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Biden Administration's North-East Asia Strategy and Korea's Policy for Reopening of North Korea-US Negotiation

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English Abstract

The beginning of the Biden administration gave hope that the U.S.-South Korea alliance will find its place and that it will serve as a turning point in the process to restore peace on the Korean Peninsula. Instead of restoring peace on the Korean Peninsula, however, there is a possibility of creating another competition between South Korea-the U.S.-Japan and North Korea-China-Russia. Concerns are raised that the U.S.-South Korea alliance's effort to suppress North Korea's attack and provocation on South Korea in order to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula may serve as a reason to create a new Cold War structure.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Secretary of Defense visited South Korea, after visiting Japan, on March 18th and held a South Korea-U.S. 2+2 meeting for the first time in 5 years, showing a South Korea-U.S. alliance. However, the U.S. Secretaries only criticized North Korea's human rights issues instead of offering to talk. North Korea ostentated its presence by launching 2 short-range ballistic missiles, and the U.S. also warned to respond appropriately.

North Korean people are facing difficulties due to sanctions, yet the leaders of North Korea are not much affected by the sanctions. The South Korean government must explain to the U.S. authorities that the majority of North Koreans consider the sanctions imposed by Americans to be the cause of all hardship.

If the U.S., which has 600 times the economic power of North Korea and more than 300 times the nuclear power of North Korea, offers appropriate economic assistance to North Korea without shaking its regime, North Korea will easily give up its nuclear weapons. When issues of abductees and human rights are raised, an abandonment of medium and short-range missiles and biochemical weapons is asked without considering the security dilemma of North Korea, and demands more than ‘compete denuclearization as an outlet’ such as revealing the full picture of its nuclear capability are made and being inspected, then North Korea will almost definitely stick to its nuclear development even if there are many difficulties.

As the U.S. lost its credibility over the problems in Iran and Ukraine, the U.S. should first declare that it will abide by the Singapore summit’s joint statement of the former President Trump and Kim Jong-un, express its willingness to accept the end-of-war declaration, and request North Korea to temporarily suspend its nuclear program. Whether the Biden administration will restore the nuclear agreement with Iran before North Korea launches major provocations such as submarine-launched missiles and long-range missiles and apply it to North Korea will determine the future relationship between the U.S. and North Korea.

* Translator’s note: This is a third party’s unofficial translation of the original paper which was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.

* This article is written based on the author’s personal opinions and does not reflect the views of the Sejong Institute.