

5. Korean Choices

Acronyms and abbreviations

MERS—Middle East respiratory syndrome

NGO—Non-governmental organization

OECD—Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SKY universities—The most prestigious South Korean universities, consisting of Seoul National University, Korea University, Yonsei University

SOFA—Status of Forces Agreement

UN—United Nations

Glossary

386 Generation: The generation of South Koreans born in the 1960s who were politically active during the democratic transition of the 1980s.

Asian Games: A pan-continental multi-sport competition organized every four years by the Olympic Council of Asia.

Asia's Paradox: The term coined by President Park Geun-hye to refer to the antithetical situation of regional political and security tensions which undermine economic cooperation.

Chaebol: A South Korean business conglomerate, usually dynastic. Chaebols played a central role in post-war economic recovery.

Cold War: The political and military tensions between the U.S., the Soviet Union and their respective allies that occurred between 1947 and 1991. Although no direct fighting ensued, the U.S. and Soviet Union armed themselves in case of a possible nuclear war and amassed many nuclear weapons.

Creative Economy: An initiative by Park Geun hye's government that champions small-to-medium sized businesses and start-ups as the future drivers of national economic growth. The plan is a turn away from the post-war model, which was focused on large conglomerates (chaebols).

Dokdo/Takeshima Island dispute: A longstanding dispute between Korea and Japan over an island group known as Dokdo or Takeshima, respectively. The islands were annexed by Japan in 1905 and restored to South Korea after WWII, but sovereignty remains contested.

Economic Democratization: A main platform of Park Geun hye's presidential election campaign, which promised to decrease chaebol influence and expand the welfare state.

Eurasia Initiative: President Park Geun hye's 2013 proposal for a system of unified transport, trade and energy across Eurasia. It would connect rail, road and sea routes, from London to Seoul, through Russia and North Korea.

German reunification: The rejoining of East and West Germany into one nation in 1990, following 45 years of separation between Soviet and American spheres of influence after World War II.

The Hague: The seat of government of the Netherlands, which also houses the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

Jang Song Thae: A high-ranking government official under Kim Jong Il. It has been speculated that he took functional control over the country as the health of the

Supreme Leader declined. In 2013 he was accused of being a counter-revolutionary, stripped of all power, and executed.

Japanese colonization of Korea (1910-1945): A period of colonization ending with the defeat of the Japanese Empire in WWII. Korea was then divided into Soviet and American zones of occupation, setting the stage for the Korean War (1950–1953). Japanese-South Korean relations were normalized in 1965.

Kaesong Industrial Complex: An industrial park north of the Demilitarized Zone. It is administered by South Korean businesses and employs over 50,000 North Korean workers.

Kim Jong Il: The Supreme Leader of North Korea from 1994 to 2011, after the death of his father Kim Il Sung. His regime was marked by heightened militarism, human rights violations, and a severe famine, which resulted in limited economic decentralization.

Kim Jong Un: The Supreme Leader of North Korea. He inherited the position upon his father's death in 2011.

Korean Blue House: South Korea's executive office and the President's official residence, located in the capital, Seoul.

Korean Lunar New Year: One of the most celebrated holidays in South Korea, beginning the Korean lunar calendar. The three-day holiday is used by most to return to their family's hometown to visit relatives.

Korean War (1950-1953): A war between North Korea, backed by China with support from the Soviet Union, and South Korea, backed by American-led United Nations forces. An armistice was signed in 1953, borders were established at the 38th parallel north, and a demilitarized zone was put in place between the two nations.

Lee Myung-bak: President of South Korea from 2008 to 2013.

Miracle on the Han River: The period of export-driven economic growth in South Korea following the end of the Korean War (1950-1953), characterized by industrialization and technological development. The term makes reference to the "Miracle on the Rhine," or the economic revival of post-WWII Germany.

Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative: A Park administration initiative to foster multilateral cooperation vis-à-vis Trustpolitik. It seeks to resolve the "Asian Paradox" through open dialogue between Northeast Asian countries, as well as the U.S.

Nuclear Security Summit: A bi-annual world summit spearheaded by the United States with the purpose of deterring nuclear terrorism. The fourth and final summit is slated for 2016.

Park Chung hee: A South Korean military general who seized power in a 1961 military coup and served as President until his assassination in 1979. He is largely credited for the country's economic turnaround following the Korean War. His daughter, Park Geun hye, was elected President in 2013.

Pyongyang: The capital of North Korea and the seat of government.

Sejong City: South Korea's de facto administrative capital, which opened in July 2012.

Seoul: The cultural, economic and political capital of South Korea. A controversial initiative to move government offices south to Sejong City was begun in the early 2000s, but there are no plans to move the executive branch and other central offices from Seoul.

Sewol Ferry disaster: The sinking of the Motor Vessel *Sewol* en route from Incheon to Jeju Island in April 2014. The accident resulted in 304 casualties and the government faced harsh criticism for its failure to prevent and efficiently respond to the catastrophe. Prime Minister Chung Hong won resigned in response.

Shinzo Abe: Prime Minister of Japan since 2012. He also leads the country's Liberal Democratic Party.

South China Sea dispute: Competing territorial claims by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam over two main groups of islands.

South Korean National Assembly: The unicameral legislature of South Korea, consisting of 246 single-seat constituencies and 54 seats allocated by proportional representation.

Trustpolitik: President Park Geun hye's policy on inter-Korean relations. It emphasizes the need for North Korea to comply with bilateral and international agreements, and for consistent consequences to be applied in case of infractions.

Workers' Party of Korea: The founding political party of North Korea. It is stipulated as the single ruling party by the 1998 Constitution.

Xi Jinping: President of the People's Republic of China since 2013.

Yakusuni Shrine: A controversial Shinto shrine to Japanese war-dead of the imperial period. In 2013, Shinzo Abe became the first Japanese prime minister in seven years to visit the shrine, located in the capital, Tokyo.