

**Session:** Opening Ceremony

**Date/Time:** April 25, 2023 / 9:00-10:00

**Rapporteur:**

Seba Nazary, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

**Speakers:**

Chung Mong Joon, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Chang Hojin, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

Joy M. Sakurai, U.S. Embassy in Seoul

Henry A. Kissinger (Video Remarks), Kissinger Associates, Inc.

John J. Hamre (Video Remarks), Center for Strategic and International Studies

John R. Bolton, Former U.S. National Security Advisor; Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

**Session Sketch:**

The opening ceremony of the 2023 Asan Plenum began with welcoming remarks from Dr. Chung Mong Joon, Honorary Chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. “This year marks the 144th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship and the 70th anniversary of US-ROK alliance” he pointed out. “Without the intervention of the US, I would not be here today. I would like to take this opportunity to announce my sincere gratitude to the US and UN. We, the Korean people will never forget their noble sacrifice.” He added that, “Our alliance is the driving force for freedom and democracy. I hope this Plenum helps the 70-year alliance move into the future.”

Ambassador Chang Hojin, first Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, next delivered opening remarks. “I can say with confidence that our alliance is one of the most successful alliances in all of history. It is a testimony to the solidarity and strength between the ROK and US. The alliance is not 70 years old, but young and strong.”

Ms. Joy M. Sakurai, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, next pointed out “President Yoon is only the second leader that President Biden has invited.” Noting that the US and ROK “confront a host of global threats,” the two countries would further collaborate on topics like “cybersecurity, climate change and health security.”

Dr. Henry Kissinger and Dr. John Hamre next delivered virtual opening remarks to congratulate the 2023 Asan Plenum. Dr. Hamre noted the only real option ROK has in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear threat is deterrence. While there was growing debate in South Korea about acquiring nuclear weapons for self-defense, he cautioned that “building the warhead is really the easy part; it’s everything that goes with that becomes much more complicated.”

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

## Session Sketch

Asan Plenum 2023: “Alliance of 70 Years and Beyond”  
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Finally, Ambassador John Bolton delivered the keynote speech. He began by stating that “We have to wake up from the end of history ... the holiday from history is over.”

He added that the 6-Party Talks had been a “vast charade” and failed to denuclearize North Korea. He also noted that “We should hold China responsible for North Korea’s actions.”

On the issue of extended nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis North Korea, Ambassador Bolton stated that, “The US should redeploy tactical nuclear weapons to the peninsula and make clear to Kim Jong Un and whatever relative is looking to succeed him that we will use tactical nuclear weapons without hesitation.” He added that this would “buy time for South Korea to think long and hard about whether it needs nuclear weapons.” He further added: “I refuse to give up on the possibility of North Korea getting deliverable nuclear weapons.” On the need for South Korea to step up its regional engagement, he also added that “The Asian Quad has a lot of possibility, it should be a Quint – the Republic of Korea should join the Quad as soon as possible.”

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