

보도자료 **Asan Poll: “South Koreans and Their Neighbors 2025”**
PRESS
RELEASE **Record 76.2% Public Support for Nuclear Armament**

SEOUL, April 28, 2025 – The Asan Institute for Policy Studies has released its flagship annual public opinion poll, “**South Koreans and Their Neighbors 2025.**” This year’s Asan survey of 1,000 South Korean was conducted in March 2025 and highlights public opinion on key foreign policy issues. The survey found South Korean attitudes have broken four new records, including:

1. Record 76.2% support for indigenous nuclear armament (70.9%, 2024)

Support for acquiring an indigenous nuclear weapons capability increased by 5.3%p in 2025 to reach an all-time high of 76.2%. This is the highest figure since the Asan Institute began surveying this issue in 2010.

Support for the re-deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons also increased to 66.3%, the second highest since 2013. Confidence that the United States would use nuclear weapons to defend South Korea was 48.9%, down 4.1%p from 2024 (53%).

2. Record 71.2% support for maintaining USFK troop levels (65.4%, 2024)

This year found 71.2% support for maintaining the current level of 28,500 U.S. Forces Korea, marking a 5.8%p increase from 2024 (65.4%). Overall support for the U.S. military presence remains unchanged at 80.1% (80.2% in 2024).

Support for the ROK-U.S. Alliance remains robust, with 96% of South Koreans agreeing it will continue to be necessary in the future, up 2.8%p from 2024 (max: 96.4% in 2022).

3. Record numbers of South Koreans choose the United States over China when it comes to preferred future partner (85.8%) and economic importance (74.2%)

Even as 52.7% of respondents expected the relationship with the United States to worsen under a second Trump administration (37.3%p increase from 15.4% in 2024), a record 85.8% nonetheless said that South Korea should choose the United States over China as its preferred future partner. This was a 10.7%p increase from 2024, and higher than the previous record set during the Biden administration in 2022 (85.5%).

Meanwhile, 74.2% chose the United States as most important for South Korea’s economy. This is a 23.9%p increase from 2024 and it was also significantly higher than at any point during the first Trump administration (max: 52.6% in 2018).

The executive summary and findings can be downloaded at:

<https://en.asaninst.org/contents/category/publications/public-opinion-surveys/>

Methodology: The surveys were conducted by Embrain Public using RDD for mobile and landline on March 4~6 and 6~8, 2025. Each survey had a representative sample of 1,000 respondents (weighted) over the age of 19 across South Korea with a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

Inquiries:

Dr. Peter K. Lee, Research Fellow (peter.lee@asaninst.org)

Mr. KANG Chungku, Principal Associate (Public Opinion Studies Team Lead)
(ckkang@asaninst.org)

About the Asan Institute for Policy Studies

The Asan Institute for Policy Studies (<http://en.asaninst.org/>) is an independent think tank that provides innovative policy solutions and spearheads public discourse on the core issues in Korea, East Asia and the world. Our goal is to assist policymakers to make better informed and mutually beneficial policy decisions.