

Online Special Lecture

“The Biden Administration and North Korea”

November 20, 2020

PARK In-kook

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Good evening in the United States. It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to today’s special online conference on “The Biden Administration and North Korea.” With the very high likelihood of the Biden Administration taking office next January, there is hope for reinforced US-Korea alliance and improving US-China and US-North Korea relations altogether. As always is the case, new changes bring new opportunities as well as challenges. It is very timely we will have today’s discussion especially with top-notch experts and scholars in the United States who had played critical roles in the North Korean denuclearization negotiation for the past 30 years. I hope the webinar will give you an opportunity to fathom the new Biden administration’s insights in these important issues.

This morning, we have five excellent speakers. If I introduce the first speaker, Ambassador Joseph Yun. Joe Yun recently served as the US Special Representative for North Korea Policy of the United States after completing his services as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific in the US Department of State. Ambassador Yun also served as the US Ambassador for Malaysia. As all of you are well-aware, Ambassador Yun was the key diplomat securing the release of Otto Warmbier two years ago.

With regard to time management, I will give 7-10 minutes for initial presentation to all panelists to be followed by 3-5 minute second-round presentation. And then, I will open the floor, we’ll open the floor for the Q&As from the audience, who sent their questions through online in advance. As of now, we received more than 100 questions. I’ll select 5-6 key questions which are not covered during today’s discussion. So now, it’s high time for me to invite Ambassador

Yun.

Joseph YUN

Thank you, Ambassador Park. It's good to be here. And my thanks to Chey Institute for having me. You know, I've been in Korea for one week and I'm happy to see, really, normal life has returned. And I think the Korean government has truly, really, done an excellent job of overcoming COVID and I hope in the US, too, we can get our act together and really come to grips with this. But that's not why I'm here, to talk about COVID, but to mostly talk about North Korea.

So, I wanted to draw a map, a process, of how the United States, specifically the Biden administration, might approach the North Korea issue based on my experience of people there as well as my experience in the government. Now, of course, everything of the Biden administration's starting point will be review of the current situation. And I want to highlight three items that will be key assumptions.

Number one is the question, will North Korea denuclearize? Now many analysts, or even casual observers, recognize how difficult that is. But for the US administration coming into essentially the government cannot simply say they will not denuclearize. And this is really going to be the first point of contention between analysts and policy makers. Policy makers need to say, "Well, they may not denuclearize quickly. But we have to have the goal of denuclearization." So, that's going to be the first kind of contentious item.

The second contentious item is really, you know, we've seen pressure. We've seen American policy based on pressure over the last 25 years or so. And so, again, analysts will say, "Look, maximum pressure of any kind of pressure is not going to bring about North Korea to say, "We give up." That's not just going to happen." But again, you will see policy makers saying, "But we need pressure. We need pressure to be strong and to work."

Now, the third item, unanimity is the political reality in Washington. That the United States

(and I'm sure that's the case in South Korea as well) simply cannot acknowledge or recognize North Korea as a nuclear weapon state. So, you have these analysts saying they're not going to denuclearize and political reality that we cannot accept North Korean weapons. So, the challenge is what to do about them.

Now I'm going to mention the last item in the current situation, which is what do about President Trump's policies of the last four years? Especially his summit, his exchange of letters, and also the progress he made. I mean, let's be frank about it. You may or may not disagree with everything President Trump has done in the world or in foreign policy in general. But I think one thing we have to give him credit for is trying something new with North Korea. So, I do think there will be a debate. Do we throw away everything that Trump has done or do we keep some of it and then continue with those that have worked?

So those are the challenges that we'll be faced with and I'm sure our panel will enlighten them. But let me give you, in a few minutes, my own view of what I hope will happen.

Number one, to a surprising degree, what happens with North Korea is not determined in Washington but determined in Pyongyang. And this is particularly true early on in the new administration. We've seen Pyongyang conduct missile tests, conduct nuclear tests early in the Obama administration and obviously early in the Trump administration, too. Now, the message going to Pyongyang should be "Please refrain from early provocation to give time to give chance to diplomatic opportunities that will open up in Biden's administration." So, I think it is very important that early on, Biden's administration sends a clear message that they're willing to engage diplomatically. So please, let's not be led into a pressure path or a different path through the provocation.

The last point I want to mention is that US policy for the last 25 years or so towards North Korea has been very narrow in scope. It's been essentially the mantra of giving Kim Jong-il or Kim Jong-un the choice between a prosperous future and a bad future if they have nuclear weapons. A prosperous future if they give up nuclear weapons. Well, that hasn't worked and so, we need to recognize and open the policy aperture. And I would hope we will emphasize not just denuclearization in the policy but also a peace-building process. To me, they go hand-

in-hand. They have to go hand-in-hand. Otherwise we can never success in not just denuclearizing but bringing peace and stability to the peninsula. So, Ambassador Park, with those remarks, I'll hand it back to you sir.

PARK In-Kook

Thank you. I fully agree with you one of the great legacies of President Trump was that he put top priority on North Korean nuclear issues for the first time since 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework when President Clinton put North Korean nuclear issues on top line, on top-priority issues. The question is, how, what will be the new administration's attitude in terms of whether they will continuously brand it as a deal-breaker issue or not. So maybe you can share your thought during the second presentation.

And on the maximum pressure issue, my question is, is there any still remaining stuff to impose as a new sanction? You know, which means that we have not reached to the level of maximum pressure yet? So in that case, what kind of item could be used as a final, or really literally the maximum, pressure in the future if North Korea reverts to provocation again? Thank you.

Our next speaker will be Gary Samore. Gary served for four years as President Obama's White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction, which means the top control tower in the United States. Before that, he served another four years as Special Assistant to President Clinton. So maybe, he served in the White House for almost eight years during the two US Presidents of the Democratic President. So now, he has many things to share with us. So, let's welcome Gary. Okay Gary, you have the floor.

Gary SAMORE

Thank you very much President Park. And thank you to the Chey Institute for organizing this important discussion. The topic of our meeting is the Biden's administration's policy toward the Biden administration. But I think the more immediate question is North Korea's policy

toward the Biden administration. Will Kim Jung-un be willing to resume nuclear talks that began under President Trump or will he break the moratorium and resume nuclear and long-range missile tests.

