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# Newsletter No. 36 (January – February 2026)

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## 1. Activities

### A. Joint Academic Conference with the Institute of International Studies at Shandong University (December 6, 2025.)

The Institute for Far Eastern Studies of Kyungnam University co-hosted the South Korea–China Joint Academic Conference with the Institute of International Studies at Shandong University under the theme “South Korea–China Cooperation amid the Transition of the Regional Order in Northeast Asia.” The conference was convened to strengthen academic exchange between the two countries and to explore strategic pathways for peace on the Korean Peninsula amid evolving dynamics in Northeast Asia. A total of thirteen presentations were delivered across two sessions.

Scholars from both countries engaged in comprehensive discussions on key political, diplomatic, and security issues, including U.S.–China strategic competition, shifts in policies toward the Korean Peninsula, deepening ties among North Korea, China, and Russia, and the prospects for new forms of regional cooperation. In particular, participants examined in depth the uncertainty surrounding the Northeast Asian order following the launch of the Trump administration, adjustments in the North Korea policy of the Lee Jae-myung administration, and the role of China, with a view to identifying practical directions and strategic challenges for future South Korea–China cooperation.



## B. The 76th Unification Strategy Forum (December 11, 2025.)

The Institute for Far Eastern Studies of Kyungnam University held the 76th Unification Strategy Forum under the theme “A Turbulent Transition: Reordering the International Order and the Korean Peninsula” with the aim of assessing developments on the Korean Peninsula in 2025 and offering outlooks for 2026.

Held toward the close of 2025, the forum took place amid a period of profound and complex transition marked by shifts in North Korea's strategic orientation, intensified U.S.–China competition, the emergence of a renewed Cold War–like structure, and the reconfiguration of alliance and nuclear order following the launch of the Trump administration. Against this backdrop, the forum provided a valuable platform for building a broad consensus on the need to recalibrate South Korea's mid–term to long–term strategies in preparation for the challenges of 2026.



## 2. Publications

### A. Book (5 Issues)



Transition of Northeast Asian Order and Korea–China Cooperation  
December 22, 2025. Sang Man Lee et al.



Future Strategy for the Korean Peninsula in the AI Era  
December 24, 2025. Hyun–Jung Ryu et al.



Peace Strategy Initiative for the Korean Peninsula in the Era of Great Transition  
January 21, 2026. Ho–Young Ahn et al.



“Peace and Security Legislation” and the Right of Collective Self–Defense  
January 27, 2026. Jin–Goo Cho



Strategic Variations on South Korea’s “Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy”: A Comparative Analysis with the German Case  
January 30, 2026. Byong–Chul Lee

### B. Strategic Analysis of Korean Peninsula (8 Issues)

Implications of a Compromised and Mutually Tolerated Dissonance

December 12, 2025. Jehun Lee [Adjunct Professor / University of North Korean Studies]

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## After APEC Breakthrough, How South Korea Can Achieve Its Nuclear Submarine Ambitions

December 12, 2025. Hackyoung Bae [Professor / Korea National Defense University]

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## Structure of Lee Jae Myung Government's North Korea Policy and Future Tasks

December 16, 2025. Cheol-wun Jang [Research Fellow / Korea Institute for National Unification]

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## Status of Chinese Inbound Tourism to South Korea and Proposals for Its Sustainable Revitalization

December 16, 2025. Hyoungjong Kim [Associate Research Fellow / Korea Culture & Tourism Institute]

※ Read the Full Paper



## South Korea-China Summit and the Korean Peninsula Issue

January 8, 2026. Yu-hwan Koh [Professor Emeritus of Department of North Korean Studies at Dongguk University / Former President of Korean Institute for National Unification (KINU)]

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Dream of Self-reliant defense—Not a “Nuclear-armed Submarine” but an “Atomic-powered submarine

January 8, 2026. Yong Hoon Jang [Adjunct Professor / University of North Korean Studies]

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Tasks for South Korea–China Cooperation Centered on Building a Structure of Mutual Benefit for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

January 19, 2026. Haejung Lee [Director of the Center on Economic Studies of Unification / Hyundai Research Institute]

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Full Restoration of South Korea–China Relations and Ways to Enhance Affinity

January 22, 2026. Gyubeom Kim [Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Strategy]

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### C. IFES Brief (4 Issues)

MAGA's Perception of Russia, the Possibility of Realigning U.S.–Russia Relations, and the Korean Peninsula

December 26, 2025. TaeRim Lee [Former Professor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy]

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## 2026 Diplomatic and Security Issues and Outlook

January 6, 2026. Jae-Yong Jung [Director of Research, IFES]

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## Realistic but Not Realist Diplomacy: Structure and Risks of Trump 2.0's Foreign and Security Policy

January 22, 2026. Yonho Kim [Associate Director, Institute for Korean Studies, George Washington University]

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## Evaluating the Performance of North Korea's Five-Year Plan for Economic Development (2021–2025): Implications and Prospects

January 30, 2026. Eul-Chul Lim [Director of Research, IFES]

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## D. IFES Forum (2 Issues)

### Rethinking the North Korea Question: A Theoretically Grounded, Institutionally Coordinated, and Ideologically Oriented Strategy for Long-Term Stability

January 7, 2026. Walter Klitz, Dr. h.c. [Kyungnam University / former Director of the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation for North and South Korea]

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# Strategic Implications of Adjusting the ROK-US Combined Military Exercises for Renewing Inter-Korean Dialogue in 2026

January 16, 2026. Tae-Hwan Kwak, Ph.D. [Professor Emeritus, Eastern Kentucky University / Former President, Korea Institute for National Unification]

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