Suzanne Scholte: Good afternoon, I'm Suzanne Scholte, President of the Defense Forum Foundation and it is my great honor to welcome you to our Congressional Defense and Foreign Policy Forum. Please enjoy your lunch, help yourself to whatever you need—as I know you all are quite busy, we are going to jump right in to our program. For those attending for the first time the DFF’s forums were established in the 1980s to give Congressional staff an opportunity to hear from expert speakers on critical topics in a bipartisan collegial atmosphere. As we promise we have an expert speaker to address a critical topic and a bipartisan very collegial audience. One thing to note – there are a lot of media here, so I would ask during the Q&A that Congressional staff be given the first opportunity to ask questions because of the time constraints on their schedules. We are honored to have Gordon Chang, a prolific writer, fearless commentator and bold thinker to address what is happening in Asia today especially those citizens of Hong Kong and South Korea who are on the frontlines of freedom. Gordon is the author of Losing South Korea, Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes on the World and The Coming Collapse of China. He is a columnist at The Daily Beast and his writings on China have been featured in numerous newspapers from the New York Times to Wall Street Journal, and he is also a frequent commentator on CNN, Fox News, MSBNC, PBS and the BBC as well as a regular co host and guest on the John Batchelor Show. We are honored to have him address HONG KONG AND SOUTH KOREA: ON THE FRONTLINES IN THE BATTLE FOR FREEDOM...Gordon

Gordon Chang: I am very honored to be here. Thank you, Suzanne and thank you everyone for coming.

In Hong Kong and South Korea, people are fighting for their freedoms and for their societies, but they are also on our frontline protecting us. How so? I will explain. The explanation begins in Hong Kong where there’s a clash of two armies. One of them is dressed in green and full riot gear. Of course, they are the police. The other is irregularly clad in black, the protesters. Why do we have these clashes? Well, it’s
because the People’s Republic of China, Beijing, has reneged on promises. In the Sino-British joint declaration in 1984, China promised Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy for fifty years under the “one country, two systems” formula.

Beijing, however, since the handover, the return of Hong Kong that occurred in July 1997, since that time, China has encroached on those freedoms, and has taken away their autonomy. China’s attempt to prematurely seize control of Hong Kong, therefore, is the direct and the primary cause of the marches, protests, and disturbances that we’ve seen since April, but especially, since the middle of June.

Now, the immediate grievance was the extradition bill proposed by Carrie Lam, the Hong Kong Chief Executive, the chief political official in Hong Kong. This bill would’ve allowed Hong Kong to send fugitives to the People’s Republic where there’s no rule of law and justice. Of course, this sparked opposition among the so-called “pan-democratic” forces but it was also opposed by the business community. The pro-Beijing business community was concerned that Hong Kong would no longer be a refuge that they would be subject to their predatory Chinese business partners who would use the bill as a weapon to reach into Hong Kong and take them into the mainland. But the reason why I think that the extradition bill provokes such a sharp reaction was that it was the last straw for many people. And now, people say, and I think that it is true that Hongkongers have drawn a line, that they believe that the extradition bill is the last stand for their homeland.

Even now, after Lam has announced a permanent withdrawal of the bill, that’s one of the five demands. Even after this, the protests continue with the same force and the same virulence. It is no longer about the extradition bill, it is about China. In a society that I think is amazingly united, somewhere between two-thirds, maybe, three-quarters of the people are absolutely determined that China is a malign actor. Therefore, we’ve seen something also interesting or more appropriately we haven’t seen something - the dog that has not barked- is that the mass of people in Hong Kong have not criticized the always rowdy and sometimes violent protest of the young kids, the ones who are in black. I think most Hongkongers have evidently decided that they are much more concerned about the excessive force used by the police, by the intransigence of Carry Lam, and by the intrusive actions of Beijing. They are much more concerned about those things than they are about the tactics of the youthful demonstrators. Hongkongers are fighting back.

