A View from South Korea on Sino-ROK Relations

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Although we are only into the first months of the Trump administration, many Koreans recognize that the U.S.-led, market-oriented, liberal international order has been severely shaken. In the background, the rapid rise of China and rather successful economic reforms under Xi Jinping have dramatically reduced its vulnerability and sensitivity to the United States. As one power's grip is shaken and another's is energized, two different orders are emerging in East Asia. We accordingly witness a "Clash of Titans," the fallout from which could be fatal to the security and economy of the Republic of Korea.

The ROK has long faced one of the worst geopolitical environments, similar to Poland in Eastern Europe. It has been a bridge between continental and maritime powers, subjecting it to invasion during each regional power transition. Entering the 21st century, as the rise of China has dramatically unfolded globally, the rivalry between China and the United States, the hegemonic power in the world, has intensified. Accordingly, the geopolitical struggle has intensified between continental and maritime forces in Northeast Asia. The advent of the Trump administration in 2017 has added confusion and uncertainty to the ROK's foreign policies as well as to the region as a whole. Trump's remarks have aroused apprehension that the United States might not respect the current alliance system, favoring an "America First" policy. Those impressions were but the beginning of the confusion, contradictions, and chaos that his short tenure has aroused among Koreans.

The ROK finds itself caught between two competing great powers, the United States and China, and faces an existential threat from the growing nuclear weapons capabilities of the DPRK. The evolving U.S.-China relationship will be the most critical factor affecting the fate of South Korea. The ROK has relied on the United States for security, and on China for the economy. Therefore, maintaining a close U.S. alliance while promoting strategic cooperation with China and having a unified position on North Korea is South Korea's major concern. Seoul is increasingly being pushed to take sides in the ongoing U.S.-China competition. The decision by the U.S.-ROK alliance to deploy the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) on the Korean Peninsula and the resulting deterioration of relations with China illustrate this point.

When Xi Jinping became president in 2013, many experts anticipated that his foreign policy, including his Korea policy, would evolve gradually due to factional politics and "democratic centralism" practices in policy-making. However, China is profoundly changing its foreign policy, including relations with the United States and the two Koreas.[1] Xi quickly consolidated his power base in the wake of the Bo Xilai incident and changed China's identity from the world's largest "developing country" to a rapidly "developing great power." Xi has also comprehensively reviewed China's foreign policy, reflecting the rise of China and the new international environment, including rethinking China's Korea policy.

As vice president in 2011, Xi proposed to the United States the establishment of a new type of great power relations based on what he considered to be an equal partnership.[2] The Korean Peninsula became a major part of Xi's initiative, as he ordered a reexamination of China's Korea policies.[3] China has long been an ally of North Korea, supporting the status quo on the Korean Peninsula, but Xi firmly opposed its nuclear ambitions, was not permissive to its provocations, and was disdainful of its leader, Kim Jong-un. Xi emphasized establishing normal state-to-state relations with North Korea, which opened a window of opportunity for South Korea to draw closer to China. Kim Jong-un obviously recognized Xi's attitude and

China's changing policy to North Korea when Choi Ryounghae, Kim's special envoy, visited China in 2013. China also fully recognized through the third, fourth, and fifth nuclear tests, and the 7th Labor Party Congress of the DPRK in 2016 that North Korea firmly intends to possess nuclear weapons and is no longer respectful to China. Accordingly, relations have deteriorated to their worst level in almost half century. No summit meeting has been held, and few channels of communication are open at a high level.

With more confidence in its own diplomatic, military, and economic capacities under Xi Jinping, China appears to be extending its sphere of influence from North Korea to the whole Korean Peninsula. An active engagement policy towards South Korea was launched after Xi's inauguration. Xi even revealed what many consider to be a view on Korean unification in favor of South Korea when he met President Park in Beijing in September 2015.[4] Some regard him as the first Chinese leader to take a pro-ROK position. Xi's ambition to realize the "China Dream" of being a powerful and prosperous nation by 2049 appears to be critical to his decision to alter policy on the Korean Peninsula. Various South Koreans interpret his actions as a need for stability and a stronghold on the Korean Peninsula.

