

One year after the Singapore summit

What do the publics of the US, China, Japan and Russia think about the situation in the Korean Peninsula?

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One year has passed since the historic summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-un on June 12 in Singapore. The summit marked the first meeting between the sitting leaders of both countries. There were also three inter-Korean summits between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Kim last year; only two had been held before since the end of the Korean War. Twelve months after the Singapore summit, however, diplomacy in the Korean Peninsula seems to have stalled following the failure of Trump and Kim to reach an agreement during their February 27-28 summit in Hanoi.

In this context, what do the publics of the US, China, Japan and Russia think about the situation in the Korean Peninsula? After all, these four powers have a keen interest in its geopolitics and Northeast Asia more generally. And public opinion has the potential to influence foreign policy decisions. With this survey, we shed light on the views that the publics of these four countries hold regarding the present and future of the Korean Peninsula. The focus of the survey is inter-Korean relations, US-North Korea relations and policy towards North Korea.

The survey by Ipsos Mori was carried out in the period from 24th May - 4th June. It involved 1004 interviews in China, 1000 in Japan, 1099 in Russia and 1096 in the United States, respectively. Its key findings include:

- 1. Majorities in China and Russia believe that inter-Korean relations are better today than they were a year ago.** In the case of the US and Japan, pluralities believe that relations between both Koreas are about the same.
- 2. In most instances in the four countries respondents think that Kim is the leader most responsible for the evolution in inter-Korean relations, regardless of whether they think that relations are more stable, less stable or about the same as they were a year ago.** The only exception is amongst Americans who think that relations have become more stable, who credit South Korean President Moon Jae-in with this outcome by the narrowest of margins.
- 3. A plurality of US, Japanese and Russian respondents think that US-North Korea relations are similar today to what they were a year ago.** But a majority of Chinese respondents believe that relations are better today.
- 4. A majority of American citizens and a plurality of Japanese citizens who believe that US-North Korea relations are better credit Trump, whereas a majority of Chinese citizens and a plurality of Russian citizens credit both Trump and Kim.** Meanwhile, majorities in China and Russia and a plurality in the US who think that relations have got worse blame Trump. In the case of Japanese citizens who share this view, a plurality believe that Kim is the main culprit.
- 5. A majority of Americans and Japanese advocate a mixture of diplomacy and sanctions to deal with North Korea.** A majority of Russians support diplomacy only. China is split, with an

equal share of citizens supporting either diplomacy and sanctions or diplomacy only.

6. A majority of US and Japanese citizens believe that denuclearization is the first priority when dealing with North Korea. A plurality of Chinese citizens agree. In the case of Russia, a plurality believe that inter-Korean peace is the first priority.

7. A plurality in China think that their country should act as a mediator between the US and North Korea. Pluralities in Japan and Russia believe that their country should not intervene in US-North Korea relations, in the case of Japan by a narrow margin above those who think that their country should support the US.

8. Majorities of American and Chinese citizens believe that improved US-North Korea relations will have a positive impact on their country. A plurality of Japanese citizens agree. In the case of Russia, a plurality think that it will have no impact on their country.

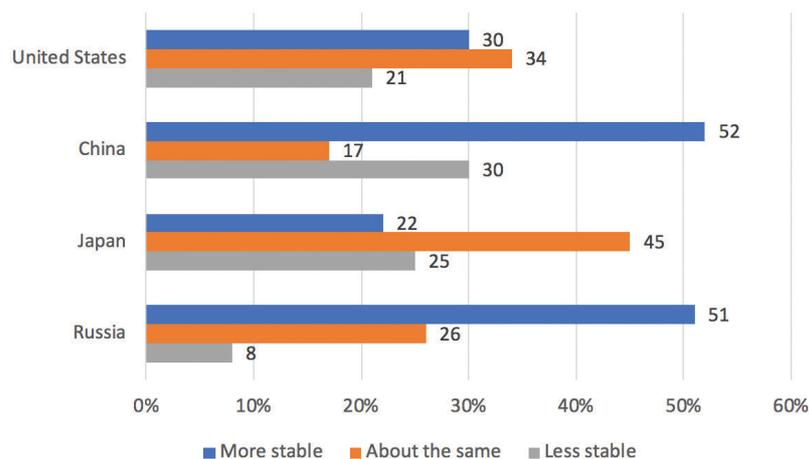
9. A majority of Americans, Chinese and Russians believe that their country should support better inter-Korean relations. In the case of Japan, a plurality think that their country should remain neutral.