And because of their fighting back, China is not moving its tanks and armor, and its troops into Hong Kong. I think that China does not think that if they did so that this would be Tiananmen, as people talk about. Tiananmen, of course, is a reference to June 1989 when Chinese troops advanced from the west to approach to the center of the city, killing in an unrestricted way. Hong Kong will be different. Hong Kong is a different landscape. It has tall buildings and narrow streets that favor the defenders so if Chinese were to move into Hong Kong in a forceful way, yes, there would be high casualties but on both sides. I don’t think that Xi Jinping wants his first war to take years, may be decades, to result in high Chinese casualties and end in defeat.

So why should we, Americans, care what happens on the periphery of Chinese soil? We care, because the same power that is encroaching on Hong Kong is also attacking our democracy. Indeed, that power is attacking the concept of democracy. China has done it to all of us. When my wife and I were in Hong Kong
in the beginning of this month, we talked to a formerly pro-Beijing journalist who was jailed, now is just a journalist. He looked at me and said “what’s happening in Hong Kong, what China is doing in Hong Kong, is a warning to the United States.” So it is true that people in Hong Kong do need America but we need the people in Hong Kong. Over there, people are fighting for their home, and if we ignore their struggle, we might be doing the same thing in the not-too-distant future. Hong Kong is the frontline of freedom.

There’s another frontline and that is South Korea. President Moon Jae-in is doing his best to end democracy in South Korea. More importantly, he is working to end South Korea itself. That’s the state that he was elected to defend, that’s the state he took an oath of office to defend. We got a hint of that on August 15th this year. This was supposed to be the 71st anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Korea in 1948. He gave an address to the nation but he managed to not talk about the state that he leads. Instead of talking about the 71st anniversary of the founding of South Korea, he talked about the centenary of the founding of, the proclamation of the provisional government of Korea that never existed. In 1919, Korea had already been annexed by Japan. So why did he do this? Why did he talk about the provisional government? The provisional government was intended to govern all of Korea. And Moon is a Korean nationalist not a South Korean one. His goal is to unify Korea. It is not a surprise then that during his summit with Kim Jung Un, the North Korean ruler, Moon has emphasized the union of the two Koreas. Now, since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, every Korean leader, the North and the South, has advocated unification, but Moon appears to be the first Korean leader, since then, to accept the unification proposals of the other side and he is doing his best to achieve that unification as quickly as he can. Now, to pave the way forward to the unification of the two Koreas, he is trying to make South Korea’s form of government comparable with the North’s. Most fundamentally, Moon’s Democratic Party of Korea in 2018 tried to amend the constitution of the Republic. It tried to remove the notion of “liberal” from the concept of democracy. Fortunately, Moon failed in this effort. Now the South’s conservatives, the opposition, turned back the effort, but Moon has kept on trying. His Ministry of Education has been trying to change the text books, trying to take out the concept of liberalism. They have succeeded in part because in the text books of middle schools they did delete the word “freedom”.

Remember, North Korea thinks it is democratic, so if South Korea is a democracy but it is not liberal or free, then it looks a little like North Korea in theoretical terms. Moon, after all, what’s the formal name of the state that he leads? It is the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Moon’s party is also democratic but his party is leading the charge against democracy in the South. Moon, the 19th president of ROK, is determined to be its last one. And Kim whose family for more than seven decades has tried to absorb South Korea. Well, he pretty much agrees the same thing.

Therefore, we need to talk about one day, April 15th 2020. On that day, there will be National Assembly elections. All three hundred seats in South Korea unicameral legislature are up for grabs. There’s a lot of reasons why that election is important but let me focus on one of them and that’s the amendment of the constitution of the ROK.

Under Article 130, a president can propose amendments to the constitution. It also provides that the proposal to amend the constitution must receive at least two-thirds of the votes in the National Assembly. After that, it goes to a popular referendum. In that popular referendum, only a simple majority of the people of South Korea have to approve. Moon is unpopular but he could well get that simple majority because, after all, he is counting the votes. So, the most important thing for the opposition in Korea, those who want to preserve their democracy needs to make sure that they can take back the control of the National Assembly. The main opposition party, the Liberty Korea Party, currently holds 110 of 300 seats. Some small conservative parties hold scattering of others. It is important that they actually get at least 100 seats and hopefully more. We know that if they don’t, Moon’s party will try to amend the constitution. April 15th, therefore, is do-or-die, now-or-never. And it is now also time to safeguard democracy and freedoms in the ROK. Since Moon
became a president in 2017, Moon has tried to return South Korea to a more authoritarian style of governance.

