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TRANSCRIPT

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**ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2022**

**Session I: The Biden-Yoon Summit and Korea's Pivot to  
Regional Leadership**

DATE

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Mark Lippert:

All right. Good morning, everyone here in D.C. Good evening, everyone in Korea. Good day to everybody around the world. Welcome to panel one of the ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2022. We just heard two scintillating keynote addresses. We're off to a running start. And we're going to round this out with panel one this morning.

And we have an all-star, packed lineup here on panel one of heavy hitters, as they would say in baseball terms. But let me get into their bios. You know them well. Anyone who's been in and around the Korea issue set knows this crew very well, but let me introduce them quickly, their formal bios and introductions, and look them up online too because I will not go through all of their myriad of accomplishments but I will get through some of them.

So let's go first to Dr. Youngkwan Yoon. Foreign Minister Yoon is the professor emeritus at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Seoul National University. From 2003 to 2004, he happened to serve in a small position as minister of foreign affairs and trade in the Republic of Korea. (Laughter.) He also worked as senior visiting scholar with the Korea Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs from 2020 to 2021, where I suspect he overlapped with my good friend Ash Carter, and also taught at Harvard University writ large. He taught at University of California Davis, served as chairman of the advisory committee of the parliamentary diplomacy of the Korean National Assembly from '19 to '20 and a host of other accomplishments. He has published over a dozen books, 80 articles in the field of international political economy, Korea's foreign policy, and inter-Korean relations. He received a doctoral degree from SAIS right here in Washington. Welcome, Minister Yoon.

All right. Next up, Robert Rapson, senior diplomat of the United States, retired recently after a(n) illustrious 39-year career in the Foreign Service really that spanned the Indo-Pacific region: Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia, India, and Afghanistan. Touched all four corners there. As charge d'affaires and deputy chief of mission at U.S. embassies in Seoul, Tokyo, and Kuala Lumpur, he advanced significant U.S. political, economic, commercial, security, law enforcement, public diplomacy interests with those countries in the region. Also, a range of other service. In Korea specific, he was director of the Office of Korean Affairs at the Department of State 2012 to 2015, which is a critically important but often unrecognized or underrecognized job in the State Department. It does yeoman's work in making sure the bilateral relationship stays on track, and Rob handled that really well. He was also deputy economic and senior trade officer at U.S. Embassy Seoul from '97 to 2000, the vice consul at U.S. Embassy Seoul in U.S. Consulate Busan '84 to '86. Recipient of numerous State Department individual and group Superior Honor Awards. B.A. in international relations from Penn State – Nittany Lions, go! – and is a graduate of Singapore American High School. Welcome, Rob, to the panel.

All right. Next up, my favorite retired Air Force intelligence officer, Dr. Sangyoon Ma. I'm giving away part of his bio here. He's a professor of international relations at the Catholic University of Korea. Formerly, he served as director general for strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from '16 to '19. He was also a visiting fellow at Brookings and the Wilson Center here in D.C.; also a think tank in Stockholm, ISDP. And, fulfilling military service responsibilities, he worked, as I previously noted, ROK, an air force intelligence officer, '89 to '92. Dr. Ma received his B.A. and M.A. in international relations from Seoul National University. As a Swire scholar, he continued his studies at St. Anthony's College; Oxford University, where he received his DPhil in international relations; and his main areas of research include East Asian international politics, U.S. foreign policy, Korea-U.S. relations, and Cold War history.

Last but certainly not least, Dr. Victor Cha. I don't even need to use his bio because I introduce him every week – every other week on “The Capital Cable.” (Laughter.) He's the vice dean at Georgetown University. He runs the Korea Chair here at CSIS. Former Bush NSC. Also, I think plays a mean game of tennis or at least long-distance swimming in Hawaii. (Laughter.) There's a whole myriad of facts here. But everybody knows Victor. And Victor, welcome to the panel as well.

So, with that, let's get into it. And I'm going to go to Foreign Minister – the foreign minister first because, one, he's the most senior person on the panel; and, two, I wanted to really take advantage of his expertise in academia but also as minister. And it really dovetails with what we talked about with Secretary Krittenbrink. And Secretary Krittenbrink admonished us to talk more globally vice regionally. OK, so stipulated.

But let's pick up off of the summit here, Foreign Minister – you've been through a couple summits yourself – and let's go right to the crux of the matter. We've got – I'm going to talk about three quick pieces, right? We've got the joint statement that outlined the outcomes, number one. Number two, I would say the two keynotes we heard today, which were summations of where the relationship is and is headed on a range of issues. And, three, the personal chemistry between the two presidents, which we've heard a lot about on both sides. And I think people who were there in and around the summit would attest that there was a chemistry and there was alignment, and leaders matter.

So in terms of this next step of working together globally, something that isn't new – it's been around for a while – but probably more emphasized here today coming off of this summit, where are we headed in terms of the relationship, number one? And number two, how would you sift through

how to prioritize this big, broad, sweeping agenda that we've now heard, touching on everything from people-to-people to values to economic security to some of the more traditional security areas? Foreign Minister, the floor is yours. Broad brush strokes, and please get us – get us off to a fast start here on panel one.

Yoon  
Youngkwan:

Thank you very much for your kindly introduction and wonderful questions to think about.

