

# COMPARATIVE

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## CONNECTIONS

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**CHINA - KOREA RELATIONS**

### **ECONOMIC STABILIZATION, END-OF- WAR DECLARATION, AND THE ONGOING “JOINT STRUGGLE”**

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During the waning months of 2021, China and South Korea worked together to stabilize and strengthen their economic relationship and the Moon administration reached out to China as part of its full-court press to achieve an end-of-war declaration prior to the end of Moon's term in May of 2022. Through several foreign minister-level meetings between Chung Eui-young and Wang Yi, including Wang's visit to Seoul for a meeting with President Moon, an exchange held in Tianjin between national security advisors, and regular bilateral economic consultations, the two countries improved economic cooperation and sustained close consultation on peninsula-related issues. The most significant outcomes of these discussions included the first release of a major Korean movie in Chinese theaters since 2015 and ongoing efforts to bilaterally support the digital, technological, and climate change dimensions of Sino-South Korean economic cooperation. China offered support for Moon administration efforts to end the Korean War through pursuit of phased and synchronized actions and discouraged relevant countries from taking destabilizing unilateral moves.

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Meanwhile, North Korea's missile tests in September-October frustrated hope for regional diplomacy as Beijing and Pyongyang jointly commemorated their 72-year-old "joint struggle to defend and glorify socialism" by marking national and bilateral anniversaries. Their official statements, however, lacked substantive outcomes in China-DPRK diplomatic exchanges. Post-pandemic trade remained stalled as both leaderships turned to self-reliance in their national development strategy.

### South Korea's End-of-War Declaration Push and Diplomacy with China

President Moon's push at the UN General Assembly for an end-of-war declaration with North Korea is his administration's last major diplomatic initiative, with implications not only for inter-Korean relations but also for both US-South Korea and Sino-South Korean relations. The end-of-war initiative has provided an opportunity for Moon to make a push for restoration of China-South Korea military and economic relations to the pre-THAAD status quo ante. The first step in Moon's diplomatic push with China involved the return of 109 Chinese remains from the Korean War to China and the restoration of normal military exchanges between South Korea and China. This gesture, alongside efforts to stabilize the relationship in the run-up to the 30th anniversary of diplomatic normalization next August, has provided momentum for dialogue on the end-of-war declaration between respective foreign ministers and national security advisors.

During Wang's Sept. 14-15 visit to Seoul, Chung and Wang held an [in-depth discussion](#) of the Korean Peninsula and "agreed to maintain close cooperation for early reinvigoration of the Korean Peninsula Peace Process." Both foreign ministers supported humanitarian aid for North Korea and the prompt resumption of inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation. Minister Wang pledged that China would play a "constructive role in peace and stability on the Korean [P]eninsula and in the region," and affirmed that North Korean missile launches are not conducive to the improvement of inter-Korean relations.

Foreign Minister Chung may have taken the opportunity to request that China exert influence on North Korea to resume inter-Korean and US-North Korean diplomacy, given that China and North Korea have enhanced the alignment of their respective positions in public exchanges

between Kim Jong Un and Xi Jinping, even in the absence of direct diplomatic interactions. Foreign Minister Chung emphasized regional cooperation "based on openness, inclusiveness, and transparency ... while expecting a stable development of US-China relations through cooperation between the US and China." The two foreign ministers held a [follow-up meeting](#) on Oct. 29 on the sidelines of the G20 in Rome, at which they "had a frank and in-depth exchange of views on ways of cooperation to advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, including end-of-war declaration." ROK Director of the Korean Peninsula Peace Negotiation Headquarters Roh Gyu-deok held [follow-up video consultations](#) on Sept. 29 and Nov. 1 with PRC Special Representative for the Korean Peninsula Liu Xiaoming.



Figure 1 Yang Jiechi and ROK national security advisor Suh Hoon meet in Tianjin. Photo: Yonhap

South Korean National Security Advisor Suh Hoon traveled to Tianjin on Dec. 2 [for consultations with](#) CPC Central Committee Politburo member and former Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. Yang [affirmed](#) that "China always supports the improvement of South-North relations on the Korean Peninsula and advocates the settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue through dialogue and consultation following the 'dual-track approach' and the principle of phased and synchronized actions" and noted that "China is willing to work with other stakeholders to play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability, as well as realizing lasting peace of the Peninsula." Suh expressed the importance of the relationship with China and the need for practical cooperation in economic, trade, culture, pandemic response, and other fields, and sought cooperation with China to "build lasting peace on the peninsula, keep advancing regional cooperation and uphold

multilateralism.” These statements suggest that Suh has won qualified support from China for the goal of ending the Korean War in tandem with North Korean steps toward denuclearization.

