



## TALKING POINTS

Asan Plenum 2013: "New World Disorder"  
[www.asanplenum.org](http://www.asanplenum.org)

**RELEASE EMBARGO DATE: APR. 30, 2013 AT 9 AM**

---

**Panel:** Challenges for the ROK-US Alliance (Regency Room)

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 30, 2013 / 15:30-16:45

**Talking Points for:** Doug Bandow, Cato Institute

The principle problem facing the U.S.-South Korean alliance is not generational, but substantive. The relationship was forged during the Cold War when only a U.S. security guarantee and military presence could preserve the South's independence from an aggressive North Korea backed by the Soviet Union and China. With the ROK's rapid growth and end of the Cold War, South Korea is well able to defend itself.

There are no equally useful alternative roles for the alliance. Washington would like to use Korean bases to help contain China, but that would turn the ROK into a target in any conflict. Nor is Beijing likely to help with North Korea or welcome reunification if it would end up facing a united Korea allied with America with U.S. forces on its border. Military cooperation might be useful in other contingencies, but no formal alliance is required.

Better relations between Seoul and Tokyo are more important for South Korea than the U.S. It is not in America's interest to risk military confrontation with China to limit its ambitions in East Asia. Instead, the democratic states in the region need to work together, led by South Korea and Japan.

---

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