

Centre for ASEAN-India Studies, Korea National Diplomatic Academy and Korea Centre, East Asian Institute Roundtable

Recent Geopolitical Trends and Republic of Korea's Response

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Recent geopolitical trends in general and the current geostrategic situations in the Pacific in particular indicate that the post-War liberal international order has been significantly undermined. The war in Ukraine, the increasing military tensions in the Taiwan strait and the intensification of US-China strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific are indicative of a changing world. The overall strategic perception of the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) under the current Yoon Suk-yeol administration is that the post-war international order – or the rules-based international order that we know of – faces serious challenges and could no longer be taken for granted.

In particular, the US leadership, and its relative capability, has declined to a very significant degree; the American unipolar moment is effectively over in Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region. We now have the emerging multipolar order – that is, a multipolar distribution of power, with China taking more than half of the economic, military and comprehensive national power among all Asian countries. In Asia, China is at the centre with Japan, India, Korea and other countries in the periphery.

In the Ukraine crisis, South Korea has been participating in the US-led sanctions against Russia. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a direct challenge to the fundamental principles and norms of the current international order and a serious



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violation of international law: it is a grave infringement of the Ukrainian people's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

American response to the Russian invasion shows that the United States does not have an effective deterrent capability. From the beginning, the Biden administration precluded a direct intervention to possible Russian invasion and eventually failed to deter Russia. Biden's announcement that the United States would not directly intervene in the event of a Russian invasion of Ukraine has weakened its

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credibility and deterrent capability against Russia. The Ukrainian crisis is not limited to Europe only – it has wide and broad repercussions in the Indo-Pacific region as well. We now have increasing food and energy crises in Asia, which further aggravate the security environments in this part of the world.

The heightening of military tensions in the Taiwan Strait threatens the stability of the busiest sea lanes of communication in the world and poses a serious challenge to the stability of Asia and broader Indo-Pacific region. South Korea is not isolated from the spillover effect of the Taiwan Strait crisis, worsening the overall security environment for South Korea. Depending on the level of intensity of the Taiwan Strait contingency, South Korea could face a situation in which it might have to get involved in one way or another along with its US ally.

While the Yoon government vowed to pursue a more resolute and determined China policy, its response to US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit illustrates that its China policy has yet to be fully developed. When Pelosi landed in South Korea after visiting Taiwan, she was not greeted by any officials from the Yoon Suk-yeol government. She was also not able to meet President Yoon in person. President Yoon had cancelled his scheduled summer vacation and was in Seoul during her visit; however, he did not meet Pelosi. Instead, they talked for about 40 minutes over the phone.

Given that Yoon has publicly announced that forging stronger ties with the United States would be the number one priority in his foreign policy, this move came as a surprise to many. Whether it was related to the ROK Foreign Minister Park Jin's scheduled meeting with his counterpart, Wang Yi a week later was unknown. Regardless of the reasons behind Yoon's unexpected response to Pelosi's visit, the incident illustrates the kind of challenges and sensitivities that Yoon might be facing in managing the bilateral relationship with China.

Another security challenge that Yoon has to deal with is North Korea. North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and provocations have continued unabated, posing grave threats to not only the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula, but also the whole international community. As US-China strategic competition intensifies, along with the deepening of Russia-China relationship and cooperation "without limits", it has emboldened North Korea in its nuclear ambitions. North Korea has already completed its preparations for another nuclear test and is ready to conduct the test at any time and of its own choice.

North Korea could have been emboldened by the support of Russia and China in their repeated blockage of new sanction measures against North Korea in the UN Security Council in response to North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile and other missile provocations earlier this year. North Korea is now even threatening to use nuclear weapons and has legalised pre-emptive nuclear strike for "serious national security threats".

Besides existing challenges, including non-traditional security issues such as cyber-security and climate change, the ROK needs to address new challenges such as the disruption of global supply chains. For example, South Korea has been recently agonising over the issue of joining the 'Chip 4' arrangement with the United States.

The Yoon government has clearly indicated that it is ready and willing to join forces with like-minded countries in bolstering a rules-based international order. President Yoon has announced that he will formulate ROK's own Indo-Pacific strategy framework and expand the country's regional roles in economic as well as strategic areas in close collaboration with the United States.

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POLICY HAS YET TO BE FULLY
DEVELOPED.**

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Compared to the previous Moon Jae-in government, which had pursued a policy of balanced diplomacy between Washington and Beijing, and maintained a sense of strategic ambiguity on controversial and sensitive issues between the United States and China, the Yoon government is leaning towards strategic clarity in its foreign policy orientation and strategic outlook. In fact, President Yoon has repeatedly emphasised the political and strategic identity of ROK as a market-based liberal democracy and in upholding the fundamental values of freedom, rule of law, human rights and so on.

There are at least three important priorities in the upcoming Indo-Pacific strategy framework by the Yoon government.

First is the expansion of ROK's regional cooperation towards the broader Indo-Pacific region, namely the expansion of the New Southern Policy (NSP) that focuses on bilateral cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. This includes a reinvigorated partnership with India,

Australia, New Zealand and other like-minded countries in the region, as well as extra regional like-minded countries like France, Germany and Great Britain.

Second is Yoon's likely announcement of his strategic outlook in his Indo-Pacific strategy, with a clear vision of Indo-Pacific regional order based on rule of law and multilateralism. Yoon is expected to give greater priority to regional strategic issues, including maritime security issues in the Indo-Pacific region. President Yoon has also indicated greater interest in joining the Quad working group and security cooperation with the United States and Japan in a trilateral format.

Third is the priority given to ASEAN as a partner in the upcoming ROK's Indo-Pacific framework. The key message from the government on its ASEAN policy is to "carry on and upgrade" the NSP. The priority implies that the Yoon government is likely to continue with the forging of stronger ties and cooperation with ASEAN countries.

Whither Seoul's New Southern Policy?

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This essay addresses two questions: (i) whither Seoul's New Southern Policy (NSP) with the inauguration of the Yoon Suk-yeol Administration? and (ii) how could the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea) and ASEAN advance together amidst the flux and uncertainties driven by the intense geostrategic competition between US and Chinese superpowers in East Asia, and could they play an active, creative and cooperative role in regional affairs for mutual benefits?

Rebranding NSP?

The NSP was a foreign policy signature of the preceding Moon Jae-in administration. It reflected the aspiration of the ROK as an upper-middle power to play a more autonomous role in regional affairs. Indeed, the NSP may be the genesis of South Korea's foreign policy doctrine towards Southeast Asia and India. It can be interpreted as a Korean upper-middle power seeking to diversify its foreign policy and play a larger diplomatic, economic and cultural role in Southeast Asia and India commensurate with its G-20 status and ranking as the 10th largest gross domestic product (GDP) in the world. ROK's 10th GDP status barely beats Russia, an Eurasian great regional power, by a nose.

The Moon administration also believed that ASEAN states can contribute to peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. While it could be a bridge too far for ASEAN states to play a positive role in issues of peace and development in the Korean peninsula given its geostrategic



Dr Lam Peng Er

complexities, North Korea is an integral member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Its participation in the ARF prevents Pyongyang from being totally ostracised and isolated by the international community for its relentless nuclear weapon programme. Given the important issue of war and peace in the Korean peninsula and its vicinity, ASEAN sees the necessity to keep the diplomatic lines of communication open to Pyongyang. Moreover, as Singapore and Vietnam hosted the Trump-Kim summit in 2018 and 2019 respectively, other ASEAN capitals may

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play host to future summit meetings between Washington and Pyongyang. While that remains to be seen, it is not inconceivable. Presumably, Singapore, Vietnam and other ASEAN states would be happy to play this modest role as a convenor for a future bilateral US-DPRK Summit.

