

## The President's News Conference With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea

October 16, 2015

*President Obama.* Please be seated. *Anmyong haseyo.* [Laughter] Good afternoon.

Last year in Seoul, President Park welcomed me to the Blue House. Today it's a pleasure to welcome her back to the White House. Madam President, during your last visit here, you addressed a joint session of Congress, which is an honor that's reserved for America's closest friends. You noted that the founding document of both of our countries—our Declaration of Independence and your Constitution—enshrine our commitment to our people with the same words, to their “pursuit of happiness.”

For more than six decades, Americans and Koreans have stood shoulder to shoulder in that pursuit. And, Madam President, once again, your time here includes a visit to our Korean War Veterans Memorial. We are very grateful for that. It's a reminder that our people have fought and bled and died for one another's freedom. And I know your gestures mean a great deal to the American people and especially to our proud Korean war veterans.

In recent years, President Park and I have worked together to strengthen our alliance for the future, and today I want to reaffirm that the commitment of the United States to the defense and security of the Republic of Korea will never waver. Our alliance remains a linchpin of peace and security, not just on the Korean Peninsula, but across the region. And so South Korea plays a central role in America's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. And we continued that work today.

As we agreed in Seoul last year, our militaries are investing in shared capabilities, including the technologies and missile defenses that allow our forces to operate together effectively. We want to ensure that our Korean allies have the capabilities that are needed to take on greater responsibility for the defense of the peninsula and the eventual transfer of operational control of the alliance. And we're deter-

mined to maintain our readiness against any threat.

Madam President, I want to commend you and the people of South Korea for the resolve that you displayed this summer following North Korea's reckless actions in the DMZ that wounded two of your soldiers. North Korea was reminded that any provocation or aggression will be met by a strong, united response by South Korea and the United States.

Likewise, Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs have achieved nothing except to deepen North Korea's isolation. Today President Park and I are reaffirming that our nations will never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. We will continue to insist that Pyongyang must abide by its obligations on the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the peninsula in a peaceful manner. And given the horrific treatment of the North Korean people by their Government, our two nations will continue to expose abuses and call for accountability for human rights violations.

At the same time, we do support President Park's efforts to improve relations between South and North Korea. As my administration has shown with Iran and with Cuba, we are also prepared to engage nations with which we've had troubled histories. But Pyongyang needs to understand that it will not achieve the economic development it seeks so long as it clings to nuclear weapons. In contrast, President Park has articulated a better vision—a unified Korea free from the fear of war and nuclear weapons—and that's a vision that we very much support.

Beyond the peninsula, President Park shared her proposal—the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperative—Cooperation Initiative—to build greater cooperation among the countries of the region, and we welcome those efforts. President Park and I met with Prime Minister Abe of Japan last year to address shared challenges. And the trilateral summit that President Park will host this month can be

another step forward in building positive relations between South Korea, Japan, and China.

With respect to trade, we reviewed the first 3 years of our KORUS trade agreement. Bilateral trade is up, including exports of American autos. We do still have work to do, and I conveyed that when the issues of implementing KORUS have arisen, they have been resolved, but we need to resolve them quickly. And President Park discussed the regulatory reforms that she's pursuing. Those are reforms that we welcome.

And finally, I'm pleased that our alliance is increasingly a global one. South Korea is not just an important player in the region, it's increasingly an important player on the world stage. South Korea remains a partner in development, in Afghanistan, a member of the coalition against ISIL, a generous donor of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees. And now we're going even further, expanding our cooperation to some new frontiers.

For example, given the increasing cyber threats to both our nations, including from the D.P.R.K., we're stepping up our efforts to strengthen our cyber defenses and coordinating at the highest levels—the White House and the Blue House—making sure that we're in sync in dealing with that challenge.

In the fight against climate change, we're accelerating our investments in clean energy. Our new civil nuclear agreement reflects our shared commitment to the safe use of nuclear power, which is a low-carbon energy source. And I want to commend South Korea for announcing its post-2020 target to limit carbon emissions through its national cap-and-trade system. As we head into the Paris conference, South Korean leadership can be an example for other nations around the world.

