PROCEEDINGS

May 14, 2024 | GRAND HYATT SEOUL

THE ASAN INSTITUTE for POLICY STUDIES

ASAN PLENUM 2024

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for POLICY STUDIES

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Greetings from the Chairman

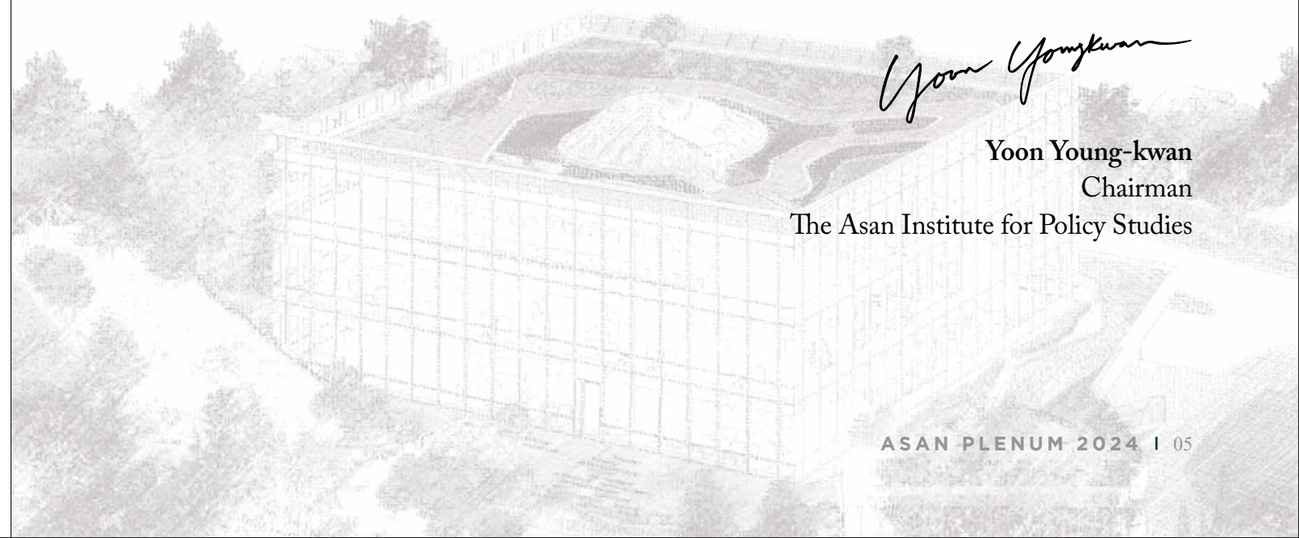
Welcome to the Asan Plenum 2024!

The theme of the Asan Plenum 2024 is "Future of Asia: Prosperity and Security." Asia is entering a new era of strategic competition between rival blocs which are engaged in multiple contests. Tensions are rising around key maritime and territorial flashpoints which are fueling a regional arms race. Non-military domains are also being securitized while protectionism and de-risking are replacing open borders and free trade.

We are thrilled to have you here with us to navigate a path through these unprecedented crises, striking the right balance between competition and cooperation, as well as deterrence and dialogue. Your participation is essential to our efforts, and we are honored to have you join us.

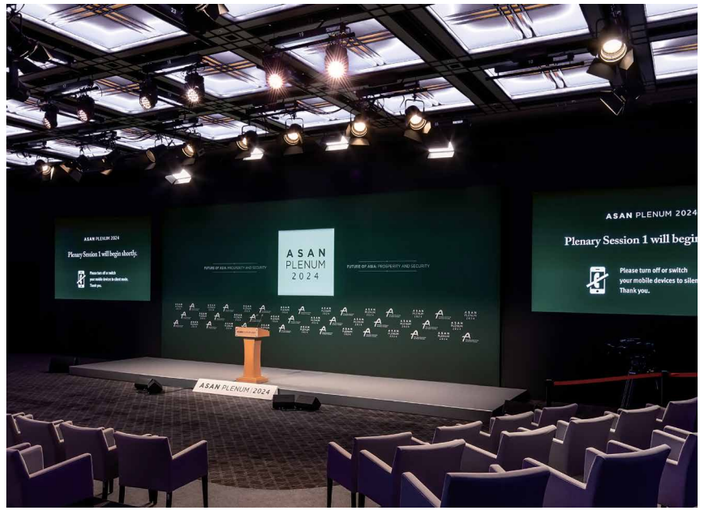
As in previous years, the Asan Plenum 2024 brings together renowned scholars from around the world to engage in intensive dialogue and analysis. We believe your contributions to the conference will be invaluable, and we look forward to fruitful discussions and insights during the event.

Thank you for joining us, and we hope that you will enjoy the conference.



Yoon Young-kwan
Chairman
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

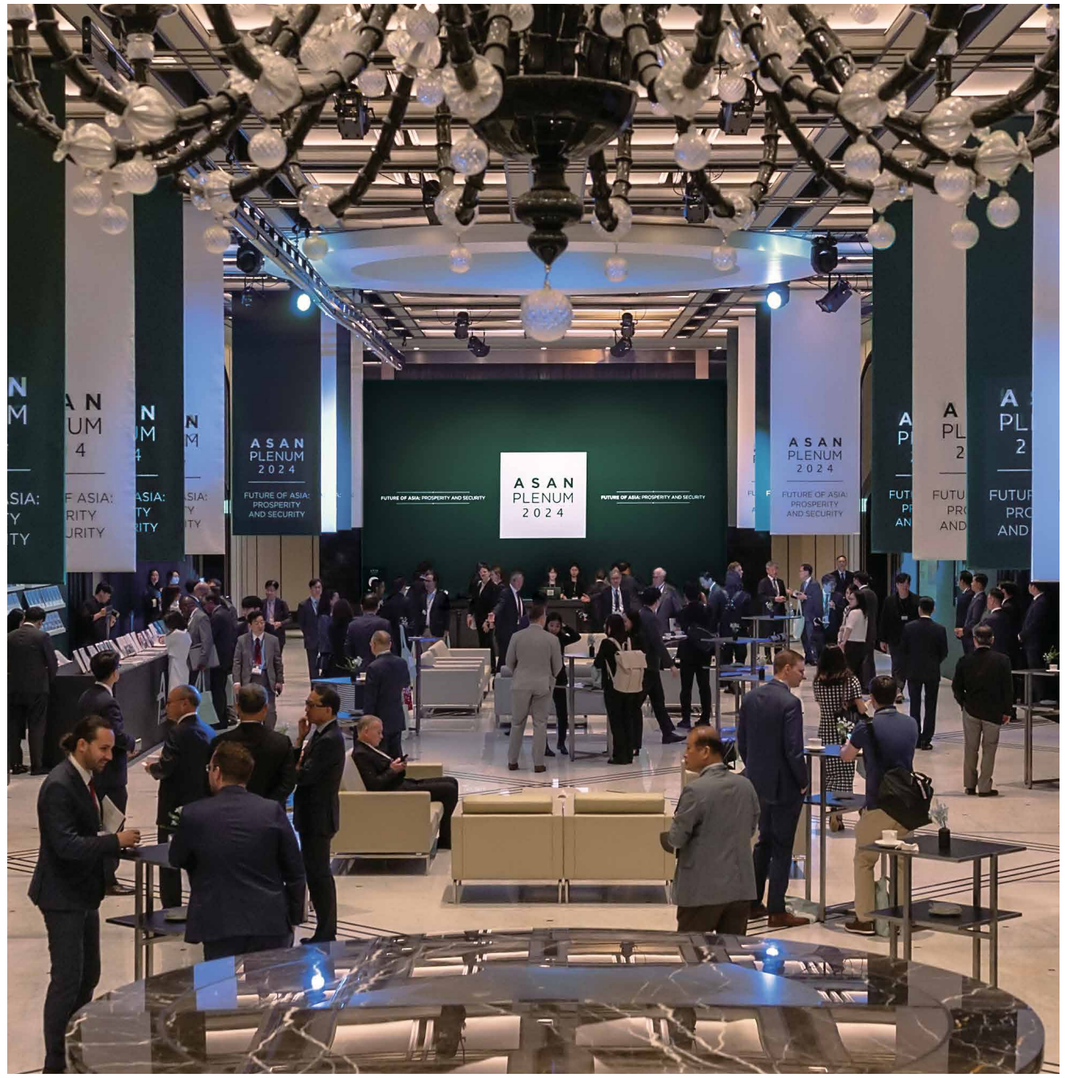
About the Asan Plenum



The Asan Plenum is a yearly gathering of some of the world's leading experts and scholars. In addressing the most pressing problems facing the world with expertise from around the globe, the Asan Plenum aims to impact the policy-making process and enable the global community to better deal with the challenges it faces.

Plenum Format

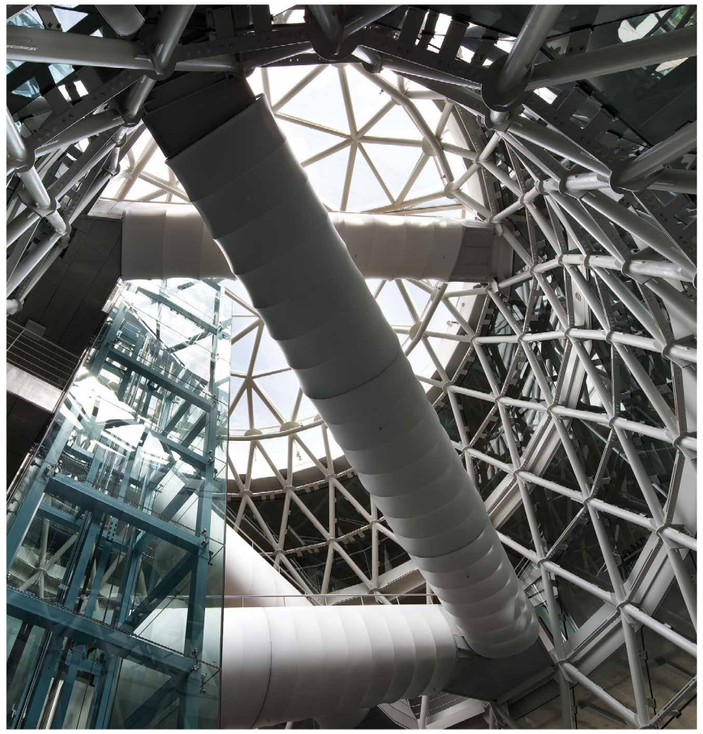
The "conversational" format of the Plenum is intended to maximize interaction among panelists and participants. Plenary and concurrent sessions will provide further in-depth discussions and networking opportunities.



About the Asan Institute for Policy Studies

As an independent, non-partisan think tank, the Asan Institute for Policy Studies is dedicated to undertaking policy-relevant research to foster domestic, regional, and international environments conducive to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

The Asan Institute was established in commemoration of the late Founder and Honorary Chairman of Hyundai Group, Chung Ju-yung, who left an indelible mark on South Korea's modernization and inter-Korean exchanges towards peace.



Named after Chung Ju-yung's pen name "Asan," Dr. Chung Mong Joon founded the Asan Institute on February 11, 2008, to become a world-class think tank that mirrors South Korea's place on the world stage.

Welcoming Reception & Dinner

Date | May 13, 2024
Time | 17:30-19:30
Place | Namsan I+II

Dinner Speech

Karen House
Senior Fellow,
Belfer Center for Science
and International Affairs,
Harvard University

Good evening. As all of you are painfully aware, there are a lot of very bad trends in today's world. North Korea has denounced reunification and tested its first full-range intercontinental ballistic missile. Their bluster is not new, but Mr. Kim has continued to build his arsenal of nuclear weapons. I think he does not intend to part with them, no matter what Donald Trump says if he comes back. A former CIA head, for whom I have great respect, told me recently that he thinks nuclear proliferation is the greatest threat to the world.

Ahead of the risk of Ukraine leading to a wider war, what's going on in the Middle East? Iran, another member of this axis of evil, is making mischief all over the Middle East—from Gaza to Lebanon, to Syria, to Iraq, and, of course, the Houthis in the Red Sea—disrupting shipping with impunity.

Russia and China are the captains of this Axis of Evil, and they no longer condemn North Korea for its provocations at the UN the way they used to. They have grown closer to each other, and perhaps worst of all, the world is witnessing increasingly befuddled and declining U.S. leadership, which has emboldened China and Russia. It is very popular to say we live in a multipolar world, but I am sure the people in this room will recall Xi Jinping saying in 2021 that the world is undergoing great changes not seen in a century, but time and trends are on our side, meaning China's.

All of this reminds me of the pessimism 35 years ago about the United States. At that time, Japan was then supposed to be the world's number one because it was the richest, and money matters. Europe was seen as a contender because it was nearly concluding its 1992 single market, and that was seen as another threat to U.S. dominance. Gorbachev was busy with perestroika, glasnost, and great military might, and China was busy with its multitude of people, and the market economy at the time was seen as a longer bet.

You could read everywhere in those days the doomsayers concerning America. The International Herald Tribune had a headline that said, "America, Europe is coming." Time magazine said the emergence of super-rich Japan as the major superpower. And, of course, Yale historian Paul Kennedy's book, *The Rise and Decline of the Great Powers*, something of a bible for American doomsayers, was on the bestseller list for 24 weeks. So, as foreign editor of The Wall Street Journal in 1988, having read all of this, I set out to determine if the United States was a washed-up power and what the status of global power was.

I traveled 100,000 miles, talked to several hundred leaders and laymen around the world, and wrote a series in The Wall Street Journal that said: "Power is not simply money, market size, might, or mass. Whether America relishes the role or not, it is the preeminent power in the world today and will remain so for at least the next generation, and probably longer."

The Journal ran a five-part series that tried to lay out the detailed reasoning behind that conclusion. Among other things, I said, imagine a great power race: Lane 1 is the Soviet Union, dazzling the crowd with political gymnastics but running at such a slow

pace that it risks being lapped. Next is the People's Republic of China in a slow crawl, and Lane 3 is Europe, sprinting in its uniform of unity, but more suited to be a commentator than an entrant. Japan, the world-record sprinter of recent years, is the heavy betting favorite, but the real question is whether Japan has the legs or lungs for a long-distance race. And sure enough, within a year of that series, Japan's economy collapsed and was somewhat more abundant for two decades. Two years after that, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. If you try to look at facts as opposed to conventional wisdom, you get a lot closer to the truth. Then, what about today's pessimism?

I admit that it is very difficult not to be extremely worried about the state of the world. The political divisions in the U.S. are creating a crisis in relations with Israel. They are also creating the potential to undermine U.S. support for Ukraine. The fact that the U.S. cannot or will not stop the Houthis' assault on shipping in the Red Sea is making the U.S. look impotent to the whole world. Beyond the war in Ukraine and the risk of a wider war in the Middle East, it is the erosion of credibility in front of the whole world that makes all nations stop. Look at South Korea's interest in pursuing its own nuclear defense because of its lack of faith in the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Look at China and Taiwan, too. Look at this moment in time and think that China might decide: why not now? They have reason to believe that the U.S. is not up to that challenge.

That being said, our adversaries are not ten feet tall either. Russia is a fundamentally weak country, with a GDP less than South Korea even though it has got three times South Korea's population. China has its own demographic and economic problems. While strategists today debate whether the world now is more like prior to World War I or prior to World War II, I think it is important to remember that this is not the first time in American history that the U.S. has been slow to face up to its internal and external challenges. It took Pearl Harbor to get the U.S. into World War II, it took Sputnik to knock the Americans out of postwar complacency, and it took an oil embargo to make Americans rein in their energy proficiency.

