THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
CENTER FOR EAST ASIA POLICY STUDIES

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE: WAR ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100 Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PARTICIPANTS:

Welcome Remarks:

BRUCE JONES
Vice President and Director, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

Revisiting North Korea's Strategic Intentions:

JUNG H. PAK, Moderator
SK-Korea Foundation Chair in Korea Studies Senior Fellow,
Center for East Asia Policy Studies
The Brookings Institution

ABRAHAM DENMARK
Director, Asia Program, and Senior Fellow
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

BRUCE KLINGNER
Senior Research Fellow, Northeast Asia
The Heritage Foundation

SUE MI TERRY
Senior Fellow, Korea Chair
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Assessing the Costs of a Military Conflict on the Korean Peninsula:

RYAN HASS, Moderator
David M. Rubenstein Fellow, Center for East Asia Policy Studies
The Brookings Institution

ROBERTA COHEN
Chair Emeritus
Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

MARA KARLIN
Nonresident Senior Fellow, Security and Strategy,
Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence
The Brookings Institution

LAURA ROSENBERGER
Senior Fellow and Director, Alliance for Securing Democracy
The German Marshall Fund for the United States

SCOTT SEAMAN
Director, Asia
Eurasia Group

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. JONES: Good morning, everybody. My name is Bruce Jones. I'm the vice president for Foreign Policy here at the Brookings Institution. It's my pleasure to welcome you here today to this event, which we've titled "Thinking the Unthinkable: War on the Korean Peninsula."

Tensions between the United States and North Korea have been high and rising. From North Korea's testing of intercontinental ballistic missiles, to its sixth and most powerful nuclear test, to the war of words between the two leaders, I think I'm not alone in worrying that the worst may come to pass in this decades-long conflict. Let's make no mistake. War on the Korean Peninsula, even without a nuclear exchange, would almost certainly result in an extraordinary number of causalities and throw the entire region into turmoil. The stakes could not be higher.

In the past little while, things have taken a surprising turn. We saw first, of course, the move by the Kim regime to use the Olympics to thaw their relations with the South, or try to at least, in the first-even meeting between Kim Jong-un and the South Korean officials in Pyongyang, and then the unexpected move, or maybe expected, we'll find out, move by Kim Jong-un to reach out and offer direct talks with President Trump. And the definitely surprising move of President Trump to agree.

And just in case you thought this was the day where there would be a pause in dramatic developments, five minutes ago the President fired Tillerson and put Pompeo in at State or at least has nominated him for State, saying that it's in order to have the right team in place for the North Korea negotiations. There might be other reasons, but that's at least the official statement of intent.

So there is a moment for diplomacy. I think we all hope and pray that that succeeds. I will tell you I have spent my career studying diplomacy and war, and one of the realities is that ill-prepared diplomacy can fail dramatically, and ill-prepared talks have often been a precursor to dramatic escalations and conflict. So the fact of a moment for diplomacy is not cause to relax. It's cause for intense preparation and to worry about the potential aftermath.

So to talk about all of this and much more, we have an extraordinary panel of expertise here today, and I'm going to turn the mic over to Dr. Jung Pak here at Brookings to introduce the panel and the conflicts. Dr. Jung Pak is a Brookings senior fellow and is the SK-Korea Foundation Chair in Korea Studies here, our foremost expert among several on the Korean Peninsula and one of the finest scholars employed here at Brookings, has been, just yesterday was on Face the Nation, talking about this issue, has been very prominent in the media on this and has what I think is the best essay out rationality of Kim Jong-un, which I would encourage you to read on our website. So with that, please join me in welcoming today's panel. And let me call Jung to the stag. (Applause)

MS. PAK: Thank you, Bruce, for that kind introduction. I'm so pleased to have some of Washington's top Korea leads, and my good friends and former colleagues in the U.S. government, to have this important conversation about North Korea's strategic intentions. I know they are not strangers to you. So when I was formulating the conference I thought, who could be the best people to talk about strategic intentions? And I didn't have to look too far to look around at my former colleagues and my friends on Mass Ave.

Abe, to my left, is the director of the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Prior to joining Wilson, he was a deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia.

Sue is a senior fellow for Korea at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Prior to CSIS, she served as a senior analyst at the CIA, a deputy national intelligence officer on the National Intelligence Council, and the director for Korea, Japan, and Oceanic Affairs at the National Security Council.

Bruce, to my right, is a senior fellow for Northeast Asia at the Heritage Foundation. Before that, he was CIA's deputy division chief for Korea and has a served a total of 20 years at both the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency. So 75 percent of the panel has some CIA background, but Abe is not deterred from joining this group in any case.

So thank you --

MR. KLINGNER: We'll be gentle.

MS. PAK: So thanks to all of you for taking the time out to join us. As Bruce mentioned, there have been several interesting developments over the past few months. North Korea has dominated the headlines, but with this conversation I wanted to go beyond the presentation and the question and answer, the usual traditional format. And what I wanted to do was have this panel and have a discussion and have you join us in this discussion. And it'll be a conversation among the panelists and we'll open it up for questions and answers at the end.

One of the things I want to accomplish with this panel is to talk about what are the current developments on Korean Peninsula issues, but also to talk about and reassess our -- what North Korea's strategic intentions are. I wanted to point out that there's some in the Trump administration and others, other experts who believe that North Korea has more offensive aspirations; that is to unify the Korean Peninsula by force. I think most people would say that North Korea's intentions so far are not to invade South Korea in the near future, but for prestige, for coercive diplomacy, and for deterring the United States from attacking it.

So we'll go through all those things, but first, I wanted to open up the discussion or conversation about the two summits that are supposed to be happening in April and May. And what I think is striking -- and please jump in to all of you -- what I find striking is that what we have is a South Korean government read-out of what Kim reportedly said. And then the Washington community and the Seoul community and the policy-making community has built this analytic infrastructure based on something that may or may not have happened. And North Korea has yet to either confirm or deny what they said, and that's probably to maintain their maximum flexibility on the issues and on their next steps. But, you know, I'd like to get the panelists' thoughts on what is driving Kim's outreach now? And what are South Korea's motivations for maybe polishing what Kim had probably said or might have said to present to the U.S. president? But the fact of the matter is that President Trump has said yes to meeting with Kim, and I think it's in all of our interests to make sure that diplomacy does not fail. As Bruce mentioned, preparation is key.

So I'll leave it -- I'll open it up to the panel for what you think is driving Kim's motivations. Abe, I know you wrote something about how we should support diplomacy and wondering if you have any thoughts about what's driving Kim.

MR. DENMARK: Sure. And thanks for inviting me. Thanks for putting this together. I think North Korea is being motivated by three factors. And, of course, there's always a certain degree of speculation when it comes to trying to define what might be motivating them. But I'll give you my best sense and throw it to the CIA to revise and extend.

MR. KLINGER: To correct you.

MR. DENMARK: As we used to. I think it's a mix of three things. First would be I think economic pressure has taken hold and is at least giving -- is at least putting some degree of a squeeze on Kim Jong-un -- limiting access to foreign capital, limiting their ability to fund some of their programs. Not to the point where I think they're really shaking in their boots, but I do think it's a motivator.

Second, and my personal opinion would sort of make this the least influential but I think it's certainly there, is concern about the potential for conflict. That all the talk coming out of Washington about various military options, "bloody noses" or beyond, I think at least has gotten noticed, although my sense is that the North Koreans didn't take all that too seriously.

But third, and I think this is probably the biggest motivator, is that North Korea may not believe that they need to conduct these large scale tests for a while. That over the past several years they made significant progress in their missile programs and their nuclear programs, a really unprecedented progress, made significant milestones. At the New Year's speech that Kim Jong-un made, he declared North Korea to be a nuclear power. Said that they would shift to mass production. So their sense may be that their scientists and engineers don't need to conduct these big scale tests for a while and that this may be an opportunity to open the door, to come to the table, see what happens. But I think the key here is that in all three of

those motivations, there's no sense that I've had that I've seen anything North Korea has said or done to even suggest that they're seriously considering or even opening the door to actual denuclearization.

And to get to your last question about why South Korea may massage the message coming out, I don't know if they have or not, but I think it's clear that President Moon and his government want the Americans to come to the table to talk with the North Koreans. And if they can make that happen by presenting a welcoming and open door for the Americans to go through, I think that it's something that they may do. But I have no information that they've actually changed the message, but I do think the key point that you pointed to is that we haven't actually heard from the North Koreans on this. For all that's come out of Seoul, all this come out to Washington, North Korea has been radio silent and I think that is a very importance piece of it.

MS. TERRY: Let me tweak a little bit because I don't have something major to add. Just a little bit of tweaking. Just a slight difference. I broadly agree with everything that you've said. But I would just say first, when you're talking about sanctions, I would go a little bit further and say I think sanctions are biting. I think they are hurting. As you talked about, the trade, the export is down. Foreign currency reserve is down, so I think it's having a psychological toll on Kim Jong-un.

On your second point about "bloody nose," limited strike, that concern, I do think the North Koreans are spooked. They watch Washington, D.C. very closely, what's coming out of Washington very closely. Probably they're watching us. Hi. So, no, they're -- so we had a foreign delegation. They went to North Korea and came back and give us a debrief. And according to them, the North Koreans were grilling him about -- or these guys about even Victor Cha not being nominated to be the ambassador to Korea. And they saw that as a sign that our policy is hardline.

My point is they're watching very, very closely. And if we were kind of spooked about this talk of "bloody nose" and limited strike, trust me, I think the North Koreans are pretty spooked, too. So I wouldn't necessarily say that's sort of least important. I think it's still -- it's a factor about that.
And your third point was --

MR. DENMARK: That they've made enough progress that they don't need to test for a while.

MS. TERRY: Oh, yeah. So it's, I think, they need to buy time. I'm not sure if they -- I do agree that they don't need to test necessarily, but it doesn't mean -- just because there's a pause in testing, it doesn't mean they're not working on their program.

MR. DENMARK: Right. Right.

MS. TERRY: Right? So I think for whatever reason, they need to work on the program. So we don't know why they're pausing, but I will just say let's not confuse pausing with them stopping on their nuclear missile program.

MS. PAK: Can I add one more thing? Is that sometimes it's not always about us.

MS. TERRY: Right.

MS. PAK: And that there are, you know, that there could be domestic drivers; right?

MS. TERRY: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. PAK: So, you know, Abe points to one thing, which might be that okay, they'll do -- we'll focus on other things. But also, you know, we have the 70th anniversary of the country's founding coming up this year; right? So what does it look like? What are the optics of Kim Jong-un, going to Panmunjom, meeting with the South Korean president, moving closer toward unification goals, and having this picture, this first-ever summit meeting and it will boost Kim up. It will be a propaganda boon for him, and that would suggest to him that, you know, he's not just in charge of the nuclear weapons but he's also in charge of unification.

MR. KLINGER: First of all, it's a pleasure to be back at Brookings, and I say back because my first job out of college was at Brookings. I was a research intern, then a research assistant for about a year and a half. So my little claim to fame is I think I'm probably the only person who has played softball for both Brookings and Heritage. Although admittedly now, my throws from third base take a few more bounces to make it all the way to first.

Yeah, it really is an extraordinary situation we're in. I mean, it's sort of whiplashes because we, you know, I've equated it to watching a Korean Game of Thrones where, you know, by late December, early January, you're watching the script and it's the inescapable clash of armies. Everyone's approach, you know, preparing for this military clash, you know, perhaps started by a U.S. preventive attack. Then all of a sudden one season ends, the other season starts, and the writers have pulled a plot twist where now you don't see anything about military actions, it's the emissaries from the two kings talking to each other, the third king looking across the narrow sea wondering what his ally king is up to. And now all of a sudden everyone has forgotten about military options and we're all intrigued by what's going on and the back, you now, backstabbing and intrigue of the diplomacy. In the meantime, the army in the north is still preparing its fire and fury from above. And then with this sudden whiplash of diplomacy, we don't know if this is a diplomatic breakthrough or an invitation to the Red Wedding. So, you know, we'll see how it all plays out.

But I think, you know, I agree with the others on the reasons for how we got here. We don't know, but I think it's a combination of many things. But in a way, every group of analysts can claim victory and I told you so. So the Hawks can say it's because of the threats of a "bloody nose," a preventive attack, fire and fury. The Doves can say, look, we just wanted to get to diplomacy all along. You finally have listened to us. We can finally get to where we want. The pythons, like myself, who advocate squeezing North Korea through targeted financial measures and pressure in part to get them to the negotiation table in a meaningful way can say, you know, we finally had real pressure in the last two years and that's had a big effect. And then China can also just sort of sit back and say "We were right. We've been urging you two countries to get together." You know, the whole problem is the U.S. and North Korea, that now that you're going to have a summit, as Beijing has always told us, this is the way to work it out. So everyone can claim

to be right.

And you know, on the Hawks' side, I think maybe the threats of military action perhaps had a bigger impact on the South Korean president than on the North Korean leader. I think part of the reasons that Moon Jae-in has been so energetic in his attempts at reconciliation between the Koreas is because of concern about a U.S. attack.

I was in Seoul in January. Had a presidential advisor reach out basically to say I want to convey how extremely nervous we are. And so I think that may be driving South Korea.

So as we move toward these summits, you know, I just find it much more unpredictable than in the past, and that's on both the North Korean and the U.S. side. Perhaps more so on the U.S. side.

MS. PAK: So, you know, when we talk about the Inter-Korean Summit, what do you think is going to happen? I suspect that they'll be talking about family reunions, the economic zone that President Moon has been talking about and trying to knit together the North and South, although I'm sure sanctions are going to throw a damper on these things. So what are some key things that we should be looking out for for the Inter-Korean Summit? Any thoughts?

MR. KLINGER: I'll jump in again. Well, I think sort of going to the U.S. side, I think a lot of us have commented that the U.S. side has a lot of critical vacancies in the roster, and then there seems to be kind of a thin bunch on expertise. And you know, this, in my view at least, sudden acceptance of an invitation is quite different from the past where we might have looked for a bottom-up approach of working level officials meet, and if we have success we move up and up the echelon until finally we decide to have a president. Moon Jae-in, who the U.S. was kind of being wary of look how eager he is, over eager he is on, you know, a summit and an engagement. Well, when he was invited he said, well, thanks very much. I'll take that under advisement. In the meantime, I'm going to send a delegation and we're going to work some things out like, you know, a common agenda before he agrees.

And I remember back in 2000, when I attended White House meetings about Korea, you know, Bill Clinton had been invited to North Korea and he said, well, thanks very much. And some in the administration were saying the force of Bill's personality is so strong, if we just get him and Jong-il in the same room we'll get everything we want. We'll eliminate nine months of having to work it up through the echelons.

