



## **Back to Basics**

**A Conference Report from the  
US-ROK-Japan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue**

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## **Pacific Forum CSIS**

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## **Key Findings/Recommendations**

The Pacific Forum CSIS, with the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, and with support from the Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (PASCC/DTRA), held a US-ROK-Japan Extended Deterrence Trilateral Dialogue on Aug. 29-30, 2016. Forty-one US, ROK, and Japanese experts, officials, military officers, and observers, along with 15 Pacific Forum Young Leaders, attended in their private capacity. The atmosphere was positive and cooperative. Concerns expressed in previous meetings – Japanese worries about a Korean “tilt” toward China and Korean worries about Japanese collective self-defense (CSD) legislation opening the door to Japanese militarism – were muted if expressed at all. Key findings include:

The US, South Korea, and Japan agree on the nature and depth of the North Korean threat. All agreed North Korea is increasingly able and ready to threaten them, the trajectory of its military development is accelerating (despite sanctions), and it is determined to modernize its nuclear arsenal. All concur that North Korea will attempt to leverage its nuclear weapons in negotiations on other issues.

The three sides agree China plays a central role in dealing with North Korea, but they also believe that Beijing’s desired end-state for the Korean Peninsula differs from theirs. While all four seek a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, there is no faith that China will pressure Pyongyang to behave or give up its nuclear weapons. China’s hostile reaction to the deployment of THAAD suggests that Beijing is even less likely to pressure North Korea in the future.

There is consensus on the need to pressure China to align its policy more closely with those of the US and its allies. South Koreans, however, are more circumspect than Japanese and Americans and argued that geopolitical realities dictate that they must be prepared to work with China, as much as the ROK works with Japan. China’s position will only change if Beijing concludes that Pyongyang is more of a liability than a strategic asset; some experts doubted that the US will take actions that would convince China of the need to change its thinking given the larger risks to the overall US-China relationship.

While all three countries seek dialogue with Pyongyang to achieve a peaceful resolution to the North Korean problem, they believe North Korea will never give up nuclear weapons. Even the sanctions regime is unlikely to alter the North’s strategic calculus, which will continue to favor nuclear and military development over anything else.

There is little evidence that North Korea has a sophisticated understanding of deterrence theory. Worryingly, there appears to be increasing confidence in Pyongyang about its ability to use these weapons, in particular to manage escalation. The North’s military progress may also make it more likely to engage in destabilizing provocations at the conventional level.

A central focus of Pyongyang's policy and nuclear doctrine is to drive wedges between and within the US and its allies, in particular to dissuade Japan from entering a conflict on the side of the US and the ROK and to exploit political divisions in the ROK to its advantage.

Japanese worry that North Korea will be more assertive in the months following the US and South Korean presidential elections as it attempts to "test" the new administrations, regardless of who wins. There was considerable anxiety regarding the US presidential election outcome; regardless of who wins, the apparent trend toward isolationism and against free trade is worrisome to both US allies.

The central problem in Northeast Asia today is deterrence, not assurance. US allies seek indigenous means of imposing costs on North Korea. This is driven by fears that deterrence may fail, not by doubts about US commitment. One participant stressed that "pre-emptive options are necessary for deterrence purposes."

Dealing with North Korea requires convincing Pyongyang that its threshold for pain is lower than that of the US and its allies and that the consequences of bad behavior are real and outweigh any potential benefits.

All agreed that the ROK-Japan Comfort Women Agreement, while fragile, was working and has improved the atmosphere between the two sides. All also agreed on the need for GSOMIA and a bilateral ACSA but few thought either was possible in the near term (i.e., during President Park's remaining two years). Most believed that in the event of conflict on the Peninsula, Korea and Japan would work things out (with Washington serving as facilitator).

While the subject was not on the agenda, Japanese and Korean participants, at the meeting and privately, strongly objected to the US adopting a No First Use policy, arguing that such a declaration would have a negative impact on extended deterrence.

## **TTX Conclusions**

*Move 1 posited the seizure of Daechong Island by North Korea, along with several hundred hostages, followed by an unattributed underwater nuclear blast off the coast of Niigata, which killed 1,000 people. In Move 2, Pyongyang claimed responsibility for the nuclear blast and 50,000 Chinese military forces mobilized on the North Korean border. Meanwhile, there were rumors of a coup in North Korea and reports of limited PLA activity within North Korea at military facilities.*

All agreed from the onset that North Korea was the aggressor and was to blame for the nuclear explosion off Niigata and acted accordingly. All agreed that regime removal was required. Koreans saw this as an opportunity to push for reunification. Americans and Japanese were more cautious but stood behind the ROK.

The Japanese considered the Niigata explosion an act of war and authorized JSDF to respond militarily against North Korean ships/aircraft. Japanese indicated that they were prepared to fully use authorities granted in new security legislation, invoke CSD and provide support to the ROK and US (ASW, minesweeping, etc.) if asked. Significantly, Japanese demonstrated – as in past meetings – understanding of and sensitivity to Korean concerns.

Japanese insisted that any settlement of a conflict that did not include complete disarmament of North Korea, including WMD removal, would not be politically viable. Though their bottom line was that North Korea must not be allowed to launch a second attack against them and should be “severely punished,” they would rely on the US to identify an appropriate response.

South Koreans responded by mobilizing for war and reunification, expecting full US backing. South Korean commitment to reunification was near-total: the removal of the Kim regime, and the elimination of its WMD stockpiles, would not suffice. Americans, for their part, regarded anything short of regime removal as impractical. Japanese were more inclined to be satisfied with regime removal (and denuclearization), rather than the elimination of the North Korean state.

There was a divergence between the US and ROK on messaging to China, although there was a common goal: to keep China out of the conflict. South Koreans preferred full transparency and clarity as they worried about working with Beijing after the crisis. The US was more inclined to be opaque so as to not give China reasons to block the realization of its war aims. Still, the US was ready to work with China to secure WMD, while South Koreans worried that any Chinese involvement might undercut unification efforts. All assessed that alleged Chinese military activity in Pyongyang was more likely aimed at supporting a pro-China successor regime than at perpetuating Kim Jung-Un’s rule.

While the Chinese mobilization made some Americans reconsider the extent of military action against the North, it had the opposite effect on South Koreans. The possible presence of PLA troops in North Korea prompted them to speed up plans to unify the two Koreas and prevent China from changing facts on the ground. While 50,000 PLA troops along the border were seen as aimed at security not intervention, Americans and Koreans worried about Chinese military intervention to preserve a North Korean buffer if the allies marched on Pyongyang (even though China experts argued that Beijing would be more concerned with entering into a conflict with the US/ROK than preserving a North Korean state that had initiated the conflict).

