清华–布鲁金斯公共政策研究中心

BROOKINGS-TSINGHUA CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

NORTH KOREA THROUGH CHINESE EYES

Beijing

Tuesday, April 23, 2013

中国北京 清华大学 公共管理学院 100084
电话：+86-10-6279-7363　传真：+86-10-6279-7659　电邮：brookings@tsinghua.edu.cn
http://www.brookings.edu/about/centers/brookings-tsinghua

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction:

MENG BO
Associate Director
Brookings-Tsinghua Center

Keynote Speaker:

JONATHAN POLLACK
Senior Fellow and Director
John Thornton China Center The Brookings Institution

Commentator:

WANG DONG
Professor of International Relations
Peking University

* * * * *

PROCEEDINGS

Introduction

Meng Bo: Dear students, professors, honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen, Good afternoon. My name is Meng Bo, assistant dean for the school and associate director of the Brookings-Tsinghua Center for Public Policy. On behalf of the Center director, Prof. Wang Feng and our Dean, Prof. Xue Lan, who are travelling today, please allow me to welcome all of you to today's forum. And our special welcome goes to ambassadors and diplomats who are with us today. We are honored to have you attend this event.

Topic of this forum is about North Korea, which draws lots of attention from the international community since the beginning of the year. As we know, the situation in Korean peninsula has been one of the focal points of security in the world, and the intensity and speculation of potential conflicts have dramatically increased since February this year, with underground nuclear test, military exercise, and various announcements and declarations from all sides. I believe all of us have many question marks in our mind. What triggered North Korea's action? Where the peninsula situation would be heading to? How North Korea's future could affect Northeast Asia and US-China relations?

Today, we are honored to have two distinguished guests, whose expertise will definitely help us better understand all the questions above, and they are, Dr. Jonathan Pollack, Senior Fellow and Director of the John Thornton China Center from the Brookings Institution, and Dr. Wang Dong, Professor of International Relations from Peking University.

I apologize that we invited Professor Yang Xiyu, senior research fellow from the Chinese Institute of International Studies, to be the other commentator, however, during the weekend, we heard he was ill in hospital and could not come to our event. We are sorry to miss Prof. Yang this time, and wish he will recover soon.

Now we would invite Dr. Pollack to give a talk for about 30 minutes, followed by comments from Professor Wang. After the talk, they will answer your questions.

Now would you please join me and welcome Dr. Jonathan Pollack.

Keynote Speech

Jonathan Pollack: Meng Bo, thank you very much for the warm introduction. I am delighted to be here today to talk about a topic that is very much on people's minds, but many would argue we don't understand all that well. How do we explain North Korea and its conduct, and more importantly, how is it viewed by China as well as by others? And what specifically might has China sought to do to eliminate the risk to its own interests on the Peninsula and beyond?

My own view of these questions is that all of them need to be seen through a historical lens. It's often argued we really don't know very much about North Korea, I would contest that. We know a great deal, if you know where to look and how to look, because there is, there I say a certain timeless quality to North Korea since it's kind of a unique state as I will elaborate on, and there is a complex history of China's involvement with North Korea, often not discussed very openly, but it is observable. There is more to the point, I think, a thirty-year transition that has been underway, sometimes gradually, sometimes not so gradually, sometimes with interruptions. But a thirty-year history of China's own strategic transition on the Korean Peninsula, and the effect that has been had on China's relations with the North and of course, with the South of Korea. That of course, coincides with North Korea's steady pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, which I would want to explore this afternoon. That leaves the Chinese leadership with some very very difficult questions that it grapples with, to the present day. North Korea, it seems to me, is a source of potential danger and instability, in Northeast Asia. Many of course will highlight what are seen as missed opportunities with North Korea or times things have started and not pursued further. My own view here is that it would not behoove any of us, any of the countries that are affected by North Korean behavior, to point fingers at one another. If we point fingers at one another, then North Korea comes out, in effect, able to withstand the careful scrutiny that I think its own behavior warrants. There is in effect, a collective failure, to deal with this issue. But it is a failure rooted not so much in absence of commitment to try to somehow find ways to diminish tensions and resolve disputes, but more as a function of the North Korean system and the leadership itself. And that is what I want to talk about to some extent today.

There is of course, an enormous legacy, it's a legacy that affects very directly the United States and China. Only a year after the founding of the People's Republic, China and the United States were at war on the Peninsula, and that has shaped so much of our subsequent directions. But in all of these, Korea and the DPRK have tried to find a way to stand apart, even at times when North Korea was closely linked to the Soviet Union and to China. The underlying directions, I believe, were ones that were to enhance, by whatever means to stand apart. It is of course, a dynastic system. North Korea has only had three leaders in its history, Kim Il-sung, the founding father of the state, from the establishment of the state in 1948, until his death in 1994, Kim Jong-Il, his son, from 1994, until his death in 2011, and since late 2011, his son, Kim Jong-un. This is a unique phenomenon in the history of Marxism–Leninism. It's a dynastic process. No Marxist–Leninist state has seen power pass from father to son, and then to another son, and yet that's the reality. North Korea is the only state ever to withdraw from the Nonproliferation Treaty. It is the only state in the world today that tests nuclear weapons, that is avowedly pursing missile development in order to deliver nuclear weapons, and all of these, in the face, defying directly successful resolutions of the UN Security Council. It has a deeply adversarial relationship of course, with the Republic of Korea, to the South. And indeed we see a degree of militarization in this relationship that is very very frightening in terms of its capacities. And then finally, North Korea is America's longest-running adversary in the international system. The US, except for very brief periods of time, has not even approached what we call a normal interstate relationship with North Korea, all of these, of course, right on China's very doorsteps.

Now, throughout its history, as I said, North Korea has tried to create strategic space for itself. You could argue all states seek to do that, but it has sought to do this in defiance of many international expectations, and certainly even in the face of defying those states with which was long allies. It has exploited whatever possible the divergence and fissures that exist outside, amongst the others that are affected by its behavior, all the while putting in place the building blocks of a long term nuclear weapons capability, that bit by bit has now come into realization. It seeks to be sure control of its own strategic destiny, and you could argue any state would seek to achieve that. But in its own case, it is done so remarkably, on the basis of a policy that presumes that others will support it economically in terms of food, energy and alike. It is a story

that cycles again and again and again, in other words, we see things today, but the manifestations of this long proceed of what we observe of the present time.

Today, for example, it is China, that has now, yet again, North Korea's primary benefactor, providing it oil, providing it food, principle source of trade, principle source of consumer goods, because the economic capacities of the North exist amid profound dysfunction that has been evident at least since the time at the end of the Soviet Union. So there is this ever going dependence on China, but that dependence has not translated into North Korea accommodating to what Chinese preferences may be. I'll come back to this in a few minutes. But we have to ask ourselves questions about why has there not been more of an ability to shape North Korean behavior and to eliminate the risks that it poses to regional security.

Now, if we examine the longer suite of North Korean history, something that many people are not aware is that the North was much more of the dominant part of the economy of the Peninsula. It was not until the 1970s, or in the mid-1970s, that per capital gross national product of the Republic of Korea exceeded that of the North. Again, remarkable both in terms of what we have seen, development in south Korea, but more, the extent to which the militarization of the North Korean economy, undertaken in a series of steps accelerated in the 1960s, has found North Korea saddled with limitations, and an inability to conduct itself by any kind of normal external means. Of course, in this process, because of the danger of the nuclear weapons represents, there have been repeated efforts to try to inhibit, the North's nuclear development. The North of course, has signed the Non-Proliferation treaty in 1985, but the story here is one, frankly, repeated failure, repeated inability to hold the North to its commitments, and at the same time, without states having the capacity, or means or willingness, to challenge the reality of North Korea moving in the direction of its full nuclear weapons development.