And finally, we're expanding our cooperation to promote health and global development. And having already worked together against Ebola, South Korea has stepped up as a true leader in advancing global health security. Our development agencies will partner to reduce poverty and encourage sustainable development in Southeast Asia. And both our countries are standing together to promote educa-

tion and health for girls around the world: our "Let Girls Learn" campaign and South Korea's Better Life for Girls initiative.

So, Madam President, thank you once again for your partnership, your leadership, and your friendship. I believe that we've shown again today that our unbreakable alliance is not just a foundation for security in the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. More and more, our alliance is helping people around the world in their own pursuit of happiness, the security and prosperity and dignity that they seek for their families and for their nations.

Madam President.

*President Park.* Mr. President, thank you very much for your remarks. I also thank you and the American people for the very warm welcome you've extended to me throughout my visit.

Now, in today's summit, you and I discussed not only the Korea-U.S. alliance, but also issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula, the Northeast Asia, and a shared global agenda. During the past 2½ years, we've been able to creatively resolve such sensitive issues as a conditions-based transition of operational control and the revision, after 42 years, of the nuclear cooperation agreement, which evidences that the Korea-U.S. alliance is stronger than ever.

Our alliance is now moving beyond a security alliance and an economic alliance and evolving into a comprehensive global alliance. The biggest threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is North Korean provocation and advancement of North Korea's nuclear capabilities. And President Obama and I shared recognition in many aspects of this issue.

First, to deter any strategic provocation by the North, Korea and the U.S. will continue to strengthen coordinated efforts with the international community, including China, Russia, and Japan. And to this end, we will try to fully utilize the various regional and multilateral gatherings that are to take place.

Second, with a sense of urgency and firm commitment, we have agreed to strengthen diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem. On the basis of Korea-U.S.-Japan

cooperation, we will strengthen coordination among the other five parties, while Korea and the United States will deepen consultations with other countries, including China.

Third, should North Korea demonstrate a genuine willingness towards denuclearization, we reaffirm that Korea and the U.S., along with the rest of the international community, stand ready to extend cooperative measures to the North.

In our discussions, we looked beyond today, the current—we looked beyond the current pressing issues of the Korean Peninsula and engaged in deeper discussions about the future of the Korean Peninsula. With regard to the changing situation in the Korean Peninsula and in the process of peaceful reunification, we will continue to pursue mutually coordinated policies on North Korea. At the same time, to create conditions conducive to peaceful reunification, we will also deepen high-level strategic consultations between Korea and the U.S.

I would also like to thank President Obama for his support for the Korean Government's ideas on peaceful reunification. Today we adopted a joint statement on North Korea that contains our shared recognition on these related issues.

The Korea-U.S. alliance is the linchpin of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. And there exists a synergy between President Obama's rebalancing of policy in the Asia-Pacific and our Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, or NAPCI. And I would like to thank President Obama for his warm words of welcome and strong support for NAPCI. In late October, the second high-level NAPCI forum will be held in Seoul, and I hope that Korea and the United States will continue to engage in close cooperation in that forum and beyond.

President Obama also recognized Korea's initiative in reviving Korea-Japan-China trilateral talks that had been on hold for the past 3½ years. And he also expressed his high hopes for the Korea-Japan-China summit that will be held in 2 weeks' time.

We also shared the recognition that such meetings may meaningfully contribute to the

improvement of bilateral relations in our region. President Obama affirmed that Korea-U.S. relations and Korea-China relations can be compatible and supported Korea's policies toward China. The recent summit meetings between Korea and China, the U.S. and China, and now Korea and the U.S. have served to build consensus regarding North Korea and its nuclear program, and we believe that this will play a positive role in ensuring peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and throughout Northeast Asia.

In dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem, we will also seek to strengthen cooperation between Korea, U.S., and Japan. I believe that strengthening three-way dialogue between Korea, the U.S., and Japan, and Korea, Japan, and China, will enable us to open new channels for stronger regional cooperation.

