

**University of Chile
International Studies Institute
Asia Pacific Center
Korean Studies Program**

Research

**“Perceptions of the South Korean foreign policy towards
Argentina, Brazil and Chile”**

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Financed by:

2008 *Small Research Grants Program in Korean Studies* granted by the Center of Korean Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), with the sponsorship of the Academy of Korean Studies

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Santiago, Chile, July 2008.

Introduction

In the framework of the foreign policies of South Korea, arose the question of analyzing the situation and the importance of this country towards some countries of Latin America.

The administration of president Roh Moo-hyun obtained an historical achievement signing the Free Trade Agreement with Chile with results, in general positives according to both foreign ministries, because of the increment in the bilateral commerce at the first trimester of 2008, which got up to USD 1.969 millions with an increase of 32.1%, being the highest among the principal commercial partners of Chile. Also Korea maintain the fifth position as a commercial partner with Chile, after the US, China, Japan and Brazil.¹

Bilateral relations with Argentina and Brazil, despite of non existing FTAs among these countries nowadays, it's marked by a broad relation, that can be traced to the sixties and seventies when a massive Korean immigration was initiated, being approximately 105.000 those who arrived to all of Latin America, half of them in Brazil, country that now has 50.000 Koreans.²

In the case of Argentina, the first immigration wave arrived in 1965, and then in regular patterns between 1970 and 1978 and during the eighties, when the procedures for Korean immigrants in Argentina Act was signed in 1985.³ This and other common issues make as study and are a source of information on the Korean foreign policy.

The main objective of this research is to determine and understand, from the point of view of Latin American scholars of Korea, their own thoughts about foreign policy (in politics, economy and cultural issues) towards Argentina, Brazil and Chile (ABC). The selected time frame was between 2003 and this year, because of the little time available to do the research and in order to have a state of the art map of the developing of this relations as well as the necessity of continuity of this politics, at the eve of a new administration in South Korea.

Research was made thanks to a wide bibliographical review and the formulation of enquiries to South Korean scholars' experts in Latin America, which gently answered the questions in terms of confidentiality and anonymity.

The idea that scholars and not official functionaries would answer the questions arose out of the necessity of having a more objective or at least critical position of the official figures and, at the same time, to be open and understand the scholastic view of the professors on their own foreign policy.

¹ Source: Boletín de la Cámara de Comercio Coreana. Informativo Chile – Corea, INSOC- 305-2008.

² Gymparaes, Lytton., "The Korean community in Brazil: challenges, achievements and prospects", paper The 3rd World Congress of Korean Studies, Cheju National University, Jejudo, South Korea, Oct 27 -30, 2006. P.5.

³ Mera, Carolina, "Historia de la Migración hacia la Argentina", En: Mera Carolina, Consiansi Liliana y González Carmen, "Coreanos en Argentina: 10 años de Historia", Ediciones Al Margen, La Plata Argentina, Octubre de 2005. pp. 31-45.

This research was financed by the 2008 *Small Research Grants Program in Korean Studies* granted by the Center of Korean Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), with the sponsorship of the Korean Academy of Korean Studies. It received the collaboration of the research assistant Gonzalo Muñoz Bravo in different aspects of the research and from Gonzalo Guaiquil as a translator of this paper. Both of them are students and members of the Korean studies program of the Asia Pacific Center of International Studies Institute at the University of Chile. It also received the assistance of the Director of the Center, Prof. Martín Pérez Le-Fort in the data processing from the questionnaires.

I. South Korean Foreign policy towards Argentina, Brazil y Chile (ABC)

South Korean foreign policy marked a milestone during the sixties when establishing diplomatic relations with the majority of countries from Latin America, like Brazil in 1959 and Argentina and Chile in 1962, among other nations of the region.

During the nineties with the consolidation of South Korea internal politics, it was established a series of principles that, in the opinion of the scholar Kwak Jae Sung included the concepts of globalization, diversification, multi functionality, regional cooperation and a future orientation in foreign policy.⁴

At that time the relations with Latin America were reinforced by the visit in 1996 of Kim Young Sam, the first South Korean President who traveled to the region. Then in 2001 president Cardoso of Brazil went to Korea, and above all, this relations were straighten with the APEC 2004 summit in Chile, were the former president Roh Moo-hyun made a tour in different countries and signed agreements in different issues, as in the case of Argentina, were signed agreements of economic cooperation, education, mining, natural resources, technology, farming, IT, among others. With Brazil the agreements included economical cooperation, energy and IT.

Nevertheless, one huge achievement of the South Korean foreign policy was the FTA with Chile, in 2004, which allowed that bilateral commerce to increase considerably, and also made possible future negotiations of Korea with other countries, including MERCOSUR. Also, Chile signed other agreements with South Korea such as Double taxation exemption agreement, promotion and protection of investments agreement and a nuclear cooperation for pacific purposes agreement, among others.

The new administration of President Lee Myung-bak has defined a foreign policy strategy that strengthens the relationship with the regional powers and searches new diplomatic relations in the base of natural resources necessities and the maintenance of globalization and market economies concept.⁵

Closer ties with Latin America, under these parameters could be explained under this new foreign policy of energy and economic, as well as scientific, technologic and cultural cooperation.

South Korean necessity of maintaining good relations with the ABC countries could also be explained in political terms “South Korea is a observer member of the OAS, participates in the reunions of Group of Rio, and is a extra-regional member of the IADB”⁶

⁴ See quotation in: Choe Gyoung-Joo, “Política Exterior de Corea hacia América Latina. Evolución, desafíos y perspectivas futuras” En: Di Masi Jorge/Crisconio Magdalena, “Corea Argentina: percepciones mutuas desde una perspectiva regional”, Asociación Argentina de Estudios Coreanos, Segundo Congreso Nacional de Estudios Coreanos, La Plata, Argentina, Agosto de 2006. P.31.