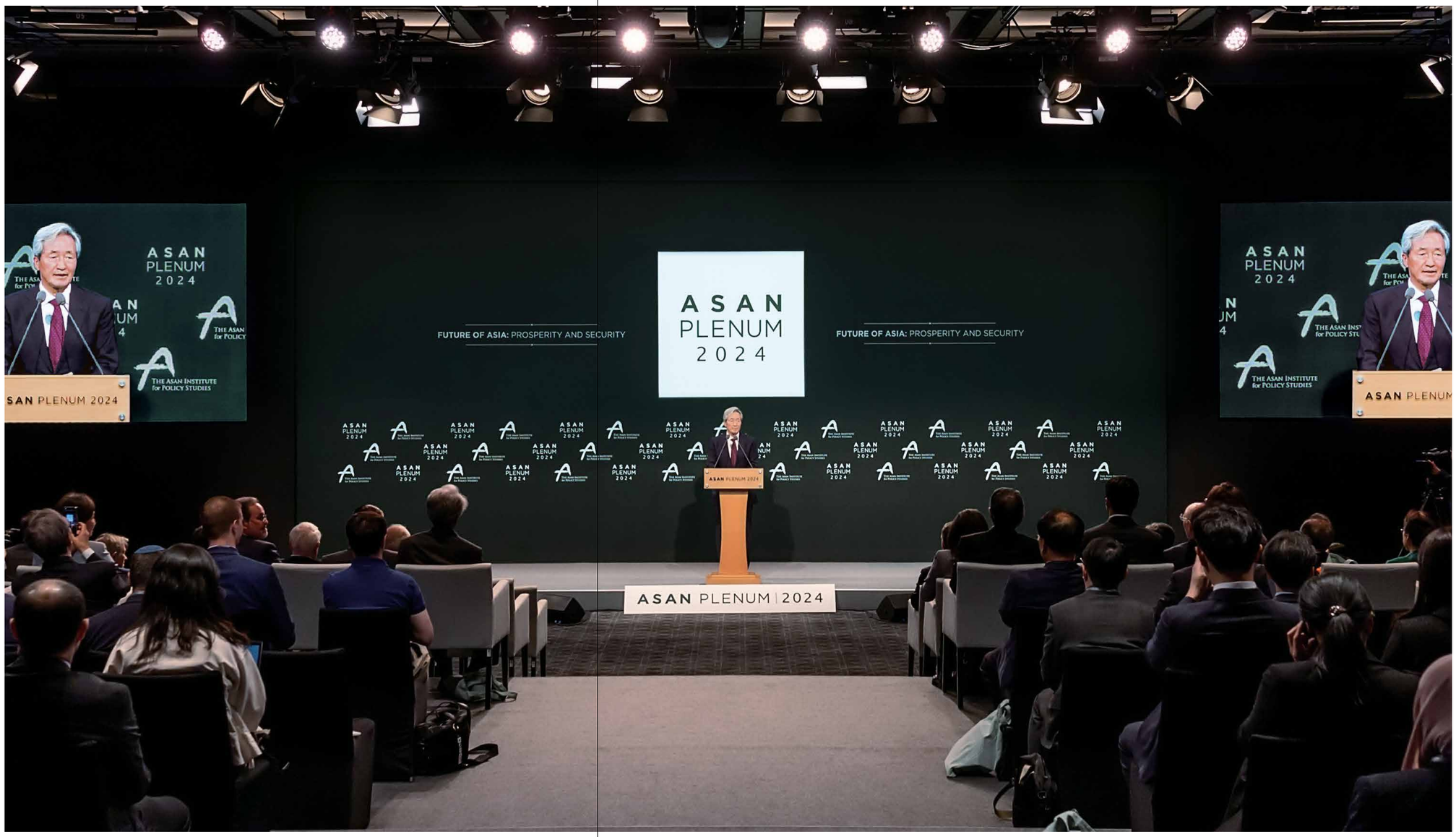
A two-party democracy is always a mess, especially when compared to centralized countries such as Russia, China, and North Korea. America has never measured its progress on how well people march in line behind some leader's drum. It has always been a society that, both in preaching and practice, does indeed prize individualism.

That individualism means that society is slow to act. But I would argue that the history of America is that the costs of collective delays have been more than offset by the rewards of individual creativity. The fact that you can innovate and attract the best and the brightest in the U.S. and that you can enjoy the fruits of your labor creates an incubator for rebirth that does not exist anywhere else. While we cannot rule out U.S. decline, it is absolutely a choice, not an inevitability. What is not in doubt is that if the U.S. is not part of the global leadership, China will create an illiberal world order, and we will all dance to China's tune. That reality should provide all of us with some sobering thoughts about our choices. We got over the divisions of Vietnam. We got past Jimmy Carter's malaise and into Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America." As Winston Churchill said, "In the end, Americans always do the right thing after having exhausted all other alternatives." I think that's the summation of what is very true about America.

Thank you.

Opening Ceremony

Date	May 14, 2024
Time	09:00-10:00
Place	Grand Ballroom I+II



Welcoming Remarks

Chung Mong Joon
Founder and Honorary Chairman,
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Welcome to the Asan Plenum 2024. The theme of this year's Plenum is the "Future of Asia: Prosperity and Security." Before talking about Asia's future, I want to reflect on important lessons from Asia's past.

For most of human history, Asia has been the driving force of cultural development and technological innovation. In the beginning of human history, civilizations flourished along the banks of the Yangtze, Ganges, and Euphrates rivers. For more than fifteen hundred years up to the 16th century, merchants, pilgrims, and warriors traveled the Silk Road. They brought with them four Chinese inventions: papermaking, the compass, gunpowder, and printing.

As history unfolded, in the modern era, Asians experienced severe hardships. In the 19th century, Asia became a battleground for Western powers. Western powers colonized much of Asia. The British colonized India. The French took Indochina. The Dutch controlled Indonesia. The British sold Indian opium in China. The Chinese burned the opium and the Opium Wars started. China lost the wars and China was forced to sign the unequal treaties.

In the 20th century, the situation did not improve. Asia was the major battlefield between the Allied Powers and the Axis Powers during the Second World War. Around 30 million Asian people died. Post-war liberation did not produce prosperity and security for Asians. After Japan's surrender in 1945, Mao Zedong's Communists and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists resumed fighting in China. The Communists won in 1949 and the Kuomintang retreated to Taiwan. 10 million people were killed in the Chinese Civil War.

Korea was a part of Asia's hardships. In 1945, Korea was liberated and divided between North and South. In January 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson made the mistake of excluding South Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter in the Far East. Six months later in June 1950, with the Soviet Union's support, North Korea invaded South Korea. Within one month of the invasion, North Korea occupied most of South Korea, except the southern port city of Busan. Under the banner of the United Nations Command, sixteen countries sent combat forces and six countries contributed medical units.

I was born in Busan during the Korean War in 1951. I was fortunate to survive the war. After three years of war, the Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953. During the Korean War, one million South Korean civilians, 140,000 South Korean soldiers, and 40,000 UN soldiers lost their lives. This was the price that we paid for freedom. Korea remained the last bastion of the defense of liberal democracy.

This may sound like a depressing way to open a conference titled the "Future of Asia." But we better not forget the past if we are to build a better future. At the end of the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the UN Forces, said, "It will take them 100 years to recover from the devastation." In 1951, during the Korean War, the British newspaper, The

Times, ran a condescending editorial, saying, "It would be more reasonable to expect to find roses growing on a garbage heap than a healthy democracy rising out of the ruins of Korea." But both predictions were proven wrong.

In 1988, only 30 years after the end of the Korean War, we hosted the Seoul Summer Olympics and in 2002 we co-hosted the FIFA World Cup Football Tournament with Japan. If we look at the sheer magnitude of the geopolitics of the vast Eurasian continent, the fact that a small country like South Korea, located at the tip of the continent, remains a free democracy, is a miracle, a miracle in progress.

Asia is becoming the world's center of gravity. Today it accounts for over 40% of the world's GDP and is expected to grow to 60% by 2050. Major countries in Asia are leading the next industrial revolution. They are developing the technologies of the future such as semiconductors, quantum computing, and biotechnology. Today Asia is prospering. But the question is whether Asia is at peace.

Our concern is that we still do not have a stable regional order. Prosperity without peace is fragile. We understand that the United States and China are in a New Cold War. In political rhetoric, President Biden said that "competition should not veer into conflict" and President Xi said that "Planet Earth is big enough for the two countries to succeed." However, in reality, both countries are resorting to protectionism and unilateralism. "Buy American" or "Made in China" are the slogans of the two superpowers.

The competition between democratic and autocratic coalitions is also intensifying. American Senator Marsha Blackburn called the alignment between China, Russia, and North Korea a new "Axis of Evil." Meanwhile, others accuse U.S. alliances and new minilateral partnerships like the Quad and AUKUS of seeking containment of China.

The dangers of a military clash in Asia have rather increased. My dear friend, the late Dr. Henry Kissinger, dedicated his life to averting a Third World War. He achieved détente with the Soviet Union and diplomatic rapprochement with China. Today, we need that kind of leadership to prevent tensions from leading to a war.

Predicting the future of Asia is not easy. In 1969, President Nixon announced that he wanted Asian allies to bear more responsibility for their own defense. In 1971, the U.S. pulled out one infantry division from South Korea. In 1975, the U.S. withdrew from Vietnam. Many predicted that the United States would withdraw from Asia. In 1989, some predicted that China and Russia would soon embrace liberal democracy as their economies opened up and developed into market economies. But these predictions were wrong.

I want to remind you of another issue that many people have predicted wrong: North Korea and its nuclear weapons. 15 years ago, Rupert Murdoch, the founder of News Corporation, asked me, "Do you know what the biggest news in the world

is today?" The answer, he said, was "Iran's nuclear program." The international community underestimated North Korea's nuclear ambitions. While Iran has not developed a nuclear bomb, North Korea has built nuclear weapons. The international community failed to stop North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

I have been calling for measures to deter North Korea's nuclear threat for many years. In 2011, I delivered a speech in the South Korean National Assembly calling for the re-introduction of tactical nuclear weapons which were withdrawn from South Korea in 1991. North Korea's nuclear developments have been a clear violation of its commitments to the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We had spent decades attempting engagement. The "Sunshine Policy" had tried to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions in exchange for economic assistance. Today, as we face a regime of hereditary dictatorship of three generations, we came to a different conclusion about the nature of the North Korean regime. The analogy of the scorpion and the frog in Aesop's fable makes us think of the hidden nature of North Korea.

As George F. Kennan once wrote of the Soviet Union, it is "Impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to logic of force." North Korea used to describe itself as "A Paradise on Earth." But North Korea's GDP per capita is $600, the lowest in the world. South Korea's GDP per capita is $32,000, 50 times larger than that of North Korea. For North Korea, the very existence of a free and prosperous South Korea is a political threat. For the survival of its regime, North Korea thinks it needs the reunification of the Korean Peninsula under the communist flag.

We, South Koreans, support the ROK-U.S. alliance. We welcomed the 2023 Washington Declaration to enhance extended deterrence. We better begin laying the groundwork for the redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons. This is the same logic that the United States continues to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Turkey today. We also need to continue dialogue with Asia's major powers like China and Russia who have responsibilities and roles to play as permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "The Best Way to Predict the Future is to Create it." I believe that the Republic of Korea will do its part to ensure that the Future of Asia is peaceful and prosperous for all. I hope that North Korea abandons its futile quest for nuclear weapons and seeks engagement with the outside world.

I hope that Asia can build a stable regional order where all countries can enjoy prosperity and security.

Thank you very much for sharing your insight and wisdom.

Congratulatory Remarks

Kim Hong Kyun
1st Vice Minister,
Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Republic of Korea

Distinguished speakers and guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to express my appreciation to Honorary Chairman Chung Mong Joon and the Asan Institute for Policy Studies for organizing this important forum every year. It is a great honor for me to deliver my congratulatory remarks here. The theme of this year's conference, "Future of Asia: Prosperity and Security," resonates even more deeply with us as we face tectonic shifts in geopolitics.

Geopolitical tensions, fueled by the war in Ukraine, have spread to the Middle East and other regions. Asia's security and prosperity are also heavily impacted by these growing tensions. The case in point is North Korea. North Korea has become more provocative in both actions and rhetoric, advancing its nuclear and missile capabilities. Its aggressive stance has been further emboldened recently by increasingly close military cooperation with Russia.

What kind of future should we envision for Asia, and how can we secure peace and prosperity in this era of crisis? Let me briefly outline Korea's strategies for securing peace and prosperity in Asia.

First, at the forefront of Korea's strategy is to protect and uphold the rules-based international order. The economic and political success of Korea and many other Asian countries has been made possible thanks to this rules-based international order—one anchored in free markets and universal values of freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. However, this international order is under attack from all fronts, as global security challenges spread across regions.

To confront this, we are forging partnerships with other regions that share our values. In addition to the enhanced trilateral cooperation among Korea, the United States, and Japan, our growing collaborations with NATO and the EU demonstrate these efforts. As emphasized by my Foreign Minister at the recent NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting, the security dynamics in Asia and Europe are deeply interconnected and we will increase our collaboration to address global security challenges. Furthermore, Korea is enhancing its engagement with the Global South. Next month, Korea will host the inaugural Korea-Africa Summit, a significant step forward in strengthening our ties with Africa. We are also intensifying our strategic relationships with ASEAN. To defend this order, Korea also plans to lead discussions on important global issues like cybersecurity, climate change, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding as a non-permanent Security Council member of the UN.

Second, Korea is committed to strengthening cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region. This region is vital. It encompasses crucial sea lanes like the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, and it represents almost two-thirds of the world's population and global GDP. Peace, stability, and safety in the Indo-Pacific region are also essential for the security of the world.

Recognizing this, the Korean government launched its first comprehensive regional strategy, the "Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region," in 2022. To advance its vision and strategy, Korea is committed to strengthening partnerships with countries that uphold the values of freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. Enhancing cooperation with China is also important in these endeavors. We will continue to pursue a mature and sound relationship with China based on mutual respect and reciprocity. In this regard, we anticipate hosting the Korea-Japan-China trilateral summit in Seoul soon for the first time in four years.

Lastly, securing peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is crucial for a peaceful and prosperous Asia. Despite its economic hardships and dire human rights situation, North Korea continues its nuclear and missile development. Korea will continue to pursue deterrence, dissuasion, and diplomacy, to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea. Korea and the United States are working closely to further strengthen extended deterrence, as laid out in the Washington Declaration. Moreover, building on the historic Camp David Summit, the trilateral security cooperation between Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo is deepening day by day.

Although the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea was disbanded last month due to Russia's

veto, we are redoubling our efforts with like-minded partners to ensure the faithful implementation of UN Security Council resolutions and to block North Korea's illicit cyber activities. Korea will also intensify its efforts to improve the egregious human rights situation in North Korea and enhance our support for North Korean defectors.

Accordingly, Korea will host the International Forum on North Korean Human Rights at the end of this month, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the release of the UN COI report. This forum aims to enhance international awareness of North Korean human rights issues and promote efforts for their advancement. As President Yoon emphasized, our unification policy aims to ensure the freedom of all North Koreans, and a free and unified Korea will contribute to peace and prosperity in Asia and the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Asia's security and prosperity are not just regional issues. They are global imperatives. To create a more peaceful and prosperous future for Asia, Korea will continue to work closely with its partners. I believe the Asan Plenum will be a valuable platform for sharing insights and knowledge to help us reach this goal. I look forward to a fruitful discussion ahead.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Congratulatory Remarks

Edwin Feulner
Founder and
Chung Ju-yung Fellow,
The Heritage Foundation

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, friends, Dr. Choi Kang, President of the Asan Institute, and other colleagues of Asan. I am delighted to be here with all of you in Seoul, particularly thanks to my long-time dear friend Dr. Chung Mong Joon, who is welcoming us for a timely gathering to survey key dimensions of the Korea-U.S. alliance as well as to look beyond the current status of them.