Following the US announcement of a “diplomatic boycott” for the Beijing Olympics, President Moon made clear that South Korea is not considering such a boycott and had not been asked by any other country to join such a boycott in a [joint press conference](#) with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison during a state visit to Canberra, Australia. South Korean Vice Minister Choi Jong-gun and his counterpart Le Yucheng held [virtual consultations](#) on Dec. 23 at which they discussed preparations for the Beijing Olympics and addressed issues such as supply chain issues, cultural exchanges, and environmental issues “so that the peoples of the two countries could feel improvements.” They also discussed cooperation on the end-of-war declaration and on ways to resume dialogue with North Korea. In the run-up to those consultations, South Korea [disinvited](#) a Taiwanese minister from speaking at a December conference on the technology revolution hosted by South Korea’s Presidential Committee on the Fourth Industrial Revolution scheduled for the eve of high-level strategic consultations between Beijing and Seoul.

### North Korea Tests Regional Diplomacy

Despite South Korean efforts to jumpstart talks with North Korea, North Korean missile tests in September-October frustrated hope for advancing regional diplomacy on the Korean Peninsula by the end of 2021. The reported tests included new long-range cruise missiles on Sept. 11-12, two short-range ballistic missiles on Sept. 15, a “hypersonic missile” on Sept. 28, an “advanced anti-aircraft missile” on Sept. 30, and a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) on Oct. 19. Pyongyang’s latest provocations appeared to amplify demands for sanctions relief amid COVID-19’s ongoing economic impact. They coincided with PRC foreign minister Wang Yi’s visit to Seoul on Sept. 15-16, and US-ROK-Japan nuclear talks on Sept. 15 and Oct. 19. They also challenged Moon Jae-in’s renewed [calls](#) to the UN General Assembly on Sept. 21 for an end-of-war declaration. DPRK representative Kim Song [claimed](#) to UN counterparts a week later, “inter-Korean relations have never come out of the shadow of the US interference and obstruction.” North Korea’s foreign ministry official Jo Chol Su similarly [criticized](#) the UN

Security Council’s Oct. 1 meeting on the missile tests as a violation of sovereignty.



Figure 2 PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi visits Seoul and meets with Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong. Photo: Yonhap

According to the South Korean media, North Korea’s Oct. 19 test was its “[eighth known projectile launch](#)” in 2021. China’s foreign ministry responded by reiterating its support for a “dual-track” approach to peace and denuclearization, pointing to a “[critical juncture](#)” on the peninsula. The UN Security Council meeting on Oct. 1 did not produce a joint statement condemning Pyongyang’s actions, reinforcing disappointment over Chinese and Russian opposition. In early November, China and Russia reportedly extended their proposals for easing DPRK sanctions through a draft resolution shared with Security Council partners.

Beijing’s reactions reignited US calls for stronger Chinese influence over North Korea. As the defense department’s annual [report](#) to Congress on Military and Security Developments indicated in November, “The PRC’s objectives for the Korean Peninsula include stability, denuclearization, and the absence of US forces near China’s border.” The DoD’s 2021 [Global Posture Review](#), released later that month, supports further cooperation with Indo-Pacific allies to “deter potential Chinese military aggression and threats from North Korea.” In a series of sanctions announced on Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, the US Department of Treasury [designated](#) new entities in China as violators of UN resolutions banning employment of DPRK workers.

## The Inauguration of the Future Development Committee in Preparation for the 30th Anniversary of the Normalization of China-South Korea Relations

China and South Korea marked the 29th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations on Aug. 24 by inaugurating the [Korea-China Relations Future Development Committee](#). The purpose of this committee is to build on existing forms of cooperation to build a stronger relationship in anticipation of the 30th anniversary of China-South Korea ties next year. A virtual [Comprehensive Review of Economic Cooperation meeting](#) held between South Korean Foreign Ministry Director-General for Bilateral Economic Affairs Lee Miyon and Chinese Ministry of Commerce Director General Yang Weiqun on Sept. 2 acknowledged efforts to maintain close economic cooperation by establishing a fast track procedure for business travelers, drafting the Korea-China Joint Plan for Economic Cooperation (2021-2025), and strengthening multilateral cooperation through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and ASEAN+3. South Korea sought the expansion of regular flights from South Korea to China and cultural exchanges for Korean games and movies, and greater cooperation in the food and agricultural sector. Chinese representatives sought new industrial cooperation opportunities and strengthened cooperation between regional governments. Both sides sought to address private sector difficulties firms faced in their overseas operations.

