



Korea Institute for
National Unification

PRESS RELEASE

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KINU'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULT OF THE 2024 KINU UNIFICATION SURVEY: North Korea's Two-State Claim / US Presidential Election Outlook and ROK-US Relations

- The Korea Institute for National Unification (President Kim, Chun-Sig) released the executive summary report of the 2024 KINU Unification Survey: North Korea's Two-State Claim / US Presidential Election Outlook and ROK-US Relations.
- Face-to-Face interviews with structured questionnaire were conducted on 1,001 men and women aged over 18, with sampling error of $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level.
- Public opinion on the necessity of South Korea possessing nuclear weapons has risen. Support peaked at 71.3% in 2021, fell to 69% in 2022 and 60.2% in 2023, but rose again to 66.0% in 2024.
- Trust in the US nuclear umbrella policy is high, but fell from 72.1% in 2023 to 66.9% in 2024.

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- Continued overwhelming support for the US-Korea alliance: Over 90% responded that the alliance is necessary.
 - More than 85% of respondents said that the presence of US forces in Korea is necessary.
 - While very favorable public opinion towards US-Korea relations persists, 44.1% responded that Korea-China relations have worsened over the past year.
 - Over half of the respondents are unaware of or uninterested in North Korea's abandonment of unification.
 - The most supported response to North Korea's two-state claim is "strengthening ROK-US-Japan cooperation."
1. KINU (President: Kim, Chun-Sig) announces the findings of the 2024 KINU Unification Survey on June 27, 2024 (Wed). This annual KINU Unification Survey has been recognized as the oldest known and reliable survey on unification and North Korea.
 - This survey aims to study the public's views on unification, North Korea, unification and North Korea policies, North Korean defectors, inter-Korean integration and national security, and perceptions of neighboring countries and their changes. Its purpose is to identify the various factors influencing public perception and to contribute to the establishment of sustainable and democratic unification and North Korean policies that garner public empathy and support.
 2. Face-to-face interviews were conducted on 1,001 men and women aged 18 and over from April 18 to May 16, 2024. The sampling error was $\pm 3.1\%P$ at the 95% confidence level.
 3. Major findings of the 2024 KINU Unification Survey: North Korea's Two-State Claim / US Presidential Election Outlook and ROK-US Relations are as follows.

■ Public Opinion on Unification

- Since 2020, the public perception of the necessity of unification has hit its lowest point.
 - In the 2024 survey, 52.9% of respondents believed unification was necessary. After the failure of the Hanoi Summit in 2019, which marked the escalation of tensions between North and South Korea, recording 52.7% in 2020, it has been the lowest recorded since then.
 - The war generation showed the most proactive attitude towards unification, with 73.6% believing it necessary. However, as age decreases, the perceived necessity of unification diminishes. Only 46.5% of millennials saw unification as necessary.

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- Among young people, the primary reason for supporting unification is the alleviation of the threat of war.
 - The proportion of those considering "ethnic kinship" as the most important reason for unification is higher among the elderly. 45.1% of the war generation stated that unification should happen because of "ethnic kinship," while only 26.1% of millennials agreed.
 - Conversely, the younger generation is more inclined to see "alleviation of the threat of war" as the most critical reason for unification. This suggests that emphasizing the potential for peace through unification might be more effective in persuading the younger generation of its necessity.

■ Attitudes toward North Korea

- There has been a sustained trend of viewing North Korea as a threat or adversary rather than a partner for support and cooperation.
- The proportion of respondents who believe that North Korea desires communist unification reached its highest level since 2018 at 49.7%.
 - The unprecedented level of military provocations by North Korea in 2022, followed by continued provocations in 2023, is speculated to have influenced such opinions.
- Only 15.4% believe that economic sanctions will lead to North Korea's denuclearization, marking the lowest level since the survey's inception.
 - This skepticism towards the efficacy of economic sanctions in achieving denuclearization is prevalent across all age and ideological groups.
 - The ongoing advancement of North Korea's nuclear capabilities, including the launch of ICBMs and satellites, despite economic sanctions, seems to have influenced public opinion.
- Doubts about North Korea's proposition of using nuclear weapons and missiles solely as diplomatic tools and not attacking South Korea are increasing.

