Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

CSIS Press Briefing:
South Korean President Park Geun-hye White House Visit

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H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: Good morning, and welcome to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. I'm Andrew Schwartz, and I'm here with – whoa – (laughter) – OK – we all right? All right.

I'm here with our Asia Beatles, we call them – you know, it's like the fab five or four, or – how many do we have over there? (Laughter.) Yeah, all right. Well, it's early. But where else can you get K Street bagels this early? I mean, come on, you know. So anyway, thank you all for coming this morning; we've got a really fascinating briefing with our top Asia scholars here. Victor is just back from Seoul and is going to have a lot to say. He literally is just back from Seoul. I think he got back at – you know, last night.

And I'll – we'll go down the line, but we have some – you know, just tons of expertise here. Of course, Victor was head of the – deputy head of the six-party talks during the Bush administration and a director on the National Security Council. Mike Green, to my immediate left, was senior director in the Bush administration on the NSC for Asia. Chris Johnson is our – and Mike is our Japan chair, and also our senior vice president. Victor is our Korea chair. Chris Johnson, right next to Victor, is our China studies chair, and Chris was the top Asia analyst – or the top China analyst at the CIA until about a year ago when he joined us. And we've been really grateful to have him heading our China program.

And Matt Goodman is – I guess, Matt, you're not so new anymore, but, you know, Matt came here from the White House, where he was working on Asian – ASEAN and Asian economic issues and tons of other things as well. And Matt's our international business chair, so we really have a well-rounded lineup for you today. And we'll also be putting this out later today on a transcript, so we'll have this for you.

And with that, I'm going to turn to my colleague, Victor Cha.

VICTOR CHA: Thanks, Andrew. Good morning everyone; thank you for coming out so early. Well, let me begin with, I guess, about five minutes just on what I think the summit is framing up to be and what I think will be the main issues.

As you probably all know, she will be arriving – her first stop will be in New York on May 6th, and then she'll be coming to D.C. on May 7th for her official meeting, which will be morning meetings at the White House followed by a press availability and then a lunch. On the evening of May 7th, there will be a big dinner at the Smithsonian that the Korean government is hosting, basically in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the alliance. And so everybody and their grandmother will be at that.

And then, May 8th, in the morning, my understanding is she'll make a visit to the Korean War Memorial, and then she'll give a speech at a joint session of Congress, followed by a lunch that the U.S. Chamber will be hosting. So everybody and their grandfather will be at that. (Laughter.) And then she travels off to L.A.

This is her only stop; she's not adding any other parts of the – of the hemisphere into this trip. This is just a trip to the United States. And clearly, there are going to be many issues on the

agenda. They will be discussing – North Korea, of course, will be at the top of the list, but also civil nuclear cooperation, I presume, will be also a big issue even though an agreement was made for a simple extension – a two-year extension of the agreement. As many of you know if you follow this, there's a wide gap in negotiating positions that can probably only be resolved through a higher-level political discussion, not through simple working-level discussions. And I imagine the two leaders will spend some time on that.

Another big issue down the pike is something called SMA – Special Measures Agreement, the negotiation of cost-sharing for U.S. forces in Korea. And given our own difficult financial situation with the sequester, I imagine this will also be much more of a higher-level political – a negotiation that will be much more in the political spotlight than it's been in the past. And then I also imagine that, on trade, there will be a celebration of the one-year anniversary of KORUS, but presumably and hopefully, some discussion of TPP. And Matt's our expert on that, so I will – I will leave that discussion to him.

What I think this summit will really be about, in addition to the issues, is building a relationship. This is the first time that the new South Korean president is coming to Washington to meet with President Obama. She is in many ways, as you know, a historic president not just in Korea, but also in the region of East Asia, being the first democratically-elected female president or leader in – of the Northeast Asian countries.

And in a sense, she has big shoes to fill because of the relationship that the former president, President M.B. Lee had with Obama. They, I think by all accounts, had a unique relationship. The president really did like Lee Myung-bak, and so I think there will be an effort to try to build or replicate, perhaps in a different fashion, the same sort of personal relationship. So in this sense I think she is not just only introducing herself to the American public – to Congress and to the president, but also trying to tell her story. I think a lot of this trip will be about telling her story.

It's a very compelling story. And – you know, many South Korean presidents have interesting and compelling stories, whether you talk about Kim Dae-jung, who was a democracy fighter, or Roh Moo-hyun, who was, you know, a dissident lawyer – sort of, he was the Abraham Lincoln – Korean version of Abraham Lincoln – born in a log cabin – well, maybe they didn't have log cabins in Korea, but born in a thatched roof house and then becoming president of the United States. Lee Myung-bak also a very compelling story – essentially starting in the equivalent of the mail room at Hyundai before becoming head of Hyundai Global Construction.

And so she has a very compelling story as well, you know, as the daughter of Park Chung-hee and having to see her mother get assassinated and take over her duties as first lady, and then really coming back into politics when she thought the country was falling apart during the Asian financial crisis in 1997, '98. That was what brought her back into politics. So I think it's a very interesting and compelling story, and that'll be a lot of what she wants to do.

I imagine she's going to talk not just about issues but also about the values that she holds as a – as a politician, as a leader of the country. Not simply – I think, of course, because she believes in them, but I think she understands well that every presidency is judged not by the list

of things they have coming into office, but how they react to surprises and things that change. And when those sorts of things happen, the only thing that you have to go on are your core – whatever your values or principles are. And I – so I think she'll want to lay those out. I think it's also a good way for her to be able to talk about her father, Park Chung-hee, but also be able to distinguish herself from her father in the sense that she can talk a great deal about democratic values and freedom in a way that helps to distinguish her from her father's past.

On the alliance – you know, again, this is the 60th anniversary, and I think one of the key themes that they will want to emphasize – message is that you hear a lot about her trust politic – her trust policy of opening up and building relations with North Korea and China, but I think the message she wants to send here is that, you know, despite all this rhetoric, at the core of – her center of gravity is the U.S.-Korea alliance. I mean, that is really the core of her foreign policy worldview, even as she does things like trying to reach out and build trust with China, or if an opportunity presents itself, to build trust with North Korea, which takes us to the last and most difficult issue, which is North Korea.

And here, I don't think she has any other choice. The message is going to be a tough one about enforcing sanctions, about a very principled approach. Again, in Seoul – I just got back yesterday from Seoul, and front page, all over, the discussion was about Kaesong – Kaesong Industrial Complex, where the Park administration made, you know, a very clear, principled decision. After all the workers got kicked out, they left some managers at Kaesong, but the North Koreans would not allow the delivery of food and supplies to those managers. So, they were there for weeks. And President Park at one point finally said, you know, either let us have discussion on this or we have to pull those people out. And the North Koreans basically flipped her off and she pulled them out.

And so, for many, this was the last – the last thread of inter-Korean engagement because even after all communications were cut off, even after all operations were stopped, the fact that the North Koreans did not kick out these last 200 or so managers left some hope that there might be a chance that they would reopen this thing. But she was very principled in terms of her decisions and said that she's going to pull them out if they don't allow discussions. And she did, and she's gotten a lot of public support for that. So I think, again, it will be a very principled discussion about North Korea; a tough message even as she hopes to build trust with them.