Regional peace and stability becomes stronger when countries within the region build closer ties of mutual economic dependency. In this regard, I would like to congratulate President Obama for the successful conclusion of TPP negotiations. Korea and the U.S. already have an FTA with very high standards. And in this respect, I believe that we make natural partners in terms of the TPP. Since TPP negotiations have now been concluded, we will be engaging in closer cooperation with regard to Korea's possible participation in the TPP.

Today's meeting was particularly meaningful in that it provides impetus to our efforts to open new frontiers of cooperation within the Korea-U.S. alliance and strengthens our global partnership. Korea and the United States will focus first on health security, cybersecurity, space and Arctic cooperation, which are gaining the spotlight in this 21st century.

In the realm of space, particularly, we will work to quickly conclude talks on the Korea-U.S. agreement on space cooperation to establish an institutional foundation for such cooperation. In the cyber world too, in order to enhance common response capabilities against cyber attacks, we've agreed to establish a hotline between the White House and the Blue House for cyber cooperation.

On global issues, President Obama and I, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, have agreed to strengthen cooperation on climate change, development cooperation, U.N. peacekeeping operations, nuclear security, humanitarian aid for refugees, violent extremism, and other urgent global issues.

Today's summit served as an opportunity to set forth a clear vision and strategy for the future of the Korea-U.S. alliance. In forging a new Korean Peninsula, a new Northeast Asia, and a new world, I'm confident that the Korea-U.S. alliance will continue to evolve into a comprehensive strategic alliance.

*President Obama.* All right, we're going to take a couple of questions. We'll start with Michelle Kosinski, CNN.

*2016 Presidential Election/Israel/Arab-Israeli Peace Process/North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. On 2016, now that we've seen the Democratic candidates in their first debate and how they did—and maybe you can share some of your thoughts on how much you watched of that—[*laughter*—do you feel like the window now has closed on the Vice President entering the race? And if you don't feel that it's closed, do you feel that he, in a sense, owes it to fellow Democrats to get in very soon?

And also, on Israel, we heard Secretary Kerry say that one of the roots of what's going on there now is frustration over settlement activity. Do you feel like that is a root cause of the violence? And do you feel like President Abbas has a responsibility to condemn attacks and try to stop them?

And, President Park, welcome. As you know, the U.S. has reached this deal now with Iran over its nuclear program. I'm not sure if I should start over—were you able to hear that, President Park? As you know, the U.S. has reached a deal now with Iran over its nuclear program, but how would you feel if that were North Korea? Would you welcome attempts for such a deal, and do you feel like you would

ever trust North Korea to abide by such an agreement? Thank you.

*President Obama.* Good. The Democratic debate was taking place at the same time as some ball games—[*laughter*]—so there was a little bit of clicking back and forth. I'm not going to comment on what Joe is doing or not doing. I think you can direct those questions to my very able Vice President.

The one observation I'll make about the Democratic debate was that those are all some very fine people. They share a belief in an economy that is working for everybody and not just the few. They share a belief that America has to project strength around the world by maintaining the finest military, but also by making sure that we've got a strong economy back home, that we're employing diplomacy and working with other nations wherever possible to solve big problems, like climate change.

So what was interesting to me was the degree to which—although there are some very real differences among the candidates, and I'm sure those will emerge, and they—there may be for each candidate some differences with my administration—overall, they very much—we very much share a vision of an economy that works for everybody and effective pursuit of America's national security through all the tools that are available to us. And I was very impressed with all of them, and I know them personally. And they're good people.

Beyond that, I think it's up to the American people to decide. And so I will have a vote like everybody else, as a citizen. And that ballot is private, and I don't have to share my views about that right now because I think it's important for the American people to make up their own decision.

*Q.* So you don't think it's too late for the Vice President to get in?

*President Obama.* I think that the Vice President, like every other candidate, makes their own decisions about these issues, and they'll have to figure out whether it makes sense for them.

With respect to Israel, obviously, we're very concerned about the outbreak of violence that

initially is centered on Jerusalem, but we always are concerned about the spread of violence elsewhere.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms violence directed against innocent people and believe that Israel has a right to maintain basic law and order and protect its citizens from knife attacks and violence on the streets.