I think the Biden-Yoon summit was successful for a few reasons. First, from a Korean and an observer's perspective, I think it was a quite successful event. First, the value factor, you mentioned already about that, and I think there are, I mean, important universal values which are respected by global community such as democracy, freedom, and human rights, and the rules-based international order, and something like that. I think Korean diplomacy – Korea's diplomacy, I mean, should be guided by those principles in one way or another. However, in the recent several years Korean diplomacy tended to be much influenced by some kind of emotional nationalism rather than universal values. So, as the result, Korea's diplomacy could not mobilize full support domestically and internationally. And this joint statement confirmed that, I mean, alliance relationship and the future vision for both allies as a kind of global, comprehensive strategic, I mean, alliance, should be rooted deeply in those common values. And I think this is important factor and this is one of the most important, I mean, implication of the summit meeting from a medium- and long-term perspective.

On the other hand, the summit meeting and the joint statement widened the scope of Korea's diplomacy. Korea's diplomacy tended to narrowly focus on the Korean Peninsula issue. I think it is quite understandable for Korean leaders to try to stabilize inter-Korean relationship and try to establish a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. However, I think it shouldn't take all the other diplomatic issues hostage. And it is quite the case, especially when Korea has become number-10 largest economy in the world and, I mean – and it needs to focus more on how to contribute to the global community. So I think this joint statement provided various areas and methods of cooperation, mutual cooperation, in that regard, contributing to the global community more actively.

And the third important implication of the summit meeting was that from a national-interest perspective of both the United States and South Korea, we – both allies are facing serious challenges – that is, economic security and also, I mean, upgrading technologies. And this joint statement provided various issues and areas of mutual cooperation in that regard.

So I think those three – for those three reasons, I think the summit meeting was quite successful. However, I heard assistant secretary's speech this

morning and I was quite assured about, I mean, security of the Korean Peninsula. However, I'm a little concerned because probably President Biden and his team may be preoccupied by many other important issues, like the Ukraine war, China issues, Iranian negotiation, and all the other important domestic political issues including midterm elections or something like that. So I'm wondering how much political capital will be left for President Biden and his team to invest on the North Korean issue.

On the other hand, North Korea is becoming more and more impatient. And there's a clear, I mean, mismatch between the U.S. situation and North Korean situation, which may become a kind of important structural cause for the coming kind of crisis.

So I think it's time for preventive diplomacy. And I would like to, I mean, recommend the Biden administration to seriously consider dispatching a special high-level envoy to North Korea to, I mean, mediate the crisis situation and to begin dialogue.

We have lots of escalation mechanism(s) on the Korean Peninsula, but we don't have de-escalation mechanism. That's the big problem, I think. Thank you.

Mr. Lippert: Excellent. Let me just follow up on that last point, and not to turn this into a North Korea discussion. But Mr. Minister, do you – it seems as though the comment you're making is that the current structure where we've got Sung Kim as ambassador in Jakarta but dual-hatted as special envoy for North Korean issues is something you would like to see modified and changed, and perhaps either a full-time envoy or a high-level envoy or perhaps a more permanent line-serving official like the deputy secretary go to North Korea as a one-off engagement. What are you proposing here, Mr. Minister?

Foreign Minister Yoon: Yeah, high-level official as a one-off engagement.

Mr. Lippert: One-off, OK, yeah, to complement the work of Sung Kim?

Foreign Minister Yoon: Yeah, to – yeah, of course. Yes. Yes.

Mr. Lippert: OK. All right. Thanks, Mr. Minister, for the clarification.

All right. Victor, over to you. Wake up there. You know I'm joking. First, I'm going to ask you two questions.

One is, since we're on North Korea, it was interesting that this issue did not feature prominently or as prominently as in past summits. And I was going to ask Secretary Krittinbrink that question had we had more time. But over to you for that question, and then I want to come back to you on a follow-up on kind of some values issues.

Victor Cha:

Sure. Well, first, thanks for doing our session this morning with Dan, and also thanks for chairing this panel, Mark, with a really great group of experts and scholars.

Yes, I mean, you know, normally when we see a summit meeting between the U.S. and the South Korean president, particularly a first summit meeting, the featured item always is North Korea. But as Dan Kritenbrink said and as you witnessed personally, President Biden arrived in Korea and the first place he went was not the DMZ or not intense discussions on North Korea but went to the Samsung plant in Pyeongtaek, which really sent a message about the alliance relationship, about the diversification of the scope of the alliance relationship.

On North Korea, you know, the message, I think, was – it was low key but it was very clear, which is that there is airtight alignment between the two not just in words, but actually in the way they think about the issue. The return to this phrase “denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula,” “denuclearization of North Korea” as President Lee said in his speech this morning, you know, those are words that have meaning given where we were coming from on this – on this issue in the past. And so I thought that was quite significant. And really, the serious discussions and more behind the scenes – I think behind closed doors, not as public – when it came to North Korea was really on the question of extended deterrence, where you heard – Dan Kritenbrink used very clear language when he talked about extended deterrence and the U.S. commitment to defend South Korea with the full range of capabilities. Again, that’s specifically chosen language to show that there is a real shoring up of the security – the extended-deterrence commitment.

So I think a focus on North Korea, but largely in terms of the alliance. Of course, open to diplomacy when the time presents itself, but there doesn’t seem to be much interest on the part of North Korea right now. And perhaps that is why Foreign Minister Yoon is calling for this – for this special envoy.

Mr. Lippert:

All right. That’s excellent on North Korea. Let’s pivot a little bit to the global and regional issues, as befitting the name of this panel. Both Secretary Kritenbrink and Foreign Minister Yoon just in his opening intervention mentioned the values-based diplomacy, right? Victor, this is something you’ve made a long career writing about in academia. You’re vocal on these issues.