10. Majorities of Americans, Chinese and Russians think that improved inter-Korean relations would have a positive impact on their country. A plurality of Japanese also share this view.

1. Compared with 12 months ago, do you think that the relationship between North and South Korea is now more stable, less stable, or about the same?

North Korea has increased its diplomatic outreach since the Singapore summit twelve months ago, including a third summit between Kim and Moon. On the other hand, North Korea has recently resumed missile testing. We wanted to know the views of respondents regarding whether inter-Korean relations have become more stable or not during this period of time. Chinese and Russians are most positive about the state of inter-Korean relations today compared to twelve months ago. 52 percent and 51 percent, respectively, think that relations are more stable. In contrast, only 30 percent of Americans and 22

percent of Japanese think that the summit has helped inter-Korean relations. Interestingly, however, Chinese seem to be polarised. 30 percent of them believe that inter-Korean relations are less stable today than they were a year ago. This figure is higher than for Japan and the US, with 25 percent of Japanese and 21 percent of Americans believing that the summit has made relations less stable. Meanwhile, it should be noted that 45 percent of Japanese, 34 percent of Americans, 26 percent of Russians and 17 percent of Chinese do not believe that inter-Korean relations have changed significantly over the past year.



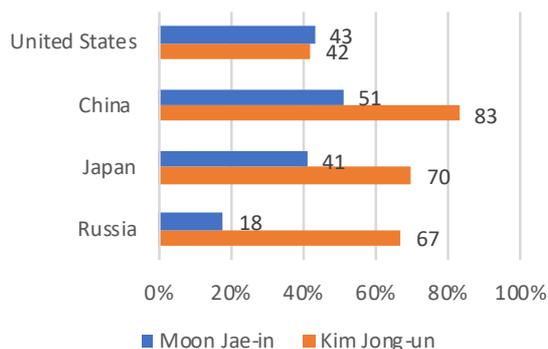
2. Which, if any, of the following leaders do you think is most responsible for the current state of the relationship between North and South Korea?

We wanted to know which leader respondents think was responsible for the state of inter-Korean relations one year after the Singapore summit, whether it be Moon or Kim (note that we allowed respondents to choose more than one option, and the sum of percentages in some of the countries goes above 100 percent). Among those who think that relations are more stable, a majority in China, Japan and Russia think that Kim has been more responsible. 83 percent, 70 percent and 67 percent, respectively, think that the North Korean leader is solely or jointly responsible for more stable inter-Korean relations. In contrast, 51 percent of Chinese, 41 percent of Japanese and 18 percent of Russians believe that Moon has been solely or jointly responsible for better relations between both Koreas. In the case of the US, 43 percent of respondents believe that the South Korean leader is solely or jointly responsible for better inter-Korean relations, while 42 percent think that it is Kim.

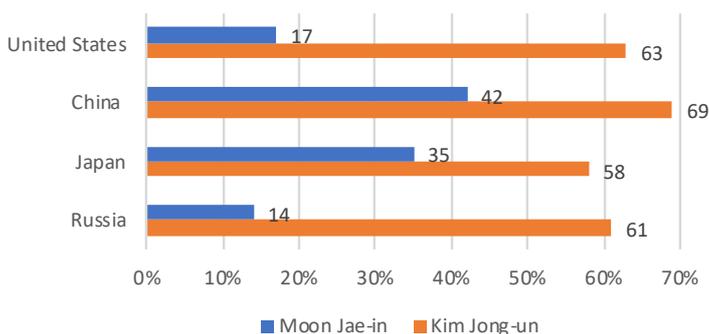
Among those who believe that inter-Korean relations are about the same as they were one year ago, a majority think that Kim has been more responsible. 69 percent of Chinese, 63 percent of Americans, 61 percent of Russians and 58 percent of Japanese think that the North Korean leader is solely or jointly responsible for relations not having changed. Meanwhile, 42 percent of Chinese, 35 percent of Japanese, 17 percent of Americans and 14 percent of Russians think that Moon is solely or jointly responsible for more stable inter-Korean relations. In contrast, 51 percent of Chinese, 41 percent of Japanese and 18 percent of Russians believe that Moon has been solely or jointly responsible for better relations between both Koreas. In the case of the US, 43 percent of respondents believe that the South Korean leader is solely or jointly responsible for better inter-Korean relations, while 42 percent think that it is Kim.