Xi's new policy orientation to the Korean Peninsula brought about greater cooperation with South Korea. Park Geun-hye and Xi Jinping held eight summits. Park visited China in September 2015 to celebrate the 70th commemoration of the victory in World War II, in spite of a *de facto* boycott by the Western powers including the United States. This marked the zenith of ROK-China relations. However, the deployment of THAAD in South Korea in 2016 dramatically altered the course of relations, plunging them into the worst crisis since the end of the Korean War. Xi's bold policy faced total failure, which damaged his authority in China. With this perspective on Xi's motives and intentions, progressive Koreans view the election of Moon Jae-in as an opportunity to put relations back on a positive track.

SHIFTS IN STRATEGIC THOUGHT

China's North Korea policy has shifted in line with changes in China's own identity under Xi. During the Hu Jintao era, there were three competing schools identified on the basis of criteria used to analyze China's status in the world: the "traditional geopolitics school" (传统地政学派), which includes chauvinistic nationalists, the "developing country school" (开发途上国派), and the "newly rising great power school" (新型大国派).[5] Under Hu Jintao, the mainstream was the "developing country school," which regarded China's priority as economic development. Although most specialists focusing on Korea belong to the "traditional geopolitics school," China's official Korea policy was guided by the "developing country school," whose priority was stability and the status quo, avoiding confrontation with the United States on the Korean Peninsula. China's Korea policy was basically passive and responsive as a dependent variable of U.S.-China relations, e.g., China's responses to North Korea's attack on the South Korean warship *Cheonan* and North Korea's bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010. Beijing called for stability and restraint, instead of focusing on the responsibility of the Kim Jong-il regime as the culprit in these aggressions.

The Xi government has shifted China's Korea policy. The catalyst seems to have been North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013. After the test, Xi was outraged and reportedly harshly criticized China's inability to deal with North Korea in front of leaders of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s intelligence office. He then ordered relevant institutes and experts

to reformulate China's North Korea policy based on national interest instead of ideology and possibly outdated policies. The "rising great power school" became the mainstream of China's Korea policy, forging Korea policy in the context of China's grand strategic design, in which China is a global level great power, to realize "China's Dream" by 2049.

Authorities now describe China-North Korea relations as normal state-to-state relations rather than a traditional cooperative relationship or alliance forged in blood. National interests have become the most important criteria in relations with the two Koreas. Despite resistance from the "traditional geopolitics school," which still favors North Korea, Xi launched his new policy in favor of Seoul, changing the order of three principles for Korea policies from emphasis on stability and peace to: denuclearization, stability and peace, and resolution through peaceful means. While some analysts of Chinese policy doubt that this hierarchy of principles prevailed, many Korean progressives accept it. Some Chinese specialists such as Yan Xuetong even floated the idea of forging a China-South Korea alliance until the existing bilateral relationship began to deteriorate rapidly in the aftermath of North Korea's fourth nuclear test in January 2016. During that time, supporters of Korean unification favorable to the South also increased. It has barely been a year since China turned critical of South Korean policies, focusing on THAAD deployment, and there is optimism that this can be reversed.

China's Korea policies became much more refined, separating the new concept of a bottom line from a red line. The red line signifies prevention of war and a chaotic situation, while the bottom line means policy guidelines to protect China's strategic interests based on various scenarios, including North Korea's instability.[6] The bottom line was recently defined as prevention of the "Kim Jong-un regime's collapse" and "the collapse of the North Korean domestic economy." It can also be the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue through non-military means, sticking to the principle of denuclearization and preventing U.S.-ROK military encroachment into North Korea. These are objectives amenable to diplomatic coordination.

Xi's audacious change of Korea policy had some effect during the second half of 2013 and 2014 after the quick intensification of tensions on the peninsula by North Korea during the first half of 2013,[7] forcing North Korea to take a more cautious stance, dispatching Choi Ryounghae to assuage tensions with China in May 2013, and holding a strategic dialogue between the two ministries of foreign affairs in June.

