

# In about a hundred words on upcoming South Korean – American Summit

**Security dynamics in Asia have never been more fluid or unpredictable. One of the cornerstones of regional stability is American-South Korean relations, which is under new strain with the revelations stemming from the recent Pentagon leaks.**

**This week South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol visits the White House for a critical summit. With so much at stake in Asia, GLOBSEC asks experts from South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom; *What is the most pressing bilateral issue that South Korea and the United States must address together?***



**Jenny Town**

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While the expansion of economic and tech cooperation are growing areas of alliance cooperation, improving the security environment in and around the Korean Peninsula will still be the most pressing issue. This includes a range of challenges including how to adapt to North Korea's growing nuclear capabilities; how to enhance South Korean confidence in US extended deterrence; how to manage optics and relations with China as US, South Korean and Japanese cooperation deepens; and what can be done to prevent Seoul from choosing the nuclear weapons path. Of particular importance will be whether any new measures to enhance bilateral consultation on nuclear policy and planning to address growing South Korean anxieties are announced. Equally notable will be how China and Taiwan are mentioned in any joint statement—whether language is stronger or more specific than past statements—could have more serious implications to Korea-China relations in the near term



**Patrick Tucker**

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The two nations need to better collaborate on microprocessor development and supply. Both countries are investing heavily to build new advanced microprocessor fabrication plants as the threat of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan rises, jeopardizing the global supply of advanced microprocessors. Such an invasion would threaten shipping routes throughout the Pacific. Both countries need to quickly deepen technology-sharing agreements and possibly establish a new security partnership around shipping and logistics, one that assumes a Chinese military takeover of Taiwan.



**Dr. Tongfi Kim**

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Presidents Biden and Yoon should engage in a geoeconomic tying-hands strategy, which makes it difficult for them to deviate from cooperation in the future. The current public opinion and political climate in both the United States and South Korea present a rare window for implementing policies that were once deemed too economically costly or overly provocative towards Beijing. Government turnover could change this favorable environment in the coming years. Therefore, the US and South Korean governments must act now, building a robust foundation for strategically-motivated economic cooperation that can withstand future political shifts. By locking in the paths of their economic policies, they can enhance deterrence against undesirable actions by China and others.



**Robin Shepherd**

GLOBSEC's Executive Director, North America

"Everybody's spying on everybody," a senior diplomat from a leading European country once told me. "It's mostly about getting the edge in the normal business of negotiations, whether that's with our enemies or even our allies." So, when South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol meets Joe Biden in the White House this week, the recent leaks, suggesting the Americans have been spying on South Korean officials over Seoul's stance on Ukraine, are unlikely to occasion much in the way of bad feeling. To be sure, spying and Ukraine will feature prominently in the press conferences. But, with Pyongyang flexing its muscles yet again, events on the Korean Peninsula itself, and China in general, will dominate the private discussions.