We also believe that it's important for both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Israeli elected officials and President Abbas and other people in positions of power to try to tamp down rhetoric that may feed violence or anger or misunderstanding and try to get all people in Israel and in the West Bank to recognize that this kind of random violence isn't going to result in anything other than more hardship and more insecurity.

And I don't think that it's—I don't think we can wait for all the issues that exist between Israelis and Palestinians to be settled in order for us to try to tamp down the violence right now. I think my views are well known that, over time, the only way that Israel is going to be truly secure and the only way that the Palestinians are going to be able to meet the aspirations of their people is if there are two states living side by side in peace and security.

Those talks, which Secretary Kerry put enormous effort in, and before that, a number of our envoys and Secretary Clinton put enormous effort in, have stalled. And I think it's going to be up to the parties—and we stand ready to assist—to see if they can restart a more constructive relationship. But in the meantime, right now everybody needs to focus on making sure that innocent people aren't being killed.

And even though you didn't ask me the question, I'm just going to horn in on the question that you asked President Park, because we actually discussed Iran and what it could teach us about the situation in North Korea.

These are both countries that have a long history of antagonizing—antagonism towards the United States, but we were prepared to have a serious conversation with the Iranians once they showed that they were serious about the possibility of giving up the pursuit of nuclear weapons. And I suspect President Park

agrees with me here that, at the point where Pyongyang says, "We're interested in seeing relief from sanctions and improved relations, and we are prepared to have a serious conversation about denuclearization," it's—I think it's fair to say we'll be right there at the table.

Now, whether even if they made that gesture, they would then be willing to subject themselves to the kind of rigorous verification regimes that we've set up with Iran, particularly given their past violations of agreements, that's a separate question. But we haven't even gotten to that point yet because there's been no indication on the part of the North Koreans, as there was with the Iranians, that they could foresee a future in which they did not possess or were not pursuing nuclear weapons.

*Q.* So, just to be completely clear, do you agree with Secretary Kerry on the role of settlements leading to the violence, or certainly—

*President Obama.* I don't think that's what Secretary Kerry said. I think what Secretary Kerry said was, is that we have to end the violence, that Israel has a right to prevent its citizens from being subjected to random violence, that all parties have to lower the rhetoric, that the religious sites that are so important to three of the world's major religions inside of Jerusalem need to be respected, and that the status quo that allowed shared worship in and around these spaces needed to be maintained.

And then, I think as an addition to those statements, what Secretary Kerry said was, is that the atmosphere in which there's so much tension and suspicion between Palestinians and Israelis obviously creates the potential for more misunderstanding and triggers. And that's something that has been true now for decades. And if we can make progress there, obviously, it's going to help, but there's not a direct causation here. And what we do need to make sure of is that we're focusing right now on ensuring that innocent people aren't being killed.

*President Park.* With regard to the Iranian agreement and whether it could be applied to the North Korean situation, I think that was what the question was about. Now, if you look at the Iran negotiations and how it was con-

cluded, how you reached an agreement, we saw the United States and the U.S. leadership lead the whole process, and we had other countries that also made concerted efforts. We had international efforts that came together that made this possible, and I think that's a very important lesson that we need to take away from this.

Now, if you look at the North Korean nuclear problem, we do have international cooperation in that area. We have China and Russia that are also all vehemently against North Korean nuclear capabilities. So we do have some international cooperation there. But the difference between Iran and North Korea might be something that President Obama just said; I totally agree with him. What's important here is that you need to have this genuine willingness, on the part of North Korea, that they will give up nuclear capabilities. This might not be a perfect example, but you can take a horse to the trough, but you can't make it drink water, there is a saying.

So it's the same thing here. North Korea has to come to its own conclusion that it is genuinely willing to give up nuclear capabilities and become a full-fledged member of the international society. They need to have that. If they don't have that, then even if we have international concerted efforts, then we won't see a conclusion to these negotiations or talks like we saw with Iran. So that's a big difference that I see here.

*President Obama.* Who do you want to call on, Madam President? They all seem very capable.

