

# COMPARATIVE

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## CONNECTIONS

A TRIANNUAL E-JOURNAL OF BILATERAL  
RELATIONS IN THE INDO-ASIA-PACIFIC

**CHINA- KOREA RELATIONS**

## MOON'S OLYMPIC DIPLOMACY

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The early months of 2018 may well be remembered as Kim Jong Un's coming-out party. Beginning with his New Year speech calling for better inter-Korean relations, he suddenly became the topic of global attention and the "must have" partner for summits with both friend and foe. After seven years without any direct contact, Kim managed to meet both President Xi Jinping and President Moon Jae-in, and get a commitment for a meeting with US President Donald Trump within the span of two months. With the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games and the flurry of diplomatic activity surrounding the Kim-centered summits serving as the primary catalysts, the prospect for a "breakthrough on the peninsula" became the central focus for China-Korea relations.

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## Presidents Xi Jinping and Moon Jae-in meet Kim Jong Un

Kim Jong Un visited China on March 25–28 for his first summit with President Xi on March 26. He was accompanied by his wife Ri Sol-ju and other officials, including Choe Ryong-hae. On his first foreign trip since taking office in 2011, Kim affirmed his commitment to denuclearization and willingness to hold summits with South Korean and US leaders. The four-day visit marked the start of Pyongyang's reconciliation with Beijing after almost a decade of frictions over its nuclear and missile development, and efforts to build bargaining leverage ahead of Kim's anticipated talks with Presidents Moon and Trump.



1Kim Jong Un and Xi Jinping meet in Beijing (Xinhua)

South Korean officials held parallel meetings with DPRK and Chinese counterparts from March 29, a day after Beijing and Pyongyang confirmed Kim's "unofficial" visit to China. Amid high-level preparatory talks on the inter-Korean summit, the ROK presidential office quickly [praised](#) Kim's pledges to Xi and China's mediator role. Seoul's official responses, however, were challenged by emerging domestic concerns that China-DPRK rapprochement would be used as a strategic tool to weaken international sanctions, undermine US-ROK denuclearization goals, and complicate Moon's efforts to engage Pyongyang and Washington in dialogue. National Assembly Speaker Chung Sye-kyun addressed such fears at a US-ROK alliance forum on March 29, where he [welcomed](#) Beijing's intervention as a tool for ensuring that Pyongyang will meet any potential denuclearization obligations under future multilateral negotiations.

North-South preparatory talks coincided with Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi's two-day visit to Seoul, where he met National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong on March 29 and Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha on March 30. In addition to briefing his counterparts on the Xi-Kim summit, Yang extended Beijing's support for Moon and Trump's respective summit plans with Kim Jong Un. DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho led Pyongyang's broader global outreach through a series of diplomatic engagements in April, including talks with PRC counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing on April 3, and Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on April 10. Addressing the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Azerbaijan on April 5–6, Ri pointed to favorable conditions for inter-Korean reconciliation and a potential "[breakthrough](#)" for reunification.

Beijing showered much praise on Moon Jae-in's [historic meeting](#) with Kim Jong Un on April 27, the third inter-Korean summit and first time for a DPRK leader to enter South Korean territory. In their [Panmunjom Declaration](#) and joint [press conference](#), the two Korean leaders agreed to pursue denuclearization and start peace talks to officially end the 1950–1953 Korean War. The meeting was held against a backdrop of revived exchanges of bilateral friendship between Beijing and Pyongyang's party leaders, affirming the success of the March Xi-Kim summit. Communist Party of China (CPC) International Liaison Department head Song Tao followed up on the summit with a visit to Pyongyang from April 13, where he led a Chinese art troupe as part of efforts to strengthen cultural exchanges. Song met Kim Jong Un, who agreed to comprehensively advance bilateral ties. Song also met Kim's sister and First Vice Department Director of the Worker's Party of Korea (WPK) Central Committee Kim Yo-jong. At a reception hosted by the WPK International Department on April 13, Song called his visit the "first footstep" toward implementing the Xi-Kim agreements, while Vice Chairman of the WPK Central Committee Ri Su Yong declared that the China-DRPK friendship has entered a "fresh high phase."

