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Executive Summary

A Review of Five Summits between Kim Jong Un and Xi Jinping: Characteristics of the Current China-North Korea Relations and Its Implications for South Korea's Geopolitics



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

- Xi Jinping achieved significant success in sowing influence on Kim Jong Un through repeated socialist ideological indoctrination and underscoring their strategic affinity.

- In less than a year and a half, through a whirlwind of five summits, Xi Jinping has tried to plant influence on Kim Jong-un based on the socialist ideology they share. Xi evoked the amicable China-North Korea relationship during the Cold War period by using sublime references such as “blood alliance,” “lips and teeth” and “one and only relationship in the world.” Such attempts further highlighted strategic and mutual benefits of a favorable China-North Korea relationship in the reality of international relations.

- Xi Jinping’s two-frame operation on the Korean Peninsula
 - To ‘great power’ China, both South and North Korea are ‘weak states.’
 - The brand of homogeneous socialism, however, outweighs the ‘weak state’ frame of North Korea; Xi thus conferred Kim full state honors.
 - Only the ‘weak state’ frame works on South Korea. There has been constant controversy over Xi’s neglect of and disrespect for South Korean envoys.

- Time to prepare a new strategic paradigm to overcome inertial thinking on the role of China in the North Korean nuclear issue

- Xi will set priority on establishing socialist solidarity with North Korea over denuclearization. As the relationship between the U.S. and China deteriorates, North Korea's geopolitical importance to China is bound to rise.

- It is time for South Korea to prepare a new paradigm to overcome the conventional, inertial thinking on the role of China regarding North Korean issue.

- Limits of the conventional thinking on the role of China are clear. Depending on its own national interest, China will be active in "crisis management" (eg. preventing military conflict) of the Korean Peninsula while passive in "crisis solution" (eg. denuclearization). ♣

※ 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.