



Online Series

2017. 12. 20. | CO 17-33

Achievements of ROK-China Summit Meeting and Remaining Tasks

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Achievements of the latest South Korea-China summit meeting can be analyzed in the following three ways. First, the 3rd summit meeting between President Moon Jae-in and Xi Jinping paved the way for building mutual trust and normalizing bilateral relations in a year that marks the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China. Second, President Moon and Xi, based on mutual trust, have reached a consensus on following four principles of Korean Peninsula issues: 1) no war in the Korean Peninsula; 2) adherence to principle of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; 3) a peaceful resolution of North Korean nuclear problem through dialogue and negotiation; and 4) a recognition that an improvement of inter-Korean relations is ultimately conducive for resolving Korean Peninsula issues. Third, the meeting also laid the groundwork for expanding bilateral social and cultural exchange and economic cooperation thanks to China's official withdrawal of THAAD retaliation against South Korea. As a result, the two countries will be able to contribute to making substantial progress of the Strategic Cooperative Partnership by expanding exchange and cooperation, which are currently centered around economic, trade, social, and cultural arenas and human

exchanges, into the fields of politics, diplomacy, security and local government.

Remaining Tasks for Making Headway with ROK-China Relations

In spite of significant accomplishments of the two parties agreeing on rebuilding mutual trust and restoring economic, social, and cultural relations in a prompt manner, South Korea-China summit meeting left heavy tasks to be resolved in order to achieve South Korea's diplomatic and security goals of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and peace settlement and to make headway with South Korea-China relations.

First, it is imperative to stably manage the issue of THAAD deployment since the issue has not been completely settled and continued to negatively influence bilateral relations. The South Korean government should, therefore, demand for China's active role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue while emphasizing that the THAAD issue could be negotiated in a direction that alleviates China's concern if denuclearization of North Korea is realized.

Second, the ROK government should induce China's cooperation on its two-track strategy of dialogue and sanctions for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. In this process, the ROK-US-China trilateral dialogue should be initiated to build a consensus and reach an agreement on goals of sanctions against North Korea.

Third, in order to manage and resolve differences between South Korea and China, it is necessary to restructure previously agreed multi-dimensional dialogue channels and host them on a regular basis, such as high-level strategic dialogue between the Head of National Security Office at the Blue House and the Cabinet Minister on Chinese Foreign Affairs, diplomacy and security dialogue between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, joint strategic dialogue between government research institutions, and policy dialogue between political parties. The South Korean government should explore a way to establish new strategic dialogue channels.

Fourth, there is a need to put the focus of bilateral cooperation primarily on maintaining stability and preventing a war on the Korean Peninsula. By affirming the consensus of both parties on building peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, South Korea and China can create a virtuous cycle where their bilateral relations and inter-Korean relations can go hand-in-hand harmoniously.

Fifth, the Moon government should preemptively pronounce its fundamental position on the Korean Peninsula issues in order to curtail negative impacts of intensifying US-China strategic competition on the Korean Peninsula. In dealing with countries surrounding the peninsula, South Korea should strongly demand that the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula be considered as a priority and that a consent is required through consultation with Seoul when crafting an important policy related to the Korean Peninsula issues.

Sixth, public diplomacy has become increasingly important for establishing the solid foundation of Strategic Cooperative Partnership between South Korea and China. To that end, it is essential to plan and implement policy-public diplomacy programs under the theme of stability and war prevention of the Korean Peninsula, which is a common concern both for South Korea and China. Furthermore, the South Korean government must adjust its direction of public diplomacy toward China in a way that overlapping and event-oriented diplomacy can be eliminated through a comprehensive review of its public diplomacy system. In addition, it is necessary to further strengthen policy-public diplomacy for expert groups participating in China's policy-making process and promote tailored-policy-public diplomacy depending on an area and targeted audience by diversifying a pool of experts and regions when hosting related events. ©KINU 2017

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