

South Korea's Interest in ASEAN+1: New Southern Policy and Peacebuilding

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Abstract

ASEAN as a regional organization in Southeast Asia has cooperative relations with state actors and other international organizational actors within the ASEAN+1 framework, one of which is with South Korea. ASEAN relations with South Korea experienced ups and downs due to following the dynamics that occurred on the Korean Peninsula. After the election of Moon Jae In as President of South Korea, the South Korean government emphasized its seriousness to deepen its relations with countries in Southeast Asia and India. This article explains why South Korea has again strengthened its relationship with ASEAN through the New Southern Policy. This study uses the concept of national interest based on English School thinking with a qualitative approach and literature review methods that collect data in the form of books, journals, official government websites, and scientific reports/papers. The results of this study indicate that South Korea has deepened its relationship with ASEAN to realize its national interests in the form of increasing economic cooperation which was affected by the trade war between the United States and China. In addition, South Korea's other national interest is in the form of efforts to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula through ASEAN member countries that also have bilateral relations with North Korea.

Abstrak

ASEAN sebagai organisasi regional di Asia Tenggara memiliki hubungan kerja sama dengan aktor negara dan aktor organisasi internasional lainnya dalam kerangka ASEAN+1, salah satunya dengan Korea Selatan. Hubungan ASEAN dengan Korea Selatan mengalami pasang surut karena mengikuti dinamika yang terjadi di Semenanjung Korea. Pasca terpilihnya Moon Jae In sebagai Presiden Korea Selatan, Pemerintah Korea Selatan menegaskan keseriusan untuk memperdalam hubungannya dengan negara di kawasan Asia Tenggara dan India. Artikel ini menjelaskan mengapa Korea Selatan kembali memperkuat hubungannya dengan ASEAN melalui kebijakan *New Southern Policy*. Penelitian ini menggunakan konsep kepentingan nasional berdasarkan pemikiran *English School* dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode pengumpulan data studi literatur yang mengumpulkan berupa buku, jurnal, situs resmi pemerintah, dan laporan/makalah ilmiah. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Korea Selatan kembali memperdalam hubungannya dengan ASEAN bertujuan untuk mewujudkan kepentingan nasionalnya berupa peningkatan kerja sama ekonomi yang dipengaruhi oleh perang dagang Amerika Serikat dan China. Selain itu, kepentingan nasional Korea Selatan lainnya berupa upaya mewujudkan perdamaian di Semenanjung Korea melalui negara anggota ASEAN yang juga memiliki hubungan bilateral dengan Korea Utara.

Keywords

ASEAN, South Korea, National Interest, New Southern Policy, Peacebuilding

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Introduction

ASEAN as a regional cooperation forum must interact with other countries or international institutions since the dynamics of various global challenges encourage governments and international institutions to establish cooperative relationships. As a result, this trend appears to be inextricably linked to ASEAN, consisting of ten Southeast Asian countries that require interaction with actors outside of ASEAN, such as governments and other international institutions.

The growing urge for external parties to develop friendly relations and mutually beneficial dialogue cooperation and partnerships with ASEAN emphasizes the importance of ASEAN as a regional and global powerhouse (ASEAN, n.d.; Setnas-Indonesia, 2021a). Initially, the Dialogue Partners focused on securing technical and economic assistance to benefit ASEAN's economic development. However, over time, the Dialogue Partners' agenda has grown to include a variety of topics related to the ASEAN Community's three pillars, such as promoting trade and investment, strengthening socio-cultural relations, exchanging views on regional political issues, and discussing non-traditional challenges (terrorists and transnational crime). Similarly, although ASEAN's official involvement with Dialogue Partners began in the 1970s, Ministers of Foreign Affairs from ASEAN member nations met with partners from outside ASEAN in Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) (Merced, 2017).

Currently, ASEAN has 11 Dialogue Partners, namely; United States of America, Australia, India, Japan, Canada, the Republic of South Korea (hence referred to as South Korea), Russia, New Zealand, People's Republic of China, European Union and United Nations (UN). In addition, the ASEAN also has Sectoral Dialogue Partner relations with Pakistan, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and Development Dialogue Partners with Germany. Further, ASEAN also establishes dialogue and cooperation with regional and international organizations such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Mercado Comun del Sur/Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Pacific Alliance (PA) (Setnas-Indonesia, 2021a). Meanwhile, Papua New Guinea (1976) and Timor Leste (2002) are ASEAN partners as observers (Merced, 2017).

