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I prepared a long introduction, but since I am probably the least knowledgeable person on the stage about this issue, I will forgo it and just start out by saying that my closest encounter with the Korean issue was when I served as President of the UN General Assembly in 2013, when a nuclear test was performed by North Korea. I was in office, and I very well remember the early morning when this became news, and I had very agile conversations since early morning with my American colleague and my South Korean colleague. Everybody asked me to call for an emergency session of the General Assembly, and I said I would do that, but that I needed to talk to the ambassador for North Korea first, so I invited the North Korean ambassador to my office and said, 'Sir, there are deep concerns about what took place last night in North Korea.' He asked me, 'What happened?' I said that the whole world was talking about it, and that a nuclear test seemed to have been performed. He said, 'That is not true, do not believe the propaganda of the West.'

I must admit that I was puzzled with this conversation, but nevertheless we proceeded to hold a session of the General Assembly. That was my closest call with the issue that has been dominating the agenda of international relations for decades, especially in the last year or year and a half when there were some turbulent developments in terms of fire and fury and nuclear buttons, to smiles and handshakes and a very hopeful discourse, according to many observers in this particular case.

I will not speak further about the issue. Here on the stage we have a really impressive group of people. Tsakhia Elbegdorj is former President of Mongolia and a dear friend of mine, actually a classmate from graduate school. He was the leader of the peaceful democratic revolution in Mongolia in the 1990s and served as a member of parliament, chairman of the major party and Prime Minister prior to becoming President and serving two terms. He is a commissioner right now in the International Commission against the Death Penalty and a patron of the World Sustainable Development Forum, and a proud graduate from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Then we have Wang Jisi, one of China's leading thinkers and most respected intellectuals. He is a professor of the School of International Studies and President of the Institute of International and Strategic Studies at Peking University. He was a global scholar at Princeton and an honorary president of the Chinese Association for American Studies, and for many years he served as a member of the Foreign Policy Advisory Committee of China's Foreign Ministry. He holds many other affiliations and is also a director of the Institute of International Strategic Studies at the Central Party School of the Communist Party of China.

Then we have Douglas Paal, vice-president for studies at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He previously served as vice-chairman of JP Morgan-Chase International, but he was an unofficial US representative to Taiwan as director of the American Institute in Taiwan from 2002 to 2006. He was on the National Council staffs of Presidents Reagan and George H. W. Bush, and he also worked in US embassies in Singapore and Beijing, also a Harvard University graduate.

Mr. Yim Sung-joon is Senior Adviser at Lee International IP & Law Group. Previously he held the position of President of the Korea Foundation, served for many years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, and amongst other posts he held the position of Ambassador to Canada and Egypt, and also served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He graduated from Seoul National University, Oxford University and Keio University.

Yuichi HOSOYA is a professor of the Faculty of Law at Keio University in Japan. Previously he was an assistant professor at Hokkaido University, a visiting researcher at Princeton, visiting professor at Sciences Po in Paris. He is a former member of the advisory board of Japan's National Security Council. He was part of the Prime Minister's Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security as well as on National Security and Defence Capabilities.



Last but not least is Georgy Toloraya, one of Russia's foremost experts on Korean affairs. He served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, but he also served in Russia's embassies both in North and South Korea. He is currently Director of Center for Asian Strategy at the Institute of Economy in the Russian Academy of Science and Professor of Oriental Studies as well as Executive Director of Russia's National Committee on BRICS Research.