THE CHANGING TIDE OF CHINA'S NORTH KOREA POLICY

Under the leadership of Xi Jinping and Kim Jong-un, China and North Korea have so far failed to find common ground. Xi, as the leader of a great power, has sought to draw respect from Kim and put an end to North Korea's flouting of China's interests, whether with nuclear weapons development or provocations. Meanwhile, Kim has been sensitive about China's intervention in North Korean affairs. He seldom shows respect to China. North Korea wants an "equal partnership." At a minimum, Kim's impertinent attitude toward China—symbolized by his pursuit of nuclear weapons that can hit the United States—is quite different from that of his predecessors, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, who paid respect to China, at least superficially.

Xi's visit to South Korea in July 2014 heralded the improved relationship between South Korea and China. However, worries about the deteriorating bilateral relationship with North Korea grew among China's Korea experts in 2014, leading to vehement debates that fall. The experts were eventually successful in persuading Xi to move to a more balanced Korea policy to reduce the potential costs of the evolving, complex security environment, including South Korea's positive approach to U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral cooperation against China.[8] Reflecting the outcome, *Huanqiu shibao* published five articles on China's North Korea policy from November 27 to December 8. Since then, China has intensified the so-called two-track approach to North Korea; on the one hand, maintaining sanctions, and on the other hand, using engagement policy as a lure, while sending a signal to North Korea that the denuclearization policy of China is not reversible. China's new policy appeared almost successful until the fourth nuclear test was conducted by North Korea in January 6, 2016.

With the fourth test, Kim Jong-un indicated to China and the world that under his leadership, nuclear development was no longer an issue for negotiation. Kim had already decided to pursue deliverable nuclear weapons to threaten the United States and to possess an arsenal that could survive a U.S. first strike. This meant that North Korea would not take China's interests and demands into consideration in its decision-making. The U.S.-China strategic rivalry has turned out to be a minor variable in North Korea's current pattern of decision-making. With the nuclear test, Kim has indicated that North Korea will determine its agenda according to its own timetable and reasoning. As a result, China faces a serious dilemma in its North Korea policy. In this vein, the Chinese online media outlet *guoguanzaixian* reported that Chinese experts were split into six policy orientations on North Korea: unconditional support, abandonment, status quo, limited sanctions, strict sanctions, and political realism.[9]

China agreed to increase sanctions against North Korea. However, to protect its bottom line of "no collapse of the Kim Jong-un regime," it requested an exemption for items related to people's livelihood in UN Security Council Resolution 2270, while consistently taking a strong stand on strategically important national interests, as demonstrated by the THAAD controversy. The THAAD issue posed a tremendous dilemma, bringing China into a feud with both Koreas. China is extremely uneasy with the decision to introduce THAAD, while also not willing to embrace North Korea's nuclear development. Deployment of THAAD in South Korea provides better protection for U.S. personnel and facilities as well as for South Korea against North Korea's increasing nuclear and missile threat. But China perceives the THAAD issue in the framework of the U.S.-China strategic rivalry. China has historically regarded the Korean Peninsula as part of its sphere of influence. It still considers influence over the peninsula an important policy imperative, particularly with regard to preventing South Korea from becoming part of a U.S.-Japan alliance against China. The security situation on the Korean Peninsula after the fourth nuclear test and the THAAD issue arose was spinning out of China's control, even before the Trump administration added new complexity to decisions about Sino-U.S. coordination and Moon Jae-in's election added new uncertainty about South Korea's impact on this relationship and on North Korea's policy.

To protect its own interests and bottom line, China has adopted a much more active stance on the Korean Peninsula. Wang Yi suggested, on February 17, 2016, a new approach, called parallel negotiations for denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and a peace treaty. It was the first active initiative China took on the North Korean nuclear issue. However, both Koreas instantly rejected the suggestion; the United States was rather cautious. So far, China

has agreed with the United States that the North Korean nuclear issue should be an area of coordination and cooperation in the midst of strategic rivalry and in spite of tension in the South China Sea. The Korean Peninsula can be a good example of the new type of major power relations.

With the fear of losing control on the Korean Peninsula, Beijing has recently changed its stance on the Six-Party Talks and become more open to embracing various mini- and multilateral talks to deal with North Korea-related issues. In discourse within China, for example, a "2+3+4 approach" was introduced.[10] China is worried about the potential for military clashes between the two Koreas and of U.S. surgical strikes on North Korea's nuclear facilities. In particular, the inauguration of Trump as the president increased this fear.

