

Panel: Leadership Transitions in the Two Koreas (Violet/Cosmos)

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In the April 11 election, there were two issues that were ideologically driven by the opposition. The first was the ROK-US FTA and the other was the naval base on Jeju island. The ROK-US FTA was first negotiated in 2007 while Roh Moo-hyun was in power. The Democratic United Party (DUP) chose to Assume the stance of far-left United Progressive Party and other civil organizations in order to form a strategic coalition for the election. This move to the far left by the DUP alienated many swing voters. They might have believed that it would trigger the kind of anti-US sentiment which was key in the election of President Roh in 2007. However, this time the anti-US card did not seem to work. Why? In 2002, the incident that triggered the massive anti-US protest was mainly an emotional one: the killing of two middle school girls during a U.S. Army exercise and the subsequent acquittal of the U.S. soldiers. However, the ROK-US FTA and Jeju naval base issues are not emotional ones, and therefore require more rational calculation. Thus, public was not mobilized as it was in 2002.

** The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.*