The cooperation between ASEAN and South Korea began in November 1989 with a sectoral dialogue. South Korea then became an ASEAN Dialogue Partner two years later, at the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1991 (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2019a). The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era in ties between South Korea and ASEAN. The President of South Korea, Kim Dae Jung, has a policy that focused on the formation of the East Asian Community. This political movement was embraced by Keizo Obuchi (Prime Minister of Japan) and Jiang Zemin (President of the People's Republic of China), who shared the same vision of holding the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit with the three East Asian countries (S. Lee, 2020).

ASEAN's partnership with South Korea was enhanced in 1997 and strengthened in 2004 when South Korea agreed to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). In the same year, at the 8th ASEAN-ROK Summit, the parties agreed on a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership. After that, the ASEAN-South Korea Free Trade Area (AKFTA) for commodities commenced in 2007, followed by the services and investment sectors in 2009 (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2019a). Then, in March 2013, to increase trade volume, accelerating investment flows, promoting tourism, and enriching cultural exchanges (Setnas-Indonesia, 2021b). Finally, in 2015, ASEAN and South Korea agreed on the ASEAN-South Korea Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2016-2020) (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2019a).

At first, ASEAN member countries were hesitant to work with South Korea because some of them have close links with North Korea. However, South Korea's success in hosting

the 1988 Olympics changed this viewpoint, and ASEAN requested that South Korea contribute an annual financial commitment as a requirement for becoming an ASEAN dialogue partner. As a result, the ASEAN-South Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF) was established in 1990 with a one-million-dollar annual commitment (Howe & Park, 2019). The partnership makes the economy the main impetus for cooperation between ASEAN and South Korea. Furthermore, the conditions of both parties are complementary. On the one hand, ASEAN is a resource-rich region, whereas South Korea is not. South Korea, on the other hand, has outperformed other ASEAN members in terms of economic growth. Because of the disparity in economic development between the two parties, cooperation between ASEAN and South Korea has become more profound and broader since South Korea joined the Southeast Asian region's production network (Yang & Mansor, 2016). Further, South Korea also narrates its diplomacy as a middle power country (Howe & Park, 2019). The joining of South Korea also supports this with the Newly Industrializing Economies (NIE) in the late 1980s (Yang & Mansor, 2016).

Correspondingly, South Korea is also committed to international development cooperation, Official Development Assistance (ODA). Until 2019, South Korea was involved in ODA assistance in developing countries in ASEAN, such as Indonesia (US\$ 73.2 billion), the Philippines (US\$ 89.7 billion), Cambodia (US\$ 73.4 billion), Laos (US\$ 88.8 Billion), Myanmar (US\$ 83.8 Billion) and Vietnam (US\$ 170.7 Billion) (J. Lee, 2019). However, in May 2019, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) announced that South Korea would double ODA to six recipient countries in Southeast Asia by 2023. Accordingly, KOICA will increase ODA for Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines to reach 180.4 billion Won in 2023 from 87 billion Won in 2019 (Choe, 2021).

In 2018, the trade rate between South Korea and ASEAN reached 14 percent, although its position was still below China's with 24 percent. However, this number was above the United States (12 percent), the European Union (11 percent), and Japan (7 percent). For South Korean investment in ASEAN, it has increased from US\$ 2.1 billion in 2009 to US\$ 4.8 billion in 2017. Meanwhile, AKCF has grown from US\$ 1 million to US\$ 7 million per year (S. Lee, 2020). ASEAN and South Korea also agreed to establish AKFTA, which would increase the trade between the two sides. The economic size of AKFTA has a Gross National Income (GNP) of US\$ 1.84 billion in 2006. In the context of the Purchasing Power Parity, GNP from AKFTA reached US\$ 3.38 billion with South Korea of US\$ 1.11 billion and ASEAN at US\$ 2.26 billion. In addition, the total population of ASEAN and South Korea is 605 million people (Park, Donghyun; Park, Innwon; Esther B, 2008). Until 2018, South Korea's trade with ASEAN has an export value of US\$ 100,239,564,000 and an import value of US\$ 59,616,808,000. Then, South Korea's direct investment in ASEAN has reached US\$ 5,919,301,000 in 2019 (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2019b).

As a result, in 2018, ASEAN became South Korea's second-largest trading partner, South Korea's third-largest direct investment destination, and South Koreans' most popular tourist destination. At the same time, South Korean influence in ASEAN member countries has grown due to the South Korean industry's expansion into the region. Korean Wave, for example, emerged in the 1990s and exports South Korea's entertainment industry, which includes drama, film, music, and other performing arts (Kemala, 2019). On the other hand, the cooperation between the two sides can run smoothly because the two sides have similar interests and

challenges to overcome, such as the joint agreement between ASEAN and South Korea that underpins the importance of maintaining regional peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the East Asia region. The cooperation was stated in the Joint Statement of the 25th Commemorative Summit in Busan, South Korea, in 2014. Furthermore, ASEAN and South Korea are committed to peacefully continuing the initial denuclearization efforts on the Korean Peninsula (ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2019a).

