

Inquiries

-First of all, please tell me the meaning of this election. It is very highly likely that Obama win, which is unimaginable just a year ago.

1. The question is too broad. This election proves that many things are changing in the United States – particularly the attitudes of the American people. They are no longer a white majority. Immigrants from around the whole now comprise the greater number of “Americans,” particularly people from Latin America and Asian nations. Secondly, the election demonstrates the deep frustration of ALL Americans, both Republicans and Democrats with President Bush and his policies. Even Senator McCain is trying to distance himself from Bush. Finally, the election comes at a time when the United States prestige around the world is very low and its financial power greatly weakened. It is possible that this election may mark the high point of US world power. Hereafter, it is possible that US global influence will gradually subside.

-Do you think American people are ready to accept black president? And what about the possibility, as someone is afraid to say, to happen tragic incidents after taking office?

Yes – it is clear that you are more concerned about this than the American people. Obviously the color of a person’s skin remains a great concern to many Koreans, unfortunately.

-Do you think American society has changed a lot in terms of the value, ideology, and racial relationship in terms of election ending with Obama’s win?

Yes, as stated above

-I give you two ifs. If Obama will be good president, why? If he will fail, why? In addition to that, what is Obama’s short-term and long-term difficulty. As you know, ‘the First’ means there is pretty tough and unexpected road ahead. You never know what will happen.

I am sorry but this question is unworthy of an answer.

-How much do you expect Obama's foreign policy could be changed compared to Bush Doctrine? Particularly towards 'rogue states' such as Iran, Syria, Cuba, North Korea?

Please see my attached article.

-Russia is re-emerging. As you see Russia's invasion to Georgia, Russia could become negative factor to world political stability. What do you think new administration's approach to Russia should be?

I do not know since I do not have any expertise about Russia.

-Trans-Atlantic relations was pretty bad during Bush administration. How about in Obama time?

If Obama is elected, relations with Europe will improve.

-In short, it is assumed that there should be some self retro-reflections about preemptive and so to speak 'one-sided diplomacy' from Bush administration. What do you think of that?

I do not understand this question.

-How could you define new administration's diplomatic doctrine in few words?

First we have to know who will be the new president!!!!

-Now US economy is terrible, so is the rests of world. Do you think it is possible '21st New Deal'? Don't you think that today cannot be 1930s in terms of scale and complexity. On top of that, there are many exterior factors, that means US cannot solve the problem alone.

I am optimistic that the world economy and the US economy will gradually recover from the present situation.

-Politically and economically, the voice of China gets louder and louder. Conflict is looming between two interests of US and China. What is potential partnership and what is potential competitor in political and economic arena?

US-China relations will continue to improve because both have much to gain strategically and economically from cooperation. Differences will cause tensions, just as they do between the USA and ROK, but bilateral discussions will continue to resolve the differences.

-Bush administration put an emphasis on Japan diplomatically. But as you can see, Japan has evoked many troubles with neighboring countries by distorting history and school-textbook. In short, Japan has denied their atrocities in the past. How do you see new administration should deal with that?

The Bush Administration DID not emphasize diplomacy with Japan. On the contrary, it emphasized cooperation with the ROK after Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun. Bush cooperated with Koizumi because he needed Japan's help in the Middle East and because Japan has been the US key ally in East Asia since the Korean War. But recently Bush has deeply angered Japan by removing North Korea from the US Terrorism List. The next US president must repair relations with Japan, just like he must repair relations with European nations.

-How do you think Six-party talks is unfolding under Obama administration? Could it be developed into long-term constant peace-framework in Korean Peninsula?

The same as if McCain is elected President. US influence in the Six Party Talks is greatly limited because China is the key player, not the US.

-What is Obama's perspective and way of approach towards Kim Jung-Il, north president ?

-- Obama, if elected, would do what Bush has been doing since January

2007 – permit US officials to engage the North Korean government in negotiations.

-What if Kim Jung-Il resist abandoning nuclear program or tries to cheat it again one way or another, what's the leverage that Obama has?

- this is a hypothetical question.

-North ultimately hopes normalization with US. What is the precondition for that from US?

This is an old question first asked in 1992! I suggest you read the State Department web site regarding an answer for this question.

-Obama has expressed intentions many times that he is willing to meet Kim Jung-Il face to face. What are the odds that US-North summit talks could happen in near future?

Zero. First Obama has to be elected, then there has to be progress on bilateral issues beginning with the nuclear issue. Why don't you read Obama's speeches posted on his web site!!!

-Relationship between North and South are getting constraint after Lee Myung-Bak taking office. It should be pretty negative effect on US-North relations and US-South as well. What is your take on that? Of North and South, which do you think should make concessions?

North Korea is in a very strong negotiating position regarding its nuclear program. It has plenty of plutonium, a few nuclear weapons, has ballistic missiles and very likely can soon put a nuclear bomb on a ballistic missile. This is not a question of concessions but more a question of how best to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. So far Lee Myung-bak's approach has not improved the situation. I would suggest that he think more about how to improve prospects for peace on the Korean Peninsula and spend less time worrying about how to avoid his predecessors' policies toward North Korea. The bottom line is that

the president of South Korea must do what is best for his people.

-Now in US, moderate-left government set to go. But in Korea President Lee Myung-Bak is quite conservative. What do you expect the chemistry of two nations would be?

“Moderate left” and “conservative” are meaningless labels. Both the US and ROK governments want the same thing on the Korean Peninsula – peace and stability as well as an end to North Korea’s nuclear program. I am very confident that both governments’ officials will engage in discussions aimed at coordinating their approaches to North Korea, something that is going on now. The important thing is not the skin color of the American president or whether he is liberal or conservative. More important is his willingness to engage his allies in discussions and coordination of policy. President Bush refused to do this. By the way, Prime Ministers Abe and Aso were “conservative” but neither was comfortable with “conservative” Bush.

-What is the Obama’s thinking about Lee, south president? How would you assess the intimacy between two?

I don’t know.

-About US ‘strategic flexibility’ and redeployment to southern part of Korea of US forces in Korea, there are a lot of worries and discomforts among Korean people. Any uncertainties or vacuum about US deterrence power for Korea?

NO. the best thing for Korea is to ensure that it has a strong defense capability and is working with North Korea to minimize tensions.

-Ruling party of Korea, HannaraDang continues to ask re-negotiations of the timetable of transferring wartime operational command, which is scheduled by April 2012. What’s the possibilities of that and do you think it is going to go ahead smoothly?

My guess is that the US government, after President Bush, will agree to re-negotiate this deadline. By the way, couldn't this also be a "stumbling block?"

-Obama's opposition to US-Korea FTA could be stumbling block for the future relations between two countries. What sort of approaches should Korea and US government take to solve that without any grudge?

I do not think it will be a stumbling block, only a problem to be resolved through negotiations if Obama is elected.

-Finally, on the anti-America feelings, especially young Koreans. How seriously does new administration take it and any steps to cure that problem?

Koreans are not "anti-American." This is a fiction created by some scholars and journalists. Young Koreans, like young Americans, have the right in a democratic society to criticize the policies of their government and that of other governments. I hope some day Korean journalists will realize that Korea is now a democracy and that criticism of government policy is a democratic right. It was the government controlled press of the Pak Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan dictatorships that labeled criticism of US policy by Koreans to be "anti-American."