### Moon Jae-in's Olympic diplomacy

The primary opening for expanded inter-Korean diplomacy was President Moon's engagement of Pyongyang during the Feb. 9–25 PyeongChang Winter Olympics. China's Foreign Ministry welcomed such engagement on Jan. 18, after the

first North-South dialogue in more than two years produced an agreement allowing their athletes to march under a unified flag at the opening ceremony. As head of China's delegation, CPC Politburo Standing Committee member Han Zheng, met South and North Korean officials on the sidelines of Olympic opening ceremonies including President Moon and DPRK parliamentary chief Kim Yong Nam. In talks with Han Zheng on Feb. 8, Moon called for Chinese support for building momentum toward inter-Korean and US-DPRK dialogue. Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong delivered the North Korean leader's summit invitation to Moon and the DPRK delegation affirmed Pyongyang's willingness to hold talks with the Trump administration. Seoul similarly hosted high-level Chinese and North Korean delegations for the Olympics closing ceremony on Feb. 25, led by PRC Vice Premier Liu Yandong and DPRK national intelligence chief and WPK Vice Chairman for ROK Affairs Kim Yong Chol. Moon backed China's longstanding position on US-DPRK bilateral talks as a prerequisite for international nuclear negotiations on Korea, a central message exchanged between Chinese and South Korean officials at the conclusion of the Games.

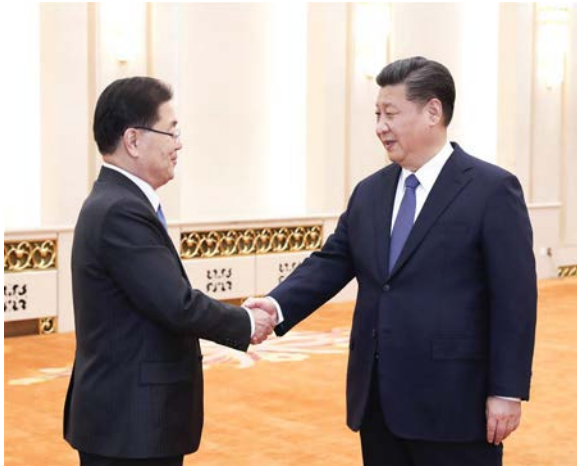


3 South Korean President Moon Jae-in (R) shakes hands with Han Zheng, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China, before their meeting at his office Cheong Wa Dae in Seoul on Feb. 8, 2018. (Yonhap)

President Moon's Olympic diplomacy catalyzed Seoul's bilateral coordination with six-party members in March, led by National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong and intelligence chief Suh Hoon. Chung and Suh led a South Korean delegation to Pyongyang as special envoys of President Moon, where they were hosted for a dinner meeting and had an extended conversation with Kim Jong Un on March 5. Upon their arrival back in Seoul the following day, Chung and Suh announced plans for an April inter-Korean summit at Panmunjom and were dispatched to Washington for a meeting with President Trump on March 8, at which they announced that Trump had accepted an invitation for a US-DPRK summit. Chung's talks with President Xi and Russian officials in Beijing and Moscow on March 12-13, and a simultaneous meeting between Suh and Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in Tokyo, aimed to build regional support for the summits. Seoul's high-level diplomacy from January also aided the resumption of trilateral dialogue with China and Japan. After Moon's meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Kono Taro in Seoul on April 11, the presidential office announced plans for a trilateral summit in Japan in May. PRC Premier Li Keqiang and Kono on Jan. 28 pledged to resume the trilateral summit this year after three years of deadlock over China-Japan maritime disputes.



