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TRANSCRIPT

Event
Looking Forward: The Future of United States-Japan-Korea Trilateral Relations
Welcoming Remarks and Fireside Chat

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FEATURING

Kurt Campbell

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CSIS EXPERTS

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John Hamre: OK. Thank you. Welcome. Delighted you're all here. My name is John Hamre. I'm the – shhh. My name is John Hamre. I'm the president here at CSIS and wanted to say a hearty welcome to all of you. Kind of a – I can't tell if it's fog on the outside or the inside when I look out the windows. I think it's kind of condensation. It's humid, is typical Washington. So, anyway, but it isn't going to be confusing or ambiguous here. We're going to have a great program today.

And I – you know, first of all, I want to say thank you to Secretary Kurt Campbell for joining us. He's going to be leading this off in a dialog with Mark Lippert and, you know, I think Secretary Campbell was – did some authentically strategic things during his time in office both in the White House and over at the State Department and a centerpiece of that, really, is the trilateral relationship that he helped pioneer with the United States, Korea, and Japan.

And I'm very grateful that the Korea Foundation is supporting us today and is really underwriting this important reflection. We're at the 60th anniversary, you know, of the peace agreement, basically, between Korea and Japan. They had such a bitter history, you know, and I understand that, and it's not all done. You know, there are still people that have that in them.

But, you know, reconciling the frustrations of the past are not a solution for security in the future and this is about security in the future, and I think it was the leadership – and same way with Ambassador Lippert. Ambassador Lippert was just on the forefront of shaping that environment when he was in Korea and so it's a very, very important moment that we're reflecting. Because we've had three elections. We've got three new governments, OK, and they were not really in place to be the architects of this new trilateral.

We need to try to reinforce this now. It's a very important conversation that we're having and I want to say thank you to these gentlemen. Mark's going to lead a conversation with Secretary Campbell. There couldn't be two better people, you know, to do this.

But I must say there is poignancy to the moment because it was last fall when Secretary Campbell organized a wonderful gathering at the State Department that featured leaders of this evolution over the last 50 years and it was – Joe Nye was one of them and Rich Armitage was the other. Both were trustees here at CSIS. Both have passed since then and, you know, none of us would have thought – we had the conference here and never would have thought we would have lost them both – titans.

Back in 2000 – and Kurt was the organizer of this. He launched the first of a series of what were called Armitage-Nye Reports. And if you go back – and there's six of them – if you go back and look, every one of them featured a

discussion about the importance of the trilateral relationship. Every one of them. And, you know, that was foresightful about what was needed and I think these two gentlemen and every – well, Victor, too – everybody here they'd been participants in this really important dialog.

This is of a strategic significance and we're living in kind of a tumultuous day. You know, it's not clear what tomorrow is going to be like. You know, don't know how we're going to get through today. I mean, we better be doing some strategic thinking and we ought to be doing some reflecting on things of true strategic significance that we enjoy, and that's going to be the best way to kick off this.

So Secretary Campbell, thank you for what you've done. Thank you for coming.

Mark, thank you for your leadership in Seoul. And let me turn it to you, Mark. Let's get this going for real. Thank you all for being here.

(Applause.)

Mark Lippert: All right, thanks, Dr. Hamre; a fitting tribute to two giants in the community. I remember Deputy Secretary Armitage, when I had one of my Senate-confirmed positions, told me to sleep faster. That was the best advice he ever gave me. So anyway, that was very Armitage.

We're delighted to welcome Secretary Campbell here this morning. If you're in this room, if you have anything to do with Asia, you already know Secretary Campbell either personally or by reputation. But let me formally introduce him by bio. Please take a moment, follow along at your table as well.

But, first and foremost, chair, co-founder of the Asia Group, a position he's returned to after a very successful stint, tenure, in the Biden administration as deputy secretary of state and as the White House Indo-Pacific coordinator. He was the inaugural inhabitant of that position. He served in the Obama administration admirably as the assistant secretary of state, and, of course, the Clinton administration as a deputy assistant secretary at DOD – deputy assistant secretary of defense. Sorry, I can't talk this morning.

