



# Special Envoy Yun on US Engagement in the Pacific

## TRANSCRIPT

Discussion.....2

- Ambassador Joseph Yun, *Special Presidential Envoy for Compact Negotiations*
- Patrick M. Cronin, *Asia-Pacific Security Chair*

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A video of the event is available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZtNwmuXq6Y>

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**Patrick Cronin:**

We're going to silence the key compact phone here. Okay. Hello, everyone. I'm Patrick Cronin, Asia-Pacific Security Chair here at Hudson Institute in Washington DC. And today, it's a great privilege to be with Ambassador Joseph Yun, who's the Presidential Special Envoy helping to complete the compact negotiations of free association with critical Pacific actors who really are responsible for making sure that the United States has that Pacific positioning to be influential throughout the Indo-Pacific region. And I think very few people really understand just the importance of these compacts, and of the players, and the actors, the people on the ground, on these island states. And so Joe, I wonder if we could just begin by talking about how did the United States get into this position of having Compacts of Free Association? Because many people who know their World War 2 history, know that these were Japanese occupied areas. Right? Many Americans lost their lives fighting back, there was a UN Trusteeship, and then sovereignty was granted, but with these compacts. But maybe you could just fill in some of the blanks of what exactly are these compacts?

**Joseph Yun:**

Well, thank you very much, Patrick, and thanks for Hudson Institute and you for hosting me. So you're right, not many people know what Compacts of Free Association are. When I told my wife that I'm going to be Special Presidential Envoy for Compact Negotiations, she thought I was talking about cars, compact cars. So I had to explain to her. As you mentioned, essentially, at the end of Second World War, United Nations gave to US four territories that used to belong to Japan. These are the Northern Marianas, in essentially area around Saipan, and then Palau, Micronesia, and Marshall Islands, those four. So they became part of what we call as trust territories that US were governing under the UN mandate, essentially. And then about 40 years ago, there was a move, they wanted to have more self-determination, and United States wanted to give more self-determination. So each of them had a vote, had a plebiscite, on the choice between should we remain US territory or should we become a sovereign nation?

So at that time, Northern Marianas, now called Commonwealth of Northern... CNMI, Northern Mariana Island, they voted to remain territory, while the other three voted to be their own sovereign state. And so this process went on for a while to complete independence. And essentially, leading to complete independence, these three former US trust territories wanted special arrangement with the United States, and that's what's known as compact. Compact essentially involves, I would say, four key elements. Number one, they're completely sovereign, but they gave defense responsibility to the United States. So none of the three states have armed forces. US also got the right to essentially have a say on the seas and also what kind of security arrangements that these countries can have with other countries. So the first part is very much based on security. Second part is based on immigration. That is the population of compact states.

These three compact states can come, and live, and work, and study in the United States without having to get visas. So that's quite a unique arrangement. And the third item they got was really the economic assistance United States would provide to these countries, grant assistance essentially in sectors such as healthcare, education, environment, infrastructure. That's the third item, which we call the economic grant and assistance. Fourth item is that the United States agreed that they will be continuing federal programs and services. That includes providing post office for them, things like weather service... I don't think we do weather, but kind of weather analysis, and things like FAA, transportation security, and all those things.

**Patrick Cronin:**

So there are a lot of public goods that are going on?

**Joseph Yun:**

There are a lot of them. So these are the four items that we provide on the compact. The first two are perpetual, that's the security side agreement and also immigration. The last two, economic portions and federal programs and services, they expire 20 years sometimes, some 15. It just happens that this year, the last agreement we reached, which is Compact II will expire. And so I am being charged with negotiating the third generation of economic aspects of the compact.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And just, again, to underscore how important it is to succeed on that, the geography of this region... First of all, yes, the commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and everybody knows Guam because we put a lot of money for the defense of Guam because it's a US territory, but the other three compact countries, they comprise a geography that's essentially equivalent of the continental United States, if not larger, and it's mostly water with scattered islands, could you just say something about the people? Who are the people who are populating these islands, and how do you work them into these negotiations, and how do they introduce their own interests?

**Joseph Yun:**

So Patrick, you are completely right. Essentially, if you look at the map, northern half of the Pacific that is above the equator, you have Hawaiian on one end and you have Philippines in the other end. And these islands are in between. And most of the oceans in these islands either belong to Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Island, or us through Guam, and the Northern Marianas. So they're critical part of Pacific Ocean. And it is also very much relevant obviously in the Second World War, when General MacArthur went island hopping, and famous battles like Peleliu and Kwajalein, and they all took place around there. And so it was very relevant in the Second World War.

