

# Speaker Ideas

Sharing the power of ideas

*guest speakers for conferences and events*



**Karel van Wolferen**, born in Rotterdam 1941, left the Netherlands in 1960 on a shoestring to see the world, and spent two years living in and traveling through the Middle East, India, South East and East Asia, writing magazine articles. He first arrived in Japan in 1962, where he taught English; made documentary films; co-authored language books, and traveled extensively in the region. Commissioned to do a study on student radicalism in the West, Mr. van Wolferen distilled the results in "Student Revolutionaries of the Sixties" in 1969, reviewed by the International Herald Tribune as "the best introduction to the subject".

In 1972 Mr. van Wolferen joined the Dutch daily newspaper NRC Handelsblad as full-time correspondent for East Asia. He covered major events in Japan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines and South Korea and was awarded the Netherlands Prize for Journalism for his reporting on the 'peoples' revolution' in the Philippines. He specializes in the dynamics of Japanese political institutions; the theory and practice of globalization and contemporary capitalism; and the re-examination of fundamental economic concepts. In recent years he has written extensively on the changed role of the United States in world affairs, and has advocated that Europe and the East Asian region develop a new truly post-Cold-War diplomacy to cope with common problems. His articles and essays have appeared in foremost American, European and Japanese publications.

His book *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, which has been translated into twelve languages, is generally considered to provide the most elaborate intellectual support of what has been called the "revisionist" view of Japan. He has gained a large Japanese readership with more than a 18 books (adding up to well over a million copies sold), on political; economic; and historical issues relating to Japan as well as on problems of political change and global compatibility among economic systems.

Mr. van Wolferen is emeritus University Professor for Comparative Political and Economic Institutions at the University of Amsterdam. He is currently engaged in writing a book for simultaneous publication in Europe on the consequences of current American foreign policy, and the necessary formation of a collective European political voice for the preservation of stable and peaceful world order. His longer term project entails a study on how flawed political and economic theories block a better understanding of the realities in the post-Cold-War world, and how knowledge of Asian institutions can help us discern these realities.

While it has become fashionable to dismiss Japan as a source of economic knowledge and China receives the attention that used to be devoted to Japan, van Wolferen shows how Japanese experience, when well understood, is in fact a very useful analytical tool with which to approach China, emerging markets in Asia, and economic development in general. A topical example of this relates to the ongoing credit crisis. The bailout of private corporations which are too large to fail without creating economic chaos is known as socialization of risk. No modern economy has arranged this as systematically and efficiently as Japan. When Europeans and Americans start down this road, they can learn much from the ways the Japanese have found to minimize inevitable negative effects.

Karel van Wolferen is an enthusiastic and dynamic speaker with extensive experience of executive briefings and other corporate meetings as well as government audiences in the United States, Japan, and across Asia and Europe. An engaging speaker, and equally at home as a conference chair, he cuts through much conceptual smog produced by today's controversies and is guaranteed to stir an audience with his analyses and thought-provoking insights.

**Topics include:**

- Alternative Perspectives on Global Economic Developments
- What Role for Europe in the New World Order?
- What Kind of Order May Emerge from the Current World Disorder?
- The Conceptual Challenges of the World's Second Largest Economy
- Credit Risk - What Japanese Methods of Risk Management May Teach Us
- The Dance of the Yen and the Dollar, and the Newcomer Euro
- Can the Capitalism of Today Continue to Exist?