ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020

70 Years Later: Bringing Peace to the Korean Peninsula and Beyond

Wednesday, June 24 — Thursday, June 25, 2020
Executive Summary

Seventy years has passed since the outbreak of hostilities on the Korean peninsula, and yet an end to the state of hostilities still remains beyond the grasp of the parties involved. As tragic as the anniversary of the war and Korea’s division remains, we are also reminded of the unparalleled political and economic progress witnessed in South Korea, which undeniably represent the most fruitful seven decades in Korea’s history.

To remember the past and to chart the path forward, CSIS and the Korea Foundation convened the fifth annual ROK–U.S. Strategic Forum virtually on the 70th anniversary of the war. During the two-day discussion from June 24 – June 25, 2020, scholars, experts, and officials gathered virtually to discuss the strategic context of developments on the Korean peninsula as well as challenges and opportunities for regional relations and the ROK-U.S. alliance. Discussions covered the process of the transition to a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, the status of the U.S.–ROK alliance, the current global health crisis, and opportunities for the future-oriented ROK–U.S. collaboration in security and innovation. This year’s keynote address featured the First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Cho Sei-young, and the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, Harry Harris. Below are the proceedings for the 2020 ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum.

Cover Photo: Stan Honda/AFP/Getty Images
AGENDA

ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020
70 Years Later: Bringing Peace to the Korean Peninsula and Beyond

Co-Organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Korea Foundation

Wednesday, June 24 – Thursday, June 25, 2020
Center for Strategic and International Studies
1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20036

Wednesday, June 24: Public Sessions

8:00 – 8:10 AM WELCOMING REMARKS

Dr. Geun Lee
President, The Korea Foundation

Dr. John Hamre
President and CEO, and Langone Chair in American Leadership, CSIS

8:10 – 8:20 AM KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Cho Sei-young
1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

8:20 – 8:25 AM BREAK

8:25 – 9:25 AM SESSION I: Peace on the Korean Peninsula

This session featured a discussion on the status of the U.S.-ROK alliance in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Korean War, the process of the transition to a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, and the security, economic, and political requirements for the transition.

Moderator

Amb. Mark Lippert
Senior Advisor, CSIS Korea Chair; Former U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea
Panelists

**Mr. David Helvey**
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, U.S. Department of State

**Dr. Haksoon Paik**
President, The Sejong Institute

**Dr. Intaek Han**
Research Fellow, Jeju Peace Institute

**Amb. Kathleen Stephens**
President and CEO, Korea Economic Institute of America; Former U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea

**Dr. Sue Mi Terry**
Senior Fellow, CSIS Korea Chair; Former Senior Analyst, Central Intelligence Agency; Former National Security Council

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**Thursday, June 25: Public Sessions**

8:00 – 8:15 AM

**OPENING ADDRESS**

**Amb. Harry Harris**
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea

8:15 – 8:20 AM

**BREAK**

8:20 – 9:20 AM

**SESSION II: Pandemics and the Global Responses**
This session examined the current global health crisis and the comprehensive impact of pandemics on the world.

**Moderator**

**Ms. Anna Fifield**
Beijing Bureau Chief, The Washington Post

**Panelists**

**Dr. Chul Chung**
Senior Research Fellow, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy

**Dr. Youngmee Jee**
Special Representative for Health Diplomacy, the Korea Foundation; Former Director-General of the Center for Infectious Diseases Research, Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
9:20 – 9:25 AM        BREAK

This session featured a discussion on opportunities for the future-oriented U.S.-ROK collaboration in new concepts of security, including cyber security, AI, and outer space.

Moderator
Dr. Young-kwan Yoon
Professor Emeritus, Seoul National University;
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Panelists
Dr. Nohyoung Park
Professor, School of Law, Korea University

Mr. Yunju Ko
Director-General for North American Affairs Bureau,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Dr. Michael Green
Senior Vice President for Asia and Japan Chair, CSIS;
Director of Asian Studies, Georgetown University;
Former National Security Council

Mr. Randall Schriver
Chairman of the Board, Project 2049 Institute;
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense

10:25 – 10:30 AM        CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Geun Lee
President, The Korea Foundation

Dr. Victor Cha
Senior Adviser and Korea Chair, CSIS;
Vice Dean for Faculty and Graduate Affairs and D.S. Song-KF Professor of Government, Georgetown University; 
Former National Security Council
Good evening to all of our friends in Korea. Good morning to all of our friends in Washington. We are so pleased to be able to welcome you all to this Korea-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020. And my special thanks to Dr. Lee who heads up the Korea Foundation. He is a great personal friend and a professional friend and colleague. And we are so excited. And thank you, Dr. Lee, for bringing us together again. This is a real opportunity.

We are together this time through the magic of modern collaboration tools. Because of the pandemic we cannot travel, but we can talk to each other and be together, and really dig in deep to the issues that are important in our day. Before I begin, let me just congratulate Korea for a splendid job of handling the coronavirus. You have become our big brother. We look to you for how we ought to do it. We are not doing all that well in this country managing the coronavirus. But you have given us a roadmap on how it could be done well, and I am very grateful to that leadership.

Dr. John Hamre welcomes the audience to the first ever virtual ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum.

And let me also say this is an important time to reflect on the anniversary of the start of the Korean War 70 years ago, when we were brought together in a terrible way. But we have stayed...
together to help promote and create the strongest, most vibrant Korea ever in history. It is an unfinished job because we still have a divided Korea. And history still will give us the opportunity at some point to bring the Korean people together in peace. And it will be the most important development in my lifetime, surely. I think it will happen in my lifetime. And it will be the most important development for peace in Asia. And I am very excited for that possibility. We will talk about some of that today.

I really would like to turn, if I may now, to Geun Lee, who is the president of the Korea Foundation. Been leading such a dynamic program these last years. And I am very proud that we can have this opportunity to partner with you. I know that we are separated by lots of miles, and we are separated by time zones, but we are together right now. And I look forward to hearing your thoughts, Professor Lee.

GEUN LEE

Colleagues and friends all over the world, as president of the Korea Foundation it is my privilege to welcome you all to the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020, the fifth iteration of this annual forum, co-hosted by CSIS and the Korea Foundation. President John Hamre, who is so kind and nice to introduce me in such a great way, and his excellency Cho Sei-young vice foreign minister of the ROK, Ambassador Harry Harris, and the honorable Professor Young-kwan Yoon, and all of our distinguished delegates and guests:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for joining this forum despite your busy schedules, the inconvenience of social distancing, and the time difference. Unlike in previous years, this year’s forum is being held as an online conference due to Covid-19. My special thanks go to Dr. Victor Cha, who I had a video conference a few hours ago, and the staff of the Korea chair at CSIS for their exceptional preparation of this online event.

Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues and friends, we are now in the midst of global upheaval due to Covid-19. The novel coronavirus has infected millions, killed hundreds of thousands, and impacted the wellbeing of billions more. This invisible virus is changing the whole world, reordering our daily lives, and pitting us against an unprecedented crisis. Unfortunately, we have come to see vividly just how fragile international solidarity and cooperation can be in the face of the pandemic. Countries are barely managing to cope with their own problems of public
health, unemployment, racism, and inequality, let alone being ready to tackle serious issues of international cooperation.

However, we are certain that the collaborative effort of global governance that incorporates core prosperity and universal values will be key to successfully dealing with these new challenges. The power to share information and resources and work together is an indispensable ability that mankind possesses in the fight against this new and lethal virus. At this moment, solidarity and cooperation are the most powerful weapons in the war against Covid-19, alongside our ability to remain flexible and to overcome any selfish short-sightedness.

Dear friends, exactly one year ago today the fourth Korea-U.S. Strategic Forum was held in Washington, D.C. At that time, expectations for sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula remained quite high in Seoul as a series of compacts had been made or planned between the leaders of the ROK, North Korea, the U.S. and China. Since then, many unfortunate changes have occurred. Diplomatic engagement with North Korea to achieve denuclearization has stalled.

We regret that the DPRK has yet to return to the negotiating table, despite our steadfast and patient efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation. Furthermore, North Korea has recently begun to accuse the ROK and the United States nearly daily. They have labeled the historic North Korea-U.S. summit in Singapore an empty promise. Indeed, experts are concerned that Pyongyang might resume military provocations, nullifying any progress achieved since early 2018 among the leaders of the ROK, the U.S., and North Korea.
Certainly, the path to denuclearization and permanent peace on the peninsula is not an easy one. Some may say it is an impossible job. But anyone can accomplish an easy task. Resolving the seemingly is impossible is reserved for great leaders and innovative minds. This is one of the reasons why we regularly bring together brilliant minds from both of our countries to exchange wisdom. Peace on the Korean Peninsula is not just in the interests of 80 million Koreans. These security issues disrupt peace and prosperity not only here but also in the greater region of East Asia and around the entire globe – much like how we are witnessing the outbreak of a health crisis in one region disrupts the whole global economy.

Tomorrow marks the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. From 1950 to 1953, the Korean Peninsula was devastated by conflict. More than 2.5 million civilians perished. Some 54,000 American soldiers were sacrificed. And more than 3 million Koreans became refugees. As a result of this terrible war, the ceasefire treaty solidifying the 38th parallel remains to this day. The brutal fighting drove the two Koreas apart and left permanent injuries and scars. Such a tragedy should never be repeated.

Peace on the Korean Peninsula is not just in the interests of 80 million Koreans. These security issues disrupt peace and prosperity not only here but also in the greater region of East Asia and around the entire globe – much like how we are witnessing the outbreak of a health crisis in one region disrupts the whole global economy.

— Geun Lee

It is through this conflict that the South Korea-U.S. bilateral relationship grew into one of the strongest in the modern world. This is an alliance forged in blood, transformed through decades of painstaking efforts, striving for lasting peace and prosperity in Korea and beyond. The 138 years of diplomatic relations we have achieved were made possible because of the solid foundation of friendship boasted by our alliance. The Korean government remains firmly committed to staying the course toward denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. As we embark on this bold path unwavering collaboration between the ROK and the U.S. is more important than ever. We must continue working towards our shared goal in order to solve the North Korea nuclear issue and to establish peace.

As we work, our alliance is also evolving. It has become a solid foundation in maintaining stability of the liberal international order. Now we are encountering new regional and global issues that we need to tackle together, such as cyber and space security,
pandemics, climate change, and global governance of the digital economy. Our wisdom, therefore, should extend beyond the issues on the Korean Peninsula to include these new and significant areas. There is no better venue to start discussing these new issues than this ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum, together with CSIS. I hope this year’s forum will serve as the first bilateral launch pad to ignite new intellectual cooperation between our two countries on a wider range of global governance issues.

Dear friends, this year’s forum will be held over the next two days. During the event, we must chart the path ahead with optimism. This is befitting of the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum. Since its launch in 2016 it has successfully served as a comprehensive dialogue channel for the discussion of critical matters that affect our common interests. I have no doubt that this forum is among the most important and effective forum events that the Korea Foundation presents in cooperation with its foreign partners. I hope that, as always, it will lead to productive discussions and suggestions about how we can collectively respond to the challenges we face and overcome those problems together. We are lucky to have an extraordinary array of wonderful speakers lined up this year to cover a variety of topics and share their insightful ideas.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the CSIS for co-organizing this forum, and to all our invited experts and guests for coming together here and now. Now, I turn to a congratulatory video by First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Cho Sei-young. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Keynote Address

SUMMARY

The Vice Foreign Minister talked positively about the evolution of the ROK-U.S. alliance in the past 70 years and emphasized that the alliance must continue to evolve to reflect the changes of the past 70 years. He welcomed President Trump’s decision to invite Korea to the G-7 summit as a sign of its elevated role in the international community. He also stressed that with Korea’s economic, military, and technological growth, there is increased expectation by the Korean public to be an equal partner of the United States. He reaffirmed the ROK’s commitment to the alliance and to the promotion of peace on the Korean Peninsula and concluded his remarks by reflecting on how challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic can provide the U.S.-ROK alliance with new areas of growth and cooperation.
Dr. John Hamre, president and CEO of CSIS, Dr. Lee Geun, president of the Korea Foundation, distinguished participants. It would be a privilege to address the distinguished attendees of this forum in any year, but this year marks the 70th anniversary of the Korean War. So today it is a special honor for me to speak to you on how far this alliance has come and how much farther we can go together.

I would like to begin by sharing with you an anecdote. In Korea, as in other countries, sending face masks and testing kits overseas in the thick of the pandemic is a delicate topic. But when my government decided last month to provide 500,000 masks to American veterans of the Korean War, the Korean public expressed overwhelming support. After 70 years, our boundless gratitude to the Americans who helped defend Korea in its darkest hour has faded not one bit.

The Korea-U.S. alliance is at its essence and inception a security partnership, but in recent decades it has expanded beyond the contours of the military to realms such as free trade and development. Geographically it is no longer limited to the Korean Peninsula and has evolved into a global partnership. Over the past several months, Covid-19 has brought into sharp relief the fact that this alliance concerns not just the difficult and seemingly far-off issues of security or the economy but that it can also directly touch the daily lives and wellbeing of the citizens of our two countries.

The Korean government spares no effort to support the U.S. in the time of need, airlifting hundreds of thousands of testing kits to its ally. In April, upon becoming the first country to hold nationwide elections in the midst of a pandemic, Korea promptly responded to a request by U.S. officials to share its experience of election management. Naturally, this spirit of close collaboration extends to the top. Our president has spoken on the phone on three separate occasions in as many months, underscoring the fact that our shared interests are simply too important to wait out the pandemic.

I believe that the personal trust between our two leaders played an important part in President Trump’s decision to invite Korea to the G-7 summit. I do not think it was an accident that the invitation was extended to Korea. We are recognized as among the top 10 countries by measures of economic, military, technological, and other indexes. In fact, it is often the Koreans themselves that are caught staring unfamiliarily into the reflection
of a capable, mature figure that they have yet to fully recognize. So in a way, the G-7 invitation represents Korea finally stepping onto the big stage.

But with privilege comes responsibilities. And Korea is ready and willing to take on the duties. For instance, our ODA levels still fall short of what is expected of Korea. That is why Korea’s ODA budget for this year was one of the few areas exempted from across the board budget cuts following the pandemic and actually earmarked for increase. Distinguished guests, just as the G-7 invitation signifies recognition of Korea’s growth and a change of the international landscape, so too must the U.S.-Korea alliance evolve so that it can embrace the changes of the past 70 years.

I think it was in this context that Deputy Secretary Biegun spoke of the need to renew or rejuvenate the alliance. I understood his core message to be that certain preconditions for launching the alliance have shifted over the past 70 years, and that the partnership needs to also evolve with the times. This is an acute observation, with which I agree completely. It is only natural that Korea raise contributions to the alliance in concert with increased capabilities. At the same time, there is a corresponding expectation among Korean people for genuine recognition and appreciation as an equal partner of the United States.

Striking the right balance between the two will be crucial as the alliance continues to evolve. Allow me to take a moment to share with you our efforts to contribute to the alliance. Foremost, Korea is increasing its financial contributions. For almost 30 years we have supported the U.S. troops in Korea in accordance with the
Special Measures Agreement. Last year, the support topped more than $900 million, an 8.2 percent increase from the year before. 8.2 percent may seem modest until you realize that it is over four times the rate of the economic growth in Korea.

Korea is also top importer of U.S. military equipment. And we have been increasing our own defense budget by an average of 7.5 percent every year since 2017, and now spend 2.6 percent of the GDP on defense. No major U.S. ally spends at a higher figure. These efforts paint a clear picture of an unwavering commitment to the alliance. As you are aware, our two countries are currently engaged in difficult SME talks. Negotiations between countries are never easy, even among the closest allies. But as the say, April showers bring May flowers. And I have not the slightest doubt that we will find the creative solution for moving forward.

The Korean government is also continuing efforts to strengthen its military capabilities. Clearly a stronger Korean military serving alongside the U.S. benefits Korea’s own security and national interest. At the same time, it contributes directly to the national interest and strategic goals of the United States also. Distinguished guests, the transition of wartime operational control will be an important symbol of an alliance that is adapting and evolving with its sight set of the future. This will also provide the Korean people with a sense that their country’s appreciated as an equal partner of the United States. And we should do our part to make the required conditions for a speedy transition.

The role and status of the U.N. Command is also an important subject in the evolution of the alliance. The UNC has kept the armistice for the past 70 years. While Korea is deeply grateful for these efforts, the Korean public also recognizes that it is time for Korea to take center stage in maintaining peace and security by ending the current state of armistice and establishing a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. Lifting dated restraints on developing space and satellite capabilities, which has been placed on Korea decades prior, will be a good place to start.

Across seven decades, the core purpose of the alliance has remained straightforward: the deterrence of war and the promotion of peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula. These objectives run through the path of denuclearization and the establishment of a permanent peace regime. Significant progress has been made over the past two years. Along the way, however, we remained clear-eyed about challenges and difficulties we face. Unfortunately, we are once again confronted with the reality of rising tensions between North and South Korea.
Nevertheless, the Korean government will continue efforts to prevent escalation. The stakes are simply too high for us to turn back the clock now or become disheartened by setbacks. Dialogue, steadfast engagement, and a healthy dose of patience are the only constructive options for moving forward. While Northeast Asia is a region more accustomed to rivalry than solidarity, opportunities for real cooperation are by no means lacking. Achieving denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula is one important area in which the United States and China can set aside differences and work toward the common purpose.

