

Speaker 1: [00:02](#) [inaudible].

Nick Burns: [00:03](#) Good afternoon. Welcome back. Good afternoon everybody. So we've just done some surgery in the schedule and I just want to give you all the schedule so you know what's going to happen. The order of battle for the end of this meeting. Um, we're going to have a panel on North Korea right now and it's going to be from three, uh, from, from now until three o'clock. It's going to be chaired by Ken Delaney in of NBC News. He's joined by Ben Rhodes, um, by Chris Hill. Ambassador Chris Hill, um, was our North Korea negotiator for President George W. Bush and has a lot of experience in this field. Sumi Terry, uh, as well. And John coons. Joy, this is going to be a fabulous panel about whether or not the administration is on the right track on denuclearization in North Korea at three o'clock. It's going to be a great pleasure to have congresswoman Alissa Slotkin here with congressman Mac Thornberry and they're going to talk, give us a perspective from Capitol Hill on authorizing, um, for the Defense Department and for an American national security and to get their views on a lot of the issues that we've been discussing.

Nick Burns: [01:19](#) And then finally, the final panel is going to be a panel that tries to sum up what we think about the last two and a half days. And I'm going to, um, interview two former chiefs of intelligence. So John Scarlet, who have [inaudible], who is chief of the British secret service organization and my six and John McLaughlin, who is acting CIA director and deputy director for Central Intelligence. So two spooks, intelligence experts give us their sense on what they've heard, what they make of it, what our conclusion should be. That'll take us until, uh, four 30 at four 30, we'll all walk over to Greenwall tent and Christian Welker of NBC News Will Interview Congressman Adam Schiff from five to 6:00 PM on all the issues we've been discussing. So without further ado, Ken, thank you for sharing this panel.

Speaker 1: [02:17](#) Thank you. Thanks. Thanks man.

Ken Dilanian: [02:33](#) Thank you all for being here. Good afternoon. David Sanger talked about the diehards on Saturday, but these are the real die-hards Saturday afternoon and Aspen. Um, so I'm Ken Delaney and I covered national security intelligence for NBC News Two years ago with this forum. So those of you who are there will remember the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joe Dumford, uh, told my colleague Andrea Mitchell, that war with North Korea should not be considered unimaginable. What's unimaginable, he said was the idea that North Korea, uh, we'd have the capability of striking Denver with a nuclear weapon. And a few weeks later, president Trump, um, you

know, famously threatened North Korea with fire and fury, the likes of which the world has never seen. We're in a much different place today, thankfully, but how different is it really? Um, that's what I hope this wonderful panel will, will chew over today. And, uh, nick, nick already did the introductions.

Ken Dilanian:

[03:31](#)

Um, so I'm gonna bypass that, but I just want to say I learned something wonderful about Sumi Terry, um, this weekend, which is that her nickname at the CIA was tsunami sue in connection with, uh, with a paint ball, exercise and training. And I'll let you tell, I'll let her tell you that story offline. Um, okay. So we're going to talk about what's transpired and over the last few years and where this thing goes next. But I want to start with what's in the news right now, which is, um, there's a joint exercise, uh, scheduled for August between the South Koreans and the u s military. And the North Koreans have have objected to this and they've said, um, the North Korean foreign ministry said it's crystal clear that this is an actual drill and a rehearsal of war aimed at militarily occupying our republic by surprise attack. And further, there's a report that they claimed that president Trump promised to cancel this exercise, uh, during the last summit. So I want to ask all of you to sort of analyze what's going on here. Is, is it credible that president Trump did promise to cancel this exercise? Uh, Sumi Terrick go ahead.

Sue Mi Terry:

[04:37](#)

I think it's plausible. I mean, who knows? Uh, we don't know what, I think it's plausible that he could have promised Kinda, but I mean this is not a large scale exercises. These are very scaled down drills, right? It's, it's, it's a mostly computer simulated training exercise to see, to assess, verify, uh, operational capability of uh, transfer of wartime operational control. I mean this is very skilled on virgin. So I think the fact that North Koreans are making a fuss about this, um, are either, they are trying to, this is what they do, right? North Korea has whole diplomatic strategies based on a combination of Tom Offensive and coercion. So they want to increase their leverage when negotiations do begin or working level negotiations or they are trying to sort of buy out time and they want to sort of, this is sort of their way to make this as an excuse and not engage in working level negotiations because they were never, they were never really into it. Right. They were always trying to separate president Trump from his advisors. If you see it the whole past year or lot of criticisms of his adviser as Secretary Pompeo, name calling, calling ambassador Borton human defect, while he's still sending beautiful love letter to president Trump. So David, he's, this is so either, I think this is sort of a tactical move on North Korea's part to increase the leverage or a wait to time.