When it comes to those who think that the relationship between North and South Korea is less stable now than it was twelve months ago, a majority also hold Kim as the most responsible among the leaders of both Koreas. 78 percent of Americans, 77 percent of Russians, 71 percent of Chinese and 65 percent of Japanese think that the North Korean leader is jointly or solely responsible for less stable relations. As for Moon, 53 percent of Japanese, 49 percent of Chinese, 19 percent of Russians and 9 percent of Americans think that it is his responsibility, either by himself or together with Kim.

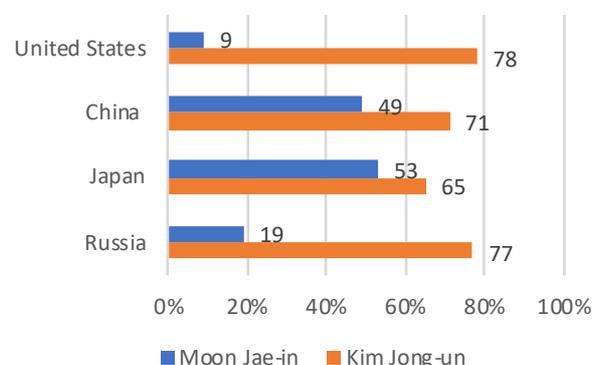
More stable



About the same



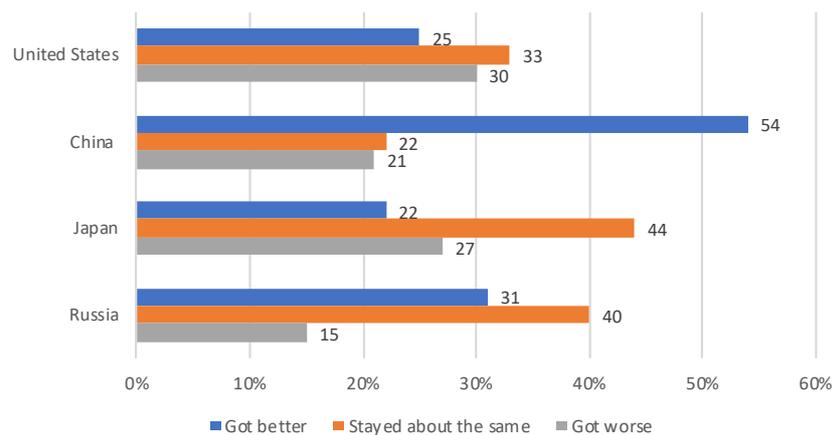
Less stable



3. Compared with 12 months ago, do you think that US-North Korean relations have now got better, got worse, or have they stayed about the same?

The Singapore summit, diplomacy involving North Korea since then including a second summit between Trump and Kim, and recent North Korean missile tests are among the events that should shape perceptions of the current state of US-North Korea relations compared to a year ago. We wanted to know whether, according to respondents, this relationship is now better or worse. It is Chinese who believe that US-North Korea relations have a more positive relationship today compared to a year ago. 54 percent of them think that they have got better during this time. In contrast, only 31 percent of Russians, 25 percent of Americans and 22 percent of Japanese,

respectively, think that it is the case. Meanwhile, more American and Japanese think that relations have got worse compared to one year ago. 30 percent and 27 percent, respectively, do. In the case of China and Russia, 21 percent and 15 percent, respectively, think that relations are worse compared to a year ago. A significant number of respondents think that US-North Korea relations have not changed much. 44 percent of Japanese, 40 percent of Russians, 33 percent of Americans and 22 percent of Chinese think that relations have stayed about the same compared to twelve months ago.



4. Which, if any, of the following leaders do you think is most responsible for the current state of the relationship between the US and North Korea?

