The PCI News

2023 Building Bridges Award

The Pacific Century Institute is proud to announce the 2023 Building Bridges Individual Awardee as Ambassador Donald P. Gregg, former US Ambassador to Republic of Korea and 2023 Building Bridges Institutional Awardee as Ewha Womans University with Dr. Eun Mee Kim, President, accepting the award on behalf of the University.

Ambassador Donald P. Gregg is Chairman Emeritus of the Pacific Century Institute and the Korea Society. After enlisting in the military in 1945, Mr. Gregg attended Williams College in Massachusetts, where he was recruited to join the CIA. Over the next 31 years of service, he was assigned to Japan, Burma, Vietnam, and Korea. By 1979, Mr. Gregg was the Asia Policy and Intelligence Matters Specialist in the United States National Security Council, and then Director of the NSC’s Intelligence Directorate. From 1981 to 1988 Ambassador Gregg was National Security Adviser to Vice President George H.W. Bush. In the meantime, from 1980-1989, Ambassador Gregg contributed to the development of young scholars as a lecturer at Georgetown University, teaching a graduate level workshop on Force and Diplomacy. In September 1989, Ambassador Gregg was appointed the Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. Prior to his departure from the country in 1993, he received the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, an honorary doctoral degree from Sogang University, and a decoration from the Republic of Korea. In March 1993, he retired after almost half a century to the United States government, going on to become the President and Chairman of The Pacific Century Institute and the Korea Society. After retiring, Mr. Gregg contributed to the development of young scholars as a lecturer at Georgetown University, teaching a graduate level workshop on Force and Diplomacy.

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The much-admired member of the Council on Foreign Relations published a memoir in 2014 titled, Pot Shards: Fragments of a Life Lived in CIA, the White House, and the Two Koreas. Recent accolades include an honorary degree from Green Mountain College (1996), the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service (2001), Williams College’s Kellogg Award for Career Achievement (2001), the 2004 Bartels World Affairs Fellowship from Cornell University, the Philip Jaisohn Award for Service to Korean-American Relations (2005), the Distinguished Service Award from the American Committees on Foreign Relations (2006), the Korean-American Friendship Award (2007), and honorary degrees from Colorado College (2010) and University of Central Lancashire (2015). In 2009, Ambassador Gregg and his wife were honored by the establishment of The Donald P. and Margaret Gregg Professorship at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

Ewha Womans University was established in 1886 as the first women’s educational institution in the Republic of Korea by Mary Scranton who was dispatched by the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society of the United Methodist Church of the United States in the 19th Century. Ewha was established to educate girls and women who did not have the opportunities for any education in the late Chosun dynasty. In 1887, “Po Goo Nyo Goan” was established in the compounds of Ewha as the first women’s hospital to help treat women patients by women doctors and nurses. Thus, Ewha’s main mission to this day stands firmly on two pillars – i.e., women’s education and women’s health and medical education. Today, Ewha’s mission is to educate and nurture women leaders of the world in all fields of academic disciplines based on the Christian spirit of love, devotion and sharing. With 25,000 students and 250,000 alumni around the world, Ewha has now grown into one of the leading research universities in the world with a full range of academic disciplines from humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, arts and music, engineering, law, medicine, and two teaching hospitals. Ewha has 15 undergraduate colleges, 15 graduate schools, and 2 teaching hospitals each with 1,000 beds in the capital city of Seoul, Republic of Korea.

President Eun Mee Kim is the 17th President of Ewha, and announced the Ewha Vision 2030+ in May 2021 entitled, “A Creative and Innovative Platform Leading to a Sustainable Society” in taking up the challenge of meaningful change in the era of the Digital Transformation. President, Kim will accept the award on behalf of the institution, its faculty, and its students.
This opinion piece featuring PCI Board Member, Dr. Siegfried S. Hecker was published in the 38North on January 20, 2023.

The Disastrous Downsides of South Korea Building Nuclear Weapons

By Dr. Siegfried S. Hecker

Is South Korea Willing to Lose Its World-leading Nuclear Power Program to Build the Bomb?

In a wide-ranging interview on January 11, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol warned Pyongyang that if North Korea’s nuclear threat continues to advance, South Korea would consider building nuclear weapons of its own or ask the United States to redeploy them on the Korean Peninsula. Although President Yoon walked back these comments at the World Economic Forum in Davos, they were published in the South Korean press and reinforced by some Republic of Korea (ROK) defense analysts. Cheon Seong-whun said, “President Yoon’s comment could turn out to be a watershed moment in the history of South Korea’s national security.”

