

Change or Continuity? Seoul's Approach to Southeast Asia under the New Southern Policy

Yoon Ah Oh**

South Korea's New Southern Policy (NSP) is commonly viewed as Seoul's hedging strategy to respond to intensifying US-China strategic competition. Such a view essentially takes an extrinsic approach treating Southeast Asia as a means to South Korea's larger foreign policy ends. However, the NSP can also be viewed as Seoul's Southeast Asia policy, which is about its relations with the region. Such an *intrinsic* perspective leads to the question of whether the NSP constitutes a clear policy shift. I propose using two distinct frameworks which are centered on resources and assumptions to assess whether the NSP represents change or continuity in Seoul's approach to Southeast Asia. The findings suggest that the NSP represents a dramatic change in terms of resources devoted to its engagement with Southeast Asia, but Seoul's Southeast Asia policy has remained unchanged in terms of the underlying assumptions about the nature of its relations with the region.

Key Words: New Southern Policy, South Korea, Southeast Asia, ASEAN, Security

I. Introduction

The New Southern Policy (NSP) of South Korea or the Republic of Korea (ROK) is considered a major foreign policy of the Moon Jae-in administration. Launched in 2017 as a response to intensifying US-China strategic competition, it was understood that the NSP sought to build coalitions with the regional countries of Southeast Asia (SE Asia) and India. The NSP was announced in full form in November 2017 during President Moon's state visit to Indonesia. The visit was part of his tour of Vietnam,

* Assistant Professor, Seoul National University; Email: yoona.oh@snu.ac.kr

Indonesia, and the Philippines to participate in a series of meetings of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summits, and the East Asia Summit. The NSP, in its first version, had the three pillars of people, prosperity, and peace and organized various areas of cooperation under each pillar. It was presented as a comprehensive cooperation initiative covering most aspects of economic and diplomatic relations. The NSP had 16 key areas of cooperation, ranging from terrorism response to trade promotion, cooperation in smart technologies, and expanded cultural exchanges. In November 2020, Seoul introduced the NSP Plus at the virtual Korea-ASEAN summit as an update of the NSP in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSP Plus reorganized the NSP on the principles of people-centrism to set "fresh, feasible initiatives centered on seven key areas of cooperation" in seven streamlined areas where the public health sector takes priority (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy 2021).¹

The NSP paid unprecedented attention to SE Asia by committing to elevate SE Asia (and India) in the country's foreign policy priorities to the level of the "Big Four" powers, namely the United States, China, Russia, and Japan. These four countries had traditionally been the most important to South Korea's foreign policy and diplomatic affairs. Thus, the NSP is a foreign policy initiative that finally granted South Korea's relations with SE Asia a recognition commensurate with actual levels of economic cooperation, people-to-people ties, and other exchanges. Previously, despite the fact that SE Asia was already one of South Korea's top trading partners and investment destinations in addition to being a major home region of international migrants in the country, its place in Seoul's foreign policy hierarchy had come up short relative to its socioeconomic importance.

The Moon government itself considered the NSP its flagship foreign policy and a major achievement.² It held the view that the NSP has historic importance as South Korea's regional diplomacy and left the country's relations with SE Asia stronger than they had ever been (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy 2022). The NSP's intent to place a diplomatic priority on the region, with its effort to expand cultural

-
- 1 The seven areas of cooperation are as follows: 1) comprehensive public health cooperation in the post-COVID era, 2) sharing a Korean-style education model and support for the development of human resources, 3) promoting two-way cultural exchanges, 4) building the foundation of mutually beneficial and sustainable trade and investment, 5) support for rural villages and urban infrastructure development, 6) cooperation in future industries for common prosperity, and 7) cooperation for safety and peace promotion at the transnational level.
 - 2 It was cited as one of the key achievements of the first half of the Moon presidency by the Chief of Staff to the President in 2019 (Park 2019).

exchanges in particular, was well-received by SE Asian diplomats (Moon 2020). In addition, the NSP served as a useful diplomatic focal point in the government's effort to navigate US-China strategic competition in Asia. This was borne out by the fact that both Washington and Beijing sought to link the NSP with their own regional initiatives, such as the Free and Open Indo Pacific and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Ingram 2020).

In contrast, the NSP also received a good amount of skepticism, if not criticism, that it was ineffective in addressing South Korea's strategic vulnerability to fallout from the US-China rivalry or strengthening Seoul's foreign policy latitude. Although not directly connected to the NSP, Seoul's policy stance during Moon's tenure was characterized by a series of disagreements with Washington. The sources of friction included Seoul's persistent request to Washington to uphold Pyongyang's demands in US-North Korea nuclear negotiations, its reluctance to make the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system fully operational, its exit from the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), its efforts to expedite the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) of a combined US-South Korean force from the U.S., and its pushing Washington to declare the Peace Declaration with North Korea (Kim 2023). The ROK-US alliance weakened to the point that, just before the 2022 presidential election, 70 percent of respondents of a major public opinion survey said that the top foreign policy priority for the incoming government was "strengthening" the US-ROK alliance (Yoo et al. 2022). Despite such friction with the U.S., neither the Moon government nor the NSP was credited with improving South Korea's strategic autonomy. This is largely because the Moon government was heavily criticized for its China policy and being over-accommodating to Beijing's interests (Choo 2021). China's increasingly aggressive rhetoric and coercive diplomacy toward South Korea, but perhaps more importantly, the seeming powerlessness of the Moon administration with any matter related to China, did not help create a public perception that South Korea was expanding its strategic autonomy from great powers. This is why it is rare to see a convincing argument for the efficacy of the NSP as a hedging strategy in a serious sense.

Although these assessments differ, both share a commonality that they view the NSP from an *extrinsic* perspective. Since they view the NSP as Seoul's hedging strategy to respond to intensifying US-China strategic competition, they are essentially an extrinsic approach treating SE Asia as a means to Seoul's larger foreign policy ends. However, the NSP can also be viewed as Seoul's SE Asia policy, which is about its relations with the region. Such an *intrinsic* perspective leads to the question of whether the NSP

constitutes a clear policy shift in Seoul's SE Asia policy. Then, it becomes a question worthy of investigation independent of the NSP's effectiveness as a hedging policy.

This study examines whether the NSP represents a significant change in Seoul's SE Asia policy. There are many ways to compare and contrast a policy in relation to its predecessors. Among these, this study uses two frameworks. The first framework focuses on resources invested under the policy, and the second on assumptions about ROK–SE Asia relations. I have chosen these two frames of reference because they capture distinct aspects of the traits and limitations of the NSP and thus offer analytically differentiated and useful insights.

