

# What Is to Be Done for China?

## : Anatomy of China's Super Power Conundrum and PRC-ROK Relations

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| <p>I . Introduction</p> <p>II . China's Achievements</p> <p>III . PRC-ROK Relations</p> <p>IV . China's Potential and Major Huddles to Become a Global Superpower</p> |
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### | ABSTRACT |

This paper explores China's great success secrets in modern periods and challenges of this century amid its ambition to become a global superpower, along with PRC-ROK relations. This work demonstrates that in order to attain a global superpower status, China must solve DPRK's nuclear problem pro-actively. Moreover, despite the several success story in modern times, China is clearly facing several new challenges both in regional and global context. This paper argues that among numerous obstacles, China fundamentally should overcome the restraints of the current global energy and financial market system. For this restraint obstructs China's energy security goals and its grand Belt and Road initiative ambition in the end. In other words, the current global energy and financial system has been formed quite unfavorable and unfriendly towards China. Equally this paper contends that the constructivist approach may turn out very useful concept that could enhance future PRC-ROK bilateral relations in the longer terms. Without employing appropriate measure to deal with several particular burdens such as global energy price systems, natural resource constraints, environmental pollution, strong allies support, it is rather not easy for Beijing to maintain its current trajectory in the longer term.

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## I. Introduction

This paper examines China's great success secrets in modern periods and challenges of this century amid its ambition to become a global superpower, along with PRC-ROK relations. This study argues that in order for China to become a superpower, to solve DPRK's nuclear problem is essential. Furthermore, despite the series of success stories in modern times, China is facing a new few major challenges both in regional and global context. This essay argues that amid numerous challenges, China fundamentally has to overcome the restraints of both the current global energy and financial market system which is genetically related to both its energy security goals and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)'s future outcome. For the current global energy and financial system in particular set a really high shield against China. Unless China completely either joins or admits this global system, China's risk will never be solved. Not only with current west dominated financial system, China also has to overcome North Korean assignment. China's old traditional thinking of using North Korea as a buffer state will never be favorable to the international community's existing perception toward China. In the same context, equally, this paper contends that China's soft power strategy has been China's inherent great strength throughout the centuries. Accordingly, the constructivist approach is a very useful concept that could enhance the currently estranged PRC-ROK relations in both immediate and the longer terms.

## II. China's Achievements

It is quite monumental to point out that China's remarkable economic growth in the past few decades was perhaps the most successful phenomenon, yet was sometimes regarded as a mystery in world history.

It is quite rare to discover any nation with consecutive economic growth in the past few decades by almost 10 percent each year in modern history. China has steadily enjoyed annual economic growth by 9 percent since 1978.<sup>1)</sup> There are several explanations for this achievement.

First, great leadership quality by Deng Xiao Ping was the dominant force in achieving the current economic prosperity up to now. It is important to note that Chinese leadership quality is by far superior, in comparison with its rival states or its neighboring nations, whether it is based upon totalitarian leadership or Chinese version of democratic style. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that special leadership quality is much required to control 1.3 billion population with 56 minority ethnic groups. The case of clumsy and arbitrary Soviet leadership already proved how important the leadership quality is to manage multi-ethnic and multi-nationality country during the last century, not to mention to deal with always delicate center-periphery relations. None of other countries' political leaders have been capable of doing this task as the same as the Chinese leaders have done so far. Historically, China has produced better quality leadership throughout the centuries, compared with Korea, Russia, and other parts of the world. And this leadership pattern was set to be China's very unique political culture in modern political history, whether Chinese leaders resorted to democratic methods or others. It is also important to note that even though Xi consolidated his power based upon one man rule system, collective leadership has served as balance of power relations among the top leadership. One of communist country's typical leadership style, collective leadership was the mediating system for the power struggle. And Chinese executed this particular system quite well throughout the past few decades.