We might say, to some extent, North Korea right now, bites the hand that feeds it, and that is very very much, China. In a book that I published a couple of years ago, I go through a great deal of the history, of the origins of this program, the way the internal capacities were built overtime, in terms of infrastructure, scientific personnel, means of producing fissionable material and the like. The point I want to make is that, the decisions that the North Korea made about the pursuit of the nuclear weapons, long

antedated the end of the Cold War, many argue that it was only with the loss of the long term alliances, first with the Soviet Union and then with China, that this is what induced North Korea to pursue a nuclear weapons capability. This is simply not the case. North Korea officially began talking about its nuclear capabilities in the 1960s, when it was allied with China and the Soviet Union. The program itself began to materialize much towards the mid and latter parts of the 1970s, and really began to take off in the 1980s, when again, it still had, presumably, still vibrate relationships with both Moscow and Beijing. So it's important to bear in mind that, this is not a recent development. But to be sure, part of what North Korea's responses were to the fact that, the United States, for many years, deployed nuclear weapons on the Peninsula, beginning first towards the mid and late 1970s, and subsequently withdrawn, the remaining US nuclear weapons, were all withdrawn in the early 1990s. But the intent here, I believe, was to make North Korea as its leaders said, an impregnable fortress of its own, something that could withstand pressure from the outside world, including from both Beijing and Moscow, and stand apart by whatever means possible.

From China's point of view however, the transition that I alluded to earlier, the fact that China began progressively, to move, to divert strategically from North Korea, really began in the early to mid 1980s, partly as a consequence of the reform and open door policy, opening to the outside world. Kim Il-sung, of course did enjoy a close relationship with the Chinese leadership. Kim had fled with his family when he was a young boy, to Manchuria, spent 20 years in China, first as a young student, then subsequently as a gorilla organizer. He joined the Chinese Communist Party, he spoke very good Chinese, and I think he found an affinity with China. And there was an affinity that he felt with the Chinese leadership, with Mao Zedong, with Deng Xiaoping, and he would visit China with great regularity. In 1992, on a visit with Deng to Sichuan Province, Deng sought to demonstrate what was going on in Sichuan in terms of early reforms, particularly in the agricultural sector, in the belief that somehow this might help convince Kim Il-sung that this was going to be the way for some kind of transition in North Korea as well. My own view would be that this was one of the areas that Deng failed. When Kim visited Sichuan with Deng in 1992, he made a promise to Deng, he said that he would send his son, Kim Jong-il, who by then was already designated his successor, he would send him, each year, on an annual basis, to China, to observe the results of

China's economic transitions. Kim Jong-il made his first visit to China in June of 1983, he did not return to China for another 17 years. Why? Deng had two goals. The first was trying to affect some kind of internal transition in the North, at the same time Deng sought to persuade the United States, to meet with the two Koreas, under Chinese auspices, here in China. This was a formal proposal that Deng presented to then Defense Secretary Weinberger, in September of 1983. The problem of course, was that among following that meeting, was the Rangoon bombing, when 17 officials, 17 members of the South Korean cabinet, were blown up, in Burma, by North Korea agents. Deng held young Mr. Kim, Kim Jong-il responsible for this. There was an apology issued by Kim Il-sung. But the very fact, that you had a leader that who had been coming up that was defying China and others, was something that I think was deeply troubling to them.

So what we saw on a step-by-step basis beginning in the mid-1980s, was the gradual movement toward a relationship between China and South Korea, that materialized finally much more definitively, in 1992, with full diplomatic relations, to a point where today, China and South Korea are major partners, economically, and to some extent, politically as well. The trade that China does with South Korea today, or rather, South Korea's trade with China as well, is extraordinary in it scale. It's about 225 billion dollars a year, in contrast with about 6 billion dollars a year in trade between China and North Korea.

So, the beginnings of this transition, I think, were deeply troubling to the North, because it was seen as an erosion of its ability to influence and shape the behavior of its long-term benefactors. That, of course, had manifested itself most fully when the Soviet Union, recognized South Korea, towards the very end of the Soviet era followed shortly afterwards, by China. This had a devastating effect on the North Korean economy, and whatever the reluctance or the hesitancy to make a definitive decision in the North about its nuclear programs, this was eliminated at that point. And that what you saw instead, was the movement to an actual avowed nuclear weapons capability. So, beginning in the early 1990s, the United States becomes part of this negotiating process. It is only at that point that the elected American officials, for the very first time, at a senior level, meet with North Korean counterparts, and through a succession, if you will, of nuclear crises in the 1990s and on to the first decade of the 21st century. We saw, North Korea,

step by step, tried to realize these capabilities, to be sure, the first nuclear agreement with North Korea, the so-called agreed framework, was, like all diplomatic agreements, probably imperfect. But it did lead to the shuttering of North Korea's production of plutonium. But it did not preclude specifically developments in highly enriched uranium. And although we did not know the full story of what transpired during this period, it seems reasonable to assume in the aftermath that, North Korea, even if it closed down one program, was beginning to build up another, giving it an alternative means to sustain its nuclear weapons development, something that of course has materialized much more fully, in recent years. Now, everyone says, everyone by that I mean all of those outside of North Korea, including the United States, including China, insists that we do not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. And in a technical sense, that's true. No one confers legitimacy on these capacities, everyone insists that they are opposed to them, everyone insists that they will never be recognized in accordance with that status. The question however is that, in the factual terms, obviously, the North, is in possession of these capabilities. And by its own words, makes it very clear that its intent, in the years to come, is to expand those capabilities, both qualitatively and quantitatively, so what is to be done? China's role here, I think, as well as America's, has been to try to find a way to see if there's some way to inhibit the development of these capabilities, and to induce the North to honor the commitments that it has made, the agreements that it has signed. The problem, among other things, is that the North has walked away from all of those agreements. So it makes it very clear that if it were to return to any kind of negotiation, it would have to be on the basis of the recognition by others, that it is in fact, in possession of nuclear weapons, that it in effect, it has equal status, to other nuclear weapons states. That's not an acceptable proposition to China; it's not an acceptable proposition to the United States. And yet, you have to ask, what the options have become under circumstances where you have a state in open defiance of what its commitment and promises were.

So as we look at this and we ask what are the feasible options? Are there ways to inhibit what the North might do? The effort is of course then to constrain North Korea, to a series of resolutions taken under the UN Security Council. They haven't worked obviously as well as many people would hope, although it's the question of can you raise the costs to North Korea, to make it more difficult to pursue its nuclear capacities,

as well as inhibiting other forms of its external behavior. China has been a major participant in this process, particularly since the onset of the second nuclear crisis that occurred early in the George W. Bush administration. But in all of this, China, even as it sought to affect some kind of diplomatic outcomes, demonstrated what would seem to be significant risk aversion. Not pushing the limits of these policies too much, walking to some extent on egg shells we might say. China's relationship in fact with North Korea is almost unique, when the authorities in Beijing, have difficulties with the foreign policy behavior of any state, whether it's the United States, Japan, India, whomever, they have no reluctance to air those differences quite openly and criticize foreign governments quite openly. With North Korea it's done much more cryptically, much more wary of where this might lead. So this begs the issue: what is it specifically, about the relationship with North Korea that makes it so difficult, for China, to take particular kinds of steps? Compared to all of its other bilateral relations, what are the reasons? Well, I think at one level, I think we have to acknowledge that there is a shared revolutionary history, between China and North Korea, Kim Il-sung, as I mentioned before, was a guerilla fighter in Manchuria. There was then, of course, the Korean War itself, where China made major sacrifices. Mao Zedong's son was killed in the early weeks of the war, and was buried in North Korea. And that historical legacy, that shared fate, although it may be of diminishing relevance, at a time when life has moved on, and China has moved on, made the inoperative factor, made the inoperative factor in particular for some within the PLA, to some extent within party channels, but it is in fact that many will allude to. So there was that common revolutionary struggle. But the value of this, overtime, is that China has tried to emerge economically and politically, probably suggests that this is of diminishing relevance, to understand Chinese thinking, Chinese behavior.

Now, perhaps for some, the party tie between the two countries still does matter, but what about the larger spectrum of China's strategic interest, on the Peninsula, and beyond? Let's review some of the arguments that are made, efforts to explain China's behavior.