⁵ See: <http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/a-new-era-in-south-korean-foreign-policy>

⁶ Neghme, Verónica, “Vinculaciones América Latina-Asia: Presente y Futuro”, documento de trabajo, publicado en:

and from July 2007 is also member of ECLAC. It's in this area that, the most important political issue has been the support of Argentina, Brazil and Chile to South Korea, in the pacific solution of the North Korea nuclear program.⁷

I.1 Brazil

The visit of President Roh Moo-hyun in 2004 to the three countries reinforced the bounds prior established. In the case of Brazil straitening the “special Alliance between South Korea and Brazil towards the XXI century” established in 2001, as part of Brazilian's president Fernando Henrique Cardoso visit to South Korea. This alliance allowed the reinforcement of IT, biotechnology, Aerospace industry, electro technology, metallurgy and clean technologies areas, as well as a visa exception agreement between both countries.⁸

During his visit to Brazil president Roh, renewed the commitments with the creation of the “Comprehensive Cooperative Relationship for the Common Prosperity in the 21st. Century” Act. In this document it was created a center for cooperation in IT. Brazil reinforced its position of support of South Korea in order for the latter be a member of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), condition obtained in 2005. They also signed cooperation agreements in natural resources, energy, science and technology areas.⁹

In the bilateral economic exchange sector, both presidents “agreed to encourage South Korean companies to participate in public and private projects in Brazil, in areas like oil, energy and construction, such as highways, railroads and ports”.¹⁰

Another important topic in the bilateral relations with Brazil is the large Korean colony living in this country and the cultural issues that exist between both countries.

Diplomatic relations were established between Korea and Brazil in 1959 and in 1962, The South Korean government established its embassy in Rio de Janeiro. With the implementation of the immigration law in 1962, the South Korean government allowed a significant entry of Korean immigrants to Latin American countries and especially to Brazil¹¹. There are many discussions if this immigration to Latin America was a forced stop before heading to the United States, looking for re-emigration. Both positions are questioned, because many immigrants decided to stay in their first destiny and others decided to emigrate again for different reasons.¹²

http://asiapacifico.bcn.cl/columnas/vinculacion_asia_latinoamerica_vneghme/vinculacion_asia_latinoamerica_versioncompleta?searchterm=vincula Santiago, 24 de julio de 2007. P. 9.

⁷ See: Choe Gyoung-Joo, Op. Cit., “Política Exterior de Corea hacia América Latina. Evolución, desafíos y perspectivas futuras”, P. 34.

⁸ See: Di Masi Jorge, “Preferential relations between MERCOSUR and Korea: Perspectives of an idea under construction”, Relac. Int. (B. Aires) vol.1 no.se Buenos Aires 2006, P. 11.

⁹ See: Choe Gyoung-Joo, Op. Cit., “Política Exterior de Corea hacia América Latina. Evolución, desafíos y perspectivas futuras”, P. 34; y, Di Masi, Ibidem.

¹⁰ <http://spanish.korea.net/04novpol18-11.html>

¹¹ See: Gymaraes, Lytton., Op. Cit., “The Korean community in Brazil: challenges, achievements and prospects”. P. 5.

¹² See: Mera Carolina, Op. Cit. “Historia de la Migración hacia la Argentina”, P. 9.

In Brazil, according to Professor Guimaraes, there are about 50,000 Korean immigrants and descendants, contrasting with the numbers of the rest of Latin America which is approximately 55,600 people.¹³

This close relation despite of the geographical distance has made the relations between Korea and Brazil a priority for the South Korea government in Latin America. This is reinforced by the necessity of new natural resources and development, political and economical issues in common are the base of prosper future relations.

In the economic sphere, the FDI of Korea in Brazil between 2001 and 2006 was mainly focused in the electronic sector (electronic equipment, communication equipment, office machinery, and IT equipment) with a 37,3%, where Samsung and LG were the principal companies.¹⁴ According to the foreign relations and commerce ministry, the total investment of Korea in 2006 was approximately USD 1.13 billons with 82 projects and bilateral commerce the same year was in exports USD 3.06 billons and in imports USD 2.71 billons.¹⁵ Among the principal exports products from Brazil to Korea are: Soy (9.11%), Iron (3.2%), oil and lubricants (2.7%) and automobiles (2.5%).¹⁶

On the other side, among the principal Korean exports to Latin America, as a whole, we can highlight: automobiles (10,5%), semi-conductors (10,4%), wireless communication devices (10,3%), computers (6,7%) and chips (6,7%).¹⁷

In agreements signed between Korea and Brazil, we can distinguish:

AGREEMENTS BRAZIL – SOUTH KOREA.¹⁸

Agreement	Signed	In force	Enacted	
			DECREE N°	Data
Trade Agreement.	21/05/1963	21/05/1963		
Cultural Agreement.	07/02/1966	20/10/1967	61686	13/11/1967

¹³ See: Gymparaes, Lytton., Op. Cit., “The Korean community in Brazil: challenges, achievements and prospects”. P. 6.

¹⁴ See: Mortimore Michael, and Kwak Jae Sung, “An Analysis of Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America by Korean TNCs, Working paper, 2006. P. 11.

