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SPEAKER
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INTRODUCTION AND MODERATOR
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Mark Lippert: All right. We’re at the very last session, but we saved the absolute best for last. We have a keynote address, and then a moderated Q&A. And we’re really honored that Undersecretary John Rood would be here with us today. I’m going to give a brief introduction, but please do check out his biography.

It is an unbelievably impressive biography. Essentially, to boil it down, 30 years – three decades public and private sector experience, highlighted by, of course, his current position, undersecretary of defense for policy, which as someone who worked in the Pentagon I can attest is one of the most essential and critical positions, covering an array of global responsibilities. Everything from cyber, to space, to every single region on the world. He probably never sleeps. And prior to that, the good news is that he has a long, deep foundation on which to draw. He was assistant secretary of state, acting undersecretary at State, senior director at the White House for – at the NSC for counterproliferation policy. Was – previous experience at the Pentagon, an analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency and, just for good measure, a staff member of the United States Senate. So he’s really covered almost every single institution here – national security institution in Washington, D.C. And it’s a real tribute.

And I should just add to, finally, his private sector experience is equally as impressive. Vice president at Raytheon, senior vice president at Lockheed and Martin. And I would be remiss if before he came up to the stage, a sun devil at heart, a B.S. from Arizona State in economics. So without further ado, Mr. Undersecretary, please, the podium is yours, the floor is yours. Thank you.

John C. Rood: Well, first of all, Ambassador Lippert, thank you so much for that nice introduction. I wish I could video tape that a little bit, send a clip to my mother. But anyways, it’s terrific to here at CSIS and to spend some time with you in the great institution, in a gorgeous facility that we’re privileged to get to use here today.

So what I thought I would do is say a couple words. This is a highly dynamic time on the Korean Peninsula and certainly in Asia. Asia’s been a dynamic place for quite some time, as you know. But I think in particular if we were five years ago we would have pointed to this time, and a number of the things that are occurring there in the Korean Peninsula, and we would have said, no, that won’t happen. We won’t have summit meetings between Chairman Kim Jong-un and the president of the United States. Kim Jong-un will not be traveling to places like Singapore, and Hanoi for these sessions. But here we are. We’re engaged in those activities. And we also, I think, would have painted a slightly different picture about the security situation in the area. So it’s a real great pleasure for me to get to talk about those.

One of the places that I also wanted to thank, in addition to CSIS, is of course JoongAng Ilbo, who is also co-hosting this event. And I really appreciate being invited to speak.

The relationship that we have between the United States and the Republic of Korea just remains critically important. And I really commend you for having a
conference to talk about those activities. I intend today to talk on that ROK-U.S. alliance, first touching briefly on where we came from and then, secondly, on a discussion of where we are going to. The trajectory of that relationship is something we talk a lot about within the Defense Department. Some of the discussions I had just today in the Pentagon touch on this. And I’ll discuss also the importance of trilateral cooperation between the ROK, Japan, and the United States. And then finally, I’ll talk about U.S. efforts regarding the DPRK.

So with that, let’s start, number one, with the trajectory of U.S.-ROK relations. We’re very proud of that alliance that our two countries have forged. And it is a relationship that has really matured over time. With the ROK we have the Combined Forces Command, or CFC, which is the only truly combined command of its kind in the world. And with it, we stand ready to meet any immediate challenge, most importantly, together. In addition, we have the United Nations Command, a ready-made coalition of partners dedicated to the defense of the ROK. These U.N. Command member states understand the global importance of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and that’s why they support this effort.

Of course, our partnership was born in conflict and has seen many crises. But through it all, we’ve always looked to the future, which is why gatherings such as this are so important where we can talk about the future of that alliance. Support for the U.S.-ROK alliance, I would say, is bipartisan. It runs deep and it’s something which we’ve got a very firm foundation upon which to build.

Now, you may say, well, that’s rather unremarkable, John. But in Washington at the moment, I would say, well, there’s a diminishing number of things in which there is strong bipartisan support and a willingness to work together to build on those, and the U.S.-ROK alliance is certainly one of those.

