

NEXT-GENERATION VISION CONSORTIUM ON ROK-US AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

KOREA FOUNDATION
KF 한미미래센터


EAST-WEST
CENTER

2023

THE EAST-WEST CENTER & THE KOREA FOUNDATION



The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue. Established by the US Congress in 1960, the Center serves as a resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and develop policy options. The East-West Center in Washington advances US-Indo-Pacific relations by creating innovative content, publications, exchanges, and outreach activities.



The Korea Foundation (KF) was established in 1991 to promote awareness and understanding of Korea and to enhance the goodwill and friendship of the international community toward Korea and its people. As a representative organization of Korea's public diplomacy efforts, the KF implements a variety of activities and programs, including support for Korean studies worldwide, as well as the promotion of cultural and people exchanges.

Acknowledgments

The East-West Center gives sincere thanks to the Korea Foundation for its partnership and support for this Next-Generation Vision Consortium on ROK-US and the Indo-Pacific. This program exemplifies the East-West Center's commitment to developing and equipping young leaders through impactful dialogues. In particular, I would like to thank the Director of Korea Foundation USA Sung-won Bae and his team for this meaningful and impactful collaboration. I also wish to thank each of our guest speakers for taking the time to share their valuable insights with this cohort of rising leaders. I am also grateful to participants in the East-West Center in Washington's Young Professionals Program (YPP), whose written briefings of discussions from each workshop were used to produce this summary publication. I would like to thank EWC in Washington Program Manager Ross Tokola and Programs Coordinator Kimery Lynch for developing and coordinating this series as well as EWC Infographic and Design Specialist Jeanette Simmons for the design of this beautiful publication. And last, but by no means least, I thank every participant who was selected to be a member of this consortium. We look forward to your continued engagement with our friends at the Korea Foundation and with the East-West Center and wish you health, happiness, and success as you pursue professional careers.

Dr. Satu Limaye
Vice President, East-West Center
Director, Research & East-West Center in Washington

The East-West Center, in partnership with and generous sponsorship from the Korea Foundation, invited representatives of youth-oriented organizations specializing in international relations to the Next-Generation Vision Consortium on ROK-US and the Indo-Pacific to build and strengthen their knowledge of Korea, the US-Korea relationship, and international affairs.

Participants from organizations such as student-led associations, volunteer organizations, youth networks, think tanks, and universities located across the United States were selected through an application process to participate in a series of workshops in which they had the opportunity to engage with one another and with eminent guest speakers.

The final workshop, convening participants in-person from across the country, was held at the Korea Foundation's new office in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the conclusion of the program and the beginning of a lasting network of young professionals engaged on these important issues.

Presentations and discussions summarized herein do not reflect the views of any particular participant, speaker, or of the East-West Center and the Korea Foundation.

The US-ROK Alliance in the Indo-Pacific

The 70-year alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea, while initially created to contain communism during the Cold War, especially in Asia, has continued to remain successful and relevant to this day. The alliance is adaptable and has been able to evolve over time. The Republic of Korea and the United States also share a common set of values as Korea developed into a prosperous democracy, thereby deepening relations with the United States. Furthermore, alliances between democracies are more resilient and flexible because policymakers in both countries are accustomed to a culture of democratic bargaining.



Dr. Andrew Yeo, Senior Fellow and SK-Korea Foundation Chair in Korea Studies, Center for East Asia Policy Studies, Brookings Institution

Dr. Gregg Brazinsky, Professor of History and International Affairs; Director, M.A. Asian Studies Program; Director, Sigur Center for Asian Studies, George Washington University

Ross Tokola (Moderator), Program Manager, East-West Center in Washington

Even before the alliance was created, there was military cooperation in which US officers began training the ROK army as early as 1948. Cooperation with the ROK military only grew during the Korean War as the country's forces swelled to 500,000 troops. It was this war and the shared sacrifices that the United States made in defense of the Republic of Korea that led to the establishment of the alliance. 36,000 US servicemembers and hundreds of thousands of South Koreans died in the war, leading to what is described as an alliance "forged in blood."

The alliance was formally signed in 1953 in the form of a mutual defense treaty that allowed the United States to deploy troops within the Republic of Korea, similarly to agreements that the United States signed with Japan and other Asian states to contain communism in Asia. No one could anticipate at the time of its signing that the Korean War armistice would hold for 70 years. The treaty not only helped stabilize the region through deterrence of foreign aggression but also deterred Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea from taking any sudden action against North Korea.