Two studies highlighted South Korea's relations with ASEAN, namely economic cooperation and peace, as understood in prior studies. In the study of economic cooperation, the changes in oil prices—according to Baek and Choi (Baek & Choi, 2020)—have an unbalanced effect on the trade balance for numerous commodities in the short and long run. According to Darma and Hastiadi, the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA), ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Area (AKFTA), and ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA) have all had a favorable and significant impact on trade formation and trade diversion in Indonesia's food and beverage commodities exports (Darma & Hastiadi, 2017). Furthermore, Kim, Kim, and Han believe that banks actively participate in the risk-taking associated with Deposit Insurance. As a result, deposit insurance has the reverse impact, worsening as coverage expands, and improved regulatory quality can reduce moral hazard (Kim et al., 2014). Park argues that regional economic cooperation is the key to ASEAN's liberalizing trade and investment (Park, 2011). Tongzong and Cheong argue that Indonesia and other ASEAN members can adopt particular liberalization actions to boost ASEAN commerce with other Asian countries (Tongzong & Cheong, 2016).

According to the research, ASEAN-South Korean relations are centered on economic cooperation to increase profitable trade between the two parties. Furthermore, Tan, Govindasamy, and Park feel that ASEAN can indirectly support North Korea reform through political, economic, and social means in the peace study (Tan et al., 2017). ASEAN's role in the framework is to pacify East Asia depending on the pattern of conflict and the death rate caused by war and end conflict (Kivimäki, 2011). As a result, this study contends that ASEAN-Korea relations can positively impact the achievement of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

However, there is a gap in previous studies that have not addressed ASEAN-Korea ties and the New Southern Policy under Moon Jae In's leadership. As a result, the researcher poses the following research question: Why is South Korea's New Southern Policy reinforcing its ties with ASEAN? In answering this question, the researcher will use the concept of national interest from the English School of International Relations Theory.

New Southern Policy and English School

In international relations, the realist tradition sees the world as a conflicted and difficult place to change. There is a clear separation between domestic and foreign politics, and moral considerations cannot influence state behavior. This characteristic of the English School distinguishes between the realism and revolutionary perspectives on international politics. The English School's approach emphasizes the international community's presence without the agreement of the nation-state, which must be preserved in an international system (Burchill, 2005). According to the logic of the English School, the international system, the international community, and the world community are three spheres in international politics that always work simultaneously. The politics of power between countries and the structure and process of anarchy in the international system operate parallel to realism and structural

realism. Furthermore, rationalism and the institutionalization of shared interests and identities amongst nations place the establishment and maintenance of shared norms, standards, and institutions at the heart of international relations theory. This viewpoint is similar to regime theory but goes further. As a result, the worldwide community has become a significant emphasis of the English School's thought. Meanwhile, the English School does not devote much attention to the concept of the global community. This concept, however, is similar to transnationalism but is more closely related to normative political theory (Murray, 2016).

On the other hand, international relations provide an organizational framework for the global political system, which includes governments, regions, institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), transnational and subnational groups, and other persons and communities. In order to comprehend a phenomenon academically, international relations must also have historical depth. In addition, values have a crucial influence on international relations. Values will influence the choice of research topics, allowing academic publications and statements to affect political processes. The most pressing issue in international politics is establishing an orderly and just international society (Dunne et al., 2013). International relations scholars must recognize that foreign policy often requires policymakers to make difficult moral decisions, such as deciding between the goals and values of political opponents and involving armed forces, which can result in both material and human losses, as well as other dire consequences, such as going to war or opting for humanitarian intervention. As a result, the international community's traditional approach seeks to avoid the argument between realism and liberalism over the contrast between state ego and conflict and human goodness and cooperation (Jackson & Sørensen, 2013).

National interest is still the primary goal of states to engage in international relations and have international cooperation with other states or international actors (Manan, 2017). Narrow egoism, on the other hand, according to the English School, hinders the state from looking beyond its immediate concerns and fears. To nurture the international community, a larger and more educated vision of personal/national interests is essential. Furthermore, maintaining world order increases a country's prospects of survival and security. Moreover, significant countries are obligated to extend the notion of national interest as part of their global leadership responsibilities. As a result, big countries have a more powerful influence in the international community (Burchill, 2005). It demonstrates a shared interest that causes the state to consider more than just its national interests. A country must prioritize common interests for the global system to function appropriately (Dermawan, 2020).

