

Center for Strategic and International Studies

“Spring Summitry on the Korean Peninsula: Peace Breaking Out or Last Gasp Diplomacy?”

Session II: Implications for U.S.-DPRK Summit

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Location: CSIS Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Time: 10:25 a.m. EDT

Date: Monday, May 7, 2018

Transcript By

Superior Transcriptions LLC

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MARK LANDLER: There's an overlap in the issues we discuss in this panel from the last one, but there are obvious differences, one of which is we're talking about a meeting in this panel that hasn't happened yet. Not only has it not happened. It hasn't even been scheduled, and we don't know where it's going to be. So it goes without saying that there's a lot of unpredictability in the conversation we're about to have.

I'm going to quickly introduce everybody and then make one very quick opening remark and go to questions. But I really don't need to introduce people, because all of you know all of these people. So I'll keep it very short. It's an all-star panel.

Starting down at the other end, Mark Lippert was ambassador to South Korea, serving President Obama; next to him, Sheena Greitens, a leading scholar on Asia broadly, but also on Korea. Next to her is Victor Cha, who was almost the ambassador to South Korea – (laughter) – and is at Georgetown, a wonderful university, and also CSIS; Sue Mi Terry, who also worked for the Obama administration on Asia issues and is now the senior fellow and CSIS Korea chair; and lastly, Mike Green. You all know him. He worked in the George W. Bush administration and is the senior vice president for Asia, CSIS Japan chair, and also works at Georgetown.

So I only want to make one comment about Donald Trump, which is what I do as my day job, to sort of set the tone for this conversation, and that is, I actually was on duty the night that Donald Trump accepted Kim Jong-un's invitation to meet, delivered via the South Koreans.

And I think it's worth remembering – you all probably read it at the time, but it's worth remembering exactly how this went down, because it was not like any other White House. These two government representatives came from South Korea to brief the national security adviser about their meeting with North Korean officials and begin what people assumed would be a deliberative process leading toward a decision on whether President Trump would meet with the North Koreans.

And they came to the White House on a Thursday. They were supposed to see the president on a Friday. He heard that they were in the national security adviser's office, H.R. McMaster's office, and he said bring them into the Oval Office. So they unexpectedly went into the Oval Office, sat down with the president and a number of his advisers, though not his secretary of state, who was overseas.

And they basically laid out the results of the meetings that they'd had in the North and said that they thought that there was receptivity to having a meeting with Kim Jong-un. And the president said let's do it. And these two gentlemen, I assume, blanched. I wasn't there to see it, but my assumption is they were probably a bit taken aback.

And President Trump then said to the national security adviser of South Korea, and you go out and tell the press this is going to happen. And he said I have to call my boss first. I have to call the president of South Korea. So Trump turned to McMaster and said take him to your office and have him call the president.

So they go into McMaster's office. He calls his president. President Moon says, well, if that's what he wants, we should go ahead with it. And then the national security adviser comes out and, in a moment I'm sure he never expected in his entire career, he walks out into a darkened White House driveway, where there a phalanx of cameras and reporters, and announces that President Trump will be meeting with the president – with the supreme leader of North Korea, an announcement that just was so

unorthodox on so many levels, you almost can't even begin to think about it – a major policy announcement being made in the White House by an official of another country's government.

So I only mention all this because it's by way of pointing out the obvious, which is we truly know very little about what's going to happen in the next couple of months. And so I just wanted to kind of plant that as to set a bit of a tone.

But so why don't we go to the first question, which actually is very appropriate to what I just said, which is the following: Will a summit between President Trump and Kim Jong-un actually happen? Yes, it will. No, it won't. And will it be postponed, which is not quite the right question since we actually don't know when it's happening. But the presumption, I guess, here would be it doesn't happen in three weeks; it happens in six months or perhaps even later than that. So –

OK, you can continue to respond, but we kind of know which way this one's going. Eighty-one percent say that it's going to happen. And that's interesting, because I'm not convinced, if you talk to people inside the administration, that they are as confident as 81, 82 percent.

But why don't I start maybe with Mike, because I think Mike's actually talked to a couple of people inside recently. What is your sense of the level of confidence that this comes off?

MICHAEL GREEN: Well, the president appears to already be preparing his peace-pipe speech and clearly wants to do this. And it's popular on the stump speech, with his base. It has becoming a talking point on Fox News and in the administration's overall spin. So there's a huge amount of momentum politically and from the president himself.

But I would personally say the odds are somewhere in the 60 to 70, at most 80, percent range, because the process itself is shifting, it appears, from the CIA, which doesn't do summits, to the NSC, State Department, people that do summits. And there are a lot of practical issues that the Secret Service, the NSC and the president's political minders will start to now have to grapple with.

And with North Korea, you don't know in these meetings what you're going to get. There are so many uncertainties that I would say there's a possibility it does not happen or it gets postponed, meaning, you know, we don't see it happen in the spring or summer.

MR. LANDLER: Sheena, why don't I ask you maybe to reflect a little bit on the North Korean side of the equation. Kim Jong-un does appear not only receptive but eager to have this kind of a conversation. Is there anything you can conceive of that would get in the way of that, would cause him to have second thoughts or reverse course?

SHEENA GREITENS: Yeah, sure. I think that, as you think about this from the North Korean perspective or from Kim Jong-un's perspective, the agreement to meet in and of itself is something that Kim Jong-un can go back and present to a domestic audience and talk about as a success in and of itself. And there's a long tradition in North Korean politics of taking meetings with foreign leaders and portraying them domestically as recognition of a certain status that North Korea has earned or that the leadership has earned for the country abroad.

And so I would expect that a summit that North Korea sees as being able to meet those internal objectives would probably, from North Korea's perspective, be worthwhile to have. But there are also real practical considerations for a North Korean leader traveling abroad, depending on the exact

country. There are a number of locations that have been speculated on. You mentioned the sort of security concerns that the Secret Service might have. I imagine that Kim Jong-un has some security concerns of his own that will depend heavily on North Korea's own relationship with whatever location that summit takes place in.

And so I think that, from a North Korean perspective, there are potential upsides. I'm not sure that there's a lot of downside unless there's a condition put to having a meeting that they simply can't meet. And so far I'm not sure I've heard one emerge from any of the conversation around summit planning.