Examining whether the NSP represents change or continuity contributes to our understanding of ROK–SE Asia relations and Korean foreign policy developments in recent years. Despite the public attention paid to the NSP during the past few years, scholarly treatment of the NSP has been rather scarce. This may be partly explained by the fact that the NSP is a relatively recent initiative and, thus, it is too early to properly assess its achievements. Still, it may also be attributed to the fact that current accounts of the NSP tend to focus on its efficacy and legacy without articulating the conceptual framework for analysis. The findings from this study illuminate where the NSP has come up short and where it can improve Korea's SE Asia policy going forward.

This study proceeds as follows. The second section discusses the two frameworks for assessing the NSP. The third discusses the background of the NSP. The fourth and fifth sections present assessments of the NSP using resource and assumption frameworks. Their findings quite differ. The final section concludes.

II. Frameworks: Resources versus Assumptions

I argue that whether the NSP represents a significant change in Seoul's SE Asia policy can be usefully examined using two frameworks. The first seeks to ground analysis on the changes in resources committed to and invested in Seoul's diplomacy toward SE Asia. Under the resource framework, one could conclude that the NSP represents a change if diplomatic attention and resources devoted to Seoul's SE Asia affairs expand or decline in a measurably way. Ultimately, a considerable increase in the resource area can be interpreted as a success or achievement of the NSP from this perspective.

The idea of focusing on resources is based on conceptual differentiation used in the project management literature within the field of business and management, such as the input-transform-outcome (ITO) model articulated by Zwikaël and Smyrk (2012).

To judge performance of a complex project, this model breaks down a project so that it is possible to make multi-level evaluations specific to each constituting process. A typical model consists of inputs, outputs, and outcomes, where inputs are resources that are used to produce outputs, which are tangible and visible results of a project, which subsequently contribute to outcomes, which are the ultimate goals. In the original management literature, it seems that the key reason for breaking down project processes was to assign accountability to each step to better secure target outcomes. For my purposes, the key utility of this model is to separate outcomes from inputs and outputs clearly, enabling fairer judgement of achievements at each stage for a complex policy like the NSP.

The second framework focuses on the change in assumptions about the nature of ROK–SE Asia relations. Assumptions about the "nature" of ROK–SE Asia relations can take the following forms, for example. One can assume that ROK–SE Asia relations can be upgraded by strengthening economic and cultural ties while avoiding hard security issues. In other words, leaving out strategic and security affairs will not affect the value of South Korea's partnership with SE Asia as long as economic ties and cultural exchanges are expanded. Others may assume that bilateral relations cannot be transformed without an improvement in security cooperation, irrespective of the progress made in economic cooperation.

Once we take an assumption-centered view, an important implication is that two policies should be considered identical (even if they manifest different levels of rhetoric or resource deployment) as long as they share similar assumptions about how things would work in ROK–SE Asia relations. This is another way of stating that the assumption framework does not prioritize policy content per se but its underlying notions. This makes it quite different from the resource framework, which is more about visible investment. In addition, compared to the resource-centered framework, the assumption approach takes the strategic environment of ROK–SE Asia more seriously.

Employing different frameworks thus makes it possible to make differentiated evaluations of the NSP. This should improve our understanding of the NSP given the fact that accounts rarely mention their frames of reference when they make a judgment of the NSP. It also explains why views diverge on the NSP, as discussed earlier. It should be also noted that this approach is different from frameworks commonly used in foreign policy analysis where the focus is often on explaining foreign policy decision outcomes. In contrast, the framework used in this study is focused on clearly differentiating between distinct perspectives for assessing changes.

III. The Background of the NSP

The NSP was one of three policies that constituted the larger regional initiative of the Moon government called "A Responsible Northeast Asia Plus Community." This included (1) the "New Economic Map of Korean Peninsula" on inter-Korea relations and (2) the New Northern Policy (NNP) targeting Russia, Mongolia, and Central Asian countries in addition to the NSP (National Planning Advisory Committee 2017). The initiative targeted a broadly defined East Asian continent.

The goal of the NSP was to diversify its foreign relations to maintain or enhance its foreign policy latitude or strategic autonomy in the midst of intensifying US-China strategic competition under the Trump administration and aggressive Chinese foreign policy toward South Korea. The strategic environment had acute economic elements.³ South Korea's unusually high level of trade dependence on China was the main pathway through which it was affected by great power politics. In other words, the transmission mechanism was South Korea's economic ties with China.

When South Korean President Moon assumed office in May 2017, a shift in US trade policy was already underway. In January, on President Trump's first day in office, the U.S. withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free trade deal negotiated by President Obama and concluded in 2015. A key part of Trump's protectionist "America first" trade policy was to reform US-China trade relationships to make US businesses more competitive and protect US manufacturing jobs. President Trump particularly wanted to reduce the US trade deficit with China, recorded at around \$346 billion in 2016, by imposing tariffs and quotas on imports from China. Because of the structure of the East Asian production network and South Korea's active participation in trade in intermediate goods, disruptions to China's exports to the United States were likely to negatively affect South Korea's exports to China. Because China is the largest export market for South Korean goods and because South Korea runs a large trade surplus with China, disruptions could undermine South Korea's overall trade performance. President Trump's protectionist rhetoric and aggressive trade policy also alarmed many in South Korea. Trump's trade war directly targeted South Korean exports of steel and automotives to the US market, and the country ran a high trade surplus with the U.S. (Jeong 2018). This provided strong support for diversifying economic

3 Outside South Korea, the NSP received special attention as a window to South Korea's dilemma in the growing US-China competition among scholars and practitioners (Nilsson-Wright and Yu 2021). Seeking greater foreign policy latitude was well understood as the key background for the NSP (Yeo 2021).

relations away from the US market.

More importantly, South Korea had to address its exceptionally high trade dependence on China, which made it vulnerable both to fallout from the US-China trade war and to the risk of Chinese economic coercion. Although successive South Korean governments sought to maintain close economic relations with China, South Korea learned the hard way that China was willing to use its economic power to pursue its foreign policy goals. China's sanctions against South Korean businesses for the deployment of the THAAD missile system in 2016 significantly increased support for the diversification of South Korea's external economic relations.⁴

The NSP's diversification motive was also based on the central principle of the foreign policy of the Moon administration, which emphasized "confident diplomacy leading international cooperation." This was clearly stated in an official document of the Moon administration called the National Agenda (National Planning Advisory Committee 2017). This was again emphasized in the 2020 Diplomatic White Paper, in a section under the head "confident cooperation diplomacy with four neighboring countries" (Chapter 1, Section 2-2). The idea of "confident diplomacy" was used to imply strategic autonomy especially in relation to the four great powers. To reduce reliance on great powers, South Korea would need economic and diplomatic diversification that would make it less vulnerable and more confident in its foreign policy.