We must firmly reject the cynicism and self-fulfilling prophecy that lasting peace in this region is but a pipe dream, now made even more distant by U.S.-China rivalry. Bringing North Korea back to the negotiating table, achieving denuclearization, and creating a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula will not only benefit Korea, but also open up opportunities for Washington to implement its strategic objectives in the region. It is such shared strategic goals and interests of our two countries that will ultimately sustain and strengthen the alliance.

Distinguished guests, five months have passed since the world was thrust into the unimaginable reality. Predictions abound as to what the post-corona era will look like. Some project a future in which decades of meticulous works to create an open and connected world is dialed back. Under this scenario, self-reliance and naked competition among nations become the norm. This represent the future of deglobalization. Others predict, in fact they yearn for, a world brought together in its fight against the pandemic and problems that define go-it-alone solutions.

Under this scenario, global resources are consolidated, and connectivity deepens. Call this the future of re-globalization. Our world is interdependent like never before. So the only way to fight global problems is through inclusion, not exclusion. By committing ourselves to cooperation, not by going down our separate paths. Covid-19 is testing not only the immunity of individuals, but also the immunity and resilience of the liberal international order itself. I am hopeful that, unlike Covid-19, the post-Covid world will not catch us off guard. We have a choice to make between linking arms versus retreating into our respective borders.

As you may be aware, Korea’s open, democratic, and transparent approach during the pandemic has been praised as a winning formula for fighting infectious disease. However, we did not set
out to promote these values, per se, rather our health authorities found themselves embracing a certain set of principles as a touchstone against which acceptability of new Covid-19 measures was assessed. When sharing our experience with health professionals from around the globe, we have been emphasizing the potency of the open and transparent approach at every turn. We will continue to stress these principles, working alongside partners like United States.

Covid-19 is prompting like-minded countries to pool resources like never before, with the realization that no one is safe until everyone is. This is yet another area in which the U.S.-Korea partnership can shine. Distinguished guests, our changing world is presenting the alliance, 70 years young, with constant opportunities for cooperation and growth. The United States and Korea are time-tested teammates in one of the most successful partnership the world has seen since the Second World War. But we must not be complacent or satisfied even.

Despite all of our remarkable achievements and successes, I am convinced that this alliance can and should be pushed to evolve into a partnership that is even more effective, even more adaptable. While the United States and Korea have been co-authoring new chapters of history every single year for 70 years, I firmly believe that the best days of the alliance lies ahead still. Thank you.

Session I: Peace on the Korea Peninsula

SUMMARY

Session I commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Korean War by reflecting on the past and current state of the U.S.-ROK alliance and the necessary elements to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula. The discussion highlighted the successful relationship between the United States and Korea and highlighted its evolution from a military alliance to one that encompasses shared values and economic, cultural, and political partnerships. Experts also discussed gaps that can be addressed in the ROK-U.S. alliance and suggested new areas of cooperation. Finally, the session identified existing challenges to achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Transcript (as delivered)

ANNOUNCER

“Session I: Peace on the Korea Peninsula” covers the U.S.-ROK alliance in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of
the Korean War, how a transition to a permanent peace on the peninsula could work, and the security, economic, and political requirements for that transition. Moderated by Ambassador Mark Lippert, senior advisor at the CSIS Korea chair and former U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Korea, this session features: Mr. David Helvey, Dr. Haksoon Paik, Dr. Intaek Han, Ambassador Kathleen Stephens, and Dr. Sue Mi Terry.

 Audience, please welcome Ambassador Mark Lippert.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Good morning everybody here in the United States. Good evening, everybody in Korea. And good day to everybody else around the world who is tuning into this very important, very timely broadcast of this very important conference. I am Mark Lippert. I am going to moderate this panel here today. And we are not going to go through introductions. We do not need a lot of setup, because we have had some excellent opening remarks and some excellent video presentations that really set the frame well here today.

I will just say, we are gathered here today to talk about, as was alluded to in the opening comments, some of the hard problems. We brought together some of the best minds to deal with these, present company excluded. There is a sense that while these are difficult problems, one of – some of the comments early, well, there should be a sense of optimism because we have done great things together in the past. We are doing great things today. And we can do this as an alliance.

A couple of other quick things. The alliance is global now. It is not just about the Korean Peninsula, not just about Northeast Asia, but the world is watching what the United States and Korea do. And there are new issues that have come to the fore, that were outlined I think very, very effectively in terms of space, cyber, environment, energy – things that we need to work on together as an alliance and a bilateral relationship.

So for this panel, we are going to try to do all of that in about an hour. And we are going to touch on three main themes. One, the state of the alliance and a historical lookback. Two, peace, why it is still elusive, what elements are needed. And three, some of these newer pieces that I just discussed, that may come in, as well as peppering in some of the issues of today that are important pivot points going forward.

So with that, I am going to go right to questions. And I am going to turn the first question over to Ambassador Stephens.
— Ambassador Kathy Stephens, who really does need no introduction. And, Kathy, Ambassador Stephens, apologies, let’s just take a step back. Recognizing the 70th anniversary of the Korean War, can you reflect on, in your time on the peninsula and all these different iterations, some of the two or three most important events in terms of the development of the alliance, progress towards peace, and maybe why peace and proved elusive. Just to get us going here with a broader perspective, Ambassador Stephens.

KATHLEEN STEPHENS

Well, Ambassador Lippert, Mark, thank you very much. It is great to join you. You told me this question was coming, and I have tried to reflect on it. And we are marking the 70th anniversary of a terrible day that I first learned to call yugi-o, just June 25th, that is all that you had to say for Koreans to remember the trauma of that day and what followed.

So, I can talk about a lot of significant events. And I think the vice minister just now alluded to many in the alliance and in the search for peace and dealing with the unfinished business. But I think on a day like this we do have to reflect on the history, on the kind of origin story of this alliance. And I think we, Americans, are learning that actually history does matter. A few years ago I visited the Truman Library in Missouri. And I read Truman’s farewell address when he left the presidency after a very eventful time. And his address actually says: The most important decision of his presidency was the decision to defend the Republic of Korea in 1950. And that is always stuck with me.

Now, there is a lot more history there, but my point is we need to understand that history better, and understand that also our
alliance was actually formed, as we know, in the context of the armistice, of the so-called temporary armistice. So we had a temporary armistice and an alliance, which has turned out to be not so temporary. So I think a lot of reflection on history and understanding that better, and not seeing it purely through the lens of all that is followed, is important to get to what – and also how that is seen from North Korea.

And I guess the other point I would make, since you asked me specific events, is most than – as more of a process, in terms of the alliance, where our alliance actually became a kind of values – truly values-oriented alliance. More than what we were against. We were against communist aggression. We were against what that represented. But what I saw in my years in Korea, I actually was in Korea when President Carter was elected and he brought in a human rights agenda which was very, in some ways, destabilizing to the alliance but over time became a part of our values alliance.

And even more important what I saw in the 1980s, and it was a continuum of course, was Koreans saying: We have values too. And those are values we share. Against torture. For human rights. For elections and democracy. And seeing all that blossom really did change the nature of the alliance. So I think that is the context in which now we have a very different platform for thinking about the unfinished business on the peninsula, which is, of course, kind of extending those opportunities, if you like, and a more – and reconciliation on a still-divided peninsula.

**MARK LIPPERT**

All right. Thanks, Kathy. Ambassador Stephens. Great setup. There is a reason I came to you first. I know you, to use a baseball analogy, would hit it out of the park. And you have really got us off and running.

Let’s go for a Korea perspective to Haksoon Paik. Dr. Paik, you have held a range of different positions. You also have been in and around this relationship, in and around this alliance doing very important work. And just a minute or two of your time to get us off and running in terms of a broader context, a broader perspective.

**HAKSOON PAIK**

Thank you very much, Ambassador Lippert. It is really great we are connected like this, have conversation in these trying times. It is truly comforting.

Ambassador Stephens mentioned values-oriented alliance. But in addition to that, let me think of three events which – in which
resiliencies – resilience of the alliance has been amply expressed and contributed to the development and strengthening of the alliance cooperation, despite all kinds of challenges in the past. First of all, Korea-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty was signed just after the Korean Armistice agreement was signed. But we were already allies before the Korean War. We fought together in the war and protected the interests of both countries on the Korean Peninsula and in this region of the world.

Second, we fought again together as allies in the Vietnam War, Iraq War, and also the war in Afghanistan. Third, South Korea could overcome financial crisis 1997-98 thanks to U.S. support. It will be Rubin rescue, so called. Robert Rubin was the Treasury secretary in the Clinton administration at that time. Thanks to U.S. support we could resurrect our economy, helping stabilize the so-called liberal economic order in Asia, and beyond, for all of us.

Those three events are talked about with the resilience side of our alliance. But if give me more time a little later, I share with you my thought on frustration side as well. Thank you, Ambassador Lippert.

MARK LIPPERT

Well, excellent, excellent intervention. And, again, we came to you first, doctor, in part because we knew you, working with Ambassador Stephens, in the true spirit of the alliance, would get us up and running. So excellent intervention. Really appreciate it.

OK, I am going to come to Mr. Dave Helvey. Dave, you are the current U.S. government official on this panel. You are in the Pentagon. You are a very senior member of the Pentagon. You too have been around in terms of a whole range of perspectives on the alliance. You just heard from Ambassador Stephens. You just heard from Dr. Paik. Some of the elements were defense in nature, some of them were finance. But they spoke to a resilience about the alliance. Can you just walk us through, from where you sit, what is your perspective on the state of the alliance today? Where the U.S. and the Korean governments are working together? Where are the gaps? And where is this all headed?

DAVID HELVEY

Well, thank you, Mr. Ambassador, Mark. And thank you to CSIS for giving me an opportunity to participate in this truly special and important forum. And I am also particularly glad that we can meet virtually, even if we cannot meet in person.

I would like to kind of start by just kind of reflecting on what it is we are celebrating today and tomorrow, the 70th anniversary of the
Korean War. And I think this really does, Mark, speak to the question that you posed to me. Yeah, the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War is really meaningful at this time in the alliance. I know there is a lot of stress and tension on the alliance, but I think it is important to kind of remember how we got to where we are.

And I think about in this context the memorial here in Washington, D.C. to the Korean War, and the words that are emblazoned on the memorial. That says that this is a memorial to remember the American people, the 1.5 million Americans who answered their country’s call to defend a country they never knew and a people that they never met. I think that speaks to the spirit of sacrifice, but the willingness on the part of those American soldiers, citizens, to come to Korea’s aid at a time of a crisis.

Seventy years from that point today, though, I think we should also look back and say that those words were true then, but they are no longer true now. We know Korea. We know Korea deeply. We know the Korean people. We have deep and extensive people-to-people ties based on a long, rich history of our alliance relationship that extends far beyond the defense aspects of the relationship.

But speaking to those I can say with certainty that our defense alliance with Korea today, militarily speaking, is truly unique – one of the most capable and one of the most effective alliances – precisely because of those deep bonds and ties that we have that are manifest in the combined force. The interoperability of that combined force creates and enables, and the capabilities that that combined force brings not only to ensuring deterrence and appropriate defense on the peninsula but also our ability to work together in service of our combined shared objectives globally.
We had heard, previously about our fighting together in Vietnam and Iraq, Afghanistan. I think that really speaks to how close we are as an alliance. And, to your point, Mark, in your introductory remarks, this truly has evolved from a military alliance focused on the peninsula to one that is truly global in nature and encompasses support for free markets, civic engagement, the people-to-people exchanges that we talked about, education, tourism, mutual respect.

And in 2015, we announced a new agenda for new frontiers for areas for cooperation in the alliance, some of which you highlighted, but one of which is particularly important today, where we talked about cooperation on global health security and to advance our ability to counter biological threats. I think the COVID environment that we are in today kind of underscores the foresight that the leadership of both countries put into that new frontiers agenda in 2015. But there is other areas as well. Science and technology, collaboration, space and cyber. These truly are at the cutting edge of where this alliance can be, should be. And I think this is an area where we need to continue moving.

So looking into the future, I see that this type of cooperation – not only in terms of the military dynamics, continued focus on deterrence and defense on the peninsula, evolving this alliance to be much more global in nature, I think that can continue. It should continue. And I want to see it continue. In the defense space, I would note that Korea over the past decade has gone from a net security recipient to a net security provider. It is truly a partner for us and for others for peace, and security, and stability in the region. And in this respect, you see the South Korean increased capacity based on the economic performance really contributes to effective alliance capabilities, able to service our shared vision.

I think we need to continue working with our ROK allies to identify and address future security challenges to both of us, as well as to the region more broadly, including things as how we can work together to support the rules-based international order, how we can support things like freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes. But also I think

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— David Helvey
there is room for us as an alliance to be able to work on how we can cooperate in terms of our security, cooperation, and capacity building of third parties.

And this is particularly important because as each of us has very precious and limited resources to dedicate to that task, being able to pool those resources together makes a much more efficient and effective way of addressing security cooperation needs and capacity needs of our partners. And by pooling those resources, it also lightens the burden that each of us has to carry. So I think that is an important consideration.

I would be remiss if I did not say that I would like to see South Korea and Japan be able to work more closely together, not only bilaterally but multilaterally with us and with other like-minded partners. Again, being able to contribute cooperatively and collectively I think is the way to ensure that we are participating in a networked security architecture in the region – something I know that Victor Cha has spoken of with great eloquence in the past.

So looking to the future, I would like to see the Republic of Korea become even more active in global security initiatives. The ROK is a respected friend and trusted partner to many around the region and the world. And it has a tremendous capacity to be able to do good. And so we would like to be a partner in that and we would like to support that. And so, again, thanks for that question. And really appreciate, again, the opportunity to be here this morning.

INTAEK HAN

Thank you. Firstly, my assessment of Korea-U.S. alliance, as we commemorate 70th anniversary of the Korean War, I think what is remarkable about our alliance is that we are commemorating only one Korean War, not two or not three. This is rather puzzling,
given the fact that there has been a lot of nuclear tests, numerous missile tests, and of course all these threats and the blew up – explosion of inter-Korean liaison offices. All this would expect – would lead one to expect there would be more conflict on the Korean Peninsula. But the history is that there has been only one major conflict on the Korean Peninsula, which took place 70 years ago.

And how come there is only one major conflict on the Korean Peninsula since 1953, when Korea and the United States formed alliance? I think the main factor has been the Korea-U.S. alliance. In particular, the security guarantee that U.S. offered to South Korea was the key to stability and the prosperity of South Korea. So U.S.-South Korea alliance, or Korea-U.S. alliance has offered more than security guarantee, actually. It has provided an environment in which South Korea could transform itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to one of the most prosperous market economies, and also one of the most vibrant democracies in the world. So in this aspect I think the alliance has been beneficial not only to Korea, but also to the United States as well.

Now the United States has a – has an ally that is more than military partner but shares common values and also has same economic and political systems. And the success of the alliance I think has also unexpected consequences. One of them is burden sharing issue. As the size of South Korean economy grows both in absolute terms and also relative to American economy, there is now increasing pressure on South Korea to pay more to keep American troops on its soil. But this increasing call for bigger burden sharing...
is not specific to South Korea-U.S. alliance. But it is common also in U.S.-German, U.S.-Japanese alliance as well. So as long as the relative position of the U.S. economy declines and American public favors isolationism, the burden sharing issue will not go away.

Now turning to the gaps and also future directions of alliance, South Korea and the United States have been close allies since the United States came to rescue Korea during the Korean War. And their alliance will have to go through some fundamental changes in the future if North Korea keeps developing its long-range nuclear missiles as well as cyber capabilities. At the core of South Korea-U.S. alliance has been American nuclear umbrella for South Korea. While North Korea’s ICBMs do not directly threaten South Korea, they will threaten South Korea indirectly by weakening American nuclear umbrella. It is not difficult to imagine how the development of North Korean nuclear missile capabilities undermines the credibility, the effectiveness of U.S. nuclear umbrella for South Korea.

Also, the U.S.-South Korea – the Korea-U.S. alliance is less than effective in deterring the North from launching cyberattacks on the South, or even on the United States. The North has already launched successful cyberattacks on South Korea and U.S. targets as well, such as Sony Pictures Entertainment. Lastly, but possibly more important, the Korea-U.S. alliance as it currently exists is unable to lead the North to denuclearize or provide incentives to implement regime change. On the contrary, past behavior by North indicates that a stronger Korea-U.S. alliance is likely to harden rather than soften North Korea’s stance. So also an effort to strengthen and update the Korea-U.S. alliance in response to new threat from the North seems to agitate China and deepen the security guarantee – security dilemma between the U.S. and North Korea, as well as between the United States and China.

Since the formation of alliance, South Korea and United States have been great partners. To deal with rising threat most countries need to strengthen and modernize the alliance. I think strengthening and modernization of the alliance requires more discussion between two countries than more weapons. And I am happy that the forum provides much needed opportunity for such discussion. Thank you.
MARK LIPPERT

Excellent, Dr. Han. Really appreciate the intervention there. A lot of deep thinking and analysis. Let me pull out one theme that you weaved throughout your remarks, which is that – something we have not discussed is North Korea and the situation there, and what their impact is on peace on the peninsula.