Developing a sense of shared interest between countries regarding the primary goals of social life is the beginning point for maintaining order in the international community. Fears of unfettered violence, instability, or insecurity of independence or sovereignty can all contribute to a sense of common interest. Furthermore, based on the rational calculation, states' willingness to accept restrictions on their freedom of action is reciprocal (Bull, 2002). The concept of the international community leads to the study of normative choice in foreign policy, which is the state's responsibility. According to the English School, it demonstrates multiple degrees of state responsibility, including 1) dedication to the state and the survival of its people. 2) respect for other countries' legitimate interests and rights, as well as international law. The state is responsible for its citizens based on this notion, which places

national security as the fundamental foundation that the state must safeguard. It refers to the political responsibility thesis, which considers the state of being a morally and legally independent political community superior to international associations. Prior to pursuing its national interests, the state appears to have no international obligations. In determining a state's national interests, international law and international institutions are taken into account (Jackson & Sørensen, 2013). The sovereignty of a state is often referred to by the system of constitutive principles of a state or the international community. The nature of the definition of sovereignty, on the other hand, has intersubjective aspects. The fact is that sovereignty is reciprocal, but it is contingent on other sovereigns' acknowledgment. As a result, sovereignty must demonstrate its existence and demonstrate its actions (Neumann, 2003).

The English school is built around three key concepts international society, international system and world society. the international system is chiefly about power politics issues among states whose activities are adapted by the design of international anarchy. International society exists a group of like-minded states 'consider themselves to be limited by a typical arrangement of rules in their relations with each other, and share in the working of common institutions. International society is about the formation and maintenance of shared norms, rules and institutions (Stivachtis, 2018).

Throughout the history, there was not any single international system or society. Instead, there were several regional international societies, each with its own particular rules and institutions. Relations between political entities that were members of different regional international societies could not be conducted on the same moral and legal basis as relations within the same society, because the rules of each individual regional society were culturally distinctive and exclusive. After Cold War, there is a phenomenon that appears the division of the global international society no longer exist; and a set of regional international societies with different degrees of 'thickness' slowly become known within the confines of the 'thinner' global international society (Stivachtis, 2018). Today, the operations and membership of the UN reflect the existence of a "thin" global international society. Europe conforms to the basic defining condition of regional interstate society; and second, that within this region, the possibility exists for a broadly integrative and solidarist movement toward cooperation and convergence (Stivachtis, 2013). Seeing the developments that have occurred, ASEAN has become part of the regional international society in the Southeast Asia region which has its own characteristics.

Diplomacy is the use of official agents and peaceful means to manage relations between nations and other entities with international status. We must use the term diplomacy to refer to the official relations of not only governments, but also other political entities with international clout. Bilateral or multilateral diplomatic connections exist. In theory, bilateral linkages connect one state or government to another, but in practice, they connect one 'people' or political system to another. Multilateral diplomacy can take the shape of bilateral or multilateral conferences, as well as permanent conferences, such as international organizations (Bull, 2002).

Diplomacy encompasses both the formulation and implementation of a state foreign policy. The gathering and appraisal of information regarding the foreign environment, as well as the balancing of various policy paths, are all part of the policy making process. Diplomacy

can take two forms: ad hoc and institutionalized. Present-day diplomatic contacts between sovereign states are institutionalized in the sense that they are maintained independently of specific items of business that arise, that they take place against the backdrop of a permanent relationship between the parties involved, and that they are conducted on the basis of well-understood rules and conventions, some of which have the status of law (Bull, 2002).

Diplomacy enables communication between state leaders and other actors in international politics. There could be no worldwide society, let alone any international system, without communication. The negotiation of agreements is a second role of diplomacy. International interactions would be feasible without the drafting of agreements, but they would consist only of brief, hostile meetings between political communities. Agreements can only be reached if the parties' interests, while divergent, coincide at some point, and the parties are able to recognize that they do. The diplomat's job is to figure out what this area of overlapping interests is and to persuade the parties to recognize it by argument and persuasion (Bull, 2002).

According to President Moon, "New Southern Policy aiming for a people-centered community of peace and prosperity. The Korean government will strongly push forward its New Southern Policy to achieve remarkable advances in its ties of cooperation with ASEAN. It is my aspiration that the New Southern Policy will achieve a community for the people which connects people to people and minds to minds; a community of peace which contributes to peace across Asia; and, a community of shared prosperity where ASEAN countries thrive together through mutually beneficial economic cooperation" (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, 2021). New Southern Policy is South Korea's diplomacy to regional international society in order to deepen and maintain relations between South Korea and ASEAN.