Now that conservative candidate Yoon Suk-yeol won the ROK presidency, the question is whether the NSP will be downgraded as the Yoon administration will prioritise and strengthen its relations with the United States and Japan to counter a nuclearising DPRK. Some Southeast Asian scholars may question the viability of the NSP given the Yoon administration's embracing of an Indo-Pacific strategy (IPS) as its foreign policy paradigm and priority. Will the NSP be rebranded or will it be an old wine in a new bottle? Or will the reincarnated NSP, perhaps with a new name, become a regional subset of a larger IPS? Are attestations from Seoul that a rebranded NSP will not be downgraded merely rhetorical?

Indeed, better relations with the United States and Japan do not need to be a zero-sum game for South Korea's enduring relations with ASEAN states. Southeast Asia and India will become more important to South Korea in the long run given their diplomatic, demographic and economic weight in the Indo-Pacific region. The ROK is likely to place Southeast Asia and India at the heart of the Indo-Pacific region to avoid an over-dependence on China and the United States, its most important economic and security partners respectively.

One possible scenario is that the branding of the NSP may change while its essence remains, reminiscent of a quote from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". In South Korean electoral democracy, political parties-in-power may alternate between left-of-centre and right-of-centre ideologically. ROK presidents of different ideological hues will come and go as a consequence of democratic elections and term limits. However, ROK's national interest regardless of domestic party politics is likely to prevail in seeking a win-win approach with ASEAN and India.

Consolidating ROK-ASEAN Cooperation

Ways for ASEAN and ROK relations to advance beyond general and abstract terms, and platitudes could take several dimensions. First is the greater cooperation between the coastguards of ASEAN and ROK for navigational safety, anti-piracy measures, environmental protection and humanitarian and disaster relief in East Asia. Second is the proposal for regular submarine rescue exercises between the navies of the ROK and specific ASEAN states.

Third is the clarion call for greater soft power cooperation and exchanges between ASEAN and ROK. The opening of the ASEAN Culture House in Busan is a nice gesture by the ROK to underpin the cultural dimension of the NSP. Evidently, cultural communication should not be a one-way traffic of K-pop, movies and soap operas to Southeast Asia.

Fourth is the regular hosting of high level ROK-ASEAN meetings. Such meetings can be held between their respective ministers or permanent secretaries, or top

bureaucrats from different ministries to exchange notes and lessons on climate change, pandemics, plastic pollution of oceans, economic development and environmental protection in the Mekong subregion, digital trade, mutual enhancement of cultural soft power, and also updates on peace in the Korean Peninsula.

Fifth is the proposal to consider launching a high-quality Korea-ASEAN Infrastructure Bank (KAIB), with an eye on Mekong subregional development, and to co-finance the future reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Headquarters could be located in Seoul and the KAIB presidency rotated between a Korean and a Southeast Asian.

WITHOUT THE WILL TO TAKE RISKS AND THE SUPPORT OF AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL COMMUNITY FROM ROK AND ASEAN INTELLECTUALS AND TOP POLITICAL LEADERS ALREADY BURDENED BY IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES AND CRISIS, EVEN A NON-THREATENING PROJECT LIKE A KAIB WILL NOT COME TO FRUITION.

The United States is the most influential player in the World Bank (WB). Ditto for Japan and ADB (Asian Development Bank), and China and AIIB (Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank). It is perhaps high time the ROK and ASEAN have their own KAIB to finance good infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. The hesitation could be a concern with the already overcrowding in this developmental field (with WB, ADB and AIIB) notwithstanding the insatiable demand for infrastructural investment in East Asia. Or it could be a concern with capital insufficiency between Korean and Southeast Asian exchequers for such an ambitious and visionary project, or it could simply be due to a lack of time as a KAIB requires a strong commitment from busy ROK and ASEAN politicians and bureaucrats who already have their hands full dealing with immediate problems at hand.

The ROK and some Southeast Asian states may have pride and pretensions of being middle powers. However, without the will to take risks and the support of an epistemological community from ROK and ASEAN intellectuals and top political leaders already burdened by immediate challenges and crisis, even a non-threatening project like a KAIB will not come to fruition. Apart from these considerations is the fact that it is hard to talk about visionary things beyond presidential terms.

Epilogue

Amidst intensifying geostrategic competition between US and Chinese superpowers, it is important for a concert of middle powers between ROK and ASEAN to have a voice

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in regional affairs. While the rebranding of the NSP seems imminent, downgrading it to a subset of IPS will not be a good consideration. A good example is Japan. Led by then Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, Tokyo originated and promoted the idea of an Indo-Pacific concept. However, Japan did not jettison its Fukuda doctrine towards Southeast Asia. Tokyo has always kept the Fukuda doctrine even when the Democratic Party of Japan was the ruling party at the national level between 2009 and 2012. To Japan, the Fukuda Doctrine is a regional blueprint, which has an overarching framework known as the Indo-Pacific Concept (IPC). Evidently, there is no contradiction between the Fukuda Doctrine and the IPC.

Perhaps the Yoon administration could draw lessons from the Japanese analogy of the Fukuda Doctrine and IPC. It could adopt an Indo-Pacific strategy without the need to place the NSP as a subset of the IPS. Southeast Asia is a region of around 670 million people with a rising middle class and a combined GDP of at least US\$3 trillion. Seoul should value the ASEAN region based on its own merit and not view it as part of a Great Game with the United States and Japan against China and North Korea. South Korea, as an upper-middle power, should have the bandwidth to do both well: enhance the NSP (regardless of its renaming) and establish an IPS with Korean characteristics for reconciliation and not confrontation in East Asia.

Singapore's Humanitarian Cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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Mr Gordon Kang

Despite the ebbs and flows of crises in the Korean peninsula over the past two decades, Singapore has actively contributed humanitarian assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea). In times of natural disasters, and no less the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, various actors in Singapore have sought to engage with the reclusive state and provide aid where necessary. This article provides a brief review of Singapore's humanitarian cooperation with the DPRK and suggests potential areas where such engagement can further develop. The analysis is structured based on two time periods: the pre-COVID era and the COVID era.

In total, there are five known instances of Singaporean humanitarian aid to North Korea, with three before the COVID-19 pandemic: (i) April 2004's explosion at Ryongchon railway station, North Phyongan; (ii) flooding from July to September 2007; and (iii) flooding from July to September

2012. During the COVID era: (i) in April 2020, the Singapore Red Cross pledged to provide COVID-19 humanitarian aid to North Korea; and (ii) on 6 May 2021, Singapore received sanctions exemptions from the 1718 Sanctions Committee to provide aid to North Korea, with an extension to 4 September 2022.

Several different entities have been involved over the years. For example, the Singapore Red Cross Society (SRC), as a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); the Singapore government; Mercy Relief, a Singaporean non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in 2003 that engages in disaster relief and sustainable development programmes; and possibly, private actors, such as with the case of Michael Heng, a Singaporean businessman who, in speaking to NK News, reportedly was contacted by the DPRK embassy in Singapore to source for COVID-19 test kits, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) gear and respirators.¹

The Pre-COVID Era

On 22 April 2004, a catastrophic explosion occurred at Ryongchon railway station, North Phyongan province. Six days later, the Singapore government pledged US\$50,000 to initiate a public appeal through the SRC.² A total of around US\$126,000, or S\$210,000 was contributed by the time of the final report released by the IFRC in December 2006. According to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in

¹ See <https://www.nknews.org/2020/04/north-koreans-asked-singaporean-contacts-for-help-sourcing-covid-19-test-kits/> (accessed 8 September 2022).

² See <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-State-ments-Transcripts-and-Photos/2004/04/MFA-Press-Statement---North-Korean-Railway-Accident> (accessed 8 September 2022).

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a news report on 24 April 2004, the cause of the explosion was an “electrical contact caused by carelessness during the shunting of wagons loaded with ammonium nitrate fertiliser and tank wagons”. Such an explosion is similar to that in Beirut in 2020.

