

Mori Grant Report

Thesis Title: 韓国の安保政策と対外経済政策とのリンケージ

~盧武鉉政権における韓米 FTA の決定を中心として~

Student Name: 方 惠景 (Bang, Hyekyung)

Student ID: 81224936, 2nd year student

Program: Global Governance & Regional Strategy Program (GR)

School: Graduate School of Media and Governance

Thesis Adviser: Yorizumi Watanabe

Research Background

The South Korean economy is highly dependent on trade. Trade accounts for over 80% of its GDP. From the initial stages of economic development, exports have been the main driver of growth. However, up until 2003, South Korea was not active in pursuing free trade agreements and only relied on the multilateral trading system of GATT. However, with the rapid increase in the number of FTAs globally, South Korean government expressed resolution to direct its foreign trade policy to forging Free Trade Agreements. A roadmap for active FTA policy was drawn up in 2003 by President Roh Moo-hyun. South Korea's trade strategy largely shifted its focus from global multilateralism to regionalism. This policy met with significant domestic political backlash and protest, and pro-liberalization business lobbies fell short of providing equivalent political support to the government. Nonetheless, the FTA initiative has become a core element of the Roh government's economic policy reforms. The most controversial and challenged FTA for Korea, the Korea-US FTA negotiation, was also started during his presidency. President Roh Moo-hyun was elected from much support from the left-wings. It seems he is the last person who would initiate the Korea-US FTA. However, President Roh, as a executive decision-maker pursued Korea-US FTA.

Research Objective

This research intends to examine the linkage of Korea's security policy and external economic policy with the case of President Roh's pursuit of Korea-US FTA. Korea-US relationship was based on security and military alliance. With deep analysis on the linkage between external economic policy, such as forging FTA and security policy, in the case of President Roh's Korea-US FTA initiation, this research aims to draw future implications for trade-policy making of Korea.

Research Conducted

This research mainly relied on in-depth interviews and analysis Korean literatures.

- Venue: Seoul, South Korea
- Date: From 2nd of August to 22nd of September 2013
- Interviewees

Sector	Institution	Person
Research Institute	Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)	Oh, Minah (Researcher)
	Institute for International Trade (IIT)	Myoung, Jin-Ho (Researcher)
Politicians	Korean National Assembly	Lee, Jasmin (Cabinet member)
Media	MBC, YTN	Park, Beom-soo, Kim, Ju-hwan

Research Outcomes and Conclusion

With careful review of the literature and extensive interviews, a few conclusions have been drawn; 1) President Roh's strong push for Korea-US FTA was largely due to the concerns of fundamental alliance between Korea and US, and security issues. 2) Despite the strong political backlash, President Roh embraced FTA strategy which can benefit Korea both strategically and economically. 3) South Korea's FTA policy is largely influenced by the executive power, and President Roh, although known as liberal and left-wing sided, was the only person who could direct Korea's FTA strategy into forging Korea-US FTA.