

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
CENTER FOR EAST ASIA POLICY STUDIES

**BETWEEN THE U.S. AND NORTH KOREA:
AMERICANS AND THEIR DIVIDED
FAMILIES**

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[Transcript prepared from an audio recording]

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Welcome Remarks and Moderator:

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Presentation:

NAN KIM
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University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Remarks:

THE HONORABLE MARK KIRK (R-Ill.)
U.S. Senate

JASON GESKE
Legislative Assistant to the Honorable Mark Kirk

Panelists:

JASON AHN
Director and Executive Producer
“Divided Families”

CHAHEE LEE STANFIELD
Executive Director
National Coalition on the Divided Families

NAN KIM
Associate Professor
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

SAM YOON
Executive Director,
Council of Korean Americans

PROCEEDINGS

MS. MOON: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Kathy Moon. I am with Brookings in the Center for East Asia Policy Studies, otherwise known as CEAP, right here. We are really happy to be hosting this event. I took a chance on trying to bring to the Washington table an issue that has never been addressed, at least by a think tank or outside of Congress, perhaps. And a part of it from genuine boredom that we have nuclearized the Korea issues to a point where, you go to seminars and you are not learning much anymore. I don't think I'm the only one who feels that way. And also because there's a lot more to North Korea, the United States relationship with the North and to the Peninsula issues than nuclear weapons. And yet they've dominated everything.

And so today, what I wanted to do was to focus on human aspects of the U.S.-DPRK relationship, something people don't want to think about, that we even have human aspects. And so we are very, very lucky that we have a wonderful panel of participants who will be able to enrich our knowledge, our education and our understanding of both the limitations and the possibly opportunities or possibilities for improvement in U.S.-DPRK relations. So, I thank you all for coming. And first I'd also like to mention a note of thanks to our donors. The Council on Korean-Americans, it is a nation-wide group based in Washington, D.C., the executive director, Sam Yoon, is with us, he'll be joining the panel; and CKA, C-K-A, Council of Korean-Americans. CKA and some members of CKA were very, very generous in offering support to help make this event possible.

I also want to thank my good friend, James Min of DHL who also is a generous donor, and he came out all the way from Ohio to be here, and he's sitting very shyly in the back of the room. So, thank you, James. Of course I want to reiterate that Brookings' commitment to independence, and also to underscore that the views expressed today, here, are solely those of the speakers and not the Institution.

So, on this issue of family reunions, divided families and Americans, to my knowledge, this is the first time, a D.C. Think Tank is addressing the reality of Americans who are separated from their family members in North Korea. We are very familiar with the pain and trauma the division has caused so many on the Korean Peninsula, and the ups and downs of family reunions, that have been taking place on and

off, mostly off, unfortunately, on the Peninsula, often used as a political tool by both governments. In the U.S. over 100,000 Americans, Korean-Americans are unable to meet with or communicate with their relatives in the DPRK. There is a diaspora of divided families all around the world and the U.S. is one part of that link. Urgent international security issues like, the North WMD programs, and sanctions have overshadowed what we might call, or I might call family health and family security issues. And the DPRK of course maintains relatively closed borders, so we can't access the country and its people and family members at will.

Many Americans who have lived for decades not knowing if their siblings, their children, and other close kin are alive or dead, are now in their 70s, 80s, 90s or older. Many who have been able to document where a family member is in North Korea, holds on for the time when a reunion might occur before they die. The human cost of the Korean War, the continued division of the Peninsula, and the high tensions affecting the East Asia Region and the United States remains high. And as you know U.S.-DPRK relations these days is at a very, very low point. We don't have much to even talk about because we are not moving very -- at all, really, on nuclear -- on denuclearization. Sanctions make it difficult, if not impossible for any kind of economic exchange, and even humanitarian groups in the United States have had trouble accessing their work based in North Korea. Many things, then, are missing in the bilateral relationship, and one of them is a personal human connection between those in the DPRK and in the U.S.

American POWs and MIAs are part of that human connection, and progress on that issue has stalled for years. Americans with divided families are the other human connection, and their issue is just beginning to be recognized as a policy concern. I want to share with you a brief history comparative look at other countries with whom the United States either did not have diplomatic relations, or had an "enemy" relationship, and yet were able to work out provisions, legally, for family visits of divided families. The first is something that many of us in the older generation, that includes anybody probably over 40, is familiar with, the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union did not permit its people from leaving, and especially Jews who were discriminated and persecuted in the Soviet Union, had a very difficult time finding a haven elsewhere.

And the United States, through the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in the early-1970s, made it possible, through negotiations with the Soviet Union, to make immigration, the leaving of Jews from the Soviet Union to the outside world, Israel, the United States and other places, to be a requirement for most favored nation status. Now, of course the U.S. did have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, which we don't have with North Korea. Then there is Cuba until recently an "enemy state" with which the United States and its people were not to do business, not to have relations, except even Cuba, even Cuba-U.S. relations being bad as it was for so long, permitted the visits of family members, Americans by law, were permitted to go to Cuba or to accompany someone going to Cuba for the purposes of family visits. And family was, under law, defined as Americans being permitted to visit a "close relative" located in Cuba, or accompanying a close relative traveling to Cuba pursuant to the authorizations.

By law the term "close relative" of an American referred to and refers to still, "Any individual related to that person by blood, marriage, or adoption, who is no more than three generations removed from that person, or from a common ancestor with that person." We have legal precedence, the point is that. We don't have to reinvent the wheel about who is a family member of a North Korean, who is a North Korean family member of an American. Then there's Vietnam. In 1989 a California State Senator led a delegation composed mainly of Vietnamese-Americans to Vietnam for the first time, way before any roadmap toured normalization between Vietnam and the United States was introduced. It was the first time Vietnam accepted such a delegation. The group brought with them a list of about 500 names of Vietnamese-Americans with relatives in Vietnam. The delegation did not represent any government entity or any business entity, it was completely a private affair funded by private Vietnamese organizations in America, Vietnamese-American organizations.

The only governmental aspect or relationship was that the U.S. State Department approved of this trip in the late-'80s, and briefed the 14-member delegation in Thailand before they went to Vietnam. The international community has, through the U.N. High Commissioner for refugees, pushed for family reunions for decades and actually succeeded in establishing the Orderly Departure Program, the ODP, for Vietnamese with family members outside of Vietnam, especially in the United States.

So Vietnamese were able to come to the U.S. to join their family members, even those who had been in the Vietnam War with whom the U.S. had -- or against whom the U.S. had fought. The international community also, through the International Committee of the Red Cross, played a key role in helping unite families in Vietnam and in America through its restoring family links program, way back in the early 1990s. And I just want to add that for many Americans in the United States, because we cannot go through our channels in the U.S., many Korean-Americans use the Canadian Red Cross as a way to reach, find out information about and reach through letters, through photographs, et cetera, sending remittances, to North Korea and try to maintain a relationship through letters and such.

So, today we have with us Professor Nan Kim, of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has a book coming out, literally, it's hot off the press, coming out any day now, called; "Memory, Reconciliation, and Reunions in South Korea: Crossing the Divide." I've known Nan since we were children. I had a ponytail, she had pigtails, growing up in the same church in New Jersey, and it is wonderful to reunite with Nan, whom I've always kept in touch, but to be with her for this panel, and to be able to learn from her own research. I believe this is the only, first-time and only book in English, academic book, on divided families in South Korea, and that is a feat in and of itself, and we'll listen to her to get an idea of the issue as it was framed in South Korea, and then try to see what lessons we might learn or not learn, for the United States. We also have Senator Kirk's staff who will join us, and then a panel discussion with Mrs. Chahee Stanfield, Jason Ahn and Sam Yoon. So a rich table that awaits. So, Nan Kim? (Applause)

MS. KIM: Thank you. I'm very honored to be able to speak today and I wanted to thank Kathy Moon. First of all, when I received this invitation, it was a great surprise and I was so pleased. Kathy has been not only a long-time friend but also a mentor, and a kind of big-sister figure. Thank you also to the Brookings Institution for sponsoring -- for hosting this, as well as sponsors, and for those who made it possible. So the focus of our program today is the efforts by U.S. citizens to reunite their families who have been divided for over 65 years, who lost all contact since they were separated during the 1950-53 period of the Korean War. So, regarding this issue of Korean war-time separation, the perception of divided families both in Korea and in the U.S., as well as elsewhere in the world, that perception has been shaped by the periodic media broadcasts of the family reunions.