Both South Koreans and Japanese strongly supported taking the issue to the United Nations to secure international legitimacy, but they did not expect the UN to act in ways that would bring the crisis to a satisfactory conclusion, primarily as a result of Chinese and Russian objections. Diplomacy was supported while militaries created facts on the ground.

Japanese expected China to make moves elsewhere during a crisis, such as in the South or East China Sea and began taking steps to defend the Senkakus against Chinese adventurism, thus diverting resources and creating an expectations gap. Japanese also worried about not having insight into post-conflict plans for the Korean Peninsula and stressed the need for close consultation and coordination.

South Koreans complained that Japanese team was “obsessed” with noncombatant evacuations (NEO), though Americans countered that this issue is likely to concern all governments. The primary ROK concern was the possible use of JASDF aircraft. One bright spot was the possible use of Japanese ferries and maritime assets to help conduct NEO for all third-party nationals; this is an area of potential cooperation that should be explored.

Non-US participants evinced a belief that deterrence is binary; either it works or it fails. Americans explained that even after an attack, deterrence is still vital. A key US goal was reestablishing or reinforcing deterrence; other participants did not seem to prioritize that objective during the crisis. Japanese participants stressed that deterrence was not just about North Korea, but also about China, and that the reaction to the North Korean attack would affect that deterrence relationship.

There was endorsement of increased missile defense (MD) cooperation among three allies – such as upgrading the *Pacific Dragon* exercises – but participants cautioned that there needs to be a better understanding of the limits of MD systems, how they can be integrated, and the benefits that would be produced. There is an important difference between sensor and interceptor integration, for instance.

Both South Koreans and Japanese stated that the US response – to flow forces into the region, take the lead in military operations, and support reunification – had met their expectations. US participants expressed surprise that South Korea’s push for reunification was seemingly not affected by an assessment of the damage that would befall their country as a result of North Korean attacks.





## Conference Report

The US extended deterrent in Northeast Asia rests upon two pillars: the deterrence of potential adversaries against acts that threaten the security and interests of the United States and its allies, Japan and South Korea, and the reassurance of those two allies that the US will honor its commitments to defend them. Throughout the decade that the Pacific Forum CSIS has, with support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), conducted bilateral and trilateral dialogues about the US extended deterrent, the focus has largely been on the latter: reassuring Seoul and Tokyo that Washington's commitment to their defense is secure and that effort appears to have been successful. More recently, however, there has been growing concern that the first element – the deterrence of potential adversaries – is no longer guaranteed. North Korea's relentless modernization of its nuclear and missile programs, in combination with a young, untested, and increasingly provocative leader, have raised doubts about the certainty of deterrence on the Korean Peninsula. Equally troubling has been the advent of a more muscular and assertive foreign policy in Beijing, which has triggered concern in Tokyo and Washington (and to a lesser degree in Seoul) that China may be a revisionist power that is ever less deterred as its military strength grows.

The extent of those concerns was evident in discussions and deliberations at the 2016 US-ROK-Japan Strategic Dialogue, held Aug. 29-30 in Maui. At this meeting, held as in the last three years in partnership with South Korea's Asan Institute, 41 US, ROK, and Japanese experts, officials, military officers, and observers, along with 15 Pacific Forum Young Leaders (all attending in their private capacity), shared and compared assessments of North Korea, and Pyongyang's nuclear strategy and doctrine. All participated in a two-move tabletop exercise that examined the three countries' reactions to a crisis on the Korean Peninsula in which the North used nuclear weapons. As in previous meetings, this exercise revealed both problems and prospects for trilateral cooperation. Significantly, it made plain that progress has been made in and among the three countries as they contemplate responses to nuclear contingencies in Northeast Asia: in contrast to recent meetings, Japanese worries about a Korean "tilt" toward China and Korean worries about Japanese collective self-defense (CSD) legislation opening the door to Japanese militarism were muted if expressed at all. Perhaps even more important, our discussions highlighted areas of work that the three security communities must pursue.

### **Assessing North Korea**

The US, South Korea, and Japan are aligned when assessing the nature and degree of the North Korean threat. All agreed that North Korea is increasingly able and ready to threaten them, that the trajectory of its military development is accelerating (despite sanctions), and that it is determined to modernize its nuclear arsenal. That drive means that tests routinely described as "provocations" are much more than that: they are essential to Pyongyang's defense program, a characterization that has profound implications for responses to them. Participants agreed that continued possession of nuclear weapons is a cornerstone of North Korean security policy and diplomacy; a North Korean participant at the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NCEAD) reportedly said

that the country's *existing* nuclear program is "nonnegotiable." No one in our group believed that the North would ever give up its nuclear weapons. Japanese participants reminded the group that conventional weapons are also being developed and deployed and the threats they pose should not be overlooked or ignored.

There was also agreement Pyongyang will attempt to leverage nuclear weapons in negotiations on other issues. Its goal, explained a South Korean speaker, is to be accepted as a nuclear power and to get sanctions lifted, aiming ultimately to decouple the US from its allies. A first step toward this end is the conclusion of a peace treaty between Pyongyang and Washington.

The *byungjin* program of simultaneous nuclear and economic development remains in place. Sanctions have increased the costs of North Korea's determination to pursue nuclear weapons and are beginning to bite, but they remain bearable. As a senior North Korean official once confided to a US participant, "we are more willing to cut off a leg than you are a pinkie."

Sanctions are only a means to an end – bringing North Korea back to the negotiating table. Our US speaker suggested that the goal of sanctions should be resumption of the Six-Party Talks with a renewed commitment to the September 2005 Joint Statement and a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. Only governments that accept that end state should be allowed to rejoin the talks, a condition that paves the way for five-party talks without North Korea. While this may sound far-fetched, Chinese participants floated this idea at the 10<sup>th</sup> US-China Strategic Dialogue (another DTRA-supported dialogue that Pacific Forum CSIS hosts). The Iranian nuclear deal succeeded in part because the six parties sitting across from Tehran at the table coordinated positions and were consistent in their approach. Their unity ensured that sanctions were effective and forced Iran to negotiate in seriousness.