A South Korean decision to build its own bomb could, indeed, be a watershed. Threatening Pyongyang does little besides wipe out Seoul’s remarkable economic miracle and destroy the soft power it has established around the world.

Some of the purely military aspects could be accomplished in vincingly in mastering civilian nuclear power generation. It is true that with its advanced technological capabilities, South Korea could probably build the bomb quickly. But a few bombs don’t make a nuclear deterrent, particularly if Seoul will have to go it alone. And let’s be clear, if Seoul were to go down this path, Washington could, and likely would, withdraw its nuclear umbrella. Building a nuclear arsenal to counter Pyongyang’s would require a major national redirection of its economy and diplomacy that would negatively affect nearly all facets of South Korean life for decades.

For nearly fifty years, South Korea has pursued a civilian nuclear energy program. It wisely focused on the middle of the fuel cycle—that is, reactor fuel fabrication, reactor construction and operation, and electricity production. It has built neither enrichment nor reprocessing facilities. Consequently, South Korea has no inventory of bomb-grade plutonium or uranium currently stockpiled. To build nuclear weapons, it would have to repurpose some of its civilian reactors to produce the plutonium bomb fuel (combined with using its laboratory-scale pyroprocessing facilities to extract plutonium) or construct a centrifuge facility to make highly enriched uranium. Either path would take at least two years to produce enough bomb fuel for even a few bombs. In the longer term, an effective nuclear deterrent would require new, dedicated nuclear weapons facilities, requiring substantial time and financial commitments.

The next step in building a bomb is weaponization—that is, designing, building and testing the nuclear devices. South Korea could surely master all scientific and engineering challenges of building a bomb—as it has demonstrated so convincingly in mastering civilian nuclear power generation. Some of the purely military aspects could be accomplished in concert with its conventional military technical complex. But to prove the design and fabrication, there would need to be nuclear testing, but where? Neighboring countries—China and Japan—would certainly object strongly, and there would undoubtedly be strong domestic opposition to tests from every South Korean province.

The nuclear warheads will also have to be integrated into delivery vehicles—such as ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, submarine-launched missiles or bombers. South Korea has all the basic building blocks, but it would still have substantial work to do to integrate the nuclear warheads into the delivery systems. Moreover, these requirements will continue to evolve as North Korea upgrades its offensive and defensive
The Disastrous Downsides of South Korea Building Nuclear Weapons
(continued from page 2)

capabilities. The assembly, disassembly and fielding of nuclear devices pose serious safety and security risks and would have to be learned without help or advice from current nuclear powers. Seoul will also have to develop a command-and-control structure that is more stringent than anything it has done so far for its conventional military.

Another consequence of building a nuclear arsenal is that it will compete for resources—financial, personnel, and technical—with the South’s conventional military. As with other industries, such as electronics, automotive and consumer goods that depend on South Korean engineering and manufacturing, its military industry has risen to be among the best in the world. South Korea has become one of the top international suppliers of military hardware. Seoul’s sales pitch is that it can deliver NATO-attuned military hardware faster and at lower prices than the United States. Changing directions to focus on a nuclear arsenal will derail most of its conventional military export business.

Should South Korea decide to build its own nuclear arsenal, I believe the United States will almost surely end its military alliance and economic partnership with Seoul. Congressional sanctions would likely follow, trade would suffer, and technology cooperation would be derailed.

A South Korean Nuclear Arsenal Would Seriously Undermine and Possibly Destroy Its Civilian Nuclear Industry and Global Exports

President Yoon has vowed to reinvigorate South Korea’s civilian nuclear industry and greatly expand its exports. Shortly after his interview, he was in the United Arab Emirates to do just that.

In the 1980s, South Korea worked closely with the United States and Canada and quickly learned how to design, license, build, and operate nuclear reactors. By the 2000s, the Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) licensed and built its own Advanced Power Reactor, the APR-1400. I visited South Korea’s impressive nuclear facilities about ten years ago. I found the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) in Daejeon to be a world-class research laboratory. Its High-Flux Advanced Neutron Application Reactor (HANARO) is one of the best in the world, which allows the South to do cutting-edge nuclear research and produce a variety of nuclear isotopes.