On a positive dimension, it may be that the leadership of China has believed that ultimately North Korea would have no alternative but to undertake some kind of an internal transition. I mentioned before that this was something that Deng Xiaoping

sought to undertake without success. It's telling, by the way, that when Deng Xiaoping died, Kim Jong-Il chose not to pay his condolences, at the Chinese embassy in Pyongyang. So this in effect, is an argument, though that suggests that sooner or later, the presumption must be that North Korea, must undertake, some kind of adjustment, definitive adjustment in its internal policies, paralleling that China has undertaken, that Vietnam has undertaken, and so forth. The problem with this however, is that, the ability of North Korea to withstand the pressure, to continue to persist with its highly autonomous concept of its own behavior, derives directly from the fact that you put up walls vis-a-vis the outside world. You don't want that external influence coming in, that might undermine the system with its liabilities. So that is the positive aspect as yet unrealized, now being revisited yet again, under new Chinese leaders, and I will come back to this in a few minutes.

So what are the reasons why, the mainly negative reason to explain Chinese behavior? The first and I'll just list them and then talk about each of them a bit. The first would be the posited fear of a collapse of North Korea. That somehow the state would erode, to such an extent that ultimately it loses its coherence, with resulting instability that affects China's interest very directly. The second argument is that North Korea is a presumed buffer state, for China, that is, somehow, a strategic asset, for China, that it helps, to protect China, from other potentially threatening behavior, particularly from the United States, since the United States of course is closely aligned with the Republic of Korea. The third explanation I think would just simply be worries about renewed conflict, on the Peninsula, and the fear that the US regional military role, would increase even further, as a function of that conflict, and that therefore, China seeks in effect, as long as the crisis is not accepted, to undergird the regime in the North, provided the wherewithal that it can persist. The fourth is supposedly the fears of the Korean unification, the presumption that Korean unification would find the United States and its military forces quite literally on China's doorsteps, as a justification if you will, that the United States would use, under circumstances where you had a unified Peninsula, that you could direct power against China. So by this logic of this success of negative reasons, denuclearization kind of falls off the priority list, it's kind of last place. But let's examine, briefly, each of these explanations in turn.

First, the presumption of North Korean collapse. Collapse has been regularly predicted by the part of the United States. It kind of goes in cycles, somehow, believing that North Korea, cannot indefinitely defy the laws of political and economic gravity. So the presumption would be that you need an insurance policy to prevent the worst from happening. But China, it seems to me, seems to understand better than most that there are enduring sources of strength, in the North Korean system, one that have enabled it to persist against all odds. It's therefore not an impossible state, as one author has suggested, recently, but an implausible state. But you do not have a continuous history, of 65 years of as a state, if it is simply based on the belief that others hold you up against the world. I think that in fact, for reasons that many on the outside don't understand fully, there is a kind of internal authenticity, and legitimacy in the North Korean state, as long as the core elites that underlie the support for the regime in Pyongyang stay with it and do not desert it. Now, China therefore, has tended to discount, the arguments that there could be in fact an outright collapse of the North, and even as I presume that at some level, you still have to allow for that possibility, but you consider the very very low likelihood of that. A weakened state is not necessarily a state that is on the edge of collapse.

What about the buffer state argument? To me, this may have had the relevance in the immediate aftermath of the Korean War, but I see this as an argument that seems, in my view, increasingly contrived. If anything, the argument is upside down. It is not so much that North Korea is a buffer state for China, but that China is a buffer state for North Korea. And the question would be how long China would be prepared to accept and accommodate to that reality, because of the dependence that North Korea has on China.

Now, the other argument, here however, the presumption would be that under conditions of unification, the United States would seek to take advantage of this, and would seek to deploy its military forces, maybe right on up to the Yalu. That presumes several things, first of all, that the United States would actually seek that goal, and I'm not at all convinced that is the case. And secondly, a unified Korean government would accommodate to that kind of reality, and I'm also not at all convinced of that. In a way it's very much an old-think argument. Even if you presume over the longer term, quasi-adversarial relationship between the United States and China, and just for sake of

arguments like, take that argument, you don't need ground forces, on the banks of the Yalu, in order to post that kind of a threat, to China. It just simply doesn't make sense, strategically or other.

A third fear though, is that somehow North Korean actions will trigger the potential for a very very different set of US policies in Northeast Asia, concerns here are expressed about missile defense and the like, and that too, would be seen as very adverse to Chinese interests. So therefore it's an argument that China does tend to make repeatedly even if the United States seeks to reassure China that whatever it is doing with respect to the defense of North Korea, is not directed at China.

Then there is of course, coming back to the argument that Korean unification, what's presumed the nightmare scenario of a democratic Korea, closely aligned with the United States, in service of US strategic objectives. Would a unified Korea seek this kind of relationship? That's an open question. More than anything else, I think, the leaders in Korea, in South Korea, understand keenly, that under circumstances of unification, China is your permanent neighbor, your truly permanent neighbor. Their incentives would not be, in my view, ones that would be to create an adversarial relationship with China. Even today, South Korea, if you look at the pattern of its trade, with the outside world. South Korea does more trade right now, with China, than it does with the United States and Japan combined. That trend presumably would only become that much more entrenched as the interdependence between these economies persists. And this is something that I think is accepted largely across the political spectrum in Korea, an awareness of what deeper South Korean strategic calculations might be.

So what goes essentially unmentioned, I think, in most renderings of explaining Chinese behaviors, is a deeper fear, a deeper fear of the unpredictability, of the North, of its adversarial nationalism, that it is not accountable to China, and that the steps that China has sought to take, both under Hu Jintao and now under Xi Jinping, to gain a measure of predictability in North Korean behavior, assurance that it will not take steps that might undermines the security of China. These kinds of assurances have gone nowhere. It is the power of the weak, over the power of the strong. Look at, both historically and at present, North Korea, rather than being some form of strategic asset for China, is very very much a strategic liability, and more than this, China often talks about, its concerns about the lack of strategic trust, between the United States and

China. There is most assuredly, a total lack of strategic trust, between the leaders here in Beijing, and the leaders in Pyongyang.

So, all of these suggest to me, China has to ask itself some fundamental questions, about whether or not a redefined set of strategic interests, would enable it to deal, much more fully, both with the United States, and with the Republic of Korea, if it concludes that North Korea's behavior, ultimately, poses a truly severe threat, to the interest of China. The evidence, though, has begun to mount, Kim Jong-un, rather than as he said at one point, opening the gate, has reverted to form, he has picked up where his father left off. He has made a reiterated commitment, so the goal of nuclear weapons enhancement, both, as he said, qualitatively and quantitatively. He is a young, untested leader, who will not allow China, or any outside power, to influence unduly its strategic choices, and that China will not have a special role, if you will, in relation to the North. So the prospect here is that no matter how long it might take, and how uneven it might be, if North Korea is able to persist, and sustain itself economically, it becomes much more a fully realized nuclear weapon state, that increases the risks of truly fundamental strategic change in Northeast Asia as a whole. A breakdown if you will, in the kind of security order that has long persistented in the region. It's worth noting here by the way, I think the assumptions that both the United States and China, have used with the new North Korean leadership, are actually quite similar. When Kim Jong-Il, Kim Jong-Un 's father, had stroke in 2008, China increased its commitment and support for North Korea, perhaps in the belief you could influence the succession process and that you could hope a younger leader might see the world differently, and might approach his own society differently. Indeed there were early indications, in young Mr. Kim's rule in the North that he was indeed going to prepare to test these possibilities. He talked about how North Korea would now be able, no longer needed to tighten its belt, but the message from the North now increasingly is that it must continue to tighten its belt, for what presumes to be its core strategic objectives.

United States actually made a calculation which was not too dissimilar from that of China. In early 2012, in the immediate aftermath of Kim Jong-Il's death, and Kim Jong-un's succession to leadership of the North, the US quite quickly and quite surprisingly was able to negotiate an agreement, known often as the February 29th "Leap Day Agreement", which seemed to suggest the possibility that North Korea would

again forego further steps in its nuclear weapons development, no longer test missiles, make other kinds of commitments, all of these based on what US officials were told were in the negotiations, but this was at the behest of the new leader. It took about two and a half weeks before this agreement collapsed. Yet again, reminds these people that agreement formulated by North Korea, may be honored for a period of time, may be longer, may be shorter, but ultimately, North Korea arrogates to itself the right to break those agreements. So it doesn't exactly land a high degree of confidence for what might be negotiable, even as many are now arguing in terms of North Korea's latest threatening rhetoric and the like, that perhaps, yet again, we should 'test' North Korea's intentions, to high level diplomacy. So, the record here is, to say the least, unblemished by what we would call success, or long term success, because I believe the leadership of the North, draws a direct connection, between the preservation and the enhancement, of its nuclear weapons and missile assets, and its preservation as an autonomous state.

