

SEMINAR SERIES



KAYLA ORTA

**NONRESIDENT FELLOW, INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY INITIATIVE (IPSI),
ATLANTIC COUNCIL**

Tuesday, December 2nd

5:00 PM – In-person & Zoom

Coble Hall #108 (801 S. Wright Street)

DETERRENCE AT A CROSSROADS: U.S.-ROK SECURITY ALLIANCE AMID NORTH KOREA'S EXPANDING WMD PROGRAM

Abstract:

Amid the evolving security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region, the U.S.-South Korea security alliance is at a crossroads. North Korea's expanding nuclear weapons program and rising calls in South Korea for its own indigenous nuclear weapons program have placed increased stress on the U.S.-ROK security partnership. To discuss these issues, the presentation will first situate the alliance's shared strategic interests within the historical context of deterrence on the Korean Peninsula, including a concise review of how Pyongyang's worldview has shaped its security posture. Building on this, the presentation will review North Korea's nuclear strategy through the four pillars of its WMD program and assesses how its deepening ties with Russia and China influence regional stability. Lastly, we will conclude with discussion questions designed to stimulate debate on future pathways for deterrence, diplomacy, and risk reduction on the Korean Peninsula.

Bio:

Kayla T. Orta is a Nonresident Fellow in the Indo-Pacific Security Initiative (IPSI) at the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security. As a former US Department of Defense National Security Education Program Boren scholar, her regional expertise lies in Indo-Pacific foreign policy, US-Republic of Korea (ROK) ties, North Korea, and US-ROK-Japan trilateral relations, especially at the intersection of security and technology policy. Her work focuses on non-proliferation, nuclear deterrence, and civil nuclear energy markets.

Professionally fluent in Korean, Orta most recently worked as the Senior Associate at the Wilson Center's Hyundai Motor-Korea Foundation Center for Korean History and Public Policy.

She holds an MIS in Korean Studies from Seoul National University's Graduate School of International Studies. Her thesis, written in Korean, analyzed US and South Korean foreign policy strategies during the 1994 North Korean Nuclear Crisis.



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