Strategic autonomy in South Korea's foreign policy used to be discussed mainly in the context of the US-ROK alliance largely because, for most of its history as a modern republic, that was the main constraint. Since the end of the Cold War, managing the tension between aspirations for more foreign policy autonomy and the imperative of the US-ROK alliance has been the key task for all South Korean governments (Snyder 2018). However, the past decade saw the emergence of a new source of tension, which was the shift in China diplomacy to a more aggressive and coercive direction. The sanctions in the aftermath of the THAAD deployment were a clear example. This strengthened the rationale that Seoul needed more partners and diverse foreign relations. In this context, the NSP presented a case that SE Asia and India could be the most viable and effective partners for diversification.⁵

4 China's 2016 sanctions are not mentioned in the 2020 Diplomatic White Paper as background for the economic diversification drive. In contrast, Japan's export restrictions on key industrial materials for South Korea's semiconductor industry in 2019, a reaction to a court ruling on forced labor during World War II, were mentioned in the White Paper.

5 Putting Southeast Asia and India in the same category for economic diversification was not always well received. Arguments have been presented that the NSP could have been more focused on India rather

IV. Resource-Centered Assessment

A. Resources before the NSP

For a long time, South Korea maintained a highly narrow view of its foreign relations due to the pressing security necessity to respond to the North Korean threat. The division of Korea and the legacy of the Korean War led to the dominance of the United States and Japan in South Korea's foreign relations during the Cold War. The end of the Cold War and the economic rise of China since then made China a key economic partner of South Korea. Russia became a major partner for its geographic proximity and diplomatic leverage over North Korea in addition to its natural resource wealth.

Prior to the NSP, South Korea's foreign policy initiatives involving Asia were either Northeast Asia-focused or encompassed all of Asia without giving SE Asia exclusive attention. The Roh Moo-hyun government issued the "Northeast Asia Hub Country Initiative," while the following Lee Myung-Bak government and Park Geun-hye governments came up with the "New Asia Initiative" and the "Korean Peninsula Peace Cooperation Initiative" tied to the "Eurasia Initiative."

Over the years, SE Asia has emerged as South Korea's key economic partner and the target of vibrant diplomatic engagement, but it still lacked political status within the foreign policy hierarchy (Lee 2019b). It would be difficult to argue that South Korea ever had a SE Asia policy worthy of its name prior to the NSP. There were some references to the "Southern Policy" under the Kim Young-sam government in the 1990s, yet that policy lacked a coherent geographic concept. The scope of the then "Southern Policy" was essentially defined as southern Asia-Pacific, including countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Indonesia, the Philippines, and Australia, a region understood outside North America (Kookchung Shinmun 1994). Even in the 2000s and years leading up to the NSP, SE Asia lacked individual recognition in Seoul's foreign policy thinking and institutions.

than Southeast Asia for value added (Choe and Kim 2019; Oh 2020). Economic cooperation between Korea and India has been stagnant since 2010 despite the India-Korea FTA signed in 2009. The economic size of India is comparable to that of Southeast Asia, but Korea's trade with India in 2019 was only about 14 percent of its trade with the latter. Korea's people-to-people exchange with and public exposure to India is considerably limited compared to Southeast Asia. Progress in Seoul's security cooperation with India remained even more limited than progress in economic cooperation (Dhawan 2002).

B. Expanded Diplomatic Resources and Economic Cooperation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea clearly stated in its Diplomatic Paper 2018 that the NSP ultimately seeks to create an "ROK-ASEAN Future Community" by elevating all aspects of its relations with SE Asia and India and placing an unprecedented priority on the region (2018, 62. fn. 1).

Under the NSP, Seoul committed and dispensed a significant amount of organizational and fiscal resources to upgrade diplomatic ties with SE Asia. The first step was to increase South Korean *government resources* devoted to SE Asia and ASEAN. At the highest level, the Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy (PCNSP), to be chaired by the Economic Advisor to the President, was established in 2018 to oversee the policy development and coordinate the complex set of programs under the NSP. More important was the expansion of organizations within the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) devoted to SE Asia. The Korean government created the ASEAN Policy Bureau within the MFA. Two things were noteworthy. First, SE Asian affairs used to be dealt with by the "South Asia & Pacific Affairs" Bureau, where the region was grouped together with South Asia, Australia, and New Zealand (PCNSP 2022). Now, it has its own independent bureau with three departments. Second, the newly created ASEAN Bureau was set at the same level as the China and Japan bureaus. Considering South Korea's conventional diplomatic hierarchy, this was a significant change. ROK's ASEAN mission in Jakarta, Indonesia, was also upgraded and enlarged. Such a reallocation of government resources would have been difficult to execute without the political attention and support created under the NSP.

South Korea invested unprecedented diplomatic resources in SE Asia under the NSP. This was most visible in summit diplomacy. President Moon visited all 10 SE Asian countries within two years of his coming to power, which had never been done by any of his predecessors. Since the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit—which consists of 10 ASEAN member states, China, Japan and South Korea—was established in 1997, the ROK president has made annual visits to the ASEAN chair country to attend a series of ASEAN-related summits. These summits include the annual ASEAN-ROK Summit, the APT and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Because a number of SE Asian countries are also members of the APEC and Group of Twenty, whose annual summits take place close to the timing of the ASEAN and EAS summits, the ROK president's visits to the region often extend to the host countries of these regional groupings. However, South Korean presidents rarely made frequent visits to SE Asia that were not bundled with multilateral meetings. President Park Geun-hye, the immediate

predecessor of President Moon, made a state visit to Indonesia during her first year in office. However, she made no other foreign policy-related visits to SE Asia outside the ASEAN summits during the first two years of her tenure.⁶ President Lee Myung-bak made six visits to SE Asian countries outside multilateral summits during his first three years in office.⁷ In terms of unbundled, foreign policy-related visits, President Lee visited seven SE Asian countries during his time in office, while President Park visited two during her tenure.⁸ In-person diplomatic visits conducted by state leaders are important signals in inter-state relations, as they reveal significant strategic information (see Malis and Smith 2021; Wang and Stone 2022). Therefore, South Korea's leader visits under the NSP are clear evidence of heightened attention and resource investment in SE Asia.