The treaty also significantly affected society, economy, and culture during the Cold War. It created ongoing relationships between the two militaries, with thousands of ROK military officers coming to the United States for training, thereby shaping the outlook of many of the officers. One such recipient of training was future president of the Republic of Korea Park Chung-Hee. The alliance mobilized both armies to assist the postwar reconstruction of schools, apartments, and other infrastructure, playing an important role as ROK economic growth began to increase in the late 1960s and 1970s. There was also a significant cultural impact. The first generation of Korean jazz and rock groups started out by performing for American troops in military bases.

The US military presence in Korea also led to tensions between the two countries. In the 1950s, an entire genre of literature called the camptown novel arose that described life around US military bases, subtly expressing discontent. Tensions in the US-ROK alliance reached a low point in 2002 and 2003 when a US armored vehicle accident killed two teenage girls in South Korea, an incident exacerbated by poor personal relations between US President George W. Bush and the progressive South Korean leadership at that time.

Nevertheless, the alliance continued to persevere and evolve. US relations with China drastically improved in the 1970s, leading US President Nixon to reduce America's commitments in Asia and begin the process of the "Koreanization" of the US-ROK alliance—drawing some US forces while also working on the modernization of ROK forces. At the same time, economic growth and growth in automobiles and other manufacturing in Korea led to lowered dependence on the United States. Beginning in 1983, there was a shift in burden sharing, with the Republic of Korea beginning to take on an increasing share of the cost of US troops, reaching \$400 million annually by 2000.

With the threat of communism diminished and a South Korea more capable in its defenses against North Korea, the United States and Korea began to focus on bilateral issues, such as the economy and the environment. South Korea became a global leader in manufacturing and in advanced technology. While sometimes competing with the United States, there remains a high level of interdependence between the two countries, with many Korean firms now operating in the United States. The Korea-US Free Trade

Agreement, or KORUS, which went into effect in 2012, is one of only three FTAs the United States has in Asia (the others are with Australia and Singapore) and has had an important effect in increasing two-way trade and investment.

The United States and Republic of Korea relationship has transitioned to becoming a global comprehensive partnership promoting a rules-based order, democratic values, and cooperating on public health. As the world continues to change, the United States and the Republic of Korea will need to be creative in adapting their alliance as they have over the past seven decades.

The alliance has demonstrated tremendous resiliency. When progressive ROK President Moon Jae-in came to power in 2017, there were concerns that the alliance would run into trouble as it had in the past when there was a progressive president in Korea and a conservative president in the United States in the early 2000s. However, it became clear that the alliance would continue to be strong because of long-standing institutionalized relationships and common values and identity.

There were transactional concerns under the Trump presidency, including his demand that South Korea and other Asian partners contribute more money in burden sharing. Another potential issue that arose was relations with North Korea, especially in the lead-up to President Trump's summits with Kim Jong-Un. However, both Presidents Moon and Trump had incentives to engage with North Korea, and even after the US-North Korea conference in Hanoi collapsed, South Korea remained engaged.

Another key issue area for the alliance was the nature of engagement with the region. As the United States and its partners, such as Japan, Australia, and others, shifted from the term "Asia-Pacific" to "Indo-Pacific," South Korea was more hesitant to adopt the term. While the Moon government produced the "New Southern Policy," which encouraged greater focus on South and Southeast Asia, they wanted to keep their distance from what they feared China might see as an anti-Chinese alliance, especially given the Republic of Korea's close economic ties to China.

When Joseph Biden became president of the United States, he continued to use the term "Indo-Pacific" as a framework. President Biden's liberal internationalism and commitment to the rules-based order contributed to convincing the Republic of Korea to make the shift to the term "Indo-Pacific" as well. President Yoon, the current ROK president since 2022, campaigned on the ROK-US relationship as key to ensuring Korea can maintain its global relevance. Yoon, and many others, worried that Korea was losing its strategic relevance as it was not in the QUAD and other regional multilateral frameworks. There is also the question of whether Japan and India would support ROK participation in the QUAD. President Yoon has expressed his interest in staying informally involved, and with increased cooperation on health, digital trade, and supply chains.

