

**Tufts Seminar 2021**

**China and the World**

# **Briefing Paper – South Korea**

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Representatives:

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## **Introduction**

We are an East Asian country located in the southern half of the Korean peninsula. With a population of 51 million, over half of which live in the capital city Seoul and its surrounding area, we rank 7th on the Asian Human Development Index, and 12th in world GDP. But the nation's history often haunts the present: since the Korean War (1950-1953), the Korean Peninsula has been divided between North and South along the 38th parallel. This tension has caused strain in our foreign relations, policy, and access to resources. The line dividing South and North Korea represents not only a divide between two nations, but a contrast in ideology, policy, social structure, allies, and goals.

We hold a vested interest in maintaining American economic and other initiatives of the United States, one of their most important allies. While navigating relations, we note the complex geopolitical sphere of Asia, especially in the 21st century, and thus treads lightly in terms of diplomacy and voicing opinions on certain topics. Our overall goal is to heal the wounds of the past: with knowledge that China, like the United States and themselves, wished to avoid conflict, we will attempt to achieve economic, foreign, and environmental objectives through diplomacy and negotiation.

Both North Korea also believes they maintain the right to govern the entire Korean peninsula. Although the tensions between us and North Korea have been consistent, there have been multiple strides to reconcile the two countries. Though, this progress has been slowed by frequent North Korean missile tests, beginning in 1993. Interestingly, these tests also frustrated China, who realized the potential threat of having an increasingly militarized neighbor.

Increasing opposition between the United States and China has put pressure on us to navigate between China, our greatest economic partner, and the United States, who provides us with security.

## **Key Points**

1. With regard to the South China Sea, we are in a difficult position. The ROK relies heavily on the region for trade and energy resources. However, Korea is against tension and Chinese militarization of the area, which threatens our money and energy flows. Diplomatically, we are largely aligned with the U.S, but need China's support in North Korea denuclearization, along with America's. Korea's hope is to continue trade with China, avoid conflict in the South China Sea through diplomatic relations, while securing more partnerships with ASEAN participants.
2. We have had a growing trade relationship with China, which has now become its top trading partner. Given China's dominance within the Asia-Pacific region and its importance to our economy, the Korean government has to consider the effect its policy in regard to conflicts in the region will have on its economic relationship with China. However, we should still try to balance its trade relationships with the United States and other actors in East Asia, as well, if China oversteps to the point that it could jeopardize our overall trade in the region. This is especially relevant with respect to the conflict in the South China Sea. Furthermore, it is important that we continue to bolster our domestic supply chain.
3. We have not taken a strong stance on climate change and is not close to meeting the Paris Agreement, even with the help of COVID-19 reducing their carbon footprint. Climate change will have serious consequences for us since so much of its population lives on the coast. However, it's biggest problem currently is air pollution. Asia as a whole has a very

diverse range of climate policies, making it difficult for countries to work well with each other on this issue. Our goal is to slowly implement stricter climate laws in order to reduce emissions without having a large effect on their economy or population.

4. Unification is the only way to guarantee the safety of the entire Korean Peninsula. Seoul must take the lead in uniting the peninsula and claim to be the sole authority of the region. However, we must balance its relationships with China and the US, given its strong ties to both. North Korea's nuclear weapons are too powerful and too dangerous to be possessed by such an irresponsible and unpredictable country. Demilitarizing North Korea should be a top priority.
5. Our developmental focuses include technology, research and development, potential reunification with North Korea, and maintaining our economic relationship with China.
6. Our relationship with Taiwan is not easily defined. Despite lack of official recognition, we are heavily tied with Taiwan non-diplomatically, and therefore relies on their economic success and security. We wish to be careful not to upset China on the issue of Taiwan, as we depend heavily on China and need China as an economic ally. However, we do not want to upset the United States on that same issue, who is one of our most valuable allies and provides us security against North Korea. We hope to engage in diplomacy with Taiwan, China, and the U.S to maintain stability and have a mutually beneficial relationship for every participant.

### **Background Information**

The mountainous South Korean Peninsula reaches from mainland Asia, spanning from the Yellow Sea at west, the Sea of Japan at east, and the Korean Strait and East China Sea at South. The Korean Peninsula has endured a long history, from its founding by Goojseon in the Lower Paleolithic period. During the Warring States period (206 BCE - 220 CE), the Chinese established colonies in Korea, though Chinese cultural influence had little impact beyond the aristocracy. During the time of Three Kingdoms in the late 7th century, Korea saw militaristic states. Dynastic periods followed, leading to the unification of the dynasties under the Silla dynasty. After the wars between Japan and China and Russia, Korea was occupied by Japan (1910-45). This occupation ended after WWII, when Japanese surrendered the northern half of Korea to the USSR and the southern half to the US. After WWII, around four million people migrated from North to South Korea. Still, we are among the most ethnically homogeneous nations in the world, with upwards of 96% of inhabitants of ethnic Korean descent. Although the 1943 Cairo Declaration displayed original intentions for a unified Korea, the distrust between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War led to two separate nations, each with its own beliefs and form of government. We established a democracy and held fair elections, while North Korea was influenced by communism and established an authoritarian regime. In 1948, our independence was declared. Our government adopted a Constitution of the Republic of Korea, containing executive, legislative, and judicial branches, much like that of America.

In June of 1950, North Korea invaded our nation, initiating a three year conflict for control of the peninsula. This civil war brought up UN veto rights, and in many ways was representative of a proxy war between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Chinese government, too, sent millions of troops to fight on the side of the North Koreans, recognizing the importance of a communist ally in East Asia. After three deadly and destructive years of fighting, the war ended with no clear winner, instead disagreeing on a divided peninsula along the 38th parallel, essentially the same divide as had existed at the beginning of the war.

Interestingly, because we never signed the 1953 armistice, we are still technically at war with North Korea. This continued military tension causes us to allocate 15% of government spending to our military and maintain required conscription for South Korean men.

Despite the rocky system of government in Post-War South Korea, we have managed to increase their economy and infrastructure significantly. Our economy is increasingly industrialized, known for electronics and manufactured goods. Despite China's aid to North Korea during the Korean War, and Chinese fear of an American-allied and democratic power in East Asia, China is our largest trading partner, and we are China's 4th largest. Thus, the division of allies isn't so clear-cut — as much as we stand with the United States, they are involved economically with China in a way that prevents complete or blind support of American agenda.

