

Major Developments Strongly Suggest the End of Unipolar World Order

By [Federico Pieraccini](#)

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*With **Moon Jae-In's** victory in South Korea, the period of tension on the Korean Peninsula is likely to end. With the rise to power of the new president, South Korea can expect a sharp decline in hostilities with North Korea as well as a resumption of dialogue with China.*

An expected and [highly anticipated](#) victory was confirmed in South Korea on May 9, with candidate Moon [winning](#) South Korea's presidential race over his rivals **Hong Joon-pyo** (Liberty Korea Party) and **Ahn Cheol-soo** (People's Party). After the resignation and [arrest](#) of former **President Park Geun-hye** over an immense [corruption scandal](#), public opinion turned away from her party in favour of the main opposition representative, a center-left lawyer specializing in humanitarian issues.



Moon (picture on the right side) spent several years in the opposition party [advocating](#) for greater cooperation in the region and dialogue with Pyongyang as well as with Beijing, representing quite a contrast to Guen-Hye's pro-Americanism. Along the lines of Duterte in the Philippines, Moon intends to resume dialogue with all partners in order not to limit his options in the international arena. Such an approach reflects the essence of the multipolar world order: cooperation and dialogue with all partners in order to achieve a win-win outcome.

Looking at the situation in the region, the victory of a politician who seems to have every intention of negotiating an agreement rather than supporting military escalation seems to provide for a hopeful future for China and her neighbors. The level of cooperation and trade between South Korea and China is fundamental to the economy of both countries, so a return to the negotiating table over the issues surrounding the deployment of THAAD are a hopeful sign that the business communities of China and South Korea value deeply.

Duterte Strategy

The United States is again faced with a [Filipino-like scenario](#). Historically, South Korea and the Philippines have always been two fundamental US allies, more concerned with Washington's interests than their own national political agendas. Over the last few decades, both countries have been governed by politicians careful not to upset the sensibilities of US policy makers. South Korea and the Philippines are at the heart of the political strategy Obama called the Asian Pivot, more explicitly, a policy aimed at containing China and its expansion as a regional hegemon in Asia.

Following the Trump administration's focus and threats against North Korea in recent weeks, war has seemed more likely on the peninsula. But with Moon's victory, it has probably been permanently excluded as a possibility. In several interviews weeks prior to the election, Moon stated that a war between the US and the North Korea would constitute an impossible burden for South Korea to sustain. Moon is very realistic about the conventional deterrence that North Korea possesses, maybe even more so than the nuclear development.

Even though Trump has said he is willing to meet with **Kim Jong-un**, most of his decisions seem to depend on the hawks surrounding him. Looking at the first hundred days of the Trump administration shows a remarkable departure from electoral promises, with the influence of generals he nominated, leading to various escalations in the hot regions of the world. Bottom line is, Trump's intentions and words matter to a certain extent as US posture in the region seems to be guided by military generals and inner circle family members. Fortunately for the world, the tentative moves in Syria and Afghanistan have not amounted to much, such as with the bombing of the [Shayrat](#) airbase or the show in Afghanistan involving the [MOAB](#).

THAAD to Divide



The deployment of the THAAD system continues as part of a belligerent attitude towards North Korea. The [strong and firm rhetoric](#) of Pyongyang is justified and not surprising given the context and the threats facing the country in wake of [US provocations](#). The deployment of THAAD has had [consequences](#), such as increasing tensions between South Korea and China. Moon's victory goes contrary to the goal of the US policy-makers in Washington to isolate China. In this light, the hurried deployment of THAAD before the South Korean election obliged the probable winner, Moon, to be faced with an accomplished fact. This first step makes it clear what Washington's attitude towards the new South Korean president will be.

The THAAD has also been deployed to antagonize the most frustrating point between Seoul and Beijing: North Korea. The measure was intentionally taken by Washington to pressure Seoul. THAAD has all the characteristics of a Trojan horse. Placed to reassure an ally (Seoul) against a fake-threat (Pyongyang), it becomes a weapon against China that puts in place a system, only a few hundred miles from its border, potentially able to [affect](#) China's strategic nuclear forces. The US military accelerated the deployment of THAAD in the knowledge that

this would immediately place the future president in a difficult situation, in that removing THAAD would not be easy in the face of huge American pressure. This may perhaps be Moon's first challenge; to use the dismantling of THAAD as a means of exchange with Beijing to return to a normal relationship of co-operation. If Beijing wants to believe Moon's goodwill in eliminating the THAAD system, it may begin to loosen some of the measures imposed on Seoul as retaliation for the deployment of the US system.

Multipolar world to the rescue

In this scenario, one must not make the mistake of believing that Moon's victory means that a major US ally will cease its support for Washington. As always, in this era of transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world, the pressure that Washington will decide to apply to South Korea will affect the nature of the US-ROK alliance. The United States will have to abandon the warlike posture so dear to Mattis, McMaster and Admiral Harris (the commander of the US Pacific Fleet). In this Tillerson as a realist might be the right man at the right place to negotiate with Moon. Potentially it could be possible to solve the problem in whole by dealing with North Korea, although that seems unlikely given the pressures the deep state will put on the administration to continue using North Korea to create instability in the region.

This is why much of the region's future will remain subordinated to potential negotiations between Beijing, Pyongyang and Seoul on the Korean peninsula, especially after Moon's victory. If these three nations succeed in finding common ground on which to set upon a path of reconciliation, the region will benefit greatly. Of course, in this context, the one most likely to lose influence is the United States. If Washington wants to [remain relevant](#), it should abandon the Chinese containment plan through the Korean peninsula by exploiting North Korean problems. If they instead decide to try to sabotage any peace agreement in the peninsula, this will only push Seoul and Pyongyang even closer together, to Beijing's great pleasure.

Recent years have seen a mounting showdown between the old world order configuration based on chaos and destruction and led by Washington, and the [new multipolar order](#) that focuses on win-win opportunities, dialogue and sincere cooperation. If Washington decides not to accept the new rules of the game, where it can no longer dictate the law, it will end up producing more damage against itself than any foreign country could actually do, in actual fact accelerating the formation of the multipolar world and putting to bed the [unipolar world order](#) for good.

***Federico Pieraccini** is an independent freelance writer specialized in international affairs, conflicts, politics and strategies.*

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Articles by: **Federico
Pieraccini**

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