Second, China's Free Economic Zone (FEZ) policy was unusually successful particularly in the Guangdong region during the beginning stage of Deng Xiao Ping's economic reform. Deng was actually able

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1) Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: the Penguin Press, 2011), pp. 487-508.

to build his own political clout and support through the success of Guangdong's economy. China's FEZ success became virtually the ideal model for any other developing states to follow this pattern, even for North Korea. Kim Jong-il actually often used to visit Zhuhai a few times for himself. However, most of Free Economic Zone policy could not bring productive outcomes like the Chinese case mostly because of stubborn and high customs tax and regulation policy of host countries. It is equally important to point out that Soviet Union's series of attempts of Free Economic Zone policies continued to fail over and over again throughout the decades and the regions, even during the Russian Federation period. And even other western states could not make comparable achievements as the Chinese did. Following the success in Shenzhen, Shantou, Zhuhai, Xiamen, China's Free Economic Zone policy continued to prevail in Shanghai and other parts of China. It is interesting to note that China's Free Economic Zone policy is even being adopted in China's most challenging provinces such as three northeastern provinces or even at the border between China and North Korea.

Thirdly, China's economic success was also due to the Chinese people's unique traditional habit of saving their fortune in their savings bank account. For example, China's saving bank deposit ratio for individual is about 50%, compared with Korea's 3% and the US's 12% along with OECD average countries with 8%.<sup>2)</sup> In other words, it is safe to note that China's economy was built in the basis of saving fortunes-driven economy, compared with the US consuming or capital driven economy. This phenomenon is also very intriguing when compared with other socialist states such as the Soviet Union or even the Russian Federation.. The image of banks in Russia is still portrayed as unstable and unreliable so that average Soviet and Russian citizens have tended to avoid using banks.<sup>3)</sup> Most of Russian banks went bankrupt and disappeared while

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2) Interview with Chinese anonymous expert at China Social Science of Academy, Beijing, China, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

3) Conversation during the Workshop on Northeast Asian security, The Institute of World

failing to give large sum of money back to regular customers during the stagnation period. Whereas in China, banking system mechanism, either national famous branch or local ones, run quite smoothly so far throughout the nationwide. If PRC absorbs Hong Kong's economy completely in the near future, Chinese financial system based upon banks will be much stronger and larger than now, and even may look comparable to New York or London at least in terms of scale and international reputation.

Finally, the size of China's large population has served as the major linchpin to maintain its economy. China's national economic strategy is somehow very simple in that if the export policy failed, China has always domestic option to divert its economic priority. Beijing can always utilize 1.3 billion population as the potential consumer group to give a big cushion to make up its trade deficit in the event of the failure of negotiation of trade talks with the US or other trading nations. Domestic economic option would be very difficult for other states to exercise in the case of economic crisis except India. Even other similar export-driven economy states such as Korea or Japan cannot dare to think of this option primarily due to the size of difference of population. It is crucially important to point out that the size of population was not only the main secret for PRC's economic success. It has been also always the major weapon for every flourishing prosperous Chinese dynasty throughout the centuries. It is undeniable that prior to 1840, China was the single highest GNP producing nation in the world during many centuries. And now it is safe to note that China is back on the same old trajectory restoring its old previous economic status.

Other than China's economic growth, China was also very successful in implementing its soft power strategy during recent years. While carrying out its soft power strategy, China possesses two critical merits: one