¹⁵ Source: http://www.mofat.go.kr/english/regions/latinamerica/20070803/1_327.jsp

¹⁶ See: Korea-MERCOSUR Joint Study, Eliana Valéria Covolan Figueiredo (Ministério da Agricultura Pecuária e Abastecimento – MAPA) y Frederico Tomich (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada – IPEA), Botucatu, November 28th 2006, P. 18.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Source: Brazilian Embassy, Seoul. <http://www.brasemb.or.kr/>

Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income.	10/01/1984	10/01/1984		
Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Joint Commission	07/03/1989	21/11/1991	354	02/12/1991
Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Joint Commission	28/09/1989	28/09/1989		
Agreement on Co-operation in Fields of Science and Technology	08/08/1991	30/12/1992	743	05/02/1993
Exchange of Notes on the Mutual Abolition of Visa Requirements concerning Diplomatic and Official Passports.	11/08/1992	09/09/1992		
Agreement for Air Services between and beyond the Respective Territories	11/08/1992	31/05/1995	1545	03/07/1995
Treaty of Extraditions.	01/09/1995	01/02/2002	4152	07/03/2002
Exchange of Notes for the Amendment of the Agreement for Air Services between and beyond the Respective Territories of August 11, 1992	29/02/1996	05/02/1997	2786	24/09/1998
Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of Policy Consultation Talks	11/09/1996	11/09/1996		

Agreement on the Issuance of Business, Investment and Press Coverage Visas	11/09/1996	26/12/1997	2467	19/01/1998
Agreement on Tourism Co-operation	11/09/1996	25/11/1997	5437	29/04/2005
Agreement on Abolition of Visa Requirements	18/01/2001	20/05/2002	4235	17/05/2002
Agreement of Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy	18/01/2001	25/07/2005	5555	04/10/2005
Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	13/12/2002	8/02/2006	5.721	13/03/2006
Memorandum of Understanding on energy and mineral resources	16/11/2004	16/11/2004		
Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of Reciprocal Tax Exemption in Air Transportation	19/11/2004	19/11/2004		
Executive program in cultural exchange	26/9/2006	26/9/2006		

Also, they signed a bilateral military cooperation agreement in 2006, in order to improve the cooperation in the defense and military technology areas, with the aim to sell armament to other countries in South America.¹⁹

In the Energy sector, President Lee Myung-bak has already solicited to President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva his support for Korean companies in energy and natural resources fields²⁰ in this area, there are also investments in other countries such as Colombia and Peru.

¹⁹See:http://www.korea.net/News/News/LangView.asp?serial_no=20060402002&lang_no=1&part=106&SearchDay=

²⁰ See: http://dynamic-korea.com/news/view_issues.php?main=HOT&sub=&uid=200800239078&keyword=

In the cultural area, Korea and Brazil have a strong relation. In 2006, the executive program in culture agreement was signed, which will strength the expositions, visual arts, music, cultural heredities, cinema, dance, theater, libraries, literature, sports and the promotion and cooperation between the Korean and Portuguese languages.²¹

The Korean Foundation has promoted the cultural binding between both countries, in a series of forums about Korea and Brazil, three of them already carried out and the last one programmed to November 2008²², and the promotion of Asian programs at the Brazilian universities (Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Catholic of Sao Paulo, Mackenzie, among others). It is in this sense that the Korean Studies Association of Brazil was recently created; the first national congress of Korean studies in Brasilia was held, along with the third encounter of Korean studies in Latin America, both in the city of Sao Paulo, 2007.

I.2. Argentina

Diplomatic relations between South Korea and Argentina were formally established in 1962. During the visit of President Roh Moo-hyun to Argentina in 2004, it also obtained the status of “Comprehensive Cooperative Relationship for the Common Prosperity in the 21st. Century”.

In this visit a memorandum of understanding was created between Banco de la Nación Argentina and the Import and Export Korean bank with a loan of 30 millions in order to finance Argentineans who wanted to import Korean products. Other important steps worth mentioning are the declaration on non proliferation nuclear weapons, the pacific use of energy and a reinforcement of the multilateral system of the UN to achieve peace and bilateral agreements in the science, technology, cultural and educational areas.²³

This situation reinforced a bilateral relation that was already in good shape. In 1996 they signed various agreements, due to the visit of president Kim Young Sam to Argentina, such as protection of investments or fishery agreements, with the idea of promoting the expansion of exchanges and cooperation between Korea and Latin America. Subsequently, the Korean-South American Cooperation Center in Energy and natural resources was created, with its office in Buenos Aires.²⁴

Economic exchange between both countries, according to the foreign and commerce ministry is: Exports USD 330 millions and Imports: USD 556 millions, with foreign investments of Korea in Argentina of USD 390 millions in 50 projects during 2006.²⁵

²¹ See el Acuerdo en: http://www2.mre.gov.br/dai/b_cors_21_5837.htm

²² See: http://www.kf.or.kr:8080/eng/program/new_forum9.jsp

²³ See: Di Masi Jorge, “Preferential relations between MERCOSUR and Korea: Perspectives of an idea under construction”, Op. Cit., P.11.

²⁴ See: Mera Carolina, “Panorama general y reflexiones acerca de las relaciones entre Argentina y Corea” Revista de Estudios Internacionales, -Nº 156, Enero-Marzo 2007

²⁵ Source:

http://www.mofat.go.kr/english/regions/latinamerica/20070803/1_328.jsp?board=board&boardid=&key=1

In the immigration area, the number of Koreans living in Argentina until 2006 was almost 15,000 people.²⁶

In agreements signed between both countries, we can distinguish:

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ARGENTINA-SOUTH KOREA²⁷

AGREEMENT	SIGNED	APROVED	DATA
Establishment of diplomatic relations	Tokyo, Feb. 15 1962	Decree N° 4.542/64	FEBRARY 15, 1962
cultural agreement	Buenos Aires, aug 25 1968	Law N° 18.387	JANUARY 4, 1970
Agreement of the patent protection, utility models, designs, trademarks to nationals of both countries.	Soul, aug 14 1972		AUGUST 14, 1972
Cultural joint commission Argentina-South Korea	Buenos Aires, aug 8 1975		
Cultural joint commission Argentina-South Korea	Buenos Aires, nov 28 1975		
Cultural joint commission Argentina-South Korea.	Buenos Aires, oct 5 1978		
Joint statement from the ministry of commerce and industries of South Korea and the ministry of commerce of Argentina. Argentina	Buenos Aires, may 5 1981		
Memorandum of understanding for a joint commission	Buenos Aires, oct 28 1991		OCTOBER 21, 1991
Multiple visa for businessmen agreement	Buenos Aires, jun 16 1992		JULY 16, 1992
Final memorandum of the joint commission Argentina-South Korea	Buenos Aires, jun 16 1992		
Agreement of bilateral commerce protection	Soul, may 17 1994	Law N° 24.682	SEPT 24, 1996
Extradition treaty	Buenos Aires, aug 30 1995		

