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South Korea's 'New Northern Policy' and 2019 Summit Diplomacy to Central Asia¹

Abstract. This article is to introduce the 'New North Policy' of the Moon Jae-in's government (since May 2017) of the Republic of Korea, and explain the contents and performance of the 2019 Korea-Central Asian State Summit (Korean President and Prime Minister's official visit to Central Asia) and cooperation in Central Asia under the 'New North Policy'. By analyzing the significance of 2019 Summit Diplomacy with the relation of New Northern Policy, the conclusion is to propose a couple of plans for future cooperation of Korea and Central Asian states.

Keywords and expressions: South Korea, New Northern Policy, Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Summit, Northern Economic Committee (북방경제위원회 in Korean).

Аннотация. Ушбу мақола Корея Республикасидаги Мун Чжэ Ин (2017 йил май ойидан) ҳукуматининг "Янги Шимолий сиёсати" билан таништиради, шунингдек, 2019 йилги Корея ва Марказий Осиё Саммитининг (Корея Президенти ва Бош вазирининг расмий таширифи) мазмуни ҳамда натижалари, "Шимолнинг янги сиёсати" доирасида Марказий Осиёдаги ҳамкорликни баён қилади. 2019 йилги Саммит дипломатиясининг Янги Шимолий сиёсат билан боғлиқлигини таҳлил қилиб, Корея ва Марказий Осиё давлатларининг келажакдаги ҳамкорлиги учун бир нечта режалар мавжуд деган хулосага келиш мумкин.

Таянч сўз ва иборалар: Жанубий Корея, "Янги Шимолий Сиёсат", Ўрта Осиё, Ўзбекистон, Саммит, Шимолий иқтисодий қўмита (Корейс тилида 북방경제위원회).

Аннотация. В этой статье представлена «Новая политика в отношении Севера» правительства Мун Чжэ Ина (с мая 2017 г.) Республики Корея, а также разъясняются содержание и результаты Саммита государств Центральной Азии и Кореи 2019 г. (официальный визит Президента Кореи и премьер-министра в Центральную Азию), сотрудничество в Центральной Азии в рамках «Новой политики Севера». Анализируя важность дипломатии Саммита 2019 года в связи с Новой Северной политикой, можно сделать вывод о нескольких планах будущего сотрудничества Кореи и государств Центральной Азии.

Опорные слова и выражения: Южная Корея, «Новая северная политика», Центральная Азия, Узбекистан, Саммит, Северный экономический комитет (북방경제위원회 на корейском).

I. Introduction

The core of the "New Northern Policy" of the Moon Jae-in government (May 2017-present) is the establishment of a northern economic community of peace and prosperity. Recently, Korea's economy has reached the maturity of major industries such as automobiles, shipbuilding, and textiles, and it is urgent to find new growth engines due to the slowing down the growth of Chinese economy, the Korea's largest trading partner.

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Against this background, the north-eastern region of Russia - Far East, Mongolia, and Central Asia have many demands for energy, and there are many future elements of cooperation in the complementary economic structure with Korea, which has developed industries. In addition, these northern countries have a friendly stance toward Korea, a mid-sized country, and it is also a region of historical and cultural ties from ancient times. The 2020 New Year's Speech of the President Moon Jae-in also said, "We will move toward Northeast Asian economy, security, and community through the 'New Northern Policy'."¹

Today, in South Korea's foreign economic policy, this New Northern Policy can be seen as the most important economic basis. Central Asia, which is located at the center of the New Northern Region, is classified as Central Region (Central Asia, Mongolia) in the New Northern Policy. In particular, in Central Asia, previous Korean governments recognized it as a major partner in economic, political, and private exchanges, and as evidenced by this, Korea-Central Asia summit diplomacy has been frequently promoted. In addition, the 'Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum', which is a multilateral consultation involving all five Central Asian countries, was established (2007). In 2010, the Secretariat was opened in Korea and efforts have been made to ensure stable cooperation between Korea and five Central Asian countries.

This article is to introduce the 'New North Policy' of the Moon Jae-in government of the Republic of Korea, and explain the contents and performance of the 2019 Korea-Central Asian State Summit (Korean President and Prime Minister's official visit to Central Asia) and cooperation in Central Asia under the 'New North Policy'. Furthermore, by analyzing the significance of 2019 Summit Diplomacy, the conclusion is to propose a couple of plans for future cooperation of Korea and Central Asian states.