Now, if recent history is any guide, I'm afraid there is very good chance that North Korea will confront the incoming Biden administration with a new round of nuclear and or missile tests in order to demonstrate North Korea's technical achievements and to strengthen their bargaining leverage.

Nonetheless, I think there's at least a chance that Kim can be dissuaded from conducting new tests in order to avoid additional sanctions because North Korea's economy is already very weakened economy by the existing sanctions and the coronavirus.

So, in order to reduce the risk, I agree with Ambassador Yun that the Biden administration should communicate with Pyongyang that it is willing to resume nuclear negotiations on the basis of the July 2018 Singapore Summit. That the Biden administration will continue to honor the agreement between Trump and Kim on a test moratorium in exchange for limits on US-ROK joint exercises. And Biden is willing to meet with Kim Jong-un if there is an agreement on denuclearization that they can announce.

Now, frankly, if Trump were a normal President, he could be very helpful in delivery this message. But unfortunately, we just cannot count on Trump to do the patriotic thing to help Biden and his country. Nonetheless, I think the Biden administration should do their best to try to discourage Kim from a new round of testing.

If Kim Jung Un rejects Biden's offer and resumes testing, I think the U.S. will be in a better position to mobilize international support, including China, for additional sanctions. And even more important, strong enforcement of existing sanctions.

But if Kim Jung Un accepts Biden's offer, then both sides can assemble negotiating teams and they can start negotiations. I think we should be very realistic about what to expect from these negotiations. As we know from the collapse of the Hanoi Summit, the two sides are very far apart on the pace, terms and conditions for denuclearization. So in my view, complete

elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile in the near-term is just not a realistic option. I completely agree with Ambassador Yun we should not give up on the objective, we should continue to say "We don't recognize or accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state." But as a practical matter, the best we can achieve in the near term are concrete and verifiable limits on North Korea's capacities, like a freeze on fissile material production, in exchange for partial sanctions relief, economic assistance and peace-building steps, like an end of war declaration. Such an agreement would at least be a step towards the long-term objective of denuclearization. But as I said, I think we need to be realistic and recognize that for the time being, certainly most likely for the four years of President Obama's term, North Korea is going to continue to have some nuclear weapons capability and the US and the ROK will have to strengthen their defense relationship in order to ensure deterrence. Thank you very much.

PARK In-Kook

Thank you Gary. On the possibility of renewed provocation, just as in the past US presidential election in the past...North Korea already demonstrated some new, not new, ICBM but upgraded models which has been dubbed as a "monster missiles." Maybe some US analysts described that new ICBM which has been demonstrated during the military parade might be designed to apply the MIRV system, which might debilitate the capability of the US MD system. So maybe in that sense, North Korea already sent some sign of provocation. So maybe as a specialist on that issue, I wonder what you are reading on the recent development during the 1 month ago in a military parade? And also, what should be...if US, North Korea resumed their negotiation on nuclear issue, what should be base, starting point? Singapore Conference or Leap Day Agreement, which has been agreed before? Thank you. Maybe you could make something during your second-round presentation.

Our next speaker will be Bob Einhorn. Professor Bob Einhorn was the State Department's Special Advisor for Nonproliferation and Arms Control, a position specially created by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009. He was also Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation. So now he working as a Senior Researcher in Brookings Institute. Bob, you

have the floor.

Robert EINHORN

Ambassador Park, thanks so much and thanks to the Chey Institute. It's a pleasure to be here with some of my friends and colleagues on this panel.

I don't think the Biden administration will rush into diplomacy with Pyongyang. North Korea isn't near the top of the Biden administration's list of priorities. Starting on January 20, which is when the President will be inaugurated, top priorities will be domestic — coping with the surging pandemic, boosting the economy, restoring civility, and promoting racial justice. In foreign and security policy, early attention will be devoted to the defense budget, China, climate change, extending New START, right-sizing US military presence in the Middle East, and more.

Regarding the world's two major proliferation threats — North Korea and Iran — the new administration, at the outset at least, will be more actively focused on Iran, given candidate Biden's declared intention to return to the JCPOA if Iran does the same. Soon after assuming office, the new President may be reluctant to take on two politically risky negotiating challenges at the same time.

On North Korea, I believe the Biden administration's inclination will be to proceed cautiously. Before engaging with the North, it will want to restore South Korean and Japanese confidence in US security commitments and ensure that allied deterrence and defense capabilities are in good shape. It will also want to take the time to consult with the ROK — and also Japan and eventually China and Russia — to seek a widely supported approach to negotiations with North Korea.

But while proceeding deliberately, it will be conscious of the need to address the growing DPRK threat to the United States and its allies. And it knows that, if the North feels it is being ignored, it may decide to act provocatively to get the world's attention, including perhaps by conducting a nuclear test or launching an ICBM missile. So, not right away, but before too long,

the Biden administration will want to engage North Korea – both bilaterally and probably also in a multilateral framework.

President Biden’s approach to engagement will be much more conventional than Trump’s. He won’t think that personal diplomacy and beautiful love letters can overcome significant substantive differences. I don’t think he’ll rule out summit meetings. But he’ll meet at the summit only if progress had been made at the professional level and if he believes involvement by the leaders has a reasonable chance of resolving remaining issues.

The Biden team will be realistic about what is achievable. It knows, whether it says so publicly or not, that Kim Jong-un has no intention of giving up his nuclear deterrent – at least not in an agreed timeframe or for a price the United States and its allies would be willing to pay. At the same time, the Biden administration will not be willing to accept North Korea as a permanent nuclear-armed state and it won’t be willing to abandon the goal of complete denuclearization. Rather than insist on early and complete denuclearization, I believe the new administration should support a long-term process in which incremental steps toward the agreed goal of complete denuclearization are accompanied by concrete steps favored by the DPRK in the economic and security areas.

In that regard, I agree with Gary that it would be wise for the incoming administration to endorse the general framework agreed by Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump at their 2018 Singapore summit – working concurrently and in parallel for peace on the Peninsula, normalized US-DPRK relations, and denuclearization. Such a balanced approach not only makes sense on its merits. It could also be reassuring to Kim Jong-un that the new administration is not disregarding what he had done, and it could help give President Biden’s North Korea policy by giving it some political cover with Republicans.

