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PRESS
RELEASE

Asan Report Release: “A Pointillist Coalition: Redefining Allied Force Posture in the Indo-Pacific”

SEOUL, January 30, 2026 – Dr. Peter K. LEE and Ms. Esther DUNAY, research fellow and research associate in the Center for Regional Studies at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, published a new *Asan Report*, titled “A Pointillist Coalition: Redefining Allied Force Posture in the Indo-Pacific.” The *Report* examines how the evolving patchwork of U.S. and allied force posture initiatives can become more integrated, resilient, and sustainable. It argues that the debate about allied force posture should be expanded beyond just deployments of uniformed military forces in each other’s territories.

First, it discusses how the United States is rethinking its military presence in the Indo-Pacific, yet why it has struggled to change. Second, it examines the responses by allies to possible changes in U.S. force posture. Third, it shows how allies are pursuing their own, more eclectic, types of force posture arrangements with each other, but that the Republic of Korea (ROK) has been notably absent from these **quasi-force posture initiatives**. Fourth, it presents new force posture models that play to the strengths of allies:

- The first is what it calls the “**coalition lily pad**” strategy of using access arrangements to lay the foundations for coalition operations with a light military footprint.
- The second model is what it calls the “**military-industrial force nexus**” of leveraging overseas defense industrial presence as a form of hybrid force posture.

The report offers policy recommendations to improve coalition force posture:

1. The United States should establish collective forums for posture consultations.
2. The ROK should initiate reciprocal access agreement (RAA) negotiations with other U.S. allies to avoid being excluded from the emerging coalition network.
3. The ROK should consider limited regional force deployments focused on capacity-building as part of the growing regional role of the ROK-U.S. alliance.
4. The ROK should explore the posture implications of its defense industrial partnerships and facilities and how they can support coalition deterrence.
5. Allies and partners should coordinate their local community engagement around potential wartime access points by investing in social license contributions.
6. Other partners—such as those from Europe—should initiate consultations on how their territories in the Indo-Pacific could facilitate the two hybrid models.

Dr. Lee and Ms. Dunay conclude that the “discussions on allied force posture in the Indo-Pacific must expand beyond the narrow focus on uniformed military forces in allied territories” and that the proposed models “facilitate high levels of integration among allies and can strengthen deterrence, reduce the possibility of conflict, or improve capacities in a potential conflict.”

The Asan Report is available for download at:

https://asaninst.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=s1_2_eng&wr_id=91

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