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AFTER THE TRUMP-KIM SUMMIT 2.0:
WHAT'S NEXT FOR U.S. POLICY ON NORTH KOREA?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. PAK: Good morning. Thank you for joining us. My name is Jung Pak. I am the SK-Korea Foundation Chair in Korea Studies here at Brookings. And on behalf of Brookings I'd like to welcome you to join us at this panel to talk about the Kim-Trump Summit 2.0.

I just note that we have a slight change on the panel. Ambassador Lippert was unable to join us because of travel, but I am really delighted to have this august group of colleagues with me today.

First, let me start with Bob Einhorn at the end. He is a Senior Fellow at Brookings and served as a State Department special advisor for non-proliferation and arms control, a position created by Secretary Clinton. Next to Bob is Ambassador Kathy Stephens, who is currently the President the Korea Economic Institute since September of 2018. She was the former Ambassador to South Korea from 2008 to 2011, and she's been a career diplomat, having served in China, the former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, Portugal, and India. Tom Wright is to my right, is a Senior Fellow at Brookings, and he is an astute observer of the Trump Administration and its foreign policies, and I'm delighted that he's able to join us in Ambassador Lippert's place. And also Tom along with Bob and myself were part of the Brookings internal Korea Peninsula Working Group. So I'm delighted to have my colleagues with me. Last, but not least, is Major Garrett, who is the CBS News Chief Washington Correspondent. He's ubiquitous across the CBS News platforms and he's host of the popular podcast, "The Takeout," which I was pleased to have participated twice. And he is par excellence one of the best interviewers I have ever seen or met. And he is author of Mr. Trump's Wild Ride, which was published last year in 2018.

So thank you for joining us and I'm really excited for this conversation.

So, Major, over to you.

MR. GARRETT: Good morning, everybody. A quick run of the show. We'll do this until about 10:35 with the panel and then open it up to questions from the floor. I'm a generalist, worse even than that I'm a television generalist. (Laughter) So I'm going to leave it to the experts to give you the real information. What I'm going to do is facilitate the best conversation I can.

I just want to give you a couple of observations that I had from Hanoi. I'd love to be able to tell you all sorts of juicy details about all the administration officials that came back to Air Force One to talk to the travelling press corps after the summit. There were none. The President didn't come back, no senior official of any kind, of any rank, other than Sarah, to tell us the President will give remarks at Joint Base Elmendorf. Richardson came back to talk to us. Eighteen hours back from Hanoi, not a word. Not a single assessment from the traveling President or those senior advisors with him. Obviously Secretary of State Pompeo had gone off, but others were on the plane. No spin, no context, no anything, off or on the record.

The other thing I think is important about Hanoi is how different it felt as a reporter than did Singapore. In Singapore there was a lot more access to administration officials; Secretary of State Pompeo did a lengthy press conference the day before. The summit in Singapore started essentially in a fulsome voice expressing not only the ambitions of the administration for that first summit, but its expectations. There was none of that in Hanoi. Administration officials were hard to come by, they wouldn't return text messages, schedule was very late in coming. Everything felt up close, if not haphazardly arranged, arranged very much in the last moment.

One other thing I think is worth noting, the day before the summit ended the official White House schedule -- you may have read something about this -- noted on the official schedule with a designated time a signing ceremony, creating all sorts of

expectations, quite naturally, among the traveling press corps. The North Koreans, through their official state media, were also saying things far in advance of what they expected to happen in ways they simply did not in Singapore. So on the hard schedule for the last day of Hanoi was this 2:00 p.m. local time signing ceremony and a luncheon. Well, then the luncheon disappears and then suddenly it becomes clear that now that the luncheon has disappeared there wasn't going to be a signing ceremony, and the 4 o'clock press conference local time becomes a 2 o'clock press conference with no signing ceremony.

And there was a moment afterwards where Secretary of State Pompeo denied that it was even on the schedule. Then he had to be reminded, yes, it's the White House schedule, Mr. Secretary, that said there would be a signing ceremony.

And I'm not saying that's the biggest takeaway, but for an event of this magnitude and a subject of this magnitude, that kind of either lack of preparation or lack of execution or creating a sense of expectation that was unrealized has got to be part of this story.

And with these experts, we are going to get to a lot of the underlying details. But the first thing I want to ask all of you about is something that struck all of us in Hanoi, which was not only did Kim Jong Un take questions from reporters for the very first time that I believe that's ever happened -- David Nakamura of the *Washington Post* will go down in history as the first Western free journalist to ask Kim Jong Un a question and have him answer it in public -- not only that but the Foreign Ministry of North Korea comes out within hours of the summit and starts its own conversation on the record about what did or didn't happen. Now, again, not only am I a generalist, I'm a television generalist, but I don't think these things are normal. And I wondered what, from the panel's perspective, that indicates about the North Koreans' approach to this subject, this Administration, and this topic.

So, Bob, you want to start with that?

MR. EINHORN: Well, I mean first of all, it's been clear for almost a few years now that the North Koreans are getting a lot better at public diplomacy. Kim Jong Un especially feels very confident, even over confident, here. And I think their willingness to go out there and get their side of the story out was an indication of this sense of confidence that they can deal with the media and come out ahead.

MR. GARRETT: Ambassador?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: And actually, if I can just add on, I wasn't in Hanoi but, you know, as you said, you said Hanoi seemed a little bit less prepared in a way than Singapore. But, you know, on the other hand, I think the Trump Administration heard a lot of the criticism they got, in my view rightly, before Singapore, there wasn't a lot of the substance done on what should be in the deal.

So we had a process of some months after some reluctance apparently by the North Koreans to engage, of the negotiator, Steve Biegun, actually meeting with the North Koreans, of giving a speech I think at Stanford --

MR. GARRETT: At Stanford, right.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: -- where he outlined some of the details, where to negotiate. So it began to look a little bit more like a traditional -- if not bottom up at least some bottom action moving up towards a deal, and then this idea of a signing ceremony. And so it is interesting and still a mystery to me kind of how that fell apart. And maybe we can talk more about that.

But with respect to Kim Jong Un and North Korea and their approach, you know, one of the things we like to chew on over time is how different is he from his father and his grandfather, and to what extent is this a replay of what we've seen before or are we in a new period. And I think a big question is, is this kind of a transformational period where something really different is possible. I do think we learned a lot from this summit, just

watching Kim Jong Un, as we have in his previous engagements with the South Korean President in his other summits. He is ready to speak to the press. And we hear his voice. We never heard his father's voice. I think maybe once in the 20 years that he was in power. I may have that slightly wrong. But I noted, and I understand Korean better than I speak it, but I noticed in their opening engagement -- and Jung, you may have a view on this -- when President Trump came in -- and it was very characteristic -- was this is going to be great, we're great friends, this is going to be a bigger success than the next one. He was already putting down a couple of little markers, he was saying the past few months have been really difficult, I have had to be very patient. This is before the thing fell apart. But I'm here to try my best, you know.

And then so he has revealed a bit I think and is more comfortable doing that. Now, what that means going forward, you know, I'm not sure, but I think it's very interesting and something to watch.

One thing I think we learned from -- or I think I learned anyway -- from what we think happened at the summit, is it turns out sanctions are really important to North Korea. You know, there was a lot of, again, you know -- this is a chattering class saying well, you know, sanctions aren't hurting, they are hurting, he's ready, he can endure this, he can't. But it seemed like they outline of the deal as described by both sides in these extraordinary aftermaths was the North Koreans, Kim Jong Un, really, really wants some sanctions relief and they want it now. So I think that's a good thing to keep in mind however we go forward in any kind of negotiating process.