2 South Korean President Moon Jae-in (R) shakes hands with Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong before the start of their meeting at the South Korean presidential office Cheong Wa Dae in Seoul on Feb. 26, 2018. (Yonhap)



*4Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) meets with Chung Eui-yong, national security advisor for the President of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Moon Jae-in and also special envoy of Moon, in Beijing, capital of China, March 12, 2018. (Xinhua)*

### **Beijing and Seoul's preferences for denuclearization and peace**

Nuclear negotiator Lee Do-hoon engaged six-party members from February as part of Seoul's efforts to sustain the Olympic dialogue momentum, holding separate meetings with US, Japanese, Russian, and Chinese ambassadors that month. Although Beijing praised Pyongyang's decision to suspend nuclear and missile tests in April, unresolved differences between China and the two Koreas over the form of multilateral talks were apparent from January. As Seoul prepared to host foreign delegations, the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Jan. 25-26 reminded others of the ongoing significance of the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, China's "suspension for suspension" proposal for ending Pyongyang's tests in exchange for an end to US-ROK military drills, and its "dual track" approach of simultaneous denuclearization and peace talks.

Differences over long-term conditions for addressing Korean Peninsula security also emerged in Beijing's interactions with the international community in January-February. Chinese and Russian representatives did not attend the Foreign Ministers Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula, held on Jan. 16 in Vancouver, shortly after the resumption of inter-Korean dialogue and Pyongyang's decision to join the Winter Olympics. Including the United States, South Korea, and Japan, the 20 participating countries

jointly [declared](#) that, "North Korea will never be accepted as a nuclear power," and committed to pressuring the North until it "takes decisive, irreversible steps to denuclearize." China's Foreign Ministry immediately denied the meeting's "legitimacy or representativeness" given the absence of major stakeholders in the DPRK nuclear issue, and attacked the "Cold War thinking" behind the US and Canada-hosted meeting. Echoing Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's calls for alternative mechanisms to pressuring Pyongyang, China's Foreign Ministry further identified the Six-Party Talks and the UN Security Council as the main channels for diplomatic coordination.

The Feb. 16-18 Munich Security Conference was another platform where China voiced its insistence on US-DPRK dialogue as a starting point for such coordination. Chair of the National People's Congress (NPC) Foreign Affairs Committee Fu Ying in a [nuclear security panel stated](#) that "there should be negotiated settlements to address the security concerns of all parties," pointing to US-DPRK mistrust as the source of recurring tensions on the peninsula. After visiting Pyongyang in March, Moon's National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong affirmed Kim Jong Un's willingness to not only hold talks with Trump but also his commitment to denuclearization in exchange for a security guarantee. While the joint declaration following the inter-Korean summit outlined ambitious plans for pursuing peace talks within this year, it left open whether the process will involve the two Koreas and the United States, or also China, as did the previous North-South [statement](#) of October 2007.

### **China and South Korea's post-THAAD interactions**

Coordination on North Korea has dominated Beijing and Seoul's broader political and security interactions since the height of the THAAD controversy last year. Following up on the Xi-Moon summit in December, Deputy Speaker of the Korean National Assembly Park Byeong-seug met State Councilor Yang Jiechi on Jan. 16 in Beijing, where they agreed to implement agreements advancing bilateral ties. In her bilateral meeting with Fu Ying on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in February, South Korea's ruling Democratic Party leader Choo Mi-ae urged China to use its "power of persuasion" on the DPRK nuclear issue given its longstanding "role of mediation."

China and South Korea have sought to “normalize” ties since agreeing to put aside the THAAD dispute last October. The ROK Defense Ministry on Feb. 1 reaffirmed plans to repatriate the remains of 20 Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War, after talks in Beijing between the Ministry’s policy office chief Yeo Suk-joo and Bao Fengyu of the PRC Ministry of Civil Affairs. Foreign Ministry and maritime security officials in late April also resumed the biannual China-ROK meeting on fisheries cooperation. Last held in July 2016 following Seoul’s decision to formally discuss THAAD deployment with Washington, the meeting had been launched in 2012 to address intensifying clashes over illegal Chinese fishing in ROK waters. After South Korea’s Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries announced plans to expand the number of patrol ships and personnel operating in the Yellow Sea this January, the ROK Coast Guard seized a Chinese vessel on April 13 in Seoul’s latest crack down on illegal fishing.

Chinese incursions into South Korean airspace is another point of contention in the bilateral relationship. In response to a PRC military aircraft’s entry into South Korea’s air defense identification zone (KADIZ) on Feb. 27, First Vice Foreign Minister Lim Sung-nam called in Chinese Ambassador Qiu Guohong in Seoul in protest against the incident, while the Defense Ministry summoned Chinese military attaches based in South Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reported on similar unauthorized entries of Chinese military aircraft into KADIZ on Jan. 29 and April 28.