From the IFRC's final report of the incident, the blast left 161 people dead and some 1,300 injured; 1,850 homes destroyed and 6,360 damaged; disrupted the county's electricity supply and water system; and damaged many public buildings, such as schools, a county hospital, a polyclinic and the local train station. The SRC's monetary contribution helped to ensure the facilitation of aid across three phases of support. Through the IFRC and DPRK Red Cross, there was an immediate phase, where they aimed to restock disaster preparedness warehouses in Sinuiju and Pyongyang with items such as tarpaulins, quilts, jerry cans and supplementary health kits. A mid-term phase followed to provide family and winter assistance such as clothing, winter shoes and quilts. Finally, a long-term phase of reconstructing and equipping the polyclinic, and building sustainable water access took place.

During the July-September 2007 floods in the DPRK, the Singapore government contributed US\$50,000 and the SRC donated US\$19,000 for humanitarian assistance, making it a total of US\$69,000 or S\$105,561 worth of relief items.³ The World Food Programme's August 2007 Floods Rapid Assessment Report showed that torrential rains caused massive floods in at least eight provinces, causing severe damage to infrastructure, housing and farmland, affecting an estimated 960,000 people.

As Figure 1.1 demonstrates, North Korea's topography is especially mountainous, limiting the quality of available farmland and isolating certain communities particularly where roads and bridges have been destroyed. Landslides are likewise a common consequence, causing damage, burying crops and eroding arable land. Figure 1.2 shows the extent to which the flatter 'cereal bowl' provinces were particularly affected, such as North and South Hwanghae, North and South Phyongan, South Hamgyong, Kangwon and Pyongyang.

An estimated 454 were killed, 156 missing, 170,000 left homeless and tens of thousands living in temporary shelters. According to the IFRC's final report released in January 2009, the DPRK Red Cross, in coordination with the IFRC and the broader health cluster group led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), aimed to restore transport routes, communication and housing. Efforts were also taken to improve basic healthcare services across all affected counties/cities, such as through the allotment of interagency emergency health kits; enhanced access to sustainable, hygienic and safe water with the distribution of chlorine; and the allocation of essential non-food items. Fig 1.3 shows the total list of relief items amounting to about S\$6.8 million as recorded up to September 2007.

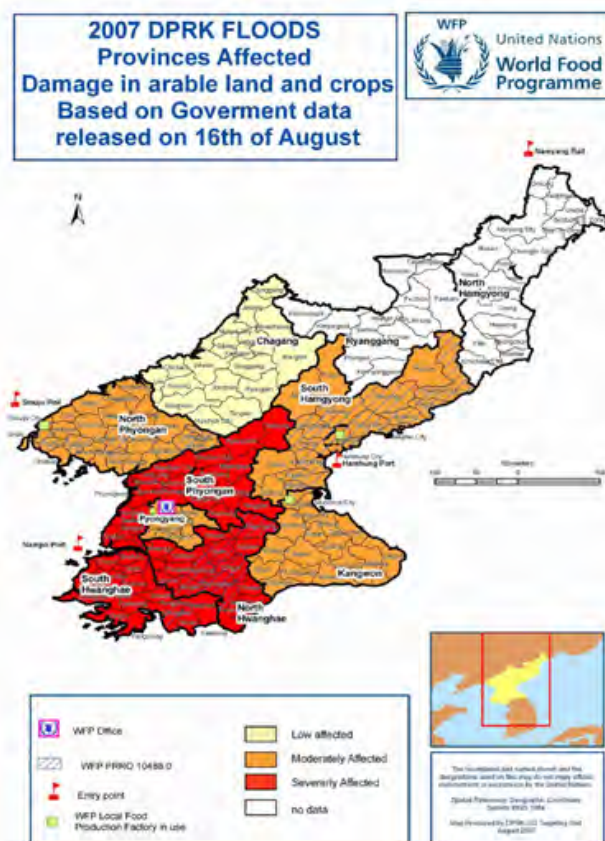
³ See <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2007/08/MFA-Press-Statement-Humanitarian-assistance-for-the-Democratic-Peoples-Republic-of-Korea> (accessed 8 September 2022).

Figure 1.1 DPRK Terrain



Source: Global Security.

Figure 1.2 Provinces Affected by 2007 DPRK Floods



Source: August 2007 Floods Rapid Assessment Report, UNWFP DPRK, 2007.

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Fig 1.3 List of Relief Items (KRW 4.2 billion or SGD6.8 million),
not including logistics and administration costs

Category	Item	Quantity
Food	Instant noodle	3.6 million (EA)
	Instant rice and other emergency food	50,000 (EA)
	Bottled water (2L)	1.8 million (Bottles)
	Soy milk and other beverages	2.7 million (EA)
	Choco Pie	2.4 million (EA)
	Powered milk (for babies)	10,000 (Tins)
	Instant cup noodle	600,000 (EA)
	Hardtack	100,000 (EA)
	Chocolate & Candy Set	5,000 (Set)
Cooking utensil	Portable gas stove	10,000 (EA)
	Gas canister	50,000 (EA)
	Bowl set	1,300 (Set)
Commodities	Towel	20,000 (EA)
	Sleeping bag	5,000 (EA)
	Blanket	30,000 (EA)
	Emergency Relief Emergency aid kit	10,000 (EA)
Others	Water filter	1,000 (Set) * Each set contains 4 million tablets

Source: DPR Korea: Floods Emergency Appeal No. MDRKP001 Operations Update No. 2, 2007.

In 2012, the Singaporean NGO Mercy Relief received an official aid request from the DPRK due to immense flooding that lasted from July to September 2012. An appeal for funding was set up from August to September 2012. In total, more than S\$300,000 was raised from donations from the public, social and religious institutions and corporations in Singapore.⁴ According to the IFRC's final report published in March 2013, the 2012 flood and typhoon season, including the impact from Typhoon Bolaven, caused 231 deaths and displaced 241,547 people, with 22,730 houses destroyed or damaged and 46,445 houses submerged.

A total of 121,998 hectares of farmland and public buildings were damaged or destroyed including railways, roads, bridges and communication networks. Relief items included 80,000 packs of food with a three-year shelf life; 10 units of water filtration systems designed and developed with Singapore Polytechnic are manual-powered filter systems which do not require electricity to pump; two tons of fresh fruits, bread and fresh milk; and 500 hygiene kits.⁵

The Current COVID Era and Future Opportunities for Cooperation

After a short spike in COVID-19 cases at the beginning of its domestic spread on 12 May, the DPRK registered a

steady decline of new cases until its "eradication" in just three months on 11 August. During this period, though the DPRK did not officially accept or administer a vaccination policy, the state may have received and administered some vaccines. Gavi, the NGO coordinating deployment of the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) programme alongside the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and WHO, had told NK News that North Korea did receive and administer some vaccines from China. Trade data with China also noted the inclusion of 'vaccines' in February 2022, but was not specified.

North Korea has requested for and imported PCR testing kits, PPE gear, relevant antibiotics, ventilators and other medical and pharmaceutical commodities. Land imports with China through Sinuiju-Dandong are subject to a three-month quarantine and disinfection period at the recently built complex at Uiju airport in Sinuiju, with sea imports through Nampo quarantined for shorter periods off the coast. Continued rise in trade with China despite the closure of the land border from April to September 2022 suggests growing use of the sea route.

Very recently, at the second sitting of the seventh session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) on 8 September, Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un announced the resumption of mask wearing and the kickstarting of a vaccination programme in November, citing warnings from the WHO particularly on the risks of winter. This is notable

⁴ See <https://www.mercyrelief.org/dpr-korea-floods-relief-ops-update-03/> (accessed 9 September 2022).

⁵ See <https://www.mercyrelief.org/dpr-korea-floods-relief-ops-update-01/> (accessed 9 September 2022).

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as the country had previously rejected multiple instances of vaccine provision, such as Sinovac from China, and through the COVAX programme.

