



ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021

The Road Ahead after the Biden-Moon Summit

Monday, November 15, 2021

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AGENDA

ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021

The Road Ahead after the Biden-Moon Summit

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

Monday, November 15, 2021

Center for Strategic and International Studies
1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036

9:00 – 9:10 AM

WELCOMING REMARKS

Lee Geun

President, The Korea Foundation

John Hamre

President and CEO, and Langone Chair in American Leadership, CSIS

9:10 – 9:30 AM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Choi Jong Kun

1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

9:30 – 9:35 AM

BREAK

9:35 – 10:50 AM

SESSION I: U.S.-China Competition and the Alliance: To hedge or to choose?

Moderator

Mark Lippert (online)

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

Panelists

Evan Medeiros

Penner Family Chair in Asian Studies &
the Cling Family Senior Fellow in U.S.-China Relations;
Former Special Assistant to the President &
Senior Director for Asia, The White House

Randall G. Schriver

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

Kim Joon-hyung

Professor, Handon Global University;
Former Chancellor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy

Ma Sangyoon

Professor, Catholic University; Former Director-General for
Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Sohn In-joo

Professor, Seoul National University

10:50 – 10:55 AM

BREAK

10:55 AM– 12:10 PM

**SESSION II: Denuclearization and Peace on the Korean
Peninsula: Is there a way forward?**

Moderator

Kim Joon-hyung

Professor, Handon Global University;
Former Chancellor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy

Panelists

Sue Mi Terry

Director, Hyundai Motor-Korea Foundation Center for Korean
History and Public Policy, Wilson Center

Richard C. Johnson

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Countering
Weapons of Mass Destruction & Acting Deputy Assistant
Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense, U.S.
Department of Defense

Yoon Young-kwan

Kim Koo Visiting Professor, Harvard University;
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Sheen Seong-ho

Professor & Director, International Security Center, Graduate
School of International Studies, Seoul National University

12:10 – 1:05 PM

LUNCH BREAK

1:05 – 2:20 PM

**SESSION III: Trilateralism and U.S.-ROK Alliance
in Indo-Pacific region**

Moderator

Victor Cha

Senior Vice President 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

Panelists

Andrew Yeo (online)

Visiting Fellow and SK-Korea Foundation Chair in Korea
Studies, Brookings Institute; Professor of Politics and director
of Asian studies, The Catholic University of America

Alex Wong

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for North Korea in the
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and former Deputy
Special Representative for North Korea, U.S. Department of State

Kim Hyun-wook

Professor and Director-General,
Korea National Diplomatic Academy

Kim Ji-young

Associate Professor, Hanyang University

2:20 – 2:30 PM

CLOSING REMARKS

Lee Geun

President, The Korea Foundation

Victor Cha

Senior Vice President 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

Welcoming Remarks

Transcript (as delivered)

JOHN J. HAMRE

"It looks like North Korea's become – come back to its old playbook, you know, being pugnacious, you know, and making things more challenging. But it doesn't change the foundation of this relationship. We're committed to each other because – I'll just speak from an American point of view – we need Korea. Korea's vital for us. It's important not just that you be a security partner, but you be the flag-carrier for democracy in Asia, and you've done that."

– John J. Hamre

Thanks to the generous support of the Korea Foundation, we're able to hold these annual conferences. Very important that we have this opportunity together. There's so much, you know, flux right now in our world. Gosh, I mean, everything is upside down here, and of course you've got a major election coming in Korea. And so, everything is – in a sense is moving, and there's some uncertainty about our future, but there's not any uncertainty about our bilateral relationship. It's rock solid. It's very strong. We've had some – (laughs) – interesting days in recent years. And, Randy, you were one of the great forces of stability to hold the – hold the alliance together. I will always be grateful for what you did when you were in service. It was crucial, you know. And there were ups and downs and the winds would blow a little bit in funny ways, but we came through it stronger, I believe. It's a little bit more uncertain what this new world is going to be like. It looks like North Korea's become – come back to its old playbook, you know, being pugnacious, you know, and making things more challenging. But it doesn't change the foundation of this relationship. We're committed to each other because – I'll just speak from an American point of view – we need Korea. Korea's vital for us. It's important not just that you be a security partner, but you be the flag-carrier for democracy in Asia, and you've done that. And that's why we celebrate the opportunity to be together. And even though we're going to explore a lot of the questions that are in front of us right now, there's no question



about the fundamental commitment we have to each other. And so I'm very grateful for that. It's my – my role here is ornamental. My wife always laughs when I say that, but my role is ornamental, largely to welcome everybody. And I especially want to say a hearty welcome to President Lee, you know, who is now the president of the Korea Foundation. He's no stranger to the world of think tanks and to Washington because he's been, you know, in the – he's been – he's run a think tank himself. He's been in the – in IFANS, you know, the academy. He's just been a constant leader and figure. And so, we welcome him back. The first time, though, that we can do this conference – because the Korea Foundation's made it possible for us to do it for six years, but this is the first time that we can be together in person. We've been doing it virtually – (laughs) – and with all of its, you know, satisfaction and frustration. Now we can be together, and we're going to have a very interesting day together. So, I would ask you, with your warm applause, please welcome to the – to the dais President Lee Geun. Thank you. (Applause.)

LEE GEUN

President Hamre is definitely taller than I am, so I need to adjust my microphone. (Laughs.) Thank you very much, President Hamre, for your kind introduction. His speech was so informal and friendly, so I also need to be informal. But in front of so many Korean reporters, I have to be a little bit more formal. So, I'm going to read what I prepared. President of the CSIS Dr. John Hamre, Deputy Assistant to President Biden and Coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs at the National Security Council Dr. Kurt Campbell – who is not here yet – and 1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Korea Dr. Choi Jong Kun, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning in Washington, D.C., and good evening in Seoul. I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all of you to the Sixth Korea Foundation-CSIS ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum. Let me also express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Kurt Campbell, deputy assistant to President Biden and coordinator for Indo-Pacific affairs at the National Security Council; and Dr. Choi Jong Kun, the 1st vice minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea, for graciously accepting this invitation despite your busy schedules. I also would like to take note of the presence of former Korean Foreign Minister Dr. Yoon Young-kwan. Thank you very much for making time to join us today. Korea Foundation's warm welcome also go to the panelists and also to the audience watching this livestream from Washington, D.C., Seoul, and all around the world. Last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were only able to host the forum virtually. Although we are still unable to invite an audience to the CSIS conference room just

yet, it is wonderful to actually meet our American colleagues and friends in person in Washington, D.C. I'm so glad to see President Hamre in person this time, as well as Dr. Cha and other American colleagues. I sincerely hope that we will be able to welcome our audience in person as well next year. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Korea Foundation and the 29th year of our partnership with the CSIS. I believe the fact that we have worked with the CSIS since the very establishment of the Korea Foundation reflects how much we value this partnership and what a critical role it has played in the policymaking communities, both in the U.S. and in Korea. Thirty years may not be long enough to evaluate the significance of an organization, and as president of the Korea Foundation I may be a little bit biased; however, I believe that the Korea Foundation has been at the forefront of promoting a better understanding of Korea over the last three decades through a variety of activities such as track-two forums, cultural exchanges, education programs, and next-generation empowerment programs. I really appreciate Dr. Victor Cha's efforts in strengthening the next-generation empowerment programs. And I believe that we have made substantial progress on all these fronts. When the Korea Foundation was first established in 1991, the international community's level of awareness about Korea was quite low. However, after only three decades, people around the globe are now recognizing the progress of Korea in a wide range of fields including academia, economy, entertainment industry, technology, innovation, and even Korea's military capability. And as mentioned during CSIS's event last month on Korea's soft power, Korea has become one of the most dynamic and strongest soft power countries in the world. Of course, I cannot say that this is solely thanks to the work of the Korea Foundation, but I think the Korea Foundation has been quite instrumental as a platform connecting and bridging the people and culture between Korea and the world. Since 2009, the Korea Foundation has been working with our partner institutions to lay a solid foundation for Korea-related research activities in Washington, D.C. and throughout the United States. This is because we believe that in order to strengthen the ROC-U.S. alliance, and maintain and enhance trust between the two countries, it is critical that we have independent and stable platform through which scholars and experts can engage in candid discussions, conduct timely and in-depth research, and communicate with key stakeholders. Among the Korea Foundation's many program pillars, we take great pride in our collaborative work with think tanks in the U.S., and in particular with the CSIS. In 2009, the very first Korea



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– Lee Geun

Chair position at a think tank in the United States was created at the CSIS. We were confident that under the forward-looking leadership of President Hamre, the CSIS would be able to develop a robust Korea Chair program. We are also grateful for Dr. Cha for his leadership and efforts to build a Korea policy studies ecosystem in the United States through various timely research activities and programs. The CSIS Korea Chair celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2019, but on the occasion of Korea Foundation's 30th anniversary this year I want to reemphasize and recognize the leadership efforts and contribution over the past 12 years once again. Considering the tremendous achievements that we have made over the past three decades, we are excited to continue our partnership with CSIS for the next 30 years to come, if not forever. And I hope that we can help the great minds of both Korea and the USA to craft creative and future-oriented policy ideas that will deepen and expand our alliance in the future. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, recently a number of significant developments have been unfolding in the U.S.-ROK alliance and on the Korean Peninsula, including the unprecedented results of the Korea-U.S. summit meeting between President Moon Jae-in and President Biden in May 2021. President Moon and President Biden reaffirmed that the ROK-U.S. alliance is the linchpin for stability and prosperity in the region and agreed to work closely for a new chapter in our partnership. This new chapter entails working with each other in a range of fields, such as climate change, global health, emerging technologies including 5G and 6G, semiconductors, supply chains, chain resilience, quantum technologies, and so on. Needless to say, in order for us to make substantial progress in these new domains, peace and security on the Korean Peninsula

and in the Indo-Pacific is a prerequisite. Despite the tireless and sincere efforts made over decades by the governments of both the ROK and the United States, the North Korean nuclear issue still remains as the most pressing challenge we face in the region. At the same time, the complex regional security landscape derived from the U.S.-China relations and their intensifying competition is reshaping the region in an uncertain direction. In order for us to be able to move forward with the future-oriented alliance agenda that our two presidents agreed to during their summit meeting, and to ensure shared security and prosperity for the alliance, enhancing and strengthening trust between the two countries is imperative. It is my honest hope that this forum will provide a platform for trust-building and also for innovative policy discussions for the future of the ROK-U.S. alliance. I also hope that the discussions we exchange today and tomorrow will help us better navigate the new challenges we face and identify the directions we need to take for peace and prosperity of Korea, the USA, and the region. Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to President Hamre and Dr. Cha for their leadership and efforts in building this forum. My thanks also go to the CSIS and Korea Foundation staff for their hard work in arranging this event. I look forward to active and lively discussions. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

VICTOR CHA

Thank you, President Lee, for that – those very warm and kind remarks about CSIS. We're very gratified to be holding the Sixth ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum in person here at CSIS. I want to welcome all of our participants for joining us, both Americans and also Koreans who've come a long way, as well as our audience who are joining us online this morning. I want to congratulate Korea Foundation on 30 years. You have done incredible work in the United States and around the world in terms of creating a much better-informed public and scholarly community about the role of Korea in the world and the importance of the U.S.-Korea relationship. Our keynote address today is by one of South Korea's leading foreign policy speakers, Dr. Choi Jong Kun. We're very kind – it's very kind of him to join us today. He has a very busy schedule here in Washington, D.C., both meetings with the United States, as well as trilateral meetings and other bilateral meetings. But he's willing to take time out this morning to join us, and we're very grateful for that. As President Lee stated, Dr. Choi is the first vice foreign minister for the Republic of Korea. He served as secretary to the president for peace planning in the Office of National Security before joining the Foreign Ministry. Dr. Choi was an associate professor of political science

and international studies at Yonsei University from February 2009 to July 2017. He was also a member of the Policy Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a member of the Advisory Board at the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Committee in the National Assembly. He also served as an assistant professor at the University of North Korean Studies from 2008 to 2009. Dr. Choi received his B.A. in political science from the University of Rochester, M.A. in political science from Yonsei University, and his Ph.D. in political science from The Ohio State University. Dr. Choi will join us for some remarks. And after that, provided there is time, we'll have time for maybe a little bit of a question-and-answer session. But not a whole lot of time because, again, his schedule is very busy. So, I'd like to invite to the stage Dr. Choi Jong Kun. (Applause.)

Keynote Address

CHOI JONG KUN

Thank you very much, Dr. Cha, for your kind introduction. It's always good to be in Washington, D.C., especially during the fall. Great town. Dr. Lee Geun, president of the Korea Foundation, and Dr. John Hamre, president of CSIS, also Dr. and Minister Yoon Young-kwan of minister of foreign affairs from Roh Moo-hyun government, good morning, distinguished guests joining us here in person and virtually. First of all, thanks for having me here. I am very happy to make a speech here at the CSIS. I guess this is my second time doing so. Last time I was here was about four and a half years ago, serving as secretary to the president for peace and arms control back in 2017 and '18. At the time, I remember I explained why the ROK-U.S. alliance should engage North Korea, and we exchanged views on pressing matters relating to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. Friends and colleagues, one of the prominent features of our alliance is that we do actually evolve. The ROK-U.S. alliance was first forged as a military alliance during the Korean War. With the noble sacrifice of some 34,000 American soldiers, territory of the Republic of Korea was defended. Korean soldiers have also stood shoulder-to-shoulder with American soldiers in every major war led by the United States since the Korean War, joining the U.S. in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. We do also fight together tirelessly in the Middle East and in Africa and conduct peacemaking missions around the world. The values deeply embedded in our societies are important aspects of our ties. Korea has fostered the values sown by the United States in our own way. Our people have safeguarded democracy and human rights whenever a shadow was cast over them, be it in the face of

Choi Jong Kun giving his keynote address speech during the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021.



colonization, dictatorship, or corruption. Korean people shed their own blood in our own streets for our own democracy and human rights throughout modern history, thereby Korea has become a beacon of democracy and capitalism in East Asia. Now, we are even widening our areas of interest to other parts of the international community in order to uphold our values of democracy, multilateralism, and rule of law, and above all, cosmopolitan culture. The win-win nature of our bonds and the mutual trust grounded on shared values lie at the heart of comprehensive and strategic partnership, which we are now proud to be a part of. The ROK-U.S. leaders joint statement adopted at the summit held last may between President Moon and President Joe Biden showcased how far our alliance has come. Our leaders also committed to advancing our partnership into one that encompasses not only traditional security but also the economic and cultural domains as well. Our two nations have shown the world what an alliance should look like in the 21st century, especially during these pandemic years. Dear friends, in my time serving as the first vice minister of foreign affairs for the last year or so, I have gained even deeper sense that our alliance is no longer dominated by a single issue. You may imagine, my world calendar starts from agenda relating to North Korea and ends with them. To be frank with you, I don't always wake up to worry about North Korea. But if in fact my schedule is always filled with meetings about and travel to other regions, such as Southeast Asia, Central and South America, West Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, including Iran. I have engaged with our partners and friends in these regions on issues ranging from responding to pandemic to enhancing development cooperation, protecting democratic values throughout the world. And paradoxically enough, the more I engage with non-U.S. partners, the more clearly, I realize that Korea's standing in global affairs is higher than we thought, and that Korea and the United States have a vast amount of potential to expand our areas of cooperation even further. Our two countries' respective approaches to Indo-Pacific region are one good example, Korea is a nation which has itself lived through the pain of losing sovereignty, going through state-led development and democratization together at the same time, and achieving a high dynamic economy has been persistent proponent of ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led regional architecture. Korea has been a vocal advocate of democratic values when it comes to the current situation in Myanmar. Those citizens calling out for democracy in Yangon remind us our people in Gwangju who protested against the military regime 40 years ago. We see yesterday's Gwangju in

today's Myanmar. Korea's support for the people of Myanmar will be strong, persistent, and relentless. Our collaborative reach does not stay within Southeast Asian theater. For example, in Central America Korea has long sought mutually beneficial cooperation as a bona fide partner. Korea is the only country in Asia which has free trade agreement with Central America as a group, and the only Asian member of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, CABEL. We are the sixth-largest donor to the Northern Triangle states, contributing around \$35 million annually. Two weeks ago, minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Korea invited vice ministers of seven Central American countries to Korea. And we had the first Korea-Central American special roundtable to find a way forward for our partnership. Our role in Central America, for example, is gaining more significance and we help address the root cause of migration to the United States by leading to better standards of living for people and constructing social stability in this region. Our two countries, Korea and the United States, have managed to keep our approach to Iran in tune as well. As the custodian of one of Iran's largest overseas frozen assets, Korea has actively engaged with both Washington and Tehran at the same time. I, myself, visited Iran three times this year. Let me tell you, it wasn't that exciting to begin with. Based on our communication with Tehran, United States, European Union, and E3 nations, our government has expressed its firm intention to render active diplomatic support for reviving the JCPOA, as the keeper of the Iranian frozen funds and a verifier of the potential deal that might happen in Vietnam, hopefully soon. I reaffirm this position whenever the occasion arose to relevant parties in the Iran nuclear deal – my great friend, U.S. special envoy for Iran Dr. Rob Malley and deputy secretary general of the European Union Mr. Mora, just to name a few. Today our alliance has significantly enhanced our global profile. Our two countries are at the very forefront in responding to new challenges. COVID-19 has illustrated that no one is safe until everybody is safe. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Korea and the United States have helped each other when each of us was in need. We further elevated the level of our cooperation by exploring ways to fundamentally tackle this global challenge through the launch of the ROK-U.S. Global Vaccine Partnership. Our two countries are leading global climate change initiatives. On the occasion of the COP 26 recently, Korea announced upgraded 2030 nationally determined contribution, which is 40 percent reduction of carbon production by 2030, and a plan to put a complete end to coal-fired power generation by 2050. Korea and the U.S. remain