Our contemporary attempts at peace with North Korea were recognized through a Nobel Peace Prize awarded for Kim Dae-jung's "Sunshine Policy," but an escalation in North Korean attacks beginning in 2010 changed the course of relations between North and South Korea. We value the European Union as an important trading partner, and has maintained an incredibly close relationship with the United States since the end of WWII. We have had difficult relations with Japan since colonial times, including anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea following WWII, and various Japanese war crimes against Korean civilians. Though, the two have recently been more aligned, as concern over China's actions in East Asia and on a global stage are exponentially increasing.

We have been a part of the UN since 1991, is linked with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as a member of ASEAN Plus three and East Asia Summit (EAS), and in 2009 joined the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

## **Committee on the South China Sea**

### **Representative: Alex Sidorsky**

How does your country view the state of affairs in the South China Sea?

- We are notoriously unclear in our stance in the South China Sea (SCS). For many years, the only insight we provided was that South Korea supported "freedom of navigation" in the waterway. We also support a resolution to disputes in the region through dialogue and not force. You must sound like a South Korean at all times. Abolish" they".
- However, after many years of United States pressure to assume a more committed stance, we changed our position in 2015 at the ASEAN conference, remarking that "freedom of navigation and overflight *must* be guaranteed and that the disputes should be resolved in a peaceful manner." (Emphasis by student author).
- Later, President Geun-hye took those words a step further at the East Asia Summit in Malaysia, stating that all players in the SCS should abide strictly to international law, notably the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. Also, she advocated for demilitarization of the region, which largely aligns with U.S interests; "China must guarantee the right of free navigation and flight."
- South Korea does not claim any territories in the SCS.
- South Korea does not have any direct interests in the SCS. However, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has many indirect ties to the region that makes Korea interested in the resolution of disputes.

What are your goals in the South China Sea?

- Economic Goals: Billions of Korean goods pass through the SCS every year and a significant portion of Korea's oil and gas. Therefore, we advocate for free and open trade routes in the SCS with no blockade of sea lanes to promote trade. Specifically, to continue lucrative trade with China (accounts for 30% of ROK's trade) while diplomatically aligning with the USA to continue our friendship.
- Diplomatic Goal: To ensure cooperation between nations in ASEAN (Korea has a large role), specifically the Philippines and Vietnam. If cooperation can be achieved, South Korea can gain more support from ASEAN associated countries to solve other issues, such as North Korean denuclearization. Also, while not explicitly said, it is in Korea interests to support the demilitarization of the SCS, namely to align the ROK with the United States, who provide a massive safety net against North Korea; but, problems with China will then emerge that need attention. This goal is a priority considering South Korea heavily relies on ASEAN for security and economic prosperity.
- While becoming a valuable part of ASEAN, we wish to maintain good standing with China, who are against ASEAN with regard to the SCS situation.

What do you see as each actor's goals in the South China Sea?

- South Korea's Goals: Our goal is to create a region free of military and trade conflict to promote free trade in the region. Moreover, we wish to ensure gas and oil lines remain untampered from external players.
- China's Goals: China's aim is to challenge the "openness" of the SCS by militarizing and developing the region, which can upset the balance of power that has existed since WWII. Also, the SCS poses a supplemental trade route for China if others, such as the Malacca strait, are under pressure. Finally, China sees the SCS as an area under its rightful jurisdiction that can provide the nation with geopolitical power.
- The United States's Goals: The U.S opposes China in the region. Specifically, the U.S looks to keep the SCS open to all lines of communication: commerce and peaceful military activity (humanitarian intervention & coastal defense). The Center for New American Security strongly recommends enhancing America's naval presence, creating a diffuse web of partnerships in East Asia, and linking American's strategic investments to this economically vibrant region.

What direct role, if any, has your nation played in the situation? If not a direct role, which players does your nation align with?

- Economically, our role is direct, as we trade goods and receive energy through the SCS at a very high volume.
- Diplomatically, our role is more indirect. We have never taken any military action, nor do we intend to, but we are involved directly with many of the players in the region's unrest. Notably, we economically align with China for monetary and security purposes, but, align with the U.S diplomatically, who are a proponent for free navigation, demilitarization, and denuclearization. We also align with the ASEAN nations, many of which are powerful middle power nations, who we trade with and have alliances with.
- We do expect our role to increase in the future, as it is likely the U.S will ask of us to take a more substantial stance. This more direct approach may cause us to fall subject to economic retaliation, receive minimal help with regard to North Korea, and will result in further pressure from America.

What is your nation's stance on the legitimacy of the Nine-dash line?

- The ROK is opposed to the legitimacy of the Nine-dash line. Our emphasis on freedom of navigation prohibits us from supporting a doctrine that designates the SCS as China's exclusive economic zone.
- Although, we do not attempt to recognize China as breaking international law (UNCLOS) to ensure stability and an economic relationship in the region. We take this more neutral stance keeping in mind that China is maintaining commercial freedom of navigation in the SCS but not military freedom of navigation.

What has your nation said about the building and militarizing of islands by China in the South China Sea?

- We do not directly support the militarization of islands in the SCS because it threatens Korea's energy security and trade routes; nevertheless, the ROK is caught between the United States and China. Korea needs China to potentially help control North Korea's nuclear threat, in addition to the U.S, making directly defying Beijing a difficult course of action for our largest neighboring power.

Do you see UNCLOS as relevant to the South China Sea? What was your nation's reaction to the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on Philippines v. China over UNCLOS?

- We see UNCLOS as relevant to the SCS, primarily to protect the ROK economic interests in the region. Moreover, SCS supports freedom of navigation and the ruling in the Philippines v. China.
- UNCLOS has created an environment of overlapping exclusive economic zones, where the ROK overlaps with Japan and China - This increases maritime traffic and drives security cooperation to our advantage (against North Korea, for example.)
- Although there is also more illegal fishing in the SCS presently, which we oppose.
- In our response to the Court's ruling, we outline that peace, stability, and creative diplomacy are of the utmost importance. We also state that UNCLOS are relevant to resolving the dispute and that we expect President Xi to continue his assurance of not pursuing militarization in the region, which he promised in 2016.
- Nevertheless, our goal is not to antagonize China, as we hope to walk the fine line between the competing interests we have in the region. We are aware China will not follow the court's ruling, and therefore, are open to creative diplomatic solutions.