From the outset of the global pandemic in April 2020, the SRC pledged an unspecified amount of aid to North Korea within a broader region of around US\$800,000 worth of relief items to 16 countries across the Asia Pacific. This included PPE and medical supplies, such as thermometers, hygiene and sanitation kits.⁶ A year later, on 6 May 2021, the United Nations Security Council 1718 Sanctions Committee provided sanctions exemptions specifically to the SRC for the provision of RT-PCR equipment, testing kits, and related items to local hospitals in the DPRK in accordance with the "COVID-19 prevention and control activities of the DPRK Red Cross Society" from 6 May 2021 to 7 February 2022. The exemptions were extended a year later on 4 March 2022, for a period of six months, to last to 4 September 2022.⁷ Figure 1.4 shows types of PCR-testing equipment to be imported through the exemptions.

Future opportunities for Singapore's humanitarian cooperation with the DPRK thus have a good basis to build from. For instance, Singapore could look at short-term multilateral or bilateral engagement with relevant countries to explore how assistance could be extended to the supply of COVID-19 vaccines to the DPRK in light of the announced November campaign. Further support for aid packages of protective equipment and medical supplies if needed could also be considered. Which vaccines to be used in the November campaign have yet to be specified, but considering increasingly close Sino-North Korean relations, particularly in terms of trade, this is likely to be either China's Sinovac, and/or mRNA vaccines, such as Pfizer-BioNTech, provided through international programmes like COVAX.

Singapore could also consider extending cooperation in terms of aid for the preparation of vaccine distribution and storage infrastructure, as well as possibly sharing policy expertise for its long-term deployment. To successfully vaccinate the entire population of 26 million people is not an easy feat, particularly on the back of recent droughts and floods this year. Nonetheless, the DPRK's Ministry of Public Health has longstanding working partnerships with UNICEF and WHO for the DPRK National Immunisation Programme. As the successful joint response to a nationwide measles outbreak in 2007 has also shown, past programmes do exist which provide a shared platform of experience for policy adaptation.

More broadly, opportunities for humanitarian cooperation by leveraging on ASEAN's relatively cordial ties with North Korea and its various institutional actors should continue to be explored. This could be through, for example,

⁶ See <https://www.redcross.sg/media-centre/press-releases/841-covid-19-singapore-red-cross-rolls-out-more-support-for-communities-in-singapore-and-the-asia-pacific.html> (accessed 9 September 2022).

⁷ See https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/1718_to_unrc_reply_src_exemption_covid19_request_extension_4mar22_e.pdf (accessed 9 September 2022).

Figure 1.4 List of Goods and Services for Transfer to DPRK under SRC Humanitarian Exemption

Code Number	Item Description	Dimension per unit (L x B x H)	Weight	Qty
#9002020	Rotor-Gene Q MDx 5Plex	80 X 60 X 58 CM	28KG	1
#221415	QIAprep& Viral RNA UM Kit (600)	61.5 X 45.5 X 66 MM,	0.037 KGs	1
#221417	QIAprep& Viral RNA UM Kit (2400)	152 X 116 X 107 MM	0.181 KGs	1
#222015	SARS-CoV-2 N1+N2 assay kit (600)	63 X 47 X 67 MM	0.018 KGs	1
#222017	SARS-CoV-2 N1+N2 assay kit (2400)	63 X 47 X 67 MM	0.023 KGs	1

Instrument Type				
2 Plex	2 Plex HRM	5 Plex	5 Plex HRM	6 Plex

Instrument Parts			Quantity		
Picture	SAP Nr.	Part	(required)	[QC]	[IS]
		Zubehör Standard Standard Accessories			
	9018903	72-Well Rotor (INSTALLED INTO THE UNIT)	1		
	9018904	Locking Ring 72-Well Rotor (INSTALLED INTO THE UNIT)	1		
	9018907	36-Well Rotor	1		
	9018906	36-Well Rotor Locking Ring	1		
	9018905	Loading Block 96 x 0.2 ml Tubes	1		
	9018901	Loading Block 72 x 0.1 ml Tubes	1		
	9018908	Rotor Holder with Allen Key	1		
	981103	Strip Tubes and Caps, 0.1 ml (250)	1		
	981005	PCR Tubes, 0.2ml (1000)	1		

PRP-00000181-E

S/N Rotor-Gene Q MDx: _____

QIAGEN

Instrument Parts			Quantity		
Picture	SAP Nr.	Part	(required)	[QC]	[IS]
	9020343	Cable - Serial (RS 232)	1		
	9015126	Power Cord Set International	1		
	9020346	Cable - USB	1		
	9023241	SOW RQG Software Version: _____	1		

Source: 1718 Sanctions Committee Letter to the Singapore Red Cross, United Nations, 2022.

the ASEAN diplomatic community in Pyongyang, which includes neutral entities such as Vietnam and Laos that have been active with sociocultural engagements in 2022 despite the pandemic. Their presence allows them access

ROUNDTABLE: *Game Changers? Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and Pelosi's Visit to Taiwan: Implications for the Korean Peninsula and ASEAN*



Source: South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022.

to timely updates on the current situation on the ground, and more importantly the likelihood of projects to restart deeper engagement with Pyongyang. ASEAN multilateral

platforms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, has also historically been key to maintaining a shared platform with North Korea, and this was still the case this year when the Republic of Korea (ROK) Foreign Minister Park Jin briefly met DPRK Ambassador to Indonesia An Kwang Il.

Conclusion

For Singapore, developing cooperative institutional and interstate frameworks for humanitarian engagement beyond ASEAN may also not be too far out of the picture. Bridging networks across Europe that have neutral ties with the DPRK to ASEAN, such as possibly with the Scandinavian nations of Sweden and Finland, could offer significant gains towards restarting engagement with North Korea. Importantly, by cultivating the appropriate environment for dialogue and cooperation, the regional community can work towards peace and development in the Indo-Pacific and the Korean peninsula.

Recent Geopolitical Trends and US Initiatives and Reactions

Ryan CLARKE

Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute,
National University of Singapore

Dr Ryan Clarke, senior research fellow of the East Asian Institute, delivered a presentation titled “Recent Geopolitical Trends: US Initiatives and Reactions”. Dr Clarke argues that as the goodwill that the United States has accumulated over the past few decades in the Asia Pacific slowly ebbs, several key considerations have emerged for the region. For one, the transition from a unipolar world order to that of present-day great power competition has led to increased challenges for the maintenance of US deterrence in the Taiwan Strait. This has raised broader questions of its continued role in the region and how it should evolve vis-à-vis its comparative traditional presence in Europe. Further, the United States also faces concerns about relations with India – how to not only deepen positive relations, but also further develop a broader strategic partnership, a historically difficult endeavour for the United States. Despite positive signals coming from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue – or more commonly known as the Quad (the United States, Japan, India and Australia), it remains to be seen if a strategic partnership for the long-term is plausible. A related, and especially important flashpoint of concern are the clashes along the China-India border, particularly as there are no mechanisms to escalate and de-escalate the conflict up in the Himalayas. In a possible India-China conflict, it is particularly unclear what role the United States can play. This stands in contrast with relations with South Korea and Japan, of which the United States maintains and demonstrably reaffirms a continued fulfilment of treaty commitments.

