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MALONEY: Good morning. I'm Suzanne Maloney, Vice President and Director of the Foreign Policy Program here at the Brookings Institution and I'm delighted to welcome you and our distinguished guests to our program today on the future of alliances, partnerships and the Indo Pacific Regional Order, held in partnership with the East Asia Institute based in Seoul, South Korea. Over the past four years, we've seen a revitalization of U.S. alliances and partnerships across the Indo-Pacific, including those with South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, Taiwan and India that have expanded coordination on shared economic and security challenges. However, ongoing conflicts in the Middle Eastern Ukraine, along with potential flashpoints in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, demonstrate the growing risks and uncertainties in the current world order. With preparations underway for a leadership transition here in the United States.

Today's discussion will help us explore and better understand the challenges and opportunities facing America and its allies in the Indo-Pacific region. We hope that our conversation between Brookings and EAI scholars and affiliates will help shape discussions in the public discourse on how U.S. allies can collaborate in a second Trump administration to ensure regional security and prosperity. Before I turn the floor over to Dr. Sohn, the president of the East Asia Institute. A reminder that we're live and on the record, if yours would like to submit questions, please do so via email at the address events@Brookings.edu or via social media. Tagging the account @BrookingsFP and using the hashtag #USAsia. Dr. Sohn The floor is yours.

SOHN: Good morning. My name is Sohn Yul. Yul Sohn. On behalf of EAI and as an old friend of old friend and a follower of Brookings Institution, I am honored and pleased to co-host this event. I'd like to thank Vice President Suzanne Maloney for arranging all this things and Maria and Andrew for your friendship and continuing support and the scholars from both Brookings Institution and EAI to participate, particularly scholars from Korea. You had a long flight to Washington, D.C. for this event. I'd like to thank you very much. Just briefly, Yai and Capps have collaborated for quite a long time. The first joint event went goes back to 2008. That time the theme was soft power in East Asia and the United States. That was at a time when the global financial crisis prodded, and the topic was quite unique in that sense. And since then, we've done several, I mean, regular meetings.

And the most recent event conference, joint conference was exactly four years ago. That was a week after Trump lost. And we had a conference. And the theme was our prospects for U.S., our UK cooperation in the age of US-China strategic competition. So that time the topic was how both countries cooperate actually to deal with China challenge. And this time, four years later, you know, two weeks after Trump won, our theme is the future of alliances, partnerships and the order in the Indo-Pacific. Now, seems like attention has shifted from how to deal with China challenge. And this time, you know how to work under new leadership, changing leadership in the United States that we call it the waning hegemonic leadership.

So it's going to be very interesting conference. And also from EAI, we have seen the series of this conference as one that through the prism of US-Korea relationship to, you know, an effort to search for South Korea's identity as a rising middle power. And initially we started with the middle power, how to build our soft power in an interdependent world at that time, and moved to the South Korea as a pivotal power in the period of US-China strategic competition and added now with a new leadership changing hegemonic leadership here. So we would really want to know more about the changing relationship between the two countries and discuss all these things. So I'm very, very excited and honored and very much look forward to our discussion and conversation. Thank you very much.

KIM: All right. Good morning, everyone. My name is Patricia Kim. I'm a Fellow here at Brookings with a joint appointment to the Center for Asia Policy Studies and the China Center. Welcome to our first panel of the day. Well, we'll be looking at continuity and change in the Indo-Pacific in light of the U.S. presidential elections and developments in the region. I'm going to just briefly introduce my panelists and keep it very short so that we can jump right into the substance. So starting from my left, we have Dr. Chaesung Chun, who is the Chair of the National Security Research Center and a Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Seoul National University. Dr. Chun previously served as a Policy Advisor to South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as at the Ministry of Unification.

Next, we have Ryan Hass, who is the Director of the John L. Thornton China Center here at Brookings. Ryan is also the COO Chair in Taiwan studies at Brookings and a Senior Fellow in the

Center for Asia Policy Studies. From 2013 to 2017, Ryan served at the White House as a director for China, Taiwan, Mongolia on the National Security Council. Next, we have Dr. Kuyoun Chung, who is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the Kangwon National University, where she focuses on U.S. foreign policy as well as security issues in the Indo-Pacific. She previously served as a member of the Policy Advisory Committee of the South Korean Ministry of Unification, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defense and other organizations inside South Korea.

And last but not least, we have Dr. Lynn Kuok, who is the Lee Kuan Yew Chair in Southeast Asia Studies at the Brookings Institution. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge, and Lynn was previously Shangri-La Dialog, Senior Fellow for the Asia Pacific Security Studies at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. So I'm just going to jump right into our first question and turn to Chaesung, who I'd like to get us started by sharing his thought on what President Trump's return to the White House portends for the Indo-Pacific region. Neither the Indo-Pacific nor China or Korea are featured very prominently in the US presidential elections. The focus was largely on domestic issues here at home, and to the extent that foreign policy issues came up, really it was about Ukraine and the Middle East. And so, you know, I was wondering if you could get us started by talking about whether you expect the Indo-Pacific to remain a focus of the second Trump administration. And do you anticipate any significant changes to the regional order?

CHUN: Thank you. It's great to be here in the Pacific, which has been a central concept in South Korean foreign policy as well. So I think Indo-Pacific strategic is very important not just to South Korea, but to the United States as well. I arrived here on Tuesday, so I talked to my many friends here, and there was some predictions about President Trump upcoming administration's Asia policy or Indo-Pacific strategy. What we achieved during the last four years of the Biden administration was that we institutionalized some of the various aspects of Indo-Pacific Strategy basically three key pillars security, economy and development. So in security, we, I think, went beyond the hub and spoke type of alliance structure. There was a more close connection between spokes making meaning lateral and multilateral security arrangements coming from trilateral for South Korea, for example, with Japan to quad focus and other various multilateral and various multilateral, multi-layered security arrangements to cope with some kind of revisionist attempts in this region.

So that will be a backbone of liberal international order in terms of security. And also, we built APF, which is a successor to TPP. And there was some emphasis on global development to engage with the so-called global South. So we expect that this kind of achievement will last because in the Pacific the security and stability will be critical to South Korea's future vision. But what I heard in this week is that maybe APF will face the same fate as TPP and that they won't probably it will be undermined or sidelined. And we don't know how the next President Trump will deal with China and other alliance partners because there is too much emphasis on bilateral and transactional approach in dealing with both China and the alliance. So probably he will start with putting pressure on China in terms of tariff and economic matters. So there will be bi polar kind of competition.

And also in dealing with security arrangements, he will put less emphasis on multilateral unilateral arrangements like trilateral, South Korean, Japan and dealing with the alliance partners on a bilateral basis to have to maximize its U.S. interests. So that's a big concern and worry, because China has its own vision and plan to run this region with many initiatives. We know that security initiative, development and civilizational initiatives, the content are still very abstract, but they have their own vision. And yes, China competition is not just about competition between two powers bipolar confrontation. This two-narrow concept to South Koreans is by order competition. China has their own ideas about orders how to build the Indo-Pacific region according to their own designs, traditional ideas, all those things. So if U.S. retreats are retrenched from the Indo-Pacific, then the vacuum will be, you know, occupied by Chinese fusion and the Global South states, like the swing states, they vote to American type of liberal order or Chinese order.

Then there will be less engagement with Global South. So the less but the real question is, will this trend will continue over the next four years or even after that? So there are many interpretations about the election this month, and I see a big tide towards some kind of isolationist sentiment in the US public, which is reflected in the leadership. And I understand if you look back at the history a little bit academically, there was up and downs of U.S. leadership after big economic hardships, too much entanglement with global affairs. There is some period of disengagement. It is the entanglement of retrenchment like we saw in Nixon era, for example. But they returned as a global leader with new ideas. So there are stages of evolving liberal international order.

So we expect that after this period of readjustment of American retrenchment, truthfully there will be another comeback of U.S. leadership to build again the liberal international order. But at this time is different because the leadership the Trump administration emphasizes on more isolation is to try and do so. If that continues, should we expect after four years or even during the Trump administration that the U.S. will resume its national leadership again to, you know, revive it, liberate intentional trade in the Pacific?

KIM: Thank you. Chaesung. Kuyoun, I want to turn to you in light of these shifting dynamics that were just described. How is the Northeast Asian region reacting to and preparing for a second Trump administration? What are the risks and opportunities that countries see in this sub region and how might things be different from perhaps the first Trump administration?

CHUNG: Thank you for the question. Actually, it is kind of believed that Northeast Asia is the region where United States has a huge stakes, not only in the security domain with all its economic domain as well. And in spite of the kind of discussion that Professor Chen just mentioned, the Indo-Pacific region might be a kind of U.S. commitment to that in the Pacific region might be reduced. But Northeast Asia is the reason where United States has highly competition with China, actually, and there is a number of U.S. allies who are actually countering has a capability to countering China. So I think Northeast Asia still remain the kind of priority for the U.S. kind of foreign policy priority, even though Trump administrations or Trump himself has a kind of orientation of retrenchment or isolationist kind of attitude.

But the all the risk and opportunity is coming out from the kind of contradictory foreign policy kind of elements that Trump actually suggested during the campaign trail. I think he mentions about countering China, which is a priority of the United States. And at the same time, he mentions about this control as crisis escalation, which we can see from this Ukraine cases and at the same time. All the kind of Trump camps kind of figures emphasize this kind of mismatch between military strategy and the budget, which kind of all these factors into what is the end state of this United States foreign policy. What is the actual goal? Is it primacy or just balance of power?

So actually, that creates uncertainty and also leading up to opportunity and risk that North East Asian countries are kind of conflating these days. And in Northeast Asia, as I mentioned, there are kind of three different types of actors. We have partners and competitors and enemies, which is North Korea as well. So it's country. It's group of countries have different kind of responses. They are still kind of facing uncertainty, but at the same time, they are showing some kind of converging kind of behaviors at this moment as we are leading up to this inaugurations in January allies. I think this is pretty interesting. Allies are more concerned about the return of Trump. Trump are with Trump than the enemies or kind of competitors we are worrying about. What Trump actually said during the campaign trail is a burden sharing and withdrawal of kind of reduce a kind of commitment in the regions.