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Source: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto. República Argentina.
<<http://www.mrecic.gov.ar>>

Memorandum of understanding about high level consults	Soul, sep 29 1995		
Aerial services agreement	Buenos Aires, sep 9 1996	Law 25.834	JANUARY 15, 2004
Pacific uses of atomic energy agreement	Buenos Aires, sep 9 1996	Law N° 24.860	Sep. 19 1997
Acuerdo de Cooperación Científica y Tecnológica entre el Gobierno de la República Argentina y el Gobierno de la República de Corea	Seoul, oct 31 2000	Law 25.702	FEBRUARY 12, 2003
Extradition treaty between the Republic of Argentina and the Republic South Korea	Buenos Aires, aug 30 1995	Law 25.303	NOV 9, 2000
memorandum of the joint commission Argentina-South Korea	Buenos Aires, nov 7 2003		
Agreement of visa exception for diplomatic and official passports.	Buenos Aires, apr 1 2004		
Cultural and educational agreement	Buenos Aires, nov, 15 2004		
Economical and commercial agreement	Buenos Aires, nov, 15 2004		

Main economic issues between Korea and Argentina are reviewed by the Korean-Argentinean Economic Joint Committee, which is a bilateral consultant organism established under the agreement of economical and commercial cooperation between both governments in 2006. Among the main issues reviewed are, customs, bio-energy development, fishing and agricultural sanitary and phytosanitary measures, the conclusion of a social security agreement and the presentation of strategies for the promotion of a FTA.²⁸ The main exports from Argentina are Soy (17.2%), Fuel and lubricants (6.6%), seeds and fruits (5.0%) and cereals (4%).²⁹

In the cultural area, Argentina has been very proactive in the Korean studies field. At university level and with the permanent assistance of the Korean foundation, it has been established at the University of Buenos Aires, the center for Korean studies. There is also the Argentinean Association of Korean Studies and in various universities like La Plata, Rosario, Cordoba there are different center studies. Also during 2008 the IV version of national congress of Korean Studies was held, and in 2003 Buenos Aires was the venue of the first encounter of Korean Studies in Latin America, being the first of a series of encounters that are looking for the promotion of these studies and better knowledge between both countries.

²⁸ See: <http://spanish.korea.net/07novpol01-03.html>

²⁹ Korea-MERCOSUR Joint Study, Op. Cit. P.18.

I.3. Chile

Diplomatic relations between South Korea and Chile were established in 1962 and during many years were very formal, agreeing in political issues such as “the promotion of democratic values in the world”; “non nuclear proliferation”, “defense of human rights”; their relations within the APEC, FOCALAE and PECC organizations; and the reinforcement and increment of technical cooperation and investments flows”.³⁰

A huge step in bilateral relations of Chile and South Korea was the FTA, which was effective in April 1st 2004, being the first agreement of this kind signed by South Korea. The visit of President Roh Moo-hyun to Chile, due to the APEC Summit in 2004, made that their diplomatic relations also achieved the status of comprehensive cooperation relations for the joint prosperity in the 21st century”, already signed with Brazil and Argentina.

The visit to Chile was less productive in terms of agreements with respect to Brazil and Argentina, but allowed to reinforce the cooperation in the science and technological area, the exchange of technology and information, projects of joint explorations, development and productions of minerals resources, and the expansion of bilateral commerce in these resources, already signed before.³¹

Bilateral commerce because of the FTA had had a substantial increment, even though it has been more for the Chilean side than the Korean. We can observe this in the following comparison:

Bilateral Commerce Chile-South Korea³²

In millions of dollars / first trimester of each year

2007	2008	% Variation	
Exports	1.062,4	1.063,1	0.1%
Imports	428,9	906,1	111.2%
Total Commerce	US\$1.491,3	US\$1.969.2	32.1%

We can appreciate how limited the variation of incoming commerce from Korea has been, but the commercial exchange with Chile allowed Korea to prove that is a reliable partner who can sign FTA with other economies, such as United States, China, Japan, European Union, and some day commercial ties are expected also with the MERCOSUR.

³⁰ Source: Ministerio de Relaciones de Chile, Dirección Asia Pacífico.
<http://www.minrel.gov.cl/webMinRel/home.do?sitio=1>

³¹ See: <http://spanish.korea.net/04junpol16-16.html>

³² Source: Boletín Informativo Cámara de Comercio Chileno Coreana, INSOC 305-2008, P.3

Korean foreign investments in Chile, in 2006 figures of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Commerce showed almost an investment of USD 70 millions³³, far less than Brazil and Argentina.

Principal product exports from Korea to Chile between January and June in 2007 were: refined Copper cathodes 35,0%, Cooper minerals and concentrated 23,6%, tune-up copper 9,9%, Methanol 7,9%, fresh grapes 1,3%. On the other side, main imports from Korea, during the same period are: distillated oil fuel (gasoil, diesel) 47,8%, tourism automobiles 1500cc 7,7%, mobile phones 4,9%, tourism automobiles between 1000 cc and 1500 cc 4,5%, pickup superior to 500 kl. 3,3%.³⁴

Nowadays there are also exports from Chile related to fruits and pork meat, the latter one with some inconvenient due to the finding of high levels of dioxins. Nevertheless, these problems can be considered as “normal” in the bilateral relations of these countries, and they do not alter the Korean foreign policy, which privilege commercial relations and issues like energy or natural resources.