And we talk about being guided by principles. We talk about these universal and global principles. How does that dovetail with the bilateral nature of this relationship between Washington and Seoul that does have unique bilateral components to it but yet also shares some of these universal values? How are we thinking about the values issues in that context, one?

And then, two, where are we headed on this bucket of issues? Is this something that is only going to be around for this current presidency or maybe a few years and then we might shift, or do you think this is here to stay?

Dr. Cha:

Well, I certainly hope it's here to stay. I mean, this, I think, is the natural place where the U.S.-Korea alliance should be.

Again, in sort of academic writing I've written about how there are three types of alliances, right? There's alliances that are formed strictly for a military purpose, that come apart once the threat the two allies want to address is gone. There are alliances that are – that are more institutionalized, based on values, where they stand not just against something but they stand for something, and I think that's where the U.S.-Korea alliance is headed and where it should be headed and where it should be – that's where its permanent home is. I mean, I think there is a natural and mutually beneficial alignment there.

As I think President Lee stated in his remarks this morning, Korea's the 10<sup>th</sup>-largest military in the world. It's one of the most – sorry, 10<sup>th</sup>-largest economy in the world, one of the most capable militaries in the world; a country that is an affluent, industrialized democracy at a time when the liberal international order is being threatened by actions in Europe, by China's assertiveness, by North Korea's missile testing and nuclear testing. And this is when allies need to come together and play a role, not just providing private goods to each other bilaterally but providing broader goods for the environment in which they've all grown up and prospered. So I think that's incredibly important.

I thought this summit was a paradigm shift in that it was not just a focus on military security, which is of course very important, but the alliance has gone from a military security alliance to an economic alliance through KORUS and now it's an alliance that's focused on sustainability and stability, right, broader political and economic stability and sustainability. And if there's one place where this alliance should be focused going into the future – and we'll talk about this afternoon also in panel three – is it's on supply chains and economic security because that ties into everything. It's not just an issue of economics; it's an issue of strategy, it's an issue of regional cooperation, and support for the – for the rules-based international order.

Mr. Lippert:

All right. Outstanding.

Let me go next to Mr. Rapson. Rob, question for you. You've been a practitioner, as your bio suggests or strongly intimates or explicitly states, whatever the case may be. The question that I have for you is: Put yourself back in some of your old roles where you were managing bilateral pieces of this relationship. How do you think through management of Washington and

Seoul while pushing this new global agenda that is sweeping in nature? How do you prioritize, how do you operationalize, one? And, two, your thoughts on the potential of U.S.-ROK in terms of a global alliance that tackles global problems together? Rob, the floor is yours.

Robert Rapson: Thanks, Mark, and thanks for the kind intro upfront. Thanks to CSIS for having me here today, Korea Foundation as well. It's great to be here. It's great to be here in person, you know, one of those rare occasions. And it's also personally great to be here. This is my first public outing since retiring last month from the State Department after 39 years. So if I slip into diplo-speak or government babble – (laughter) – give me a little kick on the shins and I'll try to pep it up a little bit.

As we heard from Dan Kritenbrink, as we heard from the Blue House Secretary Wang, I mean, the summit was a success in every meaning of the word. It's two weeks now since the summit, and many analysts have gone through it and have picked apart all the content. And I would agree completely that it's now taking the relationship – it's expanding the horizon for cooperation across the board, making it global in nature, while also working some very discrete issues regionally, economically. And it's a lifting of the relationship, the framework for lifting the relationship in so many ways.

That said, I see some continuity here. I worked on the summit last year, the summit where President Moon came to Washington, and there was a rather impressive joint statement and a fact sheet that laid out many of the features that we see today, although today now we see an expansion of that universe of opportunity and potential for the Korea-U.S. relationship.

Of course, the proof is in the pudding, and implementation and follow-through is essential. That's hard. Dr. Yoon, you touched upon that. You know, there are distractions throughout the day, the week, the month on both sides. But if you look at the intention, the commitments embedded in the statement as well as the words from the presidents themselves, it looks to me that we stand a very good chance of both sides following through on many if not most all of the commitments that underlie the joint statement.

There's always been potential for global cooperation. In fact, Korea's been engaged globally in so many ways, primarily economically, over the many decades and years that I've been working on Korea. But that's expanded. Korea's commercial footprint has grown into a development assistance footprint, and now it's looking to match some of that regionally and maybe globally on the strategic side as well. There's great potential, again, for Korea to be doing more.

What I would go back and also I know Dan Kritenbrink touched on, and as a practitioner of foreign policy over these many years, it's not easy to put these summits together, and especially when the counterparty's only been in office for 10 days and hadn't quite yet moved into his own office to host a visiting U.S. president. But timing is everything, and the timing for this visit was perfect. I don't recall – and I think it's a first – that a sitting U.S. president arrived in Korea so early on in an administration. So kudos to the teams on both sides for the logistics of putting this summit together, but also for making it happen during the timeframe it did. I mean, President Yoon could have said: Hey, you know, I'm busy right now. I really can't accommodate President Biden. I've got to take care of a lot of things. I'm just in the office. I'm learning. I don't even have my staff in place yet. But nonetheless, recognizing the import of doing this and the bilateral summit with the U.S., he welcomed the president. And I think the chemistry, as Dan described, as you described, Mark – you were there witnessing the visit to the Samsung factory – it was all very positive, and it augurs very well for the relationship going forward.