Now, that said, what does China do? I'm not here to advise China, I'm only here to observe what I think I detect. I do think that there is preliminary but suggestive evidence, that China is yet again trying to find a formula, to in some sense, limit the cost, to its own interests, impose certain kinds of costs on the North where it can, without triggering extreme reactions on the part of the North. It is not, I believe, a commitment, to in effect untether China, from North Korea, but it is, to make clear to North Korea, that its conduct is unacceptable, and China must therefore protect its own interest under the circumstances. How might this be realized? Well on the one hand we could see the criticisms, that Xi Jinping in his speech at the Boao Forum, made that were, by any reasonable imagination, directed against North Korea, the phrasing was hardly critique, he talked about no one should be allowed to throw a region, or even the whole world, into chaos for selfish gains. I think it was widely understood that this in fact was directed at leaders in Pyongyang. There has been a pronounced cooling, in the interaction between North and South, … between North Korea and China, you don't see the flow of visitors in either direction, and even as our reports that yet again, China might seem to send someone to Pyongyang. A, we don't know for sure if that will take place, and even if we do, it is not because necessarily, we would see a major increase in Chinese influence on the North, we'll see, what are the other things that we can

observe? We can observe a warning, of relations between China and the Republic of Korea. When Xi Jinping became president of China recently, not so long ago, Park Geun-hye, the new President of the Republic of Korea, called President Xi on the phone to congratulate him, they talked on the phone for 20 minutes, they mutually extended invitations to one another, for state visits, no such invitations has been forthcoming from China, to enable Kim Jong-un to visit China, and at the same time, Chinese leaders or high level officials, seemed decidedly unwelcome in Pyongyang.

So, the question is whether in some sense China can, if you will, close the circle between what I'll call the preservation of this logic, of relations with North Korea, and the fact that that preservation of this logic, really may not be a solution. By preservation I mean, you simply can sustain the system in any way you can, for fear that you do not have an alternative, but the reality is that the risks that may be here, are significant. Xi Jinping's immediate challenge, is seems to me, is does he try to move Chinese policies, in a different direction, that far more explicitly, redefines Korea's strategic interests. Chinese commentaries clearly indicate that in the aftermath of North Korea's third nuclear weapons test, and its other forms of threatening behavior, that these entail identified risks, to the security of China. That is something that we have not really seen in Chinese statements in the past. Different varieties of commentaries that illustrate this, can the Chinese leadership, impose limits, on its support for North Korea, can it impose costs that sober, rather than embolden the North in its actions. Or do those run risks in China's view, provoking a more adversarial relationship between North Korea and China. Or is there somehow still hope that, against all odds, North Korea will not be able indefinitely, to defy those laws of gravity that I mentioned before. In my view, these operative terms of reference, are slowly but exacerbated, under debate here in Beijing, and they do suggest to me, the possibility of a gradual redefinition of Chinese interest on the Peninsula, and relationship both with the United States, and South Korea in the context of the Peninsula. How China evolved these interests in defining these policies, in the months to come will reveal a great deal about the foreign policy directions in how China conceptualizes its longer term interests, very very important and very very endangered part of the world.

Thank you very much for your time.

Commentary

Wang Dong: Thank you, Professor Meng. I'm very sorry to know that Professor Yang Xiyu can't join us today due to illness, and I hope he will fully recover soon. Actually I have to say that perhaps Professor Yang's absence has created some problem for me, because I actually was thinking about free-riding. I thought I could just say that I have nothing to add following the remarks by two distinguished scholars. But now I have nowhere to hide and I'm afraid I have to say something (Laughter). But seriously, first I would like to thank Professor Meng and the Tsinghua-Brookings Center for inviting me. And thanks particularly, Jonathan, for asking me to serve as a commentator. It is truly my privilege and honor to be here. As always, after listening carefully to your speech, I have learned a great deal. And Jonathan, also I hope what I will say here today will remain the same as we chat in private.

I have to say that I am not going to and also not able to deliver a terrific remark as comprehensive and wide-ranging as Jonathan just did. I just want to focus on a number of things and maybe try to provide some look into the Chinese perspectives about this very important issue as well.

First, whether or not there is a shift in China's policy toward North Korea. This is actually a question that I have been asked a lot by friends in the media recently. And as many of you may have noted, recently there actually has been a debate going on in China's academic circles, with some scholars and policy analysts publicly advocating that China should reconsider its policy towards North Korea. But on balance I think this debate has been carried out mostly among the academia and still remains academic, so to speak. So I think recalibration may be a better word to describe what is happening now in China's policy toward North Korea.

There are a number of reasons why there won't be a fundamental shift in China's policy towards North Korea. I think Jonathan has just laid out some of them in a very convincing way. I just also want to add that both historical memory or historical legacies, and also bureaucratic interests or inertia are among the reasons why we will probably see that the fundamentals of China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula will remain the same.

At the fundamental level, China's policy toward North Korea is made based on the calculus of China's national interests. The Chinese new leadership's foreign policy style has been characterized as assertive—assertive in a positive sense, which means China will be more assertive in defending its strategic and security interests, and China's policy towards North Korea is and should be made based on the calculation of what is in China's best interests.

That being said, I also would like to call your attention to another very important fact, that is, there actually has been growing sentiment of frustration and even pure anger, among the Chinese public toward North Korea's recent provocations. If you have followed the Chinese netizens' online comments, you'll see that the outpouring of anger and, sometimes, nasty comments about DPRK's provocations and irresponsible behavior was actually unprecedented. The location of DPRK's third nuclear test was so close to the Chinese border that many Chinese worry about the danger of contamination. So this most recent nuclear test indeed seems to be a turning point in the Chinese public's perception and opinion toward North Korea's nuclear ambitions. I think such a significant shift in China's public sentiment will in the long run provide more confidence and even legitimacy for Chinese leaders to deal with the North Korea nuclear challenge in a more "assertive" way.

I'm sure that we have a lot of friends in the media here today in the audience. Maybe I'm wrong but I don't recall I've read many polling data regarding the Chinese public's opinion toward North Korea's nuclear ambitions. I would encourage our media friends, particularly Chinese media friends, to conduct some polling or survey just to get, in a more accurate manner, the Chinese public's attitudes toward North Korea's behavior. And I think this is not only helpful from the scholar point of view, that we would have better data at hand to conduct a better informed analysis of this very important challenge, but also that it will provide very important data for the top Chinese leadership to engage in the deliberations of China's policies toward North Korea and the Peninsula as a whole.

I think Jonathan is very gracious in not publicly criticizing China's policy toward North Korea. But based on my own interactions and communications with a lot of American friends and colleagues, I know there has been a lot of dissatisfaction on the American side regarding China's policy. And there is no denying that there are

differences and even disagreement between China and the United States regarding what we should do toward North Korea. And first of all, I want to add that we should acknowledge that we—China and the United States—also have a very fundamental shared interest in seeing a nuclear free Peninsula, or to be more specific, in having the denuclearization of North Korea as the final goal. I think there is no question that both China and the United States agree on that goal.. But the question is regarding approach. I think Jonathan has already alluded to that, and I just want to add that some of those differences or disagreement actually stem from considerable perception gap between China and the United States. While, as Jonathan has just mentioned, many in the United States believe that the collapse of DPRK is just a matter of time, however, I think few in China would share that kind of view. One might argue that the Obama administration's so-called "strategic patience policy" toward North Korea is also partly based on that assumption. So if you assume that this regime will sooner or later just disappear, why bother, you may ask, taking any effort to engage it? I'm not criticizing the U.S. government's efforts in trying to engage North Korea diplomatically. I fully recognize the Obama administration's efforts in that regard and I think the Chinese government and people do appreciate that. But the fact is that we do have a difference in our perceptions about this assumption, and personally I think such an assumption might need to be critically reexamined. The problem is that the kind of collapse argument has been there for decades, and North Korea is still here. If a kind of assumption is problematic, then the set of policies based on such kind of assumption will needs to be reexamined. So I think we all need to, probably have to study closely about North Korea, about the resilience of this regime. And if we recognize there's some problem in our assumption, we'll have to deal with that as well.