is financial capacity as discussed above, and another strength is cultural richness heritage which has accumulated for the past several centuries. It is important to note that China's marvelous economic growth in modern period indeed provided a variety of tools and options, including the capacity to exercise a wide range of economic aids for other developing nations, investment capital, access to China's massive market for energy and raw materials, and supply of inexpensive labor. There is no denying that China's economic success has clearly boosted its international prestige and in particular generated special capability to combine growth with authoritarianism. And this amplified the following image and perception that China provided an ideal alternative to Washington Consensus of liberal democratic capitalism. Also, here, cultural heritage does not mean merely cultural items but also a particular segment of its political culture of using soft power strategy and tactic abroad. Perhaps China's biggest strength in projecting its soft power strategy lies in the emphasis on smooth transnational human networks with no strong resistance from the counterparts. Chinese tended to approach its targeting nation not by means of force all the time, but by means of natural flow of intimate human networks on and off while sharing common identities and values, just like constructivist approach. China has been quite successful in prevailing ideas, norms and values to neighboring states in the region by building up so-called pro or friendly groups toward China in political, economic, social and educational spheres to the counterparts. It is important to note that, however, in recent decades, China has been more successful in implementing its soft power strategy towards other regions such as Africa and Latin America than East Asia in recent history. Once again, China's soft power strategy is also genetically related to China's fast growing economy. As China has grown in global economic power, it has acquired the means to redirect nations in new directions. China has chosen to approach countries by offering different kinds of big sum money in investing infrastructure for natural resources, instead of exploiting and brutalizing people, keeping them in servitude, and denying

them education in the region just like western Europeans did exactly one century ago.<sup>4)</sup> Both in the near and long term future, China's soft power strategy is highly likely to serve as the most effective and useful tool in becoming a great regional power and global superpower.

Another significant Chinese achievement is military modernization. China's miraculous economic growth facilitated a wide-ranging and rapid modernization of its armed forces and defense industry. In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China's weapon system, including jets, tanks, ships, and submarines, lagged much behind that of the US, and yet the gap began to disappear except in the aircraft carrier area. In particular, China's submarine technology improved dramatically and somehow even surpassed the US's this year. Nonetheless, China has still a long way to catch up with the US aircraft carrier in many ways, although China recently announced to build its 4<sup>th</sup> aircraft carrier with possibly nuclear power generation.<sup>5)</sup> China has also aimed at asymmetric approaches to deterring and defeating potential enemies by developing anti-satellite weapons, many precision-guided conventional ballistic missiles, and cyber war techniques that could turn out quite costly and difficult for the US and its allies to counter.<sup>6)</sup> In recent years, People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been quite successful in employing defense anti-missile system all over the world inviting a few advanced internet technology ventures allegedly. China's 5G technology will continue to play a major role in military operation all over the world, which is very similar to what Google map or the US satellite navigation system did for the past few decades. China's 5G internet technology will surpass the current US

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4) Ann Lee, *What the U.S. Can Learn From China* (San Francisco: Berett-Koehler Publishers, 2012), pp. 173-174; and see also Wang, Jian-Ye, *What Drives China's Growing Role in Africa?* (Washington D.C: IMF Working paper, 2007), pp. 1-32.

5) News one news, "China decided to build its 4<sup>th</sup> aircraft carrier," <http://news1.kr/articles/?3780064> (Accessed November 28, 2019).

6) Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Asia, 2000-2020," in Ashley J. Tellis, Andrew Marble and Travis Tanner (eds.), *Asia's Rising Power an America's Continued Purpose* (Washington DC: the National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010), p. 29.

navigation system once fully commercialized.

### III. PRC-ROK Relations

Besides the task of overcoming the western-dominated international financial system, China has to solve difficult North Korean assignment. China's traditional way of thinking of using North Korea as a buffer state does not help China's image in international community. In this sense, PRC-ROK coordination is crucially important. Nonetheless, the current relation between PRC and ROK is quite estranged for many reasons.

Nevertheless, the two nations clearly do possess more potential to enhance diplomatic ties with each other in the future. One of the biggest optimisms is special historical ties between the two nations which inherited from the past 5,000 years. Two nations, regardless of ideology, different political system, values and cold war framework, or even the difference over North Korean issues, it is difficult to deny that at the peoples' level, perhaps the two nations understand most each other well, in comparison with other countries, in the sphere of most parts of life except politics. Accordingly, it is very interesting to note that two nations' expectation for one another is much higher than any other states' relations. Indeed these expectations tend to be much higher than the limits and the realities that the current relations are able to produce at the current stage.