Within the Defense Department, we strive for the military-to-military relationship to remain strong and we believe that military-to-military relationships should be insulated to the extent we can from the political forces that shape both of our democracies and, at times, produce some turbulence and ups and downs.

We often refer to the military-to-military relationship as the ballast in a strong relationship – ballast, of course, keeping a ship at sea from becoming too unstable. Many of you here are familiar with the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy that the United States has put out, as well as our drive for a free and open Indo-Pacific region, and we understand that we’re in an era of great power competition and achieving our goals requires a vision to compete, deter, and win against revisionist competitors such as Russia and China.

Our free and open Indo-Pacific vision is inclusive and promotes widely-shared principles that underpin the current order and benefit all countries. This includes respect for national sovereignty, a fair and reciprocal trade, and the rule of law. This vision is not shared by all. Therefore, achieving our vision requires
combining a more lethal joint force with a more robust constellation of partners and allies.

Strengthening regional alliances for strategic advantage will help deter bad behavior and keep the peace. It’s a good deal for all of us. The U.S.-ROK alliance is central to our efforts to accomplish that. Since 1953, the ROK has gone from a net security recipient to a net security exporter and the ROK is a defense partner that is trusted across the region, and as we look beyond northeast Asia to the new challenges of the future we expect South Korea to continue to be a source of stability and prosperity.

I’d like to briefly highlight some of the steps the U.S. and ROK are taking to deepen that defense relationship. Of course, for those that aren’t familiar, we have 28,500 American servicemembers stationed in the ROK. They and their families live and work there. Together with our Korean allies we recently opened the U.S. Army garrison at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, which is now America’s largest overseas military facility.

We’ve made progress to expedite the fulfillment of the mutually agreed upon conditions to transfer wartime operational control from the United States to the ROK. Now, if you pause to think about that for a moment, the effort is to transfer operational control in a crisis, in war, with one of the largest armies in the world from the United States to our Korean partners.

That’s a very substantial activity where our combined command will be essential to execute that, and in the Defense Department one of the things I love about working there, these are not theoretical things. These are things that we want to be able to exercise and do under the most stressing situations, and lives depend on the success of that endeavor and we take it incredibly seriously, as do our South Korean allies.

To ensure that that transition strengthens the alliance, we’ve jointly agreed to a conditions-based plan which includes the ROK acquisition of critical capabilities to lead that combined defense. The ROK has been in the top 20 for U.S. foreign military sales for the last two decades, totaling more than $19 billion just in the last 10 years.

Last year, the ROK approved an 8.2 percent increase in their defense spending, mirroring the increase in host nation support that the ROK provided to the United States. This allows the ROK to make further advancements in defense modernization to prepare for that operational wartime control being transitioned to its forces.

In preparation for that OPCON transition, the U.S. continues to encourage the ROK to make further investments, particularly in the ability to counter North Korea’s missile and nuclear threats. We’re encouraged by what we see in the ROK stepping up as a regional leader, as demonstrated by their new Southern Policy. This November, South Korea will also host the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit and the inaugural Korea-Mekong Summit in Busan.
These are both important milestones in its relations with ASEAN and Mekong countries.

So let me talk about the second thing that I wanted to address, which is ROK-Japan-U.S. trilateral cooperation. Looking beyond the Korean Peninsula, there are many challenges in the Indo-Pacific that are critical to all three of those countries. If you just looked at a map and review the current security environment in the Indo-Pacific, Japan and Korea should be mutual partners. They have shared values. They’ve committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific based on a rules-based international order. Both understand the long-term risks of a rising China. Both understand the importance of standing up for international norms on intellectual property, on prevention of cyber theft, on the concerns that we have about China aggressively and opaquely modernizing their military while also trying to change the geopolitical status through coercive diplomacy. Both understand a resurgent Russia has set its sights on the Far East. And both understand that stability enabled the region to thrive and achieve remarkable results. And both are concerned about authoritarian states challenging that international rules-based order.