Benjamin Rhodes: [05:58](#) Yeah. And I just say, um, you know, I was rarely accused of being a hawk, uh, in the Obama administration. Um, and I very much support diplomacy with North Korea. You know, I, I let our diplomacy with Cuba was involved with Iran. Uh, a couple points. So the first thing is with the exercises, often you hear about this and you wonder why is this so important? Um, we deploy our troops through South Korea on rotation, right? So people are not there in perpetuity. The troops that are there and the entire model for how we would respond to and contingency on the Korean Peninsula depends upon interoperability coordination with the South Korean military. And so if you have troops who have not yet practiced essentially four different contingencies on the Korean Peninsula, they're not ready. Uh, they're not, they're not bad already. And so the op, these joint exercises are not just for show.

Benjamin Rhodes: [06:50](#) They're actually just to make sure that the South Korean military and the American military that is rotating through is prepared for the different contingencies. So it actually does matter. Um, obviously some of this is optics, but this gets at our preparedness on the Korean Peninsula and not just North Korea, but the Chinese have frequently complained about these exercises for years. Um, in part because what they would really like in the long run is to see the u s military presence in South Korea. And, uh, and this is seen as a step on the pathway towards ending the u s military presence on the Korean Peninsula. Dr Cha as the representative of the South Korean government here. Is it your understanding that this exercise will proceed? The Indo Peckham Commander told this forum a few days ago that his orders were to proceed.

Jong Kun Choi: [07:34](#) Uh, before I begin anything, say anything I need, I like to introduce myself. Uh, I worked for the Blue House, which is the prejudicial office of the Republic of Korea. Uh, my official title is presidential secretary for Peace Planning. So I've been involved in this government for the last two years. And just for the record, uh, government of the Republic Korea has been taking this joint military exercise very seriously. And so far we have either suspended or canceled two joint military exercises. One's called key resolve and Foul Eagle, which uh, we suspended last year, sometime in March. And after to that we had a very first uh, Inter Korean, uh, summit in palm jumps, joint security area, followed by Singapore summit. And then we had another summit in Pyongyang. In other words, join to military exercise has been very critical, not only in bringing about the crispness of the military alliance between the United States and Republic of Korea.

Jong Kun Choi: [08:43](#) The combat readiness has never been compromised because while we have been suspending or canceling the large size military exercise, small scale that is so critical to field training, exercise has been ongoing. So I just wanna say for the record that military interoperability has never been compromised way that I understand in terms of things that North Korea has been projecting outside, especially the joint military exercise is that historically even between Seoul and Pyongyang, we would not or they would not have any type of dialog or negotiation if there is any type of joint military exercise. So what happen is I think that they had been following focal historical track. If there is going to be joined to military exercises in the territory of South Korea, we are not going to have so-called working level negotiation with you. So I think that they've been basically a sounding at sounding out what they have been saying.

Jong Kun Choi: [09:52](#) Second of all, uh, I don't think that, uh, as far as I know, uh, president Trump, uh, did not promise the cancellation of this upcoming joint military exercise. If he had ever done that, then he would look as he, we have done so far, he consulted and organize it and use it as a very strategically. So I think that this is a very critical moment for us in Washington. And Seoul has been looking this matter of very carefully and I think and also the matter, the nature of this joint military exercise is called a in IOC, uh, IOC exercise, which is initial operating capability exercise. Why? Because Republic of Korea is trying to get our wartime operational back to our, uh, command. Therefore to get that wartime operational command, we need to have military exercise between the two commands so that we have a very smooth transition. So this nature of the exercise not offensive, it's a transitional and is for the sake of a strengthening the alliance. Okay. Let's pull back the lens a little bit. You've heard several people from the Trump administration at this panel or at this conference talk about the progress that they think has been made over the last two years in this relationship. They say that because of the three face to face meetings, because of the lack of nuclear testing was submittal testing. We're in a much better place.

Christopher H: [11:26](#) Susan Rice on the other hand pushed back on that a little bit. Chris, why don't you go for someone you all to talk about where, what do you think has been accomplished over the last two years by these very dramatic events? Well, look where we are today. Sure. Beats little rocket man and a fire in theory. So I think we could all agree on that. Um, I think the problem though is, you know, when I was doing this back during the Bush administration, they would always ask us to cancel exercises and I'd always say no. And I'd always say, only regret is we

didn't have him in the spring of 1950 an answer. They never quite understood. But, uh, I thought it was obvious. So what is different now is I, the president comes out of a, the meetings in Singapore and at a three o'clock press conference just before he's leaving on Air Force One, he suddenly learns to speak North Korean because a, we always call these joint exercises and he gets up in this press conference and calls them hostile war games, uh, suggesting that they had raised this with them.