*President Obama's Relationship With President Park/South Korea-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* I am—[inaudible]—Daily. Now, the Korean Peninsula trust-building process has been the basis of the Korean Government efforts to improve inter-Korean relations. But despite these efforts, North Korea has really not changed its attitude towards developing nuclear missile capabilities. Now, in the second half of your term in office, how do you plan on steering inter-Korean ties?

And one more. Now, from your visit to China in September, we have been seeing you say that you want to see unification of the Koreas. Do you really think that this will be possible during your term in office?

And I have a question for both of you, actually, finally. In Korea, they say that you see each other often and you start to grow fond of each other. Now, this is your fourth time meeting as a summit meeting, and you also see each other a lot at multilateral talks. So I just want to ask, have you grown closer?

*President Park.* Now, let me ask the last—answer the last question first. Then, yes. The answer is yes for me. So let me continue with my answers to your question.

Now, the Korean Peninsula trust-building process, basically, we have this principle: Now, we will be very sternly and decisively dealing with any provocations, but we're also leaving the door open for a dialogue, and we'll continue to make efforts to build trust. So this is the basic principle, and this is the basic underlying foundation of all our North Korean policies.

In August, there was a North Korean provocation in the demilitarized zone, and we stuck to this principle and applied it to the situation. And we were very firmly responding to the situation, and as a result, we were able to reach the August 25 agreement between the two Koreas.

So we had this vicious cycle where North Korea kept on provoking us, and then we just rewarded it, and it went on and on. And we want to stop this. And we are very clear that our North Korean policy line will not change just because North Korea continues to provoke and threaten us.

Now, the Korean Government will try to smoothly implement the August 25 agreement. And we seek to put into place concrete measures for reconciliation and cooperation in an effort to maintain this momentum for improved inter-Korean ties.

Now, in the past, some people—you might have thought that, well, if you just let things—some things slide, won't you get along better? But if you look at the results of that attitude, they really weren't very good. We need a

principled approach, and this principled approach might make it difficult for the time being—the immediate time being—but that is where improved relationships will actually start. That is my belief.

Now, reunification is something that no one can really predict. Now, in the summit earlier too, we talked about Germany and how the Chancellor Kohl said that German reunification would happen in 10 years' time, but then 3 days later, the Berlin Wall came falling down. So it's really something that's very unpredictable. But no matter when it happens, for us, we need to be prepared. I think that is the most important point for us. So, for any circumstances, we need to be prepared. And we are making efforts in this regard.

Now, we do have reunification preparation committee that are looking into the practical aspects of reunification, how we prepare for it. But reunification is actually not just between South and North Korea, it also affects the greater international community. So we need to also look at our neighboring countries, and we need to create an environment throughout the world where there is consensus that people agree that, yes, reunification is needed and this will be good for the region, for peace and prosperity. And we need to be able to tell our neighbors and the greater world that reunification is a good thing for the region and the world. And we will continue to make efforts in this regard as well.

*President Obama.* I was impressed the first time I met with President Park and just have become more and more impressed with her leadership, the clarity of her vision. And she has not only been a great partner to us, but I think has helped to continue Korea's broader role in global affairs. And so I'm very proud to be working with her, and I think our strong relationship is also a reflection of the extraordinary friendship and close relationship between the American people and the Korean people.

Carol Lee [Wall Street Journal]. There you are.

*Iran/Syria/Russia/2016 Presidential Election/Trans-Pacific Partnership*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. Now that your administration has said that Iran very clearly violated a U.N. Security Council resolution with its recent missile test, what are the consequences for that going to be? Would you be able to accept additional U.S. sanctions against Iran? And given this missile test and their—Iran's actions in Syria, how concerned are you that they're being this aggressive before they've even gotten the billions of dollars that they're supposed to get under the nuclear deal?

And if I could quickly ask you if you could comment on the deal that the U.S. and Russian militaries have reached. Does this mean that things—you—Russia and the U.S. are going to be at cross-purposes in Syria going forward?

And if you could, are you disappointed that Secretary Clinton opposes your trade deal, particularly given that your administration has not released the final draft?

And, President Park, you recently appeared in Beijing with the leaders of Russia and China. What message were you trying to send to the U.S. with that appearance?

*President Obama.* All right, I've got to write these down, Carol. Iran.

