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Sino-North Korean Ideological Relations in Face of 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China¹

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the most important aspects of the ideological relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the face of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The Policy Brief is divided into four parts: Reactions of the Workers' Party of Korea to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party CPC; Mention of Korea during the 20th CPC Congress; The role of CPC in People's Republic of China according to WKP and the Significance of Sino-North Korean ideological relations after 20th Congress of the CPC. The methodology included media and literature review, which were collected through Korean Central News Agency, Rodong Sinmun and documents of the 20th Congress of the CPC. This study makes evident the importance of ideological relations between China and North Korea.

Keywords: Communist Party of China; China; North Korea; ideology; international relations.

Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) greatly emphasize the value and importance of mutual political relations. They are historically, economically, militarily and ideologically conditioned. China's support for North Korea dates back to the Korean War (1950-1953), when Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean People's Army covered almost the entire Korean Peninsula. Aid was provided to all DPRK leaders: Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un, with short breaks. After North Korea's first nuclear test, China backed UN Security Council Resolution 1718, which condemned the test. Despite the temporary cooling down in mutual relations, they still remained the closest partners. Mainly for these reasons, China views North Korea quite differently from the United States or Western European countries. This is also partly due to the Cold War and Post Cold War world orders. The waning role of Russia and the growing role of China are making relations with the DPRK take on renewed importance. It is worth paying attention to the similarity of the political systems of both countries, which declare themselves to be socialist and people's republics, which differ in their adaptation to their own national conditions. In China it is Socialism with Chinese characteristic which is

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implemented by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and in DPRK it is Juche Idea, which is established by the Workers' Party of Korea (WKP). Another important common feature is that the two countries' systems were not rejected when systemic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe took place in 1989-1991. The numerous similarities in governance and geographic proximity make the PRC-DPRK relationship very important. This policy brief will attempt to shed some light upon the Sino-North Korean ideological relations in face of 20th congress of the CPC that took place from October 16 to 22, 2022 in Beijing. In particular, the analysis will attempt to answer the following questions: How did the Workers' of Korea Party respond to the CPC Congress? How was Korea mentioned at the 20th CPC Congress? How do WKP view the role of the CPC in China? What is the significance of Sino-North Korean ideological relations after 20th congress of the CPC? The answers to these questions will be considered in the following sections of the paper. From the perspective of data collection, the method which is followed is literature review and the information has been derived from Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Rodong Sinmun and Documents of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China.

Reactions of the Workers' Party of Korea to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China

The KCNA detailed the opening ceremony of the 20th Congress of the CPC, along with a summary of Xi Jinping's report (KCNA, 2022, October 16). The same was done due to the end of the Congress (KCNA, 2022, October 22). DPRK leader Kim Jong Un congratulated Chairman Xi Jinping on the 73rd anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China. In the letter, he noted that the opening 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China, which will be “a very important event convened at a crucial moment” (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 16a). Similar wishes were made by the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (Rodong Sinmun 2022, October 16). Similarly, wishes were also made by the Central Committee of the WKP and the leader Kim Jong Un on the occasion of the end of the 20th CPC Congress (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 24), including special congratulations on the election of Xi Jinping for the next term of government in China (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 24a).

Mention of Korea during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China

In Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China made by Xi Jinping General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPC “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects” it has been said that:

We celebrated the 90th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army, the 40th anniversary of the launch of reform and opening up, the 70th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the global war against fascism, and the 70th anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers' departure for Korea to resist US aggression and aid Korea (习近平, 2022, October 16).

In this excerpt from Report, Korea is mentioned as the country where the Chinese People's Volunteers helped and repulsed US forces. This shows that Korea continues to be China's historically important neighbor.

The role of CPC in People's Republic of China according to WKP

According to the WKP, the Communist Party of China established and modernized a new China with remarkable results (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 16). It was pointed out that the election of Xi Jinping for the next term of the CPC Secretary General strengthened the party's international status, is a sign of the deep trust and expectations of all members of the CPC and the Chinese people, and will enable China to continue vigorously on the path of self-development (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 24). Chairman of the DPRK Kim Jong Un in his letter of congratulations to Xi Jinping wrote that the Congress was "an epochal milestone in promoting the historic process of the great revival of the Chinese people under the banner of socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in the new era" (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 24a).

Significance of Sino-North Korean ideological relations after 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China

North Korean media has repeatedly emphasized the importance of DPRK-PRC relations in the 21st century, especially from the perspective of the 20th CPC Congress. It is commonly mentioned that the Chinese are a fraternal nation to Koreans (KCNA, 2022, October 23). The leader of the DPRK Kim Jong Un wrote in his letter to Chairman Xi Jinping that "China and Korea are friendly between mountains and rivers, and the traditional friendship between the two countries has grown stronger over the years." He also pointed out that in the face of the changing international situation, the importance of strengthening mutual communication and unity between China and the DPRK is growing, also in the field of security in the region and in the world (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 16a). In Korean media reports it was emphasized that today both parties (WKP and CPC) defend the common interests of both nations guided by socialist ideology in a complex international environment. The Workers' Party of Korea assured that it will continue to actively cooperate with the

Communist Party of China to further strengthen the development of the common era, which is to be seen in all areas of Sino-North Korean relations (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 16). The Workers' Party of Korea claims to have an unwavering stance to strengthen and develop friendship with China. He points out that both countries were fighting imperialism and building socialism. The entirety of contemporary ideological relations after the end of the 20th CPC Congress can be summarized in one sentence proposed by the WKP: "Today, the DPRK-China friendship has entered a new rise" (Rodong Sinmun, 2022, October 24).

Conclusions

One of the most important political events in China, which is the Congress of the Communist Party of China, in October 2022 had a special place in the politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is worth noting that both Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un took power at a similar time and have held the highest state positions for nearly 10 years. This points to an additional similarity between the DPRK's governance systems and the changing system of the PRC as Xi Jinping began his third term in office, which is unique. The Workers' Party of Korea constantly monitored the 20th CPC Congress. She described the opening and closing ceremony and sent many letters of congratulations, also from Kim Jong Un himself. At the Congress, Korea was once quoted in the Xi Jinping Report to highlight the role of the Chinese People's Volunteers who helped the Koreans and supported the pushback of US forces. The Workers' Party of Korea emphasized the need for close cooperation with the Communist Party of China in the era of the changing and complex international situation. It could mean the Russo-Ukrainian war, North Korean missile tests, US military exercises in South Korea and the Sino-American trade war. The analysis can be used for further research on Sino-North Korean relations in the changing international order since the end of the Cold War, in which the United States is gradually losing its global hegemony, among others by the crisis of American democracy of 2020-2021 and the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan in August 2021. As a result, questions may arise about the future of the Sino-North Korean ideological alliance in a time of changing international order.

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