

Securing East Asia's Energy Future: Advancing U.S.-South Korea-Japan Cooperation in Natural Gas

By Seong-ik Oh

As mentioned in the joint statement of the Trilateral Foreign Ministers' meeting in April 2025, U.S. natural gas has emerged as a focal area for energy security cooperation between South Korea and Japan.¹ In addition, U.S. President Donald Trump's congressional address in March specifically called for active South Korean and Japanese involvement in the Alaska liquefied natural gas (LNG) project.² This emphasis on energy cooperation gained notable traction following the 2023 Camp David summit, which elevated energy security to a core theme of trilateral coordination.³ Through these developments, the scope of U.S.-South Korea-Japan cooperation has expanded beyond traditional military and security arrangements to increasingly encompass economic and technological areas—with natural gas occupying a central role in the evolving energy security agenda.⁴

Natural gas collaboration among the three countries reflects a convergence of strategic interests. Since the advent of the “shale revolution” in the late 2000s, the United States began exporting LNG from the mainland in 2016 and has become the world's leading LNG exporter as of 2024. The nature of the LNG business requires clear advance commitments from buyers, making stable, large-scale demand from allies a vital foundation for further development and export growth.

For South Korea and Japan, increasing imports of U.S. LNG offers an avenue to strengthen their respective energy security profiles. South Korea, which relies heavily on Middle Eastern imports, and Japan, whose LNG sources are concentrated in Australia, both seek to diversify their supply through U.S. LNG. This diversification enhances energy security by reducing overdependence on any single region, as well as by providing alternatives to geostrategically volatile shipping routes such as the Red Sea and South China Sea.⁵ Building on these strengths, subsequent sections assess the future direction and potential of trilateral cooperation on natural gas.

The Northeast Asia LNG Market: Trends and Structural Drivers

The Northeast Asia LNG market is marked by rapid demand growth and overlapping pressures, including carbon neutrality goals, energy security concerns, and evolving price

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structures. In 2025, Northeast Asia—including South Korea, Japan, China, and Taiwan—represents the world’s largest LNG import market, accounting for 52 percent of total global demand. Rising Asian consumption remains the central driver of global natural gas demand growth. In 2024, Japan’s LNG imports reached 67.7 million tons (16.5 percent of world demand), while South Korea imported 47.7 million tons (11.4 percent).⁶

South Korea and Japan are industrial economies highly reliant on stable energy supplies. Their resource profiles are similarly constrained, requiring substantial oil imports to meet domestic demand. As of 2024, South Korea is the world’s fourth-largest oil importer, importing 2.82 million barrels per day, while Japan ranked fifth at 2.32 million barrels per day.⁷ Both countries have worked to reduce their excessive oil dependence through LNG imports. Japan is now the world’s second-largest LNG importer after having held the top spot until 2022, and South Korea currently ranks third. Despite diversification, Northeast Asia’s energy security remains acutely vulnerable due to its high reliance on Middle Eastern oil and the presence of China, the second-largest oil consumer in the world and a net importer. Recognizing these structural weaknesses, both South Korea and Japan have actively pursued overseas oil and gas development to strengthen their energy security.⁸

Recent forecasts highlight divergent scenarios for long-term natural gas consumption in the region. Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) projects that annual LNG demand will decline by 7–20 percent from its peak of 66 million tons in 2024 by 2040, provided that emission targets are achieved, but they also projected that demand could rise by 12 percent under risk scenarios.⁹ These projections reflect the role of natural gas in supporting surging power demand for Japan’s emerging AI industries, with the February 2025 Strategic Energy Plan explicitly identifying natural gas as a realistic transition fuel en route to net zero emissions by 2050.¹⁰ In line with these forecasts, Japanese corporations such as Tokyo Gas have secured long-term LNG supply contracts.¹¹ Conversely, South Korea’s fifteenth Long-Term Natural Gas Supply and Demand Plan estimates a reduction in gas demand from 45.09 million tons in 2023 to 37.66 million tons in 2036, with updated projections expected in late 2025.¹²

As these trends show, Northeast Asian states remain committed to carbon neutrality and energy transition policies, but the scale-up of renewables alone cannot substitute for fossil fuels in the near term—preserving natural gas’s role as an essential bridge fuel. The continued expansion of AI and other energy-intensive sectors, combined with evolving policy positions on nuclear power, suggests the potential for further strengthening the role of natural gas.¹³ Heightened supply risks stemming from the war in Ukraine and instability in the Middle East have also driven efforts to diversify LNG procurement.

