

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT
Online Event

**“ROK-U.S. Strategic Forum 2021: The Road Ahead after
the Biden-Moon Summit”**

Closing Remarks

DATE
Monday, November 15, 2021

FEATURING
Lee Geun
President, The Korea Foundation

CSIS EXPERTS
Victor Cha
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Professor of Government, Georgetown University; Former National Security Council*

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Victor Cha: At this point in the program I'd like to turn the floor over to President Lee Geun of the Korea Foundation to offer some final reflecting thoughts. Do we – do we want to President Lee to come to the stage and we can ask our panelists to depart, how about that? OK? President Lee, why don't you come up here to the stage. Come and join us up here. Very good. Please.

Guen Lee: Dr. Cha, this morning and afternoon we touched upon a variety of issues, such as North Korea, China, Japan, Korea-U.S. summit, the Quad, AUKUS, global issues from climate change to 5G-6G technologies, and vaccine diplomacy. As we all know, this forum is not aiming at reaching a consensus among all the participants within just one day, but this forum is more about exchanging different ideas and learning from each other. There may be many takeaways from today's long discussions of many different issues, but as far as I'm concerned, the most precious lesson that I learned from today's discussion is the role of and importance of the values in international relations, particularly the universal human values such as human rights, democracy, and freedom.

We talked about interests as well. And of course, interests are one of the most important drivers of international politics. But the problem with interest is that we cannot predict where we are heading if we focus only on interests. The direction could be democratic, it could be authoritarian, or even fascist. The direction could be subservient or dependent or hegemonic. But on the other hand, if we focus on values, we know where we want to go. We want to go to democratic directions. We want to make our country more human rights conscious. We also value freedom. And we also want to lead our country into the liberal and democratic direction.

So now when we ask ourselves what kind of countries and world do you want to pass on to our children and the next generation, I do think that the values will be certainly the most important navigator to answer the question. And on that note, I would like to thank all participants and panelists for their insightful discussion today. And I also would like to thank Professor Victor Cha for his leadership for this forum. And my special thanks also go to the CSIS and the Korea Foundation staff, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that this forum could take place safely in the time of COVID-19. We look forward to holding this forum again next year and hope we will be able to invite the audience in this conference room.

Thank you very much.