He's also launched CNAS; of course, spent time here at CSIS, as Dr. Hamre referenced, at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as well; served as a Navy officer, principally on surface-warfare operations; a bachelor's degree from UCSD, a Ph.D. from the University of Oxford, and a prolific author and editor. And I would be remiss also if – he also is a great baseball player; two – three, actually – baseball-playing nations, and Kurt is well-positioned to talk sliders, curveballs, and trilateral relations as well.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Kurt and just ask him a first question and pick up on a theme that Dr. Hamre mentioned. We live in a time of tumult, right? The foreign-policy assumptions are being questioned; basic principles.

Walk us through, Kurt, in your mind, why this relationship is so strategic, so important, and what's at stake here.

Kurt Campbell: Great. First of all, Ambassador Mark, it's great to be with you here today. And I think, as Dr. Hamre put it, you know, few people have served with such distinction in so many different fields. But I was with him recently in Korea, and it's like being with a rock star, a movie star. People still stop him on the street. And it's kind of cool to be with him and get to – people want him to take pictures with their dogs and stuff. So it's quite wonderful.

And I do want to just say a word just quickly, guys, to Dr. Hamre. I think, as you all know, he's built this place. And it's a rare thing to leave a physical memorial. When I first worked with John, we came to CSIS together in 2000. And I remember we were in a small, little building. It was a wonderful place. But I remember we were in his office and we'd both left DOD. And he turned to me. He said, what have we done? Because it turned out our finances were terrible; lots of challenges.

Look at what he has done in 25 years of service. And this is a physical reminder of what CSIS has accomplished during that period. It's just a remarkable, remarkable legacy. And it's incredible.

And just one last thing, if I can. Victor has been a lion in understanding and interpreting developments in the Indo-Pacific, has been courageous, has been entrepreneurial. And I would say, probably more than any other person, has quietly worked behind the scenes to build stronger relations among our three countries.

And so I just – it's – I'm honored to be here. It's actually a little humbling, because, you know, when you leave office in government here in Washington, D.C., you really leave, and you're aware of it on a daily basis. So it's nice to spend at least a little bit of time remembering elements of service that you hope have some continuity, Mark. I would just simply say that as we go forward.

I would say, for me, the animating principle, more than anything else, is that if you look at the challenges that the United States has faced historically, almost every one of them we've been able to undertake largely alone. So if you look at the First World War, if you look at elements of the Cold War, even the Second World War, we were the dominant power industrially,

technologically. We could define outcomes on the battlefield and in terms of innovation directly, I would posit. I think others would as well.

The hope is that we will be able to find avenues of coexistence between the United States and China. But at the same time, this is going to be a deeply competitive relationship, a relationship in which China is seeking, in many respects, to rewrite elements of the global order. I think I would argue, others would as well, that there are elements of Pax Americana. There are elements of the operating system that has been built up over decades that is very much in the best interests of both the United States, Japan, South Korea, other countries, Mark, to sustain over time. And the only way that can be sustained is in combination.

And so part of, I think, what we tried to do, and what I still fundamentally believe in, I believe the world is safer, is more secure, that we are able to both protect our capabilities, our technologies, and invest in critical areas if we work together. Now, I will tell you, honestly, one of the hardest things, Mark, you experienced this, for us to have the kind of thoroughgoing cooperation and engagement among the three capitals requires not just hard work between Japan and South Korea. And we've talked about this. Dr. Hamre mentioned some of the painful history that still has to be grappled with.

But it is also the case that the United States has to reevaluate some of its own assumptions and approaches. Sometimes I remember talking with Mark. We worked in a number of capacities together. Some of these relationships have paternal qualities that are going to have to evolve. We're going to have to see our partners more as equals. We're going to have to entrust them with a number of things, whether it's higher engagement on intelligence-related matters or in technology. We've got to work more constructively in these partnerships in ways that, frankly, occasionally are bureaucratically resisted.

