

## Asan Issue Brief Release: “Europe’s Shifting Security Landscape and Implications for South Korea”

SEOUL, May 29, 2025 – Dr. Saeme KIM of the Asan Institute’s Center for Foreign Policy and National Security (<http://en.asaninst.org/>) has published a new *Asan Issue Brief*, titled “Europe’s Shifting Landscape and Implications for South Korea.”

The *Issue Brief* analyzes the shifts in Europe’s security landscape and identifies key lessons for South Korea.

First, it examines how decades of security complacency have left Europe ill-prepared to respond to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the return of the Trump administration. Second, it reviews how Europe has become less cohesive in its approach to security and defense. Third, it assesses the range of options available to the second Trump administration regarding the U.S. role in NATO. Fourth, it considers the implications of these developments for South Korea and offers recommendations for South Korean policymakers.

The author draws two implications from shifts in Europe’s security landscape:

- NATO’s future will hinge on several factors: the degree of U.S. disengagement, the ability of NATO members to forge a unified vision for reform, and the alliance’s capacity to overcome internal divisions over threat perception.
- Under the second Trump administration, the U.S. is reshaping how it views and engages with its long-standing allies. The “America First” thinking has acted as a form of shock therapy for the transatlantic alliance. This raises deep concerns about the credibility of the U.S. security deterrence in both Europe and Asia.

In this context, South Korea should consider the following:

- South Korea’s approach to the U.S. alliance should be to acknowledge concerns about burden sharing, stay open to negotiations, and clearly articulate South Korea’s own security priorities.
- South Korea should diversify strategic partnership, with Europe and NATO —not to hedge against the U.S., but to complement the alliance and contribute to collective burden sharing.
- South Korea should consider how it can take the lead in advancing a collective regional security framework going beyond the bilateral U.S. alliance, drawing lessons from NATO’s experience.

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