And I think the other thing – while being here on this – is I think she's also going to both thank and emphasize – thank the United States, and in particular the United States Congress, and emphasize the human rights aspect of the problem. Congress played a big role in passing the North Korean Freedom Act. Her visit here will come just after the conclusion of North Korea Freedom Week here in Washington, in the United States. And so I think the human rights aspect of the North Korea problem will be emphasized during her visit. So with that, I'll turn to Mike.

MICHAEL GREEN: (Clears throat.) Excuse me. Thank you, Victor, and thank you all for coming.

I thought I would focus on a few of the themes that Victor introduced for the bilateral summit and try to imagine the harder, tougher discussions that are going to be happening behind

the scenes on North Korea, on relations with Japan and on this issue of transferring wartime operational control from the U.S. to the ROK.

On North Korea, it's a pretty safe bet, because it happens every time, that there will be a message from the summit emphasizing deterrence and U.S-ROK resolve to keep up the pressure on North Korea, coupled with a message that there's still an opening for dialogue. And the line which is used again and again – and to confess, Victor and I used it when we were in the NSA, too – NSC, too; it's getting – it's getting – it's getting a bit worn – but, you know, North Korean provocations will only further isolate the regime in the international community, which, I think, from Pyongyang's perspective is one of those, you know, "please don't throw me in that briar patch" threats.

The aim is to deter North Korea and reassure South Korea and Japan and, politically, I suspect, to keep North Korea off the headlines or get it out of the headlines as quickly as possible because there really is no elegant solution. And I can tell you from our experience in the Bush administration – the Clinton people would say the same; and I think when they get out of office, the Obama people will confess that – the more North Korea's in the news, the worse you look. It's not an issue or a problem set that was created by God to make administrations look good because it keeps getting worse.

I think the administration will take some comfort in the notion that the North Korean threat is not like Iran. Iran with nuclear weapons has a history, a civilizational precedent that would lead Tehran to pursue regional hegemony and rhetorically, if not physically, the destruction of the state of Israel. North Korea's hemmed in on all sides by large, powerful, rich, well-armed neighbors: Russia, China, South Korea and Japan, both allied with the United States. As the line from "An Officer and a Gentleman" goes, they got no place to go. But that does not mean that this is a problem that's going to ripen and get easier with age. We've had cycles of provocation and crisis followed by dialogue for almost two decades now. But it's not cyclical. With each new crisis, the potential threat from the North grow, and we're reaching a critical period.

One possible explanation for the shutdown of Kaesong and for what's happening on the peninsula now is that the North is getting ready to test another ballistic missile. This time, probably the Musudan, a more capable and potentially more accurate mobile missile. The sanctions followed a more or less successful Usadon (ph), or intercontinental test, and a nuclear test, which was of a large yield in terms of the kilotonnage picked up by seismic instruments, but surprisingly obscure in terms of the particles emitted in the atmosphere. In previous tests, the U.S. and presumably China have been able to pick up whether it was uranium, plutonium and so forth. Very hard this time, apparently, to get that information, which suggests the North Koreans are much better at hiding and containing the test. If it's a – if it's their first uranium enrichment-based test, that's dangerous because unlike plutonium, which has to be cooled by water and can be detected above ground, uranium enrichment occurs with spinning of centrifuges that can be hidden in caves. And potentially – the estimates vary – with all the uranium that exists in North Korean mines, they could be cranking out a crit. (ph), or a bomb's worth, a year or so, once the centrifuges are spinning.

A North Korea with six to nine nuclear weapons is a problem. A North Korea that approaches Pakistan, with 30, 40 or 50 nuclear weapons, is a really big problem. The idea that North Korea will be contained is right, in terms of regional hegemony, but it doesn't mean that North Korea will behave. And there are reasons to worry that a North Korea with an increasingly capable nuclear deterrent will become increasingly brazen; that the kinds of conventional attacks you saw in South Korea in 2010 could become more common because Pyongyang may assume that we can't retaliate because of their nuclear weapons capability.

The North has also threatened in the past to transfer their capability. I was at the talks when they did that in 2003. And, indeed, they did do that; they helped the Syrians build a reactor at al-Kibar. They didn't transfer fissile material, which would have been, I think, a real red line. But they did help – it's openly acknowledged by the administration at the time – I was out of government in 200, but it was openly acknowledged they did help the Syrians build a reactor complex the Israelis subsequently bombed. That's – those are all different forms of potential intimidation threat to get concessions that North Korea otherwise wouldn't get in terms of sanctions-lifting and legitimacy for the regime.

And it's pretty clear now that the North Koreans are dead-set on having nuclear weapons. It's in their constitution; they make no secret of it. When they talk in any way about dialogue, it's a dialogue on peaceful coexistence with the United States in which we acknowledge and recognize North Korea as a fellow nuclear-weapon state.

So, what does the administration actually do and what does the ROK actually do beyond the statement that will come out about how we are resolved to work together, which is true? One thing is increasing our deterrent and our own defense. And so you will have noted, perhaps, about two months ago the U.S. and the ROK finished joint planning on how we would respond to provocations – not full-scale war but provocations – so that we're doing it together, so the U.S. isn't pulled into something against our will and the ROK has the backing of the U.S. Implement the Security Council resolution; difficult without China, which I'll leave Chris to explain, but very difficult.

Dialogue. I think Secretary Kerry historically in the Senate has been very keen on dialogue with the North. When we were in the NSC, we repeatedly received letters from then-Senator Kerry on the need for dialogue with the North. But what do you talk about if the North's goal of dialogue is recognition of the North as a nuclear-weapon state, a place we cannot and will not go? So these are real conundrum – conundra – I studied Latin in high school – (chuckles) – conundra for the administration.

Another thing that I think they'll talk about quietly is the Japan-Korea relationship. The U.S ability to get purchase on the North Korea problem is always impaired when Japan and Korea are at odds. And Japan and Korea are now in a bad way. It is primarily because of Prime Minister Abe's statements on history, many of which he has moderated from the election campaign in Japan last year. But that's not how it's seen in Seoul.

So, for example, in the election campaign, Prime Minister Abe said he would revisit the official apologies Japan issued on the 55th anniversary of the war. His foreign policy advisers, I

suspect the administration here, Korean friends said don't do that. The Japanese solution was, OK, and the prime minister's office put out a statement saying he will look at this issue on the 70th anniversary of the war, which is 2015. So, in Tokyo, the internationalist view is, OK, we kicked that ball down the road; we're not going to deal with it; that's two and a half years away; we'll get our arms around this; we'll work on relations. And they viewed it in Tokyo as a step back and a way to moderate that rhetoric that had been so negative.

I did a radio call-in show last night, in Seoul, and it will be no surprise to many of you that that is not how it was seen in Seoul. In Seoul, the reaction was, my god, he's promised to revisit these historical apologies in two years, and he – he said he'll do it. You know, what will happen next? So they're really at an impasse.