committed to strengthening partnership in green technology, as well as making joint efforts in a range of fora, such as the OECD, as we believe in multilateralism. Dear friends, the evolving nature of our relationship is, in fact, only natural when you come to think about the policy that our nations pursue. We believe that foreign policy should serve the needs and the interests of our own citizens. Foreign policy, just like any other domestic policies, must protect and increase the welfare of its citizens. And Korea is no exception. In this light, we have confidence, and I am very personally confident, that our alliance has been adapting itself to serve their pressing demands and respond to the diverse present-day challenge that our people encounter. So, I believe this is a time to ask ourselves whether we are also looking at our bonds from a new angle. At times, we have – we have viewed our alliances through the lens of the very issue that has haunted us for long, North Korea. Peace and security on the Korean Peninsula is still at the core of our alliance. And our alliance, I have to emphasize, is the linchpin of peace, security, and prosperity for Northeast Asia. So, I believe we should diversify areas of our attention and see how interregional interactions affect evolution of our alliance, since we are global partners. Policy communities of both our countries, including experts, scholars, and journalists who are joining this event, should update the narrative of our alliance. You are the opinion leaders, generating ideas and affecting perspectives. What you envision for our relationship does affect how our alliance evolves. As a policymaker and scholar, myself, I say to you that we need to construct a shared conceptual reference point on our alliance, and to map out its way forward. This will serve to deepen the understanding of our relationship and make discourse more policy-relevant and vibrant during and after the pandemic era. I know the Korea Foundation runs on an excellent next-generation program with the CSIS. And I met many of them whenever they come to Korea, before the pandemic. And I'd love to do some more when they actually come to Seoul – either as position I'm taking now or as professor at Yonsei University, which I really look forward to going back to. (Laughter.) But I hope the next generation of opinion leaders will come together and discuss matters as broad as global green energy initiative, water management in Southeast Asia, development cooperation in Central America, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, and, of course, Korean issues as well. I look forward to CSIS, as a key element in the U.S. policy circles, playing a full part in such work as well. I also have another hope. I hope that Korea Chair will be recognized as a position that not only examines Korea, the

country itself and its very own issues, but also explores and discusses Korea's enlarged horizon of global engagement as well. Distinguished guests, I'm not done yet. I have not talked about the elephant in the room, North Korea. I know once I talk about it, what I said so far about our dynamic alliance and Korea's global engagement will just evaporate. (Laughter.) And media will only cover North Korea issue. I really – I am so used to experiencing that. Out of my 12-page-long speech, I spent about eight pages on our dynamic evolving major alliance. I bet \$100 in my pocket that no one is going to talk about it in the media, but please. We do not share – the alliance is not solely about North Korean issue, but it is a very important issue. And thereby, advanced perspectives on the issue itself is really important. So let me finally come to North Korea. Two more pages. (Laughter.) For a nation which experienced tragic war and is still living in a state of incomplete peace, making sure that ordinary people go about daily lives without fear of war is fundamental responsibility of Korean government. And we, the Korean people, know from experience that peace is never a given, but something that must be earned. Also, for last five years, Korea increased its military spending by 7 percent annually. Our military expenditure accounts for 2.7 percent of our GDP, which is the highest among U.S. allies. Having that in as a backdrop, the Moon Jae-in administration, in close consultation with the United States, has strived tirelessly to advance our goal of achieving denuclearization and establishment of peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. What we have focused on is to establish an enduring structure for engagement with the DPRK. This is the exact line that I used four years ago in this building. As a member of the security team of the Moon Jae-in administration from the summer of 2017, I can say that we have never fantasized about the peace process. The peace process could likely be long, arduous, and even torturous. On the way, North Korea might be tempted to look back and doubt or hesitate to stay the course. In this vein, we need a framework that can keep Pyongyang on track. It is imperative to devise a structure from which no one can easily walk away from the whole process. By presenting North Korea with a clear picture of what it can gain or lose through the process, we may be able to convince them that their best bet is to stick to the process. In 2018, there was a sense of fresh hope that we could establish such a framework and push the peace process forward. We created a structure with inter-Korean relations and U.S.-DPRK relation proved to be mutually reinforcing, creating a virtuous cycle. But you know what happened. I know that we still have a long way to go, but we never give up. We do never give up.

ROK-U.S. summit in May laid a strong diplomatic foundation to make progress again on this ongoing task, which is fundamental responsibility of the Republic of Korea government and also U.S. government at the same time. Our two leaders agreed to the importance of picking up where we had left off and building on what we had brought about through previous agreement with North Korea, such as Singapore Joint Statement and 2018 Panmunjom Declaration. Also, the September 19th Comprehensive Military Agreement, known as CMA, is another advancement reached in 2018. This inter-Korean military agreement has greatly reduced the likelihood of accidental military skirmishes and clashes between the South and the North in the DMZ. This in turn has provided space for both of us to concentrate on the denuclearization dialogue, which is a bigger talk and highly sensitive process that can be undermined by even minor military clashes in the DMZ in the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, the agreement has set a meaningful precedent for future talks with Pyongyang. During the negotiation with North Korean military, I learned a priceless lesson: We can come to an agreement, even in a short time, if we can secure both the political will of the leaders and the working-level negotiations that fill in details – an optimal combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, I believe. In an effort to revive the dialogue with DPRK, President Moon Jae-in once again proposed an end war declaration at the 76th U.N. General Assembly. By putting an end to the Korean War, our government intends to commence the process of making irreversible progress in denuclearization and turning the abnormally long armistice into peace regime. Long, long way to go. But think about it. Really, do think about it. Who can propose such a bold initiative other than the Republic of Korea? And which country's more qualified to do so? The peace regime will comprise a set of norms and principles that would define the future of the Korean Peninsula, including those regulating the inter-Korean political relationship, military confidence- building measures, and economic and social exchanges. The end of war declaration would mark a meaningful entry point for two Koreas and United States to shape this new order by opening up a venue for denuclearization dialogue and the peace talks. Above all, it is morally right thing to put an end to the war and begin the peace process. So, friends and colleagues, so far I have outlined the new chapter of our alliance that our two countries are opening together. Also briefly touched upon – briefly touched upon North Korea an end of war declaration. I hope that you have found it very useful. And this morning I woke up early because of the jet lag, 3:00 a.m. You



“The peace regime will comprise a set of norms and principles that would define the future of the Korean Peninsula, including those regulating the inter-Korean political relationship, military confidence-building measures, and economic and social exchanges. The end of war declaration would mark a meaningful entry point for two Koreas and United States to shape this new order by opening up a venue for denuclearization dialogue and the peace talks. Above all, it is morally right thing to put an end to the war and begin the peace process.”

– Choi Jong Kun

know how sentimental you become at 3:00 a.m., you know, especially in Washington, D.C., ahead of this big meeting. So, I jot down a couple of points. This is purely my personal point. These people, first time listening to, you know? (Laughter.) Before I just conclude my speech, I just want to share my personal realization and personal touch, having worked at – having gone through the peace process '17 and 2018, and also you know my background as a scholar, and I will be going back to my original job at Yonsei University. I always think about this “who else” argument. Korea, we go through a lot of difficulties, challenges, living next door to, you know, a rising power. But I come to think of this term, who else? In other words, every time we come to face difficulties of stumbles and hurdles, it is our friends in the United States consulting with us, giving advice, and exchanging views, and sometimes debating very harshly behind the doors. But who else can we do that with? That’s what I realized. The United States, people say, is the only ally – only treaty ally of the Republic of Korea. Yeah, this, it is true. But I think it’s beyond that. Sort of who else argument, you know? Whenever we have a problem, especially during this pandemic, who else did we talk to? We didn’t go to Beijing. We didn’t go to Tokyo. We didn’t go elsewhere. We went to and came to Washington, D.C. I think that speaks to a lot of facts, a lot of traditions, a lot of reality that we have. I think that we have a very strong – (inaudible) – community between Seoul and Washington, and Korea and the United States as a whole. I really do hope that this gets really expanded, this gets really evolved, as I just spoke about how on global stage Republic of Korea is doing our own parts, tackling global agendas, and also tackling, resolving peace problem on the Korean Peninsula. So, with that, I wish you could explore further how our alliance can

grow more through this constructive dialogue. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

VICTOR CHA

Well, thank you very much, Vice Foreign Minister. That was a wonderful set of remarks, and also very personal in many ways. And we're very grateful that you would share that with us, and that you'd take the time. Again, I know that your schedule's very busy, and we did want to set aside at least a little bit of time for questions. If you – anyone here, if you'd like to ask a question there is a mic over here on the far end of the stage, and we'd be happy to take – I don't know how many we can take – but if you could just like up there. And while folks are thinking about their questions, Vice Foreign Minister, if I could ask you: You know, I agree with you – (laughs) – that your tour de force with regard to the alliance is both important and well-deserved. I mean, your administration has done an incredible job of reestablishing and expanding the importance of the U.S.-Korea alliance for both countries and for the world. But you're right, the press will focus on just what you said on North Korea. But my question isn't about North Korea, even though that takes up a lot of our time and the headlines. The bigger and broader question for the alliance in China. And there I guess I wanted to just get your views on how, in your – in your mind, Korea navigates this new environment in which there is a lot more competition between the U.S. and China than Korea arguably has been used to. And from your perspective, again, as one of the people in the South Korean government that has to conceptualize and think about Korea's path, if you could offer us some thoughts on that, that would be great.

CHOI JONG KUN

Yeah. I did not say anything directly about China in my speech, reasonably because we have a good working relationship with the government in Beijing. They're our strategic partners. And just – as I said in my speech, just like any other domestic policies, foreign policy also should serve the needs and interests of Korean citizens, namely middle-income class. The trade volume of – trade volume of Korea-China is larger than our trade volume with the United States and Japan put together, and we make money out of it. We make big surplus out of it. And who enjoys the surplus down in the market? Our citizens, ranging from the small to medium entrepreneurs to big, you know, conglomerates. We cannot ignore that. At the same time, we are also worried about supply-chain resilience, meaning that – overdependence on, you know, many parts and components coming from China. And that is not only our problem also; that is also problem for, I guess, everybody as we all are getting much more interdependent or



Choi Jong Kun and Victor Cha during the Keynote Address at the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021.

otherwise dependent on Chinese. So, we realized issues are there and coming up, but at the same time seeing interaction between Beijing and Washington. As it gets more competitive, then we get really high tension within our foreign policy communities. Because first of all, our area of caution is something like this: What kinds of impact it will have on our exporters, our market actors? What kinds of strategic constraint it will have on our foreign policy arrays? And what kinds of impact it will have on our Korean Peninsula as a whole? But as I mentioned, our government is trying to be – make peace on the Korean Peninsula and create a structure. We cannot do it without, obviously, support and backup and consent and consultation from our friends in Washington, but also realistically speaking we also need partnership from Beijing as well. That's strategic theater that we belong to. Whether we like it or not, that's a reality of our policy as well. So why we are trying to be – so we're trying to be really having – forming a good working relationship with China. After all, we are – we are the country that lives right next door to. At the same time, we're trying to diversify our market shares. In other words, our very strong, aggressive approach to our friends in Southeast Asia under the name of New Southern Policies, our engagement with our European partners. We are the – we are the – we are the only country that has free-trade agreement with the European Union market, America, and at the same time China. So, we want to become a so-called porous nation in trading states. After all, we have many identities as a nation, but most of all we are enjoying our trading-nation identity as well. So we're trying to be really pragmatic about it. I also want to – I also want to toss a rhetorical question, something that we can also think about: For the interest of the United States which one is better,

South Korea having a really bad relationship with China or South Korea having good working relationship with China? Which one would be good for the interest of the United States? I don't have a clear answer. It's something that really arising in my mind these days. And that's my answer, I guess.

VICTOR CHA

Thank you very much, Vice Foreign Minister, for that response. I mean, Korea does really have one of the most complex relationships with China of all U.S. allies and partners. I know that – again, I know you have to go, but if you'd allow me to ask just one other question –

CHOI JONG KUN

I can stay. (Laughter.)

VICTOR CHA

If you could ask me just – answer just one other question, and it is about – it is about North Korea. There's a lot of attention now and talk and debate and discussion here in Washington about the end-of-war declaration. And one of the questions that I often get – which I don't have an answer to, so maybe you can answer it – is, the U.S. and the Republic of Korea are working very hard on thinking about this, but in these discussions is there any sense that there is actually going to be a positive reception from the North with regard to this framework – this broader framework that you proposed in your speech for a peace process on the peninsula and denuclearization?

CHOI JONG KUN

It's hard to predict. I mean, think about what happened back in 2017 and compare that with 2018. You know, back in 2017 every weekend, especially, North Korea fire a lot of missiles. And I was in the Situation Room in the Blue House, and I was really mad with the fact that they especially fired on Friday night. (Laughter.) And then, 29th of November, with the lofted launch of a(n) ICBM, they certainly declared they complete everything, and then we move into a so-called peace Winter Olympics season, transferring the – transforming the whole nature. And we had a really highway ride in 2019, and sometimes it went really fast and then we had Hanoi. I know I can say because on that day when Hanoi summit crumbled, a lot of people drank a lot of soju in Seoul – (laughter) – and I'm not – I am one of them, to be honest with you. I know this is on live and I can't say something like this, but after all, I'm a professor. (Laughter.) But we never gave up, though. Second of all, we never thought that North Korea is an easy partner, but we saw a glimpse of possibility with the very strong partnership between Washington and Seoul, without any daylight, we could – we could have pushed a

little bit harder on engagement and we could have crossed that threshold, but we couldn't – maybe because of a lot of reasons, but I'm not going to linger on the reasons. What I'm telling you is that with very strong coordination and cooperation between two allies, I think we could push and begin anew and open the door and bring North Korea into this, as I said, long, arduous, and tortuous process that nobody can walk away. And I believe that end-of-war declaration is a good ticket to the peace process, as well. My government – Moon Jae-in government, as you all know, has about six months in power. We do not – we do not aim to achieve everything at once. We do not push this in any hurry. As I told you and told to friends here, we want to create a structure and roadmap so that we can update, adapting to different circumstances and environments. And we believe that end-of-war declaration is one good example. As my capacity as presidential secretary for peace planning, my – one of my job portfolio was monitoring sanction regime. And I can surely tell you that we have very fierce sanction implementation. I cannot say any in detail, but other than any other nation in our theater we are actually doer – implementer of the sanction. So, sanctions still there, but also we need to give an idea about how creative we can be in sustaining this process when it actually begins, because at the end of the day this essentially semantic analogy, it's like standing in the very shallow river but with the very high – high whatchamacallit – streams. Unless you go against the tide, you will just fall back. In other words, there is no status quo when you deal with North Korea. Either you have to engage and try to create a structure to bring North Korea into out of, I guess dungeon – and I don't have the exact answers. We've tried it. We never give up. And my president took a very bold initiative to put out this, his – what he believes is a very viable option and go from there. So it's very doable. And whether North Korea take it or not, we will have to wait and see. I can't speak for North Korea at this juncture in the public.

VICTOR CHA

Well, thank you. That's actually a very interesting expression, there is no status quo on North Korea. That's actually a very interesting way to think of it. We're out of time. I would like to, first of all, thank you for your service and for all that you've done to – for the Republic of Korea and for the alliance. You mentioned several times in your talk that you're looking forward to going back to being a professor at Yonsei. What will you look forward to the most when you return to campus?

CHOI JONG KUN

Summer vacation and winter vacation. (Laughter.)

VICTOR CHA

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm round of applause for the vice foreign minister. (Applause.)

Session I: U.S.-China Competition and the Alliance: To Hedge or to Choose?

MARK LIPPERT

All right, everybody. Good morning to those in Washington. Good evening to those in Korea. Good day to those around the world. Welcome to Session I of this excellent conference that's already underway with a couple of rousing speeches, great Q&A, to get us ready for our first expert panel.

We're a little behind. So we are going to make up some time by skimming over some of the biographies. But don't let the brevity detract from their importance and really impeccable credentials. It is an amazing group.

With that, I'm just going to get right into the substance of the panel. This panel is about U.S.-China competition and the alliance, to hedge or to choose. Maybe, perhaps, the panelists will talk about how that, perhaps, is a false choice. I don't know. We're going to get into that.

But, essentially, with secondary states and the international system being confronted with less hedge space and zero-sum binary choices in an era of U.S.-China strategic competition, how do U.S. allies assess policy decisions? Under what conditions do they hedge, align with the U.S., or accommodate China, and what is the impact of this competition for broader stability in East Asia?

As I mentioned, a fantastic panel to get us rolling here and I'm going to, again, breeze through their bios. Here we go. Dr. Evan

The panelists partaking in Session I: U.S.-China Competition and the Alliance: To Hedge or to Choose?



Medeiros, Penner Family Chair in Asian Studies at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He also served in the White House as the senior director under President Obama. Long history at RAND as well and received his Ph.D. in international relations from the London School of Economics.

Next up, the Honorable Randall G. Schriver, chairman of the board of Project 2049 Institute and partner at Pacific Solutions, LLC, former assistant secretary of defense for Asia at the Pentagon, former deputy assistant secretary of state. Also served as a founding partner of Armitage International, served as an intelligence officer in the United States Navy, attaché at U.S. Embassy Beijing and U.S. Embassy Ulaanbaatar. B.A. from Williams and a master's degree from Harvard University.

Next up, Professor Joon-hyung Kim, professor in the International Studies Department at Handong University where he also served as the chancellor of the Korean National Diplomatic Academy. Invited to George Mason as a Fulbright visiting scholar and a whole host of other impressive work on peace, unification, all of these issues that this panel and this conference will discuss here today. Received his B.A. from Yonsei University and his M.A. and Ph.D. at GW – George Washington University. I'm sorry about that.

Next up, Sangyoon Ma, professor of International Relations at Catholic University of Korea. He was director-general for strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea from '16 to '19. Formerly held positions as visiting scholar at Brookings, public policy scholar at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, intelligence officer in the ROK Air Force. B.A. and M.A. international relations at Seoul National University and then as a Swire Scholar continued study of international relations at St. Anthony's College, Oxford University, where he received his Ph.D. degree.

All right. Last but, certainly, not least, Sohn In-joo, professor, Department of Political Science at – and international relations, rather – and international relations, excuse me, at Seoul National University, visiting professor University of Tokyo, director of the Institute of China Studies at Seoul National University, and a host of very interesting academic work and credentials. Served also as a consultant for the Intergovernmental Group of 24 at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. His work has appeared in numerous journals, received his Ph.D. from George Washington University and his B.A. from Seoul National University.

Welcome to the conference, all of our participants, and I am virtual. You are all there. The last time I did this I was in person

and everybody was on a screen, and I talked to an empty room full of a screen so I made the wrong call again. Someday I'll get the right memo and we'll do this right. But hey, what the heck. I'm in my living room with my Basset hound. So life's good.

All right. Let's get into the – let's get into the conference here. Really, really great panelists, as I said. Really great subject. I'm going to turn to Dr. Medeiros first to level set here and just ask him a broad question, where things are heading in the U.S.-China relationship. We've got this really important virtual session tonight between the two leaders – President Biden, Xi Jinping – and so topical as well, the impact to the allies, impacts in the region.

Dr. Medeiros, broad strokes here to get us going. The floor is yours.

EVAN MEDEIROS

Well, Ambassador Lippert, thank you very much. I think you missed your calling. You are, of course, a wonderful ambassador but it sounds like you'd be an even better sports broadcaster. (Laughter.) So I look forward to the sort of play-by-play approach to this panel.

In terms of the U.S.-China relationship, now is a great time to be looking at it, not simply because Xi Jinping and President Biden are going to meet for the first time as counterparts but, more broadly, because the relationship is fundamentally changing in its character, and I want to make two points today about what that means for the U.S.-ROK relationship.