And for that, I want to bring in Dr. Terry. Dr. Terry, as I just mentioned, part of the reason we have not seen peace on the peninsula are the actions of North Korea. And we have seen some significant developments over the last week, including last night. Can you take us through a little bit of a broader perspective? Where are the North Koreans today? Where have they been? Where are they going? Your thoughts on the North Korea piece of discussion we are having here today.

SUE MI TERRY

Sure. So let’s start with where the North Koreans have been. Obviously, the North in the past decades have relentlessly pursued their nuclear program, with the goal of gaining international acceptance of North Korea as a responsible nuclear weapons power. And through four different U.S. presidents for almost three decades now we made little progress on the denuclearization front. And not surprisingly, we are at an impasse, yet again, with North Korea today and little progress has been made, despite U.S. president having met with the North Korean leader three times now.

And adding to all of this is worsening inter-Korean relations, as you have just mentioned, as we have seen in the past week, with North Korea blowing up the inter-Korean liaison office in Kaesong, really the key symbol of inter-Korean reconciliation. And the latest provocations follow year-long dissatisfaction that North Korea had with South Korea, showing their dissatisfaction with sort of with the short-range missile tests, and practicing strike drills with the Blue House replica, and so on.

And I think what the North Koreans are doing right now is this is all part of broader strategy to pressure Seoul, to really split from Washington, and for Seoul to make concessions, particularly on the sanctions front. In the Hanoi summit Kim Jong-un made it very clear that what he wanted, first and foremost, was sanctions relief. And now that the economic situation in North Korea is more dire, as it is struggling with the secondary effects of the prevention measures they have taken to prevent coronavirus. So now they are determined to create and manufacture crisis with South Korea.
North Korea just yesterday, today, just mentioned that Kim Jong-un now has suspended military action plan against South Korea. But this does not – this is a tactical move. I think Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un are playing good cop/bad cop. But it does not change the fact that what North Korea wants, what it is override goal is to get sanctions relief and to put a wedge between South Korea and the United States.

And if I could just quickly mention where are headed in terms of DPRK-U.S. relations also, I think North Korea, after they are done with South Korea in terms of provocations, they will have to turn its attention to Washington and dial up pressure on Washington. It is an election year, after all. Pre-corona North Korea’s missile and nuclear activity was already on an escalatory path, right? A frequency of North Korean provocations closely resembled the first months of 2017 with the short-range missile tests. And North Korea’s usual MO is a brinksmanship strategy to overcome domestic stresses. And there are domestic stresses in North Korea. So and they have to ramp up provocations to dial up pressure in Washington. There is plenty of things that they can do besides an ICBM and nuclear test. We can talk about that a little bit later.

One final point, and I will just conclude here, is that there was some discussion among the Korea watchers where Trump – President Trump and Kim Jong-un will go for a last-minute, 11th hour deal, an October surprise where North Korea agrees to partly freeze its WMD program for partial sanctions relief. And I used to think that this was very unlikely. It is almost July, after all. But I do have to wonder about this because Kim did himself leave a very small opening earlier this year when he said he would
freeze the nuclear program or reduce the nuclear program if conditions are met. And now when you have seen this Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un playing good cop/bad cop, I am wondering if he is trying to go for that last possible minute deal with President Trump. So I leave that as an open possibility. And I will conclude here for right now.

MARK LIPPERT

OK, Sue. Lots of food for thought. Lots of tantalizing questions.

I am going to come back to Dr. Han quickly. Dr. Han, talk to us about what Dr. Terry just mentioned, the inter-Korean piece. That dynamic – you heard what Dr. Terry say – her assessment, North trying to split the alliance and use kind of the inter-Korean peace there. Where are we in terms of the state of the inter-Korean peace? That is an important element here. Can you just talk about your thoughts there vis-à-vis the alliance and the situation on the peninsula.

INTAEK HAN

Yeah. I think we all know what occurred between South Korea and North Korea recently. North Korea shut down the communication lines, blew up the inter-Korean liaison office which was built for them, and then threatened and then suddenly postponed moving troops into the DMZ. And they also threatened then suddenly postponed sending anti-Moon Jae-in leaflet using balloons. So of course, these actions can be cancelled, and new decisions can be made at any time. But these really puzzling events and tension have been rising on the Korean Peninsula during the past weeks.

So what do we make of these events? What we, for instance, these events say about inter-Korean relations, especially about inter-Korean channel. Do both Koreas get along well with each other? Obviously not. The North wants the South to expand inter-Korean cooperation. The North will push the United States to lift sanctions. This is something South has been – has failed to do – deliver so far. So North Koreans are angry about – angry to South Korea. Do they actually talk with each other? How about inter-Korean communications channel? I think the answer is yes. I think through these events North Koreans actually talking to South Korea. And also, possibly to the United States, to Americans as well.

And also, I think that the main audience of recent events may be actually in North Korean residents, among North Korean population. What we are seeing now may be a very carefully
directly choreographed, tightly controlled political signaling where the roles are clearly preassigned. Kim Yo-jong plays such a role, other people play such an other role. And the limit has been clearly defined. First of all, there was no territorial intrusion. There was no human life lost. So why the rhetorics have been harsh? And the actions, while very dramatic, there was little or zero risk that these provocations go out of control and escalate into military conflict.

Secondly, as Dr. Terry mentioned, the roles have been clearly divided. And the targets – I think this is also important as well – targets have been carefully selected. For instance, the North Korea has not criticized Mr. Trump or the United – or the United States this time, has they? So despite all these provocations, I think that relations between Chairman Kim and Mr. Trump are more or less remain intact and, quite possibly, relations between Chairman Kim and Mr. Moon may be still okay. And because obviously Kim Yo-jong played the back-up role, and only to be stopped by her elder brother.

And one important question would be why did North express anger is such a dramatic way? I think that they had to. They had to do it to save the face of their leader, whose image was tarnished by anti-Kim leaflets. So the dramatic action was needed to be taken in public so that North Koreans could see that. So all in all, my impression about the North based on recent moves is that North Korea is very strategic actor and becomes quite suddenly inviolable when its leader is openly challenged. I think that sums up my impression. Thank you.

MARK LIPPERT

Excellent. Excellent, Dr. Han. I am going to go to Dave Helvey. But before I do, one follow up to you quickly. You really laid down a comprehensive diplomatic, military landscape of drivers for behavior from North Korea. What about the economic piece? There have been reports of the North Koreans issuing bonds, sanctions, all of that that is impacting pretty – a weak economy in North Korea. Do you – just quickly, do you think that is also in the mix here as well?

INTAEK HAN

I think so. Now this actually led to one of the points that I mentioned towards the end of the conversation. North Korean economy is in bad shape right now. And this, even after Chairman Kim stood with Mr. Trump three times. And both he and also North Korean population all expected something to come from these meetings. But they did not come. Nothing – no
major concessions have been made and the sanctions are still there, the economy is still bad, and in fact it may be worsening rapidly due to the Covid-19. So in this kind of deterring situation sometimes you need to make diversionary tactics. And that may be what happened this time.

MARK LIPPERT
OK. Thank you. Let’s go to Dave. Mr. Helvey, just – you just heard a very complicated matrix from Dr. Terry, Dr. Han of military provocations, signaling, possible diplomatic breakthroughs, economic sanctions. Given where things stand on the peninsula from your vantage point, what is the current state of defense and deterrence? And how does that lead into possible U.S. receptivity to diplomatic entreaties?

DAVID HELVEY
Well, thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador, for that question. I think, as Dr. Han said in his earlier response, it is important to remember that together the United States and the Republic of Korea – we have been successful in deterring North Korea from large-scale aggression, or any attempts to unify the peninsula by force. And I think it is important to kind of underscore that deterrence at that fundamental and most basic level still obtains and remains very strong and very effective.

Now, that has not meant that there has been the absence of provocations. We have seen provocations recently. We have seen certainly more lethal provocations – whether it is the box mine incident, the sinking of the Cheonan, or the shelling of Yeonpyeong in recent years, or the cyberattacks that Dr. Han also mentioned. But I think it is important to kind of underscore that deterrent at that fundamental and most basic level still obtains and remains very strong and very effective.

Our security commitment to the Republic of Korea, as well as to Japan I would add, remains ironclad, both in terms of the will and the capabilities that we are able to bring, the capabilities that are on the peninsula, and the capabilities that we would bring to the peninsula in the event of a crisis. And, of course, the capabilities that are resident off the peninsula that provide that fundamental deterrent capability. That we do not need to go into detail, but it is there based on our strategic forces.

As many of you know – and I think this is something that is kind of been a theme of the conversation thus far this morning – Korea remains the hardest of hard targets. It is hard to determine tactically what North Korea is going to do on a day-to-day basis, even though I think we had all agree that strategically North
Korea, particularly under Kim Jong-un, is very predictable and understandable.

But it is hard to tell what is going to happen the next day, the next week, or the next month. And as we have seen just in the past several hours shifts from – focused on preparing for potential provocation to putting those on hold. So I think it underscores the need to be able to monitor the situation in North Korea carefully. And it – and to maintain our preparations to be able to respond to events as they happen and anticipate them.

As far as any specific provocations that North Korea may carry out in the future, it is obviously hard to speculate. We have been monitoring the overall increase in rhetoric in threats against Seoul. We know that the efforts to date in this recent cycle have been focused mostly on Seoul and President Moon. But I think it also kind of underscores maintaining alliance readiness and alliance capabilities is so critically important.

And I think there is – one important consideration that we have within the Department of Defense is we have to look at and be prepared for threats as they are, not necessarily as we would like them to be. And so having that kind of realistic appraisal. And that is why having the combined force there is critically important. And having that – having that effective deterrent and having the strong combine force I do think is important to diplomacy.

And this gets to the point that Ambassador Lippert raised. It is our view that maintaining an effective deterrent based on a ready force, a force that is prepared to – in the terms that many USFK commanders have referred to be prepared to fight tonight, is important precisely because that helps to create the type of environment within which multilateral diplomacy, aimed at the final and fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, can take place.

It is hard to talk if there is no security. And so maintaining that basic deterrence is an important part of the diplomatic outreach. And I also think that that basic deterrence and the capabilities that we bring, that our partners bring, is also important to the effort to maintain the integrity of the will – the true will of the international community and its representative manifest in U.N. Security Council resolution.

Enforcing sanctions, whether it is against ship-to-ship transfers, or restrictions on other types of commodities, or access to financial markets is an important part of enabling that diplomacy to obtain. And we, within the Department of Defense, view that
as being an important part of our role as well, is helping to create those capabilities.

With respect to what the future may hold, our policy, as I have said, remains very much focused on denuclearization. And it is a denuclearization that we believe can only realistically be obtained through a diplomatic process. Certainly our strong preference. We have made some progress in the past but it is not clear if North Korea is intent to move forward together with a denuclearization agenda that will result in a much brighter future for the people on the north side of the Korean Peninsula. Over.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thanks. Thanks, Dave. Really appreciate the insights there. Just one quick follow up. On some of the things we are watching, you mentioned a whole array of possible threats, provocations. Would this also include asymmetric capabilities the North is developing – cyber, special operations forces, things of that nature? And do you believe the alliance is ready for provocations based around those functional areas?

DAVID HELVEY

Well, yeah, I think you are right to point out that North Korea has the capability to launch a number of different types of provocations that kind of run the range from the conventional through to conventional and irregular. We are aware of and we are prepared to respond to provocations including in the cyber and special operations types of threats. But I would also say these are areas that we need to constantly invest in, we need to constantly focus our efforts to ensure that we are making the right types of investments, and that we are improving.

I think the one thing that is absolutely clear over the 70 years that we have been dealing with this challenge – 70 years since the beginning of the Korean War – is that the North Koreans – or, North Korea presents a very agile and adaptable adversary. And so even if we have confidence today that we can address the threats that are presented, we know that those threats are going to change. We know those threats are going to evolve. And that requires that our alliance also be adaptable, our alliance also be agile, and our alliance evolve to stay ahead of – not just to follow, but to stay ahead of the threats that North Korea presents. Over.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thanks so much. We have been slowly making our way back to Haksoon, Dr. Paik. It feels like a little while since we have heard from you. And we have not utilized your expertise as much as we should. So I am going to give you two questions
And we do have some new elements on the peninsula, a president of the United States who has been willing to meet face-to-face with the North Korean leadership. A willingness to scale back or cancel exercises to make North Korea feel more secure. A progressive president in South Korea, who seems very determined and has put personal political capital on the line to work towards peace and work – and a relationship with the North. These are new elements that often folks have said – some analysts have said, if we just had this, or this basket of things, we could move forward. On the other hand, the last couple of weeks has shown some turbulence.

Now, maybe we are headed towards a negotiation, an October surprise, as Dr. Terry mentioned. But just your thoughts on both. Any comment on what the panel has said, number one. And number two, the elements of peace that either are missing, or what else we need to do to move forward.

HAKSOON PAIK

Thank you, Ambassador Lippert. We talked about the problems we have been experiencing with North Korea by others on this panel. So just let me focus on the peace issue you mentioned. And in answering your question, I think that we have necessary conditions and sufficient conditions for peace on the Korean Peninsula. Necessary conditions for peace include end the war declaration, no more military exercises against each other, and peace treaty. Three of them, in my opinion.

And on the other hand, we can include the following five items as sufficient conditions. The first two of which are controversial, as we all know. Number one, denuclearization. Second, sanctions removal and arms control. Northeast Asia multilateral security cooperation. And also, political will of the top leaders and their key advisors to strike a deal and to faithfully carry it out, which is not an easy job, as vividly and powerfully revealed by John Bolton’s memoir. And so I think these are the conditions for making a peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula as a possibility in the future.

But, if you give me time, let me share with you some of my thoughts on the – not the bright side of our alliance for the last
seven decades until now. Let me point out three things. First, this has to do with our frustration or concerns of our alliance capability. First, our inability to end the war, start a peace on the Korean Peninsula, and denuclearize North Korea, even though almost seven decades were given for us and they lapsed. Another point has to do with this defense cost-sharing negotiation this time.

This really hurts. The forceful demand for a 500 percent increase in South Korea’s defense burden sharing is a nonstarter, or a message, if you will. Which makes South Koreans ask, is this America we used to know? That is what the alliance is for? It truly hurt, and it still does.

Finally, let me point out that leadership styles and the way they present the issues do matter. Think about the differences about Presidents Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump, for instance. I think leaders on both sides, Korea and United States, should present issues and options in a negotiable way and in a solvable way between allies.

Thank you for the time. I can share my thoughts on the concerns and frustration side of our alliance, even though we had tremendous success and resilience, as I mentioned, and the contribution our alliance has made in the past.

MARK LIPPERT

OK. Thanks for the insights. We are getting close to time here so I want to bring in Ambassador Stephens, who we too also have neglected.
Kathy, just a couple of questions for you. Anything to dovetail off of the very good intervention from Dr. Paik, number one. And number two, the last point, that leaders matter. So we are headed up to an election year in the United States. Any advice you might have for either a second Trump term or a new Biden administration? I know these are big questions, but just any way you want to take it. And then we will probably go to Q&A from the audience.

Yeah, thanks, Mark. I really appreciate the comments that have been made and I endorse just about all of them. Picking up on Dr. Paik’s point, I think the context that our alliance and our efforts vis-à-vis North Korea is important. And it is underlying but maybe just to state it, I think we really are in an unprecedented and still unpredictable eye of the storm of political, social, geopolitical flux. And that is affecting everything.

In terms of what is missing, I think I want to answer that a little bit. And given the constellation of positive things that I think you rightly highlighted as we try to work on the North Korean issue, I think it is been a perennial issue in this effort that in both countries, in the Republic of Korea and the United States, the effort has become somewhat partisan. And I think because – and this goes to – because I think that any success we are going to have on the denuclearization front, on the inter-Korean reconciliation front, on the overall challenges is a process, and a pretty long process, we need – easy for me to say as a nonpolitician – but we need to try within our own political systems to have a strong bipartisan or even nonpartisan support for it.

I also think while we talk a lot about – and kind of matching up the denuclearization effort with the inter-Korean effort, that has been better in words than in deeds. And we need to find a way to integrate that more. So I am getting into the advice part I guess now. And have a sustainable process, both on the kind of political bipartisan side in both countries where it has been a problem, but also in kind of understanding that this cannot be – and this goes to the alliance as well – purely transactional. Purely – I mean, there is a place and a time for big events. But there is a lot of kind of slow, hard work that has to be done. And there has to be the resilience of not only the alliance but of our own political systems to deal with that.

And my final point would be, we have not really touched on it, but that kind of regional dimension. David certainly mentioned, and rightly, the importance of other alliance relationships, such as Japan and the United States has, and the importance of the
Korea-Japan relationship. But there is that topic called China. And the many anxieties, I think, in the Republic of Korea, maybe about being forced to choose between China and the United States on a whole variety of fronts. And that obviously is the context in which we also have to look at the alliance.

But also, I do not think we are going to get to a sustainable settlement, if you like, on the Korean Peninsula with a kind of – as one of our colleagues sometimes calls it – with after-action drive-by reports to Beijing. We have got to figure out a way to really – even in a very difficult time in our bilateral relationship with China, to bring a more regional and multilateral dimension to our efforts.

MARK LIPPERT

OK. Great stuff, Kathy. We have got about three or four minutes left and about three or four questions from the audience. So I am going to try to give everybody about a minute here. And, Kathy, back to you with this one. You just mentioned China. This really fits neatly with what you just – your recent intervention and analysis.