Christopher H:

[12:23](#)

And then he said, you know, these exercises costs a lot of money. And I would say frankly exercises compared to actual wars cost very little money. But we won't go into that obvious point. So I think the president did kind of put this on the table and I think the North Koreans are looking to see if they can weaken the links between the two armies because Ben and Sumi have pointed out these are, you know, our army are our 29,000 troops there and all the troops that rotate through, they don't rotate through to play softball. They rotate through to work with the RLK K to make sure it's a seamless, very powerful military. And by the way, it's one of those powerful in the world. So there's a lot to be concerned about. And I think ultimately, I just like to make one fundamental point, which is North Korea doesn't have nuclear weapons because they're afraid we're going to attack them or attack them after we've had some exercises, they have nuclear weapons because they want to create a circumstance that over time we somehow leave the Korean peninsula. And I think we need to be more aware of that kind of strategic concept they have and maybe a little more stubborn in not giving into it to me as are they taking Donald Trump for a ride?

Sue Mi Terry:

[13:34](#)

Well, I, you know, so in theory I support engagement, negotiation, dialogue, and I think, you know, you can argue that nothing has worked with North Korea, so we'll try this out at the highest level. Um, but your question was what, what have we seen since Singapore in the last two years? Um, so I hope that we would have made more progress than we didn't. Right. I, Singapore honestly, uh, loose an aspirational statement of work North Korea of working towards denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. You know, I work towards a lot of things. I wanna accomplish a lot of them. Right? So that's as we're working towards, is that an aspirational statement? We had three meetings up repeating President Kim, president, president Trump and Kim Jungian. And we don't have a agreed upon definition of denuclearization. We don't have roadmap, we don't have a timeline. We certainly don't have a declaration.

Sue Mi Terry:

[14:22](#)

I mean, so we're all, I'm all for engagement. What we need is come to see something. Meanwhile, Kim Jong Un had met with Sheesh and Ping me five times now four times in China. Of course, if she met with Putin, met with President Trump three times, went to Singapore, I had a nice Selfie, had a whole image makeover. Now he looks like a normal person or a normal country. That's an exactly. Yeah. Why is that? You know, but I mean we now forget completely that Kim is someone who killed his half brother using band. You know, we we, yeah, we, we forget all of that now. He looks like a normal person. So I honor, I didn't appreciate Kim's, Ah, I think he did quite well for last, you know, since Singapore. I think he did quite well and I didn't appreciate, I think I underestimated him. So if anything, I think Kim made more progress for North Korea than we, if our goal is still complete. Denuclearization I don't, I don't see honestly that we have made it progress, at least at this point. I hope to see that.

Jong Kun Choi:

[15:20](#)

I mean I try not to argue, but please argue that's why we're here. Uh, the Aspen scare, no, that what me you just said is representative of the mainstream argument in Washington d c however, as a person actually involved in the policy making, especially dealing with North Korean denuclearization compare ourself with the what happened in 2017 and the time before, I think we made a lot of progress. Why, why? Because first of all, it had, you used to be inconceivable in a way that a president of the United States is directly engaging the chairman of the DPR second of boat. There was a declaration in Singapore that laid out four pillars of the relationship, future head. I'm not saying, uh, that Singapore decorations in the most perfect declaration in the world. But think about it. We are talking about the process and process that changes total. A historian of the U s a n d.

Jong Kun Choi:

[16:22](#)

P. R. K. N. Moving forward. I remember I am by the way, uh, by trading a university professor teaching international politics and started working from an 18th of July, 2017. So what happened was when Jane Goldman came into power 10th of May, 2017, I counted how many times North Korea conducted mid-south test as well as nuclear tests every 20 days on average from May nine to 29th of November, North Korea tested nine new nine, a long range missile tests and one nuclear test, meaning that every 20 days we had a, a some sort of double weapon after we had the, uh, uh, test. And then we had three summits. Uh, we also had two declarations between two couriers and one military agreement. In other words, you could say that the progress has not been made in Thomas of the teen acquired generations. But we got to the stage where both leaders agreed

to have working level, the working level negotiation. Why is it because they cannot walk out twice as they did in Hanoi so that they got to the point where working level negotiations with pretty a, a needed so time. You will be a moment of very critical juncture in this fall. And I think, and I suspect I'm very hopefully, uh, I'm very, uh, hopeful. Um, what, uh, I am very optimistic about what's going to happen. So that I think it's too early to say anything. Anything

Benjamin Rhodes: [18:03](#)

yet. Are you, do you share that optimism, Ben Rhodes? Not entirely. Um, I, and I want to say I'm very supportive of the, the Republic of Korea taking this stance and in fact we, we lacked a partner in soul, frankly, that supported engagement. And so, uh, I want to credit president moon his team for what they're doing. I think the, the issue is what are we trying to achieve here? And if you look at the metrics of what we're trying to achieve, North Korea is not only not taking any steps to give up any pieces of its nuclear program, they're continuing to build nuclear weapons. So their program continues to advance. Um, and so measured against the ultimate goal of denuclearization. But even if you accept, as I do, that that is a very aspirational goal and something we're unlikely to reach in a near term timeframe.