Now, these things have been well understood and discussed in our trilateral meetings, which are continuing at both the secretary level, assistant secretary level, and others, and we’re very pleased to see those. And we’re also pleased to see Korea and Japan cooperating to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions on the DPRK.

But let’s look beyond Northeast Asia, and this trilateral defense relationship can play an important role in some other areas like countering terrorism and violent extremism, preventing piracy in the Indian Ocean, improving health security in Southeast Asia and Africa through the Global Health Security Agenda, promoting human rights, promoting economic development, assisting the victims of conflict and disaster worldwide. The ROK and Japan are linchpins in the region of stability and security. Taken together, these two great allies have so much potential for what they can do, both with us in the United States but also together. There’s a lot more areas of convergence than divergence.

Now, I’m well aware – and I meet with both countries and I read the press stories, so I’m aware of the strains in that relationship. But the United States, I would say, strongly believes that the integrity of our mutual defense and security ties must persist despite frictions in other areas of the ROK-Japan relationship. Which is why we encourage the ROK to recommit to the General Security of Military Information Agreement, or GSOMIA, and to renew that agreement. We call on both countries to participate in a meaningful dialogue to address their differences.

So now that I’ve discussed some of those challenges that we face, let’s talk about where we have common goals with respect to North Korea and theme three. As President Trump and Secretary Pompeo have both said publicly, the United States remains ready to take simultaneous and parallel actions on all commitments that Chairman Kim and President Trump have agreed to at the
Singapore summit. This includes the complete, final, and fully verified
denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as agreed to by Chairman Kim in
Singapore, as well as transforming the U.S.-DPRK relationship, establishing a
lasting and viable peace on the Korean Peninsula, and making progress on the
recovery of U.S. servicemembers’ remains from the Korean War. We also look
forward to helping to build a bright economic future for the North Korean
People.

I’ll briefly discuss how DOD supports efforts to denuclearize the peninsula
through diplomatic means. And of course, our State Department takes the lead
on that diplomacy here in the United States; we play a supporting role at the
Defense Department.

First, the United States and ROK modified our training program for military
training in a manner that ensures readiness and provides for the security and
safety of our forward-deployed servicemembers while still supporting those
diplomatic goals. We modified the size, scope, volume, the messaging, and the
timing of our training with a focus on ensuring our capability to ensure mission-
essential tasks remains unchanged. General Abrams and General Park – who is
the ROK’s chairman and their equivalent of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who I had
the pleasure to see earlier today at Joint Base Henderson – he agrees, along with
General Abrams, to having a strong working relationship, and we’ve designed
our training programs together, achieving the goal of a high readiness level.

Secondly, we’re working closely with our partners around the world to sustain
economic pressure on the DPRK through the implementation and enforcement of
is crucial to our efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the DPRK’s U.N.-
prohibited WMD and missile programs. The DPRK continues to violate
sanctions to support its illicit WMD and ballistic missile programs, things like
U.N.-prohibited ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum and other goods are
occurring, allowing the DPRK to receive fuel and provide hard currency earnings
for the regime. North Korean laborers overseas are also a significant source of
revenue for this regime.

As you know, U.N. Security Council resolutions limit North Korea to importing
500,000 barrels of refined petroleum per year and ban completely its export of
coal and other lucrative commodities. Through the enforcement coordination
cell in Yokosuka, Japan, the United States is working side by side with allies and
partners to include the ROK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France, and the
United Kingdom to enforce U.N. sanctions against North Korea.

China and Russia are also united in the need for North Korea to refrain from
provocations and return to negotiations. We’ve encouraged China to do more to
disrupt and end the DPRK’s illicit activities, and I would say this is one of the
areas that we would call on China to do more than they are presently doing.