On the other hand, in 2015, Kuala Lumpur Declaration on a People-Oriented, People-Centered ASEAN affirming to continue establishing a people-oriented, people-centered and rules-based ASEAN Community where all people, stakeholders and sectors of society can contribute to and enjoy the benefits from a more integrated and connected community encompassing enhanced cooperation in the political-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars for sustainable, equitable and inclusive development. ASEAN will also enhance cooperation with its dialogue partners and relevant external parties within the framework of ASEAN-led mechanisms in all three pillars of the ASEAN Community that would complement regional efforts to strengthen a people-oriented, people-centered and rules-based ASEAN (ASEAN, 2015).

South Korea has conducted deeper diplomacy with ASEAN by utilizing NSP, which promotes a shared vision and interests, namely the development of a people-centered and prosperous relationship. This diplomacy reduces friction between South Korea and ASEAN member countries, allowing South Korea's position as an ASEAN dialogue partner to be embraced warmly. South Korea's interest in increasing the intensity of relations with ASEAN is to achieve South Korea's national interests which finding alternative partners in order to have more support for developing peace on the Korean peninsula. This article aims to analyze the interests of South Korea within the ASEAN+1 framework. This article will be divided into four parts namely introduction, conceptual framework, research methods, discussion, and conclusions.

Methods

This qualitative study entails sensitivity to a problem and a willingness to delve further into the issue and grasp the meaning of a social phenomenon (Suwendra, 2018). This study employs the literature review method, which entails gathering primary and secondary library sources such as books, journals, official government websites, and scientific reports/papers. The sources were then organized into categories based on the research question. As a result, the data becomes a part of the research findings (Darmalaksana, 2020). Following the data collection, the researcher used a triangulation procedure to check the validity of the research findings using many sources of information. The researcher then utilized a dual method in the data collection process (Barlian, 2016).

Result and Discussion

1. South Korea Interest in ASEAN+1

After Moon Jae In was elected President of South Korea, the country launched a core diplomacy strategy to strengthen ties with ASEAN members and India (Yu, 2020). Meanwhile, South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Hwa stated that this policy was a pillar for the South Korean government's expansion of ASEAN relations, with Indonesia at the core (Pramudyani, 2019). The increase in the status of the South Korean Ambassador to ASEAN, which was marked by the placement of the former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, demonstrates South Korea's seriousness in cooperating with ASEAN. In addition, the number of professional diplomatic employees for ASEAN has increased thrice. Furthermore, in May of this year, the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a new agency, the ASEAN and Southeast Asia Bureau (Choe, 2021).

The New Southern Policy (NSP) is a policy that South Korean President Moon Jae In announced during a visit to Indonesia in November 2017. This policy strives to align South Korea's relations with ASEAN with other major countries, including the United States, China, Japan, and Russia (Ha & Ong, 2020). President Moon Jae In announced his approach, which includes enhancing cooperation in the domains of transportation, energy, water resources, and information technology and extending technology, heritage, art, and people exchanges between the two countries. The concept of ASEAN and South Korean ties is then described in the 3Ps: People, Prosperity, and Peace, which are built on a community of people, peace, coexistence, and shared prosperity (Hernandez, 2018).

These 3Ps are developed within a community of each of these principles in the NSP policy. The Community (People) promotes mutual understanding between the two sides by boosting people-to-people exchanges, promoting ASEAN people's rights to live in South Korea, and enhancing governance, among other things. Within the Prosperity Community (Prosperity), this policy emphasizes building a foundational relationship that benefits both parties and is based on future-oriented economic cooperation. Later in the process, the Community of Peace (Peace) focuses on creating a safe and peaceful environment in the region by working together to achieve peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and then expanding cooperation in the defense and defense industry, as well as improving resilience in the face of regional contingencies (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, 2021).

The seriousness with which President Moon Jae In is committed to developing relations between ASEAN and South Korea can be seen in how he prioritized ASEAN as a foreign policy priority throughout his election campaign. Second, it can be seen in the President's deployment of special envoys to ASEAN member countries. Third, his visit to all ASEAN member countries in two years. Fourth, to become President of South Korea, who could visit Brunei Darussalam for the first time in 19 years. Fifth, since 2003, he has been the President of South Korea, who has visited Singapore. Sixth, to become President of South Korea, who returned to Cambodia after a ten-year absence. Finally, for the first time, the Mekong-ROK Summit would be held (Ha & Ong, 2020).