Notably, South Korea and Japan’s long-term LNG contracts are typically indexed to crude oil prices based on the Japan Crude Cocktail (JCC), incorporating an “Asian premium,” while spot transactions use the Japan Korea Marker (JKM) price.¹⁴ Lacking land-based pipeline

imports—unlike China—both countries rely almost entirely on seaborne LNG from distant suppliers such as the United States, the Middle East, and Australia.¹⁵

U.S. LNG Production and Export Trends

The United States has become the world's preeminent producer of both oil and natural gas, thereby exerting considerable influence over global energy markets. As of 2024, U.S. oil production reached 13.2 million barrels per day, with output concentrated in the Permian, Bakken, and Eagle Ford basins.¹⁶ U.S. natural gas production has doubled from 19 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) in 2000 to 37.7 Tcf by 2024, now accounting for roughly one quarter of world production.¹⁷ This leadership position is largely a result of the shale revolution: as of 2025, 90 percent of U.S. natural gas output is sourced from shale formations.¹⁸ As U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright has noted, LNG is poised to become a top U.S. export within several years—a development that is expected to significantly reduce the U.S. trade deficit and become central to the Trump administration's "energy dominance" policy.¹⁹

Patterns in oil and natural gas trade present a more nuanced picture. The United States lifted restrictions on crude oil exports in 2016; since then, it has imported 8.42 million barrels per day of oil and petroleum products while exporting 4.10 million barrels per day, maintaining net importer status. Notably, South Korean petroleum products rank as the second-largest U.S. oil import after Canada, totaling USD 4.71 billion.²⁰

In natural gas, the United States began exporting LNG produced on the mainland in February 2016 and became a net natural gas exporter in 2017.²¹ As of 2024, the United States is exporting 7.7 Tcf of natural gas annually, nearly 20 percent of its total production.²² Of these exports, 43 percent are shipped by pipeline to Canada and Mexico, while the remaining 57 percent are LNG shipments bound for Europe and Asia.

South Korea first began importing LNG from Indonesia in 1986, viewing it primarily as an alternative to oil. Imports of U.S. LNG commenced in 2016, with the Cheniere–KOGAS agreement marking the first long-term U.S.–South Korea LNG supply contract. In 2024, South Korea imported 0.28 Tcf of U.S. LNG, accounting for 17 percent of South Korea's total LNG import volume.²³

Japan, meanwhile, began importing LNG from Alaska as early as 1969 to fuel the world's first LNG-fired power plant.²⁴ For decades, Japan was the primary destination for scarce U.S. LNG exports (prior to the continental surge). Japanese imports of U.S. LNG, which totaled just 8 billion cubic feet (Bcf) in 2015, increased sharply from 2018, reaching 336 Bcf in 2024, reflecting both expanded U.S. LNG export capacity and the two countries' mutual efforts to improve bilateral trade balances.²⁵ Today, about 40 percent of Japan's LNG imports come from Australia, and U.S. LNG imports stand at 0.33 Tcf, around 10 percent of Japan's total.²⁶ For both South Korea and Japan, then, growing U.S. LNG imports align with broader objectives to diversify supply sources, reinforce energy security, and support improvements in bilateral trade balances.

Proposed Areas of Cooperation

1) Alaska LNG Project

The Alaska LNG project is a proposed initiative to transport natural gas produced in Alaska's North Slope region to the port of Nikiski on the southern coast via pipeline, where the gas will then be liquefied and exported to Asian markets including South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The project comprises a gas treatment facility at the northern production site, an eight hundred-mile (1,300-kilometer) pipeline, and a liquefaction terminal in Nikiski. The estimated total investment would amount to USD 44 billion.²⁷ Following approvals from the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and Department of Energy (DOE), the project is currently focused on securing buyers and investors to achieve its targeted commercial operations by 2031.²⁸

First and foremost, the Alaska LNG project aims to stimulate regional economic development. Alaska's Southcentral region has traditionally depended on local gas from the Cook Inlet, but dwindling production has created an urgent need for an alternative supply. The state legislature has prioritized early construction of the inland pipeline to provide heating and electricity for major Alaskan cities.²⁹