Of course these are the temporary meetings between North-South separated families in Divided Korea, or *nambuk isan kajok sangbong* (phonetic), and as I was asked to speak here today about my new book which analyzes this phenomenon of the Korean separated family, reunions themselves. For my book primarily focuses on the family meetings that occurred in mid-August of 2000, just two years after the historic June Summit. Although there have been 19 separate rounds of these family exchanges, the August 2000 reunions are the ones that have received the most attention in the domestic South Korean, as well as international media. I'll explain this further but the first thing to note is the historical precedence for this kind of temporary reunion, where very intimate and intense personal encounters are broadcast to the public. So we can think of those reunions as a kind of political technology that developed over time, and their form has been shaped by, primarily, two main precedence, the first being the KBS Telethon entitled, *Finding Separated Families*, or the *isan kajok chatgi* (phonetic), and the broadcast was initially planned as only a 95-minute program, in duration to commemorate the war.

But it generated a tremendous groundswell, and KBS was left with no choice but to extend the live broadcast, as a special television marathon that would eventually be what defined our understanding of this mediated family reunion; in the sense that people would -- often they were occurring on live television or over the two simulcast in different provincial cities. So, the KBS Telethon continued for a total of 138 days, from June 30th to November 14th of 1983, and eventually resulted in more than 10,000 successful reunions. The only precedent prior to 2000 official -- sorry -- any other cultural kind of reference point is this show, *achim madang* (phonetic) which would -- was actually inspired by the KBS Telethon, and shows not only reunions of separated -- North-South wartime separated families, but also other circumstances of family separation, particularly adoption, international adoption.

So as I was starting to say, the only official exchange of families between the two Koreas prior to 2000, occurred in September of 1985, when delegations of 50 separated family members were sent from each side to meet relatives in Seoul and Pyongyang. And so these were held at the height of the Cold War, so that in a sense these events were marred by ideological grandstanding on both sides. And the reunion's program would not continue past that single exchange meeting, and another feature of this was that not

all the family members came out to meet with their relatives. Again, because of the tension of the Cold War climate, only 65 members were able to meet their relatives.

So, one legacy of the 1985 meetings was a degree of cynicism about the separated family meetings, and the question, because these family meetings have continued on since 2000 -- the post Summit Family Meetings have continued on for 19 rounds. And why focus so heavily on the 2000 meetings and especially given how drastically the political climate has changed from the period of the turn of the millennium? And one of the things I argue is that these August 2000 family meetings would prove formative for how we understand this contemporary concept of North-South family reunions among divided families. So, for example, although we commonly associate these North-South meetings with heart-rending emotion, that was actually not the case prior to these Sunshine Era Reunions, regarding the broader level of public interest, the television ratings in South Korea, prior to the August 2000 family meetings, actually proved higher than for the June Summit itself, reflecting a widespread popular curiosity over how the two sides would interact, and this is very striking because in many of the -- the policy studies about this kind of early onset of the Sunshine period, a heavy emphasis on the June Summit, and the reunions are just often a footnote, if mentioned at all, when in fact, the highest level of public support for engagement, coincided not with this June Summit, but with -- following the reunions themselves.

So, as I mentioned, in terms of the interest and the attention that was generated by the reunions, it had been this popular speculation in the run-up to the reunion's broadcast, that the North Koreans would be very rigid, very stereotypical apparatchiks, and would mostly use the event as a vehicle for North Korean propaganda. Of course, as we know now, the meetings would instead generate searing images of raw emotion, and intimate expressions of affection in scenes where mutual resemblance is among the participating families were unmistakable. But so as I mentioned there's a degree of cynicism that was a legacy of the 1985 meetings, but the 1985 meetings were not actually, in my field interviews, there wasn't -- they certainly did not have nowhere near the impact as the KBS Telethon, but one of the ways in which it did endure as far as in the sort of cultural repertoire about the reunions is you'll notice this photograph of a man meeting with his mother, and that was used as the photograph for the backdrop of the mural that ran the length of the August 2000 reunion.

This is taking place in COEX, in Gangnam, which at the time was really the kind of urban new development as well as the kind of cutting edge urban space. And so this mural is also notable because even though it looks like a printed, I guess, sort of somewhat out-of-focus photograph it is actually stipulated, there's lots of -- it's made up of all different characters that show the names of 116,000 other family members who had applied but could not participate. So it was sort of shadowed by all of the people who -- and so there was a sense that this was a token event, but nevertheless extremely important. And so the meetings, again, this image would circulate and become part of, again, the backdrop, and there is also the sense of uncertainty, because whether this would also be a one-off, right, or whether the meetings would continue. And so that is also one of the breakthroughs, not only that the meetings occurred, but this would continue on for several rounds, again, for 19 rounds, although only the first three were exchanges between Seoul and Pyongyang.

After that, that was negotiated at the June Summit, and then subsequent to that, the 4th and beyond, and there were some delays, and then all of the subsequent meetings have been held only in North Korea. So, the post Summit Meetings were there for the first sustained series of official meetings between North-South separated families. So the reunions are closely associated with the Sunshine Policy which marked, of course, as I think most people in the room would be familiar, a departure from the prior official position that had long regarded North Korea as an enemy and arrival for political and diplomatic legitimacy. And so the Sunshine Policy therefore pursued engagement with the North to an unprecedented degree and inter-Korean relations emphasizing diplomatic dialogue, mutual recognition, economic cooperation, and peaceful reconciliation.

And so the reunions as the first large-scale -- I'm getting ahead of myself -- as the first large-scale event following the summit and also crucially involving civilians, these family meetings carried heavy political significance. On the one hand South Korean officials describe the successful accomplishment of the reunions as no less than a prerequisite to fulfilling other aspects of the agenda of economic cooperation. They anticipated that these events would serve as a sign that other aspects of the June 15th joint declaration could be taken in good faith. And as I mentioned earlier, it was the reunions, and of the summit that saw the peak of South Korean public opinion favoring engagement. But the deeper cultural

meaning was -- the way in which these events could be understood with respect to one memory, this book might -- book argues that prior to the two states proceeding with the terms of inter-Korean economic cooperation, the reunions opened a space, a luminous space, to recognize the war's staggering human devastation, invoking a sense of bereavement to which both sides could lay a claim.

And so the book considers what occurred on the level of popular memory and cultural practice during the crucial period following the June 2000 Summit, which contributed toward making a reconciliation possible to imagine. And that's facilitating the political agency for changes in South Korea's inter-Korean policy that would set the course for the ensuing decade of engagement. So the reunion themselves were simultaneous exchange in which 100 North Koreans came to Seoul, and 100 South Koreans went to Pyongyang, and each individual participant was seen with only a handful of family members over the course of four days. And to prepare for the reunions the respective Red Cross societies, sent a list of 200 names in advance to ascertain whether these candidates were alive and traceable. And so, then a delegation would be chosen from each side. And so with less than a month to prepare, the officials located these candidates through mass media outlets, and using television as well as the major newspapers. And so through breaking news reports it soon became apparent that the name Central North Korea represented those who had gone missing during the episodes of wartime chaos in the late 1950 and early 1951. So, as Kathy said earlier, because of the prohibitions on communication between the two populations, this meant that there was essentially no contact between the family members caught on opposite sides of the divide.

And the Koreans were thus denied the ability to sort the living and the dead, which is a crucial post-conflict process that had been arrested by national division. So, unable to ascertain whether or not their missing relatives had survived the war's destruction, many of those who were not -- could not be traced were given up, or mourned as dead. And this is also amidst the social risks attached to having relatives on the other side. So these meetings in 2000 rather than being meetings among those who are merely physically separated, amounted to more of an extraordinary encounter with those who would normally cross the inter-Korean border, but also crossed a boundary of returning from the state of social death, and that amounted to a collective return of the presumed Korean war dead, as those who had been regarded

for half a century to have been among those lost in the Korean War. So hundreds of such people resurfaced the very meaning of war death became unsettled as it was a shocking development among South Koreans to learn that North Korea sent information about so many of these presumed war dead, including those who held prominent or high-ranking positions in North Korean society.