So my argument would be, Mark, that the goal here would be to work with other like-minded states in the Indo-Pacific. This is the core three. If we can get this right, then much of our challenge in the Indo-Pacific has been addressed, but it is also bringing other countries in as well – Australia, countries in Southeast Asia, increasingly India. I would also say an important project, which I believe is vital, is knitting the European community together more with the Indo-Pacific community. I hope we get to this, Mark, but one of the things that is being debated now is whether it is still in our interest to encourage Europe to be more engaged in the Indo-Pacific.

I fundamentally believe in that. I believe that that is in our best strategic interests, largely because of our shared community and shared values. But ultimately, that is the – I think the struggle before us, Mark, is a couple of different visions. One is a vision of working ever closely with allies and partners, recognizing that our interests and security are essentially better

secured through those parameters, those initiatives. Or, a world in which we take issues on more alone, and that we think more about a foreign policy that is largely isolated from cooperation with allies and partners. I do not believe that second world will meet the requirements or ambitions of some of the architects that have proposed moving in that direction. I believe it will weaken the United States, make us less rich. It'll be harder to innovate. And, frankly, we will lose the goodwill and support of key countries like Japan and the ROK. I'm sorry, that's a long answer, Mark, but I hope that gives you some context.

Mr. Lippert: No, good. That's fantastic, Kurt. Like, off and running. You know me, I rigidly stick to the script here. So I'm going to just – I'm going to jump forward at your prodding and talk a little bit about this world that's more interconnected. How do you see Japan, Korea, the U.S. working in this environment, with the Australians, with the Europeans like you talked about, to basically effectuate a world in which the United States, A, is not alone; and, B, you know, we can use the old phrase the rules-based international order and/or the operating system, as you put it, that the U.S. has promulgated over the last several decades? How does that work, in your mind, over time?

Dr. Campbell: So, you know, Mark, I would say that it has – this kind of framework has many dimensions. We tend to focus – and I would say sometimes probably even over-focus – on just the security dimension, and that is of critical, I think, importance. There has to be more trilateral coordination and engagement, which means a world in which the ROK and Japan increasingly take on worldviews and perspectives beyond just their local neighborhood – which is, of course, of critical importance, but a larger perspective also sort of awaits. And I think that's important.

What I am struck by continually is that when we've looked to do major initiatives – so, like, over the last four years, Mark – and you were central to this when you served in the Obama administration – we have been trying to step up our game in the Pacific. Now, the challenge is when you use a frame like Indo-Pacific the second part of that sometimes get second shrift; like, not as much focus. And so we've got these island nations, all of whom facing enormous challenges, and frankly all being hotly contested from the PRC with respect to their interests in foreign basing and a number of other initiatives. The two countries that have stepped up the most in wanting to work with us and other countries in the Pacific are Japan and South Korea.

So just to give you a sense, the ROK had almost no program in the Pacific five or seven years ago. Today, very different: strings of embassies, engagement in climate projects and issues associated with human welfare, supporting undersea cables. You can go through a variety of these things. And so,

ultimately, it is the ability to make common purpose in a variety of arenas, not just simply security.

I think the hardest thing – and you will have seen there's an important essay in Foreign Affairs this month from our friend – and Mark and I and Victor have worked closely with him – Ely Ratner in which he makes an argument – a powerful argument for a kind of NATO in the Indo-Pacific, and he has some ideas of who the core partners would be in that. Notably, in that article he excludes the ROK. It's not in that first initial tranche; it's Japan and Australia and a couple of other nations. My worry is by going down that path we create a kind of tiered structure in which some countries are more reliable. And frankly, I think it creates more divisions and tensions between the ROK and Japan.

Our most important mission, I would suggest to all of you, in our diplomacy is to take the necessary steps to bring Japan and the ROK closer – ever closer together. And I think what Dr. Hamre very delicately put on the table is that we have three very different leaders now in Japan, ROK, and the United States from the original leaders that launched the trilateral. And you know, you had a couple of leaders in that that were absolutely committed to building those bridges. And now the question is, will these – each of these leaders, with very different priorities, very different perspectives, are they going to be as equally committed to sustaining the trilateral?