Facing fiscal challenges—such as a USD 1.5 billion budget deficit in 2025, reduced library funding, and continued commitments to the disbursement of annual oil dividends to residents—the state government sees oil and gas development as a crucial avenue for future revenue.³⁰ Given the harsh environment and limited employment opportunities, a multi-year construction phase is expected to provide well-paying jobs to Alaska's labor force of 360,000, drive economic activity, and enhance infrastructure and community services.³¹

From the federal perspective, the project leverages Alaska's unique natural resource base and its status as the only U.S. state bordering the Arctic, thereby advancing national interests in future Arctic energy security. Federal government support for the project dates back to the Trump administration's initial approval in 2020 and the Joe Biden administration's export clearance in April 2023.³² Upon his inauguration in January 2025, President Trump issued an executive order affirming his commitment to Alaska resource development and positioning Alaskan LNG as a pillar of U.S. energy dominance.³³ In the Maritime Action Plan (MAP) announced on April 9, Trump stated that the new U.S. Arctic maritime strategy aims to respond to foreign presence in the region and reinforce U.S. engagement, further connecting gas development in Alaska with broader Arctic strategic goals.³⁴

Since early 2025, Trump has actively solicited South Korean and Japanese participation in Alaska LNG through summit meetings and speeches. Both countries have approached the project cautiously, recognizing its favorable logistics and diversification potential but raising questions about its economic viability. Official U.S. government sources previously mentioned lingering concerns over high project costs and limited interest from energy

majors. While originally estimated at USD 44 billion in 2016, financing improvements temporarily reduced projected costs to USD 36.9 billion in 2022, but the recent addition of labor, material, and interest rate increases—as well as technical challenges posed by permafrost construction—echo the cost overruns in the Trans Alaska Pipeline project of the 1970s.³⁵

Permafrost change driven by climate dynamics presents the most immediate technical challenge. Permafrost refers to ground that maintains a temperature below zero degrees Celsius for two or more years in a row; found throughout much of Alaska, it undergoes thawing and refreezing cycles that complicate construction and maintenance. Given that summer and winter cycles, as well as long-term warming, can alter subsoil conditions, developers must undertake sophisticated site-by-site surveys and possibly adopt a strain-based design, which addresses ground movement and infrastructure stress over time.³⁶

Another persistent obstacle is price volatility in global gas markets, a key factor in previous failed Alaska LNG export efforts. As the market looks toward a 2032 commissioning date, analysts weigh uncertainty in medium-term demand. While major producers such as Shell project up to 60 percent global LNG demand growth through 2040, U.S. experts caution against oversupply risks.³⁷

Japan, having imported roughly 1.2 million tons of Alaskan LNG annually since 1969, is relatively familiar with the region but remains prudent regarding new investment.³⁸ Following the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (AGDC)'s establishment in 2014, Japanese entities maintained limited engagement until the U.S. presidential request for participation prompted renewed interest in 2025. On July 22, Japan shifted its stance by agreeing—in tandem with the United States—to pursue an Alaska LNG joint venture as part of a broader trade accord.³⁹ Subsequently, JERA, Japan's largest LNG importer, signed a letter of intent (LoI) in September for a twenty-year, 1 million ton per annum (MTPA) purchase from Glenfarne, the project's operator.⁴⁰ To evaluate the project's feasibility, the Japanese government and major stakeholders—including Tokyo Gas, Osaka Gas, Mitsubishi and Inpex—commissioned Wood Mackenzie for economic and risk analyses.⁴¹ Discussions and negotiations remain ongoing.

South Korea has taken a comparably cautious approach. Although President Trump mentioned at an August 2025 summit with South Korean leadership that South Korea intended to join Japan in Alaska LNG investment, South Korea's Office of the President has clarified that such involvement would be subject to final agreements on a broader USD 350 billion investment package and careful project-by-project review.⁴² Nevertheless, POSCO International became the first South Korean energy company to enter into a strategic partnership with Alaska LNG in September, signing contracts for steel pipe supply, LNG purchases, and co-investment.⁴³

While the South Korean government remains cautious, one U.S. expert has noted that, should South Korean firms participate in the project, the LNG Canada project, which plans

to nearly double its capacity to 26 million tons by the mid-2030s, could become an industry benchmark for their involvement in the Alaska LNG project, which is expected to export up to 20 million tons of LNG per year.⁴⁴