And essentially, these oceans formed the foundation of, I would say, United States' security on West Coast. This is Pacific, it's the security. And so it is very relevant today. And of course it is quite relevant as we look at geopolitics of today, namely, we do have China challenge, strategic competition with China. And we have seen southern half, as you go towards the south, you come towards the group of islands known as Melanesia. And you have seen places like Solomon, and to some extent, other places where China is exerting some influence. And really, this geostrategy is a huge factor on why so-called compact states are very, very important to us, especially in our Indo-Pacific strategy.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Yes. "Some influence" is a good diplomatic phrase that vastly understates, I think, what the Chinese are doing, there's elite capture at work, there's bribery, there's outright economic coercion, a desire to build military basing. And I think to get through to that South Pacific without these compacts in place will be a lot easier for the Chinese to expand their influence, to have a free ride on trying to control the larger Indo-Pacific region and beyond, if that's what they want to

do. Who knows what their intentions are, but clearly, their aspirations seem to be big and their capabilities are growing. So without these compacts in place, we lose that access, we do not have the right to say who travels or puts a base into Micronesia or into the Marshall Islands.

**Joseph Yun:**

Absolutely right, Patrick. And I think if you are... as it was the case of Tokyo, or during the Second World War, or just before, or even Beijing now, anyone with ambitions, you do want to control waterways. And parts of compact islands is of course within what the Chinese would call second island chain. So these are strategically very important. And of course, we have military facilities. There is a US base, army base, in Kwajalein in Marshall Islands, for example. So completely right at controlling this half of the Pacific is critical in any kind of geographic sense. Now, about a month ago, President of Micronesia, President of FSM, his name is David Panuelo, wrote a very long letter, it's actually 13-page letter, detailing what the Chinese are doing in his own country, list of coercion, bribery. And he also mentioned other places, corrupting legislators in Solomon Islands, for example.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And offering them money literally-

**Joseph Yun:**

Straightforward money, yeah.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Yes. We want your vote.

**Joseph Yun:**

And so I would really suggest, because this is head of state writing this letter, 13-page letter, that anyone interested in political diplomatic activities around Pacific, take a look at this letter. I think it's the most detailed-

**Patrick Cronin:**

It lifts the veil off-

**Joseph Yun:**

... firsthand item I have seen. So to me, it is quite concerning that this amount of coercion, bribery, and erosion of rule of law, these are taking place in these parts.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Have we neglected the Pacific? I was talking to Ambassador Tom Hubbard the other day. When he was ambassador of the Philippines, I didn't realize he was also technically the ambassador to Palau, or had responsibilities for working with Palau in that position, meaning, from Manila, not from Palau. Have we neglected the Pacific?

**Joseph Yun:**

So I believe when Tom Hubbard was Ambassador, Palau may still have been a territory trustee.

**Patrick Cronin:**

You may be right. You may be right. Okay.

**Joseph Yun:**

It was a while ago. I hope Tom's not listening.

**Patrick Cronin:**

You were a young foreign service officer at the time.

**Joseph Yun:**

I don't think I had even joined... maybe, I don't know. But he may have been there because they did get their independence, I want to say, late '80s. So that may have been right. Now, have we neglected Pacific? The answer is yes, we have neglected Pacific. And so I do appreciate more attention currently being given. We are trying to correct that quite a bit. You have seen us opening embassies, for example, in places like Samoa, Solomon. And then obviously, with compact negotiations, we had the first, in Washington, visit by Pacific Islanders last September summit meeting there. And so now, we're playing a little bit of catch-up, I would say. But we need to accelerate our catch-up.

**Patrick Cronin:**

You have to invest in people, and time, and energy.

**Joseph Yun:**

Absolutely.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And can you just say something about the people you've been able to deal with from these compact states?

**Joseph Yun:**

So if you look at compact states, it's more than about China, it's more than about money. These are very democratic societies. They've had number of democratic transitions. I don't think we've seen an authoritarian regime there yet in any of the states, and completely open press, a lot of civil society, NGO, activity there, and more than that, these immigration rights means that many of their folks live in the United States. I come from Oregon and you see a lot of Marshallese and a lot of Micronesians there, and obviously, a lot of them in Hawaii. And so they are very, very American. It reminds me a lot of being in Guam when I go there, or even Hawaii. And so to me, this is huge asset for the United States and it needs to remain as an asset. But these days,

developing small island economy is just a monumental challenge. And you look at that throughout the Pacific.