As one separated family member put it when I met him at the South Korean Red Cross headquarters, if even these people can come forward, then things must really be changing. So it's scores and scores of such people who had long been counted among the dead, were suddenly discovered, in fact, to be alive in the North, there arose this possibility that any Korean family could prove to be a North-South separated family. So, in this way the reunions also indirectly recalled the war's catastrophic toll of mass death. And in recent historical scholarship, on the Korean War there has been increasing emphasis on traumatic memory and considering the war as the Cambridge Anthropologist Heonik Kwon has written, "Not primarily as a violent struggle between contending armed forces, but rather the struggle for survival, but unarmed civilians against the generalized indiscriminate violence, perpetuated by the armed political forces of all sides."

But even so, the bitter reality was off-limits through the suppression of ordinary people's narratives by dominant Cold War interpretations on both sides. So, if I can just -- I'm sorry -- I'll just quickly wrap up then. This was, rather than -- In the months following the June Summit, and at a transformative moment in the history of inter-Korean reconciliation the reunions then effectively served as the first joint North-South Korean commemoration of the war. And although it was timed to mark the anniversary of liberation from Japanese colonial rule, on August 15th, the reunions instead, really signaled the consequences -- the ongoing consequences of the war, in this commemoration that was centered on ordinary people as the war's victims. So rather than condemn the reunions of a form of war remembrance that was glimpsed through the trauma of those who had been bereft of the war's destruction, a sense of loss, to which both sides could lay claim. And so prior to the two-states proceeding with the terms of economic cooperation, this was a space to recognize the legacies of the war from the perspectives of ordinary people. So, I'll stop there. Thank you very much. Absolutely! Thank you. (Applause)

MS. MOON: Many thanks, Nancy. There will be time to ask her questions and follow up, and tease out all of the richness in her work, during the panel. I just want to introduce now, the film. We are going to see an excerpted clip of the documentary film called "The Divided Families." The director-producer Jason Ahn, would you stand up Jason? He's right here (applause). And Jason is a Korean-American, he is also a physician, and he happened to do a film while he was in Harvard Medical School. So, you know, we have very talented people in the midst. So, are we ready for the screening? And then after this, we will continue with remarks from Senator Kirk's staff and then the panel.

(Video played)

(Singing in foreign language)

MS. STANFIELD: My name is Chahee Stanfield, but I'm known as Chahee Lee in the Korean-American community. I was born in Manchuria, China, I grew up in Daegu City in South Korea. In 1992 my nephew went to North Korea and found out that my father had passed away. I have a brother living in North Korea, I believe he's in his 70s. Seven years ago I received a letter from him. Since then I haven't heard from him, so I'm not sure whether he's still alive. My father and Oong Hee stayed in Manchuria, and the rest of my family left for Daegu. Right after we left, the border between China and North Korea was closed, so my father and Oong Hee became trapped in Manchuria, and that's how my family was divided forever.

(Speaking in foreign language)

SPEAKER: In the fall and winter of 1950 with the U.N. retreat families in many sent their stronger, younger often male members south with full intention of joining them in a few weeks. And so they in a sense said goodbye to each other in the winter of 1950 saying, I'll see you in three weeks. And that three weeks or two weeks has become 60 years. Since the early 90s relations between South and North Korea have improved somewhat, and the South Korean government has taken a very active position on divided family reunions. It has an organization, it has a database, it encourages people to get together as a sense of community, if you are a divided family member you feel that somebody is trying to do something for you. Overseas Koreans do not have these advantages because the U.S. government doesn't have a divided

family program.

(Speaking in foreign language).

SPEAKER: Did my wife die in the war? Is my child alive? Are my parents, if they are still living? Do I have anymore brothers and sisters? And so they all started a kind of desperate search.

(Speaking in foreign language)

SPEAKER: We know that have over 100,000 American citizens who have relatives there. We know because of the income differential between the DPRK and the USA, there's a tremendous capability in the United States to fund and support this effort. We have established the official channel through the commission and we have the registry to make it easy for the first test cases. The difficulty of all these efforts has been to break this loose from the up and down cycle of U.S.-DPRK relations.

MS. STANFIELD: Those Six-Party Talks were dragging on, and the normalization between North Korea and the United States were not foreseen. So, Congressman Kirk, and we had to do something, we needed a big project to push the U.S. government. So, we started Saemsori.

SPEAKER: Most Koreans, Americans, who tried to solve this issue, will try to write letters to the administration, to the president, to the secretary of state, and somehow push this down from the top, or else they'll try to contact the North Koreans to act as honest brokers in a raging push for divided family reunions. Saemsori's strategy is quite different from that, it's to remind the U.S. government, through the representatives, that this is in fact not just a human rights issue - this is a citizen rights issue.

SPEAKER: Working with Steve Linton and Eugene Bell, we thought it's best to put together a data base and now with over 1,000 Korean-American families that have direct information on their relatives. Most of the time they are in a position like Chahee Stanfield.

(Speaking in foreign language)

SPEAKER: When he had left for North Korea to see his sisters, I actually asked him, you know, make sure

you get a clip of their hair, so that we could do like a DNA test to make sure, you know, that it's them, because let's face it, 57 years, you get a call saying that your sister who you haven't seen for all those years is alive --

(Speaking in foreign language)

SPEAKER: So they found their family, he's found his sisters, but now what? They are in the late stages of their lives right now, so that's never going to change. I mean they are never going to be able to be that, like physically be together like a family.

(Speaking in foreign language)

(Applause)

(Video ends)

MS. MOON: I don't think I've ever -- I don't think Brookings has ever hosted a film showing at a policy talk before, but it's quite moving. And my sister lives in New York and I miss her now watching this film, and our only excuse is that we are all just too busy, not divided by the forbidden. Thank you, Jason, very much. Thanks to Mrs. Stanfield also for making this film and for sharing it with us. I'd like now to introduce one of the stars of the documentary, Senator Mark Kirk. Senator Kirk was supposed to be here until about 1:00 p.m. today, and then we learned he had to go in for voting. And so we completely understand and his staff was very gracious enough to offer a busy man, the legislative assistant to Senator Kirk, Jason Geske.

Before I ask Jason to join me, to deliver some remarks on behalf of the senator, I want to introduce Senator Kirk to you, you saw his face and his activities, just a little background, more recently Senator Mark Kirk of Illinois, and Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, together, a republican and democrat, introduced Senate Legislation 2657 which directs the State Department to prioritize discussions with members of the Korean-American community who still remain separated from their families.

Senator Kirk has been an ardent supporter of Korean-Americans and their efforts to reunite with their families since 2001. As a former representative of Illinois' 10th District, he introduced this issue to the

House of Representative as early as 2002, I believe, and discussed the matter with then Secretary of State Colin Powell. We are very fortunate to have some notes, remarks from the senator via his legislative assistant, Jason Geske. Jason? (Applause)

MR GESKE: Thank you. Again, Senator Kirk sends his regrets, there's a lot of undergoing the National Defense Authorization Bill right now, and there's votes all day. So, before I left him today he told me two things to tell you. First of all, thank you, Jason, Chahee is here. I mean, all of the stakeholders involved in pushing this forward. The National Coalition for Divided Families, a lot of other groups who have worked with our offices, and other offices.

You know, it's so easy to do nothing, for Congress to just do nothing, and Chahee and other divided family members and Korean-Americans, and non-Korean-Americans have pushed this to the fore for Senator Kirk and for Senator Warner, and across the Senate and in the House. And so that doesn't happen without you, and that's why that was the main thing he was going to say here, is these -- you know, it's nice that he spoke, but the main person who spoke was Chahee and the other divided family members. To hear those stories, and to really make it real, that this isn't something that just happened 60 years ago, and you can go about your life, not thinking that it's still happening and, you know, it's still happening for Chahee and the others we saw on the video.

And so the second one is, the second point he wanted to make, was that this is a priority for him, and Kathy, you mentioned the Bill S.2657, which we introduced about three months ago, and there's copies of it, outside for everyone to look at, and it's actually a very important Bill that we are pushing because it pushes something that has to happen. A lot of times you talk about resolutions, you talk about senses of the senator, senses of the Congress. And one individual word can make so much difference in how we conduct foreign policy, and how Congress enforces its will through the power of the purse.