An initial step in this step-by-step process might be to turn North Korea’s current de facto moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests into a formal limitation. This would constrain the DPRK’s ability to produce smaller and more efficient nuclear weapons and to improve the reliability and accuracy of its ballistic missiles, including their ability to penetrate allied missile defenses with multiple warheads.

As a next step – and preferably as part of a larger initial step – the US and its allies should seek to ban North Korea’s production of fissile material and therefore cap its nuclear arsenal. This would require a verifiably shutting down of all facilities for the production of enriched uranium or plutonium throughout North Korea. Shutting down only the DPRK’s nuclear complex at Yongbyon, which Kim Jong-un offered to do at the Hanoi summit, in my opinion would not be enough. It would allow North Korea to continue producing fissile materials and expanding its arsenal at undeclared facilities outside Yongbyon. If, as might be expected, North Korea resists a nation-wide ban, such an interim deal might proceed in stages – starting with Yongbyon, later including a few suspect undeclared facilities, and eventually expanding nation-wide.

An interim agreement along these lines would commit the parties to continue negotiations toward the goal of complete denuclearization but it would not specify a deadline for achieving that goal. In exchange for such interim limits, North Korea would be offered incentives that fall within the Singapore categories of peace on the Peninsula and US-DPRK normalization. A reasonable package of incentives might include a declaration to end the Korean War; establishment of liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang; constraints on US-ROK joint military exercises consistent with allied readiness; a commitment not to pursue new US or UN sanctions; humanitarian assistance; and a relaxation of some existing US and UN sanctions, including exceptions that would permit certain inter-Korean projects to proceed. Such an interim deal would not be as demanding of the North as early and complete denuclearization. But negotiating an interim deal would not be easy.

Sanctions pressure would be necessary, despite current Chinese and Russian acquiescence in DPRK sanctions evasion. And despite the increasingly adversarial state of US-China relations, Beijing would have to be persuaded to lean heavily on the North to accept a reasonable deal. But in the end, North Korea may simply not be willing to accept meaningful and verifiable agreement on its nuclear and missile programs. In that case, the Biden administration should be prepared to walk away from the negotiating table and to work with its allies on a long-term strategy of pressure, deterrence, and containment. And having made a reasonable proposal – one that could command the support of key countries like China but was rejected by the DPRK – the US and its allies would be in a stronger position to sustain and build international support

for such a long-term strategy. Thank you, Ambassador Park. I'll leave it there.

PARK In-Kook

Okay, thank you Bob. Everybody is observing the new Biden President will return to the conventional diplomacy. In a sense, generally speaking, he might follow his Democratic President predecessors by taking Strategic Patience 2.0. So, in that case, he might be faced by natural questions. What's different between Obama's Strategic Patience and Biden's Strategic Patience? So that is some question to be answered during the second round possibly.

Now you mentioned the Chinese involvement and help is invaluable to achieve the goal of denuclearization from the US side. In that sense, recently, President-elect Biden mentioned in Foreign Policy, I quote "jump-start a sustained and coordinated campaign with our allies and others, including China." So, I wonder if this kind of thing implies he is coming up with some new formula or framework in dealing with North Korea? For example, having some new four-party talks or returning to six-party talks, which already rejected by North Korea 10 years ago, but anyway, I call it reinforced six-party talks or four party-talks. What is your idea, based on your almost 30 years' experience in dealing with North Korea during the last 30 years?

Our next speaker will be Mr. Bruce Bennett. He is called a walking dictionary on any topic related to the USFK and defense system. I know he has visited Korea more than 100 times to monitor US military joint exercises. So now, I'd like to listen to your invaluable advice. Okay, Bruce, you have the floor.

Bruce BENNETT

Thank you, Ambassador. I need to have screen-sharing if I'm going to show my slides. I've not been allowed to do that by your people. Sorry for that. We should have tested that before but...well, welcome to everyone! I'm going to talk about the situation with President-elect Biden and Kim Jong-un.

I think we have to start recognizing that for the United States, North Korea's nuclear weapons are not yet an existential threat but they possibly are for South Korea. With the number of weapons that Kim likely has available, with the sizes and capabilities thereof, South Korea likely is facing an existential threat. The United States may still be a few years from that. But any planner knows that if you want to get such a threat under control, the time to do it is sooner rather than later. (We have any chance on the slides yet? Looks like I may be able to...there we go. Alright, let me grab that and we'll share.)

So, let me talk about what we face then with North Korea. First thing to recognize is if you look at the North Korean six nuclear tests today and take adjusted estimates of the yield of those tests, those weapons could cause incredible damage in Seoul or New York City, for example. The numbers shown here are for fatalities and serious injuries. But the numbers at the bottom of the screen corresponding to North Korea's six nuclear tests are truly daunting and that leads me to the concept of an existential threat. How many nuclear weapons does North Korea have? We don't know. We can estimate how much fissile material they've made but even that is highly uncertain. Different numbers are projected based upon centrifuges one anticipates, another means of making nuclear weapons, but these charts show some alternatives. We could be facing a North Korea which already in 2020 has as many as a hundred nuclear weapons or at least the fissile material for that many. We just don't know for sure. But that's a lot of nuclear weapons and arguably well beyond what Kim Jong-un needs for deterrence purposes.

So, what about Kim? He offered to negotiate denuclearization. But I would argue that Kim has actually already committed to denuclearization in at least two occasions. First occasion, in his 2019 New Year's Address, Kim Jong-un said, "We will neither make and test nuclear weapons any longer or use and proliferate them." That wasn't to rid of all of them but he committed to a nuclear production freeze in his 2019 New Year's Address. That's what it means to not make them. More importantly, in the Panmunjom Declaration of April 2018, most people argue that that's pretty wishy-washy on denuclearization. The reality is, look at Article 1.1 that says, "North Korea and South Korea will implement all previous North-South agreements and declarations." And if you look at the 1992 Denuclearization Declaration, it's very clear. "North Korea shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons." That sounds

like it's committed already to denuclearization. That's good for President Biden. He does not have to force Kim or try to get Kim to commit to denuclearization because he has already done so. He hasn't with the US directly but he did with South Korea.

