

China should ask South Korea to relax its alliance with the United States in return for China's readjustment of its role against North Korea, thereby making South Korea a neutral country.

regarding South Korea as the finishing touch to its grand strategy

Emergence of the proposal for a South Korea - China alliance

- Some "new emerging great power" theorists, including Yan Xuetong and Wang Yiwei, have proposed a South Korea - China alliance. They suggested the compatibility of ROK - PRC alliance with ROK - US alliance.
- They view South Korea as a strategically important "swing state," and seem to think that South Korea should be more motivated to collaborate with China than with the United States, considering its economic reliance on China, its geographic proximity to China, and the cultural affinity between the two countries.
- They hope that China should ask South Korea to relax its alliance with the United States in return for China's readjustment of its role against North Korea, thereby making South Korea a neutral country.
- They are a minority by a numerical sense, but it appears that they are close to a main stream of thoughts in new Chinese foreign policy orientations directed under Xi Jinping's leadership.

China's promotion of stronger collaboration with South Korea in matters concerning national security

- China is increasingly emphasizing the negative impacts of the South Korea-U.S. military alliance on its national interests, which is a departure from its previously passive stance on the alliance.
- China is proposing measures of military collaboration that were unthinkable just a few years ago, including South Korea-China joint military exercises on the East China Sea, South Korea-China-Russia security talks, and the presence of South Korean representatives at the China-Russia military exercises.
- The foregoing indicates that the North Korea is no longer a determinant in China's South Korea policy.

China's proposal to connect its New Silk Road Initiative with South Korea's Eurasian Initiative

- China has proposed the construction of an extension of its New Silk Road Initiative ("Onshore Silk Road and "Offshore Economic Zone") to the Korean Peninsula, regarding South Korea as the finishing touch to its grand strategy.
- China is strongly proposing that South Korea take part in its grand strategy.

4. Orientations adopted by South Korea in response to the developments in the U.S.-China Relationship

Strategic direction	Alliance with US and communication with China (聯美通中)	Alliance with US and harmonization with China (聯美和中)	Alliance with U.S. and collaboration with China (聯美協中)	Alliance with both US and China (聯美聯中)
Factors				
Period	Lee Myung-bak Administration	Park Geun-hye Administration (2013~2017)	2015 ~ 2030	2030 ~ 2049
U.S.-China relationship	U.S. superiority	U.S. military superiority; economic balance between the two	U.S. maintains military superiority; China economic superiority	Military balance between the two; China maintains economic superiority
International situation	Conflicts and collaboration between the U.S. and China	Complication of conflicts and collaboration between the U.S. and China	Strategic competition between the U.S. and China	Strategic balance between the U.S. and China; Formation of multilateral system
China's emergence as a world power in world systems	Worked to enhance friendly relations with countries in the region based on the South Korea-U.S. alliance; Took a "seeking common ground while keeping difference" stance toward China	Refraining from one-sidedness in diplomacy; Taking a "seeking common ground while reducing difference" stance toward China; Collaboration among middle power countries; Bolstering bilateral relationships with the U.S. and China	Maintaining the strategic South Korea-U.S. alliance; Deepening collaboration with China; Establishment of multilateral security system; Systematization of collaboration among middle power countries	Putting an end to alliance-based diplomacy; Bolstering multilateral security system; Proactive operation of the middle power countries' council
Factors affecting the North's regime	Bolstered the South Korea-U.S. alliance and collaborated with Japan; strengthened diplomacy toward China and Russia	Maintaining the South Korea-U.S. alliance and bolstering collaboration with Japan; Promotion of South-China strategic dialogues with the North	Operation of tripartite (South Korea-U.S.-China) strategic talks based on bilateral collaboration with the U.S. and China	Deepening strategic talks with the U.S. and China; Stabilization of tripartite (South Korea-U.S.-China) collaboration; Realization of peaceful unification

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From "the strategy of alliance with the U.S. and harmonization with China" to "a strategy of alliance with the U.S. and collaboration with China"

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Suggestions

South Korea's Foreign Policy to China Needs for an adjustment from the strategy of "alliance with the United States and harmonization with China" to a strategy of "alliance with the United States and collaboration with China"