Does the U.S.-China – this is a student from Yale University. Does the U.S.-China relationship make it harder for Moon Jae-in and the South Korean government to talk to North Korea? And maybe perhaps I would add, what about the linkage between inter-Korean talks and the nuclear program, that I think the Moon administration promulgated early in their tenure?

KATHLEEN STEPHENS

Yeah. Well, I would want to hear from a Korean about the difficulties of the Moon Jae-in government. But I guess my answer
would be, in a word, yes. I think at a time of rising tensions between China and the United States makes certainly diplomacy vis-à-vis North Korea more difficult, but also just more broadly the whole range of issues that Seoul looks at much more difficult.

MARK LIPPERT

OK. Let me go to Haksoon just for a real quick follow up on that. Same question to you, Dr. Paik. The U.S.-China relations in terms of inter-Korean conversations and dialogue.

HAKSOON PAIK

We have been just experiencing all the difficulties just between the United States and Japan on the one side and China and the others on the other side. And even though there is a growing tension and rivalry, I do not think this will continue to the extent we see these days. Election is over. Over in the United States – and China will have to deal with the new government in the United States. And they will just calm down a little bit the benefits of both sides. And this will create a better opportunity for the countries like Korea and others, who are very much seriously hurt by the relentless competition, and particularly verbal attacks from both sides on each other. So I am watching this very closely but looking forward to a better lining – a silver lining after the election in the United States.

MARK LIPPERT

OK. Thank you. Excellent.

Dr. Terry, question for you specifically. Our viewer asked you to answer this question. Essentially, the Bolton book. You just wrote a column about it. They had – the question is scale of one to 10, the Bolton book, especially in terms of its accuracy. I am going to try to try to fill in some of the blanks here. Its accuracy and critiques of negotiations with North Korea.

SUE MI TERRY

I do not question the facts are accurately told from Bolton’s perspective. I do not think he was actively thinking he was going to lie. Now, I am not necessarily –agreeing with Ambassador Bolton’s perspective and views, but I do think his book shows he just took very meticulous notes. So these are the truths, as he sees them. But as a reader, Ambassador Bolton’s viewpoint is very well-known. So I think a smart reader can sort of go through the book and understand about that. But I do not think he was actively making things up, if that is what you are asking.
OK. Absolutely. Great. And we are going to get to this last one. We are over time, but I am going to ask. This is a question directed at the Americans. So it is from a student. And this question is: Can the U.S. ever give up the ROK as an ally? And the student asked – they asked for a realistic not a theoretical answer.

So I am going to – Dave, you are a practitioner. I am just going to ask you not to answer the whole theoretical question, but within the Pentagon each and every day thousands of hardworking men and women in uniform on both sides of the Pacific, as well as the ROK counterparts, are working to make this alliance stronger, as you outlined earlier. Is that a fair – anything you want to say, just about the practical modalities on that question? Since they asked for a realistic answer.

Thanks for that and thanks for that question. And absolutely we are committed to this alliance. It is an alliance that is based not just on a military presence, but it is an alliance that is based on our shared values, our shared democratic political systems, our shared economies. This is something that certainly supports the interests of both nations and the region. So our alliance is strong. And that is something we are going to continue focusing on and make it even better. Over.

All right. Last question – last word to Kathy. Kathy, same question to you. You are a former ambassador, a practitioner, number one. And number two, to this day you work on the alliance from different hats, including the KEI, as well as you are chair of the Korea Society. So same question to you, in a realistic, non-theoretical manner.

Yeah. Well, maybe also on a somewhat personal and emotional matter, I would say if by alliance, we mean the relationship between the people of Korea and the people of the United States, I think it is an incredibly deep thing. And it has deepened beyond my imagination over the 40-plus years that I have been following Korea. And I think all of us kind of feel it. If we mean alliance in terms of the security alliance and how we work together that way, first of all, it is lasted a lot longer than most security/military alliances do. But it will respond to changes in the world.

And in fact, our security alliance does – in 1953 – does envision a world in which there is a different kind of security order in Northeast Asia. So I do not want to send out any tremors there,
but let’s not assume. We are in a state of great flux here. But I think the very deep relationship between our two – again, our shared values, our shared sense of – our shared challenges is going to underpin a very important relationship. But what the future of the security alliance and relationship is I think will depend on the evolution of great-power relationships and also our ability to try to finish the unfinished business in a positive way on the Korean Peninsula in terms of division and suffering.

MARK LIPPERT

OK, excellent way to end. That sets up day two tomorrow of the CSIS-Korea Foundation conference. Tune in tomorrow, 8:00 a.m. Eastern time. What did they say on the old “Batman” show? I am dating myself. “Same bat-time, same bat-channel.” And we really look forward to another day of excellent discussion, excellent deliberations, finding areas where we can work together, finding areas by which – that will do exactly what Kathy said, work on this alliance, make it a dynamic entity that has a bright future for decades to come.

So thanks, everybody. Really appreciate the participants, those who stayed up late in Korea, those who woke up early in the United States, and all the viewers. We apologize we did not get to every question. But that just means more questions, more time for day two. Thanks again
Day 2
Thursday, June 25, 2020
Opening Address

SUMMARY
Ambassador Harris began his Opening Address by commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean War and applauding U.S. and South Korean efforts in forging and maintaining their unique relationship. He discussed South Korea’s successful response to Covid-19 and highlighted the ROK’s support for the U.S. in the battle against the pandemic. Ambassador Harris also emphasized the importance of continuous bilateral initiatives between the U.S. and South Korea in upholding global standards and principles for areas including infrastructure projects, trade, energy, digital business, research, and education. Ambassador Harris concluded his remarks by ensuring U.S. commitment to its allies and encouraging continued regional peace and cooperation.

Transcript (as delivered)
VICTOR CHA
Good morning, everyone, or good evening if you’re in Asia. Welcome to day two of the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020 hosted by the Korea Foundation and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

My name is Victor Cha, senior adviser and Korea Chair here at CSIS, and vice dean and professor at Georgetown University. And we have a great morning of panels lined up for you today. We had a great start yesterday with keynote speeches by the presidents of the two organizations, as well as the first vice foreign minister, to a standing room only crowd of over 16,000 viewers, and so we’re really looking forward to the discussion this morning.

To start us off we have introductory commemorative video celebrating 70 years – today is actually the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War – celebrating 70 years of the alliance that was put together by our senior fellow and colleague, Ambassador Mark Lippert, former U.S. ambassador to Korea.

And then following that video, we will have a short address by the current U.S. ambassador to Korea, Harry Harris, and then we will move directly into our panels being moderated by Anna Fifield of The Washington Post, who is now in China.

So with that, we will move to the start of the program, and thanks again for joining us.
Hi, everyone. Good morning from Seoul, and thank you to Victor and everyone at CSIS for the invitation to speak to you all today. I am sorry that I am not able to join you interactively this morning, and I hope that we will all be able to attend the next conference in person.

This year, we have the privilege of commemorating the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. I have thought long and hard about it and have spoken about it as a struggle that culminated in the victory of democracy over communism, and we see the fruits of that struggle in the present-day Republic of Korea.

As the Washington dwellers know, the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington is inscribed with a plaque that reads, “Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met.”

Seven decades later, I think that those men and women who served here during the Korean War would be amazed and proud of the alliance that we have forged and maintained together, and as we look to the future, I hope that what we do today to sustain and strengthen our alliance is worthy of the sacrifices that they made for us. This audience knows well the remarkable journey of South Korea in these few short decades. It is now known as a world-leading innovation nation and a key anchor in a volatile Asia.

As the ROK has changed and developed over the years, so too has the U.S.-ROK alliance. Like all relationships, we have our highs and lows. But the enduring strength of our alliance can be seen day to day, from our close cooperation in fighting coronavirus to the close coordination of our respective approaches to the DPRK.

The Korean government’s approach on Covid-19 has been lauded, and rightly so, as a global model. The ROK government’s comprehensive testing, detailed tracing and notification, and a robust health care system to treat patients have proven to be effective. There has been no need for a lockdown here because people here lived through and remember SARS, MERS, and other epidemics, and they follow guidelines. They wear masks and they limit social engagements.

In fact, Korean citizens were so confident in their government’s Covid precautions that there was a record voter turnout of over 66 percent in the April 15th National Assembly elections, which produced no Covid spikes afterward. These elections resulted in President Moon’s Democratic Party and its satellite, Citizens’ Party, winning a near super majority – 177 of the 300 seats in the legislature.
This means that President Moon now has a mandate to push his political agenda, for example, increasing social programs and fostering inter-Korea relations, though on the latter, events of this last week have, pointedly, reminded us that it takes two to tango.

Today, Korea is emerging from Covid-19 and is in transition to the new normal of what they call here everyday life quarantine. I spoke last week at a Korean War 70th anniversary art exhibition hosted by the MPVA and Ban Ki-moon in Gwanghwamun Plaza in front of the embassy, and it was all face masks and elbow bumps – you know, the new normal.

Now, can I see a show of hands if there – if this is a new normal where you currently work and live? OK. Now, a show of hands if I am describing a scenario that could not be further from your current reality. Wow. What am I saying? I cannot see a show of hands because this is a prerecorded message. But I am sure there was at least one person out there who raised his or her hand. So thank you. Just making sure you are still with me because I am just getting started.

Now, more than ever, many in the United States are benefitting firsthand from Korea’s successful response to Covid-19. The Korean government donated 2½ million mask to the United States, and Korean churches and companies stepped forward to donate PPE to the United States. You may have seen on Twitter and in the news sister city- and sister province-state relationships have also kicked into high gear, with PPE donations flowing from Kwangju to San Antonio, and Jeollabuk-do to New Jersey and Washington.
On the commercial side, Hyundai developed drive-through testing at 22 hospitals across the United States and is providing vehicles for medical and emergency responders. Kia is producing protective face shields at its West Point, Georgia, facility for U.S. health care providers, and examples abound of ROK business proactively contributing to the health and well-being of the communities in which they live and operate.

As global economies plan their recovery in a post-Covid world, I believe the significant and continuous foreign direct investment by ROK companies in the United States deserves recognition. The Samsung Austin semi-conductor facility, for example, has been a part of the Austin, Texas community since 1997 and they have invested more than $20 billion there, the single largest sustained instance of FDI in American history.

The list goes on and on, with companies like CJ, Hyosung, LG, Hyundai, Kia, et cetera, and the United States needs to look no further than its closest allies and friends as it plans its economic rebound. And this goes both ways. The United States is the largest source of FDI in South Korea. Korean exports have long found an open market in the United States, and we remain the second biggest export destination for quality Korean goods.

Of course, the ROK, like most other economies impacted by Covid, including ours, has work to do for sure. ROK GDP growth in the first quarter of 2020 was minus-1.4, and the second quarter may be even worse. Even so, the ROK leads the OECD as the country with the best growth.

I know that some countries would try to leverage the impact the global pandemic is having on national economies and international supply chains for strategic purposes. But Covid has helped expose the U.S. and, frankly, the global economy’s overreliance on a single-source country supplier, and the administration is working to restructure and remedy unhealthy dependencies.

Undersecretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, the Environment – and everything – Keith Krach is leading this charge from the State Department. We are encouraging the ROK to join the Blue Dot Network, an initiative to bring together governments, the private sector, and civil society to work together to develop quality infrastructure projects. The network will certify infrastructure projects that demonstrate and uphold global infrastructure principles.

By proposing a common standard of project excellence, the Blue Dot Network will attract private capital to infrastructure projects
in developing and emerging economies. We are also increasing efforts to strengthen supply chains by creating the Economic Prosperity Network, a network of networks of trusted partners.

The network will include companies and civil society groups operating under the same set of standards on everything, from digital business, energy, and infrastructure to research, trade, education, and commerce.

As we develop details of the EPN, we will continue to work closely with the ROK on this initiative. I believe if we move quickly and persistently toward a trusted industrial base through a network of friends and allies, including the ROK, the U.S. economy and its strategic supply chain will be in a far better and more secure place than before Covid.

Now, while much of our focus has been diverted to Covid-19, we continue to pursue our key bilateral initiatives. We continue to work at the highest levels toward a fair and equitable defense burden-sharing special measures agreement.

On trade, we are focused on implementing our amended free trade agreement, or KORUS. In 2019, our trade deficit with Korea went up by $2.5 billion to just under 10 billion (dollars), which is suboptimal. Also, for the first quarter of 2020, the goods trade deficit with Korea was 3.9 billion (dollars). Not a good trend. Of course, one thing we must keep in mind is that Covid will continue to affect trade in the remaining quarters.

However, despite lower demand in the U.S., closed factories in Korea, and supply chain disruptions, the good news story here is that U.S. exports actually continue to rise, and, pre-Covid, our bilateral trade numbers were on a four-year increase, reaching a record $172 billion in two-way trade in goods and services in 2019.

Nontariff barriers and Korea-specific standards remain a challenge for U.S. companies operating in Korea. This is the case in big pharma, cloud computing, and data localization, insurance, and so on. As Korea telecom companies deploy their world-leading 5G infrastructure, we will need to work closely together to ensure the highest standards of communications reliability and security to advance our shared interests.
Now, just last week, citing reports that Beijing has threatened to break commitments with the U.K. unless London allows Huawei to build its 5G network, Secretary Pompeo affirmed that America stands with its allies and partners against the CCP’s coercive bullying tactics. The ROK knows better than most countries about such threatening behavior by China. We will have to work closely together to forge a path forward.

Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific remains a priority, particularly in terms of maritime and cybersecurity issues, transparent and fair financing of infrastructure projects, and women’s economic empowerment. We see many opportunities to collaborate with the ROKG in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific.

Where the ROK-Japan relationship is concerned, I have said it before and I will say it again. No important security or economic issue in the region can be addressed without active ROK and Japan involvement, and the Covid-19 pandemic is one more example of that.

And, finally, the DPRK. I am told the panel preceding this one was all about the DPRK so I will be brief. The U.S. remains open to making progress through diplomacy on the goals President Trump and Chairman Kim set at the historic Singapore Summit.

Now, like all of you on today’s call, the embassy team and I are tracking the recent activity at Kaesong, the choice words from Pyongyang, and we remain in close coordination with our ally, the Republic of Korea, on our efforts to engage the DPRK. The United States fully supports the ROK’s efforts on inter-Korean relations and urges the DPRK to refrain from further counterproductive actions.

So, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening to me today. Thank you to CSIS for hosting this virtual conference. Good luck and God bless.

(A video presentation begins.)

VICTOR CHA

The South Korean experience is dramatically different from many of the other countries afflicted by Covid-19. South Korea has just over 10,000 total infections, and even if you scale that up to the population of the United States, they still have vastly less – much less than Italy, much less than Spain, much less than France.

So I think there are a couple of things that South Korea did to reduce the spread of the disease. The first is that they moved very
early. They discovered their first case of a traveler from Wuhan, China, on January 20th, and it took the South Korean officials less than a week after that first case to organize a meeting with 20 pharmaceutical and medical companies to start talking about a public-private sector partnership to increase production of PPE, of medical equipment, of face masks, as well as start a crash production on test kits.

The other thing that South Korea did very early on was declaring a national emergency. They went to code red on the infectious disease alert about one month after they discovered their first case. In the United States, it would take us at least three more weeks before we would declare a national emergency at a time when every day counts.

South Korea also put a lot of emphasis on contact tracing, and they essentially leveraged technology to do this. They used the one piece of technology that every South Korean has, and that is a cell phone.

South Korea is the most penetrated country in terms of cell phone usage per household, and so the government thought it would be useful to put an app on a cell phone such that you could do contact tracing in terms of individuals who were tested positive for Covid-19 and you would also be able to warn other people using the app of the routes or the places visited by a positive case of Covid-19.

When we look at the South Korea case as well as the cases of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, all of whom dealt pretty well with this Covid-19 pandemic, these societies are better prepared for Covid-19 today because of past coronavirus pandemics that they have suffered from.

In Asia, this was SARS in 2003 and it was the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome in 2015. These coronaviruses created this sort of panic that we see in the United States today. So the South Korean response to MERS in 2015 was not good. The government was strongly criticized for being unprepared. The emergency rooms were not ready for a highly contagious pandemic of this nature.

People were scared. They were very scared. But they learned from that. They learned to develop production capacity in terms of PPE as well as other forms of medical equipment to produce test kits very quickly and, most important, they learned about the importance of transparency with the public, providing as much information as possible to the public.
And so I think perhaps the best lesson and perhaps the brightest news, going forward, is as a result of this experience. The United States, I think, is going to be better prepared for the next pandemic. Although the lessons this time are quite severe, we are going to be better prepared for the next pandemic.

(Video presentation ends.)

Session II: Pandemics and the Global Responses

SUMMARY

This session examined the regional and global response to Covid-19 and the geopolitical implications of the pandemic. The panel identified the outbreak of MERS in 2015 as a critical lesson for South Korea to improve its disease control system, allowing South Korea to manage the Covid-19 pandemic through transparent communication and data collection, sufficient preparation of medical infrastructure, and efficient public-private sector partnership. The discussion identified the West’s insufficient experience with pandemics as a primary reason for its unsuccessful response to Covid-19. For the U.S. in particular, the lack of implementation of technology, a fragmented healthcare system, and shortage of local medical capacities contributed to its inadequate response to the pandemic. This session also covered how Covid-19 has influenced economic activities within Asia, potentially causing structural changes in the global value chains, and how Covid-19 might reshape political dynamics and relationships in Asia.