Point number one is in the broad arc of the U.S.-China relationship, so since normalization in '79, I think we're heading into a period that I consider to be a terra incognita. In other words, we're entering into a period where strategic competition is expanding, it's intensifying, and it's diversifying.

We're entering into a period in which the scope and the character of competition is really about to accelerate in significant ways. There is broad spectrum competition between the United States and China. In other words, we compete on security issues, on economic issues, on issues of technology, and even on issues of ideology.

Now, of course, security, competition, and economic competition is not new, but it's broadening and intensifying. And unlike during the Cold War, these four areas of competition now bleed together. Security competition has economic dimensions. Economic competition has security manifestations. Questions of ideological competition are expressed in terms of global governance and technology.



"Point number one is in the broad arc of the U.S.-China relationship, so since normalization in '79, I think we're heading into a period that I consider to be a terra incognita. In other words, we're entering into a period where strategic competition is expanding, it's intensifying, and it's diversifying. We're entering into a period in which the scope and the character of competition is really about to accelerate in significant ways. There is broad spectrum competition between the United States and China. In other words, we compete on security issues, on economic issues, on issues of technology, and even on issues of ideology."

– Evan Medeiros

So, in other words, all of these four issues are intertwined with one another, which makes it much more difficult to compartmentalize and, ultimately, manage them. But the fact that the relationship is becoming more competitive is part of the story. There's an additional part of it, which is both sides are now actively using risk and friction. They tolerate it. They use it in the relationship.

Both sides are using much more confrontational strategies. They're tolerating confrontation in the relationship more, and I think that that leads to not only a greater degree of differences but also more volatility in the relationship and I think we should expect that, going forward.

A final point I want to make about competition is the fact that the domestic politics behind it are changing in both sides and I think that's only going to make the competitive dimensions of the relationship a greater challenge to manage. In fact, I think that we may be entering an era of the relationship in which domestic politics more than geopolitics – in other words, the relative position of each country in the international system – influences the U.S.- China relationship.

In the United States, you see a fairly rapid deterioration in public opinion. Unfavorability toward China is at an all-time high among both elites and the public. You have strong bipartisan support within the Congress for more active measures to support competitive strategies toward China. China has alienated key parts of U.S. society – the business community, the media, certainly, civil society after the implementation of the NGO law, and even universities who have to think much more systematically about China risk and China exposure.

So the domestic politics are changing in the United States and, similarly, the domestic politics of China's America policy are changing. Xi Jinping has centralized decision-making so much around him that it's unclear whether or not he and his advisors fully appreciate how they've alienated other countries with their aggressive and assertive policies.

You see nationalism spiking in China. There's a strong sense of indignation in China. The domestic dimensions of China's competitive strategies are coming to the fore, as reflected in things like the fourteenth Five-Year Plan passed earlier this year in which the Chinese are starting to reengineer the composition of their economy to take account of a much more complicated external geopolitical environment.

So the domestic dimensions of the competition are changing in important ways that I think will complicate and narrow the ability of America and the ability of China to manage this terra incognita that I talked about.

Second point, what does this mean for allies and partners? And sort of the way I think about it is we've entered a new era in which what happens in the U.S.-China relationship no longer stays in the U.S.-China relationship. It's sort of the opposite of the Vegas rules, so to speak.

And what I mean by that is as the competition intensifies, because China has such a global economic footprint, because it is becoming more important to the security and the politics of countries all over the world – China is present and influential in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and in Europe – so what that means is that as the U.S.-China competition intensifies and manifests in those four baskets I talked about that the pressures on other regions, other parts of the world where the U.S. has strong allies and partners, the impact on them is going to be more acute.

And so what I think about is that the trade-offs for allies and partners are going to be more frequent, the trade-offs are going to be on a broader set of issues, the trade-offs could also be more costly, and then the Chinese are actively sort of exploring the boundaries of those alliances and those partnerships to see what risks countries are willing to run, what costs they're willing to pay, as the U.S.-China relationship heats up.

As a former policymaker, a question that I used to get all the time is, is America going to ask us to choose between the United States and China? I think that we should now reverse that

question and ask countries what are you going to do when China asks you to choose between the United States and China?

Because what I see is as China has become more capable and more confident that China is increasingly asking countries to choose. I would note, in particular, as a closing point, an excellent piece of research that Professor Cha did about a year ago where he looked at the binary choices that both Australia has faced and South Korea has faced as the U.S.-China competition has heated up.

And so I think that's an excellent piece of research because it points to the diversity of decisions countries face, whether it's speaking out on Hong Kong, supporting the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, supporting the BRI. And whether these choices are binary or not we could argue about, but, nonetheless, there are going to be more of these pressure points countries are going to face.

And I think from an American perspective is if I was a policymaker, I think the United States needs to think a little bit more systematically about which decisions speak to the strategic alignment, strategic orientation, of a country, right. You know, does South Korea's unwillingness to speak vocally about the crackdown on Hong Kong, does that really affect the U.S.-ROK alignment, whereas its position on BRI and AIIB, you know, and, certainly, on issues like North Korea, you know, may speak more to issues of alignment.

Final point that I'll close on, Ambassador Lippert, is, you know, in answering this question, you know, how do you avoid – how do countries avoid having to choose between the United States and China, and I think the way increasingly our allies and partners need to think about it is that in order to avoid having to choose, right, having to face that sort of dramatic decision of aligning with China or aligning with the United States, I think in order to avoid the grand strategic choice, countries are going to have to make some choices. In other words, have to think in advance before we get to a crisis.

So in order to avoid having to choose, countries are going to have to think about making some choices, you know, about things like 5G in order to avoid some grand strategic moment in the future. But, nonetheless, my broader point is what happens in the U.S.-China relationship no longer stays in the relationship, and I think the kind of trade-offs that countries are going to face are going to be more frequent, they're going to be broader, and be more costly.

Over to you, Ambassador Lippert.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thanks, Dr. Medeiros. Really appreciate the outstanding intervention and the comments about being a sports commentator. Dare to dream, KBO sportscaster in my future.

All right. Let's go to Professor Sohn to follow up on Dr. Medeiros' comments that really set the stage well for your expertise, Dr. Sohn. You are a deep expert in China. Let's pull on one thread that Dr. Medeiros – Dr. Medeiros mentioned, the objectives of Beijing in their relationship towards Seoul.

Are they forcing the Koreans to choose? I think that's one. And then the other question is just general thoughts on where this relationship is between Seoul and Beijing. You heard the vice foreign minister talk about a partnership, talk about a good working relationship.

Professor, you're a deep expert in this area. The floor is yours.

SOHN IN-JOO

OK. First of all, thank you very much for your kind introduction, Ambassador, and I extend my thanks to CSIS and the Korea Foundation for organizing a wonderful event.

Let me start with your second question, where are things in the bilateral relations. My takeaway point is South Korea and China, they need to accept open-minded pessimism about bilateral relations in the near future. I think two country have entered a new and more complicated stage in terms of three important developments.

First, the dynamics I want to touch on is the heightened sense of economic vulnerability and security, and that is, you know, South Korea and U.S. find that some elements of today's U.S.-China's trade competition may lead to some change in the global supply chain – global supply chain and global value chain.

So it is, consequently, in Beijing and Seoul there's growing sense of uncertainty about possible decoupling or partial coupling or complementary recoupling with Chinese economy. And on top of that, both Beijing and Seoul are keenly aware of the risk of what is called economic interdependence, weaponized interdependence, which means the manipulating or abusing the economic dependence to achieve a narrative and separate interest.

So these new dynamics heighten the – deepen a sense of the vulnerability and are starting to undermine market-driven trade, market-driven economic integration between two countries.

My second point is about the decline of positive feelings in the Sino-South Korea mutual perception. And on the Chinese



"My takeaway point is South Korea and China, they need to accept open-minded pessimism about bilateral relations in the near future. I think two country have entered a new and more complicated stage in terms of three important developments."

– Sohn In-Joo (right)

side, a lot of reports and news media suggest that the Chinese public's perception towards South Korea has – it worsened over the past decade.

Likewise, on the Korea there's anti-China sentiments running high that's well reported. So this sort of increasing negative trend and mutual perception will become a stumbling block to the future bilateral relations.

My third point is about the domestic politics, especially elite politics, in two countries, and the leadership in two countries have been preoccupied with domestic challenges and domestic issues. And in China, Chinese leaders are, you know, pretty much obsessed with the – dealing with domestic problems in a quite repressed manner, and also things appears to be having geared toward the – President Xi Jinping's – the consolidation of his power and the extension of his tenure as paramount leader next year.

And on the Korean side, South Korea is politically polarizing and facing daunting challenges such as housing bubble, income inequality, youth unemployment. And also I noticed that the domestic issue – as opposed to foreign policy issue, domestic continue to dominate public debates in the run-up to the president election next year.

So my point is the leadership in the two country are not in a good position to afford time, energy, and political capital to do some proactive, creative measure to improve bilateral relations. So, overall, now, the two countries may have to accept the open-minded pessimism about their relations, and I would say the overdose of optimism can be self-defeating.

So, rather, a realistic view can be helpful for maintaining stable relations to country and I would say that nothing is permanent except change. Nothing is permanent except change, which means South Korea, China, went through ebbs and flows, up and downs, over the past three decades. So two country should remain patient, open minded to any change in the future.

The question – first, the question about the – what China really want, what's the objective, we have to start thinking about the Chinese understanding of the U.S.-China competition. And they see the one key nature – elements of the U.S.-China straight competition is resume competition, system competition. For Beijing, the primary concern is the regime resilience, regime survival, so they – Chinese leaders have internal anxiety, and to this China's leadership wants to shape its international environment in favor of Chinese Communist Party staying in power.

To this end, China – Chinese leaders maybe – probably they will try to prevent South Korea from the teaming up to contain or harm China. And also, moreover, I think the Chinese leaders want to neutralize or mitigate South Korea's cultural normative influence over Chinese people. K-Pop, K- Drama, featuring liberal ideas like such as diversity, pluralism, is dangerous. It's sort of a spiritual pollution.

So we have to understand Beijing's concern by its regime resilience in its approach to South Korea and other neighboring countries. That's all.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thanks, Professor, for, really, an outstanding intervention in and around the two questions that I posed to you that really built well on Dr. Medeiros' setup and overview.

Let's go next to Professor Ma. And speaking from your experience, Professor, director-general policy planning, talk about the dynamics that these two previous panelists you heard – Dr. Medeiros talked about choices. You talked about structural deterioration in the relationship. You talked – we heard about – Professor Ma (sic; Sohn) talking about open-minded pessimism, you know, preoccupation with domestic concerns, public opinion sliding in both countries, weaponization of the economics.

So lots of complications in the environment in which policymakers in Seoul find themselves in the midst of this relationship. So what is the impact on ROK policymaking especially towards the U.S.-ROK alliance and on issues concerning Beijing?

The floor is yours.

All right. Thank you very much for having me here.

During the past 10 years, I think, there has been an increasing number of cases where Korea faces very difficult, you know, situations to make policy decisions among the conflicting pressures from, on the one hand, from Washington and the other hand from Beijing. The current government, I think, under the previous and current administration has sought quite consistently a sort of balanced diplomacy.

This is not an equal distance policy, however. Korea does not aim to be – aim to place itself at the right center, the right geometric center, between the United States and China. To be honest, Korea is tilted more toward United States while it tries to avoid somehow irritating or provoking China, especially with regard to the issues of sovereignty and territorial claims that China think are sensitive.

Korean government officials, including Vice Minister Choi, repeatedly express this position by saying and emphasizing that the United States is Korea's only ally and China is the largest economic and trading partner.

Despite China's rapid rise in the recent decades and some academic observations that there is taking place kind of a power shift or hegemonic shift from the United States toward China, I think most of the Korean officers, policymakers, doesn't want to see, really, the power shift happening. Yet, Korea tries to avoid kind of a friction with China for two well-known reasons.

First, China is the – Korea's largest economic and trading partner. Our trade volumes – the portions of, you know, trade with China occupies about 25 percent of our total trading volumes. And, in

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– Ma Sangyoon



addition, Korea imports a number of items very essential for our economy from China. So that kind of dependence on the trade with China makes us to – makes us very difficult to somehow taking a position to provoke China.

Secondly, the current Korean government seeks China's active cooperation to jumpstart the Korean peace process. President Moon Jae-in proposed the end-of-the-war declaration among the three parties or four parties and want to utilize the upcoming Beijing Winter Olympic Games as a kind of a diplomatic opportunity.

On the other hand, I'd like to say that Korea seeks cooperation with the U.S.- Indo-Pacific strategy, especially in terms of Korea's own new Southern Policy. The cooperation is more focused on economic area and social areas, too. But Korea is somehow cautious on defense cooperation, however, especially in a wider region beyond the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea seeks to enhance its own defense capacity, however, in close consultation with the United States. It is noteworthy, I think, in a recent report by – that the CICIR, which is a think tank associated with a Chinese intelligence agency, warned recently that South Korea's enhanced defense capabilities in areas like missiles and submarines would play disadvantageously for China in its strategic competition with United States.

I think this testifies how Korean, you know, policy and positions is somehow navigating narrow waters between rocks and hard place. Thank you.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thank you, Professor. Really excellent insights.

Can I just follow up on one point, just draw you out just a little bit more? It was on your last point that you made about the wider regional, I guess, cooperation engagement by Seoul in the Indo-Pacific.

How about values? There's been a lot of talk on democracy, human rights, rule of law. You have Taiwan referenced in the joint statement that accompanied the summit between the two leaders just this spring. There's been, obviously, an ongoing conversation for many years between the United States and South Korea on the South China Sea. You touched on that a little bit. But any further comments on that basket of issues?

MA SANGYOON

Well, on those issues, which might relate to the values or value diplomacy, I think Korean government has been a little bit less

concerned with those issues, the causes of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. This is partly because of the concern that we have not irritating China too much.

Probably we may have opportunities to discuss later in this round of discussion, I think.

Korea, I think, needs to take a more principled approach or position reflecting its own identity as a liberal democracy or as a trading nation that Vice Minister Choi touched upon in his previous addresses. Well, Korea's own political and economic development owes greatly to the existence of the liberal international order and that testifies that Korea needs and has an interest, a very significant interest, to preserve that kind of international order for that freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and free trade regimes in the world, and human rights, democracy, I think, those are all issues that really matters for Korean interests. Thank you.

MARK LIPPERT

Well put. Thanks, Professor. Excellent comeback there and appreciate the comments, especially about the rules-based international order and its nexus to the trading nation status of the Republic of Korea or the emphasis that the Republic of Korea places on being a trading nation.

Let's come to Professor Kim, and let's bring this back to the Peninsula. It dovetails a bit with the Q&A session with the vice foreign minister, where we had a lot of conversation about China. But the vice minister kept bringing this back into the peninsular context and the North Korea relationship as well as kind of a driver.

So let's – and the reason we bring this back is because of your expertise on North Korea, but the impact of all of this on DPRK itself, machinations in Pyongyang, and Seoul's DPRK policy and as well as the alliance posture towards DPRK policy, especially given the competition of two key members, U.S. and China, that hold seats at the Security Council and are essential for virtually any multilateral configuration on the DPRK issue – four-party, six-party, et cetera.

Professor, comments on this basket of issues? And the floor is yours.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

OK. Thank you very much. I'm honored to be one of this wonderful panel. And especially, Ambassador Lippert, as I – if I remember correctly you are Doosan's supporter, right? They're losing now. So I hope they win over. It's not – it's not –

MARK LIPPERT

I'm not happy. I'm not happy. They're down 2-0, you know.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Korean Series is going. Anyways, yes, I'm relieved, like, a few months ago from a government official job, so I'm enjoying the civilian life afterwards.

Yeah, it's really strategic questions for Koreans' survival – Korean, you know, both North and South. Let me start with introducing my episode of when I met North Korean Foreign Ministry people back in March 2018.

The time is very delicate at the time because, you know, it's after announcement of inter-Korean summit and U.S.-North Korean summit decided. Somehow, this trilateral 1.5 strategic dialogue in Helsinki, Finland. After three days, we talked a lot and as – informally – and I asked so many questions that I, you know, have, you know, in the long time. And I asked him: What do you think about China? China is your plan A to be – to survive in the coming – if your regime have difficulties? He said – definitely, he said, no, our plan A is U.S. The plan B is China.

We want to have good relations with the U.S. because they have something regarding – it deeply related to our survival. But if you push us too much to the corner, then we have no choice but to hang on China. And he challenged me by asking that. Whenever China gets stronger in history, they always have a hard time – gave a hard time to Koreans. I think it's very frank and honest statement. And this is the very episode I heard with – you know, from Kissinger and Kim Kye-gwan's dialogue in New York channel, and they want to have – even want to have some kind of alliance relations with the U.S. I don't think it's just – you know, just kidding or a joke.

The reason why I say is I think it's right now we are at juncture, I think. And the U.S.-China relationship, someone called it strategic paranoia. I know China behaves sometimes, you know, bad violator. They steal technology, But somehow, this strategic competition out of hands. And that means, you know, it's very difficult to Koreans, both Koreans, you know, because we never solved – resolved this division of the peninsula. We couldn't be successful, you know, when the Cold War collapsed.

You know, Chinese people, they said it's a long war, so even 50 years or a hundred years but they can endure. They say they will win, but they can endure. But physically, geopolitically, you know, this East Asia is the battlefield. I don't think they are going to the war, but somehow they weren't so tested each other, so this fault



"People say...what's South Korea's plan A? Plan A, of course, U.S. Then plan B is China? No. No way. You know, our plan B is actually the U.S. and multilateralism. So, definitely, alliance is our number-one policy but it has to be complemented by – supplement by multilateralism."

– Kim Joon-hyung (left)

line from Korean Peninsula and the East China Sea and Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

I think, you know, Taiwan Strait is most dangerous spot, but if somebody, you know, like, a military clash, that's the end of it. So I don't think it's really useful, in my opinion. But the Korean Peninsula is the one that U.S. and China can take advantage of to warn or to test the other side. So that's really a worry.

And another one is, you know, in a way, Korean government, especially progressive government, is trying to balance. You know, this divisive frame is going on now – you know, always was there. You know, pro-China, pro- North, progressive, same category. Pro-U.S., you know, and anti-China, anti- North Korea, always on the same side, and it's still going on.

But somehow progressive government like a Moon government tried to balance, you know, even if, you know, there's criticism by the pro-China. I know that is going on a very deep conversation dialogue between Beijing and Seoul. Even – you know, everybody's talking about this domestic cost of foreign policy is rising but somehow they try to maintain, be rational even in election time, and even after the sanction by China. Everybody – you know, more than 80 percent anti-China feelings, but still. And in many people it's just the same questions: How can we choose China over U.S.? So why don't we choose now, you know, U.S. over China? This is – it's almost consensus among people.