And so in 2657, which is the most important part is it directs the State Department to discuss divided families with South Korea, with anytime we engage with North Korea, whether Six-Party Talks, et cetera, because previously, you know, the language says the State Department is urged to discuss this. I mean it's

very -- That doesn't force you to do anything, if something else comes up, or there's another issue to the floor, that's easily left by the wayside, anything that's not enforced for someone to speak about.

And so that's why Senator Kirk and Senator Warner, along with other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee introduced this Bill to say, not only that the State Department should talk about this with Korea, with South Korea and the government of South Korea, but also that the State Department, through the special representative for North Korea Policy, should meet with stakeholders like Chahee, like Jason, twice a year at least, to get their views, to get updates from the ground, because I know every time I speak to Chahee which is very frequently, good to see you, she always tells me something new that I didn't know.

And if I don't know something or the State Department doesn't know something, you know, it's easy for that information to just disappear or not -- issues not to make something of it. And so that's why there are two aspects to that Bill, one being the -- you know, saying State Department shall bring this up as opposed to should or is urged to, and those words make a world of difference in foreign policy, and then also the consultation aspect so that our government consults with our people, our South Korean-American community to push forward South Korean -- Korean-American divided family issues.

And so I want to be brief, I don't want to go too long, but there are copies of this Bill outside, and I can't confirm, but I know Senator Kirk is pushing forward for this language to be included in the Appropriations Bill that's going to come out in a week, so that's why I can't confirm anything, because I don't know what the final Bill looks like, but hopefully that will be in there, so the State Department will not be funded without the Bill.

And I think there will be some real change here, because the ultimate truth is, people who have divided families are dying, and tens of thousands who applied to have divided -- to meet with their divided relatives have died, and the problems are only going to get worse, in terms of these families leaving and dying without resolution, without knowing, and that's why this is such priority for Senator Kirk, because 2001 to 2016 is 15 years, well in 15 years this -- I mean it will be an even worse situation for the few

remained divided families left.

And so, thank you. Thank you for having me here, and I look forward to hearing from the panel, and seeing new things, new information, so I could take back to Senator Kirk. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. MOON: As the panelists get properly wired with their microphones, I just want to mention that we had invited Senator Mark Warner of Virginia as well so that we maintained our bipartisan status, we invited the republican and the democratic, regrettably Senator Warner was not able to attend, but we know that he very much supports the efforts that Mrs. Stanfield and others are doing.

So, we are going to now break into the panel discussion, in a more casual way, and have two of our featured guests, Mrs. Stanfield whom you already met, as another star in the movie, speak with us, as well as Jason, who worked on the film, and is, ever since that film, and he finished Harvard Medical School, he is moving on in his professional career, but he continues to pursue this issue quite passionately with all the other duties that he has in life.

And then Sam Yoon will speak on behalf of different groupings of Korean-Americans. We want to make sure no one walks out thinking that all Korean-Americans have the same view about this issue, or any other issue. And then we'll open it up for Q&A, and you are most welcome to engage Professor Kim, and all the other guests.

I will not spend time going into their bios, the profiles are here, and so I ask you to please take a look, and we'll start with Jason Ahn, who is the director and producer of the film, for some remarks, and then move on to Mrs. Stanfield.

MR. AHN: Thank you very much. Thank you, Professor Moon, for having us here, and it's very nice to be on the panel with you all, and it's really exciting to see that this issue is getting some momentum here, and so what I thought I'd share with you all, is just my personal journey, and how the film came to be, and then kind of the things that we are working on right now.

So, you know, in college my mom shows me a picture of her cousin who was actually defecting from North Korea and she told me that she was in China. And I asked her -- Wow, I didn't know I had a cousin in North Korea. And so it turns out that my grandmother was a divided family member, she had left her younger sister, her younger brother in North Korea, when the line was drawn, she happened to be in the Southern part of Korea, and her family happened to be in the northern part of Korea.

And so when I heard that story and I heard that it was her last wish to see her younger sister before she passed away, she passed away in 1990, so I was very young, but I did have this fond memory of my grandmother. Through some channel she was able to send a letter to North Korea, and then receive a letter, it took about six months for that to happen, and by the time she sent the letter saying -- to her sister saying, if it's the last thing before I do before I pass away, I'm going to come and see you. And unfortunately she wasn't able to do that.

And that story stuck with me for a very long time. After college I went to Korea on a Fulbright Fellowship, I was studying North Koreans defectors and wanted to learn about their health as I was going into medicine. And there, actually, met my mom's cousin who actually successfully made it to South Korea, and she told me that she had seen photos of my grandmother's funeral when she had been in North Korea, and that she longed to reunite with our family in the States.

So here I was, right after college, very young, idealistic, passionate, wanting to make a difference in the world, and I had this kindred connection to this country that was so foreign to the U.S. And that made me think of two things. One, wow, I was born in America, and I'm so thankful for the opportunities that I've been given. And two, I should do something about this, and that's where I got to meet Chahee, and she was working then Congressman Kirk, and the organization at the time, trying to get the legislation passed.

I'm sorry the film excerpt that you saw today was actually outdated, and so some of the things on there, it was outdated but you can see the full version of the film online at DividedFamilies.com. And so I went to medical school, but this thing kept eating away at me, I felt like time was running out, this is an urgent

issue, and if we don't do anything about it, you know, the history is going to be lost, the stories, and so there I decided to make the film.

Our goal was to record the history, raise awareness and to advocate for a reunion, and I think we are doing all those things after, you know, five years of production, in post-production, fundraising, interviewing all the divided family members that you saw up here, and it's just been a real privilege to be able to work with you, Chahee, and to carry the stories of these divided families on.

What we are working on right now, is try to do more advocacy work, especially around this Bill Senate, S.2657. What we are trying to do is getting folks like you all to make phone calls and emails to our legislators, especially to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And so, some very tangible things that you can do, is sign up for a newsletter, if you go to DFUSA.org, stay connected, watch the film at DividedFamilies.com and spread the word and with that I'll end. Thank you.

MS. STANFIELD: Thank you.

MS. MOON: And then we have Mrs. Chahee Lee Stanfield.

MS. STANFIELD: Hi. We, the Korean-American divided families suffer for so long -- so long, because for years we lived with a Cold War mentality. And we didn't want our neighbors or our government to know that we had family members in North Korea. We didn't even want our children to be a part of our generation's tragedy, we wanted them to be far, far away, and to be happy, and be successful as Korean-Americans. But here you are. When you have your education, power and the gifts, you have chosen to fly back to your roots, and stand next to us carrying our issues. When Jason came into my life, the whole dynamic of the divided family work had changed. Now they are carrying his team, DFUSA, and they are carrying our issue in an American way. We no longer have to worry about our language problem, and the cultural barrier, and you don't know what it means to us. Thank you, Jason; and Katherine, Sam, and Nan, and thank you all. Thank you very much.

MS. MOON: Sam Yoon, from CKA?

MR. YOON: Yes. Our organization is a national membership organization, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and our mission is to raise the voices of Korean-American community at the national level, and to develop leaders. I actually flew in from Chicago this morning and met with a very good friend of Chahee's, yesterday. Just to show how closely we are all connected. And I have to say, Jason, that film, I think, like for many of you, it's very difficult to watch. Normally I think that if I'm going to be -- watch something like this with my wife, I have to bring Kleenex for her, it's like, where is mine? I'm like, what's going on?

I would want to share just three quick points about -- just my thoughts about mainstream society, mainstream America and what the challenges might be, in terms of making this an issue that's meaningful to them. Korean-American community second, you know, as I talk to lot of Korean-American leaders around the country, and North Korea, in general, is an issue that our organization cares deeply about. And then just some ideas about what divided families -- the opportunity that this issue can present in terms of the larger issue of North Korea for Americans. I think it's not any news to anyone here that the media fuels an image of North Korea that is -- that's problematic for anyone who wants to see a future in which things get better, because the message about North Korea is that it is a place that it's so hard to understand, and so kind of belligerent to the U.S. and to the world, that they just can't -- you can't deal with them.