Now, we know that Kim hasn't kept his word from his 2019 New Year's Address. Many indications. US community, the International Atomic Energy Agency have said, not only is he producing nuclear weapons but he's increasing his capacity to do so. And if you took that list of things of the 1992 Denuclearization Declaration, he's violated almost every one of them and thus, he's violated the Panmunjom Declaration. In fact, he's not only not done what he committed to. He's done the opposite. He's built weapons, expanded the capability. And let's be clear, a poor country like North Korea with limited GDP is not going to be expanding nuclear weapon production if they anticipate to dismantle that production in the next couple of years.

So, what about the public reaction to this? Just a few months ago, the Korea Institute of National unification ran a poll in South Korea. 90% of South Korean citizens who responded said North Korea will not fully denuclearize. That doesn't mean we can't get partial denuclearization as several of my colleagues have said We want that but we're probably not going to zero anytime soon.

So, what do we do then? How do we get Kim Jong-un to even partially denuclearize? Well, President Moon seems to believe that if the US and South Korea just give North Korea a little bit more, like an end-or-war agreement, the North will be more responsive and be prepared to start the denuclearization process. I'm afraid something like that which is uncompensated in return, the standard US response is likely to become what Secretary of Defense at that time ten years ago Gates said, "I'm tired of buying the same horse twice."

North Korea has committed to denuclearizing in 1992 many times since and it hasn't happened. So, what do we need? We need to get an agreement which involves North Korea doing some form of denuclearization. And I agree with my colleagues. I would start early with a production freeze of its nuclear weapons. If we're going to get further American actions to assist North Korea. So, what do we need to be thinking about? If we at this stage gave North Korea an end-or-war agreement, arguably we would be buying the same horse for the third or fourth time. I

think if you look at the balance sheet of where we stand with North Korea, the US has given North Korea a fair amount during the Trump administration. In contrast, North Korea has tended to the opposite of what the US was interested in having happen. So, I think at this stage, we're also concerned about whether or not Kim Jong-un will commit a provocation in the coming weeks. He's going to be concerned, as everybody said. President Biden is going to be heavily involved in other issues and Kim generally doesn't like it when he's not paid attention to. And when he's not offered concessions, we don't know he will do a provocation, but the chances are there. And we should be hedging against that.

How do we do that? I would offer that doing some kind of contingent offer to Kim Jong-un may be a way of helping that. I think we should consider, for example, humanitarian support in terms of medical supplies. Kim Jong-un has shown incredible concern about COVID. With treatments and vaccines we could offer North Korea, if he does not provocation in the last six months, he could get a monthly shipment of these things. But if he does a provocation, then his shipments would be suspended for six months. Which is to say, President-elect Biden can't start shipments today. He can't do that until he's President. But he can tell Kim, you do a provocation between now and the inauguration or soon thereafter, and you're going to limit what I'm going to be able to send you. This is a contingent offer. If you don't do a provocation for six months, you get what I'm offering starting late January, early February. We're trying to preempt your concern that we're not paying attention. That we're prepared to work with you. And we are! In fact, Biden would be illustrating that he's not hostile towards North Korea. That he wants the North Koreans, especially elites who get likely much of this stake, to get better medical care. And that if the North Koreans don't get it, then that's going to be due to North Korean provocations. So, managing the transition to inauguration, I don't think that President-elect Biden should negotiate this kind of thing with Kim Jong-un. I think he should simply declare, "I'm offering this. You can take it or leave it. But it's on the table. I'm prepared to offer it." In other words, I'm saying a maximum pressure campaign in and of itself is not going to work. It's got to have a carrot and stick component. Kim has got to be able to go to his elites and claim victories in the negotiation process and he's got to recognize that if he doesn't come through, the consequences will be there for that failure.

So what kind of carrots could the US be offering North Korea? Well, the medical shipment certainly. We could offer to host North Korean officials to help them understand the US and we know that Kim Jong-nam wanted to go to Disneyland in Tokyo years ago. We could offer something similar in the US to selected officials. We could even offer it to North Korea to have some of their graduate students come to US colleges. Many of them would likely be from families of senior elites, which would be good people to have better understanding of the US. But if we're talking about the sticks as another indication, one of the things we forget about the actions being taken right now, are the sanctions. You can't just increase sanctions; you have to be prepared to enforce them. The United States could tell China we need to stop the ship-to-ship transfers, so we'd like you to start interdicting ships that are carrying coal to China, carrying oil back from China to North Korea and other goods, and we'll let you do that over the next couple of months, but if you don't, then we'll send a couple of destroyers up into the northern west sea to take care of it ourselves. The other kind of thing we should recognize that Kim Jong-un is very sensitive on is information operations. He really dislikes outside information and for whatever reason, we don't seem to use it. In fact, despite his heavy use of psychological operations, we don't respond and that is something we could threaten. We don't need to do the sticks if he's prepared to negotiate. We're prepared to work with carrots and do exchanges. But if we have to, there's the alternative. Thank you very much.

PARK In-kook

Thank you. Bruce, I'm sorry. You know, we couldn't enjoy your excellent PowerPoints, thanks to some miscommunication among us. We know that nobody wants to use PPTs. But next time, I'll provide another chance, I promise. It's kind of a little...It seems to be a little surprising for me to hear from you that you suggested some validity of carrots instead of the result only to...you know, maximum pressures. And then you also focused on the importance of our concerted effort to elicit some agreement with North Korea. But at the same time, I'd like to point out...if we look back last 30 years in our negotiation with North Korea, we made wonderful agreement, including Geneva Agreement in 1994. In 1992, we have some wonderful unprecedented historical joint declaration of South-North Korea denuclearization. Also, you

know the 2005 six-party talks in a joint statement, which has been classified as a monumental achievement in our negotiation history. And also, almost agreement in the name of leap-day agreement. But the problem is the implementation. So, there is another sour lesson, which we learned from our 30 years of negotiation with North Korea. How we could implement even though we reached an agreement. So that is another question to all of us.