Chile is a country with limited energetic resources, but rich in natural resources such as Cooper, molybdenum, gold, silver and minerals containing lithium, being Chile the producer of 35% of the cooper global demand.³⁵

This are the resources that Korea is looking for in Chile and the first FTA with this country was centered in this issue and also due to the low impact in the agricultural sector of Korea, because one of the main exports of Chile are fruits, such as grapes, which are offseason. Other reasons are that the economical structure of both countries can be complemented, and also that Chile is a country with much experience in this kind of agreement.³⁶

The search of trade partners in the FTA area from South Korea is part of the politics implemented to end the sufferings of the Asian Crisis of 1997. Election of future partners, like the Chilean case, is aimed to be compatible with the OMC policies, bilateral or multilateral; bringing satisfactory answers and without harm in sensitive areas; support from the private sector; structural comparative advantages detection in both countries; income levels of the future trade partner; commerce barrier levels; real and potential size of the market, among other points.³⁷

³³ Source: http://www.mofat.go.kr/english/regions/latinamerica/20070803/1_331.jsp?

³⁴ Source: Ministerio de Relaciones de Chile, Dirección Asia Pacífico.
<http://www.minrel.gov.cl/webMinRel/home.do?sito=1>

³⁵ See: <http://spanish.korea.net/04junpol16-16.html>

³⁶ Cheong Inkyo, “Korea’s embrace regionalism and the economic effects on its bilateral FTAs with Chile and Japan”, En: Harvie, Lee and Oh (Editors) “The Korean Economy”, Edward Elgar, Massachusetts, USA, 2004.Pp.225-234.

³⁷ See: Cordi Braulio, “La Política de Corea hacia los Acuerdos de Libre Comercio”, En: Di Masi Jorge/Crisconio Magdalena, “Corea Argentina: percepciones mutuas desde una perspectiva regional”, Asociación Argentina de Estudios Coreanos, Segundo Congreso Nacional de Estudios Coreanos, La Plata, Argentina, Agosto de 2006. P. 188.

Other agreements signed between Chile and South Korea are the following: double tax exception, promotion and protection of investments , non diplomatic visa, non visa up to 90 days, aero-commercial agreement (since 2001), Memorandum of understanding between the Korea Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) and the ministry of Health concerning food safety, pacific uses of nuclear energy (2002), mineral resources cooperation committee (2004) mutual recognition of driver license (2007), public television agreement (2007).³⁸

In the cultural area and academics Exchange, like the Brazilian and Argentinean case, Chilean universities have agreements with their Korean counterparts. With the financial assistance of the Korean foundation it was created the Korean studies program at the international studies center of Universidad de Chile. Other universities also had received funding related to Korea such as the Asia studies center of Universidad Católica de Chile and other centers and programs of private universities.

Universidad Gabriela Mistral is the head office of the Chile-Korea Society “established in 2006 as initiative of former ambassador of Korea in Chile Mr. Kee Hyun-seo and Mr. Andrés Zaldívar, who are in charge. The main objective is to promote friendship and cooperation between Chile and Korea in diverse areas, such as: political, economical, social, scientific, technological, cultural, academics, and also because of the strength of the relations thanks to the FTA. There is a Korea Chile Society as a counterpart, with meetings in Soul, South Korea.³⁹

Agreements between universities up to this day are: Universidad de Chile and Universidad de Kiung-Hee (1996) framework agreement; Seoul National University (2004) framework agreement and (2007) specific agreement between the Latin-American institute of the national university of Soul and the international studies institute of Universidad de Chile; Information and Communications University (ICU) (2003) specific agreement with the physics and mathematics faculty and; University of Korea (2007) framework agreement and student exchange⁴⁰

Other agreements between universities that can be named are: Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez and Hankuk of Foreign Studies University; Universidad Católica and Duksung Womens University; Universidad Católica de Chile and The Catholic University of Korea; Universidad Católica and Korea University, Universidad Mayor and Korea University.⁴¹

There is a webpage inside the site of the library of the national congress that encourages involvement among the people on the Asian issues and also helps the parliament in their work. This initiative is in permanent actualization, bringing information, reports and news from Korea.⁴²

³⁸ Sources: <http://www.minrel.gov.cl/webMinRel/home.do?sitio=1> ; http://www.ugm.cl/portal-corea/a_bilaterales.html ; <http://spanish.korea.net/04junpol16-16.html>

³⁹ See: <http://www.ugm.cl/portal-corea/index.html>

⁴⁰ See: http://www.uchile.cl/uchile.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=conUrl&url=8041

⁴¹ See: <http://www.minrel.gov.cl/webMinRel/home.do?sitio=1>

⁴² Access to the asia pacific website is: <http://asiapacifico.bcn.cl/>

II. Questionnaire applied to South Korean research experts in Latin American and foreign policy.

The idea of applying a questionnaire became necessary when we needed to analyze the current state of bilateral relations between South Korea and the Countries of the South American ABC, Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

As previously seen in section I, South Korea and the ABC countries have an extensive relation in different matters, and is looking for a diverse relation according to the conditions of each country. We can say , in overall, that ABC countries don't have the importance of other regions for the South Korean foreign policy, but their new approach and the search for new markets and natural resources has made them look permanently to this area. To find the answers of how and at which level these activities are being carried out is the main motive to do this questionnaire.

The Questionnaire had ten open and close questions, mainly centered in foreign policy issues towards the mentioned countries. The scholars that answered these questions belong to the main South Korean universities and organizations related to Latin America. There answers were obtained in terms of confidentiality and anonymity.