The third thing we’ve done is we’ve taken steps to work with both the DPRK and
South Korea to recover the remains of U.S. and Allied servicemembers from the
Korean War. I would say the Defense POW/MIA agency reports to me in the United States, and it’s an area – I don’t think it’s an overstatement to describe it that we really regard it as a sacred trust and duty of ours, and we simply have an obligation to return to families the remains of their loved ones in an honorable fashion. There are still 5,300 U.S. servicemembers who are unaccounted for in North Korea, and DPAA, as you know, after the Singapore Summit, received 55 boxes of remains of U.S. servicemembers from the DPRK. I’m happy to say that, since that time, at the world’s largest forensic laboratory in Hawaii, we’ve done extensive examination of these remains and have so far identified 28 U.S. servicemembers, and we expect to identify many more from those remains. So we’re making good progress.

And if you don’t understand the impact of that, I’d just encourage you to look at some of the publicly available information, and having met with the families and those whose fathers were killed in the conflict, or husbands, it’s just something that will sustain you about the good things our country does and the lengths our people will go to to bring this kind of closure for our servicemembers.

So we remain engaged in this. One of the areas that the inter-Korea Comprehensive Military Agreement provided is for the ROK army and North Korea’s people’s army to demine an area in the DMZ where we have conducted remains recovery in the spring. We look forward to more cooperation on this issue.

The KPA, unfortunately, ceased communication with us in the United States last year after some very good cooperation. I want to emphasize we in the United States remain very open to that kind of cooperation. We really hope that we can handle that separate as a political issue from others. We don’t regard this as a political issue at all; it’s a humanitarian issue. But I will say it’s transformative at times to the relationship. We are building a different relationship between the United States and Vietnam, and the thing that allowed us to do that is the excellent cooperation we had for years and years on the recovery of U.S. servicemembers’ remains in Vietnam.

So in conclusion, let me just say – tie some of these various themes together. The United States does have many allies and many partners. But when we cultivate those relationships, we always begin with looking, do we have shared values? Do we believe in democracy? Do we believe in the value of human rights? Do we believe in a world of free sharing of ideas? Do we believe in one in which we respect the dignity of individual humans and support freedom? And I think there the alliances that most turn out to be the center of gravity have that in common. And we have that in common with the ROK. The Republic of Korea is this tremendously thriving democracy. At times, you know, noisy. At times we have frictions. At times there are differences of opinion, but I will say we are very proud of the work that has been done there in that alliance relationship.

And we have a strong ally who in the last decade has become a trusted friend all over the Asia Pacific, contributing to its own defense while taking on the
responsibility to eventually lead it. Our economic ties are very resilient. Our people-to-people ties are strong. Our common values drive us to be better. And I will say there’s a growing cultural tie, as a father of a young daughter who is in college and very interested in Korean pop culture and can recite from heart the names of many famous Korean stars. I’ve learned a lot about Korean culture from my daughter, I will say. I think there’s a growing tie between our peoples.

And so as a friend, let me just reiterate that in the military-to-military area our ties are very strong. We take that very seriously. The U.S.-ROK alliance is a bedrock one. And we know that wherever we go, we go together. As our two militaries say, Katchi Kapshida. Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

Mark Lippert: OK, thanks. Right. All right, John, thanks – or, Mr. Secretary. I’m sorry.

John C. Rood: Please, call me John.

Mark Lippert: John. Thanks for a great overview of all – really a great synopsis of what the Department of Defense and what the administration is doing. Sometimes a lot of those issues don’t get the attention they deserve. I’ll just attest to what you said to the remains repatriation. Having worked on that with Vietnam, it was transformative. So I very much appreciate your comments of the potential value there.

If I may, I’d like to just get into a quick Q&A for about 10-15 minutes, and cover the landscape, the waterfront of the issues that we face before us. So why don’t I just start with your very, very good comments about trying to keep the military relationship insulated, largely, from some of the political ups and downs that occur. You talked about the strength of the alliance on the military-to-military side. Yet, there’s a couple of issues that are out there that pose potential irritants. And maybe go through a couple of them.