Anyway, I really appreciate your very detailed suggestion utilizing the medical shipment with US-Korea coalition format. Then at the same time, many people have some questions on the problem of the postponed joint military exercises. Some people say that it doesn't matter at all. Some people say without joint exercise, the existence of the USFK itself is meaningless. If you have some...I would highly appreciate if you share your idea as an expert on that issue during the second round of presentation. Our next speaker will be Mr. Scott Snyder. He's working as a senior fellow for Korea Studies and director of program on US-Korea Policy at the CFR, which stands for Council on Foreign Relations. He's a well-known pioneer in solidifying the concept of Korean Desk in the American think tank landscape and he's doing very well. So, I'm very delighted to have Scott. Scott, you have the floor.

Scott SNYDER

Thank you so much, Ambassador Park, for inviting me and the Chey Institute for sponsoring. I am aware that I am the fifth speaker. I'm not a cleanup hitter. I think there have already been several home runs that have been hit by other panelists. What I'm actually finding is also that I'm a little bit more pessimistic than some of the other panelists about what may unfold under the Biden Administration with North Korea. This meeting also reminds me of four years ago being invited to Seoul to predict what the Trump Administration was going to do toward North Korea. I can assure you that I got it wrong and also I have to say it was a very difficult situation because if you're analyzing the Trump Administration, you're either analyzing Trump's gut or trying to get into his head. But now we are back in a conventional situation where there's more to go on. So, what I really want to do is to talk about what do the North Koreans see in what the Biden campaign has laid out so far and how are they likely to respond. And I see 4 D's as

the major framework that the Biden campaign has laid out and with regard to North Korea, 4 D's is trying to get to the fifth D, denuclearization. So, the 4 D's are domestic affairs focus and emphasis...that's already been discussed to some degree...emphasis on democratic values, emphasis on deterrence, and an emphasis on multilateral diplomacy – all designed to get to denuclearization.

So, as we look at the 4 D's, what is North Korea maybe seeing. The domestic focus means that North Korea is likely to drop as a policy priority under the Biden Administration, compared to the relative high position that North Korea enjoyed under the Trump Administration. So, that raises the question: will North Korea wait and can North Korea afford to wait. And that's the reason I think like so many people are focused on the possibility of provocation.

But also, I think that North Korea is going to see the second D, democratic values, as an issue that drives North Korea and the United States further apart, compared to the Trump Administration because the Biden Administration is likely to appoint a human rights envoy and is likely to talk about shared values, including in its outreach to allies. So, the chasm between the US and North Korean systems will feel, I think from Pyongyang's perspective, like it is enlarging.

And then the third D is deterrence and I think that we've already seen people close to the Biden Administration talking about the importance of shoring up deterrence vis-à-vis both China and North Korea. I actually think that North Korea should welcome an emphasis on deterrence as a move that would enhance military stability while actually implying acceptance of its de facto capabilities, but that sort of stability would not go very far toward reducing mutual mistrust or remove risks of conflict.

And then diplomacy. Biden campaign has talked a little bit more about multilateralism, but I don't think that North Korea wants to go back to multilateralism. I think that they would see that as an effort to gang up and put pressure on North Korea. Although bilateral diplomacy is not excluded, it's conditional upon a return to the denuclearization pathway. And unless the North Korean issue can be compartmentalized as part of the China-US relationship, I don't think the multilateral diplomatic path is going to move forward and I believe that North Korea

also is going to resist coming to negotiations with the stated focus of denuclearization.

There have been several of the prior presenters who have already laid out particular pathways for what we can do, if we get to the table. But what I worry about is that North Korea, I think, has been focusing since the beginning of 2020 on winning de facto acceptance as an entrenched nuclear weapons state. And it refers to a position that demands the removal of the American hostile policy but that hasn't been defined. So, North Korea is casting the doubt on the ability and willingness of the US government to remove this policy, suggesting that that policy is unchangeable. And we haven't seen talks. We've already seen stalemates basically in negotiations. And I believe that unless North Korea uses its eighth party congress in January in order to generate some space that opens the way for a negotiation pathway that we are going to see more stalemate between Washington and Pyongyang. And really, I think Kim Jong-un's objective is really that the United States should accept North Korea precisely as it is, as a nuclear dictatorship, not as we wish it should be.

So, I think that both focusing on denuclearization and focusing on human rights as some have suggested as part of a pathway to normalization is simply not going to get off the ground. So, my bottom line is that the Biden Administration may learn the difficulty of multilateralism in terms of managing to compartmentalize North Korea as an issue in the US-China relationship. And also, that in the context of bilateralism, if North Korea takes a position of no negotiation without legitimation, then it's going to be very hard to even get back to the table. So, I worry that the North Koreans are looking for a way to achieve some form of recognition of its current status as the precondition for actually getting back to negotiations and I'm not sure that Biden Administration would be ready to pursue that pathway.

PARK In-kook

Thank you. Now we finish our first round of presentations by distinguished five excellent speakers. I raised some questions, but during the discussion, you could get some intrinsic or very natural questions during our debate. I'll give some another five minutes additionally. But

one of my...if I'm allowed to raise 2-3 questions, first thing is – if Kim Jong-un tries to provoke as their predecessors did in the past, when, and what kind of thing might be possible. If we look back at the past record, in the case of trump administration, there was a missile provocation within 23 days of inauguration and nuclear test 10 months after election. In Obama case, within 35 days of inauguration there was a missile provocation and 6 months after election, nuclear test in case of Obama presidency, and second re-election case, 3 months after. Then, there might be...another possibility might be another nuclear test or promotion of solid fuel missiles or re-entry technology, the SLBM, and MIRV system. So, maybe if you could make any...we hope it should not be done with some great initiative by new administration but in case what kind of presumption might be possible.

Also, President-elect Biden promised to engage in 'principled diplomacy.' So, maybe many observers suspect that that kind of slogan may include handling North Korean human rights issues. So, in that case, what kind of issue could be raised. Especially you (Joe Yun) have some insights because you yourself escorted Warmbier when you take him out of North Korea and the impact on general landscape of human rights areas in the United States. I have to make full stop here. So, I will give it...but you don't have to limit your answer to my questions. You can select any issues you'd like.