The two sides resolved to work closely at the Mekong-ROK Summit, highlighted by South Korea's decision to build a public research institute to share its experiences and success. In addition, the Center for Biodiversity, the Joint Center for Water Resources Research, the Korea-Mekong Forest Cooperation Center (KMFCC), and the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization were established by ASEAN countries along the Mekong River and South Korea (AFoCO). South Korea is committed to improving East Asia's connectivity to promote peace and prosperity (S. Lee, 2020). However, due to growing tensions and pressure from major countries around the Korean Peninsula due to the United States and China's increasingly heated rivalry and competitiveness, South Korea directed its NSP policy to ASEAN. As a result, South Korea must lower tensions and expand its strategic influence over the big countries to establish a strategic partnership with ASEAN. Furthermore, ASEAN and South Korea are geographically near in proximity (J. Lee, 2017).

The NSP concept refers to joint prosperity between ASEAN and South Korea, not just a profit for the South Korean economy. In addition to sharing its infrastructure success, South Korea will provide the groundwork for long-term growth through infrastructure development. The focus of peace between ASEAN and South Korea is regional peacebuilding rather than military and security issues. Peace is necessary for prosperity, and these two domains are convergent in the interests of ASEAN and South Korean citizens (J. Lee, 2017). The 3rd ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit, according to the KDB Future Strategy Research Institute, was a triumphant achievement. Despite the uncertain external environment, it is highlighted by strengthening economic links between South Korea and ASEAN. It also promotes high-tech industry economic cooperation and contributes to political and security cooperation, particularly non-traditional security. The diversification of economic cooperation through various formats, such as bilateral meetings and the 1st Mekong-ROK Summit, demonstrates this (S. Lee, 2020).

NSP will also help to accelerate the industrial revolution 4.0 by fostering collaboration in the finance, information technology, digital, and biotechnology industries. South Korea is likewise dedicated to collaborating with ASEAN to develop the ASEAN Smart City network to enhance long-term urban planning (Yeo, 2020). As a result, development cooperation becomes a focal focus in the NSP's implementation process in Southeast Asia and South Asia. According to official South Korean government document, the economic pillar's focus under the NSP is to lay the groundwork for future-oriented mutually beneficial economic cooperation (Choi, 2021).

NSP, on the other hand, has been chastised by a number of groups, including Um Eun Hee (Researcher at Seoul National University Asia Center). They urged that the NSP's

implementation emphasizes society and peace so that South Korea's sense of superiority is paired with attempts to strengthen the country's understanding of ASEAN culture. Furthermore, the NSP's formulation is rushed because the next President of South Korea's ability to sustain the policy is unknown. South Korea is similarly having difficulties promoting the NSP. Some people believe that South Korea's policies are mercantile. The cooperation rhetoric is unidirectional and non-reciprocal, as there are only discussions about South Korean firms entering ASEAN and assisting local sectors, with no mention of any assurance for ASEAN enterprises to join South Korea (S. Lee, 2020).

By encouraging ASEAN norms and activities, South Korea may further promote the NSP concept's peace and regional stability pillars. Non-traditional security challenges such as climate change and pandemics have emerged as critical factors in South Korea's domestic policy, potentially reinforcing the NSP's pillars in the future (Yeo, 2020). Furthermore, South Korea should broaden the scope of the NSP's peace pillars beyond traditional security challenges to position itself as more balanced and proactive in dealing with regional security and strategic issues (Choe, 2021). On the other side, the NSP must face the difficulty of identifying the appropriate policies for deciding the role of the South Korean government. Furthermore, the South Korean private sector has encouraged rapid economic progress in the Southeast Asia region during the last two decades, and the South Korean government should reassess the NSP for it to have a more significant impact in the future (Yoon, 2020).

At last, South Korea's drive to strengthen ties with ASEAN and its member countries is driven by national interests, particularly the desire to escape the struggle between the United States and China, which has impacted South Korea in recent years. On the other hand, economic issues are an essential part of ASEAN's relations with South Korea to develop mutually beneficial economic and trade connections.

2. Peacebuilding on the Korean Peninsula

The more than 30-year partnership between ASEAN and South Korea has strengthened ties, even though the process was not always smooth and had ups and downs. South Korea is dedicated to make ASEAN a part of its foreign policy by promoting NSP, which is based on the 3Ps principles and in keeping with the ASEAN principles that have so far held together. Furthermore, by realizing the prosperity and peace of Asian countries outside of the Korean Peninsula, President Moon Jae In seeks to develop diplomatic relations with ASEAN and India through the NSP to have a level relationship with the United States, China, Japan, and Russia (S. Lee, 2020). South Korea's role in Southeast Asia is also inextricably linked to the two countries' shared circumstances, including being influenced by China's economy and relying on the United States for security. ASEAN members see South Korea as being more politically neutral than China and Japan. It is bolstered by South Korea's low profile in Southeast Asia, which contributes to the idea of South Korea as a neutral country from an ASEAN perspective (Cronin & Lee, 2017).

