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Executive Summary

The Outlook for U.S. Foreign Policy under the Biden Administration



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*This article is written based on the author's personal opinions
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Executive Summary

■ Trump Administration's Foreign Policy Legacy

○ Evaluation of Trump Administration's Foreign Policy

- Major achievements during Trump administration include corporate tax cuts, deregulation, continued economic boom, hard-line policy towards China, revision of trade agreements such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), support for Ukraine, normalization of Israeli-Arab relations and more.
- Compared to these major achievements, three significant failures are more pronounced which are indicated in the regression of democracy, the failure of the COVID-19 response, and the decline of the U.S.'s global leadership.

■ Biden Administration's Foreign Policy Stance

○ Biden's single most emphasized theme in his inaugural speech is "unity."

- The biggest legacy of Trump administration's four years is the division, conflict, and regression of democracy in U.S. politics.
 - Biden administration signed 17 executive orders and memorandums that reversed the Trump administration's policies from the first day of his inauguration.
- #### ○ President Biden emphasizes the recovery of the U.S.'s leadership as the keynote of overall foreign policy, compared to Trump with America First strategy.
- Biden administration emphasizes three agendas: first, innovate democracy at home, second, promote foreign policy for the middle class of the U.S., and third, return to the position of international leader.
 - The two pillars of Biden administration's foreign policy can be summarized as

"multilateralism" and "value and normative diplomacy."

- However, two things that will not change much, even after the new beginning of the Biden administration: the continuation of Trumpism and the hard-line stance toward China.
- Multiple challenges are expected at home and abroad in Biden's diplomatic agenda due to the conflicts in the domestic politics prompted by the aftermath of the Trump era and difficulties in rallying allies and partner countries for the weakening of the U.S.'s leadership.

■ Major Current Issues

- Response to COVID-19 and "Erasing Trump"
 - Four tasks that the new administration needs to solve urgently includes: COVID-19, economic downturns, climate change, and racial inequality.
- Relations with Major Powers
 - The U.S.-China relations is expected to continue in the nature of systemic, ideological, and hegemony competition.
 - The causes of tension in the U.S.-Russia relations are present in the allegation of the Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S.'s presidential election, Putin's use of nerve agents against political opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and suspicion of Russia's hacking into U.S.'s federal agencies.
- Regional Strategy and Alliance Policy
 - Re-establishing the relations with allies and networking, especially restoring the transatlantic community is the top priorities.
 - In terms of policies towards Asia, Biden administration will continue with Indo-Pacific Strategy.

○ Restoration of Global governance and multilateralism

- Changes are expected in rejoining the Paris Agreement, World Health Organization(WHO) and the vaccines pillar of the ACT-Accelerator(COVAX), and participation in UN Human Rights Council, rejoining the U.S.-Iran Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the extension of the U.S.-Russia New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty(New START), and changes in the Treaty on Open Skies.

○ Economic and trade policies

- Biden's trade policy is expected to highlight values and norms.
- It will be characterized by multilateralism and compliance with international norms, elevating labor and environmental standards in trade agreements, strengthening the U.S.-centered global value chain, and continuing the hard-line stances toward China.

○ Non-proliferation and security

- The Biden administration publicly declared that it will rejoin the JCPOA with Iran when Iran sets forth as premise for compliance with cooperation.
- The Biden administration views the North Korean nuclear issue with significant interests in curbing North Korea and contends it as a "serious threat" and it will adopt a "new strategy" via close consultation with the allies.

■ **Implications for the U.S.-ROK Relations**

- After the inauguration of the Biden administration, the conflict over the pending issues of the U.S.-ROK alliance are expected to ease to certain extent, but the South Korean government should prepare two cases in advance as new emerging challenges.
- First, the question concerns to what extent the South Korean government

would live up to Biden administration's value-based diplomacy.

- Second, the question of how much the South Korean government would participate in networking between the U.S.'s allies and partner states.
 - Lastly, the South Korean government should also prepare for the possibility that the Biden administration will demand value and cost sharing for the U.S.'s allies and partner states.
- During the Biden administration's review of the policy towards the Korean Peninsula, the South Korean government needs to accurately analyze the Biden administration's Korean peninsula policy and a pan-governmental bipartisan level diplomatic demarche that constantly bring the reality that the South Korea faced.
- The South Korean government should correct negative perception of the Moon Jae-in administration's North Korea policy, and it should strengthen its diplomatic efforts to present Seoul's position on the peace process on the Korean Peninsula and suggest rational policy alternatives.
 - If the U.S.-China hegemony competition continues to heat up, it should focus on diversifying the Korea's diplomacy and market portfolio, by noting that the excessive reliance on our security and economy on certain countries could increase the risk of "weaponized interdependence." ❖

※ Translator's note: This is a summarized unofficial translation of the original paper which was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.