He has, for instance, taken control of the big broadcasters to reduce the airing of dissenting views and to promote North Korea. To control his messaging, Moon has also gone after social media to prevent what he calls “social discontent” or “social distrust”. His party has gone especially after YouTube which has become a primary forum for opposition voices. They’ve tried to enact censorship laws but they don’t really need to enact those laws because his party has tried to pressure YouTube. They’ve done this in numerous ways, for instance, a tax evasion investigation immediately after YouTube refused to take down 104 videos that were put up by conservative voices in South Korea.

Moreover, Moon has been relentlessly using the National Police Agency to investigate those who have views that Moon has found to be discordant. You don’t need to be factually incorrect to be the target of a police investigation. More than seventy South Koreans are now being investigated, some of them are journalists, because they started to question where Moon was for five hours this April when the wildfire in the eastern portion of the country was raging. And don’t even think of mentioning the Gwangju massacre in 1980, unless, of course, you accept Moon’s narrative. So it’s not a good idea in South Korea of 2019 to criticize what Moon calls the “May 18th democratization movement” and you certainly don’t want to use preposterous remarks and it is a sin to mention that North Korea might possibly have had a hand in the movement. And now, with the appointment on the 9th of this month of the controversial figure, Cho Kuk, possibly corrupt but certainly in favor of North Korea, this is going to make the situation in South Korea even worse. Moon’s government also sought to silence other critics especially defectors from North Korea. He doesn’t want their voices to talk about the horrific nature of the regime. Also, we are starting to see what some conservatives call a “reign of terror”.

Radicals in Seoul have been putting up wanted posters for North Korean defectors, putting their lives in danger. They now criticize North Korean defectors as “scum”. And now, notorious groups along with the “Flower Wave” have openly and with impunity challenged critics of the government and those who criticize North Korea. They are dangerous. They have invaded into classrooms to shout propaganda. They have intruded into the offices of Daily NK, a news site in Seoul. They have broken into the offices of a human rights organization to disrupt its functions. They have made public death threats and they have staged plays in Seoul, showing people bound with rope. No surprise then people on the opposite side believe that democracy is on the verge of collapse. Especially, something that we saw in a September 4th, 2018 statement. In short, opposition conservative voices have been pressured, prosecuted, coerced, and harassed.

In the new South Korea, we are even starting to see some of the fear. In the big flag rallies on the weekends, many people hide their faces or try to make sure that photographers don’t catch them. They are concerned about the retribution from the government.

It wasn’t supposed to be this way. When Moon was inaugurated, in May 2017, He said “I will strive to get rid of authoritarian practices in presidency”.

Obviously, that promise has not been kept. Now, this is ironic. Moon was once a human rights lawyer and campaigner for democracy. We can’t blame him for authoritarianism in South Korea and that’s been there from the start with the first president, Syngman Rhee. We saw it during the strongman, Park Chung-Hee Park. And of course, two generals-turned-presidents, Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo. Nonetheless, we all saw in succeeding administrations, a move to democracy and liberalization. And we can clearly say that South Korea was a more open place during Moon’s two predecessors, Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye.

So let’s be clear about what’s been happening in South Korea. It’s a reversal of decades-long process to make South Korea a more free, open, and democratic society. Some people have even suggested that the UN
appoint rapporteurs for South Korea. Things have gone that bad. So, unfortunately, the South Korea of tomorrow could live up like the South Korea of the past. Maybe even more like North Korea.