II. The Moon Jae-in Government's New Northern Policy and Central Asia

1. New Northern Policy(신북방정책)

The basic spirit of South Korea's New Northern Policy is rooted in "forming a Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility," announced during the Kim Dae-jung administration(1998-2003). In the Moon Jae-in government, building the peace cooperation platform in Northeast Asia as the "axis of peace" that expands the foundation of peace, and making the northern region beyond Northeast Asia the "axis of prosperity" is the core spirit of the New Northern Policy.² The four main goals in this policy are summarized as 'establishing a peace base in Northeast Asia', 'sharing strategic interests by creating an integrated network', 'creating new growth engines', and 'promoting human/cultural exchange'.³

¹ 2020 is the Year of New Northern Cooperation! What is the New Northern Policy?, Foreign Ministry of Republic of Korea.

² At the same time, the Moon Jae-in government is also pursuing a new southern policy. In other words, centering on South Korea, the north is a new northern policy, and the south is a new southern policy, which is intended to establish a common axis of prosperity. However, this article reiterates that it covers only the North Korean policy that Central Asia belongs to.

³ Korea's Policy Briefing, New Northern Policy, <http://www.korea.kr/special/policy/CurationView.do?newsId=148865644> (accessed 2020-07-24).

[Fig. 1] Countries subject to the New Northern Policy¹

After inauguration in May 2017, President Moon Jae-in announced the New Northern Policy, which focused on expanding economic cooperation with northern countries, particularly on active participation in the Far East, at the ‘3rd Eastern Economic Forum’ in September of the same year.² As a promotion strategy for realizing the vision, a) promoted a new cooperation model with Russia through 9 bridges (9-Bridge strategy, refer to the fig. 2 below) b) established a dedicated organization for northern economic cooperation, c) established an institutional infrastructure for northern cooperation.³

[Fig.2] 9-BRIDGE MAP⁴

¹ Northern Economy Cooperation Committee (북방경제협력위원회), 9-Bridge, http://bukbang.go.kr/bukbang_en/vision_policy/9-bridge/ (accessed on 2020-07-14).

² Moon's Keynote Speech at the 3rd Eastern Economic Forum(제 3 회 동방경제포럼 기조연설), Blue House of Republic of Korea(청와대), <https://www1.president.go.kr/articles/944> (accessed 2020-08-01).

³ Korea's Policy Briefing, New Northern Policy, <http://www.korea.kr/special/policy/CurationView.do?newsId=148865644> (accessed 2020-07-24).

⁴ “9-BRIDGE” of the “New Northern Policy” under the Moon Jae-in Government of the Republic of Korea, Northern Economy Cooperation Committee(북방경제협력위원회), http://bukbang.go.kr/bukbang_en/vision_policy/9-bridge/ (accessed on 2020-07-14).



In other words, the New Northern Policy is a continental strategy that strengthens cooperation with Eurasian countries based on peace. Trilateral cooperation between South, North Korea and Russia (Najin-Hasan logistics business, railroads, electric power grids, etc.) laid the foundation for implementation, FTA promotion between the Korea-EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) and participation in the 'One Belt and One Road' initiative of China. It can be characterized as a policy to institutionalize multilateral cooperation and further connect the Korean Peninsula to the Eurasian region.¹

Korea's New Northern Policy, which will serve as a midwife for the construction of the Eurasian Northern Cooperation Belt, is based on mutually complementary, comprehensive, and horizontal relations among the participating countries, and promotes common interests as an important value.

The New Northern Policy aimed at promoting economic and political relations with North Korea, Russia, and Central Asia through Europe, has led the construction of the Eurasian Northern Cooperation Belt, which can be a check and balance while cooperating with China. This is the main strategy of the Korean government. With the recent anti-Russian sanctions, Korea-Russia economic cooperation is not achieving the expected results, while Central Asia is a key partner in the New Northern Policy of South Korea.

The core cooperation areas of this policy are largely divided into 3 regions (Eastern area-Far Eastern Russia/China, Central region-Central Asia/Mongolia, Western area-Western Russia, Ukraine) It is directly connected to strengthening the business. In particular, Central Asia has been continuously engaged in exchange and cooperation with the Korean government, focusing on the resource development and infrastructure sectors, and has a lot of interest in expanding cooperation into the manufacturing, agricultural and information and communication sectors where Korea has strength. Therefore, Central Asia is a region where there is a great need to pursue mutual growth through sharing of the Korean development model in the future, while strengthening private support and government cooperation by using intergovernmental consultative bodies.

