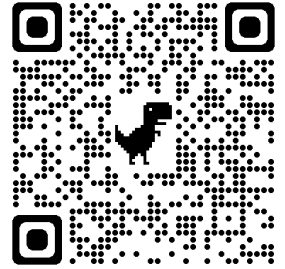# World watching Republican race

Former US President Donald Trump is trying to wrap up his party's nomination as he campaigns for the latest primary in South Carolina, but he struggled to win over many Republicans.   David Kochel has worked for decades in the party trenches holding every job from field staffer to senior strategist.   Mr. Kochel, thank you for joining us today.

Thank you for having me.

Well, Trump is facing off this weekend against Nikki Haley who was born and raised in South Carolina. She's even served, of course, as governor there.   How do you see this latest nominating contest playing out?

Well, I think Trump is in a very strong position.   It looks to me like the first couple of contests he won Iowa significantly, he won New Hampshire, it was closer, he's very strong in South Carolina.   It does look like he's on the way to the nomination at least in terms of building up the delegates.   Nikki Haley is out making a pretty compelling case against Trumpism and Donald Trump for the nomination.   You never know what the future holds with all the court cases and everything else.   There needs to be a case made inside the Republican party for what it would look like without Donald Trump at the top of the ticket.

There are some Republican voters who have said that they won't vote for Trump if he becomes the nominee. What do you think that says about the state of the Republican party at this moment and time?

We're a fractured party right now.   He's a divisive figure inside the party.   He's a divisive figure in the country.   I think he's got the potential to….   First of all, he can win the general election.   There's no doubt Biden is weak.   People view him as too old.   Trump appears more vigorous.   But there are a number of Republicans, I'm one of them frankly, who is turned off by the rhetoric, who is turned off by the chaos.

Why do you think these are the only candidates we have been able to produce in the US?

Yeah, that's a great question.   There are also a lot of democrats who won't be supporting Biden.   I think we're in a race to the bottom.   It's a race that the country really doesn't want to see.   I don't think that most people want to see a rematch between Trump and Biden.   But here we are.   The primary system has produced what it's producing.   Once Biden decided he was going to run for reelection, it's very very difficult to unseat a sitting incumbent President in a primary.   The Republican question is a little more difficult. Obviously, the Republican party has become more populous under Trump.   There are a lot of voters who are going to be turned off by both of these candidates.

Trump has said he'd encourage Russian forces to do whatever they want to NATO countries that don't spend enough on defense.   Do you really think this reflects the Republicans views on foreign policy?

Well, I think Europe is rightfully concerned.   Very concerned.   I don't think that is the majority position inside the Republican party at all.   In fact, I think most Republicans strongly support NATO.   So, it's very concerning.   I think it's concerning to a lot of Republicans as well.   The way you hear Republicans who support Trump talk about it, they kind of talk about it like he's not really serious or he just says crazy things. He doesn't really mean it.   He was President for 4 years and didn't get us out of NATO, so we'll have to see what he does.   If he's elected the actions will speak louder than the words, I think.

Thank you very much for your insights, Mr. Kochel.

Thanks for having me.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.
1.   Why do you think Donald Trump is popular among the Republican party?
2.   Do you know any differences between the Republican party and Democratic party?
3.   Who do you predict will win the 2024 Presidential election?   Why?
4.   What is most concerning for Japanese if Trump is elected president?   What is most concerning if Biden continues to be president?
5.   Both Biden and Trump have unfavorable images among voters.   What could they do to turn their image around?