Keep talking about this withdrawing kind of military forces out Korean Peninsula or Japanese or other territories. And also, he didn't really mention about commitment to defend Taiwan as well. So that kind of attitude of retrenchment or restraint at the same time create a very huge risk in kind of design in foreign policy for our allies and how we're going to try to coordinate further actions in terms of contingency in the regions and economy way. Professor Chung just mentions we have developed during the by administrations a whole lot of economy architecture, IP and supply chain. And South Korea also invest a huge in the United States to build the factories and provide jobs. But all the things will be kind of redone and I'm not sure what kind of policy will be made by Trump. Administration is kind of changing every day.

But that kind of uncertainty kind of provides all the kind of come back to us in the East Asia field risk, what kinds of things we can actually expect or predict remain unsure, I think. And another point which is pretty new, is that deregulation actually, when it comes to kind of emerging technologies like A.I. kind of advent of enormous kind of political stage provides another kind of uncertainty when it comes to Biden administration. He put a lot of effort in building a A.I. governance or emerging technology companies to make use of safe way. But now he is more talking about deregulation as an expected market as well. That area could be an area of competition in the future as well. So and when it comes to energy, North Korea is more aligned with Russia. We will talk about this later.

But that provides a whole different strategy in far better North East Asia as well, which will be a challenge for United States to deal with Russia, China and North Korea itself as well. I really want to talk more about the later, but all the different this change strategy environment is kind of differences when you compare that from the first administration, but from South Korea's perspective and allies perspective, what we are more pessimistic about this situation is the changing nature of U.S. voters is not just about Trump, but the U.S. voters become more nationalist given that their preference and this Trump kind of elect Trump President Trump is kind of utilizing that voters preference to strengthen their legitimacy. So that's another concern for that long-lasting kind of effect.

KIM: Great. Thank you Kuyoun. I mean, on voters, I would love to hear if we have time. Your thoughts on how South Korean voters are thinking, how dynamics may be changing there and what implications that might have for the Indo-Pacific order in the coming decades. But first, I'd like to turn to Lynn to ask the same question. But for Southeast Asia. So how are Southeast Asian states preparing for Trump 2.0? What are the opportunities and risks for this region? And, you know, what are some of the differences you think this time around?

KUOK: Thanks so much, Patti. And it's great to be with everyone else on this panel and to see everyone in the room. Thank you for joining us. I think the first point to note is Southeast Asian governments are very pragmatic, possibly even more. Pragmatic then Mr. Trump. And they will work with whoever's in power. They will work with the Trump administration. I think that perception is that they have worked with President Trump before and the Trump administration, and they will do so again in terms of risks and opportunities. Let me first focus on risk and opportunities in the realm of security. So in terms of risks, I think the main risk in their minds in terms of security is that a Trump administration will be unnecessarily confrontational towards the united towards China, particularly if a trade deal is not reached or offered by China to the United States.

That Mr. Trump thinks is a win for the United States. I think if you remember that in his first administration, Trump greatly soured on China after a trade deal wasn't reached. And he also blames China for the COVID pandemic, which lost him a second term. I think some analysts in the region suggest that the Philippines, countries like the Philippines and Vietnam would actually benefit from a more confrontational approach to its China. But I think even the Philippines, which is on the frontline of the battle with China in the South China Sea, would not want a US-China confrontation which would destabilize the region. And I think we see this in its actions in response to the United States and China in the South China Sea. So there have been various skirmishes and clashes between the Philippines and China, particularly around second Thomas Shoal, as well as other features in the Philippines exclusive economic zone.

And the United States has actually offered operational support in the South China Sea, which the Philippines has turned down. Another thing that came to light earlier this week is that we hosted the Indo-Pacific commander at Brookings, and he clarified that of the four additional Enhanced Defense Cooperation agreement sites that were offered to the United States last year in a sign of, you know, stronger relations between the US. Security relations between the United States and the Philippines. Of those four, I mean, these four currently still being used for humanitarian operations rather than military operations. So I think the Philippines has been quite careful in its approach towards the United States and China in terms of opportunities.

That's a little bit harder to glean. But if we want to look at the silver lining behind every cloud, one might say that although Mr. Trump is often accused of being disdainful towards alliances and partnerships, I would say that's probably not true. And I and I think it's very likely, in fact, that we will see a more hawkish second Trump administration seek to bolster alliances and partnerships which it deems important to counter China. So, of course, the question then becomes which alliances and partnerships in the region can benefit from this. And I think the onus must at least partly lie with countries in the region to demonstrate that they are important to U.S. national security interests.

So that's an opportunity for them to demonstrate that they are important and that they are pulling their weight in any alliance or partnership with the United States. And I would say that in any event, many in the region have already begun preparing for a United States that might be more transactional and might in some respects turn inwards. And I think, you know, we've seen consciences in Southeast Asia actually seek to bolster both their strategic as well as the economic ties with countries from outside the region as well as with China.

So I think if we look at countries that come out or regions that come out top in the list of regions or countries that Southeast Asia is seeking to bolster ties with, that's number one, the EU and by the EU. The poll that the survey that conducted that asks respondents in their region about who they would most like to partner with apart from the US-China, it would be the EU coming out on top European countries as well as the EU as an institution as well as Japan. So those two partners come out on top and South Korea has been has improved in terms of sending, but still only about 6% have selected South Korea. And I would say that ultimately the differences between a second Trump admin.

The situation and the Biden administration before that, at least in the security realm, are probably less significant than some hand wringing might suggest. It was under the first Trump administration that the United States began to focus on countering China, as well as framing the region as the Indo-Pacific and bringing in India more as a major security partner. It was also under the first Trump administration that we saw the United States resurrect the quadrilateral security dialog. And under the first Trump administration, we also saw the United States clarify the US Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty, wherein the United States confirmed that the Mutual Defense Treaty covered the South China Sea as well, and would also extend to cover Philippines Coast Guard. And finally, I would say that while Mr. Trump has often been accused of riding roughshod over international law to and it's certainly a valid criticism in some respects.

It was under the first Trump administration that we saw the United States actually confirm that it accepted the merits of the tribunal award in the Philippines case against China. Under the Obama administration, it had merely called on both parties to adhere with that award rather than confirming the merits. So let me close by just saying that although the Trump administration might well state a second, Trump administration might well stay the course in the security realm. I think some of its threatened actions in the economic realm might well make might well impact the willingness and ability of countries in the region to work more closely with the United States in the security realm as well. But I'd be happy to touch on some of the risks and opportunities in the economic domain later. Thank you.

KIM: Great. Thank you, Lynn. And we're going to finally turn to Ryan to ask him about how China is reacting to and preparing for a second Trump administration. I'm sure it sees plenty of risks in Trump's return, but does it see any opportunities and what sort of areas of continuity as well as change, do you expect in US policy towards China in the next four years?

HASS: Well, good morning, everyone. That's a big question. I'll try to tackle it. But before I do, let me just thank my friends from the East Asia Institute for coming across the Pacific Ocean to enrich our conversations in Washington. It's really, really valuable to hear your perspectives. And on that, I want to try to address a concern that I heard from our friends about retrenchment, isolationism, retreat, which are words that that seem to come up in. It's true that President Trump has a unique set of views related to Asia, related to alliances, but President Trump is not Kim Jong Un. He does not decide by fear what the United States is or where the United States is going. President Trump is in his final term. He is elderly. And as we saw yesterday, his ability to impose his will upon Congress is limited. He had an attorney general that he had nominated who was morally compromised.

And despite President Trump's strong view that he would be the best candidate, he was not. And he ultimately was forced to withdraw his name from consideration. I mention that because President Trump's views on alliances are also out of sync with the views of many members of Congress related to alliances. If you think of Senator Hagerty, Senator Rubio, Senator Risch and we can keep on going down the line. Senator Sullivan. They feel very strongly these are all Republicans who feel very strongly about the importance of alliances. And so I just encourage us to keep that front of mind as we sort of conduct this thought experiment about what the next four years are going to look like, because President Trump's views will not be the sole defining feature of American foreign policy going forward. Now to the question about China. I hear some friends suggest that China sees opportunity with President Trump's return to power.

I think the logic is that that President Trump will create divisions at home inside the United States, as well as distance between the United States and its allies. And this will this will open up space and opportunities for China to advance its goals and objectives. I'm not sure I'm confident of that assessment. I think for the Chinese that I have listened to and met with and spoken with and watched.

I think they see more risk than opportunity with President Trump's return to power, in large part because he's so unpredictable. They have a hard time anticipating the way that President Trump and his administration are going to approach China. And that's discomforting, I think, especially to a leadership that values predictability and stability. And so I actually am of the view that a. The Chinese are more concerned than they are optimistic about President Trump's return to power. There are two things that I am confident about.

One is that China also has its own domestic politics. President Xi cares deeply about his image inside China, and I don't think that he's interested in being perceived as a punching bag of Donald Trump. The second thing I'm confident about is that that China cares a lot about its relationships with other major powers as well, and doesn't want to be perceived as being pushed around by anyone, including the United States. Where does this all lead? I think what it suggests is that China will probably take a wait and see approach. They will wait to see how President Trump approaches the relationship before they decide how they're going to respond. I don't think that they want to get out ahead of the United States.

They want to be seen as the responsible, stable, steady actor. And if there is a change in the relationship, a change for the worse, they want the United States to be perceived as the actor that had instigated that that downward pressure on the relationship. How is China going to respond? I will start with this final point and turn it back to you. I think that they are going to take a variety of steps to try to brace themselves for impact. The first is to hedge by strengthening relationships with other countries, BRICs members, global South partners, to sort of provide a bit of bulwark and steadiness to the pressure that they expect that they will face in the United States. I think that they will also continue to invest very significantly in their own defense. I think that there will spend a lot of money on domestic security as well as external security. At the same time, I think that there will be prepared to engage with President Trump when and where he is interested in engaging. And I think that President Trump will probably want to engage directly with President Xi and the leader. The leader interaction will color and inform the agenda and the tone of the relationship going forward.

KIM: Thank you, Ryan. Turning to Kuyoun again, a challenge that the incoming Trump administration will face immediately is the tightening alignment between Russia and North Korea. There's been recent news that North Korean troops have died on the Ukrainian battlefield, and there's been a lot of speculation about the types of military and technological cooperation that may be happening between Russia and North Korea. And so I'd like to ask you, you know, how is the region and are okay in particular interpreting and reacting to these developments? And to what extent is this renewed North Korea-Russia alignment, shifting longer term dynamics in the region?