### **Resumption of China-ROK economic interactions**

China and South Korea made relatively greater progress in normalizing bilateral economic ties this year, resuming talks that were suspended in 2017 due to security tensions over THAAD. ROK Finance Minister Kim Dong-yeon met National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Chairman He Lifeng and Central Bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan on Feb. 2, and toured Beijing’s technology hub Zhongguancun. In addition to reiterating Seoul’s longstanding concerns over the Chinese business environment facing Korean investors, Minister Kim discussed measures to address recent problems of speculative investment in cryptocurrency. His visit produced an agreement on creating a pilot free trade zone in China’s northeast, expanding exchanges in science and technology, and

establishing a consultative body on tourism. Second Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun and China’s Vice Commerce Minister Gao Yan resumed annual Sino-ROK joint economic committee meetings on April 20 in Beijing, where they renewed their commitment to realizing the Xi-Moon agreements.

China’s Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen and ROK counterpart Kim Young-sam opened the first round of bilateral FTA talks in Seoul on March 22, which aimed to expand the FTA’s scope in the service and investment sectors since its implementation began in December 2015. While China’s \$5.6 trillion service industry emerged as the world’s second-biggest market in 2016, China-South Korea services trade grew four times faster than global services trade between 1998 and 2016, from \$2.7 billion to \$36.7 billion, according to the ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. Based on ROK trade ministry data, South Korean exports to China grew by 24.5 percent on-year in January amid the global economic recovery and the resurgence of the manufacturing sector in particular. On the other hand, South Korea’s Finance Minister Kim and China’s central bank governor Zhou reached a consensus in February on the rising threat of US protectionism to emerging markets. The Korea International Trade Association (KITA) in January warned that US import restrictions targeting Chinese goods are also likely to harm South Korean businesses.

At the regional level, efforts on DPRK denuclearization energized China-South Korean economic initiatives with Russia and North Korea. During his visit to China on April 13-15, head of South Korea’s Presidential Committee on Northern Economic Cooperation Song Young-gil met Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) President Jin Liqun and presented Seoul’s vision for Northeast Asian integration linking energy and infrastructure projects under Xi’s “One Belt, One Road” and Moon’s New North policy. He also promoted plans for creating a trilateral mechanism with Russia on cross-border development under conditions of peninsula peace.

### **Resumption of China-ROK cultural interactions**

China-ROK cultural interactions showed a possible reversal of the declining trend in the tourism and entertainment industries. In January, the number of individual Chinese visa applications to visit South Korea recovered to

pre-2016 levels according to South Korean official figures, boosted by a special visa-free entry program for the Winter Olympics. Meeting in Beijing on Jan. 30, South Korea's Vice Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Maeng Sung-kyu and Chinese aviation officials agreed to revive the bilateral aviation market to accommodate growing air traffic. According to the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), the number of Chinese visitors in South Korea in 2017 totaled 4.16 million, a 48 percent decline from 2016, when Chinese accounted for almost half of all foreign visitors. In contrast, the Justice Ministry reported a 16.5 percent increase in the number of Chinese visitors from February to March this year, 13 percent growth compared to the same period last year. Following these trends in cultural exchanges, Beijing theaters began screening South Korean films in April ahead of the Beijing International Film Festival, ending a two-year boycott.

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi's visit in March raised South Korean hopes for Beijing's lifting of economic restrictions since the THAAD dispute, for which Yang promised "tangible results" in talks with President Moon on March 30. Constrained people-to-people exchanges and the deteriorating business environment for South Korean firms remained priority concerns that Moon raised with China's official representatives at the February Winter Olympics. During her visit to Seoul National University on Feb. 24, Xi's special envoy, Vice Premier Liu Yandong, urged both South Korean and Chinese students to play a leading role in promoting the bilateral partnership. Despite such gestures at the official level, however, South Korean businesses remain cautious about the long-term economic and cultural impacts of the THAAD dispute. Uncertainty remains centered on the normalization of Chinese group tours to South Korea and the sale of Lotte Mart's Chinese units, where THAAD-related losses are estimated at more than \$1.88 billion.

