

[문정인 칼럼] 중국이 신냉전을 피하는 길 원문보기
Moon Chung-In: How China Can Avoid a “New Cold War?”

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Summary

Can China win the hearts of the world through the moral leadership superiority over the United States? Looking back on China’s attitude towards South Korea during the THAAD crisis, its actions in the South China Sea, and its “wolf warrior diplomacy” that is being talked about by the people after the Corona virus outbreak, China’s diplomacy seems to be closer to adopting the path of power and force than the path of the king.

Source: <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/opinion/column/960940.html#csidx5e1041f61b77d1597769ef9d50385b7>

Series Editor: Hemant Adlakha



Source: thediplomat.com

The gist of Michael Pompeo’s speech at the Nixon Memorial on July 23 was in stating China to be “a country that threatens the world with hegemonic ambition,” “a country that spreads the Corona virus all over the world,” “a country that uses unfair trade means, steals industrial technology and spies on the US,” “a dictatorship that suppresses civil liberties in Hong Kong and the rights of Tibet and Xinjiang ethnic minorities,” and “a country that threatens the sea routes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea by augmenting its military power.”

On August 24, the Chinese Communist Party’s newspaper, *People’s Daily*, divided Pompeo’s criticism into 26 items and refuted each of them. It stated “The Chinese Communist Party is committed to Chinese-style democracy for the people,” “China sets anti-hegemonism as the basic norm of its foreign policy, and sincerely adheres to the international order,” “China has been transparent and has made public all information about Corona virus and has shared with the international society the know-how of overcoming the virus,” “China has accepted the US demand regarding unfair trade and competed with the US through investment in

innovation and R&D, and the accusation of the act of industrial spying is unfounded,” “The Hong Kong Security Law is a matter of internal affairs and is relevant to only those who collude with separatists and foreign powers and wave flags, and the Uighur political prison camp is a place for mental and vocational training for potential terrorists,” and “China’s military power is outnumbered by that of the US, and the sea routes in South China Sea and the East China Sea are fully guaranteed under the international law”.

To summarise, Pompeo’s statements are all untrue.

People’s Daily says that its objections are based on objective facts and on the arguments of Western scholars and commentators. However, there are three reasons why it is difficult to accept China’s position at face value.



President Moon, Secretary Pompeo

Source: korea.net

Strategic ambiguity and confusion of the PRC

First is the strategic ambiguity and confusion of the Chinese government. Since his inauguration, Xi Jinping has been talking of - peaceful development through harmonious co-prosperity with all mankind and building a community of shared destiny for humanity; a new type of great power relationship with the US that involves cooperation and competition with the US while at the same time saying what needs to be said; espousing policies of friendship, goodwill, mutual benefit and prosperity with neighbouring countries, and a new Asia Security Initiative that seeks cooperation, comprehensive, joint and sustainable security with Asian countries.

However, contrary to his claims of peaceful development, Beijing is being criticized as a kind of neo-imperialist pursuing a great power status and advocating a community of shared destiny for humanity for its BRI project. The conflicts with neighbouring countries have not ceased despite his principles of friendship, goodwill, mutual benefit and prosperity, and the new Asian Security Initiative that had garnered the expectations of the Asian countries has long since become ineffective. What remains is merely the theory of new and great power relations. Such strategic ambiguity and confusion is undermining the trust of the neighbouring countries.

Ancient Chinese thinker “Sunja” and his three types of leadership

Secondly, as the “America First” policy of the White House is greatly damaging the international status of the US, discussions on moral leadership are becoming more active in China. For instance, Yan Xuetong, a professor of Tsinghua University, quotes ‘Sunja’,¹ the lawyer-thinker and says that there are three kinds of leadership in the world. They are, *the way of the king* that gains people and the world through virtuous ways, *the way of domination* that gains part of the world through political power and military force, and then *the way of the strong power leadership* that seizes at least one empire through coercion. Prof. Yan proposes that in order to surpass the US, China must adopt *the way of the king*.

It is true that China’s international status has improved due to large-scale development aid and due to the recent success in containing the Corona virus. However, can China really win the hearts of the world by demonstrating its moral leadership superiority over the US? If one were to look back on its attitude shown to Korea during the THAAD crisis, its actions in the South China Sea, and the ‘Wolf Warrior’ diplomacy that is being talked about by the people after the Corona virus outbreak, China’s diplomacy now seems to be closer to *the way of*

¹ Sunja is the Korean name for the Chinese Confucian philosopher Xun Kuang (310-235 B.C.), who was also

popularly known as Xunzi. He too is said to have contributed greatly to the Hundred Schools of Thought.

domination through political and military power than to *the way of the king*.



Source: scmp.com

Chinese exceptionalism

Finally, it is the issue of Chinese exceptionalism. The US also advocates exceptionalism, but has tried to justify it with universalism of freedom, democracy and human rights. In contrast, China's exceptionalism has no convincing universal elements. It merely emphasizes its special features as a civilized state, its own style of socialism, and its own style of democracy. All this would not be a problem had China been an ordinary country. However, if China wants to

become the world's leader it will have to choose between one of the two - either spread China's particularities all over the world in order to make it a global standard, or make compromises in its particularity and universality. In the former case there is a danger of a backlash from the global domination of a Chinese model. Therefore, the only possibility is the latter. What is needed is the flexibility and transformation of the Chinese leadership.

In order to avoid a New Cold War with the US, and establish itself as a respected power China needs to make clear the direction of its national strategy. This is possible when China is faithful to the path of peaceful development and demonstrates it through adopting *the way of the king* in its actions, and wisely harmonises the Chinese kind of particularities with global universality.

The views expressed here are those of the translator and not necessarily of the Institute of Chinese Studies

ICS Translations *Back Issues*

Issue No/ Month	Title	Translator
No.9 Sep 2020	Chinese View: Indian Army Illegally Crosses LAC again, Occupies Chinese Territory	Hemant Adlakha
No.8 Aug 2020	Words and Deeds of Bureaucrats with High Degrees Disappoint Masses. Why?	Tanvi Negi
No.7 Aug 2020	More Frequent US Military Comes Near Us, More Likely It is to Cause “Guns and Misfires”	Prashant Kaushik
No.6 Jul 2020	Epidemic in the Eyes of “Three Generals of Chinese Sci-fi”	Shanky Chandra
No.5 Jul 2020	China’s Long Range Missiles not threatened by Indian Air Defence Systems	Hemant Adlakha
No.4 Jul 2020	Do we really need experts who only know “jargons?”	Hemant Adlakha
No.3 Jul 2020	More frequent US military comes near us, more likely it is to cause “guns and misfires”	Hemant Adlakha
No.2 Jul 2020	China: Bubble that will never pop?	Hemant Adlakha
No.1 Jul 2020	Mao Zedong on Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute	Hemant Adlakha

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