But you know, there are bad actors out there who are going to test that proposition, and the North Koreans are doing that now. So it'll be interesting to see how this evolves as the new president, President Yoon, assumes office and now takes on the heavy mantle of governing and leading the country forward.

Mr. Lippert: All right. Outstanding, Rob.

Let me – let me ask you one follow-up question. In terms of – I'll just quote Scott Snyder from CFR. Scott made the point a week ago that the fact sheet under Moon-Biden felt like the sides were kind of trading off equities, right, and basically accumulating a large fact sheet full of very interesting deliverables but what kind of looked like tradeoffs. This one, he said he thought that it looked a lot more like the two sides were in large agreement and putting down on paper what they had basically agreed to and were going to work together on. So augurs well for implementation, according to Scott.

The question that I have for you, to come back to Foreign Minister Yoon's comments, is that we've got – and you touched on them, too, Rob – we've got this big global agenda, two pretty robust joint statements, fact sheets, whatever you want to call them from two summits, lots to do, and then very, very crowded agenda here in Washington, right? To use Foreign Minister Yoon's list, I've got China, Ukraine, Iran, domestic political issues. As a practitioner – as someone who, you know, has to basically work in, you know, 12 hours a day, maybe 16 hours a day with the resources you're given – how do you see the bandwidth issue in terms of North Korea, global Korea, the bilateral relationship? Rob, the floor is yours.

Mr. Rapson: Yeah. I mean, bandwidth is an issue. Our NSC, the State Department, and all the related agencies are consumed with equally if not more important agendas or urgent agendas at this time. So setting aside that bandwidth to get the essentials done so that there are not big lapses or time goes by where we haven't moved, we haven't been able to meet.

But in the first week, two weeks after the summit, we're seeing the principals, the senior officials – U.S. officials making the time to go out. Wendy Sherman going out. Sung Kim is a regular, a frequent traveler to Seoul. And we'll just need to see more from the economic agencies. And that's where, I think, if I have any concerns, it would be the bandwidth on the economic security team at State and the NSC being able to engage in a robust way with their Korean counterparts.

I don't have any question that on the Korean side that they'll be fully engaged and President Yoon will make sure that his team is doing all it can to make the summit outcomes real.

Mr. Lippert: No, thanks, Rob. Thanks for that. And I was struck by the secretary's comments about all the institutional mechanisms that the Koreans are busy standing up on the economic security agenda. It's pretty interesting to deal with the bandwidth issue on their end. So I think your point is interesting in terms of our economic agencies, watch that space. Perhaps that's for panel three later on this afternoon.

All right. Professor Ma, we've kept you on ice for way too long, but I did want to set you up in terms of getting through this and bringing you to the strategy question. You are the strategy expert here up on the stage. And the question that I have for you is: Thinking through your old hat or your old job at the Blue House, rather, where you were charged with compiling all of this and basically prioritizing and formulating a strategy that is workable for the bilateral relationship, how do you see this? We've talked about all of the global issues. We've talked about bandwidth issues. We've talked about DPRK and the Korean Peninsula issues. If you're thinking through now coming off of this summit two leaders, great chemistry, big list of things to do, how do we formulate this into a coherent, cohesive strategy between the two allies that effectively prioritizes this vast problem set and then allows for effective and efficient implementation? Professor Ma, the floor is yours.

Ma Sangyoon: Thank you very much for inviting me, and very interesting and very daunting question to answer. Basically, the summit was a success as all the participants just mentioned, but at the same time there are some areas to be discussed further in the later time. I think the priority question is number-one question that we have to answer.

But with just regarding the North Korean denuclearization question I think that the question itself was not much addressed in the summit and in the joint statement. And addressing the denuclearization of North Korea or the Korean Peninsula itself actually quite tightly linked to the regional issue – regional politics. Especially, the U.S.-China competition directly affects how China views North Korea, the value of – the strategic value of the North Korea. And as we all know, back in 2017 China agrees to the passing the U.N. Security resolution imposing new sanctions on North Korea, but now China opposes every steps that U.S. and South Korea would like to, you know, put on the U.N. agenda.

So, in the background, U.S.-China relationship and the regional affairs and how Korea tried to, how can I say, went on that terrain directly affects the denuclearization question. I wonder whether our government or the American government actually are thinking and planning on that very difficult question, a very sensitive question as well, especially because regional and Korean Peninsula are very tightly linked. So when we start thinking about strategy, we have to take into consideration of those two domains at the same time.

Mr. Lippert:

Excellent. And let's tease you out a little bit, let's draw you out a little bit on the question of China and broaden it a little bit away from North Korea, right? Obviously, you really outlined the issue well in terms of there's this complicated geopolitical issue that has a direct impact on North Korea. One could argue that there's a complicated geopolitical relationship between Washington and Beijing that impacts the region, if not the world. Your thoughts in terms of where the Republic of Korea sits in this mix, right, in terms of the U.S.-China question. I know this is a big question in the Republic of Korea. Where does it sit, and what did you see from the summit in terms of the direction that the alliance is heading on the China issue writ large?