2. Central Asia – its Importance and Values for the South Korea

Central Asia is a region recognized for its strategic values such as rich energy and mineral resources, geopolitical points, young countries, the Korean Wave spread, and 300,000 Korean (Goryoin) networks. In addition, the Central Asian region is an attractive cooperation target for Korea, which faces demands such as diversification of energy and mineral supply routes, discovery of new export markets and investment areas, and expansion of diplomatic and economic cooperation targets.

In 2019, President Moon Jae-in and Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon sequentially visited to five countries in Central Asia. For South Korea, Central Asia has been regarded as a new market in the center of Eurasia, an area of importance for the practical

¹ Lee Ji-eon, “신북방정책에서의 정상외교 (Summit Diplomacy in the concept of the New Northern Policy)”, Presented at the Seminar of the New Northern Policy hold by the Northern Economic Committee (2020-05-15).



success of the North Korean policy. Thus 2019 Summit Diplomacy can be evaluated as that the Korean government does consider of Central Asian states as important partners. In particular, the President's visits to the three Central Asian countries (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with according to the visiting date) and the Prime Minister's visits to the two other Central Asian countries (Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic) strengthened traditional friendly cooperation relations, expanded Central Asian States' consensus on the New Northern Policy, and Korean residents living in Korea. Furthermore, it has the meaning of strengthening historical and cultural ties. The government's intention to promote the 'New Northern Policy' and diversify diplomatic and economic policies reflected the intention of expanding cooperation with Central Asian countries.

Central Asia has been the main target area for cooperation by the Korean government since the mid-2000s, and is a region where Summit Diplomacy have been irregular but frequently promoted. After establishing diplomatic relations with five Central Asian countries in 1992, Korea has developed mutually beneficial cooperative relations, although there are some differences among countries. With this Two-Tops(President and Prime Minister)' visit, Korea reaffirmed the importance of Central Asian countries as Korea's main partner.

Furthermore, above mentioned, the New Northern Policy is also paying much attention to linkages with major long-term development strategies of countries in Central Asia. It should be noted that the Korean government's development strategy contains the concerns and interests of the Central Asian state's individual development strategy – Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan's Development Strategy for 2017-2021 (2017), Kazakhstan: 2050 Strategy (2012), and Turkmenistan: Social and Economic Programme of Turkmenistan for 2018-2024 (2017).¹ This means that the Korean government deeply understands that the long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation with the Central Asian individual state could be maintained only when it is directly or indirectly linked and promoted in their economic development plans.

III. Summit Diplomacy of Korea-Central Asia: Outcomes and Implications

1. Summit Diplomacy by Country

From the perspective of Central Asian countries, which are pursuing the diversification of the economic cooperation route, Korea has always been a major partner, especially as Russia's and China's hegemony toward Central Asia becomes stronger. More and more, Korea needs to establish its position and status as a "good" partner to help Central Asian countries achieve economic autonomy and independent development.

Under this keynote, when officially visiting Uzbekistan in 2019, President Moon Jae-in stated in a parliamentary speech that he would open the era of the "Iron Silk Road" with Central Asian countries - linking Russia, Central Asia and Europe starting from the Korean Peninsula. Most of all, the biggest achievement of the Korea-Uzbekistan summit was the "Special Strategic Partnership," which promoted bilateral

¹ Northern Economy Cooperation Committee(북방경제협력위원회), Strategy of New Northern Policy, http://bukbang.go.kr/bukbang_en/vision_policy/strategy/ (accessed on 2020-08-01).



relations more strengthened, and suggested the hope that cooperation between the two countries could be a pioneer in establishing an Eurasian cooperation belt. In addition, real cooperation between the two countries in the fields of energy, infrastructure, 5G, health care, education, defense, and public administration was discussed in depth.

In the case of Turkmenistan, they expressed their intention to expand the infrastructure and energy cooperation, sign a “culture/humanity agreement”, select scholarship students to Korea, and open the King Sejong Institute (Korean language center), and create a second and third Qianli cooperation model in the future. In particular, in Turkmenistan, it is said that the construction of the gas chemical plant in Qianli was highly satisfied with the completion without any deadline and accidents, and the President of Turkmenistan directly suggested additional cooperation plans with Korea.

Meanwhile, in the context of Korea's support for Kazakhstan's '2050 Economic Development Strategy', the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the 4th Industrial Revolution, and agreed to jointly pursue cooperation in high-tech areas such as 5G, big data, and artificial intelligence. And the willingness to cooperate in the logistics sector.

Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon's visit to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has contributed to promoting bilateral cooperation with the two countries. This visit focused on supporting Korean companies' entry into Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where infrastructure was relatively insignificant compared to other Central Asian countries, and focused on securing new markets and cooperative partners through diversification of existing areas of cooperation. Furthermore, through the strengthening of public development assistance, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan sought joint prosperity, and Korea pledged to establish its status as a sustainable cooperative partner.

First of all, Tajikistan mentioned the possibility of cooperation in the fields of energy, transportation, water resources and agriculture. Tajik President also promised to provide a 5-year duty-free benefit to Korean companies entering the market. On the other hand, Korea-Kyrgyzstan discussed the possibility of Kyrgyz production, processing, and export of eco-friendly agricultural products, and cooperation in areas such as Korea's advanced health and medical technology, investment attraction, tourism infrastructure development cooperation, direct route opening, and railroad construction were mentioned. In addition, the Economic Cooperation Committee of the two countries was formed to establish an institutional basis to materialize these cooperation discussions.

2. Implications of Korean President and Prime Minister's Visit to Central Asia

Central Asia has been the main target area for cooperation by the Korean government since the mid-2000s. After establishing diplomatic relations with five Central Asian countries in 1992, Korea has developed mutually beneficial cooperative relations, although there are slight differences among countries, and recently reaffirmed its importance as a major partner region.

The President's visit to three Central Asian countries and the Prime Minister's visit to two Central Asian countries have the significance of strengthening traditional friendly partnerships, expanding regional consensus on the New Northern Policy, and



strengthening historical and cultural ties in the Goryeo in Central Asia. This is because expanding the cooperation with Central Asian countries is essential for the current government's promotion of New Northern Policy and the diversification of Korea's foreign and economic policies.

Furthermore, the 2019 visit by the Korean president and the Prime Minister to Central Asia is meaningful in order to reaffirm cooperation with major Central Asian countries in the transition period of leadership. In the past two to three years, with Uzbekistan as the starting point, some countries in Central Asia are undergoing an internal transition, such as regime change, while accelerating economic reforms and opening up their economies. What these countries have in common is that the degree of openness is gradually increasing and the investment environment is also improving. Under these circumstances, the Korean government's official Two-Top's visit to the Central Asia in 2019 is considered to have been happened very timely when it is necessary to exchange with the new central government in order to maintain existing economic cooperation and diversify the fields of cooperation.

IV. Conclusion and Suggestions for Cooperation

As an axis of the Moon Jae-in administration's New Northern Policy, the Central Asian region has important implications for the concrete realization of and for its effective outcomes. Therefore, considering the political system of Central Asian countries, the Presidential Summit between the relevant states is also an effective way to strengthen cooperation.

At the same time, in order to strengthen multilateral cooperation with the Central Asian region, the "Korea-Central Asian Cooperation Forum", which was established as a venue for all five Central Asian countries to participate, needs to be used more actively. In fact, many experts of the Central Asia in Korea and abroad have suggested that this forum has to be upgraded by participation of the prime minister level or even higher, highlighting the need for regular meetings of high-ranking personnel, regular evaluations of cooperative projects, and the discovery of new cooperation agendas in a systematic and stable manner.

The voices of local experts in Central Asia agreeing with this suggestion are also high. A consensus was also formed among the leaders of Central Asia on the need for more frequent exchanges between the Presidents at the 2019 Korean President's visit to Central Asia. For example, the Prime Minister of Kyrgyz Republic mentioned that the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum needs to be used more actively to maintain good relations with neighboring Central Asian countries and to build bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In other words, considering the political system of Central Asian countries, it is necessary to finally settle for an effective system to achieve real cooperation between South Korea and Central Asia, aiming at regularization of the Summit through the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum.

On the other hand, in order to promote cooperation in the economic sector, the activation of private enterprises entry to Central Asia should be given priority. To this end, it is necessary to provide institutional and financial support devices for countries in



Korea and Central Asia. Due to the nature of a Central Asian country with a strong presidential regime, there should be a mechanism to ensure continuity so that the frequent changes of high-ranking officials is not interrupting the on-going cooperation. Only then will future-oriented, mutually beneficial cooperation with a long term be possible, rather than a single occurrence of a single cooperative idea.