ROK-ASEAN Relations: ROK's ASEAN policy under Yoon and Future Directions

Wondeuk CHO

Research Professor, Centre for ASEAN-India Studies,
Korea National Diplomatic Academy

Professor Cho Wondeuk, research professor at the Centre for ASEAN-India Studies at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy, presented his analysis on “ROK-ASEAN Relations: ROK's ASEAN Policy under Yoon and Future Directions”. Professor Cho argues that South Korea is now implementing its own interpretation of the Indo-Pacific framework, and within that, the Yoon government's ASEAN policy. The Yoon government has shown great interest in ASEAN as a region, but many in ASEAN have cast doubts about the Yoon government's continued engagement with ASEAN countries. In all likelihood, the new ASEAN policy that the Yoon government unveils will not be the same as the previous Moon administration's New Southern Policy (NSP), and instead work within the framework of the Indo-Pacific strategy. The NSP had been greatly welcomed by both ROK and ASEAN member states, and had deepened relations between the two regions. Some continuity will likely remain between the NSP and the new Yoon policy towards ASEAN as evidenced by President Yoon's meeting with Indonesian President Jokowi Widodo and Singapore President Halimah Yacob upon taking office, signalling the intent of the Yoon administration. ROK Foreign Minister Park Jin has also stated that the ROK will not only play a more proactive global role, but also look towards ASEAN as a key part of the Indo-Pacific framework, leading to renewed ROK-ASEAN engagement. Looking towards the future, US strategic competition with China will possibly give the ROK more space on its engagement with ASEAN. Prospects for ROK-ASEAN cooperation on the Mekong River and in maritime security seem positive.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea Foreign Ministry Director General's Statement

Pak Jong Hak, director general of the Department of Southeast Asian Affairs of the DPRK Foreign Ministry, issued the following press statement on July 20:

July 24 this year is the 14th anniversary of our country's signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, and July 27 is the 22nd anniversary of its entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's signing of the Treaty and entry into the Forum marked occasions of important significance in developing the friendly and cooperative relations between the DPRK and the ASEAN and its member nations onto a new high stage.

With these anniversaries as an occasion, I would like to express consistent support and solidarity with the governments and peoples of the ASEAN member states in the efforts to strengthen cooperation and cohesion with each other and invariably maintain the ASEAN-centered policy while raising their influence and voice on the international arena.

Independence is the first among the DPRK's three foreign policy tenets, and the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity takes the foremost place in the principles and ideas advocated by the ASEAN.

The history of the relations between the DPRK and the ASEAN which have lasted for dozens of years proves that the maintenance of independence and the respect for sovereignty are the main factors that have promoted the establishment and constant development of the bilateral relations.

At present, the high-handed and arbitrary practices, interference and split into groups by specified forces for gaining unchallenged position are witnessed on a worldwide scale. The moves are posing a serious challenge and obstacle to the efforts of the ASEAN member states for peace and stability in Southeast Asia and national progress and prosperity.

Due to the U.S. and some vassal forces' inveterate hostile policy toward the DPRK and their reckless military provocation moves in Northeast Asia, not only this region but also the Asia-Pacific region are in the growing danger that may embroil them as a whole in a nuclear war.

The stable situation in Northeast Asia and the peace and prosperity in Southeast Asia are linked in one chain.

For the ASEAN to maintain impartiality and objectivity in the regional and international arenas while adhering to the main principles of respect for sovereignty, non-interference, equality and mutual respect, on the basis of independent and correct judgment over the source of the situation prevailing in the Korean Peninsula and the region, will be conducive to keeping peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

As a signatory to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the DPRK will as ever steadily promote the development of relations with the ASEAN and, as a member state of the ASEAN Regional Forum, will exert its sincere efforts to jointly protect the regional peace and security in conformity with its foreign policy tenet and the main idea of the ASEAN.

Embassy of DPRK, Singapore

In Seoul

In July 2022, the Korea Foundation sponsored Dr Lam Peng Er, head of the Korea Centre, to visit the Sejong Institute, Korea National Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Unification and the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, and meet friends from the Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) in Seoul on 20 July 2022, he was warmly received by TCS Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) Sakata Natsuko.

DSG Sakata highlighted the five functions of the TCS and a variety of new initiatives, programmes and publications including the CJK Virtual Marathon, Trilateral Common Vocabulary Dictionary, Research Report on CJK Local City

Exchange, An Evolving Trilateral Cooperation: Reality and Outlook, the Trilateral Statistics Hub. Of particular mention was TCS' engagement with ASEAN and its willingness to work with ASEAN stakeholders.

Dr Lam rated highly the achievements and significance of both the Trilateral Cooperation and TCS. In turn, he briefed the TCS on the role played by the Korea Centre at the East Asian Institute in the study of all the three countries of China, South Korea and Japan in the TCS. Dr Lam suggested collaborating on events for the Korea Centre and the institute to learn more about the Trilateral Cooperation and the TCS.



Dr Lam Peng Er (right) with TCS Deputy Secretary-General Sakata Natsuko (left).



With South Korea's former Ambassador to Singapore Lee Sang Deok and ROK's ambassador designate to Indonesia.



With Director General for ASEAN and Southeast Asian Affairs, MOFA of ROK Ms Eui-hae Cecilia Chung (background, left), Director for ASEAN and Southeast Asian Affairs Ms Kim Hejin (foreground, right) and First Secretary Ms Han Young hee (foreground, left) of the same ministry.

Highlights at the Korea Centre



21 September 2022. The Korea Centre held a productive and fruitful dialogue with a visiting delegation of officials from the Swedish Armed Forces Indo-Pacific HQ Desk and Swedish Defence attaches in the region. Both sides exchanged views on contemporary issues of common interest in the Indo-Pacific and Korean peninsula. At the end of the meeting, a small token of appreciation was presented to Dr Lam.



27 September 2022. The Korea Centre hosted Counsellor Ha Anh Tuan (Ph.D) of the Embassy of the SR of Vietnam in the Republic of Singapore for a friendly discussion on contemporary events in the region.



ROK Embassy in Singapore First Secretary and Counsellor-designate ROK Embassy in Myanmar Diego Ha at the Korea Centre in August 2022

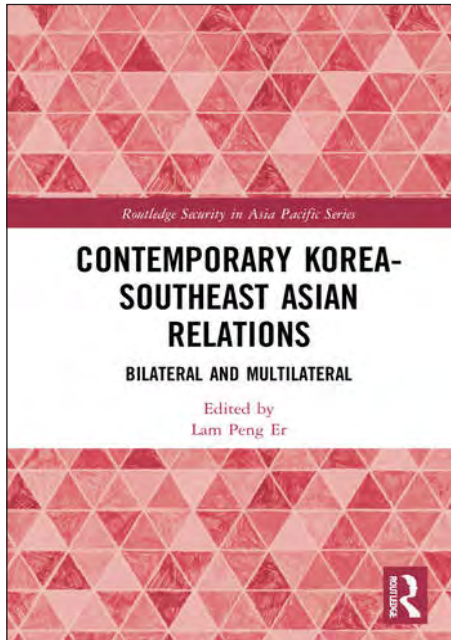


13 September 2022. The Korea Centre welcomed a delegation from the CMI Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation and held a positive exchange of views on conflict management and resolution in the Indo-Pacific.



Recent Publications

Contemporary Korea-Southeast Asian Relations: Bilateral and Multilateral



Editor:

Lam Peng Er

Publisher:

Routledge

Year of Publication:

2022

Description:

This book presents a comprehensive overview of the relations between the two Koreas and the different ASEAN states, including their relations with ASEAN as an organisation. It outlines a complex picture with both bilateral and multilateral relations in play at the same time. It charts how the present situation has arisen for each relationship, discusses current difficulties and strains, and assesses how the relationship may develop in future.

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CHRONOLOGY

ASEAN - South / North Korean Relations

A Chronology of Key Events: July 2022 to September 2022

Gordon Kang

Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore

THE Korea Centre at the East Asian Institute closely monitors Southeast Asian regional developments vis-à-vis the Korean Peninsula. This chronology considers key bilateral and multilateral interstate interactions between both Koreas and individual ASEAN countries, as well as with ASEAN as a regional institution.