Yet even if the North were to agree to the goal of denuclearization and talks to pursue it, Pyongyang would likely demand the lifting of all sanctions as a condition of its return to the table and that is a nonstarter for the US and its allies. In addition, since our meeting was held, political scandal has ensnared, paralyzed, and resulted in the impeachment of ROK President Park Geun-hye. In other words, three key players in any attempt to resolve the North Korean situation – the US, North Korea, and South Korea – are virtually locked into positions that provide little room for diplomatic maneuver. Nevertheless, as a US participant noted, it is valuable to look open to negotiation, if only to hold the moral high ground.

The five parties negotiating with North Korea – China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the US – agree that the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear weapons free, but they do not agree on how much pressure to put on Pyongyang to accomplish that. Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo are prepared to push Pyongyang to the brink; they believe that only that possibility will force the North Koreans to negotiate seriously. Beijing does not want instability or regime collapse, however. This divergence overshadows every

discussion of the North Korean situation, complicates the search for a solution, and defies policymakers and analysts among the three countries.

To be clear, China cannot force North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. Beijing is critical to Pyongyang's economic well-being but it cannot dictate outcomes in that capital. There is no love lost between the two countries, once described to be "as close as lips and teeth." Still, Beijing could turn the screws if it desired – the task of the US, South Korea, and Japan is to give China reason to do so and to encourage Chinese strategists to think that North Korea is not worth the costs of protection. This means making China uncomfortable with the consequences of North Korea behavior – such as a South Korean decision to deploy the THAAD missile defense system; a Japanese participant suggested that ballistic missile defense cooperation be brandished for precisely this purpose – but that also risks inciting Beijing to take actions that could damage the interests of the US or its allies. A US participant warned that this approach could alter Korean Peninsula dynamics in ways that increase tensions in the short term, reinforcing divisions between the US and its allies on one hand and China, North Korea, and Russia on the other.

This threat is real. China has embraced a more assertive foreign policy in recent years and has launched a full offensive in the aftermath of Seoul's decision to deploy THAAD. It appears as though Beijing's focus is impacting ROK domestic politics and the process of selecting the next president – muddy though that is, given the scandal that has engulfed President Park – rather than the THAAD deployment itself. Strategists in Washington and Tokyo worry that Beijing will try to shake ROK determination to work with them and a "more aggressive approach" will compound the pressure. Similarly, policymakers in Seoul (and to a lesser degree in Tokyo) worry that Washington's need to work with Beijing on global issues may drive a wedge between the US and the ROK (and Japan). An ROK participant reminded the group that North Korea tops the South Korean security agenda, while it is only one item among many for Washington.

The only hope of successfully countering Pyongyang, warned our South Korean speaker, is "a comprehensive solution shared by all three countries," adding that "we no longer have the luxury of differences." The long-awaited signing of the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) between Seoul and Tokyo (after our meeting) is a promising development, but it is only one step among many that should be taken. The three countries have to agree not only on desired outcomes, but acceptable outcomes and firm red lines. They have to reach agreement on "a trilateral approach to increase costs on North Korea" and be prepared to share costs as they are inflicted upon the allies. This approach must be multidimensional, encompassing diplomatic, economic, and military options. One participant suggested that the three countries upgrade military exercises as a signal of their determination to work together to deter the North. He proposed stepping up the *Pacific Dragon* BMD exercise so that it does more than just track a missile and includes either an intercept or shoot-down, holding joint exercises that include activities other than missile defense, and including all three countries' personnel as full participants (rather than having some attend as observers).

## North Korea's 'Theory of Victory'

Belligerence and bellicose threats are nothing new for North Korea. The three leaders of that country have long used supercharged rhetoric to remind the world of their presence and their ability to create instability and do great damage to their neighbors. What has changed in the last decade, however, is the ability to make good on those threats. As detailed in the first session, the North's military capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, continue to improve and its arsenal of nuclear weapons continues to expand. Once viewed primarily as a proliferation concern, North Korea is now seen as a tangible military and strategic threat, one with an expanding reach. It is reckoned that the North has from 6-35 nuclear weapons and is capable of a steady build up with either an uranium or a plutonium core. The ranges of its missiles are growing: it has long been able to threaten all of South Korea and Japan and the continental United States will soon be within reach (if it isn't already). With that ability comes a growing confidence in Pyongyang that it can deter the United States and can use its strength to prevail in confrontations with adversaries. This ability, in conjunction with the belief that North Korea is prepared to pay a higher price (or sustain higher costs) than the US or its allies, motivates risk taking by Pyongyang. As our speaker noted, "the specter of nuclear war hangs over every crisis."

As an immediate objective, Pyongyang seeks to deter adversaries from challenging it. Over time, it hopes to drive a wedge between the US and its allies, decoupling it from both South Korea and Japan by making it unwilling to defend their interests at so high a potential price. The North has long said that Japan tops its target list, a threat that is designed to discourage Tokyo from aiding the US and the ROK in a peninsular contingency as well as create doubts in both allied capitals about US priorities when thinking about allies' defense.

North Korea's ability to achieve those results depends on a credible theory and doctrine of nuclear weapons: merely threatening the use of such weapons is not enough. Views on Pyongyang's strategy are mixed. North Korean officials and representatives talk tough, claiming that they want to be treated like a nuclear-weapon state in some contexts and, more worryingly, like the Soviet Union in others. (The demand to be treated as a superpower is troubling because if serious it suggests a failure to understand how such weapons work.) One US participant in track-two dialogues with North Korean representatives warned that "we should not underestimate the degree to which the North Korean leadership doesn't fully understand concepts of nuclear use and deterrence." Others, including our speaker, argued that the North wants assured nuclear retaliation – a survivable second strike capability – along with robust limited war-fighting options; he noted that North Korean military exercises have targeted ROK ports and airfields. War-fighting options aim to present the US with a *fait accompli* before it can flow reinforcements or create psychological effects that limit its ability to intervene in a crisis. As a Japanese participant bluntly put it, the North wants to remind other governments that pre-emption is not just a US option.

Growing confidence in a second strike capability – however limited – is likely to make Pyongyang more confident about managing a crisis. It complicates US thinking about deterrence, obliging planners to contemplate not only nuclear use by a desperate regime, but also opportunistic use early in a conflict. In each case, the US and its allies must have – and agree upon -- graduated military options and clear off-ramps for an enemy. These options have to be telegraphed well in advance of conflict to avoid forcing an adversary up the escalation ladder, even though Pyongyang might also interpret them to mean that the possession of nuclear weapons could buy it space on that ladder. The difficulties inherent in signaling are compounded by the prospect of multiple parties sending messages during a conflict.