But that's not easy. You know, 30 percent dependence on trade. Decoupling is necessary. We tried to decouple, you know, with the Chinese economy since the THAAD incident. Some success cases, but still going back to – actually went back to, like, almost

30 percent again. It's going to take time and needs a very careful approach. So it's not easy for us, too.

Yeah, definitely, I don't think it's really strategic ambiguity, you know, our government trying to hold on. It's not pure balance. We all know that. Fundamental basis, of course, U.S.-ROK alliance, but we don't want to damage – critically damage Korea-China relationship.

So and let me conclude my comment. So we have a choice. People say, are you plan A – what's South Korea's plan A? Plan A, of course, U.S. Then plan B is China? No. No way. You know, our plan B is actually the U.S. and multilateralism. So, definitely, alliance is our number-one policy but it has to be complemented by – supplement by multilateralism.

But these days, you know, multilateralism inside the one bloc, in a bloc situation, is not a very good idea. Now, Quad, Indo-Pacific, and Five Eyes, we have a good working relationship. But joining as a member is a different story. And one more thing is we tried to build some kind of crossover multilateral kind of organization or institutions with EU, with ASEAN, so-called we call the third region, third zone.

I'll stop here. Thank you very much.

MARK LIPPERT

Professor, outstanding intervention and you really covered the landscape on the themes of ROK in terms of strategic competition between the U.S. and China.

Just let me follow up and ask – re-ask the question that I put in the original question to you. Just a little bit – if you don't mind, just a couple minutes on North Korea. We've – I just wanted to factor that in. You touched on it a little bit. But, obviously, it looms large in South Korean policymaking.

China has a Security Council seat. There's elements in the multilateral conversations, if they ever get going again, with North Korea. How does that play into these thoughts you had in terms of leverage the Chinese may have politically on the South Koreans or impact on South Korean policymaking?

Your thoughts there, quickly, and then we'll go to Mr. Schriver.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

OK. I think, you know, original goal is to try to, you know, make this multilateralism more on the policy agenda. But somehow, because of they're all mesmerized by this North Korean issue, like, early beginning year of his policy, and this Southern Policy

and Northern Policy, and another, you know, obstacle was the pandemic. So I don't think it really materialized as he intended to do that, but bottom line is like that.

And he always have to defend himself. He's not really, you know, destabilizer of the alliance. He tries so hard, you know, tell people in Korea and the U.S. he's not the type that many, you know, conservatives framed.

MARK LIPPERT

OK. Thank you. Excellent. All right.

Mr. Schriver, you've been waiting a little while. We appreciate the patience. But, you know, you're the cleanup hitter. You're the Kim Jae-hwan of the conference. That's Doosan's cleanup hitter. So let's stick with the baseball analogy here.

You heard some very interesting comments along the way about decoupling the domestic issues in South Korea, that it's not equidistant in terms of a hedge between the United States and China that the Koreans are running.

The multilateral peace, southern strategy, this comes right into your wheelhouse, especially as former assistant secretary of defense at DOD where you had a regional lens and were charged with a lot of alliance management, among other duties.

But talk about these dynamics in terms of the impact in Korea, alliances more generally, and then thoughts about how the United States might play into these trends in a way that brings allies and partners closer to us versus further away, Mr. Schriver, and any other comments you might want to make, too, on the preceding interventions because that's the distinction you have as the cleanup hitter. You can hit any pitch you want, and I'll stop there.

RANDALL G.
SCHRIVER

Great. Well, thanks, Ambassador Lippert. Appreciate you moderating this panel, and thank you to CSIS and the Korea Foundation and for my colleagues, who've already made excellent comments.

Look, I think for the United States and the region we've been on a trajectory for a longer period than some people acknowledge or maybe even understand. I actually think, and I've said this many times, the Trump administration was more evolutionary than revolutionary and that, in fact, the basic foundation for our move into the Pacific where we prioritized alliances, where we thought about posture, where we thought about competition with China, all of that really began during the pivot or the rebalance that,

Mark, you were so critical in helping conceive of and develop, and Evan as well.

And, really, you know, if you look at – I don't have to tell you guys because you guys came up with it, but 60 percent of our naval forces in the strategic guidance that the Obama administration put out in the Pacific, the prioritization and modernization of alliances and so on and so forth, all of this was laid in the Obama administration and then, I think, further during the Trump administration, and now, I think, we see a lot of continuity in the Biden administration.

I make this point because even though, certainly, President Trump had a difference in style and personality and tone, I think we've been on this trajectory of adopting a more competitive posture vis-à-vis China for quite some time, and it was really driven by interest, by China's behavior and their, really, aspirations to undermine the free and open order that we've all benefited so much from.

So this gets to your question about alliance management. I think our alliance discussions have also evolved and matured along the way where, particularly, behind closed doors we're able to have very frank and candid discussions about where we see the future challenges and what our expectations may be of our respective alliances and respective minilateral and multilateral organizations.

So I think this has been a fairly smooth evolutionary process up until recently where, I think, the competition is intensifying. And so when we talk about choices, sometimes I'm a little uncomfortable even with the – you know, the titles of sessions like this, whether or not to choose or hedge or choose.

Well, for goodness sake, hopefully, we've made a choice of some kind that we're allies and we share values and there's sort of a foundational view of what's important. But when we would go around the region we found a lot of receptivity not to choosing Washington over Beijing but can you choose protection of your sovereignty.

Can you choose free fair reciprocal trade? Can you choose peaceful dispute resolution? Can you choose international norms and standards? Can you choose a particular approach to a regional order which is characterized by the free and open qualities?

Now, obviously, I'm not – no spoiler alert here – if you choose all those things, we're pretty confident you'll be in our camp. But the

choices are going to become more stark and pointed and people will be, I think, further exposed, if you will.

I've never thought that people didn't want to choose, and people don't generally want to choose in public and they don't generally want to choose in a way that appears confrontational to China because we all have a lot of stake in the China relationship.

But in terms of choosing those values, those norms, those standards, I've always felt very comfortable that we've got momentum. We've got a coalition of countries that far outweigh countries that want a different kind of regional order or a different kind of deferential relationship with China. So I'm pretty confident about it, and I'm bullish on the U.S.-ROK relationship and alliance, going into the future. But there are some risks.

Look, the Biden administration is attempting to pull something off that's very difficult. We're going to learn a little more, maybe tonight after the phone call, although I've seen a very aggressive ploy at dampening expectations, which is always – you know, I had pretty low expectations going in already. But we've been assured there will be no deliverables and we shouldn't have high expectations for this first meeting.

But, really, what I think they're trying to do is achieve a new sort of steady state. They talk about common sense guardrails. They talk about trying to insulate certain areas of cooperation. Certainly, we've seen Mr. Kerry's efforts related to climate change. I think we'll hear more about some of the other efforts, maybe even something related to the Korean Peninsula. So try to achieve a new normal but a steady state where competition is the defining quality of the relationship. But we do have these so-called common sense guardrails and we have these insulated and protected areas of cooperation.

I don't think it's going to work, and I don't think it's going to work because a point that Evan made, which I thought was an excellent point, the Chinese are willing to accept more friction. They're using coercion and military tools in order to try to drive outcomes. That will make it very difficult to have a steady state that is not very dangerous and risky.

I think it will also fail for a number of other reasons and it relates to, you know, values and interests. There are certain things that are just going to be hard to ignore. We can go and have a normal Olympics but it's pretty hard to ignore ongoing genocide, which is happening in Xinjiang right now – two administrations in a row have acknowledged that – and nor should we ignore genocide.

This should be factored into our relationship.

And when our Chinese counterparts say they want a relationship based on mutual respect, they want a relationship characterized by win-win cooperation, what they really mean is they want us to refrain from any criticism whatsoever of their actions, particularly what they deem internal policy matters, and that we avoid irritants, and this will be very, very tricky to navigate.

So, going forward, and let me speak specifically about the U.S.-ROK alliance, I think there's really sort of two risks. And let me chapeau this again by saying I am bullish on this and I think we'll manage this all effectively and we'll come out the other side stronger but, really, two risks, and they've sort of been addressed in one form or another so far.

But one is that we have a near-term crisis that we're not prepared for as an alliance and I think, certainly, something could happen in the Taiwan Strait. I'm not of the view that China is anxious for a fight and that they're planning a near-term invasion. But, certainly, the level of flight activity, surface activity, in and around Taiwan raises the risk for all of us of an unintended incident or a crisis that escalates.

What have our friends in Seoul thought through what that means for them? Have we thought through what that means for an alliance? I suspect not thoroughly enough, because sometimes we respect these topics as taboo topics and we don't go deep enough. But I can't think of anything worse for the alliance than a crisis of that nature that we're unprepared for, caught off guard for.

So I think whatever needs to be done behind closed doors, whether that's our ROK allies having conversations among themselves and gaming through what a crisis like that might mean or even, I think, more appropriately and valuable would be an alliance discussion about certain hotspots and what it would mean for the alliance should there be a crisis of that nature.

The second risk is, really, more difficult and long term in nature and that is that this divergence that we may have on views of China and the regional order and how much deference to show to China in favor of maintaining normal trade relations, that that divergence will cause a drift that, over time, we'll find ourselves 10, 15, 20 years from now with a diminished alliance.

Not that the affinity would be gone, not that the history always remains and that we would have many shared interests, but, look, China is the organizing principle for the Department of Defense



“We don’t want to find ourselves at a point where we’re making decisions about our strategic relationship – pardon me, our strategic competition with China that sort of overlooks or forgets the importance of Korea, and that can come in a number of forms... But the point is we don’t want to sort of slide into a diminished state because of this divergence, and we need to address it head on earlier so that we don’t sort of wake up 10, 15 years later with a less relevant alliance.”

– Randall G. Schriver

right now as defined by the previous National Defense Strategy and that’s been endorsed by the new administration.

You can’t have an alliance where one side views something as the primary important challenge, the organizing principle, and the other side doesn’t embrace that without some loss of relevance over time. And if that’s the drift we’re on, that’s also equally dangerous, in a way, because, again, we’ll be sort of diminished and less relevant over time and that’s not where we want to be.

So we need to be vigilant about evolving. I like the – it was interesting, the 1st vice minister’s comments. He gave a speech and didn’t mention China, but he talked a lot about evolving and adapting and doing what we need to do to keep relevance. So I think that’s really the challenge that I took away from that speech, and we have to have the China challenge as a part of that discussion.

There, certainly, will be perturbations along the way, but Korea does not want to be France in the AUKUS equation, right. France was treated the way they were treated mostly because they, frankly, were overlooked and that key decision-makers didn’t give full proper consideration for their role in the Pacific, their partnership with us.

We don’t want to find ourselves at a point where we’re making decisions about our strategic relationship – pardon me, our strategic competition with China that sort of overlooks or forgets the importance of Korea, and that can come in a number of forms.

And by the way, there are some near-term risks there, too. I hope if the administration is seriously considering a no-first-use declaration, which I think would be a horrible idea, I hope we

think about fully what that means for extended deterrence and what that means for our alliance with the ROK and others.

But the point is we don't want to sort of slide into a diminished state because of this divergence, and we need to address it head on earlier so that we don't sort of wake up 10, 15 years later with a less relevant alliance.

MARK LIPPERT

OK, Randy. Thanks. A really outstanding intervention. Let me just come back for a one-minute follow-up because we're, basically, out of time. But your thoughts on, going forward, given some of the risks you outlined, number one.

Number two, I think what I would characterize as some of the structural friction that you think will lead to at least a look at a different approach in the near future, and then this danger of being, I guess you'd sort of say, overlooked – those three issues.

And I would just, for the record, point out that in just a few years back the Koreans were seeking cooperation on nuclear submarines, right – the AUKUS piece. There's an interesting lens there.

Randy, thoughts on how we manage this tiny question in about a minute.

RANDALL G.
SCHRIVER

Well, again, I agree with the point Evan made. And I don't mean to make you feel uncomfortable, a Trump appointee agreeing so much with you, Evan. But he talked about finding the areas of cooperation that really have more significant strategic significance rather than maybe some of the other areas.

And I do think, as uncomfortable as it is for all of us, we are not going to be able to maintain normal sort of status quo trade and economic relations with China, going forward. We're not. And I think where it's coming to a head first is on technology, and I think the combination of China's aggressive efforts to steal it, pirate it, but also the program of military-civil fusion in that seemingly commercial activities are really benefiting – ultimately, benefiting the PLA through the civil-military fusion efforts.

That means we've got to tighten up. So it's supply chain for our own protection so there's diversification there so we have reliable suppliers of critical technologies. But more and more, it's about protection of technologies. It's about identifying the choke points that are important to China so that we understand where we have leverage. But this is not going to be a normal trade relationship, going forward.

In the U.S., we're going to start to look at capital flows, which is sort of the untouched 800-pound gorilla. We've put these tariffs in place. We've talked about entities lists. But still, the capital is flowing to China at unprecedented levels. That's not going to continue. And so for us to have, I think, an approach to the overall China challenge that is really optimal we've got to start talking about these hard economic questions first.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thanks, Randy. We're about to gavel down.

Evan, you were brought into this. One minute to you to respond. Closing thoughts, then we're going to gavel and get on with the rest of the show.

EVAN MEDEIROS

So I will foot stomp Randy's point, which is one of in order for the alliance to continue we really have to stay aligned on the China challenge. When 1st Vice Minister Choi was giving his speech he said, let's talk about the 800- pound elephant in the room. And I thought he was about to say China, and I was, like, great. They get it. And, of course, he talked about Korea.

So I think all of the risks that Randy highlighted are really spot on. I hope the U.S. and the ROK, at a government-to-government level, have a very special, quiet, nonpublic channel for beginning to coordinate perceptions, assessments, strategies, and policies on China.

That's what's needed, because whether it's through the channel of a crisis or drift, I think that there are real serious risks that need to be attended to because, as other commentators have pointed to, the Chinese strategy is one of either neutralizing or Finlandizing South Korea. That's what they want. Diminish the role of the alliance gradually incrementally over time.

And while it's easy for all of us here that are very focused on the U.S.-ROK alliance and have a lot of experience, I think it's the policymakers at the top of both our systems that don't focus on U.S.-ROK 24/7 that need to be sort of brought into that, and I think that that's going to be an exceptionally important agenda in the future.

Thank you.

MARK LIPPERT

All right. Thanks, Evan. With that, we are going to gavel down Session I, an outstanding session. Professor Medeiros, Professor Sohn, Professor Ma, Professor Kim, the Honorable Randy Schriver, thank you all for, really, outstanding comments, insights,

counsel. Really, really, really a fast-paced tour de force here.

In closing, I'll just say the takeaways that I had, among others, complex, evolving, involves domestic alliance issues. It's broader in the international context in terms of its impact. It's not equidistant, the distance Seoul is trying to cover between Washington and Beijing. But they're – where we are between 100 percent agreement in Washington and Seoul and being equidistant is still to be determined. And then, finally, values, economics, multilateralism, even cultural – the K-Pop reference by one of the panelists as well – all in play here. So great session. Thanks again. It really set us up well for the next events here in the conference and, really, fantastic food for thought for all policymakers, academics, and think tank experts around the world. Thanks again.

Session II: Denuclearization and Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Is There a Way Forward?

KIM JOON-HYUNG OK, hello, everybody. My name is Kim Joon-hyung again. I'm sorry to show you my face twice in a row. (Laughs.) But I am more honored to be a moderator for the second session, which is titled "Denuclearization and Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Is there a way forward?" And I thought about this when I looked at these questions. We are asking same – we have been asking the same question over and over again. Still didn't get, you know, answered. And then, you know, this morning First Vice Minister Choi talked about never give up. (Laughs.) So, I don't want to give up asking this question. So maybe we can have – we can have some clue or insight to think creatively. And we have a great line of panelists. And actually, you know, during the first session I was expecting to come back to me one more time. (Laughter.) But suddenly, it ended. So why don't we, changing a little bit of format, so at least two rounds or three rounds, if possible. So maybe we'll come in short, a little bit, and then we can talk more about issues. I will introduce each whenever they come to present, so not, you know, everybody at once. OK. Actually, I set out several questions beforehand, and then I have three – I categorized into three. And first question is this, like, where are we now, and diagnosing the current situation and forecasting the next six months. Because six months are – the Moon government has six months left. And I don't want to – we don't want to focus the long-period of time. So, for the next six months. And who and what will be the key to move on from the current deadlock? So, this is the first category of questions, and you can present yourself. First presenter, let's see, next to me. Dr. Yoon Young-kwan is Kim Koo visiting professor in

The panelists partaking in Session II: Denuclearization and Peace on Korean Peninsula: Is There a Way Forward?



the Department of Government at Harvard University. Previously, he was senior visiting scholar with the Korea Project at the Harvard Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs from December 2020 to June 2021. He's also professor emeritus in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Seoul National University. From 2003 to 2004, he served as the minister of foreign affairs and trade of Republic of Korea. Before joining the faculty of Seoul National University in 1990, he taught at the University of California-Davis for three years. I have a long list of his resume, so I'll stop here and give him the stage. The floor is yours.

YOON
YOUNG-KWAN

"In other words, we are in a kind of stalemate, which seems somewhat stable from a short-term tactical perspective. But from a long-term strategic perspective, which may be working disadvantageously in terms of U.S. strategy interest in their region."

– Yoon Young-kwan

Thank you very much, Professor Kim Joon-hyung, for your very kind introduction. And it's my great pleasure and thank you for having me in this very important conference. As we all know, I mean, we are – we have been in kind of stalemate for at least two years, since the end of Hanoi summit. And there was no progress in terms of denuclearization. And there was no improvement of bilateral relationship between the United States and North Korea. And inter-Korean relationship maybe there was some, but still we are in a difficult situation. And the U.S. government, the Biden administration, has been saying – for example, Ambassador Sung Kim has been saying that the U.S. is open to dialogue without any condition at any time with North Korea. But frankly speaking, I feel that, I mean, their plate is already full. I mean, there are so many things to cover, so much more urgent issues. I mean, there are. And North Koreans, they say that basically what is important is the end of hostile policy of the United States. And I wonder whether they are really interested in the end of – I mean, declaration of end of Korean War. And so far, they have been restraining their behavior, and they have not yet made any



significant provocation, such as nuclear test or ICBM. But nobody knows how long they will restrain their behavior. South Korean government, they seem to be quite interested in facilitating resumption of the U.S.-North Korea dialogue – for example, so taking some measures like declaration of the end of Korean War. But they have only six months left. So, I don't know whether their efforts will be successful or not. In other words, we are in a kind of stalemate, which seems somewhat stable from a short-term tactical perspective. But from a long-term strategic perspective, which may be working disadvantageously in terms of U.S. strategy interest in their region. If we – if we continue to be in this kind of stalemate for a long time, probably I'm afraid the relative influence of the United States will be weakening while the relative influence of China will be increasing. So, I'm concerned. I'm concerned about that, yeah.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much. It's very short. (Laughter.) OK, good. OK, our next speaker will be Sue Mi Terry – Dr. Sue Mi Terry. She is director of Hyundai Motor-Korea Foundation Center for Korean History and Public Policy at the Wilson Center. She was a former senior fellow with the Korea Chair at the Center for – CSIS, here. Dr. Terry was a senior analyst on Korean issues at the CIA from 2001 to 2008. She was director for Korea, Japan, and Oceania affairs at the National Security Council under George W. Bush and President Barack Obama, between 2008 and 2009. Actually, she is a – she is almost like a star in Korea. I saw her face every other day in Korean news. (Laughs.) So congratulations on your new job, and the floor is yours.