CHUNG: Yeah, I think that's a very important questions and I believe all depends on the kind of durability of two countries relationship, whether it will end after the end of the Ukraine war or continue even after the war. But all the kind of indicators shows that they are kind of more than just kind of wartime alliances. I think they are exchanging technology as well as food and oils, which actually violates a number of a U.N. sanctions system. And also by sending actually, for South Korea's perspective, there are two red lines. So when it comes to two countries relationship. First one is the kind of mutual defense treaty which already they signed and they're sending military forces to Ukraine, which already did.

So it constitutes kind of change, the entire kind of calculations about South Korea as opposed to North Korea as well as Russia, as well as a kind of IP for members rivalry or a supporting kind of kind of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. But kind of we are raising kind of our leverage against Russia, Russia, by kind of showing our willingness to increase our support to Ukraine. But at the same time, the entire picture shows that by having North Korea in the calculus, the Ukraine war is protracted, more casualties and actually European partners become the casualty because of North Korea. And also, I actually I mentioned.

So the U.S. system is kind of weakening because of Russia support for North Korea. So that's kind of the initial kind of concern for South Korea, but at the same time is a concern for the United States and Japan as well, because we have we are kind of working on this U.S. system after the U.N. Security Council kind of kind of suspended this panel of expert committee all year.

So this such a political kind of transformations, pro wise, not only South Korea, but also United States provides a hard time for South Korea. And other concerns is that North Korea declare there's two state kind of claims defining South Korea and North Korea is a kind of hostile kind of countries. We are kind of divided and we are in that kind of unified kind of pursuing unification in the future. But South Korea has a moral and moral duty to pursue, and we are really willing to pursue a accomplish unification in the. His poor manner. So it is competing kind of strategy. Goals create another concern. And I believe that actually kind of this unification agenda might be a kind of challenge in the future. If a Trump are willing to initiate a dialog with North Korea as well, because North Korea obviously does not really want to talk about unification anymore, especially with South Korea. But South Korea is kind of that's a priority.

And of course, North Korea policy. And if United States are really willing to dialog with North Korea for accreditation, I think they will have to provide or kind of raise a stake beyond the first kind of summitry in the Hanoi and the first reservation. And there is not kind of possible, I think, given that the current situations and even the Trump administration, even Kim Jong un, cannot satisfy with the kind of previous kind of stakes and kind of negotiation deals that they used to adopt in the first kind of round of summitry. So if that's the case, all these kinds of geopolitical kind of transformations, not only for the kind of Ukraine war, but also kind of Korean peninsula wise, this transformation is kind of challenging for every country in the region.

KIM: And I want to turn to chairs on to dig a little bit deeper on the prospects for another Trump-Kim summit or interaction. You know, as we all know, a distinguishing feature of President Trump is that he's not an ideologue. He has no qualms reaching out to dictators. In fact, he's boasted of his friendship with Kim Jong Un, with Putin and Xi. And so I think this opens up some unique opportunities as well as risks. So how is Seoul assessing this potential in the next four years? And so if you could just share your thoughts on that, that would be great.

CHUN: Yes, this is a big question why President Trump prefers to have done some admitting rather than a prepared a different type of approach. But there might be some personal psychological explanation. But from a theoretical perspective, the negotiation, if you are dealing with dictators, authoritarian leaders, the counterpart has a lot of leeway to negotiate with their counterpart. So they have a relatively broader sense of a possible zone of agreement. So if President Trump has a negotiation with a dictator as authoritarian leaders, there could be some relatively swift process of implementing the results of the negotiation. So the result could be direct and in the short term, So President Trump can make a lot of that deal.

So in dealing with North Korea as well, President Trump might have a quicker negotiation with dictators like Kim Jong un. But the real issue is, is the diplomacy coming back from this perspective? If President Trump make a deal to the exclusion of other parties, such as, you know, third party stakeholders like South Korea in dealing with Kim Jong un and North Korean nuclear matters, then there will be serious blowback, as we saw in 2019, along failure. So North Korea also knows that. So after the failure and North Korean leaders say we have dealt with President Trump quite effectively. However, now we realize that we have to deal with the United States as a whole so that there might be sustainable agreement for the guaranteed North Korea's survival and better relations with the United States.

So even though there might be short term direct results from a top down level of negotiation, if we want to sustain and have the long-term effect, there should be a more, you know, bottom up and wide comprehensive deal to deal with many issues. So when we talk about the complete denuclearization of North Korea, maybe we can deal with freezing of North Korean nuclear materials and missile development. However, or what North Korea wants foremost is the guarantee of their survival. Kim Jong un is born in 1984, so he's very young and he thinks that he might rule the North Korea maybe for next 3 or 4 more decades. So they need economic support, which is impossible under this international sanction system.

So they want to have a long-term beneficial relations with South Korea. And who knows that it may be. However, right now, Kim Jong un defines this situation as the new Cold War. So he might think that he can survive without having any negotiation with. Us in South Korea just by having a closely interdependent relations with Russia and China, which Korean just told. So after we show to North Korea, there will be no possibility of North Korea's revival, only by having relations with China and

Russia. Then they will come back to the negotiation table with the South Korean and United States. We have to talk to the present Trump that the Georgia should be very painful and long to deal with many issues, and not just about nuclear weapons and missiles. So what we have to prepare for the whole peace structure of the Korean Peninsula.

KIM: Well, turning to another hot spot or potential hot spot in the region, Taiwan. Ryan, you know, as we all know, President Trump also has some unconventional views when it comes to Taiwan compared to, let's say, the Republican establishment or even those in his orbit. And President Trump has talked about Taiwan as an economic competitor. His demand that there pay more for U.S. Quote, unquote, protection. So what can we expect from a second Trump administration in terms of its policy towards Taiwan? And what impacts might this have on broader sort of regional views of the United States, broader regional security arrangements?

HASS: Well, when President Trump talks about Taiwan, he doesn't talk about Taiwan publicly very often. But when he does, he always focuses on three things. The first is that Taiwan is really far away from the United States, 9000 miles away from United States, 90 miles away from China. What are we doing? Second thing he focuses on is that Taiwan, his party says, doesn't pay enough for its defense. He treats Taiwan like an insurance company, would treat a holder that isn't paying enough for its insurance claim. The third thing that he focuses on is that Taiwan has ripped the United States off of taken away its semiconductor industry.

And that's not fair. So this is a pretty good insight given the repetition with which he focuses on these points. It's a pretty good insight into how he thinks about Taiwan as an issue. But this is also how he thought about Taiwan as an issue the first time he was president. And during that time, the U.S. Taiwan relationship grew. It did not retreat. And so what that should tell us something. And what it tells us, I think, is that if he is not focused on Taiwan, he is surrounded by advisers who care deeply about Taiwan and who will take certain personal risk and professional risk to try to advance the U.S. Taiwan relationship.

And so, so long as Taiwan stays below the presidential sight line. So if it's not at Fox News in the morning, it's not on the front page of The Wall Street Journal. There is a lot of space for people who work for President Trump to advance the US Taiwan relationship. And if we look at the people who he has appointed thus far, Senator Rubio and Congressman Waltz, they are very passionate in their support and defense of Taiwan. And so we'll have to see how things develop. How much how prominent of an issue Taiwan is, how much direct presidential involvement there is in Taiwan over the coming years.

That will tell us something about the nature of U.S. Taiwan relations going forward. But if you accept as a proposition that Taiwan may not be the issue that demands presidential attention on a daily basis, there should be a fair amount of space for people who care about Taiwan to advance the relationship and the two issues that are going to be, I think the definitional issues for the U.S. Taiwan relationship in the coming years will be first on how to strengthen Taiwan's resilience, domestic societal resilience, and then to how to increase Taiwan's international profile. These two things, I think, will be sort of the central elements of the U.S. Taiwan relationship. And I think that there should be a fair amount of space to push those two initiatives forward.

KIM: Great. Turning to Lynn. Another key area of concern is, of course, economic policies and how the Trump administration's economic policies will impact the region. President Trump has famously said he'll impose a 10% tariff on all countries and a 60% tariff on China. And this is going to have major impacts on trade flows and on economic as well as political consequences in the region. And so how our Indo-Pacific states are thinking about what's coming down the pike. How are they preparing for a more potentially confrontational US-China economic relationship? And what are some of the long term impacts you foresee from these sorts of policies?

KUOK: Thank you, Patti. So I think that the fact that a second Trump administration might impose tariffs on the region that are relatively less than that he imposes that which he imposes on China might mean that in the short term, Southeast Asian countries could benefit by positioning themselves as alternatives to China. But I think that sort of. It might be short lived, particularly for countries that already have large or significant trade surpluses with the United States, as they might well soon come under fire by from Mr. Trump in terms of pressure to reduce trade surpluses or face further tariffs. So I think that would be one of the main concerns and is the main concern of countries in the region at the moment. There is also a second concerned, a concern that a more confrontational US-China approach might well be to greater scrutiny of Chinese investments in Southeast Asia. And I think that is probably also in in terms of like they probably also thinking about that right now. And, you know, what would they do if they came under pressure to limit Chinese investments in various strategic sectors, say, manufacturing or digital infrastructure?

And of course, we could see what is deemed strategic sectors increase as time goes on as well. And I think the third concern that countries in the region are facing in the economic domain, in the economic domain, is that if. A second Trump administration goes ahead to pull out of IPF, which is already a watered-down version of the TPP, or not the CPP, TPP. What would that mean for the region? I think. I would say that. Countries already have been preparing in some respects for a United States that's adopting more nationalistic economic policies, a United States that is no longer the champion of free trade that it used to be. Nonetheless, I think they are expecting some destabilizing and concerning effects. And what they are doing, of course, as I mentioned earlier, is to expand that economic as well as strategic ties with third countries.

But they are also expanding and deepening ties with China. And although the United States is remains the largest investor in the region, I think we are seeing economic ties with China intensify day by day. And this has been ongoing for many years now. In the latest poll of Southeast Asia, when asked which power, which country they considered to be the most influential economic power, China came up on top with 60% selecting China as the most influential economic power. And one might think that perhaps the United States came in second at 40%, but the United States trailed far behind at just 14%. And I think this could hurt the United States drive for greater strategic influence in the region. And this is particularly so given that for the region, economics is security. And as I mentioned earlier, I think countries might be less willing or able to work with the United States in the strategic realm if the United States starts imposing some of these economic policies and distances itself more and more from the region in terms of economic engagement.