The ASEAN-Korea Commemorative Summit and the 1st Mekong-Korea Summit held in Busan in 2019 provided an opportunity for further cooperation. These summits and tours were accompanied by a large number of government-to-government meetings, business dialogues, and cultural exchange programs. A wide range of diplomatic outreach, track 1.5 and 2.0 dialogues, and public diplomacy activities were organized in South Korea as well as SE Asia under the banner of the NSP.

The major economic initiatives under the NSP were the signing of multiple bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with SE Asian countries. These were significant investments in the relationships. South Korea pursued multiple FTAs with SE Asia to expand trade ties. The country added three bilateral FTAs with SE Asian countries under the NSP. It signed FTAs with Indonesia in 2020 and Cambodia in 2021. It also concluded the Philippines-Korea FTA in 2021. Negotiations with Malaysia were launched in 2019. The three concluded FTAs benefited from the momentum created by the NSP. Efforts to establish bilateral FTAs with ASEAN member states had stalled prior to the NSP due to a lack of mutual interest or to setbacks during earlier negotiations. Considering the fact that Japan signed bilateral FTAs with all member states of ASEAN on top of the regional ASEAN-Japan FTA, there was a good case that the NSP could further promote and expand trade liberalization between South Korea and the region.

The signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was part

6 President Park visited Singapore in 2015 to attend the state funeral of former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew; Author's calculations using records from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea (MOFA) (https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_4064/list.do).

7 Author's calculations using data from MOFA.

8 President Lee's attendance at the Bali Democracy Forum organized by Indonesia in 2010 and 2012 are not counted as "unbundled visits" in the tally; Author's calculations using data from MOFA.

of the progress made under the NSP to enhance trade and investment ties between South Korea and SE Asia. The RCEP was signed in 2020 with 15 countries, including 10 ASEAN member states and South Korea. Compared to the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement in place, it further eliminates 1.3 to 4.3 percentage points in tariff for South Korean exports to SE Asia and 1.7 to 14.7 percentage points in tariff in SE Asian exports to South Korea (Ministries Concerned 2021, 117).

Another important input was the increase in state financial flows to SE Asia. Official development assistance (ODA), financial resources directly under the influence of the government, was the major policy tool in this case. Seoul pledged in 2019 that it would increase its ODA to the region by more than 20 percent annually to double the amount in 2023 (Yonhap News Agency 2019). SE Asia was already South Korea's major development partner region, and the NSP was set to continue this trend. For the funding of South Korea's ASEAN diplomacy, Seoul increased the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund to US\$14 million in 2021 and the Mekong-Korea Cooperation Fund, which focuses on multilateral sub-regional cooperation in mainland SE Asia, to US\$4 million in 2021. The increase in ODA was one area where the contribution of the government was most visible and measurable (Nicolas 2021).

C. Change: Achieving Goodwill and Making an Entry into Regional Diplomacy through Resource Investment

The allocation of resources allowed South Korea to claim a new profile and status in its SE Asia diplomacy. The NSP is South Korea's first geographically focused foreign policy agenda to specifically name SE Asia as a region. In that sense, the primary significance of the NSP is its giving South Korea's relations with SE Asia, and India, belated political recognition proportional to the region's importance. This has political and diplomatic importance since it helps secure goodwill and standing in South Korea's bilateral and regional relations with SE Asia (Moon 2020).

Thus, the NSP gave Seoul something to point to in a competitive field of regional diplomacy in East Asia. SE Asia, or East Asia more broadly, is a place where numerous regional diplomatic initiatives are in competition, including China's BRI, Japan's Quality Infrastructure Strategy and its many predecessors, Taiwan's New Southward Policy, and US Indo-Pacific (Chen 2020; Wallace 2013; United States Department of Defense 2019). Unlike many external partners, South Korea lacked a regional policy that specifically targeted SE Asia. Now, South Korea's regional policy has a presence in regional diplomatic discussions. The NSP has been used in diplomatic dialogue in its relations

with the U.S. and China. In 2019, Washington and Seoul issued a joint factsheet to promote cooperation between the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the New Southern Policy (United States State Department 2021; United States White House 2021). The NSP was also perceived as compatible with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) by some (Pardo 2021). On the other hand, Seoul also proposed to China linking the NSP with China's BRI so that Korean firms could participate in BRI projects (Yun 2019). The NSP acted as a focal point and a frame of reference in the conduct of regional diplomacy, which was useful for Seoul.

The NSP granted unprecedented resources to Korea's relations with SE Asia. In terms of resources, the NSP undoubtedly represents a significant change in Seoul's SE Asia policy. The official account of the success of the NSP and popular narratives about the nature of the NSP largely correspond with the resource-based assessment. This means that those views are persuasive where resource investment is concerned.

V. Assumption-Centered Assessment

A. Assumptions of SE Asia Policy before the NSP

The practice of South Korea's SE Asia policy had the following assumption during the post-Cold War era roughly from 1990 to 2010: Separation of economic cooperation and strategic involvement was possible and posed no constraint on the expansion of relations with SE Asia. After the end of the Cold War, South Korea remained largely uninterested in geopolitical issues outside the Korean peninsula. It was an emerging middle power and largely preoccupied with the North Korean nuclear issue and Korean reunification.

For SE Asia, South Korea's lack of interest or involvement in SE Asian strategic issues was unproblematic because the strategic environment of the region was benign. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, China did not make aggressive overtures, so a need to respond to aggressive Chinese diplomacy was not present. China's opening and reforms extended into external economic sectors in earnest in the 1990s, and its accession to the WTO in 2001 marked the beginning of its meteoritic economic rise. At the same time, the 2000s was the decade when Beijing maintained Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy philosophy of "hide your strength, bide your time" and presented a broadly accommodative stance to its Asian neighbors. China participated in various multilateral settings and seemingly accepted the existing regional order. This was the basis for the optimistic view of that time that China turned out to be a benign power and ASEAN

socialized China into its regional norms centered on ASEAN (Goh 2007/2008). China's participation in the Declaration on Conduct of the Parties process in the South China Sea was taken as supporting the ASEAN socialization argument of "a zone of relatively stable peace" (Weissmann 2010, 64). With the strategic environment stable and "peaceful," SE Asia saw no particular need for or expectations of Korea assuming a strategic role.