MR. LANDLER: Mark, I wanted to – maybe we could shift from will it happen to where should it happen, or where might it happen. The president is obviously intrigued with the idea of the DMZ. I think some of his advisors are less intrigued with the idea of the DMZ, and in fact have some reservations about it. Looking at it from an American perspective for a moment, if you were advising your former boss on a meeting like this, would you tell him to try to have it in a place like Singapore, or would you tell him to go to the DMZ and surround himself with all of that symbolism?

MR. LIPPERT: Yeah, it's a great question. You know, when you kick it around, I think you're left with trying to figure out: Do you want this in the framework of the armistice or not, right? And if you start with that question, then you, you know, get into this arcane system where, you know, you have this – the Swedes and the Swiss as the neutral nation-states, the two of the four that are left up there under the armistice. And so perhaps if you want to use that frame, then you go to Switzerland, right? And that makes a lot of sense.

I think, you know, absent that I think, you know, a third country is probably the safest. Singapore sounds pretty good, and Mongolia is always one. I know that sounds like it's off the table now, but those were the two that I thought that if you were going to go to a third country, and it was advisable to do a third country, those are where I'd go. I would probably – you know, this is a judgement call. You know, you can argue this round of flat. I'd probably start with third country vice the DMZ. The DMZ to me feels inter-Korean, feels a little – is sort of something that is already just – we've just kind of done that in a way. And you probably want to save that for something down the line a little bit more.

So if it were me, I'd probably make the call. Armistice, no armistice trappings. And if that, then you've got Switzerland or Sweden. And if not, then over to a third country, Singapore, Mongolia.

MR. LANDLER: Sue Mi or Victor, do either of you disagree? Do you have a different perspective on it? Would it make sense to do it in the DMZ?

MS. TERRY: Well, you can answer that. I wanted to comment on a little bit on their comments, but let's finish with the location question.

MR. CHA: Well, so my first choice would have been Mar-a-Lago. (Laughter.)

MS. TERRY: I'm still with Mar-a-Lago. (Laughter.)

MR. CHA: He seems to like to take Asian leaders to Mar-a-Lago, right? No, I think what Mark said makes a lot of sense. On this question – on the question itself, to me, you know, so much of diplomacy is about momentum, right? And so I feel like the longer it takes for this summit, in terms of

venue and timing to materialize, the more chance that it could be postponed or fall through, right? And already, like, over the weekend we saw some sort of scratching, you know, things on KCNA saying, like, well, you know, the Americans think it's because of sanctions that we're coming to the table, but it's not, right? And if you keep up this nasty talk, you know, so on and so forth. So I feel like the longer this thing takes to materialize, the more chance there is that the momentum could fail, and then it might be postponed or might not even happen.

MS. TERRY: I just want to say, which I never normally disagree with these three gentlemen, I am very certain that this summit is going to happen.

MR. GREEN: You're fired. (Laughter.)

MS. TERRY: Well, because we – I mean, Michael just talked about from President Trump's perspective. He wants to have a win. He wants to be able to say he did something, he accomplished that no other predecessor has accomplished. But from North Korean perspective, I think Kim Jong-un has made a shift here. Otherwise, what is all this summitry, with South Korea, going to Xi Jinping, negotiating all of the groundwork. So you don't meet with Trump? I think he has decided that he's going to meet with Trump. There is an agenda. We're always talking about maximum pressure, sanctions, getting the Chinese to do more, and bloody nose. And that's what brought North Koreans to the table, with President Moon doing all this excellent diplomacy.

There's a North Korean strategy and tactics here. And I think for Kim Jong-un, he has decided that this is the path that he's going to pursue. We'll see if it's truly a strategic decision or a tactical decision. So I – because the leaders now have an incentive to meet, I think the – and one thing I think we do know about Kim Jong-un, which I mean, there's not a whole lot of information, but he seems like a bold person. He seems – I mean, just even being able to kill his uncle in first year. That's not a sort of a half – you know, he's an indecisive person, OK? This guy's a pretty decisive person. And I think he has made a decision. So I think this summit will happen.

MR. LIPPERT: Can I just come in just quickly on that? The one thing that I thought of in the most sort of recent historical example where it didn't happen, was 2015 and the Russia summit, right? You had – you know, you can – we can unpack all the differences in different time and momentum and the Americans versus the Russians, but there did seem to be a lot of momentum for this Kim Jong-un Vladimir Putin summit. And something in their system stopped it, right? Now, was it lack of consolidation of power from Kim Jong-un? Was it people thought he might embarrass himself? Was it some other reason? But there is some sort of trigger mechanism in there that did put a halt to this that I think we need to sort of focus on, to Victor's point, which is the longer this goes on the more this trigger may rear its head and come up. So I'll stop there.

MS. TERRY: And I would just say, President Trump constantly talking about U.S. sanctions or sanctions, I do think it's playing a negative role because we just saw Kim Jong-un – we also know is a thin-skinned person. So that could kind of get him a little bit negatively. We've already seen that last few days with his rhetoric.

MR. LANDLER: Well, why don't we move from will it happen to if it happens, what will be on the table? And will it be bridgeable? And go to the second question, which is precisely that. Can the U.S. and the DPRK bridge differences in definitions of denuclearization?

MS. TERRY: Oh, wow.

MR. GREEN: Any differences.

MR. LANDLER: Yes, no, maybe. They should take maybe off this. It would be way more interesting.

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

MR. CHA: Yeah. Make sure to turn on your – some of you may be clicking without knowing that it's on. The green light has to be on on your clicker. So make sure to turn it on.

MR. LANDLER: OK. Well, it's a closer split, but the majority, the slim majority, is that the U.S. and the DPRK will not be able to bridge differences in definitions of denuclearization. So I guess let me throw it out and ask, first of all, whether the panel is – where they land on this issue. And secondly, if you – if you accept the majority view, then maybe describe a bit what this process we're about to embark on looks like.

And maybe, Sheena, you want to start?