First, we’ve got the exercise issue. Second, we have the OPCON transition issue, where some seems more interested in a timeline, others really feel strongly about the conditions-based element of it. And finally, what I would say is, you’ve got the burden-sharing agreement that, as you pointed out, the Koreans have the largest overseas military base, big defense increases, large FMS sales. How does that square? So if you could take those in turn, first on the exercises, then on OPCON, and then burden sharing. Get to some of the mil-to-mil relationship issues.

John C. Rood: Sure. Well, one of the things that has been a core strength of ours in the United States military is our ability to work with allies in a seamless way. One of the big advantages we have on the battlefield is that U.S. formations don’t fight independently from allied formations. We derive great strength from our ability to work together. And that is very certainly true with the ROK. So where exercises play a key role is this is a form of training. And it’s one of the key ways that we train. And one of the big advantages we have is when you talk to U.S. service members when they are engaged in combat for the first time, they
talk about the quality of the training they received, and how the live environment was very similar to that which they trained for.

And because of that capability to train and work at scale with our partners, it gives us an edge. And it’s one of the things that we’re keen to preserve. So with the Republic of Korea, it’s one of the areas where our militaries over the years have trained together, have worked together, conversed together, studied together. And it makes us a much more cohesive force. And the goal is to have an effective fighting force with the idea you hopefully never use it in combat against the adversary, that they see the credibility of your capability. And so for us, those – that type of training with the ROK is very important, and it’s very important to see the growth in our combined capabilities to support transition of operational control to the ROK. So to transition to that point, one of the ways that you measure it is not talking about it but actually exercising it – training together to validate that you can do that.

Now, you might say, well, gee, we can put these things down together. We can have discussions/exchanges where we agree on those things. But the reality that we find that makes us, again, such a capable military force is we don’t settle for that; we go out and test these things in the real world. And our training environments are set up to determine, can our formations, can our fleets, can our aircraft, the air forces operate in a certain way? And this is deadly serious. I mean, it makes all the difference in real combat to winning and losing.

And you know, as one of my former bosses used to say, there’s no God-given right to success on the battlefield that has been provided to America. If we don’t take this very seriously, deadly seriously, and train for it and plan for it, and indeed go out with our partners and do it to validate that we have those capabilities, we won’t have it.

And so that’s where we take very much a conditions-based approach, because while these are political matters, these are also terribly important to the safety and security of our people. And again, part of what keeps the peace and provides that room for diplomacy is having strong military capabilities, having an integrated force with our Korean partners such that we can provide stability. And I think it’s proven to be very successful on the peninsula. Certainly, reasonable people can differ about individual parts of the wartime operational control. But I think the principle that until certain capabilities are retained we want to take a conditions-based approach, we hold ourselves to that standard in the United States. This is not something unique that we would offer to others. And so, you know, as we see the growth – and the Korean forces continue to make strides in that regard – we remain very focused on a conditions-based transition.

Mark Lippert: So before you get to the burden-sharing, just to summarize a bit on your – on the exercises, the key is not to turn them into a political matter or political bargaining chip or anything like that; it’s the exercises are for their own right to ensure deterrence and defense are maintained on the peninsula. And the second, just to summarize, is that on OPCON the time will be dictated by basically fulfilling the
conditions, as the two sides had previously agreed that’s the position. Am I – am I fair on those two points there?

John C. Rood: Yes. Military training is to produce readiness, and readiness to perform in combat if necessary, or certainly for deterrence functions. And so we see our training as directly related to that, and not a political issue but a military readiness issue.

Mark Lippert: Now, on the burden-sharing, you’ve got – there’s been a lot of discussion about this in the Korean press. As you’ve pointed out, there have been increases before, contributions in terms of FMS and defense budgets. What’s the administration’s approach on this? And where are we headed with this burden-sharing agreement?

John C. Rood: Well, we’ve had a burden-sharing agreement with the Republic of Korea for some time now, and the U.S. position is that we just seek a fair and equitable distribution of the burdens. And that’s something that our Korean partners are very engaged with us on. I think we’ve made good progress over the last couple of years in this area.