What is most disturbing is that Moon has been trying to take down the defenses of South Korea. My good friend Tara O has talked about the September 2018 agreement that Moon signed with Kim Jung-Un when Moon went to Pyongyang. The agreement clearly favors the attacker, North Korea, much more than it favors the defender. Moon has unilaterally taken down defenses, tank traps, observation posts, fencing near the Demilitarized Zone. He’s also been implementing plans to make the South Korea army smaller in circumstances which are quite puzzling. And he has been undermining South Korea’s alliance with the United States.

There’s one country that’s pledged to defend South Korea. It is the country that rushed to South Korea’s defense after North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel on June 25th, 1950. It is the one country that has 28,500 forces now. It is the United States of America. Most people in South Korea support the alliance. This was made clear by a poll which was released in January, but it doesn’t really matter what most people in South Korea think. They don’t count politically in the new South Korea. What matters is what one person thinks, and the person’s name is Moon. He has allowed his senior officials to mischaracterize the alliance to inflame opinion, made it difficult for the U.S. to maintain its one battery of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), and went behind the back of his only ally and protector to make an agreement with the Chinese foreign ministry in October 2017 - the infamous “Three No’s”, no to more placement of THAAD batteries, no more South Korea’s participation in ballistic missile defense, and no to a tripartite alliance with Japan and the United States. Now, these negative covenants were made without us. They undermine our ability to defend the South. And they are as some people have said, deference to a Chinese bully. The bully who supports North Korea.

I can’t say that Moon hates America but when our president visited South Korea at the end of June, President Trump stood next to Moon and the first lady. And the first lady was wearing conspicuously a blue butterfly brooch. I’m not sure if our president understood the significance of that political statement, but the blue butterfly has been a symbol of anti-Americanism in South Korea. So Moon was not only disrespecting Trump but also disrespecting the United States of America.

Let me close with just one point. In recent months, Moon has been stirring up anti-Japan sentiment. We started paying attention when Moon terminated the military information sharing agreement a few weeks ago. Now, I can understand the anti-Japanese sentiment. My father during WWII was one of millions, perhaps tens of millions, of Chinese who fled to Japanese marauding army. He was in Shanghai at that time, going to school. He then walked west along with everybody else, hitchhiked, and got himself to places like Kunming, he was strafed by the Japanese and went to other cities, getting away from the Japanese. But let’s be clear, no Japanese official who prosecuted the war is alive today. No Japanese who was in authority in Korea during the annexation period is alive today. Moon has to understand that regardless of how he feels he needs Japan. In the case of a North Korean invasion or in the case of the Chinese aiding the North like in the Korean War, the U.S. will need Japan’s cooperation to defend the South. We will need the forces we have in Japan. We will also need Tokyo’s active cooperation.

I don’t think that Moon particularly cares. He is pro-North Korea and China and anti-America. In short, he is a danger to South Korea, which means that he is a danger to freedom, which means that he is a danger to us. Our frontline today, the frontline of our freedom is Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea. And it is the time for we, Americans, to step up and defend them. Thank you very much.

Question 1. What would take for China to actually intervene with force in Hong Kong?