*Q.* Iran.

*President Obama.* What was the second one?

*Q.* Russia, military.

*President Obama.* Russian military.

*Q.* Hillary.

*President Obama.* And Hillary and—got them. Whew! [Laughter] All right, let's see if I can take these in turn.

With respect to Iran, Iran has often violated some of the prohibitions surrounding missile testing. And our position with respect to U.N. resolutions, prohibitions, and potential sanctions are unchanged with respect to their—to missile programs.

And this is something that I made very clear during the debate around Iran—the Iran nuclear deal: The Iran nuclear deal solves a specific problem, which is making sure that they don't possess a nuclear weapon. And it's our

best way to do that. It does not fully resolve the wide range of issues where we've got a big difference. And so we are going to have to continue to put pressure on them through the international community and, where we have bilateral channels, through bilateral channels to indicate to them that there are costs to bad behavior in the region and around the world. But we're not going to do that more effectively if they're also on a separate track pursuing a nuclear weapon.

With respect to their actions in Syria, as I've said before, they're just doing more of what they have been doing for the last 5 years, as is Russia. And it's an indication that their basic premise, their basic theory of how to solve Syria has not worked and will not work.

I mean, their preference originally was, we will simply send arms and money to Assad, and he will be able to clamp down on dissent. And when that didn't work, they directed Hizballah to come in and prop them up and sent in some of their own military advisers. And that did not work. And now the Russians have come in, and Iran is going to send more people in. But it's also not going to work because they are trying to support a regime that in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the Syrian people is not legitimate.

And our goal is, even as we double down on going after ISIL, is to continue to cultivate relations with a moderate opposition that can serve as a transition to a new government inside of Syria, and that we continue to have a process of getting the Iranians, the Syrians, and all—the Iranians, the Russians, the Turks, the Gulf countries, and all the other interested parties to sit down and recognize we've got to have a political transition if we want to end the humanitarian crisis and save the structure of a unified Syrian state.

With respect to Russia, the only understanding that we've arrived at is, how do we deconflict in the event that our planes and their planes might be occupying similar space over Syrian skies? So, in that sense, we've arrived at an understanding and some channels for communications. Where we will continue to differ

is in the basic set of principles and strategies we're pursuing inside of Syria.

President Putin believes that if he continues to do what he's been doing over the last 5 years—and that is, prop up the Assad regime—that the problem will be solved. Our belief is, is that we have to go after ISIL and violent extremist groups. But the magnet that the civil war there is serving in bringing in foreign fighters and recruiting people to this extremist cause will only go away if we're able to get a political track and a legitimate, inclusive Government inside of Syria.

So there's no meeting of the minds in terms of strategy. But my hope is, is that as we continue to have these conversations, and as I suspect Russia starts realizing that they're not going to be able to bomb their way to a peaceful situation inside of Syria, that we're—we'll be able to make progress on that front.

And with respect to trade and how Hillary views trade, I'd have you direct questions to her. I mean, here's a general proposition, guys: During the course of what will be a long campaign, I probably won't be commenting on every single utterance or decision that the various candidates make, because I think that it is natural and proper for candidates to run on their own vision and their own platform.

And what's encouraging is the fact that I think everybody on that stage at the debate affirmed what I've said in the past, which is, we agree on 95 percent of stuff and on the basic vision of a country that is building out our middle class, is making sure that everybody who works hard gets a shot, that believes immigration strengthens us rather than weakens us, that believes that people should be treated fairly and equally. The vision of the Democratic Party that I've fought for is one that is broadly shared by all the candidates. There are going to be some areas where they differ at any given point.

Now, I'm happy to make the case once again for the trade agreement itself. And I hope, Carol, you take the time to read it because what you'll see is, is that it meets the promise that I made: the most progressive, highest standard trade agreement that we have ever

put forward that deals with chronic problems like child labor or forced labor and is enforceable; that makes sure we are upping our game in the Asia-Pacific region on the environment and is enforceable; that protects intellectual property that is the wellspring of innovation here in the United States; that makes sure that our businesses are treated fairly when they invest in other countries; that opens up markets.

