

Maintaining a Leading Role in the Six Party Talks and Strengthening Influence on Korea

- China attempted to not only keep a leading role in the six-party dialogue but enhance its influence on the Korean peninsula by promoting its approach to South Korea.
- » The nation's intention is reflected in the provision of the Joint Statement that stipulates that the two countries shall strengthen bilateral and multilateral talks in various forms within the framework of six-party talks and create a positive condition that would help resume the talks.

Laying a Cornerstone for Reunification of the Peninsula Led by South Korea

- The approach strategy of Xi's China to South Korea intends to reset the relations with South Korea based on a possible reunification of the two Korea in the future.
- » China weighs the possibility of a reunification led by the South over that led by the North if it becomes reality and makes approaches by laying a long-term groundwork to form a friendly ties for cooperation with a unified Korea.

4. Impact of Chinese Approach to South Korea

Increasing Difficulty in Managing the Bilateral Relationship

- Such a proactive approach of Xi leadership is expected to intensify difficulty for South Korea to manage the bilateral relationship as well as positive aspects in developing it.
- » Deemed as a goodwill under clear conditions, the approach requires tension in managing the bilateral ties since China, sooner or later, is likely to call on South Korea to pay the price of the goodwill in return.

Possible Dilemma of Choice though Unwanted

- The active approach as well as an escalating competition between China and America or intensifying confrontation between China and Japan could put greater unwanted pressure of dilemma of choice on South Korea.
- » South Korea has faced the dilemma in the China-Japan relations before and is experiencing a hedging dilemma on the recent issue of joining AIIB and installing THAAD between the US and China.

Difficult Multilateral Cooperation in the Region Including Six-Party Dialogues

- The increasingly strengthened approach by China could cause the neighboring countries to move actively to counter it and consequently disturb the multilateral cooperation mechanism in the region such as the six-party talks.
- » For example, Japan improved its relations with the North through a bilateral negotiation and promised to ease the sanctions imposed against it. This unsettled the regional multilateral efforts to address the North Korean nuclear program.

Accelerating Change of the Dynamics in the East Asia

- China's active approach strategy on Korea can reinforce Japan's vigilance and facilitate improved US-Japan alliance, accelerating change of the dynamics in the East Asia and competition among the countries as stake.
- » The power in the East Asia is developing into the direction that collapses the status quo and China's proactive approach to South Korea is increasingly likely to confront the US East Asia strategy.

CHINA WATCHING



China's Approach Strategy to South Korea and Its Implication

Park, Byung Kwang, Director of Center for Northeast Asia,
Institute for National Security Strategy

아주대 중국정책연구소
Ajou China Policy Institute
亞洲大 中國政策研究所

2015. 3. 23 <No.2>

Suggestion

Basic Principle on Chinese approach to South Korea and Development Direction

- We have to create an internal basic principle on China's approach to the Republic of Korea and direction to develop the relationship between the two countries in that its approach has to contribute to development of both countries and regional stability and should not aim to shake the very foundation of KORUS alliance or check or press any third party countries.

The Approach to the South to Change the North

- We have to realize denuclearization and practical change of the North by utilizing the Chinese approach to South Korea. To this end, we need to emphasize that the policy toward the North does not seek its collapse and absorption reunification eventually and serve as a catalyst to change and open the hermit kingdom through an economic cooperation among the two Koreas and China.

ROK's Independent Strategy for Power Transfer in the Region

- We need to precisely classify and identify cooperation issue, neutrality issue and conflict issue to be treated under the US-China relations and subsequently build diplomatic strategies that would allow South Korea to make the most of its policies for each scenario to take into account the sensitivity of changing dynamics in the East Asia as well as build independent responding strategies of the ROK.

TFs for Korea-Sino Relations or US-Sino Relations at the Presidential House

- Given the reality that it is *Cheongwadae*, the presidential office, that plays the most important role in the policy making, Task Forces responsible for China or the US-China relations need to be established and operated at all times at *Cheongwadae* if it understands that the relations between South Korea and China / the US and China are critical.

we need to emphasize that the policy toward the North does not seek its collapse and absorption reunification eventually and serve as a catalyst to change and open the hermit kingdom through an economic cooperation among the two Koreas and China

Task Forces responsible for China or the US-China relations need to be established and operated at all times at *Cheongwadae*

China weighs the possibility of a reunification led by the South over that led by the North if it becomes reality and makes approaches by laying a long-term groundwork to form a friendly ties for cooperation with a unified Korea

the approach requires tension in managing the bilateral ties since China, sooner or later, is likely to call on South Korea to pay the price of the goodwill in return

발행 아주대 중국정책연구소

발행인 김홍규

주소 경기도 수원시 영통구
월드컵로 206 아주대학교
율곡관 527-2호
아주대 중국정책연구소

전화 031-219-3861

홈페이지 www.ajoucp.i.com

China Watching은 중국의
외교·안보 분야를 전문영역으로 하여
최신 현안을 분석하는 자료입니다.