But the majority view in the administration, which I thought was the proper one was, no. We don't deploy a president for a grip-and-grin meeting. We don't deploy a president to negotiate something. We deploy a president to sign an agreement where we know where every punctuation is on that piece of paper. So there were meetings going on in Kuala Lumpur talking about the potential parameters of a missile deal, and the U.S. officials said you've got to make us happy. And the North Korean officials were saying if your president goes to Pyongyang, he will be happy. We said that's not how it works. And so in my view, the administration chose, you know, not to send the president.

So here we're doing really the total opposite. So I think on the South Korean Summit, we're going to be looking for Seoul to be doing a lot of the legwork in essence for our summit. So if we have a thin bench in some cases, Seoul is going to be working on it. They go up first. We're going to look to what they agree to, maybe with some wariness. But I think they're going to be doing a lot of the prep work, you know, sort of on our behalf.

MS. PAK: Is it possible that South Korea would just talk about inter-Korean stuff and not about denuclearization or about the bigger issues and just leave that for the U.S.?

MS. TERRY: I'm leading towards that because I think it's so hard for South Korea. I mean, what can they do? And they're kind of -- they're constrained. They cannot really lift sanctions. They said they won't. The sanctions will continue. They're not going to open Kaesong Industrial Complex. They cannot -- there's not a lot of give that South Koreans can give to North Korea.

So instead of focusing on the big stuff, I think they will focus on the Kumgang family reunion, a lot of little

things that they can achieve and they'll leave the big stuff to Washington.

But even the big stuff, my concern is I don't know if we have figured out exactly what our deliverable is. What are we going to achieve? What do we want? I think sort of what we expect and what North Korea wants, I mean we're just so at a different place. I think this is why it's really hard to figure this out. What is our goal? Do we even know exactly? Before May, it's around the corner. Do we know what we want out of North Koreans in this meeting?

MS. PAK: I think for the Trump-Kim Summit, if it happens, it has to be "all hands on deck." Bipartisan, all Korea experts, people who have negotiated with the Koreans, with the North Koreans, for a crash course on how to negotiate with the Koreans. And there are plenty of people who have been in the same room with the North Koreans working on these issues.

But I also think that there's nowhere to go but down if these two leaders clash. I can see two ways where there are, you know, risks and opportunities on both sides. One is if they really don't get along, and that their desire for quick results, their personalities or, you know, their personal ownership of the issue will quickly have them both dig in their heels and there's an immediate confrontation. And then President Trump comes out and says we tried diplomacy. They're not serious. This is never going to work and we're back to locked and loaded.

On the other side is what if they do get along? What if their personalities do meld and they really reach a rapprochement or they really have a chemistry between them. And Kim taps into the president's inclinations to be wary about alliances, about cost-sharing, burden-sharing, and North Korea says we'll give up ICBMs and, you know, you can remove the troops or radically decrease the number of U.S. troops on the peninsula and then we can have a sort of leader-to-leadership dialogue and just channel and that leaves out South Korea.

So I think the Moon administration right now has a greater tolerance for having direct U.S.-North Korea ties or conversations in comparison to the previous administrations, but I think South Korea could easily

be sidelined in that kind of scenario where Kim and Trump get along really well.

MS. TERRY: I just want to follow up because I 100 percent agree with what Jung just said. Those are my big two concerns. One, the first one, if it doesn't work, you've already used an engagement diplomacy card. So you say, okay, I've done that. It doesn't work, and now the risk for conflict has increased because there's not a whole lot of different places to go from there.

But the first -- and the second issue she brought out, North Koreans are going to say we need regime security to give up nuclear weapons. And that's going to make sense; right? We need regime security, but what does that mean? That translates to U.S.-South break up of the alliances and really, when they start talking about a peace treaty, which they wanted for many, many decades and they're going to bring that up, what does a peace treaty mean once you sign it? It sounds good in theory, but it means also pulling U.S. forces off the Korean Peninsula. And then they can say, well, we'll pledge to denuclearize, but of course, there's a verification issue.

So I'm concerned about sort of the extreme scenarios of both coming out of that. I guess the most optimistic scenario is that they just sort of agree in theory, principles of denuclearization and we'll work together.

MS. PAK: Which is a big deal because he, Kim Jong-un has never said anything to the effect of denuclearizing anything. So, so far he's only cemented North Korea's nuclear weapon status. It's in the constitution. He has taken personal ownership of being photographed with every missile head and you know, smoking cigarettes at every missile launch; right? So if the South Koreans were able to extract those statements from his, you know, cigarette-stained mouth, then great. That's a big deal because that's a change, because at least he is now paying lip service to denuclearization. With that said, it's still from his father's playbook of saying the right thing.

MS. TERRY: Right. It's a long way to go.

MS. PAK: And dragging us all into this long slog of negotiations.

MR. DENMARK: So I think there's two things I wanted to mention. First off, we need to focus more as a policy community on the Inter-Korean Summit. I think the potential summit between Trump and Kim is obviously very important. It needs a lot of work. As you said, all hands on deck. But the summit between President Moon and Kim Jong-un, which is going to happen definitely, is also very consequential. And if North Korea continues to stay quiet between now and then in terms of statements about what it's actually willing to talk about, what it's actually willing to do, then the summit may be an opportunity for Moon to extract some sort of statement like you suggested, to set the stage for a good summit between Trump and Kim.

In that summit itself, I agree with Sue about concerns about two scenarios. Right? That either it doesn't work, and Trump throws up his hands and says diplomacy is a failure. We have to go to phase two. Right? Or another option, as you suggested, being that they make a deal. And either it's a great deal or it's a bad deal. But I think there's a third option you suggested here, and I tend to think this might be a way, an objective for us in the policy community to think about, which is to really flip the script.

Bruce mentioned how we usually go through the echelons of nine months of meetings and then have this thing. And Trump has really flipped that. We have the summit. Summits are incredibly complex things to plan. But they are very rarely, if ever, an actual place for actual negotiations to take place. There's a few examples here and there, but usually the summit is the time where the process comes to a conclusion and both sides agree to something that was already agreed to. Right? So this may be an opportunity to flip the script where the two leaders come together, make some sort of principled agreement, potentially even just restating subsequently what was agreed to in 2005, the six-party talks in 2005, and then directing their governments to begin a process to negotiate under those principles. That may be a way to sort of deal with the short timeline that we have. And it's actually similar to how the Obama administration negotiated with Russia and Medvedev on nuclear issues where the two leaders had a meeting and then they sort of paused the summit. The two teams got together to work and then they met again to review what the two teams had done.

So for the policy community, that may be a way to move forward where we talk about principles, we set vague but hopefully mutually compatible objectives between the leaders in which the two sides then can have a bit of a mandate that they can negotiate from after the summit takes place.

MS. PAK: I like your point about how we should pay attention to -- maybe using the Inter-Korean Summit could set the table for -- and I think that makes a lot of sense, and of course, that would involve a lot of discussions and coordinations and consultations with the South Korean government, as well as Japan, because right now, you know, Tokyo kind of stands alone in terms of, you know, there have been consistently on maximum pressure. They're probably blindsided by the Inter-Korean Summit and the potential Kim-Trump Summit. So I think we need to have close coordination with the allies.

MR. KLINGER: Yeah. I think right now the U.S. and South Korea are in a really good place alliance-wise. I had been concerned about what policies Moon Jae-in would pursue, but I think he's adopted a much more centrist policy than I had thought he might. And I think a lot of that was driven by North Korean actions, just as I think Obama adopted a tougher North Korean policy than he had planned on because North Korea showed it would act as badly to him as Bush. I think the same was true as Moon. And I think the two allies are talking a lot.

You know, that said, there's still going to be a wariness. I think the U.S. is going to be wary about, all right, what's Moon going to do when he gets into that room? What's he going to promise? What's he going to come out and say he said? Et cetera. I think he faces a lot more constraints than Kim Dae-jung or Roh Moo-Hyun did because internationally you've got the required sanctions. Moon has admitted now that Kaesong would be a violation if he reopened it, et cetera, et cetera. And also, domestically, there's a much stronger South Korean public support for the alliance than under Roh Moo-Hyun's time and there's much greater wariness of engaging with North Korea and much greater concern about North Korean actions. So Moon is under a lot of constraints but we're still going to be nervous about what he does.

Now, looking the other way, you know, I'm kind of imagining Moon Jae-in, now that we have this U.S.

summit, you know, he's sort of kicking back, popping a beer, saying okay, we're not talking about a preventive attack. I got Trump and Kim in the same room. Oh, my God. I got Trump and Moon in the same room. You know, now he's opening the bottle of scotch and he's just saying, you know, because who knows what's going to happen? You know, I think, you know, as Abe pointed out, usually a summit is just to sign something or to agree to things that have already been worked out. Here we're doing it the opposite. A lot of people would say this is the way to do it. It's the experts as well as the previous administrations. We're all to blame for why we're here. You know, do the top-down approach. Be unpredictable, all that. And Trump I think figures he'll go in like a CEO talking to a CEO saying, look, I've got people. I've got minions to work out the details. We'll work out a general agreement here, and then the people will write 57 paragraphs. But the concern I have is sort of with the thin bench on expertise is already we've seen officials saying things like, you know, well, North Korea has agreed to abandon their weapons. Well, no, they haven't. Even in the South Korean version of what supposedly North Korea agreed to, they're not saying that and there are a lot of really heavy strings attached. Also, we're seeing statements like, well, North Korea is saying things they've never said before. It's like, actually, they're saying the exact same thing --

MS. PAK: Also, they're allowing us to have exercises.

MR. KLINGER: Right. But, you know, they're saying exactly what they've been saying for at least the 24 years that I've been doing it. So if people think that they're agreeing to things, that we've already achieved things that North Korea has never agreed to, if you don't know, well, look at this agreement, this agreement, this agreement, and if you don't know what hostile policy means, you know, then you can agree to something not knowing it's as bad a deal as before.

MR. DENMARK: So let me comment on that, if I could. I think there's a difference between not having the expertise and not listening to the expertise. Right? I'm concerned, and I was disappointed, very disappointed, that Victor was withdrawn as ambassador. Concerned about the minimal appointments that have come through on Asia policy across the government. My successor still hasn't been appointed, and my position wasn't even Senate confirmed. They haven't filled that position. But that doesn't mean

that there's not expertise in the room. Our Chargé in Seoul is very experienced, very knowledgeable. We have a lot of people in the State Department, in the White House, in the Pentagon, who know Korea very well, who know all this history and have been working on it a long time, and they're extremely good at what they do.

My concern is that for whatever reason that expertise is not translating into what is being said by top leadership. You quoted I think it was Mike Pompeo that was saying those things over the weekend. And that tells me that this huge base of knowledge within the government is not being used by the top leadership. And that is equally concerning, if not more concerning. And I actually had the same points. I also notice my favorite quote from the weekend from the administration, in addition to all the things that you mentioned, someone said that the summit may not happen, but if it falls through it's certainly North Korea's fault, which is pretty great at setting expectations.

MS. PAK: So I want to move on to some -- so we wanted to talk about current developments because I know, I'm sure you all have questions about that. But I also wanted to discuss with my colleagues here about North Korea's strategic intentions. So this is one episode, right, the Inter-Korean Summit, Kim's outreach, the Olympics, the possible Kim-Trump Summit. These are all just episodes in a bigger story. And in the intelligence community, in the annual threat assessment has long said, and I think all of us have worked on the ATA, has long said that North Korea's nuclear weapons are for prestige, deterrence, and for coercive diplomacy. I think in juxtaposition with that I see long-held IC assessment, which is probably going to change. I'm not sure. Is the national security strategy document, which is supposed to be the grand strategy of the United States that said that North Korea seeks nuclear weapons to kill millions of Americans? So those are completely different, or different -- they're on different sides of the threat spectrum. And I think that reflects in part the variations in what North Korea is really going after. I'm sure when we're being interviewed and we're writing papers and all of these things, you know, what does North Korea really want? Is it survival, which is one side, right, and deterrence? You know, deterring the U.S. from invading North Korea? Or is it that they want to use the nuclear weapons to invade South Korea and unify by force? And I don't know that there's a right answer or wrong answer. With North Korea, you know, we're putting forward our best analysis and our estimates, but I'd like to get your thoughts on where you are on that spectrum if that's helpful.

MS. TERRY: So let me begin with that. I think it's a timeline or so. It's not like North Koreans -- I think all of us are in agreement, even the Hawks should be in agreement that North Korea is looking to have this capability for regime preservation. I think there's no debate about that. Regime preservation, survival, defensive thing is the utmost priority; right? North Koreans themselves have said all the time, they bring up the case of Iraq, they bring up the case of Libya. What happened to Gaddafi? He's dead. We don't want to be dead. This makes sense; right? This is the ultimate deterrence against the United States. I think everybody agrees with that.

The course of diplomacy part, the offensive component, I think that makes sense. It's a long-held IC assessment. It's not something that's ridiculous. I think why is it a ridiculous thing to assume that -- or to say that North Koreans, if they can beyond just survival, use this nuclear weapons capability to do something that serves their interest? It's not unrealistic. And part of that, of trying to decouple, you hear oftentimes senators talking about North Korea decoupled U.S.-South Korea alliance, that is not a ridiculous statement. It makes sense from the North Korean perspective. It's part of regime survival. If you could decouple their alliance. There are how many thousand -- 27,500 American forces sitting in the South. Why would you want that if you're North Korea? So if you can decouple the alliance, kick the U.S. forces off the Korean Peninsula, that also makes sense.

Unification on its own terms, that's the most controversial part because a lot of people who are pushing against that idea are saying, well, that's ridiculous. How can North Korea possibly unify? Well, capabilities are different from goal or intent. Right? So first of all, that's a separate question. It's controversial but they also don't have evidence that North Korea gave up on this goal. It's just that the only thing they can say is that it's not realistic. But I think it's something, I think you might have said in your piece, that it's something that you can still hold on to as a goal to see if that's possible long term -- 30 years, 40 years, 50 years. If there's a peace treaty, if the U.S. forces are off the Korean Peninsula, see if you can, but it's not something that's definite. It's not something that they're capable of doing.

MS. PAK: So one of the things that keeps me up at night is, you know, lots of things keep me up at night.

My kids --

MR. KLINGER: Sick children. Yeah.

MS. PAK: Sick children. Lots of things. But one of the things that keeps me up at night is am I wrong? Are we underestimating North Korea? Are we being overly optimistic if we say that this is just to -- that nuclear weapons are just to broaden their way, poking and prodding and getting their way on certain things? Do they have this grand vision? And I don't think they're there. I think it's this goal that they hold up. But I also believe in human agency and that we and the government and our allies together can make sure that they don't get there and that Kim doesn't have the confidence to think that, yes, I can fulfill the dream of my grandfather who tried to unify by force.