2) South Korea-Japan Joint Continental Shelf Development Agreement

The South Korea-Japan Joint Development Agreement (JDA) on the Continental Shelf in the East China Sea, which entered into force on June 22, 1978, stands as a notable example of bilateral South Korea-Japan cooperation—one that could benefit from constructive U.S. engagement in the future. Designating a joint development zone (JDZ) in the East China Sea between South Korea and Japan, the agreement represents a rare episode of collaboration amid a complex bilateral relationship.⁴⁵

After several rounds of joint exploration in the 1980s, the project did not yield economically viable results. Since 2010, there has been no substantial cooperation or joint activity under the framework. However, given that natural gas is the predominant resource in the broader East China Sea, prospects for future joint development are likely to revolve around gas production.⁴⁶

Maintaining cooperation in the JDZ remains sensible even from Japan's viewpoint, despite lingering doubts about the project's economic feasibility. Joint ventures that distribute high-risk, large-scale investments are standard practice in the oil sector. Moreover, this approach is consistent with the original spirit underpinning the agreement. Holding petroleum and gas assets in the region could strengthen both South Korea's and Japan's energy security and may contribute to reducing the "Asia premium" paid on energy imports.⁴⁷

The agreement was established for a fifty-year term from its entry into force on June 22, 1978, and the prospect of cooperation persists: a joint committee convened in September 2024 for the first time in forty years, and—despite the option for either party to notify termination three years before expiry (from June 22, 2025)—no such notifications have yet occurred. This restraint suggests both sides' desire to avoid further strain in the bilateral relationship, particularly as 2025 marks the sixtieth anniversary of diplomatic normalization.

Legal and political evolution has complicated the arrangement. The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), establishing exclusive economic zones (EEZs) up to two hundred nautical miles from a country's coast, and more recent international legal precedents have shifted perceived maritime entitlements. Japan now sees the arrangement as disadvantageous, reflecting only limited enthusiasm for renewal and hinting that the agreement's expiration could serve as a diplomatic lever.⁴⁸

Yet there is a renewed case for active cooperation. With energy transition policies, artificial intelligence, and rising power demand portending an increased role for LNG in meeting regional energy needs, joint development of natural gas resources in the East China Sea could help the two countries meet their medium-term energy needs and bolster their energy security. Participation from technically advanced U.S. energy companies could serve as a

catalyst for progress, supporting South Korea and Japan in their quest for enhanced energy security and aligning trilateral interests in the region.

3) Expansion of LNG Imports and Joint Terminal Construction

With the ascent of the United States to the position of top LNG exporter worldwide, federal policies supporting LNG export terminals have opened new opportunities to expand exports to Indo-Pacific nations. This dynamic has particular relevance for resource-poor, energy-dependent countries such as South Korea and Japan.⁴⁹ Strategic U.S.-South Korea-Japan partnerships have facilitated the negotiation of long-term LNG contracts, financial support for new export terminal projects, and diverse modes of corporate involvement in U.S. LNG infrastructure.

South Korea's engagement began with the Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) signing a twenty-year contract in 2012 to import 3.5 million tons annually from Cheniere's Sabine Pass Train 3, with deliveries commencing in 2017. Facing expiring long-term supply contracts, South Korea has worked to substitute existing volumes; for example, in August 2025 it secured a ten-year agreement to import 3.1 million tons annually from the United States—reflecting not only supply needs, but also bilateral trade balancing efforts.⁵⁰ With legacy contracts from Oman and Qatar concluding (representing a combined 9 million tons per year as recently as 2024), South Korea remains open to further expanding U.S. LNG purchases under a new USD 100 billion, four-year energy import commitment made during trade negotiations.⁵¹

Japan has similarly scaled up its commitments. In June 2025, JERA finalized a landmark twenty-year contract for 5.5 million tons of annual LNG imports from the United States, building on Tokyo Gas's 2018 agreement to purchase 2.3 million tons annually for twenty years.⁵² INPEX signed contracts in 2022 to import 1 million tons annually from both the Plaquemines and CP2 LNG projects, and JERA secured similar 20-year, 1 MTPA deals in 2023.⁵³