So I would say that, in short, Trump's threatened economic policies should worry not just the region, but as well. But the United States as well, given its potential impact on U.S. strategic influence in the region.

KIM: Okay. Thank you, Lynn. The issue of American voters came up earlier on the panel and how American voters seemed to be feeling, you know, less interested in being internationally involved, less interested in alliances. You know, I don't know if we have survey data to back that up, but that seems to be sort of the sentiment. And I was curious, you know, since we have our colleagues here from Korea, if you could share with us sort of how South Korean voters are thinking and feeling these days, how are they thinking about the U.S.-ROK alliance? There was a lot of turbulence during the first Trump administration and the alliance. It survived, and if anything, it became stronger because of the many initiatives during the Biden administration. And from what I understand, public support is pretty high for the U.S.-ROK alliance. And so if you could just sort of share how voters might be thinking, how that might impact the alliance going forward. That would be great if either of you are both okay.

CHUN: Certainly, there is a very strong support for the U.S. Our key alliance, as you can imagine, under the Biden administration, even though there was a kind of relations which may be conflictual to some extent, but there was a general recognition that South or South Korea is protected by United States under the extended nuclear deterrence. So the U.S. is perceived as generally providing security public goods. In return, South Korea is willing to share burdens, and the past 30 years of American polarity puts too much burden on Americans shoulders. So there is some understanding we should do to reduce the burden in terms of security. However, there is also understanding to make some adjustments in burden sharing.

We can do that, but without some general principled agreement between us and our key that we have the same through our perceptions, the same proposals in security areas, in dealing with the threats from North Korea and China by just focusing on the burden sharing issues. You know, the more about fiscal being, then the foundation might be weakened because if there is a, you know, academic conflict between R.K. and you guys maybe in the upcoming administration and there is no consensus about the general future vision of the security cooperation between two countries, then there might be some critics inside South Korea. Why we have to, you know, continue the alliance to a little bit. And also less thing is about the extent of nuclear deterrence, which we might deal with in the second session. There is really. Really mounting North Korean nuclear threats. They changed the Constitution and changed the operational doctrines that can in any time attack South Korea as a target, which they say South Koreans are now foreign country to North Korea so they can use nuclear weapons without any hesitation. So without extended trust from the United States, we are really exposed to a very high level of nuclear threat. So we should do something. And then after the Washington Declaration and with the establishment nuclear, they called the cop a consultative group. There is a heightened emphasis on the extended deterrence. So we want to continue that. So we'll see if Trump and Michelle will inherit that.

CHUNG: Just added up to several kind of, another kind of aspect about South Korea's public opinions and Professor Jun mentions about this South Korean public support for the Iraq U.S. alliance. This is actually a bipartisan kind of manners, either progressive and conservative. They prefer to have a better relationship with the United States. And when it comes to security, proper provisions and nuclear deterrence, as well as kind of joint exercises, all of these activities has to be well-received by the South Korean public and even for the trilateral cooperation’s with Japan. South Korean people. As you all know, we have kind of historical issues and textbook dispute. So at the kind of personal level, there still remains grievances about Japanese kind of publics. But at the same time, there's an increasing understanding that this kind of try to cooperation is kind of unnecessary from the strategic perspective. So it's kind of kind of diversion kind of trend in the South Korean public that they're beginning to understand this strategy, imperative of having this cooperation with the U.S. and even with Japan as well.

KIM: I'm glad you brought up a trilateral cooperation between the U.S., okay. And Japan, as well as bilateral cooperation between Iraq and Japan. There was actually a question that was submitted in advance. It came from Alexander Leap K, the European Council on Foreign Relations. And he asked about this very question. A lot of you know, there was obviously effort made by all parties to make this trilateral and bilateral cooperation happen. But it is true that the Biden administration did play a big part in sort of bringing the two parties together and sort of institutionalizing that.

So do you if there isn't as much attention or interest in the Trump administration in sort of carrying forward what's been achieved in the trilateral space, do you expect this to continue? I guess the question is, do you expect Seoul and Tokyo to continue forward on their own?

CHUNG: From South Korea perspective, we have kind of huge interest in that also. So I think the moments of maintaining this try to cooperation, because when you think about the origins of the trilateral, it is based on the kind of understanding that we have some kind of military cooperation to discuss North Korea issue in ten years. It begins as a tick tock. And now we are kind of assembled finally. And actually we achieved a lot of kind of a kind of all kinds of implementations and exercises and cooperations. And even we are cooperating over emerging technology as well. So I think South Korea has a huge incentive to maintain the current momentum.

And I believe Japan of course, Japan has a domestic kind of challenges, still do not have incentive to disengage from this momentum. It's not like the increase in momentum, but doesn't have kind of disengage from it. But the thing is, the United States at this uncertainty we have actually from South Korea perspective, if we look at this as a kind of a platform to maintain deterrence in the Northeast Asia, United States has no reason to disengage from it because not only is going to stabilize it for the Korean Peninsula, but it could serve as a stabilizer for Northeast Asia. But I'm not sure Trump might prefer a transactional or a more emphasis, more burden sharing over stability. So we will see how it works.

HASS: So I'm going to be irresponsibly speculative for a second and suggest that I think that President Trump is unlikely to want to put himself in the role in the middle of Seoul and Tokyo in the first term. He also didn't really feel comfortable being a matchmaker or marriage counselor, as I think as he referred to it. So that's probably where he will end up. But that doesn't mean that his entire administration is sitting in the same place in so much as the quad sort of developed at the level below the president before the Biden administration. I hope that. U.S., Japan, South Korea. Trilateral relationship can continue to flourish below the presidential level for the coming four years as well.

Because if you think about it, you know, it wasn't until the Obama administration that there really was this trilateral mechanism that sort of came into being. It went into abeyance for four years of the Trump administration and then during the Biden administration has really developed, grown and flourished. And so the trajectory is positive. We just need to keep it alive for the coming period.

KIM: Right. All right. Well, we're going to open up now for audience Q&A. If you have a question, please raise your hand and a microphone will come to you. If you could just briefly introduce who you are, where you're from, and then ask your question. That would be great. We have a shy crowd. Well, as you guys are thinking about questions, I'm going to take one more from the pre-submitted questions that came through email. And this one comes from Carol Silver of Rockville, Maryland. And she asks, I think this would be a good question for Ryan, but others feel free to jump in. Do you think China will take advantage of the Trump presidency to try to take over Taiwan?

HASS: That's another big question. I wish I knew. Yeah. I don't know. But I don't think so. I think that there are its very clear what China would like to do. China would like to unify Taiwan with the mainland. That is not in dispute. But there is not any deadline. There is not any pre-set date at which an invasion will occur. Some people have said 2027, some people have said 2024. Some people have said 20, 25. I don't believe any of that. I don't think that any leader in the world has an invasion date circled on a calendar in his office. I think it'll be guided by the situation, by circumstances. And if it looks like Taiwan is at risk of permanently separating forever, then I think that Beijing would be willing to take extraordinary risks to try to prevent that outcome. If it looks like it could achieve its goals at low cost and risk to itself, then Beijing may try to seize that opportunity as well. But I don't think that we're close to either of those polls right now. I think we're very much in the middle, and I expect that we will be for the coming period as well.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Ben Massengill from the Stimson Center. My question is more reflective to South East Asia. There's a lot of in discussion in terms of economic things. A lot of my discussions have been along the lines of if they don't want to have to choose as they value the security opportunities from the U.S., but really more dependent upon China, given Trump's transactional view on those things. Security's not likely to come unless he gets an economic deal.

So pushing more pressure on Southeast Asia to cut a deal with China and that view, do you think that there's any possibility that some of these southeast China. Southeast countries will be willing to renounce or negotiate away some of these territorial claims they've been having with respect to China's nine dash line, given that they may not get any sort of security guarantees from the United States.

KUOK: The only country that has a security guarantee, as you refer to it from the United States in Southeast Asia, is the Philippines, given the U.S. Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty? I do not see any signs that the Philippines, even if it had a need for greater economic engagement with China, that it's will cede away its sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone. I think that is likely to be a non-negotiable. The concern recently has been with respect to Indonesia. The Chinese and the Indonesian presidents recently met and issued a joint statement and in that joint statement we saw Indonesia talk about joint cooperation with China in areas of overlapping claims in countries exclusive economic zones. I think Indonesia subsequently came out to walk that back. So I don't see that happening either.

And in fact, when I first read the statement, I actually thought it was quite a clever approach to the reach to the statement because it sought to emphasize agreements between China and Indonesia. And in so far as Indonesia wanted better relations with China. That worked. And if there are no overlapping claims within Indonesia and China, then there are no there is no joint development to talk about. So I actually had a rather different take from some other reads in terms of the joint statements. Right? So you can only cooperate if there's overlapping claims, if there's none, that there's nothing to cooperate on. But nonetheless, we have a lovely statement that shows that we agree. There is always a concern that countries would be more willing to cede sovereign rights indexes in the South China Sea if they had intensifying economic ties with China. But I think they which stopped short of ceding these sovereign rights. Thank you.

KIM: Right here in the front.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Thank you. I'm Tom Rickford with the Foreign Policy Discussion Group and the Malaysia Americas Society. And I'd like to follow up on what Ryan was talking about and ask about the likelihood of Japan, South Korea and Singapore working to help Taiwan in these very difficult times.

CHUN: Well, that's very broad, very important, I think. So there is a lot of conversations going on between South Korean government and the U.S. government in terms of time contingency, how South Korea can contribute. So there are several concerns for South Korea, maritime security issues. If there is a contingency based on a revisionist intention from China, using military power over sea line of communication will be seriously damaged. Second, there will be an example of changing the status quo that will affect North Korea. So the only country that China has a relationship of alliance is North Korea, because China has a policy of non-alliance from 1978.

But if there something happens in Taiwan Strait, I think there should be prearrangement between China and North Korea to make some pressure on U.S. at the Kia or South Korea. So we have to deal with two fronts confrontation at the same time. We might help the United States with military power, but before that, to make a successful deterrence, we have to cooperate with the United States economically and diplomatically. And also how we end the Ukraine war will be very important. It remains as an example of deterrence failure. So we don't want to repeat that. So not just about military preparedness. We have to cooperate with United States, what South Korea can do in terms of economic policy. And there are a lot of South Koreans in Beijing. So there are many things to consider. But I can say there is active participation and dialog going on between U.S. and South Korean government.

KIM: And Lynn you add to a Southeast Asian perspective on this?

