

# KOREA ECONOMIC INSTITUTE OF AMERICA ACADEMIC PAPER SERIES



Promoting Dialogue and Understanding  
Between Korea and the United States

## SOUTH KOREA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SEEKING STATUS AS AN AUTHORITY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

By Kadir Jun Ayhan<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic caught almost all countries unprepared. Some countries, including South Korea (hereafter Korea), managed to deal with the pandemic relatively more successfully than others and had a proactive global posture from early on, including providing aid, and public diplomacy campaigns. In this paper, I explore Korea's COVID-19-related public diplomacy activities and its aims. I analyze Korea's COVID-19 humanitarian aid trends, its policy documents, and the tweets related to the pandemic posted by the country's official public diplomacy account. I find that the pandemic catalyzed what Korea had already been aiming to do, which is improve its global status to be among top authorities across various issue-areas. Due to the nature of the pandemic, Korea's public diplomacy has been themed around international cooperation and solidarity. I suggest that Korea should hold onto its international cooperation emphasis on public diplomacy, to form the basis for its status-seeking as an authority in global governance in the post-pandemic era.

**Key Words:** South Korea, COVID-19, public diplomacy, ODA, Twitter, status-seeking

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a shock that brought global interconnectedness and the need for common solutions to global problems to the forefront for diverse international and transnational actors. Since the early days of the pandemic in early 2020, many countries raced to help other nations, sending doctors, test kits, masks, and best-practices guidelines. Korea, one of the hardest-hit countries as of February 2020, managed to flatten the curve in a very short period and was already sharing its know-how and helping other countries in March 2020.

Korea projected its early success in the pandemic to contribute to its status-seeking on the global stage. While most countries were busy with handling the pandemic at home, Korea along with others who relatively put their house in order, distributed medical equipment, test kits, masks, and other humanitarian aid to other countries. In addition to helping others, Korea also engaged very proactively in promoting its successful management of the pandemic, and its aid to others, as well as communicating for international cooperation and solidarity.<sup>2</sup>

*Kadir Jun Ayhan is Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of International Studies at Ewha Womans University. The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any organizations they are affiliated with. This paper is the 123rd in KEI's Academic Paper Series. As part of this program, KEI commissions and distributes up to ten papers per year on original subjects of current interest to over 5,000 Korea watchers, government officials, think tank experts, and scholars around the United States and the world. At the end of the year, these papers are compiled and published in KEI's On Korea volume. For more information, please visit [www.keia.org/aps\\_on\\_korea](http://www.keia.org/aps_on_korea).*

In this paper, I explore Korea's COVID-19-related public diplomacy activities and its aims. I argue that COVID-19 catalyzed Korea's status-seeking as an authority in global governance. The distribution of Korean aid and its aims, and the country's public diplomacy outlook during COVID-19 continued its trends in the pre-pandemic era, but COVID-19 catalyzed the evolution towards a focus on global governance to form the basis for the country's desire for higher global status.

Korea's COVID-19-related public diplomacy has had two components: projecting Korea as a good international citizen that helps others and seek international cooperation and solidarity, and promoting Korea's relatively successful handling of pandemic management. I analyze two sets of data to present these two components. First, I look at how Korea distributed its COVID-19 humanitarian aid and its aims. Second, I analyze the country's COVID-19-related tweets from its official Twitter account. Both analyses are explorative to set the groundwork for more in-depth analysis in the future.

The paper is organized as follows. In the next section, I introduce the background against which Korea pursued an active public diplomacy agenda during the pandemic. In the third section, I explore Korea's COVID-19 humanitarian aid and how it has been used for public diplomacy. In section four, I analyze COVID-19-related tweets posted by Korea's main public diplomacy account on Twitter, @mofa\_koreaz. In the last section, I summarize the findings, and make suggestions for policy and further research.

## KOREA'S STATUS-SEEKING ON THE GLOBAL STAGE AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

### *The Background before COVID-19*

Once among the bottom in most global indices, Korea has become a top country in almost all dimensions of world politics. As of 2021, the country is ranked sixth in the Global Firepower Index for its military strength,<sup>3</sup> tenth in terms of nominal GDP,<sup>4</sup> and thirteenth in the Global Diplomacy Index.<sup>5</sup> However, in these rankings and most others, Korea ranks behind the four Northeast Asian powers, namely the United States, China, Russia, and Japan, or fifth among the Six-Party states.<sup>6</sup> This geographical reality puts Korea almost at the bottom of the regional status hierarchy, often caricaturized as being a shrimp among whales. Korean

governments since Park Chung-hee in the early 1960s have been in search for a higher status among "advanced nations."<sup>7</sup> This search has pushed Korea to find ways to gain social mobility on the global stage, where it is on par with other advanced nations.

Noted scholar Amitav Acharya calls the emerging world order "multiplex," wherein different actors are authorities in different issue-areas without the dominance of hegemonic powers (the poles).<sup>8</sup> In this emerging multiplex world order, contributions to the provision of global public goods, or global governance, have become as important as material resources in serving as status markers. The global status hierarchy, in turn, filters which actors can have seats (authority) at which tables (global governance issue-areas).

Particularly, the emergence of the G20 as the main platform for the majority of global political and financial decisions has opened more room for Korea to have a seat at the top table along with other major global actors. Consequently, Korea has ramped up its contributions to global governance, and assertively promoted its contributions to ensure its global status is commensurate with its capabilities.<sup>9</sup> In this endeavor, Korea has been benchmarking traditional middle powers (Australia, Canada, etc.) who prefer to address global problems through multilateral diplomacy.<sup>10</sup>

The Korean government sees emphasizing the country's contributions to the provision of global public goods in line with improving the country's status on the global stage.<sup>11</sup> This has been a consistent aspect of Korean diplomacy beyond the Korean Peninsula. All Diplomatic White Papers in the last two decades have consistently discussed Korea's global contributions and the country's global status in the same chapter (Chapter 5) and in connection with each other. This has been even more important after the emergence of G20 as the main platform to discuss global affairs, which allowed more stakeholders to steer the direction of the "global security order,"<sup>12</sup> which, in turn, would allow Korea to be "master of [its] own destiny."<sup>13</sup>

### *Status-seeking during COVID-19*

The COVID-19 pandemic began against this background for Korea. The government made implicit and explicit connections between the country's response to COVID-19 and its pandemic-related aid, and the country's aspiration for improved global status. In his townhall meeting with Korean public on November 21, 2021, President Moon Jae-in stated

that “if the G10 was to be constructed, Korea would be the first country to qualify for it” (author’s translation), and the country’s successful pandemic management contributed to the country’s international status to be recognized among the top 10, while also acknowledging this to be an accumulative process for decades.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Korea Foundation President Lee Geun argued that in the post-COVID-19 era, Korea could emerge as a new advanced great power (*shinheung seonjingangdaeguk*)—in cooperation with other liberal democracies with shared values—building on the success of Korea’s open and liberal model of the pandemic management.<sup>15</sup> He suggested that in the digital-centric Fourth Industrial Revolution-age, the Korean model showcased an alternative to China’s strong-state-controlled authoritarian model not only for pandemic management but also other potential disasters which may paralyze other countries.<sup>16</sup>

Public diplomacy—understood as international actors’ communication-based activities to understand, influence, and build relationships with publics across borders to contribute to achieving foreign policy goals<sup>17</sup>—emerged as a key tool to form the basis for Korea’s global status-seeking. Korea was one of the first countries to incorporate COVID-19 into its public diplomacy beyond humanitarian assistance. While being very assertive, Korea’s public diplomacy efforts during the pandemic have also been cautious. There were two main reasons for this caution: Korea’s initial success could have been temporary as the pandemic was still not over; and it was not the best time to celebrate any success due to the tragic nature of the pandemic which cost many lives and distressed people globally.<sup>18</sup> Hence, Korea followed two narratives for its public diplomacy during COVID-19: promoting Korea’s success not for mere promotion and celebration but to share its know-how with others; and to frame its leading efforts in COVID-19 discussions in terms of international solidarity and cooperation.