In reviewing North Korea policies, Fu Ying, chairwoman of the foreign affairs committee of the National People's Congress, is at the forefront. According to her review, China will be much more active and take the lead in resolving the North Korea nuclear issue in the future. China has already proposed the strategy of parallel negotiations of "denuclearization" and a "peace treaty"' in March 2016 and "two temporal stops" of nuclear weapon and missile development by North Korea and joint military exercises by the ROK-U.S. alliance in May 2017 by Wang Yi. It is now assumed China is likely to go further in future negotiations.

With Kim Jong-un's obstinacy, China also takes the possibility of North Korean instability much more seriously and wants to prepare for it, even with South Korean counterparts. Due to the sensitivity and maneuvering room required in diplomacy, China has been hesitant to have a Track 1 dialogue but is searching for a dialogue at the Track 1.5 or Track 2 levels. The PLA—more than any other institution in foreign and security affairs—should be willing to pursue such a dialogue due to its area of responsibility. China will be positive about holding a trilateral dialogue with the United States and South Korea at a Track 1.5 level, a civilian-led dialogue on the surface, which would include government officials on the U.S. and South Korean sides and non-government experts authorized to discuss sensitive matters on the Chinese side, eventually if North Korea continues its nuclear weapons development, launches provocations, and worsens the security situation on the peninsula. The Chinese are concerned that Pyongyang's increased belligerence is bringing Seoul and Tokyo closer together while providing strong justifications for Washington to rebalance to Asia—a development that Beijing sees as part of a strategy to contain its rise. South Korea's military-related institutions, such as the Korean Institute for Defense Analyses and the Korea Research Institute for National Security, organized by retired generals and civil specialists, would work on such a dialogue with Chinese counterparts is the thinking heard in Seoul.

DIVERSIFYING VIEWS ON NORTH KOREA

Among Chinese experts, opinions on North Korea have greatly diversified during the era of Xi Jinping. Analysis of more than 90 articles and major reports written between 2013 and 2016 resulted in several interesting findings.[11] First, the former three strategic schools have split into seven different views on North Korea policy, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Seven Views on North Korea Under Xi Jinping*		
Schools	**Sub-schools**	**Number of Articles**
Supporter	Conditional	1
	Unconditional	1
Status-quo	Maintain Stability	34
	Recognition of Nuclear Weapons	2
Normal State-to-State Relations	Limited Sanctions	30
	Active Sanction	15
Abandonment	Abandonment	8

* Based on an analysis of 91 articles and pamphlets published between 2013 and 2016. The articles were sourced from the Chinese search engine CNKI and other library-searching engines, such as that of Fudan University.

Second, the mainstream during Hu Jintao's period was the "status-quo" group, the intellectual heir of the "developing country school." However, during Xi's era, limited and strict sanctions supporters have dramatically increased. They became the leader among China's North Korea schools. Those supporting abandonment of North Korea recorded eight; under Hu, almost no one supported this view publicly. This trend under Xi favors South Korea.

Third, it is noteworthy that in China discourse among experts under Xi's leadership illustrates an increasingly positive attitude toward South Korea and even unification. As illustrated by the strategic report on the Korean Peninsula by Wang Shang, a lieutenant colonel of the Chinese air force, the Chinese military has revealed its preference on unification favorable to the South.[12] Some supporters of strict sanctions, such as Jia Qingguo, Zhang Liangui, and Li Kaisheng, argue that China should support the United States and South Korea if North Korea starts another war. Such a shift in viewpoint may be related to Xi's efforts to find breakthroughs in Chinese unification with Taiwan.

Given China's new policy orientation, the possibility of China cooperating on denuclearization and unification on the Korean Peninsula has increased more than presumed. China believes that North Korea's provocations inflict serious potential damage on China's core national interests. The United States and South Korea can assure China that they would not defy China's interests in future arrangements on the peninsula, which could encourage China to undertake a fundamental review of its current North Korea policy, which could then lead to a shift in China's Korea policy. Such reasoning has been boosted by Moon's election.

