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The Moon Jae-in Administration's North Korean Policy: Its Basic Direction and Primary Tasks

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Basic Direction of North Korean Policy

It is advisable that the Moon Jae-in administration pursue North Korean policy following the basic direction. First, a comprehensive structure for peaceful coexistence and unification should be prepared. Crafting a peaceful coexistence policy should be done within the large framework of mid to long-term unification vision and strategy. Such comprehensive structure should be centered around two sets of policy: 1) policy aimed to prepare for unification within the large framework of mid to long-term vision and strategy; and 2) another policy enabling peaceful coexistence for the stability on the Korean Peninsula, and inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation.

Second, it is desirable to either consecutively or selectively link the solution of North Korean nuclear issue with the improvement of inter-Korean relations. The new ROK government should find a possible room to improve inter-Korean relations while acknowledging the priority placed on nuclear issue. Furthermore, the government should explore

measures to gradually advance inter-Korean relations, hinging on how North Korean nuclear issue is solved.

Third, the Moon administration should consider combining several policy options based on selective engagement policy. The selective engagement policy should be pursued depending on situations and conditions. In fact, the utter dependence either on containment or engagement policy only produces a very restrictive effect. The selective engagement policy is about adjusting the scope and level of cooperation with North Korea, depending on their possible change in policy and progress of negotiations.

In addition, measures for pressure and inducement should be flexibly combined according to different situation and phases. It is crucial to sternly respond to North Korea's provocations and bring neighboring countries and the international community together in support of the legitimacy and effectiveness of sanctions against Pyongyang. However, at the same time, there should be a clear stance on rewarding North for their friendly attitude and cooperation. And the type and scale of rewards should be determined case by case.

Fourth, there should be at least a minimum political and social consensus on North Korean policy. The government should enhance a consultation with the National Assembly on North Korean and unification policy. Moreover, it is important both for the conservatives and the progressives to reach a minimum agreement and expand the scope of consensus on unification policy.

Primary Tasks

First, measures for the crisis management on the Korea Peninsula should be prepared. In more detail, the ROK should have a military readiness posture for potential provocation of the North while containing its provocation through various measures, such as strengthening the US-ROK joint response, building trust for the US extended deterrence capability, and deploying the US strategic asset on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, response manuals should be established in an

organized manner addressing different types of North Korean provocations, such as its additional nuclear test, medium to long-range missile launch, traditional military provocation, and cyber terror. In addition to that, the Moon administration should induce North Korea into an agreement on moratorium regarding the suspension of its nuclear and missile launches.

Second, the Moon government should make a road map to simultaneously pursue sanction·pressure and dialogue. It should come up with comprehensive measures to determine what kinds of sanction·pressure should be implemented and under what conditions, and when is an appropriate timing to initiate a dialogue, and how to adjust the level of sanction·pressure during a dialogue. Conditions and forms of the dialogue, implementation measures for denuclearization process, and agenda should be considered in this phase. As for condition of the dialogue, 2.29 consensus should be restored in order to resume the dialogue. As to the format of the dialogue, various options can be considered, such as holding the US-DPRK meeting, resuming six party talks and a trilateral meeting of the US, the DPRK, and China.

In addition to that, a phased road map should be formulated on the nuclear and missile issue. Complete, verifiable, and irreversible (CVID) dismantlement is a very unlikely scenario to be achieved in the near future even though denuclearization is an ultimate goal. Therefore, the second best option is to start with a nuclear freeze and adopt a gradual approach. Especially, it is important to materialize a phased practical verification system so that the implementation of denuclearization agreement remains in place.

Additionally, measures for implementation of comprehensive agenda should be devised. For instance, there should be an action plan on how to implement a comprehensive agenda. One example of this includes offering rewards to North Korea in line with the phase of denuclearization and missile dismantlement, such as giving the regime a security guarantee, establishing the peace regime, lifting economic sanctions, providing economic assistance, and normalizing diplomatic relations.

Third, the Moon administration should demonstrate a flexibility in inter-Korea relations. Despite a deadlock in the nuclear issue, the new government

should seek ways to advance inter-Korean relations, such as promoting social and cultural exchanges with the North and providing humanitarian aid.

Fourth, the network for cooperative diplomacy should be established. The cooperative diplomacy requires multi-level links, including the US-ROK alliance, ROK-China strategic cooperative relationship, and trilateral cooperation of ROK-the US-Japan and ROK-the US-China. Moreover, Korean Consensus should be built on the issue of denuclearization, peace, and cooperation to convince the neighboring countries and the international community. South Korea should root out the practice of Korean Passing, which excludes South Korea in discussing issues of the Korean Peninsula, and seize the initiative in dealing with peninsular issues. ©KINU 2017

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