And I think this is not something the U.S. government can openly broker or moderate, but I suspect it will be a key theme with the Japanese side of course, but also with the Korean side. Wartime OPCOM conclude – I suspect the two leaders will confirm that we're going to transfer operational control on the peninsula in wartime from the U.S. to the ROK. Since the Korean War, the U.S. has had operational control if in the event of a war. It makes sense. Right now, the ROK has peacetime operational control. The U.S. would get wartime operational control. And literally what happens is, when you go from peacetime to wartime, everybody has to shuffle their chairs around. The command relationships change. It creates a big organizational seam that's not a good thing to be dealing with in the middle of a crisis. So it's logical we would transfer it. The ROK is quite capable.

But conservative voices in Seoul, in increasing numbers, are saying, is this the signal we want to send to the North right now, that somehow we're dissolving the joint command between the U.S. and ROK? I think both presidents Park and Obama want to proceed, but the politics of this are getting increasingly complicated in South Korea. And I'd love to be a fly on the wall to see how Park Geun-hye explains this to President Obama.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON: Thank you, Andrew, and thank you all for coming this morning. On China, I think the core issue really is, has there been some sort of turn in their policy on North Korea? This is something that's been speculated quite extensively within the last several months. And there's several reasons to believe that something is definitely going on in the way that Beijing sort of looks at the North Korean problem. The first is that we have new people, new leaders in place in China, and they seem to have a different sort of approach, at least initially, toward how they discuss the issue publicly and also just from their backgrounds how we assess, I think, the way they view the problem. So for example, Xi Jinping, the new Chinese president, I believe is seen both inside China but also abroad as much more decisive than his predecessor Hu Jintao, much more in control at this stage in his consolidation of power than Hu Jintao was at the analogous sort of period in his efforts to consolidate power and a lot less willing, if you will, to get led around by the bureaucracy on some of these key issues. Xi Jinping, as one of these princelings, the children of the founders of the regime, has this sort of sense of born to rule aura about him and also a sort of strong-willed and decisive character. So there's an idea that he's a little bit less willing than his predecessor to sort of take at face value what the bureaucracy is feeding to him on this subject.

Likewise, at the more working level, we have a new state counselor in Yang Jiechi, the foreign minister of China, who has replaced Dai Bingguo, the previous state counselor. And Dai

was actually quite close to the North Koreans. He had worked with them for a good number of years in his previous capacity in the Chinese Communist Party's International Liaison Department, which, despite its odd-sounding name, is basically the primary channel for interactions between the Chinese and the North Koreans. And so Dai Bingguo tended to seemingly play an unhelpful role in terms of China's position over the last couple years of unwavering support, in terms of giving the North Koreans, repeatedly with these provocations, the benefit of the doubt.

I think the new team in Yang Jiechi and then in the foreign minister, Wang Yi, probably both view the North Korean situation with a more jaundice eye than – certainly than Dai, and this is in part because they've spent some significant portions of their careers as foreign ministry people mopping up the messes, if you will, created by the various North Korean provocations. The international blowback that comes from China's strong support for North Korea in a couple of these places, they've had to deal with that. So to the degree that they have influence in shaping the debate within China, I think it's fair to say that you have more skeptical people increasingly playing this role. So what that means in the broader context of their policy is that, you know, within China there's always a debate over the value of the North Korean relationship or how to approach North Korea. I think it's fair to say that that debate was going on primarily at the academic level between, say, 2008 until very recently. Now I think it's fair to say that this debate is moving up in the system and is sort of being debated at a much more serious level.

And even things that in the past might have been considered long sacrosanct assumptions, such as the value of North Korea to China as a critical strategic buffer between themselves and South Korea, and more importantly, between themselves and U.S. forces, this is also being hotly debated, I think, in Beijing right now. So there's a lot of effervescence, I think is the way to put it, in the system.

That said, I think the U.S. in particular but all observers of China's policy north – toward North Korea need to be skeptical that there is some sort of a massive turn about to come in their – in their policy approach. They certainly do seem to be doing certain things. Mike mentioned sanctions enforcement. There's been a lot of press and other on-the-ground observations and so on along the border with North Korea that suggest that there has been some tightened enforcement of things going back and forth across the border, but there's been a lot of countervailing reporting and, I think in some ways, stronger reporting that suggests it's very much business as usual along the border, especially in terms of the trade but also financial transactions, remittances, the things that basically keep the North Korean regime running.

And this is really the test, in my mind, of whether there is some sort of significant policy shift coming for the Chinese on North Korea, is will they do these things that not only hurt the North Korean regime, but also are a difficult sell within their own system. And this is primarily true for, say, the provincial party chieftains running these border provinces. They, in my estimation, care a lot more about investment opportunities in the north and what goes across the border every day than they do about enforcing the will of the U.N. Security Council. So with that being the case, it's tough for Beijing to be able to – as Secretary Kerry put it in his comments in China, to bear down on North Korea jointly. So this is a real challenge.

The other piece is that Xi Jinping has other things on his plate domestically that he's trying to achieve for which he will need the support. They have a party plenum, which is their

kind of key policy setting meeting coming up in the fall, and all indications are that Xi Jinping is trying to drive through some sort of an economic reform program at that policy gathering. And to do so, he's going to need support for – from some elements in this Central Committee of the Communist Party who don't want to see change on the North Korean policies. So he has to decide, is this something that he wants to invest, you know, substantial political capital in at this particular stage.

The other piece is that I think it's important just to understand the complex nature of the Chinese relationship with North Korea. It is longstanding, it is complex, there's close connections and – all of which is to say that it would be very difficult for the Chinese side, I think, to move the policy on a dime or to change it dramatically, and so I think it's important for the U.S. in particular to have modest and sort of level-headed expectations of what we can expect from China in terms of their North Korea policy.

On South Korea and China's approach, they'll be watching the summit, as Victor pointed out, very, very carefully. They're very intrigued by Madame Park, I think. She speaks Mandarin Chinese, which is of interest to them, of course. They realize that the relationship was very badly damaged with the previous president, President Lee, and I think they see Park as an opportunity to try to achieve some balance in their relationship while of course all the time – all the way through being very mindful of not upsetting the North Koreans as well. So that's going to be a fundamental challenge.

I think China's sending the right signals in their relationship with the U.S. so far on this by at least being willing to talk a lot more about the situation in the North. And instead of just flat denials and sort of, you know, backing the North no matter what they do, there does seem to be more willingness on the Chinese side to at least acknowledge that the North Korean actions are troublesome and that they are problematic and that they're willing to send the head of their six-party talks delegation here and to, you know, engage robustly. As secretary – I judge from Secretary Kerry's comments before the – on Capitol Hill, where he's basically sort of doubled down and expressing his confidence that the Chinese are being more helpful, I have to assume he was told something, you know, by the senior Chinese leadership that brings him to that conclusion. So there is an idea, I think, that the Chinese are beginning to look at their policy much more carefully. Perhaps we'll see some tactical moves. But again, this kind of grand strategic view that they are somehow ready to abandon the North I think would be very premature and has to be avoided, because if you take that into account and there's too much sort of exuberance on the U.S. side or the South Korean side or the Japanese side on this, you can very easily find yourself in kind of a traditional hope and disappointment cycle with working with the Chinese on the North Korean problem. So I think I'll stop there and turn it over to Matt. Thank you.

