

## **The report: “New Dynamics in Korea-US-China Relations”**

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The policy forum “*New Dynamics in Korea-US-China Relations*” took place on Wednesday, October 8, 2014 in Seoul, Korea. It was organized by The Korea Society with the purpose to feature distinguished leaders from academe and analysis to elaborate the topic. The Korea Society is a private, nonprofit organization that is dedicated to the promotion of greater awareness, understanding and cooperation between the people of the United States and Korea.

The forum started with first session under the title “*Politics and Economics of Korea-US-China Relations*”. It was attended by speakers related to each concerning country. Firstly James Kelly, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, put an emphasis on US-Korean relations and in addition, he labeled them as “*the best foreign policy success of US from the era of cold war.*” Regarding China, he was much more skeptical about its attitude in the international environment. Secondly, Han, Sung-Joo, the former chairman of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, built on the previous presentation and affirmed the exceptional positions of US-Korea relationship. He described this alliance as a strong, unshakable and resistible partnership. Lastly, the Chinese security expert Zhu Feng, the renowned professor at the Peking University’s school of International Studies, focused on the China-Korea relations. On one side, he sees dynamism in the mutual interconnection, mostly due to the advanced negotiation about Free Trade Agreement between two governments. On the other side, there is a sensitive American factor playing role in the China-Korea dialogue. He assumes that China keeps pushing Korea to choose one country over another, to ally either with China or the United States. Furthermore, the North Korean problem is a decisive obstacle in this issue. China is not visibly moving from the “two Koreas policy” and the abandonment of the DPRK regime from the Chinese authorities is not likely to happen. The strategic reasons are essential here.

The second session “*Korea facing East and West: Engaging China and Invigorating its alliance with US*” continued with the proposed ideas and suggestions from previous discussions. As claimed by Han Sukhee, professor of Chinese studies at Yonsei University, Korea wants to promote balance between both states, it aims to be in between China and US. He reached his conclusions based on the actions of current Korean president. President Park Geun-hye is aware of the fact that it is extremely dangerous to emphasize one or other side of the relationship.

The final session bridged the debate into business and policy opportunities related to the Korea-US-China cooperation. It underlined the private sector as a leading factor in trust building and thus cordial relations on each side. Scott Snyder from the Council of Foreign Policy commented on US-China business relations as challenging, since China has adopted policies involving an unequal treatment between foreign and domestic companies. However, all speakers participating in the third session agreed that in the last decade China moved from the factory to service market. The third sector has overtaken industrial and agricultural production and thus China has been able to build a competitive economy reflecting needs of 21st century.

The final remark made by the forum chairman Thomas Hubbard, is the difference between basic geopolitical or political interests of each country and the behavior of business community. The private sector naturally follows the investment opportunities as a source of

benefit and it acts as independently as it is allowed by the state law.

To summarize it, the forum clarified that the US-Korea-China relations are highly dynamic and tight but at the same time challenging and competitive. All three countries have been the strategic rivals to each other as well as the biggest economic partners with the largest trade markets in the world.