Gordon Chang: Well, everyone who’s smart will tell you that independence is not a real possibility. I take a different view. If you go back to 1997, the handover, everybody was pro-Beijing and patriotic. The place
was just swarming with all sorts of red flags. Five years ago, we started to see kids in their 20s wear shirts with Union Jacks on them which was one of the ultimate disrespects of Beijing because what it really said was that life was much better under a white master who was five thousand miles away, than it is to be ruled by my own kind. Luckily, since that time, the movement and the self-identification of people in Hong Kong is not Chinese. About a week and a half ago, someone released a survey that shows ninety-five percent of people in Hong Kong under the age of 30 say that they are not Chinese. They said that they are Hongkongers. It is an important movement toward an independence state. Also, we’ve heard the national anthem of Hong Kong, “Glory to Hong Kong”, sung by people throughout society. Once you get a national anthem, you are on your own to getting a nation. China can, of course, kill everyone in Hong Kong, about 7.4 million. Yes, there are capable of doing it but I don’t they are going to. I don’t think they can quell what’s occurring right now. It is growing and I don’t think Beijing has an answer. Carrie Lam has been saying that maybe we can make housing cheaper and make life better from an economic point of view. That might have a marginal effect but it is not going to affect what people really think and that is, right now, they believe that they should have their own society. All the slogans that you hear or see in the photographs, those point to an independent Hong Kong. Yes, it is going to be hard but it is not impossible as people will tell you. What would take China to intervene? Of course, China doesn’t want to intervene because of the reason that I mentioned. Also, it would end Hong Kong as a special financial center where a lot of communist cadres get their money out of the country. So, it is, in some sense, protected, but I think they will intervene under one condition: when they think that the people in Hong Kong are inspiring protests throughout the mainland. Now, people in the mainland took a poll. It is hard to have a poll on sensitive topic in a totalitarian state but if they were to take the poll which was fair and accurate, I think, you will find somewhere around 90-95% do not sympathize with the people in Hong Kong. Basically, the view in the mainland China is “those guys in Hong Kong are rich, they have everything. Why are the complaining?” But, the people in Hong Kong have pushed Carrie Lam around and they pushed, to a certain extent, Beijing around. People in the mainland, especially, in a deteriorating economy, which is not growing at the 6.3% that they claimed for the first half of this year and which may even be contracting if you start to look at the August indicators. Whatever it is, it is not growing the way it once was. They’ve got grievances and all sorts of complaints, economic and non-economic. They may say, “Well, if I protest, like those guys in Hong Kong pushing Carrie Lam around. Why don’t I do the same thing? I’ve got grievances myself. If they can do it, I can do it.” And that’s when Beijing intervenes. I think, Beijing is not going to intervene, likely. Nonetheless, a desperate, insecure, communist, and militant superstate. They can do anything.

Question 2. What’s going to happen in 2047, which is the end of the 50 year period that was promised in the Sino-British Joint Declaration?

Gordon Chang: I don’t know the answer to that. And I actually think that most people in Beijing right now are not looking at 2047. I think they are looking at 2019 because they’ve got a situation where they can’t really control things. You know, they tried almost every tactic in Hong Kong - putting the Chinese soldiers into the Hong Kong police wearing Hong Kong police uniforms, bringing out the thugs, and having Carrie Lam say that she wants to talk to 150 randomly selected people. So, I don’t think that they actually think that far ahead. They’ve got two important anniversaries coming up, October 1st when Hong Kong is not going to be rejoicing in the resumption of Chinese rule - by the way, Carrie Lam canceled the big fireworks display on October 1st. And they have another big anniversary coming up in next year, which is a 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist party. So, I think, what they are really trying to do is to focus on the here and now. When it comes to 2047, who knows, I don’t know what they are thinking.

Question 3. When do we start moving against the Communist Party of China?

Gordon Chang: If you look across the American political spectrum, there’s a view that China is a malign actor. There’s no consensus though - as to what to do. But, I think that when you start to look at a lot of Democratic Party candidates who criticize President Trump’s tariffs and China policies. But, if you look at
the establishment of the Democratic Party, for instance, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer, they are on full board with what the president is doing (against China). And I think that it really shows a remarkable acceptance of the view that China is a foe and an adversary. I call them “enemy” because, in May of this year, they actually declared a people’s war on us. I think, most people are starting to come to a much darker view of Beijing’s intentions. Well, your question is when do we actually get serious. I’m not in the president’s head but one can make the argument that he has identified China as America’s enemy and he is going to put it down. But what we haven’t heard from Trump is the Reaganesque statements which I believe he should be making and which is not in his nature to make. Nonetheless, he is doing things which could very well bring down the Communist party because he is attacking their economy at precisely the wrong moment. China is going through a really difficult time with its economy and you can start to see this in any number of factors, especially those who look at the manufacturing numbers, but even looking at consumption numbers, China’s economy is falling fast. President Trump’s tariffs attacks on Huawei, Chinese manufacturing companies, their telecommunications companies, and all sorts of things that the president is doing could have a material effect on the stability of China. People ask, are the Trump’s tariffs causing problems in China? The answer is No. China is causing its own problems, largely, because of Xi Jinping’s views on state domination economy and the resumption of totalitarian control. None of them is working, but what we are seeing is that Trump’s policy is have a marginal effect at precisely the right time for what you want to do and for what I want to do as well, because I believe that coexistence is not possible. as much as we would like it. And we can be friends with the Chinese people of course, we will be friends with the Chinese people just not with the Communist party of China.

