

Keynote Address by The Hon. Kin Moy

September 28, 2021

(16:53)

Thanks so much, Fred, for that generous introduction. I want to thank the Atlantic Council and the Korea Foundation for extending this very kind invitation to me to speak to all of you today, and I look very much forward to sharing our thoughts with you on the important role of US-ROK relations and our alliance, and the important role that we play in shaping the world of the 21st century.

Diplomacy is back at the center of US foreign policy, and we are strengthening our alliances and engagement with the world to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken have made that clear in both their words and their actions. Secretary Blinken and Austin visited Seoul as part of the first overseas Cabinet-level travel of the administration. We welcomed President Moon to Washington on May 21 as only the second Head of State to visit the White House under this administration. And, most recently, Deputy Secretary Sherman traveled to Tokyo to meet trilaterally with ROK First Vice Minister Choi, and Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori, followed by meetings with President Moon, Foreign Minister Chung, and others in Seoul—and I was very privileged to actually join the Deputy Secretary on that travel. And of course, just a few days ago, Secretary Blinken met both bilaterally and trilaterally, with Foreign Minister Chung and Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi on the margins of the UN General Assembly, and I was present there, along with my colleague, Mark Lambert. We pursued such robust engagement because the US-ROK alliance is the linchpin of peace, security and prosperity for Northeast Asia, a Free and Open Indo-Pacific region and beyond. In order to look at the scope of US-ROK global cooperation, I'd like to first explain the Biden-Harris administration's foreign policy outlook in the Indo-Pacific, and around the world.

We have long put forward a vision of peace and stability, freedom of the seas, unimpeded commerce, advancing human rights, a commitment to the rules based international order, and the recognition that our common interests are not zero sum. In the face of growing threats to that order, the United States is fortifying our key partnerships, which have been and will be grounded in respects candor, openness, inclusiveness, shared interests and mutual benefits. And we will always remain true to our values and support those who seek a better future for all people. In the 21st century, the world is more interconnected and interdependent, and we must step up to take on new challenges ranging from the crisis of climate change, to global pandemics, to cybersecurity, and we must create new opportunities, including clean energy and secure supply chains, and most importantly, we must do this together. The United States will pursue a free and open Indo-Pacific that promotes our interests, and those of our partners and allies. We're a proud part of the Indo-Pacific, and this region is critically important to our nation's security and prosperity. In addition to deepening close bilateral relations. We will work multilaterally through long standing institutions like the United Nations, as well as with

ASEAN, which remains central to the region's architecture. As I said we must work to achieve these goals together, more importantly with allies like the Republic of Korea.

Our alliance is enduring and is built upon our shared values and a deep friendship between the American and Korean peoples and the importance both our countries attached to this partnership in creating peace, security and prosperity across the globe. Our task is to determine how best to do so as we face the challenges of the 21st century. In terms of one of the real hotspots, or one of the areas of great concern around the world today, COVID. Part of figuring out how to use our US-ROK bilateral relationship for the global good is looking at our efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. In the early months of the pandemic, the United States and the ROK collaborated to establish robust travel screening measures to preserve air links between our countries and assisted with repatriating each other citizens. The ROK donated critical medical supplies to the United States, including 2.5 million protective masks and facilitated the purchase of 750,000 COVID-19 tests. In support of vaccination efforts, the US government successfully delivered 1 million doses of the J&J single-shot vaccine to the ROK on June, 4, and an additional 400,000 doses on August 15. Following the bilateral summit between President Biden and President Moon, the United States and the ROK created a comprehensive global vaccine partnership for the purposes of strengthening our joint response capabilities for infectious disease through international vaccine cooperation. The administration is working with the ROK to expand global COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing through a senior level KORUS global vaccine partnership experts group.

According to climate change, President Biden has centered the climate crisis at the forefront of our country's foreign policy and national security planning. The President and the entire administration have looked to the ROK, as a critical partner and leader in the global effort to combat climate crisis. And in each stage, the ROK has responded. At the Leaders' Summit on Climate in April, President Biden urged all leaders to demonstrate their commitment to enhanced action to fight climate change. For our part, we announced a substantial increase in our Paris commitment to reduce our emissions by 50 to 52% by 2035. President Moon declared the ROK would cease all public financing for new overseas coal power projects, a critical step in setting the stage for G7 countries to declare the same a few months later. That in turn likely influenced President Xi's decision to announce last week that China would stop building new coal plants abroad. Although we still seek more details on President Xi's pledge, we are confident external actions, including those by our two governments, contributed to this decision. And now we are five weeks away from COP26 at Glasgow. We look forward to the ROK reaffirming its climate leadership by announcing an enhanced and ambitious nationally determined contribution, or as we refer to it, NDC, as soon as possible. Doing so as other advanced democratic economies like Canada, the EU, Japan, the UK, and the United States have done will send a powerful signal to other major emitters to come to Glasgow with reduction targets required to keep the world's goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.