Professor Ma:

Well, it is quite clear that the Republic of Korea is taking more, you know, stronger relationship with the United States, and the wish to strengthen the alliance is very much vivid in the joint statement, but at the same time, we cannot miss the point that the joint statement was very much careful in somehow avoid – trying to avoid the sentences or phrases that might, you know, somehow provoke Chinese sentiment. So, well, it was a very carefully written statement, I think, so in that regard, Korea – and even in our previous speech by the – Secretary Wong, he mentioned that Korea still wants to preserve its cooperative relations with China, especially in terms of economic relations, so I think – well, we may have to be careful. Korea is not really taking a very clear side but, at the same time, Korea was wanting to and still wants to strengthen its alliance relation with the United States.

Mr. Lippert: OK, one more follow-up to you; then I'm going to come back to Foreign Minister Yoon.

If you were back, Professor Ma – and Foreign Minister Yoon, get ready because I'm going to ask you the same question. Professor Ma, if you were back in your job at the Blue House, now Yongsan, and it's late at night and the president calls you and says, what should we do about China, where should we be headed, what would your answer be?

Professor Ma: Well, we'd like to gradually, well, decouple or, you know, separate our coming relations with China but I think it will take very long time. But we have to give a clear signal to our companies and corporations. Well, try not, you know, invest too much in the country and try to take on alternative ways to conduct their business with other countries, but it will take a very long time. The process has to be very gradual, so in the meantime, we have to maintain, you know, somewhat cooperative relations with Chinese leadership. That's inevitable.

Mr. Lippert: All right. Excellent. Thanks, Professor.

Foreign Minister Yoon, same set of questions to you. Question one is, your analysis of the direction of the U.S.-ROK alliance vis-à-vis China and, two, your recommendations on where we should be heading as an alliance with respect to China, the big regional and global question, I would say – one of the big regional and global questions at the heart of Washington-Seoul relations. Over to you, Foreign Minister.

Foreign Minister Yoon: I think the fact that President Yoon Seok-youl agreed on the contents of joint statement which emphasized importance of value as a guideline of alliance has already made the position of the Korean government clear in terms of its relationship with China. What I'm saying is the relationship between the United States and ROK is qualitatively different from our relationship with China in the sense that we share common values with the United States and we are allies for several decades, and our relationship with China is different from that kind of alliance relationship, so we need to make it clear, I mean, quietly to the top leaders of China that we make a bilateral relationship between Korea, South Korea and China probably more stable from a long-term perspective because it may reduce the kind of over-expectations about what South Korea can do to China or cannot do, something like that. So I think our relationship with China – I mean ROK-China relationship – should be based on common understanding of mutual interest and, I mean, rule-based international order, something like, I mean, respect for sovereignty and a mutual understanding about each country's interest, or something like that. So I think it's qualitatively different, I mean, from our relationship with the United States. So I think that should work as a guideline for Korea's diplomacy. And one important thing is that our government or political leaders sometimes should be ready to kind of face some protests or some

difficulties coming from China, but I think, even in that kind of situations, Korean leaders tend to – should behave kind of with some principle and that’s the kind of wise way of doing diplomacy with Chinese people, I think.

Mr. Lippert: And the principles that you would like to see followed when Korean leaders face protests or démarches from the Chinese side are – what principles would you like to see in there?

Foreign Minister Yoon: For example, we can explain to them that our constitution defines Korea as a democratic state, so it is natural for South Korea to go together with the United States when they promote democracy in the world. I mean, that kind of clear positioning is important when we explain our situation to Chinese people. But our relationship with China, I mean, will remain stable and mutually beneficial if we – I mean, they understand our position clearly and if they respect, I mean, their own interests in their relationship with South Korea. So I think that’s the – that should be the basic guideline with, I mean, diplomacy with China.

Mr. Lippert: Got it. Thanks for the expert commentary there, Foreign Minister.

Rob, over to you; then I’m going to come to Victor; then we’re going to open up for questions because we’re starting to get a little short on time. But Rob, let’s vector a little different direction in terms of the region. Two areas where you have served, right – Japan, which we’re going to do a whole panel on later but would be interested in your thoughts there, but also Southeast Asia, where you have deep experience as well. How should the U.S.-ROK alliance be thinking about those two regions in terms of where we can cooperate, our alignment, our posture, in terms of effectuating a more regional and global outlook between Washington and Seoul?

Mr. Rapson: Good questions and good points, Mark. If I could just go back to China just for two seconds.

Mr. Lippert: Yeah, please.

Mr. Rapson: You know, the flashpoint for –

Mr. Lippert: We have a rule here: If you don’t like the question, you just pick another question.

Mr. Rapson: No, I do like the question. (Laughs.) It was a good question. I won’t hang around China too long.

The flashpoint, of course, for the last administration, the Moon administration, even for the Park Geun-hye administration, was the THAAD deployment – flashpoint with China, which precipitated, you know, the

actions that we're well familiar with, the costs that were put on Korean companies. And some of those costs are still out there. It begs the question, you know, what is – is there another flashpoint out there, or trigger point with China that could precipitate coercive measures of some sort? Don't know. Hopefully, we won't have to find out. And then, of course, for the U.S. the big question – I think this is part of the IPEF framework discussion is, what do we do to help allies and partners who come under the bite of Beijing like this in a coercive way? And that's something that needs to be talked about, thought through, because I think the feeling in Korea was that they bore the brunt, Korea bore the brunt of Beijing's coercive measures without any assistance or support from elsewhere. But Southeast Asia is a win-win region and the Koreans bring a lot to the table already through their trade, investment, ODA. And what we can do, what we've been trying to do to date but could do more of it, is greater coordination, finding synergies bilaterally, multilaterally with other partners in the region to bring Korean expertise and money to bear in capacity-building across the board.