Transcript (as delivered)

ANNOUNCER

Session II, "Pandemics and the Global Responses," examines the current global health crisis and the impact of pandemics on the world. This session will be moderated by Ms. Anna Fifield, Beijing bureau chief at The Washington Post.

Featured panelists include Dr. Chul Chung, Dr. Youngmee Jee, Dr. Victor Cha, and Dr. J. Stephen Morrison.

Audience, please welcome Ms. Anna Fifield.

(Music)
Hello, everybody, and welcome to Panel II of our Pandemics and the Global Responses. I am Anna Fifield from The Washington Post. I have just spent the last three months in my home country of New Zealand, which has almost entirely eliminated coronavirus, and but I am now back in China where I am in a quarantine hotel and having predictable internet problems, which is why you cannot see me. I have had to dial in for this event. So please bear with me as I try to conquer these technological problems. But I think we will have a great session nonetheless with four excellent experts on the subject.

Joining us from South Korea, we have Dr. Youngmee Jee from the Korea Foundation and one of South Korea’s top infectious diseases expert. We also have Dr. Chul Chung from the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, or KIEP. And joining us from CSIS in Washington, D.C., is Victor Cha, the Korea Chair, and Stephen Morrison, the director of Global Health Policy Center.

The subject before us today is a very broad one. We will try to focus it on South Korea’s response to the coronavirus outbreak and compare South Korea’s response and actions with that in the United States. So we will drive the conversation from here for maybe the first half of the session but I will leave plenty of time for questions. So please submit them through the system and I will see them and ask them of the audience.

But to start things off, I will turn to Dr. Jee in South Korea, where South Korea was lauded for its very successful response to the coronavirus at the beginning, the way that it rapidly ramped up to widespread testing and instituted extreme contact tracing, and what for many countries would seem to be radical transparency.

But even for all those initial gains, South Korea has had a few bumps. It is undergoing another second wave at the moment. But, still, nothing like what the United States has been seeing, and this week, obviously, the U.S. has chalked up a very grim new record, recording a new daily high number of cases.

So I would like to start, turning to you, Dr. Jee, to ask you about the South Korean – kind of the way South Korea was prepared for this outbreak. Obviously, it went through SARS, but, most recently in 2015, going through the MERS outbreak, Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome outbreak there. And there was a lot of criticism at that time that South Korea had not been prepared enough for the outbreak and it did not have the right systems in place.
So I was hoping you could talk to us a little bit. You were involved in the MERS response at that time. But talk to us about what South Korea learned from that 2015 epidemic and how it applied those lessons to respond rapidly to coronavirus this year.

YOUNGMEE JEE

Thank you for the question, Anna. As we have seen from the video clip, it is very true that Korea learned a lot from the MERS experience in 2015. So based on those lessons learned from the outbreak of MERS, the government took various actions. Firstly, in terms of governance, Korea CDC was upgraded with new establishment of emergency operations center and also a laboratory analysis center. Those two centers played a significant role in the Covid-19 response.

And, secondly, the emergency use licensing, those allowing the – all the licensing or for production of the kits was the key, and that really made us possible to extend our nationwide laboratory testing from a very early stage.

And next thing I can mention is infrastructure, of course. So we have strengthened infrastructure based on our experience from MERS, so such as negative-pressure room and ventilators – add more – and respiratory triage. Those were prepared. But I still think those are not enough.

So we still have to better prepare for the next peak. And then as you have seen from the videos, we have also enhanced our risk communication based on our experience from MERS. From the period of MERS outbreak, the government was criticized for not sharing the information of affected hospital list with the public.

So we have revised the national infectious disease prevention and control law to allow Korea CDC to collect and share data with development – the institutions and also with the public.

The [South Korean] government handled this crisis without lockdown and with minimum travel restrictions in a very transparent and democratic way, based on extensive testing from a very early stage.

– Youngmee Jee
And in addition to those four factors, I also want to emphasize the importance of public-private partnerships. In many way(s) there were very close partnership(s) among public and private sectors.

So, for example, a community treatment center and a drive-through and walk-through sampling and testing method was proposed – were proposed by private sectors and adopted by the government, and also there was very close collaboration between different ministries. So those different ministries worked together to create a smart tracking system for the epidemiological investigation and also a safety protection app was applied to monitor the quarantined people.

And above all, I want to also emphasize all the actions. The government took actions right after the report from China to WHO at the end of last year. So, in January, the government took many, many actions. So on the 27th of January, as Victor also explained, there was a very important meeting with pharmaceutical companies to discuss the production of a diagnostic kit for the COVID-19 based on the emergency use license. And at that time, we only had four cases. But those actions were very, very critical for the early testing.

In summary, government handled this crisis without lockdown and with minimum travel restrictions in a very transparent and democratic way, based on extensive testing from a very early stage.

I think that will be my summary. Thank you.

ANNA FIFIELD

Yeah. Thank you very much, Dr. Jee.
I think some of these things you have described could be done by any country if they had the political will to do so. But some of them seem specific to Korea with the MERS experience but also just the level of technology in Korea and the way they are able to push the alerts and the information out to people.

But I think one thing that has been very surprising to me and to, I am sure, many people around the world is the way, as you mentioned, the South Korean government has been able to access so much personal data during the course of this, to be able to access cell phone data, credit card usage, security camera footage, all of the – and even GPS records from people’s cars, and all of this kind of stuff would cause a firestorm in many other countries and set off a lot of alarms about privacy.

But in South Korea, there does not seem to have been much concern about that. How can you explain that? Is there just a higher degree of social trust in South Korea? I will ask Dr. Jee again, if you could just, briefly, respond to that. And then I will ask Dr. Chung if he has thoughts on that, too.

YOUNGME JEE

OK. Thank you for the question again.

It is very true that privacy issues should be handled with extreme care and we need to see both sides of public health and privacy. In Korea, MERS outbreak actually triggered government action towards public health side. And, as I mentioned, government was blamed for the – for not sharing the information with the public very quickly and also path of infective cases, that those were really criticized by the public.

Based on that criticism, as I mentioned, the relevant law was amended. So I think there is some misunderstanding on Korea’s policy. This is not really like authoritarian or all centralized government action. The truth is that our policy is based on and is coming from the public demand.

I think there was some consensus from the society to really amend the law to allow Korea CDC to collect data and share with the public. But, still, I think we can refine our law after outbreak is over. We have to really see what we can really do better to protect the privacy of infected individuals.

ANNA FIFIELD

OK.

Dr. Chung, would you agree with that? Is this widely accepted by South Korean people?
CHUL CHUNG  Yeah, I agree. I guess I would like to add a little bit more, maybe. The government and the authority actually sort of revised the degree of showing this information in order to preserve a certain level of the privacy. And I do not know how to say this, but personally I think the trust is the most important thing these days, especially in Korea. And I also suggest the policymakers to consider the social capital and social cohesion based on that trust building in order to, push for some policies, especially in economic policies and trade policies.

ANNA FIFIELD  OK. Great. Thank you.

And, Dr. Cha, do you have anything to add on this privacy subject?

VICTOR CHA  Yeah, Anna. Thanks. I do.

So the first thing is – just a couple things. The first thing is that in terms of the coronavirus experience in Asia, more broadly, this is one instance or one example in world politics where Asia was just so far ahead of the West. Asia, as you know, was so much better prepared for what came with Covid-19 because of the experiences with coronaviruses in the past and, particularly, in Korea, the MERS virus. And Dr. Jee is the real expert on this. I am the novice.

But when I went back and read some of the after action reports of doctors in Hong Kong and in Singapore and in Korea dealing with SARS in 2002, 2003, and MERS in 2015, it was just amazing to read because all of the things that they were talking about that were happening in emergency rooms – absence of PPE, frontline health care workers getting sick, pitching tents in parking lots to create improvised isolation wards – were all the things that we were seeing happening in the United States earlier in the spring. And so they were just better prepared because of the experiences they went through.

I think there were two cases of MERS nationally in the United States in 2015 and maybe a dozen cases – Ebola was the other one. There was dozen cases of Ebola in the entire country, maybe two dozen cases of SARS. So it just did not even move the needle in the United States and, yet, it had a deep searing effect in Asia. Hence, all of the changes that Dr. Jee was talking about.

Second, I think, Anna, you talked about comparing to the United States. I think it is very clear when we look at the Korean response and the U.S. response that the national government or, in our case, the federal government – the national government in
Korea led from the front and not from behind in terms of bringing together. As Dr. Jee said, public and private sector really played sort of a leading role in this, and that has been – I am sure Steve has something say – really been absent in the U.S. case.

And in terms of privacy, I think the interesting thing here and the verdict is not out yet, is that you're right. The government has taken control of a lot of information to ensure access to a lot of information about private citizens. And I think when people look back on this the real question will be: do open democracies like Korea, when they have access to this information for public health and public safety reasons, are they able to provide enough safeguards or self-restrain in a way so that that information is not abused and used in bad ways?

And this may – we may see this question answered directly later after we go through this when the government decides what it will do with all this information that it has available. But as per your initial question, I do not think you can get the levels of social trust that we have been talking about without the provision of the information.

The reason there is no trust here in the United States is because nobody believes the information that they are getting from their political leaders, and the data – it is not being suppressed but the leaders are not drawing attention to it. Whereas in Korea, after MERS and SARS, there was a public demand, as Dr. Jee said, for the government to provide transparent and clear information.

And so the government was mandated with doing that, and when they created the laws to allow for this accumulation of all this information and to provide it to the public, then it became the public's responsibility to comply with social distancing and mitigation efforts.

So I do not think – I guess what I am trying to say I do not think you can get the levels of social trust that you were talking about, Anna, in the question without the government providing the information. So I think trust and the whole question of privacy of information are interconnected in that way.

ANNA FIFIELD

Mmm hmm. Yeah, that is a great point.

I will turn it over now to Stephen Morrison. Stephen, do you think that like Victor said, Asia was really ahead of this and reacting very quickly. But there is nothing particularly Asian about this response, right? Like, why is it that other countries
J. STEPHEN MORRISON

Thank you, Anna. May I just, first, add a remark to what – the discussion on the technology?

ANNA FIFIELD

Please.

J. STEPHEN MORRISON

I think it is important. When you are talking about trust in technology in the case of Asia, I think it is important to emphasize that the bargain that the public has with their government is that there will not be egregious abuse and the bargain is that the payoff for compliance is minimizing the disruption of economies and schooling.

So the public understands what the bargain is, what the compact is, and I think that has been validated and put into legislation and socialized as an idea over the last decade and a half, and I think that historical experience and that cultural and political compact is really fundamental.

And when you have that technology, you are able to put it to great use at the very front end and also when you have outbreaks – cluster outbreaks. What is problematic for the United States and others that did not intervene early and aggressively but intervened sloppily and late is that technology does not really provide a whole lot of benefit for us in that context. Contact tracing in the United States is going to be done by people walking around and getting on the phone and talking to people.

Your question around how did we get such a catastrophe in Europe, Europe is now coming out of this but Europe was very late and fragmented in its responses. In the United States, now Brazil, other Latin American states, and in India as well, we are seeing a rush of cases – as you pointed out, a historic high. The fact that in America 2.3 million people infected and 122,000 dead is just an astonishing fact.

When you’re talking about trust in technology in the case of Asia, I think it’s important to emphasize that the bargain that the public has with their government is that there will not be egregious abuse and the bargain is that the payoff for compliance is minimizing the disruption of economies and schooling. So the public understands what the bargain is, what the compact is, and I think that has been validated and put into legislation and socialized as an idea over the last decade and a half, and I think that historical experience and that cultural and political compact is really fundamental.

– J. Stephen Morrison
So trying to explain why we had such a(n) abdication of responsibility at the highest levels has to do with the nature of this presidency, I believe. But it is not the only factor. Our public health system decayed after the 2008 and 2009 recession, and we disinvested in public health in the 2,800 public health jurisdictions around this country. They lost 56,000 jobs and 25 (percent) to 30 percent of their budgets.

We have a highly fragmented public health system and that has – and we are paying a huge price for that. So this virus has been able to take full advantage of all of our – the weaknesses that have been exposed in our very inadequate health system. It is also targeted those who are poor, those who are of color, and those who are otherwise marginalized and, obviously, it is taken a huge toll on the elderly.

The protections that you might see in other societies were not in place here either, and we have had just enormous toll taken by those who are poor, of color, Black and brown, and those who are poor and those who are elderly or have underlying conditions.

What we are seeing right now, this surge of cases, 36,000, 37,000 yesterday, the highest ever. The other peak we had was April 24th. So we are back into a regressive very furious cycle. It does have to do with increased testing but only around the margins, really. What it has to do with was premature opening.

It has to do with behavioral reversion to complacency and disregard of the guidance, particularly by young people, of the lack of capacity locally. We are seeing this over and over again in
the South and the West – the lack of testing capacity, the lack of ability to isolate, quarantine, and contact trace.

Those capacities that exist in Asia do not exist at a local level, and we are seeing a continued abdication of leadership. Vice President Pence briefed the Senate Republicans in a private session yesterday and misrepresented reality and encouraged them to focus on the positives that are happening in the midst of this wildfire that is raging through over 20 states.

The last thing I would say is that we cannot deny the speed and perniciousness of this virus. This virus is an extraordinary virus. It moves with speed. It is easily concealed. It has delayed impacts, and we have just not been able to build the capacities to manage it.

ANNA FIFIELD Yeah. Yeah. Great. Terrifying just to watch from a distance what is happening there, and obviously, China has really tried to capitalize on the American more bungled response to the coronavirus outbreak there. We have also seen the Trump administration try to use this as part of its broader hostilities with China. There is a real political component there.

But separate from that, turning back to Victor Cha, do you think that Covid will reshape the dynamics and the relationships within Asia itself? Is this going to prompt countries like South Korea and Japan to rethink their relationship or their dependence on China, at least? Or how much is the United States trying to put pressure on its allies in the region to do that?

VICTOR CHA Yeah, it is a great question, Anna.

I would say that the short answer to your question is I think it will put pressure on allies and partners of the United States but not directly as a result of Covid.

And what I mean by that is that while China also has dealt relatively better with the virus, at least later on, than the United States did, there is still lots of questions about a lack of transparency, about their acquiring of information and using an almost dystopian form of contact tracing, and you know better than I – the bar codes. You are sitting in a quarantine hotel right now and probably being – every one of – every movement is being watched in one way or another.

But I think the way it does put pressure on allies is that as you said, Covid-19 has led to a worsening of the relationship...
between the United States and China, not an improvement to the relationship between the United States and China. And in almost every piece of writing in this field as well as in the international relations field prior to Covid-19, the arguments were that when we have transnational pandemics like this, this is where countries should come together because this virus does not know borders, that we should be coming together whether it is with regard to contact tracing, travel guidelines, a vaccine, that we should be working together. And, if anything, it is just pulled us apart.

And the way that puts pressure on other countries is that we increasingly see more situations where the lead power in the international system and the rising power are putting countries like Korea and others in what I call binary choice situations where they must make choices because both powers are asking them to take one side or another. And we have not seen that so much on Covid but we, certainly, have seen it on other issues like 5G, Blue Dot Network, EPN, Hong Kong.

There are a whole variety of issues. The reason I think this is new and different is that in the past there were isolated cases in which countries like Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, might have – there were isolated cases where they might have been asked by the United States to take one position and by China to take another.

But we are seeing that more and more now in a lot of the choices that are being put to these countries, which put them in a really difficult position because for many of them their top security partner is the United States and their top trading partner is China.

And so I would say what Covid has done and what the mutual recriminations between Washington and Beijing over Covid has done, has only widened that gap and fueled the inclination on both sides in Washington and Beijing to put pressure on countries to take zero-sum choices. It is either us or them, and that is both perplexing and dangerous for all of these other countries.

ANNA FIFIELD

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. The political side is as you describe and then the diplomatic side of it is still playing out. But I guess the fears are building, and I will turn to Dr. Chung now about the economic impacts that this is going to have on the global economy. But, we are already seeing it in China, where all of this started.

And so, Dr. Chung, can you talk a little bit about how severe you think this economic impact is going to be, starting in Asia? We already have seen it is not just the supply chain disruptions,
which have been enormous, but there in South Korea, that is so reliant on Chinese tourism more and more and Chinese business and general trade, how South Korea is dealing with this. And how do you think China's biggest trading partners in general might respond? Is this going to encourage more diversification away from China in trading relationships?

CHUL CHUNG

Yeah. Thank you, Anna. That is a great question.

As you may know, there was an incident of the automobile industry, the wiring harness that is a part for the automobile manufacturing, that through the pandemic there was the supply disruption coming from China. So some of those – the automobile industry plants had to shut down for some time.

But I guess the more problem to this automobile industry, for example, is the weak demand and the big drop in the production, especially for Korean manufacturers. The exports dropped a lot. In May, for example, 57 percent decrease compared to last year, and the overseas production dropped by 36 percent until May this year compared to the last year.

So because of the protectionism and deglobalization and the pandemic, I think that there are some structural changes in the global value chains in the supply chain. Even before the pandemic, though, the supply chain shortening actually was a trend, and also the global value chains becoming more of the regional value chains. For example, the USMCA highlighting and tightening the rules of origin, so leading to more concentration of production activity in the United States or in North America. So they will actually bring some demand for the restructuring of the value chains for the companies and the firms across the world.