What economic activity(ies) in the South China Sea is(are) important to your nation (fishing, natural gas/oil, shipping)?

- 86% of Korea's oil consumption is supplied by imports from the Middle East, almost all of which must transit the South China Sea, making the SCS of great importance.
- South Korea's mobile phone and chemical product exports to China exceeded \$471 million. Much of this trade is via the SCS - Important for imports and exports.
- Maintaining a powerful economic alliance with the Chinese is a priority for us, due to the fact that South Korea's trade with China accounts for more than the combined total of its trade with the United States and Japan; most of which is conducted through the SCS trade routes.
- Also, fishing is important to us, especially tuna. The WCPO provides nearly half of the global tuna catch, much of which is located in the SCS. Distant-water fishing nations, including the ROK, take advantage of these resources, while paying for license fees, creating a successful, bilateral relationship that should remain.

Should there be a military conflict in the South China Sea, how would it impact the security of your country?

- If the Chinese militarization of the conflict in the SCS worsens, we are placed in an awkward and dangerous position. The U.S would struggle to fulfill their obligations in defense treaties to us which would potentially lead the ROK's government to partially doubt the U.S as a trustworthy ally - This deeply weakens the U.S-led regional security architecture of the region while giving China more influence in the SCS, which can potentially pose a greater threat in the future to Korea in our future.
- Also, we (South Koreans) have been under the impression for decades that China does have the potential power to help resolve the North Korean nuclear threat and potentially facilitate reunification, to a varying extent. Subsequently, it makes it difficult for us to not align with China, who potentially offer this great security net.

Do you believe that your nation would participate in the conflict? If so, who do you see yourself being allied with?

- We do not think that Korea would participate in conflict in the SCS for two reasons. First, we do not have the military capabilities to compete with the likes of China and the U.S. Secondly, we have other interests that are of greater concern, notably the issues with North Korea, and in the Yellow Sea.
- If we were to participate in conflict in the region I think we would take a non-direct approach. Instead of aligning with China or the United States, we may align ourselves with middle powers such as Japan, India, Australia, ASEAN, and even the EU. This is beneficial because one of our primary goals in the SCS is for the region not to become a hub of U.S - China security competition and we do not want to pick sides.

### **Committee on the Korean Peninsula**

**Representative: Alison Lefcourt**

How would you describe the current situation on the Korean peninsula? What level of concern do you have about the situation on the peninsula?

- With a new administration in Washington, we are eager for cross border economic cooperation with the North and for the United States to resume negotiations with Pyongyang over its nuclear program.
- Any hope of a breakthrough during the Trump administration was obviously misplaced. It is impossible to know at this early stage if the Biden administration can represent a new beginning in trying to successfully negotiate with North Korea. Some Koreans are worried that a Biden administration may take a hard-line approach to North Korea as President Obama did. We will push the Biden administration to take a softer stance with Kim Jong Un. With the coronavirus pandemic forcing Kim Jong Un to shut off the country from the rest of the world causing untold economic devastation in his country, perhaps he will be more amenable to coming to the negotiating table as normal life resumes in 2021 and 2022.

How would you describe the Six Party Talks?

- The Six Party talks aimed to find a solution to the security concerns surrounding the North Korean nuclear program. We were involved in the talks alongside North Korea, Russia, China, Japan and the United States and took place between 2003 and 2009. While the Six Party Talks achieved some level of success, it was only during the fifth round of talks that North Korea agreed to shut down Yongbyon. This was in 2007, four years after the talks began. By 2009, North Korea had withdrawn from the talks after being sanctioned by the United States for a controversial satellite launch. While there has been some support for the resumption of the talks, nothing concrete has taken place in over the last 12 years. Clearly the Six Party talks do not represent the clearest path to a resolution of the North Korean nuclear program dilemma. With a new President in office and a new Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, who believes in diplomacy, it may be possible to restart Four Party talks which would include only North Korea, China, the United States, and ourselves.

How would you describe the relationship among North Korea, South Korea, and China?

- China is North Korea's closest ally and most important trading partner. China defends North Korea against the harsh economic sanctions preferred by the United States. China is mostly concerned about the country's potential collapse and a deluge of refugees that would flood into China. China will do what is necessary to prop up Kim Jong Un and prevent this outcome. While China is unhappy with North Korea's nuclear program its main aim is to prevent a failed state.
- While we remain strong economic partners with China, they have distinct aims politically. We must balance our relationships with China and the US, given our strong ties to both.

How are these relations informed by historical memory?

- After the Korean war, there was never a formalized peace treaty, leaving Korea divided by the 38th parallel, with North Korea backed by the Soviet Union, China, and other communist governments. We were backed by the United States and its western allies.
- This history plays into the division with North Korea today. We believe we should be the sole authority of the entire peninsula, as does North Korea.

Should there be a role for additional actors?

- As the main nuclear power in the region, China must be a part of any negotiation we have with North Korea. As our closest ally, the United States must also be included in any diplomacy. However, the addition of Russia and Japan and others in the region does not seem essential and may simply add complex dynamics to the discussions.

What is your role, or what would you like your role to be in the Korean peninsula? Are you in favor of Korean unification? Why or why not? What are the main issues preventing a peaceful unification?

- Unification is the only way to guarantee the safety of the entire Korean Peninsula. However the bleak state of the North Korean economy and its horrific social conditions will make reunification a massive challenge. Because this outcome is so favorable to countries like China and the United States, they must support this effort diplomatically and economically.



- As the only economic force in the region, we must take the lead in uniting the Peninsula. While a unified Korea has always been our goal, the intransigence of the North and the incredible economic toll that unification would inflict upon us has many citizens wary. While we dream of one Korea, the sad reality of the North requires that the leaders of that country choose to cooperate if they want to form a partnership.

What are the implications of North Korea's nuclear program for the region? Are you concerned about North Korea's nuclear weapons? Why or why not?