SUE MI TERRY

Thank you so much. And thanks to Victor, CSIS, and Korea Foundation for having me here, even though I defected. (Laughter.) And it's great to be here and be part of this panel, distinguished panelists. And I know everyone here has been looking at the Korean issue for a very long time. So I really appreciate this. After having followed North Korea for how many decades, I feel there's more humility. Like, I don't know. I don't have answers. I don't know where we are headed. And I read everybody's – I just read Minister Yoon's wonderful piece on national interests on how we need a bold strategy. I'm not sure if we're going to necessarily agree on what we should do next, but I think we can agree on where we are today. (Laughs.) And I do agree with Minister Yoon's comments right now that, obviously, we are at an impasse, again, after three decades of dealing with North Korea and after five U.S. presidents – very different U.S. presidents, and very different policies we have pursued, from

bilateral negotiations to multilateral, Axis of Evil, to, you know Banco Delta Asia, to strategic patience, to maximum pressure, and even meeting with Kim Jong-un three times. And here we are again having this conversation on where we are. So we are at an impasse. And I would argue that – I agree with Minister Yoon that in the sense that while there might be, you know, OK, there's no nuclear test and ICBM test – and I'm going to leave this part to Richard, because he's the professional on this – but we are at a worse point, I would argue, because North Korea has been making advancement on both its nuclear and missile program. That's what they've been doing the last few years. And last recent spate of tests show that they are trying to diversify their missile programs and frustrate U.S. missile defenses, and so on. So I do think we are worse off. And after having gone through the summitry and having sat down with Kim and having the Hanoi summit fail, our options – U.S. options are getting even more limited, realistically speaking. So I don't think we are – so, again, here we are. We are at an impasse, but we are even worse off. I know that President Moon, with six months left in office, you know, he's making a valiant effort to really make progress with North Korea. And I do think it's important to have this conversation, even though we might not agree exactly on the pros and cons of having a peace declaration right now with North Korea. Although, I do buy Victor's earlier comment, what he was trying to get at is do I necessarily think that North Korea is going to be like, sure, that's all I need, we need a peace declaration and this is the one thing that we've been missing the last three decades, and now we can make progress? I'm highly doubtful, because one thing that we – you know, one good thing that came out of the Hanoi summit is that we understand what Kim

"But I think this is sort of – that's what he's [Kim Jong-un] going to do. He's going to continually alternate. And North Korea's strategic goals have not changed. They remain consistent, which are getting international acceptance of North Korea as a nuclear weapons power, getting us comfortable living with North Korea's nuclear weapons. And then secondly, I do think Kim does want to split the alliance."

– Sue Mi Terry



wants. And Kim wants significant sanctions relief. So unless we are willing to give that, I'm not quite sure necessarily that peace declaration would – that's going to be it, and North Koreans are going to say, OK, now that's going to get us starting the right framework, and so on. So that's where we are. And in terms of your question, the second part of the question of you asked us to predict what's going to happen in the next six months, I mean, you know, one thing about also having followed North Korea for many years is I don't think they're all that unpredictable. So I can – you know, it's going to be an interesting six months, because there is South Korea – presidential election in South Korea. Clearly Kim would want, I would think, the progressive candidate to win, just because of their policy stance. One's more pro- engagement and the other conservative party is a little bit more, you know, less so. So, you know, it'll be interesting how Kim calculates that he should best influence South Korean election, although I do think South Korean public now is so sophisticated and they're so focused on domestic issues, I'm not sure if they're going to be all that much swayed by whatever North Koreans choose to do. But my prediction is that they are going to continue at this spot a very – Kim found this very sweet spot of provocations and returning to some sort of testing campaign, but it's not – it doesn't really merit an overreaction. This is a nice, sweet spot for Kim. And alternating between that and, you know, sort giving out peace feelers to South Korea to see where he can land. Beijing Olympics might be a good venue, just like PyeongChang Olympics served as a good venue for – if Kim is interested in having a sit-down, that might be a good venue. But I think this is sort of – that's what he's going to do. He's going to continually alternate. And North Korea's strategic goals have not changed. They remain consistent, which are getting international acceptance of North Korea as a nuclear weapons power, getting us comfortable living with North Korea's nuclear weapons. And then secondly, I do think Kim does want to split the alliance. So I think that's what he's going to do, is continually sort of alternate back and forth. And I would just end with this comment: There's some criticism of the Biden administration's policy in terms of what are they doing. You know, this is – they keep saying we're not this, we're not that, we're not doing strategic patience, we're not doing maximum pressure. Well, what is it exactly? There are no details. But I do think that one thing that the Biden administration is doing correctly is that they mean it when they say they are going to work very closely with their allies. So, I do see the Biden administration working very closely with the Blue House, and with Japan, with South Korea, going back and forth.

At least – maybe not much has been accomplished, but there’s a lot of coordination and transparency back and forth. And I think that’s a very good thing.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much. I think you’re right, when I heard, you know, from Blue House and MOFA, actually, they say all kinds of levels they talk to each other. So sometimes they don’t have anything to discuss anymore, jokingly they said. But somehow nothing came out of it. And actually, one point you made is, you know, North Korea can help progressive, you know, candidate in coming election. But in history, the opposite actually. They did something actually when – ironically, or maybe they intended to help conservative. Maybe they are symbiotic – you know, hostility symbiosis, I call it. (Laughs.) Anyways. OK, and then the question about the Beijing Olympic and the role of China, actually, I saved it for the last. So I’m going to come back to you if we have time for that. And third presenter, let me introduce Dr. Sheen Seong-ho. He is a professor of international security and a director of the International Security Center at the Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University. Previously he was a visiting fellow at East- West Center, Washington, D.C. CNAPS fellow at the Brookings Institution, an assistant research professor at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, and a research fellow at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis in Cambridge, MA. Dr. Sheen has taught at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. The floor is yours.

SHEEN SEONG-HO

Thank you very much, Professor Kim, for a very nice introduction. First of all, it’s so nice to back in Washington, D.C. My last travel to D.C. was more than one and a half years ago. So I guess this is a pretty much the same for most of Korean delegation. It’s been a long time, I guess. And I guess my American colleagues also maybe are longing to come back to Seoul some time. I hope we will have that kind of, you know, back and forth active exchange between Seoul and Washington. Maybe this is the beginning of going back to normalcy both in D.C. – and when I watched last night, Sunday night football on TV, everybody was – you know, I mean, no masks, tens of thousands packed stadium. So unreal still in Korea at the moment. But I think this is good sign. After listening to all of my, you know, previous presenters, I also happen to be on the same page with most of what they say about denuclearization, dealing with North Korean regime. But because they are still, you know, kind of to cheer up the mood in this room, I would like to maybe suggest some new – a different perspective. Not that I’m just naïve enough to believe all kinds

“So, I suspect maybe – that may be a continuing kind of trend, that’s even both Washington and Beijing, that they don’t want to see any kind of new crisis on the Korean Peninsula next year. So maybe that may give us some kind of break for the South Korean government. Whoever comes into the next presidential office, Blue House, they will still try to stabilize the situation, especially given all this pandemic going on. Everybody is worried about economy. So maybe still, in essence, obviously that says the good part of this or what will happen, how it will go, it depends on Kim Jong-un.”

– Sheen Seong-ho

of miracle on the Korean Peninsula. But let me talk about the three, I think, I believe, important political calendar regarding this event in the coming months and year. The first is, obviously, the Beijing Olympics next year in February – starts February 4th. So, speaking of this end of Korean War declaration, I guess there is some speculation in Seoul at this moment that, obviously, we know that the current outgoing president, Moon Jae-in, maybe his last wish would be to have this great ceremony at least with maybe him and President Biden, and maybe Chairman Kim, and even Xi Jinping. Who knows what will happen in the next year? About five months left in his office. But definitely he would like to – you know, want to have his lasting legacy as a president who really pushed forward this kind of engaging North Korea, building – at least, starting a kind of peace process on the Korean Peninsula. Which Vice Minister Choi Jong Kun talked about this morning. Obviously, the second is – so who knows what will happen in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics, who will show up. Obviously, the Chinese government maybe want to have President Moon but, most of all, maybe they want to have President Biden. But we will see. The second, but how the North Koreans will react, of course, respond. The one complicating thing, as we all heard before, we have, you know, an upcoming presidential election in South Korea, which is set for the 9th of March, so a month after Beijing opening ceremony. And of course, North Korea, obviously, watching carefully who is going to be the next president. So if I were Kim Jong-un, even if Kim Jong-un has a very good, you know, personal relation with President Moon, he may want to see who will become, you know, owner of next Blue House. And obviously, we have this about four months of horseracing between the two candidate from governing party



and opposition party. And the race is very tight at the moment. So, no one knows. There's both possibility. And each of these candidate has their own view on North Korean policy, which maybe – but is quite, you know, general that, obviously, governing party candidate tend to be more for the engagement, whereas the opposition party candidate Yoon Seok-youl is more aligned with the general conservative line of – you know, on North Korea policy. So, we will see. But still that's another important, I think, calendar to watch. Finally, the third calendar I think it is important is – in both U.S. and China – the November next year. U.S. has a midterm election. In China they have 20th Party Congress. And every sign indicate that President Xi Jinping wants to have his position sealed for the next term, which is – which will break away from the, you know, tradition of the Chinese party leadership change, and all that. And that means that at the same time I guess both Washington and Beijing will be very much preoccupied with their own domestic calendar, obviously with this good reason. And in this regard, I see that – I suspect they may want to have any kind of, you know, trouble coming out of Korean Peninsula or East Asia. I mean, speaking of in the U.S.-China strategic competition, there is an intensifying, there is a rivalry, and all that. But at the same time, all politics are local, you know? And to me, in that regard, it reminds me of, OK, back in 2017 under the previous U.S. administration, Korea was the hot spot. Back in 2017 everybody was talking. If there is any war, it will be the Korean Peninsula. Thank God now Korea is not on the top of that list. People talk about Taiwan or South China Sea, in case of you and China. So, I suspect maybe – that may be a continuing kind of trend, that's even both Washington and Beijing, that they don't want to see any kind of new crisis on the Korean Peninsula next year. So maybe that may give us some kind of break for the South Korean government. Whoever comes into the next presidential office, Blue House, they will still try to stabilize the situation, especially given all this pandemic going on. Everybody is worried about economy. So maybe still, in essence, obviously that says the good part of this or what will happen, how it will go, it depends on Kim Jong-un. And no one knows what is he up to. (Laughs.) But at least we have a relatively kind of, to me, stable kind of foundation for the concerned parties in the region to engage, rather than confront, North Korea. Of course, we all know that they will not easily give up, you know, their nuclear program. There will be lots of, you know, North Korean tactics and to drive a wedge between U.S. and ROK, and all that. But I'm quite sure, whoever becomes the next, you know, occupancy of the Blue House, they will try to work with American government,

their counterpart. That's one thing that I'm quite sure. So, on that, I try to leave on a little bit of positive note for the prospects on the Korean Peninsula in the coming months. Thank you.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much, Dr. Sheen. Our final panelist is Mr. Richard Johnson. He is the deputy assistant secretary of defense for countering weapons of mass destruction and acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear and missile defense at the U.S. Department of Defense. Prior to his appointment at the Department of Defense, he served as the senior director for fuel cycle and verification at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and the system coordinator and deputy lead coordinator for Iran nuclear implementation at the U.S. Department of State. And I kind of saved him for the last, because he is an expert on nuclear issues, he's an expert on North Korea, an expert on Iran. So and he is the only one who really is tacking with this North Korean issue right now, as a government official. So maybe he can give a better picture with more accuracy. Go ahead. (Laughs.)

RICHARD JOHNSON

Thank you very much, Joon-hyung. And thank you so much to CSIS, especially to my good friend Dr. Cha, and also to the Korea Foundation, Dr. Lee Geun, for inviting me today. It's very nice, as others have said, to be back in person and to see a lot of smiling faces, even if the topic that we're discussing is a very serious one. So thank you very much. You asked, you know, kind of where do we stand? And I think it is important, though Dr. Terry mentioned it a little bit, to come back to where we stand from a U.S. policy perspective, and then talk a little bit about where that has taken us to today. So just to recall, the Biden-Harris administration as one of its first acts undertook to underdo – to do a new North Korea policy review. And I was a part of that review when I came into government. I came in a little bit later, but I was part of it starting in March of this year. And it's important to recall that after doing a very intensive look at our policy that we've landed in an important place. And that is that first of all, we have reaffirmed our commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. But we also have an understanding that past efforts, as has been mentioned before, have not achieved this objective. So, we understand that we have to focus on something that's not a grand bargain, not strategic patience, as you've said, but something that is practical, and something that takes a calibrated approach that includes being open to and exploring diplomacy with the DPRK. Minister Yoon mentioned the comments from my former boss, Ambassador Sung Kim. But also, working to make sure that whatever we do is

increasing the security of not only the United States but of our allies, particularly our regional allies in South Korea and Japan, and our deployed forces there and around the world. And I should just note here that my key role here at the Department of Defense is focused primarily on the countering WMD side and the nuclear side of things, which includes not only supporting the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but also enforcing U.N. Security Council sanctions resolutions and also overseeing missile threat reduction, WMD threat reduction and, very importantly, our strong, incredible extended deterrence commitments to our partners and allies. And I think that is something that is very important to this equation and needs to not be forgotten when we're talking about this issue. And so there's a balance that we have to achieve. Dr. Terry mentioned where we are in terms of the last six months or the last year in terms of North Korea's development of its nuclear and missile programs. And I would agree that we see a worsening in regards to increasing technical sophistication on behalf of the DPRK. We've seen what the North Koreans claim to be a hypersonic glide vehicle test. In recent months we've seen advancements in the submarine-launched ballistic missile realm. All of this is a concern not only to the United States but, frankly, to South Korea and Japan and that regional stability. And I think we have to recall that the security and stability of the Korean Peninsula is intimately and inextricably tied to regional security and stability. And it connects very much back to the previous panel that talked about U.S. and China relations. One of the things that is part of my duties, and I think needs to be considered – and this was also a part of the DPRK policy review – was the idea that while we are seeking a practical calibrated approach that is including of and inclusive of diplomacy as our first tool of resort, that we cannot give up on, at the same time, fully implementing and making sure that we are upholding the U.N. sanctions regime and U.S. bilateral sanctions, because these tools are very important not only as a signaling device – and sanctions are not a punishment. Sanctions are a tool to prevent and reduce threats and to counter proliferation. And so I think it's important to recall that we will continue to do that. We are doing that now. And at the Department of Defense, one of the things that we do in support of that is to actually spearhead an effort where we're joined by seven other nations, including Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand, and of course South Korea, along with the U.K., to enforce the resolutions, particularly preventing North Korea from receiving illicit refined petroleum and helping to deny the revenue from illicit sources that come from their WMD and

missile programs. And so that effort will continue, and it needs to be underway. In terms of where we're going from here, I would just say I think the United States has shown truly its commitment to reaching out to the DPRK, to speaking with them diplomatically. But we've also shown, as has been pointed out by others in the panel, that we will do so in line with what President Biden has said very clearly and repeatedly, which is our effort to reinvigorate and modernize our alliances, particularly our alliances with South Korea and Japan. So, while we will see diplomacy as a first – tool of first resort, we will not this diplomacy take a backseat to our efforts to make sure that we are upholding our commitments to those allies and partners. So in short, we've made very clear our interest in reaching out, but in the meantime if we're not getting feedback from the DPRK – and understanding that COVID is an important component of this – then we have to do other things to make sure that we uphold and maintain strategic stability in the region and protect our allies and partners. And so we will look forward to proceeding on whichever track is the right one. And I know that Ambassador Kim and my colleagues at the State Department are doing all that they can to engage with our partners and allies. And, as you said, meeting very, very regularly. But in the meantime, as they say in English, it takes two to tango. So, we look forward to seeing if we have a dance partner who wants to come to the floor. But we will not stand idly by in making – in ignoring the threats that we see from North Korea's actions, both in its nuclear and its missile program. And I will close by also saying something that is often overlooked but is an important part of my portfolio, which is that the DPRK, we assess, is also undertaking offensive chemical and biological weapons programs, which are a serious threat to – not only to the Korean Peninsula but to the region, including to U.S. forces. And we're all living today – I'm looking out into an audience that I'm very happy to see everybody is wearing their masks, but if you think that COVID was a difficult challenge, there are many other concerns that you could have in that regard. And we should not forget that as a component of our strategy. Thank you.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much, Mr. Johnson. And thank you for your, your know, excellent service at – you know, at the front. And, yeah, we have – we spent half of our session wisely, so we can have a second round. And second round, the question seems a little stupid, but let's ask that. Does Washington truly want to denuclearize North Korea? It seems odd, but sometimes in Korea, cynically, people say: If you emphasize denuclearization

at once, or CVID, which is so hard to achieve, that means you don't really want it denuclearized in your mind. So maybe it's a cynical statement, because – I raise this question because I have some kind of feeling that in Washington, either moderate who try to have a dialogue – solve the problem with dialogue, through dialogue – and hardliners want to pressure North Korea until they surrender. But somehow, they approach consensus that North Korea is not going to denuclearize. Of course, solution is different, but somehow, they – so is this cynicism? Or is it really – that means ironically it can, you know, help North Korea to keep their nuclear weapon. You know, sanction is not going to make North Korea collapse in the near future. And the dialogue is going to take a long time. So maybe this – and another question – a follow up question is, can the Korean government persuade these doubtful and busy Washington politicians to seriously solve the problem through dialogue with Pyongyang? Because some people say this North Korean issue is a very important issue, and even critical issue. But it doesn't seem like it's an urgent issue. So, for example, you know, U.S. approach is just come to the negotiating table. We can talk anything unconditionally. It's not going to work to call North Korea to the table, because they had a traumatic experience in Hanoi, so they want to have some kind of solid promise before they come to the table. But U.S. look at it as a sacrifice, even though North Korea is doing anything. So, for example, you know, end of war declaration and things like that. So still posture it continues, that means North Korea is not going to come to the table. So, this is my second question. Start with Minister Yoon.

