
Panel: R2P and North Korean Human Rights
Date/Time: Tuesday, April 22, 2014 / 14:30-15:45
Speakers: Chris Nelson, Samuels International Associates, Inc. (Moderator)
Lee Jung-Hoon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK
Barbara Demick, Los Angeles Times
Frank Jannuzi, The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation
Greg Scarlatoiu, Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

Rapporteur: Patrick Thomsen, Seoul National University

Moderator Chris Nelson (Samuels International Associates) gave a short background to issues of Human Rights and the 3 traditional models of their promotion: strategic restrictions, economic sanctions and intervention. In the past 2-3 years the United Nations (UN) and its actions represents an opportunity to meld together previous separated approaches. (Strategic and economic)

Speaker Lee Jung-Hoon (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK) outlined the 3 pillars of the right to protect (R2P) 1. State responsibility 2. Provide assistance to other states 3. Violators are subject to intervention. In his opinion the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) report was justified in its recommendation to refer North Korea (NK) to the International Criminal Court. (ICC) He highlighted the uniqueness of North Korea's violation of Human Rights in its duration, spanning over 7 decades. He also highlighted China's forced repatriation being a paradox where forced abortions and infanticide result in the murder and termination of ethnically half Chinese fetuses and babies.

Barbara Demick (Los Angeles Times) began by quoting Andrei Lankov in suggesting that the HR situation in North Korea had improved since the regime changed. The UN COI highlighted heinous crimes such as executions and torture, however she focused on the opening of markets under the new regime and how they provide more opportunities for citizens in North Korea to find means for their survival. She mentioned the failed currency revaluation in Kim Jong-II's time and his stiff restriction on markets as a major source of HR violations. She ended by asking the question of to what extent was Kim Jong-Un responsible for the system that he inherited and how much time will we give him to fix it?

Greg Scarlatoiu (Committee for Human Rights in North Korea) countered the point of an improving HR situation in North Korea by explaining that the prison camp population in North Korea had reduced due to systemized murder. Granted markets in North Korea were opening however he also claimed that they were breeding grounds for illicit activity. He criticized the narrow approach of engaging North Korea on issues of nuclear disarmament and said more UN resolutions needed to be linked to HR. He was very clear that the COI has identified North Korea as a serious violator of human rights and the International community must act. 140 UN recommendations have been issued to North Korea and not a single one has

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been acted upon. He also recommended that the UNSC force China to exercise its veto so China’s hand can be forced.

Frank Jannuzi (The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation) agreed with the other speaker’s sentiments pertaining to the severity of the situation in North Korea. He believes that to affect real change in North Korea we need to employ ‘hard-headed engagement’ that looks to long-term changes. Similar to an approach used in the Helsinki accords during the Cold War. The focus should be on people; he suggested we open up avenues for exchange between North Korea and the outside. Some of his suggestions: 1. Remove bans on travel visas to the US for North Korean citizens, 2. Employing track 2 cooperation channels. 3. Offering study abroad opportunities for North Korean students. 4. Increase broadcasts of information (T.V. Internet, Radio). He believes no amount of hardline policies will bring change to North Korea.