Now, not to say that some of that isn't true, but the perception, the once piece of data that I came across about Americans and how that affects their attitude toward North Korea or the perception, is simply that when Americans are asked: among these five countries, I think it was China, South Korea, Sudan, Syria, which of them has the worst human rights record, and by far the choice, the answer for Americans is North Korea. I remember seeing -- the number is 34 percent. The next higher was, I don't know, it was 17 percent; China was 13, and Sudan and Syria I think were at 11; and Russia, Russia was at 9. North Korea in the minds of mainstream America is the worst, the worst offender of human rights, so we are starting from there. Not to mention, this survey was taken in 2014, these days it's nukes, right. I saw a photo -- or no -- it was the cover of the Economist Magazine with Kim Jong-un on it, and they took his hair, and they

made it into a mushroom cloud.

MS. MOON: Last week.

MR. YOON: And that was just last week. That's what -- that feeds the American perception of what we are dealing with there. It's obviously a challenge, and this whole idea of using this -- not using this issue, it is an issue in and of itself. But this issue has a way to, as Nan was saying, to bring a human face to the toll that has been created by the division that was caused by people other than the Korean people; the 50 and 60 years' worth of buried trauma, as well as ongoing pain. So that's one issue.

And Korean-Americans, 1.7 million of us here, but we are not all -- we are not monolithic. Roughly a third of us are not even -- I think they are immigrants, they are not citizens, roughly a third are Korean-born U.S. citizens, roughly a third are U.S.-born American citizens. And so based on that perspective your nationality, where you were born, you are going to see thing very differently. No surprise. I'll say that for our organization which is a leadership organization, we did a straw poll of our members a number of years ago, and said: What policy issue do you think is most important to you? North Korea just rose head and shoulders above all the others. But immediately the sense was; wait a second, isn't this a divisive issue, how we all had conversations with our parents or aunts and uncles about this issue, and then the conversation just went in a bad way? And so we did have some trepidation about raising awareness about -- or, just embracing that says, something for which our organization should be a voice.

I found in the last few years, again, talking with a lot of Korean-American leaders, that's much less the case than I would have expected that some of our members worried about. And I think that does have to do with the passage of time. And so it's both, you know -- I think it's an opportunity in that, you know, that there is a sense that we should care about this. I think maybe two decades ago you would have heard someone from my father's generation say, I want to have nothing to do with that evil regime, communist, you know, red you know, these kinds of images and perceptions would have gotten in the way.

I think that's less so. But I think that has to do with the passage of time. And that's both an opportunity to kind of refresh and pass on to another generation, you know, the challenge. But it is, again, it is that

time is going to make this, as a race against time, as your film was suggesting. And then lastly, just a quick idea or thought that, you know, when you explain to a Non-Korean, North and South Korea were the problem of North Korea, you just get into a conversation, I think it's clear, and I think Nan's book brings this out too, divided families is a metaphor for the country itself, for the very kind of -- the circumstances that it's on a Peninsula. I mean, Koreans, and I think this is statistically true, they tend to be -- to like to be with other Koreans, they tend to be more insular, more dependent on Korean language media, than other Asian-American groups.

You go to a lot of campuses and you see there's Asian student groups, but there always has to be a Korean student group, right? There's something -- and that's not something necessarily to be proud of, but it's just a fact. Koreans are very -- Asian-Americans, in general, that's also very well known, they tend to be more family oriented. Well, Koreans take that to another level, so the idea that our country, you know, our kin, our family as a country, has been divided, you know, there's a parallel to the very facts of a people that we know, our own relatives, that there's division in our family. And I think, you know, to the extent that we need our country, our policymakers, our lawmakers to consider a future in which this division is something that we can address, we need to start telling the story of real human beings sort of affected by it. And so that, as Kathy said at the beginning, this can't be all about news. And even human rights as important as that is, this is beyond a human right. It's a human condition that every individual can -- even if it doesn't happen to you, you now intuitively, if you had a sibling and that sibling is missing from your life, taken from you, that will never leave you until the day you die.

If you are thinking about like when, Egypt Air crashed, you know, or these airlines that crash; the desperation of families to even know what happened is something that -- that's a trauma that you will never ever -- you will live the rest of your life seeking that information so you can feel complete again. And if you apply that to an entire nation of people, I mean, that's the story of our people, and if you don't think that that doesn't pass on to you at the next generation, and the next generation, you don't understand something about human nature. So all of us, even the younger generation, it's something that we carry in our DNA if you are Korean, and I think the story and even the effort to have our lawmakers address it, is a really good opportunity to kind of fulfill something that is really always going to be unfilled

for the Korean people in America.

MS. MOON: Thank you. I'd like to give Nan just a couple minutes to share any thoughts with us since she has approached this from an academic perspective, and to meet the film, which I know you've seen already before, and to listen to Mrs. Stanfield and Jason talk, perhaps if you want to help bridge the issue of family, divided families in Korea versus here. You know, what are some differences, commonalities if you are so inclined?

MS. KIM: I'll be happy to. Thank you. The reunions that occurred in South Korea, in North and South Korea in the early 2000s were actually -- excluded -- if you were an American citizen you would had to have South Korean citizen apply on your behalf. In other words, a relative in South Korea, so that was strictly between North and South, although there were some relatives who had come, who had been -- But one of the things that was striking was that those, if you look at the photographs, the people who became the iconic separated families from those very highly-publicized 2000 reunions, are people who have never been considered separated families before, because they were the families of those who had gone to the North. That's the list that the North Koreans sent. The South Koreans, of course, sent a list of the people who had been former refugees, who had come from -- in other words, so there were the two sides exchanged so that the South Koreans went to Pyongyang, and North Koreans came to Seoul for these three rounds of the reunions.

And that was really striking because it meant that these families who participated and were on a sort of in the media spotlight where people who had hidden their family histories for their entire lives because of the social risks and the nervousness and, you know, the sense of danger surrounding those who was related to someone -- and so this really changed the notion. But it also meant that many of those people, because they experience discrimination in South Korea, a number of them also migrated abroad, or tried, but because of restrictions, were unable to.

So, one of the points I wanted to make about diaspora is the way in which -- the fact that at the same time you had 200 names of people who had been mourned as dead suddenly appear, it really changes the notion of diaspora because generally, in the contemporary sense, we think about diaspora as communities

that are connected over vast spaces, and are able to, you know, sort of cooperate and communicate with each other. But there's an older notion, a pre-modern notion of diaspora, which I'll call exilic diaspora which in the original sense from the Jewish Diaspora of, when you are exiled from your community that was a form of a social death, as well as that was a very vulnerable position. And so there is another form of diaspora in which it actually not about connection but about disruption, and as we saw from the KBS, during the KBS telethon, some of those families were just one village over. They didn't necessarily have to go anywhere, but yet cannot connect with each other.

And so in that way one possible approach is that there are other groups that are part of this type of exilic diaspora. Maybe child soldiers, international adoption is another when there is closed adoption, where, despite our interconnectedness in telecommunications, our ability to travel, there's still those families that cannot reconnect. And then just one last comment I wanted to make was that these series of reunions, one of the things that was really striking was the way in which we think of this traumatic memory, and this has historically been used to perpetuate further enmity, and this is the real turning point where being able to really bring attention to that social suffering can be a means for common ground and reconciliation, I feel like that's one of the resonance of this.

MS. MOON: Thank you very much. It's very meaningful because there's a lot of -- you can't separate the public, political and policy from the personal, and this is obviously the case, and it has to be that way. That whatever policy is formulated, or approaches are formulated, it must be grounded in the personal experiences and priorities of the individuals who have been doing the feeling and the suffering, and the waiting. I think that it's interesting that I was first introduced -- actually Nan Kim, back in, I think, 2001 or 2002, introduced me to my own sense of curiosity if not longing for this abstract North Korean family that I am also a part of. My mother as born in North Korea, in Kanggye, my father from Busan, so you know, from tippy top to the bottom, or the lowly bottom.

And I always grew up, unlike many Korean-Americans or Korean families, my whole family, my mother -- my bedroom stories were about the Korean War; Japanese colonialism by my father and then then Korean War, and taking refuge by my mother. So, naturally, I ended up studying Korea. This is what was fed to

me before I went to sleep, as a child. And what I found fascinating is that I grew up with stories about my mother growing up in North Korea as a very normal thing. To me, North Korea was introduced to me as a normal place of her childhood. The mountains, the beautiful water, her favorite foods, so in a way I'm grateful that I had not been given a contaminated version of a place that really did exist prior to the kind of difficulties that we all know North Korea has been living through, and living in and creating.