MATTHEW GOODMAN: Thanks, Chris. Thanks, Andrew. I'll be very brief because I know you want to talk about all of that. Just two and a half points: Number one, economics will not feature very heavily in this – in this summit meeting. That's it. Point two, however there will be some – there will be some discussion of trade. And the two half-points there are on KORUS, as Victor said, we just passed the one-year anniversary of the implementation of the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement on March 15th. And – so there will be a celebration of that.

There's been some grousing about the lack of demonstrated economic benefits from KORUS to date, but we're working on less than one year of trade data, and so that's really kind of an unfair criticism. It's way too early to judge whether this has been a useful agreement or not. It is the organizing principle for our bilateral economic relations and it's going to take time for it to play out. So be patient. And I think that will be the message from the leadership.

And then, finally, on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, I think there will be some discussion of that, not led by the U.S. side, although I think the U.S. would be very interested in Korea ultimately joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It's possible that Madame Park could lean forward on this issue. Korea's been a little reluctant to join TPP, although it would be relatively easy for them in a substantive sense because TPP is really based on the KORUS template and there would not be a lot of additional substantive changes that Korea would have to make.

But partly because it was a difficult political discussion within Korea and they don't want to reopen that whole debate with the National Assembly about all of the different problems of trade liberalization, and partly because, I think, of a concern about not tilting too far towards the U.S., having done KORUS, vis-à-vis China. I think Korea's put more focus on trying to do a trade agreement with China, both for economic and strategic reasons. So that's been why they've been reluctant to join TPP.

However, the introduction of Japan to the group recently, with Japan's being welcomed into the negotiations and probably joining the negotiations this summer, has, I think, fundamentally changed the calculation for Korea because now their biggest competitor is in the agreement. And I think Korea now has to seriously look at that. And so I think there's much more focus and conversation about this in Seoul. And I think it wouldn't be entirely inconceivable that Madame Park could not – I don't think she's going to announce Korea's intention to join, but I think she might lean quite far forward on this trip.

That's it.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Great. We'd love to take your questions. And if you could speak into the microphone by pressing the button and identifying yourself, that would be great.

Howard (sp), let's go to you first.

Q: OK, great. Thanks. I guess my question would be for Mike. Might we expect – or what should we expect from North Korea during this visit? I mean, are they likely to just sit back or do something to get attention or to be on those headlines, as you say? And I guess, more broadly, you know, is there – you know, what might the – at this point, what can the U.S., South Korea, the other parties do – just sit down and watch all this project – progress that the North seems to be making on its nuclear program and its missiles?

MR. GREEN: (Inaudible.) You know, it used to be a little bit easier to predict North Korean provocations. And Victor's program here has actually looked at all the data and demonstrated some clear patterns. It's a little harder how because the tempo is up for the North Koreans. They're constantly ratcheting up, at least rhetorically and often in material terms. For

example, this week Pyongyang is talking about, you know, a sudden – consequences and retaliation for the recent two-month U.S.-ROK military exercises.

Victor should weigh in too, but I would expect, in response particularly to whatever joint statement or press avail statements come out of the summit, some overheated language. I think there's a pretty good chance a missile test is coming, whether or not it's coincided with the summit or not, I don't know. My own view of these tests – missile and nuclear – is that they are not political statements primarily. They're primarily weapons development programs.

And they test them when the weather's right, when the technology's ready, when they've done the forensics on the previous test. You know, maybe not as scientifically as U.S. or European defense contractors, but I think that's the primary determinate. And then they time – the secondary consideration is what political messaging. That's my own sense. But I think it's possible that's coming.

In terms of what else could be done, I think most people who have worked on this issue would concede that in the near term, at least, an agreement to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons, either through diplomacy or pressure, is unlikely, in part because China won't put on enough pressure and in part because inducements are not going to – they've made it clear, they're not going to be induced out of their nuclear weapons program. It's vital for their survival, in their view.

I think those who have some hope for dialogue with North Korea – and Wu Dawei, the chief Chinese negotiator, is making noises again about getting back to the table – would like to return to the September 2005 joint statement, in which North Korea agreed to eliminate nuclear weapons in exchange for a variety of things. That's sort of the best case for diplomacy that the North goes back to an agreement that they promptly violated. (Chuckles.)

I don't see that happening. Or, if it does happen, I think the North Koreans will caveat it so heavily that it would be essentially meaningless. But that's sort of the best hope for dialogue in terms of a substantive outcome of any kind. Dialogue is still useful in terms of understanding where they're coming from, looking for off-ramps, deescalation, but unlikely to produce an actual tangible result, I would say.

In terms of pressure, we're not going to – the Chinese are not going to help us eliminate this problem. They're not going to put enough pressure on. So it might be better to focus on discrete – and this may be happening behind the scenes and we're not seeing it – but it may be better to focus on discrete Chinese interdictions, where there's actionable intelligence, we know that certain dual-use materials are moving in and out of North Korea, and the Chinese, primarily on the intelligence side, interdict them or stop them for us.

That would be useful. And I think it would be a confidence builder between the U.S. and China. We've not had a whole lot of luck on that front, but that's where I think our efforts should go for the near future.

MR. CHA: The only thing I would add to that is, the other thing that we could do is, of course, to enhance our alliances on the military side with both Japan and Korea, and to try to encourage more trilateral cooperation. The dilemma there, as Mike mentioned in his opening remarks, is that the Japan-South Korea leg of that triangle these days is quite bad.

And it's not so – I guess it's a little bit public now because the foreign minister cancelled – the South Korean foreign minister cancelled his trip to Japan after the Yasukuni Shrine visits by the ministers, but just – I mean, for those who work these sorts of circles, you can feel it. It's really quite bad now and probably only going to get worse.

And then on North Korean behavior, I've always been of the view that in spite of all the bluster and the rhetoric and the targeting (taped ?) maps and everything else they were showing us – the North Koreans were showing us a few weeks ago, I was always worried that it would be – something would happen after the end of U.S.-ROK military exercises, which ended yesterday – I mean, ended the 30th – April 30th.

And so, what, September/October is harvest season. April/May is missile testing season for North Korea. (Laughter.) That's always when they seem to test their missiles. And the fact that Madame Park is coming here and the world will be focused on this, those sorts of things always – you know, if you try to think about the variables that sort of all come together whenever the North Koreans do those things, we're seeing them come together now.

MR. JOHNSON: Let me just add two –

MR. SCHWARTZ: Couldn't they just do baseball season? (Laughter.)

MR. JOHNSTON: Let me just add two quick points on China, to build real quickly on what Mike said. What Mike indicated, I think, is a good example or highlights as well, with the Chinese approach on this, how we have to be mindful of the fact that their goals for even a process of dialogue are very different than ours. Their goals are to return to a six-party talks process that continues to talk about talking, primarily. And ours are the – is the denuclearization of the peninsula. So we need to be very, I think, sort of aware that – of those disconnects between. Doesn't mean we can't work well with China. I think there's a lot of areas, as Mike points out, where we can.