Question 4. Was Moon responsible for the impeachment and conviction of his predecessor Geun-Hye Park?

Gordon Chang: It sure looks like it from all of the factors, especially, because of what Moon is doing now. I have to say the answer is yes. With regard to the former president Myung-Bak Lee, he’s been quiet. Tara O would be able to better answer the question than I can. But you haven’t heard his voice and that is going to be something that I am sure Moon fears because the former president Lee was a popular figure.

Tara O: He was jailed for one charge. (inaudible 38:12)

Question 5. What would force the current president Moon to step down?

Gordon Chang: Well, you know, Gallup Korea just came out with this most recent poll which shows that Moon’s approval rating was 40%, an historic low. Gallup Korea generally generates higher numbers than other surveys. So, Moon is really unpopular and part of this is the appointment of Cho Kuk, which I think it is a watershed moment. I don’t know if Moon would actually ever be impeached but that is of course, what people in South Korea are now saying. The situation in South Korea is volatile, but for instance, if you got conservative opposition doing well on April 15th, then they very well may take revenge. Because as to the question we talked about people believe Moon is responsible for the unfair impeachment and conviction of the former president Park, there’s blood lust right now. So, I think, the question will be better answered on the 16th of April next year.

Question 6. How much China aides North Korea’s nuclear weapons program?

Gordon Chang: The answer is a lot. There are a couple things. We know that there have been substantial transfers of technologies for North Korea’s missile program. For instance, the transport erector launcher that North Korea uses for its mobile missiles came from China. We learned that at the big parade on April 15th, 2012, the TELs for the KN-08 came from China. Also, North Korea has a lot of liquid-fueled missiles, in August of 2016, they tested there first solid-fueled one. And they had two other tests of solid-fueled missiles quickly after that which was land-based and the first one was sea-based. The question is where did North Korea get solid-fuel technology? There are two missile analysts, one from Israel and the other one from
Texas, who say that the missile North Korea launched in August of 2016 and the two that they launched early 2017 look to be variants of China’s J-L1 submarine launch missile. Of course, China’s been supporting North Korea’s economy, which allows the North to continue its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons program. And they have been laundering money for North Koreans. You know, we don’t have time today to run through all the list but the one thing that I think really important that sometimes people don’t focus on is that there’s always been a question that Chinese say, “North Korea hates us, therefore, we don’t have influence in Pyongyang”. Well, it is true that Koreans hate the Chinese. They have for two millennia fought so many wars. The border between China and Korea moved hundreds of miles in both directions. But, that doesn’t mean Chinese don’t have influence. Xi Jinping, the Chinese ruler, summoned Kim Jung-Un to North Korea four straight times before Xi Jinping returned the visit. That’s an indication that when the Chinese pull the string, the North Koreans will jump. They may hate the Chinese but they know that they have to obey. The Chinese don’t always seek obedience but when they do, the North Koreans comply. That shows you that North Korea could not run ballistic missile program and nuclear weapons program if the Chinese didn’t really want them to do so.

Question 7. Are the protests in Hong Kong inspiring protests in South Korea?

