

Opening Remarks

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I'm honored to be here at the 7th Peace Forum of Soka University, Chinese Culture University, and Kyungnam University. I'd like to thank Dr. Suzuki Masashi, President of Soka University, and Dr. Chao Chien-min, Distinguished Chair Professor, Graduate Institute of National Development and Mainland China Studies, Chinese Culture University, for their continuing support of our tripartite fellowship.

I'd also like to thank the distinguished participants for coming, and especially the organizing committee at Soka University for bringing us all together, in one setting – which is the first time since the pandemic! It is wonderful to be able to see everyone in person again.

Through our Peace Forum, our universities have strived toward the goal of making peace in the region. Last year, our discussion centered on the issue of the US-China strategic competition, its impacts on East Asia, and the dilemmas it poses to South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.

This year, the discussion deepens, but with a focus on “dependence” and “interdependence” in the international system. Conflict is intensifying as independence strengthens. How can our nations, our institutions, our peoples promote cooperation and coexistence in this complex system? How can dependencies be developed into mutually supportive cooperation? How can we promote cooperative relations beyond the idea of interdependence?

These are tough questions. But I know this forum will provide a solid platform for some critical discussion among us.

Once again, it's good to see everyone here. I hope you enjoy today's proceedings.
Thank you very much.