We wanted to know which leader respondents thought was responsible for the state of US-North Korea relations one year after the Singapore summit, whether Donald Trump, Kim Jong-un or both equally. Among those who think that relations have got better, a majority credit Trump in the US: 57 percent. The figures are 39 percent in Japan, 34 percent in Russia and 32 percent in China. In China, a majority credit both Trump and Kim equally: 51 percent. In Russia it is a plurality that shares this view: 43 percent. The figures are 32 percent in Japan and 29 percent in

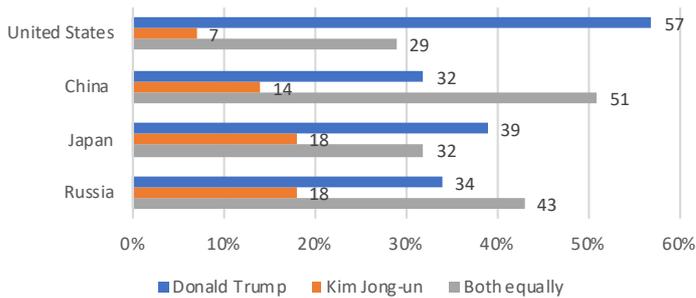
the US, respectively. Those who think that relations between the US and North Korea have got better over the past twelve months and credit Kim are a minority across the four countries. 18 percent of Japanese and Russians, 14 percent of Chinese and 7 percent of Americans, respectively, think this way.

Among those who believe that US-North Korea relations have stayed the same compared to one year ago, a plurality in China, the US and Japan believe that this is due to both Trump and Kim. 45 percent

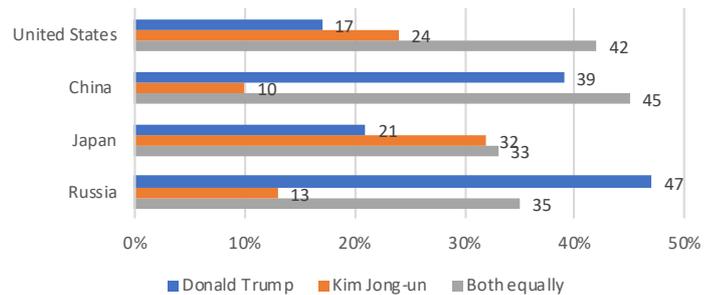
of Chinese, 42 percent of Americans and 33 percent of Japanese think this way. The figure is 35 percent for Russia. In Russia, a plurality of respondents think that Trump is more responsible for relations having stayed the same. 47 percent of Russians think this way. The figure is 39 percent for China, 21 percent for Japan and 17 percent for the US. In the case of Japan, 32 percent of respondents think that Kim is responsible for relations being the same as one year ago – almost the same figure who think that both leaders are equally responsible. Kim is considered to be responsible for the same relations by 24 percent in the US, 13 percent in Russia and 10 percent in China. When it comes to those who think that the relationship between the US and North Korea has got worse

compared to twelve months ago, a majority holds Trump responsible in China and Russia. 55 percent and 54 percent, respectively, think this way. The figure for the US is 40 percent, and 24 percent for Japan. In Japan, a plurality (40 percent) of respondents holds Kim responsible for the worsening in relations. The figure is 22 percent for the US, 14 percent for Russia and 9 percent for China. Meanwhile, 33 percent of Chinese, 31 percent of Americans and 27 percent of both Japanese and Russians hold the view that both Trump and Kim are equally responsible for worse relations between the US and North Korea.

