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Executive Summary

The NATO alliance of the Biden era: prospects and implications Executive Summary

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

Executive Summary

- 2021: 72nd anniversary of the Atlantic Rim's organization, the NATO
- This year marks the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an alliance of 30 countries (North America and Europe). In 1949, 12 founding members signed the North Atlantic Treaty (also known as the Washington Treaty of April 4, 1949) in Washington, D.C., and established an organization accordingly. During the Cold War, democratic countries in the North Atlantic region formed a political and collective defense alliance against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. After the end of the Cold War, the alliance began managing crises regarding the Balkans and the former Soviet Union. Since September 11, 2001, the area of collective defense expanded in line with changes in the international security environment such as international terrorism and cyber security.
- Deteriorating relations among the Atlantic Rim within the NATO during Trump's term
- In his four-year term in office, Trump has unprecedentedly worsened the U.S. relationship not only with the EU, a coalition of European democracies, but also with the European allies within the NATO (21 out of 30 NATO members belong to the EU). The existing international order of liberalism has shrunk with the loosening of the democratic alliance, and the world faces an era of competition among powerful nations. Since the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump has promised U.S. voters through "America First" diplomacy that he will soon change "unfair" foreign policy practices for U.S. taxpayers, which previous administrations had overlooked. Trump focused on sharing the defense cost with the democratic allies, oppressed the leaders of his allies, treated the alliance as a form of business, and expressed skepticism about the NATO.
- The basis of the new Biden administration's revitalization of the NATO alliance

- On November 3rd, 2020, Joe Biden was elected as the 46th president. The new administration was based on 'America is Back.' It promised to restore the U.S. international leadership and to respect multilateralism and the democratic allies. In particular, it began to rebuild the U.S. relationship and restore trust with the European allies, which were damaged by Trump's skepticism toward the NATO. In other words, the U.S. now contributes to international security and prosperity by coping with multilateral threats from China and Russia with stronger "alliance cohesion" based on democratic values and facing global challenges such as climate change, health and security issues. The allies highly expect the re-unification of the Atlantic Rim. President Biden will attend the NATO summit in Brussels on June 14, 2021 and meet with the leaders of the EU. This will mark the beginning of the post-Trump transatlantic era.

■ Purpose of the paper

- This paper intends to put the Biden era's NATO into perspective and find its implications. South Korea is both an ally of the U.S. and a 'global partner' of the NATO. The Biden era's NATO will have many implications for South Korea's security and strategic stability in the Asia-Pacific region in the first half of the 21st century.

※ 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.