Korea’s COVID-19-related public diplomacy aimed “to consolidate [Korea]’s image as a model for promoting democracy, leveraging its advanced information and communications technology, developed civil society, and the acclaimed COVID-19 response principles manifested by transparency, openness, and democracy.”<sup>19</sup> The signature public diplomacy campaigns TRUST—an acronym for “Transparency, Responsibility, United Action, Science, and Together in solidarity” (this is TRUST campaign ver. 2.0)<sup>20</sup>—and #StayStrong<sup>21</sup> began as early as March 2020. Korea spent much energy and resources on these campaigns, the former sharing Korea’s best practices in flattening the curve (Figure 1), and the latter promoting Korea’s solidarity with the international community (Figure 2). In line with both campaigns, Korea published a number of long foreign-language (mostly English) guidelines sharing its COVID-19 response know-how with other countries (the first of which was published again as early as March 2020), while also promoting the country’s success in addressing the problem.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the country has also held numerous virtual meetings, seminars, and publishing videos to that end.

One of the most important attempts to support global status-seeking was branding Korea’s pandemic response as K-Quarantine. This branding aimed to “raise [Korea]’s global status ... [and] take the lead in the global market of the bioindustry, a future source of growth,” according to Seong Yun-mo, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy.<sup>23</sup> However, this brand caught on in the Korean domestic public sphere, but not as much globally, as K-Bangyeok preceded and was used more widely than its English translation of K-Quarantine (2,590,000 vs. 28,800 results on Google searches, respectively).

Figure 1. TRUST Campaign



TRUST Campaign ver 1.0  
**T**ransparency-**R**obust Screening and Quarantine  
**-U**nique by Universally-applicable-**S**trict Control-**T**reatment



TRUST Campaign ver 2.0  
**T**ransparency-**R**esponsibility-United Action  
**-S**cience and Speed-**T**ogether in Solidarity

Source: Screenshot from Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website<sup>24</sup>

Figure 2. #StayStrong



Source: Screenshot from Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website<sup>25</sup>

## KOREA'S COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN AID

Korean governments especially since Roh Moo-hyun have emphasized international development cooperation as a key foreign policy tool to achieve the global status it is seeking. This was one of the top agendas of Lee Myung-bak administration's Global Korea agenda. Since then, the emphasis has continued although with less assertiveness.<sup>26</sup> The country has been actively promoting its success as being the only country to graduate from an aid recipient to an OECD/DAC country.<sup>27</sup> During COVID-19, Korea showed once more its readiness to share the global burden by actively providing aid for other countries.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korea disbursed \$586 million worth of COVID-19 humanitarian aid to 125 countries in 2020. While this macro trend contributes to Korea's narrative for deserving higher status in global governance, the distribution of aid reflects more specific foreign policy goals that such aid (and its communication) is designed to support.<sup>28</sup>

Out of this \$586 million in aid, \$453 million was distributed to 120 countries as official development assistance (ODA) according to OECD/ DAC standards.<sup>29</sup> \$417 million of

this ODA was given to 120 countries, while \$36 million was disbursed to multilateral initiatives. The total grant equivalent of Korea's COVID-19 humanitarian aid was \$356 million.<sup>30</sup> In terms of grant equivalent of bilateral aid, \$152 million was disbursed in the East Asia and Pacific region, \$92 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, and \$35 million in the Latin America and Caribbean, \$51 million in South Asia, \$9 million in Europe and Central Asia, and \$9 million in the Middle East and North Africa (Table 1 provides more regional details). The Philippines, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Paraguay, Ethiopia, and Tanzania received the most in terms of grant equivalent, each receiving over \$35 million (Table 2). Among the top recipients, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Colombia, and Uzbekistan, were selected because the government saw them as strategic "hub countries."<sup>31</sup> The emphasis has been on countries that Korea designated as "priority countries" which include the top 9 recipients of Korea's COVID-19 in Table 2,<sup>32</sup> most of which are part of the Moon administration's New Southern Policy (ASEAN countries and India). The 2021 COVID-19 humanitarian aid is also likely to focus on the countries included in Moon government's New Northern Policy (mainly former Soviet Union countries) as well as New Southern Policy.<sup>33</sup>

**Table 1. Korea's COVID-19 Aid by Regions**

Region	Total	Grant equivalent
East Asia & Pacific	167,365,319	118,585,317
Africa	96,990,321	88,156,821
Latin America & Caribbean	56,095,210	23,238,225
South Asia	51,718,293	46,155,700
North & Central America	50,000,000	0
Middle East	3,697,343	3,697,343
Eurasia	2,211,005	2,211,005
Asia (unallocated)	2,223,697	2,223,697
Unallocated	83,039,290	83,039,290

Source: Korea Official Development Assistance portal (author's compilation)

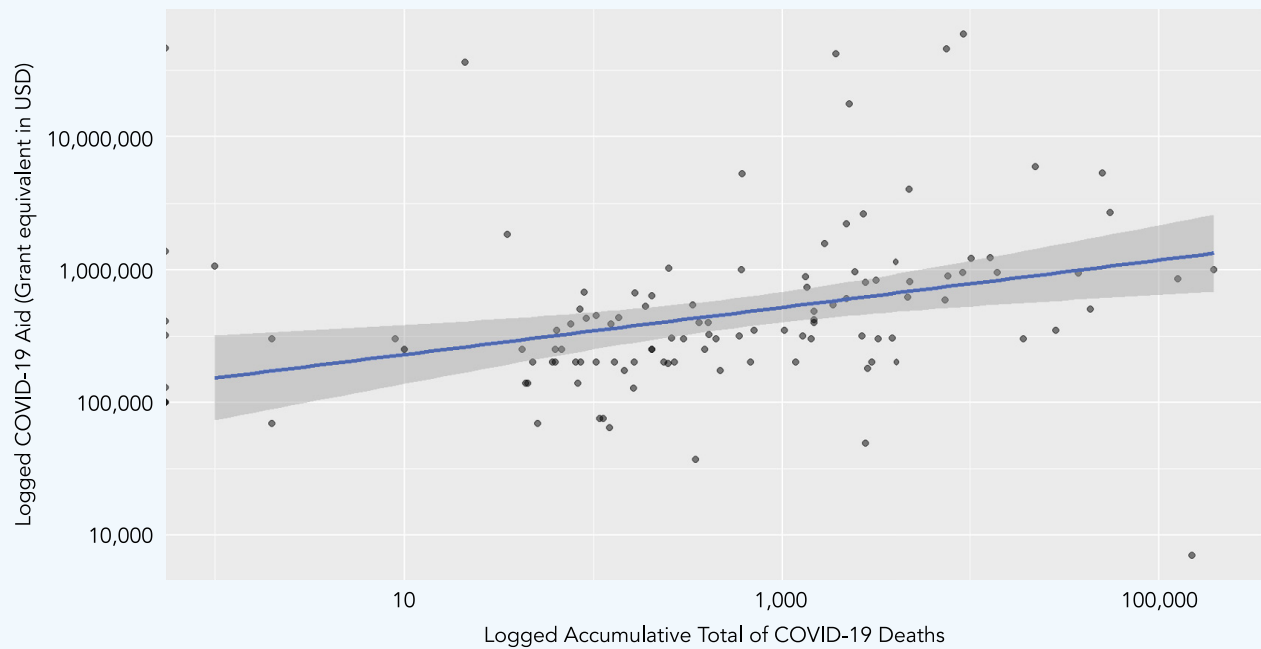
**Table 2. Korea's COVID-19 Aid by Countries**