Korea's been, you know, that model for so many countries out there. The Miracle on the Han has resonance. And so just doing a lot more of what we have been doing, and I think there's a willingness on the Korean government's part to invest even more in the region. And, you know, they can take that into the strategic realm as well. They've been doing some already through surplus assets; military assets have been provided to some countries, you know, working closely with Vietnam and others to build up their abilities. Of course, ASEAN is not a homogeneous entity; it has members that have different interests and different connections. And the third piece – and I served in the other country that features heavily now in the Indo-Pacific discussions, India; I was in India for three years. India's a special case and the Koreans have been invested there for a long time, but I think there's more that can be done there, and of course, if Korea aspires to Quad status or a stronger relationship with Quad, India's thoughts and role are very important in that regard.

Mr. Lippert:

Well put, Rob, and I would say a couple of just go-backs. One, when I was the ambassador, the Indian relationship was getting warmer between the two sides, bilateral. I think we had two or three ship visits. We had I think six or seven different ministers come through. I mean, it was pretty remarkable. In large part, it was the response to THAAD, which was interesting. And on the THAAD point, I'll just make one comment, which is interesting in terms of – public support for THAAD has always been so durable in Korea, despite all of this, right? It's been strong, well over 50 percent, sometimes going all the way into the 70s percent. It seems, though, the Korean people have a very clear-eyed view and have really told their leaders what their preference is. And it comes back to Foreign Minister Yoon's comments about democracy being enshrined in the Korean constitution, right? So it's not an insignificant piece of data that there's strong, robust, and durable public support,

especially among the young generation, for THAAD and moves along – so pretty interesting stuff, Rob, that you’ve teased out, so thanks for that. Please come back.

Mr. Rapson: Just 20 seconds –

Mr. Lippert: Please.

Mr. Rapson: Going back to Professor Ma’s point: Divesting from China’s hard for companies, not just Korean companies but American companies, European companies. The market is so large, the supply chains are so intertwined that you’re right, it’s going to take a long time if that effort’s going to be successful. Korean companies – I talk with them over the years and they all want to divest in some fashion, move their investments elsewhere. Vietnam is a nice location but it has limits, capacity limits on how much investment it can take. So what’s the next big market or markets out there? Some of them reside in ASEAN, but they’re small. India: the potential’s always there; the reality sometimes falls short. So not an easy problem to resolve – best of intentions, but in practice it’s hard to divest completely and decouple – decouple – from China.

Mr. Lippert: And final point, Rob, just to pick up on your piece on economic retaliation, and correct me if I’m wrong but I think the U.S. Congress has asked the administration for a study or report on what to do about these issues, so some pretty interesting thoughts and activities swirling around that as well.

All right, Victor, final word to you. Comments before we open it up to questions? Comments on any of the issues? Good back-and-forth here in terms of – especially in terms of values, especially in terms of China, Japan, all of that good stuff, but where are we headed in terms of globalizing and/or regionalizing this relationship between Korea and the United States?

Dr. Cha: So just on the China piece of this, I think Rob’s right; I mean, the notion of completely decoupling from China is difficult for any country to consider, but I don’t think that’s really the answer for Korea, right? It’s not the notion of decoupling, but it is the notion of trying to be able to deter future efforts by China to weaponize interdependence the way they did in 2017, and that is not something that Korea can do on its own, right? It has to do that in cooperation with other countries that are also subject to China’s efforts to economically coerce. So our good friend Bonnie Glaser has come up with a term for this; she calls it collective resilience, right? And whether that’s through IPEF or through other sorts of formations, trilateral with Japan, finding ways of coming together to have countermeasures ready that could be triggered if China again tries to do what they did to Korea in 2017, 2016-2017, with regard to THAAD. Does that take time? Of course it does, and that’s why I think the point that Professor Ma made is important. Like, we

need time to do things like this; we need time to organize governments around this, to organize private sector around this. But it is a shift in the way we think about these things, and this idea of collective resilience, I think, is one of the ways to think about deterring future Chinese action, not decoupling from China but deterring future Chinese action.

And then the second point I wanted to make – and you referenced it at the very beginning, Mark – is I think, you know, an important test for the new Yoon government when it comes to global Korea will be what else it will do with regard to the war in Europe. Korea's been invited, along with Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, to the NATO summit next month in Spain. You know, I think that's a real showcase for President Yoon and his administration to really put – to walk the walk in terms of global Korea.

Mr. Lippert: And are you holding to your prediction made on the “Capital Cable” that there will be a big splash by the Korean government at the NATO summit?

Dr. Cha: Yes, yes.

Mr. Lippert: OK, we're holding you to it.

Dr. Cha: Yes. Just like I was incorrect in terms of my prediction about North Korea doing a nuclear test during Memorial Day weekend.

Mr. Lippert: (Laughs.)

Dr. Cha: But I think that this is an important test.

Mr. Lippert: We're going to short you on North Korea but go long on the NATO summit.

Dr. Cha: Yeah.

Mr. Lippert: OK, got it.

Dr. Cha: But if Korea truly wants to be a global pivot player, in terms of international stability, this is the most important thing that's happening in the world today that involves Korea's stakes as an important supporter of the rules-based international order.