Benjamin Rhodes: [18:47](#)

The types of things you'd want to see. A, a rollback of pieces of the nuclear infrastructure, access to North Korean facilities for international inspectors remain elusive and hopefully in the fall, that is the kind of step that could be arrived at. And I think there are a couple of things that we have to grapple with here, right? Insofar as there's been a significant improvements is 2017 it's been an improvement of a crisis of president Trump's own making and essentially ratcheting up towards a war on the Korean peninsula and in ratcheting back down. And so I think we all appreciate that, but we're not seeing the results in terms of nuclear program. The second thing that is important to note here is if I look at the example of what we did on a wrong, uh, you know, you don't start with the head of state summit and you don't start with kind of bold declarations about transferring the relationship.

Benjamin Rhodes: [19:35](#)

You start somewhere concrete on the nuclear program. So we had an interim agreement, uh, two and a half years before the Iran nuclear deal that essentially froze the uranium program, rolled it back a bit for some very modest sanctions relief. Now what I find with the Trump administration is after three years almost, they're circling back around to that step, which is the appropriate place to begin. I think part of what concerns me though is we sit here at the Aspen Security Forum and we talk

about this as if there's a normal intent behind what is taking place emanating from the president states and from what I've seen, what president Trump seems to enjoy the most is the attention that comes from these summits and the sense that he's orchestrating the attention of the world between him and Kenyon. Lynn's personal relationship, the handshake of the DMV bear, very dramatic.

Benjamin Rhodes: [20:25](#)

The Singapore summit, very dramatic, but it's not in service of a process. It's not even connected down to his own negotiating team and what you need to get progress in these types of issues is very methodical. Negotiation with nuclear experts, with sanctions, experts, with legal experts plowing the ground so that the president is United States can then come in at the appropriate time and reach the agreement and said, here you seem to have two tracks. You've got working level dialogue that is taking place. And then president Trump coming in on his own when he feels like he wants, uh, again, the boost of the meeting with Kim Young Gun. So it's a very kind of discord and process to watch. So I think there's a likelihood that we could end up at some type of freeze for freeze or are modest a step in the fall, which would would be the first step forward that we've seen.

Benjamin Rhodes: [21:11](#)

But, but again, all of the framing for these negotiations has been run with the North Koreans. One, the North Koreans have always wanted the legitimacy that comes from international acceptance and a meeting with the president and states. And don't think for a second that all of those meetings with Trump and all that praise from Trump isn't playing on a loop on North Korean state television to legitimize Kim Youngun's rule. They've always wanted an end to the conflict because that's the predecessor to the u s leaving the Korean Peninsula. So the way that we're talking about these things, putting peace before denuclearization, putting the head of state segments before the working level work is exactly what the North Koreans want and not what I think most of us who've worked in government would think is the way you would go about it.

Ken Dilanian: [21:47](#)

Let's unpack some of that because I think you tackled the big question. Oh, you know, North Korea has by some estimates, 60 nuclear weapons. Their testing suggests they have the capability to deliver a nuclear weapon potentially to the u s mainland. Um, every intelligence individual I've ever talked to about this says they have no intention of giving up their nuclear capability. They view it as essential to regime survival. So why do we persist in this notion that the goal, the ultimate goal is do you denuclearization and isn't this freeze for freeze thing that you're talking about? Isn't that the more reasonable way to go and



isn't the Trump administration coming around to embracing that?

Christopher H: [22:22](#) I don't think that's the more reasonable way to go. I think if you end up with a freeze for freeze, what you have is a defacto nuclear state and a lot of people would say, well that's what we have anyway. So how they would be, how can this be worse? Well, 60 nuclear weapons could do a lot of damage, but you have to ask yourself, I mean you said that everybody, which is a lot of people, but uh, everybody thinks this is about regime survival. I don't think it is. I think this is about creating the circumstance that if there's some pushing and shoving on the Korean Peninsula, the Americans have to think, okay, we're duty bound, we're treaty bound to get involved in that pushing and shoving. But do we want to do that if there's a greater than 0% chance that North Korea has the capability of hitting Los Angeles?