The old assumption made it unnecessary to match the level of security cooperation with economic ties. South Korea was not a regional power for its foreign policy orientation and preoccupations. The South China Sea disputes seemed to be under control, and piracy in the Strait of Malacca, a non-traditional issue, only required functional cooperation and capacity building assistance (Lee and McGahan 2015). Therefore, what was sufficient was to expand economic and people-to-people ties and upgrade diplomatic relations accordingly. Strategic or security cooperation was to be kept at a minimum, except for occasions related to North Korean defectors and intelligence sharing.

B. Lack of Security Cooperation under the NSP

The Moon government presented the NSP as a comprehensive foreign policy framework for its SE Asian diplomacy. Nevertheless, it was not comprehensive in substance because it lacked a strategic security dimension. The NSP did include a security domain labeled "peace," but the peace pillar lacked strategic substance, which can be illustrated in two ways.

First, the NSP limited *security* cooperation under the NSP to SE Asia's support for Seoul's North Korea policy, whose importance was clearly asymmetric between South Korea and SE Asia. It is no surprise that North Korean denuclearization and Korea reunification is the key foreign policy issues for Seoul and, as such, it has been shaping South Korean diplomacy with SE Asia. This translated into a decades-long diplomatic practice wherein Seoul's main interest in the security domain of its SE Asia policy has been to seek diplomatic support from SE Asian states for its stance on North Korea (Lee 2019a). The tendency was such that if a conservative government was in power in Seoul, it called for SE Asia and ASEAN support for a confrontational policy and condemnation of North Korea nuclear missile tests, while it called for the region's support for the peace process and for engagement policy under a progressive government. This continued under the NSP.

Under the NSP and the Moon administration, South Korea emphasized (perhaps

over-emphasized) the ASEAN region's potential contribution to the Korean peace process based on the region's diplomatic networks with Pyongyang. The view was that SE Asia can play a significant mediating role because all SE Asian countries maintain diplomatic relations with North Korea and five countries have embassies in Pyongyang. It is true that these relational resources allow them to play a role as a host, as evidenced by US–North Korea Summits in Singapore, 2018, and in Vietnam, 2019.

Nevertheless, Seoul overplayed the significance and capability of SE Asia in North Korean affairs. As an ASEAN observer noted, there is a sense of misplaced recognition by Seoul of SE Asia's potential contribution: "the NSP seemed to conflate ASEAN's convening power and peace-oriented values, and the cordial relations that several ASEAN members enjoy with both Koreas, with the ability to broker peace in the Korean Peninsula" (Thuzar 2021, 2). The continuing focus on North Korea under the NSP manifested itself in Seoul's invitation of North Korean leader Kim Jung-un to the 2019 ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in Busan. Pyongyang turned down the invitation, but whether Kim Jung-un would attend the summit dominated media coverage leading to the summit.

Second, the NSP remained silent on SE Asia's key security needs in the context of the rise of China. The NSP and its updated version, the NSP Plus, strenuously avoided a hard regional security agenda and limited cooperation to *non-traditional and human security* issues, such as public health and disaster response. The key observation here is that this is not new and is a continuation of Seoul's past SE Asia policy. There was no change to South Korea's reluctance to address broad regional security issues, particularly South China Sea disputes.

Maintaining peace and stability in maritime SE Asia is essential to South Korea's national interests, since it is a major trading economy and heavily reliant on the Sea Lines of Communication going through the Strait of Malacca and much of the South China Sea. Nevertheless, South Korea used to be extremely reluctant to directly address South China Sea disputes on the international stage other than occasionally and passively supporting freedom of navigation in principle (Lee 2016). It was only in 2021 that South Korea officially expressed a commitment to freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea at the US–South Korea Summit (United States White House 2021). South Korea's arms sales and navy boat transfer may have strengthened the coastal state's military capabilities around the South China Sea, but this is far from security cooperation.

One of the key factors in Seoul's reluctance to become involved in the South China Sea was its sensitivity to China's interests. First, Seoul had wanted to avoid any

disruption of economic relations with its largest trading partner. Second, it has been South Korea's foreign policy belief that it should be respectful of Beijing's core interest if it wants to secure China's support for and proactive role in North Korean denuclearization and Korean unification (Easley and Park 2018; Lee 2020). The NSP continued this past tendency, and there are observations that the Moon administration was even more deferential to China during its early years (Kim 2023).

Because SE Asia, as a group of non-major powers, has similar concerns facing challenges related to intensifying US-China rivalry, South Korea's stronger partnership with SE Asia may help manage regional security (Bae 2021). However, the NSP was silent on this aspect. Korea continued to be a "regular but passive party" in ASEAN-led mechanisms (Bae 2021, 573). South Korea's involvement in existing ASEAN mechanisms continued its strong rhetoric of support for ASEAN centrality and was expanded in terms of resources, as shown by the increase in ASEAN and Mekong cooperation funds, but this did not lead to qualitative transformation. This undermined the claim that the NSP is a transformative policy that is to create a community of "ASEAN-ROK Common Destiny" (Office of the President 2019). This is perhaps the biggest cause of the rhetoric-action gap in the NSP.

If there was any notable movement toward security or strategic cooperation between Seoul and SE Asia, it was South Korea's utilization of ASEAN's position in the Indo-Pacific. ASEAN issued ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) in 2020 as a response to the US Indo-Pacific strategy (ASEAN 2020). The AOIP was significant in the sense that ASEAN recognized the Indo-Pacific concept in its official statement and offered its view, but it was limited as a strategy because it presented no alternative or important input to the United States or China (Oh 2021). South Korea expressed support for the AOIP, but the effect was largely Seoul's use of ASEAN's initiative to present a balanced position between U.S. and China contestation rather than strengthening ASEAN's position.

In other words, in the security domain, the NSP had a narrow focus of soliciting SE Asia's support for Seoul's North Korea policy and remained passive with respect to the region's security issues, including South China Sea disputes. This made the security cooperation nonreciprocal, and this could not be compensated by commitment to stronger economic or cultural cooperation. This inevitably led to a perception in SE Asia that South Korea is only partially interested in regional security and unwilling to be a partner for broader strategic issues in the region. This is why many SE Asian policymakers and observers have pointed out that South Korea approached the region in a single-issue and narrowly defined instrumentalist manner (Ha and Ong 2020).

C. Continuity: Old Assumption and New Environment

The NSP continued the traditional assumptions of Seoul's SE Asia policy—that South Korea could strengthen its ties with SE Asia through deeper economic ties without meaningfully addressing regional security. This was problematic because the NSP temporally coincided with the rise of China's "authoritarian diplomacy" (Byun 2021). Geopolitical developments during the second half of the 2010s made old *modus vivendi* difficult to hold. China's foreign policy strategy has made a proactive and aggressive turn, especially with respect to its neighbors, the key idea of which is an asymmetric bargain between respect for China's core interests in exchange for benevolence (Smith 2021).