Despite the optimism, there are several hindering elements for China to overcome. Most importantly, the North Korea question remains the major obstacle that disturbs every tickle of current bilateral relations. The question of North Korea is deeply rooted into both the Korean War and the foundation of PRC in the modern history, and is also genetically related to the US-China rivalry, and THAAD deployment and other

security related issues. It is crucially important to understand that PRC and ROK are still technically positioned into two different ideology or geopolitical groups: maritime power vs. continental power. It is virtually impossible for the two nations to escape from the Korean War framework as long as North Korea exists. For example, following a few North Korea's nuclear tests, the third one in particular, along with Cheonanham battleship sinking incidence as well as Yeonpyeong Island battle, PRC-ROK relations became more estranged than ever before. PRC has consistently supported DPRK rather than ROK in every sensitive and delicate trial caused by North Korea in the Korean Peninsula.

From the Chinese perspective, it is quite natural to understand that PRC and DPRK fought together against ROK-US allies during the Korean War. Furthermore, even without great military assistance from Kim Il-Sung's army during the Chinese civil war in the 1940s, PRC could not win over Kuomintang.<sup>7)</sup> This means that PRC cannot totally give up DPRK under any circumstance. From the South Korean perspective, ROK-US alliance is blood shed together alliance. ROK-US alliance is even more significant, compared with Japan-US alliance in that Japan-US alliance is technically a strategic alliance between former two enemy states. Despite the ideological differences between PRC and ROK, however, the former ROK President Park Geun-hye made a perhaps most dramatic and unusual decision to attend China's military parade for the first time in ROK's history during her presidency. Neither Kim Dae-jung nor Roh Moo-hyun had previously dared to think of attending PRC's military parade. However, Park's pro- Chinese policy was clearly deterred by North Korea's 4<sup>th</sup> nuclear test in January of 2016, and began to transform radically in 2016. She failed to reach President Xi on this matter, despite her several continued efforts to use private phone line with him. According to one anonymous Chinese diplomatic channel, Xi was very busy with sorting out domestic agenda related to People's

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7) Myong Ho Kim, *The Story of Chinese People 4* (Paju: Hangilsa, 1976), pp. 263-315.

Liberation Army (PLA) reform in Chongqing.<sup>8)</sup> Since then, ROK-PRC relations began to deteriorate along with further THAAD deployment issue, until this moment. In this regard, North Korea provides fundamentally the major huddle for the complete rapprochement between the two nations and this trajectory will continue to remain the same for the time being.<sup>9)</sup>

It is also important to note that there is speculation within Chinese diplomatic and political circle that PRC does not care whether North Korea possesses nuclear weapons or not.<sup>10)</sup> PRC's primary concern is the presence of US troops in the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia. For PRC, US troops is more security threat than North Korea's nuclear weapons. Accordingly, there is clear indication that Beijing does not want to solve North Korea's nuclear problem immediately and rather prefers to leave this issue to open question, although Beijing never said so in public. There is already evidence that the six-party talks never worked as Beijing hoped. What Beijing wants is maintaining status quo in the Korean Peninsula, not any change. Divided Korea suits Chinese national interests the most at the moment. It is important to note that Chinese traditional diplomatic rhetoric is that there is a clear distinction between and what Beijing says and how Beijing behaves. Nonetheless, it is crucially important for PRC to remember that North Korea will not give up its nuclear weapon under any circumstances, including when North Korea reunifies the Korean Peninsula and when the US withdraws its troops from East Asia. China should keep in mind that during the Kim Jong Un period, North Koreans often say if Japan is Korea's 100 years enemy state, China is the enemy of 1000 years.

In the course of North Korea saga, however, perhaps the most im-

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8) Interview with anonymous scholar at the China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, China, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

9) Tae-Hwan Kim, *China's Sharp Power and South Korea's Peace Initiative* (Washington D.C: Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies, 2019), pp. 141-159.