MS. GREITENS: Sure. I'm pretty skeptical that ultimately this is something that the two countries are going to be able to reconcile. I think both presidents or – both leaders have to a certain extent staked their domestic legitimacy, or a large part of their legacy or the promise of their legacy – in President Trump's case – on some fairly maximalist claims about what they're going to do. So for Kim Jong-un, you know, people often weapon that nuclear weapons are in the constitution, have been in there since 2012. But it's also just the extraordinary amount of sort of internal narrative that's been devoted to him as the person who brought that program to its culmination and the role that it plays in securing North Korea's both status and sovereignty in a precarious world.

And the Trump administration, and frankly any U.S. administration, would have trouble saying that it's OK if North Korea keeps the programs that it's developed. So I just – I find it very difficult, no matter how much effort is made, I think that the conversation will probably start with other things. But I just see that as a pretty fundamental incompatibility. I'd be interested in other suggestions of how it might be bridged.

MR. LANDLER: Well, Mike, what – do you agree with that? And if so, do you see a scenario where we head into a, you know, grinding years-long process that ultimately brings us to disappointment?

MR. GREEN: So this question is – it reminds me of one of Professor Cha's final exam questions to Georgetown. It's sneaky and diabolical. (Laughter.) It's a trick. It's full of tricks and traps. But so can the U.S. and DPRK bridge any differences on denuclearization and agree to a peace mechanism? Sure. I'm a little bit worried about that, frankly, that with absolutely no agreement on denuclearization they can bridge that and have a peace mechanism, if that's what it means. Can they bridge any differences on how they define denuclearization? Maybe. But I think Sheena pretty much nailed it.

The North Korean definition of denuclearization, and what I heard in negotiations in New York, Pyongyang, and six-party talks, I think what probably Victor and others heard, Sue heard – the definition of denuclearization is sort of like our Article 6 commitment under the Nonproliferation

Treaty. People may not remember this, but we commitment to complete global abolition of nuclear weapons in the NPT, fingers crossed behind the back. (Laughter.) And that's how the North Koreans are framing this. And the new things they're putting on the table, like no first use, no transfer, are the kinds of things nuclear weapon states, like Britain, the U.S., France do. So it's intended to verify and affirm their nuclear weapon status. I don't see anything new that actually means denuclearization.

On the other hand, we heard from John Bolton that he's attracted to the Libya model. And I was in the administration, that was three months, they turned over everything. And those of us – Joe, Victor and others – who have been in these talks know that verification, even of something very, very limited, has been, like, squeezing water out of a rock. So I think the gulf, the gap is enormous. But if the two sides decide they want a successful summit without bridging that, that is one scenario we could talk about. And that has implications.

MR. LANDLER: Do any of you believe that, even if the DPRK is serious about denuclearization, that the IAEA and the international community have the resources and capacity to verify it?

MR. LIPPERT: Yeah.

MR. GREEN (?): Yeah.

MR. LANDLER: If they opened up?

MR. CHA: No. Yeah, I think they – I think they do. I mean, you know, there is – I mean, there is a very clear set of protocols that they can follow, you know, in the various stages, starting from freeze to verification to disablement to dismantlement. There is a – there is a – you know, there is a program that you can create for North Korea, but the – so it's not a question of whether there is a template out there. I think there is one. The question is, you know, can you ever be confident that you got it all, right? And that is, of course, the hardest question to answer.

And in many ways, when we talk about CVID or PVID, we are talking about their turning over all their weapons. That's fine and we can verify that, but you cannot verify what they don't turn over. Right? And that's the big problem. Which gets to me, like – I don't know if it was a trick question, but

MS. TERRY: You came up with the – (inaudible). (Laughter.)

MR. CHA: No, Lisa came up with it.

MS. TERRY: Oh. (Laughs.)

MR. CHA: No, I think – but this one, to me, comes down to this – you know, the core question of whether, like, this problem is a problem that you see as one that should be managed or it's one that can be solved. Right? And I think when we say CVID, PVID, we are basically saying this is a problem that needs to be solved. And the question then becomes, that may be our view – and personally, I think that makes a lot of sense – but does everybody else feel the same way about that? And I think it's an open question whether the South Koreans feel the same way. I think the Japanese feel the same way. Do the Chinese feel the same way? No, do they think this is more something that

can be managed? You know, can we – can we fudge the definitions a little bit? Sure. I think that others feel that way.

MS. TERRY: Yeah, so I totally agree. And I think it's knowing in advance that we'll not be able to 100 percent verify. We don't know where all the sites are. We don't know how many and we don't know where they are, but they have hundreds of underground tunnels. Also, North Koreans are going to just allow for us to go everywhere? There are a lot of sensitive areas. What about prison camps? Are they going to just open up all these facilities? It just doesn't make sense from the North Korean perspective. So, again, if we know that in advance and we say we can take a 60, 70 percent solution, that that's still better than where we are, I think then we have something.

MR. LANDLER: You know –

MS. GREITENS: Can I add a point?

MR. LANDLER: Oh, yeah, go, go.

MS. GREITENS: Because Mike mentioned the discussion of the Libya model, and I think we look at the Libya model and we see a success from a nonproliferation and maybe a U.S. national security standpoint. I think it's hard, again, if you are asking what the North Korean perspective on it is, to look at the Libya model as something that's successful, especially when you have a group, a very small group of people in power who believe that to survive they have to stay at the top of that system. And that's not what happened to Gadhafi.

And so if you look at what North Korea has explicitly said about Libya, the lesson that they took from it was not that this was a sort of positive step for Libya's security or the security of the people who made those decisions. It was that it contributed to Gadhafi's demise.

MR. LANDLER: I'm glad you raised that, because before we move on I wanted to mention the other nuclear deal that's on the table right now. And I sense that there's some difference of opinion among experts about this. If President Trump walks away from the Iran deal on May 12th, does that actually raise a new hurdle to doing a deal with the DPRK? Would Kim Jong-un look at that as another reason, in addition to Libya, to be cautious about these things? Or do you think he's too preoccupied, he's got his own issues, he doesn't really think much about Iran?

Any one of you – Victor, you want to start?

MR. CHA: So I may have a little bit of an unorthodox view on this. Well, for one, I do think they'll pull out. Two, I think that, from the perspective of this administration, they would see that not as hurting their position on North Korea negotiations because it would send the signal that an Iran deal is not good enough for North Korea, that they need to do better than an Iran deal.