MR. DENMARK: I think there's some space in between those two. And I agree with everything that you both have said. Obviously, I think at least in the short term the goal is deterrence, all the things that have been said before. But if you look over the long term, even if the ultimate goal is unification, there are implications for North Korea to having a credible nuclear deterrent. I think it's very unlikely that once they decide they have a credible deterrent, whatever that may be, that they sit back and say, okay, we have these weapons. Now let's open up and become a normal country. I actually think that there's a great deal of potential for nuclear coercion. In fact, history in political science literature suggests that nuclear powers often initially try to engage in nuclear coercion. And you can see that already they've talked about that a bit and when they talk about use of nuclear weapons they've said very broad things. That we would not use nuclear weapons except for countries that violate the interests of North Korea, which can be huge, including international sanctions. Which I actually think nuclear coercion is something that can be handled fairly directly. We've handled that before.

The other piece though is I think it has significant implications for conventional deterrence, that if North Korea feels comfortable and confident under a nuclear umbrella, that they may feel emboldened to lash out at South Korea, at Japan, at the United States below the nuclear level. We've seen them, they've done this without nuclear weapons. Without an ICBM I should say. In 2010, in 2015, on the DMZ, they've

done it throughout their history of lashing out either conventionally or asymmetrically below the nuclear level; what political scientists call stability-instability paradox. And I worry that if North Korea feels confident in its nuclear deterrent they may say in 2010 we attacked South Korea and they didn't attack us. If they were deterred then, they'd certainly be deterred now that we have a credible nuclear capability. And so if North Korea continues down this path, if they do become deterrent, I think there's a lot of room in between saying, okay, we have a deterrent and let's go unify the peninsula. There's a lot of trouble they can cause on the spectrum before that and that's where I'm most concerned.

MR. KLINGER: Yeah, I agree. And I sort of see three lanes in the road. One is that it's just for defense or deterrence. And that you can have it as both a benign, oh, poor little North Korea. They only wanted these weapons, you know, to defend themselves against the big bad U.S. Look at what we did to Iraq and Yugoslavia. I think that's an overly benign interpretation. I think it's deterrence to prevent the U.S. from responding to something North Korea has done, particularly to our ally.

The other end, and if you're on the more benign side, you know, you're more likely to advocate freeze for freeze or, you know, sort of a concession-for-concession kind of thing. On the other end is sort of they're coming south. They want to unify the peninsula under the red banner. And to me, the folks who are advocating that, it's sort of like if you're at CIA and you're walking through the Korea Issue Group and you're like, well, where's Bob? Oh, he's under his desk with the helmet on because he read North Korean propaganda about they're going to turn us into a sea of fire. Oh, that's right. It's his first week on the job. Okay, Bob. Come on out. They say things like that.

So they do have a war plan. I mean, Kim Jong-un, when he came into power said I want a new war plan. I want to be able to occupy Seoul within three days and the peninsula within seven. That means they're going to go chemical and bio early and perhaps nuke. So they do have a plan. So it's not just the benign defense. But, and along with that is sort as Abe described, kind of the subset would be coercive diplomacy, tactical attacks, all that.

You know, I'd be in the middle where it's, yeah, it's not just the benign defense. They do have a plan. But

they're not coming south as long as they understand the correlation of forces today, as long as we have an alliance, we have the U.S. forces there. And when they say remove your forces we say no.

MS. PAK: Right.

MR. KLINGER: So, you know, they do have the plan, so we have to be wary about that. And that's why we have OPLAN 5015 and ConPlan 5029 and the counter provocation, you know, contingency plans, et cetera. So we're planning for that. We have to be wary but, you know, that's why we have alliances and they're vigilant. So I think we have to kind of look at the middle of the road as prepare for the contingencies but, you know, you don't have to -- and the folks on that side are kind of advocating the preventive attack, and many of us have written about why that's a bad idea for many reasons. And Sue Mi and Jung and I had a trilateral op-ed which was pretty fun where we listed a number of reasons why we thought a preventive attack was not a good idea. We call it CIA Explaining. That's the case where three people, CIA.

MR. DENMARK: I appreciate that.

MS. TERRY: No, I think Bruce is absolutely right. The reason why we're getting a lot of pushback on the unification thing from some folks are people -- because if we admit that somehow we are advocating kinetic action as a policy response, but that's not what we're saying. I think Bruce is absolutely right. You can still have that as a goal. That's why I said there's a difference between intent and capability. We don't have to allow that. We can say, no, we're not leaving. You're not going to decouple U.S.-South Korea alliance. It's stronger than ever. It will continue to be strong. And we push back on this. Just because you admit that that might be the long-term goal, it does not mean that we need to therefore do what? I mean, then, you know, we still stick -- be calm and stick with our contain and deter and, you know, defense and alliance coordination, all this.

MS. PAK: But consider this. So since Kim Jong-un came to power, he's done the Sony hack and various other -- the U.S. attributes WannaCry and the Bangladesh Bank heist to North Korea. He's used a nerve

agent in an international airport to kill his half-brother. He is boosting conventional military training. He's diversified the locations and the types of missiles, ballistic missiles, and has developed the rogue mobile system. Why is he doing all of this then if it's not on the side of getting ready for that war plan?

MR. DENMARK: You can attribute different things to different motivations. I think assassinating his brother is a lot more about his own personal power than getting ready for the plan. But I think it demonstrates who it is that we're dealing with and who the president is going in to negotiate with. It is still a regime that holds Americans hostage. It's a regime that the Trump administration identified as a sponsor of terror. This is a terrorist leader that he's going to be seeing. And it's a person who has ordered the deaths of several of his fellow countrymen that he saw as threats. So as the president would say, "It's a bad hombre that we're dealing with here." But just because he's a bad hombre doesn't mean that he's suicidal. It doesn't mean that he's irrational. It doesn't mean that he's going to sacrifice his life and the existence of his country in some apocalyptic vision of what happens forward. I think deterrence has worked for decades. And if the U.S. and our allies, we work together to make sure we maintain a good deterrent, make sure we stay ahead of the game there, I think deterrence should stay viable for the foreseeable future.

MR. KLINGER: And all the reasons you point out as to why it's a real threat. Why, you know, I disagree with folk who say, oh, it's a paper together. There's no real threat there. Still several years away before they can do anything. And they've been saying that for several years.

You know, with the missiles, as you point out, they're not only testing a lot but they're launching from mobile launchers from many locations throughout the country so that it would be harder to target them either preemptively or retaliatory. So the fact that they're developing SLBMs which would expose South Korea's flanks to a nuclear missile attack, because right now none of the systems that South Korea has can defend against submarine-launched ballistic missiles. They have SM2s which are good for anti-ship missiles, but not anti-ballistic missiles. So a number of other things. Solid fuel, missiles that are quicker to launch. And, you know, if we're wondering what their intent is, a lot of the missiles being launched are developments. So they're testing. A number of the missiles though are exercising the war plan, the ones

that are already deployed. And so when they launch four Scud extended range towards Japan, and we might wonder, oh, I wonder what they were planning on with that, you know, they the next day announce we were practicing nuclear airbursts over U.S. bases in Japan. And then when they launched, and there was a Nodong and they next day say, you know, we were practicing a nuclear airburst over the port of a neighboring country through which U.S. troops would be flowing. And then if we couldn't figure out who that might be, they had a map on Kim Jong-un's desk with the range ring which showed boosts on port. So they do have the war plan. They are exercising it. But as Abe pointed out, that's why we have the deterrents and all that. So even as the threat, the nuclear and the missile threat gets worse, I still think the strategy is kind of a, you know, it's not satisfying but it's more like the Cold War's response to the Soviet Union of its, you know, deterrence and containment and pressure, et cetera. You know, about 10 components that don't fit nicely onto a bumper sticker, but I think that's a better strategy than preventive attack which is, in my view, starting a war to prevent a war.

MS. PAK: Do you think it's possible that Kim doesn't have a strategy?

MS. TERRY: No. I think he has a strategy, more of a strategy than the United States to be honest. I don't know if we have a strategy.

MS. PAK: Low bar. Thanks. Okay. So I think we can open it up for your questions, and for any of us on the panel or for the panel as a whole. There are people going around with microphones if you're interested in asking your question. Anyone? Up here, please. Will you please identify yourself?

MR. MOSETTIG: Yeah, Mike Mosettig, PBS Online News Hour.

MS. PAK: And make sure your question is a question.

MR. MOSETTIG: I'm mystified to some degree by where Japan is in the middle of this. Sometimes Abe seems to be, and correct me if I'm wrong, seems to be acting that there could be violence in Korea and somehow he wouldn't be affected, or that Japan wouldn't be affected. How do you recommend the United

States deal with Japan as we go ahead in these next months?

MS. TERRY: Well, I just came from Japan. When I landed in Tokyo this news broke and we were supposed to talk about a whole host of issues with Japanese officials but the story broke. So they are mystified. They are confused. They are the ones who are very in line with the U.S. in terms of maximum pressure policy, in terms of imposing sanctions. Even when "bloody nose" talk was, you know, coming out, I think they were still supportive of this administration. More supportive actually, but they were completely caught off guard and surprised, like all of us. So I think it's very important to obviously stay closely aligned with Japan as we are with South Korea. I think Prime Minister Abe is going to come before this Trump-Kim Jong-un meeting to probably talk about the Japanese position.

Of course, they are also concerned about their own issues when it comes to North Korea, like (inaudible) issue. They already talking about how to include that as one of the deliverables to President Trump that he could possibly get from the North Koreans.

MS. PAK: So after the news broke, you know, President Trump got on the phone with Xi Jinping, Abe, but there was a subsequent tweet where it says, you know, Abe is supportive or something to that effect. And then in that same tweet it was about the trade deficit.

MS. TERRY: Right.

MS. PAK: So that doesn't help for one of your staunchest allies in the region who has stood next to you on maximum pressure.

MS. TERRY: Right.

MS. PAK: But that points to, I think, the tendencies to talk about the trade deficit, you know, the burden sharing and these types of things, or revisiting the alliance even as we're trying to work on the North Korea problem. Do you have any thoughts?

MR. DENMARK: I think Prime Minister Abe deserves a lot of credit for engaging with Trump so soon after the election and really built a robust foundation for that relationship. Generally, my sense has been that they've been pleased with the muscular and confident approach that the United States has taken towards the North Korea issue and at various times towards China. But at the same time I think Japan has been a bit quietly nervous about the muscular and confident approach that the United States has taken when it came to North Korea and China.

The decision by the Trump administration to withdraw from TPP was a major blow for Abe, one that he's attempted to recover from and tried making the best of, but the idea that President Trump agreed to meet with Kim Jong-un without prior consultation with his ally in Japan really inflames fear that Japan has traditionally had when it came to North Korea, that they get cut out. That the United States will cut a deal with the North Koreans, or with the Chinese for that matter, and not consult with the Japanese, not represent Japanese interests in that negotiation, and that the decision to meet with Kim Jong-un spoke directly to that fear. So I think it's good that Prime Minister Abe is going to be meeting with him, and I completely agree with Sue that the key is to remain lashed up with our allies, both before and after meetings to make sure that we're all on the same page, shoulder to shoulder.

MR. KLINGER: Yeah, I think as Abe was saying, is that in the presidential campaign here, Trump said a lot of things, sort of negative things about alliances and free-riding allies and trade imbalances and stuff. But I think Abe saw it as, look, I live in a bad neighborhood. I really need to lash up tightly with the U.S. And so he developed a very good relationship with Trump. I mean, the best, I think, you know, particularly early on. And then he was the most supportive of the firm sanctions and, you know, resolute stance against North Korea. So now with the sudden decision, you know, it's a little bit of a case of, you know, it's like, yeah, we're shoulder to shoulder with our U.S. ally. Where did he go? You know, with this sudden shift, I think now Japan is nervous. I had a visit by a senior official from Japan and you could detect this. You guys are still going to be tough, right, on sanctions and sort of you're not going to just go into a room and make a big deal that doesn't take into account the security concerns of Japan and others.

I sort of think back on like the Agreed Framework time when the South Korean president at the time was complaining we were negotiating South Korea's security over their heads and that even though U.S. officials would say, look, before and after every time we meet with North Koreans we are briefing the South Koreans, and the South Koreans were still nervous. They felt we weren't telling them everything. And that was one of the reasons why we had the six-party talks is everyone is in the room together. Well, now as South Korea is meeting separately, the U.S. is going to be meeting separately with the North Koreans, you know, Japan may feel like they're the one out in the cold and wondering what both the U.S. and South Korea will be agreeing to because certainly, they would be affected by any kind of clash in Northeast Asia, as well as the security situation on the peninsula if we start making agreements or concessions or removing our forces. So I think they are concerned. And that just shows why we need, you know, even more coordination amongst our allies.

MS. PAK: And just as a final point, I would look for -- I would hope to see more South Korea-Japan cooperation on these issues. Next question, in the back in the green sweater, please.

MS. COOK: Hi, Stephanie Cook, Nuclear Intelligence Weekly. Thanks so much. This is a great panel. Could you address -- you addressed somewhat the change at the State Department. How is Kim going to read the accession of Pompeo to Head of State Department, and how do our allies read it? And what effect do you think it'll have on the summit meeting?

MS. PAK: You know, this is -- I talked about episodes earlier. I think this is yet another episode of the Game of Thrones or whatever.

MS. TERRY: You don't even watch it.

MS. PAK: Yeah, I don't even watch it. But --

MR. KLINGER: That's like when I --

MS. PAK: -- this has been a year-long storyline though.

MS. TERRY: I don't think it's shocking. I mean, I think -- I think on one hand you can say, okay, it's not a good sign in terms of diplomacy just because Pompeo seems a little bit more hard on North Korea, less than Tillerson, but this has been out there as news for surely about, I don't know, at least six months. Everybody has been talking about it. So I don't think it comes as a major shock, so I'm not sure if it's going to have such a great impact because it's not --

MS. PAK: But I think it does show to a certain extent that maximum pressure -- the policy of maximum pressure and engagement -- maximum pressure is strong but the engagement part is not as strong. Right? Because Joe Yun retired last week. He was a special representative on North Korea policy and now Tillerson is out.

MR. DENMARK: So let me take a slightly different tact. I agree with what you said but I sort of have a different reaction to that. And it's less about Tillerson and Pompeo as personalities, as individuals. In any negotiations, negotiations that I've been in, if you look at them historically, the key -- one of the key features for any negotiator is that they have to be able to credibly represent their leadership. That they know -- that your counterpart knows that whatever deal you make, you know that your boss will back you up; right? And everybody has known, you just have to watch CNN or read the newspaper, that Tillerson and the president had a lot of problems and did not see eye to eye on a whole host of issues. And so that, for better or worse, made Tillerson less of an ideal negotiating representative in these sorts of meetings, similar to other officials that have come and gone.

If Pompeo can credibly say he represents the president, and if the president is able to convey that sort of representational status, then it may make Pompeo a more credible negotiator than that. Potentially more than Tillerson was just because of the differences that he had with the president. That's my optimistic interpretation.

MS. PAK: that's a great point.

MS. TERRY: Good point.