The NSP essentially self-limited its efficacy by avoiding hard strategic and security cooperation (Choe 2021; Gaad 2021). Despite the fact that the NSP was presented as a comprehensive strategy, "in an effort to minimize the risks of being drawn into the quagmire of US-China strategic rivalry, Seoul had to design the initiative as a purely functional cooperation agenda by setting aside strategic issues from the NSP's "peace pillar" (Choe 2021, 3). This fundamentally undermined any claim that the NSP was meant to transform ROK–SE Asia relations.

One would think that SE Asia would appreciate Seoul's avoidance of the traditional regional security agenda. Paradoxically, the weak position of SE Asia in the international relations system required a stronger external counterweight (Gaad 2021). This is because the strategic environment of East Asia has evolved to a point where one cannot be taken seriously as an external partner if appearing totally reluctant to address the China challenge.

SE Asia wanted external powers whose influence may contribute to managing their relations with the increasingly assertive China's rise in the region, yet South Korea was passive in any discussion of the issue. This made South Korea an ineffectual partner even under the NSP (Gaad 2021). The passivity became even more pronounced by the Moon administration's extreme sensitivity to China's national interests and desire to avoid the slightest risk of provoking China in both economic and security domains (Kim 2023).

South Korean foreign policy makers may have thought that to solve its strategic problem (reduce China's leverage over Seoul coming from the latter's trade dependence), an economic approach (diversifying trading partners away from China toward SE Asia) with strong rhetorical commitment would suffice. However, SE Asia may have liked to see a strategic reorientation, even a modest one, in addition to expanded economic and cultural cooperation to be convinced that the NSP is a policy different from those of the past. This was clearly reflected in SE Asian reception of the NSP.

Although the intention behind the NSP was well-received, SE Asian observers noted that South Korea's engagement with SE Asia continues to be centered on economic ties (Ha and Ong 2020).⁹ Many SE Asian policy elites correctly pointed out the dominance of the economic agenda in South Korea's relations with the region. The expectation was that the NSP would expand cooperation, making it broader and more comprehensive. There was a sense that if South Korea wanted to become an external partner more than an economic power, it needed to step up.

Regional polls of SE Asian policy elites conducted by the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, a think tank in Singapore, indicate that South Korea has a limited presence as a security partner in the region. When asked to choose a "third party" partner from among the EU, Japan, Australia, the UK, India, and South Korea to hedge against the uncertainties of US-China strategic rivalry, only 3.5 percent of respondents picked South Korea in 2020 and 6.8 percent in 2021 (Seah et al. 2022, 33). Most chose the EU (40.2 percent) or Japan (29.2 percent) in 2021.¹⁰ An ASEAN observer commented that "The NSP's diplomatic rhetoric did not seem to have affected SE Asian policy communities' view of the ROK's role and reach" (Thuzar 2021, 2).

From a historical perspective, this suggests that Seoul's SE Asia policy may have circled back to an earlier time when security was an agenda equally important as economic issues. During the Cold War, South Korea's foreign policy was primarily shaped by its survivalist imperative against existential security threats from the communist North. SE Asia was an area where South Korea staged fierce diplomatic competition against North Korea for state recognition and political legitimacy. At the same time, South Korea needed natural resources and commodities from SE Asia for its economic development. The region also became an important market for Korea's nascent manufacturing and construction service exports.

With the end of the Cold War, economic cooperation took the central stage in Seoul's relations with SE Asia. The fall of the Soviet Union and the two Koreas' accession to the United Nations in 1991 practically ended the pressure for SE Asian countries to choose sides between South and North Korea. Accompanied by South Korea's own accelerated economic development, the three decades after the end of the Cold War

9 A Malaysian expert pointed out that even in the economic cooperation domain, where most achievements were expected, details of the NSP were not clear. "Citing broad macro and structural trends may be sufficient for political and diplomatic purposes, but they are hardly assurances that ASEAN will be the valued economic partner as presently envisaged by South Korea" (Wong 2020, 71).

10 This annual survey report series uses data from the survey conducted in the previous year. The survey year, not the publication year, is referred to.

saw dramatic expansion in South Korea's economic engagement with SE Asia in every external economic sector of trade, investment, financial services, and labor mobility. However, the past few years have seen the resurgence of the necessity of the strategic agenda in East Asia.

VI. Conclusion

Prior to the NSP, South Korea already had a robust economic and cultural presence, and it was in possession of a solid reservoir of soft power in the region. The NSP presented a memorable foreign policy brand for South Korea in the competitive field of East Asian regional diplomacy. This has enhanced South Korea's international profile and served as a focal point for diplomatic discourses and narratives. The NSP has done a good job of securing resources for South Korea's SE Asia diplomacy. It has made a strong case that South Korea has the goodwill to expand its ties with the region and represents a brand that can be usefully deployed at diplomatic exchanges. Thanks to the NSP, South Korea can build upon an improved relationship going forward.

However, this study raised the question of whether the NSP represents a significant change in Seoul's SE Asia policy and how one would define and measure that change. It used two frameworks. The first was a resource-based assessment that centered attention on the diplomatic and organizational resources invested under the NSP. The insight here is that resource investment reveals the level of political commitment and seriousness of intention. Under this framework, changes in resources can be a good indicator of a policy shift. The second was an assumption-based assessment where the focus was on the assumptions made about the nature of ROK–SE Asia relations under the policy.

My analysis shows that the NSP indeed represents a change in the domain of resource investment. In terms of financial and organizational inputs, event outputs, and exchange outputs, the NSP raised resource investment to a level that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. This is also consistent with most official accounts of the NSP under the Moon administration—that it gave unprecedented attention to SE Asia. Whether economic diversification has been achieved by the NSP would be difficult to know because policy changes of this scale take time, and the COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions.

However, the analysis also shows that in terms of assumptions, the NSP represents continuity rather than change. The NSP inherited and maintained Seoul's old assumption

that SE Asia policy would not need a hard security agenda. In other words, the NSP maintained old assumptions that leaving out strategic and security affairs will not affect the value of South Korea's partnership with SE Asia once economic ties and cultural exchanges are expanded. The problem is that East Asia has a new strategic environment unfit for the old assumption. The NSP was primarily driven by economic interests linked to South Korea's security interests, but the NSP itself failed to include the security dimension necessary to make the NSP more convincing to its SE Asian policy audience. The focus on strengthening economic ties and promoting cultural exchanges without expanding security cooperation may have worked in the past, but not in the current strategic environment of East Asia.