The other thing, to kind of come back to this theme of what might be done interdiction-wise and so on, and then just also what are indicators that China really is making a move in a more helpful direction on this, discussion between the U.S. and China on possible contingency scenarios or planning in the case of a North Korean collapse or these sort of things, this is something the U.S. side has been pushing for with the Chinese for a very long time. And the Chinese, understandably, are reluctant. They don't the North – you know, they're afraid the North would find out about these discussions and so on. Some indication that those talks are going to move forward, I think, would be a clear sign that China really has shifted its policy.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Jill.

Q: I just had one very simple and another a little more complex.

MR. SCHWARTZ: If you could use the microphone.

Q: Oh, I'm sorry, yeah. Jill Dougherty, CNN.

Just one very simple question about Kenneth Bae, the North – the Korean-American who was sentenced, whether you find any connection at all to what is going on, or is this the usual type of, you know, using an American somehow as a hostage in some way?

But the other question is more – it came up when we were on Secretary Kerry's trip, which is one thing that he seems to be doing is sending a message to the Chinese that, look, if you do more and contain North Korea, we won't have to have such a big military presence in Asia. Therefore, it's in your interest to do as much as you can.

Do you see any sign that that is making any dent in what the Chinese thinking is?

MR. CHA: On the detained American, I think it is unfortunately business as usual for North Korea. I think they have a real – this – they have a real neuralgia when it comes to folks that come into the country and do things that they consider to be proselytizing against the regime. And so we've seen, I think, at least six folks detained since 2009. All of them have eventually been released and it's required some sort of high-level show. The – of course, the ones that are most well-known – so they're Laura Ling and Euna Lee, where President Clinton – Former President Clinton had to go in.

And so you know, it may be something like that. I don't know if it'll be another ex-president – I understand President Carter wants to go again – or if it'll be the – our envoy for human rights, Bob King. But this person was, again, sentenced to 15 years of labor camp – in a labor camp. And I imagine that there will be again some sort of effort to try to get him – get him out and you know, probably some sort of statement coming out of the summit about that too, between the – between the two leaders.

I'll let – I'll let Chris address the – your question about China in depth. The one thing I would say about that is that this is a talking point we've used on the Chinese before – (scattered laughter) – about how their neighborhood just gets tougher for them the more the North Koreans do these sorts of things. I do think – to the Obama administration's credit, I do think they've backed those words up with action, particularly the sort of maneuvers we saw during the U.S.-ROK military exercises.

But I think one of the things the Chinese will be watching very closely is this Japan-Korea relationship, because if you really want to think of one of the ways to consolidate that, just as a hypothetical, one of the things that you would want to do is to try to get Japan and South Korea to do some sort of bilateral security declaration, not a treaty, but some sort of – or a collective security declaration, like the Obama administration tried to get a few years ago. These sorts of things really show the sort of consolidating of U.S. relationships in the region and that's just hard to do now, because of the Seoul-Tokyo relationship.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, I agree completely, Victor. I think that really is the key. China historically has tended to move, quote, unquote, on the North Korea issue when they believe one of two things to be the case: The first is that they judge that the U.S. will act in a unilateral way, whether kinetically with force or through economic means, such as the sanctioning of Banco Delta Asia in Macau some years ago. That's one lane.

I think it's fair to say that, you know, just based on what Secretary Kerry said when he was in Beijing and the general atmosphere that we've all been talking about today, the Chinese probably can conclude fairly safely that unilateral action by the U.S. is unlikely in this contest.

So the second way is to persuade the Chinese that North Korean misbehavior is creating precisely what they, the Chinese, say is a self-fulfilling prophecy about their worst fear, which is greater U.S. military presence in the region and also greater trilateral U.S.-Japan – or U.S.-Japan-Korea military cooperation. And I think that this issue, the history issue, has really made this very, very difficult at this stage. And China can, will and is exploiting that already and will continue to do so in the future. I mean, for example, I think some of Prime Minister Abe's recent statements have allowed at least the Chinese to be able to say to their own internal audience, but also, perhaps, to the South Koreans that, you know, they're talking basically out of China's longstanding playbook about what Japan's view is on history.

So as long as this is all going on, they see the potential to drive wedges between Japan and South Korea. And as long as that is true, then that really complicates, I think, our efforts in that regard.

MR. GREEN: Quick additional points: The South Koreans now trade more with China than they do with the U.S. and Japan combined. And China is now overwhelmingly – I don't know the most recent figure, but well over $2 billion – is overwhelmingly North Korea's largest trading partner and supplier of – the estimates are 70 (percent), 80 percent of their food and fuel. So as Chris has pointed out in other forums, Xi Jinping is a student of Marx and appears to believe in the dialectic material forces in history.

So if you look at those trade numbers, time, if you're in Beijing, would appear to be on your side and your control over how things eventually happen in the peninsula will only increase with time. And if Japan and Korea are going – the two key U.S. allies are drifting apart, all the more control China will have over the Northeast Asian and peninsula problem over time.

I think there are some serious flaws in that perspective. For example, in a – although Japan and Korea have problems, in public opinion polls, South Koreans, by a large margin, identify China as their biggest long-term security problem, not Japan. And even the trade figures are misleading, because it's intermediate trade. So I think there's a lot of holes in the logic.

But I think from Beijing's perspective, all of these trends would sort of demotivate, if that's a word, Beijing to actually take action, though, if it seems like time's on their side, which is why we keep coming back again and again to the Japan-Korea link, because that just reinforces the sort of complacency in Beijing.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Questions – right here.

Q: (Name inaudible) – with Phoenix TV.

My question is, during Wu Dawei's visit, he really keep a low profile in the U.S. What could come out of the meeting between him and the U.S. officials on North Korea? And to be more specific, what exactly the U.S. would like to see China to do and to be realistic doing?

Thank you.

MR. CHA: Well, I guess it is pretty – it is somewhat significant when Wu Dawei comes to the United States because that's 13 hours on a plane without smoking – (laughter) – and that's really hard for him. That is – that's really hard for him.

But you know, I think – I would imagine, based on past experience that the Chinese have some sort of playbook which is all process-based about how to get back to talks, something like, well, first, the North and the South Koreans talk and then you and the North Koreans talk and then we get back to six-party talks, I mean, some sort of – a plan that really is just a process without telling us how we're supposed to do these things. I would imagine there was some of that discussed, in part, because I think they feel like there's interest on the part of the Park Geun-hye government to try to move forward with some sort of dialogue. And the situation's just getting worse.

So – but again, to lay out a process of steps is one thing; to actually create the sort of incentives or disincentives behind the scenes that will make the North Koreans more amenable to, you know, entering into this process of steps is a whole other question. And I mean, in terms of what the United States would like China to do – I mean, I agree with my colleagues on the – I mean, we know in terms of incentives what the – what the Chinese can do. The real question is on the disincentives side. I think every time that we've gotten an agreement with North Korea, whether it was 1994 or 2005, I mean, the key thing that tipped the balance weren't the incentives that the Chinese were providing the North, it was either the withholding of assistance or actual disincentives.

So – and then there's a long list of those, whether it has to do with the North Korean foreign exchange bank in China or it has to do with airspace or it has to do with the inspection of cargo, these sorts of things, the bridge in Dandong, all these sorts of things are – that are ways that the Chinese can subtly – they don't have to do it publicly so they look like they're kowtowing to U.S. pressure – but they can do things effectively behind the scenes that would be felt by the North Koreans.