MR. GARRETT: Jung?

MS. PAK: Tom said in the green room before you arrived that we should be interviewing you since you were in Hanoi, and I could listen to you for another hour or so at least.

But, you know, my initial thought was, wow, Kim is really comfortable versus Singapore. You made some comparisons with Singapore and the preparation levels there. I thought in Singapore Kim was hesitant, he was nervous, his body language was more tense. And what I thought what was different in Hanoi was that he was swinging his arms freely. At time President Trump's and Kim's body language mirrored each other when they were actually sitting with the table in between them and they both had arms, their elbows resting casually on the table as they were engaging with the press. And the fact that he answered David's question, which I think was less controversial than the question about the liaison office. So on the human rights issue and some other things, President Trump deflected that question away from Kim, doing his job for him. But on the liaison issue, he was uncomfortable; Kim was uncomfortable because he finally had to say well, you know, that's up for discussion. We'll see how this goes.

So my take away was that Kim is much more comfortable with public diplomacy, as Bob mentioned, and that Kim probably felt that he was in a warm, receptive environment with President Trump. And that Kim also miscalculated in thinking that like President Trump that he could, through the sheer force of his personality and of that relationship, that they could get this big deal going. And essentially, the each wanted big deals and they thought they could do it, which I think undermined to a great extent the working level negotiations that were going on behind the scenes.

MR. GARRETT: Tom?

MR. WRIGHT: I think Kim sort of understands or understood that there were two parts to the negotiation. There's the substantive part, with each side having their proposals and there was a big distance, but then there's the personal part with the President. And I think it's -- you know, we don't know actually which is more important for the President, right, for President Trump, because he definitely takes the personal side very

seriously. So the fact that he got along well with Kim and that afterwards he said well, this fell apart, but maybe he said in the interview with Sean Hannity, maybe that was the right thing for Kim to do, not to take this deal. Maybe it wasn't the right time. I still get along really well with him. So the summit failed and President Trump left, but wasn't really angry at North Korea. You know, he wasn't saying well we're going to go back to tough sanctions or maximum pressure or the threat of the use of force. He was like, I really like this guy, we get on really well, we're just sort of going to continue as before. I think that might have been why there was the radio silence on the plane, because there was no real sort of plan B. And what worries me a little bit is that Trump is -- we often think of him as unpredictable, but he telegraphs sort of everything. Everyone knows how to get on his good side or how to get on his bad side. And if you praise him and you're really nice to him and you have this very "pally" summit, that produces a positive effect for your side, which I think is what Kim did.

So I think there was a bit of manipulation here and I think he played the role, you know, quite well on that, and I'm sure it drove John Bolton absolutely crazy. (Laughter)

MR. GARRETT: One thing I left out, we were anticipating people coming back on Air Force One, as we always do, because it frequently happened. Either senior officials or the President will come back. On or off the record there is usually some engagement. And the reason we had a higher level of anticipation is there was a lot to talk about, number one. Number two, though people in Hanoi with the Administration weren't very talkative in the immediate aftermath, people that I texted with back here, who were still awake, kept texting me back the same thing, Reykjavik moment. So we were anticipating well someone will come back and contextualize that on the plane and make this fulsome argument.

Bob, I know this is in your wheelhouse, so tell the audience what they were referring to and whether it was or wasn't.

MR. EINHORN: Well, you recall, Reykjavik, which is 30 years ago, this was Regan and Gorbachev and they got into a discussion of getting rid of nuclear weapons. And the price for the United States was having to give up SDI, the Strategic Defense Initiative. And Reagan wasn't prepared to do it. He left and a lot of people thought that was a greatly missed opportunity. I'm not sure it was. But, anyways, so here is --

MR. GARRETT: That was the immediate analysis?

MR. EINHORN: That was the immediate analysis. So now did both sides pass up a great deal? I don't think so. I think what was on the table was a kind of small deal. I think that's in the advanced discussions that Steve Biegun participated in. I think what was on the table was a limited deal. The North Koreans would shut down the Yongbyon nuclear complex, or at least keep parts of it. And the question is, what would be the price. And in the advanced discussions, I'm told, the North Koreans indicated that they would be demanding a high price -- essentially, the lifting of the most consequential UN Security Council sanctions.

You know, the President said they called for lifting all sanctions and then Ri Yong-ho, the Foreign Minister, disputed this. But in reality they were calling for lifting of all sanctions after March 2016 and these were the consequential ones that had the major impact in the North Korean economy.

And so the United States in the advance discussions, as well as at Hanoi, rejected this, the price was too high. So the question is, what should be counter proposed. And here I think the Trump Administration made a big mistake. They came back with basically their original proposal, you know, complete rapid denuclearization, declare everything, let's get this over with. Go big, as I think one of the spokesman indicated afterwards. And this kind of freaked the North Koreans out. They had indicated clearly they weren't prepared to do this.

In my view, they could have given a much better counter proposal, either sweeten the deal for Yongbyon, for the limited, and instead of lifting all these major sanctions, but a little bit more on the table. Apparently, there were prepared to talk about liaison offices, establishing capitals, also prepared to consider a declaration to end the Korean War, maybe some humanitarian assistance, and so forth. Maybe the deal could have been sweetened a bit to get Yongbyon. And that would have been a good step forward. When you shut down Yongbyon you don't stop the North Koreans from producing more nuclear weapons or more bomb making nuclear material for nuclear weapons. But it's a significant step because a lot of their key facilities are there. So that would have been a reasonable step for Hanoi.

But a better step, in my view, would be to go bigger, not real big, but bigger and look at facilities outside the known nuclear complex to some undeclared facilities that are very important. Apparently, this was discussed, including this Kangsun site, a suspected enrichment facility. It would have been good if the North Koreans simply agreed to declare that facility and permit the International Atomic Energy Agency to visit it and verify a shutdown. But apparently that wasn't the proposal. The proposal was to go real big and basically go back to the original position. And this, of course, led to a stalemate.

And I think that one of the lessons the Trump Administration will hopefully learn is to abandon some very unrealistic assumptions about what is achievable with the leverage that we have. And I think it should be clear by now that the goal of a rapid and complete denuclearization of North Korea is just not going to happen and that we have to settle on a much more practical and realistic and very important objective. And my candidate for that would be an interim agreement that suspends all production of fissile material anywhere in North Korea and links that to a formalization of the current suspension of all nuclear weapon tests and all flight tests of long-range missiles. That would be an

impressive interim measure. It wouldn't abandon the goal of complete denuclearization, it would simply recognize that this is going to happen incrementally, it's going to take a long time.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: If I could go back to the sanctions that Bob mentioned. I think for the -- you know, since the North Koreans brought it up in Hanoi that they thought that they could potentially get it with President Trump. So when the North Korean Foreign Minister did that unprecedented press conference at midnight in Hanoi, you know, they started crafting their own narrative of what happened. Hey, we weren't asking for all sanctions, we were just asking for partial sanctions. And we weren't talking about the missile and the nuclear stuff, but we were talking about things that affect the people's livelihood. So they're crafting this narrative, this is something, these are sanctions that affect the people's livelihood and trying to appeal to the humanitarian concerns.