MR. KLINGER: I'll be skeptical. Well, one thing is the problem with using analogies is if they haven't watched Game of Thrones.

MS. TERRY: I'm up-to-date.

MR. KLINGER: But I used Game of Thornes on a TV interview and they were like, oh, I'm sorry, I don't watch the show. That's sort of like when I did BBC TV and I used a baseball analogy to explain missile defense. "Well, I'm sure that's quite correct, Mr. Klinger, but we play cricket here." Anyway, on preventive attack, I mean, the view is that, you know, General McMaster is most in favor of it. Secretary Tillerson, Secretary Mattis were against it. And Pompeo seems to be at least perceived as more in the McMaster camp. So if Tillerson is out and Pompeo is in, some would see that as, you know, you have more advocates for a preventive attack if this diplomacy thing doesn't work, so.

MS. PAK: Up here, please.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for coming. My name is Mitsu Onakai, Reagan Foundation and Heritage. I'm going to try to say or to make sense out of my talk. So many things are going on in my head. You guys touched it but just remember, North Korea is the one that requested this meeting. So my question is, what do they want? Why do they want to meet? Well, Trump didn't request this meeting, so that's my natural question. What do they really want? They're using this as a stepping stone to an ultimate goal. What is that ultimate goal? Things like that go through my head.

I think this decision for this meeting was made long before the Olympics. They just used the Olympics to come up with something like this. Long before meaning '80s, late '80s, Kim Jong-il met with Clinton and they came up with a pretty good deal. They got what they wanted from America. So maybe that's what they have in the back of their mind. We've got to do something because they are feeling the sanctions as

you mentioned. I agree with that. So my question is, what do they really want? I mean, two things. Number one, they want the U.S. to withdraw from the 38th, the DMZ, or what else? They want to hit Okinawa, or Guam, or whatever. So there's a lot of things going on in my head. But I do agree with you. It may end up with we're going to make this deal by faith only and then go from there. Maybe end up with that. I don't know. However that is, I think Trump is the only one who can deal with this because he's kind of unorthodox and outside-the-box type of mentality, and this is probably what it's going to take to get something done. Something. Not all, but something. This could be the number one step. So, anyway.

MS. PAK: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that.

MR. KLINGER: I think the reason for having extensive pre-summit meetings between U.S. and North Korean officials would be trying to figure out what it is North Korea wants, or at least an agreed-upon agenda. We have issues we want to talk about and we want to find out what particular issues they want to bring up. I mean, I think they want to try to drive a wedge, reduce the forces, et cetera, but at least for the purposes of the summit we want to have an agreed upon, you know, we want to talk about denuclearization. We want to, you know, I think if they want to talk about a peace treaty, we want to point out that we should have like a conventional armed forces in Europe treaty type negotiations that proceed that where you're thinning out the conventional force threat to South Korea rather than just signing a document. You know, so you know, I think obviously they're trying to reach their objectives, which is reduce U.S. influence, U.S. defense of South Korea and the region, so we need to work against that. But it'll be, you know, denuclearization, whether we bring up human rights in an initial meeting or not, but I think we would want to focus on security issues. They may want normalization of relations, peace treaty, removal of the hostile policy, a long list of things. So that's why you want to have meetings ahead of time so your president isn't surprised by what they're trying to bring up.

MR. DENMARK: So if I could add another piece, and we haven't talked about this aspect of it yet. In terms of what the North Koreans get out of a summit, the summit happening in itself is a major victory for North Korea. Sitting down next to the president of the United States as an equal, as a counterpart, conveys tremendous prestige and legitimacy to Kim Jong-un. That's why I want to sit next to Sue. It

conveys a lot of prestige and legitimacy to me. And so one of the things that struck me by the statements over the weekend by I think it was Pompeo again who said that we've given up nothing to sit down. And my reaction was just sitting down with the North Koreans at the presidential level is a major concession. So I think even if the event happens, even if nothing comes out of it, North Korea has already gained a tremendous amount of political capital as a result of the summit even happening.

MS. TERRY: I agree. And just quickly on that, I think still this is why the venue is important or so. Wherever they meet, it's true that North Koreans are going to spin this domestically to say it's our nuclear strength, it's our capability that brought, look, the U.S. president to sit down with us. This is something that North Koreans sought for a long time and actually, Bill Clinton did not meet with Kim Jong-il. I mean, later, only as an ex-president, but there is no American president that ever met with a North Korean leader. But I do think so in this sense, also the venue is important. I do think that, I hope that the president does not go to North Korea to give that extra legitimacy that he can spin to his people. I think a more neutral location would be better, like South Korea DMZ or even a neutral country, third country like, I don't know, Switzerland, Sweden, Singapore.

MS. PAK: One of the things that I've been worried about is thinking about why they tested so often in the past few months and why they were so bent on digging in their heels and exchanging in this rhetorical war with the president is I'm wondering if they're looking for a deal with the president in terms of that no one else matters in this environment but the leader, but the top leader. That's clear from the Kim Jong-un perspective and the constant shuffling and the demoting and promoting within the Trump administration, I think Kim can see that President Trump is the only one that matters on this North Korea decision-making. And you know, something that nags at me in the back of my mind is was he doing all of these things so that he can try to cement a deal with the president early in his administration that he can reinforce in the next three years, which would be moving toward eroding the alliance with South Korea. So I think that's one thing that I'm looking at.

MS. TERRY: What would that ultimate deal be? Would it be a peace treaty? Would it be like, hey, let's normalize relations. Let's conclude a peace treaty. And then in return we will denuclearize.

MS. PAK: Right. I can see Kim Jong-un untapping into President Trump's, you know, alliance issues. You know, suspicions about alliances and tapping into that, that vein that runs through this presidential administration and say -- and be in these drawn-out peace treaty negotiations or drawn out, you know, I'll sacrifice the ICBM but I'll keep everything else which still keeps Japan and South Korea in danger. And building suspicion in South Korea and Japan about U.S. commitment in the region.

MS. TERRY: This is why I said this is one of my big concerns. It truly is, that he's going to try to make this deal because President Trump came in -- before he even came in he talked about burden sharing. He even talked about it. Why do we even need the forces there? And he talked about it cost too much. And so, again, I think Kim Jong-un understands this, watches this very closely.

MS. PAK: And he's been suspicious for decades.

MS. TERRY: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. PAK: About alliances. So this is not a new thing. So, and it only takes a quick google search to learn that. In the back over there, please.

QUESTIONER: I have a question on China's role in this crisis. From China's side, as North Korea's nearest and most powerful neighbor, China has a vested interest in the country's stability, and it is obvious that Beijing's priority is quite different from Washington's priority. Has American worked out a strategy to persuade China that the status quo is not sustainable? And has that been necessary to bring China to the negotiating table if China and the United States have not reached a consensus?

MS. TERRY: Well, first of all, I don't think at this point North Koreans want China involved. That is part of the strategy. First of all, I think the North Korea-China relationship has deteriorated. There's no love lost there. They actually despite each other. I think Xi Jinping does not like Kim Jong-un. Kim Jong-un does not like Xi Jinping. It's clear. They have never even met since he came into power. That

relationship is evolving and changing, although you are absolutely right. I don't think China's fundamental priority or its interest in the Korean Peninsula and still wanting stability, still wanting a buffer, all of this has not absolutely changed yet. Still, the relationship has evolved.

For this particular summit, I don't think right now -- I think China is concerned about being left out. I think this is almost everybody's concern, even though it welcomes this engagement in broad terms. But I think it's part of North Korea's -- I don't know if they want necessarily China involved in this. It's kind of -- they want to create fissure between everybody.

MR. DENMARK: I completely agree. King Jong-un has no interest in being anybody's little brother. Kim Jong-un wants to engage with the United States and be recognized as a major player on his own. So the fact that if he does indeed meet with the president, I think that's another piece of that. He's not meeting with the Chinese first.

From China's perspective, I think similar, as Bruce described, President Moon potentially, they got what they wanted. The Americans are talking to North Koreans but now they find themselves on the outside. And so there's always been this dichotomy from the Chinese perspective of saying on one hand this is not our issue. This is an issue between the United States and North Korea. They need to solve it between themselves. But then they would say but China has an important role to play in this dynamic. And I think you're seeing that here where they're pleased on one hand that the meeting has been agreed to. May actually happen. But at the same time they're concerned that potentially the most consequential security issue in the Asia Pacific is being managed without them, which is a direct challenge to their ambitions to be the most dominant, most essential, most critical power in the Asia Pacific. And so how they react is I don't think they're going to insert themselves at this point but I do think if things go badly, especially, they may try to play a larger role.

And from an American perspective, it's been one of the key accomplishments of the Trump administration. They do deserve a lot of credit for getting the Chinese on board with pressure. And I think it's important for the Americans to be demonstrating that they're open to play China's game. China,

you say that you want us to engage? We're going to engage. But that means that if it doesn't work, that we've shown that your strategy doesn't work and you need to be on board with us more. So a lot of it will depend on what happens if and when this summit actually occurs, but I suspect that afterwards China may try to play a more essential role. On which direction on which side I think is still up to --

MS. PAK: So I think because Kim and Xi hate each other, I think the venue for a U.S.-North Korea summit will not be in China. I think it's more likely that -- if it happens, it's more likely to be Moscow or somewhere in Russia, maybe in the Far East somewhere. But we're speculating.

MS. TERRY: It's interesting. Ian Bremmer just suggested that and Zakaria. He's like, I bet Putin is going to say, you know, let's sway Russia.

MS. PAK: And Russia has been always this wild card in this drama. And Kim has shown a preference for Putin over Xi maybe because he doesn't want to be Xi's younger brother.

MR. KLINGER: What did you say, on China, I think right now at least, you know, they're seeing it positively because now we're not talking about preventive strike. That's been put on the back burner for now. And they would also see it as, well, vindication of their strategy of you guys just have to be in the same room together and talking. That will work. They also would see it as, oh, maybe we don't need to really enforce sanctions as much now because they've served their sole purpose which was to get North Korea back to the table, and therefore, why should we stop turning a blind eye to stuff happening on Chinese soil. I think they also see it as well, it's now even less likely the U.S. is going to enforce secondary sanctions against Chinese violators of U.S. law when Congress sent a list to the White House of 12 Chinese banks that they think there's evidence for committing money laundering in the U.S. financial system and the White House still hasn't taken action against any of them and there's, you know, a lot of unclassified work on all the Chinese entities that are facilitating North Korea's prohibited programs. And this administration has continued to pull U.S. punches on things like that. So I think China would see it like, well, it's less likely they're going to go after our entities. We don't have to push the U.N. sanctions as much. So I think a number of things they would see it as positive. And then even if the meeting doesn't

go well and we start talking about, you know, beating the war drums, I think China would say, look, look, you know, you went back to -- you went to the talks. You just need to try again and again and again. So I think on a lot of ways, even though they're going to be wary about being out of the room, I think they would see a lot of this as positive, at least in the near term unless things go bad.

MS. PAK: Yes? The gentleman in the blue jacket over here.

MR. BOYD: My name is Derek Boyd. I'm interested whether the panel thinks that the North Koreans can get an enduring agreement with the United States, because the panel has mentioned that it's not clear what the United States actually is aiming for in these talks. And also, raise the point that negotiators have to be credible, and it's not clear to me that anybody can establish that position with respect to this President of the United States. So can the North Koreans have a realistic expectation of reaching an enduring agreement with the United States?

MS. TERRY: I think this is an excellent point. I do think the Jong-un regime is very, very skeptical. Bruce and I actually, you know, we had an opportunity to meet with North Koreans. Remember when they said -- they brought up, they said, listen -- they always bring up first of all the 1994 agreed framework. And then they say, hey, we get it. You have a democracy. You have a different president that comes in and they bring up when President George W. Bush came into the office, the whole famous Axis of Evil speech, and then the whole agreement they think fell apart. And then they talk about, you know, because your system is democracy, we get it. We can't really trust it. You can have a different person that comes in and completely scrubs the deal. And this is why I think the Iran deal is being looked at very closely. We have an Iran deal, but if that gets scrapped, what does that say about any deal that the North Koreans make with us? So already they are very, very skeptical of us and I do think they question that can they really have a deal that they can trust with the United States.

MS. PAK: So I don't think they want an agreement at all.

MS. TERRY: Just a negotiation process.

MS. PAK: I think it's the process and optics that matter more than the actual agreement or whatever agreement comes out of it. For North Korea, you know, there's a lot of talk about, you know, the hostile U.S. policy. They don't feel security. They want security guarantees. But the regime requires a hostile United States for legitimacy and for it to succeed and to keep going.

MR. KLINGER: Yeah, and in that meeting when North Korea was saying basically, you know, how can we do a deal? You change your policy every four or eight years. I said, yeah, democracy is pretty messy. You ought to try it sometime. It didn't go over well.

MS. PAK: Yes, please, up here. Please wait for the mic. Thanks.

QUESTIONER: Rick Duty from Global Peace Foundation. Talk about the meeting place. Mongolia former President Elbegdorj, he traded, made offer for this meeting. They say that they made an arranged meeting for North Korea and Japan before and then he went to North Korea before and that Mongolia has good relations with all the six-party nations. How do you think about this offer?

MS. PAK: I'm very skeptical about Kim Jong-un going too far. I don't think he'll go very far. I think even going down to the border area is a big deal. So I don't -- yes, but Mongolia is also -- I've also heard Singapore being bandied about as a possible venue. But you know, I don't think Kim wants to -- you know, Jonathan Pollack, my colleague from Brookings, he said that, you know, his missiles have traveled farther than himself. And I think that will probably hold true for a while.

MS. TERRY: Still, I mean, it's closer than Sweden or other places that also have been mentioned as a possibility, so.

MR. KLINGER: I wonder if Trump is pushing for some Trump resort. And then charge the North Koreans.

MS. TERRY: I don't mean to be --

MS. PAK: That's definitely flipping things around because we --

MR. KLINGER: We usually pay for North Korea.

MS. TERRY: But I do think Mr. Trump actually cares about -- because, you know, he does come from the drama, like the entertainment aspect because it's going to be one of the most watched spectacles. So I think it's up to him. I think he would think about what makes the most sense or so in terms of the dramatic volume.

MR. KLINGER: To me I thought Panmunjom for the Inter-Korean Summit was brilliant.

MS. PAK: Yeah, it was perfect.

MR. KLINGER: Because I had argued that it shouldn't be in North Korea. You shouldn't have the third time the South Korean leader seemingly goes to the greater leader and pays homage by visiting him. I had figured the cow had left the barn; that it was a done deal, but I argued that it should be in South Korea. If not Seoul, maybe Jeju-do, the Island of Peace, and you could control security and control demonstrators better. So I thought Panmunjom was a brilliant idea, and it would make sense for the U.S.-North Korean Summit, but I wonder if Trump wouldn't want to do it because it's been done. If perhaps a driving force for agreeing to this summit is it's a Nixon goes to China, it's a first-ever by a U.S. president, so it's historic, it's sort of high visibility. And you know, would he not want to go to Panmunjom because it's been done? He wants something either more high visibility or just more unique for the unique U.S.-North Korea visit. But on the venue, I don't know. I mean, I think we should focus more on the agenda than the venue but the venue is important but the agenda is more important.