Foreign Ministers Chung and Wang in their [Sept. 15 meeting](#) welcomed the launch of the Committee for the Future-Oriented Development of Korea-China Relations as well as the Korea-China Joint Plan for Economic Cooperation. The two agreed to strengthen bilateral relations and mutual understanding through the Year of Korea-China Cultural Exchanges (2021-2022) and related efforts to promote people-to-people exchanges on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of normalization of China-South Korea relations. The foreign ministers acknowledged the need to accelerate efforts to address air pollution and fine dust issues and prioritized the objective of establishing a “Post-Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME)” to preserve marine environmental resources.

A [vice-minister level meeting](#) between Choi Jong-moon and Ren Hongbin on Nov. 30 adopted the joint plan for economic cooperation and agreed to foster collaboration between South Korea’s New Southern and New Northern Policies and China’s Belt and Road Initiative. The Korean side sought expanded access to the Chinese market for cultural content such as Korean games, movies, and TV programs in the context of efforts to expand cultural exchanges and expressed appreciation for Chinese efforts to restore an unexpected cutoff of Korean access to Chinese urea water used in diesel engines. The Chinese side sought closer South Korean cooperation in the digital and low-carbon sectors and in the management of provincial Korea-China Industrial Complexes.

The Chinese government took a significant step forward in easing restrictions on Korean cultural products by allowing the [first limited release](#) on 257 screens of a Korean movie in China in six years on Dec. 3 with the release of the 2020 Korean comedy *Oh! My Gran*. In addition, the Chinese edition of GQ magazine has featured Korean actor Lee Dong-wook on the cover of its December 2021.

## China-DPRK Friendship and “Joint Struggle”

China and North Korea celebrated 72 years of diplomatic relations in October. The DPRK foreign ministry [pledged](#) to advance the friendship under Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un, who have held five summits since 2018, and supported common interests in regional security and socialism. Xi and Kim exchanged messages on Sept. 9 and Sept. 25 commemorating North Korea’s 73<sup>rd</sup> founding anniversary. President Xi [praised](#) the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK)’s “great achievements in building a socialist country,” noting “a new dimension to our traditional friendship” since his meetings with Kim. Kim Jong Un [supported](#) steady growth of China-DPRK friendship “in the joint struggle to defend and glorify socialism” against “hostile forces.” The two leaders renewed these messages on Oct. 1 and Oct. 19 for the PRC’s 72<sup>nd</sup> founding anniversary. Days after opposing US “new Cold War” policy, Kim [voiced](#) solidarity with China in its efforts to “defend the sovereignty, right to development and territorial integrity of the country.” Xi [promised](#) to “propel the relations to a new stage” amid what current Chinese narratives identify as historic structural shifts “in 100 years” compounded by COVID-19. Later in October, Kim Jong Un [marked](#) the 71<sup>st</sup>

anniversary of China's participation in the Korean War by affirming the bilateral friendship "sealed in blood."

Despite unprecedented contact between Xi and Kim in recent years, their declaratory statements lack substantive progress. Current China-DPRK diplomatic exchanges remain limited to vice minister-level courtesy calls through their Embassies. On Nov. 5, parallel meetings were [held](#) between PRC Ambassador Li Jinjun and North Korea's Vice Foreign Minister Pak Myong Ho, and DPRK Ambassador Ri Ryong Nam and China's Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianghao. Ri Ryong Nam also met China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi in Beijing in late October. China's longest-serving envoy to Pyongyang, Li Jinjun met DPRK Premier Kim Tok Hun on Dec. 22 before ending his term as ambassador.