Peacebuilding on the Korean Peninsula is inextricably linked to North Korean nuclear proliferation. It is the result of the Korean War, which has not ended yet. North Korea's nuclear weapons respond to the United States military presence in the country following World War II and the Korean War (1950-1953). As a result, North Korea developed a defense alliance with

China because the two countries are geographically close and share a communist ideology (Sulaiman, 2020). North Korea is expected to begin its nuclear program in 2021, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). North Korea's nuclear reactors are producing plutonium yet again. When North Korea's last nuclear test was conducted in 2017, it is likely to be followed by a nuclear test program (Perwitasari, 2021). Stopping nuclear proliferation is a powerful agenda because if a country develops nuclear capability on its own, the likelihood of using nuclear weapons increases (Masni, 2021).

Relations between ASEAN member countries and North Korea have existed since the Cold War and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), before the 1990s. Kim Il Sung's relationship with Ir. Soekarno (1st President of Indonesia) and Norodom Sihanouk (Former King of Cambodia) exemplifies this. North Korea also has trading ties with members of the ASEAN region, including Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. The Singaporean government has also supplied humanitarian aid to North Korea, and the Choson Exchange (a Singapore-based non-governmental organization) has provided entrepreneurial training to North Koreans (J. Lee, 2019). Apart from Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines, North Korea has embassies in eight ASEAN member countries. The ASEAN-North Korea trade volume reached US\$ 184.6 million, making it North Korea's third-largest trading partner after China and India (Vo, 2018).

ASEAN does not constitute a threat to North Korea as a group of small and medium power countries. North Korea also believes that ASEAN does not have a biased view of the country. As a result, North Korea has a more substantial level of trust in ASEAN (J. Lee, 2019). In contrast, ASEAN and South Korea pledged to support peaceful denuclearization efforts on the Korean Peninsula in the Joint Statement of the 25th Commemorative Summit. It is vital because a conflict on the Korean Peninsula will have a detrimental influence on the Asia Pacific region's economy, eventually spreading to Southeast Asia. Furthermore, if war breaks out again on the Korean Peninsula, it will result in a greater loss, as North Korea now poses a nuclear threat that threatens the entire globe (Vo, 2018).

ASEAN welcomes President Moon Jae's intention to put forward three principles* in dealing with issues on the Korean Peninsula and the vision to transform the demilitarized zone (DMZ) into an international peace zone. In November 2019, South Korea expressed its appreciation for ASEAN's willingness to continue playing a constructive role in promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula in the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity, and Partnership. Through an ASEAN-led mechanism, the two sides committed to promote and facilitate dialogue and cooperation. Its goal is to help the Korean Peninsula achieve total denuclearization and long-term peace (T. B. N. Nguyen, 2020). President Moon Jae In's Three Principles include Peace being the main priority which is the foundation for realizing prosperity. Second, the spirit of mutual respect between South and North Korea and promoting cooperation between the two countries. Third, an Open Policy for all that involves public participation and interaction to ensure that policies are understood and made by the people of both countries (Ministry of Unification South Korea, 2021).

ASEAN and South Korea can cooperate further in the peace cooperation framework because it can reduce ASEAN's sensitivity regarding security cooperation with powers outside ASEAN. In general, peace cooperation does not necessitate the existence of a common threat or

the designation of a specific organization or country as a common enemy. This cooperation is focused on the creation of a peaceful region rather than the prevention of threats. Furthermore, because it promotes norms and regulations in cooperation, the peace cooperation framework is particularly appropriate for small and medium power countries. Peacebuilding, on the other hand, is a normative discourse that all parties can agree. As a result, multilateral peace cooperation between ASEAN and South Korea is a promising arena for both sides (J. Lee, 2019).

Furthermore, ASEAN and South Korea have similar geopolitical conditions in the region, which is the scene of the world's great powers' upheaval. On the one hand, Southeast Asia is located on a major maritime route connecting Europe to China in the east, making it a prime target for conquest and colonization. On the other hand, the Korean Peninsula is a battleground for the world's maritime powers, with the US, China, Japan, and Russia all vying for dominance. Then, during the Cold War, these two territories became flashpoints for confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, as the South Korean War and the Vietnam War demonstrated. As a result, the two regions become places of conflict of interest between the United States, China, and Japan, facing similar issues. As a result, ASEAN and South Korea have collaborated to develop institutions in East Asia to promote peaceful cooperation and dispute resolution (Yang & Mansor, 2016).