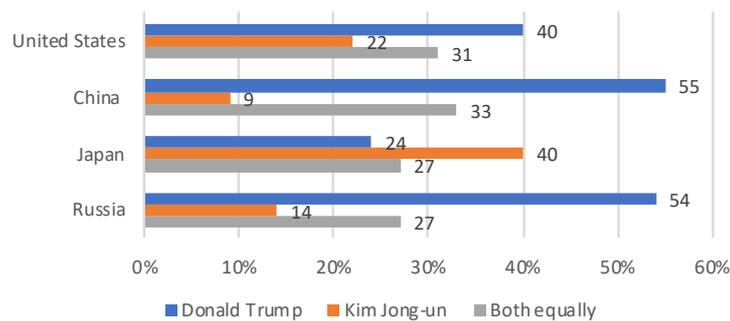
Got better



Stayed about the same



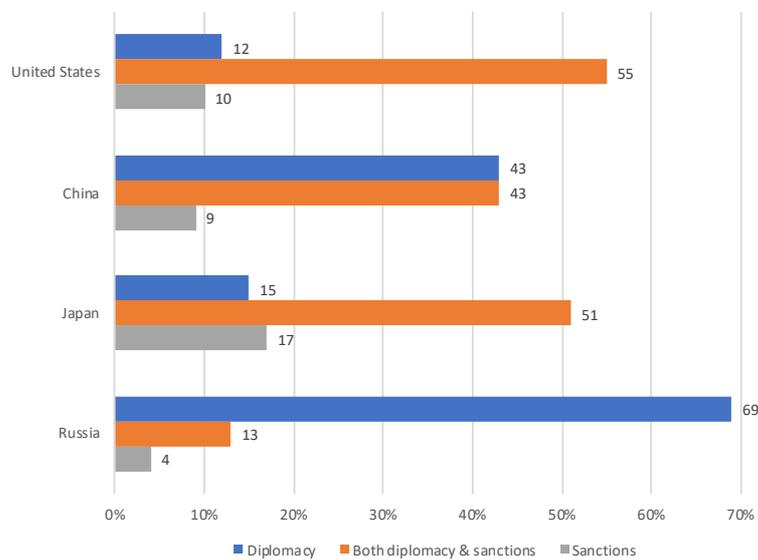
Got worse



5. Which of the following policies do you think the international community should prioritise when dealing with North Korea?

There are several policy options to deal with North Korea, but diplomacy and sanctions are the most commonly discussed. At 55 percent and 51 percent, respectively majorities of American and Japanese respondents believe that both diplomacy and sanctions should be prioritised. Meanwhile, 43 percent of Chinese and 13 percent of Russian respondents believe in this option. Diplomacy is the most popular

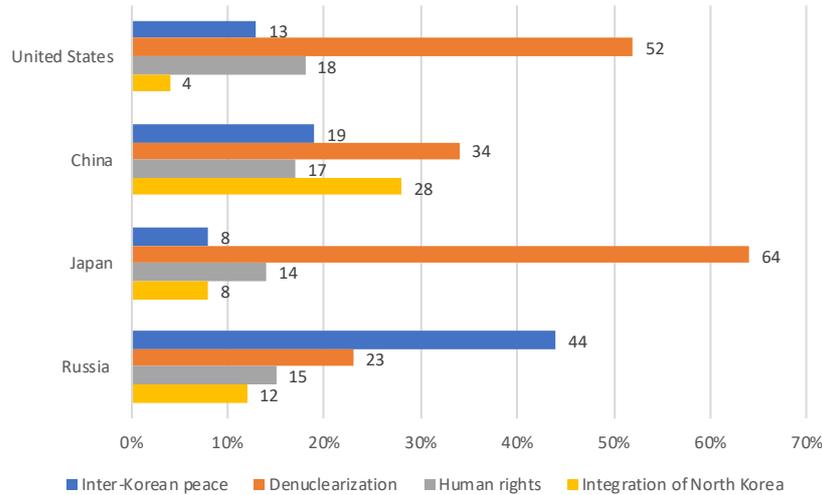
option among Russian and Chinese respondents with 69 percent and 43 percent, respectively. In contrast, only 15 percent of Japanese and 12 percent of American respondents choose this option. Sanctions alone are supported by 17 percent of Japanese, 10 percent of Americans, 9 percent of Chinese and 4 percent of Russians.



6. Which of these goals do you think the international community should prioritise when dealing with North Korea?

There are several goals that the international community might want to achieve when dealing with North Korea. Respondents were given the following four options to choose from: peace/reconciliation between North Korea and South Korea, denuclearization of North Korea, improving the human rights of the North Korean population, and integration of North Korea in the international community. In Japan, the United States and China, denuclearization was the most popular first priority, with 64 percent, 52 percent and 34 percent of respondents, respectively, choosing it. In Russia, only 23 percent of respondents