MS. PAK: We have time for one last question. In the middle, in the back. Yeah.

MS. BAGAMAN: Thank you for the presentation. My name is Jill Bagaman. I'm a graduate student and research fellow. And my question is about, kind of switching gears a little bit, we've assumed that this talk between the president and the leader is going to take place. What would be the consequences and concerns if it does not happen, and who would most benefit if this talk is spoiled?

MS. PAK: The North Koreans have not confirmed or denied, so they have nothing to lose. It was up to -- the ball was in the U.S. court, right, based on what the South Korean government had provided a readout of that meeting. So for the North Koreans, I don't think they have anything to lose. The optics would be from the North Korea perspective that the U.S. has declined diplomacy yet again. Right? And we're the good guys.

MR. DENMARK: Yeah, I think a lot of it would just depend on the specifics of how it goes down. I mentioned before, an official has already said that it'll be North Korea's fault if it goes down. But I think from an American perspective there is some political cavity to be gained to be shown to be open to negotiations and letting North Koreans be the bad guy. Letting the focus of international ire and attention be on Pyongyang and their behavior. And so staying open to engagement, trying to make it work, letting the North Koreans be the bad guys I think is probably the way to do it.

MR. KLINGER: Yeah, I think it depends on the specifics. If North Korea never confirms they're having a meeting, then we're just waiting by the phone. But if it -- however it goes, if it looks like it's North Korea's fault, they're being unreasonable, then the U.S. can say, look, we tried, as we have tried many times before if you talk to U.S. diplomats, they've reached out even on an unconditional sort of working level and they've been always rejected. If the U.S. looks like, look, we're the reasonable ones, we tried, and therefore, if you have to go back to the tough policy, whether it's sanctions and/or military threats, then you would think you get better buy-in from the international community because you did try. If it looks like -- and then even domestically, politically, you could say, you know, we were tough. We didn't give in. Others wanted us to have a meeting. It would have had concessions and we don't do concessions with North Korea, then that would also be a positive. If it looks like the U.S. is the unreasonable one, then I think it has kind of an international backlash against the U.S. where you may get less buy-in for a follow-

on tough policy if it looks like the U.S. was the unreasonable one.

MS. PAK: So I wanted to thank our panelists and my friends and colleagues for joining me on this panel today. We talked a lot about diplomacy and about the two summits that are potentially going to happen, but what if diplomacy fails and there is a military conflict in the Korean Peninsula? And so Ryan Haas, my colleague at Brookings, will be leading an excellent panel, panelists who will be assessing the costs of a military conflict in the Korean Peninsula. So sit tight as we switch actors. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. HASS: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for being with us this morning. As Jung mentioned, my name is Ryan Hass. I'm a Rubenstein Fellow here in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings Institution. It is my pleasure today to serve as a moderator of an expert panel that will look at the cost of military conflict on the Korean Peninsula. In my role as moderator, I've asked our expert panel to provide an analytically rigorous examination in their areas of expertise of what the world will look like if diplomacy fails and military options are employed to thwart North Korea's nuclear and missile ambitions.

What would be the economic effects, the humanitarian consequences, the logistical challenges as well as the impact on the U.S. standing in the region and the world. Through this panel, we would like to deepen public knowledge about the potential cost of conflict so that any future decision and discussion about military options is grounded in a rigorous assessment of the risks associated with it.

I will invite each panelist to the stage to provide opening comments. Afterwards the panelists will assemble up here, we'll have a chance to exchange questions and answers with all of you until about noon, and I will provide panelists with the opportunity to provide last word in their closing comments. So with that, it is my pleasure to first introduce Dr. Scott Seaman who focuses on Japan and the Korean Peninsula at the Eurasia Group, which is a leading global risk political analysis consultancy.

Scott has held a variety of positions in government and the private sector, both in the United States and

Japan. He also has the distinction of being an alumnus of both the University of Virginia and Duke, which will complicate, I think, his month ahead as both college basketball teams March Forward and March Madness. But with that, I welcome Scott to the stage to talk about the potential economic impacts off conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

MR. SEAMAN: Thank you very much, Ryan. I have to say I went to Duke and UVA. I never attended a basketball game. So I have the dubious distinction of going to both schools, which are basketball powerhouses but not having attended. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to talk today. As Ryan mentioned, I work at Eurasia Group. My primary job is to work with clients who are worried about political risks around the globe. I mainly focus on Japan and North Korea and South Korea, but in my role I also deal with a lot of Pan-Asian issues, and certainly this is one of those today.

I thought I would start by just talking about some of the impressions that I have gained by working with clients as this crisis has kind of developed over time. I'll start by saying that this is definitely a classic fat-tail risk that we're talking about. In other words, the chances of a military conflict actually occurring are, at least in my view and I think many others share this view, is relatively remote. However, if it were to happen, it would have an incredibly damaging effect, not only in humanitarian terms, but economic terms, social terms, and everything else. But because of that, it's an incredibly difficult risk to price in. So clients that I talk to, they're always wondering is this really going to happen and, if so, what do I need to worry about. But their primary question is what I just mentioned is this going to happen. Because if it's not going to happen, they certainly don't want to take the time and energy and money required to try to build a business plan around it.

I would say that they're worried about a number of different things. I can put them in big baskets. They're worried about their personnel on the ground, they're worried about their physical assets, they're worried about their financial assets, they're also worried about disruptions to supply chains, and also about cyberattacks, which is something that's getting more and more attention as North Korea turns to

that as a way to finance itself.

But what's interesting is, as I said, firms and investors are struggling to find a way to incorporate their analysis of this risk in their actual decision making and most of them have actually decided not to do so. I just wanted to mention a survey that I came across, because I wanted to find out more about what firms were actually doing to respond to this risk. I found a couple of surveys, both from Reuters, one was in May of last year. In this one, 87 percent of respondents -- and this was a group of Japanese medium and large enterprises. Eighty percent of them thought the standoff would not lead to conflict. In other words, they didn't think that this was a highly significant risk.

Only 10 percent were actually discussing what they would do in the event of a conflict, and 43 percent of those were talking about making new business continuity plans and others were involved in planning to evacuate the Peninsula families and employees that they have there. Another survey in October of 2017, only 24 percent of companies surveyed said that they felt the North Korean threat would have an impact on their operations or on business continuity planning.

And of companies with business continuity plans, only 10 percent said that they were actually strengthening those plans or discussing doing so. The point I'm trying to make here is that people are extremely worried about this risk. Investors are worried and businesses are worried, those that have operations in South Korea, those that have investments there, and anyone else that does business in Asia or in the world is certainly looking at this as a significant risk.

But because it's so difficult to price that risk in, the reaction has been relatively mild, and I wanted to talk just a little bit about that. 2017, despite all of this risk, was actually a phenomenally good year for South Korea. Now, you could argue that without this geopolitical risk that things would have been better, but of course that's a counterfactual and really difficult to get your hands around.

But let me just go through a few things that show how well the economy performed last year despite all this risk that we've been talking about. The main KOSPI Index began 2017 at a little over 2,000 and ended close to 2,500. Meaning that if you were investing there, you made a 21 percent return. In 2016 the return was a little over three percent and 2015 it was a little over two percent.

So, in addition to the geopolitical risks, you had a couple of other things that were happening that may have muted the effects of that; one was certainly the fact that we had an impeachment followed by a new president coming in offering a fresh reform agenda, talking about cleaning up corruption, and that made a lot of investors and businesses more confident about the future for South Korea, despite the fact they were facing this major threat in North Korea. Also foreign investors were net purchasers of assets in Korea last year. Now, those net purchases were actually down from the year before, but it is remarkable that investors still continued to see South Korea as a place that wanted to put their money.

There are only three months in which they were net sellers; one was August when of course we started to see a lot more risk around the idea that Kim Jong-un was talking about sending a missile maybe into waters near Guam, that risk continued into September. And so there were net selling activities by investors then and then again in December, which was mainly profit share -- profit taking at the end of the year.

The Won appreciated 14 percent in 2017, so you know on most of the major indices, the Korean economy performed quite well. This of course was also because the global economy as a whole was doing much better and exports, which are such a large part of the Korean economy were being pulled and really improving because of that. So a lot of the risks that we were trying to talk to clients about last year was actually difficult to put your finger on because of these other positive events that were happening around it.

One other thing that I think is a large seachange that came as a result of this risk, and that's really the China/South Korea relationship. When I've been talking with Korean companies for many, many years, as

was the case with U.S. companies, China was seen as the Shangri-La, the market that they were going to go into, expand, make lots of money, and take advantage of not only their geographical closeness but also their political and social closeness to the Chinese. It was really seen as the market where they needed to be and expand.

They're much, much more aware now of China as a source of political risk, and this is all around the dispute, the long-running dispute between Beijing and Seoul when Beijing became very upset with Seoul's decision to deploy THAAD and as a result started to retaliate against South Korean companies. Let me just talk briefly about that. South Korean investment in the first seven months of last year into China declined 43 percent. So South Korean companies were definitely reacting to the idea that the business environment in China was not as welcome as it was in the past and they were really drawing back on their investment plans. The Korean economy, lots of estimates as far as how much it actually lost as a result of the THAAD dispute, but I see the figure of $10 billion being thrown around a lot. Cosmetics were hit hard, entertainment, all of the K-pop that is normally so popular in China had a very difficult time remaining on television. Concerts were canceled, consumer goods were hit very hard, and especially tourism. Tourism from China into South Korea really dropped off a cliff.

Just as an example of that, the South Koreans were assuming or expecting that they would have around 200,000 Chinese visit the Olympics and only 20,000 arrived, so that's only ten percent of the original estimate.

Of course, all of this geopolitical risk has prompted South Korea and Japan to take a harder look at their defense spending, and certainly my clients have been watching it very carefully because they want to be aware of what companies, both in South Korea and in the U.S., are likely to take advantage of what is likely to be a significant military buildup.

Now, moving just to the consequences, so what happens and what's happening now and now what might

happen if we actually have a conflict. There will be a huge selloff of equities. Emerging markets will be hit especially hard, so South Korea obviously, but our countries in the region as well.

Massive trade disruption, just to give you an example of how important the sea and air routes going through that area of the world, about $5 trillion worth of goods go through the South China Sea each year, and that's more than one-third of total global maritime traffic, so that's a huge amount of cargo and goods moving back and forth in an area that may become a war zone.

Eight of the world's 15 biggest ports are in the region in terms of cargo volume and six of the world's 15 busiest ports in terms of container traffic is also in the region. We would also expect a collapse of major supply chains. And in particular anything related to information and communication technologies and that's mainly because South Korea has such a major role that it's playing in producing those sorts of things for the world. I'm thinking in terms of semiconductors, wireless communication devices, flat panel displays, and application devices like tablets.Samsung in 2017 was responsible for 36 percent of NAND flash memory production in the world, and 45.6 percent of DRAM memory.

A lot of South Korean companies have started to move their production outside of South Korea, but a lot of this high-tech production as well as the R&D is still located in South Korea and, of course, all of that would be either severely damaged or certainly at severe risk in the event of a conflict. Of course we can't forget about the fact that South Korea produces enormous amounts of cars and vehicle parts, so any supply chains in Asia or elsewhere that are connected to that would be severely damaged. I kind of think back to what happened with Japan after Fukushima and all of the work that major companies had to do to repair their supply chains and, in my cases, find alternatives.

Massive capital outflows, regional currency depreciation, commodity prices across the world would really be fluttering, because people would be struggling to figure out, well, what's the demand going to be and what's the supply going to be, because you would really be getting hit on both of those -- that you would be

getting hit from both directions there. There would probably be a significant recession around the world. Very difficult to understand how long that would last, but maybe two years. And if you're talking about a global recession over the course of two years, you're talking about an incredible amount of capital that's lost and an investment stays where it is without being deployed.Property markets would get hit. And of course you'd get into all of the problems associated with massive refugee flows not only out of North Korea, but out of any of the other areas that are affected by a conflict.

If you look toward the longer term consequences, again, these are all just estimates, you can find a wide range, but I've certainly heard that reunification could cost around $3 trillion. And you're talking about integrating two incredibly different economies, incredibly different populations, so it would take at least a generation to even get close to be able to economically integrate the two countries. You'd also have probably a major problem with unemployment in South Korea as it tries to absorb all of these refugees from the north.

The real wildcard for me, and I would love to be able to, one, find out if it exists and, two, be able to provide it to my clients and that's is there any sort of plan that the United States, South Korea, Japan, China, and other countries have made for who will be responsible for cleaning up the mess, who will be maybe occupying parts of North Korea, who will be in charge of rebuilding infrastructure, who will take control of a lot of the resources that are in the region.

All of those things will have enormous effects on investment. When I'm talking about these consequences, obviously I'm talking way down the road, probably 20 to 30 years. But if you're a mining company, for example, you are thinking in those long timelines. Looking briefly on the bright side, if we can do that, we do have 25 million North Koreans who would be available to provide goods and services to the world at obviously a much, much higher level than they're doing now. There are plenty of companies in South Korea and Japan and other places that would love eventually to be able to take advantage of that labor pool. Abundant natural resources, this is kind of the hidden treasure, aside from the nuclear

weapons. The other hidden treasure that North Korea has is enormous wealth in natural resources. Ballpark figures suggest that maybe there are $10 trillion worth of minerals in North Korea -- coal, iron, ore, zinc, copper, and a wide range also of rare earths. So if the North Koreans, or anyone else, is actually to take advantage of those resources, that would definitely help pay for a lot of the reconstruction effort.

Finally I get a lot of questions about infrastructure. As everyone knows, China is very, very interested in building out its Belt and Road Initiative. South Korea also has its own plans for hopefully building out infrastructure in Northeast Asia, including through North Korea. And in the longer run, both the investment in that type of project and then the economic gains that come from it certainly would provide a bright spot much further down the road. With that, Ryan, I will stop and thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. HASS: Thank you, Scott. Our next speaker is Robera Cohen. Roberta currently serves as Co-Chair Emeritus of the Committee for Human Rights North Korea. Roberta's distinguished career has spanned the United Nations, the State Department, as a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and as an author and academic. She's one of the world's leading experts on human rights and displaced persons. Today we are fortunate to have her to examine the potential humanitarian consequences of conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

MS. COHEN: Thank you, Ryan, it's a pleasure to be back at Brookings. It's one of my alma maters. Before commenting on the humanitarian cost and consequences of military action, which I was asked to do, let me first emphasize that it's important how we think about the people who will be affected. Need I even mention that the people over there have the same human worth dignity and value as the people over here.