Christopher H: [23:12](#) Well, the answer to that is, boy, if they hit Los Angeles, you know, we'll turn North Korea into a parking lot. Well, is that really a trade off American president wants to make? I mean, we don't need more parking there. Uh, and so I live in Los Angeles too, so I could rethink the Los Angeles thing. But my point is, my point is I think this nuclear arsenal, and by the way, I, the president makes a big deal about the fact they're not testing. Well, I did this from September, I'm sorry, from August, 2005 through two eight they never tested except when the talks have broken apart. So as long as you're talking to them, they probably won't test. So I think the real issue we have to be looking at is can we create a structure by which they understand that a future with nuclear weapons is more difficult than a future without them.

Christopher H: [24:04](#) And I think a lot of this maximum pressure stuff was the way to go combined with opening up a channel, which I think it was also the way to go combined with maybe broadening the diplomatic architecture. I mean, all the talks I heard about China today, I wanted to go out and start digging my bomb shelter. But, uh, but I frankly think if we work with China established some kind of a pattern of cooperation on North Korea, maybe we can get the North Koreans around to the view that somehow this is hurting them rather than helping them. I hope that's true, but so far they've said nothing. This is a triumph of hope over variance. I get that. Yeah.

Jong Kun Choi: [24:43](#) I mean, make no mistake. I'm not here to feed you guys with any fantasy that everything will be right. It's going to be tough and bumpy road ahead as my president mentioned many times.

But thing is the crux of the matter here and on is that we need to raise the structure, as Chris just mentioned so that nobody can walk out of this. In other words, I don't care whether Kim Jones is sincere or not. I don't care whether people in Washington or people in solar is really, really serious or not. But at the end of the, what we want is that we want a sustainable process where North Korea basically works towards the new polarizations. You're not. And also as a citizen of soul, a CTO can more than 10 million population located in the four 40 miles south of the DMZ war. And peace is not a choice because it totally affects daily life or ordinary citizen.

Jong Kun Choi:

[25:42](#)

In other words, people here in Washingtonian, Paris, London can talk about many things in regards to the future of North Korea. What really impacts, uh, us is that we cannot coexist with nuclear North Korea. Uh, my administration has been very clear about it. Any type of deal, just ministrations in south crest very clear that Korea, the Korean Peninsula has to be free of nuclear weapon, free of a nuclear facilities to produce new war, a nuclear weapon, graded material and no nuclear open weapon, uh, stored in, in the Korean Peninsula that would be tested with the end state of the a, the inequality [inaudible] while we needed a clear roadmap and also comprehensive agreement to get to that end state. And also we need to build up the milestones so that nobody can walk out.

Ken Dilanian:

[26:37](#)

Sumi Terry, you've looked at these issues inside the CIA. Is there any dissent in the intelligence community? Against the notion that North Korea is extremely unlikely to ever give up its nuclear weapon. You said never before. Okay. All right.

Sue Mi Terry:

[26:49](#)

Highly unlikely with high confidence, highly unlikely. You don't want to say never but highly unlikely. But I think what we can get to is some sort of an interim deal. Uh, and I think what actually headed in that direction, um, freeze or you know, Yo knows he goes in Hanoi, actually United States was able, we were about to give, make some concessions. We're ready to open liaison offices where we are about, you know, we were okay about giving a piece that creation to North Korea. It just, it all fell apart because North Korea came with such a maximalist demands to have five USC sanctions removed. But I think we're headed in the direction where there's an interim deal and you can debate whether that's, you know, good deal with a substantive deal. But I think North Korea will offer maybe young build facility plus something and we can, from zero sanctions lifted to fall, you NSC sanctions being lifted.

- Sue Mi Terry: [27:37](#) There's something in the middle. And I think that interim deal can be reached. Um, now will we ever get to dinner? Quotation? I have to be honest, like let's, let's realistically speaking for very candid about it. I think the ha the most likely the best optimistic scenario is in which North Korea pretends that they give up. At least they are committed to pretending and we pretend that they are giving it up, you know, so he's kind of like, and that's okay. We can still argue whether this is still a better scenario than not when North Korea is continually working on accelerating the nuclear missile program. But that's the most realistic.
- Jong Kun Choi: [28:13](#) If somebody has to remember today, today's the 20th of July, so sometime next year we have to see what's going to happen. So in other words, if we essentially being a better position, what I mean by better position next year is that we might have some sort of working level discussion ongoing, no tests yet. We'll get to the very clear, uh, picture of what the end state should be. N N remind you that this, the new coalition process is a long term process. You know, we talk about Yangon very easily, but in young gun complex, they up there about 300 to 400 buildings there. I went to the Ohio State University, which is the largest university in the United States. It has about 200 buildings. And remember and imagine tackling it down and taking all the buildings out and, and it's gonna take more than two, three years and only the United States can do it.
- Ken Dilanian: [29:10](#) And just so we understand, I mean this is an educated audience, but I think you know this, but you guys have all had access to classified intelligence. Is there any scenario under which a US military strike could take out all of North Korea's nuclear capability and its ability to reign artillery shells down on soul? No. No. And I've just got to say flat out no. And there's another problem here. So I mean, um, as Mr j very eloquently said, uh, they're very close to North Korea. I mean, to paraphrase Sarah Pailin, you can see North Korea from your bedroom. So if, if you're going to start attacking, uh, North Korea, you better tell South Korea. And if South Korea receives that information, what are they going to do with tens of millions of people? Are they going to keep it quiet from them on the, in the hope that North Korea doesn't react? Or are they going to start getting people into bomb shelters?
- Christopher H: [30:08](#) That's a big task. And then if you're not going to tell South Korea, well there's no more alliance at that point. So this fantasy that we can somehow take out there, you know, quite apart from the question of where, you know, this is the most tunneled society in the world, this fantasy that we can attack all