KUOK: He asked about Singapore saying like, yeah, I think a Taiwan contingency would be a nightmare scenario for Singapore, given that Singapore hosts has a logistics facility that the United States uses and which is likely to be drawn into a Taiwan contingency plan. However, beyond that, it's not clear what further steps Singapore might take in the event of a China-Taiwan clash.

I wrote a paper on this a year or two ago in terms of how Singapore might respond in the event of a Taiwan contingency. And I interviewed several people in that respect. And I think the what was clear was that they were refusing to be drawn into a clear statement of what Singapore would do in such a scenario. And they said it would depend on circumstances without even clarifying what these circum, what these factors would be and what would happen in the event of these factors occurring. So if X and Y, but what the X was wasn't clear. What the way was wasn't clear either. I think one might Other than that. Other than that, it's perfectly clear.

Everything was perfectly clear to me. Some might draw from how Singapore responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To say that Singapore might perhaps respond in the same way in the Taiwan scenario. So Singapore took a particularly strong stance compared to other Southeast Asian countries to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine as well as to take sanctions against Russia. However, I don't think it would apply in the Taiwan scenario given Singapore's one China policy. And the other thing I would. Well, I think I'll start there. I think it wouldn't apply. It wouldn't necessarily apply given Singapore's one-China policy and close ties with China, even though Singapore also has close ties with Taiwan. Thank you.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Piper Kimball, American University’s Asian and Indo. Pacific Studies Initiative. I have a question that's really directed towards our South Korean guests and a bit asking on South Korean and Japanese views on something that Ryan mentioned, which is. That over the last four years, the Biden Administration, there's been a very thoughtful, clear objective of sort of institutionalizing. These ties, these networks the lattice work that the administration talks about. And I think it's predictable that. We won't see the same level of effort by a Trump administration and we might even see a Trump administration.

At best, it would be sort of passive neglect. At worst, it would be active efforts to sort of break up that that lattice work. What steps might South Korea or Japan, which have very clear interests in seeing. This institutionalized institutionalization. Continue and even grow? What steps might South Korea or Japan take to step into a leadership role if the United States is not doing so? And even if the United States is sort of actively working against that?

CHUNG: I think, yes, some of the kind of I mean, retros or latticework of South Korea focus on is a kind of actually several things kind of trilateral between U.S. South Korea and Japan and also is not a kind of trilateral, but there is an NCG on nuclear concentrate group that we just created with the United States to strengthen our extended deterrence from the United States. And the other thing we are focusing on is, well, it's not we're aware of in the United States. We have a we attempted to revitalize the U.N. commander kind of summit as an as a preparation for the contingency of the Korean peninsula. So these are the kind of trilateral they're mostly focus on how to deter North Korea in terms of contingency, as well as preparing for our response to deterring North Korea in the peace time.

So in that case, South Korea has a very strong interest in sustaining it and leading it. It is not just about United States, but Japan and other neighboring countries are have interest in kind of deterring North Korea. So I think South Korea will garner a lot of effort to maintaining it is why are we worried that after Trump administration all the kind of military will falling down, but this kind of working level kind of practice at this moment. So it is kind of automatically kind of executed and implemented without considering a focus on the more political decisions that are sustaining all the effort. So I think at the working level, as well as South Korea's effort, I think the current kind of military roles, especially those kind of prioritized by South Korea, will be sustained and sustained. And also there's a discussions that are given that United States will not have that much interest in sustaining let latticework.

There's a discussion there like mine, countries will call us together to maintain the existing lattice work until another administration will come back to states. But yeah, I think that's another way that, like most countries like Australia and New Zealand and Singapore and Japan, these countries will be kind of discussing how to maintain current that is sort.

CHUN: I think that's a very important question. You know, it's up to the level of threat security threats in this region if the United States relatively retrenched from northeast Asia. But there is a rising threat from China and North Korea, that there is a strategic imperative that South Korea and Japan should cooperate with each other. So it also is related to the general security situation globally. So you have the revisionist powers become more emboldened to do something, revisionist policies than I think South Korea and Japan has. And there is a need to cooperate more closely. However, we have two nuclear powers, North Korea and China. So South Korea and Japan are heavily dependent upon, again, nuclear extend deterrence if there is no guarantee from the United States. And I think, you know, many things can happen. So that's a big question. And also bilateral relations between South Korean Japan.

There is always a danger of manipulating the nationalist sentiment between two countries politically. So it's a kind of polarization issue. But socially, you know, as you know, South Korean and Japanese, the young population have a very good perceptions about each other. And UI prisoner and so on, has led to a many year multiyear survey. And I think we are very we could be very optimistic. You know, last year GDP per capita between Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan was number one, South Korea second and Japan third because of the exchange rate, maybe. So the former colony is more prosperous than the former empire. That's one case. So there is no reason for sense of inferiority for South Koreans these days. So as long as politicians try to refrain from manipulating this kind of, you know, sentiment, that it can cooperate very rationally in terms of security.

HASS: I just wanted to add one observation, which is perhaps a statement of the obvious. But Tom and Piper's question really sort of speaks to a discussion that many of us are having in Washington about if a vacuum is to emerge, how will it be felt in Asia? And I take a lot of comfort in what you are sharing with us, that there is a lot of thinking going on in the region about this and that there are others that are prepared to be more proactive, more forward leaning in in filling some of that vacuum, because we all know that nature abhors vacuums. I'm not entirely prepared to concede that there will be a vacuum.

I think that the United States, just by its sheer presence in the region, will remain a large force, even if even if the president is less engaged relative to previous presidents in the region, we will still have the energy come in in Hawaii. We will still have an incredible diplomatic presence in the region. We will still have an incredible business presence in the region and non-governmental presence in the region.

So I remain bullish on America's presence in Asia. But it is comforting to hear that there is a lot of thought being put into this question.

KIM: Great. Well, I think that's a wonderful optimistic note to end on, and I just want to encourage the audience to stay for the next session, which is actually going to dig deep more deeply into these questions about U.S. alliances, many lateral multilateral frameworks. And so please stick around. I believe we have a coffee break for ten minutes and then we'll see you back in the auditorium. And thank you so much to all of the panelists.

SOHN: Some, you know, key mechanisms that operate in the Indo-Pacific, including alliances, partnerships, unilateral multilateral arrangements. But unfortunately, the previous session, you know, talk almost all about the topics that we got to do. So we are at a loss. So we try to be imaginative, creative to, you know, get to some of the points that we might go a bit deeper to discuss. So my name is Johnson again. Yeah. And I am also a professor at Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea. We have four distinguished panelists here on my left. Mireya Solís, you all know, she's a Director and Senior Fellow at the Center for Asia Policy Studies here with no more introduction because you know very, very well. And next is Sang-Yoon Ma, Professor of International Relations at the Catholic University of Korea.

And he is currently the President of the Korea Association for International Studies. And the next is Andrew Yeo from Brookings, and he's Senior Fellow and SK-Korea Foundation Chair in Korea Studies. You know, too, you know, Brookings fellows are close friends of Yi for many, many years. And the next is Professor Jiyoung Ko, Professor of Political Science at our Seoul. I'm sorry, Korea University. She she's a rising star in the Korean Political Science community, and she works on international relations and particularly the works related to nationalism. So I think I equal, you know, distraction. And once again, some of the questions already asked addressed. So first, let me, you know, ask quickly to Mireya with Trump's return, we see kind of tremendous level of uncertainty, you know, over, you know, Trump administration's policy toward China and particularly in East Asia, you know, South Korea and Japan, too, that we are facing so-called decoupling pressures.

So one source of decoupling pressure is that we have already experienced during the Biden administration's that, you know, countries are getting burdened as an ally to support the United States, to decouple from China economically in certain sectors, particularly, you know, sectors of dual use technologies or, you know, high, I mean, advanced technology sectors. So that's one source of decoupling pressures to, you know, Asian allies. And another pressure that we expect from the Trump administration is tariffs that, you know, we heard that, you know, 60% of tariffs import tariffs on, you know, Chinese certain Chinese goods and also some universal tariffs to on Korea and Japan as well. So how you know we deal with these so-called decoupling pressures one direct decoupling pressures from the United States. Another is there's a pressure from U.S. decoupling of China economically and that will have indirect but significant. Impacts and consequences on the economies of Korea, Japan and others. So how do your people expect this?

SOLÍS: Thank you very much, you all. It's wonderful to be here. We really appreciate the partnership with the East Asia Institute. So I'm happy that we're having this iteration again. Thank you all for joining us. And as you've heard, we are the second act, so I'll try to keep it punchy and that the link to this very important question on what happens next when it comes to the economic agenda. And I'll take both. There are two elements to your question. You'll and I'll take them in reverse order. I'll start with tariffs and then I'll move on, talk about the technology competition. And they're both critical. And I would start by saying that, you know, from the point of view of U.S. allies and partners. The return of a president who believes that the most beautiful word in the dictionary is tariffs presents its challenges.

And I also want to emphasize that President elect Trump talks about tariffs as a mechanism to obtain concessions on a broad set of issues is not just on the economic agenda. He can use them to apply pressure elsewhere. So we might be seeing a lot of tariff action and we already have some sense of how he'll move forward because we've already had he had one term and there was a period when the United States and China veered into a trade war and there were punitive tariffs applied on very substantial share of the bilateral trade flows. And of course, because we live in a globalized world where we have sprawling supply chains, we know that this is not remains just a bilateral affair.

But that trade war also had important consequences on countries like Japan and South Korea, who had invested deeply in the China market of operations connecting throughout the region. And we can expect, therefore, that is a return of a potential trade war would have big implications. Now, interestingly, these tariffs never really went away, and the Biden administration has largely retained them and more you know, you know, recently President Biden added to those times by imposing a higher tariff on electric vehicles and solar panels and so forth. So there's already a fair amount of tariffs built into the situation. President elect Trump now is talking about an expanded set of goals. And as you mentioned, Yul, he has mentioned putting on adding a 60% tariff on all imports from China and perhaps even removing China's most favored nation trading status. These obviously will have much larger implications than anything that we've experienced so far because the 60% tariff is indeed prohibitive.