- North Korea maintains chemical, biological and nuclear weapons to serve as a deterrent to Western aggression and as a tool to be taken seriously on the world stage. The purpose they serve for North Korea is clear, but any accident or mistake on the part of North Korea could easily result in the destruction of the entire Peninsula. These weapons are also sought after by terrorist organizations, and we worry about the possibility of these weapons falling into the wrong hands. Quite simply these weapons are too powerful and too dangerous to be possessed by such an irresponsible and unpredictable country. Demilitarizing North Korea should be a top priority of every major world power.

Where do you think North Korea fits into China's grand strategy?

- China wants to have a role in any resolution that takes place on the Korean Peninsula, to protect their own national interests. Their close relationship, as seen recently through meetings between Kim Jong-un and Xi Jinping, stems from two basic facts: 1) North Korea presents a major geopolitical headache for the United States and 2) The collapse of North Korea would be a nightmare for China. For these reasons, China will continue to prop up North Korea as a dysfunctional dictatorship there is the least bad option for the time being.

Should human rights or social and economic justice be a concern when dealing with North Korea?

- Yes, however the interests of the North Korean people must be replaced by the interests of the South Koreans and our peaceful neighbors. While innocent North Koreans are a priority, they are part of a larger group of considerations that must be taken into account when we negotiate with North Korea.

Do you think the resolution of the tensions on the peninsula should be a concern for all of Asia?

- Since North Korea has been mostly held in check since it became a nuclear power in 2006, Asian nations may have been lulled into a false sense of security. While North Korea maintains its military readiness, the potential exists for an attack. The whole region must make it a priority to see the Korean peninsula free of weapons of mass destruction.

**Committee on Taiwan**

**Representatives: Alex Sidorsky and Darrah Parker**

Briefly describe the history of Taiwan and Mainland China. How would you describe the status of Taiwan now?

- In the eyes of the Chinese government, Taiwan is a rogue part of China that will eventually once again become part of the country. Taiwan was a Dutch colony in the 1600s, and was controlled by the Qing dynasty of China from the late 17th century to the late 19th century. After Japan's victory over China in 1895, Taiwan was surrendered to Japan, who controlled the region until after WWII, when the Republic of China began ruling Taiwan. A Civil War in China caused the Nationalist troops, led by Chiang Kai-shek, to flee China at the defeat of Mao Zedong's Communist armies. These nationalist troops fled to Taiwan in 1949, and claimed to be the just seat of Chinese power.

Is Taiwan an independent country? Why or why not?

- Taiwan has a good amount of autonomy, but this has lately been more and more challenged by China, who outwardly opposes Taiwanese independence and invalidates their claims of absolute sovereignty over the territory. While many nations recognize Taiwan as separate from China, many do not. So, the question of Taiwanese independence comes down to who you ask.

Does Taiwan have international standing in such bodies as the United Nations or the World Health Organization? Why or why not?

- In 1971, the UN seat of China was switched from the ROC (Republic of China, Taiwan) to the PRC (People's Republic of China). After this, many countries switched their recognition of the legitimate seat of power of China from Taiwan to Beijing. Taiwan is not recognized as an independent country in the UN, but rather as a province of China. Taiwan has long been an extremely contentious issue for China, and recognition of Taiwan by international organizations would be very upsetting to the CCP.

Why does China want to "reunify" with Taiwan? Describe China's "One Country, Two Systems" constitutional principle?

- Despite growing animosity, diverging political systems and different allies, China still believes they have a right to reclaim Taiwan as part of their country. Taiwan is a valuable country, both economically, and in terms of historical connection to the land. Currently, China and Taiwan remain in an agreement of "one country, two systems."

Why and how was this principle devised?

- This principle was devised in order to bridge the divide between those who wanted Taiwanese reunification with China, and those who supported Taiwanese independence. In this arrangement, which was proposed in 1995, Taiwan does not technically have sovereignty or self-determination, but is allowed to have their own army and leader.

What is Taiwan's interpretation of this principle?

- Now, most people in Taiwan do not support this system, but rather wish to maintain the status quo of relations, with Taiwan essentially separate from China.

Does your country recognize Taiwan? Why or why not?

- Diplomatic relations between Taiwan and ourselves ended in 1992 when we recognized the People's Republic of China (Communist China) as the legitimate seat of power. Because we strongly value and rely on our relationship with China, many of our moves away from anti-communist foreign policy have worsened relations with Taiwan. Still, both countries maintain strong non-diplomatic ties, in terms of economic interdependence, trade, and international collaboration, and we have frequent non-official relations.

What is your interaction with Taiwan?

- Over decades, our relationship with Taiwan has grown stronger through public channels, trade and private networks. As both nations grew democratically, we became more aligned as the private sector became more important and required diplomacy with Taiwan for economic stability and growth, even though we recognize China as the only legitimate authority.
- Recently, many sister-city relationships have been achieved, and more than 600,000 people partake in cultural and educational exchanges.
- In addition, we trade heavily with Taiwan, and they remain one of our most important economic partners in East Asia, we are very interdependent on each other regardless of competition in certain areas.

Do you trade with Taiwan? On what scale?

- We trade with Taiwan on a relatively large scale. In 2019, bilateral trade accounted for over \$34 billion, representing 5.63% of Taiwan's trade and 3% of our trade.
- The goods commonly traded are: Petroleum, circuits, transmission receivers, appliances, and semiconductors. In the past five years, trade in the communication, finance and information sectors has largely increased.

Does Taiwan have a better technology sector than China?

- While we believe in Taiwan's technology sector, at the moment, China's technology sector is stronger than Taiwan's. We feel that Taiwan has not adapted its economy as well as China has; namely in recruiting talent in technology (computer science and machine learning) and in R&D and industry. Taiwan needs a reinvigorated innovation ecosystem.
- However, we do hope Taiwan strengthens their technology sector through programs with the ROK, including "gAsia Pass" which promotes talent flow between Korea and Taiwan, Taiwan's New Southbound Policy, and through channels in the U.S's Indo-Pacific Strategy, such as the "digital cyber security partnership program."

Does your nation support Taiwan's technology sanctions on China?