The fuel fabrication facility in Daejeon, operated by KEPCO Nuclear Fuels, is a marvel of modern engineering and manufacturing. Doosan Heavy Industries in Busan is one of the few places that can forge reactor vessels for modern light water reactors. It was there that our Korean host showed us one (pictured below) that was going to the Vogtle reactor being built by Westinghouse in Georgia. The United States no longer has the capacity for heavy forgings like reactor vessels.

South Korea, along with Japan, are among the few in the world that still do. At the time, I concluded that South Korea was a model for the nuclear industry.

In 2009, South Korea won the contract to build four of its APR -1400 reactors for the United Arab Emirates. It has done a remarkable job and is well on its way to putting the four reactors on the grid. South Korea’s success is in stark contrast to the huge cost overruns experienced by the French company Areva in Finland and Westinghouse in the United States. The two reactors to be built in South Carolina were scrapped after an expenditure of $9 billion. The two in Georgia are in better shape, but still greatly over budget. KEPCO, on the other hand, has proven itself competent and the supplier of choice to the western world. Poland recently signed a contract for a reactor from KEPCO.

If Seoul decides to build the bomb, it will likely bring about an end to its nuclear export business, both for lack of customers and because the US can block the export of many South Korean nuclear technologies since they are based on US technologies licensed to the South. It may also lead to the shutdown of its domestic reactor fleet. South Korea imports all the uranium used for its civilian nuclear reactors and depends on other countries for enrichment services. Once South Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), it may no longer be able to produce nuclear fuel, threatening the domestic nuclear industry, which generates one-third of South Korea’s electricity.

Seoul Would Deal a Serious Blow to the Nonproliferation Regime

South Korea would be the first democratic country to withdraw from the NPT, dealing a blow to decades of US leadership in preventing nuclear proliferation. As serious as the North Korean nuclear threat is, I believe Washington would have no choice but to condemn and counter the South’s decision to build the bomb. The nonproliferation regime is a
complex fabric of treaties, agreements, assurances, practices, and international organizations. North Korea’s bomb and Iran’s pursuit of the bomb have already stressed the regime. The negative impacts of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine are playing out now. South Korea should not join these countries in undermining the regime.

Its withdrawal or expulsion from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would also put it in company with the only other country in that situation—namely North Korea. Instead of playing a supportive role in organizations like the IAEA, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, South Korea would be shunned by the international community.

South Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT would also undermine one of the most effective elements of the regime, namely forging security alliances to extend security protection to allied states, eliminating the need for these countries to build their own nuclear deterrents. So far, the United States has done this successfully in Europe and in Northeast Asia.

Shooting Itself in the Foot

South Korea’s decision to build the bomb will be widely condemned. It is unrealistic to think that Washington would support such a move or turn a blind eye. Moreover, China would likely level its own sanctions or support the international community to do the same. Consequently, the quest for the bomb will threaten much of South Korea’s economic success and soft power it has so painstakingly constructed over the years. Its quest for the bomb will shatter South Korea’s phenomenal success with the likes of Samsung, Hyundai, and Hallyu.

The irony is that an indigenous nuclear arsenal will make South Korea less secure. It is likely to draw an escalatory response from the North, and Seoul may then have to face that threat on its own. Gone will be the experienced hand of Washington, the nuclear umbrella, and visits by US strategic platforms to South Korean ports and airfields. Instead, a South Korean nuclear arsenal would create the potential for any small incident on the peninsula to go nuclear, with little experience in either Korean capital on how to deescalate such crises. Except for a few instances, over the past forty years, the South Korean public and general life have been rather little affected by various developments in the North. That will change as Seoul will have to decide on its own how to respond to Pyongyang’s threatening actions.

President Yoon may have walked back his comments on pursuing the bomb, but to the South Korean public, it is not a fringe idea. Public opinion polls over the last decade show consistent majority support for nuclear possession. South Koreans also increasingly question the credibility of US extended deterrence. It is imperative for the South Korean government to widen the discourse with the public about what it would cost them to build a nuclear arsenal. Likewise, Washington must better understand why its extended deterrence is being questioned and how it can work with Seoul to correct it.

I have stressed that for South Korea, the decision to go nuclear comes with trade-offs and consequences too enormous to bear. The South can have its own nuclear arsenal—at great expense and sacrifice—or work with the Americans to remain under the nuclear umbrella with American troops stationed on the peninsula. It cannot have both.

PCI Board Members, Founders and Fellows often contribute to the media. The opinions expressed are solely those of the individuals involved and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Pacific Century Institute.

