



Dashed Potential: How Misperceiving China Could Hamstring the U.S.-ROK Alliance

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The Republic of Korea (ROK) is undergoing a strategic reorientation under the administration of President Yoon Suk-yeol. Upon assuming office in May 2022, Yoon quickly signaled his intent to break from the positions of his predecessor, Moon Jae-in, on two critical issues: North Korean denuclearization, and countering the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC). He also hopes to make the ROK a "global pivotal state" that looks and acts beyond the Korean peninsula.

These shifts have great potential to advance America's interests in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. That potential, however, could easily dissipate. The outlook of U.S.-ROK relations, and South Korea's global ambitions, hinge in large part on how Washington and Seoul calibrate their relationship with Beijing.