But what's interesting is that I never had a sense of a real connection until Nan and her husband bought a ticket and invited me to -- in Seoul, we were studying there at the time, all of us for different reasons; introduced me to the first-ever visit by the North Korean Acrobatic Circus Troop to Seoul. And I thought, why the hell am I going to watch a circus, I don't like circuses.

But then of course, I thought well, she invited me, and this could be interesting. I went as an anthropologist, and I have to tell you, I was mesmerized the whole time looking, because it finally hit me. As I watched the acrobats swinging and dancing and curving their bodies, in the most strange positions, I was marveling at their abilities and the discipline that must have taken by the state to get them there, but I was also wondering, could that be my second, third cousin? Could that be my -- because my mom left two uncles, a half-brother, and grandmother, and all sorts of people there. So I just kept looking out going, could that be, and yet I felt afraid at the same time. I didn't want to know them. And so it was a very strange experience and I forgot about it until I saw Nan today, and had this panel so, boy, talk about buried memories.

With that, and with the intention of unburying things and sharing openly, I'd like to open up our discussion to all of you, and invite you to ask questions to our panelists, and for our panelists to ask one another question if you have any. We have microphones and people will be walking around with them, and if you just raise your hand, please tell us your name and affiliation if you have one, apart from being a family member. And please keep your question to a question, and keep it brief, please. Thank you. We'll start in the back and then come to Mark.

MR. SHANE AHN: All right. My name is Shane Ahn. We might be third cousin, I don't know.

MR. AHN: Yeah. We are probably related somehow.

MR SHANE AHN: Yeah. So, actually I went to North Korea when I was fairly young, maybe 25 years ago, and my dad went 5, 6, 7, 8 times, over a period of a couple decades from the late-'80s to I guess -- or whenever he got too old, and a lot of relatives passed away. But anyway, you know, despite whatever national conflicts were going on, a lot of individuals, civil society efforts continued, and a lot of North Koreans, former North Koreans met their family when they were turning back. So, maybe Professor Kim, or anyone else on the panel, can you tell me what kind of efforts do you run into during your research of the -- I know there were a couple things alluded to in the film, but I wonder if there was a larger concerted effort that you are aware of? Thanks.

MS. MOON: Okay. I'm going to take a few questions in each round, and then give the panelists and opportunity and then come back for more. We have a question up here?

MR. TOKOLA: Ok, thank you. I'm Mark Tokola from the Korea Economic Institute. My question is, of course what we want for the families, are reunions, that's the goal, but to what extent could a simple accounting of where people are? And if they are still alive, or maybe a quicker exchange of letters or maybe telephone calls, could those be done too, and would it help at all?

MS. MOON: Okay. I'll take another question, and then we'll go to the panel. Yes?

MR. LEE: Hi. Joseph Lee. I just want to thank you guys for your time here. Professor Kim, you wrote in the National Bureau of Asian Research --

MS. MOON: I'm Professor Moon, she's is Professor Kim.

MR. LEE: I'm sorry. Professor Moon, I'm sorry. You wrote a piece a couple years ago about U.S. political engagement of Korean-Americans.

MS. MOON: Right.

MR. LEE: And talking about the Comfort Women issue and how we passed it in Congress. And you latched it onto a different minority group, the Armenian-Americans, and used that as a great example for what we should do to mobilize. So my question is: How are we going to get Senate Bill 2657 passed, especially with the Foreign Relations Committee with Chairman Bob Corker from Tennessee? I know we can leverage some of the great things, like I think Hankook Tires is down there. Georgia, David Purdue, U.S. Senator David Purdue, actually used to live in Busan, Korea, for a while, has a great connection with Kia in Georgia as well. I was wondering, what type of leverages we can do moving forward.

MS. MOON: Okay. You seem to know more than many of us here, so we might ask you right back, but we'll go to panelists, and then come back for some more questions. So we have three questions out there, and I'll just -- let's start with Sam, and then we'll go to Mrs. Stanfield.

MR. YOON: Well, you know, the last question, it's seriously true, you know, we obviously need a legislative strategy. I think I'm going to put my amateur political pundit hat on for a second. And say the political atmosphere right now is I think is difficult for passing anything that seems risky to anyone. I'm not an expert in the ins and outs of the -- you know, kind of how a bill, you know, gets through the Hill, but I imagine the rhetoric that's out there, about North Korea, if this were to get the kind of exposure that we would hope it would, you know, there will be between President Clinton and -- I mean, sorry, that was a --

MS. MOON: A slip.

MR. YOON: A little slip. Maybe referring her husband, maybe that was what I mean. Secretary Clinton and Donald Trump that, you know, in the popular imagination about what North Korea is, you connect an issue like that and say, this has to do with that country. I think it would be hard, and for our purposes, it's an organization that really, you know, is trying to build an advocacy capacity, we are looking ahead to the next administration and they are obviously two very, very different futures. But preparing nonetheless to

get both campaigns to respond to -- you know, to tell us what strategies or thoughts they have about how to solve this as a problem. And I think just as the legislation, you know, directs the State Department to do; I think divided families has to be a part of, whether we use a questionnaire, or some sort of Circus Debate, whatever we choose to do between now and the election, I think that that is all part of a larger advocacy strategy, you know, and the Bill itself is an excuse to, you know, to create a longer-term campaign around this issue, as bills often do.

Bills are organizing tools as well as, you know, the law when it gets passed. But there are ways, there are vehicles to tell the story to America and to the world, and I think that's certainly, you know, an important function.

MS. STANFIELD: I have a story to answer your question. Our first appeal introduced by Senator Kirk was blocked in the House, by the two chairs of the Preparation Committee. Congressman Duncan Hunter in Seattle and the Congressman Ike Skelton in Missouri. Having -- Working for the Congressman Duncan, reversed his decision that it was not a big problem because we had the Korean community there. The Korean-American Association and they worked with other organizations, and they called Congressman Duncan and wrote, in all the direction they wrote and called, and it worked out right away, he changed his mind. But the problem with that -- Congressman Skelton, he was from a rural area and there were no Koreans living there. And so was there the university, no, they are all farmers. We could not find the Korean farmers. So, we send them from even Hawaii, and we sent the letters, from all of the country to Congressman Skelton. Eventually he changed his mind. So the Bill was passed in the House eventually.

MS. MOON: Jason.

MR. AHN: Yeah, I can mention a little bit about what we are trying to do. We've actually reached out to the presidential campaigns as the Divided Families USA Group, to the Trump campaign as well as Clinton and Sanders campaign. And actually the Trump campaign gave us 30 minutes over the phone, Dr. Clovis did. This was right after he said that he would speak with North Koreans. And what we were trying to

inform them, is that, well, if you are going to speak to the North Koreans talk to them about divided families. That should be the first that you talk to them about. I think one of the biggest hurdles actually for us, is our legislators don't even know about the issue that well. So actually, Senator Boxer is a senator from California, a state with a lot of Korean-Americans. I called their office not too long ago, asking them about their stance on the Senate Bill, and they hadn't even heard about it. And so I think the problem is really apathy, and perhaps a lack of understanding of how to be engaged in the political process.

And what we are trying to do is really change that culture in the Korean-American community and say, look, your voice does matter. Pick up the phone and make a call, or send an email. And so that's what we are really trying to do, and thank you, Joseph for your question. We should talk more, and we should partner. Mr. Ahn, to go to your question; I interviewed a number of divided families in the U.S., who actually got to go to North Korea, some of them spoke about a lot of their fears surrounding it being tagged as a pro-communist when they come back. And a lot of these folks actually had to have money to go. And so there's a financial consideration, not only are you -- you have to be willing to go under this pro-North Korean organization, whether it's in Canada or the U.S., or some other international organization, you'd have to fund tens of thousands of dollars with no guarantee that your family would actually be your family.

And, you know, we've talked to some divided family members who, you know, talk to some brokers in China who would set them up, and it was all a farce. And so these are working class people like *halmeonis* (grandmothers) and *hal-abeojis* (grandfathers) who are -- this is their last wish and they are willing to do whatever they can to get there, and so that's why we need our government, the U.S. government to actually make this happen. And time is running out, and we need to do it soon.