their sites and, and succeed is just that. So I think people need to get real, and I must say, to pick up on tsunamis point, I think a step by step approach, which I did to the point that John Bolton called me Kim Joan Hill for doing it. But I think a step by step approach is the right approach. I don't think they're gonna fall out of bed one morning and say, let's give up these nuclear weapons today. And what's so interesting about hearing about

Benjamin Rhodes: [30:53](#)

that band is that there's evidence that the Trump administration is considering that my colleague David Sanger, reported that they were, John Bolton pushed back and said the story was false, but there's other Trump himself has, has made comments that make you think that he's willing to do an interim deal. Did Ben talk about that? I think it's because it's the only viable pathway because they're not just going to come out with their hands up and give up every bolt and screw their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons program. So I do think is step by step approach would represent some progress. There's another dynamic here though, that that needs to be brought in because to your point about, um, well they're not going to give it up. And so you know, what's the harm essentially in a seeding to this status. It's also any negotiation like this takes place in a broader national context.

Benjamin Rhodes: [31:37](#)

Right. And there, there are two things that really concerned me about how this has gone forward. One involving nonproliferation and one involving the Asia Pacific region on nonproliferation. The more in which you seem to grant the legitimacy of North Korea, his acceptance of nuclear weapons, and this is why Sue's right. You have to at least act like they're not being, you know, as someone who violated the Nonproliferation Treaty, they're not being given essentially to get out of jail. Free Card is you're loosening the norm against simplification of nuclear weapons in the, in the near term, in the medium and longterm. Frankly, you may be setting off a dynamic in the Asia Pacific region where I'm a Japan and on even pretend [inaudible] republic of Korea, not under this administration or other countries in that neighborhood. We start to say, well, they had their nuclear weapons. We need them now too, and so you have a scenario where you have preparation of of nuclear weapons in the Asia Pacific region that also sends messages globally.

Benjamin Rhodes: [32:32](#)

The second thing that concerns me is the way in which this, I talked about the process within the u s government of making sure everybody's on the same page, which is going to be possible in this negotiation as long as John Bolton is national committee advisor. There's also the coordination, the region

and president Trump rushed this without consulting, I think appropriately with Japan. Uh, you know, personally I didn't see the, the type of consultation that we would've done with Republic of Korea in the long run. What China would like to do in North Korea probably as well, is drive wedges between u s allies between the u s and our allies and between our allies in Asia Pacific, so that essentially they value us credibility less, whether you're Japan or the Republic of Korea, our other treaty allies in that region. And then the Chinese go in and start to pick them off and say, well look, we're here.

Benjamin Rhodes: [33:19](#)

We're a bigger trading partner. Why do you even have these Jewish troops here or why you invested in the u s led international order? And so I worry that the way in which this is being conducted, not as part of a broader engagement strategy in Asia Pacific, not valuing allies, but disparaging allies and raising questions about why do we pay to keep troops in Japan. All of this is playing right into the, the Chinese could not have scripted a better for them to be able to essentially discredit US leadership in Asia Pacific and try to pick off countries, drive wedges between countries. So again, we have to bear in mind it's not just about this bilateral issue between the u s and North Korea or even the trilateral issue bringing in the Republic of Korea. It's also about what is the strategic context and what is this doing to that strategic context. And I think it's, it's playing right into China as longterm.

Christopher H: [34:05](#)

Okay. I'm going to take audience questions. Yeah. Might want to add one more thing. I assume you mentioned a couple of things that we had in play. One piece treaty. This is predicated on the notion that little North Korea sits there worrying every day that the u s is going to invade them. But Gosh, if we gave them a peace treaty, they'd feel so much safer about that. It would be sort of, you know, some wizard of Oz thing where they get this and they go, oh, this is wonderful. We don't need to worry about the u s I submit to you the peace treaty idea is not going to solve this problem unless it comes in the broader and final context of denuclearization. The second thing was the idea that we were going to establish a, a, an interest section in North Korea. And what could be better than that?