The comment attributed to our Commander In Chief that if there's a war, at least they will die over there was made notwithstanding that the Republic of Korea is our ally, that its 51 million people will be affected, including some 240,000 American citizens living in Seoul, not to mention millions of Japanese that may be affected, and Japan is our ally as well.

The principal driver of humanitarian crises worldwide is war. Unlike natural disasters, war really stays limited in scope but can escalate and produce high numbers of casualties, injured people, and uprooted people who can become internally displaced, often on a massive scale, or flee across borders and become refugees.

Most are desperate for food, medical care, clean water, shelter, and protection. The total number of forcibly displaced persons from war and violence today is more than 65 million. A war on the Korean Peninsula, even if not full scale, will add substantially to the world's totals, because of the specific features of the Korean situation.

First, both sides have advanced lethal weaponry, indeed weapons of mass destruction pointing to the likelihood of rapid and enormous casualties. Even if North Korea were to use only conventional artillery and rockets against Seoul in retaliatory strike, the number of civilians killed and injured could be in the tens of thousands as a minimum rising to the hundreds of thousands. If North Korea used chemical weapons, and many believe it might, and possibly even biological weapons, the casualty rate will go even higher, and survivors will have to seek medical treatment for years thereafter. If in the worst case scenario a nuclear weapon were to be used on Seoul and possibly Tokyo, there could be deaths in the low millions, plus additional fatalities and illnesses from radio activity on the whole region. Were a tactical nuclear weapon to be deployed in North Korea, the damage might not necessarily be containable. So let's just say that the people over there are really going to suffer.

Second, the density and location of South Korea's population points to a high death rate. Bruce Klingner mentioned nervousness in South Korea, South Korea should be nervous. Some 25 million people, half of the population of country, are concentrated in the Seoul greater metropolitan area, with 43,000 in each square mile, all within striking distance of the North's artillery maybe 35 to 50 miles away. No amount of shelter, stockpiled food, and medicines and gas masks can fully shield a civilian population under direct

military attack. In an advanced economy like South Korea, the damage to electric power and information systems could badly affect health care, food, clean water, and sanitation. The extent to which the population is prepared for a full-blown humanitarian emergency is not known since too many drills or announcements could create panic. There will be a 'stay put' policy in Seoul, but the displacement of South Koreans can be expected. For the Americans and the Japanese in the country totaling some 300,000, there are evacuation plans. But if one is realistic, how successful can they be.

A third feature of the Korean situation is the rhetoric that has been used by the U.S. and North Korean heads of state, which seems to encourage attacks on civilians in a war situation. Threats to totally destroy North Korea and to unleash fire and fury suggest far more extensive military action than surgical strikes, not to mention North Korea's threats to turn Seoul into a sea of fire and use nuclear weapons against American cities. Now, true, words can be bluster, but they also can cause miscalculation and create an environment in which unthinkable situations become more likely.

Fourth is the humanitarian crisis already in North Korea. An estimated 70 percent of the North Korean population, 18 million people are said by the U.N. to suffer from food insecurity and undernutrition. Some 15 million need access to basic health services, and 3.5 million access to clean water and proper sanitation. Recently severe drought, flooding, and sanctions have exacerbated the situation. War will unquestionably cause further scarcities, so that people now living on the edge could fall over into starvation. We do not know whether the population today will be as accepting of hunger, disease, and death as it was during the great famine of the '90s. We may have a North Korea, what the U.N. calls a complex emergency, where authority, local, or central breaks down and international involvement becomes necessary.

Fifth, a refugee emergency sizable, even massive flows from North Korea can be expected if there is escalating conflict and food scarcity with tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands fleeing principally to China and ultimately to South Korea with smaller numbers to Japan, Russia, and other countries.

Sometimes the 1 million figure is used, but often those who do so overlook the barriers to refugee flows, such as landmines at the DMZ, a possible Chinese closure of part of its border, military strikes, tunnels overrun with soldiers. The contingency plans of the U.S., South Korea, and China are reported to all give priority to averting refugee flows by restoring order quickly and helping people survive where they are. This of course presumes troops on the ground, and it also presumes collaboration among the U.S., South Korea, and China in the event of turmoil. China is reportedly building refugee camps near its boarder and also planning special zones in North Korea for internally displaced persons, IDPs, whose numbers will no doubt exceed those of refugees. Unique to the Korean context is that refugee flows could actually be a catalyst for the first stage of Korean unification. South Korea is legally and politically bound to allow in North Koreans considering them as citizens. However, if South Korea is under attack and endures a difficult post-conflict recovery, it may not be in a position to bring in large numbers, at least not immediately. Managing migration will become a pressing issue and UNHCR, IOM, and other agencies may have to be called in to promote wider burden sharing.

Finally, let's turn to the obligation of the U.S. military to give high priority to protecting civilians during hostilities. From the humanitarian perspective, the challenging issues, even sore points, that usually arise include, one, collateral damage, the euphemism for civilian casualties and destruction of homes, hospitals, and even Aid Convoys. Second, the usage of weapons like cluster bombs in Afghanistan that pose a threat to the civilian population. Three, humanitarian pauses and coordination between airstrikes and food deliveries. Let me also draw attention to a fourth, peculiar to North Korea, its notorious political prison camps with some 120000-plus inmates.

The military will need to have a map of these camps so as not to rain down fire on prisoners who already suffer from the worst malnutrition, disease, and abuse in the country. The largest camp, Number 16, is just 2.5 kilometers away from Punggye-ri nuclear site, a possible military target. Furthermore, if U.S. and allied military forces are on the ground and it were militarily feasible, there's the question of taking over the prison camps and securing entry to them for humanitarian actors. The dismantlement of the camps

has long been a goal of the United States and the international community.

In closing let me underscore that a war initiated by the United States will give the Trump administration the obligation to foot the humanitarian cost and also a major part of the recovery. To this end, cooperation with the international humanitarian system will be essential rather than slashing their budgets. Humanitarian and development actors will be better accepted by the local population than foreign forces and have expertise with reconstruction and recovery. Now joint preplanning will be a challenge, since the humanitarian actors are often reluctant to become involved in planning for a war as opposed to a natural disaster, but joint strategizing could go a long way to ensuring that the humanitarian consequences of military strategy are more easily anticipated and better dealt with. Recently the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights identified the humanitarian and human rights' crises around the world and called them some of the most prolific slaughterhouses of humans in recent times. Let us hope that Korea, both North and South, can be spared the agony of joining that list. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. HASS: Roberta, thank you for that sobering presentation. Our next speaker is Mara Karlin. Mara is a Nonresident Senior Fellow here at Brookings in addition to being a professor across the street at Johns Hopkins' site. Mara previously served in the Pentagon where she advised five Secretaries of Defense on issues relating to strategic planning, defense budgeting, and future wars. In her last role at the Pentagon, Mara was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Force Development where she played a key role in guiding the evolving development of the U.S. military. Today Mara will examine defense and logistical issues of military operations on the Korean Peninsula. Mara, thank you.

MS. KARLIN: Good morning, thank you all very much for having me today. So what I want to do is spend a little bit of time offering up some of the questions that the Pentagon is probably having swim in its brain these days as it thinks about what a conflict with North Korea might involve and what it might look like. It's important, however, when you do this that you think a little bit about the U.S. way of war, and there's

two key principles I want to make sure that you're thinking about.

Number one, the U.S. military fights away games. So while there are 28,500 U.S. military personnel in South Korea and while there is a substantial U.S. military presence and posture across the Asia-Pacific, these are away games. And in the event of a conflict, these numbers will be rather insufficient.

The second key principal to be aware of is that because of these away games, the U.S. military has to be able to get anywhere at any time under any circumstances. As you think about what such a conflict looks like, you will realize that much of that might be impeded. The U.S. military has been at war for the longest period of time in its history, for 16-plus years, and the types of wars it has been fighting are profoundly different than the conversation we are having today. That's important, because it has a tactical operational and strategic impact on what you will ask your U.S. military to be able to do and to do successfully. This is a military that has focused on Iraq and Afghanistan, a military with lots of experience in fighting terrorists and insurgents, a military that has spent a lot of time learning Arabic and Pashto and Dari. Moreover, this is a military, and I would argue in American public, that has lost the ability to conceptualize what big wars look like, and we are talking about big war.

I spent all morning teaching my students across the street about World War II. If you want an analogy, it should not be the last 15, 16 years of war. It should be much, much bigger in scope.

So the Pentagon if it is being asked these questions about conceptualizing, how to actually plan for this sort of war is going to think about the different types of wars it has been preparing for to date, it will also be thinking about how orthogonal this sort of conflict will be to the strategy it has just released.

So only a few weeks ago, also across the street, Secretary Mattis put out his National Defense Strategy and the focus is on great power competition, great power rivalry. It looks at Russia and it looks at China, and it says this is the future, dealing with these sorts of challenges. It emphasizes how important it is to not let

that future be dragged down by the ankle biter that is the Middle East. You could say that a conflict in North Korea would be a perfect way to kill or, at a minimum, neutralize that National Defense Strategy.

Let's say nevertheless, though, one wants to think about what questions arise for a conflict. So the first thing the Pentagon will say is, what's the end state we're after, what are the goals that we are trying to achieve. While these are not mutually exclusive, there could be a handful of them like deterring future tests, destroying the nuclear capabilities, or regime change. So based on whatever end states are being given to the Defense Department, it will then try to plan out operationally how do you actually fight and win and achieve whatever these objectives are.

So let's say it's the first one, let's say it's what's known as a preventive attack against a facility, for example. So the Pentagon will think operationally how do I best do this, you can do this by air, for example; you might use stealth capabilities like F-22s or F-35s. You could do this by sea, for example, using land attack cruise missiles. To do so effectively, you might have to jam command and control in North Korea. You might also have to harm or potentially destroy air defenses. Now, of course, you have the challenge that all of this may be perceived by North Korea as not merely a preventive strike, but operationally that's how you would do it. Let's say in particular this preventive strike would want to be over say a missile launch site, you would have the challenge of a finding said site, moreover thinking through what site you actually want to hit. Because inconveniently it turns out many of these are near the border with China. That makes it a little more complicated. There is an operational objective, no doubt. Sometimes that cannot be terribly consonant with a strategic objective.

The U.S. military will be thinking about how to protect its bases in Japan and Guam and Hawaii but of course in South Korea. So let's say it's given the end state of a much more expansive one, let's say the Pentagon has given the end state of destroying nuclear capabilities or even regime change; it will think about how do I know if I've gotten everything I need to get, it will no doubt be planning a profound and substantial ground invasion. Every assessment on this topic shows the numbers for a ground invasion

will be substantially more than you have seen in Iraq or Afghanistan. This is why the last 15-plus years of war are terrible analogies for understanding what a conflict like this would look like. It would involve shipping over months troops and tanks and armored personnel carriers and bombers and fighter jets and helicopters. Estimates are it would take at a minimum two months or so for all of this material to arrive. Obviously this does not happen in a vacuum. All of us who remember the runup to the 2003 Iraq War, remember watching on our televisions every night the flow of men and material to the Middle East. One would have to assume that such a logistical train would be pretty severely impeded.

Other questions the Pentagon will be thinking about as this conflict erupts, what will the impact of conventional artillery be, almost surely tens of thousands of casualties. Will chemical and biological weapons be used, that is an asymmetric advantage that the North Koreans have. They could kill many, many people, but perhaps just as importantly, they could cause profound panic. It's worth remembering when we look at the Iraq War, that this was a very big worry. It was one of the few worries it turns out that did not come to fruition but would have markedly changed what that conflict looks like.

The Pentagon will be thinking about what's known as a NEO, a Noncombatant Evacuation. Effectively the U.S. military has a built of an obligation to the Americans that are in the region and specifically that are in South Korea, which is to get them out. This could be about 300,000 people. I ran the largest NEO that the Pentagon has ever had to do during the Israel–Hezbollah War, that involved 15,000 people. It was pretty slow. At one stage, we literally sent a cruise ship to try to take people out of Lebanon. And importantly at the time Lebanon was being attacked by a very close U.S. partner, Israel. So we were able to have very frank communications with the attacker and even then it was difficult and unweldy and slow and we faced a whole lot of criticism, that's 15,000 verse 300,000.

Other questions the Pentagon will be thinking about, the Chinese of course, a topic that no doubt has been addressed pretty substantially earlier today, what are they willing to do, what are their interests, are they prioritizing the same thing we are prioritizing, which is probably those nuclear weapons, and what are the

South Koreans thinking, how expansive do they think this conflict should be, where do our interest diverge. The Pentagon will be thinking about stabilization and reconstruction. So we have recently seen a city destroyed by ISIS, Mosul. Spend time in Mosul, city blocks absolutely destroyed, reminiscent of World War II battles. This is a city of about 660,000 people and assessments are that it will take tens of billion dollars to rebuild. Seoul is 9.8 million people. So you can think about those numbers, and that's stabilization and reconstruction of South Korea, not North Korea, that's an entirely different ballgame.

Of course the penultimate question that the Pentagon will be asking itself is what about nuclear weapons, do we need to use them. And there are arguments that in this conflict operationally, the Pentagon will have an easier job satisfying some of its objectives if it chooses to use nuclear weapons. It will be more effective in some ways, but that's operationally. Strategically, obviously, the cost would be profound for nuclear weapons to only be used again by the United States. Obviously that doesn't get into the question of what about North Korea and to the extent to which they choose to do so.

So let me conclude by saying this: On Saturday, I'm taking 45 five students and faculty to South Korea. We've been studying the Korean War, the historic one, for the last few months and we're going to go and walk around and think about this conflict. So preparing for this war, I've been spending a lot of time in archives. I've been struck by how wrong the United States was time and time again in understanding that conflict, the role of the Chinese in particular shocking, completely unexpected when you read the declassified materials. It's very clear. Truman's administration says, the Chinese aren't going to get involved, they don't need to do so. They have other things on their priority list. Moreover, I'm struck by how wrong the U.S. leadership is about how quickly this conflict would end. MacArthur pledges to Truman this conflict will end by Christmas. The U.S. troops and South Korea have a massive debaucherous almost Thanksgiving where they go overboard because the conflict is about to end, and yet we're sitting here in 2018 and the U.S. military is still in South Korea. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. HASS: Thank you, Mara. Our last speaker in this panel is my good friend Laura Rosenberger. Laura

is the director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy and a Senior Fellow at the German Marshall Fund. Prior to joining the the German Marshall Fund, Laura held a variety of national security positions at the State Department and the National Security Council, including as the National Security Council Director for Korea and China, and as Tony Blinken's Chief of Staff. Laura also was foreign policy adviser to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. Today she will examine the impact of a military operation on the Korean Peninsula for America's alliance relationships, its regional standing, its global standing.