	Country	Total	Grant equivalent
1	Philippines	\$101,566,236	\$58,348,833
2	Cambodia	\$53,959,860	\$48,397,261
3	Bangladesh	\$50,308,957	\$44,746,364
4	Ethiopia	\$44,913,748	\$40,463,673
5	Tanzania	\$40,302,709	\$35,852,630
6	Paraguay	\$50,257,879	\$17,400,894
7	Colombia	\$4,542,821	\$4,542,821
8	Laos	\$4,281,013	\$4,281,013
9	Indonesia	\$3,887,089	\$3,887,089
10	Uzbekistan	\$2,062,618	\$2,062,618

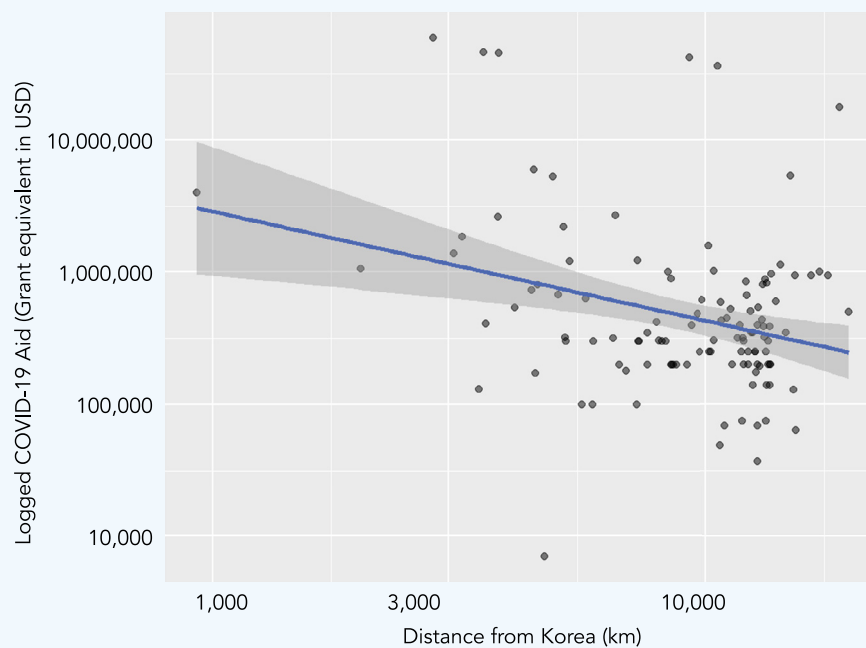
Source: Korea Official Development Assistance portal (author's compilation)

Apart from outliers, it seems that Korea considered the severity of COVID-19, understood as accumulative total of confirmed COVID-19 cases, in its aid allocation decision (see Figure 3). However, other than that, other factors show that Korea's aid allocation was mainly informed by the country's foreign policy priorities. Korea prioritized countries that are geographically closer to itself, mainly New Southern Policy

countries in Southeast Asia (see Figure 4). Furthermore, there was positive correlation between Korea's COVID-19 aid, and its exports to the recipient countries (see Figure 5). Furthermore, the countries' income level, measured as GDP per capita, which is indicative of the needs of the recipient country did not matter much in aid disbursement (see Figure 6).

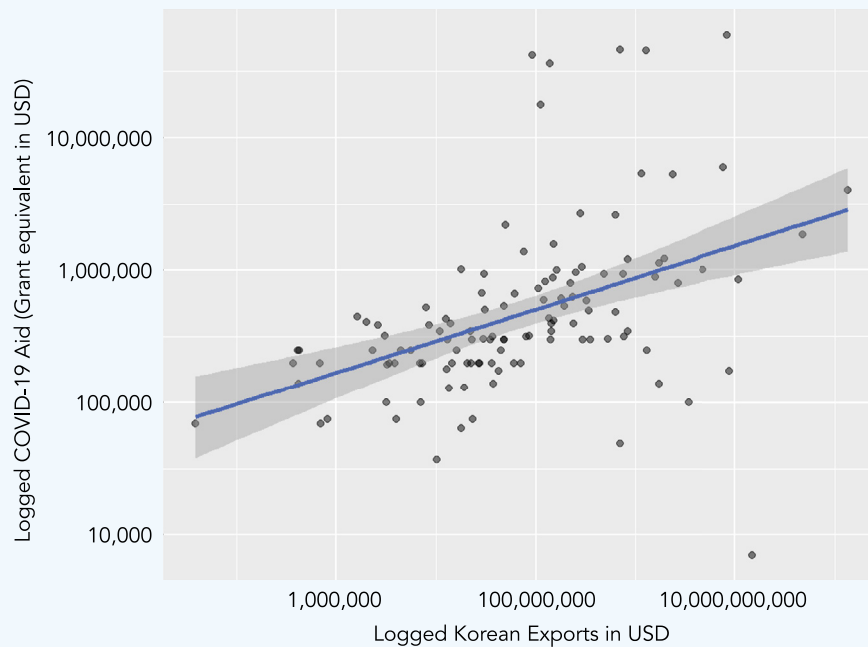
**Figure 3. Accumulative COVID-19 Cases vs. COVID-19 Aid**

Source: Author's analysis based on data from Korea Official Development Assistance portal (aid data), WHO (COVID-19 data)<sup>34</sup>

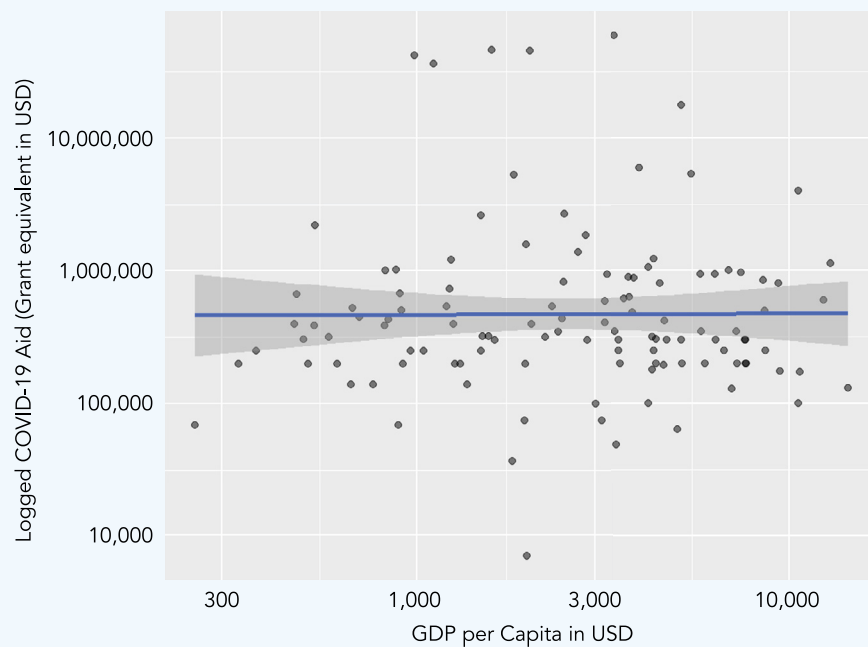
**Figure 4. Distance vs. COVID-19 Aid**

Source: Author's analysis based on data from Korea Official Development Assistance portal (aid data), dist\_cepii (distance data)<sup>35</sup>