10) Interview with a few anonymous Chinese diplomats, November 2018.

portant factor in bilateral relation between Beijing and Seoul is to maintain individual human networks or non-political dialogues at least at the non-governmental actor level if necessary. This will serve as the linchpin of future PRC-ROK rapprochement for the longer term. Quite frankly, in the immediate future, it would be extremely difficult for the two nations to become closer than before, given the consideration of three levels of analysis: the individual, intra-state, and the international level. The current international system, especially the US-China balance of power rivalry relations is being perhaps the most deteriorated in the course of the rather quiet and inconspicuous battle between Belt and Road Initiative and Indo-Pacific Strategy all over the place in the planet. This systemic structure will have significant influence on delaying PRC-ROK rapprochement. President Moon officially announced in late June of 2019 that ROK joined the Indo-Pacific Strategy in harmony with his New Southern Economic Policy. What is worse, US-China trade dispute is not generating a friendly environment to recover estranged relations between PRC and ROK either. US actually included THAAD issues in the list of trade dispute between China and the US.

Moon and Xi's personal relations are also somehow in the stage of frictions. Moon administration was originally born with the sentiment of pro-China, pro-Russia, and pro-North Korea from the beginning. His administration and his followers in particular, still tend to believe that the gravity of importance for Korea's diplomacy should tilt toward Beijing rather than Washington because of their political beliefs and philosophy. Nevertheless, throughout his administration period, Moon continues to sense that he has been ignored by Xi ever since he became the president. In particular, he allegedly strongly felt that he was completely ignored by Xi especially following the Osaka G20 Summit in June 2019.<sup>11)</sup> Accordingly he had no choice but to make some adjustment for his

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11) Youtube, "Xi Jing Ping refused shaking hands with Moon Jae In," <https://blog.naver.com/dbslzhs0131/221573867156> (Accessed June 30, 2019).

policy toward PRC just like his predecessors did during their terms, while officially joining in the Indo-Pacific Strategy with caution. This means that as far as PRC-ROK relations are concerned, there are so many barriers to maintaining rapprochement between the two nations. As a result, there is no denying that either traditional realism or liberalism approach is not going to be that effective for the time being, as illustrated before.

Despite all the difficulties, constructive approach may turn out the quite desirable solution to repair damaged bilateral relations, considering the importance of special historical bonds between two nations, especially at peoples' level. Peoples of the two nations should continue to promote progressive ideas and encourage their governments to adhere to norms of constructive and appropriate behavior. Compared with Japan, according to Korean observation and analysis, China is somehow perceived to be having a more flexible society, in terms of expressing their opinion and communicating frank and candid opinions with their foreign counterparts at least in the realm of academia or other non-governmental organizations such as media or others. On the contrary, Japan is strictly government one dimensional controlled society. For instance, Japanese universities or think-tanks are even being prohibited to approach to Korean counterparts, if government gives direct order not to meet them. However, perhaps China and Korea have been relatively more approaching and more coordinating despite diplomatic friction, in comparison with their relations with Japan.

At this moment, one of the international relations theories, constructivism approach may turn out as one of the remedies because it constitutes special component of current PRC-ROK relations. People-to-people contacts keep increasing despite political restraints between the two nations. The constructivism will serve as potential cornerstone to move peoples' perceptions and minds from the grass root level from both sides. The creation of public opinion and public sentiment is crucially important to understand each other in this bilateral relations. In this

sense, the role of media is essentially very important. Furthermore, patience is much required in PRC-ROK relations especially among almost every social stratum in each side. The role of educational institution, policy driven think tank, cultural institution should step up in the forefront of maintaining and recovering bilateral relations these days. Prior to the THAAD deployment dispute between the two nations, the largest number of foreign students who study in ROK were Chinese students. And yet, THAAD deployment in Korea prevented Chinese students from coming to Korea. For example, it is intriguing to point out that the number of Vietnamese students who study in Korean universities outnumbered Chinese students since 2017.<sup>12)</sup> In short, exceptional patience is much needed from both sides in order to enhance bilateral relations. Policymakers, people, and the media should remain self-restraint from one another in the event of possible crisis, if they want to maintain good relations.