As was made clear in our first session, a successful strategy requires close cooperation among all three countries and the elimination of daylight between their positions. Pyongyang must have no hope that it can decouple the US from its allies, or them from each other. But success demands more than unified messaging. The three militaries must be prepared to respond together in ways that complicate North Korean planning and increase the three countries' options in combatting aggression or provocations. Recommendations include peninsula contingency exercises that use ports and airfields in Japan, and promote trilateral cooperation on antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). A Japanese participant added that GSOMIA is a welcome step, but it is not sufficient.

Critical to shaping North Korean thinking is denying it a second-strike capability. We had a robust debate about the survivability of those road mobile assets, as well as the meaning and credibility of a DPRK submarine-launched nuclear missile. Definitive answers are lacking but there appears to be greater faith in the ability of the US and its allies to track those assets so as to be able to neutralize them in a crisis.

The great irony today is that US allies seem to be growing more assured by the US extended deterrence – credit official and nonofficial dialogues such as these – but doubts are growing about the credibility of the deterrent itself vis-à-vis adversaries. As a Japanese participant explained, “I have 100 percent confidence that the US will respond to a nuclear attack on Tokyo. But it won't matter to me since I will be dead.” For him, deterring and preventing an attack by the North is the most important concern today – for him and other Japanese participants, the focus of US credibility is shifting away from extended deterrence, and toward a preemptive attack against the North if circumstances warrant. But, a US participant warned, it is important to note that North Korea's strategy embraces a wide array of threats and means to impose costs on the US and its allies. A successful deterrence strategy must take them all into account.

### **Tabletop exercise: Move 1**

As in the last two years, this meeting featured a tabletop exercise (TTX) that involved a crisis in Northeast Asia. This year, we took up where last year's exercise left off – North Korea had invaded and seized Daechong Island, a small island near the Northern Limit Line that is just 12 miles from the North Korean coast, along with several

hundred hostages. This was followed in this year's scenario by an unattributed underwater nuclear blast off the port of Niigata, which killed 1,000 people.

Before it detailed its responses to Move 1, the ROK provided its assessment of the situation. The country had lost territory and suffered 5,000 casualties. Sovereignty had been challenged and the situation was moving toward all-out war. Objectives guiding the response included the elimination of additional North Korean threats, ensuring security for all South Koreans, and consolidating the foundation for unification: "this is the beginning of the end game." ROK participants believed that North Korean objectives included the separation of the US from its allies; a plan to fight limited war and to terminate the conflict as quickly as possible; the halting of flows of materiel from the US; the decoupling of Japan from the US; and the survival of the regime in Pyongyang.

In these circumstances, Seoul looked to Japan to provide rear-area support and anticipated that new collective self-defense (CSD) legislation would facilitate that action (and more). Korean participants accepted Japan's need to take action in response to the underwater nuclear explosion that provides some measure of retribution or revenge, but they expect prior consultation with Tokyo on any action that occurs on the Korean Peninsula, and do not want any deployment of Japanese ground forces; ISR or other activities such as minesweeping would be acceptable, however. Significantly, they anticipated that the two bilateral alliances would be working together and highlighted the need to plan ahead of time to ensure that coordination and cooperation occurred.

Concretely, the ROK government would take various measures to protect civilians, including financial measures to stabilize the economic situation, while calling on the US to deploy forces and be ready to launch a pre-emptive, preventive strike against North Korean nuclear forces. Seoul would message Beijing that North Korea is the cause of this crisis, that the South is acting in self-defense, and that the China-North Korea alliance should not be activated – all intended to minimize China's desire to intervene. Seoul would ask the US to reinforce those messages in its communications with China. It would also consult closely with Japan and ask the UN Command to get United Nations Security Council authorization to act; this would be part of a larger initiative to mobilize international opinion on South Korea's behalf. Finally, the ROK government would assure foreign nationals that it will protect them but there would not be an early noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO).

The South Korean response had several notable elements. First, there was sympathy for Japan and the casualties it had suffered. As an ROK participant explained, the delay by some countries in offering sympathy to South Korea in the aftermath of the *Cheonan* incident badly hurt South Korean feelings, and South Koreans would not want to be guilty of the same insensitivity.

Second, there is great ambivalence about China. Beijing is primarily viewed as an obstacle to action against North Korea, and South Korea aims to minimize Beijing's ability to halt, interfere with, or otherwise block the realization of ROK objectives, whether through the use of Chinese troops or diplomacy. There would be no mention of

unification at the early stage of the crisis to avoid forcing China's hand, but the risk of Chinese intervention requires communication with Beijing to ensure that it does not feel marginalized or excluded.

The South Korean response embraced a mix of objectives and some participants sought to use the unfolding crisis to begin a push for unification, which raised a third, related issue – the commitment of Koreans more generally to unification of the Peninsula. While our group seemed ready to exploit the opportunity to push for that goal, it is by no means clear that all decision makers and the public lean in the same direction. There has been a generational divide in thinking about the desirability of unification, but a younger ROK participant warned that younger Koreans are not willing to be pushed around by the North. Still, the ROK team acknowledged that its response was relatively hard line and a different administration might have a different response.

Finally, Koreans were asked whether they expected the early US use of nuclear weapons in a peninsular crisis. “No,” we were told, but “all options should remain on the table.” Whatever is decided should follow the military operational plan (“OPLAN”), and all actions should be bilateral in nature.

The Japanese team immediately convened its National Security Council after the Korean island was seized and commenced the collection of intelligence, in cooperation with the US and the ROK. Tokyo also began diplomatic consultations with the international community, prioritizing communications with Washington and Seoul, and would call to convene the UNSC. China would be consulted and pressed to pressure Pyongyang. The Tokyo government would immediately issue a travel advisory for travel to the northern part of South Korea, halt all commercial flights to the country, and begin preparations for a NEO to protect Japanese nationals in the ROK. Tokyo would also shore up defenses against cyberattacks.

The government would declare the underwater explosion “an armed attack on Japan” and order the SDF to deploy; deployments would include efforts to protect US and ROK facilities in the country, as well as nuclear power plants, and the deployment of missile defense assets. Consultations with Seoul would include discussions of a NEO as well as a readiness to hear any and all requests for support for the ROK. In the absence of a specific request, the Japanese team would not invoke collective self-defense legislation. Tokyo would also send “a strong message” to China that Beijing should not use a crisis to advance its interests elsewhere, as in the South or East China Seas. At the same time, it would ask Washington to send a strong and clear signal to North Korea (and China) about the applicability of its extended deterrent.