With respect to the QUAD or a potential QUAD+, many South Koreans see potential in the organization as a steppingstone to becoming engaged in the region, but do not want to become explicitly involved due to concerns of alienating China. Also, on the potential for increased Taiwan-ROK-US cooperation, there is concern among South Koreans who do not wish to risk the ROK economic and diplomatic relationship



Dr. Andrew Yeo; Dr. Gregg Brazinsky

with China over increased alignment with Taiwan. China's role and influence with North Korea remains an important consideration in Seoul's management of its relationship with Beijing.

Thus, Yoon decided that it was necessary for Korea to have its own Indo-Pacific strategy. This has led to further increased cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Korea regionally that is expected to grow in the coming years.

If US-China competition increases in the Indo-Pacific, Seoul will be forced to make difficult decisions about how far they are willing to go and if they are willing to endure economic sanctions from China. Meanwhile, the centerpiece of US-ROK economic relations is the current free trade agreement, yet digital flows and services are becoming increasingly important and deserve more attention. There are numerous opportunities for synergy and exchange in the advanced technology industry, particularly in biotech, AI, and quantum computing.

An issue area for closer coordination between the United States and the Republic of Korea is nuclear security and extended deterrence. With more frequent missile tests by North Korea, many South Koreans are concerned about the credibility of US deterrence. South Koreans have pushed for more input in nuclear planning, and there has been a growing debate within the ROK as to whether it should build its own nuclear weapons. While there has always been convergence, divergence, and reconvergence again in the US-ROK alliance, shared values have pushed the two countries together in the past and continue to do so today.

US-ROK Economic Relations in Asia: The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, Supply Chains, and Beyond

Set against the background of increasing competition between the United States and China since the formation of the US-Korea alliance, economic relations in the forthcoming decades cannot only be based on risk management or hedging. It is important to remain cautious that the United States does not lose out on the benefits of free trade and innovation when it implements defensive economic measures. And though the world is not heading towards de-globalization, it is heading for a critical test of globalization because of the stressors now affecting it, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and recent China-centric export controls from the United States have also been stressors, including on the US-Korea relationship. The formulation of the IRA led to unintended consequences arising from the fact that electric vehicles must be assembled in North America to qualify for

IRA tax credits. Battery manufacturers from Korea source components from countries such as Argentina and Indonesia, and this creates problems with the definition of domestic content under the IRA.

The United States has identified a chokepoint with its lead in advanced semiconductor technology, and believes its goal is no longer sufficient to stay a mere one or two generations ahead of China in this technology, but to maintain and even expand as wide an advantage as possible. And despite recent rhetoric, the United States is not decoupling from China, except in terms of a small set of the most advanced technological sectors.

While neither the Republic of Korea nor the United States are members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the two countries must work together to shape the regional economic architecture.

The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework is an untested approach by comparison. Without market access commitments and a strong enforcement mechanism, it will be very easy for a future US president to walk away from IPEF, and US allies are aware of this. Within South Korea, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework is a political battering ram that the opposition uses to attack the ROK government.

Negotiating with the United States on these matters is now difficult for US allies, since the US only has the political capability to reach limited executive agreements that don't require congressional approval, and don't give the recipient countries the status of FTA partners.

Meanwhile, in these days of economic security, we are seeing a resurgence of state authority and industrial policy comprising a range of tools including subsidies. But there is a continuing question about regulatory capability. Apart from whether entities such as the US Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) and other government bodies have sufficient staffing to meet the increasing demands of their work, governments are also discovering that private sector actors are unwilling to share the kind of proprietary information that governments are asking for to help identify chokepoints.

The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited (TSMC) has already said that they will not apply for CHIPS Act subsidies because the reporting requirements are too onerous, while Samsung and SK Hynix are still evaluating those requirements. Additionally, companies are still trying to educate themselves on what the restrictions on China-based investment will be if they accept CHIPS Act funding.

In assessing prospects for enhanced economic cooperation, one must keep perspective on how much a country, and specifically as relevant the private sector, is willing and able to put on the table. In this sense, both the Republic of Korea and the United States face government and private sector challenges in coordinating economic policy.