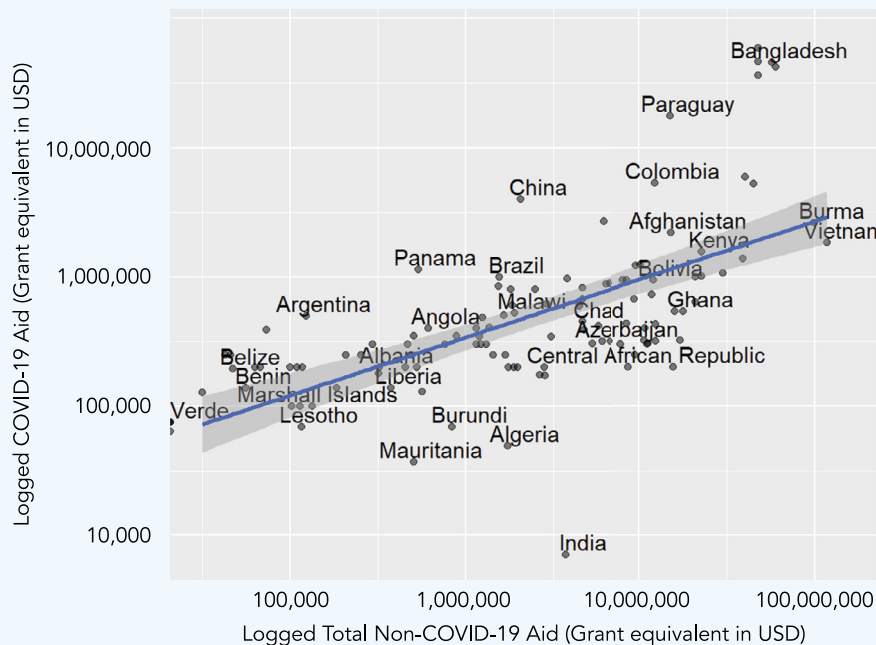


**Figure 5. Exports vs. COVID-19 Aid**

Source: Author's analysis based on data from Korea Official Development Assistance portal (aid data), Korea Customs Service (export data)<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 6. GDP per Capita vs. COVID-19 Aid**



**Figure 7. Total Korean Non-COVID-19 Aid in 2020 vs. COVID-19 Aid**

Source: Author's analysis based on data from the Korea Official Development Assistance portal (author's compilation)

These findings suggest that the distribution of Korea's COVID-19 humanitarian aid was mainly strategic and informed by the country's foreign policy goals such as New Southern Policy. More importantly, Korea's COVID-19 humanitarian aid was highly correlated with its overall aid in 2020 (see Figure 7), suggesting the continuation of foreign policy-led aid distribution regardless of the COVID-19 consequences.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to this relatively more substantial aid, Korea also engaged in more symbolic aid to appeal to the emotions and attract media visibility. The most important example of such an initiative was the distribution of three million masks to Korean War veterans in 22 participating countries, with half going to the United States.<sup>38</sup>

Korea's plan for the future of its ODA is "to utilize the increasing interest in Korea following COVID-19, building on the basis of international cooperation, and pursuing a strategic COVID-19 response with ODA" (author translation and emphasis).<sup>39</sup> For 2021, the country planned to increase its overall ODA by 19 percent (to nearly \$4.1 billion), while

increasing the ratio of medical aid from 10 percent in 2020 to 11.1 percent in 2021 which corresponds to a 33.7 percent increase in volume.<sup>40</sup> However, in the actual 2021 budget, the total ODA increase was 8 percent (to nearly \$3.15 billion) while medical aid increased by 21.1 percent to a ratio of 11.7 percent of total ODA.<sup>41</sup> The substantial increase was presented as Korea's active participation in international cooperation to tackle COVID-19.<sup>42</sup> To that end, the country aimed to design and export a K-Quarantine model customized for the recipient countries, as well as to collaborate closely with other transnational actors—especially by participating in the Groups of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security, which Korea helped form and became co-chair of within the UN, WHO, and UNESCO.<sup>43</sup> In Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun's words, Korea's "quarantine capabilities attracted the world's attention ... and we must live up to the international community's demands from us to overcome the COVID-19 crisis" (author translation).<sup>44</sup> The underlying idea in Korea's aid was to be able to play a leading role in global issues such as pandemic response.<sup>45</sup>

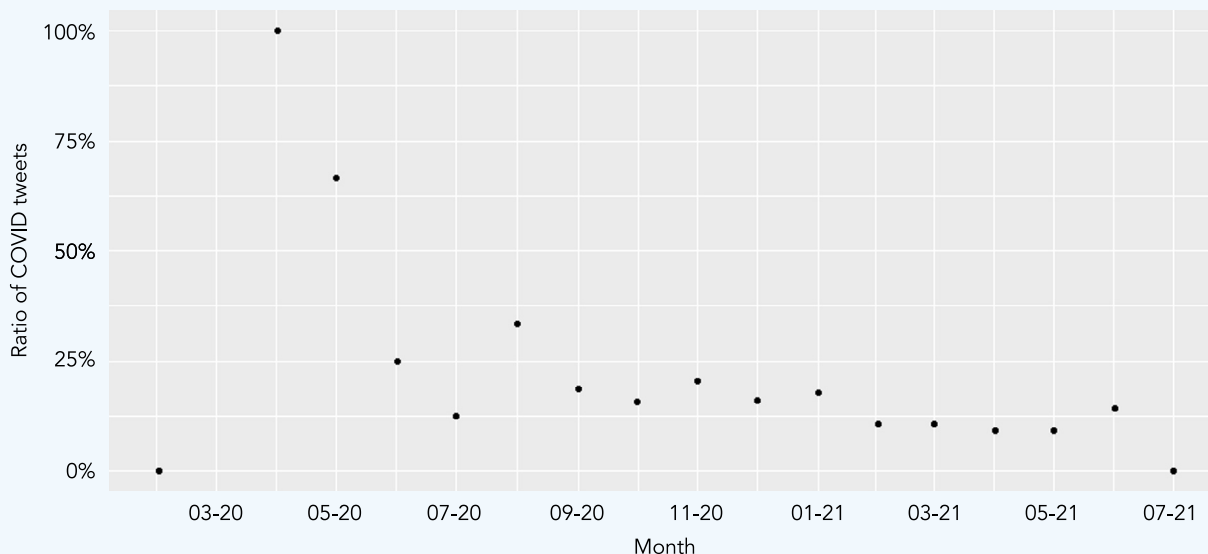
## DIGITALIZED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DURING THE PANDEMIC: @MOFA\_KOREAZ

The Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not been very active on social media platforms until recently. COVID-19 triggered more social media activity, although this remained limited compared to many other countries' digitalized public diplomacy.<sup>46</sup> The ministry's official public diplomacy account on Twitter, @mofa\_koreaz, tweeted mostly in Korean prior to and in the early months of COVID-19 addressing the Korean public in line with the idea of *kookmin waegyo*<sup>47</sup> (in truth, the ministry's public affairs for its policies and activities). However, Korea's early success in COVID-19 was seen as an opportunity to gear up the country's public diplomacy, including on digital platforms given the physical restrictions that came with the pandemic. The official public diplomacy channels across social media sites were rebranded to "KOREAZ: All about Korea A to Z" in September 2020 as part of the initiatives to strengthen the country's digital presence. For the 2021 MOFA budget, nearly 6.4 trillion KRW (\$5.4 million) was allocated for "Digital Plus Public Diplomacy" including strengthening of the digital infrastructure.<sup>48</sup> The objective of this initiative is to improve the international community's sympathy and trust for Korea by disseminating contents related to Korean culture and policies such as Korean Wave and K-Quarantine.<sup>49</sup>

The online messaging, including MOFA's Insight Series that hosted prominent foreign scholars, focused much on promoting Korea's COVID-19 response in a positive light, as explicitly stated on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website.<sup>50</sup> The tweets sent during the pandemic also focused on promotion of the country while also calling for international solidarity.