Mr. Lippert: All right, excellent, Victor. And I know said this would be the last question, but I'm going to go back one more time to Professor Ma because both the previous panelists mentioned his intervention. I think it did get the creative juices flowing in a really interesting way. Let's go back to this notion on how to deal with China, right? You've got Korean companies, you've got Korean government policy, you've got the U.S., you've got other markets, all of this, and you've got Victor's concept that he brought in via Bonnie Glaser, our former colleague here, of collective resilience. How are you thinking in terms

of strategy, the right mix of public versus private, right? You've got market forces, some very, very hard business decisions that have to be made by not just Korean companies but, as Rob pointed out, multinationals, on the one hand. On the other hand, you've got industrial policy in more focus here in the United States than it's ever been, but it's also extant for – it's been extant, rather, for many decades in Asia, right, in a different way. And then you've got government high foreign policy going on in the background. What's the right mix here of these things in terms of how do leaders in both capitals and business leaders and academics think through this basket of issues?

Small, little question to you, Professor Ma, to round out the panel.  
(Laughter.)

Professor Ma: I don't have private sector experience so I'm not sure – I'm not the right person to answer that very important question. But I think – well, in the previous administration, for example, in Korea, Korean companies are complaining that well, we don't know what sort of direction that we are heading, so they were complaining why government giving us direction, even if the specific answers to specific question on the business side. So, well, government has to think up very hard and at least provide some directions that our government foreign policy is heading and our relationship with both China and United States is being directed. Then I'm sure our very capable businessmen will find their own answer.

Mr. Lippert: OK, thanks.

Foreign Minister Yoon, do you want to answer or address any of that, that intervention and/or the question in terms of how do you think through policy, government, market economics, business, cultural relations as well?

Foreign Minister Yoon: I think the most important thing that our government should do is to send a right signal to the private sector so that they can predict, I mean, what kind of, I mean, the policies will conform our government and how they should readjust their business strategies in accordance to the kind of government policies. Important thing is that top policymakers should make a very correct kind of policy based on our core judgment of international situation surrounding Korean Peninsula, and I think that's important and I recently heard that big businesses began to increase the investment in South Korea in recent weeks. I think that has some implication for the importance of right government policy choices.

Mr. Lippert: All right, outstanding. Let's end the panel there in terms of the panelists' contributions and interventions to my questions; now the floor is open to anyone who may want to ask questions for the last 10 minutes or so. If not, we'll go to lunch early maybe. I don't know – (inaudible) – there's a video.

Dr. Cha: Are we doing questions online too? We're not doing questions online, OK.

So while they're waiting, can I just say on your last question, Mark, about, you know, government signaling? I mean, you know, government can signal very clearly, as you know well. They can signal very clearly in terms of what direction they are moving and they cannot just signal but they can provide incentives for companies, and there's nothing that makes companies respond more than incentives, whether it's, you know, in industrial policy or in tax policy. So there are clearly ways to signal directions, even for Korean companies which are notoriously known for not – (laughs) – necessarily following what the government wants to do. So I think there is a way forward here on this and I think, you know, the administration has – the Yoon administration has an opportunity to do this, since it's already laid out how important these issues are very early on in the administration.

Mr. Lippert: And just tell me if this – I'm just going to follow up, Victor, on your comment here. It does seem that it is a complicated mix that we are entering into in this relationship, right? We are broadening it in terms of its scope, in terms of the issue set, right? It's been broadening for a while but you would say probably that breadth is accelerating, right, number one. Number two, the – I guess you would say the geographic reach is also enhancing, at the same time, or expanding too. And three, I would say the issue sets are becoming even more complicated, right, in terms of that. So sitting back at your old desk at the NSC, you know, Steve Hadley's calling you, you know, how are you thinking through what needs to get done first in this really matrixed relationship that we find ourselves in?

Dr. Cha: So I would say – and not to sort of steal the thunder from this afternoon's panel on economic security and supply chains – I'm seeing them all sitting right in front of us.

Mr. Lippert: (Laughs.)

Dr. Cha: I mean, if I had to pick one – you know, obviously North Korea can present itself as a proximate issue at any moment, right? At any moment they could do that. But thinking in sort of the medium to long term, I would say it really is about economic resilience and supply chain security because that is connected to the China issue, right? It is connected to cooperation with Japan. It's connected to investment in the United States. It's connected to everything. So, you know, we had the presidential secretary for economic security doing the keynote this morning. My hope is that he is – and I don't know if he is – he is fully staffed up with folks from different ministries that are reporting to him and that there is a direct counterpart for him in our government, the NSC, because if I had to choose it would be that because I think it reverberates, you know, on to questions of how willing South Korea is to be more vocal on Taiwan, for example, or how willing it is to say more

about freedom of navigation. Even though those are not supply chain security issues, they can certainly link to those issues if the concern is Chinese economic coercion.

Mr. Lippert: Yeah, and one quick follow-up to that – back to you, Victor. Sorry, just to – it dovetails with what Rob said earlier, right, in that we’ve got these economic agencies in the U.S. that traditionally haven’t played this role, right? This is newish territory for the United States. I mean, we’ve run industrial policy in the U.S. We’ve mainly run it out of the Pentagon. You know, you see the AFN commercials – Rob knows them well – of the Pentagon inventing the microwave, right – (laughter) – and these – you know, the Pentagon would develop a technology – and Ash Carter’s book talks a lot about it. They would develop technology, kind of hold it, and then disperse it, right? We’re in a very different model now where it’s much more commercially available, the business community has to be invested, so we’ve got a different landscape using different agencies in the U.S. government that probably haven’t played as big of a role in the U.S.-ROK relationship. The Pentagon is well established. You could argue the trade ministries are well established. I see our former – Korean former ambassador to the WTO. That infrastructure is there. The State Department, as Rob pointed out, lots of activity there. That’s well established. This is newish, and in the fact – or in the joint statement we’ve got a new commercial dialogue, right, on supply chain, got this NSC dialogue. This is all new stuff.