And therefore, what the effects would that have on trade flows is important to be thinking about. Now, I would say that there's a lot of clarity, even though we usually don't say this about where we're thinking about where the US might be going. But there's a lot of clarity in the tool of choice, and we know that tariffs are a favorite of the elected president. But I would say that there is less clarity on the very important questions of strategy and tactics. So what is the overriding goal? We would ask about imposing a massive 60% tariff on China? There are a number of possibilities here. One is that what you want is for China to change, that this would be a way in which you would apply leverage for China to engage with them. So there goes my plan. Thank you. Thank you. Pressure in China for China to undertake a structural reforms and, you know, take a hit or take a reform its top down economic system.

Now this would imply that we could perhaps the stage to a US-China trade agreement because already in the first Trump administration, one such agreement was signed. But I would say that it's not very realistic to expect that China today is really thinking about moving away from its current economic system. If anything, the direction of travel seems to be in a very different direction with, you know, more intervention in the economy, the dual circulation philosophy and, you know, trying to pursue technological hegemony by leaning more on its existing model.

So I don't believe that China would be amenable, and I don't think that that would be a realistic goal. The other potential objective of the 60% tariff would be to go back to what we saw in the first Trump administration, which is a managed trade approach, and Adeyanju pressuring China to buy more from us that. That's actually what the first US-China trade agreement delivered in letter, but he never really delivered in practice. So China agreed to buy to buy $200 billion worth of U.S. products. It never really happened. So, again, we could engage in that negotiation. I imagine China is precisely what he wants to do. Will probably come up already with some kind of trade deal. And the more they draw out the Trump administration in trying to negotiate something that might never really be implemented, I think they would probably perhaps see that as a win.

But again, this would just be a repeat of what was done in the first administration, now and then an additional goal and perhaps where we're getting towards is that perhaps we are thinking about the Trump administration is thinking about whole scale or a strategic decoupling. And in particular, we've heard it from some surrogates, some people in the Trump orbit, that they're thinking along the lines of a strategic decoupling or using ties to try to reassure production to the United States. Now, whether tariffs are the right instrument to accomplish this, that's a big question. To me, that seems like a very blunt instrument. And if anything, what we saw in the first time when the Trump administration went all out with the trade war with China was very little reshoring. Actually, what we saw is rerouting. What we saw was diversification and many companies going to Southeast Asia or closer to here to Mexico, but not come to the United States.

When you saw more investment in the United States was during the Biden administration, when incentives for that kind of production were provided. But now here we find ourselves with a bit of uncertainty as well, because the Trump administration will likely apply time to try to bring reshoring back. But they're also saying that they're not sure they'll continue with the subsidies of the Chips Act, and it's not clear what happens to some of the tax incentives for electric vehicles and other features of the IRA. So that uncertainty also plays against the idea that you can reshore. And finally, and because I'm thinking a lot of time just on tariffs, let me just make the other point. That is not just what happens between the United States and China and the 60% tariff, as you mentioned.

You know, there's another idea of having a universal tariff applied of between, say, 10 or 20% on all countries, perhaps. And again, here, I find there's no clarity on strategy or tactics. Are we thinking that we'll see a replay of the Nixon shock of 1971 when you'll have a president applying a 10% tariff across the board? The economy today is completely different and it has not been articulated. What would be the objective? Nixon had a very clear objective for doing that. And that lasted for four months after that objective was met. I'm not certain I saw I see it here. Or will the Trump administration decide I'm not going to go for that 1,020% tariff because it will make them exceedingly unpopular if inflation and the cost of living goes up.

But I'm going to focus on those countries that have a trade deficit, that have trade surpluses with the United States. And if that's the case, I would say that the Indo-Pacific region has a lot to worry about because Japan, South Korea, Taiwan are all partners that have trade surpluses vis a vis the United States. Now, when it comes to so that I think, will bring a lot of tension perhaps in the discussions that, say, Japan and South Korea will have with the Trump administration, because it will not only be about these, you know, how you deal with the threat of a tariff coming your way. But as a previous panel, I think, also mentioned, there's going to be perhaps bigger asks when it comes to burden sharing. And I was just I just returned from Japan and some of the items that were being discussed is that even though Japan, for example, has agreed to increase its defense expenditure to 2% of GDP, that the Trump administration will likely say that's not enough. Let's talk 3% or more. So those are things that will perhaps now bring in friction into their relationship that the United States has with these important allies.

And that will also perhaps make it harder to coordinate on the technology restrictions and the economic security agenda. That is really where I think that should be the target of our focus and not so much the tariffs. Now, final point here on how will the coupling pressures work out when it comes to the technology competition angle? I would say that, again, the Trump administration in many ways started here by adding, say, emerging technologies to the export control disciplines, by using the entity list in a very different way, by strengthening the national security or foreign direct investment.

And, what the Biden administration did was that it followed the direction of travel. Systematized these policies and then sought to have greater input from partners. So I think that we can expect that this track will continue. But to me, the areas of uncertainty are the following. One is that during the first Trump administration, President Trump frequently interjected himself in the discussion and, you know, at some point interceded on behalf of a Chinese tech company like ZTE. Could he be interfering again? And certainly he'll be interfering, I think more on the tariff front. That's one area where he thinks he probably knows best and there will be a little delegation. How would it happen with the economic security agenda?

Remains to be seen. And the other question, I think that many of our partners in the region have is whether we'll see more use of unilateral measures or will there be still an attempt to have, you know, the origins or the beginnings of a plurilateral, say, export control regime? And that gets to the question as to whether we can go from the bilateral, which would be more limited in its reach and effectiveness to a more plurilateral approach or not, that I think those were would be the elements to watch for going forward.

SOHN: Well, thank you. Thank you very much. We'll get back to you again later for the second round with the follow up questions. Next is Sang and it's about alliance question. Although, you know, lots of conversations in the previous session. We are in South Korea, for example. So feeling that discussing the decline in American prestige in the region, and particularly with Trump, the first, you know, the Trump administration's experience of that, particularly America first approach. I think there are lots of challenges to rock U.S. alliances, as we discussed before. What are your expected challenges that the Washington would bring in? I mean, what are the top 1 or 2 major challenges and why do you think that is the case?

MA: Right. Thank you very much for asking the security related question. Well, I'm thinking of two kind of tests or risks that South Korean may have to face. One, when Trump administration started its kind of pressure on us. The first one is defend, the first burden sharing that we have already covered up in the first session. And well, the second might be the North Korean denuclearization of North Korea coming about the first one, defense burden sharing during the campaign.

Trump, well, President elect Trump called South Korea as a money machine. And he said he if he would have been the president in the past four years, he would have increased the South Korea's defense budget, ensuring tenfold and a truly South Korean government. You know, to say in anticipation of Trump's election or the possibility of Trump's return actually already have actually concluded the special measure agreement last month. Well, the period for the assembly agreement actually covers 2026 to 2030. But when? Well, President elect Trump is not really satisfied with that, perhaps we may have to renegotiate it.

Well, what really worries me, however, is when Korean public feels the American what Trump's demanding and kind of excessive, large, excessively large contribution, and it may well may cause South Korean resentment. Well, public opinion may rise in favor of, for example, development of South Korea's own nuclear weapons. Well, we are relying on, you know, nuclear umbrella from the United States. And the extended term is a key component of the overall alliance. So, well, without American nuclear umbrella, the South Korean defense and security may not be secure. So Well, with that, you know, understanding, perhaps South Korean public will demand we may develop ours so that we may not rely on too much on the American security provision. And also, we can also see a rising anti-American sentiment which had somehow made our lives very difficult back in 2000, ten or even earlier.

So we do not really repeat the kind of difficulties. Well. However, in terms of timing, well, fortunately, it does not appear that a new special measure of agreement, negotiation with South Korea will start immediately. Well, we have, as I told you, we have already concluded 17th, 12th, I'm sorry, 12th assembly agreement in October. And also South Korea will have a little bit more time because, well, Japan will have to start of the assembly agreement, assembly negotiation with the United States, with under the new administration. So Well, depending on the outcome of the negotiation with Japan, perhaps South Korea may, you know, respond with more a little bit more time to think about it. Second, you know, risks or the burden that we are having actually is denuclearization of North Korea.

Well, North Korean nuclear threat is South Korea's biggest security challenge. And it is not really easy this time to predict how the new president in the U.S. will approach. On the one hand, the Trump and especially Trump on the restrictions pursuit of deal making with Pyongyang could seriously undermine South Korean security interest if Trump and his administration effectively condones the North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons and attempt to negotiate these disarmament with North Korea on the premise it would eliminate the possibility of the denuclearization of North Korea, which would be quite unacceptable for South Korean security interest. Moreover, if the United States weakens its deterrence against North Korea while making concessions to North Korea, South Korea's security will be directly affected.

On the other hand, if Trump administration does not pay much attention to North Korea and takes kind of a bystander stance, this will also be a problem for us. North Korea will continue developing its nuclear arsenal and delivery systems, while international sanctions against North Korea are losing already, thanks to the Russian role in the United Nations and others. In such cases, there's no way really to control North Korea. That, I think, is a kind of nightmare scenario for us. Thank you.

SOHN: Thank you, Andrew, do you want to add for the challenges to the Alliance song? And also, do you know what would be the desirable responses from Seoul in dealing with this challenges? Burden sharing and sharing?

YEO: Well, rather than less challenges because I think we hung in, picked up on to at least on the security side, the Alliance burden share. And of course, the North Korea issue will be a challenge. I might just throw in the tariffs as well. But before I list what these specific challenges, I think more broadly for alliances in the Indo-Pacific more generally, is the difficulties that we've had for years of a rather consistent policy. I know Biden talked a lot about values-based diplomacy. Whether you think U.S. foreign policy was guided by values or not, that's a whole nother question. But the fact that the Biden administration was very keen in building this network, this latticework of alliances, partnerships, many leaders and multilaterals, that was clear.

And so now we're going to have to go back to an approach that's going to be much more transactional. And I think that's something that all alliances will have to contend with. And so we're going back from something that's values based to or at least it was based on a particular principle about strengthening allies and partners in the region to one where now President elect Trump may you know, I don't think he's going to just disavow alliances, but he's going to be more critical in some places. He might work well together, particularly on the security front when it comes to addressing threats from China. But then in other cases, like, you know, Alliance President Chang, he may make the life of allies difficult. So that's what we'll have to look at. On the terrorist front, I know Maria touched a little bit on this, but that it's not just about the tariffs. And I looked I checked the numbers for South Korea in 2018.