South Korean and Japanese firms have diversified their participation to encompass investment in export terminals and midstream infrastructure in the United States. Hanwha Group, for example, acquired a 22.7 percent stake in Rio Grande LNG in September 2025, establishing a strategic partnership with NextDecade.⁵⁴ South Korea's National Pension Service (NPS) contributed to Blackstone's USD 2.2 billion acquisition of Tallgrass Energy LLP, a U.S. pipeline operator.⁵⁵ Japanese trading houses and utility majors—including JERA, Mitsubishi, Osaka Gas, and JAPEX—hold significant terminal and midstream stakes. For instance, JERA, Osaka Gas, and JAPEX collectively hold 36.5 percent of Texas's Freeport LNG terminal, while Cameron LNG's equity is split between Mitsubishi (with NYK) and Mitsui (each holding 16.5 percent).⁵⁶ The Japanese public sector has played a vital role: in the wake of the Fukushima crisis, public institutions provided USD 15 billion in financing to Freeport and Cameron LNG projects in 2014, enabling critical supply diversification.⁵⁷

Despite common objectives like strengthening energy security and balancing trade, South Korean and Japanese approaches demonstrate notable contrasts. South Korean firms focus primarily on volume purchases to minimize unit supply costs. KOGAS, having relied on Delivered Ex Ship (DES) contracts favoring vendor responsibility to the import terminal, now increasingly mixes Free On Board (FOB) and DES arrangements to optimize prices and reduce shipbuilding-related liabilities.⁵⁸ Japan, by contrast, aims to diversify away from its 40 percent reliance on Australian LNG, investing broadly across the U.S. LNG value chain.⁵⁹ Japanese buyers have prioritized FOB contracts, which allow for flexible destination changes and third-party reexport—an approach aligned with Japan’s ambition to develop its own gas trading hub.

Key Challenges and Strategic Factors

1) *Power of Siberia-2*

On September 2, 2025, Gazprom announced that China and Russia had signed a legally binding memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding the Power of Siberia-2 natural gas pipeline at their latest bilateral summit.⁶⁰ As one of the most potentially disruptive developments for Northeast Asian gas markets, the project warrants a close analysis of its prospective impact on South Korea and Japan’s LNG cooperation with the United States.⁶¹

Power of Siberia-2 advances a plan, delayed since its 2022 Russian proposal, to connect gas fields in the Yamal Peninsula of northwest Russia with northern China via a 2,600 km pipeline. With an annual contracted volume of 50 billion cubic meters (bcm) (translating to roughly 37 million tons of LNG equivalent, about 80 percent of South Korea’s annual LNG imports), the project will enhance China’s energy security, partially compensate for Russia’s reduced gas exports to Europe, and solidify the Sino-Russian strategic partnership.⁶²

The ramifications for global gas markets, especially the United States and East Asia, are considerable. The pipeline’s supply could replace about 48 percent of China’s 2024 LNG imports. While U.S. LNG accounted for less than 5 percent of China’s 2024 LNG imports and U.S. cargoes to China remain suspended since the implementation of tariffs in February 2025, the prospect of half of China’s LNG imports being substituted with Russian pipeline gas poses a substantial competitive threat to the United States.⁶³ According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), absent Power of Siberia-2, U.S. LNG could increase its share of the Chinese market to 24 percent; the project effectively forecloses future expansion.⁶⁴ Of greater concern to the United States is whether China would reexport part of its piped imports as LNG, supplying new demand hubs such as India and Southeast Asia and further complicating the growth prospects for U.S. LNG. Moreover, if diplomatic issues in U.S.-South Korea-Japan cooperation—such as the expiration of the South Korea-Japan Continental Shelf JDA—are not managed in a stable manner, South Korea and Japan may turn to China for imports in the form of pipeline natural gas (PNG) or LNG.⁶⁵

Beyond market access challenges, the price negotiations between Beijing and Moscow could intensify competition. With global oversupply projected in the early 2030s, the pipeline's terms will likely shape project economics and investment flows for new entrants, especially in the United States. Such dynamics require fresh scrutiny of commercial models, particularly in the case of Alaska LNG, where cost competitiveness remains an open question.⁶⁶

Should Power of Siberia-2 proceed on schedule, Alaska LNG faces immediate direct competition—natural gas exports targeting the same Asian markets with similar operational timing in the early 2030s. Pipeline logistics potentially confer a transport advantage to Power of Siberia-2, and the Yamal fields enjoy a reputation for cost competitiveness that would place pressure on Alaska's Prudhoe Bay gas exports. To safeguard participation, U.S. policymakers may need to consider business model innovation, loan guarantees, or subsidies targeted at retaining partners within Alaska LNG. Ultimately, Power of Siberia-2 constitutes a critical strategic challenge to U.S. energy dominance in the region.