Thank you, MJ, once again, for your tireless efforts to move our two countries' enduring alliance forward through the Asan Institute and other activities you have been leading. I remember our first meeting in Hawaii, along with Paul Wolfowitz, who is also with us today, to talk about the creation of a practical think tank in Seoul and your vision for it. Following that meeting, the Asan Institute was established in 2008, named after the pen name "Asan" of the Hyundai Group Founder, Chung Ju-yung, MJ's father, who left an indelible mark on Korea's economic development—the Korean Economic Miracle.

What a remarkable journey the Asan Institute has been charting since then. It is a world-class think tank that mirrors South Korea's place on the world stage. Congratulations to you and all of your colleagues. As you and I have candidly discussed here in

Seoul as well as in Washington over the past years, the Republic of Korea and the United States have accomplished a lot together. Yet, as we all know, we can do much more together. I think that is precisely why we are here together. I join everyone in this room in appreciating your vision and leadership toward that direction, MJ.

Indeed, a time-tested alliance. Those words really sum up the seven-decade partnership between the United States and the Republic of Korea. Though culturally different, the two nations share the same values. Seoul has demonstrated a trustworthy and capable partner, both in terms of national security and commercial dealings. Yet much more can and should be done.

Our alliance has a track record of supporting the mutual interests of the two like-minded nations across the Pacific while overcoming challenges and adapting to ever-changing economic and security environments around other parts of the world. As the years have passed, these shared values have bound our two nations closer and closer.

This is not to say that relations have never been strained. Yet despite numerous ups and downs—or perhaps thanks to them—Washington today considers the Republic of Korea a model ally. South Korea's relationship with the U.S. has been underpinned and reinforced by a strong foundation of shared entrepreneurship, enduring people-to-people ties, and close business cooperation led by global companies in both countries. As all of you would agree, we have so much to learn from each other, so many similar interests, and so many opportunities to create more prosperous and free societies for a greater number of people. It is truly rewarding to see our two nations' ever-elevating heights of partnership on many key fronts.

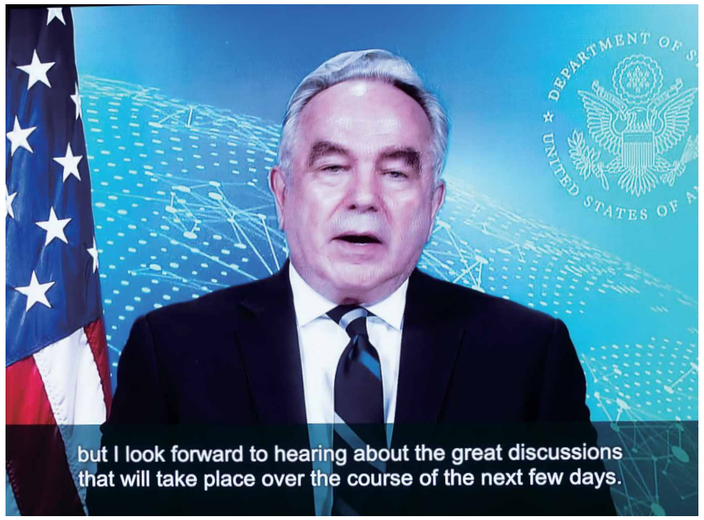
Let me close my remarks with the following. One of the main lessons I have taken from my decades in Washington is that in Washington there are no permanent defeats, but neither are there permanent victories. There are only permanent battles, particularly battles of ideas. As President of The Heritage Foundation, I always argued, and still believe, that "ideas have consequences." We need more good ideas and fewer bad ones! But where do these ideas come from, and how do they influence the policymakers … and eventually all of us? Ideas are produced by individuals who elaborate and expand the ideas. Then it takes an institution to help popularize and advocate ideas.

What really matters is how to generate, facilitate, and ensure the virtuous cycle of these three Is—ideas, individuals, and institutions. It is a process that requires our commitment to values and principles. That is why our alliance matters. The ROK-U.S. relationship is a time-tested alliance of ideas, individuals, and institutions. Needless to say, my dear friend MJ, and our great colleagues at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, you are the concrete embodiment of that relationship as an institution and individuals who generate ideas to preserve and advance our highly functioning alliance. I believe that through the interplay between innovative thinking and follow-up action by principled individuals, we can keep adding and multiplying a more positive future based on our shared institutions and values for the Republic of Korea and the United States of America.

I look forward to more discussions throughout the conference today. Onward! Thank you very much.

Keynote Speech

Kurt Campbell
Deputy Secretary of State, United States Department of State



Hello, I am the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Kurt Campbell. I very much regret that I cannot be with you all in person, but I look forward to hearing about the great discussions that will take place over the course of the next few days. I want to start by thanking the organizers of the Asan Plenum for bringing together such an incredible amount of expertise and talent to share thoughts on so many important topics at a critical time. I especially want to thank Dr. Chung Mong Joon, the Founder and Honorary Chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, for creating this venue. He is a good friend. I also want to thank Dr. Yoon Young-kwan, Chairman of the Asan Institute, for inviting me to address this important gathering.

As Deputy Secretary of State, I work on advancing America's foreign policy agenda across the entire globe. But as a longtime Asia hand—most recently coming from the White House, where I served as Indo-Pacific coordinator—I recognize that much of the history of the 21st century will be written in the Indo-Pacific. As President Biden has said, we are at a pivotal stage where new opportunities abound but so do new challenges. And to meet this moment, our partnerships in this part of the world have never been more meaningful, more impactful, and more results-oriented than they are now.

This is especially true with our two most important relationships in the region: our alliance with the Republic of Korea and our alliance with Japan. Both alliances have transformed from primarily security-focused relationships to truly comprehensive global partnerships, with impacts reverberating far beyond the Indo-Pacific. In just the last year, President Biden hosted President Yoon at the White House for a state visit to mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-Korea Alliance. Last August, he hosted both President Yoon and Prime Minister Kishida together at the historic trilateral summit at Camp David. And just a few weeks ago, he hosted Prime Minister Kishida for a state visit at the White House, as well as Philippine President Marcos for a bilateral meeting, and then another historic trilateral leaders' summit the next day.

This level of commitment from us to our nearest and dearest allies in the Indo-Pacific is not just historic but also unrivaled. As much as we are invested in our alliances bilaterally, we also understand the tremendous importance of working together trilaterally and multilaterally and networking our alliances. We are creating a lattice fence arrangement with intertwined, overlapping, and interlocking engagements.

This cooperation is at the heart of President Biden's Indo-Pacific Strategy. When it comes to our trilateral cooperation with the Republic of Korea and Japan, we would not be here without the tremendous courage that President Yoon and Prime Minister Kishida have demonstrated in bringing Seoul and Tokyo closer together. The path and pace of rapprochement Japan and the Republic of Korea have committed to—technologically, politically, strategically, people to people—will have the most far-reaching and consequential impact on our partner engagement in the region.

I was there when President Biden brought President Yoon and Prime Minister Kishida together to sustain discussions about where we are and where we would like to go with this three-way relationship. It was remarkable to see the determination on the part of both leaders. What has also made this success possible is that our three countries share a common vision for the region

and the world. This vision is anchored by our commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, democratic norms, human rights, and the rule of law, both at home and abroad.

A great example of this shared commitment is the third Summit for Democracy, hosted by the Republic of Korea about a month ago, not far from where you all are sitting today. Our collaboration on global democratic renewal is critical if we are to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous, free, and just world. We are also delighted that both the Republic of Korea and Japan are on the Security Council this year—a recognition of each country's leading role on the international stage. The leader visits to Washington, the summit at Camp David, and the various engagements Secretary Blinken and I, and my predecessor Wendy Sherman, had with our counterparts are important in themselves.

But we do not just meet to reaffirm our alliances. Over the last 12-plus months, we've laid out three separate sets of deliverables—three sets of commitments to each other—to fulfill the promise of the Camp David principles. At the core of these efforts is modernizing our alliances and making sure that we are prepared to preserve the rules and norms that have brought the region so much prosperity and security.

The people of the Republic of Korea and Japan know too well the danger to peace and stability posed by the DPRK, and we are absolutely united in confronting that shared threat. We have been working hand in hand with the Republic of Korea, Japan, and other key allies and partners about how best to engage the DPRK, deter aggression, and coordinate international responses to the DPRK's ongoing and repeated violations of UN Security Council resolutions.

On the economic front, the United States has never been more economically connected to the Republic of Korea and Japan. We are strengthening partnerships in emerging and transformative sectors like quantum, biotech, and artificial intelligence. Last December, for example, we launched a new quantum workforce program in partnership with IBM and U.S., Korean, and Japanese universities that will train 40,000 students over the course of the next decade.

We also are deepening supply chain resilience in critical sectors such as semiconductors, electric vehicles and EV batteries, pharmaceuticals, and much, much more. Our economic security and prosperity will continue to grow, benefiting our people and others around the world.

As President Biden has made clear, our partners and allies are critical if we are to be successful in seizing these key opportunities and maintaining our readiness to confront the most pressing challenges of the 21st century. At the forefront of those partnerships, our bilateral and trilateral bonds with the Republic of Korea and Japan will define the future of Asia and grow our collective prosperity and security.

Thank you very much, and I wish you a wonderful conference. You are helping us advance our agenda in this key region ahead.

Plenary Session 1

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 10:10-11:30

Changing Security Architecture in Asia

Moderator

Sohn Jie-ae
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Speakers

Michael Green
University of Sydney

Jia Qingguo
Peking University

Kim Sung-han
Korea University

Nakabayashi Mieko
Waseda University

James Steinberg
Johns Hopkins University

Sugiyama Shinsuke
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Rapporteur

Jung Damin
Korea National Defense University

Plenary Session 1, titled "Changing Security Architecture in Asia," discussed the ongoing change in the regional security climate and structure characterized by the emergence of different forms of security and economic blocs such as minilateralism and multilateralism. The traditional architecture of bilateral alliances led by the United States has evolved into new dynamics that involve groupings of multiple nations sharing strategic interests. The United States remains the hub in these groups, such as the Quad, AUKUS, and the Camp David trilateral summit. In the backdrop of these changes lie the continued competition between the United States and China, ongoing security tensions surrounding Taiwan and North Korea, as well as conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. A key theme of the session was how countries with divergent interests could engage with each other to bring peace and prosperity to the region amid the uncertainties and volatility of the future. Ambassador Sohn Jie-ae, the Republic of Korea's Ambassador for Cultural Cooperation, opened the session by asking the panelists to share their insights on the changing security climate and its impact on regional players when they endeavor to position themselves for a better future.

Dr. Michael Green, chief executive officer and a professor at the United States Studies Center of the University of Sydney, noted distinctive characteristics of the growing security collaboration among plurilateral or minilateral grouping of U.S. allies. Dr. Green saw a low possibility for these groups to evolve into an Asian NATO, citing high intraregional trade and economic interdependence in Asia as limiting factors. He also observed different understandings of values among Asian countries. He


Sohn Jie-ae


Michael Green


Jia Qingguo


Kim Sung-han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James Steinberg


Sugiyama Shinsuke

cited surveys that showed strong support for the principle of non-interference in international affairs among post-colonial countries in what we call the Global South, such as India, Indonesia, or Thailand, while other regional players like the United States, Australia, and Japan do not fully understand. Dr. Green said the fate of minilateralism in Asia, whether it would turn to an Asian version of NATO, depends on the choices of leaders of China and the United States, as their allies are poised to vote for a successful strategy. He said the United States could form regional partnerships based on democratic values, but the hub nation is now obliged to answer questions from its allies and partners about whether it will deliver the mechanics of the alliance in terms of defense production and intelligence sharing as they desire.

Dr. Jia Qingguo, former dean and a professor of the School of International Studies of Peking University, assessed that the security climate in the region has deteriorated compared to 10 or 15 years ago due to weakening cooperation between the United States and China amid their growing rivalry. Dr. Jia noted the current situation in which China is no longer a member of the U.S.-led security initiatives in the region. Previously, China stood alongside other countries, albeit at the margin of such coalitions, to address security challenges such as the Korean nuclear problem

Plenary Session 1
Changing Security Architecture in Asia

and other issues, including the war against terror. Dr. Jia attributed this worsening situation to both countries' tendencies to imagine and fear the worst-case scenario emanating from the other. While Beijing does not want war or conflict in the region and hopes for cooperation in cutting-edge technology, Washington interprets its intentions negatively. Dr. Jia stated that the United States is the stronger party, often imposes its negative perceptions of China and adopts efforts to deter the alleged threat from China. Consequently, China feels compelled to retaliate against what it perceives as the United States' malicious intentions. Dr. Jia urged that it is time for both sides to pause and develop common interests, as viewing each other as enemies does not benefit either party.

Dr. Kim Sung-han, a professor of International Relations at the Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) of Korea University, emphasized the importance of building platforms for discussion of regional issues in the form of bilateral or minilateral gatherings within the frameworks of traditional multilateral institutions such as ASEAN. Dr. Kim particularly noted the strategic significance of Southeast Asia, the region where the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and China's Belt and Road Initiative overlap. He pointed out that the recent development of strategic competition between the United States and China has divided members of ASEAN, damaging the multilateral institution's centrality. This has led to the emergence of newly initiated or created minilateral groupings as a response to the limitations of existing institutions in addressing the variety of regional issues. Dr. Kim argued that members of such minilateral groups, including the

ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral cooperation, the Quad, or AUKUS, should seek a constructive and stable relationship with China by reactivating and strengthening communication channels with Beijing. He stated that minilateral groups, such as the U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral security cooperation and the China-Japan-ROK summit, are expected to generate synergistic effects, enabling regional players to develop concrete plans for peace and prosperity in the region.

Dr. Nakabayashi Mieko, a professor at the Center for International Education of Waseda University, called for an acceleration in the cooperation among regional players to achieve collective deterrence. Dr. Nakabayashi noted the significant increase in global defense spending in the wake of changes in the international security environment with escalating conflicts in different regions. She assessed that U.S. President Joe Biden's initiative to replace the outmoded hub and spoke system of bilateral alliances in the region with a lattice-like architecture is a step toward the future in that the regional partners of the U.S. need to work more closely. She especially highlighted Japan's recent efforts to engage in the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific initiative, citing its high-ranking officials' visit to Washington and other U.S. partner countries in different continents, as well as the upgraded military cooperation between Japan and the U.S. At the same time, she also emphasized the importance of better communication between the U.S. partner countries and China to avoid unnecessary tensions. She proposed to use the term "collective deterrence" instead of "collective security" to engage China in dialogue for peace.

Dr. James Steinberg, dean of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, highlighted the United States' complicated position as a world power with a substantial presence in different regions including Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Dr. Steinberg noted the commonalities and connectedness of security issues in these three different regions, citing the U.S. Congress security package that involved aid to Ukraine and Israel, as well as military support for Taiwan. Dr. Steinberg assessed that there has always been unclarity as to how far the U.S. should interfere in different regions. He cited the past

debates in the U.S. Congress in the 1950s regarding whether the United States was prepared to go to war for Ukraine and other countries and the ongoing ones regarding a security commitment to Saudi Arabia. He also pointed out that even though the U.S. public desires to deter Chinese aggression and supports Taiwan, there is no broad-based support for the United States to militarily defend Taiwan. He noted limits to both what the United States is willing to commit and to what the U.S. partners are prepared to do. He remarked that it was characteristic of the current environment to recognize the existence of overlapping arrangements and acknowledge the necessity to tolerate a certain degree of uncertainty regarding the extent to which, in any given scenario, the United States might become involved.