#### **IV. China's Potential and Major Huddles to Become a Global Superpower**

Once again, it is needless to mention that China's role in the region is vitally important, especially with regard to solving North Korea's problem. For China, denuclearization of North Korea is even more important than defending the US military for the longer term. As a large number of experts already mentioned, the death of Jang Song-thaek and Kim Jong-nam are closely linked with China, which means the current friendly faces of Kim and Xi's meeting exposed by media is not just all about PRC-DPRK relations. North Korea's nuclear weapons

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12) Korean Association of Foreign Student Administrators (KAFSA) Conference, Jeju, Korea, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

will eventually be direct security threat to PRC, even ‘BIG IF’ reunification of Korea takes place completely in the pace of DPRK. Also, it is crucially important to note that the current balance of power relations in the region are not similar to 1940s or 1950s. It is a rather multipolar system. If China only develops its strategy toward the region purely based upon Bi hegemony or new imperial mind, this is highly likely to cause tremendous backlash from its neighboring nations. Furthermore, it is important for Beijing to keep in mind that China’s role and stance on North Korea’s nuclear proliferation is directly related to China’s image among international communities.

Secondly, perhaps, in order for China to become a true global superpower, it is necessary to compare its current status with the one of Soviet Union during the Cold War Period. China’s biggest disadvantage lies in two factors. One is difficulties of China’s physical access to energy natural resources, in particular, oil and gas; and the other is the insecurity of sea route of transporting these energy goods to the homeland. These two questions are somehow genetically related to energy security problems. It is undeniable that the global maritime route is dominated by the enormous US naval powers. In this regard, China feels immense pressure to pass through global energy choke point such as the Strait of Hormuz and Malacca Strait, not to mention Panama Canal.<sup>13)</sup> This is why China is so dedicated to Northern sea route or the North Pole in recent years. These three or four particular areas plus Mekong River area will turn out the strategic battle ground between BRI and Indo-Pacific Strategy.<sup>14)</sup> In the same line with energy sea route, China is also facing another bigger challenge, perhaps the most disadvantages, that is, the current global financial system which has

13) Michael Klare, *Resource Wars: the New Landscape of Global Conflict* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001), pp. 109-137. See also Michael Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet* (New York: A Holt Paperback, 2009), pp. 194-201.

14) Discussion during the workshop, *Regional Workshop on the Future Prospects of the Mekong River* organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) and the US Embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, June 13-14, 2019.

been formed as quite unfavorable and unfriendly to China. China is not only dealing with the US, one nation. China has to deal with other superclass financial powers, who are both visible and invisible. These financial superpowers who are mostly descendants of the Rockefeller Rothschild, and Nobel families, and others, have accumulated their fortunes for the past 250 years, while deeply penetrating into politics both domestic and international in each country. These formidable groups which consisted of old seven sisters and mainly American and European wealthy families are substantially controlling the global financial market and energy market up to now.<sup>15)</sup> Their powers were more amplified by the fact that energy became financial commodity by simply surpassing economic commodity during the millennium period. These superclasses are traditionally not so friendly toward Russians and Chinese. In order for China to compete against the US, China has to get over these global financial tycoons. Accumulating hard currency or securing sea route is not simply enough to cope with these groups' immense powers. These two preconditions are completely subordinate to global financial market trend or policy. As a similar approach that Japan did for the past several decades, China has no choice but to either be integrated into this very exclusive club, or to admit it, in order to get over this circumstance. The only sceptic is that Japan has not even been fully accepted despite its tenacious efforts to contributing to this group either. Without solving this fundamental problem, China is highly likely to be put in a very unstable and disadvantaged position for the brand new great game against the US, not to mention trade dispute or prevailing BRI strategy to all over the world.

