

The JoongAng

International : United States

"80 Years of Nuclear Deterrence Could Break at Any Time... Kim Jong-un Will Become a Provocateur for the US and China" [Inaugural Feature: Hear from 60 World-Renowned Scholars]

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Graham Allison, international security expert



Graham Allison (85), Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at Harvard University's Kennedy School, is being interviewed by the JoongAng Ilbo at the Kennedy School's office in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the 12th (local time).
Cambridge = Sunju Tomas Coordinator

"For the past 80 years, there has been no war between great powers, 80 years without the use of nuclear weapons in war, and the fact that only nine countries possess nuclear weapons. The ROK-US alliance is a key pillar supporting world peace that has been maintained for such a long time."

Graham Allison (85), a world-renowned national security expert and Professor of Government at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and Douglas Dillon, said in an interview with the JoongAng Ilbo, "The '1-2-3 formula' is an unprecedented achievement in history, but it should not be taken for granted." He emphasized that the strategic significance of the ROK-US alliance must be recognized by the governments and people of both countries, saying that the world peace and nuclear deterrence that have been maintained for 80 years are a 'fragile balance' that can be broken at any time.

The nine nuclear-weapon states mentioned by Professor Allison include the five recognized nuclear-weapon states under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia; India, Pakistan, and Israel, which are considered "de facto nuclear states" outside the non-proliferation regime; and North Korea, which has repeatedly conducted nuclear tests since withdrawing from the NPT. This differs from the international community's perception,

"President Lee and Trump must ensure no room for light."

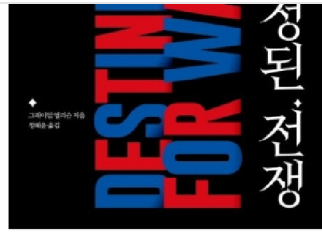
President Lee Jae-myung shakes hands with U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, D.C., on the 25th of last month (local time). (Photo by the Presidential Press Corps)

Professor Allison described US President Donald Trump's leadership style, which is shaking up the international order, as a "massive destroyer who overturns the chessboard." He advised, "Given that Trump values personal ties between leaders, the best way for South Korea to ensure a stable relationship with the US during his second term is to ensure that there is no room for strife between President Lee Jae-myung and Trump." Citing the example of the late former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, he also suggested focusing on "golf diplomacy."

Professor Allison, who explained the structural conflict and tension between existing hegemonic powers and emerging powers in his 2017 book, "Destined for War," using the term "Thucydides' Trap," predicted, "The dynamics of tensions between the US and China will continue beyond the Trump era." He added, "A single, unexpected incident between the two countries could rapidly deteriorate the situation."

Professor Allison added that given President Trump's emphasis on his close relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Xi's proactive approach to coexistence with the United States, he holds out hope that the security order could at least move in a better direction under the Trump-Xi Jinping administration. For example, he predicted that the highly likely US-China summit, likely to take place during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Gyeongju in late October, could result in a trade agreement framework focused on core trade items essential to both economies.

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"세계대전을 막을 수 있는 책이 있다면
이 책이 바로 그런 책이다."

콜라무스 수필, 탐미 카심, 니컬 퍼거슨 등 전 세계 권위자들이 극찬한 화제작



The cover of the book "Destined for War," written by Graham Allison (85), Professor Douglas Dillon of Government at Harvard University's Kennedy School, who conceptualized the structural conflict between existing hegemonic powers and emerging hegemonic powers as the "Thucydides Trap" and warned of the possibility of conflict between the United States and China. His book "Destined for War," published in the United States in 2017, was published in Korea under the same name early the following year.

North Korea's Kim Jong-un is acting as a 'provocateur' in the US and China.

Professor Allison cited the scene of the North Korean and Russian leaders standing side by side with President Xi Jinping at the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II ceremony held at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on the 3rd, stating, "North Korea and Russia have begun to function as strategic variables within the US-China competition." He added, "In particular, Chairman Kim Jong-un has become the ideal figure to play the role of 'provocateur' in US-China relations." He predicted that North Korea will become an increasingly influential actor within the US-China competition. Regarding the prospect of a North Korea-US summit, he stated, "Both the US and North Korea have considerable will," and he highly anticipated its success.

The interview with Professor Allison, which took place ahead of the 60th anniversary of the JoongAng Ilbo, was conducted on the 11th as a question-and-answer exchange via email, followed by a face-to-face interview at his office the following day.

Q. You previously warned of the "Thucydides Trap." What are your views on the Trump administration and the potential for a US-China conflict in the future?

A. "The US and China are operating exactly as Thucydides's scenario suggests, competing to see who can best portray the roles of an established power and a rising power. Whenever a rising power threatens an established power, the risk of war lurks. While neither the US nor China wants war, a single unexpected event could ignite it. Consider the history of World War I, which was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria."

Q. Last June, Wang Yi met with the Chinese Foreign Minister and emphasized that "the US and China must explore a strategy of coexistence." Is peaceful coexistence between the two countries possible?

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A Trump-Xi Jinping 'Peace Partnership' Is Possible

Professor Allison said that while the US-China conflict is inherently structural, the leadership of the two leaders (Trump and Xi Jinping) can change its course. He said, "Political leaders in the 1960s and 1980s clearly recognized the threat of nuclear war, often likened to a 'Sword of Damocles' hanging precariously by a single hair, but they have now forgotten it. Trump, however, appears to understand more deeply than anyone else the sheer horror of nuclear war."