In the meantime, when reviewing cooperation projects between Korea and Central Asia, of course, there have been many achievements, but many cooperation have been just remained at the level of the MOU between the governments. It has been also discovered that only a couple of the well-known large scaled corporations achieve national projects of each Central Asian states not ever do mid-sized firms. In other words, it is true that small- and medium-sized enterprises and private companies have not yet entered the market of Central Asia. Despite the annual exchange of economic cooperation fields held at the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum, the risk and revitalization issue of private economic cooperation have not been resolved at the government level. Therefore, it is necessary to have a practical system of Korean and Central Asian governments and financial support devices that can minimize the risks that may lead the private sector to enter the Central Asian market.

Furthermore, in order to differentiate Korea and Central Asia from other countries and regions, it is necessary to strengthen 'customized' development cooperation to highlight Korea's uniqueness. For this, Korea's understanding of Central Asia should be preceded. It is not just a unilateral cooperation proposal to enhance Korea's interests, but also the need to strengthen customized development cooperation that contributes to the mid- to long-term economic policies and national welfare and social systems of Central Asian countries, which are Korea's partners. It is necessary to closely examine key government policies, such as the economic development plans being implemented by countries in Central Asia today, and discover future-oriented cooperation projects that are suitable for them.

Here, Korea's assets and know-hows, such as the transfer of the Korean-style administrative system (establishing and operating an e-government system), establishment of a health/medical infrastructure, ICT field, education (higher education), and K-Quarantine of Corona19 which hit the global in the beginning of 2020. If the Korean quarantine and operating system against the Corona 19 are actively proposed and cooperated in Central Asia. Among them, Uzbekistan was considered to be the first country in the region to actively introduce Korea's Corona Quarantine system and effectively to slow down the spread of it most successfully in Central Asia. Mirziyoyev government had actively introduced an quarantine system by inviting an infectious disease specialist from Korea to Uzbekistan in the early days of the spread of Corona 19.

On the other hand, it may be a rather cautious proposal, but it may also seek some ways to link China's One Belt and One Road project at the economic area. As is well known, China's One Belt and One Road is a network construction project that integrates railroads, roads, and power grids across China, Central Asia, and Europe. So far, the emphasis has been placed on building the aforementioned hardware infrastructure. In addition, almost all



countries in Central Asia participate in China's this project with varying levels. Some countries have a favorable view of China's project but at the same time, concerns and fears of the China's economic imperialism are also not ignorable.

Korea, too, will not be able to have some distance from this giant China's projects when she promotes cooperation with Central Asia where China has great interests. In this case, Korea and Central Asia states should consider how to take advantage of China's project from our point of view. Of course, this would not be an easy decision for the Korean government, which has to take a tightrope between the United States and China. However, in order to support the hardware distribution infrastructure in each of Central Asia, where China's One Belt One Road pass through, and to expect downward economic effects, Korea is looking for ways to provide support in terms of software, such as customs clearance and administrative practices. It could bring a positive economic effect to all of Central Asia as well.

Lastly, Korea should establish itself as a reliable “good” partner for Central Asian countries. Central Asian countries have experienced the expansionist policies of Russia, China. Korea should have a different strategy and cooperation attitude toward entering Central Asia. In other words, it is time for the Korean government to continue to make efforts to recognize the central Asian countries' cooperation between Korea and Central Asia to be more horizontal, complementary, mutually beneficial, and future-oriented.

САЙФУЛЛАЕВ ДУРБЕК

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Замонавий даврда маданий ва оммавий дипломатия

Аннотация. Мақолада глобаллашув тизимидаги маданият, оммавий ва маданий дипломатия сингари тушунчалар, шунингдек рақамли замонада уларни амалга оширишнинг айрим жиҳатлари, шу жумладан рақамли технологиялар ёрдамида амалга оширилаётган ҳамда оммавий дипломатиянинг унсурларидан бири бўлган маданий дипломатиянинг халқаро муносабатларга таъсири ҳақида сўз юритилади. Элиталар ва келгусида қандай чора-тадбирлар амалга оширилганлиги ўртасидаги боғлиқлик алоҳида тилга олинади. Глокализация ҳодисаси, яъни глобаллашув шароитларида маданий ўзига хосликлар ва миллий қадриятлар модификацияга тортилиши ҳақида ҳам сўз боради.

Таянч сўз ва иборалар: Оммавий дипломатия, “Оммавий дипломатия 2.0”, маданият, глобаллашув, глокализация, маданий дипломатия, рақамли технологиялар, Хитой, АҚШ, Конфуций институти, “юмиоқ куч”.

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются такие понятия как культура в системе глобализации, публичная и культурная дипломатия, а также некоторые аспекты их осуществления в цифровую эпоху, в том числе влияние культурной дипломатии, реали-