Under Trump, the trade deficit was 18 billion for it between the U.S. South Korea trade. In 2023, it's 5051 behind. So it's not moving in the right direction. I don't know if that's going to raise alarm bells with Trump, but. I think for South Korea the last 3 or 4 years, it's been $113 billion and invest in that Korean investment in the U.S. If suddenly the U.S. is slapping 10 to 20% tariffs, how is that going to affect, you know, investments? Now, my personal view is that I think there's clearly benefits. This has been for American workers creating jobs. I think it addresses national security concerns, related things like semiconductor supply chains. Can the U.S. Manufacture a sufficient number of semiconductors and chips without support from allies? So there's a lot of ramifications for putting out these tariffs.

But it is going to, again, cause I think, a bit of a headache, I think, for allies if these things come up. Well, let me end on a on a positive note. I know that we're all focused on challenges with a new administration coming. And this would be true of any, you know, change in government, I think. But it's particularly true because we've seen how President Trump has operated the first time when he's on his campaign, he as hanging mentioned, he called South Korea money machine or he really said that, you know, South Korea, Japan. Now, they're not they're not doing enough. They're not paying enough. But at the same time, I think the United States as a whole understands that we're in an era of great power competition, that China and Russia are still a concern.

And frankly, the United States can, I think, confront or I can't meet the China challenge without allies and partners. And we don't know what direction that policy will take. But we've seen some signs as we've seen the selection of Marco Rubio as secretary of state or, you know, Mike Waltz as a national security adviser. So that suggests at least that Trump is aware of the China threat or the challenge. And for those reasons, I think, you know, even if Trump is saying in public that allies need to pay more to do more, I think he also recognizes that U.S. force presence is also a really important aspect of addressing this China challenge. So I'm I think I'm a bit more optimistic than others about what this change in administration could portend. Back to you.

SOHN: Thank you. I guess another topic that has been addressed before in the previous session. It is about the U.S., Japan, Korea, trilateral. And there is a question also from the floor. I mean, that's been the question has been around in South Korea and Japan to that. And also we see that domestic political conditions and in I mean, not only in the United States but at Korea and Japan sort of, you know, coalitions that has been supporting improved are Korea Japan relations are waning in a sense in both countries. So the fate of, you know, huge. How do you view that, you know, there is a mention before but I want to hear your perspective.

KO: Yeah. Thank you. So the Capital base summit last year really marks on president commitments to trilateral relationship. I mean, basically solidifying it as are like key strategic interests for the United States in the Pacific. And then the summit actually made two important progress is like one is institutionalizing consultation, consultation mechanisms post at the working level and then ministerial and then higher like leadership level as well. And then the second our progress was actually like solidifying like a more serious, like security cooperation between I mean, among these three countries. So the three countries, I mean, started conducting a military exercise like the Freedom Act, as always has happened this month.

And then also they have a member of their more I mean, serious information sharing, not only army and conventional issues, but also like more I mean, new threats like cyber threats. I mean, of course, the question is whether I mean this I mean on the level of cooperation Raul lasts or not. And in my personal opinion, I believe that there are I mean, challenges and opportunities for deepened trilateral cooperation. And then, I mean, when it comes to challenges, actually challenges, I believe, exists on all three fronts South Korea, Japan and then the United States. And they mostly stem from, I mean, domestic political dynamics and leadership.

So on the South Korea side, President Yoon has been very actively, I mean, pursuing this trilateral cooperation. However, I mean, unfortunately, I do not think that there is actually broad bipartisan support or strong public support for this trilateral cooperation. So, I mean, it's true that people see the strategic need for this trial in lower corporation, but still, especially at the public level, there is a strong distrust against, I mean, Japan. So, I mean I mean, it's true that the South Korean public opinion towards Japan has been improving over the years. So if we see the opinion poll done by EEI, it shows that. I mean, though, the South Korean public who has a more favorable attitude towards Japan, Bruce, is around like 40% and that that's actually an improvement compared to the 2020 where I mean I mean the bilateral relationship hit, I mean our lowest point. So but the problem is they are like if you look at like why South Korean public has time, it has traditionally more a cold attitude toward like Japan. I mean, the underlying I mean, causes actually nationalism.

And I mean, if you take a look like where this nationalism comes from, I mean, it is related to like the historical grievances relate to historical issues. And then I mean, the previous colonial rule and then the territorial dispute between the two countries. I mean, yeah, over like Dokdo, Takeshima Islands and all those underlying issues are not addressed and then they can come up in the future again. So that means that the essentially like I mean, South Korean leaders, if they want, they can weaken or like walk away from this trilateral cooperation with public backing. So if there is I mean, diplomatic tension between South Korea and then Japan again, then the public can easily turn against this trilateral cooperation and based on distrust, I mean, towards Japan.

And if I look at the I mean, the Japan side, I mean, we can say that that's not just a possibility because on the news, Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba is more open to revising the peace constitution. And then and then, I mean, a couple of days ago. I mean, when I mean. Then, like Japan's prime minister. Like I see. I mean, you know, as a reporter that those reports as prime minister is over, I will be offered. I'm probably offering to like this. Can you try it? And then I had already created like controversy like in South Korea. So if, like Japan moves to me, moves toward the more top direction, then that can definitely I mean, create more reasonable tensions and then fan suspicions among like South Korean nationalists.

And then that will definitely have negative impact on deepening trilateral cooperation, I believe. And then on the other side, I mean, as we know, like President Trump has our prior transactional approach to alliances. And also does that I mean, even under the second I mean, Trump administration like I mean, the US may prioritize the existing bilateral framework because it will I mean, be you will be seen as a kicker and then also a more beneficial like way to secure short term U.S. national interests, especially in terms of a like allies, like a burden sharing. And then also, if I mean, Trump ended up pursuing like anything but Biden policy, there would be a really good I mean, motivation to weaken this. I mean, trilateral I mean are partners over.

But there are also opportunities to strengthen this. I mean that trilateral cooperation and Tasmania I mean, comes from a sort of like security environment. As we know, the competition between like China and then the United States role become more intense in the second. I mean, I mean Trump administration. And then we know that there's Korea also, I mean strengthened its strategic partnership with Russia. And then there will be greater, I mean, collusion between these authoritarian regimes in the region. And then definitely I mean, the US and its allies also need to, I mean, form a more united front to deal with the unresolved issues, including like traditional like issues like North Korean nuclear issues and the rising tide on. So I think I mean, definitely the, on I mean optimism for I mean trilateral cooperation as well.

And then and then also this trilateral partnership has some unique I mean importance this because so even though in the first I mean in the first Trump administration like I mean the US has only emphasized more transactional approach. And then though I mean and then emphasis on like democratic values was completely missing in, in the allies like rhetoric. However, emphasizing democratic pillars can actually increase the credibility of a US commitment. So, I mean, this trial letter, I mean, a partnership is definitely a symbol of, I mean, democratic values and the president of partnership. So in that sense, I mean, you can have a unique advantage. And though so it has a really strong like implementation mechanisms unlike other like militaries in the region. So the success of this partnership will have more positive ramifications of I mean, for the region over.

SOHN: Thank you. Thank you, Jiyoung. We let's. I think we already spent half, almost 40 minutes. So a quick second round and then, you know, opened the floor. I guess this question, you know, goes to Andrew again. You know, in in South Korea, particularly after, you know, Trump won the election, there's a growing, increasing voices, I think are from the right and also from the left that South Korea needs to take a more independent approach. Our foreign policy approach that, you know, you get to de-risk from China and also Rex from Trump's America, then, you know, one brand would be, you know, nuclear go nuclear and then to make it an independent country, independent nation. Or you know, you go to the Indo-Pacific, broaden the strategic spaces, you know, putting more emphasis on Asian and India and Australia, etcetera. So what's your take, you know, from this, the growing, you know, the move in in South Korean academic community? Sure. Well.

YEO: There is this perception in the past that South Korea is somehow behind or lagging other allies in terms of its commitment to the Pacific. That and that has to do with South Korea's own, I think, grand strategy when it comes to autonomy. And so I don't think it's a stark choice between autonomy versus alliance with the U.S., but that is one of the debates that is central to South Korean grand strategy. President Yoon made it very clear from his campaign and day one in office that the United States and the U.S. South Korea alliance would be at the center of his foreign policy strategy. And I think that's the critique that we've heard, especially from the political left, that he's banked everything on the U.S.. Now, it worked well because the Biden administration was also trying to strengthen alliances and partnerships.

And then we saw President Yoon unveil what he calls, well, an Indo-Pacific strategy, but then the global pivotal state. So even though it centers on the U.S. South Korea alliance, that would be a platform then to strengthen things like the U.S., Japan, Korea, trilateral, or for a while they tried to join the quad, but that wasn't going to happen. But there's the then the orcas, the orcas to pillar. And then we saw South Korea also strengthen ties with Europe. So there's, you know, South Korea ties with Naito, there's the Indo-Pacific for NATO's. So there's these different frameworks, many of ours, that South Korea under the U.N. administration has really expanded. I think it's for its foreign policy aperture.

So on one hand, I think it would be a big blow if alliances were to rupture because South because President Yoon had stakes so much in the US South Korea alliance. But on the other hand, because South Korea has been moving in this direction where it wants to expand its strategic partnerships, where it wants to expand its own involvement in the region with many laterals, with other multilateral institutions that they have in some ways diversified their foreign policy. So even if their lines were to rupture, I think South Korea has other options, other choices, other partners that they can work with. So in that sense, I think the strategy of this this idea of global pivotal state has worked well in this case, pivoting, I wouldn't say away from the United States, but that it just has more options out there.

SOHN: Thank you. Thank you. Sang-Yoon, and I. I think this question is related to the previous question. The Korean public and also academic community is generally supportive of broadened alliance, U.S., ROK-U.S. alliance, which means that it is not just, you know, defend, you know, South Korea from North Korea, you know, attack, but also increase the alliance role to the region. And in general, people support the world. But when it comes to. China issues. You know, the public is very, very, very cautious and particularly in the case of, you know, Chip in Science Act, that, you know, more than 50% of Korean public are very critical of the U.S. stance on that particular issue when it comes to Chinese market etc.. So how do you expect that, you know, Trump administration will push hard to that direction And what would be the desirable responses from Seoul?