- We are caught in between China and the U.S (The Entrapment Dilemma), who largely align with Taiwan, with regard to this topic. We support Taiwan's effort to limit China's overpowering presence in the technology sector in Asia as we are looking to expand our influence in the industry. For instance, Taiwan's and our participation in the Consumer Electronics Show this year was up 23% and 20%, respectively, while China's presence decreased - which is beneficial for our economy. In this sense, our alliance with the U.S also becomes stronger, as does American foreign direct investment (FDI).

- However, China is one of our allies and imperative trading partners. Therefore, we also support China in response to Taiwan's technology sanctions. We are notorious for engaging diplomatically and hedging in our foreign policy, so making a definitive claim difficult.

How has Taiwan's perspective on its identity changed over time?

- After the February 28 incident of 1947, when many Taiwanese people were killed by the KMT military, the Taiwanese began to understand themselves as distinct and different from Chinese people. There are some divisions between native Taiwanese and those who came to the mainland during the 1940s, as they speak different languages and have vaguely different traditions. These two ethnic groups often have different opinions regarding unification versus independence. Still, the concept of a distinct Taiwanese identity has been growing.

Has China's growing nationalism caused tensions in recent years?

- China's increased nationalism, along with rapid modernization, has led them to become an even greater force in the region that we need to align with militarily and economically. Any instability in East Asia would interrupt our money flows through China, Taiwan, and Japan, causing tension.
- Also, China's nationalism has caused tension in our relationship with the United States. As China grows and competes with the U.S, we have become more and more aligned with Beijing, through the China-Korea Free Trade Agreement, for example. This stance complicates our alliance with America and puts forth questions about the closeness of our relationship in the future and the balance of power in Asia.

What is your nation's attitude on the recent US arms sale to Taiwan?

- We favor the arms sale made by the U.S to Taiwan because China is powerful to the extent that we feel vulnerable and the need to "accommodate" China. Taiwan could perhaps provide some balance to the region. Nevertheless, we advocate for diplomacy and non-militarization, as instability threatens our security via our complicated relationship with North Korea and our economic ties with China, which are extremely important. Therefore, from this perspective, we do not favor the arms sale.

Do you think that the US has fueled tension between China and Taiwan?

- Yes, the U.S has fueled tension between China and Taiwan. Even though we are allies with the U.S, China's foreign aggression, which has been amplified in the 21st century, is tied to competition with the U.S and the fact that economic interdependence has enabled China to become a leading global power, giving them the ability for Xi Jinping to announce that they intend to reunify Taiwan, causing tension
- In addition, successful democracies, such as America's, ours, and even Taiwan's, tend to have an outlook that fuels tension. Michael Doyle articulates the source of this tension well, stating that there is a "perception by liberal states that non-liberal states are in a permanent state of aggression against their own people." This outlook from the U.S has no doubt shaped Taiwanese thinking and further strained the China - Taiwan relationship.

- Finally, events such as the U.S - China trade war impact all of Asia, including Taiwan. The trade war has raised concerns about China's technological threat, causing further regulation, tariffs, and less cultural integration as Taiwanese entrepreneurs stationed in China were forced to move back to Taiwan.

How likely do you think it is that China will “reunify” Taiwan through force?

- We think that it is unlikely China will “reunify” Taiwan through force, nor do we hope that it becomes more likely in the future. We tend to align more with the U.S on this issue.
- China does not want to generate an American military response, at least at the moment, which would occur if China does “reunify” Taiwan.
- We also take interest in the South China Sea, a region near Taiwan, and we do not want to see this area militarized or unstable, as a majority of our trade and energy resources travel through sea channels. Therefore, we will engage in diplomacy to ensure that China does not spark any violence with reference to Taiwan “reunification.”

## **Committee on Climate Change and Global Health**

**Representative: Carson Riffkin**

What is the Paris Agreement?

- The 2015 Paris Agreement is a legally binding international contract about climate change between 196 Parties. It requires participating Parties to try and lower their carbon footprint in order to keep the world below 1.5°C
- We participated in the Paris Agreement, however, our current track is nowhere near reducing emissions enough to keep the world below 1.5°C. It is estimated that if all countries followed our approach to climate change, the world would likely reach between 3°C to 4°C

What are South Korea's Views on Climate Change?

- Our public has shown a high degree of awareness/concern about the issue of climate change. However, when asked about the issue of climate change in comparison to waste management, air pollution, etc. most of the public sees it as a less important issue and are only willing to tolerate small price increases to their daily lives in order to lower emissions
- Our government has not taken a strong stance on climate change. The 2020 Green New Deal did not include much of what our ruling party had promised such as a net zero emissions target by 2050 or a carbon tax. Furthermore, we continue to support new coal companies and manufacturers

What is COVID-19 and how is it affecting South Korea?

- COVID-19 is an airborne infectious disease that affects the respiratory system
- Currently, we have a Level 2 (Moderate) of COVID-19. While we originally had the highest number of cases of COVID-19 outside of China, our thorough plan to immediately respond to infectious diseases and strong social distancing measures helped us reduce our cases quickly

How is COVID-19 affecting South Korea's Commitment to the Paris Agreement?

- There is a correlation between climate change and COVID-19. The pandemic is helping us reduce our emissions since much of life has been on pause since the onset of the virus in 2019
- It is estimated that there was a 4% to 6% decrease in emissions in 2020 in comparison to 2019 due to the coronavirus. This brings us closer to reaching the Paris Agreement. However, we are still very far away unless we adopt more stringent climate policies

How would you describe Asia's policies on climate change? Are they integrated or individual? Do some countries contribute more to climate change than others in Asia?

- Asia has a very diverse range of policies on climate change. This is because none of our policies are coherent or integrated.
- The national circumstances of each Asian country differ dramatically (e.g. emission sources, levels of economic prosperity), which is what makes it very difficult for us to align on policy matters.
- Currently, China contributes the most to climate change in Asia. However, the size of their population is dramatically larger than any other Asian country. Furthermore, China has recently taken a strong stance on climate change by launching the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan as well as announcing that China will achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.

What challenges does climate change pose for South Korea?

- Most people in our country live near the coast. This means we are highly at risk of flooding or inundation due to rising sea levels. Flooding is very costly.
- Rising temperatures lead to various heat effects such as a decrease in supply of electricity and an increase in need for air conditioning. This leads to price increases for companies, the public, and our government.
- We rely on energy imports of fossil fuels for over  $\frac{2}{3}$  of our energy consumption. As other nations transition to other resources, there will be less drilling of fossil fuels, ultimately leading to a price increase for buyers like us.