And developing any small economy is a challenge. There are obviously exceptions, but these are countries with a hundred thousand or so people. And having governments, legislature, judiciary with a hundred thousand people is, number one, expensive. And then you have the other traditional way of running an economy, say, fisheries, that's been dominated by big trawlers. So it's hard to compete against those Chinese trawlers, Japanese trawlers. So to me, that's the most challenging aspect as I see how do they develop. And I believe compacts are foundational part of their development, so that these compacts through investment and infrastructure, education and environment, can lead to a sustainable development. That's what we're trying to do.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Hopefully, in an era of Starlink satellite technology and other digital technologies, we can communicate better. But even our allies like the Philippines or friendly partners like Indonesia have these vast archipelagic countries where they can't necessarily govern equally everywhere.

**Joseph Yun:**

Yeah. Yeah. But Indonesia is still a country with well over 200 million people, and so they have a revenue base of 200 million people. Philippines now must be about 70 million. Palau is 17,000 people. So it's a completely a different mindset. When you think about Palau, think Vatican as a country. Obviously, they're different.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Yes, no, in terms of the sense... There's another role that the Marshall Islands have played of course in American history, and it's both good and bad. The good side that Americans may not understand is that, in the building up of our nuclear supremacy and arsenal, we conducted a lot of atmospheric tests in the Pacific, in the Marshall Islands. We would not have become the nuclear power and able to stop and deter others from aggression if we'd not been able to build up that arsenal. But we've left the nuclear legacy. How are we dealing with that now today? I know we've compensated the Marshall Islands in time fully and finally, but we've heard this in other context of Japan, Korean negotiations. You can't really be final when the legacy continues. So how are we trying to help deal with this issue now?

**Joseph Yun:**

Yeah. This is a part of history that really, I would say, binds the two nations together, both in a good way and in a not so good way. Between late '40s and throughout '50s, the United States tested about 65, 70 nuclear weapons, nuclear devices in Marshall Islands, especially northern part, the most famous island being Bikini, where we tested these weapons. And the biggest one was so-called Castle Bravo. That was the biggest nuclear device the United States ever tested. I think the Soviets might have tested a bigger nuclear device. And so actually, in some sense, you can call it miscalculation, not unlucky, but they did not predict the wind right, especially with Castle Bravo test. And so the Downwinders really suffered unexpected radiation and damage. And so a lot of inhabitants around Bikini, and Enewetak, and Rongelap, had to be evacuated after the radiation had already hit the islands. And so that was what now, 70 years ago?

So really after that, of course we treated them, pay them compensation, resettle them on other islands. But of course there are lingering issues associated with that. So 40 years ago, there was a special compensation that United States gave them which consisted of supporting a tribunal that was established. But of course radiation continued, especially the population in Bikini have never been able to go back because, still, the land remains radiated. And there are some health effects continuing, so-called transgenerational health effects. And again, I used to deal with Agent Orange issues in Vietnam. This is materially different in the sense because, really, these are economies. As I said, Marshall Islands is 40,000, and when you have quarter of the population that have been affected by this, it puts a tremendous burden on the nation exposed to Agent Orange, which was during a war, number one. And number two, Vietnam is a population of some 70 million, of which very small fractions going to be affected. So they are on a different proportional magnitude, I would say.

So there are four island communities, so-called four atolls, in Northern Marshall Island. And so the Congress has made beyond the initial what we call final settlement, continue to make some ex gratia payments available. And so in the current agreement, we will make some money available in the trust fund. And I have asked the RMI government, since they want to have more determination on how the money is spent, that these amounts, they should spend it as their priorities, make their priorities, discuss with us. And I'm sure their priority will include development and help for these communities that still remain outside their own islands, then that's okay.

**Patrick Cronin:**

So we are joined in history, good and bad. We have strategic value that is invaluable really in terms of the location of these islands. So you've been negotiating this past year on the top line of these three new compacts. Where are you with those negotiations?