Tami Overby, Senior Advisor, Albright Stonebridge Group; President, Asia Pathfinders

Dr. Mireya Solís, Director and Senior Fellow, Center for East Asia Policy Studies and Philip Knight Chair in Japan Studies, Brookings Institution

Dr. Satu Limaye (Moderator), Vice President, East-West Center; Director, Research & East-West Center in Washington

Korea: A Global Pivot State

The 21st Century has already seen global crises in terms of finance, health, and security, including the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. These follow structural changes seen at the end of the 20th Century, such as the end of the Cold War, the Asian Financial Crisis, etc. Yet amid such crises, we have become more globally connected than ever before.

The China of the previous century was poor and required help from the outside. The United States, and particularly Henry Kissinger, attempted to reach out to China during that time to improve relations. Today's PRC is proud and overconfident. Russia in the latter half of the past century chose to be a junior partner to a rising China. Russia today is a KGB-product of the Cold War.

The Republic of Korea stands as a shining country in a hazy and turbulent world—even more notably so given that the Korean War only ceased hostilities through an armistice agreement and never officially ended. It is in part because of China and Russia today that the United States and Korea highlight that their bilateral relationship and alliance are driven by values.

The Republic of Korea has delivered, and on a global scale, to become a global pivot state. The US-ROK alliance and partnership have become unique in this unsettling time. Whereas the Indo-Pacific and Europe were considered two different “theaters,” they are increasingly being thought of as one, and the Republic of Korea has grown into this space with expanded global interests.

For example, the Republic of Korea has developed considerable capacity in the manufacture of defensive weapons. Who could have imagined before the war in Ukraine that South Korea would sell military armament to countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania—NATO member states building their arsenals with South Korean weaponry.

From the 1990s and through subsequent decades, concern rose about the DPRK nuclear threat, and the ROK economy was discounted in those earlier years because of concerns about instability. Yet South Korea became more capable and more resilient in the face of DPRK threats and provocations. The ROK defense industry is a prime example of a positive byproduct of the uniqueness of the relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

The Republic of Korea has also drawn clear lines in its engagement with the international community and in what it is prepared to offer at any given time. With respect to support for Ukraine, the Republic of Korea sells arms directly to Poland and eastern European countries, and provides humanitarian aid to Ukraine directly.

The nature of ROK support for Ukraine is also a key example of how the Indo-Pacific and Europe have become one wider theater, how they are more connected, and how the Republic of Korea is indeed a global pivot state, exemplified by President Yoon attending the most recent NATO summit in Lithuania.

The Republic of Korea has know-how in terms of how to build and to reconstruct, and it could play an important role in supporting the rebuilding of Ukraine. In terms of commercial diplomacy, the Republic of Korea contributes great wight in commercial diplomacy in initiatives that are driven by the private sector and in those driven by the government, offering a model that stands in contrast to that of Beijing.

Meanwhile, by necessity, Russia and China are becoming closer in their bilateral ties. For example, Russia, for the first time, gave Beijing permission to use the port at Vladivostok, which was operationally under the control of Moscow. In effect, Putin has decided to allow Xi Jinping to take advantage of the port's strategic significance as a naval base, also impacting geopolitical concerns for global supply chains.

It is the strategic decision of such actors to become closer, and no one knows how it will end. The United States, for its part, must connect East and West.

And while the Republic of Korea is engaging globally, there are domestic concerns that may hamper the extent to which it will be able to sustain global engagement, such as Korea's demographic issues, low fertility, and those pertaining to youth employment. Young Koreans feeling excluded from opportunities is of particular concern.

Nevertheless, there is cause for optimism given Korea's dynamic nature. There is recognition both that Korea is a global nation, and that Koreans can do more on the global stage.



Anthony Kim, Research Fellow, Heritage Foundation

Dr. Satu Limaye (Moderator), Vice President, East-West Center; Director, Research & East-West Center in Washington

Korea: A Global Cultural Powerhouse

Korean culture has come a long way since the early 2000s, when Korea didn't "sell" as well as it does today, and when Korean companies allowed their products to be passed off as Japanese to receive better reception. The impact of Korean culture can now be clearly seen across the music, film, television, webtoon, cosmetic, and culinary industries, to name but a few, which are collectively known as the "Korean Wave" or "hallyu." The esports and video game industry alone constitutes Korea's most lucrative cultural export.