Through our ongoing dialogues on the Indo-Pacific in coordination with the ROK New Southern Policy, the US-ROK alliance is increasingly focused on a future oriented partnership, including cooperation on health security, science and technology, renewable energy, law enforcement, cybersecurity, and cooperation with the Pacific Island countries, the Mekong subregion, and ASEAN. Another aspect of our relationship we must prioritize is our economic and trade ties. The ROK is now the world's 10th largest economy, a leading manufacturer of

semiconductors, automobiles and EV batteries, a major source of cultural exports like K-pop and popular Korean dramas, and an important global hub for technology and innovation. The ROK boasts a remarkable economic development success story and is the first former aid recipient country to become a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. Our trade and investment relationship is strong and growing and based on our shared values and commitment to market based approaches to economic growth. We must, or we have, deep science and technology collaboration which strengthens our economic ties and mutual prosperity. The United States is the second largest trading partner, and the ROK is America's sixth largest. Likewise, the United States is the second largest investor in the ROK, while Korean foreign direct investment, Korean FDI in the United States, has more than tripled in the past decade. America is the largest foreign direct investment destination for Korean investors, ahead of China and Vietnam. And this is just the beginning. Our companies announced more than \$25 billion in mutual investments in each other's economies at the US-ROK Summit in May. Across both our countries, people-to-people ties are a critical part of the foundation upon which this enduring security and economic relationship has been built. Over 1.7 million Korean students have enrolled in schools in the United States since 1955. During the 2019-2020 academic year, more than 49,000 Korean students came to the United States, making the ROK, the number three center worldwide of international students to the United States. We share a deep appreciation for each other's culture, history, and commitment to democracy.

With reference to the DPRK, the top US priority is to work toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We know this will not be easy. To reach our objective we are taking a calibrated practical approach that will explore diplomacy with the DPRK. As part of this effort President Biden appointed ambassador Sung Kim as the Special Representative for the DPRK and longtime DPRK expert Dr. Jung Pak is serving as the Deputy Special Representative. Denuclearization is an aim that has remained constant for four administrations, and one to which Pyongyang has previously committed in multiple documents. Our diplomatic efforts will build on the 2018 Singapore joint statement and other past documents and statements, including the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration and the 2005 Six Party Talks joint statement. To that end, we have reached out directly to Pyongyang to initiate dialogue and stand ready to meet without preconditions. It's on this basis that we hope the DPRK will come to the table to discuss our respective intentions and concerns and explore what progress may be achievable. However, we should be clear The United States is concerned by and condemns the DPRK's recent ballistic missile launches. These launches are in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and pose a threat to the DPRK's neighbors and other members of the international community. The DPRK's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs constitute serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global Non-Proliferation regime. As such, the United States will continue to work closely with our allies and partners especially the ROK and Japan, as well as others with an interest in establishing peace and prosperity in the region, to chart a path toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We have a responsibility to implement the UN Security Council resolutions addressing the DPRK, just as we implement other UN Security Council resolutions. We will continue to call on all UN member states to fulfill their international obligations, as well, in line with our goal of reinforcing global counter proliferation efforts. This keeps us all safer.

Furthermore, consistent with the Biden-Harris administration's focus on human rights, we will advocate for the human rights of the North Korean people. We are also prepared to work cooperatively with the DPRK to address areas of shared humanitarian concern. The United States will continue to support the provision of humanitarian aid, consistent with international standards for access and monitoring to the most vulnerable North Koreans, regardless of progress on denuclearization. We will enter support to inter-Korean humanitarian cooperation projects, and we hope to resume cooperation in recovering the remains of US servicemen still missing from the Korean War. Moreover, we are open to exploring meaningful confidence building initiatives.

Turning to our trilateral cooperation, few trilateral relationships are more important than the one between the ROK, Japan, and the United States. Our three countries are resilient, we share common security objectives, and our trilateral defense cooperation is more important than ever. The trilateral meeting Secretary Blinken just hosted in New York, as well as the meeting between Deputy Secretary Sherman, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori, and ROK First Vice Minister Choi in Tokyo this past July both underscore the importance of our trilateral cooperation. What really stood out in these discussions is that while our alliances with the ROK and Japan have spanned many decades, our goals and cooperation are modern and forward looking. We're working together to address the world's most difficult 21st century challenges, not just in Northeast Asia or the Indo-Pacific, but across the globe. The United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan are working together to strengthen bilateral and trilateral cooperation to address challenges like climate change, COVID-19, supply chain resiliency, cyber threats, and threats to the rules based international order and human rights on a global scale. In all of our engagements, we have reaffirmed support for ASEAN centrality and the ASEAN lead regional architecture, and also discussed efforts to support the people of Burma and a return to democracy there. As shown by the extensive breadth of our discussions, our three countries have many opportunities for trilateral cooperation, and that cooperation will benefit our peoples and the world more broadly. This was just for the first of many discussions to come, and we look forward to convening meetings at the Deputy Secretary-Vice minister level on a quarterly basis—a reflection of our commitment to advancing the trilateral agenda.

Finally, what I say is that defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding human rights, and respecting the rule of law are all fundamental values we share with the Republic of Korea and are at the center of the Biden-Harris administration's foreign policy. Our military defense ties are unwavering and our shared values and ever increasing diplomatic, economic security, and people-to-people ties are strong and enduring. The breadth of US-ROK cooperation covers nearly the entire span of human endeavors and is essential to addressing the challenges of the 21st century. America's alliances are our greatest asset and leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies and key partners. The United States and the Republic of Korea has stood side by side for over 70 years, and we look forward to expanding our cooperation in the years to come. As we work together to achieve global peace, security, and prosperity. Thank you very much.