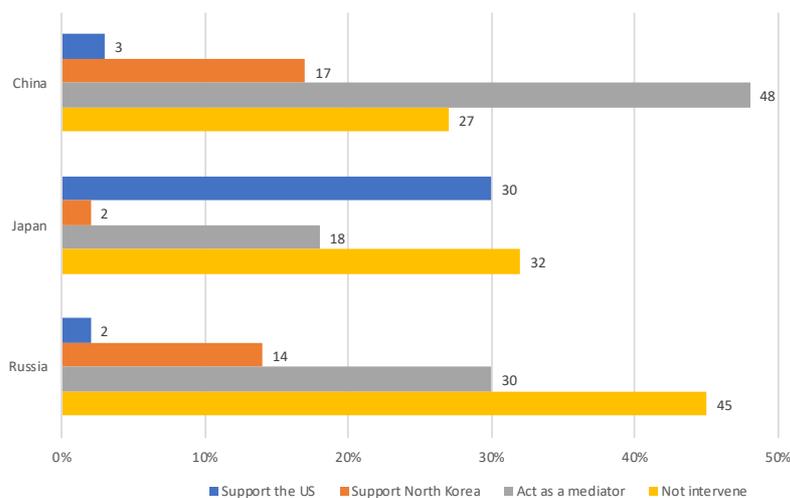
did so. Peace between North Korea and South Korea was chosen as the first priority by 44 percent of Russian, 19 percent of Chinese, 13 percent of American and 8 percent of Japanese respondents. Meanwhile, improving the human rights of the North Korean population was the first priority for 18 percent of American, 17 percent of Chinese, 15 percent of Russian, and 14 percent of Japanese respondents. Integration of North Korea in the international community was the top priority for 28 percent of Chinese, 12 percent of Russian, 8 percent of Japanese and 4 percent of American respondents.



7. What political position, if any, do you think your country should take in any future US-North Korea negotiations?

The outcome of any future negotiations between the US and North Korea could have far-reaching consequences for stability on the Korean Peninsula, and in Northeast Asia more broadly. Other players could choose to support the US, support North Korea, act as a mediator or simply restrain from intervening at all. For all three surveyed countries, a plurality of the public prefers not to take sides in any future US-North Korea relations. 45 percent of Russians, 32 percent of Japanese and 27 percent of Chinese think that their country should act as a bystander. In the

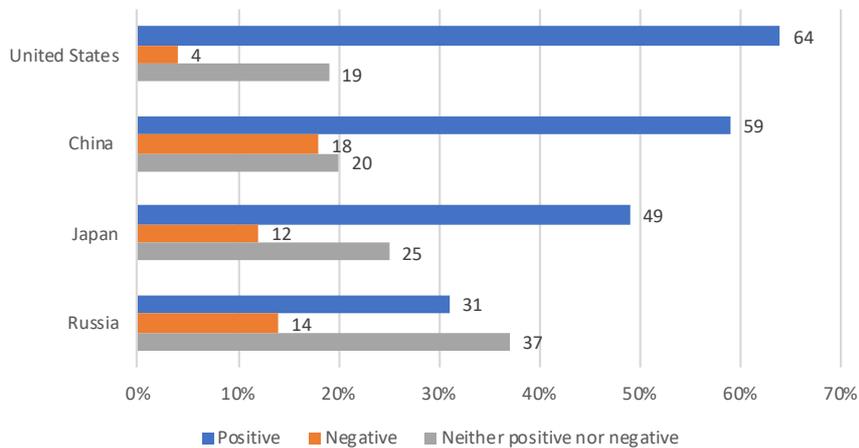
case of China, 48 percent of respondents think that their country should act as a mediator. The figure is 30 percent in Russia and 18 percent in Japan. When looking at those who do propose to pick a side, 30 percent of Japanese think their country should support the US. Only 3 percent of Chinese and 2 percent of Russians think that their country should do the same. Conversely, 17 percent of Chinese and 14 percent of Russians prefer to support North Korea. The figure is only 2 percent in Japan.



8. If US-North Korea relations were to improve, would this impact your country in a positive or negative way, or neither?

For many decades, the United States and North Korea have had a turbulent relationship. A majority or plurality of Americans, Chinese and Japanese see an improvement in US-North Korea as something to be welcomed by their own countries. Americans are the most positive in this regard, with 64 percent expecting a positive impact for the US. Meanwhile, 59 percent of Chinese, 49 percent of Japanese and 31 percent of Russians think that better US-North Korea relations will have a positive impact on their

