

1. Activities

A. Academic Symposium for Emerging South Korean and Chinese Scholars Hosted by IFES (May 6, 2026.)

The Institute for Far Eastern Studies of Kyungnam University (Director Kwan-Sei Lee) hosted an academic symposium with researchers from the Korean Peninsula and Asia-Pacific Strategy Research Center of the Shanghai International Studies University on May 6 (Wed) at 9:30 a.m. in the IFES Conference Room of the Peace Hall.



The forum was attended by President Jae Kyu Park of Kyungnam University, Chairperson Sun Hyang Kim of the Board of University of North Korean Studies, Director Kwan-Sei Lee of IFES, Research Fellow Hyunjoo Oh of IFES, Director Wang Xingxing, doctoral candidates Liu Yu, Fan Xinzhu, Jin Ke, Wang Xiaodong, Wang Zhaoqian, Li Wenjun, Wang Fulin, and Liu Jiaqi (all from the Korean Peninsula and Asia-Pacific Strategy Research Center of the Shanghai

International Studies University), doctoral candidate Lin Sen Kim and visiting student Yu Jia (both from the University of North Korean Studies), and visiting scholar Man Fung Yeung at the Seoul National University Asia Center.

Emerging scholars from the two institutions engaged in in-depth discussions on the South Korean and Chinese semiconductor industries and advanced technologies, the Lee Jae Myung administration's strategy toward Taiwan, North Korea's perception of China, South Korea's Arctic shipping route project, China's Belt and Road Initiative, and China's multilateralism.

Following the forum, emerging scholars from the Korean Peninsula and Asia-Pacific Strategy Research Center of the Shanghai International Studies University visited the North Korean Materials Room at the library of IFES, where they examined original source materials from North Korea.

The IFES plans to continue organizing academic symposiums for emerging scholars with Chinese research institutions to further promote academic exchanges between South Korea and China.

B. The 19th Samcheong Forum Held by IFES (May 6, 2026.)

The Institute for Far Eastern Studies of Kyungnam University (Director Kwan-Sei Lee) held the 19th Samcheong Forum on May 6 (Wed) at 7 p.m. in the IFES Conference Room of the Peace Hall under the theme, “Lessons from the U.S.–Iran War and South Korea’s Economic Security Strategy”.

The forum was organized to analyze the impact of the recent U.S.–Iran war on global networks and to examine vulnerabilities in key supply chains, including energy and semiconductors, with the aim of exploring effective economic security strategies for South Korea.

Professor Seung Joo Lee analyzed that modern conflicts have entered an era of ‘weaponized interdependence’, in which ‘connectivity itself becomes a vulnerability’. He particularly warned of “a surge in energy prices caused by a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and the resulting spillover into food prices” and noted that “the United States’ counter-blockade strategy, carried out through the use of AI-powered reconnaissance assets, represents a key example of the paradox of interdependence.”



The professor also emphasized that the war has evolved into a cost-efficiency-driven conflict that is rapidly depleting stockpiles of advanced

weapons, while vulnerabilities in digital chokepoints such as undersea cables have emerged as threats just as critical as disruptions to physical routes.

As a response strategy for South Korea, Professor Lee stressed that “this crisis should not be viewed solely as an issue of energy security, but rather as a ‘multidimensional game’ involving intertwined challenges related to supply chains, digital infrastructure, and the military–industrial complex.”

In particular, he explained that since it is impossible for any country to achieve complete strategic autonomy, the key is to reduce vulnerabilities while strengthening South Korea’s core strength in midstream semiconductor manufacturing to secure strategic indispensability, or the ability to exert leverage over other countries in times of crisis.

As for concrete measures, he proposed releasing strategic petroleum reserves in the short term and pursuing supply chain diversification in the long term. He also noted the need to reduce dependence on the Middle East by increasing imports of U.S. energy sources in the future. He also suggested establishing an early warning system between South Korea and Japan and strengthening bilateral supply chain partnerships with key middle powers such as the Netherlands and Australia.