Book Release

Hinge Points brings readers literally inside the North Korean nuclear program, joining Siegfried Hecker to see what he saw and hear what he heard in his visits to North Korea from 2004 to 2010. Hecker goes beyond the technical details—described in plain English from his (continued on page 5)
Book Review

Hinge Points
(continued from page 4)

on-the-ground experience at the North’s nuclear center at Yongbyon—to put the nuclear program exactly where it belongs, in the context of decades of fateful foreign policy decisions in Pyongyang and Washington.

Describing these decisions as “hinge points,” he traces the consequences of opportunities missed by both sides. The result has been that successive U.S. administrations have been unable to prevent the North, with the weakest of hands, from becoming one of only three countries in the world that might target the United States with nuclear weapons. Heckler’s unique ability to marry the technical with the diplomatic is well informed by his interactions with North Korean and U.S. officials over many years, while his years of working with Russian, Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani nuclear officials have given him an unmatched breadth of experience from which to view and interpret the thinking and perspective of the North Koreans.

As Delury details, Washington’s problems were comprehensive, failing the tests of politics, process and product. The American experience of the European theatre during the Second World War, with teams of guerrillas operating behind Nazi lines, just didn’t translate to Northeast Asia, especially when Chiang Kai-shek’s hapless supporters were written out of the script. Instead, the key role was to be played by a hesitant and dwindling anti-communist, anti-Chiang ‘Third Force’ that existed on paper, with CIA-funded newspapers and magazines, but was entirely absent on the ground. As for subversion, in China the CIA’s efforts only pre-empted Mao’s slamming shut of the already narrow door of pluralism and denying them any purchase. In Delury’s account, the programme’s start was not contingent on Beijing’s intervention in Korea, but rather on Mao’s victory in the Chinese civil war and Stalin’s bomb. As America searched for who ‘lost’ China, the CIA was authorised ‘to exploit guerrilla potential on the Chinese Mainland’ in July 1950, months before the ‘War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea’ was even a twinkle in Mao’s eye.

We see in Agents of Subversion how the CIA had total confidence in their programme. The possibility of failure was just not considered, yet the programme failed in China’s Jilin borderlands with North Korea, in Yunnan Province with the scraps of Li Mi’s National Salvation Army, and in Tibet with the Dalai Lama’s brother. Trained partisans, weapons and supplies rained down under CIA parachutes, as often as not straight into the arms of the People’s Liberation Army. These debacles—and others around the world—were not the product of a CIA gone rogue. They were all authorised and underpinned by National Security Directives in Washington.

Interestingly, London pushed back. With Hong Kong at the front of UK concerns, British mandarins expressed the view that less US subversion in China might result in less domestic repression. Things turned personal. London warned Zhou Enlai, en route to the 1955 Bandung Conference, of a threat of assassination. Sure enough, the Air India plane he had been scheduled to fly in—before a last-minute change of itinerary—suffered a mid-air explosion and crash-landing with most on board killed. The official British inquiry identified a suspect, a Chinese nationalist agent, who had conveniently escaped their jurisdiction by ‘stowing away’ on a CIA plane bound for Taiwan.

Delury convincingly argues that it was Washington’s conceit (continued on page 6)
in refusing to accept the limits of power that pulled decision makers into the swamp of secrecy and covert action. If anything, this only got worse when the hot war in Korea turned cold after the 1953 Armistice. It was all reenacted in Vietnam. The credibility gap between means and ends was filled with cloak-and-dagger. The intelligence tail wagged democracy’s dog. It reached its apogee when it was brought home and onshored by Nixon against the threat from the Democratic Party. Watergate, for a moment at least, seemed to bring a kind of closure. As it turned out, Nixon’s press conference welcoming Downey home from captivity was overshadowed by questions about the growing scandal. On his return to the US, Downey said merely ‘I thought the 20 years were to a large extent wasted’. He could have been less sparing of the process and people that put him there and abandoned him. As America threatens to turn back the clock on China, we can only hope that some lessons of the past have been learnt. Agents of Subversion can only help.