And I think the reason why Victor and Dr. Hamre wanted to have this session now is that we are really on the cusp of what is going to be some defining diplomacy: NATO plus four, we just had the G-7, we're going to have a number of other engagements in which these leaders are going to associate. And we're going to get a sense whether there is going to be ambition to continue this process and build on it. My hope is the answer to that will be yes, but I would say fundamentally the jury is still out.

Mr. Lippert: Excellent, Kurt. Let me – let me draw you out, then, on that point a little bit based on your past experience. You have seen this relationship, this trilateral formation, the bilateral relationship between Seoul and Tokyo from Clinton, Obama, Biden, and then in between as either in private industry, think tank community, as someone who works deeply on thought leadership as well. What lessons can you take away from your time in and out of government that might help guide the administrations in the three capitals over the coming years?

Dr. Campbell: Look, Mark, it's such a good question, and it's so important. And you will hear different people that have philosophies about the way forward. I think for years the belief was that this was none of our business, that the United States had to be careful and remain somewhat aloof from the process for fear

if we engaged that we would alienate or send the wrong signal to one country or the other. I, frankly – and, again, with Victor's encouragement, would reject that logic, and believe it is very much in our interest to play a role in trying to both bring the leaders and others in the countries together, but also when we see problems on the horizon to address them directly. So that is the first point I would make.

The second is, what is remarkable, Mark, is that, in fact, behind the scenes the amount of trilateral engagement has increased rather substantially. But it is always wary about what happens at the political level. And so we have to realize – to folks that say, oh, let's just focus on the operational dimensions, without strong political support, or, frankly, without – if, in the absence – if there were a signal from one of the leaders of ambivalence, it will have immediate consequences for some of the ongoing, sort of, operational workman-like effort beneath the scenes. And so it means that you have to invest in leader-level diplomacy and you have to realize the importance of it.

And the last thing I would say is everyone has a theory about the process. Some will say, look, let's focus completely on the future, and let's focus on the challenges that we face now, and let's leave history to the past. And there will be others that will say, no, no, you have to address some of the hard, outstanding issues that have animated the bilateral relationship between Japan and South Korea before you can really approach true trilateral cooperation and coordination. The only thing I would say is I am actually hoping for and looking for leaders that are deeply empathetic to the stakes, understand what we're dealing with, and are prepared – and who are prepared to address that publicly, or to show a human dimension of this.

And I've seen it on display occasionally. And I think we all have seen circumstances where the leaders are so careful not to show any sense of humanity or connectivity with their counterpart across the table. And so the more that this becomes accepted, that you acknowledge what has transpired, you address it through the lens of humanity as opposed to, like, gee, we can't say anything here that would in any way create either legal or political challenges. I also will tell you that when you see the leaders of the three countries address each other as respected colleagues and partners, you see public opinion in all three countries buoyed rapidly. Perhaps not as fast in the ROK as in the other two, but still there is an upward momentum that demonstrates, I think, clearly, that leadership in this arena matters.

I will also say, the last thing is that the challenge – it used to be that the United States would kind of sit and watch, and figure out how to engage in the bilateral relationship to make sure trilateral dynamics are ongoing. I will say that that has shifted substantially. Now it is the case, Mark, frankly, where ROK and Japanese colleagues are quietly meeting to strategize about how best to engage on some of the very complex, and in many instances

unpredictable, trade dynamics that the countries are facing. What's the best way forward? What's your strategy? How are you addressing issues?

Both countries are facing real issues on autos. Both countries are uncertain about what the end game looks like, whether there are going to be opportunities to work either in natural gas or in shipbuilding, some of the stuff, Mark, that you've worked on.

And so this is truly a three-way challenge now. It's no longer the United States basically sitting on the side encouraging. We're very much part of a dynamic that is complex, dynamic, and in some instances quite unpredictable.