Christopher H: [34:49](#)

Well, uh, the Chinese came to me with that back in 2006. I said, okay, we'd love to establish a thing, but I've got to get Washington's permission. I go back. Um, the president said, you gotta be kidding. Condi Rice saw the point, convinced the president, convinced others, even convinced John Rood. John, are you here? Yeah. Uh, so everyone was in favor of telling the North Koreans. We would have a, uh, an interest section in

North Korea. So I meet with the North Koreans in Berlin. I said, Mr. Kim, have I got good news for you? We have agreed to establish an interest section in Pyongyang and you can have intersection in Washington. It'll facilitate. And I didn't even finish my sentence before. Kim said no or uh, words to that effect. He didn't even say thank you very much. Let me check with Pyongyang. He just said no. So be careful about thinking they want something because often they want it until they don't. And you may have lifted heaven and earth to get something for them and then they stare at you like, what are you talking about? So we got to keep our eye on the ball and that is denuclearization and stop thinking that little gestures are going to solve the problem. We need to take

Ken Dilanian: [36:04](#) questions from the audience, but I just want to ask it to me, Terry or Dr j, what about the role of China over the last two years has the Trump administration's policies and the trade war and the, and the larger context, what impact has that played on China's involvement in the North Korea issue?

Jong Kun Choi: [36:19](#) One thing I can confidently share with you, people who stay China has been very productive because 95% of the a trade with, uh, the rest of the world as far as North Korea is concerned happen with, uh, China and China had been very diligent in, in pushing and, and, and sanctioning on North Korea. And, and, uh, North Korea's economy has been shrunk and, and, and hit very hard by sanction itself. And that would mean that this approached North Korea obviously highly driven by the president Trump, but at the same time, the, the, the, uh, regional states in northeast Asia surrounding North Korea has been very much consulting and coordinating with the Washington itself so that it was a very agent ribbon and also, uh, allies and, and, and, and, and neighboring states effort all together. Terrific. Okay. Questions from the audience right here, sort of blue blazer.

Speaker 1: [37:36](#) [inaudible]

Audience Member: [37:37](#) hi, I'm, I this, Oh, I ask the question. I asked on my panel two days ago after the failure of, uh, the UK in the United States to come to Ukraine's aid F in for the Budapest memorandum where you crane gave up the [inaudible] third largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Why would any country ever, ever again want to denuclearize? And I don't think that lesson was lost on a, came young on we'd like to take, can I take a whack at that? I mean, I,

Christopher H:

[38:19](#)

you know, the North Koreans are not integrated thinkers. They don't sort of look at Ukraine as having a particular relevance to them. They might use Ukraine or Libya. That's another favorite example. And they might use those countries as an example of why they can't trust us. So I understand the logic of what you're saying, but I'll ultimately, the fundamental logic is they need to look at their future and do they have a better future with those weapons or without those weapons. And so they've got to look at that. Now I know exactly what you're talking about in Ukraine and that was a great subject for a Ukraine panel, but a on North Korea, I think, uh, we need to make clear to them that we have a lot of options, but we don't have the option to walk away from this. If they open up a, a bank account on the moon, we will send a Ayllon uh, uh, what's his name up to the moon and we'll shut it down there too. I mean, we're going to, uh, we're going to make their lives miserable wherever they are. And I think it takes time. It's not going to be done in this big bang show that the president has. We're going to have to have interim deals in the meantime. But I think ultimately nuclear weapons will not quote, uh, a will not a guarantee. Their survival, what will is a better car.

Benjamin Rhodes:

[39:43](#)

I think the more relevant example is also the JCPO egg. Yeah. Because essentially that's the formula that we're talking about with North Korea. Some version of sanctions relief in exchange for some version of rolling back your nuclear program. And the fact that you had a deal that the entire international community had endorsed in the UN Security Council resolution that had all the major powers that Iran was complying with. And then you had the u s pull out of that because of political reasons, bloating of former boss or whatever it was. Um, you know, the North Koreans are watching that and thinking, well if the u s doesn't abide by international agreements in which countries agree to remove their nuclear Cape of capacity in exchange for sanctions relief, we can't really trust the U S president Trump won't be here forever. So to me, I think that this is a version of the, the JC POA being something that ironically undercuts what they're trying to do with North Korea.

Sue Mi Terry:

[40:35](#)

I mean, I think they go before that. I mean they already have an experience with 1994 we framework, they blamed the Bush administration when they came in to sort of scattering the dead. Don't point them. No, no, I'm just a little foreign service officer. They understand that, you know, we are democracy and we have to change over and things fall apart. But I do think I want to sort of push back like it's a little bit of what you said in in this sense I why can North Korea have both? Um, why can they have a little bit of a economic development and nuclear

weapons and I truly think this is where they're headed. Um, already. As I said, they have sort of an image makeover to imagine a couple more years down this road, the freeze for freeze proposal, those allow North Korea to keep all their nuclear capability.

