

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
CENTER FOR NORTHEAST ASIAN POLICY STUDIES
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**TENSIONS ON THE PENINSULA: KOREA, NORTHEAST
ASIA, AND THE UNITED STATES**

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INTRODUCTION BY:
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OPENING REMARKS:
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Transcript by:
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RICHARD BUSH: (In progress) – started. There are other people scheduled to come in, but we – I think we should get going. We have a full program this morning. I'd like to thank you all for coming to this symposium on "Tensions on the Peninsula: Korea, Northeast Asia, and the United States."

I wish I could honestly tell you that three months ago we looked into the Brookings crystal ball and figured out that this would be the week that Jim Kelly would sit down with the North Koreans, but I can't say that. We're good here at Brookings; but we're not that good. Mike O'Hanlon is about that good, but the rest of us are not.

But we will shamelessly exploit this occasion, and seriously, I think that the talks in Beijing are a very important start to a process. This remains a delicate and dangerous situation, and we're pleased to have the opportunity to shed some light on it this morning.

Before I go any further, I'd like to, first of all, advertise a new publication of the Center for Northeast Asia Policy Studies, "A Northeast Asia Survey," and there are copies outside. I would like to thank some people who made this event possible; first of all, my staff – my deputy, Sharon Yanagi; our center administrator, Kevin Scott; and our interns, Daphne, Caroline, Nori and Sonia. We have an excellent staff here at Brookings for putting on events, and I'd like to thank them as well, and I would also like to thank our president, Strobe Talbott, for the strong support he's given to the center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies, and I would like to ask him to make a couple of opening remarks.

STROBE TALBOTT: Thank you, Richard. Thanks, all, to you for coming out this morning to be part of this conference.

Being supportive of CNAPS is one of the easier things that comes with my job. I quickly discovered on arriving here about a year ago that this program is really one of the jewels in the crown of Brookings, and I think it's a credit to the program, to the legacy, to Richard's leadership of it that so many CNAPS fellows – past, present and future – would be here this morning, including at least one, and maybe -- during the course of the day -- two who will be part of this program starting in the fall.

As I look out across this room, I can see all kinds of friends and colleagues from many incarnations of many of us over the years. I won't single out any of them except one, which is this guy sitting down here in the front row in – (unintelligible) – seat, but he'll be along to throw you out of it shortly, Don. The reason I want to mention Don Oberdorfer is because about two-and-a-half weeks ago, there was a rather funny scene that you, I think, would have particularly appreciated, Don, in a cabin fairly far to the front of a Korean Airlines 747 that was making its way from Dulles non-stop to Seoul. Jim and Richard and I went to Seoul for a couple of days of meetings connected, among other things, with CNAPS, and there was also a trilateral commission meeting in Seoul at that time. And in this rather empty plane, up in the near front, there were no less than four people reading Don's book on Korea – *The Two Koreas*. (Laughter.) Jessica Einhorn, who of course is the dean of SAIS, just down the street; somebody named Don

Graham – I seem to have some memory of him associated with you over the years; and then of course Richard and myself. And it could not have been a better preparation for the trip.

As Richard has said, the timing of this conference could not possibly be better. Now Richard is actually mistaken about one thing: three months ago, Mike O’Hanlon did know exactly what was going to be happening now in Beijing; he just – because he’s such a busy guy, forgot to tell Jim and Richard and me about it. But in any event, his crystal ball is excellent, as I’m sure will be apparent in just a couple of minutes.

In addition, of course, to the trilateral talks that are underway in Beijing, Jim and Richard and I, from our visit to Seoul and Tokyo – where, by the way, among other things, we met with CNAPS alumni groups. It was one of the real high points of the trip. We heard a great deal about the topic that is going to be discussed during the course of the day. The peace on the Korean peninsula, the prospect for conflict on the Korean peninsula was very much Topic A, both in Seoul and in Tokyo. Topic A prime was U.S. policy, both now and in the future, toward the DPRK, and the implications of what is happening between the United States and the DPRK with regard to the U.S.’s bilateral relationships, not only with the Republic of Korea, but also with the other CNAPS countries, which is to say China, Russia and Japan.

I think one of the themes that was in the background of the meetings that Jim and Richard and I had in Seoul and Tokyo will probably be in the background and maybe even in the foreground of this set of meetings today, and that is the United States’ role in the world, particularly in the light of what some of Jim Steinberg’s colleagues in Foreign Policy Studies here at Brookings are already calling the Bush revolution in American foreign policy. I don’t think there’s any doubt that once one lifts one’s eyes beyond the greater Middle East, the real proving ground for what’s next in the Bush revolution in foreign policy is in fact going to be on the Korean Peninsula.

I look forward – and I’m sure all of you do – to a very good discussion. By the way, Jim, who is going to be moderating the discussion, has returned from yet another foreign trip, even since we got back from Asia, so he may drift off this evening, but I’m sure he’s very alert this morning, and I see that the topic of the first session that we’re going to have this morning that Jim is going to be leading is Pyongyang’s perspective on the Korean Peninsula, and I have many reasons to want to stay around for the discussion, not least because I want to see which of the panelists is going to speak for the DPRK regime.

But thank you all for being here, and Jim, I turn the program over to you.

(End of remarks.)