■ North Korean Nuclear Threat and Two-State Claim

- South Koreans tend not to perceive North Korea's nuclear weapons as a crisis, as the nuclear threat from North Korea has become normalized and internalized.
 - Only 18% of respondents believe that North Korea's nuclear threat affects their lives, while 47.9% think it does not.
- 47.5% of respondents expressed interest in North Korea's declaration of abandoning unification, while 40.9% stated disinterest, and 11.7% claimed they had never heard of it.
 - The possibility of increased military provocations by North Korea following its shift in policy towards the South was perceived by 46.4%, while 48.1% believed there had been no changes.
 - Regarding South Korea's policy choices in response to North Korea's two-state claim, 31.9%

preferred "resuming dialogue and restoring cooperative relations," 29.8% favored "inducing internal change in North Korea through pressure," and 35% supported "strengthening cooperation between South Korea, the United States, and Japan."

■ Outlook on the US Presidential Election

- Over half of the respondents stated disinterest in the US presidential election, but more than 3 out of 4 recognized its impact on South Koreans' lives.
- The millennial generation showed the lowest interest in the US election (38.4%).
- 62.8% of respondents supported Biden's presidency for the benefit of South Korea.
- It is predicted that Trump's election would lead to deterioration in ROK-US relations and changes in the alliance.
 - 56.6% predicted that Trump's re-election would lead to another summit with Kim Jong-un.
- 77% of respondents anticipated an increase in defense cost-sharing after Trump's election, and 51.1% believed in the possibility of US troop reduction or withdrawal.
 - Although relatively low, 31.7% foresaw the possibility of the dissolution of the ROK-US alliance after Trump's election.

■ ROK-US Relations

- Overwhelming support for the ROK-US alliance persists.
 - Since the first survey in 2020, the proportion of respondents who believe the ROK-US alliance is necessary consistently hovered around 90%.
- The necessity of the US Forces Korea (USFK): present and post-unification
 - Since 2020, the proportion of respondents who believe the USFK is currently necessary exceeded 85% consistently every year.
 - Over half of South Koreans believe that the USFK presence is necessary even after unification, indicating a realistic understanding of the strategic importance of the USFK among South Koreans.
- Nearly half of respondents (44.1%) evaluated that ROK-China relations worsened over the past year, while only 2.8% thought they improved.

■ ROK-US Relations and South Korea's Nuclear Armament

- Since 2014, the support for South Korea's own nuclear armament has gradually increased, peaking at 71.3% in October 2021. After a decline until 2023, it rebounded to 66.0% in

2024.

- Before the 2024 survey, respondents preferred the USFK presence over South Korea's nuclear armament. However, in the 2024 survey, the preference for nuclear armament surpassed that of the USFK presence for the first time. However, supporters of both major parties still prefer the USFK presence over nuclear armament. Notably, over half of independent voters chose nuclear armament.
 - Trust in US policy towards the Korean Peninsula increased compared to 2023. Particularly, there was a significant increase in trust among democrats and independents, reducing the disparity in trust between different political party affiliations. However, trust in the US nuclear umbrella policy decreased slightly compared to 2023, mainly led by People Power Party (PPP) supporters.
 - In the 2024 survey, the number of respondents opposing South Korea's nuclear armament due to the possibility of economic sanctions decreased. Conversely, support for nuclear armament increased despite the potential for economic sanctions.
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4. Korea Institute for National Unification will continue to actively strive to contribute to the establishment of unification and North Korean policies that can create public empathy and support.

※ For more information or coverage regarding this press release, please contact the person in charge.

ATTACHED: *KINU Unification Survey 2024: North Korea's Two-State Claim / US Presidential Election Outlook and ROK-US Relations*. PDF