- Sue Mi Terry: [41:19](#) So why can they not have nuclear weapons? I think this is what Kim wants, have nuclear weapons as some economic development and his cake [inaudible] absolutely have his cake and eat it too. So I don't, I sort of push back against this notion that we're going to somehow able to make him either news or economic development. I think he's trying to go at have both. And I think honestly he's headed in that direction in the future where he would gain international acceptance of North Korea as this possible nuclear weapons power, which is absolutely horrific human rights record. Yeah.
- Christopher H: [41:50](#) Cause we haven't even talked about it. Yes. So question in the back. Can I just say as a fact of political, I mean what u s president can get up and say, well I took a whack at this and I really couldn't solve it so we're just going to have to make them a nuclear state.
- Sue Mi Terry: [42:04](#) We want to say it. Yeah, we won't say it because you say what this was say. They pretend to do it and we pretend to Dalio doing it, man in the back.
- Audience Member: [42:12](#) Hi Lyndon Smith, a former DOD official on counter WMD programs. I'm now with Deloitte. Question for you. Looking ahead in maybe particularly framing it in a step by step framework, which some of you have alluded to, your thoughts on where chemical and biological weapons come in. I personally believe those are too often overlooked in the community, let alone more broadly as to how to plug those in to the broader discussion of Dina Dina colorization. Thanks.
- Christopher H: [42:38](#) Good question. Who wants to take that one? What do we do about those weapons? Kim Bio. Yeah. Yes. Vitally important except when you're talking about nuclear weapons. Hey, any other thoughts? I mean, do those get included in agreement or that we just shouldn't worry? I, I, you know, I do think there's a logic in addressing the nuclear issue, um, uh, on its own. That doesn't mean, I mean, part of the issue here in general too is that there's lots of other behavior. There's Ken Bio, there's uh, North Korea cyber activity. There is North Korea's human rights record. So we have a lot of fish to fry here. The North Koreans. I do think nuclear proliferation, nuclear weapons, uh, is, you know, obviously a distinct channel. Think we have time for one



more. Can you mention the human rights issue? I told the North Koreans and I think they should be our position that if we make progress on denuclearization and if we get to the point we, we're talking about mutual, uh, diplom diplomatic recognition. We discuss diplomatic recognition on a number of, uh, lanes, one of which is human rights. And we're not looking to set the bar really high, but we're looking for a situation where there human rights starts going in the right direction. So I wouldn't just forget about that issue. I would just bring it up in the context. If we get to that phase where we're normalizing. Last question right here.

- Audience Member: [44:02](#) I don't get lonely. Oh wait. Fairly rich country freedom. Yeah.
- Christopher H: [44:14](#) He's saying why should we care?
- Audience Member: [44:15](#) But yeah, it's a broken country. Communism is always failed. There's nothing you'd want to buy from North Korea.
- Christopher H: [44:23](#) I think it's the part about the nuclear weapon that may be can hit down. I don't want you guys to talk about those. Yeah,
- Audience Member: [44:27](#) no, but we stay strong. We will prevail. And I don't think we should. I think Trump was crazy. He took this midget and he made them into a giant, but he's still a budget
- Speaker 9: [44:42](#) fair point. Who wants to take that one take on the midget question? And this is it. We're wrapping up
- Jong Kun Choi: [44:51](#) the, uh, since I'll be flying about 14, 15 hours back to soul site. Hopefully I can make up a comment. Specialty. The gentleman, the race. Why? Uh, why would Kim, Joanne keep up? Uh, my sincere question is, I really do not know because who's know, who knows what's going to happen in the future? But I that question keep firth very important task. Go head. You know those out took the question and reframe it and raise it with a, another question that what can we do to make sure that Kim Jong keeps up because that's what diplomates and and strategic thinkers do. We cannot let this happen. Let it loose. I'm not going to, uh, comment on anything about the past, uh, out ministration post with North Korea. But what happened was if we are not, we think if, if we're not doing anything constructive about North Korea, the North Korea, whoo, nurture their nuclear program, incubated and increased it while, as you care more about it, they would, uh, do bad things about human rights in their, in their country. Thank you all

Speaker 9: [46:09](#) very much. Thanks to the panelists. Thanks to the ask

Speaker 1: [46:11](#) security for him.

Speaker 9: [46:17](#) Please remain seated as we're going to turn around the stage very quickly and begin the next session.

Speaker 1: [46:23](#) Okay.