And to answer your question, I do think that letters and maybe even a video of reunion would be probably the most feasible at this point, as many of these divided family members are frail and elderly, but for those who are able, I think, you know, face-to-face would be ideal.

MS. MOON: If I could add that, especially for Marks's question that I think people who care about this

reality need to think hard about the different stages and steps. So passing legislation is one thing, but what is the actual process, procedures? What do Korean-Americans and divided family members want? And it really depends on what people can handle.

The easiest thing would be letters, partly because it's less bureaucratic than actually arranging person-to-person, body-to-body meetings. There's also less danger involved in terms of security. So, you know, there are easier steps than outright meeting, but of course for most people, most human beings, wanting to touch, and see, and hear a family member is -- you know, is part of your heart's desire. So I think people need to think out what are the steps and also let people choose, you know, what they are willing to do.

You mentioned that you read my paper, and it's interesting when you mentioned California and Senator Boxer, because Armenian-Americans are such a tiny, tiny group in America, tiny, and yet some years ago they captured all of the United States attention on The New York Times of course, and Washington Post, because they were able to reach out to Nancy Pelosi and other politicians in California where Armenian-Americans are also very well represented.

And they were able to mobilize, they were an incredible mobilizing machine, for issues that most Americans were very ignorant about, which is the Armenian genocide. So, it doesn't take like numbers. I think it takes a lot of good thinking, and a lot of good will and collaboration. The third thing is that I would really caution people, and I speak as an academic, that divided families' issue should not become a part of the human rights issue, as a framework, or part of the Six-Party Talks, you know.

It should be a free-standing issue that has legitimacy and information from the ground up and the ground has to be Korean-Americans of divided families who wish to seek their kin. Because if others start playing with this issue, I would fear, and I studied the social movements enough to know how people use, even with good intentions, how people use issues, and people get terribly hurt.

I think it's very, very important that whoever owns the issue which should be Korean-Americans of

divided families they are the ones who have to be the platform and move everything up from there. It should not be top-down, even if the U.S. government or any other government is involved, that all information, desires, priorities, must come from the ground up. We'll go to some more questions and come back. Any others?

SPEAKER: Thank you so much for --

MS. MOON: Stand up, please, and tell us who you are.

SPEAKER: Thank you. I don't mean to stand out too much. Normally I tend to ramble so they always try not to --

MS. MOON: What is your name?

SPEAKER: My name is Darma (phonetic) and I'm a Tibetan from India. Latest immigrant addition to United States, but I had the opportunity to learn a lot of good things, and my interests are so varied, with a kind heart but not enough resources like the young voice, I'm so happy and proud to see. You know, if I have a son, I would like it to be like that, you know.

MS. MOON: If you could -- your question, please?

SPEAKER: Yeah. So, to quicken the question, knowing that among the world problems that we all have similar problems and you guys are the leading examples. I'm always -- not trying to be negative, but very careful, because all the easy things, everybody seem to be aware and know, but in terms of safety and security I should say while knowing that you guys are being used as the example. And like me, when I have my own organization I would try to emulate --

MS. MOON: Sorry. What is the issue that you want to raise, the question?

SPEAKER: To know about the problem or the danger areas -- You know, in other words, the big players who might complicate or -- You know, we already have a problem, that divided -- kind of divided countries, divided families problem, knowing that the ones who are into this, and who can do this and manipulate quite powerful or whatever was justified and all that, and I have a science background so I would focus on biotech industries, and business. So, can --

MS. MOON: You want to know what are -- who are the players and what are the kinds of issues that could perhaps derail or --

SPEAKER: Yeah. Using the good people, for example, the religious sects, you know, I know government is doing -- as you represent, other avenues, like real corpus, real philanthropic, kind-hearted person or families, and then talk to them and say please, you know, stop it.

MS. MOON: We got it.

SPEAKER: And we know everything, and this is going to bloom really bad in the end. So that way I think we can cut down a lot of things rather than --

MS. MOON: Okay. I think we have it. What are the effects? Dan?

SPEAKER: Yeah, so is there any effects of that sort, you know. This is my imagination. I'm sorry for taking long.

MS. MOON: Yeah. We have a question in the back there.

MR. WERTZ: Hi. Daniel Wertz from the National Committee on North Korea. Dr. Moon, at the beginning of your remarks you mentioned the issue of POW, MIA, remains, recovery from the Korean War Era, which in a lot of ways there are a lot of parallels between that issue and the issue of divided families, of people who are, for the most part, aging now, seeking closure, finding out what happened to

their loved ones. In both cases, a very humanitarian issue that should proceed separately from other issues such as Six-Party Talks, nuclear issues, human rights.

I was hoping you might -- you and the panel might go a little bit into whether or not dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea on those issues could proceed kind of in tandem with progress, and one of those sets of issues could help progress on the other.

MS. MOON: Thank you. It's a very good question. We'll take another question from this side if anybody has one?

SPEAKER: I am Julie. I'm a graduate student at Georgetown University. I'm not that well versed in this issue, so I really appreciate --

MS. MOON: Nobody is, except the two of them, so don't worry.

SPEAKER: I really appreciate the film and the viewing. I'm curious whether you see that there are other communities outside the Korean-American community that we should sort bring into this effort that could help be effect in the advocacy process. You mentioned the Armenian-Americans are some of the others that might be sympathetic. And then my second question is, to what degree has there been input from the Korean government, and whether it is on the agenda on the government-to-government meetings? Thank you.

MS. MOON: Okay. So, we'll go to Mrs. Stanfield.

MS. STANFIELD: When South Korea and North Korea negotiated about the divided family issue in 1985, the Korean-American divided families were excluded. So this is a -- the North Korea apparently wanted to deal with the United States directly, face-to-face, to deal with the American -- Korean-American divided families. So the Korean government has limited -- I mean, their influence is kind of limited. So this is strictly between the U.S. government and the North Korea matter. I don't know whether that helped.

MR. AHN: I think to answer the question of who to partner with, perhaps the Cuban-Americans, the Soviet-Jewish Americans, the Vietnamese-Americans, the precedence that you pointed out, Dr. Moon. So I think there is an opportunity, you know, it's just a matter of really getting in, so I think what you are doing, Sam, is amazing with CKA, is to institutionalize, you know, this voice, and I think we need to all work together and to make that happen.

MR. YOON: I think, actually, if I could jump in, Dan's question, if I might answer one of your questions. I mean, I see, you know, right here now, the possibility of there being at least, coordination, between Korean War Vets, and divided families. On its face, I think you are right, the sense of loss for -- because all of those soldiers had families, whether POWs, or MIA. There's also that sense of, kind of unfinished business or the kind of -- that long-term loss.

So I think, you know, that having that emotional resonance is what needs to drive this campaign, and I think that the challenge it is so, it's so familial, that I wonder if it would be -- how hard it would be to kind of translate that experience to others, who are just advocating on behalf of their own ethnic, or immigrant community, versus those who, you know, are dealing with that same sense of loss in the same place and for the same reason. I'm just speculating.

MS. KIM: And actually I'd like to comment because when Kathy had mentioned about the importance of Korean-Americans who are, themselves, separated families. I'm actually not, myself, a separated family member. Both my parents are from the southern part of Korea, but that's another group actually to reach out to. And so one of the points I was trying to make is really how, because of the uncertainty, even though in Korea itself, separated families is regarded as a relatively small, sort of, a fraction of a population.

But everyone knows someone or was related to someone who lost -- was lost during the war, and so many of those people were not properly recovered, and could not be properly mourned, that it opened up this possibility. And even during the course of my research, both one, a relative by marriage, and then another

who was a close friend of mine, both discovered that they never thought of themselves as separated families, and then a letter arrived, and somehow there's connection, and it changed their identity.

But that possibility exists, and it's really interesting because, you know, what has spread over the world is *hallyu*, right? As the "Korean wave", and this is a recurring theme in dramas and movies, even if they have no North or South connection, but this ideas of this sort of surprising kin relations, right, that complicate lives, or the reappearance of someone who had been seen as dead. And I really think that this is really a sublimation of the condition which Koreans live, whether on the Korean peninsula or abroad.

MS. MOON: Well, I always thought Koreans were so melodramatic, and why you know.