Mr. Lippert: You beat me to the punch on that bucket of issues. I want to get to that in one second but I want to come back to your leader level diplomacy piece because I'd be remiss if I didn't ask you about Camp David and how the leader level dynamic shaped the relationship, going forward, and you touched on a little bit, influence public opinion and led to some policy outcomes.

Kurt, could you talk a little bit about that?

Dr. Campbell: Yeah. Thanks.

And, you know, so Mark was at the absolute right hand to President Obama and had lots of experience out at Camp David. I had not. I had been there once before in the Clinton administration and had an occasional – you know, you go out, do a five-minute briefing. This was my first real experience at a – you know, kind of a full couple of days of diplomacy.

Mr. Lippert: My experience was Reggie Love, the Duke power forward and Obama's body man, dunking over my head on the basketball court. (Laughter.) But that's the sum total of it. Different, yeah, yeah.

Dr. Campbell: That's a good – that's a good memory. (Laughter.)

So, you know, we had worked really hard to pull this off. And you think, you know, Mark, that it really is all about the, you know, kind of how do you get both the leaders to want to come. But, you know, White Houses are complicated places.

You got to bring a lot of people on board to make sure that this is the right thing. You have to work hard at the worker level at what the – what we call – it's an awkward word in bureaucratese – deliverables.

I will say – and I always appreciate Victor for pointing this out – if you look at the joint statement that came out of Camp David it is among the more ambitious set of objectives not only in each of our bilateral relations about what we can accomplish trilaterally.

And so you begin to understand why some of our most important diplomatic achievements take place in places like Camp David or the Wye Accords and you realize that busy leaders oftentimes need moments of strategic reflection and to get away and actually sit and talk not on a time clock about issues that mattered and so I saw that in play quite clearly.

And so we had a series of trilateral engagements, a series of bilateral meetings and, frankly, the working level – the mid-level people we also worked very much together. While the leaders were having dinner we would sit and have, you know, our own meetings and meals together and think a little bit about the way forward.

I watched during that event both sides initially quite nervous, basically accepting the significance of it and the history of it. And, you know, it's very rare – Mark, you know much better than me government is often about disappointment and about hard labor that is unrewarded.

It's very rare that you find yourself in a set of circumstances something you've really worked hard on, and I will say I worked with this with Mark and with Victor and others for decades, and we'd had a lot of disappointments and I never thought we'd get to a place like Camp David.

But in truth I think the real kudos go to the leadership of the two leaders in Japan and the ROK, to be honest. They really understood the stakes. They embraced it.

I still feel badly about, you know, what has transpired on the Korean Peninsula. This is a hard time. You know, excited about the new leadership but how President Yoon ended his time is tragic.

At that time when we were in Camp David very clear his leadership, his role, his courage, and his ambition around these issues. So I saw those quite clearly.

I've told this story before and I'll just mention it quickly. So, you know, when you're at Camp David – Mark knows this – it's really lush. It's beautiful. There are cabins. And there's – it's like a little compound, but it's surrounded by, you know, security everywhere you go. It's hard to get on the base.

When we decided to hold this – it's up to President Biden – he said, look, let's not make the delegations drive out. Let's give them Marine One and let them

fly into Camp David. Now, you'd think, gee, well, that's easy; we'll just make that decision. It took us a month going through all the lawyers, whether it's what would happen, if something happened. You know, so – but we finally worked it out. And each of the delegations flew in. And so my job was to go and collect each of the delegations.

And as the helicopter's landing in the clear space and you're coming, you're driving up on your golf cart to pick them up, first, you know, was the Japanese delegation. And these guys are buttoned down, kind of very proper diplomats. And as we were turning the corner, I could see them doing leaping high fives and kind of taking a picture of each other and stuff like that. And then when we pulled up, they were all back to business and stuff. And the same thing basically happened with the Korean delegation, because it's exciting and it's kind of fun to be there.