Despite its disruptive potential, the completion of Power of Siberia-2 remains contingent on unresolved commercial negotiations, particularly concerning price. Whereas China seeks prices linked to Russian domestic supply (USD 120–130/1,000 cubic meters), Russia proposes oil-indexed levels reminiscent of Power of Siberia-1 (USD 265–285/1,000 cubic meters), with bulk supply contracts carrying ramifications for subsequent deals. Mongolia's cooperation as a transit country will also be essential, alongside managing construction costs and technical risk given the Siberian environment. Thus, many observers still regard the project's completion as uncertain.⁶⁷ Notably, China's silence on any binding commitment to Power of Siberia-2 may signal an intent to maintain strategic ambiguity vis-à-vis both the United States and Russia. The recent agreement may therefore be intended as much to send a message to Washington as to formalize Sino-Russian energy collaboration.

2) South Korea-Japan Joint Continental Shelf Agreement Termination

In bilateral South Korea-Japan cooperation, the June 22, 2025, window to declare the termination of the Continental Shelf JDA passed without official action during the tenure of then Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. As Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who has been known as a hardline conservative, became Ishiba's successor in October 2025, the agreement's fate is rather vague. For Takaichi, economic revitalization is a top priority issue that could motivate her to reconsider joint development of natural gas deposits in the East China Sea with South Korea. On the other hand, she has never argued that the agreement should be terminated and may instead pursue a more comprehensive review that takes the Taiwan Strait issue into consideration.

Since 2010, Japanese silence has been the norm in response to South Korean outreach—inasmuch as shifts in international maritime law and precedent have consistently favored the Japanese position. While the 1970s agreement favored natural prolongation, reinforcing South Korea's territorial claims, the post-1982 UNCLOS environment now privileges the

median line principle, strengthening Japan's maritime interests. It is plausible, therefore, for a nationalist Japanese leader to use agreement termination as leverage for maximizing Japan's maritime gains in 2028.⁶⁸

If Tokyo were to announce its withdrawal, the East China Sea could once again become a focal point for South Korea-Japan tensions, as the changed policy environment might intensify disputes over EEZs as each nation seeks to control a larger maritime area. These disputes would also likely include contested islands such as the Senkaku/Diaoyudao islands. This situation could potentially ignite broader regional friction and fuel a rise in anti-Japanese sentiment. Such a shift would directly affect LNG and natural gas cooperation, raising the stakes for U.S. engagement.

Strategic Direction for Cooperation

The United States, endowed with abundant energy resources, together with resource-constrained South Korea and Japan, have the opportunity to expand cooperation beyond traditional security alliances into a comprehensive energy partnership. Amid the global climate transition, LNG continues to play an important role as a bridge fuel, offering lower CO₂ emissions while supporting surging electricity demand driven by AI and other energy-intensive sectors. The complementarity between the world's leading LNG exporter, the United States, and two of the largest importers, South Korea and Japan, highlights the significant potential for trilateral gas cooperation.

Areas such as LNG procurement, joint investment in export terminals, the Alaska LNG project, and continental shelf development present tangible avenues for partnership. At the same time, the three countries must manage potential challenges—ranging from the potential entry of Russian pipeline gas into East Asia via Power of Siberia-2 to political transitions in Japan—with foresight. Building resilient frameworks for trilateral cooperation will require careful attention to national perspectives and priorities.

In this regard, natural gas stands as a central pillar—alongside shipbuilding, semiconductors, and the wider energy sector—where the United States and South Korea can move forward together in meaningful cooperation. South Korea is ready to work hand in hand with the United States as a solution-oriented partner, drawing strength from mutual trust and respect. Yet this vision should not stop at two nations alone. By extending this spirit of partnership to include Japan, the United States and South Korea can forge a trilateral framework that harnesses their complementarities and shared values. Together, the three nations can not only secure their energy future, but also build a foundation of resilience, innovation, and sustainability that will benefit generations to come.

Endnotes

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