In addition to lower-level exchanges with China, North Korea supported Beijing through sharpened criticism of US policy, accusing the Biden administration of interfering in internal affairs and threatening Chinese core interests. *Korean Central News Agency* released a [commentary](#) on Sept. 15, when PRC and ROK foreign ministers held talks in Seoul, attacking Washington for challenging Beijing's "One-China" principle. North Korean analyst Kim Myong Chol argued, "China is strongly standing against the US moves designed at the permanent division of the country," referring to US military buildup in the region as "persistent moves to perpetuate the division of the Korean nation and territory." A day after Biden's Town Hall [remarks](#) reaffirming US defense commitments to Taiwan, Vice Foreign Minister Pak Myong-ho on Oct. 22 similarly [linked](#) US policies on Taiwan and Korea, pointing to US intentions to "stifle our country and China, both socialist countries, in order to hold its supremacy."

#### Meeting Between the Chinese Ambassador to Seoul and South Korea's Presidential Candidates

Chinese Ambassador Xing Haiming made a courtesy call on ruling Democratic Party Candidate Lee Jae-myung at the ruling Democratic Party headquarters on Nov. 11 and made a similar call on opposition People's Power Party Candidate Yoon Seok-yeol at the opposition People's Power Party headquarters on Nov. 19. Both candidates acknowledged the importance of good relations with China and the upcoming 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2022. On his [Naver blog](#) following the meeting,

Candidate Lee pledged a relationship of cooperation, rational problem solving, and the development of a strategic cooperative partnership. Lee acknowledged China's efforts to assist South Korea in dealing with a crisis involving the import from China of a supply of a urea water mix used in South Korean diesel engines. Candidate Yoon posted a [video](#) from the meeting that expressed his expectation that relations with China will be upgraded in the future.



Figure 3 ROK presidential candidate Yoon Seok-yeol of main opposition People Power Party meets PRC Ambassador Xing Haiming in Seoul. Photo: Yonhap

China appeared set to be a part of South Korea's presidential election campaign as the opposition party sought to exploit a growing gap between the ruling party's approach to China and deteriorating public views. But recent public opinion polls confirm both a serious downturn in Korean attitudes toward China among both Korean conservatives and progressives surveyed. A [Korea Institute of National Unification poll](#) released on Dec. 28 revealed that 71.8% of those polled identified China as South Korea's biggest national security threat, with 52.5% of respondents favoring a strategy of balanced diplomacy between China and the United States and 31.1% favoring strengthening of the US-South Korea alliance. Other polls have revealed that South Korea's younger generation in particular holds negative attitudes toward China. Thus, the issue has become challenging for politicians to navigate. Candidate Lee has [advocated for](#) balanced diplomacy between the United States and China and called upon the government to send a special envoy to China early during the urea water crisis but has been cautious in his handling of China issues. Candidate Yoon has advocated for greater South Korean alignment with the United States and for stronger alignment with the Quad while

continuing to advocate for upgrading of relations with China.

### South Korea's Urea Water Shortage and Concerns About Dependency on China

As noted above, South Korea in mid-November experienced an unexpected shortage of urea water, or diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), used to mitigate carbon emissions for diesel engines. This shortage highlighted South Korea's dependency on imports of the fluid from China. The shortage came about as a by-product of China's reduced production of fertilizer-related products resulting from a Chinese ban on imports of Australian coal. The urea water shortage ballooned into a major issue for the South Korean government and underscored South Korean economic dependency on China and the need for diversification of supply of critical supply chain components. South Korea reportedly [relies](#) on China for the import of over 80% of 1850 materials and products, including critical manganese and graphite supplies.

The urea water supply crisis led the Moon administration to release military reserves of urea water, impose emergency controls on the supply and use of urea water solution, and negotiate alternative urea water supply arrangements with Vietnam and Australia in addition to negotiating supply arrangements with the Chinese government to solve the immediate urea water supply crisis. The urea water supply crisis also drew public attention to the declining sales, declining market share, and increasingly difficult regulatory environment faced by Korean firms in China. These factors have led conglomerates such as Samsung, LG, SK, Lotte, and Hyundai to face difficulties and to shift focus from the Chinese market. [FKI reports](#) that total sales of Korean companies in China have decreased by 21.1% from \$187 billion in 2017 to \$147.5 billion in 2019 and that profit margins have decreased from 4.6% in 2016 to 2.1% in 2019. As a result, South Korean conglomerates such as Hyundai Motor, LG Display, and SKC have shifted major investments from China to Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia.