The Japanese team made clear that it had legal authorization to respond to an attack by invoking its right to self-defense. In fact, the situation is the equivalent of war as far as the Japanese bureaucracy is concerned, but Japanese participants emphasized the need for a clear legal decision by political authorities. While the ROK was skeptical of any appeal to the United Nations to legitimate action, Japan saw that venue as critical to building an international consensus against North Korea. But, one participant warned,



Japan does not need UN authorization to take action against the North – it could use the 1950 resolution.

A problem for Tokyo is that it has no capacity to retaliate and thus the burden is on the US to make the situation right. “We expect retaliation by the US,” warned one speaker. When asked what specifically was expected of the US, the answers ranged from preventing another attack by North Korea to making Pyongyang pay a high cost for its behavior. “North Korea must believe it experienced a new loss in the crisis,” added another participant. At a minimum, there must be a significant reduction in North Korean military capabilities. “Pyongyang must not think that it can deter the United States.”

There was division on whether the US response had to be nuclear. Some Japanese argued that a nuclear weapon was not needed, others would not object to nuclear use, and yet another Japanese participant suggested that an offshore underwater explosion would be an example of perfect proportionality. Ultimately, said one Japanese participant, “the Japanese public will assess the quality of the US decision and decide if we can continue to rely on ED.” In short, much weighs on the US response: said one Japanese participant, “the US reaction will determine its position and role in a post-contingency world.”

For the Americans, the US was at war – even without a formal declaration, the armistice had been broken. In this situation, US political objectives included the support of allies, the assumption of the leading military role, and the assurance of publics of a good outcome. Militarily, the US would aim to deter further WMD use while preparing for the worst case (WMD use). The US team did not identify unification as its desired end state but it did seek regime removal in Pyongyang, decapitation of the regime, or nuclear disarmament with the current regime still in place. A return to the status quo ante before the island attack was unacceptable. It was estimated that the US would need 10 days to establish air superiority over the Peninsula, and during this time the ROK and Japan would risk considerable damage. Importantly, while the US would act “decisively” to prevent another nuclear strike by North Korea, that would be “extremely difficult” to guarantee.

The US team assessed that North Korean objectives included creation of a fait accompli (the seizure of ROK territory); the prevention of US retaliation or regime removal; the de-escalation of conflict, and acceptance by the US of the North as a nuclear weapon state and a peace treaty. US participants anticipated that China would share those goals.

During the conflict, the US would look to Japan for assistance in attaining control of the seas, in particular relying on Japanese expertise in ASW. The US anticipated that Japan would play an important role in shaping US thinking about the means and ends of war. It is therefore vital that the US understand Japanese expectations about the appropriate response to an attack of this nature. The US must be both decisive and restrained, aiming to increase costs to North Korea, without violating the laws of war or pushing Pyongyang to a “suicidal spasm.” It is not only a difficult balancing act, but there

is no guarantee that the US understands the North Korean calculus and can impose sufficient pain to force conflict resolution on its terms.

The US would activate the CFC authority. In our exercise, the US president chose to launch a strong conventional strike against the DPRK and issued a statement that any WMD response by the North would invoke all US capabilities. In explaining the US decision not to use nuclear weapons at this stage, the US team said forbearance reflected concern that the peace after the war would be negatively shaped by a US decision to use those weapons early in a conflict. “The world doesn’t expect the US to be a nuclear bully.”

Three messages would be sent. North Korea would be told that all options remain on the table in response to further use of WMD. Beijing would be told its help is expected once the nuclear taboo is broken, although the majority of US team members wanted to tell China to “get out of the way.” To that end, the US would warn Beijing that the conflict is kinetic and may go nuclear, that Chinese forces are expected to stay north of the Yalu River, and that the US and its allies will not go back to the UNSC for authorization to act. If China has any useful intelligence, it is expected to share. Finally, it was decided to quickly speak directly to the US and allies’ publics to argue that aggression cannot stand, that the three governments are doing their best to protect them, and that risks are necessary and worth running.

Two issues were teased out in discussion of the US response. The first concerned China: the US team assumed that China would not exploit this incident to make gains elsewhere in the region. China experts argued that Beijing would be trying to quiet any crisis in the region, not make it worse. This assumption diverges from that of Japan, and suggests a potential for discord if Tokyo devotes assets to protecting its territory and the US sees that as a low-probability event that risks the diversion of needed material.

The second issue addressed US nuclear use. While Japanese participants did not explicitly ask for or demand a nuclear response to the attack on Niigata, they implied that a nuclear counter-attack is expected. As one Japanese participant asked, “why maintain nuclear weapons if deterrence fails and you are not prepared to offer a nuclear response?” US participants rejected the arguments that deterrence had failed and that the US should now employ nuclear weapons. More precisely, they argued that North Korea’s nuclear attack had been calculated to fall beneath a plausible US nuclear response threshold, implying a clear understanding in Pyongyang that certain kinds of nuclear attacks would necessarily run a high risk of US nuclear retaliation. In this way of thinking, deterrence of escalation is still practical and valuable. They also argued that US nuclear employment would not be necessary, in the scripted scenario, to punish Pyongyang decisively or to achieve war termination on terms acceptable to the United States and its allies. In this way of thinking, US nuclear employment could actually be counter-productive, by making a peaceful resolution of the conflict less likely and creating conditions for significant international volatility in the regional order in the wake of a regional nuclear war.

The discussion touched on various other factors in the US decision not to employ nuclear weapons in the scripted scenario. First, there is the desire to reduce the reliance on nuclear weapons in the defense of the US and its allies' interests. The US has developed conventional weapons precisely for this reason. Second, it was reckoned that it would take at least 30 nuclear strikes to eliminate the North's nuclear capabilities and that is by no means proportional to the damage inflicted upon Japan. Third, there is risk to those down-range after a single nuclear use, much less a larger attack. Fourth, there is the law of armed conflict which requires all combatants to be judicious in how they wage war. Fifth, the US would not want the North (or any adversary) thinking that it had forced the US hand and that a nuclear attack automatically generated a nuclear response. Finally, in response to the call for a "nuclear warning shot" to impress Pyongyang about the potential consequences of continuing to prosecute the conflict, US participants explained the US considers that tactic to be a sign of weakness rather than strength.