Q: To follow up – (audio break) – Mike Mosettig.

In terms of – there's been a fair amount of talk here about – that the South Koreans would leave the way in terms of talking to the North. I mean, it looks in – and your discussion seems to emphasize this – that the options keep getting blocked. I mean, how can the president – how

could she even start a dialogue with the North? Or what conceivably could she do at this point? And in terms of dialogue, how does the U.S. get into a dialogue if we're not going to acknowledge their nuclear – North Korea's nuclear position?

MR. CHA: Mike, well, I mean, first, in terms of the South Koreans, so, you know, I mean, it's kind of cliché but every crisis is an opportunity. So, in Seoul, everybody is focused like a laser beam on what is happened in Kaesong, this industrial complex. And so if there's even a flicker of some sort of – something that can be interpreted as North Korean – not even a concession, but just anything that even looks mildly like it's not blatant North Korean heavy-handedness, you know, that might provide sort of just a sliver of a window in which they can try to do something.

You know, so, in Korea now, you know, every single conference you go to is all about trust now; building trust because she has this view, what she calls "trust politik," right, a foreign policy based on trust. And talking to some of her people who are the architects of this, they say it's, you know, very simply it starts with promises; promises that you make and promises that you keep. And promises lead to a process, and process leads to institutions. So, even if they can get one promise from the North Koreans on Kaesong, that would basically be – give her the political space to start moving forward. And so she took a big step earlier this week by deciding to pull all the managers out. And now, if the North Koreans even show a sign that they're interested in sort of, all right, let's just have a – let's have a discussion, this could provide the opportunity.

I think that from a – you're right, from a U.S. perspective, there isn't much that we can do right now, and I think that's why the Obama administration has been in more or less strategic patience for the last five years. Strategic patience is a – is a diplomatic way of saying we don't know what to do. And so I think in that sense there is a lot of emphasis, attention being placed on what Madame Park brings with her when she comes to Washington in terms of what her policy's going to be. I don't think she's going to say anything besides talking points we already know publicly, but I think when she sits down with the president, I think there's a hope that she's going to sort of lay out what her path is. And, you know, I would say 90 percent of the U.S.-North Korea policy now is simply staying tied tightly with the South Koreans, whichever direction they want to go in. So, in that sense, I think the ball is really in her court.

MR. GREEN: There is – there is utility in having President Park on the ROK side take the lead. It demonstrates solidarity and it debunks the North Korean propaganda that the South is just a puppet of the United States. So there's advantage to it, in addition to the advantage that you don't have to decide what your dialogue will be yet.

What would the U.S. do in terms of dialogue? I mean, I can see two options, neither of which is great. One of which is not so good; one of which would be really bad. One option is to pretend you're having a dialogue about denuclearization to talk about – talking about going back to the six-party talks and the September 2005 agreement, which was aimed at denuclearization; recognizing the North Koreans are not – you violated that and every other agreement and that progress is unlikely but that there is an advantage to talking in terms of, as I said earlier,

understanding the other side's position, sending signals. But you have a fairly modest expectation.

The second way, which some have proposed in Seoul and Washington – I don't think this the administration's plan but I think there are some people considering it. The second way to have dialogue would be to shift the subject and talk about a peace treaty. You know, the Korean War technically is not over. We have only an armistice. And so, some people have argued, well, let's – we can't solve denuclearization. Let's try to deal with other issues and talk about a peace treaty which would – some people would argue – reassure the North Koreans that they don't need nuclear weapons. I think it's a ridiculous premise and a terrible idea but it's out there. It's a terrible idea because you would in effect be, you know, playing right into the North Korean hands by acknowledging them as a nuclear-weapon state, by – in the wake of their nuclear-missile tests, their declaration of their nuclear-weapons power, giving them a peace treaty. So, I think it's a dead end. And politically it's a dead end in Washington, which is why I don't think the administration will do it. But it's in the – it's in the discussions in this town a little bit.

MR. JOHNSON: A quick point on that, which is that I think having South Korea in the driver's seat may incentivize the Chinese to push the North Koreans a little bit to give – to give the South Koreans what Victor was sort of hinting at – something that Madame Park can grab onto, if only to help the Chinese kind of shift the burden of trying to manage this problem in terms of getting North Korea to the table.

Q: Thank you. (Inaudible). The Japanese paper, The – (inaudible). Two quick questions. One is to Victor Cha, a follow-up question. What is the U.S. view on the – even though it's not likely to happen immediately, but what is the U.S. view on the potential North-South dialogue, especially about Kaesong? And do you think the U.S. kind of hoping that it could be the, you know, beginning the dialogue phase or U.S. feel it's still too early to happen?

And THE second question is to Dr. Green about history issues. Could you elaborate a little bit more how U.S. is actually feeling about the fact that this issue is coming up again? I mean, that do you think that Prime Minister Abe should moderate his rhetoric, or South Korea is overreacting? What is your thought about that?

MR. CHA: On the restart of North-South dialogue, I mean, I don't think the United States, the Obama administration's going to have a problem with it. you know, I think this is why – I think the key thing with regard to this summit on both of these issues is that she has to come here and be able to convince the president that even as she talks about trust politik and opening up and all, that she is – she is not Roh Moo-hyun, and she is not sort of wide-eyed, naïve, sunshine, engagement-policy type of person. I mean, her own personal experience shows she knows quite well how threatening the North Koreans can be. And I think that's the message she's going to try to send. And to – and hopefully then be able to have the president's trust so that she can restart some North-South dialogue.

I think the only way the United States is ever going to get back to talks with North Korea is if it's preceded by North-South because the last thing the U.S. wants is to be caught in a negotiation with North Korea where they're ignoring the South, which is what the North would

like to do. So, we cannot ever get back to U.S.-DPRK or six-party unless we have – unless we have some sort of North-South dialogue going forward.

Having said that, that's sort of the diplomatic path. As a political scientist, we've looked at the data. North-South engagement does not stop North Korean provocations. U.S.-DPR engagement does, but North-South engagement does not stop the provocation. So, what it buys you is an entrance back into broader negotiations, and it gives the North some stuff. But it's not the solution. It's just a path into a broader diplomatic process.

MR. GREEN: On the history issue, has – should Prime Minister Abe moderate his discussion of history issues, I think the prime minister's office would argue he has. You know, he suggested last year that as prime minister he would go to Yasukuni and he didn't. He suggested he would revisit the Moriyama statement and the Kono statement on history apologies, and he didn't. He put it off to 2015. His chief Cabinet secretary Suga-san has put out a statement and Ambassador Sasae in The Post yesterday put out a statement saying Japan will face history issues – I think the word was "forthrightly – and reiterating earlier statements like Moriyama and Kono. So, in terms of – in terms of policy steps, the Japanese government and the prime minister's office has, I think, believes that they've done quite a bit.

The Washington Post editorial last weekend and the Wall Street Journal editorial I think came as a shock to the prime minister's office, because historically, both the Post and Wall Street Journal have had pretty pro-Japan editorial policies over the last two decades. So two comparatively friendly newspapers sending a warning shot saying, you know, be careful on this one, I think reinforced by many Japanese cabinet members coming to Washington this week and quietly hearing this in discussions with the administration has reinforced for the prime minister's office and the government that although they may have moderated, it's not enough.