### China-DPRK Trade Hiatus and Self-Reliance

Chinese customs data showed a 40% [decline](#) in China-DPRK trade in September-October, countering previous indications of gradual

recovery. External sources suspected higher unofficial figures for Chinese imports like coal from North Korea. According to DPRK state media reports, Kim Jong Un is placing growing emphasis on state leadership and trade reorientation to promote self-reliance. Kim's Nov. 18 [letter](#) to a national conference on "Three Revolutions" (ideological, technological, and cultural), delivered by Supreme People's Assembly head and First Vice President of the State Affairs Commission [Choe Ryong Hae](#), projected "a new era of self-reliance and prosperity, an era of our state-first principle." In his address on "new development of socialist construction" to the Supreme People's Assembly on Sept. 29, Kim also [raised](#) the need to enhance state guidance and reduce import reliance.

South Korean sources have interpreted North Korea's recent policy discourse as an effort to strengthen [internal discipline](#) amid ongoing sanctions and post-pandemic restrictions. Self-reliance also [emerged](#) as a central theme in China's 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) marking a new stage of "socialist modernization," suggesting an inward turn in Beijing's development strategy. South Korea's unification ministry in November [reported](#) no indications of North Korea's border reopening with China after almost two years of lockdown due to COVID-19. Earlier, South Korean authorities had speculated that North Korea was finalizing plans to resume cross-border train operations with China and Russia after reopening sea routes for international medical aid. Despite media reports of train activity between Sinuiju and Dandong, the resumption of China-DPRK trade remains uncertain.

### Conclusion: Prospects for Post-Moon China-Korea Relations

Despite pressures from both the Biden administration and South Korea's own domestic public opinion in favor of greater alignment with the United States at the expense of China, South Korea has not yet abandoned its strategy of choice avoidance or taken actions that Beijing has judged as irretrievably detrimental to South Korea-China relations. Conservative [Munhwa Ilbo](#) columnist [Lee Mi-sook](#) viewed the urea crisis as an important lesson on the need to lessen dependence on the Chinese supply chain for raw materials, advocating for South Korea to look to the alliance and freedom-loving countries for its future. The progressive [Hankyoreh newspaper](#) editorialized that Korea's long-term strategy

should encompass both the future of Korea-China relations and Sino-US rivalry.

A [Global Times editorial](#) noted the Moon administration's commitment to "balance between Beijing and Washington" and praised it as different from Australia and Japan, arguing that "such a policy has expanded, rather than compressed South Korea's strategic space." This assessment came as part of a defense of South Korea's foreign minister for taking a "pro-SK interest" rather than "pro-China" stances in statements on China to the international media that had generated criticism in South Korea and the United States. In this respect, though China has avoided statements directly aimed at influencing South Korea's presidential election, it is clear that China hopes the next South Korean president will maintain the status quo on policy toward China that the Moon administration has embraced. Regardless of South Korea's electoral outcome, Pyongyang's post-pandemic isolation continues to constrain not just China-DPRK diplomacy and trade but also broader external engagement including inter-Korean dialogue and humanitarian aid.

# CHRONOLOGY OF CHINA-KOREA RELATIONS

## SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER 2021

**Sept. 1-2, 2021:** China and South Korea [hold](#) ceremonies for repatriating the remains of Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War.

**Sept. 2, 2021:** Yang Weiqun, the PRC Commerce Ministry's director general for Asian affairs, and Lee Miyon, the ROK Foreign Ministry's director general for bilateral economic affairs, [hold](#) video talks.

**Sept. 8, 2021:** PRC Embassy in Seoul [denies](#) that Beijing's campaign restricting celebrity fans targets South Korean cultural industries.

**Sept. 9, 2021:** Culture Minister Hwang Hee [confirms](#) a South Korean film distributor's cancellation of the planned release of Chinese Korean War movie "The Sacrifice" amid domestic protest.

**Sept. 9, 2021:** Xi Jinping [sends](#) a letter to Kim Jong Un celebrating the DPRK's 73<sup>rd</sup> founding anniversary.

**Sept. 11-12, 2021:** North Korea [tests](#) long-range cruise missiles.

**Sept. 14-15, 2021:** PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi [visits](#) Seoul and meets President Moon Jae-in and Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong.

**Sept. 15, 2021:** China and South Korea launch the 2021-2022 year of cultural exchange.

**Sept. 15, 2021:** North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles. South Korea test launches a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM).