YOON
YOUNG-KWAN

Yes. That's really interesting, and at the same time a little bit, I mean, provocative – (laughs) – question. Let me answer this way: I have never been suspicious of the true intention of the American side for their purpose of denuclearizing North Korea. What I'm thinking is that it's time for us to take some steps from the current – away from the current situation and review what our policy – I mean, how – I mean, why our traditional and conventional policy didn't work in the last 30 years. I think the traditional approach has been based on three categories, characteristics. One is on the assumption that China would continue to share the common interest in denuclearizing North Korea. I'm not sure. I'm also not sure whether China will cooperate in coming years. I'm somewhat skeptical. And nowadays, they seem to be trying to link the North Korean issue to other issues – international issues not related to the Korean Peninsula. So a little bit skeptical on that issue. And the second

characteristic of the conventional approach has been some kind of moralistic and coercive approach. What I'm saying is basically traditional approach tended to view North Korea as a bad guy, and interaction between North Korea and the United States and North Korea and South Korea is a kind of bad guy/good guy relationship rather than action/reaction interaction. So somewhat morally charged. It's understandable, because definitely North Korea violated international rules of nonproliferation and defected from so many previous agreements with the international society and South Korea. However, to solve the problem, I think we need a kind of – a little – I mean, a less moralistic approach, and kind of a more detached approach from a third-person's eye perspective. What I'm saying is pushing North Korea, you do – or do take some positive measures in terms of denuclearization. Then we will, I mean, reward you, I mean, cooperation. And that kind of approach cannot work because there is a kind of so-called security dilemma problem embedded in this North Korean issue. So, kind of a simultaneous action, I mean, principle may be necessary. Of course, Ambassador Biegun mentioned about that new approach in his Stanford address, but I think there was not much opportunity for him to really apply that principle in the negotiation in Hanoi. A third characteristic is narrow focus on – only on security dimension, nuclear aspect, probably not taking much attention to the other related important issues, like economic dimension or diplomatic dimension of North Korea issue. So, it was not a comprehensive approach. And I think we need to depart from our traditional approach based on these three, kind of, I mean, characteristics or assumptions. And otherwise, I think, I mean, Chinese influence on the Korean Peninsula will be gradually increasing, because U.S. traditional approach pushed North Korea in the orbit of China for the last two decades or three decades, or something like that. And when – I mean, even when North Korean s really don't trust much China, I think that kind of important point was not taken seriously by the U.S. policymakers. And there was no strategic effort to, I mean, utilize that kind of, I mean, delicate relationship between China and North Korea. North Korean leaders may be very much concerned about their too-heavy dependence on China, politically and economically. So, they really want to improve relationship with the United States, but that aspect has been disregarded and denied the opportunities, I mean. So, my position is that we need to take a new approach, a kind of bold approach, which focuses on changing the nature of U.S.-DPRK political relationship. Otherwise, there will be no trust between two countries at all,

and even, I mean, if that kind of very low-level, I mean, trust continues, another successful nuclear agreement will not be kept by North Korea. Probably in one year or two years there will be another defection by that country. So, I think we need to take a new approach, which focuses on changing the bilateral relationship between the United States and North Korea. And we have several measures which we can consider. For example, declaration of the end of Korean War is one measures. But I think just one stand-alone action regarding declaration of peace cannot work. I mean, it should be implemented from a broader strategic perspective in relation to other measures, like establishing liaison office in Pyongyang and Washington, D.C., and trying to build military confidence between two countries, or inviting North Koreans to this country to educate about how, I mean, market capitalism works. Some other measures. So, I think we need a new or systematic bold approach, focusing on changing the bilateral relationship. And there is not much time left. Probably if the current situation continues, sometime next year, I guess, probably North Korea may provoke – I mean, testing nuclear weapons or launching ICBM. I think we need to – we can take that kind of bold approach before that time comes. And once North Korea makes that kind of provocation, the U.S. will have no, I mean, choice, actually, other than taking a kind of very strong response against that provocation. Then probably the situation will become worsened.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much. Mr. Yoon talks about we have to give up the moralistic approach. And actually, I wrote a book review of Donald Gregg, who was ambassador to Korea – U.S. ambassador to Korea. The last sentence is: One of the reasons for the failure dealing with enemies is to demonize the enemies. Actually, reminds me of that phrase. And you talked about the new kind of approach. And why don't, Dr. Terry, you can answer that. Is it possible to go along with this new approach to North Korea, with the question that I originally gave you?

SUE MI TERRY

So, I will be very candid. So, I mean, I don't disagree with many things that Minister Yoon said. He said we need a bold approach. But the devil is in the details, right? So, I think even in that piece on the national interest you said that we need to maintain sanctions, which I agree with. So, if we do maintain sanctions, and I've made comments previously, Kim wants sanctions lifted. So how do we get to this bold approach? Right now, we saw recent spate of tests that Richard talked about. And so – and we do have our own domestic politics. We have elections coming

up. So, President Biden, even though this deal that Trump – Kim offered to President Trump in Hanoi was not good enough even for President Trump, just realistic, domestically, President Biden is supposed to in the – North Korea conducts tests, and we say we are ready to meet with North Koreans anytime, without precondition, and do what? Like, we're just going to declare peace and we are going to open liaison office? By the way, Alex – I see Alex Wong here – I believe that we were willing to give end of war peace declaration and open liaison offices. That was all sort of in the package that we were going to offer. It's just that it fell apart because Kim demanded a significant amount of sanctions to be lifted in Hanoi. So, I understand that we need a new bold approach, and I don't disagree with that. I guess my dilemma is how do we get – realistically get there at this point, where we are? And I don't think – you know, I'm not trying to necessarily defend the Biden administration. You can do that. (Laughter.) But it's not like they're coming in with some ultra-hardline approach. They said, we're willing to meet with Kim. So I just don't – I can't square this – how domestically we can also just – you know, we'll just – we just need a new bold approach, so here is a peace declaration, and we're going to open liaison offices, even though you are continually conducting tests and improving, advancing your nuclear weapons and missile program. So I guess we need to figure out how to get there. So I don't disagree with sort of the philosophy or the main thrust of what you're saying, Mr. Yoon. Also, China angle. I agree with you. I think, you know, we have a tendency to try to rely on China. And China has not been helpful, although we did see China actually implementing sanctions after years of dragging its feet in the fall of 2017. And we can talk about why that is, but that – if China was helpful then, it's no longer helpful. And I think that trying to keep on relying on China to solve the problem has not been – I don't see that also in the future. On the security dilemma piece, I understand that there is a security dilemma, and of course they are pursuing nuclear weapons as an ultimate deterrent card against the United States, because even a powerful country like the United States would not attack North Korea is they are a nuclear weapons power. But I'm not entirely certain and sold that their security dilemma will be resolved with just a peace declaration. South Koreans also say that peace declaration does not really mean much. It's just a symbolic thing. And it's not a peace treaty. It doesn't have legal binding. It's not this and that. But if it's not – if it's so not that important, what makes North Koreans feel like now their security dilemma is solved, necessarily, with the peace declaration? And I would argue that fundamentally for

the Kim regime, as long as rival South Korea state – that is freer, richer – exists, their security dilemma continues. So I understand that there's a security dilemma. I understand that it's part of the reason why they pursue nuclear weapons. But it's not all of it, right? Nuclear weapons also is a rallying point ideologically. It gives them prestige. It gives them influence. There's a whole host of reasons why they have nuclear weapons. So now, going back to your first, original question on is the U.S. serious about denuclearization, I do think that we are – we shouldn't be that cynical. I do think the U.S. government is serious about wanting denuclearization. And I don't believe the U.S. government is going to abandon denuclearization. Seeking denuclearization as a goal, because even though North Korea has nuclear weapons, and even though it is sort of a de facto nuclear weapons power but adopting that as a policy it has serious implications – including, potentially, regional proliferation in the future that could – you know, some South Korean conservatives are already talking about bringing tactical nuclear weapons back or pursuing nuclear weapons. And then then there's – that's just one reason. There's a whole host of reasons why the U.S. will never adopt it. But saying that and wanting denuclearization as a goal, that's still different from accurate assessment and the reality of the situation, which is that North Korea is highly unlikely to give it up. (Laughs.) I mean, I don't think that's being overly cynical, to come to that assessment. It's not because you want North Korea to keep nuclear weapons. It's because that's the reality of the situation of their having deal with North Korea for three decades. So I don't want to end it with that cynicism. I do think that the goal is still denuclearization. And I don't disagree with Minister Yoon. It's just that how do we figure out the details. And again, I'll end with on peace declaration I'm so glad to see that Blue House and the Biden administration is working very hard to coordinate, at least have a very frank conversation about the pros and cons of a peace declaration. So, I'm – you know, it's as good as we can do, is closely coordinating with each other.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much. Yeah, if I take the position of devil's advocate, it's kind of – it sounds to me it's like Aesop Fable's the king's new clothes. So, you know, they have nuclear weapons, and that no solution to denuclearize – it somehow is just going on, like strategic patience. And question for you – additional question is, actually, if I was not mistaken, on several occasions you were pretty critical about the current Biden's, you know, practical, calibrated approach. You said it's good, everything's right, but it doesn't have any starter to, you know, resume the process. Still

do you have – is it my wrong evaluation? Or still you have the –

SUE MI TERRY No, I do think – criticism is a strong word, in front of colleagues. (Laughter.)

KIM JOON-HYUNG I'm not actually making you define it, but –

SUE MI TERRY No, no, but what I do think is ironic is the instance that this is not strategic patience, because it sounds very much like strategic patience to me. Just because if you're not going to give sanctions relief, if you don't want to – so it's not – the reality is that, is what I'm trying to say. So it's fine to rhetorically say this is very different from Trump administration, this is very different from the Obama administration. And so that's what I'm sort of just pointing out, is that in trying to figure out what it is, it doesn't seem all that different. And I'm not necessarily criticizing it, because I don't have any other brilliant solution. It's not like I have a lot of solutions in my bag, and saying, oh, they're not pursuing that. I understand the limits of this problem, having worked on this issue. So that's what I was saying, yeah.

KIM JOON-HYUNG Mr. Sheen.

SHEEN SEONG-HO Never give up. (Laughter.)

KIM JOON-HYUNG OK.

SHEEN SEONG-HO The thing is, we all know that it's not going to be easy. And we all know that North Korea is not going to easily give up nuclear weapons. But at the same time, what's the alternative? I mean, acknowledging North Korea as a de facto or real nuclear power, what's the consequences? We all know that, as Dr. Terry just said, we are going to see a nuclear arms race in the region, starting maybe from South Korea. And recently, there was an Asan survey saying that – and we have, yes indeed, presidential race going on. There is a back and forth. Speaking of extended deterrence, South Korea is how much we are sure about the American commitment, and all that. This debate – there's quite a live debate going on. But the point was that the takeaway – and it's ironic that traditional, the opposition party, the conservative – the other one who is not very much sure about the U.S. extended deterrence. So there has been some call for maybe, yes, bringing back the U.S. tactical nuclear weapons, which is a non-starter – (laughs) – for American government position. Or nuclear

co-sharing, that's another kind of Korean way of thinking, but American doesn't seem to be on the page. What's the alternative? Indigenous Korean nuclear program. And they quote that Asan poll, in fact, that has been conducted last September, just two months ago, and 70 percent of South Koreans saying that we have to have if, indeed, North Korea becomes or already is a de facto nuclear power. That is because – but at the same time, that Asan same poll that conducted in 2018, just three years ago, the support for the indigenous program was, like, about 50 percent. Still maybe strong, but way lower than 70 percent. Why? Because that 2018 things were going quite – rather well, in terms of nuclear negotiation and all the summitry between American government and Kim Jong-un, and all that. So that just shows you that the moment American government give up, you know, denuclearization, obviously this is a wake-up call for the South Korean government, the public, and they will push for those kinds of movements. And that's not obviously in the U.S. interest. So I don't think that it's in the U.S. interest to give up, whatever it takes – bold approach, a small approach, a practical approach, or pragmatic approach. No, we should not give up denuclearizing North Korea. And I think that has been the South Korean government position all along. And last point is that next year will be the 30th anniversary of the '92 joint declaration between the two Koreas about concrete denuclearization – or, nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. By the way, that joint declaration was not done under the liberal government. It was Roh Tae-woo, president who by the way passed away just a couple of weeks ago. So it's going to be 30 years. Maybe it takes another 30 years before we can go back to all that. But should not give up. And the second point is that, of course, how can we trust North Korean regime and all kinds of rhetoric? But the fact of the matter is, as much as they're in for this nuclear development and all this missile testing and all that, and provocation, but Kim Jong-un himself said officially twice in the Panmunjom declaration – by the way, that was the first time the North Korean leader was discussing the nuclear issue with a South Korean counterpart. And in written, you know, document they committed for the denuclearization. And of course, the following Singapore summit. Everybody talks about Hanoi, but before Hanoi there was Singapore. And there also, Kim Jong-un at least in principle – if, of course, there are conditions – the Americans hostile and intentions are completely gone – then they are still committed they are willing to denuclearize. I think that maybe still give us a certain sliver of hope. And on that, maybe I think in close coordination between Seoul and Washington we should keep trying and find a way to

denuclearize Korean peninsula. Not nuclear arms race.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much, Dr. Sheen. If I – I think it's going to be shame that if I ask you, do you really want to denuclearize North Korea. Let me change my – let me revise my question a little bit. There is criticism – you know, there was worry actually by the administration they would go for – they would go for dialogue and negotiation, but a revival of strategic patience, even though the Obama people deny they never had that policy. But anyways, after one year, nothing much happening. And of course, we all know that, you know, North Korea is not responding. But there is – it's kind of this practical, calibrated approach, like, it sounds like or looks, like, passive. Why don't you try a more proactive tool to bring North Korea to the table, not just saying we can talk without condition? OK. That's my question. (Laughs.) OK.

RICHARD
JOHNSON

Well, thank you. But I'll go back to your original question, which is to say of course the United States wants to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And I will tell you that this is something – it wasn't just sort of a check-the-box exercise, that we said, well, obviously, that's the outcome in the policy review. We looked at all of these factors. We looked at how do you phrase these sorts of things. So the short answer to you is, yes, we want to do that. And to your additional question, I guess what I would say is, you know, I was also in the Obama administration. Actually, this is my fourth administration that I've served in. Three of those were as a civil servant and including during the time of so-called strategic patience. And I do think we're in a different place here. I think that, you know, it's important to recall where we were in the Obama administration, where very early on in the administration the North Koreans conducted some pretty terrible tests, missile and nuclear tests, after the president had said that he was open to dialogue. And so that – and we also had things like the Leap Day Deal, that did not go very well. And so recall how you got to strategic patience. It was after outreach; it was after diplomacy. And so, you know, I hope that we will not see provocations from our North Korean counterparts, if you will. But the reality is that strategic patience involved basically demonstration or signaling that, you know, essentially don't call us, we'll call you. And now I think we're in a place where I know the phraseology – you know, people wonder what it means, practical, calibrated. But I think it means what it says it means, which is that, you know, we're prepared to take practical steps in a calibrated manner, including diplomacy. And I think if you look at the work that Ambassador Kim is doing – and



“But I’ll go back to your original question, which is to say of course the United States wants to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

– Richard C. Johnson
(right)

I will certainly defer to my State Department colleagues on that because that’s not my area of responsibility anymore – but I think it demonstrates that we are prepared to take certain steps. But again, we have to have a negotiating partner. And I think the other difference we have from the Obama administration and, frankly, even from the Trump administration is COVID. And we have a real challenge, I think, on our hands to figure out even the – you know, the mechanism, the place, the time. You know, all those sorts of things would be an important component. Let me just add a couple more quick things, because I know we’re at the end. I’m an L.A. Dodger fan, so I think I’m playing the Justin Turner role here, as the clean-up batter. But I’m not sure; we change our lineup too much. Two more quick things. One is, because extended deterrence was mentioned, and I think it’s really important to reiterate how much an important factor in our relationship with not only South Korea, but also with Japan and Australia. And of course, we have things like the Deterrence Strategy Committee that meets very regularly. You know, and in fact we have some upcoming meetings at the ministerial level coming up, with the SCM, which I think really undergird the alliance. And I think we have not lost – not only have we not lost attention to this, we’ve actually refocused attention on this. And so the work that we’re going to help develop a common operating picture, to increase our allies’ understandings of strategic capabilities, tabletop exercises – all those sorts of things are really important. And the last thing I will just say, because it was mentioned about China. And I would say, I think the other important difference between our policy and policies that have been put forward in the past is we’re putting this policy forward with a focus on what the United States can do, working with our

allies and partners. Of course, China could play a positive and important role, and we would hope that it would – including, by the way, enforcing U.N. sanctions which it has done better in the past and we would hope it would return to that. But we recognize that we may not have as positive of a role from China in this strategy. And so, we will work with China. We will seek to do what we can with China on North Korea and denuclearization. And I won't get ahead of anything that's going to happen at a much higher level later today. But I think at the end of the day our focus is on what can we do with our allies and partners in strong solidarity in making the region a safer and more stable place. So, thank you.

KIM JOON-HYUNG

Thank you very much. We are – our time is up – almost time is up. And by taking advantage of moderator's role, I want to end this session with making two points. Number one is, I had a webinar with Mr. Biegun one time. And what he said was very interesting, because Biden administration endorsed Singapore declaration. So, the point we can go back to return to, is Hanoi. And Hanoi is not really total failure, because we tested our exchange equating each other. So, we can make change, and then we can go back to Hanoi. And the second point I want to make is, this declaration of ending war is not really paranoia or Moon Jae-in government wants to have so eagerly. I don't think so. And as far as I know, and as far as I talk to Blue House people, they say this, in between – they're trying to manage this situation, not to disturb anything, and maintain this stability. That's the minimum goal. If possible, if everything going well with the help of China, there can be a dramatic change. But not really going for it. So, it's not – (laughs) – you know, end of war declaration is life and death of Moon Jae-in government. Thank you very much and thank for you're the panelists. OK, thank you. (Applause.)

Session III: Trilateralism and U.S.-ROK Alliance in Indo-Pacific Region

VICTOR CHA

Thank you very much. So welcome to Panel 3 of the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021 hosted by the Korea Foundation and CSIS. This panel is about “Trilateralism in the U.S.-ROK Alliance in the Indo-Pacific Region.”

Time is quite short, so I suggest that we dive right into the conversation with our panelists, who are, starting from my left, Professor Kim Hyun-wook, who is professor and director-general at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy.