Ambassador Sugiyama Shinsuke, a professor at Waseda University and former Japanese ambassador to the United States, outlined two points on how regional players could bring peace and prosperity in the era of a multi-dimensional security architecture. Ambassador Sugiyama argued that forming a security mechanism among the U.S. partner countries in such a volatile security climate is not about being confrontational against certain countries like China. He stated that the recent lattice-like security mechanism in the region was formed by upgrading existing security cooperation between like-minded countries such as Japan, the United States, South Korea, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines. However, Ambassador Sugiyama added that this is not aimed at a confrontational or containment policy, but rather at a policy of expanding engagement, emphasizing the importance of engaging China in the rules-based international society. He also noted the importance of economic cooperation based on the principles of mutual prosperity.

In the ensuing discussion, panelists discussed the possibility of the formation of an Asian version of NATO. Dr. Green argued that given the economic ties with China and the integrated economic structure of Asian countries, an Asian version of NATO would not be beneficial to the parties involved. However, Dr. Green acknowledged that the need to form such a collective security structure is contingent upon China's actions and stance.

Dr. Jia Qingguo expressed skepticism regarding NATO's effectiveness, citing its failure to prevent Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Dr. Jia emphasized the need for a more comprehensive collective security system involving all stakeholders with diverse interests. Dr. Kim Sung-han argued that, even without an Asian NATO, the principles of inclusivity and self-reliance should be maintained, and small-scale multilateralism should be advocated to manage potential regional threats. Dr. Nakabayashi Mieko called for an end to China's ICAD (illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive) practices and argued for the strengthening of collective deterrence measures.

Special Session

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 11:30-12:30

The 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

Moderator

Yoon Young-kwan
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Speakers

Edwin Feulner
The Heritage Foundation

Karen House
Harvard University

Tago Atsushi
Waseda University

Paul Wolfowitz
Stanford University

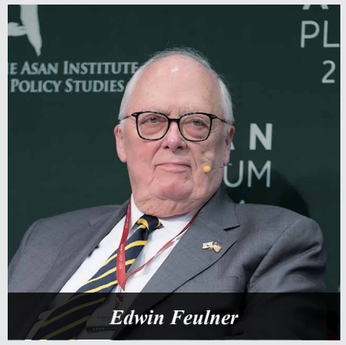
Rapporteur

Alexandra Koldeway
Seoul National University

The Special Session on the 2024 U.S. presidential election was moderated by Dr. Yoon Young-kwan, Chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. Dr. Yoon began by thanking participants for joining the 2024 Asan Plenum and noting that this year's event coincided with the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Dr. Yoon pointed out that observers expect changes to U.S. foreign policy and uncertainty if former President Donald Trump is reelected. He proposed to focus the session on that possibility and began by asking Dr. Edwin Feulner what policy he expects to see from the United States in the Taiwan Strait.

Dr. Edwin Feulner, founder of The Heritage Foundation, began by acknowledging that he is sometimes viewed as a partisan figure but said that all Americans should come together and find places for agreement. Dr. Feulner served on Trump's transition team in 2016 and came to know the man personally as an outsider to Washington. Dr. Feulner believes that Trump's four years in office matured his outlook and stated that former President Trump and the people around him would recognize that the Taiwan Relations Act serves as the foundation of a strong relationship between the United States and Taiwan that is unlikely to be upset. Rather, Dr. Feulner believes a Trump administration would approach U.S.-China relations from a realistic viewpoint. Additionally, Dr. Feulner thought that it was unnecessary to revisit former "battles," and, on that front, Trump would be unlikely to renegotiate the free trade agreement with South Korea. Dr. Feulner was therefore "cautiously optimistic" about what a Trump presidency would look like for Strait relations and a more "practical and forthright stand" in U.S.-China relations.


Yoon Young-kwan


Edwin Feulner


Karen House


Tago Atsushi


Paul Wolfowitz

Following up, Dr. Yoon asked Dr. Feulner about Trump's potential policy on defending South Korea. Dr. Feulner pointed out that the history of the United States asking South Korea to "do more" for defense precedes the Trump presidency and expressed hope that the former president saw that America is stronger with Japan and South Korea moving forward together. Ultimately, Dr. Feulner predicted that the president would have more pressing matters to attend to upon taking office.

Special Session
The 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

Ms. Karen House, a senior fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard Kennedy School of Government, was asked by Dr. Yoon for her opinion on the possible trajectory of U.S. foreign policy under a second Trump administration. Ms. House stated that she would be "the last person to try to predict Trump." However, she hoped that Trump would understand that his relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is "past its sell-by date." Ms. House pointed out that the former president has stated that he will resolve the situation in Ukraine quickly and believes that he will be distracted from the Korean situation by this problem. Ms. House was hopeful that a second Trump administration would consist of "intelligent people." Dr. Yoon asked Ms. House to clarify if she was optimistic about a continuing trilateral relationship between South Korea, the United States, and Japan. Ms. House replied that the relationship is sensible and that it is common sense not to destroy it unless South Korea "gets nervous" about being isolated from China or being unable to predict the moves of the U.S. president. Ms. House did not believe a Trump administration would pull troops out of South Korea because the troops also serve U.S. interests by being stationed in the country.

Dr. Yoon then asked Dr. Tago Atsushi, dean and a professor of International Relations at the School of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University, how Japanese people think about a second Trump presidency. Dr. Atsushi replied that

Japanese people are most concerned about U.S. commitment itself because Trump is unpredictable. Dr. Atsushi referenced a 2019 public opinion poll conducted in Japan while Trump was in office in which about 20-30% of respondents supported Japanese indigenous nuclear weapons. Dr. Atsushi stated that this could change if, during a second administration, Trump did not have "good people around him." Dr. Atsushi also noted that Taiwan is "a very delicate game" that is negatively impacted by Trump. Dr. Yoon also asked how Japan is trying to "Trump-proof" itself. Dr. Atsushi responded that people in Japan probably hope that the Biden presidency will continue. However, he noted that he is concerned about violence in the upcoming election, which would seriously damage American soft power.

Ambassador Paul Wolfowitz, distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution, was asked by Dr. Yoon about the possibility of Trump reducing American security commitment to South Korea by reducing troop presence or even withdrawing. Dr. Yoon also asked Ambassador Wolfowitz his opinion on South Korea pursuing indigenous nuclear weapons. Ambassador Wolfowitz worries that the more Americans see a nuclear aspect in a security situation, the more they will think American presence is unneeded. Ambassador Wolfowitz believes what is most likely to prevent a war is a very strong American commitment. Ambassador Wolfowitz stated that one thing President Biden "has going on" is showing that he can pull alliances together and that they work, as well as showing what missile defense can do. He continued that if he were advising South Korean President Yoon, he would say that "Trump really wants attention," and that South Korea should show success in the U.S.-ROK alliance and even let Trump claim some of the credit.

Dr. Yoon additionally asked Ambassador Wolfowitz what he thinks of reopening negotiations with North Korea and trading a nuclear freeze for the lifting of sanctions. Ambassador Wolfowitz agreed with Dr. Feulner that Trump has "been embarrassed" by North Korean leader Kim on three occasions and is unlikely to revisit negotiations. In addition, North Korean nuclear capabilities have moved far beyond what they were years ago, which means that large chunks of the nuclear program would need to be eliminated, not just limited. Ambassador Wolfowitz noted that this negotiation would be costly and would invite strong opposition in the United States. Ambassador Wolfowitz concluded by stating that whoever wins the upcoming election will only be in office for four years, and staffing will be a challenge. This would also impact negotiations negatively. Ms. House echoed this, saying that the bad news is Americans must choose between Trump and Biden, but that the good news is both will be gone in four years' time.

Before opening the floor for audience questions, the discussion focused primarily on how a Trump presidency could impact the Taiwan Strait and South Korean security. The panelists did not make any firm claims about the former president's potential policies, but all were supportive of the relationships the United States has built in Asia, especially those with South Korea and Japan, and expressed their hopes that these strong relationships would continue.

The floor was opened for audience participation, and to start things off, Dr. Chung Mong Joon, Founder and Honorary Chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, asked a question to the American panelists: Between Trump and Biden, who do you think will be elected? Ms. House stated that she would not bet against Trump. Ambassador Wolfowitz pointed out that polls are a poor indicator and that the results will depend on seven battleground states for each candidate—it could be very close.

The audience discussion then turned to Trump's approach to information. An audience member pointed out that the numbers and figures the former president cites are often wrong, for example, when he claimed that there are 40,000 U.S. troops in South Korea and that the country is "freeriding." The audience member asked if there is a way for American institutions or individuals in government to encourage the president to "be more precise in quoting numbers and figures." Dr. Feulner reiterated his claim that Trump is "more sophisticated" on policy matters and has better people to support him. He stated that Trump is, "not going to be quite as freeform as when he was an outsider coming into the Washington system." Ms. House took the opposite stance, saying, "I don't think facts are the currency of many Americans." She would not predict that claims will always be factual.

Another audience member referenced memoirs written by former officials in the Trump administration who traveled with the former president to North Korea. The audience member remembered reading that the officials were told that the purpose of North Korea developing nuclear weapons was against China. The audience member asked if that was accepted in Washington and what Beijing can do to prepare for the normalizing of relations between Washington and Pyongyang. Dr. Feulner stated that any administration will approach U.S.-China relations based on what is in U.S. national interest, whether that is issues like fentanyl of Chinese origins crossing the U.S. southern border, Chinese "dumping," or overdependence on Chinese suppliers of rare earth minerals. Ambassador Wolfowitz stated that he would like to see

the claim that North Korean nuclear weapons were developed against China in print before believing it, but that he finds it a "rather ridiculous notion."

The audience discussion then turned to divisions within the United States. An audience member noted that it is easy to say that the United States is divided today but that has been the case for many years; they asked how long the United States will continue to be divided, and how the situation can be fixed. Ms. House stated that it takes leadership to overcome the divides and at some point, Americans will come to a more confident position when the leader is not President Biden or former President Trump. Ms. House noted that there are cycles within American domestic politics and that these cycles tend to end when something "shakes us."

Finally, an audience member noted that during the Trump administration, the summit between the president and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un resulted in positive signals that the nuclear situation would be manageable, but during the Biden administration, the nuclear situation deteriorated. The audience member asked the panelists for their assessment of the Biden administration's handling of the nuclear issue in North Korea. Ambassador Wolfowitz stated that the Biden administration is more open to what allies think is necessary and argued that South Korea should focus on building up American conventional capabilities and emphasizing the presence of nuclear and missile defense capabilities around the peninsula. Ambassador Wolfowitz remembered that the final national security advisor under President Trump stated that the best response to Russian use of tactical nuclear weapons would be to respond with conventional capabilities. Ambassador Wolfowitz agreed with this conclusion in the North Korean case as well.

LUNCHEON

Date	May 14, 2024
Time	12:30-13:30
Place	Grand Salon Namsan I+II

Luncheon Speech

James Steinberg
Dean,
School of Advanced International Studies,
Johns Hopkins University

It is a great honor to be back at the Asan Plenum. It has been my great pleasure to be able to participate here over the years. This has always been a unique forum, where scholars and practitioners throughout the Asia-Pacific community can gather for frank and open exchanges on the pressing issues of our time. We may have differences among ourselves on some issues, but we all have a shared commitment to try to find common ground where we can and to manage our differences constructively where they continue to exist.

Our meeting this year focuses on Asian Prosperity and Security, which is obviously a timely and critical topic. But if you will allow me, I would like to begin by putting this in a broader perspective, because we meet at a time of extraordinary turmoil across the globe.

In Europe, Russia continues its brutal, unprovoked aggression against Ukraine while seeking to undermine European democracies through its manipulation of media and emerging technologies. In the Middle East, we see a humanitarian catastrophe and regional political crisis, triggered by Hamas's unconscionable attacks on October 7, but which have their roots in Iran's support for terrorist proxies in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. In East Asia, China intimidates its neighbors through shows of force in the South China Sea and across the Taiwan Straits, while pursuing predatory economic policies that harm our workers and domestic repression against its own people. And here on the Korean Peninsula, a belligerent North Korea has turned its back on any serious effort to reach an agreement on peaceful intra-Korean relations as it pursues a relentless build-up of its missile and nuclear capabilities.

More worrisome yet, there are growing ties among this group of actors, as Iran and North Korea explicitly, and China somewhat more indirectly, provide support to Russia's war effort, while Russia, in turn, protects Iran and North Korea from international sanctions. China and Russia increasingly coordinate their policies in the military, political, and economic spheres. To say this is a time of "polycrisis," as some have termed it, seems like an understatement.

The reason it is important to think about Asian security in this wider context is because what is happening in this region is a reflection of these broader trends and challenges. The hoped-for vision of a stable, rules-abiding, and economically prosperous global community—a vision that animated so much policy after the end of the Cold War—seems like just a distant dream, while pessimism at the prospect of world disorder is rampant. Each of these crises has distinct roots, and despite the coordination and shared goals of these destabilizing actors, it is important not to oversimplify our world into a grand Manichean struggle of good versus evil, authoritarianism versus democracy, a characterization that is not shared by many of our important partners around the world. Nonetheless, these conflicts do have one crucial aspect in common: the need for determined, principled leadership with a long-term perspective rooted both in our values and our interests.

I want to suggest today that the answer to beginning to reconstruct a new, more hopeful order requires three things. First, sustained American leadership and engagement, which is the sine qua non of combatting the forces of disorder; second, close coordination and cooperation of the global community of countries that share a commitment to the basic principles—respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law—and third, a recognition that

solutions to many of the world's most pressing problems will require us to find ways to cooperate, not just with states that share our views, but with those that do not.

First, American leadership and engagement. Few would doubt that in the aftermath of World War II, U.S. leadership was the crucial catalyst that built a framework of stability and prosperity that lasted generations and prevailed over those who challenged the basic principles on which that framework was built. But students of U.S. history know that engagement was not always embraced by the U.S., and in subsequent years, it has been challenged from the left and the right. The complex state of our world has reinforced the instincts of some in the U.S. to pull back and wash our hands of these complex and messy problems on the premise either we can survive and thrive on our own or that others can and should pick up the burden. But this is wishful thinking. The world is far too interdependent to think that we can separate ourselves from the rest of the world and thrive, and we alone have the capacity to help galvanize the necessary action to meet the challenges of our time. I am particularly gratified to see that despite the many partisan differences we are experiencing in the U.S., the recent decision by Congress to provide support for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan demonstrates that there is still broad-based support for an active, involved U.S. role.

Second, even if the American people were willing to assume this responsibility, we cannot meet these challenges alone. In part, this is a function of capacity: mobilizing the resources to support Ukraine or help stabilize the Middle East requires substantial commitments from others. It is also a question of legitimacy. When the U.S. acts with others, our actions are seen not simply as self-interested but as serving a broader, common good. Over the past three years, under the Biden administration, we have seen a wholehearted embrace of this important commitment to working with allies and partners. From the coalition supporting Ukraine to the building of the Quad to the joint effort to develop standards to govern new and emerging technologies like AI through the G-7, engaging like-minded countries in support of shared interests and values has been a powerful tool.