It is curious why Seoul's approach to SE Asia has changed in terms of resources but not in terms of assumptions under the NSP. While tackling this question properly is outside the scope of this study, I speculate that two factors may be relevant. First, as discussed earlier, the Moon administration's progressive ideology led to a foreign policy stance highly sensitive to Beijing's interests. Making investments in South Korea's diplomatic resources while staying away from strategic domains would signal to Beijing that the NSP is largely functional and unlikely to defy China's strategic interests in SE Asia. The second factor may be the cognitive transition experienced by Seoul's foreign policy community. Despite a heightened appreciation of the importance of SE Asia to its national interests, South Korea's understanding of SE Asia's deeper strategic needs may not be sufficiently mature. It will be interesting to see whether or how Seoul can incorporate a strategic agenda into its future SE Asia policy. The NSP will be the foundation upon which South Korea can build a stronger relationship with SE Asia.

It is ironic that continuity of the underlying assumptions of the NSP defies well-known description of South Korea's overall foreign policy. Policy discontinuity has been discussed as systemic to South Korea's foreign policy in that the constraint of a single-term presidential system and polarized partisan politics, combined with an aversion to "continuing" the predecessor's foreign policy (even where the successor is within the same party), create a lack of cohesion in the country's foreign policy (Kim 2016). Scholars have also pointed out that South Korea's SE Asia and ASEAN policies lack continuity and have fluctuated dramatically with government partisanship (Choe et al. 2019; Bae 2020). Nevertheless, this study shows that, within the assumption framework, the NSP shows continuity with Seoul's past SE Asia policies and approaches. This suggests that South Korean leaders and officials need to recognize that, to move ROK-SE Asia relations forward, they should revisit the underlying assumptions of the strategic nature of South Korea's SE Asia policy.

References

- ASEAN. 2020. ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. <https://asean.org/asean-outlook-indo-pacific/>.
- Bae, Ki-Hyun. 2020. "Divergent Ideas, Distant Friendship: Assessing Korea's 30 Years of Political-Security Diplomacy with ASEAN" *Korea Observer* 51(4): 523-550. <https://doi.org/10.29152/KOIKS.2020.51.4.523>.
- _____. 2021. "Regional Security Order Transition and the ROK's Order Management: Critique and Suggestions." *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 33(4): 557-577.
- Byun, See-Won. 2021. "Interdependence, Identity, and China-South Korea Political Relations: Asia's Paradox." *Asian Survey* 61(3): 473-499. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2021.61.3.473>.
- Chen, Ping-Kuei. 2020. "Taiwan's 'People-Centered' New Southbound Policy and Its Impact on US-Taiwan Relations." *The Pacific Review* 33(5): 813-841. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2019.1594349>.
- Choe, Yeseul and Seonghun Kim. 2019. "Sinnambangjeongchaeg, ASEANe chijung... 'je 2 jung-gug' indo-edo gongdeul-yeoya" [NSP skewed toward ASEAN while India as the Next China deserves more attention] *Kookmin Ilbo*, September 26, 2017. <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0924099726&code=11151400&cp=nv>.
- Choe, Wongi. 2019. "Why South Korea Wants to Tie in with ASEAN" *ASEANFocus* Issue 6/2019 (December): 12-13.
- _____. 2021. "New Southern Policy": Korea's Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy. *Asie. Visions*, No. 118, IFRI, January.
- Choe, Wongi, Jung-in Suh, Young-chae Kim, and Jae-kyung Park. 2019. eds. Thirty Years of ASEAN-Korea Relations. [Han-ASEAN oegyo 30 nyeon-eul malhada] Seoul: Korea National Diplomatic Academy. (in Korean)
- Choo, Jaewoo. 2020. "ROK-U.S. Security Cooperation and ROK-China Economic Cooperation: Strategic Considerations against China's Hegemonic Challenge." *Korea Research Institute for National Strategy Quarterly* 5(1): 119-63.
- Dhawan, Ranjit Kumar. 2020. "Korea's 'New Southern Policy' towards India: An Analysis." *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 24(1): 53-72.
- Easley, Leif-Eric, and Kyuri Park. 2018. "South Korea's Mismatched Diplomacy in Asia: Middle Power Identity, Interests, and Foreign Policy." *International Politics* 55(2): 242-263.
- Gaad, Adam. 2021. "Why South Korea Fell Behind Japan in Southeast Asia." *The Diplomat*, December 1, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/why-south-korea-fell-behind-japan-in-southeast-asia/>.

- Goh, Evelyn. 2007/8. "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies." *International Security* 32(3): 113-157
- Ha, Hoang Thi and Glenn Ong. 2020. *Assessing the ROK's New Southern Policy towards ASEAN*. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective, no. 7.
- Ingram, George. 2020. *Development in Southeast Asia: Opportunities for Donor Collaboration*. Brookings Institute
- Jeong, Hyeyeon. 2018. "Sinbohomuyeogjuuiga millyeoonda" [New Protectionism on the rise] "Wolgan Joseon" [Chosun Monthly]. April, 2018. <http://monthly.chosun.com/client/news/viw.asp?ctcd=&nNewsNumb=201804100039>.
- Kim, Min-hyung. 2023. "Hedging between the United States and China? South Korea's Ideology-Driven Behavior and Its Implications for National Security." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 23(1): 129-158. <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcab020>.
- Kim, Sung-Mi. 2016. *South Korea's Middle-Power Diplomacy: Changes and Challenges*. London: Chatham House.
- Kookchung Shinmun [Government News]. 1994. "Daetongryeong nambang saeils yoekyo silsockgua eolgul hamgye chaengeyotda" [President's Southern 'Sales Diplomacy'], November 21.
- Lee Jaehyon. 2016. "South Korea and the South China Sea: A Domestic and International Balancing Act." *Asia Policy* 21(1): 36-40.
- _____. 2019a. "Korea's New Southern Policy: Motivations of 'Peace Cooperation' and Implications for the Korean Peninsula" *Issue Briefs*, June 21. <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/koreas-new-southern-policy-motivations-of-peace-cooperation-and-implications-for-the-korean-peninsula/>
- _____. 2019b. Sinnambangjeongchaeg 2 gi, todaeul ganghwahaja [Foundation for the Phase of the New Southern Policy] Kookmin Ilbo, September 10, 2019. <https://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0924097237>
- Lee, Ji-Young. 2020. "The Geopolitics of South Korea–China Relations: Implications for U.S. Policy in the Indo-Pacific." RAND Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA524-1.html>.
- Lee, Terence and Kevin McGahan. 2015. "Norm Subsidiarity and Institutional Cooperation: Explaining the Straits of Malacca Anti-Piracy Regime." *The Pacific Review* 28(4): 529-552. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2015.1012537>.
- Malis, Matt and Alastair Smith. 2021. "State Visits and Leader Survival." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1): 241-256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12520>.
- Ministries Concerned. 2021. *RCEP: Fact Sheet*. [RCEP Sangse Seolmyeongjalyo] October, 2021. https://www.fta.go.kr/webmodule/_PSD_FTA/rcep/doc/RCEP_상세설명자료

