

Keynote Remarks for the launch of Advancing US-ROK Cooperation on Nuclear Energy

by Ambassador Thomas Graham, Jr.

Good evening to our audience in Washington and good morning to our audience in the Republic of Korea. Thank you, Jennifer, for that kind introduction, and thank you to the Atlantic Council for hosting this discussion. Congratulations to Stephen Greene and the Atlantic Council on the launch of the new report, Advancing US-ROK Cooperation on Nuclear Energy.

Those of you who know me are aware that I've devoted my life's work to nuclear arms control and non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. From 1970 to 1997, I worked on behalf of the US Government on every major international arms control and nuclear non-proliferation treaty negotiation involving the US, helping to establish international trust in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

I played an integral role in the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Extension which, along with New START, is the principal remaining major nuclear arms control agreement. The NPT and its mandatory safeguards—a system of International Atomic

Energy Agency inspection and verification ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear materials-provides the explicit legal right to nuclear power to all NPT partners.

I am a champion of nuclear energy as a key tool in the fight against climate change, while-at the same time-meeting global energy demand. Nuclear energy can decarbonize the global power system, and it also has the potential to decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors, especially desalination and industrial heat. However, it is critical that-as new-to-nuclear countries work to start nuclear energy programs and as countries with existing programs seek to acquire the next generation of nuclear reactors-the United States and its allies are the leading vendors of the international nuclear market.

The US and the Republic of Korea have an established record of success in the bilateral trade of components and services; research, development, and demonstration of advanced nuclear energy technologies; and collaboration in third countries. I have seen this firsthand, especially when I served from 2009 until 2016 on the International Advisory Board established by the United Arab Emirates peaceful nuclear energy program to warrant that the new program-built with KEPCO reactors-was making

progress and maintaining the highest standards of safety, security, non-proliferation, transparency, and sustainability in construction of the Barakah nuclear power plant.

The IAB and its originally nine, now seven members—including my dear friend, Dr. KunMo Chung—provided oversight to the UAE's nuclear energy program, which was the first country to begin such a program in nearly three decades without already having had nuclear power reactors. I applauded from afar last summer as the first of Barakah's four units came online and began providing power in the UAE. Barakah will ultimately account for 25 percent of the UAE's electricity by producing 5,600 MW of clean electricity, and it will eliminate emissions equivalent to removing 3.2 million cars off the road annually.

If you believe that the threat of climate change is real (which I do), and if you believe that the threat is here and now and not in some distant future (which I also do), then you will believe in the utmost importance of building reactors well and building them quickly. The Republic of Korea has demonstrated that it has the capability to do both, and it is, therefore, an indispensable civil nuclear partner for the United States. Over the years in my life and career I have met many of the leaders of Korea's civil nuclear

community. In addition to Dr. KunMo Chung, the senior statesman of Korea's nuclear community—this includes men and women such as—Il Soon Hwang, Professor Emeritus at Seoul National University and Florence Lowe-Lee with whom I have been privileged to work on many significant projects here in Washington.

From my work with the International Board in the UAE to my work now as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Lightbridge Corporation, I am motivated each day by my desire to mitigate climate change, and I believe that nuclear power has a crucial role to play. Nuclear energy, in my opinion, is the only energy source on the scene that can provide clean, reliable baseload energy, in the US and globally. In these efforts, our need for our international friends and allies has never been clearer.

I am now delighted to turn the floor back to Jennifer Gordon, who will introduce and moderate today's panel discussion on how the United States and the Republic of Korea can collaborate on civil nuclear research and development, bilateral trade, and trilateral cooperation.