I think some of those answers for the Korean manufacturing firms is to diversify the supply chains and also going for the safer supply chain, so that they can reduce and minimize the disruption coming from some other crisis.

I think there was some trouble in terms of the demand and the activities in tourism and especially the services industry. I think the situation is more serious because the services are different from the manufacturing because manufacturing can be temporarily distributed, meaning that maybe there was a decrease in demand and production, but we can come back later and then make up for that.
But the services are very much time dependent and foregone services are usually very difficult to recover. That is why the tourism and the service industry actually suffer more. For example, these days we call it the revenge consumption, meaning that we have to be social distanced and also some countries had some lockdowns, so after that severe period some of those consumers come out and consume more.

But, yet, there is a limitation to that revenge consumption, especially for the services. I think right now, Chinese tourists do not come as much – as many as before and it is more serious than the case of the THAAD, a few years ago in 2017.

But since the Koreans cannot go abroad, I guess the Korean tourists actually replaced some of those Chinese and the foreign tourists domestically. But I guess the cross-country tourism actually is suffering a lot, and I think there should be some more collaboration. And that actually will have to do with some solutions to the health crisis.

Yeah. Great. I love that idea of revenge consumption. I did a fair bit of revenge consuming in New Zealand once we came out of lockdown there. So, yeah. We will see.

But just to go back to a point that Dr. Cha made before about binary choices, I think one of the places where this is playing out is in the WHO. So, as Stephen Morrison detailed, China, obviously, is trying to assert more and more influence over the WHO and fill the vacuum left by the United States during – this was the result of this coronavirus outbreak. How concerned should we be about this? How concerned are you about this? And what can be done about it, if anything?
Well, I am deeply disturbed by the actions taken by the Trump administration to withdraw membership and end funding. That is a dangerous and reckless decision, coming in the middle of this pandemic. This opens the door for expanded Chinese influence.

We saw this at the World Health Assembly where President Xi appeared remotely and spoke and pledged $2 billion – it is still to be determined what that means – but also pledged cooperation on the dissemination of a safe and effective vaccine, but, obviously, did not want to really discuss the realities of what happened late last year and earlier this year in terms of the stumbles or the concealment and other measures which accounted for the spread in this period.

So we shall see if they follow through if China follows through with those commitments. I do not think that having China play a bigger role in the World Health Organization is, by definition, a bad thing. People have been pressing China for many years to make a much stronger commitment than it currently does in terms of its financial pledges and the like.

I think that, certainly, if Vice President Biden is elected president in November there will be a reversal of the WHO decision early next year and the United States will resume a strong leadership position there.

OK. Yeah. Just picking up on what you said about the vaccine there, obviously, there are many countries around the world racing to try to develop a vaccine for the coronavirus and this has turned into yet another kind of geopolitical competition between the United States and China there.

Is it a bad thing, Dr. Morrison, to have a race like this? Like, could it be a good thing if various countries are making vaccines at the same time?

Well, I do not think there should be any surprise that there is a race underway, given the gravity of what has happened to this entire planet and the need for safe and effective vaccines in order to get out from underneath the consequences, the economic and health consequences, of these dual crises.

You are right. There is a race. The fact that the U.S. and China are in a very conspicuous escalating confrontation that has become so conspiratorial and so prone to recriminations, and now we have slurs like Kung flu being used on the campaign trail with
great regularity and the like, this is feeding this notion that the United States and China want to be the first to come forward with a safe and effective vaccine.

Both countries are putting very substantial sums into the candidates that they favor. There are 183 vaccines under development. There are about 14 that the U.S. is looking at very closely and we have made huge bets with five major firms – well, one modest biotech and four global firms. The Chinese are operating with their candidates, but there are many others out there under development.

The question here is will the decision – will institutions be bent to political prerogatives in order to make judgments prematurely around the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and will the best vaccine be chosen without nationalist calculations entering that, because we have got so many candidates out there and there is no mechanism at the moment that is out there, no method of coordination, coherent and reliable coordination yet, that would help put a dialogue together. This U.S.-China strategic confrontation has, basically, pushed things in the direction opposed to coordination and that confrontation has paralyzed the Security Council.

So we need to ask ourselves how are we going to move beyond that towards some level of coordination. I think you are seeing many of the big global firms beginning to cut deals with the high-income countries. They are beginning to make some commitments on low-income countries through the Gavi Alliance. But it is totally unclear what happens with middle-income and lower-middle-income countries what sort of access will they have.

YOUNGMEE JEE So, Anna, can I add some comments?

VICTOR CHA Please go ahead.

YOUNGMEE JEE So it is true that there is a real race for the vaccine development. But I think there should be because – (laughter) – even though there are – you mentioned 186 under development, you do not really know at the end how many will succeed. So there should be a lot of efforts to really develop vaccines.

And you mentioned about no coordination of the vaccine development. But, in fact, there are some efforts to coordinate
the vaccine development among different countries and developers by WHO, and I am a member of those team for the R&D blueprint for the vaccine development. So if you see the website of WHO, there is real update of the clinical trials for the vaccine development by different countries and developers.

And as you mentioned, there was a global vaccine summit, I think, three weeks ago, participated also by U.S. and Korea and many other countries, also WHO and Gavi and some other global health partners, pledging for the vaccine access to low- and middle-income countries. And I do hope that pledge will be really practiced so that not only rich countries then but also low- and middle-income countries have access to those vaccine(s).

But I want to emphasize that there is some efforts also by U.S. NIH. U.S. NIH is really the partner of WHO. They are working very closely for the international solidarity clinical trial for vaccines.

Thank you very much, Dr. Jee. I am sorry I dropped out of the call. Thank you for taking over there.

So we have got some good questions coming through from the audience now. If you do have questions, please do submit them and I will ask them to the panelists. We have two very similar ones that are – and great questions – that have come from Wanggi Jung (ph) at CSIS and Justin Rhee at The Heritage Foundation, both concerning what happens with all of the data and surveillance after the coronavirus crisis has passed, and what guidelines are in place in South Korea for returning to normal in terms of privacy when the world overcomes COVID. That is a question from Justin Rhee. And then from Wanggi Jung (ph) at CSIS, he has asked: Will this kind of tech use become the new normal for public health in Asia after coronavirus?

So, Dr. Jee, I will turn that over to you.

I actually did not catch your question very clearly. Can you repeat your question to me?

Yeah. I am sorry about that. Basically, what provisions are in place to deal with all of this data and information that the South Korean government has collected from people during the coronavirus outbreak? How will it be disposed of or has it been discussed there how this will be treated, and how these systems will be unrolled?
YOUNGMEE JEE

So I think all those data are only used by the limited people in Korea CDC only. So all the other parties involved in collecting data will only send those data to Korea CDC, and only limited number of people will have access. And after certain period, I think that all those data will be destroyed. So I think with also the tracking system introduced in March, those data is more safer because automatically those data are diminished by the database, which is only accessible by limited number of Korea CDC staff.

VICTOR CHA

Anna, can I just add to this?

ANNA FIFIELD

Please do.

VICTOR CHA

I think it is an important question. And I agree with what Dr. Jee said. The only thing I would add is that it is actually very important that the government and the health authorities are also transparent about what they are going to do with all of this data, once we move out of this virus or move out of sort of the crisis situation with this virus because, again, it goes back to this whole question of trust. I think right now what you are seeing in places like Korea that you do not see in the United States is a virtual cycle between, civic trust and obligation to civic responsibility and civic trust, that is tied with transparency of information. And if there is growing distrust of what the authorities are doing with all of that data, that will then break that virtuous cycle again. So it is actually a very important question. And it is on the backend of this crisis, but it is what will enable Korea to be able to respond to the next coronavirus pandemic more effectively, as long as that virtual cycle is not broken.

ANNA FIFIELD

Yeah, the very important question, and one that is certainly on my mind because here in China, there has been a lot of surveillance, that has been rolled out, even more than usual, as a result of this virus. And I think it is definitely not going away once the virus is under control. It is here to stay and very worrying from a Chinese perspective.

We will turn to another question here that has been submitted by Millie Kim from Georgetown University. I will address this to Dr. Morrison. How do you believe the election has affected the U.S. response to Covid-19, if in any way? And how may the U.S. pandemic response play out as we get closer to the election? Has public health become a bipartisan issue in the United States?
That is a huge question, a very important one. I think it is pretty clear that the president is very worried about the state of the pandemic and the economic consequences as being very disruptive to his prospects for reelection. And to that degree, it has skewed the sentiment of putting a very positive spin on what is happening. We have seen the dismantling of the taskforce. The taskforce is no longer a daily event, the White House taskforce.

So we have moved beyond – in a way, moved beyond the kind of in-depth, detailed daily discussion around the pandemic. And the preference has been to not talk about it, and to have things like the president’s interview in The Wall Street Journal, and the Vice President Pence’s statement, or his op-ed in The Wall Street Journal. These are becoming campaign devices in trying to put a very positive spin on what is happening in the pandemic.

On the other side of the equation, Vice President Biden has been very tough in his campaign ads, focusing upon the failures of the Trump administration, in his view. And has come up with a plan in terms of all of the sorts of things. The expectation is that whoever wins will still face a great crisis in January that will be front and center before the next government.

Thank you. I am very pleased to see someone else has asked this question because obviously it is one that I want to ask as well, and it relates to North Korea. And so North Korea has famously said that it has no cases of coronavirus. I think nobody believes that. We have had China come out saying that they have passed assistance to North Korea. We have seen pictures coming out of North Korea of people in face masks. So the question here is, is Covid-19 different from previous disasters that North Korea has had to face? How has this virus affected North Korea, its leadership, and the elite? Does Pyongyang face significant regime instability as a result of Covid-19? And it maybe for the first part, how has the virus affected North Korea?

Dr. Jee, do you have any information about that? How wide has the outbreak been inside North Korea? That was for Dr. Jee.

(Off mic) – anyone here has any information on North Korea situation for Covid-19. But I do hope one thing, actually. I mentioned this during some meeting with vice minister of foreign affairs here in Korea. So North Korea belongs to another WHO region, which is Southeast Asia region, because of political reason. And South Korea belongs to Western Pacific region,
together with China and Japan. So if North Korea can be part of WHO Western Pacific region, it will be much easier for us to have some data. And also, China is part of this Western Pacific region, so it will be also much easier for China to collaborate. Anyway, they will collaborate with North Korea, but officially also it would be good to collaborate between China and North Korea, if North Korea and South Korea belong to the same WHO regions. So that was one of my hope.

ANNA FIFIELD

OK. Thank you. Sorry to put you on the spot with that one.

Victor, do you have any information about how serious this has been for North Korea, and how much different from previous disasters that it has faced?

VICTOR CHA

First, let me just reinforce Dr. Jee’s point about data. It would be very helpful if countries – members of the WHO who are more friendly to North Korea were able to gather some data about what is going on inside of North Korea. Whether countries in Southeast Asia that would be very important right now.

So this is different, and it is not different. It is certainly different in the sense that the virus itself, as Steve said, is pernicious. It is incredibly different. As I think many listeners are aware, North Korea does not have a public health infrastructure capable of dealing with this. And because of the virus’ origins, if there was one country that could have a virus that would be most dangerous to North Korea, it would be what emerged in China, because of the unique relationship between China and North Korea. So in that sense, it makes it different.

It is not different in the way North Korea has responded, in the sense that they publicly have stated that they have no confirmed cases. They say that it is not a problem for them. But at the same time, they have pivoted from that very public statement of strength to reach out quietly to the NGO community, to others, for help. And I say that is not different because when you look at North Korea’s response to MERS, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, SARS, and Ebola, they had exactly the same response, which was to declare publicly everything is fine but privately their asking for help indicated that the virus had entered their country.

We know that some suppliers are getting into North Korea overland at the Dandong-Sinuiju border and the water route from Dalian to Nampo, but it is very limited due to the quarantines on both sides. There is a carve out in the U.N. sanctions regime
Dr. Victor Cha answers a question from the audience on how Covid-19 has affected North Korea.

for humanitarian assistance that is being used for Covid, PPE, and other things to send to North Korea. But there is still lots of unknowns. Kim Jong-un, Anna, as you know well, has not been visible very much in 2020, from the spring of 2020 and summer. His sister has played a much more prominent role in the recent interactions with South Korea and with the United States.

And I have seen some analysts that have speculated that this could be a function of Covid concerns. That is why he has been seen on the western part of the country and not in the capital city. So as always is the case with North Korea, there is more that we do not know than we know. But looking at sort of the nature of this pandemic and the public health system in North Korea, it is a big source of concern.

Can I just add a remark here, Anna?

Sure.

Just a couple things. One is that U.N. personnel who were outside of the county because of the holiday earlier in the year have had great difficulty getting back. So I think that in terms of UNICEF and WHO, WFP presence is pretty thin. And that has been problematic. WFP’s lately been making noises that the malnutrition, which is already acute within the rural populations, has worsened. And that is probably a reflection of the border – the closure of the trade with China in this period. We have – as everyone has said – we have no data on case counts or mortality around Covid-19. But we do have evidence of deteriorating
malnutrition status. The other interesting thing is that schools have reopened, and quarantining has been relaxed somewhat on the foreigners. Which I take that to be some indication of a sense of lessening of the threat of Covid-19. Thank you.

ANNA FIFIELD

OK. Thank you very much.

We do need to wrap up. I have one more question, though, that has been on my mind. And I would like to give this to Dr. Chung to finish this session. I just wanted to ask Dr. Chung, South Koreans are famous for – or infamous for working extremely long hours and having a workaholic culture. But now out of necessity many people have been forced to work from home for at least some of the time during the outbreak. So do you think that this could finally force some kind of change in South Korean working culture? Or am I being too optimistic?

CHUL CHUNG

Yeah, that is a great question. I think the workaholic Koreans, maybe my father’s generation it worked maybe, and then to a certain degree my generation. But the younger generation actually values the balance between the work and life and leisure. I know that my father’s generation usually – we had this one week like, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Friday. There was no weekend. But in Korea there is the 52-hour week already before the Covid-19.

But with the pandemic, together with the new technology, will accelerate transformation into this type of economy, meaning that there is going to be a huge change indeed in the work environment and the labor market situation. And I think, as you mentioned, that the working at home or some other ways of working environment will bring some more flexibility to the labor market. I think that is something that we are going to see after this post-corona situation.

One thing I would like to add from economic side was on the coordination of vaccine. Even if a vaccine is developed one concern is that because of this pandemic there is a huge increase in the export restrictions. Before the pandemic the protectionism was usually against the imports – restricting imports from other countries. But this time it is the export restrictions on medical supplies and food. I think that is going to actually harm those in – especially in the developing countries or some countries like North Korea. That is going to have a big impact on the inequality as well. And it is not going to help to tackle this health crisis. So
Session III: Over the Horizon: The Future of U.S.-ROK Alliance

SUMMARY

This session focused on how to strengthen the ROK-U.S. alliance to respond to changing regional and technological developments. The panel highlighted that the U.S.-Korea alliance currently lacks the ability to address the China issue effectively and that the allies need to recognize and address more fully this gap in the relationship. The session identified the need for the U.S. and Korea to cooperate in new domains such as cyber and space to “modernize” the alliance. The panel also emphasized the importance of having a shared sense of direction and vision for the future of the alliance.

Transcript (as delivered)

ANNOUNCER

Session III, “Over-the-Horizon: The Future of U.S.-ROK Alliance,” features a discussion on what opportunities the U.S.-ROK alliance may collaborate on in the 21st century that promote the strength of the alliance, regional stability, and global welfare. This session will be moderated by Dr. Young-Kwan Yoon, professor emeritus at the Seoul National University, and former minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Korea. This session will feature Dr. Nohyoung Park, Mr. Yunju Ko, Dr. Michael Green, and Mr. Randall Schriver. Audience, please welcome Dr. Young-kwan Yoon.
It is my great pleasure to moderate Session III of ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020. Hello, I am Young-Kwan Yoon, professor emeritus at Seoul National University. Thank you very much for watching or participating in this very timely and important conference.

It is my great pleasure to moderate Session III of the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2020, which was organized by the Korea Foundation and the CSIS. For our discussion today on security matters and the future of the ROK-U.S. alliance, we have very distinguished four panelists. Each of them needs no further introduction, and all of them have very extensive working experience in the field for a long time, as a – as a practitioner or a researcher, contributing much to the development of the U.S.-ROK alliance. We had a wonderful discussion on security matters yesterday in Session I. It covered various issues, like the history and the current state of ROK-U.S. alliance and the matters related to the security and peace on the Korean Peninsula, including the North Korean nuclear issues.

Since it covered much of the current state of the U.S.-ROK alliance I hope in this session, Session III, we focus on the future of the ROK-U.S. alliance, thinking about how we can upgrade and modernize our alliance so that it can fit better to the changing international situation. As many would agree, I think the ROK-U.S. alliance has been successful in the last seven decades. It provided security which was the most important necessary condition for economic development and democracy in South Korea. Of course, there are sometimes ups and downs in the government-to-government relations between to states, but we
have overcome all those difficulties and the alliance successfully promoted shared values and mutual interest.

It started from – it originally started from the security-focused alliance in the early 1950s in order to deter the North Korean military threat. But it gradually developed into a comprehensive globally oriented partnership which covers political, economic, diplomatic, and cultural cooperation. So now I would like to invite your views on how to upgrade and modernize our alliance. I know it is a rather broad subject, but what comes first in your mind when you think about this issue? First, I would like to turn the mic to Professor Park Nohyoung.

