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Commerce Secretary says China must play fair

BY MEGAN HOULIHAN When it comes to the foreign markets everyone is focused on China, according to Assistant Secretary of Commerce William Lash III.

In a lecture Oct. 12 at Lindenwood University, Lash explained how corporations forgo judgment and try to make big bucks in China because of the immense population. Unfortunately, the Chinese, who will account for the largest middle-class group in the world in the next five to eight years, don't buy anything. He said they copy it. Illegally.

Lash has been working to protect intellectual property rights and to resolve commercial disputes involving foreign governments since 2001 when he took the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce. He was a law professor at George Mason University, and Associate Dean and Director of the Law and Economics Center. He has also taught at St. Louis University. Lash received his B.A. in political science from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard University.

Lash spoke as part of the Economic Policy Lecture Series presented by Professor Ken Chilton and Lindenwood's Institute for Study of Economics and the Environment and the Division of Management. The lecture focused on "Motivating China to Play Fair in Global Markets."

The biggest challenge with China is compliance with World Trade Laws, specifically, those that protect copyrights, trademarks and intellectual property. In China, the further away from the capital, the less compliance there is to the laws, he said.

In the country, 90 percent of software is pirated, 50 percent of pharmaceutical drugs and countless other products such as gum, playing cards, Zippo lighters and even NASCAR licensed apparel are shamelessly copied.

"People don't mind legitimate products, they just don't like cheating," Lash stated as he explained how China must enforce laws that are in place to convert from piracy to competition.

This conversion though, isn't at the top of China's priority list. The country's government is more concerned with political stability than stopping the piracy that is killing market shares of worldwide companies.

Japan used to be in the same situation that China now finds itself. With a little persistence and hard work, the country has done a complete turnaround and now produces quality brands such as Sony and Lexus. Currently, countries like Japan and the U.S. are losing respectively \$34 to \$24 billion a year due to the overwhelming and dangerous piracy taking place in China.

Press Release Contact:

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