MS. KIM: Yeah. Reality is melodramatic!

MS. MOON: And then, so, you know, all of a sudden a lost daughter will show up out of the blue, all grown-up you know, but a sublimation of the historical losses, that's a more noble way to put. Dan, I think it's worth sharing with you and others in the audience that when -- in order to prepare for this, Paul Park, my research associate and I did some research, and Vietnam is an interesting case, and Paul is the one who discovered this that, what enabled the 1989 trip led by the California State Senator and the Vietnamese-American delegation, that went to Vietnam on their own, was that there had been progress made between the U.S. and Vietnam on the POW issue.

And so there absolutely was this coattail riding, you know, that progress on one issue enable better relations and a conduit to divided families among Vietnamese, or people of Vietnamese descent trying to meet. So, it's something that is worth considering. I think in the United States we have -- we have really begun to forget about POWs, very sadly, and these are -- and as people get older and the family members move on, they will increasingly be forgotten.

And it's very similar to divided families of Korean descent, that as time goes on, these losses and the yearnings will be forgotten. So if there could be ways to bring the two together, the two groups together,

as I mentioned at the beginning. What I see as the two human connections, between the U.S. and North Korea in a positive way. Truly in a reconciling way, rather than a confrontational way, you know, it might be something worth considering.

I want to add one more thing, before I turn back to the panel, and then we get ready to close, is that we are not -- You know, Sam mentioned that he carried this, the family thing in Korean DNA and, you know of course, everybody carries this need for family in their DNA, but Koreans are extreme about it, as we know, in many ways, and I'm married to a Jew, my sister is married to a Jew, and we compete on whether it's the Jews or the Koreans or the Chinese, who are more family oriented. I think the Koreans win, but --

SPEAKER: You are biased.

MS. MOON: I think what's interesting is that something that many non-Korean-Americans, many non-Asian-Americans in the U.S. do not think about, which is that for many people of Korean descent, family does not stop with life and the knowledge of death, that ancestry, and the place of ancestry and lineage, is really part of one's current life and what you transfer to the next generation. There are many people in South Korea, and many in North Korea who have not been able to visit the graves of their ancestors, because of the division, and as the diaspora, there are many in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Latin America, many parts of the world, where people of Korean descent cannot access the ancestral grave sites of those in the North. And I think that's something else to keep in mind.

I lost my father in 2001, and he passed away, it so happens, in South Korea, and it's been a personal struggle between my sister and me, whether we leave him there, or whether we bring him home, "to the U.S." And we've gone back and forth since 2001, 15 years and it's partly because when I go to Korea the first thing -- the Korean tradition is, the first thing you are supposed to do is to go to your ancestral grave site and to pay respects to your ancestors to say, I've returned. And the last thing you do before you leave your village is to go to your ancestral grave site, and say I'm leaving.

I happen to be a very traditional Korean-American, and I do this, maybe not the first thing I do, but I do do this, and there is a comfort for me, that gives me a tie to my ancestral land in South Korea knowing

that my father's remains are there. So I thought hard, what would it be like if he were here? Well, he'd be closer to me, we would have family reunion in a spiritual sense, but then I would lose this physical link to my land of -- the land of the ancestors.

Now that's just my father's side. My mother's side is unreachable, and I never even thought about it until now. So, it's an interesting sort of revelation. How far do you reach to say, what family is to you? And for most Americans it's your unit family and immediate extended family, for a lot of Koreans, and a lot of people in traditional cultures, including those of us in the U.S., it's a huge, we have a huge network of people who are connected to us as family. And so I think I'm -- I would like to, with that note, just let you know that there is another very interesting documentary by Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, who is a documentary filmmaker and artist. She is in her 70s, she's an American, and she put out a film called -- Paul, help me, the --

MR. YOON: "People Are the Sky"?

MS. MOON: "People Are the Sky," thank you, Sam. Paul and I watched this. "People Are the Sky," and she returns to North Korea where she had been born, and takes -- just takes films, you know, shoots film, and she wanted to go back to visit her ancestral gravesite. And it was the first time when I watched that film that I realized, wow, we are not just talking about divided families in a physical, flesh sense, but in a sort of a spiritual long, family lineage sense for some people. So I recommend her documentary, "People Are the Sky."

MS. KIM: There's a screening actually. On June 23rd, there will be a screening at GW, at the Sigur Center.

MS. MOON: June 23rd, there will be a screening at GW. Wow, this is all very serendipitous.

MS. KIM: Another program that will -- actually also address the MIA, the remains as well as divided families.

MS. MOON: Oh, yes. I was asked to speak there, but I can't go.

MS. KIM: The AFSC is one of the co-organizers. In Daniel Jasper in the --

MS. MOON: Yes.

MS. KIM: Super.

MS. MOON: It's American Friends Service Committee, Dan Jasper, they are putting on this conference at GW, June 23rd?

SPEAKER: June 23rd.

MS. MOON: Okay. And I'd like to give the second to last word to Nan, because she flew, I think, the farthest. And the last word to Mrs. Stanfield, before we close.

MS. KIM: I wanted to make a quick book recommendation, since we are academics this is the way we talk to each other. And with precisely this point, thinking about diaspora in terms of homelands, but in terms of the sites of where your ancestors' final resting place is, there's a book by an anthropologist, Engseng Ho, called "The Graves of Tarim."

MS. MOON: The Graves of?

MS. KIM: "The Graves of Tarim," T-A-R-I-M.

MS. MOON: T-A-R-I-M.

MS. KIM: Right. And it's an ethnography that's about Yemen, but also the diaspora on the Indian Ocean, so in other words, this notion of the diaspora moves forward, and also over -- large stretches of time,

further scale than we often think about in our instant communication. Another point actually, I want to go back to your stories, because I will share, when I was sitting next to Kathy as we were watching this performance --

MS. MOON: The circus, right.

MS. KIM: The circus, exactly. Towards, the maybe two thirds into it, and poked me and said, "I'm writing an article about gender right now," because it's the way the women were, how they were performing there, you know, presenting, it was remarkable. The other thing that happened, at the end of both that, the circus as well as the performance, it was a music concert that was held around the same time, these were all associated, again, with an opening, a period of opening, the onset of the so-called Sunshine Era. So people applauded and of course, but they, rather than, you know, giving an understanding, people waved at each other, and at the musical performance people kind of rushed the stage, just to touch each other to hold each other. So getting back to the question about, letters and video, there is of course some limit to that, because the whole point was that, one time to be able, and some of these reunions, they just held each other, and there wasn't a lot that was exchanged, and that was really that kind of lifelong hope, to be able to fulfill that.

With letters there is always that sense of uncertainty, whether this is really my -- you know, and I think the real exchanges again, were difficult because they were only in North Korea so they were more limited, so this, why this moment, it was like 100 North Koreans visiting South Korea, right, there were all kinds of limitations that I couldn't get into today, but that itself is an event in and of itself, you know, the exchange occurred three times, and so, I wanted to, I guess, leave with that. More I would love to say, but can't get it --

MS. MOON: Read her book. Oh, we have order forms out there, along with the Senate legislation, the Bill, copies. Mrs. Stanfield? Who flew in today from --

MS. STANFIELD: Chicago.

MS. MOON: Chicago.

MS. STANFIELD: I'm 71 -- 75 years old going on 100, and we are looking at one of the species disappearing from the earth called the divided families. Millions of people including my father in North Korea, my mother in Chicago, two of my brothers, or possibly three, had passed away without knowing what happened to their family members, and the remaining divided family members that are in their upper 70s, 80s and 90s. The last 15 years have been brutal to us, and almost all the divided family members I knew had passed away, so we can't give up now. The lady you saw in Jason's film, she is still alive. She is Chicago. She left three children, she's 94 years old. She says there must be a reason God has kept me alive, the reason must be one of my kids must be still alive. That's the only reason she's still trying to walk, to go to North Korea to see her child or children.

There is a reverend in Utah, who left two sons, and he had a stroke, he had a hip surgery, a leg surgery, but he is determined to go to see his sons. We cannot give up, and please help us in any way you can, and thank you so much, for just being here, this is big support, and I appreciate it. And thank you.

MS. MOON: Thank you. (Applause)

MS. STANFIELD: Thank you very much.

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