MS. ROSENBERGER: Thanks, Ryan. Ryan forgot to mention one of the biggest distinctions of my career, which was having the privilege of sharing an office, a very teeny tiny one, in the Executive Office Building when we were both at the NSC together. So thank you, Ryan. Thanks, everyone.

You've heard a lot from my co-panelists here this morning about the economic, humanitarian, and military costs and consequences of a U.S. initiated conflict on the Korean Peninsula, but any move would also come with significant geostrategic consequences. One of the most important aspects of our policy toward North Korea has been presenting a united front among our allies, partners like China and Russia, and the broader international community.

Given different interests at play, this has not always been easy. But to its credit, the Trump administration has marshaled international support, in particular for significant new sanctions on North Korea. But what would a military conflict initiated by the United States do to that unified international support. Could it be undertaken in a way that garnered support from others or would it rather serve to divide consensus and undermine international pressure. As we heard in the first panel this morning as we heads towards a summit between Trump and Kim, there's a chance at real diplomacy, but that could be followed by failure at the table. Could that provide support from others for military action, that would require failure being squarely blamed on North Korea with others believing that diplomacy has truly run its course. But as we've seen from previous episodes of negotiation, North Korea is a master at turning the idea of continuing talks alone as leverage in and of itself, creating pressure to maintain talks

and finding a way to point the finger at the United States.

This means that any military conflict could well divide the international community, divide that very support that is so essential for any real approach to dealing with North Korea. And if the the administration were to pursue a bloody nose option, that would presumably depend on either pressure or diplomacy in the aftermath of a strike in order to constrain North Korean retaliatory action and compel it to denuclearize. Others have gotten into the pitfalls of such a move. I will let their comments speak, because they've done so eloquently, but let me turn to the specific consequences that I see for our alliances, for our regional standing, and for geopolitical implications of a U.S. initiated conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

As we've heard from other panelists this morning, as both the geographically nearest neighbor and a critical ally in the Joint Forces Command for the Korean Peninsula, the ROK would be both the most critical to have on board for any strike on the North and also have the most at stake. The Moon administration has made clear its opposition to a U.S. initiated military action on the Korean Peninsula going so far as at the National Assembly in November Moon Jae-in saying, quote, “no military action on the Korean Peninsula will be undertaken without the prior consent of the Republic of Korea.” Now, there's real questions and, in fact, it doesn't appear that such a veto power exists in the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, but that reality notwithstanding this is the position of the Moon administration.

Going into such a conflict with a division in the alliance would carry serious consequences, not just for our ability to carry out any operation itself, as Mara so eloquently laid out, but would have real consequences for the future of the alliance. As many in this room know, part of Kim Jong-un's strategy as actually been trying to drive a wedge between the U.S. and ROK, so-called decoupling. A preventive strike against the North Korea without the ROK on board could do Kim Jong-in's work for him. This would also further undermine deterrence in the future. But the challenges would not just be with respect to a conflict in itself but the day after. As we heard from Roberta, South Korea would be critical to any planning for the day

after for reconstruction, for stabilization.

The day after has always been one of the most sensitive topics in any conversations between the United States and the ROK. This is an incredibly sensitive topic domestically. In ROK minds the Peninsula is theirs to make decisions about, and they have resisted in the past any idea of the U.S., China, or international organizations having a role. While this may seem unrealistic, this is going to require serious diplomacy and very close ties between the U.S. and our South Korean allies to navigate these treacherous waters. Doing so while going into a conflict with the divided alliance would make that challenge even more difficult. We also heard this morning about tensions that exist in the U.S./Japan alliance, worsened of course by the recent announcement on tariffs.

The question of how Japan is seeing Trump/Kim diplomacy I think could really dictate how Japan would posture on any potential strike on the North initiated by the United States. But I think we should bear in mind very clearly that Japan would also be likely on the receiving end from any retaliation from the North and have a significant stake in this game. Doing so without close alignment between Tokyo would be a folly at best and trilateral coordination between the ROK, Japan, and the United States would be essential both during and in the wake of a military conflict. We know that ROK/Japan relations have never been easy, but they have gone backwards in the past year. In part in my view, due to a decision by this administration that that is not a priority in the region. But going in without a clear trilateral front would also do damage not only to our ability to carry out such an operation, but to our clear standing with our allies going forward.

More broadly, I want to cite one of my colleagues Mieke Eoyang who is the vice president for National Security at the organization Third Way, who has commented on the importance of the United States as a force for stability in the region. That has been one of the biggest underpinnings of our power, our staying power, our attractiveness to others in the region. A U.S. initiated military strike would undermine that doing significant damage to our ability to advance U.S. interests and project U.S. security. It comes at a

time when China is trying to assert greater leadership in the region as well, particularly as the U.S. has pulled back in certain ways. If the U.S. becomes seen as an aggressor in the region, this gives even greater opening for China to show its way forward to others. But China has also wanted nothing more than to see a weakening of alliances and any fraying of the alliances in the wake of a military conflict would play directly into Chinese hands. So while China may have great trepidation and, in fact, serious concerns about any U.S. initiated military strike on the Peninsula, in the long run this could actually do some of Beijing's work for it as well, sending some into Chinese arms and it could undercut the administration's efforts to create distance between Beijing and Pyongyang. Of course there is, as we heard, the potential for direct U.S. China conflict in the course of any U.S. initiated military conflict on the Korean Peninsula, and it stands s to reason that Russia could potentially stand with China in any such conflict.

And just as China is reasserting its role in the region, we see Russia reasserting itself as well. Russia has made known its interest in the Korean Peninsula through a number of ways, some of it through its very clear statements about the issue, some of it is by backfilling some of the things that China has cut off in terms of trade stepping in to help their North Korean friends. I agree as well, I can't remember who commented earlier, that in some ways a Putin play here in terms of the Trump-Kim summit is very possible, I think quite dangerous actually. We saw in the course of U.S. ROK joint exercises last fall, Russia fly to bear bombers, strategic bombers right through that exercise sending a very clear signal of Russia's interest in the Peninsula. Of course most recently during the Olympics, Russia apparently conducted a cyberattack that it did under a false flag trying to have it attributed to North Korea, almost seeming to encourage some kind of conflict.

So, again, when we look at the strategic landscape of the region, a conflict initiated by the United States could well help Russia with its own goal of reestablishing some of its interest in the region. Of course the U.S. has other alleys in the region. Australia has said it would come to the aid of U.S. if North Korea was attacked -- I'm sorry, it would come to the aid of the U.S. if North Korea attacked. But its posture if the U.S. were to launch a first strike isn't clear.

New Zealand has actually stated that it would only engage in some assistance if a strike on the Korean Peninsula received backing from the U.N. Security Council. But it's not just our standing in the region that's at stake here, this all comes at a time when the U.S. seems to be retreating from the global stage, creating unneeded conflict over tariffs, trade, linking economic interest to strategic interests across the European landscape. I just actually came back from Brussels over the weekend and had a lot of conversations with European colleagues about North Korea. This is an issue that has generally ranked lower on the priority list for our European colleagues, they felt less directly at stake. This also comes at a time when the United States is trying to renegotiate the Iran deal, getting our European allies on board with new revised terms to that deal. So adding another piece of friction in that line of communication seems like it would make getting European support for a U.S. initiated strike on the Korean Peninsula difficult at best. In fact German Chancellor Merkel has made clear that she does, quote, not see a military solution to this conflict. Unnamed U.K. officials have said they wouldn't support a U.S. military strike. I think in fact while it may seem separate how the question of whether the Trump administration stands up to support the U.K. in the wake of an apparent Russian chemical weapons attack on U.K. soil, one that NATO has said already that it believes the alliance should stand together in the face of. If the U.S. does not stand with the U.K. in the face of this, how can we expect the U.K. to stand with us in the face of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula is a great mystery to me.

So it seems like any U.S. action to initiate a strike on the Korean Peninsula would most likely be go it alone. That I believe would further isolate the United States and undermine our ability to advance other interests. The National Security Strategy released by this administration has said that a return to great power competition with China and Russia is central to U.S. National Security, but undertaking this kind of action would cut directly at the core of that. The U.S. ,as Mara mentioned, is also still fighting two missions in the Middle East. We have troops in Afghanistan and we continue to fight the counter-ISIS mission, and, again, we see a resurgent Russian threat in Europe. Given the resources required for any conflict on the Korean Peninsula that would directly undermine our ability to protect those other U.S.

National Security interests. It's not just the resources required for military action itself, but as we heard from Roberta and from Mara, it's the significant attention to resources that would be required for reconstruction for many years.

At a time when the image of the U.S. is declining around the world according to polls, a preventive war on North Korea would likely harden attitudes against United States making it harder to accomplish our goals across the board and creating greater space for our adversaries.

In sum, it's hard for me think of a more damaging move for U.S. alliances, our regional standing, and our geopolitical position than a U.S. initiated military action, a war of choice, against North Korea that is not backed by our partners and allies. Nothing here means it should not defend itself if its allies are facing an imminent threat. In fact, we must, but a war of choice would do damage to the United States well beyond the Peninsula. We need to keep the focus on North Korea as the aggressor. The minute we become the aggressor, we lose the very international support that is necessary to address the North Korea challenge itself. Thank you.(Applause)

MR. HASS: Thank you all for your presentations this morning. I want to give the the audience as much time as possible to weigh in and offer their views, their questions to you.

But before doing so, I would like to use my prerogative as a moderator to ask one question and that is: When we listen to our friends in the administration talk about the option of a limited military strike, they indicate that limited action could be useful for shaking Kim Jong-un's confidence, that the United States will be reluctant to use force, and that if messaged appropriately, a limited strike could be useful in part because Kim Jong-un would be too scared to respond, because the risk of responding could invite escalation that would lead to his demise. Why is that argument wrong?

MS. ROSENBERGER: I'm happy to jump in quickly. So to me, it's in part about this question of being

united or not and how a conflict comes about, how a strike were to come about. Shaking his confidence would also require having a plan on the back end of this. What is the plan for both deterring action, retaliatory action, by the North and what is the plan for then putting things on a track to where it's a diplomatic outcome towards negotiations.

If a bloody nose strike, so-called bloody nose strike, were undertaken without the larger contacts for that be successful, I don't see how it could possibly have the outcome that they're seeking.

MS. COHEN: I think that the idea that Kim Jong-un will do nothing and will not retaliate in some way and will just sort of take it on the chin, so to speak, is tremendously risky. We don't really know that. And who's at risk, again, we get to over there, the South Koreans are. So it's quite a risk. Wars don't usually begin with one strike here and then nothing happens. There's a way that they connect and escalate to other military actions. It's very hard to have the luxury of having that kind of even vision of this situation and also with a government in North Korea where they have been quite cunning, quite shrewed and quite brutal. I think that it was a message to everyone when the half-brother was assassinated by nerve agents in the full airport in Kuala Lumpur. It wasn't just an internal domestic way of dealing with his half-brother and a political dispute, but it was also a message to everyone else that they are capable and willing of doing something as risky as that and using chemical weapons for their own purposes.

MS. KARLIN: Just add, it's really hard to conceive of a circumstance under which this happens. I think Laura and Roberta are spot on. There's just so many caveats. The only analogy I can think of is when the Israelis hit the covert nuclear reactor in Syria back in 2007. If you recall this was a nuclear reactor had been developed covertly, thanks to the North Koreans, so it brings us back of course to the topic at hand and the Syrians did not react. This would have been the closest example to kind of a bloody nose strike.

So why didn't they and why are these analogies so different? First of all, you had interlocutors speaking with the Assad regime immediately after the strike to explain what had happened and why. Second of all,

you had an Assad regime that had the choice whether or not to advertise this, because it was actually quite embarrassing. It had been done quietly undercover of night and dawn and it would have been rather embarrassing to imagine it, so the analogy also doesn't work in that regard.

And thirdly and most importantly, the Assad regime does not bank on being a nuclear power. It is not the way that it has advertised itself to the world, which is exactly what we have seen in Pyongyang.

MS. COHEN: I'd also like to know what is it that is going to be struck when that argument is made.

MR. HASS: I'm not in a position to offer a response to --

MS. KARLIN: I should note if I can end to that good point, this decision by the Israelis had involved eight months of extremely close discussions with the United States, probably one of tightest inner agencies process that the U.S. government has ever seen. I don't think we have a whole lot of examples in this administration of that sort of close collaboration among different agencies in Washington and that sort of trust.

MS. ROSENBERGER: One more point on this, I think Roberta's point is really important to the extent that there -- whether or not all of the kinds of things we would need to hit are all co-located. Whether or not we know where all of those things are, I think is a very large question mark, number one.

But, number two, shaking Kim out of whatever, shaking Kim into realizing the consequences, would require that Kim be a rational actor. Now, I believe that Kim is rational. This administration has seemed to cast doubt on whether Kim Jong-in is a rational actor. They have made the case that he cannot be deterred in part because he abuses his people, he's a dictator who's a narcissist, he's irrational. How you can argue that you will get a rational outcome from a man you have decided is irrational doesn't really hold up to logic. Now, again, I personally believe he is rational, but if that is their logic train it falls apart

somewhere.

MR. HASS: Great. Thank you. Now, I'd like to invite questions from the audience, we'll take two or three at a time.

MR. SHORT: My name is Steven Short. To follow up on this, how is any nation who is a -- whose facility is attacked to know that the attack is itself limited and not part of the first of a sequence? And my second question is: Didn't the Japanese intend the attack on Pearl Harbor to be a limited strike?

MS. KARLIN: I'll take the second one. Absolutely. The Japanese took -- they conducted the attack under the view that America would be so perturbed that we would therefore not get involved in the Pacific, literally the exact opposite happened.

MR. HASS: Why don't we take one or two more questions, then we'll bring the panel in to react to them. Please.

MS. KONG: Hi, my name is Grace Kong and I'm a lawyer who focuses on public international law and human rights. My question is to the point that people have made that having a meeting between Kim and Trump in itself is a victory for Kim's legitimacy. I would like to ask if what if Trump told Kim in this meeting that he was actually illegitimate because of his crimes against humanity and other gross violations of human rights. True, he would certainly not be very happy with that, but in terms of that leading into anything that would cause death, isn't that a leap because he actually has the stronger incentive to keep the talks going. So I don't understand why the human rights aspect is not being discussed all within the same conversation and should be raised by Trump with Kim?

MR. HASS: Thank you. Why don't we take one more question. Sue Mi.

MS. TERRY: I have a question for Mara, specific question, about just logistics. If you can talk a little bit more about noncombatant evacuation. You brought up the Israeli situation. I think last time was like in Saigon, it was like 60,000 people we tried to evacuate. How does in any given time that 230, 240,000 Americans in South Korea, so how would that even look like? I can't even begin to understand how it works. So if you could shed a little bit of light on that, that would be great.