Keep in mind, we have some of the lowest tariffs in the world already. So we're already seeing goods and services being sold by other countries here, and the countries that are part of TPP have significantly higher tariffs. For us to be able to get those lowered, I'll—just the example of Japan, where they slap on 10-, 20-, 30-, 40-percent taxes on some of our goods and services—for those to come down and, in the case of U.S. manufacturing goods, those tariffs being eliminated completely, that's a big deal.

So I'm sure that we'll continue this debate as we post the actual terms of the agreement and Congress has a chance to review it. I'm pretty confident I'll be able to persuade a whole lot of people, once they see the outlines of the deal, that it's the right thing to do.

And as President Park indicated, there's a geopolitical reason for us doing it as well. We want those of us who already have high standards to make sure everybody else does too. Because that's going to make our businesses more competitive, it's going to put our workers in a better position so that they're not undercut by low wages or forced labor; that their plants don't suddenly shut down because we've got environmental laws that other countries aren't following. It's the right thing to do.

*Q.* Can I ask you, are new U.S. sanctions an option for responding to—

*President Obama.* I think what we'll be doing is we'll review, as we have in the past, any violations of U.N. resolutions, and we'll deal with them much as we have in the past.

So what I've been very clear about from the outset is that, although we are eliminating—or suspending, effectively—sanctions related to the nuclear program, subject to snapback if we see violations there, that sanctions that are related to ballistic missiles, human rights viola-

tions, terrorism, those we will continue to enforce. And that's not just unilateral sanctions on our part. Our expectation is, is that there will be continued international consequences where U.N. resolutions are violated.

*President Park.* Well, that was a very long answer, and I kind of forgot the question that was asked to me. [Laughter]

*President Obama.* This is what happens when I get three or four questions. [Laughter]

*President Park.* Oh, yes. I think the question about my visit to Beijing and what kind of message that I delivered.

Now, I met with President Xi in China, and I also met with the leader—the leaders of Russia. And the North Korean nuclear issue in our region, in Northeast Asia, and even the world, it's a very large threat. And this is something that we need to make concerted efforts to resolve. And I had dialogue on that topic with them, and we also talked about the security threats and also the North Korean nuclear issue from the standpoint that from the South Korean—from the Korean Peninsula and throughout Eurasia, we all want to grow together. And there are so many possibilities there, but right in the middle, blocking our way, is North Korea.

And because of that, the growth potential of the whole of Asia and Europe is being damaged a lot because of North Korea's ambitions in terms of nuclear. So that was my message that I had for the leaders that I met in Beijing. And they agreed with me in terms of my remarks about North Korea's nuclear problems, and we all agreed that we needed to make efforts to resolve this issue.

#### *South Korea-U.S. Relations/South Korea-China Relations/China-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* I am from—[inaudible]. First, I have a question for President Obama. Within the United States, with regard to the Korea-U.S. alliance, there are some people who are concerned that there are some cracks. What do you see? And in this situation, President Park has visited the United States. What is the significance of her visit?

I also have a question for President Park. Now, through this visit, you have said that you would like to open new frontiers of cooperation, and I'd like to hear some details on that, please.

*President Obama.* Actually, I don't see any cracks in the relationship at all. I would argue that the U.S.-R.O.K. relationship is stronger than it's ever been, that the alliance is on firmer footing than it's ever been across the spectrum of issues—military, economic, people-to-people, scientific, development, global issues—that we have excellent relations with the Government. Our communications is strong. Our vision of a continued robust alliance that can deal with any contingency is not just given lip service to, but we invest in on an ongoing basis. Our vision of what we need to do to see improved relations with the D.P.R.K., we have similar outlooks. And so I actually feel very good about what where the relationship between the United States and Korea are.

I think what's interesting—and this might connect to the earlier question that Carol had—is, sometimes there's a perception that if President Park meets with President Xi, that that must cause a problem for us. Well, I—President Xi was in this room, eating my food. [Laughter] And we were toasting and having a lengthy conversation. We want South Korea to have a strong relationship with China, just as we want to have a strong relationship with China. We want to see China's peaceful rise. We want them to be cooperating with us in putting pressure on the D.P.R.K. We want to be working with them to uphold international norms and rules of the road. So there's no contradiction between the Republic of Korea having good relations with us, being a central part of our alliance and having good a relationship—good relations with China.