And then in terms of how the North Koreans would take it, I don't think they'd take it one way or the other. I don't think they'd see it as negative or positive because they think they're different from anybody else anyway. They think they're a very special case. And they possess nuclear weapons, you know, and so, I mean, it wouldn't make a difference to them.

MS. TERRY: I had an interesting conversation with some North Korean officials recently who mentioned that, interestingly and ironically, that, from the North Korean perspective, if there is a new

deal made with the Trump administration, there's a higher confidence that that's going to be kept because they can't imagine possibly any more hardline administration afterwards. There's not going to be, you know, either a Democrat or another Republican administration. If you are making a deal with this particular team with John Bolton as national security adviser, in an interesting way that there is sort of – it could potentially (loss ?), right? The problem was you had a tougher administration coming in thinking that the last – the current deal is not good.

MR. LANDLER: Right.

MS. TERRY: So that's kind of an interesting perspective that I have found.

MR. GREEN: You know, the deal that North Koreans in these – in the talks or in the 1.5 or second-track talks, the deal they talk about the most is not Libya, it's not Iran, it's Nixon and Mao. That's what they want. They want that level of strategic alignment, and they're never going to get it.

Can I just – very quickly, you know, we talked about CVID, PVID versus, you know, North Korea's view. The reality is, I think, that, at most, we're going to be talking about one slice of the North Korean program. And I wouldn't be surprised if Kim Jong-un puts on the table something like shutting down the tests, the nuclear test site, which is about to collapse anyway, or even Yongbyon, which is much less useful for producing plutonium, or a freeze in ballistic missile tests.

We're not – we're going to get – we're not going to get a 60 percent solution, we're going to get a 3 to 5 percent solution. And the question is going to be, what's it worth? And if we're not careful, we'll put on the table things like Pete's (sp) mechanism or things that actually reduce our deterrence and capability much more than we've actually reduced the threat. But I think that's what it will come down to.

In that way, it's like the Iran deal. We're not – we're going to get a very imperfect, a very, very, very imperfect agreement. What are we willing to trade for it? And is it politically sustainable? And that's going to be a hard call that people generally aren't talking about. The CVID, PVID is a bit of a distraction. Yes, that's our goal, but we're not going to get anywhere near that, even in the best of circumstances.

MR. LANDLER: Well, Mark, I just – since your boss actually negotiated the Iran deal – before we leave that – I mean, do you share the general consensus here or would you have a different view?

MR. LIPPERT: Well, let me just come back to Mike's point and then get to your question.

On Mike's sort of – or Mike's comment about, you know, a slice of it and Victor's comments about manage versus solve, I think the other element here that we haven't talked about is time. Right? Is this a one-year deal, is this a 10-year deal, is this a 20-year deal? And I think how you think of time going into the negotiation is going to be dispositive in many respects in how you think of what you need to get, how much of the program you need to get up front and what you trade away up front. So I think that's critical.

You know, on the Iran deal, I'm just of mixed minds. Right? On the one hand, you know, you look at General Hayden's comments where he says, look, this is the one deal that's on the positive side of the ledger in terms of nonproliferation. He was in the chair at the agency through a long period and has seen both of these, so I put weight on that.

On the other hand, I do think Victor has a point, where the North Koreans see themselves different and this feels like they're setting themselves up, or at least attempting to, you know, Mao, China, Soviet-style type of negotiation, great nuclear power state. So how much of that is in the offing?

A point I would say. Look, if you, you know, talk to people who read KCNA, who, you know, really follow this closely and tell you, you know, Kim Jong-un ate a ham sandwich for lunch and that means something is going to happen – (laughter) – and, you know, he's going to Crazy Ivan in the bottom half of the hour – “The Hunt for Red October” reference – (laughter) – the point, what they often say is, look, there's no doubt that the North Koreans do monitor the landscape on the nonproliferation landscape and they do react to that very closely. So I do put weight on that – on that piece as well.

MR. LANDLER: Why don't we move to the next question, which is, within two years, which is most likely: CVID, nuclear and missile tests, war, liaison offices, and inconclusive negotiations? And everyone gets a demerit for inconclusive negotiations, that's too obvious. (Laughter.) But it's not stopping you.

OK. So inconclusive negotiations which, as one our previous panelists said, was not the worst thing in the world.

But what is the case for – I mean, Mike laid out the case for we're not going to get what we want, so what are we willing to take. Is there a case for a the much more positive outcome? I mean, are we missing something by landing in the middle like this? And I wonder, Sheena, is there just a case you can conceive of where this really does go in an unexpected direction and we wind up with real denuclearization and a peace regime of some kind?

MS. GREITENS: So I think one of the things you noted at the beginning is that we have relatively little data on how either of these leaders make decisions in the sense that unpredictability seems to be something – this was – this was said in the earlier panel – unpredictability seems to be something that both of these leaders prize, and so I think we have to acknowledge and have a fair amount of humility about predicting what's going to happen if you put these two people in a room because both of them see an opportunity – as I think does President Moon in South Korea – to make a legacy and to make history, and the appeal of that to these leaders probably shouldn't be underestimated.

But I also think then the question is, you know, what does that produce, right? And so your question asks about two years, and even if you take the sort of Nixon-Mao analogy, you know, just think about that process. Nixon went – so this symbolic moment that everyone pictures is Nixon in China in February of 1972. Normalization happened in 1979. That was a seven-year process. There was an administration and a party change in the United States, right – normalization actually occurred under Carter. Mao died on the Chinese side, and there is a lot of evidence, a lot of historical suggestion now that maybe normalization wouldn't have happened as long as Mao was alive and driving that process because he had tremendously sort of contradictory incentives as far as that relationship, which I don't – I think there is some comparison that could be made there to what North Korea's own incentives are about the relationship with the United States.

So this just isn't going to be a one-summit process, and I think it's important to have that expectation going in. I don't think these outcomes are mutually exclusive either for the next two years or for the next ten. I think, you know, we all hope that you don't see option C, but I think you could see some combination of two or three of these either in two years or in what is more likely, I think, to be a ten-year process if it – if there is some success.

If it's – if it's not a successful process, we'll know sooner, but a successful process – I think you are looking at something beyond that two-year time frame.