**Sept. 25, 2021:** Kim Jong Un [sends](#) a reply letter to Xi Jinping marking the DPRK's National Day.

**Sept. 28, 2021:** China and South Korea hold fisheries talks via video.

**Sept. 28, 2021:** PRC and ROK nuclear envoys [hold](#) video talks.

**Oct. 1, 2021:** Kim Jong Un [sends](#) a message to Xi Jinping marking the PRC's 72<sup>nd</sup> founding anniversary.

**Oct. 7, 2021:** ROK foreign ministry [sends](#) a complaint to Beijing on the illicit distribution of Korean cultural content.

**Oct. 19, 2021:** North Korea [launches](#) a short-range ballistic missile.

**Oct. 19, 2021:** Xi Jinping sends a reply to Kim Jong Un marking China's National Day.

**Oct. 20, 2021:** A Chinese fishing boat [sinks](#) in waters off South Korea's west coast, leaving at least one crew member dead.

**Oct. 22, 2021:** ROK Coast Guard [seizes](#) a Chinese boat for illegal fishing in the Yellow Sea.

**Oct. 23, 2021:** DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Pak Myong-ho [criticizes](#) US policies toward China and Korea.

**Oct. 24, 2021:** ROK Coast Guard [seizes](#) a Chinese fishing boat in South Korea's exclusive economic zone near Jeju.

**Oct. 25, 2021:** Kim Jong Un [commemorates](#) the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of China's participation in the Korean War.

**Oct. 27, 2021:** President Moon Jae-in, Premier Li Keqiang, and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida [attend](#) the virtual ASEAN Plus Three summit.

**Oct. 28, 2021:** PRC Ambassador Xing Haiming in Seoul [pays](#) condolences on the death of former ROK President Roh Tae-woo.

**Oct. 29, 2021:** PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi and ROK Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong [meet](#) on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Rome.

**Nov. 1, 2021:** PRC and ROK nuclear envoys [hold](#) video talks.

**Nov. 2, 2021:** ROK Education Ministry [announces](#) that the China-ROK-Japan CAMPUS Asia cooperation program will expand to Laos, Malaysia, and Singapore.

**Nov. 5, 2021:** PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianguo and DPRK Ambassador Ri Ryong-nam [meet](#) in Beijing.

**Nov. 11, 2021:** PRC Ambassador Xing Haiming and ruling Democratic Party presidential nominee Lee Jae-myung [meet](#) in Seoul.

**Nov. 17, 2021:** PRC-ROK-Japan Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat [holds](#) talks in Seoul.

**Nov. 19, 2021:** ROK presidential candidate Yoon Seok-youl of main opposition People Power Party [meets](#) PRC Ambassador Xing Haiming in Seoul.

**Nov. 20, 2021:** First shipment of Chinese urea exports [leaves](#) Tianjin for arrival in Ulsan on Nov. 23.

**Nov. 29, 2021:** Seo Ga-ram, head of the ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy's trade cooperation bureau, holds online [talks](#) with the Jiangsu provincial government.

**Nov. 30, 2021:** PRC Vice Commerce Minister Ren Hongbin and South Korea's 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-moon [hold](#) the virtual joint economic committee session.

**Dec. 1, 2021:** Second shipment of Chinese urea [arrives](#) in Ulsan from Shandong.

**Dec. 2-3, 2021:** Yang Jiechi and ROK national security advisor Suh Hoon [meet](#) in Tianjin.

**Dec. 3, 2021:** *Oh! My Gran* [premieres](#) in mainland Chinese theatres after a ban on Korean movie releases since 2015.

**Dec. 3, 2021:** Twenty-two Chinese sailors [are rescued](#) from their fishing boat in South Korea's southern waters after a rock collision.

**Dec. 13, 2021:** At press conference with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, President Moon Jae-in [confirms](#) that South Korea is not considering a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

**Dec. 13-15, 2021:** South Korea [hosts](#) the online 29<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum.

**Dec. 15, 2021:** Senior presidential secretary for public communication Park Soo-hyun [tells](#) *Yonhap*, "As the host nation of the previous Olympics, taking a special interest in next year's Beijing Winter Olympics is our duty and obligation."

**Dec. 22, 2021:** DPRK Premier Kim Tok-hun and PRC Ambassador to North Korea Li Jinjun [meet](#) in Pyongyang.

**Dec. 23, 2021:** Ninth China-ROK strategic dialogue [is held](#) online.

**Dec. 24, 2021:** ROK Coast Guard [seizes](#) a Chinese fishing boat accused for falsifying ship logs.