But when we look at those sanctions that the North Koreans are talking about, as Bob mentioned, these are very consequential sanctions and it took a lot of effort -- the intel community, the government across the board, to get these types of sanctions. And these are things that affect North Korea's export industries and cap their petroleum imports. We're talking about -- could potentially be billions of dollars of coal, textiles, seafood, iron ore, and other minerals. And I think before we start talking about how this affects your mom and pop in North Korea, these are big industries that are generally run by trading companies run by senior party and military officials.

And so what this doesn't necessarily affect directly, the average North Koreans, but it's a big money maker for the elite in North Korea.

MR. GARRETT: Tom, when Bob talked about that interim deal, do you think incrementalism or interim deals are appealing to President Trump, or do you think his approach, his strategy on this is wait for the big deal?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. I mean it's interesting, if you look at what he said in advance, he didn't really talk about denuclearization very much. I mean he said -- President Trump said, you know, I'm in no rush on denuclearization. It could take quite a while. He said his main thing was that there was no missile testing and no testing of bombs. And I think that's effectively his policy. I mean his policy is quite clear, which is the North Koreans freeze testing missiles and bombs in exchange for pretty much, you know, normalization short of the lifting of sanctions.

MR. GARRETT: And the freezing of military exercises.

MR. WRIGHT: And the freezing of military exercises.

MR. GARRETT: Which we should remember before the fire and fury rhetoric was rejected wholeheartedly by this Administration as a completely ridiculous notion about how to approach North Korea. But that's in fact where we've more or less gotten to.

MR. WRIGHT: Right, right. Exactly. Except it's actually worse than that because the Trump version of freeze for freeze is more comprehensive because he is accepting a freeze of the testing in exchange for, you know, pretty much normalization, whereas the original freeze for freeze -- and Jung can correct me if I'm wrong on this -- was a freeze of the production of fissile materials and lots of restrictions in exchange for far more incremental concession on the U.S. side of a freeze of exercises, not a meeting of the leaders and normalization.

So the Trump version is much more a combinationist than any other sort of version of freeze for freeze. But I think he goes into this saying what I'm really concerned about is this no testing. That's what really will get me going if that were to restart. So there was really no pressure on Kim to say the Americans could walk away unless you agree to rapid denuclearization. And so I think it must have come as something of a surprise. But I also think that maybe both sides, you know, thought that no deal was actually pretty okay.

From Kim's point of view he doesn't get the lifting of sanctions, but the normalization pretty much continues. It's not a return to maximum pressure, it's not sort of imposition of new sanctions by the White House.

Anyway, we'll see what happens in congress. And the pressure is sort of off. And from Trump's point of view, there was a drama in Hanoi and there's still no testing, which is what he really cares about. So I couldn't quite figure out, like Bob, why they didn't go a bit smaller. But part of me thinks maybe they didn't want that deal, maybe they're happy with no deal.

MR. GARRETT: A combinationist. Ambassador Stephens, run that by our audience.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: I mean I agree that President Trump was rather uncharacteristically in the run up to Hanoi lowering expectations and seeming to send signals that he was ready for a fairly modest deal. And I have to say in the run up to Hanoi, certainly I think -- and there are some South Koreans here, so they can speak for themselves -- but I had the impression that South Korea -- which I mean there was an expectation, they were using the term small deal. And I think that what Steve Biegun was saying publicly indicated that there was -- if you like small deal or more traditional deal, incremental deal that was in the works and that that was going to happen.

I think if we do the post mortem on Hanoi, you've got to look at process. And I think this was clearly, to my view, a failure of process. Was it a failure of substance is a little bit more debatable. I know everyone is trying to put the best face on the fact that both leaders walked away with no deal and no big deal and there were two big deals, if you like, on the table. But I think this was putting the best face on the process didn't work out. And my impression is -- I mean you were in Hanoi, but listening to what people were saying back here and in Seoul, that there was a smaller deal that was going to be something a little more

than these terms of art, a little more than shutdown of Yongbyon, dismantlement, which Kim Jong Un had publicly said months earlier that he was prepared. And dismantlement -- for those of who are aficionados of the history of all of these talks -- is a bigger deal than just shutting it down. So he was ready to trade on the dismantlement of Yongbyon, then you come in, okay, what exactly is Yongbyon and where are the borders and what's there. So there were a lot of details involved. And the U.S. was ready to do something to ease sanctions and the much hoped for easing in Seoul was something to allow some inter-Korean projects. And, again, there were some signals coming out that that might be the deal.

My own theory of the case is they ran out of time. They ran out of time and they had this action forcing event they forced on themselves saying we're going to have a signing ceremony. And you probably did have two leaders thinking, okay, we have to do something now, now's the time to up the ante. And there may have been a miscalculation on both sides about how badly the one wanted to deal. But I think they sacrificed a small deal for walking away.

I think now it's a little uncertain. They're putting the best face on it, it's a freeze for a freeze by another name. But does it go forward or not -- I think we have to kind of wait and see.

MR. GARRETT: Before I go onto the next panelist, I want to keep with you, Ambassador Stephens, based on your experience in the region, how do you think what happened -- more importantly what didn't happen in Hanoi is being read in Tokyo and Seoul?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Well, I think in Seoul there's disappointment, certainly on the part of the Moon government. Now, we do know that President Trump, maybe when he wasn't talking to you on Air Force One, was calling President Moon Jae-in,

and I believe he also called Prime Minister Abe -- entirely appropriate and right thing to do -- and reportedly said to President Moon, see what you can do.

So that points to another interesting thing, a little bit different I think about this round we're in now, which is the role of Seoul, which has played a much more active role as a mediator, catalyst -- I could use a variety of words.

MR. GARRETT: Almost definitional for the Moon government.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Yeah. So I think they are really struggling to think about -- I mean one, to kind of -- I've heard a South Korean official say that's his homework, you know, that President Moon has got to kind of new see what's possible with North Korea. But, yeah, they have a lot riding on this. At the same time, I mean you may want to talk about Tokyo as well, but I think in both Seoul and Tokyo there are certainly many people -- and again, there are a variety of views, these are two democracies -- who are relieved that there was not a bad deal. And this is something that there were fears before but didn't really come up that President Trump, given his history of statements about or questioning the importance of having U.S. troops in South Korea, his desire for a big deal, that some alliance/security related equities would be put on the table in a way that would be disconcerting, certainly to many elements in Seoul and to Tokyo. That didn't happen, so I suppose in the realm of a country song I know, like what didn't happen, they were kind of glad that didn't happen.

MR. GARRETT: Bob?

MR. EINHORN: Just on -- well, Tokyo was relieved. Prime Minister Abe I'm sure was very relieved that didn't get a bad deal from his perspective. If you look at winners and losers, I think the big loser was President Moon Jae-in. He was I think counting on steps on denuclearization that could permit an easing of sanctions and especially the exceptions to sanctions that would permit his agenda of inter-Korean reconciliation to go

forward.

I'm told, and I visited Seoul a few weeks ago, there was every expectation that there would be a kind of small deal regarding Yongbyon and that part of the sweetener to get that deal would be the U.S. would agree to make exceptions to permit this Kangsun industrial complex project in the Kumgang Mountain tourism project to go forward. That would have been very, very well received in Seoul, and especially by the Moon Administration. I think there was tremendous disappointment by President Moon. And his comments since then suggest that he may be taking a more assertive position now in terms of trying to push the U.S. in a certain direction. I think he feels that he can't leave it up to these two leaders. He's going to have to play a stronger personal role.