Gordon Chang: I think, the answer is no. But the protests in Hong Kong are doing something else which is just as important. And that is they are changing the political calculus in Taiwan. Remember, Xi Jinping believes that the “one country, two systems formula” for Hong Kong. This is for Taiwan as well. And before these protests started to get momentum on June 9th, Tsai Ing-wen, the president of Taiwan, was not even going to get renominated by her party, the Democratic Progressive party. She was out, she was stoned cold dead politically, may be a little bit of exaggeration, but she was not running again. She won the nomination of her party. Today, she is leading in every poll in Taiwan. Her margin is not enormous. It is a long time between September 19th 2019 and January of next year, but she is leading. And everyone in Taiwan says, the reason why she is leading is because of what’s occurring in Taiwan. Also, the other thing that we’ve seen in Taiwan is that campaign platforms and narratives of the opposition party, the Kuomintang, the nationalist party. They have changed. They become a lot less Beijing friendly. And that’s the effect of the protests. The thing about Hong Kong is that Hong Kong is inspiring. You can’t go to those demonstrations as we did. You can’t even read about them without getting inspired by the grit and determination of the people in Hong Kong. But the thing I was most impressed by is that the humanity of the people in Hong Kong. That’s inspirational.

Question 8. The question is about the leadership of the protests in Hong Kong.

Gordon Chang: In Hong Kong, you don’t have leaders in the protests for a very simple reason. In 2014, they had Occupy Central with Love and Peace demonstration for 79 days. The feeling in the pan democratic movement was that the government bought off the leaders of the movement and placated them. And the protest ended. The demonstrators today both the younger ones and older ones think that you don’t need leaders. We are doing just fine without them. In terms of South Korea, the one thing that struck me when I was in South Korea was how disunited and disorganized the opposition party was. And I was thinking that even though Moon was really unpopular, Moon and his party could do really well on April 15th, largely, because conservatives are more interested in fighting against each other than going after Moon. I don’t give advice to political parties outside the United States, but if I did, I’d say that you guys need to start to get together because if you guys don’t, Moon is going to kill you.

Question 9. Senator Tom Cotton mentioned that China can’t feed itself and what are the implications of that?

Gordon Chang: The Senator is right. The pig population in China has been decimated by African Swine flu. Pork being the primary meat of Chinese consumers. The Chinese need to buy pork, because if they don’t, they aren’t able to raise themselves. They lost approximately 50 percent of the pig herd. About a week ago,
China repealed additional tariffs on American pork and people were saying, “this is a good will gesture toward the Trump administration”. The answer is no. China needs to buy pork and one of the political problems in China is not how mean and nasty the Chinese Communist Party is, which it should be, but one of the main political problems is the price of food staples, especially the price of pork. So yes, they can’t feed themselves. It is sort of changing there’s a couple things going on here. First of all, China has through very shortsighted policies put a lot of metals in the soil so that’s been taken some of the agricultural land out of the cycle. But also, because of growing prosperity, you’ve got people who have different tastes. The diet of average Chinese has been changing in connection with economic development. So that’s why you have more meat and you have more other things. And Chinese people traveled a lot and they’ve had some good French food and they want it at home.

The other big story in terms Chinese consumers and food is that they don’t trust their own food supply anymore. So Chinese consumers spend a lot of money to buy foreign food because they believe in its purity. And they don’t believe in the safety and the purity of their own food. So, there’s a lot of factors that have - you know - no one factor is enough, but when you put all the factors together, yes, China cannot feed themselves. And with African Swine flu, this is become a political problem in Beijing at this moment.

Question 10. A question is about the labor unions in South Korea. And whatever happens on April 15th, do I think that they are going to create disturbances in South Korea?

Gordon Chang: My sense is no. Largely because, if you get smashed in elections, which could very well happen on April 15th, I think that essentially they will be demoralized. But you know I am not an expert on that.

Question 11. A question is about the cooperation with communist states.

