

## Asan Plenum 2023

# “Alliance of 70 Years and Beyond”

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Thank you, Honorary Chairman Chung Mong Joon, Chairman Yoon Young-kwan, and Former Prime Minister Lee HongKoo for the opportunity to speak to such an esteemed group of participants and presenters this morning. Congratulations on convening this important event. April 26th, tomorrow, starts President Yoon Suk Yeol’s historic State Visit to Washington. So, the timing of this year’s plenum could not be better.

As we talk today about our “Alliance of 70 Years and Beyond,” the constant pace of bilateral engagement by our senior leaders reflects the fact that shared commitment to the US-ROK Alliance remains as strong as ever. One of my roles as the Deputy Chief of Mission is to nurture and further develop the comprehensive and strategic partnership we’ve created. Our goal together is to expand our cooperation to address the most pressing regional and global challenges. Our Embassy team is deeply committed to advance our bilateral relationship to new heights.

The security relationship of our two countries spans generations and serves as the foundation of our bilateral partnership. In fact, some of our American Embassy staff have parents who fought in the Korean War. Since 1953, the Alliance has provided a solid foundation for Korean prosperity. 70 years later, we have built an entire ecosystem of security, economic, and people-to-people ties that will ensure that future generations of Koreans and Americans enjoy the opportunities we do today. I anticipate these connections—security, commercial, and cultural—will be highlighted during President Yoon’s State visit to Washington tomorrow.

That President Yoon is only the second world leader President Biden has invited to the White House for a State Visit emphasizes to all of us the US-ROK Alliance is critical to advancing peace, stability, and prosperity for our two countries, the Indo-Pacific, and the world. It highlights the enduring strength of the ironclad US-ROK Alliance, the United States’ unwavering security commitment to this country, and our shared resolve to deepen and broaden our political, economic, security, and people-to-people ties, particularly through educational exchanges.

This will be the third spring in a row in which the US President has held a summit with his Korean counterpart. Each summit builds on the next, and we should expect progress on strengthening our economic security and deepening cooperation on critical and emerging technologies, including semiconductors, EV batteries, biotech, quantum computing, AI, and in the defense industrial sector.

Through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and the Minerals Security Partnership, we are working together to secure and diversify critical supply chains, address climate change, and promote free, fair, open, and inclusive trade and development throughout the region. Meanwhile, our economic relationship

continues to flourish as our bilateral trade reached a new height of \$227 billion in 2022. US companies are forging new, innovative partnerships with Korean firms, and in just the last 12 months, Embassy in Seoul has processed over 15,000 work and investor visas. Over the past two years, ROK firms have pledged to invest an additional \$70 billion-plus in the United States in semiconductors, electric vehicles (EVs), high-capacity batteries, and solar.

As we look ahead, another opportunity to advance our cooperation is through the ROK's ambitious Indo-Pacific Strategy, that reemphasizes the country's aspirations to contribute more and take on a bigger role as a "Global Pivotal State." The United States fully supports the ROK in expanding its global role, which aligns with our own commitment to strengthen cooperation with Southeast Asian and Pacific Island countries and promote sustainable development, energy security, and high-quality, transparent investment, including in infrastructure. We also welcome the ROK Indo-Pacific Strategy's emphasis on contributing to strengthening coordination with its neighbors, notably through trilateral cooperation with Japan and the United States, as well as collaboration on supply chain disruptions, cybersecurity, climate change, space, and health security.

It is an exciting time in the US–ROK bilateral relationship. We are working together around the globe. The Republic of Korea is also taking on an increasing leadership role as a champion of democracy in the region and globally. For example, this country clearly demonstrated its commitment promoting shared values on the world stage when it co-hosted the Summit for Democracy in March and as it takes on the role of sole host next year. We've done a lot. But we can, and will, do more together.

As we confront a host of global threats, the United States and Korea will only deepen our ties and strengthen our resolve. As I said at the outset, this bilateral relationship is already dynamic and full of energy. It certainly keeps me and the entire embassy busy...and that is a good thing.

I congratulate the Asan Institute for convening its 2023 Plenum. Your track record in stimulating dialogue is impressive and I wish you continued success. Thank you again for the opportunity to address such an impressive group of scholars and Alliance practitioners today. We look forward to the next 70 years as we go together.

Thank you very much.