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Sejong Defense Forum

The 7th Sejong Defense Forum took place November 2022 in Seoul, South Korea. One of the main issues addressed at the forum was the crisis stability on the Korean Peninsula in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear threat. Dr. Jungsup Kim, Senior Research Fellow at the Sejong Institute pointed out that as all the attention was focused on strengthening deterrence, the US and South Korean government were not properly prepared for the instability problem, another axis of North Korea’s nuclear threat. Although enhancing deterrence is an important task, it was stressed that the risk of nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula is highly likely to occur due to the failure to properly manage the crisis and instability. The participants acknowledged that we need to be vigilant against failure in crisis management as much as failure in deterrence, and exchanged various views on how to achieve the dual tasks of stabilizing the crisis and strengthening deterrence.

Project Bridge

Project Bridge, an intercultural youth leadership program that aims to cultivate future community leaders and introduce them to U.S.-Korea relations, with an emphasis on cultural and racial sensitivity and a firm understanding of Korea. The goal of this unique program is to “bridge” the gap among cultures through cultural awareness and leadership training, with Korea as its case study.

We are delighted to introduce the 2022-2023 Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors from across the Greater Los Angeles Area. Since the start of the program, the Youth Ambassadors have learned about the Korean history, culture and society, participated in a joint Korean language session with New York and Montana cohorts, and had the opportunity to celebrate Lunar New Year at Northridge Park, CA.

The Youth Ambassadors are looking forward to upcoming field trips, workshops, and the ten-day study tour to South Korea in April 2023.

2022-2023 Youth Ambassadors

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Follow us on Instagram @Project Bridge_ to see what the Youth Ambassadors are up to!
This year’s Youth Ambassador, Sasha Sengelmann shares her insight on the program and what she looks forward to in future workshops and Study Tour to South Korea.

Annyeonghaseyo! My name is Sasha Sengelmann, and I am currently a senior at Gabrielino High School, located in San Gabriel. Spending most of my life in Singapore and the 626 – areas both well-known for their ethnic and cultural diversity – fostering relationships with others through cultural understanding is a value that has always been incredibly significant to me, and it is something that I have cultivated throughout my life. Therefore, I consider myself very lucky to be able to be a Project Bridge Youth Ambassador.

I found out about the Project Bridge Youth Ambassador Program through a Google Classroom announcement, posted by my school’s College and Career Center. After reading the program description, I made the choice to apply because it was an opportunity to gain invaluable experience learning about and building connections with people of different cultural heritages.

Though there have only been three workshops so far, we have learned much about Korea, from its history to its modern-day economy. I found the lectures about Ancient Korea to be particularly interesting, and I enjoyed learning about the states’ origins, Korean mythology, and the advancements made in science, medicine, law, literature, and culture during the Golden Age of Korea. Both inside and outside of the Project Bridge workshops, I have also been paying extra attention to religion and philosophy in Korea, as that is my assigned research topic for the program.

Confucianism has been a focal point in much of my research, as it was heavily implemented during the Joseon Dynasty, and continues to influence several aspects of Korean society, especially those pertaining to its social constructs and hierarchies. For instance, “hyo” (효), referring the Confucian value of filial piety, which is still strongly upheld in Korean society. As a Chinese person, learning about these ideas was particularly meaningful, because I was able to draw connections and make sense of the interdisciplinary values between Korean and Chinese culture, vicariously discovering the numerous instances of Chinese influences in Korean culture. I look forward to analyzing more of the similarities and differences between both cultures as I continue delving into the religious and philosophical ideologies that have – and continue to – shape North and South Korea into the beautiful, prosperous nations they are today.

Another thing I look forward to with great anticipation is the upcoming study tour in April, during which we will have the chance to experience life in Korea firsthand (and put some of the Hangul we've learned to the test!). I am especially excited to visit the Seoul Metropolitan Library, and meet Korean high school students to learn more about their lifestyles.

The study tour to Korea will only last for 10 days, yet I am confident that I will carry the memories, leadership experience, and communication skills from this journey with me for the rest of my life. As someone who understands the significance of cultural diversity, I believe that using it as a means of building “bridges” rather than viewing it as a barrier is something beautiful, thus Project Bridge is an endeavor that I am truly honored to be a part of.
**Upcoming Events**

**Book Event!**  
Agents of Subversion - The Fate of John T. Downey and the CIA’s Covert War in China  
Thursday, February 16, 2023  
12:00 PM—1:30 PM  
Hosted by UCLA Center for Chinese Studies  
Moderated by Alex Wang, Professor at Law at UCLA  
School of Law

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
PCI Annual Award Dinner  
Date: Thursday, February 16, 2023  
Venue: The Beverly Hills Hotel  
Reception 6:00 PM | Dinner 7:00 PM

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