### **China's "maximum pressure" on North Korea**

According to China's March [report](#) on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution [2397](#), adopted in December after Pyongyang's intercontinental ballistic missile test, China has imposed bans on iron, steel, and other metal and industrial machinery exports; restrictions on refined petroleum exports, and restrictions on work permits for DPRK workers. Chinese official figures showed a 50 percent

drop in total trade with North Korea in December, which the White House [hailed](#) for supporting "the United States-led global effort to apply maximum pressure" on the DPRK regime. Sustained reductions in China's imports from North Korea in January and February by 79 and 86 percent, and in exports to the North by 33 and 34 percent, drew further [praise](#) from the international media as evidence of China's "own maximum pressure policy." As *Voice of America* reported in March, the official data is supported by declining cross-border cargo flows based on container traffic between Dandong and Sinuiju earlier this year.

Such indications, however, are challenged by debate over the implementation and enforcement of UN sanctions. Concerns over Beijing's compliance resurfaced in March when President Xi held surprise talks with Kim Jong Un, after which the Commerce Ministry on April 9 confirmed China's ban on 32 "dual-use" exports in line with Resolution [2375](#). China's Ambassador to Washington Cui Tiankai in a Jan. 23 [interview](#) with *USA Today* refuted the possibility that ships in Chinese waters smuggling oil to North Korea belong to China, but also [noted](#) that "these sanctions do not ban all trade."

Moreover, Beijing remains critical of what it has identified as the adverse humanitarian effects of sanctions. The Foreign Ministry on Jan. 23 reiterated China's stance that UN sanctions should not affect humanitarian aid, stating that, "China has been and will continue to provide necessary support and assistance." These remarks came a day before the US Treasury Department announced the sanctioning of two Chinese firms as part of unilateral measures to "systematically target individuals and entities financing the Kim regime and its weapons programs, including officials complicit in North Korean sanctions evasion schemes," according to Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Meanwhile, in contrast to its traditional practice, China released 30 North Korean defectors according to *Radio Free Asia* in April. While border security inspections were reportedly strengthened around the time of Kim's visit, Chinese authorities have faced longstanding global pressure to stop deportation of "illegal migrants" back to the North.

## **Conclusion: breakthrough on the Korean Peninsula?**

Within months of Xi and Moon's pledges to "normalize" China-ROK relations, Xi's envoy Song Tao and Kim Jong Un last April [exchanged](#) promises to open a "new chapter" in bilateral ties. China's reconciliation with the two Koreas was a welcome precursor to the inter-Korean summit and anticipated US-DPRK summit. South Korea's presidential office on March 29 [expressed](#) hopes for concrete results from these summits, namely "a clear foundation for permanent denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the establishment of a peace regime." Since January, South Korean leaders have given much credit to China's "mediation" in facilitating what DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho in April called a potential "breakthrough" on the Korean Peninsula. At the same time, PRC counterparts praised President Moon's Olympic diplomacy for creating an opening for dialogue with Pyongyang.

An underlying question, however, is whether Kim Jong Un's overtures demonstrate the success of sanctions and pressure, or Pyongyang's readiness to negotiate from a stronger position as a nuclear power. Did Kim turn to engagement as a sign of strength or in a moment of weakness? While noting China's full and effective compliance with UN resolutions, Chinese officials have downplayed Beijing's support of "maximum pressure" in favor of dialogue. Ambassador Cui Tiankai in January shifted the focus of attention to the diplomatic measures identified by UN resolutions. Addressing international leaders in Munich in February, Fu Ying further called for US leadership in restarting peace talks. From a North Korean perspective, the apparent easing of tensions can be attributed to Kim Jong Un's security interests and strategies rather than the impact of external forces. At the NAM meeting in April, Foreign Minister Ri attributed Pyongyang's diplomatic engagement to Kim and the "completion of the country's nuclear armament," [stating](#) that "the independence of small nations is being threatened by big countries in various ways."

