

**Session:** The 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

**Date/Time:** May 14, 2024 / 11:30-12:30

**Rapporteur:**

Alexandra Koldeway, Seoul National University

**Moderator:**

Yoon Young-kwan, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

**Speakers:**

Edwin Feulner, The Heritage Foundation

Karen House, Harvard University

Tago Atsushi, Waseda University

Paul Wolfowitz, Stanford University

**Session Sketch:**

The Special Session was moderated by Dr. Yoon Young-kwan, Chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, who noted that this year’s Plenum coincides with the 2024 U.S. presidential election, an event with global implications. Dr. Yoon proposed focusing on the possibility of former President Donald Trump's reelection.

Dr. Yoon asked Dr. Edwin Feulner how U.S. policy in the Taiwan Strait may change if Trump is reelected. Dr. Feulner, who served on the transition team in 2016 and came to know Trump personally, believes that former President Trump’s four years in office matured his outlook. Furthermore, he believes that the former president and those around him recognize that the Taiwan Relations Act establishes firm ties between the United States and Taiwan, which a new administration is unlikely to disrupt. Dr. Yoon also asked Dr. Feulner’s opinion on Trump’s policy toward defending South Korea. Dr. Feulner stated that the history of U.S. officials asking South Korea to do more goes back before President Trump, and predicted that the president would face more pressing matters in office.

Dr. Yoon asked Ms. Karen House about the possible trajectory of U.S. foreign policy under a second Trump administration. Ms. House was reluctant to make predictions given the former president’s character but hopes that he will realize his relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is unlikely to lead to further successes. Ms. House also stated that the trilateral relationship between the United States, Japan, and South Korea is strong and hopes that Trump would preserve this as president.

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

---

## Session Sketch

Asan Plenum 2024: “Future of Asia: Prosperity and Security”  
[www.asanplenum.org](http://www.asanplenum.org)

---

Dr. Yoon asked Dr. Tago Atsushi how Japanese people are thinking about a second Trump presidency. Dr. Atsushi answered that Japanese people are concerned about U.S. commitment, but unlike South Korea, public support in Japan for developing nuclear weapons is low. Instead, 70 to 80 per cent of Japanese people support for increasing conventional weapons in Japan, even higher than 2% of Japan's GDP.

Finally, Dr. Yoon asked Ambassador Paul Wolfowitz his opinion on the possibility of Trump reducing American commitment to South Korea. Ambassador Wolfowitz worries that Americans may underestimate the utility of conventional arms when there is a nuclear aspect to a security situation. Ambassador Wolfowitz praised President Biden’s ability to pull alliances together and show that they work. Ambassador Wolfowitz would advise the current South Korean administration to show the successes of the U.S.-ROK alliance in the event of a Trump presidency.

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

---