- The strategy of alliance with the United States and reconciliation with China, which the Park Geun-hye administration stressed early on, was based on the assumption that the strategic value of South Korea would be enhanced and China's U.S. policy would remain moderate and discreet during the transition of power in the region.
- South Korea adopted a strategy for pursuing "broadening concord and reducing discord" in its relationship with China in order to significantly minimize potential conflict with China in the future, while doing its best to take advantage its ever strengthening strategic position.
- Under President Xi Jinping's leadership, China's U.S. policy has increasingly favored escalating strategic competition with the United States, making it necessary for South Korea to modify its strategy.
- It is time for South Korea to make a strategic choice to play a positive role in the area of collaboration - its two choices being "strategic conflict" or "collaboration" - in its relationships with the United States and China, while pursuing a stance of "broadening concord and reducing discord" toward China, such as by taking positive action toward the establishment of the Eurasian international system proposed by China, thereby securing its interests.
- South Korea needs to adopt a strategy of "alliance with the United States and collaboration with China" while balancing the common interests and future visions of the two, which is a suitable strategic direction for a country that must maintain friendly relationships with both the United States and China.
- The proposal to form an alliance between South Korea and China is rather unrealistic. Instead, South Korea needs to consider strengthening its relationship with China to form a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership".
- South Korea needs to work toward establishing a multilateral security mechanism in East Asia and forming a middle power diplomacy council while adhering to the "open-door" principle.

Need to push ahead with the establishment of a system of collaboration with China in order to deal with matters concerning North Korea

- The strategy of alliance with the United States and harmonization with China is based on the assumption that China's North Korean strategy will focus on continuity. However, under Xi Jinping's leadership, China's strategy toward the North has been undergoing a change, as a result of a change in China's self-identity.
- A strategy of alliance with the United States and collaboration with China requires an understanding of the change in China's view of the North and relevant policy as well as a firmer push toward a measure that includes a common stance against the North's nuclear program, which is a departure from the past policy that excluded or neutralized China in matters concerning the Korean Peninsula. South Korea needs to leverage its collaboration with China against the North's nuclear program and strive to realize the goal of tripartite collaboration involving the United States.
- It is proposed that South Korea push forward with strategic talks with China in order to cope with possible contingencies on the Korean Peninsula, while also attempting to coordinate and balance its common interests and strategic visions with China.

It is time for South Korea to make a strategic choice to play a positive role in the area of collaboration - its two choices being "strategic conflict" or "collaboration" - in its relationships with the United States and China

a firmer push toward a measure that includes a common stance against the North's nuclear program

1. China's new diplomatic strategy during the leadership of Xi Jinping

Fundamental changes in China's diplomacy

- China's diplomacy is going through a fundamental change. This change, occurring under Xi Jinping's leadership, stems from China's rapid rise as a world power following the 2009–10 global financial crisis, its growing sense of confidence, the rapid strengthening of Xi Jinping's power, which even experts did not predict, and Xi's willingness to use this power.
- China is experiencing a change in its identity. The country's mainstream strategic thinking is greatly influenced by the thought that China is now a great power, not a developing country.
- China's diplomacy is becoming more strategic and wide-ranging, and is based on professionalism, proactivity, and creativity, stressing positive participation where and whenever necessary.
- China is establishing a comprehensive strategy to carry out a foreign policy that views the entire world as a strategic space on which it will act as a global power rather than a regional power.

Application of the "2.5+@ Strategy"

- Under Xi Jinping's leadership, China's diplomacy as a global power is departing from the "1+@ strategy," which is centered on the relationship with the United States, as envisioned under Hu Jintao.
- China is adopting a stance of de-Americanization that attaches importance to its relationship with Russia (1), while maintaining strategic communication with the United States (1), and bolstering its relationship with Germany (0.5), the country that has become the core of China's new European diplomacy.

Strengthening diplomatic relationships with neighboring countries

- China's diplomacy under Xi Jinping's leadership places its priority to neighboring countries.
- China has been diversifying its strategies concerning neighboring countries and proactively pushing ahead with them. It applies considerable pressure, which includes displays of military strength, to neighboring countries that behave in ways unfavorable to its interests, such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and North Korea; aggressively keeps Japan in check; and adopts a stance of positive engagement with bordering countries, such as South Korea, Mongolia, and other Southeast Asian countries.
- In 2013, China held summits with the heads of state of over 20 neighboring countries. In 2014, Xi Jinping carried out daring "pinpoint style" diplomacy, with the aim of enhancing the country's strategic interest, by visiting neighboring countries such as South Korea and Mongolia on a one-by-one basis, which is a departure from its past practices.