What is South Korea most concerned with regarding climate change?

- Our biggest concern regarding climate change is air pollution.
- We have had trouble limiting the amount of air pollution in our country, which has ultimately led us to have the worst air pollution of the 35 richest countries. While we are currently working on improving our air quality, Seoul (where 50% of our population resides) currently has air quality that is more than two times the WHO annual limit.

Evaluate the WHO's response to COVID-19

- The WHO's response to COVID-19 has been both positive and negative.
- On the one hand, the WHO did not do a good job spreading awareness about the coronavirus on the front end. After the first meeting, the WHO decided not to declare COVID-19 a "public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). A stronger response to the virus upfront could have drastically slowed the spread of the virus.
- On the other hand, the WHO has provided technical training courses on COVID-19 around the world, and shipped crucial supplies such as millions of diagnostic kits, masks, and gloves to more than 100 countries. The WHO has also helped countries develop strategic response plans, and has worked hard to research COVID-19 to better understand exactly what it is. Furthermore, the WHO has launched a campaign to counter the misinformation spreading about COVID-19, and to educate the public on the facts of the virus.

Evaluate China's response to the emergence of COVID-19

- China's secrecy with the onset of COVID-19 led to a slow response that allowed the virus to spread rapidly.
- China pretended that the early signs of the coronavirus were similar to a flu that would pass, set a narrow criteria for confirming that a case was officially part of the outbreak, and removed posts on social media where Chinese journalists and hospital staff spoke out about the virus. Furthermore, China denied that coronavirus was spread through human-to-human transmission until the evidence was overwhelming.
- Had China not denied the detrimental effects of the virus and moved to control the outbreak three weeks earlier, it could have potentially prevented 95% of the country's cases.

### **Committee on Trade and Technology**

#### **Representative: Alden Weiner**

Describe your country's trade relationship with China and other actors in the Asia-Pacific region. What are your country's most important trade relationships? Who dominates trade within the region?

- Intraregional trade has been rapidly expanding in East Asia, which has shifted from a market-led to an institutional-based form of regional economic integration. Even though China dominates trade within the region, we have forged trade relationships with many countries in the Asia-Pacific since the mid-1990s, leading to a decline in the importance of the United States and the EU as trading partners.
- We are a promoter of East Asian regionalism and have one of the most-integrated economies in the region. Most of our exports are going to China, and that has been increasing over time.
- Sino-Korean trade is largely due to China's rapid growth and emergence as a trade powerhouse and expanding market.

#### Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)

- The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) was a trade agreement signed by twelve Pacific Rim countries that covered tariffs, intellectual property rights, e-commerce rules, labor and environmental standards, among other aspects of global trade. The primary goal of the agreement was to create an integrated economic area and establish rules for global investment and trade.
- The United States was a main actor in the TPP, and the agreement was a centerpiece of Obama's strategic economic pivot to Asia. However, the Trump administration pulled out of the pact in 2017. President Biden has indicated that he would like the United States to rejoin the TPP.



- Other actors in the TPP now include Japan, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam.
- We were seen as a potential future member of the TPP, but we did not ultimately end up joining the agreement. The reason was because our government prioritized strengthening our relationship with Beijing, and the TPP was an American led trading-bloc. Specifically, we considered becoming a member in 2013, but Park Guen-hye, the president at the time, elected not to join.
- We have still been able to establish bilateral free trade agreements with nine of the countries that signed the TPP, so our trading relationships with other countries in the region have not necessarily been harmed by electing not to join the TPP.
- President Moon Jae In said the country will reconsider joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership as he feels the need to bolster the country's trade after trade volumes have fallen because of the coronavirus pandemic and seeks a diplomatic balance between China and the United States.

#### Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- 15 countries — composed of members of ASEAN and five regional partners — signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which is arguably the largest free trade agreement in history. The agreement is dominated by East Asian members, including China, Japan, and South Korea.
- The RCEP connects approximately 30% of the world's people and output. It will also generate significant gains, adding hundreds of billions of dollars to world income annually and \$500 billion to world trade by 2030. Additionally, the RCEP will lead to the economies of East Asia becoming more efficient by connecting their strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, natural resources, and technology. Funds from the Belt and Road Initiative will also become more accessible to East Asian countries as a result of this agreement.
- The RCEP will help China strengthen its economic relationships with its neighboring countries, which will lead to us continuing to develop ties with Beijing. The agreement will also advance regional economic integration and a free trade agreement between China, Japan, and us, something that has been in the works for a few years.
- Our main reason for participation in the RCEP is to expand multilateral free trade. The RCEP will open new markets for over 90% of Korean exports — a breakthrough our economy needed, especially in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, the agreement opens up new markets for our key industries, including automobiles and steel. The RCEP is different from many other economic agreements of a similar magnitude in that it will also benefit our agricultural sector. Our trade minister, Yoo Myung-hee, even predicts that tariffs will gradually be eliminated as a result of the agreement.

#### What are the key supply chain issues in Asia?

- The dependence on Asia for manufactured goods can pose an issue to the supply chain there. Countries, such as South Korea, with large amounts of exports have to grapple with increased consumption and ensure the production of goods meets the global demand.
- The conflict between the United States and North Korea, as well as the US-China tensions, have put supply chains in Asia at risk.

- A military conflict on the Korean Peninsula could disrupt the production of electronics, which makes up a quarter of our exports. Companies must be prepared to maintain the continuity of their supplies if the conflict were to escalate. Not only will our companies be affected, but shipments from other countries can be upset, as well.
- Asia Pacific companies and global companies with current or intended supply chains in the region face issues in regard to supply chain digitization and diversification. The diversification of supply chains will reduce risk in the event of rapid changes in demand or the appearance of global and regional difficulties.

What are your country's chief imports and exports in general? With China? Within the region?

