
Introduction

The Philippines and South Korea have been allies since the inception of the Republic of Korea on the southern half of the divided Korean peninsula during the Cold War era. From then on, their bilateral relations have evolved through the years. As war-torn fledgling republics with common pro-U.S., rigidly anti-communist alignment in the 1950s and throughout the Cold War era, their relations were cordial but minimal. Today however, the Philippines and South Korea have broadened and deepened their relationship. They are now active partners in the Asia-Pacific region within a multipolar alliance system of the post-Cold War era.

Furthermore, South Korea today, with its industrialized status and membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the so-called "Rich Nations' Club", is fast emerging as a major player in the ASEAN region. It has also become a more visible and dynamic partner of the Philippines in terms of trade, commerce, investment and other forms of economic as well as socio-cultural cooperation.

It is within this context that the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines Diliman organized a conference on Korea Studies and Philippines-South Korea Relations. The conference is part of a Diliman campus-wide effort to spark more interest in the study of Korea as an important component of the academic program in the University.

A main objective of the conference was to convene Korean and Filipino scholars, government officials, representatives of government and private agencies and corporations concerned with contemporary Korean affairs and Philippines-South Korea relations. The idea therefore, was to put together the views of both the academicians and the practitioners in business and in concerned government agencies in an attempt to better understand some issues affecting Korea in general and Philippines-South Korea relations in particular. It is hoped that such intellectual exchanges, free and open discussions as well as people-to-people interaction will provide a firmer foundation for friendly and long-lasting relations between the two republics. Furthermore, it is believed that an important corollary to strengthening bilateral relationship is the "sustained and intensive studies" of each other's history and culture.

This volume published by the Asian Center is the tangible product of such endeavor. It consists of papers and the proceedings of a hectic two-day conference. Included in the proceedings are four panel discussions on certain aspects of South Korean economic development and strategies, political and economic reforms as well as issues on Korean unification. These were designed to give the mostly Filipino participants a better understanding and insight of this particular Asian neighbor.

Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the conference, styles in the paper presentation were varied. There was no attempt to impose a uniform style or to organize the papers according to a common theme or themes.

The first two papers in this volume provide a background study and analyses of some contemporary issues affecting Korea in the international and regional arena on the one hand, and on the domestic level on the other.

Dr. Kang Sung-Hack's comprehensive paper situates the problem of a divided Korea and the "long road" to Korean unification within the changing regional strategic milieu in East Asia. He traces the historical and political linkages of Korea with regional as well as international powers: from the traditional Confucian world order to the post-Cold War multipolar international system. Kang then analyzes how the shifts in the strategic milieu in the region have influenced the policies and behaviour of the two Koreas vis-à-vis the major powers and the subsequent implications to their unification. He discusses the four possible scenarios for Korean unification and evaluates each one in terms of existing theoretical/analytical support. Finally, Kang draws his candid conclusions regarding the prospects for unification.

The second paper by Dr. Park Kie-Duck attempts to figure out, as the title of his paper suggests, if indeed a South Korean model of democracy exists within the context of its economic, social and institutional bases. He documents the economic conditions and social background of South Korean politics. Park then analyzes the institutional conditions of democracy as they apply to post-World War II South Korea.

The next two papers present an assessment of South Korea-Philippines economic cooperation from the Korean perspective. However, while one is presented by a scholar from the academe, the other is from the viewpoint of a practitioner—i.e., from a long-time Manila resident and businessman.

Dr. Kim Tae-Myung gives a critical assessment of bilateral economic cooperation between South Korea and the Philippines, specially

in the era of globalization. He examines some aspects and forms of recent economic cooperation between the two republics. Kim then recommends some policy directions to improve future economic cooperation between South Korea and the Philippines.

Mr. Lee Kwan-Soo on the other hand, presents some observations, analyses and assessment of Korean business and commercial investments in the Philippines based on first-hand experiences as a businessman and as president of the Korean Chamber of Commerce Philippines, Inc. He concludes by citing some strategic directions for the promotion of South Korean investments in the Philippines especially in the face of the foreign currency crisis that was already affecting the Philippines then. (It is significant to point out that at the time of the Conference, the Philippines was already feeling the pinch of the currency crisis while South Korea was not yet visibly affected by it).

The succeeding three papers view certain aspects of Philippines-South Korea economic relations from the perspectives of Filipinos connected with certain government agencies involved with the issues presented: South Korean investments in the Philippines and the phenomenon of migrant workers to South Korea. While the paper readers may have key positions in the government agencies they represent, the views and assessment presented in the conference do not necessarily reflect the official stand of their respective agencies.

Ms. Angelica M. Cayas discusses the investment promotion strategies for South Korea. She cites specific attitudes and concerns of South Korean investors in the Philippines as well as issues affecting them which she discovered in the course of her close association with these investors in her line of work. Finally, based on her observations and hard data, she suggests a twelve-point strategy to promote the Philippines as an investment destination for Korean businessmen.

The next two papers in this set deal with the issue of Filipino labor migration to South Korea. Mr. Ricardo R. Casco's paper gives an overview of Filipino workers in South Korea: how the phenomenon started, the agencies involved and the controversial plight of Filipino workers in South Korea. Based on his detailed discussion of the Filipino labor migrants' experience, Casco then assesses the future of the South Korean labor market and suggests the undertaking of bilateral research to enhance labor cooperation between the Philippines and South Korea.

Meanwhile, corollary to the preceding paper, Ms. Liberty T. Casco presents an action plan for the technological cooperation between the Philippines and South Korea on the latter's trainee program -- the South Korean Alien Industrial Technology Training Program (AITTP). She

reviews the implementation of the trainee program from the perceptions and actual experiences of the Filipino stakeholders interviewed. Based on her findings, she then presents detailed recommendations to improve Philippine participation in the South Korea Trainee program.

Finally, Professor Lily Ann Polo ends the series of lectures and panel discussions with a program proposal for strengthening and improving Korea Studies in the Philippines, particularly in the University of the Philippines Diliman. She defines and describes Korea studies as it exists today in U.P. Diliman in general and in the Asian Center in particular, where it is offered as a core country major in the East Asian region under the Asian Studies program. Polo then assesses the on-going collaborative efforts of the U.P. and some Korean universities to strengthen academic and research cooperation. She presents some detailed recommendations for promoting the interest in and the study of Korea in the Philippines.

The Conference and this publication were made possible by the concerted efforts and enthusiastic participation of many individuals and institutions. While enumerating all of them may take up several more pages, I would like to make special mention of the following:

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Lily Ann Polo
Editor