The First question was related to the importance, among scholars, of the foreign policy during the administration of President Roh Moo-hyun of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, USA, China and Japan. (In a scale 1 to 10)

Average answers to question 1 were:

Country	Average %
Argentina	2,86
Brazil	4,57
Chile	5,14
USA	9,14
China	9,14
Japan	7,57

Figures don't differ from the general perception about the main guidelines of president Roh's foreign policy, giving more importance to the regional area and the United States. Nevertheless, Chilean position could ratify the importance, at that time, of the FTA between both countries and the relations after that. The Brazilian and Argentinean case reflected the influence of the immigration on those countries, with mayor emphasis in Brazil.

The second question was related to the importance, among scholars, of the foreign policy of South Korea among the named countries in the current administration of President Lee Myung-bak.

Average answers to question 2 were:

Country	Average %
Argentina	3,86
Brazil	5,43
Chile	4,43
USA	9,71
China	8,43
Japan	8,00

Maintenance and rise of the US average, could reflex, in the academic perception, the style of a conservative government such as President Lee, that privileges a good relation with the US (because of the FTA and other common issues), despite of some inconveniences during the negotiations and ratification of the FTA. In the case of China and Japan, being at almost the same level, could demonstrate the tendency of President Lee to open new markets, a FTA with both countries, linked with the change of status from "comprehensive cooperative partnership" to "strategic cooperative partnership" with China, would ratify his pragmatic view on foreign policy.

Going back to the ABC, the rise of Brazil and Argentina, vis-à-vis the fall of Chile, shows the priority of President Lee administration into the energy and natural resources area, with its highest at the Brazilian case. This can be seen in the agreements signed in this field, and a future FTA, even though there is no compromise at this moment.

Question 3 was made trying to break down by issue and country the most relevant issues in the bilateral relations of South Korea since 2003 to this date.

Question 3: in the case of bilateral relations between South Korea and Argentina:

Subject	Average %	Other comments
Commerce	6,57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some questionnaires commerce was established as a priority issue.
Investments	4,71	
Culture	4,00	

Immigration	4,57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this area the Korean immigration to Argentina is highly important
Energy	5,43	
Politics Relations	3,71	
scientific and Technological field	3,57	
Military Cooperation	2,86	
Others:	3,00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argentina is seen as a vulnerable country in contrast to others in the region.

The commerce area is an absolute priority in the Argentinean case, adding other issues such as immigration, energy and technological and scientific cooperation. Nevertheless is seen as the most vulnerable country in Latin America.

Question 3: in the case of bilateral relations between South Korea and Brazil:

Subject	Average %	Other comments
Commerce	7,71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's highlighted as a big market and a partner in economical issues
Investments	6,86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight as an attractive investment market.
Culture	5,00	
Immigration	4,86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Korean immigration during

		the 60's Is really important.
Energy	7,43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abundant of natural resources is highlighted. • Other priorities of the current administration such as the energy field.
Politics Relations	5,43	
scientific and Technological field	4,57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in the cooperation between both countries
Military Cooperation	3,43	
Others:	4,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazil was a recipient country in the past and is one of the favorites for the common people.

In the answers founded in the questionnaire, it can be seen how Brazil is considered as a big market and an allied in commercial issues. It also emphasizes the abundant natural resources which, mixed with the priorities of president Lee could explain the joint cooperation in this field and also the high percentage of answers in this area, really close to the commerce. We can also highlight the immigration during the 60's and the progress in technical and scientific cooperation in the last few years.

Question 3: In the case of South Korean relations with Chile:

Subject	Average %	Other comments
Commerce	9,00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increment of commerce between both countries Is highlighted. • Commerce is a

		<p>priority in the relations between both countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FTA with Chile opened the possibilities to negotiate with other countries.
Investments	6,14	
Culture	4,43	
Immigration	3,86	
Energy	5,29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy sector is a priority for the current administration.
Politics Relations	4,71	
scientific and Technological field	4,86	
Military Cooperation	3,86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Korean navy has made several port of call in Valparaiso.
Others:	3,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chile is one of the most stable countries of the region.

In the inquiries the great volume of commerce with Chile and the economic priority above other topics of foreign policy is highlighted. The FTA with Chile could imply the possibility of future negotiations of FTA's, and the current ones will be achieved. The position of Chile as the most stable country in the region is also highlighted.

The previous could confirm the priorities in commercial and foreign investments areas of President Roh, and also in the Lee administration towards the ABC countries and the ties to the energy area. Nevertheless culture, immigration and other issues are not set

aside, situation that can be reflected in the agreements as well as the good bilateral relations among these countries.

Question 4 is referred to, according to their perceptions, which were the most important subjects in the bilateral relations between South Korea - Argentina, South Korea - Brazil and South Korea - Chile, from 2003 up to the present.

The main issue mentioned is commerce. Some expressed that there weren't any important political issues between South Korea and these countries. Following commerce, the next topic in line is economic cooperation. Other issues are the visit of President Roh Moo-hyun to Argentina, Brazil and Chile in 2004, and the FTA with Chile. Other minor topics are the immigrants and the North Korean nuclear program.

As observed in question number four, it's clear the necessity to maintain and search for an important strategic relation, as can be seen in the energy field, without leaving political issues behind. The peaceful dismantling of the North Korean nuclear program is a recurrent topic, with the support of the ABC countries to the South Korean position, which implies that political issues in general have been nonexistent in complicated moments. Despite the fact that Chile and Brazil have bilateral relations with North Korea, this is not a problem in their relations with South Korea, because in the possible reunification scenario it's more advantageous to have a unified relation with Korea. Argentina established diplomatic relations with North Korea in 1973, relations which were cancelled in 1997, nowadays privileging its relations with South Korea.⁴³

Question 5 is referred to the perception of any change in the foreign policy of South Korea to the ABC countries during the new administration of President Lee.

To one exception, all scholars believed that under the administration of President Lee, South Korea will emphasize a more aggressive political diplomacy towards Latin America, especially in the search for natural resources, with a logical impact on their relations with Brazil as a priority of the ABC countries.