- Our industry and manufacturing has grown tremendously since the 1960s. Our chief exports are refined petroleum, automobiles, electronic equipment, integrated circuits, and vehicle parts, and office machine parts. We also export manufactured goods, including steels, ships, chemicals, clothing, television sets, household appliances, and computers and semiconductors. Many of these exports are to China, but we also export to other countries in Asia, such as Japan and Vietnam.
- We need to import large amounts of crude oil, which mainly comes from the Middle East. We also import coal and petroleum gas.
- From China, we primarily import machinery, metals, electronics, and chemical products.
- We also have significant imports from Japan, including machinery, chemical products, and lab instruments and equipment.

Is your country mainly an exporter of intermediate or final goods?

- We are mainly an exporter of intermediate goods. In fact, 90% of exports are intermediate rather than finished goods, meaning that any industrial shutdowns in South Korea will impact the economies of many other countries.
- The bulk of our exports to China and ASEAN countries are also intermediate goods.

Have wages in your country been impacted by trade?

- Over the past few years, export and output growth has led to an increase in the wages of our workers.
- While we have raised the minimum wage in our country, a domestic spending slump, trade friction, and a reduction in South Korean exports to China in the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019 as a result of China's trade dispute with the United States has forced companies with higher wage costs to cut jobs, give up hiring, and reduce workers' salaries.
- In response to this, President Moon and our government are committed to continuing investing in creating more jobs and raising wages.

How has conflict in the South China Sea affected trade?

- One-third of global shipping passes through the South China Sea, which includes 90% of our crude oil imports. A Chinese blockade in the South China Sea could have serious consequences for the economic and energy security of South Korea, as well as other countries in East Asia.
- Our extensive ties in the region and with the United States has made the conflict in the South China Sea vital in terms of its impact on our trade relationships. We have to

balance our economic relations with China, the United States, and other countries in the region in regard to the conflict in the South China Sea.

- If China continues to overpower other countries in the region, as it has done in the South China Sea, that could serve as a warning sign that we cannot trust China as a reliable trading partner.
- The conflict in the South China Sea may lead to South Korea siding with the international community and expanding our trade relationships with other countries, including Japan. However, we do not want to jeopardize China as a trading partner and consumer, considering that 25% of our exports go to China.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the conversation around supply chain issues?

- The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the shortcomings of the global supply chain and the interdependence countries have on each other for goods and resources. The pandemic also caused a massive disruption in the global supply chain.
- As a response to the economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have attempted to reshore production and bring manufacturing back home. Our efforts to reshore production have been driven by ensuring access to necessary supplies and parts in the event of a future crisis and promoting economic growth in spite of the pandemic.
- We also want to begin reducing our dependence on China and have faced difficulties moving supply chains out of China.
- In June, our government announced that it would provide a number of tax and subsidy incentives to encourage companies to manufacture locally. For example, companies that reshore are eligible to have corporate taxes waived for the first four years and receive an additional 50% cut the next two years.
- We are also offering to provide 20 billion won to cover costs of relocation and facility costs for companies going to regions outside the capital and up to 15 billion won to tech firms going to Seoul, the capital region.

What are the human rights implications of the global supply chain (specifically paying attention to production in the Xinjiang region)?

- In certain regions, such as Xinjiang, governments can violate human rights in order to maintain production and establish supply chains in regions where they can exploit the workers. For example, in China, the CCP and Chinese companies have resorted to forced labor in Xinjiang.
- Shifting supply chains away from the Xinjiang region, a focus of ours and the United States, is one way to reduce the human rights violations associated with the global supply chain there.
- Forced labor is one component of the CCP's effort to "re-educate" the Uyghurs, and hundreds of thousands of minorities have been transferred into manufacturing there.
- Xinjiang plays an important role in the global supply chain as it is a leading producer of cotton and polysilicon, making the production there and the human rights implications a key component of the global supply chain.
- Forced labor in Xinjiang also looks to grow other sectors of the economy, including agricultural production, electronics and machinery, chemicals, medical equipment, and mining.

- We are aligned with the United States in that we both believe the global supply chain needs to seek improved labor practices in Xinjiang.

How quickly is your country's energy consumption growing? What is the main source of your country's energy? What percentage is imported? Exported?

- Our energy consumption has been growing, and we were the world's ninth largest energy consumer in 2019. However, we rely heavily on imports for our fossil fuel consumption as we have an insufficient supply of domestic resources.
- We are a leading importer of liquified natural gas, coal, and total petroleum liquids. While petroleum and other liquids accounted for 43% of our energy consumption in 2019, making that our primary source of energy, there has been a steady increase in natural gas, coal, and nuclear energy consumption.
- The recent rise in consumption of other sources of energy has reduced oil use in the power and industrial sectors.

What other crucial resources will become scarce in the next 20 years, and how will this affect your country's trade relations and import dependency?

- Recognizing that we are a country with limited resources, especially in the energy sector, as oil becomes scarce in the next 20 years, our dependence on importing crude petroleum can pose a problem for the country in the coming years.
- Much of our petroleum comes from the Middle East, specifically Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, so that trade relationship can be impacted by oil scarcity over the next 20 years.
- In addition to oil, water is another resource that is becoming scarce and will affect us. Water in river basins in South Korea is close to fully allocated, which poses a problem for our increasing population. However, our trade relations and import dependency will not necessarily be affected. Our solution to this issue is to shift from increasing water supply through infrastructure development to managing demand.
- We are also dependent on importing minerals to fuel our technology sector. As mineral resources become scarce, we are exploring increasing our mineral imports from North Korea, who has vast reserves that are yet to be exploited. If we can import mineral resources from North Korea, we will have a stable supply for several decades.