Finally, the latest inter-Korean joint declaration remains a statement of aspiration unless or until it is accompanied by tangible steps toward tension-reduction and establishment of a permanent peace. Unless concrete steps are

taken toward both denuclearization and peace, the impact of the Panmunjom Declaration will differ little from that of the last inter-Korean declaration in 2007. Efforts to implement the agreement will raise immediate coordination challenges both with China's preferred suspension-for-suspension, dual-track, and six-party approaches, and with the pace and sequencing of diplomatic normalization and denuclearization agreements with Washington. With inter-Korean and US-DPRK processes potentially underway as part of the summit processes, the next unresolved longer-term question will be the orientation and impact of inter-Korean rapprochement on regional security in Northeast Asia. Expressing China's [support](#) for peaceful and independent unification, Ambassador Cui told *USA Today* in January that, "I think it's up to the Korean people, whether they are divided or unified, to adopt an independent foreign policy of their own." Despite Cui's seeming calm, the inter-Korean summit has placed neighboring countries on edge, and it remains to be seen whether peninsular rapprochement can initiate a virtuous circle in regional relations or whether it will have negative unintended consequences both for regional security and for Korean strategic choices longer-term.

# CHRONOLOGY OF CHINA-KOREA RELATIONS

## JANUARY – APRIL 2018

**Jan. 9, 2018:** PRC Foreign Ministry welcomes inter-Korean cooperation as DPRK and ROK delegations hold high-level talks for the first time in over two years.

**Jan. 10-11, 2018:** Moon Jae-In holds separate telephone talks on North Korea with President Trump and President.

**Jan. 16, 2018:** Presidents Xi and Trump in telephone talks praise their cooperation on the Korean Peninsula.

**Jan. 16, 2018:** Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi meets a delegation of ROK lawmakers in Beijing led by Park Byeong-seug.

**Jan. 16, 2018:** Foreign ministers from 20 countries meet in Vancouver to discuss North Korea's nuclear program. China and Russia, excluded from the meeting, release a joint statement condemning the meeting as illegal and illegitimate.

**Jan. 18, 2018:** PRC Foreign Ministry hails inter-Korean cooperation on the PyeongChang Winter Olympics.

**Jan. 19, 2018:** China and South Korea announce plans to expand car ferry operations between the two countries.

**Jan. 19, 2018:** A PRC-ROK joint committee pledges cooperation to prevent and mitigate environmental degradation.

**Jan. 22, 2018:** South Korean Finance Ministry levies antidumping duties of 12.1 percent on coated paper from China in an effort to safeguard the domestic industry.

**Jan. 23, 2018:** South Korea opens a new cultural center in Hong Kong.

**Jan. 23, 2018:** China states that UN Security Council sanctions on the DPRK should not affect humanitarian aid.

**Jan. 24, 2018:** PRC Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai in [interview](#) with *USA Today* calls for more diplomatic efforts on North Korea.

**Jan. 24, 2018:** South Korean steelmaker POSCO announces joint ventures with Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Co.

**Jan. 24, 2018:** US imposes new sanctions on entities and individuals with ties to North Korea, including two Chinese enterprises.

**Jan. 25, 2018:** ROK Oceans Ministry promises crackdown on illegal Chinese fishing in the Yellow Sea.

**Jan. 25, 2018:** China reiterates hopes for improvement of US-DPRK ties in the wake of easing tensions on the Peninsula.

**Jan. 26, 2018:** China's Foreign Ministry expresses hope that inter-Korean Olympics talks will progress into political dialogue.

**Jan. 28, 2018:** China, South Korea, and Japan agree to hold high-level talks "as soon as possible."

**Jan. 29, 2018:** ROK Trade Ministry agrees to hold future talks with China in hope of expanding industries under the free trade agreement (FTA).

**Jan. 29, 2018:** Samsung announces plans to sign a MOU with China's National Development and Reform Commission.

**Jan. 29, 2018:** Chinese military aircraft crosses unannounced into ROK airspace before being escorted out by South Korean fighter jets.

**Jan. 30, 2018:** DPRK Ambassador to Beijing Ji Jae Ryong appears publicly in Beijing for the first time in over two months.