- _최종.pdf
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. 2018. *Diplomatic Paper 2018*.
 _____. "Haeoesunbang · oebinbangan" [President's Foreign Trips and Foreign Visitors to the Republic of Korea], accessed November 25, 2022, https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_4064/list.do.
- Moon, Su-in. 2020. "The NSP through Southeast Asian Eyes: Assessment and Prospect." [Hyeonjiseo boneun sinnambangjeongchaeg pyeonggawa jeonmang]. *Maeil Kyungje* No 121, October, 2020. <https://www.mk.co.kr/news/culture/view/2020/09/1006867/>
- National Planning Advisory Committee [Gugjeong Gihoegjamun Wiwonhoe]. 2017. "Munjaeinjeongbu gugjeong-un-yeong 5 gaenyeon gyehoeg." [Five-Year Plan for National Agenda for Moon Jae-In Government].
- Nicolas, Françoise. 2021. "The Economic Pillar of Korea's New Southern Policy." Center for Asian Studies, Notes de l'Ifri, Asie. Visions No. 120 IFRI, February, 2021.
- Nilsson-Wright, John and Yu Jie. 2021. *South Korean Foreign Policy Innovation amid Sino-US Rivalry: Strategic Partnerships and Managed Ambiguity*. London: Chatham House.
- Office of the President of the Republic of Korea. 2019. "Remarks by President Moon Jae-in at 2019 ASEAN-ROK CEO Summit." Briefing. November 25, 2019, Accessed May 17, 2021, <https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Economy/698> (unofficial translation)
- Oh, Yoon Ah. 2020. "Korea's New Southern Policy: Progress, Problems and Prospects," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, East-West Center, No. 513, July 16, 2020.
- _____. 2021. "US-China Strategic Competition in East Asia and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific." *Review of International and Area Studies* 30(1): 77-106.
- Pardo, Ramon Pacheco. 2021. "South Korea Rebuffed Trump. Here's Why It Might Cooperate with Biden." *Washington Post*, May 21, 2021.
- Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy (PCNSP). 2019. *New Southern Policy*.
 _____. 2021. *New Southern Policy Plus*. Seoul.
 _____. 2022. *New Southern Policy: Shaping the Future Together with ASEAN and India: White Paper on the Moon Jae-in Administration's New Southern Policy*. Seoul.
- Thuzar, Moe. 2021. *The New Southern Policy Plus: What's New and What's Next?* KIEP World Economy Brief 11(March): 12.
- Seah, Sharon, Joanne Lin, Sithanontxay Suvannaphakdy, Melinda Martinus, Pham Thi Phuong Thao, Farah Nadine Seth, and Hoang Thi Ha. 2022. *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022 Survey Report*. Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Snyder, Scott A. 2018. *South Korea at the Crossroads: Autonomy and Alliance in an*

- Era of Rival Powers*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Smith, Stephen N. 2021. "Harmonizing the Periphery: China's Neighborhood Strategy under Xi Jinping." *The Pacific Review* 34(1): 56-84.
- United States Department of Defense. 2019. *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region*. Washington DC: United States Department of Defense.
- United States State Department. 2021. *The U.S. and ROK on Working Together to Promote Cooperation between the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the New Southern Policy*. Fact Sheet. January 20, 2021
- United States White House. 2021. U.S.-ROK Leaders' Joint Statement. May 21, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/05/21/u-s-rok-leaders-joint-statement/>
- Wallace, Corey J. 2013. "Japan's Strategic Pivot South: Diversifying the Dual Hedge." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 13(3): 479-517.
- Wang, Yu, and Randall W. Stone. 2022. "China Visits: A Dataset of Chinese Leaders' Foreign Visits." *The Review of International Organizations* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-022-09459-z>.
- Weissmann, Mikael. 2010. "The South China Sea conflict and Sino-ASEAN relations: A Study In Conflict Prevention and Peace Building." *Asian Perspective* 34(3): 35-69.
- Wong, Steven C.M. 2020. "Are the Economics of the New Southern Policy More Aspirational than Real?" In *The New Southern Policy: Catalyst for Deepening ASEAN-ROK Cooperation*, edited by Hoo Chiew Ping, 59-73. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia.
- Yeo, Andrew. 2021. *South Korea's New Southern Policy and the United States Indo-Pacific Strategy: Implications for the U.S.-ROK Alliance*. July 22, 2021. Washington, D.C.: Mansfield Foundation. https://mansfieldfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Andrew-Yeo_MMMF_NSP-Indo-Pac_Draft_7-19-21.pdf.
- Yonhap News Agency. 2019. "S. Korea's Aid Agency to Double ODA to ASEAN Countries by 2023" May 17, 2019. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20190517009000325>.
- Yoo Ji-hye, Jeong Jin-woo, and Park Hyeon-joo. 2022. "Bukbihaeghwaboda geubhada... gugmin 70% kkob-eun 'saejeongbu oegyo gwaje' lwineun" [The New Government's Top Diplomatic Priority According to the 70% of the Public] *JoongAng Ilbo*, January, 20, 2022. <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25041760#home>.
- Yun, Huihun. 2019. "President suggested cooperation to Xi's BRI after he discussed cooperation with US Indo-Pacific with Trump." [Trump-e Indo-taepyeongyang

jeonlyag hyeoblyeog eongeubhaessdeon Mun daetonglyeong Xijinping-e ildaeillo hyeoblyeog.] *Chosun Ilbo*, December 23, 2019.

Zwikaël, Ofer, and John Smyrk. 2012. "A General Framework for Gauging the Performance of Initiatives to Enhance Organizational Value." *British Journal of Management* 23: S6-S22.

Received 14 September 2022

Received in revised form 3 December 2022

Accepted 16 December 2022