Last year, for instance, we had a negotiation that concluded in a new version of that agreement. Our negotiators are sitting down again, beginning that – well, not beginning; they’re some distance into that discussion. And that dialogue will continue, I expect, for some months to come.

But I think our basic point being the ROK has developed substantially as an economy, substantially as a military fighting force, and we’ve matured our agreement over time. And this is just an area that we’re going to try to take to the next level and stay engaged with them so that we have fair and equitable burden-sharing.

Mark Lippert: Are you worried at all about – you know, you have a lot of talk in the press – and, obviously, you don’t want to negotiate against yourself in public – but there seems to be a large gap if you believe the press and not a lot of time this year to solve this. How do you feel about getting to a conclusion that strengthens the alliance and dovetails with your very good speech in terms of the goals it outlines?

John C. Rood: Well, time is always a challenge on these things because one of the great things that we have with the ROK as a partner is there is a serious legal culture there. There is a serious commitment that we know if the ROK government makes a commitment they will follow through on that. And these are at times complex issues, and so they are being taken seriously by our ally. We have a similar culture here, as you know, and we’re taking them very seriously too. So I do worry at times about the amount of work required and the time remaining, but the reality is we’ve always found a way. (Laughs.) We’ve always found a way to go together in these negotiations every time that we’ve done them.
And so the fundamentals are there in the relationship. You start with strong fundamentals. You start with a strong desire to work together and a need to work together. We need this alliance for the future. We need it to be vital and robust. And so you start with all those things, if you focus on the individual issues in a – in a given negotiation, I mean, you can see the difficulty. But when I start by looking at it from the macro point of view, we’ve always found a way to finish in time. And with good – the kind of good backing that we have from both governments, I remain confident that we’ll get to a good agreement.

Mark Lippert: OK, no, thanks for that, Mr. Secretary. I really appreciate it.

Let me – let me dovetail – let me go to another subject that dovetails with what we’ve been talking about. Obviously, one of the key goals of the alliance – the deterrence, the defense you’ve talked about – is North Korea, the North Korean threat. Earlier today, on the denuclearization subject, former National Security Adviser Ambassador Bolton said, quote, “Under current circumstances, Kim Jong-un will never give up nuclear weapons voluntarily.” And he also added that time works against those, you know, basically who take more or less a relaxed attitude. Can you talk about this – Mr. Bolton’s quote and the time pressure we may or may not be under in terms of denuclearization?

John C. Rood: Well, I guess my answer would be, whether North Korea will give up its nuclear weapons in the end, that’s the very question we’re seeking to answer with the diplomacy that the president is leading. He has – our president has engaged in very direct and I would say he’s taken some bold risks here and tried to meet directly with Kim Jong-un, tried to work not a small agreement but a large agreement here to address this issue and to bring peace and stability to the Korean Peninsula in a more enduring way. We’ve had largely peace and stability there for some time, but it would be nice to get to a more durable peace regime.

And so that – what I would say in response to my colleague John Bolton is that’s the very question we’re seeking to answer with the diplomacy. And time will tell whether it will be successful, but I do think we are very committed to that. The president is very committed to that diplomacy. Again, it’s led by the State Department. We play a supporting role, and one of our – at the Defense Department. But one of our key roles in that is to provide for the military capability and deterrence and the ability to defend the United States and our allies to allow time for diplomacy, to give time and space for the secretary of state and the president to hopefully conclude an agreement that would call for the full, final, and complete denuclearization of the North Korean arsenal.

And so I think the alternative, not trying, wouldn’t be a sound alternative, frankly speaking. I think it is in our interest to seek a diplomatic solution, and we’re going to give it a very strong push and see what we can do.