Issues

1. Strategic Value of Korea Seen by Xi Jinping Leadership

Advanced Base for China to Take the Initiative in the East Asia

- China considers the ROK a significant helper to achieve its goal of becoming a leading country in the region and an advanced base with a strategic value.
- » For China, South Korea is not a structural competitor. Rather, it sees Korea as a middle power that can support it to take the initiative in the region.

Strategic Partner to Help China Press Japan

- Xi Jinping leadership believes that working together with South Korea conforms to its strategic benefits in a bid to press and isolate Japan.
- » China thinks that South Korea is a valuable partner, which shares the perspective on the history of the Japanese colonial rule and is in conflict with Japan on the issues like the Dok-do islets, the easternmost island of the Korean peninsula, and the comfort women, to put pressure on it.

Helper to Loosen the US Blockade toward China

- Xi Jinping leadership perceives South Korea to have a strategic value for cooperation in its effort to independently break through the blockade against their country imposed by the US.
- » Since the diplomatic ties, the relation of both countries is developing into strategic partnership for all fields such as politics, military and security. China understands that this trend will be an effective tool to slacken the US blockade toward it.

Strategic Partner for Economic Development

- For Xi leadership that asserts the great rise of Chinese people, South Korea is a valuable strategic partner that can help grow its economy continuously.
- » South Korea is the largest importer and third largest exporter for China. Besides, the latest FTA between the two is anticipated to boost the Chinese economic development.

2. Approach Strategy to S. Korea of Xi Jinping Leadership

Closer and More Mature Relations

- The Chinese strategy toward South Korea under Xi leadership focuses on building “closer and more mature relations” between the two countries as their summit meeting agreed.
- » Based on the Joint Statement on Future Vision and its specific action plans agreed by the two leaders to grow into closer and more mature relations, they will pursue to have common perspectives on mutual interests and engage in strategic cooperation.

Move to Unity of Politics and Economy from Their Separation

- China’s traditional strategy toward South Korea has been separation between politics and economy basically. However, Xi leadership is turning the nation’s direction toward unity of politics and economy.
- » This illustrates a quite different picture from its past when the leaders had insisted separation between politics and economy with its excessive occupation on North Korea due to sensitive issues such as security dialogue, military exchange, their visit to South Korea and North Korean defectors.

Balance between the South and North

- China is moving toward a balanced strategy, escaping from its inclination to the North and strengthening the diplomatic approach to the South.
- » Though President Xi has had six summit meetings with President Park, Geun Hye so far since he took office with a positive stance on the ROK’s policy toward the North, he has yet to meet the North Korean leader Kim, Jung Eun.

Cooperation for Change and Denuclearization of the North

- Xi Jinping leadership is making efforts to realize a denuclearized North based on its will of zero tolerance for the North’s nuclear program and also enhancing collaboration with the South to help the regime abandon its nuclear weapons and change in the process.
- » The Chinese leaders continued to express their willingness to cooperate for North Korea’s denuclearization in a series of meetings with South Korea and are participating in the sanctions against the reclusive state more actively than ever before.

3. The Leaders’ Intention to Approach Korea

Relaxing Check on China and Realizing “Following China, Alienating from US”

- China would like to loosen the security network built among Korea, US and Japan through its approach to South Korea and fulfill its policy of following China while alienating from the US that would put Korea under its influence in the long run.
- » China wants South Korea to take a neutral position in a critical moment arising from its competition with the US. The argument of some experts to build a Korea-China alliance implies such a strategic intention.

Involving South Korea to Press Japan

- China under Xi’s leadership tries to isolate Japan while increasingly denouncing the Abe government and engage South Korea in a bid to secure cooperation.
- » Recognizing the relation with Japan as an dependent variable of the relation with the US, China has established the key strategy of negotiating with the US while excluding Japan under which it manages the relation with Japan through that with the US and tried to involve South Korea in this process.

For China, South Korea is not a structural competitor. Rather, it sees Korea as a middle power that can support it to take the initiative in the region

Xi Jinping leadership perceives South Korea to have a strategic value for cooperation in its effort to independently break through the blockade against their country imposed by the US.

This illustrates a quite different picture from its past when the leaders had insisted separation between politics and economy with its excessive occupation on North Korea

China is moving toward a balanced strategy, escaping from its inclination to the North and strengthening the diplomatic approach to the South

China wants South Korea to take a neutral position in a critical moment arising from its competition with the US. The argument of some experts to build a Korea-China alliance implies such a strategic intention