July 2022

1st	The 26th ASEAN-ROK Dialogue co-chaired by director-general, acting Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) leader of Vietnam, Vu Ho, and ROK Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Yeo Seung-bae was held. At the meeting, senior officials of ASEAN and the Republic of Korea (ROK) renewed their commitment to further strengthen their strategic partnership and broaden mutually beneficial cooperation, and discussed regional geopolitical developments such as the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action 2021-2025; COVID-19 regional recovery, including the ROK's US\$6 million to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the implementation of ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework; cooperation in areas such as digital economy, tourism and climate change; and the ASEAN Outlook in the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
5th	The 8th ADMM-Plus Expert's Working Group (EWG) on Cyber Security (CS) was jointly held by South Korea and Malaysia through a virtual subpanel session involving the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to discuss cybersecurity cooperation.
5th	Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh had a teleconversation with his counterpart from the ROK Han Duck-soo. The two leaders discussed various measures to boost bilateral relations. This was the first phone conversation with a foreign leader by the ROK's Prime Minister with a foreign leader since taking office.
5-7th	In an official visit to Singapore, ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Jin called on Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and was hosted to dinner by Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan. Prime Minister Lee and Minister Park reaffirmed the positive bilateral ties between Singapore and the ROK, and exchanged views on regional and international developments and ROK's interest to increase cooperation with ASEAN. Minister Balakrishnan and Minister Park discussed avenues for expanding bilateral cooperation, such as in areas of digitalisation, fintech and supply chain resilience and reaffirmed the interest to build on strong ASEAN-ROK relations. The discussion also covered regional issues, such as in the Korean Peninsula.
8th	To mark the 28th anniversary of the death of President Kim Il Sung, diplomatic envoys and staff members of the embassies of Vietnam and Laos in Pyongyang visited Mansu Hill to pay respect to the statues of President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il.
12th	Le Ba Vinh, Vietnamese ambassador to the DPRK, and his embassy members visited Mangyongdae on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the first meeting between President Kim Il Sung and President Ho Chi Minh. The visitors laid a floral basket, toured historic mementos before visiting Kim Il Sung University, the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and the Fatherland Liberation War Martyrs Cemetery.
13th	Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Bui Thanh Son and ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Jin had a phone call to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, infrastructure, finance, defence and security. The ministers also agreed to coordinate on activities to mark the occasion of the 30th founding anniversary of diplomatic relations.

14th	A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed to form deeper trade and investment partnerships between Thailand and the city of Busan in South Korea through a mini free trade agreement (FTA). The Thailand Ministry of Commerce aims to increase Thai exports to South Korea to 200 billion baht over the next three months. In 2021, bilateral trade between Thailand and Busan amounted to \$2.33 billion or 75 billion baht.
19th	Philippine Ambassador to South Korea Maria Theresa Dizon-De Vega met Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power (KHNP) Co. Ltd executives Nam Yoh-Shik (executive vice president, Project and Overseas Nuclear Business Division), Kim Yongsoo (Overseas Nuclear Business Section vice president) and Choi Younghwan (Overseas Nuclear Business Section senior manager) in Seoul to discuss future PH-ROK cooperation on nuclear technology and renewable energy. During the call, Ambassador De Vega shared that President Ferdinand R Marcos, Jr had expressed an interest in pursuing nuclear technology and other energy cooperation platforms with the ROK.
20th	Pak Jong Hak, director general of the Department of Southeast Asian Affairs of the DPRK Foreign Ministry, issued a press statement to express the DPRK's support of ASEAN member states' efforts to strengthen cooperation, maintain an ASEAN-centred policy and broaden international influence.
25-26th	The first ASEAN Youth Dialogue between 60 youth delegates from ASEAN and the ROK was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The Dialogue featured various development sessions to strengthen ASEAN cooperation with the ROK, panel and focus group discussions, ASEAN Talk (Live Edition) and the World Café. The Dialogue was themed "Youth in the Era of Fourth Industrial Revolution: Opportunities and Challenges in Post-Pandemic Recovery". Youth delegates' policy recommendation closely aligned with the theme in focusing on the role of youth for socioeconomic recovery efforts through expanding digital literacy and environmental conservation for climate change adaptation.
27th	The 19th Korea-ASEAN FTA Implementation Committee Meeting was held to discuss ways to further advance and revise the Korean-ASEAN FTA signed in 2006 and coming into force the following year. A new agreement was reached on digital technology and systems with ASEAN member states under Korean-ASEAN FTA to further boost bilateral economic ties.
28th	President Yoon Suk-yeol and Indonesian President Joko Widodo held a summit in Seoul as part of an official two-day visit that included a meeting with business leaders and a visit to a Hyundai Motor research centre. The two leaders agreed to cooperate on economic security, such as through the stabilisation of supply chains for key minerals, defence industry and infrastructure. During this trip, Indonesia's Krakatau Steel and South Korea's POSCO Holdings also signed an agreement to invest US\$3.5 billion to expand their production capacity in Indonesia from 2023. It includes the production of automotive steel for electric vehicles (EVs). It will also help to facilitate Indonesia's US\$32 billion project to relocate its capital from Jakarta to the new city of Nusantara on Borneo island, of which South Korea is also already a partner in construction and water supply. Indonesia expanded a cooperation agreement with South Korea relating to the construction of a new capital city in Kalimantan to replace overcrowded Jakarta, paving the way for Korean firms to participate in building digital infrastructure. The new agreement "laid the groundwork for our companies to actively contribute to building the new Indonesian capital's infrastructure, electronic government and smart city systems", Yoon told a joint news conference. Jokowi said the two countries already had partnerships in the development of the new capital, including in construction and water supply.
30th	Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh chaired a dialogue with ROK Ambassador Park Noh-wan and representatives of Korean associations and businesses in Hanoi, Vietnam. At the dialogue, the ROK ambassador and Korean business community in Vietnam presented 33 proposals to Vietnam's ministries, sectors, agencies and localities related to tax incentives, power planning and electricity market, incentives for investment in renewable energy, pandemic response, procedures in various business and labour matters, along with difficulties in the implementation of certain projects.

August 2022

2nd	South Korea announced plans to provide US\$200,000 in humanitarian aid to the Philippines after a magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit the northern Philippine island of Luzon. ROK Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Lee Chang-yang held talks with visiting Vietnamese Minister of Industry and Trade Nguyen Hong Dien in Seoul. The two ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation on supply chain resilience, as well as expand bilateral trade and investment. Areas of collaboration discussed included human resources training, technology transfer, and mineral exploitation and processing, particularly on providing support for Korean companies to participate in gas-fuelled power plant projects in Vietnam. They also agreed to co-chair the 12th meeting of the Korea-Vietnam Joint Committee on Energy, Industry and Trade Cooperation and the sixth Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Korea-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement at the end of this year in Vietnam, to foster the fulfilment of the trade turnover target of US\$100 billion by late 2023.
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2-3rd	As part of a high-ranking delegation, Permanent Member of the Secretariat of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee Vo Van Thuong visited Seoul. On 1 July, Secretary Vo Van Thuong met Prime Minister of ROK Han Duck-soo before the Vietnamese delegation visited the Vietnamese embassy in Seoul and met members of the Vietnamese community in the country. The delegates had working sessions with representatives from the Korea Foundation (KF), the Vietnam-Korea Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and the Korea-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Group. Discussions revolved around ways to promote cooperation between Vietnam and the ROK, and relations between the respective organisations. From 2 to 3 July, the Vietnamese delegation met Speaker of the ROK's National Assembly Kim Jin-pyo, leaders of the ruling People's Power Party, the head of the Senior Advisory Board of the President, the minister of employment and labour, the small and medium-sized enterprises and Startups Agency, and a number of ROK organisations such as the ROK-Vietnam Friendship Association, Korean-Vietnam Friendship Parliamentarians' Group, Korea-Vietnam Economic and Cultural Exchange Association (KOVECA) and Association of Korean People Loving Vietnam (VESA-MO). The delegation also visited the Space Technology Centre of SK Group and Samsung Town.
3-5th	The 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM), Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMCs), 23rd ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), 12th East Asia Summit (EAS) FMM, and 29th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 3 to 5 August 2022. On 3 August 2022, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Prak Sokhonn and minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation chaired the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh. The 55th AMM reviewed ASEAN's Community Building efforts; discussed ways to continue strengthening ASEAN Centrality; reviewed ASEAN's collective responses to regional and global challenges, including post-COVID-19 recovery; and took stock of efforts to implement the Five Point Consensus reached at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021 in Jakarta.
4th	On 4 August 2022, His Excellency Prak Sokhonn, deputy prime minister, minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, chaired the 23rd ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance and necessity to further strengthen cooperation through the APT process and highlighted its complementary roles with other ASEAN-led frameworks. The Meeting also recognised the APT's contribution towards realising ASEAN Community Vision 2025, broader regional integration in East Asia and the AOIP as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Indo-Pacific region.
4th	On 4 August 2022, His Excellency Park Jin, minister of foreign affairs of the ROK, and His Excellency Bui Thanh Son, minister of foreign affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, jointly co-chaired the 25th ASEAN-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh. At the Meeting, Foreign Minister Park presented the ROK government's initiative to foster greater solidarity with ASEAN, beyond economic cooperation and towards greater strategic relations. He highlighted the ASEAN region as the core of Seoul's initiative as a global leader, and stressed the significant role of ASEAN considering the expanding shift of international economic and geopolitical activity towards the Indo-Pacific. The participants also exchanged views on regional and global issues, including the situation on the Korean Peninsula.
5th	On 5 August 2022, the 12th East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting took place in Phnom Penh. The Meeting was chaired by His Excellency Prak Sokhonn, deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.
5th	On 5 August 2022, the 29th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meeting took place in Phnom Penh. Participants discussed major security issues in the region, such as those concerning the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan Strait, South China Sea, Ukraine, and Myanmar. Other topics included food and energy supply chain disruptions, disinformation and climate change. Participants also agreed to strengthen ARF cooperation in areas such as cyber-security, maritime security and non-proliferation. DPRK Ambassador to Indonesia An Kwang Il also attended the ARF and briefly met Minister of Foreign Affairs of ROK Park Jin after a welcome dinner the night before. Their encounter is the first between North and South Korean diplomats since President Yoon Suk-yeol took office.

