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Executive Summary

The Biden administration's North East Asia strategy and South Korea's plan

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

■ Problem

- There was an expectation for the Biden administration, which sets a high value on cooperating with allies-unlike Trump, for the launch of the new administration to serve as a turning point to restore the U.S.-South Korea alliance and the peace process on the Korean Peninsula.
 - Although the review of North Korea policy was announced to focus on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, and South Korea, the U.S., and Japan were asked to cooperate, continue to impose sanctions on North Korea, and engage in open diplomacy, specific policies toward North Korea still remain unknown. In other words, the Biden administration has publicly discussed North Korea's human rights issues in order to keep North Korea in check-against North Korea's provocations-instead of actively resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Although President Moon Jae In's suggestion for the U.S. and North Korea to resume talking and approaching a gradual step-by-step was well taken, the U.S. is still waiting for North Korea to take action.
 - Restoration of peace on the Korean Peninsula cannot be promised now, and a new cold war of South Korea, the U.S., and Japan versus North Korea, China, and Russia may form again. There are concerns that the ROK-U.S. alliance, which aims to curb North Korea's provocation and ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, may actually function as a tool to create a new Cold War structure.
- ### ■ The Biden administration's national security, foreign policy, and East Asia strategy
- The Biden administration's foreign policy strategy emphasizes international cooperation over nationalism, multilateralism over unilateralism, and mutual assistance over self-help, and alliance over national security. However,

China-bashing continues in aspects of the system, human rights, Taiwan, and technological competition. The idea of strengthening allies and cooperation seems like the U.S. is trying to include South Korea to keep China in check; it is, therefore, another challenge to South Korea.

- The U.S. has criticized North Korea's human rights issues in its policy. After the review of North Korea policy, the U.S. is welcoming dialogues with North Korea for the purpose of 'complete denuclearization'; however, the U.S. still maintains a bottom-up approach. The U.S. will take a step-by-step approach while maintaining current sanctions for North Korea's complete denuclearization. Whether the U.S. will abide by the agreements made at the Singapore Summit was only discussed in an informal interview with a White House official.
- President Biden reinforced the multilateral design to check China at the U.S.-Japan Summit.
- South Korea's position and the tension between North Korea and the U.S.
- The Biden administration regards China as a hegemonic challenger and not only continues to strategically enclose and block China but also compete in terms of ideology, system, human rights, Taiwan, and technology, including semiconductor supply networks. Biden will compete against Russia-unlike Trump. If Trump bashed China bilaterally, then Biden is bashing China by mobilizing Japan, Australia, India, and South Korea with the name of democracy and human rights in terms of military security, economy, trade, and technology. The U.S. insists that China poses a security threat to South Korea and hopes to add siege and restraint of China to the function of the ROK-U.S. alliance.
- We allowed THAAD deployment by U.S. forces, which the Lee Myung-bak administration and the Park Geun-hye administration had refused. China, then, lost its strategic deterrent against the U.S. and retaliated against South Korea. However, the U.S. did not take any measures to curb China's actions. We

should learn a lesson from this history.

- The U.S. says that it respects human rights by taking issue with the sovereignty of the South China Sea. However, the U.S. ignores the sovereignty of Dokdo and human rights in South Korea-Japan relations. The U.S. only emphasizes South Korea-U.S.-Japan security cooperation; it is a problem as the U.S. looks like it is taking Japan's side.
- In an interview with The New York Times on April 21, President Moon Jae In recommended that North Korea and the U.S. sit down, face to face, as soon as possible to find more realistic solutions on the basis of the failed Hanoi Summit. Also, he stressed that North Korea and the U.S. must make concessions and compensations at the same time and gradually approach denuclearization, step-by-step. The key, as he added, is to devise a road map that can be mutually trusted.
- North Korea is opposed to the results of the U.S. review of North Korea policy. However, it seems like North Korea is still considering whether to provoke or to return to the negotiating table. How the Biden administration restores nuclear agreement with Iran and apply it to North Korea, whether the Tokyo Olympics will be held and North Korea will participate, North Korea-China relation and the U.S.-China relation will impact the U.S.- North Korea relation in the future.

■ South Korea's plan

- The Biden administration's stance is the ultimate key in re-inviting North Korea to the process of peacefully resolving the nuclear issue. The South Korean government must persuade the U.S. to bring North Korea to the negotiating table, suggest a feasible plan for North Korea, and persuade the U.S. that progress can be made on the North Korean nuclear issue only if North Korea can trust the U.S. As the U.S. has lost credibility due to its issues with Iran and Ukraine, the U.S. must first declare that it will abide by the joint declaration made at the Singapore Summit, accept the declaration of the end

of the war, and request North Korea to temporarily suspend nuclear operations. In addition, persuasion through imposing sanctions and introducing a snapback system is necessary to allow North Korea to denuclearize in a step-by-step approach.

- The South Korean government must arrange in a way to ease the tension between the U.S. and China and do its best to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully so that all can benefit, even if competitions in certain areas must continue.
- The U.S.' China policy progress in three directions of confrontation, competition, and cooperation. The South Korean government must actively participate in cooperation, allow private sectors to decide whether to compete, but compete for national interest, and wisely wait until the situation unfolds in confrontational matters. If South Korea has no choice but to join the Quad, then it will be wise to officially set conditions for cooperation so that South Korea will not cooperate if third countries are excluded.
- South Korea's diplomatic and security autonomy can be enhanced only when it regains its wartime operational control and therefore reduce its dependency on the U.S.
- Currently, the terms of transitioning wartime operational control depend on the will of the U.S. However, since the U.S. wants to keep China in check through the ROK-U.S. alliance, it is unlikely for the U.S. to transfer wartime operational control. Therefore, South Korea's national leadership must declare that it will push for the separation of the Korean military from U.S. forces like the U.S.-Japan forces. Then, the U.S. will lose its justification to use three-stage implementation verification as a prerequisite for the transition and will have to accept the transition. If the Moon Jae In administration is unable to transition the control, then the next administration must make every effort to shift in its first year.
- If the transition only changes the supreme commander as a Korean general

like now, then the U.S. military will continue to follow its doctrine, strategies, and tactics. The command will in fact remain under the control of the U.S. military. Therefore, a transition into a parallel command system like the Japan-U.S. alliance is necessary.

- If North Korea, which already faces an overall security dilemma, considers human rights a problem, it will sense an elevating crisis, tense, and be tempted to strengthen its control and mobilization of North Koreans by justifying the fight against other countries that practice hostile policies. Such adverse effects must be considered. We should participate in improving human rights, yet it will be wise to judge from a balanced perspective by considering national power and various national interests, consider the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs in the implementation method, and impose sanctions and pressure carefully and appropriately.

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