In terms of winners and losers, I was in Oslo last week and a very astute Chinese expert looking at President Trump's political calculations said President Trump could have gotten great political gain out of two outcomes, a successful big deal or walking away from a bad deal. But the small deal that people would have questioned, did you get enough, did you give too much for it. And they have been politically uncomfortable for him. And so he opted for one of the two more appealing political outcomes.

MR. GARRETT: But to Tom's earlier point, this Administration has already given a lot. The freeze for freeze isn't even as aggressive as its original freeze for freeze construct, right, Tom? That's one of the points you were making.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I guess. But maybe to Bob's point, which I think makes sense --

MR. GARRETT: The not big deal doesn't obscure the fact that this Administration has gone more lightly.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I guess you could argue that if he formalized it in writing, you know, that if he actually signed the type of small deal and then it fell short of

expectations, which it would, I think that could have gotten them in trouble, particularly because of the position he's taken on the JCPOA and everything else, whereas the concessions that he's given largely sort of unilaterally aren't part of a signing ceremony, not part of a formal document. And I think he does get himself some cover by the tough rhetoric early on. So I think the foreign fury rhetoric bought him some political credit that then he was able to give these concessions. I mean I think he gave far too much. I think he basically -- it's not just the freeze for freeze, it's the complete sanitization of the Kim regime, whereas a couple of weeks before the talks Pompeo was asked what's the difference between Iran and North Korea, and he said well Iran is aggressive internationally and North Korea is responsible. You know, they have a responsible foreign policy, they're not destabilizing other countries, they're not interfering in their neighborhoods.

So that bothered me a lot because I think it does give a license to the regime, you know, to say the U.S. is not going to use leverage to push back. But all of those concessions were sort of just informal, they weren't sort of formally presented, which I think is --

MR. GARRETT: I'd like all of you to jump in quickly on the sanitization and normalization construct.

MS. PAK: I think there are lots of divergences on -- there were huge gaps between what denuclearization meant for both sides. But I think there was a convergence and that convergence -- you know with South Korea, the U.S. and North Korea, was a peace declaration. And I thought that at a minimum that we would be -- that I feared that we would be talking less about the nuclear issues and more about the more symbolic peace declaration at the summit.

But what struck me about the fact that this had no traction with Kim was that it kind of explodes the assumption that Kim needs security guarantees and then he'll start

giving up his nuclear weapons. But, in fact, Kim's view was much more transactional. As Ambassador Stephens said, he is laser focused on sanctions, which suggest to me that that's our only leverage and that's what we need to double down on.

MR. GARRETT: So because you're here you are interested in this topic. So you probably saw on your phone overnight or this morning information suggesting detection of a missile site in North Korea. I want to put that before the panel -- it's important -- and also talk about something that happened in the press conference. David Sanger, who many of you know either personally or certainly by reputation, knows a lot about nuclearization issues, fissile material, where it is, where it isn't, and he asked the President a series of questions, and in his answers President Trump revealed something that I'm not sure he was either supposed to or maybe intended to, which is we know a lot more and we know about this other place where they're making nuclear material. And he and Sanger had this interesting back and forth. And then the President said I think the North Koreans were surprised about how much we knew. That was kind of a moment for all of us in the room. We weren't exactly sure how much the President was disclosing that hadn't been disclosed before. We were all scrambling. Because I had to run on Air Force One I couldn't do a lot of research about it, but our colleagues did afterwards.

Anyone who wants to jump in on this? The importance of this missile site detection and what the President said in the press conference about what we know about other locations where fissile material is being developed.

MR. EINHORN: I probably should start on this one. On this missile testing facility called Sohae or Tongchang-ri -- different names are applied to it. This is a place where they launched their flight tests of these rockets, these space launch vehicles. It's also a place where they do some static engine testing, on the ground testing. It's a very important facility. I'm sure it's not the only facility in North Korea where they do this, but it's significant.

And this was one of the elements I think of a small deal, permitting American experts to come and to verify that they in fact had destroyed this facility.

The news overnight was that the commercial photography had indicated that they may be rebuilding this facility. New construction was observed from satellites. What does this mean? It's not clear when they began this. Some estimates are before the summit even. I think we have to wait a little bit before we draw any conclusions because every indication was that Kim Jong Un believed this was going to be a positive income for the summit. And why would he authorize them to refurbish and get this facility ready for testing, which they knew would scotch any deal that was achieved at Hanoi, why would they do that in advance?

So I'm not sure that the conclusion that's been drawn, that they're getting ready for a test or something like that, is accurate. I think we'll have to wait and see.

On this exchange between David Sanger and the President, it's clear that the U.S. side raised the undeclared facilities, these covert facilities outside of the Yongbyon complex. It's not clear exactly what they did, whether they said look, you're going to have to declare everything and in particular we know this site Kangsun, where you do enrichment. It's not clear whether it was a really big proposal or whether it was focused on that on facility. But when the President said they were surprised that we knew, this is not at all true.

MR. GARRETT: Okay.

MR. EINHORN: Because this site had been mentioned in Western media number of times, a lot of speculation about it. So the North Koreans know that Western intelligence was on to this site, so it couldn't have been a big surprise. But it's important. I think it was positive that we're putting on the table the need to address facilities outside Yongbyon because Yongbyon is important, it's where they produce plutonium, it's where they produce some highly enriched uranium for bombs. So it's an important step, but it

doesn't close down their ability to produce more nuclear material for nuclear bombs. And I think you have to go broader than that.

And so I'm glad the issue is on the table. The question is, where does it go from here?

MR. GARRETT: Anyone else want to jump in?

MS. PAK: So North Koreans know because this facility has been in the news for a while now, that North Korea knows that this missile engine test site -- that we can see it. And what's interesting about this particular episode is that North Korea is taking the initiative and starting to craft their own narrative. And I think North Korea's power is in its ambiguity. And so while we're furiously debating what this means, who messed up, did Trump lose this chance, that negotiations are going nowhere, or that we have to offer more concessions to North Korea, North Koreans are using this site and our debate and our openness against us as we continue to debate.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: If I could just add, one thing that's been interesting -- many things are interesting about this unconventional process we've been in for a year or so -- and that is that kind of the actions that have been taken -- I should say the stoppage of testing, the military exercises suspension, the various steps that have been taken, have essentially been announced by North Korea or by us in a press conference. It hasn't come out of some signing ceremony or some negotiation, it's just been announced.

And one possible theory of the case, if you try to look at it from Yongbyon angle is Kim Jong Un, again personally, very unprecedented, went out and said publicly I'm going to shut down this Tongchang-ri site, I would welcome inspectors to come in the event of -- and he tried to put some -- if you like a little bit of bait out there to say, if we could negotiate and get some concessions we'll have the inspectors come in, but here I'm taking these steps to kind of build confidence for my point of view. And I think perhaps from his point of view he

hasn't gotten much satisfaction for that, that the U.S. has pocketed all that and said, okay, let's do more now.

So maybe there's a sense of I'm going to show you that I can walk back some of these things. It would also be consistent with history for North Korea -- and I'm not predicting this will happen, but we should watch it -- for North Korea to say we have every right to have our own space satellite program. That is not a violation. There's a difference of opinion in the international community on that, but to do that. And then maybe just a little bit of warning that there may be some who think that's the way to go if a stalemate goes on. So we have to wait and see.

MR. GARRETT: Bob, I want to rely on your expertise for a second to help the audience contextualize North Korea as a nuclear nation and threat.