Promotion of a New Silk Road strategy – Commencement of competition against the United States in institutions and norms

- China is pushing ahead with a broad initiative that it hopes will situate it as a hub of the Eurasian Continent on a mid to long-term basis.
- Pushing ahead with a new initiative to establish a "Maritime Silk Road" linking it with India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, in addition to the "New Onshore Silk Road" linking it with Central Asia and all of Europe.
- Planning to emerge as a center of transportation, trade, finance, economic collaboration, and human exchange on the Eurasian continent.
- China intends to secure a stable supply of energy, which comprise a core component of a vulnerability in its national security. It also intends to set up the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to provide financial support for projects establishing large-scale infrastructure in Eurasian Continent.
- China suggested the establishment of a new China-centered security system, excluding the United States, at the 4th Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held in Shanghai in May 2014.

Prospects for China's diplomacy during Xi Jinping's second term (2017–2022)

- China's diplomacy is expected to become increasingly strategic, audacious, and proactive. During Xi Jinping's second term, it is predicted that China will take a stronger diplomatic position, as a country that is beginning to overtake the United States economically, particularly on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in 2021.

China is now a great power, not a developing country

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2. The US–China relationship in turmoil

Strategic selection and adoption of hedging policy of the United States in 2005

- The year 2005 was a watershed moment in the controversy over US policy toward China. Through the controversy, the United States reached the conclusion that it could not block China's emergence as a world power, that it could not hold China in check with a containment policy, and that it should bring China into the fold of the U.S.-centered world order, recognizing that China's foreign policy contained uncertainties.
- Following that controversy, the United States recognized China as a regional stakeholder and as a partner for strategic dialogue, and put a hedging policy in motion.

The Obama administration (led by a Democratic president), adopted the China Policy of 2005 more positively, which was established by the George W. Bush administration (led by a Republican president), and recognized China as a global stakeholder

- Looking at the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, which began in the United States, China saw significant increases in its international status and sense of pride.
- China has made positive attempts to forge more ambitious foreign relationships and national security strategy, based on its elevated international status, following the swearing-in of Xi Jinping.
- China aggressively proposed "A New type of Great Power Relationship" based on its equal footing with the United States, and succeeded in obtaining a positive response from President Obama at a summit in June 2013.

The United States and China enter a new phase of competition

- China and Russia agreed to bolster their strategic collaboration and support each other's core interests on the world stage in the early 2014.
- China is attempting to strengthen its relationships with Mongolia, Myanmar, India, and Vietnam, as is the United States, in an effort to offset the joint efforts made by the United States and Japan to keep China in check.
- The United States has adopted a "rebalancing" policy in the Asia-Pacific region and the US and Japan work on establishing the New Southern Triangle (including the U.S., Japan, and Australia) or the Quadrilateral Security collaboration system (including the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India).
- In return, China has proposed the establishment of a new international organization, excluding the United States, such as the "New Asia Security Mechanism Initiative".
- The foregoing shows that the U.S.–China relationship is entering a new phase of conflict and competition earlier than expected, even in the area of international norms, institution-building, which are the core locus of great power competition in the future.

3. China searches for a new Korean Peninsula policy under Xi Jinping's leadership

China acts as a new mediator for the Korean Peninsula

- China has started viewing its relationship with South Korea from a more independent perspective, displaying a departure from its past approach, which focused on its relationship with the North Korea.
- China has adopted a new approach aimed at enhancing its influence on the two Koreas with a focus on its national interests, taking a more balanced stance toward the two Koreas. It strives to act as a kind of mediator that encourages the two Koreas to engage in mutual communication and peaceful exchanges.
- China recognizes the need to hold the Six-Party Talks as a mechanism through which the peace process can begin.
- It is likely that China will ask for the following in the negotiation process: the suspension of the North's nuclear program, suspension of the joint military exercises of South Korea and the United States, scrapping of the North's nuclear weapons, pulling-out of U.S. Forces from South Korea, and the cessation of the military alliance between South Korea and the United States in return for China's abandonment of its role as the North's guardian.

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