Joseph YUN

Thank you very much. Let me kind of try to get my takeaway from the panelists and they have made some really excellent points. So, #1, Scott's point is – get to the table. And that kind of comes to your question of how do we...what do we do if there is provocation. So, I think it's very important to get to the table. And being the diplomat, to me, I look at that as the initial challenge. And then the point that Gary and Bob made is that OK, they're not going to denuclearize quickly, soon, maybe never, but let's hope the interim deals that will get their revenge – I think that's the other event. Don't think of it as a big bang; just get everything done at once and I think also it was Bob that made the point is this got to be a long-term project. It cannot be a short-term project. I really hope that if the only thing that President Biden does is

set up a process that will carry this issue from one administration to another as a long-term process, I think we'll have done well. The last point, I think, a couple of...especially Gary and Bob made...and then Scott...the multilateral diplomacy. Quite honestly, I do not think the US can denuclearize North Korea alone. That's been shown last 20 years. Maybe in 1994, we could have done it during a great framework, but we're not in 1994. We're in 2020. So, we need at minimum full support from China, and of course full support from South Korea. You mentioned earlier four party talk. I'd like very much like to see both China and South Korea have complete equality as North Korea and the US in these negotiations. Bruce mentioned bringing in china and South Korea will give us bigger carrots and bigger sticks. So, let me end there.

PARK In-kook

Gary?

Gary SAMORE

Thanks, Amb. Park. Let me begin. I agree with Bob and Scott that North Korea is not going to be a top priority for the Biden Administration. Obviously, he'll be focused in the first instance on domestic issues, curing the pandemic, reviving the US economy, social justice, and even in foreign policy, there are other issues that will be more important. The danger, though, for the Biden Administration is that if they don't try to forestall a provocation, if they ignore North Korea, if they take too long before they reach out, North Korea will force themselves on the Biden agenda, which would be a distraction from the other issues they want to work on. If North Korea conducts a provocation whether it's a nuclear test or another long-range missile test, the US will be forced to deal with that through additional sanctions. So, I was trying to suggest some measures the US might take in order to prevent North Korea from conducting a provocation early on in the Biden Administration and at least starting a diplomatic process.

As both Scott and Robert and Bruce said, there's no guarantee these negotiations will be

successful. I mean the one big lesson from the Trump Administration is that the top-down diplomacy didn't work any better than bottom-up. But at the end of the day North Korea was not willing to negotiate and implement an agreement to significantly limit or give up their nuclear weapons program. And we might very well be faced with an intractable problem that can't be solved. But I think from the Biden administration's standpoint, trying early on to prevent another round of testing is worth devoting some energy.

And just to comment on the technical you asked, Amb. Park, North Korea has a menu of things they can do. I would think that demonstrating a longer-range missile capability, whether it's liquid or solid fuel, or re-entry vehicle, would be a very attractive option for them both because it has a lot of technical value; they haven't been able to successfully test a re-entry vehicle yet; and it would also have some important political value because it's a direct threat to the United States. So, it's something Biden can't ignore unlike tests that don't directly threaten the US territory. So, of course we don't know what Kim Jong-un will do. I think January Party Congress speech will be an important indication and I hope the US and other countries try to get the message to North Korea that if they conduct tests it will be self-defeating; it will lead to new sanctions and forego opportunities for some of the kind of inducements that Bruce talked about. Thank you.

PARK In-kook

Thank you, Gary. Next, Bob, do you hear me?

Robert EINHORN

Yeah, I do. You asked about what we should do if North Korea proceeds with some kind of provocation. Unfortunately, I don't think our options are very good for our response. In 2017, after the provocations of 2016-2017, the world was quite outraged by North Korean provocations by the thermonuclear tests, by the ICBM range tests. The world was prepared to

go along with the US lead, imposing the strictest yet UN Security Council sanctions. But I think much has changed since then. Now, you have sanctions fatigue. You have Russia and China complicit and North Korean efforts to evade sanctions. I think it would take pretty robust provocation for the United States to rally support beyond behind strong sanctions. It would take a nuclear test or a succession of nuclear tests, I think.

So, I think the best approach is not to have to respond to a provocation but to try to head it off. And Bruce has some very good ideas. Others have talked about making early on some statements positive statements promising a readiness to engage as a way of incentivizing North Korea not to do anything that would upset the apple card and make negotiations possible. But one thing I think we need to do, we need to engage China on this. China – and this goes to your broader question, Amb. Park about the role of China – I think China does have a strong incentive. With China and the US have different views on the denuclearization vs. instability. Clearly the Chinese place higher value on stabilizing the Korean Peninsula and avoiding instability than denuclearization. But I think there would be support for avoiding a major...a return to fire and fury of the 2017 days by China. It's a difficult time to engage with China. You know, in the days of the six party talks, China was essentially a US partner in engaging North Korea. That's completely changed. China and the US are opposite sides of this problem. Xi Jinping has decided to re-embrace North Korea as a strategic partner. So, it's going to be hard to get China on our side again. But again, I think China doesn't want instability, it doesn't want US-DPRK confrontation. And I think we need to do whatever we can to reach out to China before a provocation. And if we can engage somehow in negotiations, we got to get China on board.

I think to get China on board, it requires at least two things. One is to have a reasonable US negotiating position. The Chinese have no confidence that the Trump Administration approach, the Libya model, will ever succeed. And if we had the kind of reasonable approach that a number of us have discussed at this meeting, I think we're more likely to get China on board. And the second thing is not to overuse the sanctions tool. I think the Chinese believe we've overused that tool. We've threatened Chinese entities with sanctions. Sanctions are having diminishing returns at this point. So, I think we need to refrain from overuse of sanctions. We

need to go to the Chinese early on after agreeing with the South Koreans and the Japanese on an approach. We need to go to China, lay out our cards, what we're prepared to do, and make a strong effort to get them on board. It's the only way that we can have a small chance of a successful outcome on North Korea. And I agree with Scott and Gary; I tend to be pessimistic about our opportunities here but I think we have no choice. The Biden Administration has no choice, but to make a serious diplomatic effort.

PARK In-kook

Thank you. Bruce?