A third question I want to talk about is very specific, that is, what to do about the North Korea nuclear challenge? We all agree that North Korea's nuclear ambition poses a huge challenge to all of us. The question is what to do about it. Personally, I would argue—and this is what I always advocate whenever I am invited to speak in South Korea—that we should pursue what I will label as a "peaceful development" strategy toward North Korea. If we all agree that alternative approaches are either unlikely or too costly to contemplate, then we have to think about what are the means and ways through which we can not only contain this current threat but also in the long term, and

hopefully gradually, find a path toward which we can really eliminate this threat, once and for all. I believe such a peaceful development strategy has actually been a base of China's policy for a very long time, and as Jonathan just indicated, it can be traced back to former leader Deng Xiaoping. I agree that so far we didn't achieve full success in that effort. But we have to acknowledge there are also considerable progresses in that regard. We know that before the third nuclear test, China and North Korea had concluded a number of very important agreements to set up joint special economic development zones along China and North Korea's borders. And they are not just rhetoric—there are real progresses that have been made on the ground. But the challenges, now, are that North Korea apparently wants both nuclear weapons and economic reform. This is the clear message we've got from Pyongyang. North Korea wants to eat the cake and have it, too. So, how to deal with that? I agree that this is a challenge, but also I want to argue that this doesn't mean the peaceful development approach is not working. We need to have more in-depth discussions and exchanges probably at the highest level of leaderships between China, the United States, other stakeholders in the region and as well as the international community, to try to think more progressively about what are the ways that we can find towards addressing this challenge in the long run.

And also, there is another very specific proposal I would like to suggest. I think China should publicly support peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. I know this was and remains our official policy. But we haven't talked about that publicly very much in recent years. And of course, South Korea and the United States abound with the suspicion that China is actually against the unification of the Korean peninsula. I know there are, as Jonathan just forcefully laid out, a set of reasons why some in China or, you may believe, that in fact many in China would not want to see the unification of the Korean Peninsula. But I would argue that the reunification of the Korean Peninsula will surely be in the strategic and security interests of China. And I very much agree with Jonathan's analysis of the scenarios following a peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. China doesn't have to worry about the increase of US military presence close to the Chinese border, taking into account the domestic political environment both in the United States and in South Korea, and a number of other factors. In fact we can do a

very careful analysis and come to a relatively positive assessment about the consequences of the unification and of what it will mean to China geo-strategically.

But also I think it's very important for China also to make it clear that we will oppose the use of force to change the status quo on the Korean Peninsula. By setting the perimeters in such a way, China will be able to shape the preferences and expectations of other stakeholders. Therefore, when they make decisions or take some actions, they will have to take that into account, therefore reducing the possibility of having some other stakeholders' policy that might be in detriment of China's strategic and security interests.

The last point, Jonathan has also alluded to this in passing, but I want to stress it a little bit, which is the new type of great power relationship. Our American friends tend to emphasize that North Korea will be the first test case for whether or not the idea of building a new type of great power relationship between China and the United States will be feasible. I surely agree with that assessment, but I want to add that the North Korea nuclear issue is just one of the many potential or real obstacles between China and the United States that we need to work together to remove. There are a number of other issues that have contributed to the emergence of security dilemma between China and the United States. Cooperation in good faith has a potential of addressing those issues. So my point is that our approach to the new type of great power relationship shouldn't be one that like "oh let's first wait and see if the North Korea issue passes the test"; if it works, then we move toward building the new type of great power relationship. I think the Chinese leaders' proposal to build a U.S.-China new type of great power relationship reflects, at a fundamental level, China's efforts to define a strategic vision and to find a solution to a time-honored puzzle in international history, that is, whenever there are a rising great power and another dominant great power, they would be doomed to fall into great power conflict or war. So how can we escape from what seems to be a historical destiny? The proposal to build a new type of great power relationship represents the Chinese leaders' efforts to try to come up with a strategic and in fact an intellectual framework for addressing that challenge. In that sense, this is not that the Chinese government is begging the United States, "please, let's build up this new type of great power relationship." Rather, we should agree that this is perhaps one of the few, if not the only, realistic ways that we can avoid the cycles of great power conflict we've

seen in international history. So that means we--China and the United States—should move more proactively in a wide range of issues to forge mutual trust and cooperation, including some of the more sensitive and thorny issues between China and the United States, such as the U.S.-led missile defense system.

To conclude, I just want to remind the audience that this morning the Chief of General Staff of the PLA, General Fang Fenghui had a very important meeting with Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey. After their meeting, General Fang publicly revealed that Chinese prediction—and possibly because in the context of after their joint meeting, so it will be a joint US-China prediction or assessment--that DPRK might be in preparation for (inaudible) nuclear test. Why is this extraordinary? Because I think China has never before released that kind of message. In many ways I think this can be read as a very careful or, even in a measured way, a public warning to North Korea, particularly because this message was revealed by one of the most key policy makers in the Chinese measure. So it is high time for China and the United States, and other stakeholders in the region and the international community to work together, stand united, and send a unified message to North Korea that going down the road of the pursuit of nuclear and missile capabilities will not bring them closer to the goal of building a strong and prosperous nation, a goal that they hold dear. The only way is to come back to the process of denuclearization. And that is the only way for North Korea, the government and the people, to achieve their dream as well.

So let me stop here. Thank you very much.

Q & A session

Audience: Hi, I'm from Carnegie-Tsinghua Center. It seems that one of the biggest inhibitors to US China cooperation on North Korea is a conception among the Chinese that the US global isn't really changed, so how can Washington convince Beijing that it's not our goal and how can Beijing convince Washington that it's actually taking real steps to address the North Korean (inaudible).

Jonathon Pollack: I dare say, for better or for worse, the conception of regime change is indelibly associated with what happened during the period when George W.

Bush was president putting attacks in Beijing and in Iraq. And yet I don't know whether we are talking, it's difficult to conceptualize with the existing system as we see it, and the existing leadership as we see it, a different kind of outcome in there which is of course deeply troubling. For that matter, although China certainly does not speak the language of regime change, it may well be, whether that is regime transition, or some other call it regime revolution, that the only way out of this would in fact be a different kind of leadership in the north. Now the question is always as how do you get there, how could you shape or redefine the kinds of goals of the North Korean state, you know, this is one of the reasons why my book is entitled very depressingly "No Exit". This is a family dynasty. It's a dynastic arrangement, with core surround the center, and unless and until you see a disassociation from the core portion of the North Korean elite, could we imagine, in my view at least, a different kind of outcome. I think the other phenomenon, here of course, is just simply when you ask about the question of transition of revolution. The question is always how, what kind of time scale do we have in mind, can we persist with the kind of system that is in place, with the kind of priorities that it has. Or can it be induced by one means or another to a different kind of outcome? But your question also posed the issue of the discussion that the United States and China have to have, they have not had and must have, and I do think that there are growing evidence that China is more prepared for some kind of a bilateral set of discussions about Korea, and that is a big breakthrough. So I don't really have an answer for you, because I don't think this question has ever been broached extensively between the US and China. I mean there's instead necessarily the course of diplomacy, a kind of narrowing of objectives on how do you prevent this sort of step being taken by North Korea rather than identifying that the question of North Korean nuclear weapons development is actually the question of the North Korean regime itself. So that said, there's also the factor of South Korea, this cannot be, in my view, a conversation largely between the US and China. And I would even say that there are real possibilities that South Korea can play a much more significant role in this process, maybe almost in certain extent, in between the US and China. So there are possibilities here, but the bottom line is this, if the North persist, that there is political space that it can maneuver within, because of the divide of assessment of the outside world, they end up living, playing through another day, and somehow that is why some sense of common purpose

has to be evolved between all of those that are very much affected by North Korea and its behavior.

Audience: Within last month, we've seen there's a lot of anger and trepidation among the North Korean in terms of Chinese backing the sanctions. At same time it seems that policy is calculated specific to China with rejections of very high level Chinese delegations last month, which is trying to visit North Korea to meet with the senior leadership. So I was wondering in terms of lack of high level exchange between North Korea and China in the last few months, how much is it more on the North Korean side of things versus Chinese side of things? And more broadly, any kind of in terms of China, how aggressively is it advocating economic reform in North Korea and what kind of mechanisms and leveraging to do that? Thank you.