Jenna Gibson, PhD Candidate, University of Chicago

Kimery Lynch, Korean Culture Expert

Ross Tokola (Moderator), Program Manager, East-West Center in Washington

"K-culture" became a global phenomenon, first, due to intense domestic competition within Korea leading to a drive for high-quality products as well as technological innovations to compete internationally, along with strategies aimed at Korea becoming an export-oriented economy. Second, fans of Korean culture created communities and identities around Korean culture, and devoted personal time and energy to promote their favorite artists and products. Mass gatherings at concerts, and at those held more recently online during the COVID-19 pandemic, fostered a strong sense of togetherness. The fact that Korea did not have a full lockdown during the pandemic further promoted Korean cultural output amid the relative decline in international competition. Furthermore, the Korean government provided support for these industries, including in the form of government subsidies.

While the extent to which the Korean government played a direct or indirect role in the success of hallyu is uncertain, whether the Korean government should play a role in hallyu's promotion as well as the ways in which hallyu represents Korean "soft power," are open questions.

Korean industries have been impacted by regional politics, including PRC backlash to the United States and Korea agreeing in 2016 to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Defense System (THAAD) in South Korea. In retaliation, China cancelled visits by Korean music groups and banned other Korean cultural content. K-pop stars have played a role in cultural diplomacy with North Korea, and in Korea-France and Korea-Japan friendship concerts. Tourism has been promoted in South Korean cities and towns where K-dramas are filmed.

The Korean government looks for opportunities to make use of Korean stars to support political purposes when they are relatively innocuous, such as President Moon Jae-in bringing BTS to the United Nations to support sustainable development goals. There is sensitivity both politically and among Korean and global K-culture fandom to appearances of Korean idols being used for political purposes, and concerns about "killing the cool" through misplaced or excessive government involvement. The Korean idol industry is wary of engaging in political activities. But there are opportunities for successful government engagement with local organizations and groups to amplify domestic and international programming for those with an established interest in Korea and Korean culture.

The intangible impacts of Korean soft power and its role in public diplomacy are difficult to measure, unlike other elements of soft power, such as scholarships and study abroad programs. Affinities for Korean culture can yet be understood as long-term investments—those who grow up enjoying K-pop develop a fondness that persists through time, affecting appreciation for and relationships with Korea. Though hard to quantify, Korea as a global cultural powerhouse is almost impossible not to see in everyday life—so much so that other countries have been attempting to determine the secret to hallyu's success. Whether they can succeed through imitation or through lessons learned is another open question. But there is no denying that the recognizable "K" of K-branding is a mark of Korea's global success.



Next Generation Vision Consortium on ROK-US in the Indo-Pacific Participant List

Amy Utomo, Columbia University and ASEAN Association	Kaoruko Kobayashi, Columbia University and Pacific Forum
Brandt Mabuni, Pacific Forum	Kar Lok Pang, US ASEAN Young Professionals Association
Britt Robinson, International Center for Research on Women	Kayla Orta, Korea Center at the Wilson Center
Christina Lee, Beacon Global Strategies and Pacific Forum	Lam Tran, Center for Strategic and International Studies
Daniel Bonomo, Center for a New American Security	Mai Anna Pressley, National Association for Black Engagement with Asia
Daniela Suarez, Public Diplomacy Council of America	Mathew Goldberg, Korea-Japan English Camp
David Chen, Research Fellow, Charhar Institute	Monet Stokes, National Association for Black Engagement with Asia
David Rader, Pacific Forum	Randi Edwards, The Mansfield Center at the University of Montana
Emma Potts, Columbia University and The Korea Society	Sean Dolan, George Washington Institute for Korean Studies
Hayley Pottle, Public Diplomacy Council of America and Young Professional in Foreign Policy	Sungbin (Benny) Hwang, International Student Association at GWU
Joe Bauer, Beacon Global Strategies	Tasia Matthews, US ASEAN Young Professionals Association
Julia Nguyen, SAIS Southeast Asian League of Students (SEALS)	Van Tran, Rhodes College & East-West Center Young Professional
Jung Seob Kim, McKesson	Vannary Kong, US ASEAN Young Professionals Association
Kai Abe McGuire, Georgetown & Former Japanese Embassy	





KF KOREA FOUNDATION
한미미래센터



EAST-WEST
CENTER