Mark Lippert: Thanks, Mr. Secretary. We’re almost out of time. We got two minutes left. And you know, these – I’m going to try to squeeze two questions in, all of which the complexities, you know, warrant two minutes. I’m joking.
First, just quickly, you mentioned it in your speech, ROK-Japan, GSOMIA. You know, should the U.S. take an active role in trying to mitigate or facilitate, basically, negotiations or a more positive outcome? You mentioned that the Koreans should come back into GSOMIA or at least commit to it; they haven’t left if, I guess, formally until November. And what should the Japanese do? So a couple of – just a couple quick questions there are, you know, what should the U.S. role be? What should the Koreans do? What should the Japanese do?

John C. Rood: I think the U.S. role should be to encourage the two parties to work out their differences. Now, at times over the years there have been frictions between Korean and Japan. We’re certain in a phase now that’s higher than we’ve had in recent years.

So what should be the U.S. role? I think, one, encouraging our true friends and allies here to try to work out some of the issues. These are not easy things, I know, having heard from both parties, to resolve. But that being said, it’s worth it. And we have to, I think, play the role at times of being a third part that’s pointing to the bigger picture, that’s pointing to some of the shared concerns, and encouraging our true friends. I don’t use that word lightly. We have deep relationships with both countries. And pointing out it’s very much in their interest to have a relationship – both a bilateral relationship and, indeed, a trilateral relationship which is very healthy and robust.

So I do think we need to be more active in encouraging both parties to work though those things. Ultimately, we can’t do it for them in the United States. Korea and Japan need to address those. And when they point out the role of their parliaments, the role of their courts, these are all very valid things. And we respect, certainly I do, the co-equal branch that our parliaments are, and our governments, and the role of the courts. But governments do have an awful lot that they can do. And while those are challenges, they’re not insurmountable ones. And I think that’s where I believe we and the United States need to be playing a bigger role to encourage the parties.

Mark Lippert: OK. Last question. And it comes – I would be remiss if I didn’t tap on your nonproliferation and arms control credentials here. Two quick – two sort of subparts, two sort of questions here. First, INF. What about U.S. plans to put new weapons in Asia? Anything applicable to the Korean Peninsula, Japan that you want to talk about here? And, second, one step up there’s been some talk of return of nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula. Any comment on either one of those issues, or both, please?

John C. Rood: Well, on the second one, we have no current plans to return nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula. Those were withdrawn a couple of decades ago, and that’s not under discussion today.

Mark Lippert: Advisable at all?

John C. Rood: I’m not advising that. The – with respect to the INF Treaty, just – for those that didn’t follow that carefully, just the 30-second recap. Why did the United States
leave the INF Treaty? Well, because we found Russia was violating it in a way that caused a material breach. The short summary of the treaty is that it prohibited having, developing, and fielding intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Russia developed and fielded intermediate-range nuclear missiles. And after more than five years of trying to persuade Russia to come into compliance with the treaty we were unsuccessful. And so at some point, when you’re in essentially a contract among nations, as treaties have been described, with another party with is violating it, you can’t simply stay in that agreement indefinitely. And so we are no longer in the United States a party to the INF Treaty.

Now, what that does for us is we have started development activities on intermediate-range missiles. They’re very early in the research and development phase. We’re exploring what our possibilities are. And so we don’t have any specific plans at this time for deployments anywhere. We’re still, as I say, exploring what different alternatives can be. But clearly there is – these are weapons with military utility. And we’re looking at where we could take advantage of that.

Mark Lippert: And final follow up is any plans to engage the Chinese on this issue?

John C. Rood: Well, we have had discussions with them, of course, on this issue. Now, China has fielded thousands of intermediate-range missiles of their own. And so they clearly see the military value. We’re happy to engage with them in this area, but so far China has not shown a lot of interest in arms control matters in the PRC government.

Mark Lippert: OK. We have to leave it there. There’s a whole host of other issues we’d love to get through with you, but time is of the essence. You’ve got a big job to do. We don’t want to keep you from the work you – the good work you’ve done on behalf of the U.S. government. So just a big round of applause. And thank you, Mr. Secretary.

(END)