Q. Is it possible to manage the situation rather than engage in conflict during the Trump presidency?

A. Trump has repeatedly said, "If the US and China cooperate, we can solve almost any problem." If we use our imagination, we can imagine a summit between Trump and Xi Jinping, establishing a framework for a "peaceful partnership."

Q. There are concerns that President Trump, who emphasizes 'America First,' is dismantling the traditional alliance structure.

A. To Trump, allies are 'those who cheat us, freeload, live off us, and exploit us.' The Atlantic Alliance, which formed the foundation of the postwar international order, and relations with countries like Japan, South Korea, and Australia are not core priorities in Trump's thinking. However, alliances are not 'bargaining points' to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

"What if an unpredictable leader leads the world? Oh my goodness."

Professor Allison predicted that President Trump's neo-isolationism would accelerate multipolarization, along with a long-term decline in American status and influence. "The foundation of international security, which has been maintained without world war for

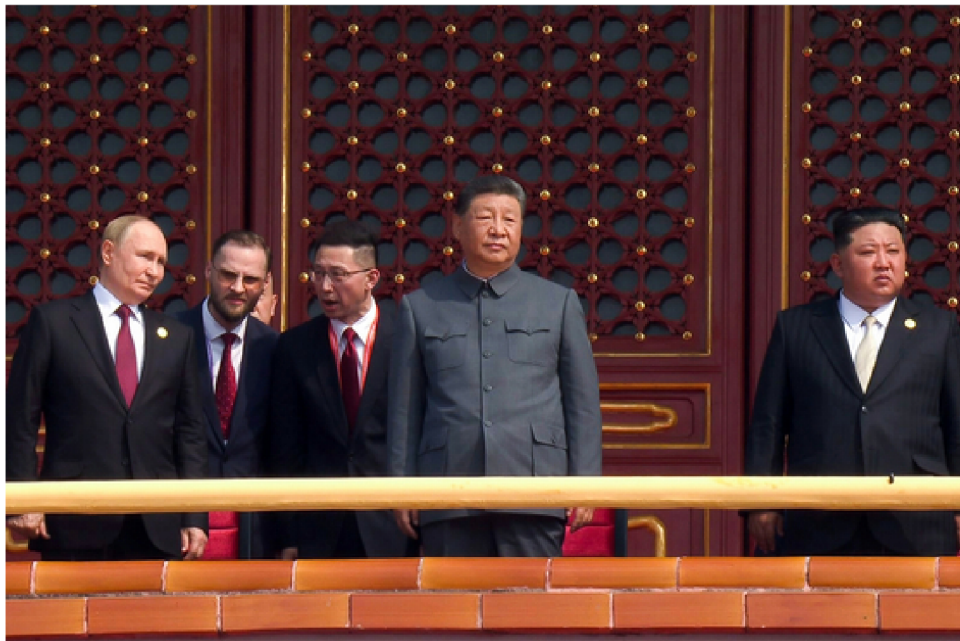
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Q. Do you agree with the analysis that the international order is fundamentally different before and after Trump's arrival?

A. "In 1963, then-President Kennedy predicted that by the 1970s, there would be 25 to 30 nuclear-weapon states. However, there are now nine. This is a remarkable achievement for the nonproliferation regime. We need to understand how this order maintained its balance under immense pressure before Trump's arrival. Now, its foundations are being shaken by a major disruptor (Trump)."

Q. What did you think of the scene where the leaders of China, Russia, and North Korea stood side by side at the 80th anniversary of China's Victory Day?

A. Xi Jinping has forged the world's most significant informal alliance with Russia. Kim Jong-un has gained increasing prominence as a key provocateur in the US-China rivalry. The US and the international community must take this into account when formulating future diplomatic strategies.



On the 3rd, the leaders of North Korea, China, and Russia stood side by side at the Tiananmen Square in China. From left, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and North Korean Chairman Kim Jong Un. Pyongyang Rodong Sinmun = News 1

Professor Allison said that while Europe's strengthening of its security responsibilities in the wake of the "Trump Shock" is positive for maintaining the international order, there are no compelling alternatives on the Asian front. "For example, one could imagine a scenario where South Korea declares its own nuclear weapons for national defense. This would trigger a chain reaction of actions by Japan, Vietnam, and others, creating a completely different situation than we have today," he said.

President Lee should practice his golf swing like Abe.

Q. If you were to advise on the diplomatic strategy that Korea should adopt in the rapidly changing international order,

A. "South Korean President Lee should take note of the examples of Finnish President Alexander Stubb and the late former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and devote significant effort to practicing his golf swing. Trump values personal relationships between leaders,

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leak."

Q. What message would you like to convey to the Korean government and readers?

A. "I'd like to remind you of three numbers: 80, 80, and 9. Since the end of World War II in 1945, there have been 80 years without war between major powers. There have been 80 years without nuclear weapons being used in war. And only nine countries possess nuclear weapons. The ROK-US alliance has been a pillar of global peace, a pillar that has endured for so long. In a world that has become multipolar, not unipolar, the various actors and alliances that prevent the collapse of order are all crucial in their own right."

Graham Allison is a world-renowned scholar with a long-standing expertise in national security and the US-China strategic competition. He served as the founding dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School and, having advised and consulted on national security issues for over 30 years from the Ronald Reagan administration to the Barack Obama administration, is considered a leading authority on the theory and practice of US foreign policy. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in March 1940, he holds a BA in History from Harvard University, BA and MA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Oxford University, and a PhD in Political Science from Harvard University.