I think as I communicated to President Park, the only thing that we're going to continue to insist on is that we want China to abide by international norms and rules. And where they fail to do so, we expect the Republic of Korea to speak out on that, just as we do, because we think that both of our countries have benefited from the international norms and

rules that have been in place since the end of World War II. And we don't want to see those rules of the road weakening or some countries taking advantage because they're larger. That's not good for anybody, including South Korea.

You—obviously, given the size of China right there on your doorstep, if they're able to act with impunity and ignore rules whenever they please, that's not going to be good for you, whether that's on economic issues or security issues.

So again, I think there we have a shared interest. And my hope is, is that as a consequence of the outreach that President Park has done, the outreach we do, the interactions that we have with Japan and resolving some of the historical challenges that exist there, that we can create in Northeast Asia the kind of cooperative, forward-looking relationship among all countries that will be good for our children and our grandchildren.

*President Park.* With the United States, we are looking to open new frontiers in cooperation and new horizons for cooperation as well. We're looking at climate change, infectious diseases, space exploration. There are some—those are just some of the topics that we talked about. These are global issues too. And in order to effectively respond to the needs with regard to these issues, I believe that we need a very close cooperation between Korea and the United States.

Now, these issues need our attention in terms of cutting-edge technologies and new industries that we need to develop, and only then will we be able to approach these issues and resolve them effectively. And in that respect, I think that we need to engage in cooperation to maybe develop—jointly develop technology in these areas. For example, we could have joint projects in smart grids or clean energy projects. And in the area of space, we have agreed to work together to quickly conclude a Korea-U.S. agreement for cooperation in space.

So, through such efforts, we have an economic alliance between Korea and the U.S. that was forged through the KORUS FTA. And we want to turn this into a high-value-added alliance that's ready for the future.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

of Russia; and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. President Park referred to former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. President Park spoke in Korean, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Joint Statement by President Obama and President Park Geun-hye of South Korea on North Korea

*October 16, 2015*

On October 16, 2015, President Barack Obama of the United States of America and President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea committed to the following.

The United States-Republic of Korea alliance remains committed to countering the threat to peace and security posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs as well as other provocations. We will maintain our robust deterrence posture and continue to modernize our alliance and enhance our close collaboration to better respond to all forms of North Korean provocations.

The United States and the Republic of Korea share deep concern about the continued advancement of North Korea's UN-proscribed nuclear and missile capabilities and commit to address the North Korean nuclear problem with utmost urgency and determination.

We reaffirm our commitment to our common goal, shared by the international community, to achieve the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea in a peaceful manner. North Korea's continuing development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs is an ongoing violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and is contrary to North Korea's commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We strongly urge North Korea to immediately and fully comply with its international obligations and commitments.

We oppose any actions by North Korea that raise tensions or violate UN Security Council resolutions. In particular, if North Korea carries out a launch using ballistic missile technol-

ogy or a nuclear test, it will face consequences, including seeking further significant measures by the UN Security Council. In this regard, we are committed to working with the international community to ensure the effective and transparent implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions, including sanctions measures, concerning North Korea, and we encourage all states to exercise strict vigilance against North Korea's prohibited activities.

The United States and the Republic of Korea maintain no hostile policy towards North Korea and remain open to dialogue with North Korea to achieve our shared goal of denuclearization. Recognizing the common interests of our Six-Party Talks partners in the denuclearization of North Korea, we will continue to strengthen our coordination with China and the other parties in order to bring North Korea, which has refused all offers of denuclearization dialogue, back to credible and meaningful talks as soon as possible.

We reaffirm that we will never accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state, and that its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is incompatible with its economic development goals. Along with the rest of the international community, we stand ready to offer a brighter future to North Korea, if North Korea demonstrates a genuine willingness to completely abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and agrees to abide by its international obligations and commitments.

The United States appreciates President Park's tireless efforts to improve inter-Korean relations, including through repeated