MR. LANDLER: A question I have on sort of Donald Trump's time horizon – I mean, he'd like a big success, he'd like to be a candidate for a Nobel Peace Prize. Can he accomplish that, set in motion a long, difficult process with few visible signs of success along the way? And is that sustainable for him domestically? Is it sustainable with his base? Does he basically pocket all the benefit just by having the great meeting and he can ride this out for as long as need to, or do you think there's a potential problem down the road for him if it doesn't look like things are working out?

Any one of you – Mike, do you want to start?

MR. GREEN: I think – I think there's a very strong possibility of two realities – or two levels of reality. At one level, I think the president, politically, can declare victory if he just introduces negotiations on a peace mechanism or denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Even if we don't agree at all what that means, just starting that process would allow him to sustain what he already has, which is a lot of praise on a favorable media, like The New York Times – oh, wait, that's not it – (laughter) –

MR. LANDLER: Failed you.

MR. GREEN: It failed me. That was it. Wrong F. (Laughter.)

MR. LANDLER: That's what you meant, yeah.

MR. GREEN: Failed – no, I mean, look, Fox News – look at his rallies going into the midterms. It's interesting. I think it's hard for the Democratic Party in the midterms to run against peace, so politically it's – you know, that's sustainable as long as North Korea doesn't do a nuclear test. And I think Kim Jung-un may get enough out of this to be disciplined and not do a nuclear test.

What does he get? China. China is 90 percent of food and fuel. If China backs off on the sanctions, that's a huge amount of relief. And if we're talking peace mechanism and denuclearization, I think the Chinese back off. So that's enough to keep, I think, Kim Jung-un disciplined on nuclear.

He might do missiles aimed – tests that are – to Japan – to just keep pushing those seams. So that's one level of reality.

At another level, I could very easily see Mike Pompeo, and John Bolton, and Jim Mattis, and Japan, and the ROKs, probably, implementing sanctions, doing exercises, maintaining deterrence. So I think – I think – was it Sheena or somebody – said earlier, these are not mutually exclusive. I think you may in fact have a kind of a split personality approach with politics sustaining it, but strategically, not that big a change in how we implement alliances and sanctions. I'd say that's probably the most likely outcome.

MR. LANDLER: I wanted to just ask any of you for your insight into – beyond the president, who is sort of emerging as the key person calling the shots on policy here, and what implications does that – does that have? And the reason I ask that is that a few days before John Bolton was named as national security advisor he gave an interview to Fox TV in which he said, the good thing about a Trump-Kim meeting is that it will fail and it will fail quickly. And by failing quickly, it will shorten the amount of time between where we are now and our next step – by which he, I think, meant a military confrontation.

He is now the national security advisor. That doesn't mean that that's the policy but, by all accounts, you have a fairly hawkish lineup with Pompeo, with Bolton. What sense do you have about how important that is in assessing how this may play out?

Do you want to start, Victor? Or Mark?

MR. LIPPERT: Yeah, I'll take – I'll take a shot at this. I mean, you know, for all of the turbulence around this sort of North Korea policy over the past year and the back and forth, I mean, they have – the administration has maneuvered themselves into a pretty interesting negotiating position in that you have – you know, you have Moon Jae-in in South Korea who is clearly in the middle of this, wants to be in the middle of this, and remember, this is the first time you've had a South Korean president have an inter-Korean summit so early in his or her term. And that, you know, bodes well for the possibility of repeat summits if things go well and can vector him or herself in the middle of something, not as a lame duck. So I think that's an interesting variable.

Beyond that, you know, they've got, you know, this kind of hawkish lineup as if – well, at least the world perceives them to be. We don't really know what Secretary Pompeo said to Kim Jung-un and so how the North Koreans see that. But on paper it seems hawkish. And then they've set themselves up with the president, who has been, you know, somewhat dovish, somewhat unpredictable, so I would say they have themselves in a pretty interesting position going forward with the current team, given where everything is, to keep the North Koreans at least a little back-footed headed into the meeting.

MR. LANDLER: I mean, Victor, I want to hear from you partly because, a few months ago, you know, you expressed concerns publicly about some of the rhetoric that was coming out about the administration. It's certainly not the rhetoric we're hearing today. Are your doubts about that largely resolved at this point, or do you still think there's a danger?

MR. CHA: Oh, I still think there's a danger – yeah, I mean, particularly if these – if this – either the summit fails or the negotiations that follow a summit fail. I mean, that is by definition what a summit does, right? It either gets you success or, if it fails, then you've really run out of diplomatic options by, you know – by definition.

Just to piggyback on what Mark said, you know, I think – so I think you do have these two dynamics taking place. From what we can see in the open press, Pompeo was clearly the guy, right? He was the guy to set this all up, and he's clearly the guy going forward. And I think, you know, Bolton – I mean, a number of us worked with Bolton in the government. I mean, he – no one is going to stand in the way of the president if he wants to do this meeting, right, and if he wants to pitch it as a success, nobody is going to stop him from doing that.

But down the process, somewhere along the lines, success will mean lifting sanctions, at some point. And that's where I think there will be a lot of resistance inside the bureaucracy, like among the players just because I think many of them feel like, if anything, this sanctions campaign has been successful, and it has clearly been reflected in the president's tweets because all he talks about is how max pressure is really – is working.

In terms – I think – and in terms of this, in particular, I sort of see like three steps. The first step is they meet, big celebration, lots of great statements. The next step is both sides are going to want something that they can point to as traction. And so for this reason, I actually think liaison offices is a possibility. It's something new, it's something different, we haven't seen it before, and then there will have to be something on the North Korean side. Maybe it's something like Mike said – ICBMs or something else, and that's a – then we have this sort of long process, right? And I think, after that first meeting, Trump – I think Mark is right. The North and the South will want to have a number of meetings, and when we talk to South Korean officials, the thing they value most about this opening so early on is that all the inter-Korean channels that have been closed for decades are now open, right? All the – they really value that. They want that to be their – you know, and so I think they'll be willing to have many, many interactions. You know, as we said in the last panel, contact is important.