**Feb. 2, 2018:** China and South Korea reach agreement to boost their bilateral aviation market to accommodate increased air traffic.



**Feb. 2, 2018:** ROK Finance Minister Kim Dong-yeon meets He Lifeng, chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, in Beijing.

**Feb. 7, 2018:** Park Won-soon, the mayor of Seoul, says he will meet Communist Party of China (CPC) Secretary Cai Qi to discuss cooperation between the two capitals.

**Feb. 8, 2018:** President Moon meets Han Zheng, CPC Politburo Standing Committee member and head of China's delegation to the PyeongChang Winter Olympics.

**Feb. 8, 2018:** PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi calls for continued inter-Korean interactions in anticipation of the Winter Olympics.

**Feb. 9, 2018:** PRC State Councilor Yang Jiechi calls on the international community to support continued inter-Korean dialogue.

**Feb. 12, 2018:** PRC delegation head Han Zheng meets senior DPRK official Kim Yong Nam on the sidelines of the 2018 Olympic opening ceremony.

**Feb. 13, 2018:** PRC Vice Premier Liu Yandong announces plans to attend the closing ceremony of the Olympics and hold meetings with ROK officials.

**Feb. 14, 2018:** ROK and PRC officials meet in Seoul to discuss inter-Korean developments.

**Feb. 15, 2018:** Moon Jae-in congratulates Chinese athletes participating in the Olympics and wishes Beijing a happy Lunar New Year.

**Feb. 17, 2018:** Fu Ying of the CPC's Foreign Affairs Committee and Chief of South Korea's Democratic Party Choo Mi-ae meet on the sidelines of the 54<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference.

**Feb. 22, 2018:** PRC Ambassador to Seoul Qiu Guohong and Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Lee Do-hoon meet in Seoul.

**Feb. 22, 2018:** China's Foreign Ministry expresses hope that inter-Korean advances during the Olympics will lead to US-DPRK dialogue.

**Feb. 24-26, 2018:** Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong leads China's delegation to the

Olympics closing ceremony and visits Seoul National University.

**Feb. 26, 2018:** President Moon and PRC Vice Premier Liu Yandong meet in Seoul.

**Feb. 26, 2018:** At closing of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics, Moon Jae-in reiterates his call for China to keep the momentum of inter-Korean dialogue moving ahead.

**Feb. 26, 2018:** China's Foreign Ministry applauds the visit to Pyongyang by South Korean envoys, expressing hope that the talks will lead to US-DPRK dialogue.

**Feb. 28, 2018:** ROK Foreign Ministry summons China's ambassador to file a complaint against the unauthorized entry of a Chinese reconnaissance plane into South Korean airspace on Feb. 27.

**March 8, 2018:** China's Foreign Ministry announces plans to send State Councilor Yang Jiechi to Seoul for further talks on inter-Korean dialogue.

**March 9, 2018:** President Trump publicly accepts a meeting invitation from Kim Jong Un. China's Foreign Ministry praises his positive message.

**March 12, 2018:** Top security advisor Chung Eui-yong and intelligence chief Suh Hoon leave for China and Japan, respectively, as Moon's special envoy to brief Xi Jinping and Abe Shinzo on February talks with Kim Jong Un.

**March 12, 2018:** Moon's envoy meets President Xi and State Councilor Yang in Beijing.

**March 15, 2018:** China, with Russia, pledges its full support for upcoming talks between North and South Korea and the US.

**March 17, 2018:** Kim Jong Un and Moon Jae-in congratulate Xi on his re-election as Chinese president.

**March 22, 2018:** Wang Shouwen, China's vice commerce minister, and Kim Young-sam, South Korea's deputy minister of trade and investment, lead the first round of talks on FTA expansion.

**March 25-28, 2018:** Kim Jong Un visits Beijing for talks with Xi Jinping.

**March 27, 2018:** South Korea repatriates remains of 20 Chinese soldiers killed during the Korean War.

**March 28, 2018:** DPRK media confirm Xi Jinping invited Kim Jong Un for talks in Beijing.

**March 28, 2018:** South Korea's presidential office confirms that China notified ROK officials in advance of Kim Jong Un's visit to Beijing.