5th	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia Prak Sokhonn held a bilateral meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of ROK Park Jin on the side-lines of the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings in Phnom Penh. The two ministers affirmed positive bilateral ties, particularly on economic cooperation, and exchanged views on regional and international developments, including the Korean peninsula.
5th	SK IE Technology Co. (SKIET), an electronics materials maker under South Korea's SK Group, signed an initial deal with Vingroup, Vietnam's largest conglomerate, to supply battery separators to its affiliate. In the week before, Vin Energy Solutions (VinES) President Pham Thuy Linh and other executives visited the SKIET headquarters in Seoul and its factory in Jeungpyeong, North Chungcheong province, to discuss the agreement. SK Group has been progressively expanding its presence in Vietnam. In 2018, it established a regional investment unit in the country.
9th	Supreme Leader and President of State Affairs of the DPRK Kim Jong Un sent a congratulatory message to HE Halimah Yacob, president of the Republic of Singapore, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Singapore.
9-12th	The third ASEAN - Korea Youth Summit, organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the National Council of Youth Organisations of the ROK took place in Seoul. The event, themed "Carbon Neutrality and ASEAN-Korea Youth", saw more than 100 young representatives of the ROK and ASEAN member states attend virtually and in person.
17th	Supreme Leader and President of the State Affairs of the DPRK Kim Jong Un sent a congratulatory message to HE Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the independence of Indonesia.
25th	The First ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Plus Three Consultation (DGICM + 3) was held in Singapore. The Consultation was chaired by the Commissioner of Immigration & Checkpoints Authority of Singapore Marvin Sim and attended by the heads of Immigration and Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the ASEAN member states, China, Japan and the ROK, as well as officials from the ASEAN Secretariat. Participants exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in immigration, consular affairs and border management under the DGICM + 3 framework.
29th	A gala reception was held in Phnom Penh to celebrate South Korea's National Day. The event was attended by more than 400 participants, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations Prak Sokhonn and South Korean Ambassador Park Heung-kyeong.
31st	Philippine Ambassador to the ROK Ambassador Maria Theresa B Dizon-De Vega met Trade, Industry and Energy Deputy Minister of the ROK Jeong Daejin to discuss energy and trade cooperation, particularly on renewable and safe nuclear energy technology. The two officials also shared views on cooperating in emerging areas of trade, such as in EVs, as well as positive expectations for the signing and ratification of upcoming FTAs such as the PH-ROK FTA and RCEP.

September 2022

5th	South Korean Vice Defence Minister Shin Beom-chul and Vietnamese Vice Defence Minister Hoang Xuan Chien conducted the 10th Strategic Defence Dialogue on increasing security cooperation between the two countries in areas such as maritime security, military logistics, arms industry and cybersecurity. This year marks the 30th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties between South Korea and Vietnam. The two countries stressed the importance of increasing cooperation in high-level exchanges, military education and other areas to elevate bilateral cooperation towards a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'.
5th	South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and Laotian Deputy Prime Minister Saleumxay Kommasith met in Seoul to discuss bilateral relations and prospective cooperation between South Korea and Laos. During the meeting, Minister Han suggested increasing people-to-people exchanges and bilateral cooperation in trade and investment as soon as the COVID situation stabilises, as well as on Laos' diplomatic role in ASEAN.
5th	South Korean energy-to-telecom conglomerate SK Group's three affiliates - SK Materials, SK Ecoplant and SK Signet - signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Gentari Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Malaysia's state-run oil company Petroliaam Nasional Berhad (Petronas), to explore collaboration in hydrogen, renewable energy and green mobility as part of efforts to bolster SK Group's green energy transition.

6th	South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and Laotian Deputy Prime Minister Saleumxay Kommasith met in Seoul to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries, particularly in trade, investment and other areas. These industries are highlighted for active cooperation to mitigate economic challenges faced during the post-COVID-19 period. The two countries conveyed their hope for the prospects of the RCEP, the free trade agreement between ASEAN countries, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, to go into effect before the end of the year.
6-8th	The 2022 ROK-ASEAN Defence Vice-Ministerial Meeting and Seoul Defence Dialogue (SDD) 2022 were held in Seoul. The annual events were organised by the Ministry of National Defence of ROK to promote regional cooperation and organise dialogue between ASEAN countries and the ROK on matters in the Asia-Pacific region and Korean Peninsula. The ROK-ASEAN Defence Vice-Ministerial Meeting focused on initiatives for ROK-ASEAN defence cooperation. The theme for the 11th SSD was 'How to Address Complex Security Challenges: Fostering International Solidarity'. It concentrated on security issues in the Korean Peninsula and Asia Pacific, such as the role of military in hybrid warfare and international cooperation, and technological challenges in defence. The first SDD Space Security Working Group was also held to further develop initiatives on space security.
11th	Trade Minister of South Korea Ahn Duk-geun and leaders from 13 other member states of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework began discussion on increasing regional economic cooperation. This included formal rule-setting talks on the four key pillars of fair trade, supply chain resilience, infrastructure and green technology, and tax and anti-corruption. The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework is an initiative for development, stability and regional cooperation between the 14 countries: the United States, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Fiji.
13-15th	The 54th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia with the theme "ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together". The Meeting cemented the commitment of ASEAN member states to regional economic integration amid economic challenges posed by COVID-19 and rising geopolitical tensions. ASEAN's economy had expanded by 3.4% in 2021, largely driven by a rebound in consumption, investment and trade, and reopening of domestic economy with the help of successful vaccination programmes. As of mid-August, the full dose vaccination rate in ASEAN had reached 69% and booster shot 30.5%. The Meeting was optimistic that ASEAN's growth will continue to be strong, projecting a growth forecast of 5% and 5.2% for 2022 and 2023, respectively. The Meeting was preceded by a preparatory meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials (SEOM) and joint meetings with the 36th ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) Council, 25th ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) Council and Consultations with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC).
14th	The Philippine Ambassador to Korea Maria Theresa Dizon-De Vega paid a courtesy call on ROK Representative Jung Choun Sook ahead of her parliamentary delegation's visit to the Philippines. Ambassador De Vega and Representative Jung discussed gender and development initiatives in the PH and ROK legislative agendas and acknowledged the volunteer work conducted by Filipina migrants in South Korea's women shelters as important advocacy in women's welfare. Gender equality and inclusivity in the multicultural setting was highlighted as opportunities for further cooperation. Representative Jung's trip to Manila will include meeting key women leaders and advocates on gender and development in the legislative and executive branch.
15th	The Jeju ASEAN Hall was officially opened by the ASEAN-Korea Centre. The Opening Ceremony was officiated by ASEAN-Korea Centre Secretary General Kim Hae-yong and attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Jin, Governor of Jeju Special Self-governing Province Oh Young-hun and the 10 ASEAN ambassadors. Located in the International Peace Centre Jeju of Jungmun Tourist Complex, the Jeju ASEAN Hall is the only permanent exhibition hall in Jeju that introduces ASEAN culture and tourism. It aims to promote understanding between the cultures and people-to-people exchanges between ASEAN and Korea. The ASEAN Tourism Promotional Vehicle was also launched in the same period to promote ASEAN culture and tourism in Jeju.
15th	Three men were charged in Singapore for several counts of conspiracy to obstruct the course of justice under Section 204A read with Section 109 of the Penal Code 1871, in relation to destroying evidence of illicit oil transfers to North Korea. According to the press release from the Singapore Police Force, the men, aged between 32 and 47, allegedly conspired to falsify shipping documents that may have shown that the Sea Tanker II (IMO 9664483), a 3,600-deadweight-ton oil tanker, transferred gasoil to North Korea-flagged vessels in or before October 2018. Further investigations also revealed that prior to the vessel's return to Singapore, two of the suspects allegedly conspired to dismantle and dispose of a computer processing unit ('CPU') onboard MT Sea Tanker II to prevent the Singapore authorities from obtaining information in the CPU relating to the vessel's activities during the material period.