I think Trump will do the first meeting, and I think he'll be very reluctant to do another one until we're at the end. And I think that's in part because – I was talking to some other folks who know him and know sort of the business. They said that's what CEOs do, right. They do the first meeting with the other company to see can we work together? Then they push it off to their negotiators, and then they come in at the very end again.

So I think it'll be very – once he does the first one, it may be hard for him to do another one until he feels like they're at the end; they've reached a deal.

MR. LANDLER: Why don't we move on to the next question so I will get through these. And we sort of anticipated this one a little bit in our conversation.

If the summit fails, what will happen? Nothing; return to heightened provocations; inter-Korean engagement will continue; an inter-Korean engagement will also fail.

OK, so a little more of a split decision – return to heightened provocations, and inter-Korean engagement will continue. And I suppose both of those things could happen simultaneously.

Why don't I just ask Sue maybe to jump in on this and lay out – I mean, do you think it could be kind of some combination of the two – the Koreas keep talking, but there's periodic friction?

MS. TERRY: Yeah. Victor called it after a summit fail there's something, a cliff. Yeah, I do think it will be a combination of – I think it will be a disaster if it fails, because we don't have whole lot of place to turn to. We just used that engagement and negotiation card, and what do we have left with?

I do think inter-Korean engagement will continue, because they're not the one who's having problem. It's between Kim Jong-un and Trump that's a problem. So – and then that's going to create an absolute fissure between U.S.-ROK alliance relationship. So it is a disaster because it will return to a risk of conflict, even a higher risk than where we were November/December of last year. And there's going to be alliance – not a break, but there's going to be a challenge to the alliance. So I think that's

going to – but honestly, like, my perspective is I think this is very unlikely to happen, just because there's – the failure.

MR. LANDLER: The failure.

MS. TERRY: In this next meeting. And, in fact, I – we often, as Korea watchers – and I'm a big pessimist; I'm just born pessimist – but we often focus on this, and I do think we should also focus – sort of think about the possibility of, I mean, what we call a catastrophic success too, the flipside of it too. And I think it's a responsibility for all of us to think about that side and prepare for that as well because this is – a lot of focus is on this.

MR. LANDLER: Right. Right.

MS. TERRY: Potentially, what if Kim Jong-un comes in with some grand bargain? Like, on the previous slide, I didn't see normalization. I didn't see a peace treaty, not even as an option in two years, right? But he could come in with some sort of, you know, OK, what if we give up nuclear weapons for normalization, for a peace treaty? And, like, I didn't even see peace treaty on the other slide.

MR. LANDLER: I don't know whether I'm alone in this, but one of the things that surprised me the most about how this story has unfolded so far is how Moon and Trump have not actually split, despite Moon being so forward-leaning and being so bold in his approach to Kim. I feel like he's really persuaded Trump to come along and take these huge risks, and maybe detected something in Trump that some of the rest of us didn't detect.

But, having said that, how real is the risk that as it plays out, particularly if there's some sort of a peace mechanism, that we do find ourselves at odds with the ROK? And, you know, how real a risk is that?

Mark, you were there, obviously. What do you –

MR. LIPPERT: I mean, coming in to, you know, the Moon Jae-in era with President Trump, everybody predicted big rift, explosion. You know, and we're not there. And, you know, I have to say a broken clock is right twice a day. I thought it would be better than catastrophic failure of the alliance that a lot of people called for. And the reason I thought is because, first, public opinion in South Korea has moved dramatically to the center over the last 20 years and really, I think, is an influence that is persuasive on this Blue House.

The second is I think Moon Jae-in has largely learned the lessons of the past. And you look at – he's not threatened exercises. He's not threatened troops. He's not gone after sanctions; managed very much from the middle.

I think the other thing that's different here that I think is pretty interesting on this question is if you believe the readouts from the South Koreans and you believe the chatter around Seoul is that both the North and the South realize they need the U.S. to solve this. And so it augurs well for – in terms of you kept inter-Korean talks going, if both sides agreed that they need the U.S. in, they're both likely to undertake actions that will try to keep the U.S. in through the inter-Korean channel.

I'm not saying that's going to happen, but I'm saying that this dynamic does feel a little different than the Roh Moo-hyun and Kim Dae-jung era, inter-Korean summits where it felt a little more nationalistic and much more about the Koreans, and maybe if the U.S. comes in, that's great, and at a minimum the six-party talks are kind of over here, kind of distant. This feels closer. And so I think that creates an interesting dynamic that I think we'll have to watch and see how it plays out.

MR. CHA: Could I take a riff on this for –

MR. LANDLER: Yes, sir.

MR. CHA: I mean, I think it's also possible that if the summit fails – what was it, C? – inter-Korean engagement could continue. But they could actually choose to decouple, right, and just say, you know, we're getting along just fine, you know, and leave us alone.

I think one of the things about pulling the U.S. in that's different this time is in the past – and Mike remembers this well – I mean, when we had the last liberal government in South Korea, they would see they're doing things for the United States in other areas as sort of their unwritten way of trying to elicit U.S. cooperation on the inter-Korean mission.

So one of the more obvious examples – and this is very clear in Im Jong-seok's memoirs, the former national security adviser – is their decision to send troops to Iraq, right, was clearly a part of a way of trying to draw the United States – the Bush administration into engaging with North Korea.

My point is that I don't really see those other issues today in the alliance, right. The alliance is really about this issue, and up until a few weeks ago it was about trade. And we don't have that broader spectrum of issues in which they could draw each other in. And that worries me a little bit.

MR. LANDLER: You – you said to me before that you were, as you thought about a job you were maybe going to have, you worried that it was going to coincide with these very tough negotiations on troop – you know, sharing the burden on troops. And it looks like those negotiations are going to be really tough. The Trump administration appears to be basically saying pay for everything.

How big an impact does that have on the broader health of the alliance? I mean, is it possible to compartmentalize that, or is it all part of the same conversation?

MR. CHA: So under – and there are others here, and particularly Mark – under normal circumstances, it's very scratchy, because it's about money, right. So it's very scratchy, and both sides leak. And I remember, like, when we would prepare for summits at the NSC that the SMA negotiator would call and say the president has to raise – it's a really important issue. He never raised it, actually, in the presidential meeting, because we knew in the end it would get resolved, and it could be compartmentalized.