@mofa\_koreaz sent a total of 549 tweets between January 20, 2020, the date Korea confirmed its first COVID-19 case, and August 20, 2021. Filtering these tweets for COVID-19-related contents left a total of 93 tweets, most of which were sent in April and November 2020. Indeed, all 15 tweets that were sent in April 2020 were related to COVID-19 following a total of 1 tweet in the previous three months (Figure 8). However, around this time, all tweets by @mofa\_koreaz were still sent in the Korean language, thus mainly targeting the domestic audience with the possible goal of convincing them of the government's successful management of the pandemic. Indeed, many other campaigns around this time involved foreigners', including Korea-based celebrities, appreciation of Korea's success, promoted for the Korean audience as well as globally.<sup>51</sup>

**Figure 8. Ratio of COVID Tweets to All Tweets between January 2020 and August 2021**



Source: Author's analysis based on data from the Korea Official Development Assistance portal (author's compilation)

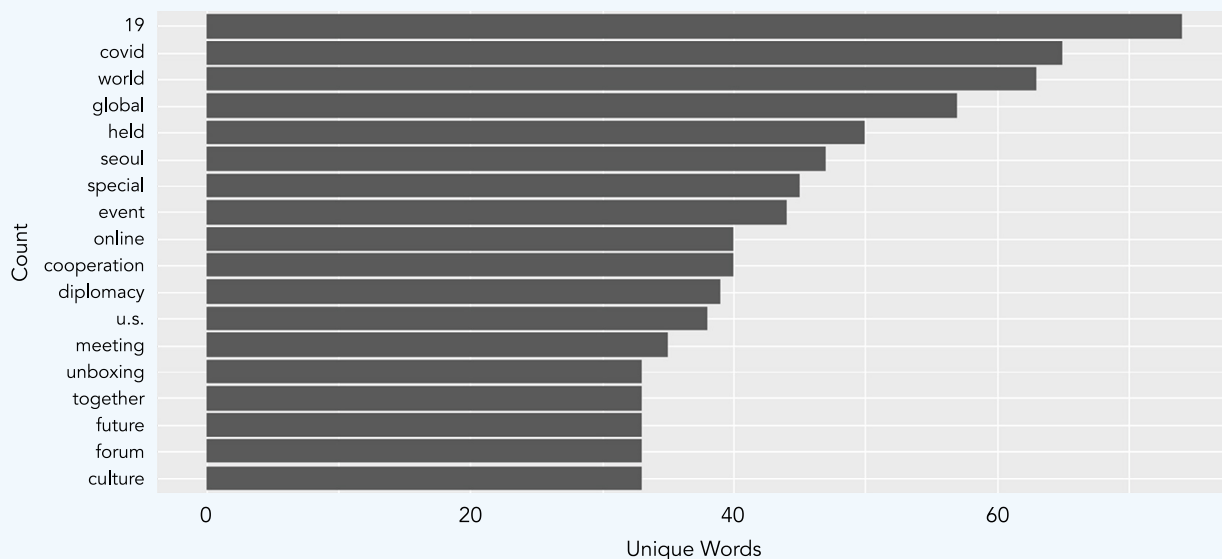
It is plausible that Korea's public diplomacy during the pandemic, especially in the early months which is coincidentally before the country's legislative elections on April 15, 2020, had the double aim of increasing the legitimacy of the government vis-à-vis the Korean public as well as helping improve Korea's status in the international community to project it as a successful global governor.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, there was more emphasis on the success of K-Quarantine in 2020, because it was when Korea was one of the top countries in terms of COVID-19 response performance. The Lowy Institute's COVID Performance Index, which takes into account confirmed cases, confirmed deaths, tests per thousand people, and ratios per million people, ranked Korea at 20<sup>th</sup> on January 9, 2021, and at 21<sup>st</sup> on March 13, 2021, being one of the three countries in the top 30 with over 20 million people together with Australia and Malaysia.<sup>53</sup> In the early months of the pandemic, the news reports and social media posts about Korea were almost exclusively positive.<sup>54</sup> However, Korea's relative lateness in the vaccination of its population and surge in confirmed cases in the summer of 2021 led to less assertiveness in the promotion of Korea's success in COVID-19 response, or the branding of K-Quarantine.

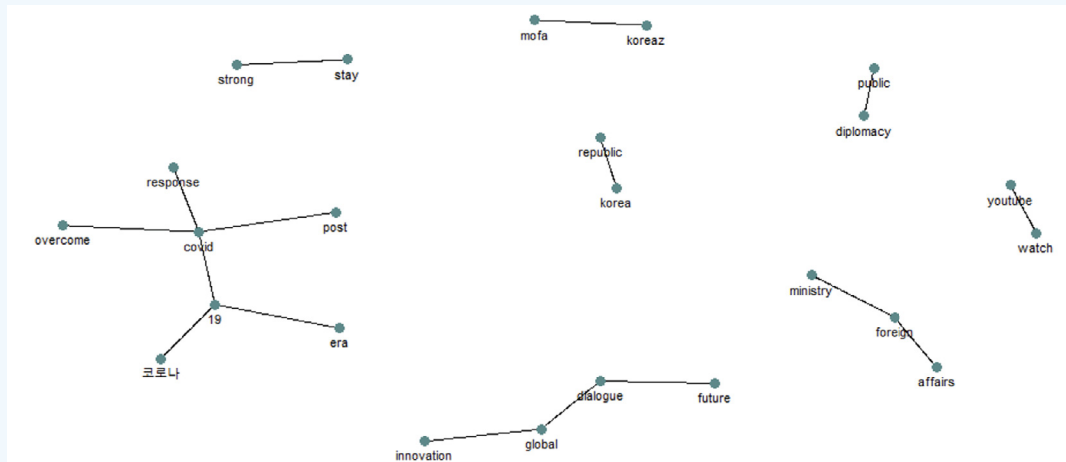
Among the 93 COVID-19-related tweets posted, 67 were themed on international collaboration or solidarity, 23 promoting Korea, and 3 were only informative tweets. For example, tweets that promoted international collaboration or solidarity (often while promoting Korea) included "Windows-to-windows messages travel from our hearts to your hearts. The 'Stay Strong campaign,' started by MOFA, has spread out in 123 countries with more than 1 million people participating. <https://t.co/2TA0ghS5tM>".<sup>55</sup> Promotional tweets included, "Korea was lauded for its successful COVID-19 response by WSJ #KOREAZ #COVID\_19 #WSJ <https://t.co/cTxijhnD8>".<sup>56</sup>

An analysis of the data reveals the most common words in @mofa\_koreaz's tweets included "world," "global," "cooperation," "together," and "future," all of which emphasize international cooperation and solidarity. The word network shows that COVID-19 was used mostly together with "overcome," "response," "post-COVID," and "era." Other jointly used words were "stay strong" (because of the #StayStrong campaign), "Future Dialogue for Global Innovation" (referring to talk series that included topics such as "Consolation and Solidarity through Culture and Art in COVID-19 era"),<sup>57</sup> and "The power of music to defuse discrimination and disparities in times of COVID-19."<sup>58</sup> The tweet word counts and word networks can be found in Figures 9 and 10.

**Figure 9. Count of Unique Words Found in @mofa\_koreaz tweets**



Source: Author's analysis of @mofa\_koreaz tweets

**Figure 10. Word Network: @mofa\_koreaz Tweets between January 2020 and August 2021**


Source: Author's analysis of @mofa\_koreaz tweets

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A few years ago, then-Korean Ambassador for Public Diplomacy Enna Park suggested that Korea's public diplomacy has been evolving from a one-way communication towards two-way communication, and that the next step is towards the most evolved version which emphasizes global public goods.<sup>59</sup> COVID-19 provided a rather unexpected and unfortunate opportunity to catalyze this evolutionary process. Korea's public diplomacy emphasis has continued as seen by the strategic allocation of COVID-19 aid as well as the tweets sent in that period, but this emphasis also moved more towards the background while international solidarity and cooperation took the center stage.