So it sounds like, to me, Victor – tell me if I’m wrong – getting the infrastructure and structure up and running from being fully staffed to figuring out how the two sides are going to work with each other is also going to be of paramount importance.

Dr. Cha: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

Mr. Lippert: Rob, please, come on in.

Mr. Rapson: I was just going to go back to this issue of globalism versus regionalism, and not to be glib here, but the region is going to demand and command attention, and if Korea can get the regional pieces right, starting with Japan, and if Japan get the regional piece with Korea right, a lot will follow from that for the opportunities for cooperation, and IPEF I think will be greater if there’s some resonance between Tokyo and Seoul – or greater resonance in Tokyo and Seoul. The China piece is always there, and Southeast Asia, the low-hanging fruit for opportunity for Japan and Korea to work together with us and others to promote these values that we were talking about so much. So global’s great but I think the region still – the basics in the region need immediate attention from the administrations.

Mr. Lippert: No, very fair, and in terms of – especially in terms of, if you look proximate – Seoul, you’ve got nuclear weapons issues. You’ve got massive economic security and more traditional economic issues. I mean, the region is driving many of these global discussions as well, so it’s well put there.

All right. So we’re at 11:30. It doesn’t look like we have any questions. We have about five minutes left. So, Victor, I’m going to ask you to just try to wrap up the panel here in terms of main conclusions, main summary, main takeaway, and set us up for the following sessions here today.

Dr. Cha: So, I mean, the only – I’ll add a – I’m sure everybody else has some comments, too, but I’ll just add that –

Mr. Lippert: Yeah. I should say I’m coming to the rest of the panelists, too. I didn’t –

Dr. Cha: Yeah. Yeah. (Laughs.)

Mr. Lippert: We’re going to go down the line, not filibuster for five minutes. So, yeah.

Dr. Cha: Right. Not tap dance for five minutes.

Mr. Lippert: Yeah.

Dr. Cha: So I would – the one thing I would say about the alliance, since the panel is about the alliance, is, you know, I think the things that are different now are that, as you mentioned earlier, Scott talked about how the joint statement didn’t feel transactional, right? And I think that’s – I think that’s right. And Rob probably knows this well, I’m sure Foreign Minister Yoon knows this well, in the past sometimes the alliance became very transactional. It’s like, you know, I’ll do this if you do this, right, and the joint statements and fact sheets started to look like that. There was no fact sheet for this particular summit just because it was only 10 days after the new government had started, but it doesn’t feel like that, right? It feels very different. And that links to my – and that’s because there’s a common foundation in values and values-based diplomacy and supporting the norms-based international order.

And that relates to the second point, which is trust, right; that whether you’re talking about extended deterrence or whether you’re talking about supply chain security, the element of trust in sort of alliance politics is much more central than it was in the past. I mean, if you just talk about an alliance based on transactions, there’s not a lot of trust there. It’s just like, you do this, I’ll do this. We’ll coordinate it. But when we’re talking about extended deterrence and supply chain resilience, trust becomes a much more important factor. And I think that is something that both sides have been working to cultivate in the alliance relationship going forward.

Mr. Lippert: All right.

Foreign Minister Yoon, closing comments to you.

Foreign Minister Yoon: I agree with Victor. I mean, the trust factor is most important. And in that regard, I was happy to hear President Biden saying I trust you to President Yoon Suk-youl when he departed Seoul. So I think I'm optimistic about the future of our alliance. Let me stop there.

Mr. Lippert: All right.

Rob?

Mr. Rapson: I think the relationship between the two administrations has gotten off to a great start. A foundational document is in place that lays the pathway forward. But the best of plans, of course, will be tested by these outside forces and actors.

The new Korean administration has only been in place for a month, you know. So it's got a long, maybe a sharp learning curve as it settles into governing. So we'll have to watch that space carefully. And of course, domestic politics here in the U.S. will assert themselves later this year and may have impacts on – you know, on how we conduct our foreign policy in some respects. So, again, those X factors are out there, and we'll need to be cognizant and watch those spaces very carefully.

Mr. Lippert: All right. Outstanding.

All right, Professor Ma, last word to you.

Professor Ma: Right. Well, the tone-setting between the two allies has been very successful, and we need further discussions about how to implement the extended deterrence, for example. The United States seems to put emphasis on integrated deterrence, which encompass not only the nuclear deterrence but also other means to deter North Korean threats, while South Korea seems more focused on how to share nuclear weapons with the United States and some more direct, you know, measures. But we need to figure out, I think, in the future.

And also, South Korea seems to be more inclined to somehow engage North Korea and China perhaps than the United States. So even though we are putting in a similar direction, but there are some differences in degree. And we need to figure out how we'll be our, you know, common strategy in the future.

Mr. Lippert: All right. Outstanding. We're going to leave it there.

Professor Ma, Mr. Rapson, Foreign Minister Yoon, Dr. Cha, thank you. Outstanding panel, got us off to a fabulous start throughout the day here for setting up panels two and three well, and we are looking forward to a great day of discussion and dialogue on a critical set of issues. Again, thank you to the panelists. Big round of applause. (Applause.)

Dr. Cha: Thank you, Mark.

Mr. Lippert: Thank you.