NOHYOUNG PARK

Thank you, Professor Yoon.

My idea is rather simple. There is a need for the ordinary people to have a good understanding of the alliance between the ROK and the U.S. For this purpose, the people of both countries need to be educated on the historical context of the creation of the alliance to secure peace on the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the role of the alliance for the two countries should be refined to cope with newly changed domestic and regional and international geopolitical situations. For example, one of the touchstones for operating and modernizing the alliance should be in how to cooperate in and through cyberspace, which was not found when the mutual defense treaty between the ROK and the U.S. was concluded in 1953. The alliance of the two countries should be fully extended to cyberspace, which is now becoming a paramount platform for the global society. I would like to speak more on cybersecurity cooperation later in this session. Thank you.

YOUNG-KWAN YOON

Professor Park, I think that you have made a very important point, especially your point that we need to try to refine or redefine the role of the alliance for both allies from a long-term perspective. But I sometime get the impression that both governments are always too busy to think from a long-term perspective for defining or redefining the alliance. So I think we need to consider and try to refine our alliance from a long-term perspective rather than spending most of the time focusing on immediate concerns or immediate challenges. Thank you very much.

Next, Professor Michael Green, senior vice president of the CSIS for Asia and Japan chair.
MICHAEL J. GREEN

Thank you, Professor Yoon. It is a real privilege to be on this panel led by you. And I also want to take this moment to thank you for all the scholarship you have brought to our alliance and leadership you have brought as foreign minister at a really critical turning point, when I was in the White House with Victor and you were in Seoul, providing real guidance for us all, as you are on this panel.

So I think that Professor Park makes a very good point about informing the public, engaging the public. We have vibrant democracies, and it is critical that we maintain bipartisan support for our alliance and also inclusion and discussion with a younger generation, which is why the very large audience for this forum is so encouraging. There is some good news in U.S. public opinion polls. Support for the U.S.-ROK alliance is at historic highs. When Americans are asked, “Should we defend Korea?” two thirds generally say yes, which is quite high – higher than NATO. And among Millennials and Generation X and Z, younger Americans in their 20s, support for the alliance is even higher.

So that is a good base upon which to build, but I think Professor Park’s point is well taken. I also think we have to continue obviously modernizing deterrence vis-à-vis North Korea. And we have some real challenges bilaterally. The SME negotiations are extremely contentious and threatening in some ways to our political consensus in both countries. But I have confidence we will do well because we have faced these challenges before. We have been able to adjust. In the 1990s when I first worked in the Pentagon with Randy Schriver at the time, we had to deal with the new scenario of instability in North Korea. And we developed joint planning and worked it together. And then 10 years ago we had to work with the new provocations after the Cheonan incident and Yeonpyeong. And we came up with a counter-provocation plan.

I have worked on alliances with Japan, with Australia. The Combined Force Command – this joint and combined relationship is a treasure and an asset that has allowed us to modernize our planning and our operational relationships. And I think we will be able to do it. So we have done well, and I think we will keep doing well, modernizing despite challenges deterrence towards North Korea. And in recent years, we have

We need to consider and try to refine our alliance from a long-term perspective rather than spending most of the time focusing on immediate concerns or immediate challenges.

— Young-kwan Yoon
done very well on building a global alliance around G-20, the aid effectiveness summits, the nuclear summit, and so many areas. The gap, and it is increasingly a geopolitical and political problem, the gap is regional security. This is the donut hole in our alliance, the area which we are not talking about.

If this were a conference on NATO, if this were a conference on Australia-U.S. alliance, Japan, even the U.S.-India partnership, there would be a panel dedicated entire to China. And in the U.S.-Korea relationship right now, we just do not have the ability to talk about the China problem effectively, despite our strong deterrence cooperation on the peninsula and our global cooperation. And Victor and others pointed out that this is a growing problem for countries like Korea that have deep economic relationships with China. But the trend lines elsewhere are pretty clear. Australia is taking a harder line on China. The new poll that came out yesterday from the Lowy Institute shows a 30-point drop in Australian trust in China. The European Union has declared that they are in systemic competition with China. The Halifax Forum for the transatlantic relationship is focusing on China in its next annual meeting.

I do not agree with speakers yesterday who said this is all because Trump is hardline on China. There are aspects of the Trump administration’s rhetoric and approach to China that I think are too simplistic, too overdone. But if Biden becomes president, there will be a continuation of strategic competition with China and policies with alliances to deal with it. So I think that is the area where we have to modernize. Now, this does not mean – you will remember, Professor Yoon, when we were in the government Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld pressed Korea very hard to agree
to strategic flexibility to the use of U.S. forces for contingencies off-Peninsula, which could involve China, obviously. And President Bush intervened and said: No, that is asking too much.

I do not think that strategic cooperation on Asia and on stability in Asia, and on the China question means that we immediately go to high-end warfighting scenarios. The really critical work is in the peacetime shaping missions. How do we convince China not to engage in coercive behavior? How do we network alliances? How do we work together? And that is a reasonable agenda we should talk about. And I can say more in our next round.

I will just conclude by saying it is ironic, because at the beginning of our alliance 70 years ago the U.S. was afraid of Syngman Rhee because Syngman Rhee wanted to create a collective security arrangement in Asia. And the U.S. did not want to be entrapped in a war with China by the Korean government. Today we have switched places. The U.S. is moving towards more collective cooperation in Asia, and it is the government in Seoul that is worried about being entrapped in a conflict with China.

But I do think there are ways we can – we can manage this so that we are not putting Korea in a difficult position. And I worry that if we do not, the U.S.-Korea alliance will be much weaker, even if we are strong on deterring North Korea. Even if we are strong in global. If we cannot handle regional issues we are going to have a problem down the road. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mike, for your excellent review of the history of bilateral alliance in the last several decades. And you also rightly pointed out the importance of the U.S.-ROK incorporation on the global issues, especially building a norm-based international order. Many, I guess, policymakers and professionals and thinkers of foreign policy in this country agree with the necessity to cooperation on how to build a norm-based international order in the future. The problem seems to be that we have a unique – very unique geopolitical dilemma, which is North Korea. And all those countries who are more cooperative in discussing this matter with the United States, they do not have some problems like North Korea. They are not divided at all, like Korea. So my question to you is, will there be any other things that the United States can help South Korea to overcome that kind of unique geopolitical dilemma?
So I will go into detail later if you like on some specific policy areas where we can cooperate, but I do think that the United States has to be – and the administration now – has to be much more sensitive to the unique situation of each ally. India is not an ally, but it is a partner we want to work with. India has a nonalignment tradition that we have to understand. The Korean government has to do with North Korea, as you said. And I think we should not have a one-size fits all approach to shaping the regional environment, dealing with China. I think we should have a menu that countries can pick from and show some flexibility and agility. And I can go into some of those areas, but they are not necessarily military.

But I would make another point, if I could, Young-Kwan. Yes, Korea has a problem because of North Korea, and Korea needs Chinese pressure on North Korea, Chinese help with the North Korea problem. But I would argue, and I think many Americans see it this way, that if China thinks that Korea is afraid to align more closely with other U.S. allies across Asia, and if South Korea is afraid to stand up to China, is afraid to take a strong stance for the alliance with the U.S., then China is going to be much less likely to be helpful on the North Korea problem.

If China thinks that it can drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington, then China is going to wait and try to weaken the U.S.-Korea alliance, and isolate South Korea, and not take action against North Korea. But if China thinks that its actions, its behavior is causing the U.S., Korea, and Japan to cooperate more, Korea to do more in regional security than it has, then I think China is going to be under much greater pressure for geopolitical reasons to do something about North Korea.

But if they feel like this tide of history is going to allow them to watch the U.S.-Korea alliance get weaker as China’s power rises, they will be less likely. Beijing will be less likely to be helpful on North Korea. They have to be faced with a circumstance that forces choices. And that is not what we have right now. What we have right now is a situation where China views the U.S.-Korea alliance – and views it as favorable in terms of the trajectory. And that makes China less willing to help us on North Korea.

So I would take the conundrum you are describing and turn it around and say precisely because we need China’s help on North Korea we should be aligned more than we have been on the China issue. Not for warfighting, not for anything like that, but in diplomatic and in values terms, as you put it.
Thank you very much for your insights. And next our speaker is Director-General Ko Yunju. He is director-general of the American affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Director-General Ko.

Yes, thank you, Dr. Yoon. And then I am very pleased and honored to have this discussion with the very distinguished scholars over the video. So and then I share with what Dr. Yoon said about our alliance, how the alliance evolved, and then so far. And I am not going to talk about – in details about the current challenging issues in the regional context that Dr. Michael Green raised. I think the result of that kind of session for tomorrow’s session. I think that this more a proper session, that I can see.

Today at this time I would like focus more on the kind of general description of how well we – or what the future of the alliance should go. And in that context, I think my question lies, how to see the future direction of the alliance? I think this kind of question is the everyday question that have to deal with my colleagues and when I am working on American issues.

I think when it comes to my core assumption or core essence of the future direction of the alliance is to enhance – further enhance our alliance partnership. That is my assumption and my essence of that efforts that Korean government is, of course, moving forward the alliance for future. So in that context, when it comes to the partnership for peace and security of the Korean Peninsula, if we look at the alliance direction for future, I believe everybody agree that Korea should play a leading role in those issues, in the Korean Peninsula issues, especially for the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula.

This is a kind of one direction that we have to pursue as alliance for the better partnership on that issue. So in that context, I think I would like to mention briefly about the OPCON transition that currently we are undergoing. As you know, the conditions-based OPCON transition was agreed between two governments in 2015 November, SCM meeting between two defense ministers. And then follow on, when the President Moon administration is sworn in in 2017, both governments agreed to facilitate those process for the OPCON – conditions based OPCON transition.

So far we finished the initial operation capability assessment last year. And then this year we are trying to help second stage of the combined forces assessment for full operation capabilities. I think that is not scheduled yet, but I believe both depends, you know,
the ministries will agree on that kind of assessment process later this year. And then based on the OPCON transition, you can see our defense budget increase every year: 7.5 percent on every, since 2017, and accounting for 2.6 percent of GDP for our defense. This is, I think, much more than the average of Japan and the other – the European countries.

And also based on the OPCON conditions, the conditions change a lot. There is a core capabilities of the Korean military, which can play a leading role in defense of a combined posture and also alliance combined defense posture that can fend off North Korean nuclear missile threats. And those kinds of conditions requires our spending on the military budget, and also on purchasing the weaponry systems. But mainly, our government is purchasing a huge amount of the United States weapons systems, which can contribute to our defense – the combined defense posture by increasing interoperability of the weaponry systems.

So those are the kind of things that the enhanced partnership for the leading role of the Korean – on the Korean Peninsula issue. That is one area where we can enhance our partnership. The other area that I can see is more related to the cooperation beyond the Korean Peninsula. I think in that case the United States had an Indo-Pacific Strategy. Korea have a New Southern Policy. So two presidents, when they met on June last year, our president mentioned that the Korean government is pursuing harmonious cooperation between two initiatives. Our New Southern Policy and the United States Indo-Pacific Strategy.
Based on that statement, we, the two government officials, followed up those statements, and we adopted a joint fact sheet on the cooperation between New Southern Policy and Indo-Pacific Strategy last November. Also, we adopted a joint statement for that cooperation.

This year our working-level officials continue to consult, to devise the mechanism and coordinate the joint project that can contribute to the capacity building in the ASEAN countries. This is the one area that we can enhance partnership for the future alliance. That partnership goes beyond the Korean Peninsula. This is one area that I can tell you. And more specifically, I would like to mention two areas – two specific areas that we can – our alliance can cooperate for future.

One is global health security. Global health security requires the openness and transparency because, as we have seen, the Covid-19 response. Everybody speaks highly of the Korean government’s response to COVID-19. Why they praised the Korean government response is that Korean government’s policy or response is highly based on the transparency and openness and the democracy. Those kinds of principles and values the United States and Korea are sharing together.

An alliance which can handle, tackle the pandemic very effectively, because the alliance is based on trust and partnership. And those pandemic issues requires the international world very faithful trust. So in that sense, I think the global health security is one specific area of future cooperation between Korea and the United States. And the two governments show the – a lot of good practices. When we addressed the Covid-19 cases, we shared a lot of information – detailed information. And also we helped each other for personal protective equipment. And also we helped each other testing kits, and many things.

So based on those practices, we can develop the international governance system of global health security. I think that is one specific area that we can work together. And the other one is that I believe the space industry. Space area is very much a promising area of cooperation for two countries because, as I said before, alliance requires – or, is based on the strong trust for each other. So usually so far the space issue is very much related to the sensitive technology. So the United States have very strong bilateral and global nonproliferation policies regarding the space development of technologies.
So those kind of nonproliferation policies are kind of becoming an obstacle for Korea to engage with the cooperation with the United States. So since we have seen over more than 67 years of alliance, we have evolved our alliance into the future oriented cooperation. In the case of space, it is the one area that — every time we have a presidential meeting, there is a joint statement. Every time in the joint statement we mentioned about the space, the cooperation as a new frontier of our alliance operations. So I think this is a time for us to move forward with the space industry cooperation for the future new frontier of the alliance. I think let me stop here, and then I look forward to our following discussions. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Director-General Ko, for succinctly explaining Korean government’s vision for the ROK-U.S. alliance for the future. After listening to your presentation, let me focus on one specific issue, which I think is probably more important issues than any other. That is the transition of wartime OPCON, I mean, wartime operational control issue.

Please correct me if I am wrong. I have got a general impression that there are two conflicting things here. One is Korean government’s desire to be an equal partner and take a more active role in providing security to the Korean Peninsula. On the other hand it takes time to prepare conditions for transition of the OPCON – wartime OPCON. And these two things seem to conflict in some sense. And I am wondering whether we can find an optimal balance between these two governments, the United States and South Korea.

And our next speaker is a former assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, Mr. Randall Schriver. Please.

Yes. Good morning to my colleagues in the United States. Good evening to friends in Korea. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this forum again. So thank you to CSIS and the Korean Foundation.

Good news and bad news. The good news is I agree with just about everything Dr. Green said, which makes me feel confident that I am on the right track, as he is probably the greatest strategic thinker of my generation. The bad news is, we did not coordinate beforehand and he said just about everything I was going to say. So I will be very brief here. And rather than repeat what Mike said I just want to amplify a couple points.
I have often said that the alliance went global before it went regional, and that donut hole, as Mike described it, is very noticeable. But it is going to become a bigger omission over time and will not impact the warmth of the relationship or the capabilities, per se. But it will threaten the relevance of the alliance going forward, if not addressed. And I say that because the China challenge – and I can say from the Department of Defense point of view where I just came from – the China challenge is the primary focus and has become the organizing principle for the entire defense enterprise. It affects everything that the Pentagon does, whether that is future investments, acquisition strategies, force structure of the joint force, future force posture, how we think about alliances and partnerships and capacity building, how we operate, whether that be freedom of navigation operations or other displays of presence in the region.

So it is hard for me to see this not impacting the relevance of the alliance, or at least in the thinking of the alliance partners in Washington, if this omission is not addressed over time. I think another important point Mike made relates to what may happen in the future, a new administration. And my view is, although a dramatic change in rhetoric, and style, and tone, and a very unconventional approach from this president, and aspects of the China policy being a radical departure from the past – I think use of tariffs and the like – but in fact in the security area and in the defense area I believe our policies are more evolutionary than revolutionary.

And if you look at the pivot or rebalance, I am not sure they ever decided what it was, but if you look at the core aspects of the Obama administration’s move into the Indo-Pacific, the
importance of the region, a place of priority, the interest in strengthening partners and alliances with a particular purpose in mind of support of free and open international order – those are all principles and aspects that were carried over into the Trump administration, the difference in style notwithstanding, the rebranding notwithstanding. And I think the same would be true going forward in a Biden administration, if there is one, or a future administration at some point because the center of gravity has really changed in the public in the United States.

The recent Pew poll, 66 percent of Americans now have a very negative view of China and are concerned about China’s behavior. But really at the core, it is a structural shift in the power hierarchy. It is China’s departure from the traditional Deng Xiaoping hide and bide strategy, and more assertive behavior, more willingness to accept friction, et cetera. So I do not see this as a Trump policy only. And again, I think for our alliance to maintain relevance, which I think we all want, we have got to start thinking about regional challenges. But I am very mindful of the earlier comments about forcing binary choices and the risks associated with that. And so I do think there are ways to frame cooperation in the region, and there is ways to – I think Mike used the terms a menu of options so that we can grow more comfortable cooperation on these issues.

We always said at the Department of Defense, we do not go to countries and say: We want you to choose between Washington and Beijing, the United States and China. But can you choose support for your own sovereignty? Can you choose support for supporting international law and norms? Can you choose to support peaceful dispute resolution? If you can choose those things, then we are confident you will be on sides because our purpose in the United States is not to seek territory, not to seek the diminishment of even our strategic competitor. It is to uphold a particular regional and global order, particularly where the regional and global commons are concerned.