But I would say that, Mark, my deepest hope is that elements of that will continue. You know, you hear, in all three capitals, both signals of wanting the trilateral process to continue and some reservations in all three capitals as well. And so the reason why events like this are important is they send a signal that I do believe there is an audience in all three countries that appreciate what was accomplished and what's possible going forward. And this is a moment in which not only ambition but a degree of care is going to be significant as each of the leaders begin both bilateral engagements but trilateral as well.

I must say the reports of the calls and engagements so far between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Lee are impressive, and they suggest that the – that President Lee and Prime Minister Ishiba want to work closer together. And that is our hope going forward.

Mr. Lippert: All right, you brought me to the series of questions that you alluded to in your previous intervention. I want to get to that.

Just one comment; your comment on – your statement on disappointment and hard labor unrewarded. That's my future autobiography. But I digress. (Laughter.) Not just government, right?

But the point – the question that I want to bring you to is the dynamics you talked about with tariffs, all the – I guess you could also argue burden-sharing is also in the background with both the security relationship –

Dr. Campbell: And whether there is questions about the continuation of certain elements of our military –

Mr. Lippert: Exactly.

Dr. Campbell: – deployment, because basically everything's on the table, Mark.

Mr. Lippert: Exactly. And how does that shape – because you've got the two bilateral alliances that, you know, hitherto have always been kind of the foundational element. Then you work to bridge the two, right, as you alluded to. And now you've got a different dynamic because the bilateral pieces, there are serious questions around them. Tokyo and Washington are quietly talking.

Talk to us about that dynamic in the context of these complicated issues – tariffs, security arrangements, our presence there, the overall China factor. How is that working now, Kurt? Draw – I want to draw you out a little more on that.

Mr. Cambell: So – and again, I would also just simply say, guys, that – so I was asked and was proud to play a role in helping lead the transition at the State Department. A very large number of those people I engaged with during that process have actually not ended up or served for short periods in the administration and then has left.

So I think we have to be honest, Mark, that the jury is still out on many of these issues. I think there are some fundamental assumptions that will be tested. So I do believe that our collective deterrence between the United States and the ROK is an essential piece of maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula at a time when the North Korean regime is prepared to take much more provocative steps than they have in the recent past, deploying off the peninsula, working with Russia, but also some of the military steps that they have taken.

So I actually believe that that shared deterrence is a critical element. There are some that would be arguing that this is a mission that the ROK can manage on its own.

My worry will be that any substantial adjustment, Mark, will be misinterpreted, will be interpreted as somehow the United States reducing its commitment to peace and stability, or raising questions about whether the United States is somehow withdrawing from fundamental commitments in the Indo-Pacific more generally, and triggering, potentially, outcomes that are hard to imagine where they will go. The fact is, we were able to work hard with ROK friends to take some steps to buttress and underscore our commitment – our continuing commitment to extended deterrence over the Korean Peninsula. I can imagine us taking steps that lead to a crisis in confidence that is very much not in our strategic interest.

And there are others that are saying that the real challenge is not on the Korean Peninsula, or even in the South China Sea, it's primarily around cross-strait related issues. I would tend to reject that narrow issue. I think the key in the Indo-Pacific has been incidents and scenarios have often developed in ways that are unanticipated and have potential consequences beyond simple dynamics that you might see. For instance, today the back and forth between Thailand and Cambodia, something that is not on very many people's radar screen, is significant and something that we should be paying attention to more directly.

So my only admonition here, Mark, there is a desire in some place to think about sweeping changes, major recommitment of forces for different scenarios, moving them around the Indo-Pacific. I would be – I would be one who would counsel caution. What I would like to see, frankly, to be honest, folks, is more capacity in the Indo-Pacific. And I will tell you, for me one of the biggest questions and challenges is, can the United States over time – not over one administration but several – continue to invest the necessary bureaucratic, political, strategic, and military resources to make clear that the Indo-Pacific is going to be the dominant theater for the 21st century?

