

Session Sketch

The Asan Symposium:
“Celebrating Korea-US Relations: 140 Years and Beyond”
<http://asansymposium.com>

Session: Vision and Challenges of the ROK-US Alliance

Date/Time: June 3, 2022/13:20-14:35

Rapporteur:

Moderator:

Paula Hancocks, CNN

Speakers:

Jung Seung Jo, Korea-US Alliance Foundation

Kim Byung Joo, The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea

Shim Yoon-joe, Kookmin University

Bruce W. Bennett, RAND Corporation

Edwin J. Feulner, The Heritage Foundation

John Hamre, Center for Strategic and International Studies (virtual participation)

Karen House, Harvard Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Session 2, titled “Vision and Challenges of the ROK – US Alliance,” explored the obstacles that the United States and Republic of Korea alliance faces and discussed plans to strengthen relations going forward. This session focused on overcoming the challenges of North Korea’s recent missile tests; China’s regional hegemony; and repairing a weakened alliance following the Trump – Moon administrations. The vision going forward included a strengthened ROK-US alliance, with an emphasis on support for the trilateral US-ROK-Japan alliance.

Speakers noted that a strengthened ROK-US alliance would include several bilateral and multilateral exchanges and cooperation. Several US panelists spoke about the importance of increasing US credibility in the region, particularly in response to provocations from North Korea and China. Panel members also noted the importance of increased activities such as ROK-US cooperation on extended deterrence and the expansion of combined military exercises. It was also encouraged to go beyond military and national security cooperation to increase exchanges on nuclear energy, technology, economy, culture, and science.

Speakers from the US particularly emphasized the need to prepare civilians and the military in South Korea for a potential attack from the DPRK. Some of the US speakers noted that such an attack would be the result of paranoia from Kim Jong Un or as a diversion due to domestic threats. The panel also noted the importance of alliance building after watching the consequences of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Most panel members agreed that the Russia-Ukraine conflict and strengthening of NATO, highlights the importance of strengthening alliances in the Pacific and globally. In this context, some panelists, including Ms. Karen

** The views expressed herein are summaries and may not necessarily reflect the views of the speakers or their affiliated institutions*

Session Sketch

The Asan Symposium:
“Celebrating Korea-US Relations: 140 Years and Beyond”
<http://asansymposium.com>

House and Mr. Edwin Feulner, suggested opening discussion on various extended deterrence measures, including redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea; some Korean panelists agreed on this point.

** The views expressed herein are summaries and may not necessarily reflect the views of the speakers or their affiliated institutions*