While Japanese strategists may appreciate the US logic – and it is unclear if they do – it seems clear that many other Japanese do not. Since reassurance of allies must address public as well as elite concerns, the US needs to explain its position on nuclear use in ways that not only quiet the traditional concern about an "itchy trigger finger" but also respond to a need for a "proportionate response" that is assumed to be nuclear.

### **Tabletop exercise: Move 2**

In Move 2, Pyongyang claimed responsibility for the nuclear blast near Niigata and 50,000 Chinese military forces mobilized on the North Korean border. Meanwhile, there were rumors of violence and instability in Pyongyang, along with reports of limited PLA activity within North Korea at military facilities.

The North's acknowledgement that it had used nuclear weapons had no effect on South Korean thinking. ROK priorities remained the rescue of hostages, protection against a nuclear attack, and preventing Chinese intervention in the conflict. The Korean team anticipated that Beijing would take action to restore a sympathetic regime in Pyongyang and secure the North's WMD arsenal. When queried, ROK participants noted that reports of Chinese engagement in the North did not affect their thinking "at all," except to make them move faster and accelerate decisions and actions.

The ROK would speed up military action, work to secure WMD sites, and redouble efforts to ascertain the situation in Pyongyang: what is the state of the leadership and who is in charge? It would step up communications with China, telling Beijing that it should halt all operations and withdraw all troops from the DPRK. It would reassert that the South is acting in self-defense and that it can handle the situation without Chinese assistance. It would add that the ROK goal is the restoration of permanent peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and that there can be no return to the status quo ante. Moreover, they warned, Chinese intervention would face stiff ROK resistance. Seoul would then seek to win support from the international community, including the UN Security Council. All the while it would be advancing logistical support and whatever else is required to prosecute the conflict and protect the lives of the South Korean people.

There was concern about a need for humanitarian assistance for the North Korean public as well.

Two issues arose during our discussion of the ROK response. The first was the ROK team's insistence that the US work closely with Seoul in prosecuting the conflict and, significantly, that the war plan be executed as designed. Any deviation, the ROK team warned, would create a "bad impression of the US." In other words, South Korea views the OPLAN as the expression of the two countries' agreed objectives and a change in implementation would signal a retreat from mutually shared goals. This seems like a marker for US planners and war fighters.

The second issue was China. The ROK team remained committed to unification in Move 2 despite the threat of Chinese intervention. ROK participants anticipated that their country could handle the situation in the North in the face of a limited Chinese presence: "if it is not massive, we can still manage on our own." At the same time, however, South Korean participants conceded that they were sensitive to Chinese concerns about how events were unfolding in the North, but "it was not overwhelming." Overall, the ROK side seemed committed to moving quickly to create facts on the ground in the North to prevent any party from blocking unification.

Since the Japanese had already assumed North Korean responsibility for the nuclear explosion, Pyongyang's acknowledgement didn't change Tokyo's basic position or alter the nature of its military response. Condemnation of Pyongyang would be louder and more pointed, and SDF activities – missile defense, ASW, minesweeping, and intelligence gathering -- would intensify. AWACS would be deployed and more would be done to facilitate coordination with US Forces Japan and United Nations forces in Japan, including aerial refueling of US forces and making available civilian air and seaports. Japan also offered to make shipyard inspections to prevent WMD leakage. Humanitarian assistance, including financial support, would be made available if requested by Seoul. Tokyo would ask the US to help protect Japan against future *Nodong* attacks and would ask Seoul to protect all Japanese nationals on the Korean Peninsula (including abductees); Seoul should also be cooperating with Japan on a NEO. The National Police Agency would be ordered to protect Korean nationals in Japan.

The Japanese team interpreted Chinese actions as an attempt to prevent reunification of Korea and to establish a pro-China regime in Pyongyang. Tokyo would denounce unilateral PLA action on the Korean Peninsula as "unacceptable" and criticize China for not cooperating with the US and ROK. Chinese behavior drove home to Japanese the need for more coordination and solidarity among US and its allies, and reinforced concerns about the need to defend against Chinese encroachments in the East China Sea.

Japan strongly backed US-ROK action to avoid a power vacuum in North Korea and supported ROK efforts to unify the peninsula. Japanese participants warned Seoul, however, that it was vitally important that the ROK government provide a unification roadmap. Tokyo would support US surgical strikes on North Korean missile sites and

other efforts to secure nuclear-related facilities in the DPRK. Japanese participants noted that it is very important that the US provide visible assurance of its extended deterrent to Japan; a Japanese participant suggested the deployment of dual-capable aircraft with warheads to a US base in Japan. Finally, the government of Japan indicated that it was willing to host an international (five party) conference to discuss “postwar issues” in Northeast Asia.

When asked if the Japanese team ever discussed staying out of the conflict to avoid the possibility of another North Korean nuclear strike, the answer was emphatically no. But that possibility meant that Japan had to be fully informed throughout the conflict, provided with information, and intelligence and consulted as the allied response to the crisis unfolded.

Both Americans and Koreans were surprised at the restraint exhibited by the Japanese team, even after a nuclear attack. Japanese participants explained that the calm and seemingly stoic reaction didn’t mean that the government or the public was anesthetized to the impact of this calamity. In fact, the Japanese team anticipated outrage and perhaps panic among the public. The failure to take punitive action reflected Japan’s inability to strike back. This magnified the pressure on the US to take substantive action on Japan’s behalf.

The US team agreed that the North Korean claim of responsibility had little impact on its thinking and behavior. Instead, the focus of US concern in Move 2 was divining Chinese intentions and shaping Beijing’s response to the crisis. This task was made more difficult by the fact that the US wasn’t sure of China’s desired end state. China did not seem to be defending the Kim Jung Un regime, nor had it moved to a war footing with the US. Americans anticipated that Chinese priorities would be dealing with refugees, securing loose nukes, and taking reunification off the table. Americans conceded, however, that they didn’t know if China was committed to particular outcomes or would be trying to collect bargaining chips, such as territory and assets, to maximize its leverage in post-conflict discussions. Some Americans feared that Beijing would set up an alternative DPRK government and tell the US to stand down. Plainly, the US has to be consulting closely with both Seoul and Tokyo about the implications of Chinese entry into the conflict.

To clear up any confusion, the US team would send China the following messages. First, that the US and its allies would not be diverted from their objectives: they seek an end to North Korean aggression, they are responding militarily, and China should get out of the way. Since China fears that all US-related military developments in the region are aimed at containing China, the US team also said it would try to reassure Beijing about the protection of its interests on the Korean Peninsula. Significantly, however, US messaging would say as little as possible about the reunification of the peninsula.