16th	ASEAN member states and the ROK met for the 19th AEM-ROK Consultation co-chaired by HE PAN Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia and HE Dukgeun Ahn, minister for trade, ROK. The Meeting focused on economic cooperation and recovery between ASEAN and ROK economies. According to the joint media statement, two-way trade between ASEAN and ROK was US\$189.5 billion in 2021, increasing by 22.3% year-on-year. Foreign direct investment (FDI) from ROK to ASEAN in 2021 amounted to US\$7.1 billion, or a decrease of six per cent year-on-year. ROK was the fifth-largest trading partner for the ASEAN region and the source of FDI among ASEAN Dialogue Partners in 2021.
16th	The 16th East Asia Summit Energy Ministers Meeting (16th EAS EMM) was hosted virtually. The Meeting was chaired by HE Suy Sem, minister of mines and energy of Cambodia. The Meeting was attended by EAS participating countries from ASEAN member states, Australia, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the ROK, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Meeting centred on strengthening the EAS as a forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic areas, particularly on the energy sector, through practical actions and collaborations between members, as well as through financial and technological mechanisms.
16th	The 19th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting Plus Three (19th AMEM+3) was held virtually. At the Meeting, participants acknowledged the effect of global geopolitical events on regional energy markets and supply security, impacting the volatility of energy prices and the resiliency of energy supply chains. The Meeting reiterated the need to enhance international cooperation towards mitigating further disruptions and strengthening system flexibility to cope with future changes.
17th	ASEAN member states, Australia, China, India, Japan, ROK, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States met for the 10th East Asia Summit (EAS) Economic Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia. According to the Joint Media Statement, ASEAN preliminary statistics show that the combined nominal GDP of EAS participating countries stood at US\$57.4 trillion in 2021. The Meeting also noted that ASEAN merchandise trade with non-ASEAN EAS participating countries amounted US\$1.67 trillion or an increase of 25.2% year-on-year. FDI flows from non-ASEAN EAS participating countries to ASEAN rose by 36.7% to US\$75.2 billion in 2021, representing 43.2% of ASEAN's total FDI inflows.
17th	The 25th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Plus Three Consultation was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia. According to the Joint media statement, the Meeting noted that trade between ASEAN Plus Three countries recorded an increase of 25.1%, reaching a total value of US\$1.098 trillion in 2021. Meanwhile, total FDI flows from the Plus Three countries into ASEAN were valued at US\$32.65 billion in 2021, accounting for 25.4% of total FDI inflows into ASEAN.
18th	Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co, South Korea's leading builder, was awarded a 1.9 trillion-won (US\$1.4 billion) railway order from the Philippine Department of Transportation. In a company statement, Hyundai E&C will build a 56-kilometre railway connecting the capital city of Manila to the southern city of Calamba in the next six years.
19th	Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo met ROK Foreign Minister Park Jin on the sidelines of the 77th United Nations General Assembly in New York, highlighting their commitment to elevate Philippine-Korea bilateral relations to a strategic partnership. A strategic partnership would deepen engagement across economic and security ties, diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges between both countries.
22nd	The Third ASEAN Plus ROK Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (third AMMTC + ROK) Consultation was held via videoconference. The Consultation was co-chaired by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and ROK. The participants exchanged views on practical cooperation on areas of mutual interest to implement the SOMTC-ROK Work Plan for Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Transnational Crime (2019-2023) in realising the transnational crime component of the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025).
22nd	The Symposium on ASEAN Identity and Strengthening ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Cooperation: Now and Beyond was held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia. Participants ranged from a diversity of experts, policymakers and practitioners from ASEAN member states and the ROK. The symposium comprised two panel sessions, themed "Amplifying ASEAN Awareness and Developing ASEAN Identity 55 Years On" and "Strengthening ASEAN Identity Through Cooperation". Discussions focused on the role of ASEAN identity in building and fostering a sense of belonging in the ASEAN community, and explored potential areas of cooperation and lessons to learn from ROK, such as through Hallyu.

27th	The National Assembly of the ROK formally ratified the Cambodia-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA). CKFTA was signed into law in Cambodia in January 2022 and ratified in June 2022.
28th	A ceremony is held to celebrate the first flight of ROK's homegrown KF-21 fighter that has been pushed to complete development by 2026 under the 8.8 trillion-won (US\$6.15 billion) project aimed at replacing the ageing fleet of F-4 and F-5 fighters and bolstering air power. The ceremony was attended by top Seoul officials, including Defence Acquisition Programme Administration (DAPA) Minister Eom Dong-hwan, Air Force Chief of Staff General Jung Sang-hwa and Indonesian Deputy Defence Minister Muhammad Herindra. Indonesia is a partner country in the KF-X project. During the event, Minister Herindra highlighted the country's commitment to continuing its participation in the fighter acquisition programme.
28-30th	The ASEAN-Korea Bio Week 2022 was held in Seoul in conjunction with international pharmaceutical expo CPHI Korea 2022. The expo featured 22 exhibitors from eight ASEAN member states, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Cambodia, showcasing products and exploring opportunities for partnership within the ROK. Enterprises participating in the event come from various sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, vaccine production and dietary supplements. On 30 September, the ASEAN-ROK Centre hosted a workshop to discuss policies for closer healthcare cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK, and shared case studies on business partnership in the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and health care.
29th	The Embassy of the Republic of South Korea in Cambodia celebrated the 25th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Cambodia with a concert at the Chaktomuk Conference Hall in Phnom Penh. With over 400 guests in attendance and performances by K-Pop and taekwondo teams from both countries, both Minister of Culture and Fine Arts Phoeurng Sackona and South Korean Ambassador Park Heung-kyeong remarked on the strength of their positive, bilateral ties.

This chronology of events is cross-referenced from the following ministries, institutions and news sources:

The ASEAN Secretariat; The ASEAN-Korea Centre; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Cambodia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Laos; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; Channel News Asia; The Borneo Bulletin; Khmer Times; Phnom Penh Post; The Jakarta Post; The Laotian Times; The Star; The Myanmar Times; The Philippine Star; The Straits Times; Bangkok Post; Nhan Dan; Vietnam News Agency; The Korean Central News Agency; NK News; NK Pro; Yonhap News Agency; Arirang; and the Korea JoongAng Daily.