Bruce BENNETT

Thank you. I think we have to remember that while President Biden is going to have his arms full, he's also going to have people working for him; Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State. They're also going to have their arms full, but they and others who could be appointed under them promptly could wind up in a position where they could pay more attention to North Korea. So, I think we've got to hope that the President-elect can make early choices of those positions, that those people recognize the importance and that we get some very capable people who are rapidly preparing to take an action. I think Kim Jong-un is going to watch us. Are we putting people in place that could make a difference? He's probably going to care about who those people are, and he's going to want to see if there's a chance that reasonable diplomatic situations develop. That said, I think we can make that. I think President-elect can make that happen. It will be difficult. It will be challenging with time required. But appointments like the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State are appointments which are required in any case.

On the implementation issue that Amb. Park raised – absolutely, our problem is implementation. As I argued, I believe that in the Panmunjom agreement, Kim Jong-un decided that he was prepared to accept the 1992 Denuclearization Agreement. That's what he said; to fully

implement everything in the past. But there's been no implementation of that. I think the United States needs to start paying attention to not only what we are thinking about, but what the people in North Korea think about. We need to tell the North Koreans that Kim Jong-un agreed to implement the denuclearization agreement. We need to be prepared to explain what that means. And then we need to prepare to lay out for him where we think we need to go in that regard. Will that succeed? Maybe not. It's a very difficult proposition. In my view, I don't think Kim Jong-un has any intention of even significantly slowing the production of nuclear weapons. I look back to the 1980s when he was starting to produce two brand new nuclear plants that had the capacity for 50 nuclear weapons of production a year of fissile materials, which means in 10 years, he'd have 500 nuclear weapons. And I have to say he's not moving that fast but if that was what grandfather thought, he's probably not thinking about 30 or 40 or 50 nuclear weapons.

So, I think the whole implementation issue is clear that it's a challenge. How do we proceed? I think we need to lay out what we hope to be the expectations. But I think at the same time, we need to tell him what the trades are. The trade in Hanoi that he proposed was a trade which from the US side would have been a disaster. I think for President Trump, if he had made that agreement to give Kim Jong-un what he asked for, major sanctions relief in exchange for only Yongbyon – well, according to at least the literature I've read, Yongbyon was only about 20 percent of North Korean highly enriched uranium production capability. I think that would have had real problems for the president when he came back to the United States. So, I think we need to be prepared to lay out what reasonable trades are, what we're prepared to do, and lay out a whole Chinese menu potentially of what's possible in exchange for what else.

In that regard, I would have to say Kim Jong-un wants a peace agreement and an end of war agreement, you name it. Well, let me ask. Who is more hostile toward the other: North Korea towards the US or the US towards North Korea? Do we train our children in schools to bayonet North Korean soldiers? I hate to say it but the more hostile party is North Korea. If we are going to have a peace agreement, let's not just get a peace agreement for the 1950-1953 war. Let's get a peace agreement to the 1953-present cold war that North Korea has been waging. Yes, North Korea needs a scapegoat for all of the problems they wind up with. But if they want

a peace agreement with the US, then it seems to me they need to be prepared to agree that they will stop their indoctrination that the US is the eternal enemy of their people. If they don't stop that, what kind of peace is it? And I'll stop there.

PARK In-kook

Thank you. Scott?

Scott SNYDER

Yeah, I'm just going to address three points. The first is about multilateral diplomacy. I actually think I agree with Bob and Joe that multilateral approach is necessary. I'm just not sure whether it's possible. And the reason why I am skeptical is because we've been working to try to compartmentalize the North Korean issue. In the US-China relationship since 2013, with Xi and Obama at Sunnylands but the broader strategic context for trying to pursue that compartmentalization has only deteriorated over the course of the past 7 years. So, actually we need a multilateral agreement about North Korea before we engage in negotiations with North Korea in order to actually be able to successfully address and contain the North Korean nuclear challenge.

I also want to address the issues related to South Korea's role and I just want to make two points here. I think that the gap between Biden Administration and Moon administration on North Korea is clear. I much prefer South Korean persuasion efforts to try to get us to raise the priority of North Korea on the Biden agenda to the North Korean provocative approach. But also the anxiety I think from the Moon administration about what Biden is going to do is pretty palpable at this point. I think there are two issues related to that. One, I think, that Moon and Biden administrations are going to have to figure out how to combine Moon's peace approach to an approach that tries to shore up deterrence in a much more integrated fashion. And two, I think, that Moon himself has a kind of what I call a DJ problem, in that he's in the same

situation that DJ was but kind of in reverse with the transition in 2000; it was from a democratic administration to a republican administration. This time, it's from a republican administration to a democratic administration. But he has been working at this and he wants to convince the new person that his approach is right. And we saw that that effort by DJ did not work very well. So, I'm simply focusing on the fact that chemistry between Biden and Moon is going to be really critical and complicated. In a way, this is the once in a generation moment where you have the two democratic administrations together. And by all intents and purposes, that ought to open up new possibilities but on this issue of North Korea, I worry that it's actually going to expose gaps.

PARK In-kook

Thank you. As I explained at the outset, we received more than 100 questions through YouTube system. Give the time constraint, I just selected three. So, the first question is that, this month, *Washington Post* reported that North Korea is thought to have 40 to 60 nuclear weapons. What number of nuclear weapons does North Korea believe it needs to secure a second strike capability to prevent US intervention on the Korean peninsula? The second question is that, ROK-US joint military exercise has been scaled down recently, which will definitely impact our military readiness. How should the Biden administration and our government collaborate to enhance readiness into our probability and deterrence? The last question might be how likely is the three-way cooperation between the US, Japan, and Korea under the Biden Administration? Can I ask the reversed way? Scott, are you ready?

Scott SNYDER

So, I think that the real risk related to North Korea's calculation on nuclear weapons and second strike is related to non-proliferation because the real concern is when North Korea reaches n plus one, it has something that it might be willing to sell. I actually believe I'll just go to the third question and leave the others. But on trilateralism, my observation is that both the

governments of Japan and South Korea, I think, are expecting the Biden administration to shore up its approach on trilateralism and I think there's already public evidence of efforts to at least stabilize the bilateral relationship in anticipation of a more active approach by the Biden Administration, so that's the single early positive effects that – the first positive effect that I see of a restoration to a conventional approach. Thank you.

