

**Session:** Plenary Session 1 (World in Turbulence)

**Date/Time:** April 25, 2023 / 10:10-11:40

**Rapporteur:**

Ivo Rijnens, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

**Speakers:**

Karen E. House, Harvard Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Yoon Young-kwan, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Edwin J. Feulner, The Heritage Foundation

James B. Steinberg, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Randall Schriver, Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs

Maria Castillo Fernandez, European Union to the Republic of Korea

Jia Qingguo, Peking University

Ken Jimbo, Keio university

**Session Sketch:**

The first session of the Asan Plenum, titled ‘World in Turbulence’, was moderated by Karen E. House from the Harvard Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. She asked the panelists about the critical fault lines, confrontations between great powers, and the impact it will have on the global order. How will smaller countries navigate the confrontations between great powers? Will global order persist in the face of the current turbulence?

Jia Qingguo of Peking University started the discussion, explaining China’s position on current global affairs, though noting that he does not speak on behalf of the Chinese government. While congratulating the ROK-US alliance on its 70th anniversary, he noted that it is not without irony that there is still a need to maintain the alliance after seven decades. He argued that countries should focus on improving themselves in terms of infrastructure and distributing wealth, and emphasized that alliances should go beyond military alliances, though he understands the importance of the military aspect. While difficult, if countries can use their resources cooperatively rather than wasting their resources by squabbling among one another, global challenges can be solved. After all, we only know if it is possible after we have tried. We need to do more than just celebrating military alliances if we want to make the world less turbulent. On a question from the audience, he noted that China did not take the phonecall from the US because of political concerns from the person in charge, afraid to make a mistake. There is no trust for such communication, but it is not a political symbol to reject the call. He also noted that the US and China are both stakeholders in the international order – not enemies.

Edwin J. Feulner of the Heritage Foundation expressed his satisfaction that a Chinese professor joined today, after puzzling remarks made by the Chinese ambassador to France recently. The notion that ex-Soviet states such as the Baltic states were not yet recognized as sovereign

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

## Session Sketch

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countries made many scratch their heads, as all three are members of NATO. He also expressed admiration for President Yoon’s recent policies towards Japan, mentioning that he heard that US-ROK-Japan intelligence sharing is better than it has been in a long time. He criticized the fact that China “makes use of its status as a developing nation” to gain access to funds and concessions it would otherwise not have access to.

EU Ambassador to the ROK Maria Castillo Fernandez then laid out the European perspective on issues, saying that affairs on the Korean peninsula affect the EU all the same, and vice versa. She emphasized the importance for countries to adhere to universal UN values, which Russia has neglected with its unjustified invasion of Ukraine. As such, she asked China to take its responsibility as a UNSC member to promote the UN values.

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Randall Schriver noted the importance to “rightshape” the relationship with China, for instance in terms of the large trade deficit that according to him creates an uneven playing ground. Export controls on specific sectors will continue (currently semiconductors) and possibly pharmaceuticals could be a future sector.

Ken Jimbo from Keio University explained the Japanese perspective. He noted the significance of President Yoon’s visit to Japan and his policies to improve the Korea-Japan relationship. He emphasized ‘when we strike, we strike together’ with regards to South Korea and the US. He also called to ‘connect the dots’, such as cooperation with the Philippines and Australia, and how the Chinese brokered Iran-Saudi deal shocked him.

James B. Steinberg from Johns Hopkins SAIS noted the need not to establish a new cold war and said it was possible to solve both global challenges and the Chinese challenges at the same time. Dr Yoon Young-kwan of the Asan Institute added that the ROK benefits from the rules based order and mentioned that Korea’s biggest fear in a Taiwan contingency is North Korea taking action if the US leaves a security vacuum in Korea.

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