One focus of military operations would be the capture and containment of loose nuclear weapons; a second would be the termination of the current North Korean regime.

The US would remind decisionmakers in Pyongyang of the need for them to control their weapons of mass destruction and warn them of the consequences of additional use. While all this was proceeding, the US would be using the United Nations Security Council to advance its political and military objectives and working to ensure that China could not use the UNSC against it.

One question hung over discussion of the US response: did the US meet the expectations of each ally? The answer seemed to differ by country. South Koreans were concerned that the US was not fully committed to the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Some Americans did argue that Washington should demand removal of the Pyongyang leadership, and not mention unification, although that would be implied. One ROK participant urged the US to be clear in its messaging to Beijing, acknowledging that it sought to reunify the peninsula; he reasoned that full disclosure would preempt Chinese objections that they had been deceived and Beijing would as a result have a difficult relationship with the unified Korea. (Unspoken of course is that the declaration of that desired end state would make it difficult for the US to settle for less.) Others worried that the prospect of Chinese intervention would temper US ambitions and the US would settle for less than unification – such as “mere” removal of all of North Korea’s WMD stocks. Several Korean participants insisted that anything less than full US backing for unification would be “a disappointment” and urged the US, with Korea, to rush north to “create a situation” and slam the door on those who would seek an alternate end state. The loudest critic, however, ultimately conceded that he was satisfied that the US response met Korean expectations.

While supportive of the ROK call for unification, Japanese participants seemed ready to settle for less. They insisted that regime removal in the North was insufficient and that the removal of the North’s nuclear capability was their bottom line. “Any settlement short of WMD removal is not politically viable in Japan,” explained one participant. Americans agreed that the North had to be stripped of its nuclear capability.

Nevertheless, some Japanese were troubled by what they perceived as US reluctance to brandish the nuclear option. There was, opined one Japanese, “no sense of urgency to re-establish the deterrent, and since extended deterrence is at the core of the US-Japan alliance, that failure threatens the existence of the alliance.” But other Japanese were not troubled. One countered that he was reassured by the US response since it demonstrated a commitment to make North Korea pay for its aggression. Pyongyang had to emerge from the crisis in a worse position than it started. There was a call to show “some nuclear leg” to reassure the Japanese public. One participant suggested nuclear sharing – a US B61 deployed for use by a Japanese aircraft – as a possible reassurance measure.

### **Key issues and concerns**

Review of the TTX highlights several issues that demand more attention from US strategists and more focused discussions among the US and its allies.

The first topic is whether the US must respond to nuclear use in kind. Japanese demands in our scenario ranged from a desire for retribution – one participant sought “perfect proportionality” with an underwater nuclear detonation near a North Korean port – to the showcasing of nuclear capabilities in the region. While some Japanese understood (and even appreciated) the US decision to respond by non-nuclear means, there also seemed to be an expectation among others that the US had to respond in-kind to a nuclear attack to validate its possession of nuclear weapons and to re-establish deterrence. While acknowledging the centrality of extended deterrence to US alliances in Northeast Asia, US participants pushed back against the logic of tit-for-tat replies, insisting that the credibility of extended deterrence doesn’t demand such a strategy. Most importantly, one US participant argued that the central question is whether a nuclear response facilitates or hinders the achievement of US (and allied) objectives in a crisis. And, another US participant added, ultimately the US has to prioritize its objectives over those of its allies, and US equities in such a crisis extend beyond the Korean Peninsula; for example, it must worry about reestablishing the nuclear taboo globally. This is an uncomfortable truth, but one that must be addressed in such discussions.

A second issue is the prospect of divergence in desired and acceptable end states as the crisis unfolded. The TTX revealed three possible end states: unification, regime removal in Pyongyang, and the end of all North Korean nuclear and WMD assets. Once the crisis began, the ROK team was committed to reunification and would settle for nothing less. ROK participants accelerated action not only to bring the crisis to a quick conclusion but also to overcome any opposition – both in and outside Korea – to that outcome. One US participant even warned that the ROK might entrap the US by speeding up its actions. Americans and some Japanese seemed prepared to accept less: regime removal and elimination of Pyongyang’s WMD capability would suffice. The US position reflected concern that an unflinching commitment to unification could drive the North Korean leadership to use its nuclear weapons in a final dying spasm with wrenching consequences. As one US participant wryly noted, “the ROK commitment to unification showed a surprising lack of consideration for the ROK civilian population.” This potential divergence needs to be examined and its impact minimized.

The third issue is dealing with China. No one in the scenario trusts China to be a mere spectator as crisis unfolds, but there were disagreements about what China would do. Americans and Koreans were convinced that Beijing would aim to frustrate unification and would deploy considerable resources – diplomatic and military – to block it. This assessment has a profound influence on how Seoul and Washington would use the UN in a crisis, even though the United Nations Command would play a central role in any conflict. Yet even with this hardline view of Chinese intentions, Koreans would convey their aim to unify Korea to Beijing; Americans were more circumspect. For their part, Japanese participants worried about Chinese action elsewhere in the region to exploit the US as it was distracted by a Korean crisis. A Japanese demand for military resources to protect potentially vulnerable assets could create tensions among the allies.

A fourth issue that emerged from this TTX was the nature of the Japanese response to the crisis. While the Japanese team seemed restrained in dealing with a

nuclear attack against its territory, the actual Japanese response met all US expectations. It provided far more assistance than it has in the past; the Japanese team credited the new security legislation for facilitating this response. One American professed surprise at “how forthcoming Japan was for the ROK.” Unfortunately, however, Japan can only do so much because of limited military capabilities (and those restraints shocked even some ostensibly well-informed US representatives.) As one Japanese explained, “Japan does not have the ways and means to deal with an existential threat. We need ways and means to control deterrence.” Those limits forced him to conclude that Japan needed its own conventional deterrent capability, presumably a strike capability. This, he argued, would give Japan “joint ownership of deterrence” with the US. Another Japanese participant suggested that those limits obliged Japan to offer different types of international support, not necessarily military. This debate will continue.

Koreans were troubled by Japanese reticence. They were surprised, if not shocked, by the cool tone of the Japanese response and were somewhat incredulous – as in previous years – about Japan’s lack of military options to respond to the North’s nuclear attack. In addition, South Korean participants were troubled – if not offended – by Japan’s call for ROK requests for aid; they felt that Japan should be forward leaning and offer assistance unbidden. A US participant suggested that Japanese reluctance reflected concern about trodding on Korean sensitivities.