Jonathon Pollack: You've asked a very good question. I have been struck by the fact to the degree that there are patterns of visitation between the two countries lately. We see much more evidence of North Korea's delegations: technical delegations, economic delegations coming to China rather than many Chinese delegations going to the North. And my instinct tells me that some of both what you do you push to alternative, but maybe a combination of (inaudible). I think that there's been an effort by China to associate itself from North Korea behavior, and one way to do this is to limit the interactions. On the other hand, there are clearly times that China has wanted to get messages to the north whether the North is listening or not. To that extent, it may be decided on both sides. Now, the question about the reform in the North, recognizing that the reform is none word in the North Korean strategic vocabulary, I'm not sure how much it really entered the activities of China in North Korea. The economic presence of China in the North is very significant, primarily in terms of the provision of oil, food stuff, food supply, consumer goods. The use of the RMB is basically the currency that is often used in the North. But that North Korea's strategy in terms of "state sponsored system" to China is much more akin to what we might call it enclave strategy, contain the influence as much as possible as some kind of particular physical space rather than see it spread within the society as a whole. So, the question is in Wang Dong alluded to the projects that has been undertaking the results thus far of those projects, I have to say as someone mixed because we are dealing here with a profoundly damaged economic system, where whether it is infrastructure, whether it is conditions under which people

labor and work, it's very problematic. And you know the argument will be we have to start from somewhere starts somewhere, I have no doubt that North Korea could be in fact a very productive society for a number of reasons. But it will require an attitude on the part of the leadership of the north that lets that kind of involvement in. And that's where I think North Korea, the leadership, become most (inaudible). My own belief is that the biggest threat to North Korea is not American weapons, however much North Korea uses that to legitimate a lot of its policies. The biggest threat is a sustained external involvement with the citizens of North Korea particularly among those who are also ethnically Korean. The fact that information spreads, idea spread, interactions increase, and all of that will be profoundly undermining to the kind of sustaining mythology that has sustained the regime for 65 years.

Wang Dong: This is a very important question. I just want to echo with Jonathon that I think this is a very difficult process. I am not suggesting that it will be very easy for China to persuade that reform and opening up will be the only endurable way for NK to achieve its own ambitions. But I think North Korea people also deserve their own dreams. But just part of their dreams now, from the standpoint of an international community, it's really round headed. We have some problems in that. We need to talk to them. We need to persuade them why this is not in their interest really going down the current path. And regarding the economic reform, programs that I think China has been very aggressively pushing for that as we all can tell, and the thing that North Korea's nuclear ambitions really twists the whole process. And that's why this whole issue of channel is so complicated because the logic goes, as soon as we convinced North Korea this is in your best interest, and eventually they will be "socialized" into the economic globalization process. In fact, I think as a lot of pointing in that kind of argument, because as soon as North Korea is got hooked to the process of globalization, there's no way that they can turn back. I can see Jonathan's points of why such kind of economic reforms and opening up might in a long run create problems for DPRK, the regime itself. But I tend to guess that when those players, if we look at international history, a lot of institutional changes, some of them are based on very careful rational choice, calculation of their interests, often times it also based on point view. For instance, some Chinese analyst and others have argued about the possibilities of North Korea might miscalculate, might greatly overestimate the kind of

nuclear benefits, therefore leading to their belief that they can conduct some kind of "punitive affections" to South Korea without being punished. That of course, will be extremely dangerous. We were close to that point a few days or weeks ago, and now the tension seems to be calmed down a little bit, but this is just one of the misperceptions that we can think of. So what if North Korean leaders they just believe that, or they won't simply buy your argument that, opening up will invite eventual destruction to their regime? Because they strongly believe that the legitimacy and kind of support they can enjoy. So if that is true, then in theory I think we could also expect the conditions I think much more favorable to an overall institutional change that will gradually lead to the direction of economic reform. So in that regard, I tend to be cautiously optimistic about that.

Audience: I teach at the Foreign Affairs University. First of all, I really enjoy both of your comments and one of the opinions that strike me after listening to both of you is that, while the short term conception of the problems on North Korea seems to be very consistent between the U.S. and China, it is the long term where there's really this tension. So I think in terms of the practical usefulness of gatherings like this, I think as much as we can try and figure out sort of what the sources of that tension are, the more beneficial these kinds of events can be. So I'd like to ask Dr. Wang a few questions about your professed support for an eventual reunification scenario, and mention a few concern that have been raised to me by Chinese observers about what would like to be some of the stumbling box under that scenario. I do so because I think it would be valuable for one, but also I think there might be a corollary of pushing the public dialogue in this way might end up increasing the leverage of North Korean behavior. One concern that has been raised to me is the idea that under a unified Korea with Seoul's control, South Korea might be tempted to attempt to retain the north Korea nuclear program, and so my question would be whether or not your understanding would be that the Chinese would be comfortable with the existing commitment to de-nuclearalization on the peninsula or you think that would require a new commitment to de-nuclearlization. And also on troop levels, obviously one of the concerns under unified Korea for China would the presence of the American troops within that country. So I wonder if you could give me any implications in terms of what China's expectations

would be for the reduction of those troop levels and on what kind of timeframe of the expectations might be taken place. Thank you.

Wang Dong: Thanks for the excellent questions. To your first question, I think if we are going to do some sort of intellectual exercises and think about what kind of consequences of a unification scenario, I would argue that the possibility of a unified Korea. I don't want to presume that there will be a unified government by South Korea. I have already criticized that assumption. So let's say a unified Korean government wants to retain nuclear capabilities. I think that probability is extremely low simply because, simply No. 1, the progress of international norms and the existing of NPP regime, which has really provided no space for the legitimacy for a unified Korean country wants to retain nuclear capability, because at that point we would have seen a kind of traverse we have gone through all the way point to a peaceful unification. So, anyone wants to advocate that now let's try to retain this capability, I think, that would not only be that very strong opposition from international community including China and US, but also I think to a great extent, I suspect majority of the unified Korean people would support such kind of position because it simply doesn't make any sense strategically speaking. Because you no longer face any threats from anywhere, so what's the point to retain nuclear weapons? Just to increase your prestige? But South Korea, you know, has already been one of the most extraordinary successful stories in the international speech. Why bothering going down the path of trying to scramble to retain nuclear weapons and make itself the enemy of the whole international community? So, I just don't see any kind of political rationale for going down that path. And in terms of the troop levels, I think that Jonathan has just made a very convincing argument, and I very much would like to echo Jonathan's assessment as to why I think this is also unlikely that US would retain, much to mention to increase, its military presence on the Korea peninsula. Because the legitimacy of political justification of American troops right now on the ground in South Korea is the threat from North Korea. So, if the peninsula is peacefully reunified, and the threat is gone, I don't think the American public will have stomach for expending so much of its money and putting their boys and girls abroad from home. So, I don't see the political dynamics going that way. And also taking into account that Korean people, both South Korea and North Korea people, to put in the best way, are very proud of their own countries, so this is a very typical, very strong

sentiment of nationalism there. So, I don't think even right now waves such as serious threats from the north, we do also see, in terms of political statues political spectrum, quite of number of people in South Korea: they really want to see America troops leave South Korea. So, if you put all these things together, I just don't see the likelihood of American maintaining, much to mention increasing, military presence on the Korea peninsula would be very high. Rather, I think actually it would be extremely low. Even any US president wants to push for that, he would have to fight the very difficult uphill battle to do that. And I don't think, during that process, China would do nothing. China would of course come up to strongly oppose that and that again of course would also add relational pressure to any US leaders to reconsider such a kind of hypothetical strategy approach.