More broadly, there is a critical need for our democratic, rules-respecting countries to coordinate our efforts to address both the challenges posed by autocratic governments, as well as our own domestic challenges to democracy. While I believe that there are important differences among these authoritarian governments, they all pursue a similar strategy of using their resources and influence to try to divide us to create a world more favorable to their interests. Increasingly, there is a recognition that, regardless of our geography, we need to understand that failing to meet the challenge in one region affects our ability to meet the challenges everywhere. That is why it is so gratifying to see Japan and Korea engaged in the effort to support Ukraine and the growing commitment of many European countries to security in the Asia-Pacific region. Just last week, the German Foreign minister came to SAIS and spoke of the importance of his country's decision to send a frigate to the Pacific.

But for many of the world's problems, it is simply not enough to rely solely on like-minded countries. For problems such as climate change, public health, economic prosperity, or alleviating the growing debt burden of developing countries, nothing short of a global effort is required. If systemically important countries are left outside the room, our efforts will simply fail.

Nowhere are these three principles more important than here in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the past several years, we have seen a sustained effort in the U.S. to deepen our ties to the region and to engage with our partners here. From the bilateral agreements between the U.S. and Korea, U.S.-Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and others, to the broader engagements like the trilateral

cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and Korea cemented at the Camp David Summit last year, we see true partnerships of an engaged U.S. working with respected partners. I am pleased that my own school, SAIS, will host a month-long engagement between senior U.S., Korean, and Japanese officials working on emerging technologies to enhance our three countries' ability to work together on these important issues.

The true test of these three principles centers around our approach to China. China's growing military capacity and its increasingly assertive global role call not just for the engagement of the United States but for a concerted effort by all of us affected by China's rise—not just treaty allies like Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and our NATO allies, but by key partners in ASEAN, India, and in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, where China, too, poses challenges. And this cannot be limited to security cooperation. Our ability to dissuade and deter China from challenging our individual interests depends on a collective sense of common concern and agreed strategies of alignment. In recent years, we have increasingly worked to reduce our dependence on China on key technologies and goods to be sure that China cannot exploit our dependence to threaten our interests.

At the same time, we have too much at stake simply to walk away from engagement with China. There are many reasons why "decoupling" serves no one's interests. First, the economic price for all of us is high. Today, we see a broad-ranging set of legitimate concerns about the costs of globalization, from the security risks associated with unreliable and potentially hostile suppliers to the undermining of important environmental and labor standards to human rights. Each of these is appropriate but taken together, we are increasingly seeing a full-throated acceptance of protectionism that, in the long term, will be costly to all. America did not rise to power by hiding behind protectionist walls. Indeed, the genius of American ascendancy, led by visionaries like FDR and Cordell Hull, was the recognition that because of our entrepreneurial creativity and abundant resources, America had the most to gain through deep engagement. Globalization has brought considerable benefits for both developed and developing countries, and interdependence also brings with it influence. Ironically, the more we pursue decoupling across the board, the greater the risk of conflict, since each side will see fewer reasons to avoid conflict. Second, few of our partners wish to be forced into an "us or them" choice. Third, as I noted above, many of the greatest problems we face, from climate change to public health to nonproliferation and global growth, require constructive engagement with China.

There is an especially compelling need to sustain people-to-people exchanges between our citizens, scholars, and businesses. Even where we have profound differences, we need to understand each other if we are to be successful both in managing these differences and finding areas of common endeavor. For decades, China and we cut ourselves off from each other, but as we opened the doors, we found that there was much to be gained. My own university, Johns Hopkins, was an early pioneer, with the Hopkins Nanjing Center that opened its doors nearly forty years ago and has provided generations of young Chinese and Americans a better understanding of each other's history and worldviews. Some now seek to close those doors, privileging the fear of foreign interference over the opportunities of engagement. Of course, we need to maintain our guard—there is no doubt that China and others have sought to exploit our openness. But sweeping restrictions are not only costly to the possibility of mutual cooperation but also feed xenophobia that infects our own societies. It is encouraging to see both President Biden and President Xi reaffirm the value of these people-to-people exchanges. Let us hope that this can be achieved in practice.

Nowhere is the need for dialogue more important than in the challenge of managing the complex relationships involving the future of Taiwan. I have had the privilege of working closely with leaders of both of the main parties in Taiwan for many years and have enormous respect and admiration for the robust democracy they have built in just a matter of three decades. The peaceful and orderly—but vigorous—democratic process we saw in January, including the willingness to accept the results of a closely contested election, is a model for all of us. It is time that Beijing understands that any resolution of the cross-strait relations must include dialogue with the chosen representatives of the people of Taiwan. It is also the responsibility of the rest of us to support the peaceful resolution of this complex historical, political, and economic challenge, by staying faithful to the principles that have produced cross-strait stability for decades—a commitment to oppose the use of force or unilateral actions to change the status quo. Here, too, we see those who understandably worry about Beijing's increasingly rigid stance too easily advocate solutions that could prove catastrophic for all concerned. The Biden administration, to its credit, has rejected such a course, recognizing that consistency in our policies, and a willingness to seek common ground through dialogue, are critical both to manage our differences and to find areas where we can cooperate, on climate, drugs, and crisis management.

It would be remiss for me to conclude my reflections on the developments in this region without a few words about North Korea. We have seen increasing belligerence from the North, in its

renunciation of the goal of peaceful unification and its destabilizing missile program—not to mention its active support for Russia's war machine in Ukraine. All of our governments have remained open to responsible dialogue, but we have all equally been clear that the intensification of threats is not going to produce new concessions. It is hardly surprising that Russia blocked the renewal of the sanctions monitoring mechanism in the UN, but this is a case where the onus is on China to demonstrate that it is serious about the non-proliferation commitments it has made and continues to advocate. China's failure to sustain its commitment to the UN resolutions can only fuel the arguments of those who believe that China is more concerned with maintaining its relationship with Russia than upholding a principled stance on non-proliferation. There are some voices who argue that we should simply throw in the towel and accept North Korea's status as a nuclear state. I think such a course would be catastrophic, not just here on the Korean Peninsula, but throughout Asia and beyond. At the same time, we must continue to couple our firm response to North Korea's provocations with our willingness to resume a substantive and meaningful dialogue, despite the DPRK's rejections of our overtures.

To conclude, I want to come back to my original theme about the nature of the problems we face in the world today. In each of the areas I have discussed, we face determined challenges to our values and our interests: challenges that require us to take firm actions to sustain deterrence against military aggression and coercion and protect our economies and our political systems against policies overt and covert that seek to undermine them. But at the same time, we need to avoid falling into the trap that sees the pursuit of security and prosperity as a zero-sum game and adopt policies that seek to attain our goals at the expense of others. There are some theoreticians and politicians who believe that the world is doomed to an atavistic Hobbesian struggle. That view is nothing short of a self-fulfilling prophecy that carries great risk and imposes great cost, a lesson we have learned time and time again from history. As we face the challenges posed by Russia, Iran, China, and North Korea, we must continue to leave the door open to a more hopeful path based on a willingness to acknowledge deep differences and manage them in a way that promotes the legitimate security concerns of all.

For this reason, I find the almost cavalier embrace of pursuing a new Cold War with China particularly troubling. Perhaps this a problem of generational myopia: a failure to understand the profound lesson President Kennedy learned and shared during the first Cold War in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis. President Kennedy said,

> "Let us reexamine our attitude toward the Cold War, remembering that we are not engaged in a debate, seeking to pile up debating points. We are not here distributing blame or pointing the finger of judgment. We must deal with the world as it is…
>
> For we can seek a relaxation of tension without relaxing our guard. And, for our part, we do not need to use threats to prove that we are resolute."

I believe that approach has been the hallmark of our success in the past and can help us guide us through the turmoil that surrounds us.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these views with you today.

Concurrent Session 2-1

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 13:30-14:45

Protectionism or Free Trade?

Moderator

Anthony Kim
The Heritage Foundation

Speakers

Matthew Goodman
Council on Foreign Relations

Kim Jong-Hoon
Former Member of the National Assembly, Republic of Korea

Clark Packard
Cato Institute

Suzuki Kazuto
University of Tokyo

Zha Daojiong
Peking University

Rapporteur

Kyra Zoubek
Seoul National University

Concurrent Session 2-1, titled "Protectionism or Free Trade?" discussed the changing climate of the global trade order. A key theme of the session was the effect of U.S.-China tensions and the increase in protectionist policies from leading countries on global trade, leading to a decline in free trade policies. As the moderator of the session, Mr. Anthony Kim, a research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, opened by asking the panelists to share their diverse perspectives on the current state of global trade and the clash between free trade and protectionism.

Mr. Matthew Goodman, director of the Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, began by noting the timeliness of this discussion, as the Biden administration is set to announce a new round of tariff increases on imported goods from China, including steel, semiconductors, electric vehicle batteries, and other related products. Mr. Goodman acknowledged that trend lines point to the United States moving in the direction of protectionism. Within this context, Mr. Goodman outlined three major points. First, whether due to climate change, supply chain disruptions, or pandemics, risks have increased around the world. It is reasonable for governments to seek to intervene in markets to help mitigate some of that risk. Second, however, is that such policies of intervention come with a cost, and that cost is not yet very well defined. Third, even if there is an acceptance that some risk mitigation and intervention is appropriate, whether through tariffs, export controls, or industrial policies, that cannot be the whole story. Mr. Goodman ended his opening remarks with the statement that the United States needs to offer something


Anthony Kim


Matthew Goodman


Kim Jong-Hoon


Clark Packard


Suzuki Kazuto


Zha Daojiong

affirmative and positive in the economic realm to help solve the problem of economic security policy.

Dr. Zha Daojiong, a professor at the School of International Studies and the Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development (ISSCAD), Peking University, provided insights on the change in global trade from the Chinese perspective. Dr. Zha stated that the biggest risk for China is not the decoupling of the United States and its allies, but rather the failure of China to manage the dynamics of divesting companies in China to other low-cost economies. This shows

that China has structural issues that do not just apply to the U.S.-China context but to all other contexts. Dr. Zha touched upon historical events that have made China cautious about embracing globalization and accepting vertical integration of industries and technologies for fear of the return of sanctions or trade blockades. This history of risks has made China more self-protective to prevail over these forces. Dr. Zha concluded by stating that there needs to be a more meaningful conversation moving forward, not about U.S.-China competition, but on key issue areas such as food, medicine, and biotechnology.

Ambassador Kim Jong-Hoon, a former member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, began his opening remarks by stating that the crossroads between free trade and protectionism have long since passed. He provided several examples to illustrate which path had been chosen. One such example was the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), which struggled to make progress due to a lack of leadership and fatigue for market opening among leading economic countries. It is very hard to find any leader who calls for further liberalization or deeper market opening. He stated that the era of globalization is over and has been replaced by an attitude of mercantilism: "my country first." He also described the political pressure leaders face to move away from globalization due to a popular majority that is dissatisfied with the effects of globalization. He concluded his opening remarks by stating that this combination

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of popular democracy, a lack of leadership, and trade tensions between the United States and China have led to current policies of protectionism.

Dr. Suzuki Kazuto, a professor at the Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo, began his opening remarks by highlighting that Japan has been derisking since before the term "de-risking" was fashionable. Japan established the Economic Security Promotion Act in 2022 and created the Ministry for Economic Security to identify where Japan stands between free trade and protectionism. From this Japanese perspective, Dr. Suzuki noted that while globalization has declined, the global trade order has not yet entirely entered an era of protectionism. Dr. Suzuki explained that the "small yard, high fence" concept for Japan has been about focusing on security and strategic problems, particularly excessive dependence and vulnerability. Instances of economic coercion have taught Japan that relying too heavily on one country for critical items leads to vulnerability. Dr. Suzuki proposed that the future of Asian and global trade should be one of free trade with resilience, where countries diversify and de-risk key products while maintaining imports from multiple friendly sources.

Mr. Clark Packard, a research fellow at the Cato Institute, began his opening remarks by providing some good and bad news on the current trends in the global market. Mr. Packard noted that patterns of trade and global supply chains are evolving in light of new economic and geopolitical factors, but there is some fracturing within the trading system as U.S.-China competition intensifies. Mr. Packard highlighted the rise of protectionism in two forms: the first is the proliferation of industrial policies, which undermine free trade through domestic production subsidies. While such policies were once more prevalent in emerging economies, the past year has seen a surge in industrial policies largely driven by the United States, China, and the European Union (EU). The second form is the increase in import substitution and tariffs, where national security continues to subordinate economic concerns and is often used as a pretext for protectionism. Mr. Packard concluded his opening remarks by summarizing that U.S. domestic politics currently favor protectionism, but he hopes this will change in the short to intermediate term.

The second round of the discussion proceeded with Mr. Kim highlighting the adaptability and continued resilience of U.S.-South Korea bilateral trade relations. Mr. Kim noted the importance of the KORUS-FTA in light of more protectionist policies from the United States, such as the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the CHIPS Act. Mr. Goodman began by stating that, broadly, the IRA and CHIPS Act can be seen more positively. The Biden administration has been clear about the need to invest more in domestic capabilities in certain areas, and these two acts represent areas where it is reasonable for the United States to want more capabilities and where spending money could be beneficial. It is also an area where partners of the United States have more opportunities to participate, taking advantage of subsidies and gaining benefits.

However, the politicization of such policies could cause problems. Mr. Goodman agreed with Mr. Packard's earlier remarks, raising

questions about how trade-distorting these policies are, how ultimately costly they are, and how effective it can be for the United States to rebuild or build these sectors. Ambassador Kim followed by emphasizing the crucial role the KORUS-FTA has played in promoting business and trade between the United States and South Korea. South Korean investment in the United States has radically increased, likely due to the KORUS-FTA and other policies like the IRA, because they have established a specific framework for companies to do business in the United States. Now the focus is on continuing to obtain more financial support from the U.S. government. Ambassador Kim described his view of the trend of global trade through the lens of geopolitics, noting an evident division of nations in the world. Among friendly countries, there is an increase in investment and trade, while in other countries that are no longer friendly, there is a noticeable decrease in trade. Dr. Suzuki added that, in the context of the geopolitical framework, the current foreign investment process under the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) is not designed for the friends and allies of the United States as such friends and allies often lose chances for investment in the United States due to the lengthy CFIUS process.

The final round of discussion addressed the nature and causes of the tension and competition between the United States and China. Dr. Zha began the discussion by stating that the feeling of unfairness in the United States about trade with China did not begin under the Trump administration. To move past this competition, which is damaging both sides, Dr. Zha recommended that there should be more domestic conversations about the current policies of both countries and whether they are truly better off with the diminishing involvement from the other. Mr. Packard expressed hope for decreased tensions between the United States and China as there is a clearer understanding of which products do not implicate national security and would not result in one-sided dependencies. Mr. Packard concluded by calling for more transparency and accountability to enable more meaningful conversations on important issues. Ambassador Kim added that U.S.-China tensions are rooted in differing perspectives of democracy, the liberal order, and human rights. As long as these differences persist, the future of the U.S.-China relationship cannot be easily remedied. Mr. Goodman agreed with Dr. Zha and Ambassador Kim that deeper structural issues are at play in the tensions between the United States and China. Mr. Goodman stated that, from the U.S. perspective, the biggest problem or underlying structural issue is that China has chosen to move away from its previous policy of reform and opening, which was a policy that the United States was more comfortable with. This shift has changed how the United States responds to issues with China and has been the underlying problem in the U.S.-China relationship. Meanwhile, Dr. Suzuki highlighted that while Chinese practices of free trade are not exactly in line with the design of international economic institutions, the United States has also been adopting more protectionist measures, contrary to the stance the United States had promoted over the past 70 years. With growing global anxiety about whether the rules-based international order can be maintained, Dr. Suzuki recommended that both the United States and China move away from their politicized positions. Dr. Zha concluded the discussion by emphasizing the need to critically assess whether the United States and China are moving in the correct direction by restricting trade and investment with each other, seeing the current trajectory as self-destructive for both societies.