And I don't think that the – I don't think the administration really wants to get into these issues. The U.S. is not well-positioned as a government to arbitrate complex historical issues. Scholars can do that, and Professor Cha and I have been in many dialogues when we were out of government, but when in government, it's very hard for, you know, diplomats and bureaucrats to talk about, you know, interpretations of history. But what they can talk about is the U.S. interest – really basic interest in Japan and Korea working together, because when that doesn't happen, our foreign policy and our security is affected, frankly.

So I think that's the tone that's being conveyed. Is Korea overreacting? You know, Korea never overreacts. (Laughter.) So – no – you know, Park Geun-hye is not anti-Japanese. I think it's – Victor and I have met with her and know her staff well, and this is not an anti-Japanese group of foreign policy thinkers – not at all. But South Korean public opinion on these issues is deep and intense, and you know, President Park's own father is frequently criticized for being – was criticized and is criticized for being too pro-Japan. So she's in a bit of a box herself. I think the Cheong Wa Dae – the Blue House is looking to the Abe government to do a big step.

And I don't think, to be honest, that's realistic politically in Tokyo. And so I suspect the administration is also urging Seoul and I suspect – I don't know this, but I suspect the president will gently encourage Madam Park to think creatively on the Korean side about how to move

past this, because the – my sense – and Victor should weigh in if you disagree, but my sense is that what the Blue House expects is a kind of joint statement where Abe repudiates – openly repudiates past things he's said. And the – and the politics in Japan, as you know, probably won't allow that. So there's going to have to be some creative work to move forward.

This issue is not going to be resolved in time – you know, in the next few months. It's simply not going to be resolved. So the question is how to manage it. In 1998 – excuse me, Kim Dae-jung and Obuchi issued a joint statement that was successful in sort of dealing with this, at least for awhile and putting out a, you know, apology on Japan's side and something of an acceptance on the Korean side.

What underpinned that was an agreement on fisheries or on – Takeshima as Japan calls it or Dokdo – that agreement on fisheries has broken down. So a pragmatic way to move forward where we begin addressing some of the underlying issues around fisheries and so forth step by step – that might be one way to solve it. I don't know if the U.S. can get involved in that negotiation; I sort of doubt it, but I think there will be some gentle pushing.

Q: Sean Tannen with AFP. Actually, my question segues into that quite well, which is, to what extent do you think Japan could be an elephant in the room in Madam Park's visit? Abe was just here a few weeks ago. To what extent do you think the South Koreans will look at what reception Abe received, whether that's – particularly, when you consider that Lee Myung-bak had such a close relationship with Obama at a time the relationships were a bit difficult with the Japanese. To what extent is there, do you think, on the part of the administration in particular, an effort to balance if you will, or to make sure that the reception to one ally is not seen as different to the other?

MR. GREEN: They obviously – the White House has to be careful about that. The Lee Myung-bak government actually had quite good relations with Japan until the last year. And it's a reminder that the Japan-Korea problems we see today, we've seen before, and they're episodic, not – I mean, the underlying issues are enduring, but the kind of, you know, deep freeze that we see right now has occurred before and doesn't last. This is not – I don't think this is a secular trend. It's a question of how both sides pull out of it.

I think that the Abe visit here actually helps, and the fact that Abe has had good visits in Moscow, in Southeast Asia also help. And – you know, in public opinion polls around the world, outside of China and Korea, Japan – for example, in Southeast Asia in the ASEAN nations, 96 percent of respondents have a positive view of Japan. In the U.S., in many polls, Japan is listed as the most trusted country in the world after Britain, Canada and Australia. So, you know, in some ways, I think that may make the Japanese side a bit complacent about the intensity of feelings in Korea.

On the other hand, I think it's evidence that Japan has soft power and, you know, is not, you know, isolated because of these issues in the world. It's a delicate balancing act. I think the administration's got it about right in terms of protocol and treatment of these two important allies. Victor – (inaudible) –

MR. CHA: Yeah, I mean I think – I think you're the – your question's right, because the Koreans do look at what Japan gets. The elephant will certainly be in the room when they talk about the 123 agreement, because the higher and higher up you go in political circles in Korea, it's not about dry cast storage or, you know, being a full-service nuclear supplier. It's about, you give it to Japan, so don't you trust us, too?

In terms of this visit itself, I think, in many ways, that comparison won't be there simply because she's going to address the joint session of Congress. And that – you know, that is – obviously, it's a huge honor for any head of state, but the fact that they're doing this – you know, Lee Myung-bak just had a visit where he gave a speech to a joint session of Congress, and then for – and in fact, he was the last foreign head of state to give a speech to a joint session of Congress. So to have another South Korean come and do this – I mean, I was – I was surprised that the Koreans were going for that, and then even more surprised that they got it. But I'm sure that that's sort of – for them, you know, in their ledger balance, that's good enough for them. (Laughs.)

Q: (Name inaudible) – with Voice of America. I'd like to ask you about North Korea's missile launch – you know, the (symptoms ?) of missile launch – we're still in missile launch – missile test decision, and – but so far they didn't do anything realistically. But the South Korean government, they actually predicted that it's going to be before April 15th, the birthday of Kim Il-Sung, but – and nothing happened.

What do you think North Korea is actually waiting for? Do you think there is any possibility that North Korea wants to use this missile test option as a political leverage in dealing with South Korea or the United States?

MR. CHA: Here, I agree with Mike's assessment that the primary driver of these things I don't think is political. I mean, the primary driver is weapons development. And so there could be technical reasons why they didn't choose to test earlier. You know, we don't know – we don't know. You know, their holding back of a test after having done all this maneuvering and setting up all these missiles, and then their not testing – would that be seen as a concession by North Korea, where they could hope to get something for that?

You know, possibly that may be a ploy, but I think these things are all secondary to the weapons development. I mean, they test these things because they learn from them, you know, how – you know, I mean they need to test the accuracy of the Musudan. They don't know – the accuracy of the Musudan is not very good, and they want to try to improve it. So that's what I think is the primary driver of these tests, and you know, you have to have the right weather, the right winds, all this sort of stuff.

Q: I have a slightly fluffier question. But I'd be interested to know how helpful the detention of proselytizing Christians is in the case of North Korea, and also, your thoughts on journalistic stunts – for example, the recent VICE TV trip. And there was a case recently with the BBC's panorama team going in and allegedly compromising students at LSE on this trip.

MR. CHA: Yeah. When you say unhelpful, you mean unhelpful in terms of the optics of the summit, or?

Q: Yeah, and broadly in terms of U.S. policy in negotiating with North Korea at all.

MR. CHA: Well, I think whether it's unhelpful or not, it's part – it is part of U.S. interaction with North Korea now. They clearly have now made a practice of detaining Americans – like I said, six since 2009. I mean, they all get released. You know, since Laura Ling and Euna Lee now they've moved in – much more in the direction of trying these people formally and giving them sentences before they release them. And of course, that is not a good thing. And you know, one of these times they're not going to release them and it's going to create a real crisis in the relationship, not that what's happened to this fellow is unimportant, but –

Q: Apparently they decided they didn't want Dennis Rodman. (Laughter.)

