

## Canada-Korea Strategic Partnership Conference 2015



**June 11, 2015**

**Campbell Conference Facility, Munk School of Global Affairs**

Conference Programme & Transcript available at [www.ckfta.ca](http://www.ckfta.ca)

Ambassador Daeshik Jo's Keynote address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMmOYawl8is>

U of T Media Relations Coverage: <http://news.utoronto.ca/korean-officials-scholars-strengthen-ties-u-t>

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## Canada-Korea Strategic Partnership Conference 2015: Seeking the Big Picture

By Hugh Segal & Tina J. Park  
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The arrival at the Munk School of Global Affairs of Distinguished scholars, practitioners, diplomats, business leaders and community members on June 11, 2015 was all for one purpose—a holistic and integrated overview of broad prospects for the future of Canada-Korea relations. Some of these sorts of conferences are like calibrated weather reports. This conference was a genuine effort to look to the future.

Sponsored by Massey College, the Munk School of Global Affairs, the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, the Asian Institute at Munk, the Canadian Studies Programme at University College and the U of T Korean Students Association, the premise of the conference was a broad based look ahead on trade, strategic and defence cooperation, immigration, education and cultural opportunities as we look forward to the future of Canadian-Korean relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The co-chairs of this conference, Hugh Segal, Master of Massey College, and Tina J. Park, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and a doctoral candidate in Korean-Canadian relations at the U of T, aimed to structure a conference that would embrace both the practitioners' experience and insight, as well as scholarly questions and analysis. Broad room for public engagement and questions from the audience was built in to the conference agenda.

While the full transcript of the conference can be found in pdf form at [www.ckfta.ca](http://www.ckfta.ca), the key highlights and conclusions from this conference are as follows:

1. The new South Korean Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Daeshik Jo, in his **keynote address** (and his first public speech since presenting his credentials) made four key points:

- A. There is a solid basis for another half century of exponential growth in the full spectrum economic and strategic relationship between Canada and the Republic of Korea.
- B. Science, technology, innovation, ship building and Arctic development should be key areas of focus for mutual collaboration between Canada and the ROK in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- C. People to people exchanges, cultural and public engagement and diplomacy must replace indifference.
- D. Key pillars that can break any pattern of indifference are political cooperation, joint diplomatic initiative in defence of common values of democracy, freedom and human rights, and seeking collaborative opportunities in the public and private sector.



2. The first panel focused on the challenges and opportunities emerging from the **Canada Korea Free Trade Agreement** (featuring Prof. Don Brean from the Rotman School of Management, U of T; Mr. Ian Burney from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; Mr. Sonny Cho from the Canada-Korea Business Council; moderated by Prof. George Georgeopoulos from the Department of Economics at the U of T).



Key conclusions that emerged from the CKFTA panel included:

- A. The success of the CKFTA will be determined by the extent to which Canadian and Korean companies, large and SME make up for the lost time in terms of Asian market and Canadian access before the FTA was signed and ratified.
- B. Beyond tariff reduction which is central to the agreement, the deployment of internationally recognised technical standards and dispute resolution will be vital building blocks for more trade volume between the two countries.
- C. Canadian companies seeking to export to Korea, as well as the Canadian government must focus on branding issues and opportunities- not enough is known about the attributes of Canadian made goods and the high quality of Canadian products.
- D. Korean investment in resources, infrastructure, technology and defence may well increase, providing target partners invest time and effort in deep relationship building.
- E. Beyond natural resources and food, Canada should focus on low weight high technology exports in partnership with Korean partners, aerospace, electronics, medical engineering which carry high value added components.

3. On the issue of human rights and crimes against humanity in the DPRK, Mr. Justice Michael Kirby, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy, gave a keynote at lunch at Massey College, highlighting the support of the UN General Assembly for his report's stern but necessary findings and the need to constantly look for ways to engage so as to improve the circumstances for children and families and seniors who suffer continued deprivation in the DPRK. Beyond the politicians and others who bear responsibility for crimes against humanity, it is important to remember the plight of the average resident of the DPRK. Q&A with the audience followed.



4. The panel on **Defense and Strategic Partnership** (featuring Colonel Jangmin Choi from the Korean Embassy; Senator Yonah Martin; Mr. John Roach from the Department of National Defense; moderated by Prof. Adam Chapnick from the Canadian Forces College) generated the following conclusions:

- A. The future of Canada-Korea military strategic cooperation will be tied to a "DIME" strategy, diplomacy, information, military and economics.
- B. Defense dialogues, agreements, MOUs, treaties and professional contacts within the combat arms are important instruments for strategic cooperation between the ROK and Canada
- C. Canadian technical support of post recovery and diagnostics re the sinking of the *Cheonan* ship is one of many ways in which cooperation can be substantive and real time.
- D. Continued participation in joint exercises like Ulchi Freedom Guardian and support for joint cyber-security endeavors will remain vital.
- E. The stalling of the Canada-Korea defense industry cooperation MOU for three years is not helpful-and can be moved ahead-and should be.
- F. Engaged steps to deepen both defence cooperation and defence procurement cooperation will be of significant mutual benefit to both sides of the relationship.

5. The panel on **immigration and education** (featuring Vice-President Judith Wolfson of the University of Toronto; Prof Ann Kim from York University; Mr. Jae Chong from the Korean Canadian Cultural Association; moderated by Ms. Monica Chi from Korean Canadian Women's Association) offered the following conclusions:

- A. The partnership between the U of T and six Korean universities is an excellent model for broader country to country educational linkages.
- B. "Knowledge Diplomacy" is a key instrument for Canada-Korea strategic dialogue and cooperation in key areas of science, technology, the humanities and the arts.
- C. Building a "joint ecosystem" to encourage entrepreneurs is a genuine and real opportunity that U of T would be delighted to pursue with Korean institutions; young entrepreneurs from Korea would be welcome here.
- D. Asking tough questions about how truly welcoming Canada is to foreign students from Korea is necessary and required if we are to sustain a high flow of Korean students to Canada.
- E. Discriminatory pay and fees for international students must be examined
- F. We need to ask whether the avenues to or blockages of avenues to permanent residence for international students remain constructive or productive.

**Broad conclusions:**

- ✚ The CKFTA, while a helpful framework for broader trade and economic cooperation, is not sufficient in and of itself to really deepen economic and trade benefits without serious initiative on issues like branding, investment, people to people ties, cultural engagement, more defence diplomacy and true relationship building.
- ✚ Easy trade partners- the United States for Canada and China for the ROK, should not be allowed to be the entire story. High value added scientific and manufacturing joint ventures, facilitated by both the public and private sectors in both countries is vital if full economic and strategic cooperation potential is to be realised.
- ✚ Indifference and lack of patience will diminish the opportunities, economic, social, defence and educational that seriously beckon both Canada and Korea, post the CKFTA.
- ✚ A joint working group on Canadian-Korean relations, involving Munk School of Global Affairs, Massey College, the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, the CIGI and relevant South Korean think-tanks, to prod progress on strategic partnership and real engagement on both sides could be a constructive next step.