**Joseph Yun:**

So as you said, we have reached agreement on top line, and I don't think it's a secret. It's 6.5 billion over 20 years for all three. So simply put, imagine it's about 300 million or 100 million each, even though obviously proportion will differ. So that's a kind of global amount for compact we're talking about. So we've done that. Now, we are negotiating implementing agreement. They will consist of how is the money spent, which identifying sectors, and oversight, reporting requirement and decisions. Because obviously, the money has to be appropriated. And once we have completed doing that, the package will go up to Congress as legislative package. And of course it has to be approved by US Congress.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And by the end of September, in order to meet the expiration date of the current compacts? So you're in a tight timeline.

**Joseph Yun:**

Well, are we in April or May?

**Patrick Cronin:**

Well, end of April. You have plenty of time. You've got the tax extension. Well, I know it's so many stakeholders. In fact, even on the US side, it's not just state department negotiating this, you have partners in this.

**Joseph Yun:**

So I would say, we have three big stakeholders. So there is the interior department. Why interior department? Because they used to be part of US territories. Interior department continued with this traditional role of providing services, economic assistance, and so on. So that's the interior part. And then state department, because it's foreign, we're dealing with sovereign countries. Defense department, because they have, I believe, the most strategic equity in this part of the world, especially the INDO-PACOM command in Hawaii.

**Patrick Cronin:**

But you can't ask them for budgetary support for this compact?

**Joseph Yun:**

Well, they typically do not do economic assistance. So actually, all the money comes from OMB. And thanks to taxpayers like you, this gets done.

**Patrick Cronin:**

So the Office of Management and Budget, which is part of the White House apparatus, decides this is what we're going to ask Congress for. And then Congress has to approve it. Now, the last compact, it was what? A voice vote. And so there should be strong bipartisan support at the end of the day for this, given the importance of this.

**Joseph Yun:**

I hope so. We have been doing the rounds in Congress and there is certainly strong bipartisan support. This is a nonpartisan issue, obviously, strong bipartisan support. And so I'm very optimistic it will get approved by Congress in short time. But before we do that, we have to reach final agreements so we can send up the package.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Well, extremely important work. And I can't think of somebody better qualified than you, Joe, really, to take on all of these stakeholders, both in the US and throughout the region. Complex issues of economics and development, at the same time, you're thinking about the security and strategic dimensions, your work as special envoy for North Korea, and on a personal note, just the fact that you helped to negotiate the return of Otto Warmbier. I'm in touch with his mother, who still cannot understand how did this North Korean regime take her son's life. And you worked so many hours to try to bring him back home safely. And in the end, he had already essentially been brain-dead in captivity. But your work in Malaysia's ambassador to negotiate extremely detailed partnership with the Malaysians, better than we've ever had, two presidential visits hosting, much of that went away because the implosion of domestic politics in Malaysia, nothing to do with foreign policy, but that's the fate.



And now, you've been called back into service essentially saying, "Wait, Joe, you cannot retire, you got to come back and help us make this 20 year Compact of Free Association with these three critical areas in the Pacific. So really important subject, the right man to do it. Are you optimistic that this is going to get done and that we're going to continue to be a Pacific power?"

**Joseph Yun:**

Thanks very much, Patrick, you're too kind. I did ask for a raise, they said no. I am very optimistic. I think we are doing the right thing. And the area that I'm working on, Pacific, there's been difference, which has been neglected. But we are now trying to amend that. And so I think we're in the right direction, but I don't think it's time to say we've done it. I think we have a while to go.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Some hard work ahead. We could take a couple of questions from the audience. I hope we have a microphone. I think we do have a microphone. And Chase, maybe you could go over there... Oh, okay. Here she is. Question over here, and if you just identify yourself first, please.

**Roger Cochetti:**

My name is Roger Cochetti, an author and an editorial contributor on technology policy to The Hill newspaper. And I wanted to stick on the big picture for a moment. You are well qualified to deal with this. The founder of Bridgewater Associates and the largest hedge fund operator in China yesterday wrote an editorial in which he said that, "At this point, war between China and the United States is inevitable, and that discussions between the United States and China have broken down and there are none." Who knows whether that's true or not, but could you share with us, given all the perspective you have on the subject of US, Chinese relations and how you see them developing in the future.

And just a small point, if China has decided that these compact nations are part of its sphere of influence, why wouldn't they just go around to do, as they say in the movies, "Whatever the Americans are offering you, we'll double it." The big picture of US relations with China, and what are the Chinese doing behind your back in the compact negotiations? Thank you.