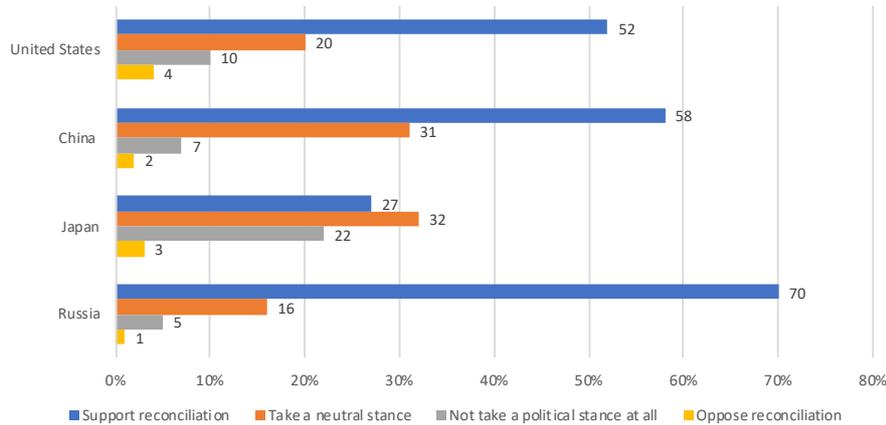
respective countries. In the case of Russia, 37 percent of respondents expect improved US-North Korea relations to have a neutral impact on their own country – making it the largest group. The figure is 25 percent for Japan, 20 percent for China and 19 percent for the US. Meanwhile, 18 percent, 14 percent, 12 percent and 4 percent of Chinese, Russians, Japanese and Americans, respectively think that improved US-North Korea relations will have negative consequences for their own countries.



9. Should your country support, oppose, take a neutral stance in peace/reconciliation negotiations between North Korea and South Korea, or not take a political stance at all?

The inter-Korean conflict has been in a stalemate for many decades with little progress. A majority of respondents support the reconciliation negotiations between both Koreas. Russian respondents are the most supportive of reconciliation with 70 percent backing it, followed by China and the US at 58 percent and 52 percent respectively. In the case of Japan, 27 percent support reconciliation. A plurality of 32 percent of Japanese is in favour of a neutral stance

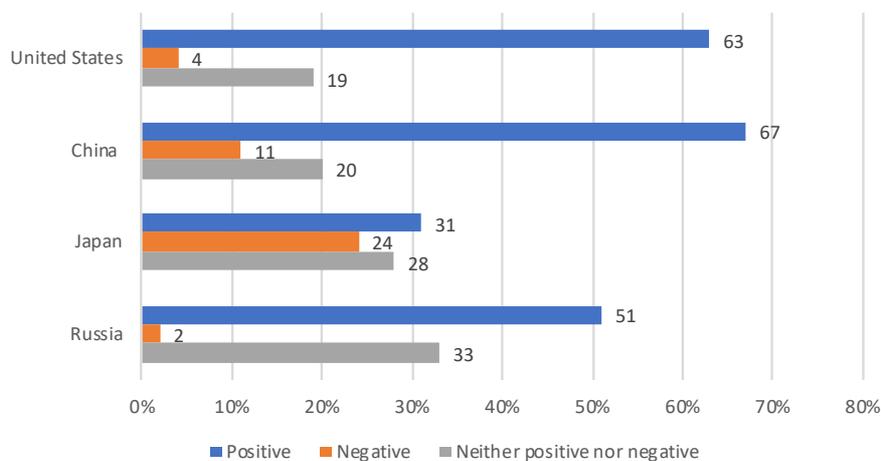
and only 27 percent support reconciliation. The figure is 31 percent for China, 20 percent for the US and 16 percent for Russia. Meanwhile, only 4 percent of Americans, 3 percent of Japanese, 2 percent of Chinese and 1 percent of Russians oppose inter-Korean reconciliation. Also, 22 percent of Japanese think that their country should not take a stance at all. The figure is 10 percent for the US, 7 percent for China and 5 percent for Russia.



10. If North Korea-South Korean relations improved in the future, do you feel that this would have a positive or a negative impact on your country?

There is an assumption that improved relations between both Koreas could lead to a so-called ‘peace dividend’. Thus, we wanted to know whether respondents thought that better inter-Korean relations could have a positive impact, or not, on their country. Chinese respondents are most supportive of the idea that better inter-Korean relations would be positive for their country, with 67 percent believing so. In the US and Russia, with 63 percent and 51 percent of respondents, respectively, hold the same view. In Japan, 31 percent of respondents believe that improved inter-Korean

relations would translate into a positive impact for their country. Meanwhile 24 percent of Japanese think that improved inter-Korean relations would have a negative impact for Japan. The figure is 11 percent for China, 4 percent for the US and 2 percent for Russia. As for those who think that improved inter-Korean relations would have neither a positive nor a negative impact on their countries, 33 percent of Russians, 28 percent of Japanese, 20 percent of Chinese and 19 percent of Americans hold this view.



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