

Historical Opportunity for OBOR and NAPCR's Strategic Connection

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Underdeveloped and unbalanced economy in Northeast Asia

Economic development and regional economic integration in Northeast Asia are underdeveloped and unbalanced. Economic development and regional cooperation are strong aspirations of the countries in the region. The objective needs of economic development in this region have actually put forward requirements for economic integration and cooperation in Northeast Asia. In fact, all countries have put forward their own regional cooperation initiatives or ideas. China has its “One Belt and One Road” strategic initiative; while in January of 2018, the “Silk Road on Ice” was put forward.

OBOR and NAPCR: Big overlap between OBOR and NAPCR

The One Belt One Road initiative itself is a move for interregional cooperation. There are several basic principles. The Belt and Road run through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting the vibrant East Asia economic circle at one end and developed European economic circle at the other, and encompassing countries with huge potential for economic development. The Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic); linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to go from China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in one direction, and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South

Pacific in the other.

The new initiative of the Silk Road on Ice includes two routes, one extending through the Russian Arctic coast to northern Europe; the other through Alaska, the Arctic coast of Canada, and the coast of Greenland to North America and the United States.

In January 2018, at the 2nd China-Latin America Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting, China and the CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) jointly announced that China's One Belt One Road Initiative was being extended to South America.

On the other hand, there are big overlaps between OBOR and NAPCR. The Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility (NAPCR) was proposed as one of the key foreign policies of the Moon Jae-in government. It includes three parts: a peace and cooperation platform, the New Northern Policy, and the New Southern Policy. The former is entitled Pillar of Peace and the latter two Pillars of Prosperity.

Judging from the scope of economic geography, South Korea's new southward orientation is part of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road." South Korea's New Northern Policy is part of the "China Ice Silk Road." The two are highly coincident, or the South Korean program is part of the "Belt and Road."

Judging from the common interest and the policies of both parties, China welcomes and supports South Korea's NAPCR policy. China's "Belt and Road Initiative" and "plan for the revitalization of old industrial bases in northeastern China" are urgently needed under the economic environment for regional cooperation. South Korea also has a magnificent blueprint - the New Economic Map of the Korean Peninsula. The strategic interests and economic interests of both parties are in fact highly consistent.

North Korea nuclear issue: Facing new historical opportunities

The positive development of the DPRK nuclear issue just proves that North Korea as a regional country has made a strategic effort to break its isolation and integrate itself into the international community and acquire the right to survival and development. For a long time, people have been debating whether North Korea can really abandon its nuclear program and whether the peninsula can truly achieve complete denuclearization. This depends on whether North Korea has a guaranteed right to survival and development.

If North Korea is isolated, its survival is threatened, its economy cannot develop, it cannot be open

to the outside world, and it cannot integrate into the international community. Then it will certainly seek nuclear power and nuclear deterrence for its own protection. Under such circumstances, it is impossible for North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. If North Korea has achieved the right to survival and development, what is the significance of having nuclear weapons? Therefore, whether North Korea can abandon its nuclear program does not depend entirely on North Korea itself. It also depends on whether the United States and the international community give North Korea such an opportunity. Nuclear weapons have little value for North Korea. In April of this year, North Korea held the third plenary session of the Seventh Labor Party Congress. In fact, North Korea had made the strategic decision to dismantle its nuclear program under the condition that it has reached an agreement with the United States.

If you want to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue, security and economic issues and regional economic cooperation are inseparable. First, the Korean nuclear issue has seriously affected and restricted regional economic development and regional economic cooperation. Second, in turn, economic cooperation has provided the conditions and motivation for the settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue.

Based on the above analysis, we must promote regional economic cooperation and even inter-regional economic cooperation. It provides realistic and promising economic cooperation prospects for both North Korea and the United States, providing guarantees and economic incentives for the settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue. The parties to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, especially South Korea, China, Russia and Japan, are the most directly involved parties and have special responsibilities and obligations on this issue.

Abandon geopolitical thinking

As a cross-regional cooperation strategy, China's "One Belt and One Road" strategic initiative is only a cooperative framework and platform. Its purpose is to achieve win-win situations and economic development and prosperity in Eurasia. It is not a geopolitical plan. We hope that all countries in the world will not look at it from the perspective of geopolitics.

South Korea has proposed its own regional cooperation initiative, the NAPCR, which is very good. South Korea can fully interface with China's "One Belt and One Road" strategic initiative, just like Russia's "Eurasian Economic Union" and the "One Belt and One Road" strategy. Strategically, China welcomes and supports South Korea's regional cooperation initiatives. From a tactical point of view, the two sides can start negotiations and consultations to determine specific cooperation projects.

“How to synergize” rather than “whether or not” is the main problem faced by China and South Korea in cooperation. It needs multilateral and bilateral integration and needs to strengthen cooperation towards third parties. I think it still needs think tanks, experts, scholars, and economists from both sides to firstly discuss this.

With the settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue, what is the future and emerging security architecture in Northeast Asia? This will have an important impact on this kind of cross-regional economic cooperation. Therefore, whether the aspirations of the countries in the region for economic development and regional cooperation can be realized will still be profoundly affected by the regional security architecture.



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