

Asan Issue Brief Release:

“MAASGA: Making American and Allied Shipbuilding Great Again”

SEOUL, August 29, 2025 – Dr. Peter K. LEE, research fellow in the Center for Regional Studies at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, published a new *Asan Issue Brief*, titled “MAASGA: Making American and Allied Shipbuilding Great Again.”

The *Issue Brief* examines the ROK-U.S. “Make American Shipbuilding Great Again” (MASGA) initiative as a key element of how the ROK can contribute to U.S. imperatives of shipbuilding renewal and naval sustainment.

It argues that the Trump administration should look beyond just financial investments and adopt a holistic strategy aimed at making both American and allied shipbuilding great again by leveraging South Korea’s world-class shipbuilding capacity.

First, it discusses the dilemma facing the United States between long-term industrial renewal and short-term wartime sustainment requirements, and President Trump’s mixed messages of allies as competitors and allies as assets.

Second, the *Issue Brief* discusses how President Trump’s attitude towards shipbuilding cooperation with allies has evolved. It also presents efforts by the U.S. Department of Defense and major ROK shipbuilders, which represent the foundation for ROK-U.S. shipbuilding cooperation between the Lee and the second Trump administrations.

Third, it examines the July 2025 ROK-U.S. “Make American Shipbuilding Great Again” (MASGA), a \$150 billion “investment” pledge, announced as part of a revised trade deal between the two countries.

Fourth, it discusses how money alone will not fix the U.S. shipbuilding challenge and why the United States should utilize ROK shipyards given capacity constraints.

- The ROK, along with other U.S. Indo-Pacific allies, should frame the task not as a direct cash transfer, but as two-fold of helping American industrial renewal and meeting the demands of forward naval sustainment.

Finally, it offers three policy recommendations for the ROK:

1. Establishing a clear control tower for shipbuilding cooperation,
2. Incorporating shipbuilding contributions in burden-sharing negotiations, and

3. Coordinating with other allies on legislative reforms necessary for shipbuilding cooperation.

Dr. Lee concludes that, “Leveraging and maximizing production capacity in ROK and allied shipyards to support sustainment and shipbuilding will help meet the short-term imperatives facing the United States as it continues the long-term renewal of an industrial base that has atrophied over many decades.”

The Issue Brief is available for download at:

https://asaninst.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=s1_1_eng&wr_id=253

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About the Asan Institute for Policy Studies

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