A final issue was noncombatant evacuations. This is a sensitive subject for Korea as it has profound implications for security and economic stability: the evacuation of foreign nationals looks like a vote of no-confidence in Seoul (as well as distracts a government that is prosecuting a conflict). Koreans complained that Japan was too focused on the NEO, while American participants countered that all countries with foreign nationals in Korea will be clamoring for such an initiative and warned that the absence of such a plan will only encourage more calls for action.

### **Next steps**

As in previous years, the TTX exercise underscored the need for and value of consultation, cooperation, and coordination among the three countries to successfully counter a nuclear contingency in Northeast Asia. Policymakers and analysts from all three countries acknowledge that conclusion and are less inclined to accept political issues as sufficient reasons to block actions necessary to protect each nation’s national; it is gratifying that participants at these meetings cite the Maui dialogues as being instrumental in demonstrating the value of such cooperation and moving the process forward. But while the three countries agree on their assessment of North Korean capabilities and the threat they posed, analysts need to dig deeper to see if they agree on North Korean intentions and tactics during a crisis.

A similar deep dive is needed on China. China figures prominently in any Korean Peninsula contingency, but the three countries’ thinking about China is shaped by the particulars of the crisis they face. The US and Japan view China differently than does the ROK. That is not to say, as some have mistakenly asserted, that Seoul is swinging into



the Chinese orbit and the alliance with the US is threatened. Rather, it means that Seoul has equities in a Korea Peninsula contingency that no other country shares. Moreover, the ROK responds to other regional crises through that lens, one that necessitates the maintenance of good relations with Beijing to keep the prospect of unification alive (or to potentially minimize Chinese objections). Tokyo and Washington don't fully share that concern. Accentuating the potential divide, Japan is threatened by China in ways that South Korea is not. South Korean priorities and logic thus cut against trilateral cooperation to strengthen the extended deterrent insofar as it applies to China. This issue demands much greater attention and even raises the question of whether US-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation for extended deterrence is viable off the Korean Peninsula.

More immediately, however, there is a need for closer coordination of missile defense capabilities among the three countries. Such coordination is problematic for several reasons. The first is the differing systems that have been deployed in the ROK, Japan, and at sea. Integrating them is difficult. Second, there are political issues. In some cases, ROK sensors can see North Korean missiles that target Japan, yet striking or intercepting them is politically sensitive insofar as it demands that Seoul court risks on behalf of Tokyo, a parlous decision given the fraught relations between the two countries. China is opposed to any MD deployment – the controversy surrounding the ROK's decision to accept a Terminal High Altitude Aerial Defense (THAAD) system is exhibit A – and an integrated regional missile defense system would infuriate Beijing. At a minimum, however, the three countries should consider the trilateral exercises that were suggested earlier in this report.

The continued development of North Korean military and nuclear capabilities poses increasingly pointed threats to the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. To their credit, the three governments recognize that effectively countering and responding to those threats demands effective trilateral cooperation to strengthen deterrence. Unfortunately, doing so is becoming more difficult given tumultuous politics in Seoul and Washington. The scandal that has engulfed ROK President Park Geun-hye has created not only a vacuum in Seoul, but it also renders some of the Park government's most important initiatives to facilitate cooperation – the December 2015 ROK-Japan comfort women agreement, the signing of the GSOMIA with Japan in late 2016, and the THAAD deployment – vulnerable to domestic political attack. Statements of candidate Donald Trump on the campaign trail in which he questioned the value of US alliances generally and seemed to encourage (or was indifferent to) both South Korea and Japan acquiring their own nuclear weapons also upset expectations in those two countries.

In other words, both deterrence and reassurance are under renewed strain. Our three countries must redouble efforts to quell doubts among allies and adversaries alike. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition of the urgency of that assignment.

## APPENDIX A



sponsored by the  
US DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY

**US-ROK-Japan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue**  
**Royal Lahaina Resort, Maui, August 28-30, 2016**

### AGENDA

#### **Sunday, August 28, 2016**

6:30 PM      **Opening Trilateral Dinner**

#### **Monday, August 29, 2016**

8:00 AM      **Breakfast**

9:00 AM      **Introductory remarks**

#### 9:15 AM      **Session 1: Assessing North Korea**

How does each country assess prospects for the DPRK over the next five years? How will sanctions impact economic developments and regime prospects? How will the Pyongyang government respond? How will its military and nuclear modernization efforts proceed and how will they influence North Korean behavior and its position in Northeast Asia?

ROK presenter: Beomchul SHIN

US presenter: Victor CHA

Japan presenter: Hiroyasu AKUTSU

10:30 AM      **Coffee break**

#### 10:45 AM      **Session 2: North Korea's Nuclear Intentions**

A US presenter will outline Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, focusing on how the DPRK intends to develop and use its nuclear arsenal. How will it signal with its nuclear capabilities? Who are its primary "targets" of that signaling? What is North Korea's "theory of victory"? How should the US, the ROK, and Japan respond?

US Presenter: Shane SMITH

- 12:30 PM **Boxed Lunch in breakout rooms: Tabletop exercise: Groups get exercise, prepare answers to questions**
- 2:30 PM **Round One Assessment**  
Plenary reconvenes to provide answers to questions and how each group reached those conclusions. After each presentation, the group is questioned by others on process and outcome.
- 5:00 PM *Session adjourns*

**Tuesday, August 30, 2016**

- 8:30 AM **Round Two**
- 10:30 AM **Coffee Break**
- 10:45 AM **Round Two Assessments**
- 12:30 PM **Lunch**
- 2:00 PM **Session 3: Assessing the TTX**  
This session critically examines the outcomes of the TTX, focusing on expectations among all players, especially as identified in Session 2. What divergences among countries were revealed? How did responses differ from expectations? What are the key lessons learned from this exercise? What differences are there between this year's TTX and last year's?
- 4:00 PM **Session 4: Next Steps**  
What should be done to close those gaps, to move trilateral cooperation forward, as well as next steps for Pacific Forum and this DTRA process.
- 5:30 PM *Meeting adjourns*
- 6:00 PM **Dinner**

## APPENDIX B



sponsored by the  
US DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY

**US-ROK-Japan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue  
Royal Lahaina Resort, Maui, July 19-21, 2015**

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