Sitting next to him is Alex Wong. Alex Wong is the former deputy assistant secretary for North Korea in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and former deputy Special Representative for North Korea at the Department of State that he also had within his portfolio, before you took on North Korea regional affairs, as I remember. So thanks very much for joining us.

I don't see Andrew Yeo yet on the screen. There's Andrew. So Andrew Yeo is joining us, I believe, from the Philippines, I think, from Manila, and as many of you know, Andrew is professor and director of Asia studies at Catholic University and he is the new SK-Korea Foundation Brookings Chair at the Brookings Institution. So we're very happy to welcome Andrew with us.

And a special welcome to Professor Kim Ji-young from Hanyang University. I think this is your first time to visit with us at CSIS. So we're very happy to have you join us. Thank you so much.

OK. So the title of the panel is about trilateralism, but I take

The panelists partaking in Session III: Trilateralism and U.S.-ROK Alliance in Indo-Pacific Region.



that, generally, to mean, more broadly, the different multilaterals and minilaterals and quads and other geometric shapes that diplomacy and strategy are taking in the region – in the Indo-Pacific region – these days.

Now, we're going to try to get through four rounds of questioning. So I'm going to ask our panelists to try to be concise in terms of their responses so that we can have a good thorough discussion.

So for the first round of questions, I would like to ask our South Korean participants to offer their thoughts on Korea's interest in these new multilateral groupings, you know, everything from the new southern diplomacy focus on ASEAN states, the northern diplomacy, U.S.-Korea trilateral relations with Australia. There are many of these groupings. I just was curious as to while this has not been – this sort of multilateral interaction has not been new for Korea on the global stage, there is more enthusiasm on the regional stage in terms of these, and I wanted to get at least an initial broad stroke view about what you think about this new apparent enthusiasm for some of these multilateral groupings.

So, Professor Kim, why don't I start with you?

KIM HYUN-WOOK

Yes. Thank you, Victor, for chairing this session, and I'm happy that I'm a member of – you know, participating in this nice and important meeting.

Yes, I think South Korea has been very active in regional grouping, too, not only global grouping. I think before, like, the 1990s and early 2000s, it was pretty much based upon, you know, adding into and participating into ASEAN-based regional institutions like ASEAN+3, ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit, things like that. And I think that was from the Park Geun-hye government and also Moon Jae-in government, too, that South Korea began to take some initiative about, you know, being more active in informing a Northeast Asia peace – like the Northeast Asia peace and cooperation initiatives or platforms, which have some different names by governments.

So I think that this was some kind of initiative to be more – take more active initiative in regional groupings. But I think that these efforts has not been very successful because – several reasons may be because the linkage between the Korean Peninsula issues and the regional peace initiative has been not very much linked. You know, whenever there was some failure of dialogue and provocations by North Korea, this, you know, initiatives – peace and cooperation initiatives in Northeast Asia has not been very successful.



“So I think that this was some kind of initiative to be more – take more active initiative in regional groupings. But I think that these efforts has not been very successful because – several reasons may be because the linkage between the Korean Peninsula issues and the regional peace initiative has been not very much linked...”

– Kim Hyun-Wook

The second reason, I think, is, you know, it has been the centerpiece of the security and peace, you know, groupings in this region – Northeast Asia region – has been pretty much based upon, you know, alliance – bilateral alliance systems rather than, you know, multilateral multinational groupings. So more focus has been always on the U.S.-South Korea alliance and U.S.-Japan alliances, which has been not very much, you know, in a positive, you know, synergy between alliance systems on one hand and the other, the – you know, Northeast Asia multilateral groupings.

The last reason, I think, is pretty much, you know, related to the U.S.-China competition. Nowadays, as you know, Kurt Campbell mentioned the CPTPP, for example, in part, many of the regional, you know, groupings have some features of, you know, U.S. initiatives, those Chinese initiatives, which makes South Korea, you know, hard time to determine whether it should be participating or not.

CPTPP, when the U.S. took initiative, South Korea was very hesitant then. Now China is taking initiative and, again, I don't think South Korea will be successfully participating in CPTPP. So I'm not sure what's going to be the future. Maybe you will ask some other question. I can answer those questions. But that's pretty much what I'm thinking.

VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you.

Professor Kim, would you like to add any comments about Korea's interest in these multilaterals?

KIM JI-YOUNG

OK. Thank you, Victor. I'm very honored to be here and express my special thanks to CSIS and Korea Foundation to give us an excellent chance to share our opinion. And I pretty much share my opinion with Kim Hyun-wook – Dr. Kim Hyun-wook. And I think – I guess it's not new, because the South Korean effort to engage in this regional multilateralism has actually continued since 1990s, you know, especially after 1997 financial crisis. You know, at that time, Kim Dae-jung administration realized, you know, the importance of reaching out to – more broadly, to East and Southeast Asia, especially.

So as Professor Kim mentioned, you know, the Korean government started to focusing on this ASEAN+3 meetings and FTA, both multilateral and bilateral, and also, you know, recently we. Oh. Yeah. Recently, we saw the successful conclusion of our CEF and et cetera. Each administration actually since then, the Kim Dae-jung administration, came up with various very ambitious plans for regional cooperation.

But I believe they were relatively weak in detail and also practical strategy. And especially the problem is that, you know, those plans of past have been – actually have been self-centered in that they are projected for usually to support – to gain support for each government, North Korean policy, and sometimes overly focused on economic interest.

But now, I believe, South Korean government is trying to shed this image, and by emphasizing this – the mutual prosperity over national interest, you know, with regional members, especially Southeast Asian countries and India. So I think this transition to community partnership is one of the most important change in Korea's engagement in multilateral cooperation at this time.

- Kim Ji-young
(far right)



VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you so much.

For our American participants, I was wondering if I could ask you to comment on the Biden administration's coalition diplomacy, broadly, and whether you think it's been effective. I mean, Dr. Campbell, when he was here, talked quite a bit about this, and Professor Lee's – President Lee's question about the multilateralization of the alliance network.

So I would just be curious to get your thoughts on how successful you think this is and whether it's the right direction. So, perhaps, I could start with Alex Wong.

ALEX WONG

"You have to ask are there going to be concrete actions and steps and mechanisms for protecting critical technologies, supply chains, critical infrastructure – are there going to be concrete steps in these frameworks to embed all of the partners in a web of commerce and a web of defense coordination that will secure a truly free and open Indo-Pacific strategy for Indo-Pacific."

– Alex Wong (right)

Sure. Thanks, Victor.

You know, I think 11 months into the Biden administration there are kind of two ways to look at this. Number one, looking at the kind of new multilateral frameworks or at least the concepts of how regional cooperation will work from an architecture standpoint it's been pretty good. You know, you look at the Quad. I think the continued commitment to the Quad, a continuation of what the Trump administration tried to do and prior administrations tried to do with the Quad, is a good thing. That's a good concept. That's a good piece of architecture.

I think AUKUS makes an immense amount of sense, so much so that I'm surprised that this idea didn't come around earlier than this year. I think the start of – or least the beginning of this administration's commitment to the ASEAN framework with President Biden showing up at least to the virtual summit is a good start. Many administrations have a good start and, hopefully, it continues.



So looking at the architecture and the concepts I think these are all good. But the second piece is the substance. What are the projects, the cooperative substance that we're going to try to institutionalize through these concepts, these architectures? And that's an open question. I think there's been a lot of good talk from some members of the administration on this.

But the questions are, will there be concrete actions and coordination on deterrence and defense frameworks among these partners for a number of contingencies, including Taiwan. You have to ask are there going to be concrete actions and steps and mechanisms for protecting critical technologies, supply chains, critical infrastructure, and there's – are there going to be concrete steps in these frameworks to embed all of the partners in a web of commerce and a web of defense coordination that will secure a truly free and open Indo-Pacific strategy for Indo-Pacific.

Now, these are all hard and big tasks. They're going to take a number of years, if not decades. But the jury's out on whether we can use these concepts to do the work there. And a big question there is will the Biden administration focus laser like on that project or will they be distracted by other priorities, whether foreign or domestic, in pursuit of that over the next three years, and if there's a second term, the second term?

VICTOR CHA

Right. Thanks, Alex.

Andrew Yeo in Manila, you are joining us, I think, quite late at night or early in the morning.

ANDREW YEO

Yes, I'm in solidarity with our Korean participants for jet lag. It's almost 3:00 a.m. here.

But thanks, Victor. Now, I'll just, you know, add that since the early days of his campaign President Biden has repeatedly stated strong support for U.S. alliances and multilateral institutions, and the president as well as several of his top foreign policy advisors have also been proponents of liberal internationalism, a perspective on global politics that advocates global engagement by strengthening the rules, norms, and institutions that sustain a free and open international order.

Now, the administration's adoption of liberal internationalism is relevant to our conversation about coalitional diplomacy as the overarching objective of diplomatic and security coalitions is to sustain and promote a rules-based order.



"The key, I think, for U.S. policymakers is to continue framing the Quad and other trilateral and strategic partnerships as promoting regional governance and shared principles. Groupings like the Quad and trilaterals should stand for something and not just an opposition to one country."

– Andrew Yeo (middle)

Some may argue that the key objective of coalition diplomacy as manifesting groupings like the Quad or AUKUS is to defend states against Chinese aggression. That may be one objective.

However, the Biden administration has been working hard to avoid that impression. The key, I think, for U.S. policymakers is to continue framing the Quad and other trilateral and strategic partnerships as promoting regional governance and shared principles. Groupings like the Quad and trilaterals should stand for something and not just an opposition to one country. And that's why I think we've seen an emphasis on issues like vaccine distribution, cybersecurity, and infrastructure governance, which is, in theory, something that China could participate in as well, at least when we're talking about the Quad.

I think smaller countries will still interpret U.S.-led coalitions as being primed to counter Chinese regional efforts, and I think there are some issues such as standards or emerging technologies where it might be hard not to come down on a particular side. But as Secretary of State Blinken's now well-quoted line refers to, our relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be, and that, I think, reflects how the administration has also approached existing and new U.S.-led coalitions.

Now, I do think it's a little bit too early to say whether the Biden administration has succeeded, and we're still waiting for the full details of the Indo-Pacific strategy. But as Alex mentioned, I think, in the first 11 months we've seen a lot of attention, at least, given to coalitional diplomacy and these new different configurations, groupings, and institutions within Asia's regional architecture.

VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you. Thank you, Andrew.

So for our second round of questioning, I'd like to dig a little deeper, now that we've sort of taken the sort of top layer off. And for Korean participants, I wanted to ask you your views on – we've talked about a number of these different coalitional efforts. I'd like to ask your views on which of these multilateral initiatives you feel have the most promise from a Korean perspective. Which of these – you know, whether they're in Southeast Asia or Central Asia or in Oceania or in Northeast Asia, which of these, to you, seem to show the most promise from a Korean perspective?

And then the same question for the United States, but, I guess, the question for the U.S. participants is, from a U.S. perspective in terms of the objectives in the Indo-Pacific, which of these groupings do you feel that the United States thinks it's important for Korea to be a part of?

And so let me go in reverse order and start with Andrew, if I could. So Andrew in the Philippines?

ANDREW YEO

Sure. Thanks. So in terms of which multilateral groupings are important, especially for Korea, I mean, the two that we've been – that we're focused on here today is the Quad and maybe the U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral relationship.

And, you know, as for the Quad, you know, it's been given special attention in this first year of the Biden administration with, you know, Biden holding both a virtual meeting of the Quad leaders in March and then an in-person summit in September. And that's one of the areas where we're actually seeing continuity from the Trump and Biden administration, although I'd say we've seen the shift away from defense – a defense security emphasis on the Quad to a wider range of issues, nontraditional security and economic issues, such as, you know, vaccine partnerships, health security, you know, infrastructure coordination groups and climate change.

And for these reasons, I think, that's why it's important to Korea. You know, it's not just about security and defense and we know that – we've heard from the vice foreign minister that, you know, South Korea wants to maintain positive relations with Beijing and Washington. So you don't necessarily – you know, when you're discussing these economic issues, you know, that's something that's maybe open to South Korea as well, too. I'm not saying that South Korea should jump in and join the Quad, but that's one – that is important for Korea as well and, of course, we have the U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateralism.

The U.S. is strengthening or building its trilateral strategic partnerships, and despite the broken state of Korea-Japan bilateral relations, we've seen the U.S. continuing to encourage, create space for U.S.-Japan-Korea trilaterals at various levels. And I'm not sure if anyone's keeping count but there's been at least a half dozen of these trilateral working group meetings.

So we've seen – we've also seen developments such as AUKUS, but I don't know if that's as relevant to South Korea at the moment. But I do want to end with just one broader comment about the regional architecture, and right now we're seeing this development of U.S.-centered, you know, groupings – coalitional groupings – and, you know, former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter had talked about a principled security network and I think this is what we're seeing developing out. And I'm curious if the U.S. is favoring this architecture over, perhaps, the ASEAN family of institutions, which has been the basis of multilateral cooperation in Asia since the post- Cold War period.

And I think for South Korea they've always felt more comfortable with, you know, the ASEAN – you know, the ASEAN-driven multilateralism because it includes China and it tries to enmesh China. And now, you know, if the U.S. is shifting towards these more U.S.-led coalitions and networks, trilaterals – the Quad – that might put Korea in a more difficult position within the regional architecture.

But I think that's a broader question that we have to be – we have to be following as these coalitional groupings unfold.

VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you, Andrew.

Perhaps I can go next to Professor Kim, and offer your views.

KIM JI-YOUNG

OK. So as we actually enter the Indo-Pacific, you know, age, I believe Korea is now focusing on – it's focusing its effort on ASEAN countries especially. You know, in the Asia-Pacific era – age – South Korea, maybe, and Japan were at the crossroad between Asia and Pacific, but in the Indo-Pacific age I believe ASEAN is rising as core countries and there is a growing importance of a strategic role of India as blockade against the westward expansion of China.

So this means that the center of global strategy actually will likely shift from Asia-Pacific to South and Southeast Asia. So I think it is no surprise that Northeast Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and Taiwan are now emphasizing their southern policies,

and now Korean government is pursuing so-called new Southern Policy, you know, to expand its interest in India and ASEAN countries, and I believe this may be seen as a struggle or effort to seeking the survival strategy amid increasing tension between the U.S. and China.

We have talked about, you know, whether South Korea should choose, you know, China or the U.S., you know, all the time today, but I think this kind of policy was chosen as a way to avoid, you know, this question or pressure.

So the policy goal is to raise cooperation level – level of cooperation with India and ASEAN on par with four great powers, which is U.S., China, Russia, and Japan. Also, trade relations will, you know, enlarge to reach the size comparable to that of China. In short, I guess new Southern Policy aims to ease Korea's dependence on great powers, and in terms of politics, security, and economy, to diversifying, you know, its – Korea's diplomatic and economic options.

Actually, the emphasis on ASEAN countries is not entirely new for Korea. Past administration actually have come up with many ambitious strategy, but only to end up with little result. So the new Southern Policy is a long list of, you know, repeating this past mistake of emphasizing short-term, charitable, or exhibitionist event.

So I think the most important thing is to maintain the consistency, you know, for successful multilateral cooperation for South Korea government at the moment. Yeah.

VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you, Professor Kim.

Alex Wong, when you were at the State Department before you took on the North Korea portfolio you were working a lot on regional affairs, and so I was curious as to, you know, your experience then. Which groupings did you see as most important in their nascent phases and what do you think of the situation now?

And also, if I could ask you, nobody talks about APEC anymore. Do you have any thoughts on – any thoughts on that?

ALEX WONG

Right. Well, you're right, I did do the regional portfolio, including the Indo- Pacific strategy, at State for about six, seven months before doing North Korea. But it was an interesting six, seven months because it was the – still, the early times in the Trump administration, and it was still the early times, at least in the newly enunciated new Southern Policy of South Korea.

And in that, you know, I want to draft off of the prior statements from my colleagues. You know, I do think a joint focus between South Korea and the United States on the ASEAN countries – not necessarily ASEAN qua ASEAN as the, you know, the multilateral grouping but focusing on what commercial capacity-building trade connections we can both work together on and leverage with particular Southeast Asian countries, I think that works all in both of our countries' favor.

You know, if you look at the ASEAN region, 650 million people, the potential for GDP growth, population growth, trade growth, over the next 10, 15, 20 years is immense compared to other parts that are – you can say are more economically mature throughout Asia.

South Korea already has some very deep economic connections with a number of countries, Vietnam in particular, where, if we – working together, we can both leverage our relationships in the region, and this is strategically in our interest. We want to embed those countries, again, in a web of commerce in a free and open region to balance coercive measures and to keep those countries open to investment, keep those sea lines of communication open, because they are strategically placed.

This something both of our countries can work together on, and when I was in government we were – at least, I tried to begin doing that and I think it has continued and does continue now in the Biden administration. So that would be, I think, the focus.

Now, as to APEC, you're right. You know, it doesn't come up too much. I mean, in my work in government, I didn't have too much interaction with APEC. It was kind of a separate economic grouping.

I will say that it is significant and continues to be for a number of reasons for the United States, number one, because it is one of the few fora where Taiwan participation is quite robust, is accepted, and using that as an example of how Taiwan can contribute to other fora continues to be a valuable piece of APEC. Not the only piece, of course, that's valuable, but one that, I think, particularly in this current environment is quite significant.

VICTOR CHA:

Thanks. And, of course, Korea played a critical role in bringing Taiwan to APEC back a couple of decades ago.

Professor Kim Hyun-wook, I wonder if I could ask you the same question in terms of Korea's views of which of these – or where is the energy in terms of these multilateral initiatives as Korea looks out at the region?

And then if I can also ask you the – what struck me about Dr. Campbell's remarks on the Quad was that he suggested there was a robust conversation taking place between the U.S. and South Korea about the Quad. So I'd love to get your views on what you think Korea's position should be vis-à-vis the Quad. So over to you.

KIM HYUN-WOOK

Thank you for your question. Maybe – because I'm not a government person, maybe I don't know how the conversation about Quad is going on. Maybe I should have asked, you know, Vice Minister Choi about that in the morning.

I think, you know, Dr. Campbell, mentioned about the, you know, U.S.-ROK summit meeting that happened this May, and I think I totally agree with him that this has been a very important critical juncture for the alliance.

I mean, you know, the U.S.-South Korea alliance has been transformed after the end of the Cold War in 2008, which was very late – very late post-Cold War transformation. At the time, it was transformed into comprehensive strategic alliances. But, I mean, the regional level cooperation was very dormant because, you know, South Korea had to think about the China issues all the time.

The regional stability and peace issue has been always a burden for South Korea. And I think this May – you know, some meeting has changed the alliance, you know, completely. I'm not sure what's going to happen, whether this critical juncture will continue in the future or not.