PARK In-kook

OK, Bruce?

Bruce BENNETT

I would have to argue, so I'll take on the first the scaled-down exercises. I should have addressed them before. President Trump agreed to scale down US exercises. He should have insisted that North Korea scale down their own exercises. Let's do things in parallel. Let's get a balanced agreement in the future. If North Korea wants to see fewer exercises, demonstrate that with its own performance. I think it's important that we have the exercises in USFK and with the ROK forces. That's especially true with the ROK army becoming so much smaller in the next few years. You know, it used to be 560,000 active duty personnel, it's now down around 420,000. My best estimate is that when we get to 2026 or so, it's going to be down around 295,000. That is really a small army for the purposes of deterrence in South Korea and all other things it could be called upon to do. That is going to take some real exercise and training to make sure that the quality of those forces is high enough.

And let me finalize with the number of nuclear weapons. Again, we don't know how many nuclear weapons North Korea has, but it is cranking them out every year and expanding that capability according to multiple sources. So, it appears to be heading towards the 100, 150 kind of frame. That sounds like it has to do with a whole lot more than deterrence. Is it eventually potentially for use coercively? And given that Xi Jinping has on several occasions mentioned

that he was not going to allow war or chaos on the peninsula suggesting that he would potentially intervene and has talked about actually intervening in some ways. I think we have to ask, is North Korea recognizing Kim Jong-il's statement to Kim Jong-un in his final instructions saying China's been our historical adversary? Is North Korea preparing against China?

PARK In-kook

OK. Bob?

Robert EINHORN

On the question about the numbers – I think the North Koreans are doing everything possible to ensure that they will have a secure retaliatory capability. They don't want to be the victim of a preemptive US strike. You know, one aspect of that is numbers. But another aspect, perhaps a more important aspect, is in kind of basic modes and so forth. I mean, they're going for mobile ICBM capability. They're going for submarine-launched systems. I think they paraded a new sea-launched ballistic missile on October 10th. And their large payload ICBM, the monster ICBM, they revealed – I think that's designed to carry perhaps multiple warheads and penetration aids, decoys and so forth designed to penetrate the US missile defenses. So, I think they're going at achieving a secure retaliatory capability in a number of ways.

On joint military exercises, this is a tricky early decision for the Biden administration. If their key objective is to reinforce deterrence, to restore the credibility of the US security commitments, then they would want to restore the joint military exercises to their former level and not to scale them back as Trump did. But on the other hand, if one of their objectives is to head off early DPRK provocations, a nuclear test, long-range missile tests, one way to do that would be to ensure that we're going to keep in place Trump scaling back. So, I think it's going to be a hard, early decision for the Biden administration.

PARK In-kook

OK, thank you. Gary?

Gary SAMORE

On the number of nuclear weapons – as Bob said, it’s not just the numbers to have a survivable deterrent. You have to have delivery systems that can survive a preemptive attack and could penetrate US missile defense. So, from the North Korean standpoint, they need to develop mobile land-based systems, sea-based systems, and systems that have MIRVs or other penetration aids and they seem to be slowly moving in that direction given their limits on resources.

On the question of exercises, I didn’t like the agreement that Trump made in Singapore to scale back US-ROK exercises and to link it to the test moratorium. But whether we like it or not, that’s the understanding that’s in place. And as Bob said, if the Biden administration moves to restore those exercises, then it’s an invitation to Kim Jong-un to resume testing. I think it’s far better to wait and if Kim Jong-un resumes testing, then I think we can resume the exercises without any difficulty.

And on the final question, I agree with Scott that one hallmark of the Biden administration will be to treat allies better than President Trump did. And part of that will be to try to patch up as much as the US can relations between Seoul and Tokyo to be more active than the Trump administration.

Joseph YUN

Thank you very much. Let me focus my response on the third one, which is the trilateral relationship – US, Japan, and ROK. I mean obviously Scott and Gary are completely right.

This will be a huge priority for the Biden administration to improve trilateral coordination, but more than that improve Japan-ROK relationship, which is probably the worst since I've been a diplomat for 33 years. It's been the worst. And they will put a lot of effort on it. But looking from the other side, my experience is that, if Japan and ROK agree on something and then approach Washington, almost always that proposal will succeed. So, really the key to managing Washington from my point of view, what works best is Tokyo and Seoul pre-cook something and bring it to Washington whether it's security issue, economic issue, foreign policy issue. So, I think this gives Seoul and Tokyo really something to work on and we've seen that recently. Your NIS chief went to Japan and I think his central message is let's work together on Biden administration, obviously as well as everyone else. So, I'm very hopeful ROK-Japan relationship will be better as a result of Biden being elected. Thank you.

PARK In-kook

Thank you. Thanks so much. We enjoyed 1.5 hour of intense discussion on the situation where we are located and what should be resolved in the future as the pending issues. Especially in the early stage of inauguration of the next president. I'd like to pick up four words. One is sanction. And role of china. And possible four party talks. And the role of new suggestion in the name of carrots and sticks. As Bob eloquently mentioned, there was some abuse of UNSC resolution against North Korea. At the same time, there are some areas where we need more reinforced implementation of the sanctions system. At the end of the discussion on the role of sanction, we're faced with role of China. That is the reality. It's quite different reality in comparison with 1994 when we reached the agreement in the form of Geneva Agreement Framework. That is the reinforced role of China. That's the key homework for the new Biden administration; how they could exercise the subtlety of the diplomacy while they are still using confrontation with China. At the same time, they have to increase the interface to provide enough global public goods, including climate change, nonproliferation. That's really north Korean nuclear issue is closely linked with us-china confrontation. That's the key homework...burden on the shoulder of President-elect Biden. It's our task to provide good ammunition or ideas for some way out. In that sense, to provide carrots and sticks – that entails

very consolidated and very closely interwoven network between bureaucrats especially in Washington and Seoul. In that sense, I'd like to encourage much more reinforced coordination between Korean governments and new Biden government. So again, as I told you, I'll try to have another second-round opportunity for Bruce Bennett to present his beautiful PPTs. Thank you for your patience and listening to our invaluable talks. I really appreciate great participation from my friends from the United States.

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