Fourth, there are a number of reform voices, who are not in the category of Korea experts, acting as the driving force behind the "One Belt, One Road (OBOR)" initiative. They do not have a strong voice on North Korea policies. However, we need to pay attention to their existence. In the first scheme of the initiative, publicized in 2015 with the endorsement of the National Development and Reform Commission, the ministry of commerce, and the ministry of foreign affairs, there was no "belt and road" in Northeast Asia.[13] The designers of OBOR want to focus more on the west and south of China instead of the east.[14] In their view, the Korean Peninsula does not possess such strategic value as earlier argued. That is good news.

Fifth, trends in China's North Korea policy seem to reflect changing policy orientations in Chinese academia. Policy after North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013 was still in between status quo and limited sanctions, reflecting Hu's legacy. However, after the fourth nuclear test in January 2016, policy appears to have moved to some place between limited sanctions and strict sanctions. Such policy changes seem to reflect changing tides in academia and among experts. After the summit meeting between Trump and Xi Jinping in April 2017, China's dramatic policy changes on North Korea's nuclear development have a much more fundamental foundation than a mere response to Trump's request to place maximum pressure.

COLLABORATION ON NORTH KOREA BETWEEN TRUMP AND XI JINPING

The greatest challenge in South Korea-China relations is how to resolve the THAAD issue, which has complicated China's North Korea policy. The South Korea-China relationship, which had been at its best, plummeted in just a year despite their shared goal of denuclearizing the North. This is believed to have occurred because of their different approaches in resolving the nuclear weapons program of the reclusive regime and the ROK announcement on July 8, 2016 that it would install THAAD on its soil, although they will be commemorating 25 years of diplomatic relations in 2017. A breakthrough to end the chill in relations is nowhere in sight. Xi Jinping has already invested too much of his credibility in opposing THAAD in South Korea and cannot back down. He even mentioned that the THAAD issue is negatively affecting China's core national interests.[15]

If the U.S.-China conflict exacerbates in 2017, South Korea might be under much more serious pressure to choose between the two great powers again, and strategic cooperation with China to combat the nuclear issue could be even further from realization. Beijing acknowledges that the strategic value of Seoul is still important, as is that of Pyongyang under the current strategic competition with Washington. In this context, it is believed that it does not want the THAAD issue to cause the strained relationship with Seoul to persist. Fortunately, the Trump-Xi Jinping summit meeting appeared quite successful, and they agreed on full collaboration on the North Korea nuclear issue,[16] applying maximum pressure on North Korea to start negotiations in order to freeze its nuclear weapons and missile development programs and then to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula with the guarantee of survival of Kim's regime, eventually establishing a peace regime. In China's perspective, Trump's new approach to foreign policy, the so-called "anything but Obama" policy, will diminish the rebalance to Asia and reduce the sensitivity of the THAAD issue. China may, in exchange, reduce tensions in the South China Sea for the time being.

With Moon Jae-in in office, South Korea and China are likely to search for an exit strategy for their strained relationship. Otherwise, China's traditionalists and supporters of the status quo would quickly gain strength. If this THAAD issue is not able to be resolved through adequate compromise among the three concerned parties, promoting South Korean missile defense, protecting U.S. military personnel and assets, and resolving the strategic concerns of China and Russia, the security situation in Northeast Asia will likely lead to an arms race—particular in missile development and defense—causing a lose-lose game for all.

If China retaliates economically and politically, and even militarily, against the South for its final decision to deploy THAAD, the public opinion of South Korea will rapidly lean towards

emphasizing the ROK-U.S. alliance. This may result in the establishment of a ROK-U.S.-Japan alliance in the region and participation of the ROK in the U.S.-led missile-defense system. Beijing also faces a risk of widening suspicion of its "good neighbor" diplomacy and of loss in its relations with South Korea. South Korea would likely pay the greater cost, which may inflict irreversible damage to the economy. Then, winning China's cooperation on the North Korean issue would become an almost impossible task for South Korea.

CONCLUSION

As the U.S.-China relationship becomes more complex, maintaining good relations with both Washington and Beijing will likely become more difficult for Seoul. Given the severity of the North Korean threat, the U.S.-ROK alliance should remain the most important pillar of South Korea's security policy. However, a sound relationship with China for South Korea's economic survival and prosperity is also critical. South Korea is a trading country, whose trade dependency is over half of GDP, and it relies for almost 30 percent of its trade on China. Seoul cannot afford confrontation with China. However, China cannot provide security assurances; the United States, meanwhile, cannot meet the economic needs of South Korea. Therefore, Seoul has no other choice but to pursue a multifaceted and complex policy to maintain better relations with both Washington and Beijing.