But for so long time, the U.S.-South Korea, you know, common threat perception was totally disturbed. I think it was distorted. Recently, I don't think, you know, current government is trying to see North Korea as a threat anymore, which, I think, you know, the U.S. is still trying to see North Korea as a threat, even though it wants to look at it as a partner to be engaged with.

China issues – the U.S. wants to use the U.S.-ROK alliance to deal with China, which I think is still – has been a burden for South Korea. But I think this May summit meeting has harmonized many things between two countries. We agreed upon how to deal with North Korea issues, engaging North Korea, and most importantly, Dr. Campbell mentioned it, right. You know, important issues like climate change and health and new technology issues. We have agreed upon our, you know, cooperation on the, you know, global supply chain issues.

And what is more important is that, I think current Biden

government Indo-Pacific strategy, one of the characteristics of their policy is they're very flexible issue-based cooperations and formation of minilateralism. It began – these three agenda-setting – climate change, health, and new technology – began at the Quad meeting, part summit meeting, early this year, and then it has been agreed at the U.S.-Japan summit meeting, next at the U.S.-South Korea summit meeting, and also G-7 meeting.

So all the, you know, agendas and issues, the same agenda setting and their agreement upon bolstering the global supply chain on those issues, has been an ongoing issue, I think. It's not the one that has been only agreed at the U.S.-South Korea summit. But I think throughout this summit agreement I think South Korea is completely participating in the Indo-Pacific strategy.

VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you.

Andrew, if I could go to you, just focusing on the Quad for this round. I mean, could you give us your views on Korea's position vis-à-vis the Quad? You know, Korea seems to be trying to operate in parallel to the Quad, producing basically the same deliverables but in a U.S.-ROK bilateral context. But I'd love to hear your thoughts on whether those two should be merged.

ANDREW YEO

Right. I mean, that's what Dr. Kim was saying, that we have these different agendas that you can, you know, break out to different multilaterals, at summit meetings or at forums, you know, like the G-20 or even at COP26. And that enables South Korea to engage with the United States and other like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific region. But that's a key question, whether South Korea should move not in parallel but with – move closer into the Quad or become part of – remain perhaps in the Quad-plus but become – join within some configuration of this quad, rather than moving in parallel.

And, I mean, I think we're going to have to wait until the next – until the Korean elections to know whether we'll move closer in that direction or not, depending on who takes the Blue House. But, I mean, in my mind it seems that Korea is – I mean, there are other questions. It's not just what Korea and the United States wants, but it's the other members of the Quad. How welcoming would Japan be if Korea, you know, wants – or, you know, joins – signs up for the Quad, or what would India's reaction be?

So, you know, it's – so it's not clear whether the Quad is the answer for South Korea. I think more important is making sure that they're staying engaged with the Indo-Pacific. And as I

mentioned, we've seen a shift in the Biden administration, leaning on the Quad and other hub-and-spokes based coalitions and strategic partnerships. And, you know, in addition to the Quad, I really think we should be – that South Korea should be looking at this U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral relationship more seriously.

And Korea, you know, may feel it's behind the curve because even with the Quad you have other trilaterals – U.S.-Japan-Australia, U.S.-Japan-India. But this is one – this is the one place where I think Korea can make the most significant contribution. But that means finding a way to work together with Japan. So it's one of the goals towards which the new Kishida government and the next government in Seoul should – you know, they should also move forward towards.

VICTOR CHA

Thanks, Andrew. I will get to the question of Japan, but I want to – let's finish this round on the Quad first, and then perhaps I'll have Alex start on the U.S.- Japan-Korea trilateral.

But, Professor Kim, could you give us your views on South Korea with regard to the Quad?

KIM JI-YOUNG

OK. So let me keep – I mean, I'd like to say a few words about whether or not South Korea should join the Quad, because this is the most important issue in Korea regarding Quad. Actually, I think it is matter of whether South Korea should – can maintain this strategic ambiguity between the U.S. and China.

So for now, South Korean government's position – official position is that while I agree with proposal of Quad, it cannot officially participate in Quad because participating in Quad, as we all know, that maybe pose some conflict with China. So since South Korea consider both sides, China and U.S., I think South Korea should be only cautious.

But personally, I believe that attending Quad or not, or Quad-plus membership, shouldn't be the major question, you know, for South Korea. You know, as Dr. Yeo mentioned, one can even question whether Quad member countries, especially Japan are willing to open the door for South Korea, which has been displaying this – you know, the passive attitude toward Quad. And also there is an issue of South Korea-Japan relations. You know, for example, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida's first order of business when he came to the office last month, to have phone call with Quad members – you know, the United States, and Australia, and India. And then he went onto the U.K. and China and Russia. Then, you know, Japanese media commented on this.

Actually, this means that Korea has been relegated to the second tier of Japanese diplomacy.

So now I think the key strategic question should be how welcoming will Quad members be toward South Korea, and which issue and field would they work on South Korea, and what kind of contribution can South Korea make in enhancing Quad, you know, capability in resolving the major problems confronting the region? And we know that, you know, there are signs that Quad evolve into more of industrial infrastructure gathering alliance, rather than around a military alliance. So in that sense, I think Korea can make some contribution, maybe in the field of high capability – technical capacity in supply chain resilience, or medical and health care and data access and transmission, and so forth.

So the focus on Quad actually should shift from collective actions – shift toward, actually, collective action to solve more urgent problem in the region, rather than – you know, rather than focusing on whether South Korea should join the Quad – you know, join the Quad or not. So that's my opinion.

VICTOR CHA

All right. Thank you. Thank you very much. Very thoughtful comments.

Alex, I'd love your view on the Quad as well, but also to take us into the next and final round of questions, of course, Japan and the trilateral relationship. It seems that – I mean, at least from a U.S. perspective, what we see is, you know, there's a lot of multilateral activity involving Japan, whether it's in the Quad or the trilateral development alliance with Australia or the strategic – TSD, Trilateral Strategic Dialogue. There's a lot of multilateral or networking of the alliance system with Japan.

And then now we're starting to see more on the Korea side with U.S.-Korea- Australia, U.S.-Korea-ASEAN. But there's nothing connecting these. Of course, the United States is connecting these two, but of course, you know, the big issue is Korea-Japan relations. So I'd love your views on both those things – both on the Quad and then also what we can do about the relationship between Seoul and Tokyo, and the broader trilateral.

ALEX WONG

Right. Just a short thing on the Quad first, since it's continuing the conversation. You know, I'm a little nervous about going too quick and too broad in, you know, framing certain cooperative, you know, relationships in terms of the Quad, only because, you know, we're very – still quite early in the Quad concept. And it's only

really recently that the Quad has really picked up momentum at the leader level, mainly because India is interested in the recent, you know, one or two years. And that's always the question mark in my mind, is if we can keep India focused on being a forthright participant in the Quad.

You know, India is – any grouping, any coalition, any framework is only as strong as its weakest link. And the question in my mind is: Will India be interested for the long term? They have a history of being non-aligned. They have a very small diplomatic corps that, just from a manpower capacity standpoint, makes it hard for them to participate and contribute in these types of frameworks. So this is a big question in my mind, that, you know, when there is not a big threat from the north, or when there's not a particular reason why they're interested now, will they continue to be? So concentrating on the Quad as the Quad before, you know, branching out would be my general approach.

As far as trilateral cooperation and the trilateral relationship in Korea and Japan, you know, just stepping back, I think we're all in agreement when we look at this – when we look at that trilateral grouping, it should make complete sense to all parties involved. We have the same geographic threats and interests. We have the same commercial interests in Northeast Asia. We have, you know, a shared systems and culture of democracy. But clearly, as you all know, there's always the continuing salience of historical issues between Japan and Korea.

So what should really be for the United States a force multiplier of our strategy and a way to save diplomatic resources and be efficient among all the players actually becomes a drain on our political capital, our diplomatic capital every time there is an uptick in Japan-Korea relations, where the United States, you know, for better or for worse, has to play a mediator role, a convener role, a facilitator role. And that takes up resources. That doesn't save resources.

So, you know, instead of, you know, creating these parallel cooperative frameworks, I think, you've mapped out Victor, I think, you know, a focus of each administration – and I'm not sure how much of it is a focus now of the current one. I'm not involved in those discussions. But the watchword for me would be “institutionalization.” That if we're going to – if the United States is going to play a facilitator role, a go-between role on any topic – whether it's intelligence sharing, military exercises, discussions of extended deterrence and missile defense, you can throw a lot of things in the basket.



Those shouldn't just be facilitating talks now but conceptualizing institutional frameworks that I think insulate trilateral cooperation from the inevitable flareups in the historical tensions between Japan and Korea. Insulate and protect them, and in the long run save the political and diplomatic capital that we always spend in order to keep the trilateral grouping in a – in a good place.

VICTOR CHA

Thanks, Alex.

Professor Kim, you and I in the past have been parts of different track 1.5s and track twos on trying to improve U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateralism. I wanted to ask you, first, I mean, your personal thoughts on that, first of all. And then, second, one of the reasons that foreign minister – Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong Kun was here on this trip is to participate in bilaterals and trilaterals with the United States and Japan, part of the quarterly deputy secretary, deputy foreign minister, vice foreign minister level talks. When Alex talks about institutionalization, right, this may be one of the ways to institutionalize this. So my first question is your personal thoughts. My second question is, do you think that this effort to institutionalize the trilateral relationship among the allies will continue, you know, whichever government comes into power in Korea after the election in March?

KIM HYUN-WOOK

I don't really have a good sense about which candidate's policies about U.S.- South Korea-Japan trilateralism. But I think it seems like, you know, still conservative candidate has more tendency to restore the relationship between Japan and Korea, it seems like. Personally, I think for now U.S.- Japan-Korea relationship is in jeopardy, but I think it's getting better because there was a very

delicate role played by the United States. Of course, the historical issue has not been solved.

And the track two approach to link Japan and Korea I don't think is very well working right now. You know, historical issue is still there, and trying to form a trilateral cooperation is not working very well because South Korean government suddenly changed its attitude to be very favorable to Japan. But Japanese government is still very anti-South Korea. Maybe domestic politics works, that's what appeals to the Japanese public. But I don't know. But so I think institutionalizing would be very important tool to revive these kinds of trilateralism.

You know, for now it seems like North Korea issues, they have commonality about complete denuclearization. But it seems like Japan emphasizes deterrence more and South Korea emphasizes North-South Korea rapprochement more. And it seems like the U.S. is, you know, focusing on the management of North Korean issues. But I think, you know, North Korean issues, fine. The other issue, I think, should be how the trilateralism evolves into the future.

You know, Dr. Kim mentioned that we are pretty in good shape to cooperate on important global cooperations, like health, and climate change, and new technologies. But what if it evolves into military cooperation, for example? Before we tried – KISA is there and GSOMIA is there. And we tried to evolve into, you know, ACSA, which is Acquisition Cross-Service Agreement to make it more solid trilateralism. And would that be possible in the future? And in order to achieve that kind of military trilateral cooperation, South Korea I think has to deal with China. Everybody knows there has been some sort of promise between the two countries. So those kind of things might be hurdles. But I think for now, institutionalization is something that is very important to restore the trilateralism that has been the case before the historical, you know, trouble in the two countries.

VICTOR CHA

So I think we've heard – Andrew, we've heard from both Alex and Hyun-wook about the importance of institutionalization in the Japan-Korea-U.S. relationship. But I guess my question to you is, as also has been suggested, politics is also important in terms of outcomes in this three-way relationship. And I guess my question to you is: You know, we do have a new government in Japan. And even though Kishida went every place else before he went to Korea, we do have a new government in Japan. Kishida was the foreign minister when the 2015 agreement was reached. And of course, we'll have a new government in Korea – and election in March and

a new government in Korea in May. So do you think that particular constellation of political forces presents an opportunity or an obstacle to improvement in the trilateral relationship?

ANDREW YEO

Yeah, that's a great question. You know very well that we always say that the constellations have to align between domestic and international politics on both – in both Japan and Korea. And, you know, these are opportunities – political opportunities to revamp bilateral relations between Korea and Japan. So for Kishida and the LDP, you know, there's some modicum of stability now. So I think they may have a little more diplomatic capital to spend on improving relations with Korea. And for South Korea, as we've heard, I think public opinion in Korea towards Japan has been increasing, in part because of – because of the intensification of U.S.-China rivalry and just Chinese assertiveness in the region.

So things are shifting. And as we run up to the South Korea election, regardless of who comes to the Blue House, and I do think both the conservative and the progressive candidates should try to capitalize on the shift in domestic public opinion. Now, as Dr. Kim Hyun-wook mentioned, the conservative party – the conservative candidates tend to be more prone to, you know, trying to mend the fence with Japan. But, you know, regardless of which candidate comes to power, I think it's crucial to improve the relationship with – between Korea and Japan.

And I do want to mention that what's interesting about the U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral is it's probably the one trilateral that tends to focus very specifically on Northeast Asia. The other trilaterals that the United States have is broader, because you have Australia, you have India. These are really configured to address issues within the Indo-Pacific. But for this trilateral, it's really focused on Northeast Asia and North Korea.

Moving forward, in terms of institutionalization, you know, there may have to be more conversations about how the U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral relationship also addresses broader issues, whether it's contingencies on the Taiwan Straits or, you know, some other issue. And I do think that those more difficult issues will eventually have to be – have to be broached.

VICTOR CHA

Yeah. Thanks, Andrew.

And, Professor Kim, I'd like to go to you – Professor Kim Ji-young. It's interesting what Andrew says, because when we think about U.S.-Japan-Korea trilateral, we think about it in terms of North

Korea. And then we also think about it in a broader, global context, providing public goods – whether it's development assistance. These seem like areas ripe for cooperation. But there is the regional element, particularly with regard to China, I think that's quite sensitive for South Korea. Probably less so for Japan, but more so for South Korea. So, you know, I guess I was curious as to your views on the extent to which this trilateral relationship can focus on questions like the Taiwan Straits or maritime security, or these sorts of things that are important to both – to all three countries.

KIM JI-YOUNG

Yeah, actually, China issue is very complicated to, you know, discuss whether – you know, we always talk about whether South Korea have to choose China or the U.S. That has been the important question. But I think as a Japan expert, I like to pay more attention to Japan-South Korea, actually, their relations, you know, in terms of this improving U.S., Japan and South Korea cooperation. As, you know, we all know, the weakest link in triangular alliance has always been the relationship between China and – I mean – Korea and Japan. And we are currently actually experiencing the – you know, the worst situation on that front in recent years as, you know, historic problems broadened into economy and security.

You know, as Dr. H. Kim mentioned before, the worsening of Japan and South Korea relations is not in U.S. interest. And I believe nor in the Japan and South Korean interest. But the United States actually historically imposed pressure to reduce tensions between the two countries, and then I believe will continue to do so in the future. But unfortunately, I think in recent years we have witnessed the limit of this pressure, and



because it has been only temporarily painted over. So now I think that Korea and Japan are at the point where they have to be more proactive toward resolving the problem.

So, you know, I have a bit different opinion from Dr. Yeo, you know, for – with this new Prime Minister Kishida. The situation is not that easy, because Kishida is, as you mentioned – Kishida actually considered a dove in South Korea-Japan relations. But as, you know, Dr. Cha mentioned, he led comfort women agreement in 1915 (sic; 2015) as minister of foreign affairs. And also, he was elected as prime minister with support from LDP hardliners. So he stated that Korea is the one that bridged the promise, and also Korea issue – so Korea should come up with the solution.

Moreover, I believe Kishida will be likely to focus more on U.S.-Japan relations than improving South Korea relations – South Korea-Japan relations. So, you know, many scholars actually have suggested that we have taken, like, two tracks – so-called two-track approach. In other words, you know, the problems should be separated from other important issue like economy and security. But now I think it's time to reconsider that method, actually, that we have to take one – you know, one-track approach, in that, you know, we should actually prioritize historical problem, and then we deal with other issue along with historic problem.

So I think now it's really time to – the South Korean government and Japanese government get together and, you know, think about taking this package approach in which, you know, the two governments discuss about the resolution of historic problem, including comfort women issue, and also South Korean Supreme Court decision on forced labor, along with Japan's withdrawal from export control, and also normalization of GSOMIA. And I think this is our own – not only, but how can I say, the very practical way to actually strengthening the Japan-South Korea, and U.S. relations, triangular cooperation at the moment.

I'm sorry, I don't think I can, you know, answer to your question about China. But I think this is most important thing to strengthening the relationship between these three countries. So that's mine, yeah.

VICTOR CHA

Great. Thank you. Thank you very much for those comments.

You know, I wish we had more time for discussion but, unfortunately, we are at the end of this session. So please join me in thanking our panelists for a very interesting discussion. And thank you to our audience online as well for watching. I'm sorry we couldn't take your questions.

Closing Remarks

VICTOR CHA

At this point in the program I'd like to turn the floor over to President Lee Geun of the Korea Foundation to offer some final reflecting thoughts. Do we – do we want to President Lee to come to the stage and we can ask our panelists to depart, how about that? OK? President Lee, why don't you come up here to the stage.

Come and join us up here. Very good. Please.

LEE GEUN

"There may be many takeaways from today's long discussions of many different issues, but as far as I'm concerned, the most precious lesson that I learned from today's discussion is the role of and importance of the values in international relations, particularly the universal human values such as human rights, democracy, and freedom."

– Lee Geun

Dr. Cha, this morning and afternoon we touched upon a variety of issues, such as North Korea, China, Japan, Korea-U.S. summit, the Quad, AUKUS, global issues from climate change to 5G-6G technologies, and vaccine diplomacy. As we all know, this forum is not aiming at reaching a consensus among all the participants within just one day, but this forum is more about exchanging different ideas and learning from each other. There may be many takeaways from today's long discussions of many different issues, but as far as I'm concerned, the most precious lesson that I learned from today's discussion is the role of and importance of the values in international relations, particularly the universal human values such as human rights, democracy, and freedom.

We talked about interests as well. And of course, interests are one of the most important drivers of international politics. But the problem with interest is that we cannot predict where we are heading if we focus only on interests. The direction could be democratic, it could be authoritarian, or even fascist. The direction could be subservient or dependent or hegemonic. But on the other hand, if we focus on values, we know where we



want to go. We want to go to democratic directions. We want to make our country more human rights conscious. We also value freedom. And we also want to lead our country into the liberal and democratic direction.

So now when we ask ourselves what kind of countries and world do you want to pass on to our children and the next generation, I do think that the values will be certainly the most important navigator to answer the question. And on that note, I would like to thank all participants and panelists for their insightful discussion today. And I also would like to thank Professor Victor Cha for his leadership for this forum. And my special thanks also go to the CSIS and the Korea Foundation staff, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that this forum could take place safely in the time of COVID-19. We look forward to holding this forum again next year and hope we will be able to invite the audience in this conference room.

Thank you very much.

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1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20036
202.887.0200 | www.csis.org