Korea has already been aiming to improve its global status by taking more international responsibilities and projecting a good international citizen image commensurate with its capabilities.<sup>60</sup> As an aspiring global governor, Korea aims to have a seat at the playmakers' table across different global issue-areas. As a country which is now stuck between the U.S. and China, the former its ally and the latter its largest trade partner and key North Korea stakeholder, issue-area-based governance or what Acharya calls "multiplex world order"<sup>61</sup> is a route for Korea to avoid Cold War-like ideological camps and to act as a global governor or an

authority in world politics. The country's relative success in domestic COVID-19 response and its active involvement in international cooperation and solidarity to tackle the pandemic has given it more capabilities-based and experience-based authority in global health governance.<sup>62</sup>

It is difficult to expect public diplomacy to produce outcomes in the short-term given its long-term focus, especially when one of the objectives is seeking higher global status. However, there are some proxy indicators to suggest that Korea's COVID-19-related public diplomacy is producing some early positive outcomes. First, Korea's self-promotion of its pandemic management is not unfounded, as reflected by social media. One study found that 96 percent of English-language media coverage and 89.4 percent of posts on Twitter and Instagram about Korea's COVID-19 management were positive.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, Korea was one of the most vocal and visible actors in global governance platforms that addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. Korea led the establishment of the Groups of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security at the UN, WHO, and UNESCO and became co-chair in each group. In addition to actively participating in and sharing its experiences and suggestions in the G20, Korea attended the G7 Summit as an observer in June 2021. The Korean

government shared a staged group picture of leaders from the event in which President Moon stood in the center of the first row between United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson and U.S. President Joe Biden with the title of “Korea’s Status in One Picture” (author’s translation), with the caption adding “this place ... is Korea’s status. We have come thus far ...” (author’s translation).<sup>64</sup> Following his return, Moon said that the G7 invitation confirmed Korea’s improved status and dignity as the country received greater recognition of its value.<sup>65</sup>

In a similar vein, Trump entertained the idea of an expanded G7 to a G11/12 by including Korea, Russia, Australia, India, and Brazil. The Blue House welcomed this proposal as evidence of “South Korea’s emergence as one of the nations leading the global order, which would help enhance its global stature and national interest.”<sup>66</sup> President Moon himself considered Korea to be deserving a seat at a potential G10.<sup>67</sup> As suggested earlier, these instances are a product of Korea’s long ascendance to well-deserved higher global status, but positive COVID-19 visibility might have played some role in catalyzing these outcomes.

In 2020, Korea’s total and COVID-19 aid both focused mainly on ASEAN countries, in line with Moon Jae-in administration’s New Southern Policy. This focus is important as most ASEAN countries and Korea have shared goals in the region, the most important of which is avoiding great power tensions by enmeshing them in ASEAN-led regional institutions.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, Southeast Asia is the first stop for Korea’s “omnidirectional diplomacy” through which it aims to engage the world beyond immediate stakeholders on Korean Peninsular affairs, namely China, the United States, Japan, and to some extent Russia.<sup>69</sup> In terms of public diplomacy, Southeast Asia is becoming more important for Korea as it is one of the few regions Korea targets for its “policy public diplomacy,”<sup>70</sup> while the ASEAN Culture House is one of only two centers Korea Foundation operates dedicated to other regions (the other being Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum Secretariat). The focus on ASEAN must continue to be a bipartisan and continuous element in Korean foreign policy and public diplomacy in addition to the major stakeholders in Northeast Asia.

One aspect that should be improved in Korea’s global governance-related public diplomacy is the need to produce more substance to back the authority and status that Korea seeks. Higher global status comes with more responsibilities in the form of sharing more of the burden for the provision of global public goods, which the Korean

government also acknowledges.<sup>71</sup> While there is no readily available comparative data for COVID-19-related aid, Korea ranks 16<sup>th</sup> country among OECD/ DAC countries in ODA grant equivalent in 2020 with one of the lowest ODA/ Gross National Income (GNI) ratios (0.14%, way below the UN target of 0.7%, and OECD/ DAC average of 0.32%). Therefore, Korea needs to do more to receive more acknowledgement for its global contributions. Public diplomacy is a catalyzer of good policies in that respect rather than being merely an advertising campaign that promotes the prestige of a country without substance.

Korea is now planning to be more proactive and strategic with its public diplomacy. There has always been a disconnect between the country’s foreign policies, including its aid priorities and multilateral diplomacy, and its public diplomacy. For public diplomacy to back up foreign policies, it must be more strategic. COVID-19-related public diplomacy closed this gap to some extent as Korea communicated international cooperation and solidarity in line with its strategic aim of being a good international citizen, one that is authoritative in global governance. At this crossroad, I suggest that Korea should continue to put more emphasis on international cooperation in its public diplomacy for it to form a solid basis for the country’s status-seeking as an authority across different global governance issue-areas. This has started against the tragic background of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it can continue for other issue-areas as well, including but not limited to climate change, green energy, humanitarian aid, and global health governance. As such, the emphasis on mere promotion of the country should be a thing of the past, something that countries with rather simple and single agenda of global visibility do.

In a similar vein, the call for solidarity requires more human-centric interactions rather than only hashtag campaigns. This remains a task for Korean public diplomacy both offline and online. Solidarity begins with listening and having genuine dialogue. As the country’s public diplomacy evolves towards two-way communication and with an emphasis on global public goods, Korea must emphasize facilitating relationship-building between elite and non-elite stakeholders in strategically important countries and Korea, that focus on shared goals and concerns such as pandemics, climate change, and environmental degradation. On social media platforms, this requires following global conversations more closely and directly engaging with global audiences made possible by these platforms.

This paper also provides a foundation for further research on Korea's public diplomacy efforts during the pandemic. In this paper, I used descriptive statistics for Korea's COVID-19 humanitarian aid and its COVID-19-related communication on Twitter. Future research can analyze the determinants of

the country's COVID-19 aid in more depth by employing more rigorous data analysis techniques. Twitter analysis can also be more focused, such as by analyzing the user and word networks of the #StayStrong campaign.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> I thank Oh Min Jee and Paula Higgins for their research assistance for this project, and Kyle Ferrier for his helpful comments on an earlier draft.
- <sup>2</sup> On communication of and for development as public diplomacy, see James Pamment, "Communication at the Crossroads of Development, Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," in *Communicating National Image through Development and Diplomacy: The Politics of Foreign Aid*, ed. James Pamment and Karin Gwinn Wilkins (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
- <sup>3</sup> GlobalFirePower, "2021 Military Strength Ranking," 2021, accessed September 17, 2021, <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>.
- <sup>4</sup> IMF, "World Economic Outlook database: April 2021," ed. IMF (2021). <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2021/April/weo-report>
- <sup>5</sup> Lowy Institute, "Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index," 2019, accessed October 2, 2021, <https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Six-Party states are those that participated in the Six-Party Talks—a series of multilateral negotiations to end North Korea's nuclear program in the 2000s.
- <sup>7</sup> Seo-Hyun Park, *Sovereignty and Status in East Asian International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- <sup>8</sup> Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014).
- <sup>9</sup> Chōngwadae, *Global Korea: The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Korea* (Seoul: Cheongwadae, 2009). In addition, almost all Diplomatic White Papers talk about this in the last two decades.
- <sup>10</sup> Kadir Jun Ayhan, "Rethinking Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy as a Nation Branding Project," *Korea Observer* 50, no. 1 (2019).
- <sup>11</sup> Collaboration of Related Ministries, '21Nyeon Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok Jonghabsihaenggyaehoig(an) (Yoguaek Gijun) ['21 International Development Cooperation Master Enforcement Plan (Based on Confirmed Amounts)] (Seoul: The 36th International Development Cooperation Committee, 2021).
- <sup>12</sup> Korean Government, Lee Myung-Bak Jeongbu GukjeongBaekseo 4: Geullobeol Rideoshibgwa Gukgyeok Jogo [Lee Myung-Bak Government National Administration White Paper 4: Global Leadership and Promoting National Status] (Seoul: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2013), 53.
- <sup>13</sup> Jae-In Moon, "Amudo heundeul su oebneun nararuel mandeulgessuemnida [I will make a country that no one can shake]," in *Moon Jae-In Malgeuljib: Jae3Kwon [Speeches of Moon Jae-In: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Volume]*, ed. Jae-In Moon (Seoul: Presidential Secretariat, 2019).
- <sup>14</sup> Korean e-government website, "I listened to President Moon Jae-in's 'Dialogue with the People,'" November 22, 2021, [https://www.korea.kr/news/reporterView.do?newsId=148895853&call\\_from=rsslink](https://www.korea.kr/news/reporterView.do?newsId=148895853&call_from=rsslink).
- <sup>15</sup> Geun Lee, *Korona Sataewa Shinheung Gangdaegukeui Jogeon, Geurigo Hanguk Gonggongwaegyoeu Banghyang [Corona Situation and the Condition for Great Power, and the Direction for Korean Public Diplomacy]*, vol. 65, IIRI Online Series, (Seoul: IIRI International Relations Institute, 2020).
- <sup>16</sup> Lee, *Korona Sataewa Shinheung Gangdaegukeui Jogeon, Geurigo Hanguk Gonggongwaegyoeu Banghyang [Corona Situation and the Condition for Great Power, and the Direction for Korean Public Diplomacy]*, 65.