Concurrent Session 2-2

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 13:30-14:45

Emerging Security Issues: Space, Cyber and New Challenges

Moderator

Lee Chung Min
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Speakers

Jeanne Choi
U.S. Department of State

Michael Cunningham
The Heritage Foundation

Peter Dean
University of Sydney

Diana Myers
RAND Corporation

Yang Uk
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Rapporteur

Yujin Son
Johns Hopkins University

Concurrent Session 2-2, titled "Emerging Security Issues: Space, Cyber and New Challenges," reflected on the shifting paradigms of security in Asia. In an era defined by rapid technological advancement and evolving geopolitical landscapes, the traditional notions of peace and security in Asia have undergone a profound transformation. The emergence of cutting-edge technologies, such as quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and semiconductor innovations has reshaped the contours of security discourse. Moreover, the proliferation of new domains, such as space, cyber, and renewable energy has expanded the arena within which states navigate their security concerns.

Dr. Lee Chung Min, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C., moderated the session with experts from various sectors. He opened the discussion by noting that the theme of the session was both broad and critical, touching on emerging security issues, including space, cyber, and new challenges such as drones, robots, and AI.

Dr. Jeanne Choi, an energy analyst in the Office of Economic Policy Analysis and Public Diplomacy in the U.S. Department of State, prefaced her remarks by noting that she was only speaking in her personal capacity. She emphasized the importance of partnerships in addressing emerging security issues, particularly in renewable energy supply chains dominated by China. She highlighted the complexity and time required to de-risk and diversify these supply chains, particularly in renewable energy and critical minerals like graphite and lithium. Dr. Choi noted that while transitioning away from Chinese dominance in these areas is a long-term endeavor, cooperation with allies can expedite the process. She referenced Japan's experience in reducing its dependence on Chinese rare earths from 90% to 60% as a case study, illustrating the need for strategic investment and policy implementation over time. Optimistically, she believes that coordinated efforts with allies can shorten the timeline for developing alternative supply chains.


Lee Chung Min


Jeanne Choi


Michael Cunningham


Peter Dean


Diana Myers


Yang Uk

Concurrent Session 2-2
Emerging Security Issues: Space, Cyber and New Challenges

Addressing the potential for critical infrastructure attacks, Dr. Choi drew parallels to Russia's ongoing attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure. She stressed that the State Department has been actively working with allies, including Korean companies, to repair and replace Ukraine's damaged infrastructure, and to prepare for similar future conflicts. This includes collaboration with international partners to repair and replace vital infrastructure, a strategy that will be crucial in future conflict scenarios.

Mr. Michael Cunningham, a research fellow at The Heritage Foundation's Asian Studies Center, discussed the potential continuity and deviations in U.S. policies under a possible second Trump administration, particularly in space, cyber, and robotics. He noted that the Space Force was a Trump creation and emphasized that Trump's policies would largely depend on his advisers. Mr. Cunningham expected more continuity than a deviation from the Biden administration on critical national security issues. Regarding China's readiness for advanced warfare, Mr. Cunningham highlighted China's focus on mastering and weaponizing new technologies despite not being fully prepared for "Star Wars"-style conflicts. He pointed out that China is experimenting with gray zone tactics and emphasized that the outcome of future technological revolutions will hinge more on technological capabilities than on traditional measures of military strength. He stressed the need for the U.S. to address gray zone activities through enhanced military planning, maintaining traditional military capabilities, and developing international rules and norms to manage such tactics.

Dr. Peter Dean, director of Foreign Policy and Defense at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, discussed Australia's critical role as a national security technology partner for the U.S. and its allies through the AUKUS pact. He emphasized that AUKUS focuses on maintaining a technological edge in six key areas, with Australia contributing advanced autonomous systems like Ghost Bat and Ghost Shark. Australia's

strong university sector, which conducts the majority of its R&D, makes it an ideal partner for technological collaboration. Dr. Dean noted that Australia's pursuit of conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS benefits both Australia and the U.S. by enhancing alliance capacity and deterrence.

He highlighted Australia's strategic geographic advantages for space-based capabilities and critical minerals supply, as well as key facilities like Pine Gap. On cyber capabilities, Dr. Dean explained that cyber warfare has become an integral part of modern military strategy, with countries engaged in ongoing limited cyber conflicts. He pointed out the unresolved issue of determining an appropriate conventional military response to a cyber-attack. He concluded by emphasizing the bipartisan support and significant investment in AUKUS, reflecting its importance to Australia's future security and strategic alignment with its allies.

Dr. Diana Myers, a former fellow at the RAND Corporation, discussed the critical importance of trust and collaboration in intelligence sharing among allies, particularly between South Korea and the United States. Dr. Myers acknowledged the challenges posed by fluctuating levels of trust due to shifting political landscapes but highlighted the consistent reliability and partnership of South Korean allies.

Dr. Myers expressed hope for continued strong relationships and collaboration in intelligence sharing, underscoring the necessity of maintaining these alliances for national security. She noted the possibility of expanding the existing "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance to include more countries, such as South Korea and Japan, especially in the context of new technological challenges like artificial intelligence. She reiterated that while political support is crucial for such expansions, the day-to-day efforts of intelligence professionals to demonstrate solidarity and cooperation with partners are equally important. Dr. Myers concluded by advocating for a future where intelligence sharing is more integrated and collaborative among key allies, leveraging the strength of established relationships to address evolving security threats.

Dr. Yang Uk, a research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, provided insights into South Korea's space capabilities and cybersecurity challenges. Regarding space, he noted that while the Yoon administration is pushing forward with ambitious plans, South Korea's past investments have been insufficient. The country only launched its first military satellite recently and has ambitious goals for the future. However, he expressed skepticism about achieving these goals, given past priorities on strike weapons over space capabilities. He mentioned that the realization of the need for a reliable space network and more surveillance capabilities came around 2020. If sustained investment continues through subsequent administrations, there could be more optimism for South Korea's space ambitions.

On cybersecurity, Dr. Yang highlighted South Korea's vulnerability despite being highly wired. He emphasized that constant hacking by North Korea and China poses a significant threat. The challenge is exacerbated by the widespread distribution of personal information, making cybersecurity resilience a critical issue. He stressed that individual vigilance is crucial, and while military networks were breached despite being disconnected from the internet, the overall cybersecurity posture is a balance between risk and cost. Enhanced security measures are needed, but they come with higher costs, underlining the need for better resources and secret tools to improve cybersecurity defenses.

The second round of the discussion proceeded with Dr. Lee Chung Min inviting each panelist to share their remarks on the critical issues they believe are most pressing. Dr. Jeanne Choi commenced by emphasizing the importance of energy security, particularly the risks associated with the geographic concentration of renewable energy supply chains. She noted that these supply chains, crucial for technologies like wind, solar, and electric vehicles, are vulnerable to disruptions, whether natural or intentional. Dr. Choi highlighted how countries are adopting protectionist trade measures and industrial policies, such as the United States Inflation Reduction Act and the European Union's Net Zero Industrial Act. These measures aim to address future security challenges through collaboration and coordination.

Mr. Michael Cunningham followed, defining the "gray zone" as actions short of war but beyond regular diplomacy and economic tactics. He cited cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, economic leverage, and nonviolent incursions as examples. These tactics are difficult to counter because they are low-cost for attackers but expensive to defend against, often lack clear attribution, and are not considered acts of war. Mr. Cunningham advised that military planning should incorporate these issues more seriously, emphasize traditional military deterrence, and develop new rules and norms for gray zone activities.

Dr. Peter Dean expanded on the intersection of new and traditional security concerns, such as cyber, space, AI, and quantum computing. He noted the shift from joint to integrated forces in the Australian Defense Force, encompassing land, sea, air, cyber, and space domains. National

resilience and adapting to new technologies are crucial. He emphasized the importance of partnerships, especially in space and cyber, and the need for improved information sharing and protection of supply chains, including undersea cables and fuel reserves.

Dr. Diana Myers raised concerns about the non-kinetic effects of gray zone operations like contested information environments and demographic shifts. She pointed out the ethical dilemmas democratic nations face in responding to these challenges compared to more totalitarian approaches, citing examples from both North and South Korea. Dr. Myers urged policymakers to find creative, ethical solutions to maintain deterrence across a spectrum of competition and conflict.

Dr. Yang Uk concluded by discussing the strategic importance of space and cyber domains, noting their origins in military applications but their current economic significance. He pointed out that the private sector now plays a significant role in these domains, complicating government control and regulation. The era of "new space" sees companies like SpaceX and initiatives like Starlink playing pivotal roles, akin to the age of exploration, but without established international norms or rules. He recognized it as a problem as the interests of private companies often differ from national interests.

The panelists welcomed questions from the audience on various topics, including environmental issues related to critical minerals, the future of military technology, and the expansion of intelligence alliances. One of the first questions was directed at Dr. Jeanne Choi regarding the implications of rebuilding the critical minerals supply chain. The audience member highlighted China's dominance in refining facilities, attributed to its lax environmental regulations, and expressed concerns about the potential for increased environmental degradation if countries like the U.S. and Australia were to develop similar capacities. Dr. Choi responded by rejecting the notion that countries must choose between environmental degradation and building refining capacities. She emphasized that there is space for the U.S. and Australia to cooperate around greener standards and technologies. She mentioned Australia's advancements in green smelting technologies and referred to the European Union's carbon border adjustment mechanism as an example of how higher environmental standards can be integrated into these efforts.

Next, a question was posed to Dr. Peter Dean about the relevance of traditional military platforms in light of new technologies such as autonomous underwater vehicles, and their implications for nuclear submarines. The question also touched on the performance of traditional warfighting platforms in the Ukraine conflict. Dr. Dean argued that new technologies would not replace traditional submarines due to the inherent advantages of nuclear-powered submarines, such as unlimited power. He explained that autonomous systems would complement, rather than replace, existing military technologies. He highlighted the importance of continuous innovation and adaptation in military technology, citing the increased global demand for armored vehicles and conventional artillery. Dr. Dean also noted ongoing developments in defensive technologies such as lasers and microwaves to counter new threats like drones.

Lastly, Dr. Diana Myers addressed a question about expanding the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance to include additional countries, potentially creating a "Seven Eyes" or even "Nine Eyes" group. She acknowledged the sensitivity of this issue, noting that the idea of expanding to seven members is currently aspirational. Dr. Myers explained that the current Five Eyes construct already exercises well-established collaboration and information-sharing routines among its members. Dr. Myers emphasized that certain regional security concerns might benefit from broader collaboration, suggesting that South Korea and Japan could particularly align on shared conflict and security issues. Thus, a potential "Seven Eyes" construct could be advantageous for enhancing collective security through regular, collaborative exercises.

Concurrent Session 3-1

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 14:55-16:10

New Arms Race: Russia, China, North Korea and Japan

Moderator

Timothy Martin
The Wall Street Journal

Speakers

Tilman Ruff
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

Randall Schriver
The Project 2049 Institute

Shin Beomchul
Former Vice Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea

Tokuchi Hideshi
Research Institute for Peace and Security

Yao Yunzhu
Beijing Xiangshan Forum

Rapporteur

Francesca Frassineti
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

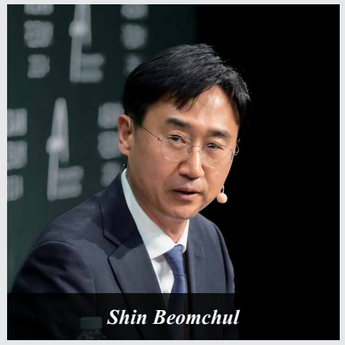
Concurrent Session 3-1, titled "New Arms Race: Russia, China, North Korea and Japan," discussed the state of the non-proliferation regime and the major implications of surging military spending in Asia. Mr. Timothy Martin, Korea bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal, invited the panelists to share their observations on intensifying security dilemmas in the context of military modernization and defense capability expansion carried out by many regional countries.

Dr. Tilman Ruff, former president and a board member of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and founding chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, warned that the extensive efforts of nuclear weapon states in defense modernization carry the potential for decreasing the nuclear-use threshold. Noting that explicit nuclear threats have multiplied amid ongoing conflicts, Dr. Ruff argued that some of the nuclear-armed states involved have brandished nuclear arms as instruments of policy, providing impunity for Russia's coercive actions in Ukraine. Reflecting on the challenges to the existing non-proliferation regime, Dr. Ruff expressed concern that cyber warfare and artificial intelligence capabilities could increase the ways in which a nuclear war could start. Furthermore, Dr. Ruff stressed the disruptive effects of disinformation, especially for evidence-based good governance. As a physician, Dr. Ruff spoke candidly about the catastrophic risks for humanity of rapid, large-scale escalation once the nuclear-use threshold is crossed, calling for higher awareness of the effects of nuclear weapons in terms of climate disruption. While a full-scale nuclear war would extinguish most of humanity, Dr. Ruff insisted that even a regional nuclear war


Timothy Martin


Tilman Ruff


Randall Schriver


Shin Beomchul


Tokuchi Hideshi


Yao Yunzhu

would inflict long-term devastation through the collapse of agricultural production, "putting over two billion people at risk of starvation within the first two years."

Despite such a rather bleak picture of the global nuclear situation, Dr. Ruff reminded the audience of the importance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was negotiated in 2017 and currently has 93 signatories. The treaty provides a categorical and comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. Significantly, it represents the only framework for the elimination of nuclear weapons that is codified in any international instrument. Having said that, Dr. Ruff denounced the rather marginal degree of

constructive engagement with this treaty among Northeast Asian countries, with the only exception of Mongolia. This stands in stark contrast to the situation in Southeast Asia, where every state but Singapore has joined the TPNW. In concluding his remarks, Dr. Ruff underscored once more the responsibility of all Nations, whether nuclear-armed or not, to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. At the same time, Dr. Ruff acknowledged that our security and prosperity depend ultimately on the nine states that own nuclear weapons. These countries should negotiate to eliminate nuclear weapons before it is too late because, as Dr. Ruff warned, "we are not likely to get a second chance to do the right thing."

While some countries in Asia are modernizing with great rapidity and investing plenty of resources in boosting their defense budgets, Mr. Randall Schriver, chairman of the board at The Project 2049 Institute, did not share the perspective that this should be described as an arms race. According to Mr. Schriver, there are revisionist states that are engaged in arming for aggression and that have been trying to shape the existing

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regional status quo in ways that are more favorable to their regime interests. Against this backdrop, ongoing defense trends pose near-term dangers, particularly in the form of accidents or incidents that can largely be caused by miscalculation. In light of the high concentration of military assets, Mr. Schriver identified the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea as two regional flashpoints that pose an immediate risk of accidents in which the involved parties would have very poor escalation control and crisis management. If such a scenario occurs, Mr. Schriver expressed concern that the military application of new technologies with less human oversight could diminish any ability to further control or manage escalation.

Commenting on the relationship between the United States and China, Mr. Schriver argued that in the past, the two sides managed to find issues on which they could collaborate, including China's accession to the WTO during the Clinton administration, the War on Terror during the Bush administration, and climate change during the Obama administration. Today, the lack of positive initiatives or projects on which the two sides could talk is a major obstacle to any balanced interaction between Washington and Beijing. Given the absence of cooperation at the political level, Mr. Schriver believed that bolstering extended deterrence and assurance for allies is the United States' only viable path in the near term.