We had this reference to Reykjavik. Clearly what the Soviets possessed then is not what the North Koreans possess now, not in numbers, not in accuracy, not in delivery systems.

MR. GARRETT: Briefly, for the audience's benefit, describe what we think we know and what they technologically have achieved, and what they still have yet to achieve in terms of contextualizing this threat, either to our allies in the region or to the mainland.

MR. EINHORN: We believe we know that they've produced a lot of nuclear material for bombs. Estimates range from 20 to 60 -- something in that range. We're confident of that. In terms of the quality of their nuclear devices, we believe that in the last year they conducted a nuclear test of a device that is widely regarded as a thermonuclear device, fairly high yield, fairly sophisticated in design. So that is a significant milestone.

In terms of missiles, we know they have hundreds and hundreds of short and medium range missiles that are in range of our allies, Japan and South Korea, and U.S.

bases and forces in East Asia. We know that. We also know that they carried out a couple of tests, not in a realistic trajectory, but kind of a lofted trajectory that indicates that they can produce rocket systems with a range that can reach the United States. Are these real ICBMs? United States would not deploy an intercontinental range missile, or any kind of missile, without 20 successful flight tests. Do we believe that North Korea has a realistic, reliable ICBM capability? Probably not. They could probably launch a rocket at Montana, hit Wyoming. I mean, you know, but to have a reliable accurate system, they need to do a lot more testing.

One thing apparently they have not tested is a reentry vehicle that could survive the earth's atmosphere as it reenters and goes to target. And they would really need to do that. So, you know, but North Korea may have different standards. They may not need 20 successful flight tests. They may be satisfied with the perception in the United States that they could hit the United States, anywhere in the United States. Maybe that's enough. When Kim Jong Un said they've achieved their goals basically in nuclear and missile, have they really achieved their goals? My guess is the North Korean military would love to resume testing. They probably don't have the confidence that any professional military would like to have in its systems, so they would like to resume. Is Kim Jong Un really willing to abandon testing of nuclear devices and long-range missiles forever? I don't know. I doubt it.

MR. GARRETT: Quick run of show -- reminder, in about 10 minutes I'll open the floor up for questions, so start thinking about those.

Tom, I want to ask you about something that you were bringing up before, this sanitization construct, this idea of normalizing that whatever has happened on these underlying procedural questions or substantive matters, North Korea has already gained something from this process. It has if not been sanitized on the world stage, it's at least

been given credibility and a foundation beneath it of some kind of legitimacy. And you mentioned some things that the Secretary of State said about it that were at least if not forgiving, giving them lots of room in comparison to Iran.

So I want to ask you about something that also came up at the press conference and that the National Security advisor John Bolton had a devil of a time dealing with on the Sunday shows, which is the President saying well Kim Jong Un said he didn't know anything about Otto Warmbier and I take him at his word, which falls within this construct of letting or appearing to let North Korea off the hook for what are documented, massive, and abhorrent human rights violations.

Talk to us about that.

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. I mean it was a real moment because President Trump brought his family to the State of the Union and rightly I think made him a part of his State of the Union Address a couple of years ago. And this is a horrible tragic awful sort of case. You know, he then at the summit did what he's done with Putin and did with Khashoggi, with the Saudis, which is just to say if I feel like I'm getting along with my interlocutor or I need something from them, just say I believe them, you know, and if there's no sort of problem here. And I think it was entirely sort of inappropriate and obviously there was a big backlash, not least because of Otto Warmbier's family came out made the point that North Korea was responsible for this and they held Kim responsible. And congress had a strong reaction. And I think the National Security Advisor did have a tough time (inaudible), but I think what it demonstrates to me is that really -- to sort of go back on something I said earlier, you know, what Trump really cares about in all of this is the testing. So he's willing to tolerate everything else. I mean I think he's willing to tolerate that missile story. That there have been plenty of instances over the last six months where he's gone on Twitter and said there's been a revelation from this private source or this newspaper about

what North Korea is doing. We know about that, it's not a problem, right, and killing of Otto Warmbier, he said it's not -- he doesn't see that as an ongoing problem, he doesn't see the other things North Korea is engaged it because I think he is essentially a short-termist, right. His view is if this isn't a problem on my watch, then it's not a problem, and it not a problem if there isn't video of testing. And I think that genuinely is his view.

That is not John Bolton's view. I think Pompeo is somewhere more in the middle. He doesn't want to get any distance between himself and the President, but he does sort of know deep down that it's a longer-term problem than the next few years. But I think that's sort of the danger sort of we're in. So everything is fine as long as that threshold isn't breached.

And I think he also -- as we know, the President does not have a big appetite for reading briefing documents or for listening for briefings or really getting into the detail on any of this, which I also think was an obstacle on the small deal, because to do that you have to have the patients and the discipline to go into the detail, whereas walking away or going big, they're pretty simple. It's 100 percent success or walking away. And I think we can't exclude that as a possibility either if that was a key driver.

MR. GARRETT: Ambassador Stephens, do you want to jump in?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Well, I had a question really. Is it your sense -- I mean -- well, given what you described, will Trump decide that he just needs to walk away from this? I mean or basically to delegate it, to say, okay, you know, we're ready --

MR. GARRETT: I think it was Mike Pompeo and make it his grief.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Yeah, yeah, just kind of lose interest in this?

MR. WRIGHT: I think it's -- I'd be curious -- I mean, Jung could -- I think it's a possibility that he actually might just sort of declare a victory. I mean I think as long as Kim doesn't cross Trump's genuine red lines I don't get any sense that he's looking to return

to maximum pressure. And I think Bolton, you know, everyone looks at Bolton as a hardliner, and says, Bolton, this is his moment. But I think Bolton has sort of made his peace with this because he doesn't agree with Trump on this at all, but he has decided not to make it an issue. He's not going to resign over it, he's not going to really try to undermine it from within, or he just might do it very subtly. But he learned his lesson early on, on that little bit when he overstepped the mark with the President. And he cares much more about Iran and he cares more about Venezuela and his pet issues. So I could see a configuration in the White House where Trump is sort of fine with it, Bolton doesn't like it but has bigger fish to fry in his mind, has sort of delegated to Biegun -- you know, Pompeo is involved and there isn't probably a third summit and we lose time obviously and then it's left to the next administration to deal with it.

MS. PAK: I also think there's a good rapport. I think they actually do like each other.

MR. GARRETT: Who?

MS. PAK: Kim and Trump. And that there is a camaraderie or -- President Trump used to mention on the campaign trail and while President that hey, it's not easy taking over a country when you're 26, which suggests to me that there is some element of empathy, right. Because President Trump was also in his mid-20s when he took over his father's business. And he said that kind of statement, you know, a few times. So there's an element of simpatico, you know, we understand each other kind of thing there. And I think that President Trump has been very clear about what he expects from Kim -- no testing. And Tom has been emphasizing this. But President Trump could also point to all the other successes with North Korea. I was the first president to meet, I released those hostages, we're having POW remains returned, we have no testing, we have -- you know, Kim is open to talking to everybody and that's part -- this is because of what I've done. So Trump could

say, legitimately say that this is what I've done.

On the nuclear, on the ICBMs and on the other stuff, you know, I mean.