- <sup>17</sup> Kadir Jun Ayhan, "The Boundaries of Public Diplomacy and Non-State Actors: A Taxonomy of Perspectives," *International Studies Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (2019); Mark Leonard and Andrew Small, *Norwegian Public Diplomacy* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2003); Efe Sevin, *Public Diplomacy and the Implementation of Foreign Policy in the US, Sweden and Turkey* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
- <sup>18</sup> Korea Foundation President Lee Geun notes such need for caution at a seminar entitled "Crisis Management and Public Diplomacy during Corona Virus: Lessons from South Korea," jointly organized by Korea Foundation and USC Center on Public Diplomacy, April 16, 2021, <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/event/crisis-management-pd-during-coronavirus-lessons-south-korea>.
- <sup>19</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Post COVID-19 Public Diplomacy Policy," June 15, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_22723/view.do?seq=319618&srchFr](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_22723/view.do?seq=319618&srchFr).
- <sup>20</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Korea's Fight Against COVID-19," April 24, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5674/view.do?seq=320075&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=covid&srchTp=0&multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=&page=1&titleNm=](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=320075&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=covid&srchTp=0&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=&page=1&titleNm=).
- <sup>21</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Cultural Exchange and Cooperation Division, "[Major Public Diplomacy News] 'Stay Strong' Global Solidarity Campaign in Response to COVID-19," October 20, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m\\_22721/view.do?seq=4418&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=](https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_22721/view.do?seq=4418&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=).
- <sup>22</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Korea's Response to COVID-19, Sharing Korea's Experience, Key Strategies," October 13, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_22742/list.do](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_22742/list.do).
- <sup>23</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "'K-Quarantine Model' A Sturdy Shield Against COVID-19," April 24, 2020, [https://www.mfds.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_64/view.do?seq=23&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=&page=1](https://www.mfds.go.kr/eng/brd/m_64/view.do?seq=23&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&multi_itm_seq=0&company_cd=&company_nm=&page=1).
- <sup>24</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Post COVID-19 Public Diplomacy Policy," June 15, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_22723/view.do?seq=319618&srchFr](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_22723/view.do?seq=319618&srchFr).
- <sup>25</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "[Major Public Diplomacy News] 'Stay Strong' Global Solidarity Campaign in Response to COVID-19," October 30, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m\\_22721/view.do?seq=4418&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=](https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_22721/view.do?seq=4418&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=).
- <sup>26</sup> For example, Park Geun-hye and Moon Jae-in administrations changed the ODA/GNI ratio target to 0.3% by 2030 from Lee Myung-bak's unrealistic target of 0.25% by 2015, Ayhan, "Rethinking Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy as a Nation Branding Project." *Korea Observer* 50, no. 1 (2019): 8.
- <sup>27</sup> Ayhan, "Rethinking Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy as a Nation Branding Project."
- <sup>28</sup> We received this information following an official inquiry made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Open Information ([open.go.kr](http://open.go.kr)) platform in August 2021.
- <sup>29</sup> KODA, "Daehanminguk ODA Jiweonhyeonhwang - Simcheungbunseok [The Status of Korea's ODA Support - In-dept Analysis]," (August 23, 2021 2021). <https://www.kodaportal.go.kr/portal/detail?basYyyy=2020&amtSel=grntEqvInt2&amtUnit=UsdAmt2>. All aid data analysis in this paper uses the data on KODA website.
- <sup>30</sup> For difference between net ODA flows and grant equivalent, see OECD, "Modernisation of the DAC statistical system," n.d., accessed 2021, October 29, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/modernisation-dac-statistical-system.htm>.
- <sup>31</sup> Collaboration of Related Ministries, '21Nyeon Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok Jonghabsihaenggyaehoig(an) (Yoguaek Gijun) [21 International Development Cooperation Master Enforcement Plan (Based on Confirmed Amounts)], 5.
- <sup>32</sup> For a list of Korea's 24 priority countries, see Han Na Kim and Jinhwan Oh, "Sectoral Determinants of Korean Development Assistance: Similar, yet Different?," *Journal of Economic Development* 46, no. 1 (2021): 89.



- <sup>33</sup> Collaboration of Related Ministries, '21Nyeon Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok Jonghabsihaenggyaehoig(an) (Yoguaek Gijun) [*'21 International Development Cooperation Master Enforcement Plan (Based on Confirmed Amounts)*], 143.
- <sup>34</sup> [https://data.humdata.org/visualization/covid19-humanitarian-operations/?layer=covid-19\\_cases\\_and\\_deaths](https://data.humdata.org/visualization/covid19-humanitarian-operations/?layer=covid-19_cases_and_deaths)
- <sup>35</sup> [https://www.rdocumentation.org/packages/cepii/geodist/versions/0.1/topics/dist\\_cepii](https://www.rdocumentation.org/packages/cepii/geodist/versions/0.1/topics/dist_cepii)
- <sup>36</sup> <https://unipass.customs.go.kr/ets/>
- <sup>37</sup> For Korea's foreign policy-led aid distribution, see Eun Mee Kim and Jinhwan Oh, "Determinants of Foreign Aid: The Case of South Korea," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (2012), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23418809>; Kim and Oh, "Sectoral Determinants of Korean Development Assistance: Similar, yet Different?."
- <sup>38</sup> "S. Korea wraps up delivery of 2 mln masks to Korean War veterans in 22 countries," Yonhap News Agency, February 15, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200507001600325>.
- <sup>39</sup> Collaboration of Related Ministries, '21Nyeon Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok Jonghabsihaenggyaehoig(an) (Yoguaek Gijun) [*'21 International Development Cooperation Master Enforcement Plan (Based on Confirmed Amounts)*], 10.
- <sup>40</sup> Collaboration of Related Ministries, '21Nyeon Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok Jonghabsihaenggyaehoig(an) (Yoguaek Gijun) [*'21 International Development Cooperation Master Enforcement Plan (Tentative) (Based on Amount Demanded)*] (Seoul: The 35th International Development Cooperation Committee, 2020); Secretariat of Prime Ministry, "Bodojaryo: Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok(ODA), Korona19 Daeungeul wihan Gukjeok Jeokgeuk Giyeo [Press Release: International Development Cooperation (ODA), Active International Contributions to Respond to COVID-19]," news release, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m\\_4080/view.do?seq=370329&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=](https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_4080/view.do?seq=370329&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=).
- <sup>41</sup> Collaboration of Related Ministries, '21Nyeon Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok Jonghabsihaenggyaehoig(an) (Yoguaek Gijun) [*'21 International Development Cooperation Master Enforcement Plan (Based on Confirmed Amounts)*].
- <sup>42</sup> Secretariat of Prime Ministry, "Bodojaryo: Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok(ODA), Korona19 Daeungeul wihan Gukjeok Jeokgeuk Giyeo [Press Release: International Development Cooperation (ODA), Active International Contributions to Respond to COVID-19]."
- <sup>43</sup> "Uri Judo Yuneseuko Segyesiminyoyuk Uhoguk Geurup Chulbeom [UNESCO Global Citizenship Education Group of Friends Launch with Our Leadership]," Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs, news release, 2020, [http://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m\\_4080/view.do?seq=370231](http://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_4080/view.do?seq=370231); Secretariat of Prime Ministry, "Bodojaryo: Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok(ODA), Korona19 Daeungeul wihan Gukjeok Jeokgeuk Giyeo [Press Release: International Development Cooperation (ODA), Active International Contributions to Respond to COVID-19]."
- <sup>44</sup> Secretariat of Prime Ministry, "Bodojaryo: Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok(ODA), Korona19 Daeungeul wihan Gukjeok Jeokgeuk Giyeo [Press Release: International Development Cooperation (ODA), Active International Contributions to Respond to COVID-19]."
- <sup>45</sup> Secretariat of Prime Ministry, "Bodojaryo: Gukjegaebalhyeobryeok(ODA), Korona19 Daeungeul wihan Gukjeok Jeokgeuk Giyeo [Press Release: International Development Cooperation (ODA), Active International Contributions to Respond to COVID-19]."
- <sup>46</sup> c.f. Ilan Manor, *The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
- <sup>47</sup> Kadir Jun Ayhan, "An Exploration of Korean Discourses on Public Diplomacy," *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia* 19, no. 1 (2020).
- <sup>48</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget for 2021 confirmed by KRW 2.84 trillion," December 4, 2020, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m\\_4080/view.do?seq=370747](https://www.mofa.go.kr/www/brd/m_4080/view.do?seq=370747).
- <sup>49</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget for 2021 confirmed by KRW 2.84 trillion."
- <sup>50</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget for 2021 confirmed by KRW 2.84 trillion."
- <sup>51</sup> See for example, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA5nGRT\\_crk&list=PLef8Xpzyipd7QGntwr9lg5yLRn3fW914&index=24&t=82s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA5nGRT_crk&list=PLef8Xpzyipd7QGntwr9lg5yLRn3fW914&index=24&t=82s) and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb78MEIL\\_Mk&list=PLef8Xpzyipd7QGntwr9lg5yLRn3fW914&index=23](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb78MEIL_Mk&list=PLef8Xpzyipd7QGntwr9lg5yLRn3fW914&index=23).
- <sup>52</sup> Ayhan, "Rethinking Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy as a Nation Branding Project."