MS. PAK: Since the mic is right here. So my question is for -- this panel has been really powerful and pitch perfect in the presentations. I found the human rights -- the humanitarian issue and the alliance and strategic and the defense. The vocabulary is very compelling to me and to probably most of the people in the room, but it's the vocabulary of economics that I think resonates the most. So I'm not sure what the question is, but how would you use that vocabulary of the economic impacts of a Korean Peninsula war; how do you explain the resilience of the South Korean economy, even in the locked and loaded episode and what is going to eat away at that resilience?

MR. HASS: Thank you. Why don't we start at the start and work our way through these questions to give Scott a second to formulate his thoughts. The first question: How would a country know a limited strike is limited; should human rights be integrated in the discussions about denuclearization, how would NEO happen in practice, and how do we talk about the vocabulary of economics and juxtapose it against the economic growth that South Korea has experienced in the past year. Do you want to start, Roberta?

MS. COHEN: I'll certainly start with the human rights question. I just want to say from the outset that human rights can be but it is not a weapon, and that's how it's increasingly thought of in all of this as some kind of weapon you hit the other side with or something from megaphone diplomacy. I find that as somebody who's been involved with human rights for all my career really, not something that I would celebrate. Human rights is a serious issue. If you were to break it down even here, what are the issues on the table really. The first one would be the Americans who are in prison in North Korea right now. There are three. There are six South Koreans I believe.

Secondly, was an issue that was mentioned in the first panel, the reunification of families, and again even here -- this is a serious issue. The reunifications meetings that have taken place in the past, if you really look at them, the money under the table, the surveillance over them, having to be in North Korea, there's a whole series of parts of those meetings that I would not think even should be graced. This is not how our unification between family members should be held. So this is something to talk about.

Third is the access to the country of the humanitarian actors, even on the ground. They have their programs. Their access is so constrained by so many different compromises that are made. This is something really to discuss in terms of whether humanitarian aid is reaching the people it's supposed to, the aid that is going through.

Then there's the question of the release from prison camps of families who have been put there with the prisoners and the prison camps themselves. Is this just to upset the North Koreans that it's raised, no, hundreds of thousands of people are said to have died in these prison camps since they began. It's one of the atrocities of the world. It's something that should interfere with normalization of relations with North Korea. It's something that has to be on the table. Now, how it's done is very important. I do not think that you walk into a room and immediately announce attack North Korea for doing this or doing that. I don't think that's a serious use of the human rights issues that need to be discussed.

I think that one would have to find, and I hope there's the skill in that government, to see human rights as serious issues that can be broken down and negotiated. And the North Koreans do actually respond. If they want something, they do -- have in the past, and I'm not thinking of this outrageous Warmbier case, but other cases where Americans have been released.

I am thinking of reports of -- and also persons who were abducted by Japan were released. There are things North Korea can do. There are even reports that aren't confirmed about whether or not in some of

the detention facilities or in the prisons there is even some restraint, because of fear of courts and justice concerns. So I think that the issues should be thought about seriously, worked out, and worked out how this gets introduced in discussions with North Korea, which will deal with the military, which will deal with strategic, with deal with nuclear, which will deal with economics, and should also deal with information flows, which is part of human rights as well, allowing in information and bringing out information. This is both critical to nuclear talks with verification and monitoring as well as it is to any kind of human rights discussions about information flows and getting to these issues in a really sophisticated way. I think that that is what is so missing in everything I hear about how human rights is being dealt with currently in this North Korea and U.S. relationship.

MR. HASS: Laura, is there any of the four questions you would like to pick up?

MS. ROSENBERGER: Yeah, couple quick thoughts. One, it's hard for me to really add much to Roberta's extraordinarily eloquent answer on the human rights piece. Let me just add that I do hope that in the course of negotiations with North Korea that human rights would be raised. I do think that's very important. I personally have given the president's own seeming lack of value of human rights as an issue that the United States should care about, I have my doubts about whether he would personally be willing to do that with Kim Jong-un, but I would love nothing more than to be proven wrong on that point but having it done in a way that Roberta offers, not in a sort of weaponized way.

The other point I just wanted to touch on for a moment, and I'm going to put on my campaign hat that I wore for a little while, as Ryan mentioned, which is thinking about how do we message foreign policy to the American people as Jung was kind of getting at here. As Ryan mentioned, I was Hillary Clinton's foreign policy adviser. What I can tell you is vast majority of American voters don't really care about foreign policy when you talk about it in abstract terms. One of the things we haven't really talked about today is most analysts and lawyers believe that any U.S. military action on the Korean Peninsula would require an authorization for the use of military force from Congress.

That is something that certain people in the administration have apparently been trying to find workaround for, but assuming it does require a vote in Congress to authorize the use of military force, the voices of the American people will be extraordinarily important in letting their members of Congress know about what they think about pursuing such a conflict.

I do think that the way we can actually best convey the consequences of this kind of action to the American people is through the economic argument, and I will leave it to Scott to actually speak to how we best make that case in terms of resonate but I do think that's a really important point.

MR. HASS: Thank you. Scott.

MR. SEAMAN: So just to make sure I understand your question --

MS. PAK: I'm not sure if I understood my question. Laura is so much better than I ever could.

MR. SEAMAN: How do we inject the economic the angle into this discussion?

MS.PAK: It resonates more with this administration --

MR. SEAMAN: Right.

MS. PAK: -- with the people.

MR. SEAMAN: So my sense, I've been looking at the KORUS-FTA quite a bit too and looking at the reaction in the United States industry associations, individual companies, and last year it was pretty quiet. I think a lot of companies were, one, surprised that they were looking at Trump in the presidency and

didn't have maybe a cadre of lobbyists that was really equipped to gain quick access to his administration, because these were new people that were being brought in and they were not the same people.

So a lot of the business community I think was relatively quiet. I think that's changing now. I think as KORUS lumbers along, that more and more businesses are getting direct access to policymakers, including the White House. Definitely the industry associations, I've seen much more activity that they're taking to really counter some of the claims that people in the administration are making about the worth of the KORUS-FTA and who's responsible for the trade deficit, things like that.

So I think it's getting better, but I think when you start talking about war obviously that takes center stage, the strategic angles, the military considerations, all of that obviously takes center stage, and it takes more time for the economic actors to wrap their brains around it. As I said, it's incredibly difficult to price in. I would argue that a major earthquake in the Kanto region of Japan under Tokyo is easier to price in because you know it's going to happen. You don't know when, but it will happen at some point. With North Korea it would be more devastating, but you don't know if it's actually going to happen.

So economic actors are trying, as I said, to figure out how much money and time and energy do they invest in planning and putting in place a strategy for dealing with something that may never happen. But definitely I think the stories around the supply chains, all of the U.S. companies would be devastated by not being able to get what they get from Samsung, high-end batteries, all the chips that go into everything and seventh largest exporter in the world, 11th largest economy in the world. So not something you want to lose as part of the global economy.

So I think it will get better. I'm hoping that KORUS is maybe a turning point, and the administration takes an approach to that that really does highlight the benefit of the economic relationship and that will then be something they can put alongside whatever Trump wants to do with North Korea.

MS. KARLIN: So there are three steps if you want to do a noncombatant evacuation; number one, is you have to figure out your numbers. The embassy will usually be the best source of this, because the embassy generally has a decent amount of contact with Americans, assuming they've registered with the embassy. It's quite possible they have not.

I can tell you 15,000, the number evacuated in that NEO that I mentioned from 2006, was nowhere near the initial guess whatsoever. We had heard a few thousand at best. So number one is you have to figure out what your numbers are. Number two, you have to actually figure out how do you contact all these people, especially if you're in circumstances of impeded communications. Your email is not going to be working terribly well. Your WI-FI will probably have some trouble, but how do you actually reach them and figure out do they want to leave, where are they, and how do you maintain that contact as they are making their way to wherever you want them to.

So you have to forget your numbers, you have to figure out how you're going to contact them, and then you have of course the penultimate question of how you're actually going to do this, how will you get them out. So one option is to say safe passage isn't going to happen. We're not going to be able to negotiate with the North Koreans a way in which they will allow literally hundreds of thousands of Americans to get to ports so they can leave safely.

In the case of the 2006 NEO, we literally had U.S. military personnel in Israel, co-located with Israeli personnel, looking at maps saying that's our convoy, that's not our convoy, and under those circumstances it was very slow and everyone got out safely. So it is quite conceivable that you might say safe passage isn't possible and instead go find your way to a bunker, hope there's not too much fallout either from missiles or from radio activity, you name it. But let's say you decide, no, we actually need some sort of safer passage, we need to get people out. Because of the numbers you're looking at, you would probably go for ships and you'd probably try to figure out what ships are in the area, what ships can get their quickly. Just because taking people out by air, C-130s are probably your best option, but those would be --

you just wouldn't be able to carry that many. So that would kind of be the balance that you would be thinking about.I hope it's pretty clear that that is hideous and complicated and it is really hard to conjure up what any sort of effective NEO would look like.

So my advice for anyone would probably be don't try to participate in the NEO and find a place underground to be for as long as you can.

MS. TERRY: Thank you, that's why I asked the question -- (Laughter) I think this would resonate. You are really risking American lives. Even if you're talking about people over there, we're talking about 230,000 American lives.

MR. HASS: Yeah, absolutely. I think we have time for one more question. We'll go to this gentleman here and then we'll give our panelists a chance for final thoughts.

QUESTIONER: Thank you again, (inaudible) is my name, Heritage Foundation. What Japan can do for South Korea or should do as much as the Japanese Constitution allows it, because it would have to be defensive facts involved, A, in terms of diplomacy; B, in terms of the war broke out. Not easy question, but I like to hear some of it.

MR. HASS: Thank you very much. This is your chance for parting shots. If you'd like to address the question, you're welcome to. If you'd like to offer your own views, you're welcome to as well. Mara, if it's all right, we'll start with you this time and work our way this way.

MS. KARLIN: Sure. At least on the Japan front, per the NEO discussion I was just having, at a minimum having Japan being a place that would welcome American noncombatants that are evacuating would be really, really important and finding a way to take care of them, because that's probably the closest place that would you take them. Obviously that would assume Japan in not under direct threat, which may not

be a great assumption to have. I would just wrap up actually if I could foot stomp a point Laura made earlier about this authorization of use of military force, I think is really worth giving some serious thought to. The U.S. military has been at war for about 16 years or so, and you haven't seen a new authorization of use of military force. Instead you've seen kind of previous authorization expanded in all sorts of ways that appear to be stretches of the imagination. ISIS equals Al Qaeda; therefore, you can go fight it, as does kind of any other violent non-state actor that might possibly be perhaps be put in that bucket. North Korea can in no way be put in that. This requires a serious conversation among the American people in a way that arguably the United States hasn't had since 9/11 and it's crucial that we do so. Because if this occurs, it will require some serious buy-in by the American people.

MR. HASS: Thank you, Mara. Scott?

MR. SEAMAN: Yeah, just a point on the Japan/Korea relationship. My job as an analyst, I'm supposed to be neutral and not provide any comments on my values or anything like that, but the Japanese/Korean relationship, as fraught as it is, it makes me crazy and sad that the two countries cannot do better together.

QUESTIONER: We need to put that on one aside.

MR. SEAMAN: The historical -- so from an economic perspective, certainly the country's demographically in terms of their economic development pathway, there are so many similarities and they're facing so many similar problems, not only North Korea, but also aging and loss of competitiveness, loss of manufacturing industries, things like that. Definitely I had hoped that the North Korea crisis would be a catalyst for pulling the two countries together. And I think it has to a certain extent, but still a lot to work through.

MS. ROSENBERGER: A couple quick points on this; number one, it's been a while -- I've been out of the government for a bit, so I haven't seen the NEO plans for a while, but NEO planning used to have a critical

role for Japan actually in any operation. But as others rightly point out in this particular scenario, it's very likely that Japan would be equally under threat from any North Korean retaliation, so I think that's a big question out there. On the broader topic of what role Japan can play, I would just make a couple points. Your point on the Constitutional limitations, particularly if this is not a defensive action but an offensive action by the United States in which Japan doesn't feel like it can make a case for its ability to take part. That could potentially -- I'm not an expert on sort of the U.S.-Japan piece of the alliance here, but that could provide some pretty difficult operational questions. The intelligence sharing relationship between the U.S. and Japan, particularly when it comes to Theater air defenses is really important. There is also a number of different ways in which Japanese territory would be really essential to -- we have a number of troops on -- that are stationed in Japan as well that would be closely involved in any conflict that would be undertaken on the Korean Peninsula. My assumption has been that the Abe government would find a way to make a case that it could do these things, but I think that there is a real question there about how far they would be willing to go and what that might look like. Certainly if they were limited, I think it would pose real challenges for the United States in its ability to conduct any of those operations.

On the broader piece, I would just say that I come away hearing all of these folks feeling more depressed than I already am about the possibility of this scenario. What I do think is sort of tying back to the first conversation and thinking about the Trump-Kim summit, assuming it happens, I've been down the diplomatic pack with the North Koreans before. I'm not one to have a whole lot of optimism for where this goes. But what I do think we really need do is given that this appears to be the path we are on, we need to find a way to mitigate the downside risks of this what happens on the back end. As we heard earlier after a summit, there is no runway left. You don't really have anywhere to go on the diplomatic track and does that just leave you in free fall towards conflict. We need to find a way to make sure that doesn't happen. Because if that's the case, and especially as if I mentioned earlier this is something -- a failure of talks is blamed on the United States. It's the worst of all possible outcomes. So where I think we really do need to be putting a lot thought is into how do we make sure that whatever happens at that summit allows for some continued runway here that doesn't immediately put us into a really devastating

conflict.

MS. COHEN: I guess a final comment would really be that I hope that as much attention goes to the consequences of military action as to the planning for military action, I think that the role of China, which has been alluded to today a couple of times, hasn't gotten as much attention as it should have, because it's very unclear, at least to me, what the Chinese will do and how they see turmoil on the North Korean Peninsula and the Korean Peninsula and what they would do about it and where they would come in.

Just a final point that is of interest to anyone on the humanitarian front and that is something in additional. In nuclear talks, humanitarian aid is always brought out and enormous quantities it provided as sort of sealing the deal, or the part of the deal, and not enough attention is paid how this aid is used. I really would hope that there would be some attention to reaching out to the North Korean population, if that's the case, with the aid rather than just handing it over to the North Korean who then use it to really carry out their own policies, which causes a lot of hardship on the Korean -- in their country. The aid is often given to privileged groups or different parts of the country are privileged. There's so much discriminatory treatment of the aid that I don't think the United States ought to be giving aid in that way.

I think it can go along with the de-nuclearization but really there ought to be access, monitoring, information about it, and some sort of attention to its being connected to some kind of sustainable development in North Korea.

MR. HASS: Thank you. I want to thank my panelists. You've done a tremendous service, not just to those of us in the room, but those of us who will watch this presentation via the internet in grounding future discussions about military options and the practical realities of the humanitarian situation, the military consequences, the economic effects, as well as the strategic effects. So thank you all.

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