MR. GARRETT: Right, right. Right. So, Bob, and Ambassador, I want to throw this out to you because it was interesting when we were there in Hanoi, the first thing that happened was there was a greeting, the handshake, then there was a dinner. And at the table were the two people from the North Korean side you would expect to be, the foreign minister and the chief interlocutor, who has this long career in intelligence. The Secretary of State was there, John Bolton wasn't there, Mick Mulvaney was there, the chief of staff. And to pick up on your point, Tom, I hear you saying, Bolton is like, you take the seat, bro. It's okay, I don't need to be at this table. I don't want to be at this table, it's not my brief anymore. It's Pompeo's brief and your political, you're the chief of staff, acting, whatever, you're at dinner. I'm not -- because you would assume the national security advisor would be there at the dinner with the two most prominent North Koreans of equal rank to him at the dinner table. No, Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, South Carolina former congressman, Tea Party. I mean this is not his lane at all, and yet Mulvaney is there.

Also, if there was anything said in Hanoi, it was about Steve Biegun, and there was this sniping at his heels about how willing he was to give up things and he wasn't aligned with Pompeo or the President. That sort of came out in the hours leading up to the nothingness that we saw in Hanoi.

So you two have a tremendous amount of personal expertise with these internal conversations, team building, team fraying processes. Give me your evaluation of those two things.

MR. EINHORN: I don't have any particularly good insights into the workings of the Trump Administration.

MR. GARRETT: No, but just in general.

MR. EINHORN: Look, it's obvious, at least to me, that there's a deep divide within the Administration. They would all like to achieve the rapid and complete denuclearization of North Korea, but it's been dawning on them that this is not going to happen. And the question is, do we continue to go for that or do we do something more realistic and incremental. And I think there are clear divisions here. I think John Bolton, from what he has said and written, suggests, look, this whole thing is a charade. We're not going to get anywhere, let's throw in the towel in negotiations and do what really needs to be done, you know, pressure, deterrence, seek the collapse of the regime.

I think there are others -- you know, I don't want to speak for Steve Biegun or Pompeo -- who are kind of more realistic and are looking at alternatives, perhaps the kind of interim arrangement I'm talking about. But I think it should be clear soon, if it's not clear already, that the rapid complete denuclearization is not going to happen. Once you draw that conclusion, I think there are three options. One is you walk away from the negotiations, you just end them, this a mug's game, we're not going to do anything. I think the second is you go for the only kind of deal which I think is realistic, the kind of interim deal I talked about. But there's the third option, muddle along and kind of -- you know, maybe muddle along is the politically most comfortable to do. You walk away from the negotiations, you're admitting failure. You know, we thought we had the leverage to do this, we don't. An interim deal, well, President Trump wanted to be the president who is going to resolve this issue once and for all, not pass it on to his successor. An interim deal, he hasn't gotten complete denuclearization on his watch. So those are not very attractive alternatives. So maybe muddle along. You know, as Tom has pointed out, as long as they don't embarrass us with testing missiles or nuclear weapons and we can continue to instruct the generals to make do without bit joint military exercises with the ROK. So muddle along this way.

But I don't think muddling along will work for long because I think the North

Korean military really wants to resume testing and maybe this --

MR. GARRETT: That pressure will build and keep building.

MR. EINHORN: And that's going to build. And I think there's going to be domestic pressure on Trump. Okay, you know, fish or cut bait here. You know, you're getting nowhere with this. How many of these no result summits can you hold before it becomes ridiculous?

So I think that the political tendency will be to muddle along, but I don't think it's sustainable.

MR. GARRETT: Ambassador?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Well, with respect to North Korea policy and the United States, I think throughout the quarter century we've been addressing this issue of North Korea's nuclear program, it's been a very divisive issue without our body politic and within administrations. I mean as soon as the agreed framework was agreed to the republicans took control of congress and refused to fund it. Heavy opposition. In the second term of the Bush Administration, when George W. Bush did pivot towards negotiation, the six party talks, John Bolton, along with Vice President Cheney and the secretary of defense, were deeply opposed to President Bush's decision to try to pivot to diplomacy. And this certainly hobbled I think in many ways the effectiveness -- it may have failed anyway -- but the effectiveness of that pivot.

With respect to can you muddle along, you do put kind of agency, if you like, in the hands of North Korea again. I mean the military may want to test. And, by the way, Kim Jong Un really may want something different for his country in terms of if he can get it, in terms of an economic future, in terms of security guarantees, but I think it is mostly the sanctions and sanctions relief. So I agree that that may seem like the safest option, depending on what else happens here, from the U.S. perspective, but it does, as has

happened in the past, really create the situation where North Korea kind of at a time and place of its choosing escalates tensions and we have to respond.

Within that context -- so here's my prescription, although you didn't really ask for it -- is it's not an original idea, but I think you have to kind of widen the stage a little bit. And by that I mean nobody has even said the word China so far today and we've been talking for an hour. Now, China, as a friend of mine has put it, is not going to be satisfied with after action briefings on what's happened. This actually matters to them. And we've mentioned Japan and South Korea. I know there is some initial consultations. This is traditional diplomacy, which I applaud the President Trump to consult, but I think actually you have to think about is the way forward to find a way to get those voices in the room. You know, I'm not trying to design the table or even the room for that matter, but bring some of those elements to play on figuring out what might be possible going forward and in a sense depersonalize it slightly.

And I give Trump some credit for having broken the taboo, which I don't think actually any democratic president could have, of meeting with Kim Jong Un. So use that, but now broaden the platform.

And, finally, on sanitization.

MR. GARRETT: Yes.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: I think between sanitization and demonization, you know, there is something called engaging, which I'm in favor of. But I think he has to do it in a way that's true to your principles and your national character, but in a way that makes it clear you're also not seeking to destroy this regime but rather to find ways to move towards a fuller and more normal relationship. I think there are words to do with it, and it's upsetting to me too when it seems to be a sanitization.

MR. GARRETT: Right. So I've promised questions. So one thing I want to

suggest to the audience is be mindful of what I've tried to do, which is facilitate and accelerate the conversation. So use your time to ask questions. I want to emphasize the importance of asking questions.

So, the microphones will circulate. There is a microphone coming right here. So, sir, we'll start with you right here.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for coming. My name is Mitsuo Nakai, Reagan Foundation. Bob, I'm going to sidetrack a little bit. I'm going to talk about something I have at the gut level. What bothers me is this, if I want attention from my parents or from my teachers at school, all I'm going to do is go to school and get into fights, get into trouble, maybe hoping that my dad will buy me a bicycle. It's kind of -- you know, I'm going to do something bad to get attention and maybe I can ask them to help me rebuilding economy or it's something like that that's really bother me.

So my question is, what about the other countries, Iran, Syria, or other countries that may follow? I don't know that, I'm just thinking. Can you comment on that?

MR. EINHORN: Well, let's see what happens with this. I mean clearly what North Korea did in 2017, all this testing, advancing their programs, I think part of it was to gain leverage, but part of it was it improve their military and deterrence capabilities. I think that was the real motivation. Whether this will set an example for other countries, I don't think Iran needs to have a North Korean example. They built up their enrichment program in order both to gain leverage and to have a nuclear weapons option. I don't see many other countries following this example.

MR. GARRETT: Sir, right here.

MR. ROSE: Herb Rose. Given the tendency for the President to desire winning in every situation, also his weakness for flattery by autocrats in particular, and given his tendency to go rogue at almost any time, I'm thinking that not only were the leaders of

Japan and South Korea exhaling, but a lot of Americans and people around the world.