MA: Well, I think that's a major uncertainty that we are facing with a new Trump administration. What's the nature of the Trump administration's policy toward China? We need some time to see to see the essence and nature of it. But I think well, there are some indications already comes out. Well, the nomination of Marco Rubio for State Department secretary and Mike Waltz for national security adviser seems to indicate the new Trump administration seems to have a hardline policy toward China. Yeah, I think it is quite unclear what President elect Trump himself really think about. Well, based on his America foreign America first policy, he strongly believes that the United States should no longer be economically ripped off or exploited by China.

But it isn't clear whether see whether he sees China as a threat, security threat or just economic harm. Well, in both cases, of course, a South Korea could suffer a very severe economic blow from

Trump's America first policy coming in the economic well toward China. This is because South Korea maintains a very significant trade relations with China, although its shares declining. But China is still South Korea's largest trading partner. In recent years, imports of intermediate goods from China have increased significantly. There is a high dependence Korean depends on China for critical minerals and rails and imports of car manufacturing related products such as batteries for EVs has increased significantly recently. If U.S. restrictions on access to the U.S. market for these items are well, and when those restrictions are tightened, South Korea will be very much significantly affected.

What is of concern in the security relationship is the possibility of South Korea's entrapment. For example, in the case of contingency in Thailand Strait Well, for example, if the United States intensifies its military competition with China in the Taiwan Strait or in the South China Sea, well, and if likelihood of likelihood of military conflict increases there, Washington might ask for, you know, South Korea's expanded role. However, that could reduce South Korea's capacity to focus on North Korea's threat, which is ever increasing now. And in addition, turning into turning China into a potential adversary is a very serious burden for South Korea because, you know, Korea is geographically adjacent to China.

And how should China and how should South Korea respond? I think it is necessary for Korea to convince the new administration in the U.S. that the response to North Korean threat and China risks will not be done separately. It is necessary to come up with a more comprehensive policy plan or blueprint that encompasses China and North Korea altogether, rather than, you know, these symptomatic prescriptions on a case by case basis and talks about this with the United States. And I think it's quite important that on all your stage of new administration, the United States. If we understand South Korea's role in the division of labor within the larger framework of security cooperation in the region between United States, Japan and South Korea, then I think, well, South Korea can focus on North Korea, while North Korea will be understood, you know, much larger, you know, security framework, which is beneficial not only for South Korea, but also for other allies and partners in the region. Thank you.

SOHN: Thank you. One last question to Maria, you. In your book, you write, quote unquote. Let me read. CP was the prelude to the burst of middle power diplomacy toward the rules-based order against protectionism. We might expect rampant protectionism next year then. Do you I mean, can we foresee a sort of, you know, coalitional, you know, app for it's made by the middle powers in the region without Trump.

SOLÍS: Well I think thank you You'll I think there'll be a different number of responses when I think bilaterally I think it'll be a desire pragmatically to engage with a Trump administration because the economic and security stakes are so high that none of these countries wants turbulence or friction in their relationship with the United States. So they'll speak the language of Trump. Quite frankly. They've done it in the past. They'll do it again. And now they'll talk about, you know, how their technology and their capital is essential to build advanced manufacturing in the United States. They'll talk about buying more energy, perhaps LNG, from the United States.

So that's one set of responses. But the other one, I think, goes to the heart of your question, and that is will they move on without the United States and would they keep this trade agreement be the right vehicle to do so? And in some ways, yes. And actually, that my biggest question mark is what will Korea do in this case? Because, you know, if you look at the evolution. This ship is an agreement that has had many lives. It began really as a US led project and with, you know, high ambition, UN standards liberalization. And then under the first Trump administration, the US left. And that then gave way to the reinvention, and that's when the CPB name was adopted. And that really was what you referred to. Ulysses You know, initiative of middle powers to decide to protect the rules-based structure to give them more predictability.

Given the choppy waters of U.S. protectionism while still keeping a seat warm in case the United States wanted to come back. I think the most recent election and the return of the Trump administration is the loudest message you can get that the United States is not returning to the ACP TPP. So what should we do next? And interestingly, the SIP was negotiated almost a decade ago, and it was negotiated before we saw great power competition, really taking on as intensely as it has before. We saw the economic security agenda thrive the way it has now.

And the PDP, interestingly, is about or is in the early stages of the first general review, whether the ways that this is supposed to be a living agreement. So we should update it and we should invite a new members. And I think it would be very important to see if the CP, TPP can be more durable than IPF in bring in supply chain resilience agenda to the agreement. In updating the digital provisions which are already a decade old, perhaps incorporated something on economic coercion or technology cooperation, those are issues that were not part of the CP, TPP, and therefore important to update. For me, the biggest question is worry South Korea in all of this, because, you know, as we heard, the domestic politics continue to be challenging. And I always thought that once you had Japan and South Korea rapprochement, the logical step would have been for South Korea to join the CP TPP because that would have taken care of that potential obstacle.

That did not happen. What I heard at the time in South Korea was that the focus was on IPA because South Korea could be a member there. And also I think because every country has a domestic politics and there's some opposition in South Korea about the CP TPP all the time, the situation is more dire today. I would I did not have a chance to emphasize before that if you look at the cumulation of a Trump's tariff proposals and there's one other idea the reciprocal trade agreement which would be basically matching and raising US tires to match the tariffs, our counterparts, we're really talking about undermining the WTO system. And I think given that, I think the stakes are higher now for South Korea perhaps to reconsider. And I joined the CP TPP, and I think that would then elevate the significance of this agreement.

SOHN: I hope so. So we have about seven minutes. So 1 or 2 questions. 5 Minutes? Five minutes. Okay. Five minutes. So, yeah. Questions from the floor. How many hands? Collective. Right. The lady back there? Yeah, the plaque. Yeah. And a more hands. Then let's. Let's collect three questions and then quick answer.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: From Korea Economic Institute. Thank you so much for coming here and giving insightful insights about South Korea and U.S. alliance frameworks and overall Indo-Pacific frameworks. I'm curious about multilateral economic frameworks that have been mentioned through. You know, like previously and in the first session. How South Korea has been in preparing for a potential U.S. withdrawal from the path. I think I hear a lot more positive responses on the IPAs saying like this is, you know, an economic framework that shows economic cooperation between the U.S. and South Korea, Whereas in Washington, I'd hear a lot more concerning voices about the potential withdrawal of the Trump second Trump administration. So, yeah, that would be my question. Thank you.

SOHN: No, no, no. I'll take two more questions. Yeah, The lady. Yeah.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Hi, I'm Serena Waters with NEC Corporation my question is about Japan's defense budget, but also potentially relevant for that from the Korea burden sharing perspective. You mentioned that they were talking about they're concerned about a potential ask, an increase in defense spending. And I'm wondering if you heard anything about the Japanese thinking through how they might respond to that ask and also what their specific concerns about repercussions might. If, you know, even 2% seems unattainable, unattainable. So I'm not sure how they could increase that. And if kind of defense tech collaboration that's been strengthened under Biden could potentially be a risk.

SOHN: Thank you. One more hand. I think the handle is at you?

AUDIENCE QUESTION: That's me. Okay. Yeah. Thanks. Jim Mullen next from the diplomatic fellow at the Wilson Center. You mentioned economic coercion and certainly during the, you know, several Trump sorry, incoming President Trump, several speeches. You know, he's talked about his desire to increase pressure on China. And presumably he'll ask allies to do similar types of things with respect with respect to tech controls and other policy initiatives. Do you think that Korea in particular, but other countries in Asia are well prepared to cope with economic coercion from China in response to these types of measures? And if so, how might they do so? Thanks.

SOLÍS: And so I'll just jump in, I guess. And the defense budget and a bit of caution. I believe I am on the more skeptical camp. I've always been a skeptical of IPF, and I think that, you know, it's a soft cooperation agreement. It was good will measure in many ways to show that we wanted to engage, but it didn't have any promise of durability. And now that we have this election result. First of all, the first pillar, which was really the more substantive pillar that remains undone, and I don't see us finding a way to negotiate around that. And the other three pillars, even if Trump does not decide to withdraw, he might still do it. These are agreements that depend on goodwill and political capital to invest, to see these cooperative agreements move forward. And I don't think that that's where the administration is going to be looking into how it advances its agenda. So I am afraid that IPF might, you know, the exercise might have been useful in the supply chain pillar because it began to, you know, put some language on how we should think about resilience.

But I think that there are flaws in its design that make it, you know, very amenable to political domestic politics are under it rendering it would so sorry to be so blunt on the defense budget in Japan. I think there's a lot of concern. I think that, you know, Japan can talk about purchasing new weapon systems and all of these things and in that sense, show that it'll be, you know, very valuable partner of the United States when you speak that more transactional language. But we should also, as you be aware, take into account the domestic, the shift in domestic realities in Japan. Ishiba Prime Minister Ishiba presides over a minority coalition government, which obviously weakens his hand in negotiating bigger budgetary allocations towards defense. In fact, in order to gain the support of a smaller party, the Democratic Party of the people, they already agreed to some changes to how they'll think about income taxes that further reduce the pie.

So I think that it's not just what the Trump administration is going to ask, but also that you have a different political reality in Tokyo that will also make it harder to deliver on an economic coercion. I don't think anybody is ready to cope with it. I would also say that China also suffers when they impose these measures and they create an incentive to diversify away. But it's very difficult to come up with a collective mechanism. And if this were to come to the ACP TPP, I'm sure a lot of focus would be on using language that is not China specific because there's no appetite in the region to do this. So how do you manage to come up with some resilience measures? With the elephant in the room that cannot be named that.

MA: Yeah, I'll take the question. The last question of China's economic coercion with South Korea has been suffered a lot with the thought retaliation back in 2016. And South Korea since then tried to diversify its economic profile and trying to diversify our investment, not just in, well, premature concentrated on China, but now it is being spread out throughout the I think this ASEAN region, we called it. And we have been somehow open to the possibility of China. You know, tech theft. And, you know, in responding to that, that kind of risks.

Currently, our National assembly is discussing the. The legislative efforts to make our own law to fight against that kind of theft. Thirdly, Korea has been monitoring our dependence on the data sources of our supply chain. When, when there is a what? What kind of items are overly dependent on China or some other countries, then we are trying to spread the wealth, diversify those dependencies. So I think those are South Korean responds to the on other round of China's caution economy caution. Thank you.

SOHN: Thank you. Thank you very much. We closed the second session and also closed the whole session on behalf of CAPS and EAA. Thank you so much for attending and, you know, having with us in the morning and you know I, I would expect another join conference four years later. We don't know who wins and you know, hope to continue, you know, with various level of support between us. And thank you very much.