

Outline of Discussion
Of
The Japan-US Roundtable Meeting

The Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) organized The Japan-US Roundtable Meeting on “North Korean Nuclear Issue and the Changing Balance of Power in the Asia Pacific” at the Conference Room of JFIR in Tokyo on December 11, 2018.



Taking advantage of the visit to Tokyo of the delegation of the National Committee of American Foreign Policy (NCAFP), JFIR organized the Roundtable Meeting on “North Korean Nuclear Issue and the Changing Balance of Power in the Asia Pacific.”

The U.S. panelists included Susan ELLIOTT, President & CEO of NCAFP, Raymond BURGARDT, President of the Pacific Century Institute, Evans REVERE, Senior Advisor of Albright Stonebridge Group, Stephen DEL ROSSO, Program Director of the International Peace & Security of Carnegie Corporation in New York, and Rorry DANIELS, Deputy Project Director of the Forum on Asia-Pacific Security of NCAFP. The Japanese panelists included WATANABE Mayu, Vice President of JFIR, AKITA Hiroyuki, Commentator of The Nikkei Shimbun, AKIYAMA Masahiro, former Vice-Minister of Japan Defense Agency, ITO Go, Professor of Meiji University / Director of Research of JFIR, KATO Yoichi, Senior Research Fellow of Asia Pacific Initiative, SAKATA Yasuyo, Professor of Kanda University of International Studies; and WATANABE Tsuneo, Senior Fellow of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

As this Roundtable was convened behind the closed doors, only a brief summary of the discussion is introduced as follows:

At the outset, the U.S. side presented their perspective on today's security landscape in Asia-Pacific, particularly concerning the North Korean nuclear issue, as well as prospects of the changing balance of power within the region as follows: While unquestionably the U.S.-North Korea summit meeting in Singapore was one of the most significant developments in 2018, it generated limited results with denuclearization of North Korea being on a plateau. While North Korea has appeared to be freezing to some extent the security challenges it had posed, no optimism is warranted as it could at any moment backfire the whole process.

Then, the Japan side presented their perspective on how the U.S.-China rivalry could affect the Korean Peninsula situation as follows: North Korean nuclear issue is indeed in a murky situation. While the U.S.-North Korea summit meeting might place China back in the game, the current U.S.-China rivalry brings uncertainties on the prospects of the situation. Besides, the summit meeting has set adrift the U.S.-ROK alliance, which should otherwise be considered a strategic asset vis-a-vis North Korea and the Japan-Korea relations has been strangling again. At any rate, regional security cooperation among the U.S., Japan and South Korea would be essential in complementing the denuclearization process of North Korea.

After these presentations, lively discussion was held among all the participants.

(JFIR Secretariat is responsible for this summary.)