- <sup>53</sup> "Covid Performance Index, Deconstructing Pandemic Responses," Lowy Institute, accessed October 2, 2021, <https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/covid-performance>.
- <sup>54</sup> Seow Ting Lee and Hun Shik Kim, "Nation branding in the COVID-19 era: South Korea's pandemic public diplomacy," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* (2020/10/15 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-020-00189-w>, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-020-00189-w>, see also Seo-Young Cho et al., "South Korea's Soft Power in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Analysis of the Expert Survey in Europe," *Seoul Journal of Economics* 33, no. 4 (2020).
- <sup>55</sup> MOFA\_KOREAZ (@mofa\_koreaz), "Windows-to-windows messages travel from our hearts to your hearts. 'Stay Strong campaign', started by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, has spread out in 123 countries with more than 1 million people's participation," Twitter, June 16, 2020, [https://twitter.com/mofa\\_koreaz/status/1272806209540640768](https://twitter.com/mofa_koreaz/status/1272806209540640768).
- <sup>56</sup> MOFA\_KOREAZ (@mofa\_koreaz), "Korea was lauded for its successful COVID-19 response...", Twitter, October 4, 2020, [https://twitter.com/mofa\\_koreaz/status/1313060866158325760](https://twitter.com/mofa_koreaz/status/1313060866158325760).
- <sup>57</sup> MOFA\_KOREAZ (@mofa\_koreaz), "The Future Dialogue for Global Innovation\_Consolidation and Solidarity through Culture and Art in COVID-19 era...", Twitter, February 5, 2021, [https://twitter.com/mofa\\_koreaz/status/1357569642496073730?s=20](https://twitter.com/mofa_koreaz/status/1357569642496073730?s=20).
- <sup>58</sup> MOFA\_KOREAZ (@mofa\_koreaz), "The Future Dialogue for Global Innovation\_The power of music to defuse discrimination and disparities in times of COVID-19..." Twitter, January 27, 2021, [https://twitter.com/mofa\\_koreaz/status/1354311126008258560?s=20](https://twitter.com/mofa_koreaz/status/1354311126008258560?s=20).
- <sup>59</sup> Enna Park, "Korea's Public Diplomacy," *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow and Nicholas J. Cull (New York: 2020).
- <sup>60</sup> Ayhan, "Rethinking Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy as a Nation Branding Project."
- <sup>61</sup> Acharya, *The End of American World Order*.
- <sup>62</sup> For kinds of authority in global governance, see Deborah D Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K Sell, eds., *Who governs the globe?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- <sup>63</sup> Lee and Kim, "Nation branding in the COVID-19 era: South Korea's pandemic public diplomacy."
- <sup>64</sup> Jeong Jin-woo, "The front row is Korea's status? No Taiga Protocol Accident? G7 forcefully," JoongAng International, June 16, 2021, <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/24083451#home>.
- <sup>65</sup> Korean e-government website "President Moon 'Confirmed the changed status of Korea...It has become a world-recognized country,'" June 21, 2021 <https://www.korea.kr/news/policyNewsView.do?newsId=148889088>.
- <sup>66</sup> Lee Chi-dong, "S. Korea expects to become formal member of expanded G7: Cheong Wa Dae," Yonhap News Agency, June 2, 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200602006900315>.
- <sup>67</sup> Korean e-government website, "I listened to President Moon Jae-in's 'Dialogue with the People.'"
- <sup>68</sup> Evelyn Goh, "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2007), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30130520>.
- <sup>69</sup> Kadir Jun Ayhan, "South Korea's Global Status-Seeking in a Multiplex World Order," (2021 International Studies Association Annual Conference, Virtual, May 29, 2021).
- <sup>70</sup> MOFA, *Jae1Cha Daehanminguk Gonggongwaegyo Gibongyeoik (2017~2021): 2019Nyeondo Gonggongwaegyo Jonghapsihaengkyehwoik [The First Republic of Korea Public Diplomacy Basic Plan (2017~2021): 2019 Master Enforcement Plan]* (Seoul: MOFA, 2019); MOFA, *Jae1Cha Daehanminguk Gonggongwaegyo Gibongyeoik (2017~2021): 2020Nyeondo Gonggongwaegyo Jonghapsihaengkyehwoik [The First Republic of Korea Public Diplomacy Basic Plan (2017~2021): 2020 Master Enforcement Plan]* (Seoul: MOFA, 2020); MOFA, *Jae1Cha Daehanminguk Gonggongwaegyo Gibongyeoik (2017~2021): 2021Nyeondo Gonggongwaegyo Jonghapsihaengkyehwoik [The First Republic of Korea Public Diplomacy Basic Plan (2017~2021): 2021 Master Enforcement Plan]* (Seoul: MOFA, 2021).
- <sup>71</sup> Korean Government, Lee Myung-Bak Jeongbu GukjeongBaekseo 4: *Geullobeol Rideoshibgwa Gukgyeok Jego* [Lee Myung-Bak Government National Administration White Paper 4: *Global Leadership and Promoting National Status*], 53.

---

## KEI EDITORIAL BOARD

**KEI Editor: Kyle Ferrier | Contract Editor: Gimga Group | Design: Gimga Group**

*The Korea Economic Institute of America is registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, a public corporation established by the Government of the Republic of Korea. This material is filed with the Department of Justice, where the required registration statement is available for public inspection. Registration does not indicate U.S. government approval of the contents of this document.*

*KEI is not engaged in the practice of law, does not render legal services, and is not a lobbying organization.*

*The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors. While this monograph is part of the overall program of the Korea Economic Institute of America endorsed by its Officers, Board of Directors, and Advisory Council, its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of individual members of the Board or of the Advisory Council.*

Copyright © 2022 Korea Economic Institute of America

Printed in the United States of America.



Promoting Dialogue and Understanding  
Between Korea and the United States

1800 K St. NW, Suite 300 | Washington, DC 20006  
T.202.464.1982 | F.202.464.1987 | [www.keia.org](http://www.keia.org)