Gordon Chang: It is unfortunate, but after four decades of trying to integrate Beijing into the international system, we obviously failed. What we’ve done is that we’ve enriched and strengthened the hostile and militant group that now threatens us, our friends and allies. I think, what we’ve seen in recent weeks is one of the many examples of the impossibility of cooperating with China. To give you one example, everyone talks about business investment into China. What Beijing is going to be doing is that taking its social credit system and extending it to corporates, including foreign corporates. A social credit system is a nation-wide program which rates every individual. They get a score which is constantly updated based upon observable behaviors. For instance, if you jaywalk, your score is going to go down, and if you say something nice about Xi Jinping, your score is going to go up. They are doing this for companies and they are going to extend this to companies. We saw what Beijing will do to our companies when it has the power to do so. And that was Cathay Pacific in connection with Hong Kong protests. Cathay Pacific now has a new chairman, new chief executive officer, and now, according to Apple Daily, two hundred vacancies that have been newly created because Beijing tried to purge the airline of those people who have protested or who have protected protesters. So, for instance, the CEO was canned because he refused to cooperate with China. He refused to turn over Cathay Pacific employees who have protested in Hong Kong. So this is what Beijing is going to do once it has the ability. So this is a question of disengagement. We would love to have American companies involved in making money in China, but you can’t do that because one of the things that is going to happen is that Beijing will weaponize them against us and they will go after those companies like they went after Cathay Pacific. We have a stock of something like 256 billion dollars of investment in the People’s Republic. And we can very well lose that largely because what we are seeing. It is unfortunate. We are not driving this. And if you want a graphic example of what can happen to an American company as opposed to Cathay Pacific, just look at what happened to the FedEx pilot who was detained because he had plastic pellets in his luggage. They have decided to go after FedEx - that was clear about 6 weeks ago - in connection with misdirection of some packages for Huawei. They have made FedEx an enemy and they are not holding Americans as hostage. This is the way that militant communist state deals with foreign
companies. So we’ve got to understand that we need to protect Americans. And you can’t protect Americans if they are in China. It is unfortunate, but what are you going to do?

Question 12. A question is about the Hong Kong human rights and democracy act 2019, which is currently in consideration.

Gordon Chang: I think it will help, but I think that provisions are not strong enough - that’s just me - but the point is the protesters in Hong Kong see this as a symbolic act. They want that passed. And the reason why they want it passed, even though it will hurt Hong Kong’s economy, is that they believe anything that undermines the rule of the Communist party is good for them. And by the way, although, there’s a lot of controversy in the United States about president Trump’s tariffs that he imposed under section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 as a remedy for the theft of intellectual property - controversial here, but not controversial among the protesters in Hong Kong. It is controversial in the sense that they want those tariffs to be higher, but the point is that they want it. They want the United States to show its resolve in this. We might think it is just symbolic but for them it is incredibly important because they want the support. About 2 -3 Sundays ago, you had the protest at the US consulate in Hong Kong. There were a thousand US flags flown on the day outside of the consulate. Thank you very much.

SCHOLTE: Thank you so much for coming. I want to make one quick announcement. That was an outstanding presentation and we are making a transcript and a video, but I wanted to mention that there’s quite a few people here who are members of the North Korea Freedom Coalition. Probably one of the most important things is that DFF has the honor of chairing the North Korea Freedom Coalition. If you are a member just raise your hand and if you want to join us all on this Tuesday, September 24th -- the anniversary of when China became a signatory to the refugee convention that obligates China not to force people against their will back to a country where they will be persecuted. Not a long of people know about this but China has been repatriating North Koreans knowing they will most certainly 100% be tortured, 100% be detained and in some cases executed when forced back to North Korea. So, on September 24th we are organizing a demonstration asking people to show up at the embassies and consulates of the PRC to deliver petitions to stop this illegal, inhuman, and brutal action. So, if you want to join us, we are going to assemble in front of the CCTV at 4:10 for a demonstration and then proceed to the Chinese Embassy for a vigil and we will also attempt to deliver a petition. I do want to mention to you that we will be signing the same songs the Hong Kong protestors and people are going to be doing this all over the world in solidarity with the people of Hong Kong.

And one final point I want to make that ties this all together, Remember the 2008 Olympics. There was a lot of controversy about Beijing being selected but we were told this would improve human rights in China. That is just one of many lies just like opening trade with China. None of this has helped the people of China, only the Communist Party of China. The persecution of North Korean Refugees in fact became even more severe because of the Olympics, because China did not what the international community to see the horrific things they were doing to the innocent men, women and children that had escaped from North Korea. With that I want to thank you all for being here and let’s give Gordon one more round of applause.