MR. CHA: Yeah. Tried to give them Dennis Rodman and they wouldn't take him.

In terms of the – you know, I -- you know, I'm sort of a mixed view of this. On the one hand, VICE TV and others, if they get in there and they give the world more of a view of what's going on inside of North Korea and they penetrate – to the extent that they penetrate the country, that's a good thing, because eventually that will become more than just one way. You know, information coming out, it can be information going in.

But there clearly are costs that come with that. People get compromised. People get detained. These sorts of things happen. You know, there's this big debate about AP and their office there and whether they're basically – is there anybody here from AP? (Laughter.) Sorry. You know, so. You know, I think there are a lot of people that think they should pull out because they're just being used. On the other hand, you know, if something were to happen in North Korea, they're the only people that are really in there. So like everything, there's a tradeoff.

MR. GREEN: The fate of Christian Koreans – Korean-Americans and others is bad enough with these long sentences at hard labor. The fate of North Koreans who convert to Christianity is horrific. And over the last 15 years or so, of course, the North Korea-China border has become more porous because of the increasing Chinese trade. And because of that, there's been an increasing number of South Korea, Korean-Americans, some Japanese missionaries who've gone to try to proselytize.

North Koreans who, in this period, have crossed over for economic reasons, can generally get away with it if they bribe guards or if they have family connections and ways to do that. But those caught – all the evidence and refugee stories indicate – those caught, for example, carrying Bibles back in North Korea are treated horrifically.

And there were stories coming out, and I suspect it's still true, that at one point they were taking – the North was taking those coming back across who had Bibles, and hooking them

through their ears with metal wires and dragging them off to an uncertainty fate, but they were never seen again presumably. As Victor said earlier, I think the regime is scared to death of Christianity and are cracking down hard. So it's a very high-risk game for anyone involved.

On AP, I agree with Victor. You know, having a window into North Korea is potentially very useful to the world, but it comes with certain responsibilities in terms of endeavoring to report without abetting propaganda – not easy, obviously. But I think this first case with AP will probably yield some lessons about how to do it better next time.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Great. Right here.

Q: Thanks. Donghui Yu with China Review News Agency. I think my question is for Chris and Mike because it's not related to South Korea but Japan and China. And a couple days ago, Secretary Hagel reiterated what Secretary Clinton said, that the United States opposed any unilateral action to change Japan's control of Senkakus and Diaoyus. And Chinese Ambassador Cui Tiankai immediately released a statement that – warning that – the U.S. not to lift up the rock for Japanese and are falling on U.S.' own feet.

So I'm wondering if this new development and Chinese anger at U.S. support for Japanese could hinder the further U.S.-China cooperation on North Korea issue because the China ambassador what the signal the U.S. side said is different than General Dempsey said in Beijing – it's different what he really said in Beijing. So – (chuckles) – I'm just wondering if this development will hinder the cooperation. Thank you.

MR. GREEN: Well, what Secretary Hagel said in Japan is established U.S. policy and has been since the 1950s, at least, and was reiterated again and again in recent years, which is that the U.S. does not take a stance on the territorial question in terms of who has sovereignty – we don't anywhere in the world except the Northern Territories dispute between Japan and Russia – but that we recognize, and have for decades, Japans administrative control of the islands. And Article 5 of our security treaty, the defense of Japan article, therefore would apply.

And that is U.S. policy. And the policy has been consistent for a long time. The problem this administration has had is that different officials articulate it differently. And so you know, the U.S. ambassador in Beijing puts it one way. General Dempsey put it another way. The policy, everyone knows. But some officials aren't so comfortable talking about this because they know it upsets the Chinese. Other officials say – think they have to say it publicly.

I think this is a real problem for the administration. And I think they need to basically produce a laminated card. (Laughter.) I mean, in Taiwan policy, every senior U.S. official knows the – you know, what you need to say. (Chuckles.) And we basically need a laminated card where every person at the assistant secretary level and above says the same thing consistent with U.S. policy.

I thought the best formulation was Ash Carter's when he was here at CSIS. He said: We don't take a position on the territory issue, but we are not neutral in terms of how this is resolved – meaning, we would oppose coercion by China or any party. That struck me as about the right

– but I think the administration's got some message discipline problems. And the policy isn't changing with each statement, but the statements seem to be. And that's something I think they have to fix.

MR. JOHNSON: I agree with that wholeheartedly, especially the concept that, you know, China focuses very carefully because when Chinese officials deliver a comment, it is for a reason. And it is, you know, disciplined and so on, in keeping with the policy and et cetera. And to the degree that the Chinese mirror image with the U.S. – I mean, I think China understands our system is a little messier than theirs on that regard. But to the degree that they sort of mirror image with the U.S., they feel that, well, if the secretary of state says one thing and the secretary of defense says another, there's a gap there. You know, that's worrisome.

On your other question about cooperation on North Korea and how that might be affected, you know, that's – the ball's in the Chinese court, I think, on that, as to how they wish to – how they wish to address that. I think it's worth noting that when the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson again talked about, you know, the Diaoyu issue as sort of bearing on core interest sort of idea here a week or so ago, that that's reflective of the fact that China takes this, and their position on the Diaoyu dispute – Senkaku dispute, very, very seriously. And there could be repercussions in other areas if that's the case.

I think – you know, to the degree that Ambassador Zhiwei (ph) came out so quickly with a – with a statement, I would argue all it really does is draw more attention to what Secretary Hagel said. So that might be somewhat counterproductive. But I think China also felt that they needed to, you know, sort of explain a principled position on this.

MR. GREEN: Can I just really – oh, sorry, my mic – every president since Nixon, and every Chinese leader since Nixon met with Mao, has – with the exception of Xiannian has endeavored to make sure that this very complicated bilateral relationship is managed in way that each discrete lane is not allowed to spillover and destroy the overall relationship. So I remember preparing briefing books for President Bush before meeting with Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao. And there would be – and I'm sure Chris remembers briefings. There were human rights, Taiwan, trade, North Korea – but, but, but, but, but.

And both sides – despite some rhetoric, both sides endeavored to make sure that, for example, trade issues did not spillover and destroy cooperation in other areas, or that North Korea issues did not affect Taiwan, or visa-versa, because once – I think both leaders since '72 have been wise enough to know that if you don't – if you don't treat these issues each in their own lane, if you allow one issue to spillover and corrupt every other issue, then U.S.-China relations will go into a dangerous spin. And I think that's – I suspect that's true for President Obama and President Xi Jinping as well.

MR. SCHWARTZ: We have time for one more if we have anymore.

Q: (Inaudible) – follow-up.

MR. SCHWARTZ: You're going to follow-up, and then we'll shut it down. Sure.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. I'm just wondering if the kind of grand bargain strategy could be used to solve the North Korea issue, Senkakus issue, Taiwan issue – like a big package, to be considered.

MR. GREEN: Nope. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHWARTZ: That was an easy follow-up. Thank you all so much for coming today. You can follow us on Twitter at @csis. And we will be sending out transcripts later today. Really appreciate it and thanks to our Asia team.

(END)