**Joseph Yun:**

Let me answer the small picture first, because it's always easier to deal with small pictures. You are right, China can go and say, "We will offer you more." But again, as I say, it's not just about money, it's also about immigration rights. I really don't see many Marshallese or Micronesians living in Xinjiang or Shanghai, they mostly want to live in the US. And that's a very important part of compact. I also think it's the cultural connection. There is depth to cultural connection to the United States that they have. And in fact, the current president of Micronesia and vice president, believe it or not, went to Eastern Oregon University.

So I think that these connections do bind. And the last point I want to make on small picture item is, again, the letter by David Panuelo. So he says that, this is the president of Micronesia, he said he just got so sick and tired of Chinese ambassador calling on his cell phone, he had to change his cell phone. So these are the things that do not appeal to compact states' mentality. And I think that mentality is very important. So that's a small part of the issue. What is going to happen to US-China relations? Is war inevitable? I don't think war is inevitable at all.

And I think anyone who says war is inevitable, or that anyone who says China's going to invade Taiwan in 2027... they cannot know. They cannot know. I'm a diplomat, and I tried my damndest to talk to North Koreans. I was so successful at it, they're completely denuclearized now. And so I believe in talking. And so it is really too bad we're not talking as openly as we used to, whether it's with Chinese or whoever. And you can fault whoever you want. But ultimately, I do believe both sides have to talk, set the floor. And I think we're getting there. And so I do believe that war is completely not inevitable, that there will be discussions. And you've seen early move to that with statements by treasury secretary as well as-

**Patrick Cronin:**

Jake Sullivan yesterday.

**Joseph Yun:**

... Jake Sullivan yesterday. So I don't think war is inevitable at all.

Patrick Cronin:

Right. And that's been echoed by a lot of other experts like you, Joe. Richard Haass, this week, as the President of the Council on Foreign Relations said war is not inevitable. Kevin Rudd, the ambassador from Australia, former prime minister, China expert, in his book *The Avoidable War*. But things are getting riskier, things are getting more dangerous, and the fact that Chinese are not answering the phone on hotlines is concerning. So they're building up, this document that leaked about global basing that they're interested lifts the veil off what China might be trying to do to build not just commercial support but other logistical and military bases globally. And that's why it's more important to come back to the compact states. And this is something we control, right? We actually have an ability, unlike North Korean denuclearization, you can actually get this over the finishing line, give it to Congress, we can fund this, and we can try to keep that position in the Pacific.

**Joseph Yun:**

Thank you. Exactly. Yep.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Anyway, if there's another question or two, I think we'll take a couple more questions before we wrap up this program. We've got two hands up.

**Ken Harada:**

Hi. Thank you ambassador. Thank you for your insight for discussion. My name is Ken Harada from JiJi Press, Japanese news agency. I have two questions, and one is about... there's a report a couple of days ago about President Biden might make a visit to Papua New Guinea on the occasion of his visit to G7 Summit or Quad Summit to the Australia. I'm sure it's difficult for you to mention about his visit, but if it's realized, how do you see the importance of this visit, and how important it is for these countries like Pacific Islands? And second one is about the economy. As you mentioned, the market or the population of these areas is very small compared to other areas, like ASEAN or other Asian areas. So how do the countries like US,

not only the US but also Japan and Korea, can invest in these areas? How these countries can help these areas for the economic development of these areas? Thank you.

**Joseph Yun:**

Thank you very much. On your first question, obviously, I, as a diplomat working on the Pacific area, any high level engagement is welcome, whether it is Pacific Islanders coming here, as they did last September at the summit level, any occasion I think would be great. And obviously, of course for the Pacific, I'm sure they would welcome President Biden warmly if he were to go there. So I don't think that decision has been fully made. So it is a good thing whenever heads of state get engaged on your issues. So that's good.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And I should just explain for the audience, that logistically, it's at least theoretically possible because the president is due to go to Hiroshima for the G7 Summit and then go to Sydney, Australia for the Quadrilateral Security Leaders among other things. So in between that geography, there were places that he could stop.