ASEAN can help North Korea engage with the international community and become a mediator to resolve disputes on the Korean Peninsula because of its position as an organization with good relations between South Korea and North Korea and an independent stance among major nations. ASEAN can help North Korea engage with the international community and become a mediator to resolve disputes on the Korean Peninsula because of its position as an organization with good relations between South Korea and North Korea and an independent stance among major nations. For example, the two leaders of the two countries returned to Vietnam on the 27th and 28th of February 2019 to attend the DPRK and US 2nd Summit (Yasinta, 2019). Furthermore, if ASEAN takes on the role of mediator, it can use ASEAN Centrality to reassure North Korea that the talks will be conducted impartially and by responsible parties. It is about keeping countries engaged, negotiating, and not backing down from the negotiations (Vo, 2018).

When a peace regime is in place on the Korean Peninsula, it will be possible to link South Korea's economic successes to North Korea. Furthermore, it creates fresh prospects for Asia's prosperity. First, the Korean peninsula serves as a conduit for North Korea to deliver electricity and power to South Korea and a conduit for South Korea to export commodities to North Korea. And then, there is the issue of sending agricultural and fishery products to Southeast Asia and India for peace on the Korean Peninsula (Kwak, 2018). In addition, several factors, such as cooperation in the health sector by providing medical and pharmaceutical facilities, can boost ASEAN and South Korea's interaction with North Korea. Second, ASEAN can collaborate by expanding North Korean tourism to achieve a long-term partnership with North Korea. Furthermore, ASEAN and South Korea can work with North Korea to remove landmines, particularly in the DMZ (T. B. N. Nguyen, 2020).

Despite the potential and success, there are still hurdles to face to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula. The problem is that ASEAN continues to have internal conflicts that prevent

it from resolving its security challenges. As a result, it raises doubts about ASEAN's ability to mediate between countries and institutions outside the organization (P. H. N. Nguyen, 2018). Then, in the Korean Peninsula issue, ASEAN's bargaining position appraisal should not be overstated. ASEAN is a minor participant in the Korean Peninsula issue, and this is the case. The Korean Peninsula issue, on the other hand, has a deterrent effect and affects the dynamics of the East Asian region's power balance. As a result, ASEAN is expected to be realistic about the current situation and avoid creating excessive expectations (Ha & Ong, 2020).

On the other hand, ASEAN is also not yet fully at peace because there are still disputes in the South China Sea which have a very high potential for conflict. The potential for conflict is influenced by increasing military exercises in the South China Sea, giving each other warnings of danger between diplomats/militaries of states around the South China Sea, provocation and intimidation efforts, and increasing the intensity of warship movements in the region. In addition, the South China Sea issue cannot be separated from the dominance of rivalry between China and the United States. Another impact arising from the South China Sea disputes is the increasing competition in weapons and defense of claiming states (Maksum, 2017).

In 2013, the Philippines filed a lawsuit against China regarding China's claims to the Scarborough Shoals in the South China Sea under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This triggers the issue of the South China Sea dispute to heat up. However, ASEAN member countries do not fully agree with the Philippines move because China is one of the important investors for ASEAN member states, so the increase in conflict escalation will have an impact on regional order and disrupt the economy and trade (Siahaan, 2017). Therefore, it can be said that the realization of peace on the Korean Peninsula is still difficult to achieve through ASEAN because ASEAN still has a South China Sea dispute which can trigger a large-scale conflict escalation in the Southeast Asian region.

Conclusion

The relationship between ASEAN and South Korea has been in the works for about 30 years. The established relationship and interdependence between ASEAN and South Korea cannot be obtained if the two do not share common goals and interests. The economic interests that underlie the ASEAN-South Korean relationship have brought this partnership forward and growing. It can be seen from the volume of trade, investment, tourism, socio-cultural and other fields.

The current economic interests cannot be separated from South Korea's national interests, which require choices amidst the frictions caused by the United States and China Trade War. As a result, South Korea moved its focus to the Southeast Asian region and India to keep its economy afloat. Furthermore, the NSP advocates peace, which is inextricably linked to North Korea and its nuclear weapons. Consequently, ASEAN member nations' relations with North Korea can serve as a constructive push for achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea and ASEAN can work together to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula. Peace cooperation between small and medium power countries, on the other hand, requires the participation of major powers. As a result, the ASEAN-South Korean peace collaboration can be replicated in a larger or multilateral framework. On the other hand, the two also have multi-layered cooperation since they are also involved in ASEAN+3, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asian Forum (EAS), and others. By leveraging a more significant forum, the ensuing

influence will grow in importance to achieve peace cooperation. It also allows ASEAN and South Korea to act as norm entrepreneurs, promoting peace norms on Asian and global scale. This research is expected to provide new knowledge and views related to research that examines the dynamics of relations between ASEAN and external partners, in this case South Korea.

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