**March 28, 2018:** PRC and DPRK media report that Kim during his four-day visit to Beijing reaffirmed Pyongyang's commitment to denuclearization.

**March 28, 2018:** ROK presidential office applauds positive outcome of Kim Jong Un's Beijing visit.

**March 29-30, 2018:** PRC State Councilor Yang Jiechi visits Seoul to meet National Security Advisor Eui-yong, Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha, and President Moon.

**March 29, 2018:** China hails the DPRK and ROK for fixing a date for their diplomatic summit.

**March 29, 2018:** South Korea's National Assembly Speaker Chung Sye-kyun welcomes China-DPRK rapprochement.

**March 30, 2018:** PRC State Councilor Yang expresses Beijing's support for upcoming inter-Korean summit.

**March 30, 2018:** China promises to lift economic restrictions on South Korean businesses imposed during the THAAD row.

**April 3, 2018:** PRC and DPRK foreign ministers meet in Beijing.

**April 3, 2018:** China submits a report of ongoing efforts to implement UN sanctions on the DPRK to the UN sanctions committee.

**April 5, 2018:** DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho expresses hope over conciliatory atmosphere between China and the Koreans.

**April 6, 2018:** Theaters in Beijing screen South Korean films for the first time since the THAAD dispute of 2016.

**April 8, 2018:** China bans the export of 32 "dual-use" items to North Korea in accordance with UN sanctions on the DPRK.

**April 8, 2018:** South Korea's Foreign Ministry announces plans to resume its annual joint economic committee session with China.

**April 11, 2018:** DPRK media say CPC international department head Song Tao and a Chinese art troupe will visit North Korea to improve cultural exchange.

**April 11, 2018:** ROK presidential office announces that China, South Korea, and Japan will hold a trilateral summit in May.

**April 13, 2018:** Kim Yo Jong meets Song Tao and a visiting Chinese art troupe in Pyongyang.

**April 14, 2018:** Kim Jong Un meets Song Tao and a visiting Chinese art troupe in Pyongyang.

**April 14, 2018:** South Korean Coast Guard seizes Chinese vessel fishing off its west coast.

**April 15, 2018:** DPRK expresses hope to consolidate its relationship with China.

**April 13-15, 2018:** Song Young-gil, head of South Korea's Presidential Committee on Northern Economic Cooperation, visits China and meets AIIB President Jin Liqun.

**April 16, 2018:** Kim Jong Un expresses hope that cultural exchanges between China and the DPRK will solidify a peaceful environment in East Asia.

**April 16, 2018:** China and South Korea announce plans to resume cooperative talks on fisheries.

**April 16, 2018:** China releases 30 North Korean defectors detained since March.

**April 18, 2018:** Chinese state media announces that Xi Jinping will visit North Korea after the US-DPRK summit due for May.

**April 19, 2018:** Chinese Foreign Ministry says the PRC supports a DPRK-ROK peace treaty.

**April 20, 2018:** China and South Korea hold first economic cooperation committee meeting in over two years in Beijing.

**April 21, 2018:** PRC applauds DPRK's decision to indefinitely halt nuclear and missile tests and close its test sites.

**April 23, 2018:** Thirty-two Chinese tourists and four North Koreans die in a traffic accident in the DPRK.

**April 24, 2018:** Kim Jong Un visits the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang to express condolences for the 32 Chinese nationals killed in a bus accident.

**April 24, 2018:** Xi Jinping relays China's appreciation for Kim's condolences regarding the deadly traffic accident of the previous day.

**April 26, 2018:** Kim sees off a train carrying the bodies of 32 Chinese killed in the bus accident.

**April 26, 2018:** Xi expresses his wishes for a successful inter-Korean summit.

**April 27, 2018:** Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un meet in Panmunjom and agree to an end to all hostilities on the Korean Peninsula.

**April 27, 2018:** Xi praises inter-Korean declaration and efforts to relieve tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

**April 28, 2018:** Chinese military plane enters South Korea's air defense identification zone without notice.

**April 29, 2018:** PRC announces plans to send Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi to North Korea on May 2-3.

Chronology compilation and research assistance provided by Colby Galliher, Bates College