In other areas, a scholar highlights besides the energy area, the search of alliances in the commercial sector with countries different from the traditional, such as China, Japan or United States, that could allow an expansion of the markets, where Chile is an example of that. Other scholars break down their answers to the necessity of energy cooperation with Brazil and economic cooperation in the case of Argentina and Chile.

Question 6 concerns, according to their perception, if the FTA with Chile helped to improve the relations between South Korea and Chile.

⁴³ Regarding the relations between Argentina and North Korea see the article: Mera Carolina, "Panorama general y reflexiones acerca de las relaciones entre Argentina y Corea" Op.Cit.; y, Paz, Gonzalo, Las relaciones entre Corea y la Argentina. Desarrollo y Perspectivas, en: <http://www.asiayargentina.com/cari-13.htm>

All the answers were positives. The majorities pointed out that Chile improved its image, and the level of knowledge among the Korean population, thanks to the commercial agreement and the arrival of Chilean wines. Also highlighted is the increment of positive, cooperative relations, thanks to the signing of the agreement.

Questions number 7 and 8 are related to each other. Number seven is referred to, if according to their perception, it could be possible to sign a FTA with the MERCOSUR, under the administration of President Lee. Question 8 is referred to the possible improvements of the relations with Argentina and Brazil after signing the FTA.

The Majority of scholars think that it is or will be very difficult to have an FTA with MERCOSUR, during the administration of President Lee. Some of them think that there can be talks about it, and others that a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) can be arranged, due to the possibility of allowing lower tariffs on some products instead of a more complex FTA. Others think that it is possible to have a FTA or a PTA signed during this administration.

Regarding question 8, the answer was positive in all the cases, nevertheless, one answer emphasizes that relations will improve more with Brazil than Argentina.

Question 9 aimed to see, according the perception of the scholars, which were the most important cultural issues between South Korea and the ABC countries, since 2003 up to the present. (In 1-10 scale)

South Korea – Argentina

AREA	Average %	Other comments:
Academic Exchange	6,14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academically Argentina is an important study site.
Cultural knowledge (literature – history)	5,86	
Language knowledge (Spanish)	6,71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korean students are travelling to learn Spanish
Student scholarships	5,00	
Others	6,00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of academic visits

South Korea – Brazil

AREA	Average %	Other comments:
Academic exchange	5,86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brazil is an important study field, mainly in the comparative studies.
Cultural knowledge (literature – history)	5,86	
Language knowledge (Portuguese)	6,57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korean students are travelling to learn Portuguese.
Student scholarships	5, 14	
Others	6,50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite of being the only country that speaks Portuguese in Latin America, Korean students are interested to learn that language.

South Korea – Chile

AREA	Average %	Other comments:
Academic exchange	6,00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The priority is the economical and student Exchange with Chile.
Cultural knowledge (literature – history)	5,86	
Language knowledge (Spanish)	6,57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korean students are travelling to learn Spanish

Student scholarships	4,86	
Others	6,00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many academic visits.

As it can be seen in the percentage of this area, the results are similar and it doesn't look like there is a marked difference between the previous administration and president Lee's. The search for a cultural approach is an unresolved issue, but is not set aside, instead it's complementing the economical side with the cultural one.

Question 10 is referred, in the opinion of South Korean scholars, to the issues that President Lee will give priority in the future bilateral relations between South Korea and the ABC countries.

Answers show the necessity for better bilateral cooperation in knowledge, culture and human capital, in order to improve effective intercultural communication as well as the economic relations. The necessity for better understanding in local and business policies is also pointed out. It's necessary to go ahead in the TLC or PTA with MERCOSUR, and also in the natural resources and energy area. There are also references to an increment in the academic Exchange between South Korea and the ABC countries, the improvement of the Argentinean exports, the commerce in the Brazilian market and the energy and natural resources cooperation with Chile.

Conclusions

South Korean foreign policy under the administration of President Roh Moo-hyun was set by the scholar Kwak Jae Sung, concepts such as: globalization, diversification, multi-functionality, regional cooperation and a future orientation in foreign policy.

We can trace in this context, the policies of the new president Lee, who also added the necessity of the search for natural resources and the orientation towards the support of regional powers including the United States.

Latin America and especially the ABC countries are not a strategic priority of the South Korean foreign policy, nevertheless there is a “strategy” of the South Korean government to search for new markets and trade partners. This strategy came after the Asian crisis and has been carefully planned to improve the economic development of South Korea.

With the ABC countries, it has achieved the relation status of “Comprehensive Cooperative Relationship for the Common Prosperity in the 21st. Century”, due to the visit of President Roh Moo-hyun to the three countries, as part of the APEC 2004 summit held in Chile. At that time, a series of agreements were signed and they arranged the commitment for the improvement of the relations between the three countries and South Korea.

One of the milestones of the South Korean foreign policy was the FTA signed with Chile in 2004 that allowed South Korea to show that is a reliable market for these kind of agreements. Although, the commerce between South Korean and Chile, according to the figures, has been more in favor of Chile, South Korea with this agreement, showed the world that it’s a reliable commercial partner for countries like the US, China, Japan, the European Union, and eventually the MERCOSUR.

In the economic area, according to the questionnaires and the bibliographical revision, South Korea is looking to increase the commerce and the foreign investments with the ABC countries. Also, under the new administration of President Lee there is a necessity of joint ventures in the exploration of natural resources and minerals.

The FTA with Chile improved the economic relations with the country and allowed a better understanding of the Chilean market by the South Korean citizens. The eventual FTA with the MERCOSUR, could improve even more the relations with Argentina and Brazil, but despite of some joint studies of feasibility for a FTA, the answers to this question, showed that there is no probability of that event during this presidential period.

This could be, due to the current negotiations of South Korea with countries of the Asia-Pacific region, such as China, Japan and also with the European Union.