If you look today at the disposition of our forces, where we're spending a large amount of our time, you would find, again, that Europe and the Middle East take a substantial portion of those capacities. And so we're always trying, it feels, to shift and find more time and attention for the Indo-Pacific. And it is always difficult and challenging. And so, Mark, that's a longwinded answer to say that I do believe there are going to be some things that are contemplated that we're going to have to evaluate carefully. And that if there is a decision to move forward, my hope is that it will not be done in a strictly unilateral way, that it will be part of a larger, you know, set of conversations, and that they will be well understood.

Right now, the biggest issues that are animating these relationships are not the strategic issues of forward deployment and flexibility. They really are the details of these trade negotiations. And it would be hard to underestimate some of the things that have been put on the table, if were accepted by the leadership in the ROK or Japan, would create immediate and intractable political problems for both governments. And they're trying to weigh, how far can I go, what can I do? They want good relations with the United States. Japan and the ROK are one and two in investment in the United States over the last five years. So I know that there would be some that would say that these are relationships that – you know, that they've gotten more out of it than we have. I would reject that logic. I believe that these are strongly mutually beneficial. And making that argument is going to be important.

Mr. Lippert: All right, Kurt. You led me to really the penultimate question. Then we'll let you wrap up and get on with your day. But this is outstanding thus far.

On the softer side of the relationship that you've led us to, you talked a little about the military presence. What more would you like to see in that area in terms of outcomes and policy promulgation?

Mr. Cambell: So, can I say, what is often hard in an environment like we're facing right now – so, the natural argument would be we need more people-to-people exchanges, more educational exchanges, cultural and other dynamics. I mean, already much of that is underway, but we need ever more of it. But I find myself almost embarrassed, because almost all our major programs which are about educational exchange, our major grants, those are all being cut to the bone. And it's unclear that we're going to be committed ourselves in both supporting American students abroad, but, as importantly, as welcoming to international students on American campuses.

And, you know, I will say I have a daughter that just graduated from college. And when we were up on campus in Cambridge – and it's a very internationalist group of kids – the palpable sense of anxiety and frustration – will we be welcomed back; will we have the opportunity even to get visas to study – was just – you know, it was – again, Mark, it was palpable. And so I find it difficult for the United States, for me, to give counsel to do things that we're not doing ourselves. My hope will be greater understanding between not just at the political level but the people to people level. What's interesting about – I'll just conclude with this, Mark.

What's interesting, for instance, about issues of history, and national identity – and, again, Victor has helped us understand this. You would think that the hardest issues are among the older generations in both countries. That is not the case. In fact, some of the hardest perspectives are among younger people. That suggests that more interchange and engagement makes sense. I will also say, the other impressive thing about Japan and South Korea, which we've already discussed, is their role internationally. It used to be that their ambitions and focus was largely just their immediate neighborhood, increasingly on the big issues – climate, disease, dealing with poverty, and humanitarian crises. If you see an issue internationally, you will find representatives, money, resources from the ROK and Japan.

And so, unfortunately, what we are seeing is while the United States has pulled back from many of these issues, in some respects both the ROK and Japan have done more and are continuing to play highly responsible international roles. And so, you know, I'm hopeful that these three countries can create a kind of, what we often describe as, virtuous cycle that encourage

us to engage appropriately, that lead us to greater trilateral coordination and ambitions, as opposed to an environment where we descend downward.

It would be hard to underscore enough, Mark, that literally the next couple of months are going to be definitional. And realizing that early moves, statements, commitments will have huge potential consequences as we go forward. I'm hopeful that the new Korean government that – you know, will be at the at the NATO meetings, will be – have been involved in a variety of diplomatic engagements with the United States. My hope is that we get off to the right foot in a bilateral relationship, which I think then we can build on as we go forward.

Mr. Lippert: All right. Outstanding. The only other thing I would add is – to our list that we didn't talk about is the possible cooperation in and around sensitive technologies, right? Semiconductors –

Mr. Cambell: Yeah. Could I just say a word about that?

Mr. Lippert: Please do.