Do you think that perhaps Trump may have conceded that he's not going to win the Nobel Prize this time around and has finally evolved to listening to some of his advisors, or was this his direction all along to accept that he couldn't get the big prize here?

MR. GARRETT: Jump in anyone.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I can start with that. I mean, no, I don't think he's going to evolve and I don't think he's going to listen to his advisors. I mean on this particular topic I think he believes he knows more about it than anyone else. He generally believes that about foreign policy questions. I mean that in all seriousness. Like he thinks that he has a special sort of insight that eludes the generals or eludes the experts. But in this case, his argument will be, look, I was sort of right about this in the beginning, he would mention Jong's thing about the things he's gotten, and he would say I spent more time with Kim Jong Un than anyone else. I'm the only leader to have met with him, I know him intimately. We know that he believes that foreign policy is about one leader to another -- like he doesn't believe in the idea of sort of national interests or bureaucracies that sort of transcend the leaders. He believes it's two people in a room that do a deal or have some understanding. And by his metric, he is more equipped to make that assessment than anyone else.

So I don't get any impression that he is sort of listening to the system or to the intelligence analysts or anything like that if it contradicts his sort of preconceived instincts on this question.

MR. GARRETT: Jung, did you want to jump in?

MS. PAK: And this is something that in the intelligence community we call the vividness bias, that you have an intelligence community that looks at what people are saying secretly because they'll lie to your face. So you have to have this healthy conversation with your intelligence people and government officials across the board to

check those assumptions and to check that mirror imaging, to check your belief that you alone know all this stuff.

But I would also say that Trump sometimes listens to his advisors. And so I think there was one time before Singapore, after the first inter-Korean summit, that he Tweeted I'm thinking about having -- you know, what a great show at Panmunjom, at the border. What do people think about if I have my -- basically what do you think about having a Korea summit with Kim at the border. And he backed down from that, but I think it was probably because his advisors said that would not be a good idea. So he listens to his advisors, but who knows when he listens to his advisors.

I would note that only when it got to -- at the press conference -- Major, you were there -- that when it got to the technical stuff, Pompeo had to walk in and say well we're talking about this because it's all material, the ballistic missiles. Trump could talk about the big things, you know, whether this was a good deal or a bad deal, we walked away, but Pompeo had to be there to talk about the details of it.

So that's why we have processes, as Ambassador Stephens was saying, and to have these National Security Council meetings, to make sure that all of government equities and our allies' equities are protected before the two guys get into the room.

President Trump has to realize that when he's in that room he's not alone in that room, that he has to have congress with him, he has to have Japan, China, Korea, and the entire government equities, whether it's commerce, treasury, sanctions, you know, state. That we're all in that room with him even though he might be the only physical body in that room.

MR. GARRETT: Thanks. Right here. Yes, right here.

MR. ROBBINS: Hi. Eli Robbins. I had a seemingly simple question. Assuming that both leaders are intelligent and calculating, why would they trust each other

given the past of either country, both Trump breaking agreements and Kim needing nuclear weapons for his own security? I'm a bit confused how the entire premise is rational.

MR. GARRETT: Ambassador Stephens?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: (Laughing)

MR. GARRETT: There you go.

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: I think you -- well we're already in this process, but I don't think that you proceed from a notion of trust. You can build a relationship. You know, human beings who are there are human beings. You can build a relationship, but I'm quite confident that Kim Jong Un is very familiar with President Trump's biography and negotiating style and that he has read in Korean or English many of the books, maybe your book, about it. I'm sure he's quite well briefed, even though he is clearly the sole decision maker.

So to me it's not really about trust right now, but it is about finding some neutral benefits that can accrue from moving a process forward. And I don't think that's impossible. And I also think it's possible if you get further into a process that some trust is built. But that's not what I would emphasize here. I would agree with that.

MR. GARRETT: Go right back here. Yeah.

QUESTIONER: Hi, thank you for the great insights. (Inaudible) from George Washington. I just want to pick up on Ambassador Stephens' comments on the need to involve China and other regional actors.

So could you elaborate a little more on that? Do you have some kind of like six party talk kind of scheme in mind going forward? Because the bilateral approach between North Korea and the U.S. doesn't seem to be working. So is that a multilateral approach that we have to seek instead?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Yeah. I mean I think when we look at the

challenge that North Korea poses, I mean it is a non-proliferation challenge, it's a regional security challenge, it directly affects the interests of all the neighboring countries. And China also was a country that has significant leverage and interest. So to me it's just common sense to say, you know, let's -- not in a sense of surrounding North Korea, but let's find a way -- much as I hesitate to compare it to the Iran deal, but I mean almost every I would say negotiation I've been involved in, whether it's in the Balkans or Northern Ireland -- I mean I wasn't involved in Iran -- or the ones we think about -- and I know there are other negotiators in the room -- you find other countries who also have a strong interest in seeing how this is going to come out and you try to come up with some common approaches.

And I think at the very least that right now, given this rather spectacular, or unspectacular, end to Hanoi, brings some more oxygen into the room. So to me it seems like an obvious thing to do, but I think that just for sort of I guess political reasons, you wouldn't say let's go back to -- never good to start a sentence with let's go back to something that everyone agreed failed.

And to the point about President Trump and leader to leader thing, I mean I'd be very interested in how Xi Jinping approaches his next meeting with Donald Trump, and if North Korea is on the agenda, and how we would approach it. I don't have an answer, but it's something I think we need to think about and I hope the White House is thinking about.

MR. GARRETT: Right here on the aisle. Right here, yes.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Shayna Estulin i24 News. Shouldn't the President and his team, shouldn't they have known that North Korea would have demanded sanctions relief during the meeting? Why did they seem so unprepared for that?

MR. GARRETT: Anyone want to jump in on that?

MR. EINHORN: I think they did know it. I think it was raised in the

advanced discussion with Steen Biegun. I think probably the same proposal was on the table, you know, lift these Security Council sanctions. But I think there was a miscalculation by the U.S. side. I think the miscalculation was we thought that Kim would cave in Hanoi at the summit level, that he would fall back to a much more realistic ask than lifting all the consequential sanctions.

So I although think there was a miscalculation on the Kim side, probably thought that the President really needed something here, was in political hot water and needed a win. And so they could keep their exorbitant price for Yongbyon on the table. And I think both sides miscalculated and I think that's why things broke down.

MR. GARRETT: And it was clear in Hanoi, through North Korean state media. It described Kim coming to Hanoi with an action plan, to achieve a result -- these are the words that the North Korean state media was putting out before the summit was even over. And that North Korean state media was saying that the U.S. administration has come to realize the error of its ways in not understanding the need for step by step -- they didn't use the word reciprocal, but that was implied. We will do something, you will do something at exactly the same time in order to advance this process. So the North Koreans were doing nothing if not telegraphing their level of expectation about either sanctions or things of tangible importance to the North Koreans. And I just wanted to lay that out.

Right there in the back, yes.

MS. RASCOE: Hi, Ayesha Rascoe with NPR. I was just wondering, when you talked about this idea of muddling through and how that's not really sustainable, what do you think would be a breaking point, or how long do you think we can kind of maintain this status quo?

And then, also, even though obviously the U.S. does not want North Korea to have nuclear weapons, we're not necessarily accepting them having. As a nuclear state,

in a way they are continuing on. And so at what point -- is there a point where the U.S. needs to reevaluate its call for North Korea to completely give up its nuclear weapons?