## **Committee on Development**

**Representative: Yufei (Lia) He**

### Historical Background

- Industrialization began in the early 1960s under the military state of Park Chung Hee
  - His goal: high rates of economic growth
- This system borrows many elements from the Japanese model of economic development
  - Characterized by the fusion of state regulation and simulation of the market through the Economic Planning Board (EPB) managing foreign economic assistance and foreign investment (specifically from Japan and the US).
  - Additionally, this economic structuring differs from traditional industrial policy in that the state is seen as an active integrator: we minimize the negative impacts of globalization + ensure regional cooperation

- First 5 year plan focuses: (successful)
  - Energy, agriculture, science and tech
  - Correcting the structural imbalance of the national economy and the development of basic industries and the economic infrastructure
  - The utilization to the full extent of idle resources; increased employment; conservation and utilization of land
  - Export promotion
- Success first in the basic and heavy chemical industries; then the formation of the “chaebol”-- the big export industrial-financial groups that are the foundation for our economy, even now.
  - The export-oriented practices are the foundation of our economic success: We’re considered one of the top 10 exporters of the world.
  - Top 10 Chaebol:

**Table 1. The Top Ten Chaebol Over the Years**

Rank	Late 1950's	Mid-1960's	1983	1995	2000
1	Samsung	Samsung	Hyundai	Hyundai	Hyundai
2	Samho	Samho	Samsung	Samsung	Samsung
3	Gaepung	LG	Daewoo	Daewoo	LG
4	Daehan	Daehan	LG	LG	SK
5	LG	Gaepung	Ssangyong	SK	Hanjin
6	Tongyang	Samyang	SK	Ssangyong	Lotte
7	Keukdong	Ssangyong	Hanhwa	Hanjin	Daewoo
8	Hankook Glass	Hwashin	Hanjin	Kia	Kumho
9	Donglip	Panbon	Kukje	Hanhwa	Hanhwa
10	Taechang	Tongyang	Daelim	Lotte	Ssangyong

- The 1980s saw us increasingly shift our economy towards tech and computer industries + improve our relations with China + the Soviet Union
- The Asian financial crisis of 1997: With government backing, the electronics and steel industries flourished. But the crisis exposed the weaknesses in our development model: high debt/equity ratios and massive short-term foreign borrowing.
  - Economic restructuring afterwards consisted of working with both the chaebols and the national banks (both aimed at improving the ability of companies to repay debts)
- The global financial crisis of 2008: The proposed anti-crisis policies/model during then (still implemented now) include:
  - Proactive role of state: as coordinator, integrator, and initiator
  - Innovation: especially in tech now
  - International factors: creating + maintaining a cooperation network
- Reasons for our economic success:
  - Highly developed workforce
  - Ease of starting a business + enforcing contracts
  - Govt. policies incentivizing investment in R&D and innovation (especially in tech)

- We, in recent years, have spent the largest share of its GDP on research and development (R&D)
  - A highly developed banking sector
  - Strong international financial position (including receiving foreign investments) + a strong export sector
- Failures in/Challenges to our economic development system:
  - Decreasing birth rates + an aging population caused by rapid urbanization, the nuclear family system, the increase in women's active participation in the economy, and lengthening life expectancies.
  - Limited natural resources + geographical size
  - Dominance of chaebols (similar to monopolies)
  - Competition with China + tensions with NK
- Govt. measures to motivate/restrict FDI:
  - Changes in tax rates
  - Cash grants (including industrial site support)
- External sources of support for development:
  - Japan
    - During their colonial rule (1895-1905), they brought the beginnings of industrial development to us.
    - One of our biggest foreign investors in recent years.
  - The US
    - Another one of our biggest foreign investors.
    - Also close political and military ties.
      - Of which we want to break out of (but also not really, because of how highly dependent we are on them).
  - The IMF
    - In 1997, we accepted a \$57 billion bailout (which was the largest such rescue in IMF history back then).
  - China
    - One of the largest importers of our goods + a major foreign investor\*

#### Key Developmental Issues to Focus On

- Our economy specializes in the new information + communication technologies sectors
- Moon Jae-in's (Our current president) development goals for 2021:
  - Tech investment + development focuses on 5G and semiconductors
- NK reunification
  - Many of our politicians and citizens believe (including Moon Jae-in) that reunification would lead to access to NK resources, ex. human capital, mines, roads, etc. which would lead to an economic boom.
  - Major roadblock in reunification is NK's insistence on nuclear weapons
    - The Biden admin's NK denuclearization plan (if successful) will pave the way for our cooperation with NK
  - China is less allied with NK than previously believed (bc of NK's highly dependent nature on China, and also Sino-SK's mutual economic benefit)

- Climate change + its impact on our economic development
  - Our climate policies are highly insufficient
  - However, under the signed Paris climate deal, our policies will reduce GDP by \$20.6 billion (1.0%) and consumer welfare by 7.9 billion (0.7%) in 2030. Declines in production are largest for fossil-based energy sectors and the chemical, rubber and plastic products, and iron and steel sectors.
- The pandemic + its impact on SK economic development
  - Our annual GDP growth was in the negatives last year→ ex. -2.7% in august (though we were impacted less than the US, Japan, and other developed countries)
  - Many politicians are worried bc it is predicted that there will be no big economic comeback until herd immunity via vaccines is achieved.

#### \*Economic Ties with China

- Sino-SK diplomatic normalization began in 1992 bc of mutual economic benefits, when economic interdependence replaced ideology as a defining factor in East Asian relations.
- China's "going out" initiative is an effort initiated in 1999 by the CPP in order to promote Chinese outgoing foreign investments.
  - It's similar to the new One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative in 2013, aiming to connect China with countries along the ancient Silk Road and a new Maritime Silk Road via infrastructure investment.
  - We have benefited immensely from China's foreign investments in both cases→ China invested US\$2.74 billion in South Korea in 2018
  - This led to closer political ties with China.
- Since 2004, China has been our largest trading partner and the largest destination for our foreign direct investment and tourism.
- The Sino-SK economic relationship has contributed to improved political relations, while NK has simultaneously become both economically dependent on and politically alienated from China.
  - Our foreign policy has been influenced by closer economic relations with China, but not to the extent that we are likely to pursue strategic realignment with Beijing or willingly forego the security benefits of the alliance with the United States.
- Our increasing ties w/ China raises a question about the conflicting nature of a US-SK security alliance and a Sino-SK alliance. This debate is centered around whether we can shed our (military) dependence on the US in order to assert itself as an autonomous actor in the region.
  - Most people in our government believe there should not be a US-SK separation (bc again, our limited geography) and how many strong countries we're surrounded by.
  - However, Jae-in values our independence more than a full/blind cooperation with the US.
- Moon's administration doesn't want to aggravate the CCP because China is our key trading partner + we want China's help with NK relations.
  - The admin prioritizes nationalism, autonomy, and inter-Korean relations over the U.S.-SK alliance.
- In terms of economic relations, in recent years, China has been investing heavily in R&D themselves→ a strong competitor with us in tech specifically.