South Korea pursues middle power diplomacy, favoring compromise and cooperation instead of conflict and clashes. South Korea cannot afford to play the role of a balancer in Northeast Asia, as former President Roh Moo-hyun once called for. Seoul should adopt a foreign policy based on positioning the country as a regional mediator, a force for cooperation, a bridge-builder. Old and new regional and multilateral cooperation frameworks, such as ASEAN+3 and Middle Power Consultation Organization in East Asia and the Western Pacific Area (MPCO, virtual institute) led by civilian experts from middle power countries such as Australia and Indonesia, could serve as a tool for moderating rivalries in U.S.-China relations. These multilateral mechanisms can create new diplomatic space for South Korea to play a more active role despite its status as a middle power. Focusing on regional middle power diplomacy could be more productive than dealing with the immediate North Korean nuclear threat, which is unlikely to be resolved any time soon. To achieve this, South Korea will need extensive cooperation from the United States and China. This is the reasoning one hears in Seoul.

Preemptive diplomacy is extremely important in dealing with North Korean issues such as nuclear weapons development and contingencies. Before China determines its bottom line for a certain scenario, the United States and South Korea should be able to have an input into its decision-making process. For that, both should be more ambitious in pressing for strategic dialogue with China on North Korea. Beyond official dialogue more proactive exchanges with Chinese experts must be pursued. Coordination between the United States and South Korea is crucial. Otherwise, the dialogues may end up increasing distrust between the two, making the scenarios previously proposed for dealing with North Korea issues unrealistic.

South Korea should intensify diplomacy with China and reach a consensus on stability and the end state on the Korean Peninsula. The THAAD issue should be resolved in a compromise among the United States, China, and South Korea. The prevention of distrust through proactive diplomacy is the optimal outcome. Otherwise, North Korean issues are

likely moving beyond control; they may cause more tension, chaos, uncertainties, frustration, and distrust among concerned states, probably resulting in military clashes in the region and at least, an extension of Chinese influence over North Korea. Fortunately, the outcome of the Trump-Xi Jinping summit meeting to collaborate on the North Korean nuclear issue at the highest level appears to have brought the best opportunity to at least stabilize the nuclear issue since the efforts by Secretary of Defense William Perry and President Bill Clinton in 1999 and 2000. South Korea's policy should not seek to isolate or contain China. The United States and South Korea could solve the THAAD issue by pledging to use the system only against North Korea and by allowing South Korea's National Assembly to have a say on additional installations of the system.

The U.S.-ROK alliance should bring in China in ways that are more positive to handling a North Korea scenario. Stabilization and peace on the Korean Peninsula are likely to bring better relations among all parties in Northeast Asia, making coexistence the key principle on the peninsula. To do so, South Korea and the United States need to assure China that the alliance role on the Korean Peninsula would not hurt Chinese interests in the region. Anything short of such an assurance may allow China's traditionalists to gain a larger voice in Chinese policy circles, resulting in opposition to active participation in North Korea's denuclearization and Korean unification in favor of South Korea. The outcomes of instability on the Korean Peninsula, another Korean war, and an assertive North Korea with nuclear weapons are likely in a losing game for all concerned parties. Against the backdrop of the worst scenario, crisis management mechanisms among the United States, China, and South Korea should be established as soon as possible.

China's strategic thinking had, arguably, changed in favor of South Korea and Korea unification under Xi's leadership before the fourth nuclear test. Under Xi, there is greater potential for the United States, China, and South Korea to cooperate on North Korea than before. North Korean instability may lead to uncertainty and chaos in Northeast Asia if the relevant parties are not prepared. Therefore, South Korea, the United States, and China should establish a trilateral dialogue at the Track 1.5 level first and then move on to the Track 1 level in time to deal with North Korea issues. Chinese mainstream thinkers—those in the rising great power group—are also aware of the U.S. capability to deter China and will not challenge the status of the United States in Northeast Asia. They still hope to maintain Korean Peninsula issues as an area of compromise and cooperation between the two great powers. The summit meeting between Trump and Xi Jinping in 2017 was quite successful. However, China is becoming more independent of and less vulnerable to outside pressure. We can anticipate that China's future Korea policies will be motivated more and more by its own national interests and strategic calculations instead of pressure from the outside. China is no longer passive, but willing to take the lead on Korea issues in ways that can be positive.