Mr. Cambell: So, guys, so --

Mr. Lippert: I was trying to tease you out there.

(Laughter)

Mr. Cambell: No, you're – no, Mark, you –

Mr. Lippert: You took the bait.

Mr. Cambell: You did great on this. I will say that, increasingly, one of the most important set of initiatives among our three countries lie in the arena of technology. And what is striking is how much each of the three countries have to build capacities in our governments to understand and be able to make complex decisions. I am struck at how many hard issues that our teams are just not prepared to make decisions about. How many senior government officials can talk wisely and with background about 5G or AI or semiconductors or quantum computing or synthetic biology? So it's incredibly difficult.

And the truth is that technology increasingly is going to be the defining issue not only in the Indo-Pacific, but among our three countries. We are going to have to innovate and figure out ways in which we use the capacity among some technology companies to animate and inform our governments. We're thinking a little bit – we were, at least – about how to bring on for periods of time mid-level technology folks to help us understand the way forward.

It seems to me that we are going to have three challenges ahead.

The first and most important is figuring out how to create institutions and approaches whereby appropriate resources are being directed at our internal capabilities. And that means investing in each of our home markets' capacities in critical areas – in elements of semiconductors and AI. So there is going to be a profoundly domestic capacity in all three countries.

The second is how we work more together on combined projects. And you've seen some of that in longer-life batteries and 5G and the like, and that coordination is going to be important. And, frankly, the more investment that comes into the United States the better.

The third, Mark, is the hardest one. Each of us are at the ramparts of certain technologies, and some of those technologies I think you can make a powerful argument about the need to restrict the cutting-edge capabilities, whether it's in lithography or stacks of large language models for AI – how to be careful about keeping some of those trade secrets closely held.

And those goals and objectives can only be accomplished through a degree of alignment and engagement. And so, increasingly, there are – there will need to be a – we have a very strong military component to our trilateral engagement. There's a diplomatic. There's a cultural. But what we're also going to have to figure out is how to actualize technology coordination.

Some of that can be done in presidential offices like the NSC or the Blue House or the new Japanese National Security Council. Some of it can take place in places like the ministry – the Department of Commerce. But increasingly, there's going to have to be a technology component that is central bureaucratically to the purposes of all three countries. That probably requires some structural changes and innovations. We have tried to use the science and technology advisor to the president to do that, but that has not been a strong bureaucratic actor historically. But I would say that this – the project I'm hopeful for of the Trump administration and the other two governments is to focus on this broad and incredibly ambitious technology agenda, which is about advancing our individual interests, our collective interests together, and also where necessary restricting some capabilities where it's in our interests to keep ahead and keep it from falling into other people's hands.

Mr. Lippert: Alright, Kurt, final thoughts. We're at time. John Hamre's about to send me a bill. I can't afford it, so –

Mr. Cambell: All right.

Mr. Lippert: But final thoughts, closing comments. The Hamre joke never plays.

Dr. Campbell: No, it doesn't.

Mr. Lippert: I think they're – everybody's scared of him.

(Laughs.)

Dr. Campbell: They're not scared of him; they're reverent, is the –

Mr. Lippert: Oh, reverent. All right. That's fair.

Dr. Campbell: My profound hope is that in a world of a huge amount of uncertainty and change – I mean, Mark, we were talking before we came in. I mean, every day there feels like cascading change that challenged some of our base perspectives about global politics, about domestic policy. I believe that if our three countries find a way to continue to work closely together that it will not only have an impact on regional dynamics and global dynamics, but our own domestic characteristics.

I think that working together forces all of us to evaluate how we see the world, how we see our own democracies. And I think I'm hopeful, at least, that it can help us be propelled towards not just a shared future, but a future in which our domestic purposes and ambitions live up to what we're capable of.

Mr. Lippert: All right. Outstanding. A round of applause for Secretary Campbell.

(Applause.)

And a tour de force, sir. Thank you.

Dr. Campbell: Thank you.

Mr. Lippert: Thank you. That was great.

(Applause.)

(END.)