

## Session Sketch

Asan Plenum 2024: “Future of Asia: Prosperity and Security”  
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**Session:** Opening Ceremony

**Date/Time:** May 14, 2024 / 9:00-10:00

**Rapporteur:**

Suhyeon Kim, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

**Speakers:**

Chung Mong Joon, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Kim Hong Kyun, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

Edwin Feulner, The Heritage Foundation

Kurt Campbell, U.S. Department of State

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The opening ceremony of the 2024 Asan Plenum, titled “Future of Asia: Prosperity and Security,” began with welcoming remarks from Dr. Chung Mong Joon, Honorary Chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. Dr. Chung began by noting Asia’s historical role as a cradle of civilization and recounted the region’s enduring resilience in the face of colonialism, wars, and geopolitical tensions. However, he observed that, “Today Asia is prospering. But the question is whether Asia is at peace.” He pointed to the dangers posed by the resurgence of Cold War-era dynamics and the heightened risk of military confrontation in Asia. Dr. Chung stated that, “The dangers of a military clash in Asia have rather increased.” Regarding the ongoing threat posed by North Korea’s nuclear weapons threat, Dr. Chung welcomed the 2023 Washington Declaration to enhance extended deterrence. He urged that, “We’d better begin laying the groundwork for the redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons,” and added, “We also need to continue dialogue with Asia’s major powers like China and Russia.” Dr. Chung demonstrated remarkable resolve, citing Abraham Lincoln’s timeless words: “The Best Way to Predict the Future is to Create it.” Dr. Chung concluded by stating that, “I believe that the Republic of Korea will do its part to ensure the Future of Asia is peaceful and prosperous for all. I hope that Asia can build a stable regional order where all countries can enjoy prosperity and security.”

His Excellency, Kim Hong Kyun, 1st Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs in South Korea, delivered congratulatory remarks. Highlighting the impact of global tensions on Asia’s security, Vice Minister Kim outlined Korea’s strategies for securing peace and prosperity in Asia. Firstly, Vice Minister Kim stressed South Korea’s commitment to upholding the rules-based international order through partnerships with like-minded regions such as trilateral cooperation among South Korea, the U.S., and Japan, with NATO, the EU, and the Global South. Secondly, Vice Minister Kim reiterated South Korea’s dedication to strengthening cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region. Finally, he urged that, “Securing peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is crucial for a peaceful and prosperous Asia,” Vice Minister Kim continued, “Korea will continue to pursue deterrence, dissuasion, and diplomacy, to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea. Korea and the U.S. are working

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closely to further strengthen extended deterrence, as laid out in the Washington Declaration.” Vice Minister Kim concluded by emphasizing the global significance of Asia’s security and prosperity by noting, “Asia’s security and prosperity are not just regional issues. They are global imperatives. To create a more peaceful and prosperous future for Asia, South Korea will continue to work closely with its partners.”

Dr. Edwin Feulner, Founder and Chairman of the Asian Studies Center, and Chung Ju-yung Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, next delivered congratulatory remarks. Dr Feulner summed up the seven-decade partnership between the United States and the Republic of Korea as a “time-tested alliance” that has accomplished a lot together and much more can and should be done. Even though the alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States has numerous ups and downs, he noted that, “Washington today considers the Republic of Korea a model ally.” Furthermore, Dr. Feulner pointed to “the battles of ideas” and how individuals and institutions generate and facilitate good ideas. This process requires a mutual commitment to values and principles. He noted that, “That’s why our alliance matters. The Republic of Korea and the United States relationship is a time-tested alliance of ideas, individuals, and institutions.”

Finally, Dr. Kurt Campbell, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, delivered the keynote speech for the 2024 Asan Plenum. Dr. Campbell emphasized the significance of U.S. partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, noting, “Our partnerships in this part of the world have never been more meaningful, more impactful, and more results-oriented than they are now.” He added that, “This is especially true with our two most important relations in the region: Our alliance with the Republic of Korea and our alliance with Japan.” Dr. Campbell discussed recent high-level engagements by the Biden administration with key U.S. Indo-Pacific allies, including the leaders of South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines. He also emphasized the collaborative approach of the Biden administration’s Indo-Pacific Strategy, saying, “We’re creating a lattice fence arrangement with intertwined, overlapping, and interlocking engagements.” Dr. Campbell affirmed that “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.” Furthermore, he highlighted the commitment to shared values and initiatives to modernize alliance and enhance connectivity, stating, “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.”

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