ENDNOTES

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2. David E. Sanger, "Obama and Xi Try to Avoid a Cold War Mentality," *The New York Times*, June 9, 2013, http://nytimes.com/2013/06/10/world/asia/obama-and-xi-try-to-avoid-a-cold-war-mentality.html?_r=0.
3. The outcome of the review is found in Fu Ying, "Chaohe wenti de lishi yanjiu yu qianjing zhanwang," May 1, 2017, http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/39SopSZOrGz12cp9yOJIsQ.
4. This argument is controversial; however, there is evidence that even the Chinese military would take Korean unification in a more positive way even if it were led by South Korea, e.g., the report submitted by PLA officer Wang Xiang on the Korean Peninsula. Hong Kong based Fenghuang TV revealed the document on March 11, 2014. The report suggested six conditions for Korean unification, including unification led by South Korea. Also see the debate between Li Dunqiu and Wang Hongguang in *Huanqiu shibao* in 2014, where Wang supported abandonment of North Korea and South Korea-led unification. Also, see Xie Tao, "What's Wrong with China's North Korea Policy?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 26, 2013, http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/03/26/what-s-wrong-with-china-s-north-korea-policy/ftjw.
5. Heung-Kyu Kim, "From a Buffer Zone to a Strategic Burden: Evolving Sino-North Korea Relations during Hu Jintao Era," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring 2010).
6. Xi Jinping emphasized this point in his opening speech at the CICA held in Beijing on April 28, 2016, http://china.huanqiu.com/hot/2016-04/8832046.htm. See also the briefings of Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to journalists during the second plenum of the 12th People's Congress on March 8, 2014.
7. Korea specialist Zhang Liangui warned of a 70-80 percent possibility of war breaking-out on the Korean Peninsula in his editorial in *Huanqiu shibao* on April 10, 2013. Ji Jaeryong, North Korea's ambassador to China, also insisted in his column in *Xinhuawang* on April 15, 2013 that the situation on the Korean Peninsula is at its worst.
8. Heung-Kyu Kim, "From a Buffer Zone to a Strategic Burden." The International Crisis group identified two groups of experts on North Korea, traditionalists and strategists, explaining China's policy. "Shades of Red: China's Debate over North Korea" Asia Report, No. 179, November 2, 2009. David Shambaugh identified seven groups—nativism, realism, major power, Asia first, global south, selective multilateralism, and globalism—in David Shambough, "Coping with Conflicted China," *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2011), pp. 7–27.
9. See http://opinion.hexun.com/2016-01-07/181656147.html and http://www.dooo.cc/2016/01/40356.shtml.
10. See Li Kaisheng's suggestion: first, negotiations between the United States and North Korea; then, U.S.-China-North Korea talks; and last, U.S.-China-South Korea-North Korea negotiations. However, for South Korea, this approach is difficult to accept because it is not part of most processes http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/iwdxIcVMHZZDIuTGRBrTEw.
11. Heung-kyu Kim and Shuxian Guo, "North Korea-China Relations during Xi Jinping Era," *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies*, Vol.32, No.4 (Winter 2016), pp. 45-82.
12. For the report see, http://news.ifeng.com/world/detail_2014_03/15/34791517_0.shtml.
13. See, http://ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201503/t20150328_669091.html.
14. Traditional China's foreign policy toward neighboring countries focused on the Northeast first. See Honghua Men, *Zongguo Waijiao Dabuju* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Chubanshe, 2013), pp. 86-94.
15. On the summit between Park and Xi Jinping at the G20 held in China in 2016, see, http://cafe.daum.net/os9990/Dh2q/103588?q=%BD%C3%C1%F8%C7%CE%2C%20%BB%E7%B5%E5%20%C7%D9%BD%C9%C0%CC%C0%CD.
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