

Yoon will find it's hard to go against the trend

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol made astonishing remarks again. He said he cannot accept the notion that Japan "must kneel because of our history 100 years ago," as if it's reasonable for Japan to refuse to reflect on its atrocities made during World War II, and as if it is South Koreans and the Chinese people who are "ignorant" and "pushing Japan too far." Isn't Yoon insulting South Korean society?

As Yoon's remarks on Japan sparked the anger of many Koreans, the South Korean president was happily sitting on a plane to the US. His recent remarks have shaped Seoul's new diplomatic posture in which South Korea is fully inclined to the US, appeasing Japan at any cost, and showing toughness and even hostility toward China and Russia. He is pushing South Korea to deviate from its long-term strategic posture and act as a new strategic pawn of the US in the Asia-Pacific, confusing many people in South Korea's strategic circles.

Recently, Yoon made an absurd statement on the Taiwan

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question, claiming that the Taiwan question "is not simply an issue between China and Taiwan, but, like the issue of North Korea, it is a global issue." After the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed strong dissatisfaction, South Korean summoned Chinese ambassador over China's opposition to Yoon's Taiwan remarks. Meanwhile, South Korea is dedicated to the chip alliance with the US, regardless of the long-standing cooperation between China and South Korea as well as the market and moral norms.

Facing with the US, Yoon presents a different attitude, which can only be described as "subservient." The leaked Pentagon documents revealed that the senior officials of the South Korean Presidential Office were spied on by the US, but Yoon didn't even express any complaint. A South Korean official also stated that the US did not act against the South Korean side out of ill intentions. In an

exclusive interview with NBC News on Monday, Yoon said that the leak will not affect the relationship between the two countries. They all white-washed the evil actions of the US. According to the Korean media, Yoon stopped public activities from April 21 to prepare for the English speech at the US Congress during his visit.

In my view, Yoon represents a right-wing Korean politician who is a lackey to the US and Japan and treats China and Russia with his nose in the air. He is the most unfriendly South Korean president to China since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and has become one of the actual instigators of anti-China sentiment in South Korean society. Yoon is pushing South Korea toward an evil path.

Yoon forgets that one of the reasons South Korea has achieved sustained prosperity is that it has effectively balanced its complex relations with all sides over the past decades. This has made it possible for South Korea, though on

a peninsula where the risk of conflict flares up intermittently, to contain all kinds of negative factors and create a rare pattern in which development resources to South Korea converge. The US is South Korea's ally, while China is the latter's absolute biggest trading partner and has become the main force that drives the "Korean Wave." Yoon's lousy attitude toward China is a kind of treachery. He seriously overestimates the capital that South Korea is proud of and arrogantly thinks he has the initiative to scold and attack a giant like China whenever he wants.

From my personal point of view, Yoon is a petty man defined in traditional Chinese culture. He lacks morality and behaves like a strategic sleepwalker. But I believe that South Korea as a whole cannot be an enemy of China. It does not have the strength or courage. If China, Russia, and North Korea deal with South Korea together, it will definitely make it miserable. China should respect

South Korean society, as it is a bit sensitive and aggressive. We might let it be to some extent. However, we don't need to be polite to South Korean politicians like Yoon. We should reprimand and scold them, and never indulge them. I don't believe South Korea can go very far in this way. Yoon's one-sided approach has caused widespread controversy in South Korea. As he pushes forward for a while, he will be pressured to back off. China should maintain sufficient strategic determination and not dance with the Yoon government. We should stick to the basic direction and logic of China-South Korea relations. The attitude of the Chinese side is consistent. The Yoon government wants to go against the general trend, but in the end it will find that the trend is stronger than what it can do.



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Global Security Initiative drives forward deeper reconciliation in Middle East

By Ding Long

China's mediation diplomacy, guided by the Global Security Initiative, has provided a new path for the resolution of the Middle East conflict and injected enduring momentum for the wave of reconciliation in the region that the world is seeing now.

Saudi Arabia and Iran, the two arch-rivals of the Middle East, have reconciled under the mediation of China and formally restored their diplomatic relations. Within a month since then, the Saudi-Iran rapprochement is like a key that opens the door to peace in this region. The warring parties in Yemen took a critical step toward a political solution; Bahrain and other Arab countries have restored diplomatic relations with Iran; Saudi Arabia and other Arab powers are interacting more frequently with Syria. A wave of reconciliation is also encouraging more joint efforts between China and the Middle East in pursuing peace.

China's mediation in the Middle East has not stopped here. In separate phone calls with Israeli and Palestinian foreign ministers on April 17, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang said China favors the two sides resuming peace talks. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict involves territory, sovereignty, refugees, and many other complex issues, which are unlikely to be simply resolved in several negotiations. In recent years, the US has deviated from the "two-state solution" with growing preference toward Israel, making it

lose its status as a mediator for peace in the Middle East.

In the absence of an international mediator, the Palestinian-Israeli situation is in danger of spiraling out of control. At this point, China hopes to play the role of an impartial mediator to promote negotiation for the short- and long-term peace between the two sides. Despite the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, China will persist in its support for a "two-state solution" to find a reasonable way out and implement its Global Security Initiative in the Middle East.

The wave of reconciliation in the Middle East is being driven by both internal and external factors. Internally, the regional countries have paid a heavy price and are overwhelmed with strategic overextension since the Arab Spring, which has led them to desperately desire to stop conflict and seek peace. Externally, the role of major powers in the Middle East conflict stands in sharp contrast to the wave of reconciliation. Compared with the policy that generates confrontation, China's mediation diplomacy has provided a new path for the resolution of the Middle East conflict, as well as a reference for the war in Yemen and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Moreover, the wave of reconciliation has exposed the negative role of the US in the region. After years of conflict, Middle Eastern countries have gradu-



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ally realized that their conflicts are not innate or insurmountable. The US pursuit of hegemony in the Middle East and deliberately prolonging conflicts constitute the important source of long-term geopolitical confrontation in this region. The US-led strategic contraction from the Middle East and its weakened security commitments have made Middle Eastern countries pursue higher strategic autonomy and a willingness for regional peace. The fact that "a step back from the US military is a step forward in Middle East reconciliation" is a phenomenon worthy of deeper reflection by US allies.

While the vast majority of the world has welcomed the long-overdue geo-

political détente in the Middle East and appreciated China's positive role, the US seems to be sitting on the thorns. The US looks at the new situation in the Middle East from the perspective of major power competition, and believes that the relationship between major powers in the region is a zero-sum game, and China is filling the gap left by it.

Under the Saudi-Iran agreement, the Middle East has seen a thriving situation of unity and prosperity. However, the continuation of the "reconciliation wave" and the resolution of regional hotspots still face various challenges. First, the Middle East conflicts are so complicated and deep-rooted that it is hard to get a one-time solution in the short term. Second, the foundation of reconciliation is fragile. Mutual trust is far from enough between Middle Eastern countries after years of conflict.

The recent outbreak of civil conflict in Sudan shows that there is a long way to go for peace and stability in the Middle East, which requires the joint efforts of the international community in the "Beijing spirit" conveyed by the Saudi-Iran reconciliation.

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