Dr. Shin Beomchul, former vice minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, raised an interesting point relating to perception in relation to defense spending. According to Dr. Shin, a serious and concerning problem is the tendency of many government officials to not consider the high level of military spending in their countries as a driving factor of the current arms race. While they view their countries' investments in defense as part of defense reform or efforts to strengthen military capabilities, they perceive the other countries' defense investments in terms of an arms race. In light of this, Dr. Shin encouraged civilian researchers and academics to continue discussing these issues to bridge governments' perception gaps. Going forward, Dr. Shin believed that the field of conventional weapons presents a more favorable environment for arms control talks, whereas the nuclear arms race poses the greatest risks for the region and beyond. Citing the consistently high level of support for nuclear weapons in South Korea and Japan, Dr. Shin noted that this support so far has been constrained by their respective governments' reaffirming support for international treaties and commitments to non-proliferation.

Dr. Tokuchi Hideshi, president of the Research Institute for Peace and Security in Japan, addressed Japan's national defense efforts in the age of great power rivalry. Dr. Hideshi provided an overview of the regional security context that led the Japanese government to announce a new National Security Strategy in December 2022. First, Dr. Hideshi noted that Northeast Asia is at the forefront of great power rivalry and that Japan is surrounded by three nuclear-weapon states: Russia, China, and North Korea. Secondly, although Northeast Asia is part of the international community of sovereign states, progress related to globalization has led to the rise of concepts such as hybrid warfare and gray zone contingencies, which have increasingly blurred boundaries and borders, according to Dr. Hideshi. Third, the international response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has reaffirmed the importance of international partnerships. In this regard, Dr. Hideshi argued that the minilateral initiatives that have been underway in the region underscore the significance of cooperative efforts.

Given such acute security challenges, Dr. Hideshi explained that Japan's National Security Strategy is built upon three pillars: self-help, enhancing the United States-Japan bilateral alliance, and expanding international security cooperation with other like-minded countries. Aside from Japan's staunch support for the regional balance of power, international cooperation is required, especially in areas like regional confidence building and crisis management. To achieve meaningful outcomes, Dr. Hideshi stressed the need to keep the channels of communication open and ensure freedom of speech in order to encourage sincere exchanges of views. Upholding the rule of law is another area in which, according to Dr. Hideshi, international cooperation should be encouraged because rules reinforce predictability and thus foster stability. In responding to a question on the future of Japan's commitment to military spending in the case of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's potential resignation, Dr. Hideshi foresaw a certain level of continuity on this front particularly considering the large consensus among the Japanese people on the need to strengthen the country's national security.

Major General Yao Yunzhu, a senior advisor at Beijing Xiangshan Forum, observed that the Asia-Pacific region has not entered a comprehensive age of arms race. For instance, since the end of the Cold War, the ASEAN states have increased their military spending by 4-6%. However, according to Major General Yao, Northeast Asia is quite different due to the persisting animosity between the United States and North Korea, and the latter's lack of willingness to give up its nuclear weapons. Recently, the United States, South Korea, and Japan have consolidated their military cooperation, especially in terms of extended deterrence, whereas North Korea has been supporting Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. For Major General Yao, these dynamics underscore the further polarization that is unfolding in Northeast Asia. In light of China's caution in taking a position regarding the conflict in Ukraine, Major General Yao stressed that it is not in the interest of Beijing to see Northeast Asia divided into two blocs that engage in an arms race.

As for the dynamics between China and the United States, Major General Yao believed that Washington follows "a strategic competition strategy against Beijing," which leaves China with no other option than to adopt a strong response, particularly about Taiwan, given Washington's enhanced commitment to Taipei's defense through arms sales and military assistance. While China's Constitution calls for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to possess the necessary capabilities to defend China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Major General Yao did not view China and the United States as outright enemies. Nevertheless, Major General Yao argued that there are some indicators that both countries are preparing, from the military point of view, to face a potential conflict in the case of a Taiwan contingency. Commenting on the current decoupling strategies against China, Major General Yao believed that such efforts are indicative of the extent to which the arms race has spread to the realm of emerging technologies.

In responding to a question posed by the moderator on the role that China should play in nuclear non-proliferation going forward, Major General Yao argued that Beijing should make some effort to bring the relevant parties to the negotiating table with the aim of at least freezing the nuclear arsenal on the Korean Peninsula. However, there is not much room for optimism, according to Major General Yao, considering the lack of political will in the United States and other relevant players to make any proactive and consequential changes. China has been modernizing and expanding its nuclear arsenal because its second-strike capability is in danger based on Chinese assessments. From this perspective, Major General Yao stressed that the rationale behind China's current defense and military efforts is to make sure that "the Chinese retaliatory capabilities would be effective in deterring a first strike." Although Beijing "would not freeze its nuclear arsenal," Major General Yao reiterated that "[China] would not change its 'no first use policy' either."

Concurrent Session 3-2

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 14:55-16:10

Flashpoints in Asia: Taiwan Strait and South China Sea

Moderator

Duyeon Kim
Center for a New American Security

Speakers

Jimbo Ken
Keio University

Ellen Kim
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Patricia Kim
Brookings Institution

Kim Young-Ho
Korea National Defense University

Wang Junsheng
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Rapporteur

Ida Therese Hovik
Yonsei University

Concurrent Session 3-2, titled "Flashpoints in Asia: Taiwan Strait and South China Sea," tackled potential conflict areas among the various key players in the region, as well as their potential implications. A core theme was how military accidents and miscalculations could arise, emphasizing the importance of implementing reliable crisis management mechanisms. The session highlighted the interconnectedness of regional security dynamics.

Dr. Duyeon Kim, an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, opened the session by introducing the two flashpoints in Asia, namely the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Highlighting their importance, he noted the potential for a sobering discussion and invited each of the distinguished panelists to identify what they considered the most concerning pathways to conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

Dr. Jimbo Ken, a professor of International Relations at Keio University, initiated the discussion by identifying two primary pathways to conflict in the Taiwan Strait: the "conflict of necessity" and the "conflict of opportunity." The conflict of necessity is driven by China's adherence to the One China Principle, which justifies its stance that Taiwan is an inseparable part of its territory. The Anti-Secession Law mandates that China take military action should Taiwan formally declare independence. This arises from a perceived obligation to maintain territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

The second pathway, the conflict of opportunity, emerges from shifts in the balance of power and strategic calculations. The growing military capability gap between China and Taiwan might create a window of opportunity for China to act. In addition, if China perceives that the United States might not intervene decisively in Taiwan's defense, it could embolden Beijing to take aggressive actions. This failure of deterrence, combined with internal strategic calculations, could prompt China to opt for a forceful resolution.


Duyeon Kim


Jimbo Ken


Ellen Kim


Patricia Kim


Kim Young-Ho


Wang Junsheng

Dr. Ellen Kim, deputy director and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, expanded on these points by outlining three specific conditions under which China might use force against Taiwan. First, if Taiwan were to declare independence, it would directly challenge

Concurrent Session 3-2
Flashpoints in Asia:
Taiwan Strait and
South China Sea

China's sovereignty claims, likely triggering a military response. Second, if the United States were to shift away from its One China Policy and formally recognize Taiwan as an independent state, it would significantly escalate tensions. Third, if China loses confidence in peaceful unification and believes that force is the only viable option, it might resort to military action. Dr. Kim also highlighted the potential for dual contingencies, where conflicts in the Taiwan Strait could prompt North Korea to exploit the situation by engaging in aggressive actions against South Korea.

Dr. Patricia Kim, a foreign policy fellow at the Brookings Institution, offered a comprehensive analysis of the potential pathways to conflict, focusing on "deliberate" and "accidental" scenarios. She identified three main pathways: first, deliberate military action by China if Taiwan declares independence; second, forceful unification driven by Beijing's confidence in its military capabilities; and third, unintended clashes leading to escalation. While the first two scenarios seem increasingly unlikely in the near to medium term due to the high costs involved, Dr. Kim noted that the risk of accidental conflict remains significant. She emphasized that the intricate tensions in the region, which include frequent military interactions and the potential for miscalculations, could easily escalate into a broader conflict.

Dr. Kim Young-Ho, vice president and a professor at Korea National Defense University, expressed similar concerns, notably relative to the risk of unintended escalation. He pointed out that military confrontations between the United States and Chinese naval forces could quickly spiral out of control. Following this, Dr. Kim Young-Ho brought to attention the possibility that Chinese President Xi Jinping might undertake aggressive actions to consolidate his leadership legacy. Such moves, aimed at demonstrating tangible achievements, could inadvertently lead to a military conflict.

Dr. Wang Junsheng, director and a professor of the Department of China's Regional Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, provided a different perspective, emphasizing the cruciality of international cooperation to avoid conflict in the Taiwan Strait. While the risk of accidental conflict certainly is present, both China and the United States have mechanisms in place to manage tensions. He stressed that China does not desire conflict to occur in the Taiwan Strait and is thus committed to peaceful resolution through dialogue and negotiation.

Following these remarks, Dr. Duyeon Kim shifted attention toward the South China Sea, another critical flashpoint in Asia, inquiring about the pathways to potential conflict in this region. Dr. Jimbo Ken expressed concerns about the growing power imbalance between China and other states, particularly the Philippines. He pointed out that unlike the Taiwan Strait, where there is an increasingly sophisticated understanding of escalation management, the South China Sea lacks adequately established mechanisms to manage conflicts. The absence of comprehensible rules increases the risk of unintended clashes, especially given the strategic importance of the region.

Dr. Ellen Kim highlighted the role of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty as a significant deterrent to Chinese aggression. She noted that any attack on Philippine vessels or personnel in the South China Sea could invoke the treaty, prompting U.S. involvement. Given the frequent interactions between Chinese and Philippine forces in the region, there is a considerable likelihood that accidents or miscalculations could occur.

Dr. Patricia Kim noted that this flashpoint involves disputes over uninhabited islands and strategic waterways. The daily interactions between coast guards, navies, and fishing vessels from various claimant states create a high potential for unintended confrontations. She pointed out that the Biden administration's assurances to the Philippines signal the U.S. commitment to the region while simultaneously complicating the strategic calculus for both China and the United States. While more stakeholders are involved in the South China Sea, making conflicts more complex, the likelihood of large-scale violent clashes is relatively low, Dr. Kim Young-Ho claimed. He attributed this to the broader geopolitical calculations that China must consider, amongst these being the reactions of other Asian countries. However, he cautioned that frequent military tensions and disputes are likely to continue, driven by the strategic importance of the region.

The risks of miscalculations and accidents are all the more significant, given the involvement of these numerous stakeholders with competing interests. Dr. Wang Junsheng again stressed that China aims to avoid conflict and seeks to manage tensions through dialogue and negotiation. To successfully do this, China and the United States ought to establish robust mechanisms to prevent and manage potential crises.

Following this, Dr. Duyeon Kim directed the discussion toward the implications that a potential conflict in these flashpoints could have for South Korea and Japan, asking the panelists to elaborate on potential scenarios and impacts. Dr. Kim Young-Ho outlined several scenarios in which South Korea might become involved in such conflicts. He suggested that China could instigate North Korean provocations to distract the United States or that North Korea might

seize the opportunity to attack South Korea. Additionally, China might militarily contain the Yellow Sea to prevent South Korean assistance to either Taiwan or other countries. Dr. Kim Young-Ho said that while these scenarios are concerning, South Korea's involvement would likely be indirect and focused on assistance of a logistical and humanitarian nature.

Nevertheless, the economic impact on South Korea would be significant, as Dr. Ellen Kim stated that over 90% of South Korea's trade volume and nearly 80% of its energy imports pass through these waters. Dr. Kim also brought attention to South Korea's concern about being drawn into conflicts if the United States calls for assistance, which could weaken the deterrence posture on the Korean Peninsula.

Emphasizing the strategic importance of Taiwan for Japan, Dr. Jimbo Ken referenced former Prime Minister, the late Shinzo Abe's assertion that a Taiwan contingency is also a contingency for Japan. Bringing attention to the geographical proximity of Taiwan to Japan's Yonaguni islands, Dr. Jimbo argued that Japanese involvement in any conflict would be inevitable. Japan's increased defense budget and enhanced military capabilities align more closely with the United States' strategic interests, particularly concerning Taiwan. Regarding the South China Sea, he pointed out the interconnectedness with the East China Sea and the importance of maintaining a rule-based maritime order.

Dr. Duyeon Kim then transitioned the discussion regarding ways to reduce risk and manage conflict in these flashpoints. She introduced this segment by stressing the importance of practical steps to mitigate tensions, referencing a quote by Robert McNamara in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis: "There is no longer any such thing as strategy, only crisis management." Dr. Kim asked the panelists to consider whether there is political appetite among the key players to reduce risk and eventually work toward resolving the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea conflicts diplomatically. Acknowledging the historical challenges of diplomatic efforts, she invited Dr. Patricia Kim and Dr. Wang to first share their perspectives on the potential for such initiatives.

Dr. Patricia Kim noted that the relationship between China and the United States has stabilized in recent years, with both countries taking steps for different reasons. The United States is dealing with various crises, including the war in Ukraine, the conflict in Gaza, and internal political divisions. Simultaneously, China faces major domestic economic challenges. Although efforts to open military-to-military channels and leader-level communications have been beneficial, she expressed concerns about their sustainability, due to the differing strategic framings of the two nations. Dr. Patricia Kim said that while the United States aims to compete, cooperate, and confront, when necessary, China rejects this approach, preferring a more binary choice. While efforts have been made, she expressed concerns that China might withdraw from these communication channels during future tensions, thus questioning how long the current stabilization will last.

Dr. Wang Junsheng agreed with Dr. Patricia Kim's emphasis on prioritizing dialogue and contingency planning, emphasizing that both China and the United States are working hard to stabilize their relationship. However, Dr. Wang also worried that the competitive relationship between China and the United States might exacerbate conflicts in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, with the United States potentially taking advantage of these conflicts to compete strategically with China.

In the final question to the panel, Dr. Duyeon Kim sought South Korean and Japanese perspectives on addressing specific measures that the United States, China, and key players in Southeast Asia could take to reduce risks and work toward resolving the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea conflicts. Dr. Jimbo expressed concern about the panel's consistent consensus, suggesting that it might indicate a lack of consideration for some critical issues. He thus highlighted three main points of concern: the danger of the United States aiming to "win" the strategic competition with China, which could lead to China rejecting de-escalation efforts; the lack of a clear understanding and adherence to historical agreements like the Shanghai Communiqué's six assurances; and the mutual underestimation of the consequences of actions that might unintentionally escalate conflicts. Dr. Jimbo stressed the need for clear deterrence strategies and political assurances to ensure peaceful resolution in times of escalating tensions.

Echoing these concerns, Dr. Kim Young-Ho emphasized that the most important step would be to establish mechanisms for confidence-building measures to address the security dilemma and mirror image perceptions among the involved parties. He encouraged trilateral or multilateral cooperation in the region, combined with more detailed action plans between South Korea and the United States to properly prepare for contingencies.

In conclusion of the session, Dr. Duyeon Kim again emphasized the practical necessity for the United States, South Korean, and Japanese militaries to practice various contingency scenarios together. She acknowledged the political sensitivity of such preparations but highlighted the importance of adequate preparation in a multitude of potential conflict scenarios.