Lastly, other than dealing with global financial super class, China

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15) Author's Interview with Daniel Yergin. Cambridge Energy Research Associates, Washington, DC. July 5, 2011. See also Daniel Yergin, "Energy Security in the 1990s," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (1988), pp. 111-132; Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Free Press, 2008), pp. 523-542; and Daniel Yergin, *The Quest* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), p. 83.

also has to deal with environmental problems such as air pollution, etc. both domestically and internationally. It is important to understand that Soviet leaders underestimated the importance of ecological and environmental disaster during the Soviet Period. Both Aral Sea ecological disaster and Chernobyl nuclear incident caused by man-made mistake generated significant social chaos and disarray in the late 1980s. Equally moreover, China does not have powerful allies in the region like the US ones, especially among its neighboring states.<sup>16)</sup> It is undeniable that still several PRC's neighboring states in the region tend to perceive China as a big military security threat. In this regard, China needs to transform its regional image drastically. It would be ideal for PRC to see that the US troops will be evacuated from the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia. However, it is virtually impossible to see this will happen even in the mid-term or longer term since US foreign policy has put too much gravity on this region lately, even above traditionally important Middle East.

In conclusion, without adopting appropriate measures to cope with the four previously discussed burdens; global energy price systems, natural resource constraints, environmental pollution, and strong allies support, it is rather not easy for the Chinese government to maintain its current trajectory in the longer term. At the same time, China needs to diversify its inherently strong soft power strategy in both more innovated and transparent way.<sup>17)</sup>

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16) Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Geopolitics of Strategic Asia, 2000-2020," in Ashley J. Tellis, Andrew Marble and Travis Tanner (eds.), *Asia's Rising Power and America's Continued Purpose* (Washington DC: the National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010), pp. 26-33.

17) Aaron L. Friedberg (2010).

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## 중국의 슈퍼파워 퍼즐과 한중 관계 분석

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중국은 지난 70년간 지속적인 경제 성장으로 인하여 지역 강대국으로 재 발돋움하는 데 성공하였다. 그 배경에는 등소평의 개혁개방정책, 특히 광둥성에서의 4개의 지역 특구 경제정책이 결정적인 기폭제 역할을 하였다. 동시에 중국의 인구 파워는 다른 수출 지향적인 동아시아 국가들과 비교했을 때 내수경제 활성화의 최대 히든 카드로 결정적인 중국경제발전에 크게 이바지하였다. 또한 전통적으로 강한 중국 특유의 소프트파워 전략은 주변국과 전 세계 개발도상국을 상대로 매우 효과적인 외교적 결실물을 내기도 하였다. 본 논문은 그럼에도 불구하고 중국이 세계적인 글로벌 슈퍼파워 국가로 거듭나기 위해서는 세 가지 장애물을 극복해야 한다고 주장한다. 첫째는 북한의 핵무기 비확산 문제와 관련해서 보다 더 국제사회가 공감하고 납득할 수 있는 건설적인 역할을 수행하여야 한다는 것이다. 두 번째는 과거 냉전시대 구소련에 비해서 매우 불리한 에너지 안보의 취약성을 어떻게 극복하느냐는 것이다. 특히 중국은 해외 자원에 대한 의존도 비중이 구소련보다 월등히 높고 현재 금융슈퍼클래스 집단이 지배하고 있는 글로벌 금융시장에의 멤버십 진입 장벽이 너무 배타적이고 높다라는 사실이다. 또한 마지막으로 본 논문은 현재 중국이 심각하게 직면하고 있는 대기오염 등 환경 문제를 근본적으로 해결하지 못한다면 향후 이웃 국가들과의 심각한 외교 문제를 초래할 뿐 아니라 국내적으로도 과거 구소련이 붕괴 직전 경험했던 큰 사회적 정치적 혼란으로 이어질 수 있다고 진단한다.

주제어: 중국, 한국, 북한, 슈퍼클래스, 에너지안보

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