My only concern this time is that it might not be, right, and that, you know, some people could look at us and say, well, this is, you know, a \$1 trillion bill. And if it's a good negotiating chip, why not, right? I mean, your article last week, I think, really showed that there – this is not something we can say is not plausible as a possible negotiating scenario. And so, yeah, I worry a little bit about that as well.

MR. LIPPERT: Yeah, maybe just a two-finger on that. I think Victor is exactly right. First is – well, let me back up and say, first, you know, when you go into these, having worked both on the Pentagon side and on the State Department side, you kind of want an idea of where you're headed, right; kind of the band of the possible.

And that – I think, if there's a common understanding heading into that negotiation, of where you're going to end up, the negotiation will still be terribly scratchy, as it always is, because you're really – you fight over really small things in these negotiations aggressively, because it's truly zero sum. But it tends to get to Victor's main point, which it tends to contain it, right. The outside political process tends to be hived off. There's a little bit of interaction from Cabinet level, but not a whole lot, but it tends to get resolved that way.

I think the final point, though, that makes this hard, if it's not contained and it does bleed over, what does make it hard is that it – as I mentioned earlier, it is kind of zero sum. There's a number, and that number is a percentage. And you can fudge it a little bit on extra things and throwing – bring other elements in. But that's what makes this hard and potentially combustible.

MR. LANDLER: You know, I –

MS. GREITENS: Can I –

MR. LANDLER: Go ahead.

MS. GREITENS: Can I add one thing on that? I think the other thing is that, you know, typically what you both have said is that this tends to be something that's worked out at a more working level, right? It's relatively rare for a Cabinet official, let alone the president, to make comment on specific burden sharing or cost sharing arrangements. At least, when I think about American alliances in Asia, Mike. I don't know if it's been different in Japan, but I think that one of the things that have been different about this from relatively early is that the president has made comments about this.

This is something that he thinks about, or thinks about as a metric of a successful relationship in his mind, and whether – you know, regardless of what the rest of us in this room think, that could have the potential, if he decides to get involved or decides to make public or private comments, that could drive the process in a way that would make it very different than it's been before. And I think we see from what he said that the potential for that exists. I just don't think any of us know whether he's going to make the choice to get involved or to comment on the nuts and bolts of that process.

MR. GREEN: You know, it's interesting you mentioned Japan, because the way Japan does host nation support is elegant Kabuki, it's like a Japanese Kaiseki meal. You don't know what anything it, it takes kind of good. (Laughter.) Whereas, Korea just cuts a check. So it – basically, right, Mark? So it has to be zero sum. The way out of this bureaucratically is for the Korean side and the American negotiators to come up with some new packaging.

But I think there's an underlying problem here that we're all dancing around, which concerns me. I don't hear in the way the administration has framed their approach to the North Korea problem a deep understanding of how much the longer-term China competition issue, and the immediate North Korea threat, are interrelated. And it may just be, you know, old swap-think on my part, but I believe that we get leverage with China on the North Korea problem when they see that our alliances are

getting stronger. That's an important source of leverage. And I also think that the – we get leverage on the long-term China problem when they see our alliances getting stronger.

If you listen to what senior people are saying, there's an awful lot of focus on the ICBM threat to the American people. And it's very – you know, the diplomatic phase we're in now is very much focused on reducing and eliminating threat to us. There's not a whole lot about the allies. And earlier, when we were in a, you know, preventive war phase, there wasn't a whole lot of thought to the alliances and moving through the alliances. So peace mode, war mode, it's – there may be – I don't want to overstate it – but there may be an underlying theme here worth members of Congress and others teasing out of the administration. What's the role of the U.S.-ROK alliance?

It has its own – it's not just a sort of transactional thing you use. Does it or does it not have, and does the Korean Peninsula have or not have longer-term strategic interest to the U.S.? And I, listening to the debate about this in the administration, am not totally confident that that piece they're focused on.

MR. LANDLER: So we have 10 minutes left and we have one question left. Victor, should we do that, or should we just go to the floor? I'm happy to do the last question.

MR. CHA: I can't remember what the last question –

MR. LANDLER: It's minimal concession DPRK would want from the U.S.?

MS. TERRY: OK, let people vote.

MR. CHA: Oh, well let's just go to – let's just go to the – we can let people vote. And let's just go to the audience.

MR. LANDLER: OK, here's – why don't you guys vote on the last question. Minimal concession DPRK would want from the U.S. that President Trump would agree to. And we can use that just to sort of go into an audience. OK, well, again, somewhat split. Lifting sanctions 29 percent, 51 percent so a slight majority for security assurances.

MR. GREEN: Can I just quickly just say –

MR. LANDLER: Jump in. And then – yeah.

MR. GREEN: Very, very quickly. In negotiating with North Korea, the word minimal – (laughs) – never comes up. Just saying. (Laughter.)

MR. LANDLER: OK. The gentleman right there. Please identify yourself and ask who you'd like to answer the question.

Q: Steve Winters. Independent consultant. And maybe I'd direct this to Victor and Sue Mi.

One thing it seems – that I'm asking – it seems there's something missing in the discussions that are going on, which is the historical perspective that basically eras are replaced by new eras. I mean, you have these changes. I mean, if you take somebody like Metternich, you'd say, well, OK, there's a new era coming, but I'm going to stop it for a couple of decades. But I can't really stop it,

because it's definitely coming. So as for the emotion that's sweeping the Koreans, yes, it's a euphoria. And yes, you can say, well, we don't want to get carried away by emotion. We've got to think objectively.

But the – so the question is, can't you view this emotion as in past historical changes of eras as the sign that something underlying is taking place that basically is not going to be stopped? I mean, nobody seems to discuss that there might be a major change of that. Maybe it's caused by technological developments, who knows what. It just seems to be left out of the whole discussion. I'm sure if Kissinger were here that's all he'd be talking about.

MR. GREEN: First of all, there's a huge change coming.

MR. LANDLER: There's a huge change. We're embarking on a new era.