Jonathon Pollack: Yeah. I think Dong has made a very relevant point. I think it's fair to say that the circumstances of Korea under conditions of unification, recognizing how is the unification, the time dimension whether or not would it be something highly conflictual or something else is a relevant factor. But that, even a president under G. W. Bush administration, the US reduced its troop strength in South Korea from 38,000 to 28,500. I think over time the challenge for the deployment of US forces, especially ground forces, the footprint of those forces in societies abroad even if there is a close link to the US steadily diminishes. And as I indicated before, if you sit by the way world affairs conceptualize over the longer term, the days of very substantial ground force deployment perceptions of one country invading another that is diminishing history. There are ways you can degrade by other kinds of means much more effectively that do not require significant numbers of military personnel. That's a long-term trend. But those points are well put. If there were Korea unification, what would be the strategic horizon of unified Korean state? How would security be conceptualized? Would it replier a significant ongoing form presumably US presence? How could be done in the way that doesn't signal adversarial conceptions reserve in China? I mean unless there is Chinese behavior that is so egregiously undermining of South Korea or a unified Korea security. I find it problematic to imagine the sustaining of the very significant large scale American military presence. What you could ask is how you conceptualize the kinds of security relationships that would exist under conditions of unification. That's a different question. That would be significant alliance redesign if you will. I can't say I would be otherwise.

On the nuclear question, I know that the presence: there are arguments that emanating from some men of South Korea that not only should the US return its nuclear weapons to the peninsula, but the same time, south Korea should get undertake of nuclear weapon. Whether it is its own, except presumably this time, it would be over rather than comfort as the world under Ko Yong Hui's father. You know, I frankly have very hard thinking out the logic with this proposition. It makes utterly no strategic sense, particularly is the US and the others try to find ways to reduce the centrality of nuclear weapons to American foreign policy. You know, US have military capacity that could be quite extraordinary that don't require reliance on nuclear weapons. And that's the long-term trend that we would see more and more. So, I am a bit lost to understand what the logic of this proposition would be and in fact that' it is the direction that South Korea would go in, then we really are talking the breakdown of the regional security order that, for better or worse, as sought to keep the peace in North East Asia for decades.

Wand Dong: let me just add very quickly a few words to Jonathan's comments. How we can conceptualize the security relationship and opportunity among a unified Korea peninsula, and China, and presumably US as well? I think if that happens that will emerge another new kind of strategic triangle between China, unified Korea and US. And given the all kinds of the rationale we have just talked about, the US and unified Korea security alliance might remain, but it will go through very significant fundamental process of being reshaped, redefined and redesigned. I think the logic is more than that a unified Korean government will try to pursue more balanced relationship between China and US. In assuming that we are believed pretty well this new type of our relationship, there is no reason for a unified Korea to pick a side. More incentives would be getting towards trying to come up with a balanced position between China and US. So, in that strategic triangle, a unified Korea would move, relatively speaking, further away from US and closer to China, of course, not to a point building another alliance with China. But I think the overall equilibrium of that strategic triangle would be much more balanced than it is right now.

Audience: Thank you for coming. I'm a master from Peking University. I am wondering how optimistic you are on how track to NGO helping make the country more peaceful? I'm asking because Prof. Siegfried Hecker put effort as kicking soccer in North Korea many times. Thank you.

Jonathon Pollack: He has not been allowed entry into North Korea since Nov 2010. One of the observations is the nuclear near in uranium enrichment facility. So, that's a source of some reorganization of frustration on his part. Maybe Siegfried is just a little too smart, and that's the part of problem. He seizes too much. Having myself travel to North Korea several times in delegations, they can serve a useful purpose. Otherwise, suppose the question would be what is the purpose do you think they are serving? If I might offer a slightly cynical view of this: is that I sometimes think that North Korea when it has conducted or committed this activity. It's precisely when negotiation is not ongoing with the outside world. So, it's almost like spring training in baseball if I can use an analogy to make sure that your message is still highly refined. These diplomats absolutely know that they want to keep the fighting form if you will in some sense. So the question is can you make contributable context. There is clearly a spectrum of view on this. They provide perhaps something as a window in the North Korea, but the risk of being exposed seems to be low? They can be very stylized; they can be very structured. Different groups may go. They all go in for the record of three, four five days. They all get variations on the same message. Some might interpret it; some would differently. But it is a channel. It is a channel by the way that some level it tells less about political cause, because if you are dealing with delegations that are governmental, maybe not by design. But there might be some presumptions that prefer legitimacy on what you see. I would say by the way there are really moments of insight. My second trip to North Korea was within weeks of president Obama's inauguration, and we visiting that occasion and listening to what we were told by our North Korea tour conductors. It was abundantly evident that North Korea passed the threshold that is regarded its nuclear weapons as not negotiable composition. This is Ken Yong Wong, to be very specific, he may be very clear that North Korea was to re-enter any kind of talks if the re-enter is a nuclear weapons state. These would not be nuclearlization talks; these would be arm-control talks. These would be therefore very vaunting. So, you are trying your best to say there's no sale there. But that doesn't necessarily mean you will be listened to. But it was a signal and indication to me that the decision to undertake another nuclear test was made by North Korea.

Wang Dong: we should echo have the kind of rich experiences as Jonathan to give you a better informed answer. But I think in theory, track to doubt certainly, we will

have understandings and exchange ideas between two sides. Given the very particular, sort of unique political structural conditions in DPRK, I think probably we shouldn't put too much attention to such kind of too doubt unless you can gain an admission like Prof. Pollack as being going into. You are able to meet with really high ranking North Korean officials, and in such context, I think that will provide a really useful way for you to get into their minds, and try to detect any kind of signal and try to present. And frankly I bet they are also using those occasion opportunities as a way to send signal as they wish.

Jonathon Pollack: what another point Wong has just made is that those you go untrack to missions must understand they are track to missions. They are not going as policy makers; they are going to try to learn to more particular issues to see if there is alternative possibility of one kind another. And it may well be that in the absence of active diplomacy, at least gives you some kind of a window to thinking and calculating in the North. If, for example, you begin to see a very different composition among those participating in these track to activities. That would be very interesting indicator potential changing the system. What is really remarkable is that there is a core group of about that doesn't wear North Korea suit. Basically, you have to find these activities for efforts for a very long time and it's very steady work over the years.

Audience: I'm a student in international development in SPPM. Thank you for your lecture. Also, Wong Dong, thank you for your comments. My question is very simple. It's basically do you think in your opinion that aid undermining sanctions. You mention that in your talk Korea is getting ready to tighten its belt. Well, nobody's belt is tighter than the Korean people's belt, the North Korean people's belt. So, do you think that sanction is supposed to increase pressure from the loan that aid undermines that objective?

Jonathan Pollack: you phase it in a very interesting way. Obviously, whatever has been undertaken in the way of multilateral sanctions under UN requires the concurrency of all the involved parties and the specifications of the resolutions are sufficiently elastic that there can be, whether allowed or not allowed, some degree of interpretation. I think it's fair to say that China has defined the sanctions in more promising terms, but it is clear, for example, that the sanction has not intended to preclude anything that is in the way of economic betterment or humanitarian systems so that Chinese people now to other things they can get in because that's one of the

exceptions that the sanctions are not rigorously enough in enforce and implemented. So that things get in are supposed to be getting in. One of the suppose that a lot of aid does come in by one means or another, does get distributed in the way that may be actually ironically, or may be not so ironically, reinforcing the loyalty of core elites in the north, and that's one of the dilemmas for the elites, to what extent, quite part of the issues of verification. How effective and how binding are the elites to verify where the goals? There are times certainly that has been fairly effective monitoring of these activities, and often it is the case that they can be very effective until they are no longer effective. That's part of the frustrations with North Korea. There seems a kind of comprehensive switch. You can see a determination of the carry out particular kinds of agreements until that chosen moment when the agreement ceases. So, it's again the product of kind of exertion we knew experience, all state experience here. So, I don't think any of us really know if you will be ingredients or the formula dictate whether we judge North Korea stable or unstable. We certainly know that when you get outside of Pyongyang, you see a very different North Korea, and where a lot of people are almost quite literally feed on their own and whether the aid gets to them, or more likely doesn't get to this. They are just trying to cook in some way. And to affect the transition in that part of North Korean economy, presumes a form presence that frankly I find almost unimaginable under existing circumstances. So, the other point of all of this is that the presumption of policy toward the north that at least US, I think, to some extent, China has to find it, is to clarify the choices that North Korea has been done. If I could put it very classily, the US says North Korea must choose: it must either pursue the relevant peaceful relations with its neighbors, or the other path is nuclear weapons. And the answer from North Korea to judge from what Kim Jung-Un says is that they choose both. That's the open frustration. We don't know what sustains it all aspects the ability to stay, at least produce certain amounts of level, to keep it up and running. There is certainly visible evidence of some transitions within Pyongyang and environs. But that's mainly to serve the core strategic elites that benefit from North Korean system. So, this is a long standing story. It has been story when outside actors has been generous to North Korea as well as much more restricted. And it is souring reminder just of how determinant the state is to sustain itself over the longer term.