Priority areas of the South Korean foreign policy are the relations with Brazil, because of their abundance of natural resources and the scientific and technological

cooperation as well as the large community of Koreans living in this country. In second place, is the excellent relation with Chile in the commercial area and Argentina is in last place due to the perception of instability at the regional level.

In the political arena, according to the questionnaires and the bibliographical revision, South Korea has no unresolved issues with the ABC countries. These three countries have supported the non proliferation of nuclear weapons, the pacification of the Korean peninsula and helped South Korea to join the IADB and ECLAC.

Despite of the bilateral diplomatic relations of Brazil and Chile with North, it doesn't look like a problem, mainly because of their position in a possible reunification of the Korean peninsula, that in the future can be seen as a continuity of their relations. Argentina held diplomatic relations with North Korea until 1977, but they broke down, trying to prioritize their relation with South Korea.

In the cultural area, there are numerous initiatives from the Korean side to open spaces of knowledge about the Korean culture, such as agreements, programs and exchanges. Nevertheless according to the questionnaires, there is a necessity for a more extended academic and student exchange, not just visits. Another important area is the promotion of the language study, Spanish and Portuguese in the Koreans case, and Korean by the ABC students.

There are many initiatives but also a lack of a deeper knowledge in the cultural, historic and political areas, which can help to understand the diverse realities of the ABC countries.

On the other hand, there are agreements in the scientific and technological field. Development in this area is especially vigorous in the military sector, and shows that there is a more complex relation among these countries, than the simplistic economic relations view.

The basic conclusion of this research is that under the administration of President Roh Moo-hyun and the strategy of President Lee, ABC countries are not a priority of the South Korean foreign policy. But the pragmatism, after the Asian economic crisis, and the necessity of natural resources, has allowed a progressive development of the relations with these countries, as can be seen in the relations of the FTA with Chile, feasibility studies of a possible FTA with the MERCOSUR and improvements of their relations.

Other issues, besides commerce, allow a stronger relation over time, such as scientific, technological and military cooperation, as well as the migration and cultural exchange. This may explain the level of importance from the South Korea point of view of their relations with the ABC countries. The strategy of excellent bilateral relations is consolidated in Latin America and we can predict that they will be even better in the future.

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Appendix

Questionnaire:

Research Project: “Perceptions of South Korean Foreign Policy towards Argentina, Brazil and Chile (2003-2008)”.

This Research Project is part of the 2008 Small Research Grants Program in Korean Studies, awarded by the Center for Korean Studies at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) USA., and The Academy of Korean Studies, Korea.

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The main objective of this Research Project is to determine and understand South Korean’s academic perceptions on foreign policy (political, economic and cultural) towards Argentina, Brazil and Chile, since 2003 to 2008, and the need for maintaining the importance of these relationships and the future perspectives with the new Korean government.

The following questionnaire is only for research purposes. All answers are both confidential and anonymous. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. During the period of President Roh Moo-hyun, what do you think was the importance assigned to the Korean foreign policy with regard to the following countries? (in numbers: 1 for lowest - 10 for highest)

- Argentina_____

- Brazil_____

- Chile_____

- USA_____

- China_____

- Japan_____

2. In your opinion, what is the importance that the current Korean foreign policy adscribes to the following countries? (In numbers: 1 for lowest - 10 for highest)

- Argentina_____

- Brazil_____

- Chile_____

- USA_____

- China_____

- Japan_____

3. In each case, what do you think are the most important topics in the following bilateral relations from 2003 to present? (In numbers: 1 for lowest - 10 for highest and explain briefly your response)

- Korea – Argentina:

Topic	Number: (1 for lowest - 10 for highest)	Explanation
Trade		
Investment		
Culture		
Immigration		
Energy		
Political Relations		
Scientific and technological fields		
Military cooperation		

Others (Specify):		
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- Korea- Brazil:

Topic	Number: (1 for lowest - 10 for highest)	Explanation
Trade		
Investment		
Culture		
Immigration		
Energy		
Political Relations		
Scientific and technological fields		
Military cooperation		
Others (Specify):		

- Korea- Chile:

Topic	Number: (1 for lowest - 10 for highest)	Explanation
Trade		
Investment		
Culture		
Immigration		
Energy		
Political Relations		
Scientific and technological fields		
Military cooperation		
Others (Specify):		

4. What do you think are the most important topics in the political relations between Korea – Argentina, Korea – Brazil and Korea – Chile from 2003 to present?

5. Do you think there will be some changes in the bilateral relations Korea – Argentina, Korea - Brazil and/or Korea - Chile under the administration of President Lee?

6. Do you think that the FTA with Chile improved the relationship between Korea and Chile?

7. Do you think that a FTA with MERCOSUR is possible to achieve during the Lee Myung-bak administration?

8. If Korea signs a FTA in the future with MERCOSUR, this situation will improve the bilateral relations with Argentina or Brazil?

9. What do you think are the most important cultural topics in the following cases from 2003 to present? (In numbers: 1 for lowest - 10 for highest and explain briefly your response)

- Korea - Argentina

Topic	Number: (1 for lowest - 10 for highest)	Explanation
Academic Exchange		
Culture Knowledge (literature, history)		
Language Knowledge (Spanish)		
Scholarships for students		
Others (Specify)		

- Korea - Brazil

Topic	Number: (1 for lowest - 10 for highest)	Explanation
Academic Exchange		
Culture Knowledge (literature, history)		
Language Knowledge (Portuguese)		
Scholarships for students		
Others (Specify)		

- Korea - Chile

Topic	Number: (1 for lowest - 10 for highest)	Explanation
Academic Exchange		
Culture Knowledge (literature, history)		
Language Knowledge (Spanish)		
Scholarships for students		
Others (Specify)		

10. In your opinion what are the most important topics that under the government of President Lee Myung-bak need to be improved in the future of the bilateral relations between Korea – Argentina, Korea Brazil and Korea Chile?

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