MR. CHA: So I think everybody in the room would hope that that's the case, right? That this is an enlightened leader in North Korea, who's finally decided that – I think Joe said it in the last panel that, you know, he's got no room. He's not nowhere else to maneuver at this point. And I think people hope that that's the case. I mean, the problem is, is that there's hope versus the empirical record. And the empirical record has not been very encouraging over the – over the last few decades.

Having said that, I just came back from a U.S.-Europe meeting in London, where North Korea for the first time was on the agenda. And I was talking to this German fellow. And he said the German and the North – and the Korean experiences are not comparable. I was like, really? That's all the unification ministry has been doing in South Korea is studying Germany. He says, I know. I know that. It's only important in one respect. And I said, what's that? He goes, the main thing is that – the main lesson for Germany from Koreans is that the unimaginable can happen. That's the main lesson, right? And so maybe the unimaginable can happen.

MS. TERRY: I don't rule out this possibility. Also, I do think that Kim Jong-il did disservice to his son in some degree, because a lot of this South historical stuff happened with his father. Maybe he's a different guy. We just don't know enough about him. The problem is, even if he wanted to make a strategic orientation differently and move North Korea in a different path, I do think he's going to face some challenges down the road that his father faced.

I mean, because the more – once we get momentum out of this, I mean, can you see? There's going to be – like, a lot of change is going to be demanded on North Korea. What about human rights? Or what about prison camps? So it's all going to come. What about getting information into North Korea? Is he ready for that kind of changes? Because he needs to be that kind of visionary, transformative leader to take North Korea truly in a different direction. And I just – I have my skepticism.

MR. LANDLER: Gentleman in the third row.

Q: Peter Appiah (sp), intel analyst and a former diplomat.

We know that rockets and nuclear weapons are on the agenda. Which of the following four might also make it onto the agenda: The global hacking complex which is located on Chinese territory, the biological weapons, the chemical weapons, or the torture camps. Do any of those four make it onto the agenda?

MR. LANDLER: Who would you like to direct it to?

Q: That seems like it might be a Michael Green and Sue Mi question. (Laughter.)

MR. GREEN: I think –

MS. TERRY: It's a good question. (Laughs.)

MR. GREEN: Well, they should all be on the table, in my view. I think you don't – it doesn't mean you try to resolve them or expect to resolve them all. But if they're going to matter, to Sue's point, somewhere down the road, diplomatically it's better to get them on the table early, even if the pace at which you work each may vary. I know John Bolton pretty well from government service. I can't imagine him not putting chem/bio and – what was the other one – oh, cyber on the table.

The human rights one is a little more uncertain to me. It doesn't seem to be a priority for this administration. I think it would be a mistake not to include in some form, because it will matter an awful lot to the Congress, the American people and, for example, South Koreans and Japanese whose families have lost people to abduction.

MS. TERRY: And Pompeo just reiterated last week what he means by denuclearization. And he included chem/bio and all of that in that in that (SVTC ?), but he didn't bring up human rights. And I do think that's going to be a very, very sensitive topic for this regime. You saw how Kim Jong-un has reacted to the whole – this human rights issue. So the political prison camp, I truly doubt that that's going to be on the table when it's so complicated already.

MS. GREITENS: Can I maybe say just one thing? The other – but the other part of this – and, again, it depends on how personal you think North Korea policy will continue to be under this U.S. administration, right? Because this is also a president who met with North Korean refugees and defectors, who made a fairly big deal in his own state of the state about the story of a North Korean refugee and defector. So I think the administration has laid some groundwork to raise that if they – if they want to.

I am similarly skeptical, just because there are so many issues that can be construed as direct national security threats to the United States. But there's also been a little bit of creation of the beginning of a discussion about that, or at least a potentially hardline position on caring about that, that could then affect the backend of this process via Congress or simply, you know, the fact that Trump himself has personally drawn attention to some of these issues through the use of his time and these meetings. I mean, I don't know. I wouldn't rule it out.

MR. CHA: Can I just –

MR. LANDLER: Yes, you can, and then one more question.

MR. CHA: OK. Just very quickly on Sheena's last point. I mean, and it could show up in other ways. Like, for example, if this process moves forward, there's going to be some demand from some folks for sanctions relief, right? And the initial most practical way of doing that is to enlarge the humanitarian carve out under the current U.N. Security Council's sanctions protocols. So that may actually be one of the ways that – I know that when Ambassador King was doing this, this was one of

the ways that you tried to open the discussion on human rights with North Korea was to – there's human rights, and there's also humanitarian issues. And so we could see it come into play that way.

MS. GREITENS: But I think it's – like, the North Korea Sanctions Policy Enhancement Act contains 36 references to human rights, including provisions for mandatory designation. So if Congress wants – part of what's happened is both in the U.N. and in U.S. law, human rights have increasingly embedded in the grounds for sanctions. And so there is statutory authority for Congress to push back on any lifting of sanctions if Congress chooses to do so. They've – that 2016 legislation creates a very different foundation than I think we had under any previous discussion with North Korea for a congressional role in controlling sanctions pressure.

MR. GREEN: Which is why it would be a mistake for the negotiators to not have that on the table.

MR. LIPPERT: Five seconds. Just thanks to the good work of Ambassador King and others, it's now much more ingrained in multilateral fabric as well.

MR. LANDLER: Gotcha. OK, we've got time for one last very quick question, and then we're going to wrap it up.

Q: Thank you. Real brief. Grace Lee (sp) from Tokyo Broadcasting System.

I know this is kind of a far-off scenario, but what about the India model, of accepting North Korea as a nuclear power, since it's very different from how we've actually dealt with them in the past?

MR. GREEN: Well, I worked on that. And not going to happen. (Laughter.) I mean, I don't think the North Koreans expect that. They'd like something maybe a little closer to what you might call the Pakistan model, where we're not cooperating with them on nuclear issues and energy peacefully, as we are with India, but we just don't give them a hard time. That's – so the Pakistan model they may have in their head. But I don't think they're going to get that either.

MR. LANDLER: Does anyone feel differently? Victor?

MR. CHA: No, the North Koreans actually once asked us about the India model. And our response was. Yes, when you become the largest democracy in the theater. (Laughter.)

MR. LANDLER: OK. Look, on that note, I think I'm going to wrap it up. I thank all of our panelists for a terrific conversation. And thank you all for coming. (Applause.)

(END)