Wang Dong: not much to add except by saying that the aid would only be effective in sort of in line with the sanction regimes UN creates. Also, I agree with Jonathan, because in international relations, so called IR scholars have done a lot of researches in sanctions. But frankly speaking, the ratio of sanctions carried out by states in history, the successful ration is quite low. More likely than not, even a sort of best sanctions regimes you can design might often not lead to what you expects. So, there are number of theoretical reasons to why this is the case. So, bear that in mind, I may be kind of moderate liquid of expectations we can have regard to those sanctions.

Jonathon Pollack: I would just say that there are times that sanctions have a kind of presume field good quality. You make a political statement. You expect of its consequences. And certainly, there is often a desire, in some sense, to signal to North Korea the degree of unhappiness in some part of outside actors for their behavior. But the predictability for the automatic tendencies whether there is a causal effect relationship here is often highly problematic.

Audience: I'm a master from Peking University. My question is about the strategic mistrust that Dr. Pollack mentioned. He said that China and the US have strategic mistrust, and China and Korea does as well. Of course, Korea and the US have same. My question is about the role of Korea plays in China and the US strategic mistrust. Currently, the US has found itself dead locked where itself it outlays. They all have certain strategic goals in terms of North Korea, and China's strategic goal is very opposite as have already talked about. However, as Dr. Wang discussed there is kind of recalibration of Chinese interest in the Korean peninsula, and toward the nuclear tests, public objection is very strong. So, it looks like the potential trend in the change of recalibration of Chinese interests in the Korean peninsula. So, my question is what role is playing now and what role could be potentially played in the strategic mistrust between the US and China.

Jonathon Pollack: It's a very good question. If you ask, I think this label (inaudible) one reaction would be the mistrust of one kind of another in academic in international relation. When I think about this argument, and I know my colleague Kenneth Lieberthal worked on a study with Wang Jisi, I was one of the reviewers of it and I said: why is this specific particular to US-China relationship? Should we say, for example, there is great trust between the US and Russia, between China and Japan?

What is it that makes it so intrinsically important in this particular case? But I do think that Korea has been, if you will, something as a test case during the time of the six-party talk or some kind of ongoing endeavor. I think that there were periods of time where this became a useful test case of whether American and Chinese officials could, in some meaningful sense, collaborate and communicate with one another, and certainly there are some periods that they are worth for effective communications. Not always because in the nature of these activities there are different conceptions of what purposes are to be served abide particular kind of agreement. On the other hand, sometimes the problem is that diplomats don't always disclose fully. They reserve certain amounts of judgment. They after all have their primary affiliations with the instructions of their own governments. And some presumptions that yield in the same bed with bringing different brains are always inherited in this process. But I would say, agreeing with what Dong has said before, under circumstances where China appears to be recognized increasingly that these are not weapons that are going away. There is no conceivable expectation at least at the year midterm that you are going to see any kind of reduction can be effort that the North Korea put against these capabilities. Does that require a rethinking and a reassessment to see whether not the two countries have some kind of conception that would be relatively unified if you walk almost all kinds of united front that is presented to the DPRK. That's a question I think that must now be on the part of both the US and China. I mean a gain: certainly if I look at this, sorry nuclear saga over decades and years over decades, there is a lot of responsibility in blame of one kind of another that can go around. A lot of what-ifs, a lot of counterfactual reasoning that we can drop out the occasion. But we have to come back to dealing with a very repulsive troop system that saw its interests and its fate are very much bound up in the possession and enhancement of particular kinds of capabilities that it wasn't prepared to forego. My own conclusion so often is when we see North Korean behaviors we do at present, which seems on the face to be validly very threatening. Well, that suggest to be very often is that North Korea often will make decisions of specific (inaudible). Let's say the test of another nuclear weapon. And then you run the (inaudible) for reasons to justify the decision that it has already undertaken. So, can we blame that sample? Is there means of influence with the north that enables it? Now, I think there is ample skepticism. However, to the degree that the US and China can speak with some sense

of common purpose, that gonna make life more difficult for North Korea. And that's worth the effort.

Wang Dong: I just want to add Jonathan's response to this again very excellent question from Peking student. I think there is definitely a very important role that South Korea can play in trying to sort of increasing or frustrating strategic trust between the US and China. And I think often times I have heard a lot from my South Korean friends, they sometimes seems to worry that China, you are really "(inaudible) or protecting" North Korea to the extent that you are (inaudible) interest or there are sense of being that you are too favorable toward the north at the expense of South Korea. And my response to my Korean friends always is: why do you have to worry about that. Just look at the kind of close and intimate relationship between China and South Korea. The trade volume is enormous. China is the largest trading partner with South Korea, and every year there are just, I think, hundreds of billions of trade volumes and millions of people from both countries travel to each other. And in fact also hundreds of South Korean people, they study, live and work in each other's countries. Take Beijing for example, we have a massive Korean towns here and we also have a huge number of South Korean students at Peking University, and I assume at Tsinghua as well. So, just taking into account all these close and intimate from the political level to the people to people level relationship between the two countries, I don't see any reason that South Korea should worry about that China would be sort of tilling toward North Korea at the expense of South Korea. And I just want to add that, in fact, I strongly believe that the strategic under security level, or sort of component of US-South Korea relations, I think we have to confess that sort of lags left behind the economic and social ties between the two countries and the two peoples. And I do strongly believe that the strategic relations ties between China and South Korea leads to be elevated to a new level. There is no reason why this should not be the case. And of course, in the process of doing that, I think it will require much higher level of strategic trust and dialogue, and exchanges and cooperation between China and South Korea as well. And like Jonathan just pointed out in his speech and remarks, I think there are pretty good signs that we see that also sort of (inaudible) in that direction with this new president Park Geun-hye. And in fact frankly speaking, there are a lot of expectations of President Park here in China, and I assume that applies to South Korea as well. So, personally, I remain very optimistic about this

relationship and I believe that it should continue to grow to become very robust and one of the best relationships we can have.

Jonathan Pollack: if I can just make a couple of final observations myself, as I remind American audiences frequently when we look at questions related to Korea, we need to remind ourselves: this is after all the Korean peninsula. It's not the Chinese peninsula. It's not the Japanese peninsula. It's not the American peninsula. The forces of national identity run very deep don't mean that nationalism is necessarily a bad word. Although there's a lot of concern, a lot of people feel now for what we see in East Asia, particular as all history revives and not often in very healthy ways. But the test I think for the longer term is given the kind of inter-connectedness that Dong has just related to, social, educational, economic, cultural and so forth, do we have a failure of our political and strategic imaginations if we ever get to a point where we could imagine the affecting of the transition, truly affecting the transition here in northern East Asia. I often reflect on this that there are sometimes weeks in history that are (inaudible) pivotal. The last week of June of 1950 was one of those weeks, which fixed this strategic geography of East Asia that has more or less persisted ever since. What we are talking about here is whether there are conditions under which we would see changes here that yet again you could conceptualize a unified Korea and a powerful Korea, a Korea that would be able to sort of stand on its own no longer subjective to the depredations of imperial powers. I think that's the vision that animates many in South Korea. I don't know whether it animates anybody in the north. We want to keep that in mind as we imagine longer-term possibilities, but most surely, we are not there yet and let's say if through careful action and determination we can advance that kind of goal but do it in a way that doesn't lead to enormous instability and conflict. Thank you!

Meng Bo: Thank you, Jonathan and Prof. Wang. I'm sure you have many more to share with us and I'm sure there will be more questions. But we have to be on schedule. So, once again, thank you both for your open, in-depth and comprehensive discussion that we have today, and thank you all for your participation and wonderful questions. Thank you!

* * * * *