MR. GARRETT: Jung:

MS. PAK: Well, I will say something else. So I would say that we are aware that North Korea has nuclear weapons, but we won't accept that North Korea has nuclear weapon status. And that's because we would be worried about the non-proliferation regime that we've been building. What are the implications for the region going nuclear? You know, there's a robust conversation in South Korea about having their own capabilities. What about Taiwan? And related to that is what is U.S. credibility in the region and the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrence in the region.

I would say that deterrence works. When we look at North Korea, other than the two incidents in 2010, the torpedoing of the South Korean war ship and the artillery fire against the South Korean island -- in all that killed 15 South Koreans -- but since then we haven't seen that kind of overt activity, in part I think because the U.S. and South Korea have shown a willingness to bolster up defense and make sure that North Korea knows that the U.S. is going to defend South Korea.

So there are political reasons, there are also proliferations reasons. North Korea has a decades-long relationship with bad actors. And if you look at some of the UN reports and some of the media reports, North Korea continues to try to evade sanctions and they try to sell missile components and technology to Syria, to Iran, and to others in other conflict regions. Do we really want that in this country, particularly having Kim being the sole owner of that nuclear weapons program? Are we comfortable with a 35-year-old who is willing to take high risks, whose father and grandfather have shown a willingness to proliferate, who has shown a capability of horrible violence against his own people and against others? Are we willing to trust nuclear weapons in that one person? And I think for

me that is the most basic question.

MR. GARRETT: I want to pick up on that question and put this to you, Tom, this idea of muddling or status quo. If we're not doing joint military exercises, it seems like muddle minus from my perspective, at least in terms of maintaining that idea of deterrence or elaborate collaboration and working with the South Korean military in a way that's visible, that has a sort of muscularity to it. Are we losing something by taking that off the table and maybe at our long-term detriment?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. I'll come to that, but I wanted to just answer that lady's question as well because I think the muddle through fails in two scenarios. It fails the moment North Korea does something aggressive. And we would have to literally believe that they would have become genuinely a normal country and would never act aggressively in any way, including with these proliferation networks, or kidnappings, or any of the sort of nefarious activities we associate with the regime. Any of those things would cause a reaction here in the U.S. and maybe elsewhere that would sort of break the muddle through pathway.

And from the North Korean point of view, their nuclear arsenal, as Bob described it, is not sufficient for them to have a stable deterrent. I mean everything we know about nuclear deterrence suggests that they have to do more testing and more building for them to be satisfied. That's why I think, as Bob said, the pressure is coming from the military, because they realize that their sort of halfway, a part of the way there, and so at some point they will feel that they need to do that, which will cause the whole thing to break down.

So we're sort of suspending disbelief here in saying well, there will be a couple of years where this is possible, but very quickly is going to come back to it. And then that gets to Major's point that what we're doing essentially in terms of the exercises, but

more generally by taking out this more robust counterweight by discussing the troops in South Korea, by weakening the ties with Japan, and sort of marginalizing Tokyo in this whole process by conditioning people here to say that North Korea is not really a problem at a time when people are debating American interests and whether or not the U.S. should have an active role in the world. If I was Kim I might think well, at the next election maybe an isolationist will be elected or someone will even want to pull back even further. All of those things I think lead that sort of alliance structure and that strong counterweight more weakened.

To me the real goal here is to communicate to Kim that if he doesn't give up the nuclear weapons, that they are useless to him for anything short of if he's attacked. And he can't use them for leverage or for power projection, or as a destabilizing mechanism anywhere else. And I think without that robust counterweight, at some point he will do that because he can.

MR. GARRETT: Thanks.

MS. PAK: The messaging is off. The messaging is part of the exercises, right. You can do it lower key or you could ramp up the rhetoric. But the messaging here is totally counterproductive. Where the President said, I don't really want to do those exercises anyway, they cost too much. So for him, the President conveyed it as a transactional -- I don't really want to do this, whereas it could have been framed as this boosts our capabilities in this way, but this shows our commitment to the region. Instead, the President said the opposite, it's too expensive.

MR. GARRETT: But one thing he didn't say, which he did in Singapore, was that they were provocative. Precisely the language long used by the North Korean regime. He didn't say that, he said they were expensive and the generals like to play their war games. I'm not saying they're not necessary, but they're too expensive.

It was in its own way, in the context of this conversation, at least dismissive, if not fully embracing as he did in Singapore, the very rhetoric the North Korean regime had always used to describe it.

Last question. So right in the back. Right here in the sweater. Yes, sir.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. I'm John from Radio Free Asia. Thanks so much. I think after the summit it is a big deal we need to agree. But (inaudible) the negotiation didn't make progress at this time, but that's why working level talk and then negotiation is important at this time. But two leaders didn't make a deal, but do you think at the working level negotiation they'll make a deal at the same level as the Hanoi summit?

MR. GARRETT: Bob?

MR. EINHORN: I think President Trump deserves some credit for recognizing you have to engage at the leader level to make progress with a regime like North Korea's. But clearly there wasn't a significant -- as there wasn't sufficient advance preparation. I think you have to use both of these tools, professional level preparations as well as a summit.

But before you actually schedule a summit, at the professional level you need to reach sufficient agreement so that if you go to the summit and get no more agreement, you've met your minimum requirement for success. You know, important issues will have to be addressed at the summit. The leaders will have to break stalemates, but you should have achieved enough progress before so that you don't risk major dramatic breakdown. And hopefully this will be one of the lessons learned from this Hanoi breakdown.

MR. GARRETT: So, Ambassador, I want to give you a moment, and we'll come back toward me. Final thoughts?

AMBASSADOR STEPHENS: Well, maybe two things. One, I do think that

you have to establish more of a vision of what your desired state is, and then it has to be incremental progress that through working up through the chain to get there.

But I think my final, I just wanted to pick up, we touched on the issue of alliance relationships and this question of kind of muddling through. And it's true we've been living with kind of the North Korean nuclear issue for a long time. And the longer the North Koreans have them the more it becomes kind of people become accustomed to the fact that well we just kind of live with this. I think that's very problematical. But I also think given President Trump's approach and -- well, skepticism about the U.S. network of alliances, not only in Asia but in the world -- that's another thing to really watch for. To what extent will Pyongyang or Beijing decide that during this Administration they want to test that a little bit more, of going to alliance equities in addition to the suspension of tests, to other things like the presence of troops, or even the defense relationship itself or the nuclear umbrella and test that with this Administration.

MR. GARRETT: Jung?

MS. PAK: I think the clock is ticking, that if there is another meeting between President Trump and Kim, that the President, given his domestic problems and some of the other hotspots around the world, that Kim is likely to see that as strengthening his own position and facing a relatively weaker opponent or adversary or partner.

MR. GARRETT: Tom?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Just following up on the Ambassador's comments. I do worry that Kim might try to drive a wedge between the U.S. and the allies by saying very nice things to the President, sending him more letters, abiding by the no testing threshold, but meanwhile probing everywhere else to see what does the President actually really care about and engaging in more assertive activities.

I hope that there is sort of a return to what Bob suggested. I think that is the

right sort of path forward. But I do worry that that one on one diplomacy I think will ultimately supersede the more sort of official level, back at the Biegun level diplomacy.

MR. GARRETT: As promised, 11:00 o'clock, we are wrapping up. It's my privilege to be with you. Tanks always to Brookings for putting all of us together. Thank you for your attention, thank you for your great questions. Give it up for the panel. (Applause)

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