**Joseph Yun:**

Well, there are many places in between that he could stop. So on your second question of what can countries like Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan, and so on, do to help? If you look at their economy, I would say, the most successful one has been Palau. Palau has really developed its tourism very, very well. They have good facilities. They were hit hard by Chinese boycott, and COVID of course. And so they're recovering that. But in order to do that, you need infrastructure, airport, hotels, and so on. So investment by South Korea, Japan... and those are the two countries that supported tourism industry in Palau, and less so in FSM and in Marshall Islands. But I think tourism is a big, big item, and secondarily, fishing. Fishing is big item for them. So I think that can also take place. And then your basic assistance, such as JICA or KOICA, would be very helpful.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And I would've just add to that. So not only can they help bilaterally or trilaterally, but if you think about the initiatives at the G7 and the push for the global partnership for infrastructure investment is a heavy focus on the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia there, as well as in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, they're advancing the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, which helps on the illegal fishing and information. And Korea's invited to the G7, so it obviously can play a role there. And there's a lot of interest in having the Koreans join on some of the projects that relate to the Quad without being a member of the Quad. So whether it's officially Quad or not, getting involved in maritime domain awareness might be a possibility that could help, especially down in the Pacific Islands areas. But last question right over here, and then we're going to wrap this up in a few minutes. Yes, sir.

**Ken Harada:**

Hi, Ambassador Yun. Again, thank you for your remarks. So I found it very interesting that the Chinese ambassador in Micronesia actually called the cell phone of the president there and he had to change his cell phone. Could I ask you to maybe share a bit more details about that?

Why did he call the Micronesian president? What is China's purpose in trying to do all these things, and how often did he call the president? Thank you.

**Joseph Yun:**

Yeah, I would suggest, there is a 13-page letter, so I think, you should read it because I don't want to paraphrase what he said. So you should read that.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And that's available online?

**Joseph Yun:**

Yeah, it's available.

**Patrick Cronin:**

And it enumerates exactly what he felt as president. He was hearing from the Chinese and very aggressive lobbying, and more than that going on the part of the Chinese.

**Joseph Yun:**

Yeah, it's available online.

**Ken Harada:**

So what's the ultimate purpose of China in the region?

**Joseph Yun:**

Ultimate purpose. I believe it's, again, to have influence, especially in economic and security area. Let's face it, it is strategic competition between China and us, as well as countries that support us, like South Korea, Japan, and others. So that's the big picture under which all this is happening.

**Patrick Cronin:**

You might say we want a free and open Indo-Pacific, but I think this is indeed a big question of competition. The Chinese are playing a bigger game than just a military game. And I think that's the point. When you think about their outreach to the developing world, what some people call the global south, trying to build institutions that allow for more favorable Beijing role and voice, but indirectly displacing US power and displacing the current rules-based system rather than trying to reform and adapt that system for all, including how the Chinese have benefited from that when you think about World Trade Organization accession. So a lot of this comes down into the Pacific because that extension, you invest in Malaysia, but just south of there, when you get down to the Pacific, all of that is very much part of the central competitive zone.

And that's why the Chinese have been so active. So when I was suggesting that maybe we'd neglected it, it's partly because the Chinese awakened the Australians, the New Zealanders, the Americans, and others in the region that, you better get more active down here because the

Chinese are extremely active and they have a different blueprint from yours. And I think that is the big picture. But just the final word, Joe, in terms of trying to wrap up, again, the importance of these Compacts of Free Association, why this is important? And the final elevator speech here on, what is at stake here? Why should we be engaging in these compacts of free negotiation for another 20 years?

**Joseph Yun:**

Yeah. I'd like to come back to what I'd begun with, which is that United States is the luckiest geographic state in the world, in the sense that it's got two oceans on either side, Atlantic and Pacific. And that's been the reason why US could prosper, develop, and become strong. And so we're talking about now the Pacific side. And US control of the Pacific is crucial for homeland security ultimately, but also for projection of US forces throughout Asia Pacific, whether it's a North Korean peninsula contingency, Taiwan contingency, you name it, it has to be there. So this is why I think the most important client I have is the INDO-PACOM command in Hawaii. And so in any kind of competition with China, it is crucial that we put the fence and continue to make sure that we have a fence that we can defend, we can project force, and ultimately, essentially give us the basing rights as well as strategic denial rights.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Well, I can see why the president made you special envoy for these compact negotiations. This has been a valuable learning experience for me.

**Joseph Yun:**

Thank you very much.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Thank you, Joe. Please join me in thanking Ambassador Joe Yun.

**Joseph Yun:**

Thank you.

**Patrick Cronin:**

Thank you all for coming today.