So I think there are ways to frame it, and ways that may be more comfortable for our alliance partners and other emerging partners. And we can focus our activities as such as well. The last thing I would say is – and this sort of circles back to modernizing

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_We don’t go to countries and say: We want you to choose between Washington and Beijing, the United States and China. But can you choose support for your own sovereignty? Can you choose support for supporting international law and norms? Can you choose to support peaceful dispute resolution?_

– Randall Schriver
the alliance – that will, over time, start to impact capabilities. And I think the things that have already been raised – cyber, space – these are all areas that the China challenge will need to invest in. So again, if we are identifying this as modernization priorities for other reasons, that is fine. I think that complements what ultimately we need to do in terms of our regional cooperation.

So like I said, a lot of what I might have said Mike covered. And so I just wanted to amplify a few of those points. And look forward to any questions or discussion.

YOUNG-KWAN YOON

Thank you for the comments. And I do not know whether this is a response to you or Mike again, but my impression is that South Korean government’s position on this issue cannot be separated from the North Korean nuclear issue, in the sense that we, most Koreans, yearn for living in a peaceful condition with North Korea, if not a peaceful unification in the later period. And if we cannot satisfy that kind of desire, or cherished desire for Korean people. South Koreans cannot but be considering China factor. And in order to help South Korea to be free from that concern, I think the U.S. can do something in terms of North Korea nuclear policy.

What I am saying is, instead of taking very orthodox approach on denuclearization – for example, you denuclearize first and then we will provide everything. Instead of that kind of approach, I think the U.S. can be more flexible, and pragmatic, and engage North Korea into continued negotiation and dialogue. In that way, I think probably the U.S. may be able to find a way to embrace North Korea on the condition that North Korea will definitely denuclearize itself. But the current situation is not developing that way. So that makes South Korea position very difficult. Again, I think this issue cannot be separated from the North Korean nuclear issue. Why do not we discuss later?

Now I would like to turn my mic to Professor Park Nohyoung. And my question to you is: What new frontier issue would you pick up if we want to strengthen or upgrade our alliance for the future? And how we can promote mutual cooperation in that specific issue area?

NOHYOUNG PARK

Thank you, Professor Yoon. Yes, I would like to choose cybersecurity issues for the alliance between the ROK and the U.S. But before moving to that discussion, if allowed, I would like to say something briefly on the issue of forcing binary choices between China and the U.S.
I think if you look at a general or bigger picture of international society and the rules making in the international society, especially relating to cybersecurity and just trade, trade in data, cross-border flows of data, I think China finds the importance of the international rules. China has been making kind of – (inaudible). So I think in the end, ultimately the two superpowers agree to international agreement, and a real agreement on those new issues. I mean, cyber sovereignty, data sovereignty. Then I think there will be less pressure on choosing a binary center in the international order.

Now, I would like to go to discussion of cybersecurity cooperation between the ROK and the U.S. And as we note, the ROK and the U.S. are one of the most advanced state in ICTs, information and communications technologies. And as a result, the two countries are most vulnerable to malicious cyber operations. And thus, there are a lot of cooperation issues on economic, political, military, and legal issues. And I would like to suggest two points. First, cyberspace, a newly found recognized domain, is now agreed to be applied by the existing international law, including the U.N. Charter.

Nevertheless, there are still disagreements on the application of the particular rules of international law, such as the international humanitarian law or law of armed conflict, and the right to self-defense as provided in Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, and also countermeasures to be imposed on international wrongful acts. In this respect, I would like to suggest that the ROK and the U.S. may cooperate on the application of international law to cyberspace, then one of the practical issues may be the application of the right to self-defense in general and the collective defense in particular.

For example, NATO allies agreed that a serious cyberthreat could trigger the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which provides that an armed attack against one ally is to be regarded an attack against all. Thus, cyber defense is now a part of NATO’s core task of collective defense. In addition, in April last year Japan and the U.S. agreed that the mutual security treaty could cover serious cyberattacks against both countries. Likewise, the ROK and the U.S. need to confirm their understanding that their mutual defense treaty could cover cyberattacks, invoking collective defense.

So the provision on collective defense against traditional armed attacks should be reinterpreted in the context of cyber. The three countries, the U.S., the ROK, and Japan, in cooperation with NATO,
could cooperate in developing the thresholds of cyberattacks which may be equivalent to traditional armed attacks.

Second, I would like to suggest that the ROK and the U.S. should practically cooperate by conducting public attributes of serious malicious cyber operations together. A group of those likeminded countries, such as the U.S., the U.K., Australia recently made public attributions by blaming a particular country as responsible for serious malicious cyber incident, like WannaCry ransomware and NotPetya ransomware. Attribution is identifying responsible perpetrators for malicious cyber operations. Public attribution, as a course of action to malicious cyber operations, may be a good tool of deterrence against malicious cyber operations.

On 21st September 2019, last year, 27 U.N. member states, including the U.S., the ROK, and Japan, made the joint statement on advancing responsible state behavior in cyberspace, where they stressed, quote, “when necessary we will work together on a voluntary basis to hold states accountable when they act contrary to this framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace, as been developed in the U.N., including by taking measures that are transparency and consistent with international law. There must be consequences for bad behavior in cyberspace,” unquote.

Thus, the ROK, as one of the states making this joint statement, should join such public attributions to hold those states committing malicious cyberoperations accountable under international law, in cooperation with the U.S., which has unparalleled attribution capabilities. The capability for plausible public attribution is a precondition for international cooperation in cyberspace. Thank you.

**Thank you very much. I think you raised important issues. It was very interesting for me to hear your recommendation that both the U.S. and South Korea should come to the understanding that defense alliance between two countries covers cyberattacks. Are there much enthusiasms among policymakers in both countries on that specific issue these days?**

**Well, as I said, there are at least two precedents in the NATO and also between Japan and the U.S. So I think between the ROK and the U.S. there should be a kind of – the understanding on cyberattacks in the context of the mutual defense treaty between the two countries.**
Director-General Ko, you mentioned the issue of cooperation in space. And we concluded a framework agreement in that issue area three years ago. Was there much progress in that issue area?

I think we have the framework agreement between Korea and the United States some years ago. And then that is a kind of – the legislative framework that we can work together. But based on that, there is some communications took place between the governments – (inaudible) – space issue. And there is some cooperation ongoing, but that kind of cooperation is very much rudimentary. For example, Korea Aerospace Research Institute and NASA, they have some project working together, but mainly at the planning level.

And then the Korean government industry, they have planned for the launch of 104 satellites, various satellites, by 2040 by using our developed civilian space-launch vehicles. But for that, the satellite, we need some parts from the United States that are very much sensitive parts that is prohibited for the international trade on arms controls, ITAR regulations. So those kind of nonproliferation-related regulations are becoming kind of obstacles for Korean industry to engage politically with the United States industries.

So in that sense, I think the alliance is, as I have said before, is based on the trust and confidence. I think the certain areas of sensitive industry, we need – based on the alliance, we need to work together to allocate scarce resources more efficiently to the mutual benefits of the country. That is the point.

We have only a few minutes left. Briefly, Michael, would you make final comments on the issues that we talked so far?

Sure. Thank you. I thought all the comments were very helpful and very concrete. And I want to applaud Director-General Ko for his efforts, and – (inaudible) – efforts to align the New Southern Policy with the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy. I think that is absolutely critical. I hope we will see more than just symbolic joint projects. We need concrete cooperation. So for example, I have spent a lot of time in Southeast Asia the past few years in countries like Cambodia, Mongolia, and Myanmar.
KOICA is doing wonderful work and very active on things like women’s empowerment, civil society building.

But when the U.S. ambassador meets with likeminded ambassadors to deal with democracy and human rights challenges, the Korean ambassador often stays out. Is invited but stays out. The Canadians go. The British go. The Australians, the Japanese. Korea as a powerful democracy, in many ways is a model of democratic transition to countries like Myanmar, should be more actively involved. In Vietnam, the U.S., Australia, Japan have divided nonlethal Coast Guard-type capabilities, patrol boats. So did Korea. But Korea did it completely through direct commercial sales, with no coordination with the U.S., Australia, or Japan. So if we aligned, then those things should be done strategically and not surprising each other. And that would be a success for what Director-General Ko is trying to do.

I think the area where we are going to have to really cooperate better is controlling sensitive technology, and especially 5G. I think the U.S. Commerce Department export control rules are too much. The extraterritoriality against Samsung or others, in my view, is too much. On the other hand, TSMC is Taiwan is now going to shift a significant amount of their seven-nanometer fabrication production to the United States. Japan has already moved in that direction. So Samsung and Korea are increasingly the outliers among U.S. allies and partners. And we have to move beyond the current dynamic, which is the U.S. kind of says: Do what we say. And then the Korean side says: Leave us alone, we need China for North Korea.

It is too simplistic. What we really need is for Korea, as an advanced technology country, to be a central part of shaping a new technology control regime in the world. It should not just be Japan, or France, or Britain. Korea has to be central in that. So we have to really start a new kind of strategic dialogue on technologies that we do not have right now.

Thank you very much. Lastly, Secretary Schriver, one of the audience asked a question to you. Would you mind if I laid this question to you directly? For Mr. Randy Schriver. You were part of the core negotiating team for the Singapore summit. What was that like? Bolton’s book says that he was unhappy with the teams falling into North Korea’s trap. Do you agree?
Can I just make one comment before answering that question, in terms of a last thought about modernizing the alliance? The author Lewis Carroll has a scene in “Alice in Wonderland” where she is asked for directions, and the Cheshire Cat says: Well, where are you going? And she says, well, I do not know. And he says, well, then any road will get you there. So I think before we start talking about particular capabilities, cyber, space, and all these things – which I think we need to know where we are headed, and we need to have frank conversations about the future of the alliance. You can not really do strategy unless you have shared vision for desired outcomes. And you can not really train, equip, and do all the other things unless you know where you are going. You can do it, but it threatens to be detached from your core security interests out into the future.

So, Ambassador Bolton has written a very lengthy book and can speak for himself, if that is his view. I think what I try to remind people from that period, we were not, before Singapore, engaged in denuclearization talks. We had about 10 days to produce a summit statement. A summit statement is very different than what Ambassador Hill was involved in, and Victor and Mike, supporting all those efforts where you had a group of technical experts, supported by diplomats and other subject matter experts trying to develop a roadmap to denuclearization, trying to come up with an agreement that would put the elements of that roadmap in place and have both sides sign a document.

We were working on a summit statement. We had about 10 days to do it. And so we thought it was important that Kim Jong-un put his name down to something. After all, this was an unprecedented meeting, an unprecedented opportunity. And for the first time, we had the opportunity to get the North Korean leader himself on paper committing to something. All the previous agreements before the Trump administration were government-to-government agreements, but not necessarily with the signature or anything from the leader himself.

So what we came up with may not have been as concrete and as binding as people might have liked. But in fact, it achieved what we sought out to do in terms of getting the leader on record committed to doing some things. Obviously what happened subsequent to that, and the failure for even a modest amount – a most attempt at implementation – (laughs) – show that even if the agreement had been more specific, stronger, different, I think we end up in the same place. And I think the efforts of the Trump administration certainly open to criticism and critique.
But I think the president was absolutely genuine in his commitment in trying to reach a deal, more flexible, Professor Yoon. I think you described in terms of asking for everything upfront before we do anything. That was not my experience as a part of the negotiating team. But it was sincere, genuine interest in trying to solve a problem. And it just — it takes two to tango. And that is where we are.

YOUNG-KWAN YOON

OK. Thank you very much. I think we had very productive and stimulating discussion. Especially I think this session was successful in highlighting one of the most important issues in trying to strengthen and upgrade our bilateral alliance. Thank you very much, all. Thank you. (Applause.)

(as delivered)

Closing Remarks

VICTOR CHA

OK. Thank you, Foreign Minister Yoon, for a great panel.

I want to start by thanking everybody in the audience for watching over the past two days. We really hope that you enjoyed our discussions over two days with three panels on regional peace, transnational challenges, and the alliance. I think it is fitting that we close our two-day session focusing on the alliance with terrific contributions from our four panelists and from the foreign minister. This, today, being the 70th anniversary of the state of the Korean War, and a reaffirmation of the strength of the relationship.

The interest among all of you in the audience is greater than ever here today, on the 70th anniversary. We are well over 20,000 views of the event over the past two days. And for those of you who missed some of it, it will be archived, both available on YouTube and on the CSIS and Korea Foundation websites.

This is, at least for the CSIS Korea Chair, our first large-scale online event. There are certain benefits, in the sense that we truly had a global audience that joined us for the past few days. My only regret is that we cannot take our guests all for a nice dinner after the evening's events, and a glass of wine, to carry the conversation further. But some of us will be doing this online privately tomorrow morning.

I want to thank our technical team and our support team for putting this event together. It is like trying to put on a television
show. And our tech team just did a fantastic job. We are truly indebted to them. They have been working absolutely overtime given all the events that CSIS is doing. I want to thank our distinguished guests who joined us over the past couple of days, the first vice foreign minister, Ambassador Harris, Ambassador Stephens, Ambassador Lippert, Foreign Minister Yoon, Assistant Secretary Schriver, Assistant Secretary Helvey, Director-General Ko, and all of the – all of the experts and scholars and opinion leaders who have joined us.

And then finally, I want to thank Korea Foundation, our partner, and my good friend and respected colleague, President Lee Geun of Korea Foundation. We have been working with Korea Foundation since the origins of this chair over 10 years ago. And this annual event, our signature event, the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum with the Korea Foundation is certainly one of the highlights of our year of programming and events. And so on behalf of Dr. Hamre, I want to, again, thank the Korea Foundation and turn the floor over to Professor Lee Geun for any closing remarks.

GEUN LEE

Thank you, Dr, Cha.

I think the Korean participants – all of the Korean participants will have a nice dinner together tomorrow at this Shilla Hotel in Jeju Island. I think that is one of the benefits of the success of Korean Covid-19 fighting model. And I hope we can bring all the participants, both in Korea and in the USA, together to a beautiful island of Jeju and have a great dinner next year.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Korea Foundation I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of you once again. Thank you for taking time out of your day to offer your passionate participation in these insightful discussions. I believe this forum was a stepping-stone towards changing the challenges of Covid-19 into opportunities. I am delighted to have joined this forum alongside such distinguished company. And I am proud to contribute to greater understanding, the exchange of ideas and ways to bring peace on the Korean Peninsula, and the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War.

The ROK and the U.S. have enjoyed a long period of friendship and have depended on each other, especially in times of trouble. Although the nature of our alliance may evolve, and the environment may change, we will always move forward together to build a brighter future. I hope that we can continue
to enhance our mutual support and deepen our friendship. I trust in the strength of the alliance. And I am certain that through our collaboration, we will resolve all the challenges that we face.

Last but not least, let me take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to CSIS. This forum would not have been possible without the cooperation of Dr. Victor Cha and the CSIS staff. Until we meet again, stay healthy and safe from Covid-19. Thank you very much. (Applause.)
ABOUT CSIS

Established in Washington, D.C., over 50 years ago, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization dedicated to providing strategic insights and policy solutions to help decisionmakers chart a course toward a better world.

In late 2015, Thomas J. Pritzker was named chairman of the CSIS Board of Trustees. Mr. Pritzker succeeded former U.S. senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), who chaired the CSIS Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2015. CSIS is led by John J. Hamre, who has served as president and chief executive officer since 2000.

Founded in 1962 by David M. Abshire and Admiral Arleigh Burke, CSIS is one of the world’s preeminent international policy institutions focused on defense and security; regional study; and transnational challenges ranging from energy and trade to global development and economic integration. For eight consecutive years, CSIS has been named the world’s number one think tank for defense and national security by the University of Pennsylvania’s “Go To Think Tank Index.”

The Center’s over 220 full-time staff and large network of affiliated scholars conduct research and analysis and develop policy initiatives that look to the future and anticipate change. CSIS is regularly called upon by Congress, the executive branch, the media, and others to explain the day’s events and offer recommendations to improve U.S. strategy.

ABOUT CSIS KOREA CHAIR

In 2019, the CSIS Korea Chair celebrates its tenth anniversary as the premier independent platform in Washington for the advancement of major policy issues of common importance to the people of the Republic of Korea and the United States. Korea occupies a central place in U.S. strategy in Asia and plays a critical role in shaping peace and stability in the world’s most prosperous and growing region.

Through nonpartisan, expert analysis of ongoing policy opportunities and security challenges facing the region, the CSIS Korea Chair promotes a greater understanding of relations between the United States, Korea, and Asia.

The CSIS Korea Chair conducts independent policy research on multiple issue-areas ranging from security to business to cybersecurity to global health. The Chair convenes public and private sector stakeholders for in-depth discussions and policy research.
CSIS appointed Dr. Victor Cha, former White House official and Georgetown University professor as the inaugural chair holder in 2009.

To celebrate its tenth anniversary, the Korea Chair will engage in new, cutting edge projects that will push the bounds of policy research on Korea, including satellite imagery, microsurveys, and big data/predictive analytics.

ABOUT THE KOREA FOUNDATION

The Korea Foundation (KF) was established in 1991 to promote awareness and understanding of Korea and to enhance goodwill and friendship among the international community through its cultural, academic and intellectual exchange activities and programs. As a leading organization of Korea’s international exchange and public diplomacy initiative, some of its major works include: providing support for Korean studies overseas, organizing/supporting international forum, assisting research institutions/think tanks around the world in their research, conferences and publications, promoting exchanges of performing arts and exhibition, and establishing Korean galleries in museums abroad. Currently, the Korea Foundation has 7 overseas branches in major cities which are Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Tokyo, Beijing, Moscow, Berlin, and Hanoi.