Plenary Session 4

Date | May 14, 2024
Time | 16:20-17:40

North Korea's Nuclear Threat

Moderator

Sue Mi Terry
Council on Foreign Relations

Speakers

Ahn Ho-Young
Kyungnam University

Naoko Aoki
RAND Corporation

Bruce Bennett
RAND Corporation

John Everard
Former UK Ambassador to DPRK

Morimoto Satoshi
Former Minister of Defense, Japan

Su Hao
China Foreign Affairs University

Rapporteur

Jung Damin
Korea National Defense University

Plenary Session 4, titled "North Korea's Nuclear Threat," discussed the growing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea amid the changing security environment on the Korean Peninsula. Topics included North Korea's increasing trade of weapons with Russia and the satellite development competition between the two Koreas. North Korea has also made a significant policy shift by renouncing unification and declaring South Korea its number one enemy while expanding its uranium enrichment capability. North Korea's continued nuclear development was possible while other regional players were dealing with other security conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas war. A key theme of the session was differing perspectives on how regional players could produce an effective deterrence against North Korean nuclear threats.

Dr. Sue Mi Terry, a senior fellow for Korea studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), opened the session by asking the panelists whether the United States needs to change its policy toward North Korea. She cited some Korea watchers who argue that Washington should give up its unrealistic goal of denuclearization and turn to sanctions relief in exchange for freezing North Korea's plutonium nuclear facilities.

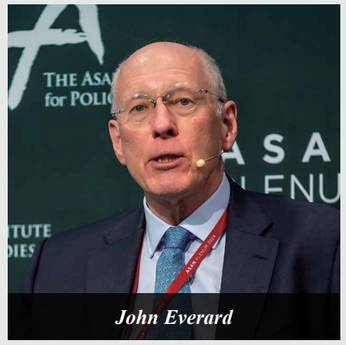
Ambassador Ahn Ho-Young, chair and a professor of North Korean Studies at Kyungnam University and former ambassador to the United States, viewed suspending North Korea's development of nuclear weapons in return for lifting sanctions as an undesirable option when negotiating with the North. Ambassador Ahn pointed out that although the idea of freezing


Sue Mi Terry


Ahn Ho-Young


Naoko Aoki

Bruce Bennett


John Everard


Morimoto Satoshi


Su Hao

Plenary Session 4
North Korea's Nuclear Threat

North Korea's nuclear program has been raised many times in the past, including in 1994, 2005, and 2006, the context of such discussions has changed significantly since the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last September. "Challenge for the rules-based international order is taking place in a far more serious manner than in the past," Ambassador Ahn said. He noted that lifting sanctions amid the burgeoning ties between Russia and North Korea would only increase tensions, as North Korea could strengthen both its nuclear and conventional capabilities simultaneously, turning them into a substantial threat. "We should try to look at North Korea in a very broad context," Ambassador Ahn said. "There are many indications that the North Korean regime is becoming highly concerned about its economy and stability."

However, Dr. Bruce Bennett, an adjunct international/defense researcher at the RAND Corporation, argued that pursuing the denuclearization of North Korea is unrealistic, given that the country is estimated to have developed about 50 to 100 weapons worth of critical nuclear material so far, while its leader Kim Jong Un is aiming for 300 to 500 more. "I think a world with 300 to 500 North Korean nuclear weapons is a bad nightmare because it will threaten the United States, it will threaten South Korea, it will threaten Japan, and with the range of missiles they are developing, it may well threaten our European allies and others," he said. Dr. Bennett suggested that the United States and South Korea need to be prepared to acknowledge that North Korea will not pursue denuclearization. This acknowledgment would be the first step

to initiating negotiations with Pyongyang for the more realistic goal of freezing North Korea's nuclear production. Dr. Bennett emphasized that Pyongyang is likely to use nuclear weapons to coerce political concessions from Seoul, citing a U.S. intelligence report titled "National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)" released in June 2023. "The United States has got to decide," Dr. Bennett said. "Are we better off trying to slow him down or stop him developing when he only has maybe 50 or 100 nuclear weapons, or do we want to wait until he has three or 500 nuclear weapons to try to do that?" He also said that the United States and South Korea should find creative ways to coerce North Korea into freezing its nuclear weapon production. He emphasized the importance of using outside information, noting that Kim Jong Un is extremely fearful of outside information like K-pop.

Ambassador John Everard, a former UK ambassador to DPRK, addressed the worsening geopolitical circumstances in the region surrounding the Korean Peninsula since the collapse of the summit between former U.S. President Donald Trump and Kim in February 2018. Ambassador Everard argued that the possibility of a nuclear war breaking out on the Korean Peninsula is real and imminent, considering North Korea's foreign and domestic policy shifts. During a key ruling party meeting in December last year, North Korea's leader, Kim, cleared the way for an attack on South Korea by defining it as a separate and hostile state. Ambassador Everard echoed the argument by North Korean experts Siegfried Hecker and Robert Carlin that Kim has made a strategic decision for war. He also said the recent situation where North Korea depleted its conventional arsenal by giving a significant part of it to Russia indicates a higher possibility for the country to use tactical nuclear weapons in a first strike. He said there are three main reasons behind recent changes in North Korea's security strategy: (1) the North Korean economy has been suffering from worsening food insecurity since the pandemic. However, Kim has yet to deliver solutions for this; (2) the erosion of control and legitimacy of the leadership due to the influx of outside information; (3) the frequent media exposure of Kim's young daughter implies instability in the leadership succession. Ambassador Everard said shifting back North Korea's hostile foreign policy toward the United States will solve the conundrum of the North Korean nuclear threat and the cooperation between the United States and China will be the key step toward it.

Dr. Su Hao, a professor in the Department of Diplomacy and founding director of the Center for Strategic and Peace Studies at China Foreign Affairs University, assessed that North Korea is exploiting the current geopolitical circumstances in the region, including the continued division of the two Koreas, growing rivalry between China and the United States, and the Russia-Ukraine war to continue its nuclear development. However, Dr. Su argued that only two countries in the region, South Korea and China, are negatively affected by the current situation, while other regional players including the United States, Russia, and Japan are taking advantage of it. Dr. Su said North Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons has created a favorable situation for the United States as it built a huge coalition in the Indo-Pacific region that aimed at strategically containing China. Russia also benefited from the situation when North Korea acted as a buffer in the Far East while it focused more on the war in Europe. For Japan, an ally of the United States, North Korea's continuation of nuclear programs has given the excuse to expand its military power. Dr. Su said South Korean and Chinese people are the ones who suffer from real nuclear threats. He argued the regional players should return to the principle of denuclearization by focusing on their common interests to avoid the worst-case scenario of nuclear confrontation.

Dr. Naoko Aoki, an associate political scientist at the RAND Corporation, addressed the importance of trilateral cooperation among the United States, South Korea, and Japan in deterring North Korea from taking actions that are unfavorable for the three countries. Dr. Aoki said the top-level commitment of the three countries, shown in the Camp David Summit in August 2023, has upgraded their trilateral military cooperation, citing their more integrated joint aerial exercises. Dr. Aoki said although such strengthened trilateral cooperation may not entirely

stop North Korea from testing missiles and developing nuclear weapons, it could still complicate North Korea's calculations. She argued that the United States, South Korea, and Japan should increase trilateral coordination, especially based on Japan's investment in counter-strike capabilities that could reach North Korea. "This will not be used unless North Korea initiates an attack," Dr. Aoki said. "But of course, if you think about the possibility of Japan doing that, then coordination with the United States and South Korea becomes even more important." She also emphasized the importance of normalization of bilateral exchanges between South Korea and Japan. Lastly, she said the three countries must look into North Korea's interpretation of different kinds of trilateral cooperative exercises to assess what works best.

Mr. Morimoto Satoshi, former Japanese Minister of Defense, noted growing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea, citing its increasing trade of weapons with Russia, and the policy shift of abandoning unification with South Korea, as well as the continuation of the development of nuclear and ballistic missiles, reconnaissance satellites, and nuclear submarines. Mr. Morimoto said strategic nuclear weapons are the most important means for North Korea to ensure the survival of the Kim regime. Mr. Morimoto assessed that the ties between Russia and North Korea have significantly intensified since the Russia-Ukraine war broke out. He said that North Korea is not only likely getting resources and technologies for its strategic weapons from Russia, but Russia is also diplomatically helping North Korea by vetoing UN sanctions against Pyeongyang. He also noted that the trilateral cooperation between North Korea, Russia, and China has intensified to confront that of South Korea, the United States, and Japan. Morimoto also assessed that North Korea is estimated to have about 40 nuclear warheads. He saw that the U.S. Initiative for Integrated Air and Missile Defense could tackle complex threats such as North Korea's solid-fuel missiles and space-launched vehicles, while also emphasizing the need to strengthen cooperation between the United States, Japan, and Korea. Mr. Morimoto said the three countries should build an integrated air and missile defense system that can effectively respond to a nuclear strike by North Korea, as well as an early warning system and information-sharing system.

In the discussion that followed, panelists examined the use of North Korean weapons in the Ukraine war. Dr. Bennett said he believes North Korea would have sent personnel to Ukraine to analyze the outcomes after sending their new missiles on the battlefield. He also argued that the United States and its allies should attempt to reach out to North Korean elites by conveying external information to those sent overseas by the regime. Ambassador Ahn responded that the North Korean regime is highly concerned about its economy and social stability, adding that the United States and its allies should take advantage of this situation. Ambassador Ahn asserted that the regional players involved should make every effort to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, calling for more concrete efforts in diplomacy, information dissemination, military action, and economic sanctions.

Closing Ceremony

Date	May 14, 2024
Time	17:40-17:55
Place	Grand Ballroom I+II

Concluding Observations

John Hamre
President and CEO,
Center for Strategic and
International Studies

Thank you, I think this has been a splendid conference. And Chairman Chung and President Choi, I think you have done a fabulous job, and the whole Asan staff has been remarkable.

We are living through the most remarkable time of my professional life. COVID-19 demonstrated significantly how weak our international institutions are. And the Ukraine war has brought back great power politics in a powerful way. And it looks like Russia's sinking just to a permanent hostility with their behavior. China has linked itself to Russia with its "Friendship without Borders," and we responded, of course, by weaponizing international finance. These are profound changes that have taken place.

It seems to me that the world is starting to bifurcate and trifurcate. It looks to me now that there are probably four major blocs that are going to emerge: you get the G7-OECD blocs, countries that champion the so-called rules-based, rule of law order. You get the BRICS minus India. You get what some people call "Connector States," which include India, Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. They are bridging across this environment. And then you get the global South. We have four emerging blocs that are becoming very clear. It is only the G7-OECD blocs that are championing the rule of law international order system. Thus, this brings me to the point about the topic of this conversation, which is the future of Asia's prosperity and security.

The most important and strategic thing we can do to assure prosperity and security in Asia and in the world is to expand the G7 and to bring Korea and Australia into an expanded G7. Overwhelmingly, that is the most strategic thing we can do. Why? The G7 is overweight on Europeans and underweight on Asians. After all, I think the political center of gravity and the economic center of gravity is now here in Asia. It does not make any sense to have an overweight G7 focused on Europe. I think the future is going to be a competition around economics and technology. It makes no sense to have a G7 that does not have Korea in it. There also has to be a rethinking of the G7. We have to start creating an agenda-setting process that is not just every host nation deciding what it wants to do. Look at the Rome conference. It is turning out to be a very parochial event. It is not about global problems in the world. It is about the Mediterranean problems. We need a different approach to agenda setting. We also need to start thinking if there are ancillary things that we want to attach to an expanded G7, G8, or G9 type of framework.

We are dealing with some of the real conundrums of our time. When the United States decided we wanted to limit semiconductors, we kind of did that on our own and told our friends, saying, "Here is what we are going to do, and we want you to do it." We need to have a process where we are working through these issues together.

My concluding comment here is to say that if we are interested in the future of Asia from a standpoint of security and prosperity, we need to bring Korea and Australia into an expanded G7. Thank you for the chance to get to say that.

Closing Remarks

Yoon Young-kwan
Chairman,
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Thank you very much. We are currently in a much more turbulent period, and it is not easy to find the way to prosperity and peace, especially in this complex world of Asia.

But we tried to find some way of finding solutions to the problems that we are facing. In our discussions today, we delved into a wide range of pressing issues that we are facing in Asia, including geopolitical tensions and regional conflicts, the North Korea nuclear threat, cross-strait relations, Taiwan issues, the U.S. presidential election, new emerging security issues, and protectionism.

Many participants offered very insightful comments, and those views have helped us in thinking about the way to prosperity and peace in Asia, as well as highlighted the complicated nature of the issues that we are discussing.

I think it was a very worthwhile effort for us to try to find ways to peace and prosperity in this region. As we wrap up today's discussion, I would like to extend my warmest gratitude and deepest appreciation to all of you for your commitment and contributions.

I would like to express my deep appreciation, especially to those who made the long travel from abroad, and I sincerely hope we can see you next time at this important event to discuss these pressing issues at Asan Plenum 2025.

Thank you very much.

Photos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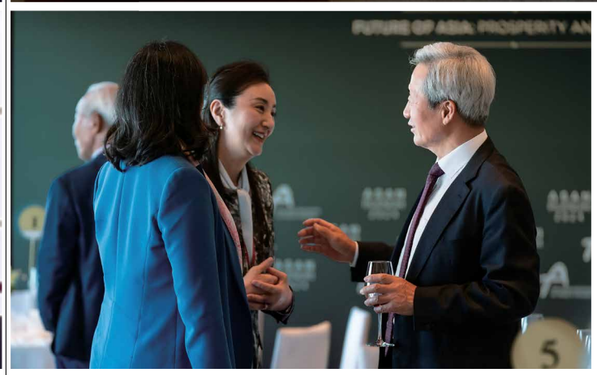

List of Participants

Ahn Ho-Young
Chair Professor, Kyungnam University

Naoko Aoki
Associate Political Scientist, RAND Corporation

Bruce Bennett
Senior Defense Analyst, RAND Corporation

Kurt Campbell
U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State

Jeanne Choi
Energy Analyst, U.S. Department of State

Chung Mong Joon
Founder and Honorary Chairman, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Michael Cunningham
Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation

Peter Dean
Director, Foreign Policy and Defence, United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney

John Everard
Former UK Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Edwin Feulner
Founder and Chung Ju-yung Fellow, The Heritage Foundation

Matthew Goodman
Director, Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Michael Green
CEO and Professor, United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney

John Hamre
President and CEO, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Karen House
Senior Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University

Jia Qingguo
Professor, School of International Studies, Peking University

Jimbo Ken
Professor, Faculty of Policy Management, Keio University

Anthony Kim
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Duyeon Kim
Adjunct Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Security Program, Center for a New American Security

Ellen Kim
Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Kim Hong Kyun
1st Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

Kim Jong-Hoon
Former Member of the National Assembly, Republic of Korea

Patricia Kim
Foreign Policy Fellow, John L. Thornton China Center and Center for East Asia Policy Studies, Brookings Institution

Kim Sung-han
Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University

Kim Young-Ho
Vice President and Professor, Korea National Defense University

Lee Chung Min
Senior Fellow, Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Timothy Martin
Korea Bureau Chief, The Wall Street Journal

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Tilman Ruff
Board Member and Former President, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

Randall Schriver
Chairman of the Board, The Project 2049 Institute

Shin Beomchul
Former Vice Minister, Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea

Sohn Jie-ae
Ambassador for Cultural Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea

James Steinberg
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Su Hao
Emeritus Professor, China Foreign Affairs University

Sugiyama Shinsuke
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Sue Mi Terry
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President, Research Institute for Peace and Security

Wang Junsheng
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Paul Wolfowitz
Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University

Yang Uk
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Yao Yunzhu
Senior Advisor, Beijing Xiangshan Forum

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