C. Joint Academic Conference with the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences, China (May 28, 2026.)

The Institute for Far Eastern Studies of Kyungnam University (Director Kwan-Sei Lee) held a joint academic conference on May 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Conference Room on the third floor of the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences.



Participants from IFES included Kwan-Sei Lee (Director), Seong-Ryoul Cho (Visiting Professor), Hyung-Jong Lee (Professor), and Hyunjoo Oh (Research Fellow). Participants from the Chinese side included Liu Lixin (President of the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences), Yu Dayong (Vice President of the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences), Wang Hui (Director of the Institute of Korean Studies, Jilin Academy of Social Sciences), Xian Dong Han (Director of the Center for the Korean Peninsula Studies, China University of Political Science and Law), Ba Dianjun (Deputy Director of the Northeast Asian Research Center, Jilin University), Gong Jianze (Dean of the College of History and Culture, Beihua University), Man HaiFeng (Director of the Korean Peninsula Institute, Eastern Liaoning University), Zhang Xiaogang (Visiting Professor, College of History and Culture, Changchun Normal University), Piao Dongxun (Associate Dean of the Institute of Korean Peninsula Studies, Yanbian University), Zhang Huizhi (Vice Director of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Jilin University), Jin Meihua (Secretary-General of the Northeast Asian Research Center, Jilin Academy of Social Sciences), Zhao Lixin (Head of the Department of International Politics, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Yanbian University), Guo Rui (Head of the Department of International Politics, Jilin University), and Suo Feng (Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Northeast Normal University).

This joint academic conference was held as a concrete step toward implementing the academic exchange agreement signed in December 2024. Both sides agreed to hold a joint conference annually on a reciprocal basis through mutual institutional visits, and to further expand ongoing academic exchanges and collaborative research.

2. Publications

A. Strategic Analysis of Korean Peninsula (6 Issues)

Assessment and Outlook on North Korea's Major Developments Between January–March 2026

April 15, 2026. Cheol-wun Jang [Research Fellow / Korea Institute for National Unification]

※ Read the Full Paper



North Korea's Intent in Requesting Foreign Minister Wang Yi's Visit

April 15, 2026. Sangsook Lee [Research Professor / Korea National Diplomatic Academy]

※ Read the Full Paper



Revisiting the 8th Anniversary of the Panmunjom Declaration: The Dissolution of “Special Inter-Korean Relations” and the Transition to “Peaceful Coexistence”

April 27, 2026. Soohwan Hwang [Professor, Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, / Jeju National University]

※ Read the Full Paper



Phase Two of the Korea–China FTA: Structure Before Speed—Eight Years of Services and Investment Talks: What Matters More Than Concluding the Talks

April 27, 2026. Hanjin Park [Visiting Professor, Graduate School of International and Area Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies]

※ Read the Full Paper



A Paradigm Shift for Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Issue

May 18, 2026. Kyu-duk Noh [Visiting Professor, Halla University / Former Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, MOFA]

※ Read the Full Paper



Constitutional Revision in North Korea and the Prospects for Inter-Korean Relations

May 18, 2026. Youngchul Chung [Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, Sogang University]

※ Read the Full Paper



B. IFES Brief (3 Issues)

A Study on the Establishment of the North Korean Police System

April 3, 2026. Quan lingxian [Visiting Professor, IFES]

※ Read the Full Paper



The Systematization of the 'Five-Point Party Building Line in the New Era' in the Kim Jong-un Era and the Political Implications of Its Codification into the Party Rules

May 4, 2026. Sang Bum Kim [Director of Research, IFES / Director, Center for North Korea Studies]

※ Read the Full Paper



The Strengthening of the China–Russia Strategic Partnership and the Advent of a Managed Multipolar International Order

May 27, 2026. Chung Jae-hung [Senior Research Fellow, The Sejong Institute]

※ Read the Full Paper



C. IFES Forum (2 Issues)

How Can Korea Make the Best Use of the NPT Review Conference?

April 23, 2026. Ho-Young Ahn [Former Ambassador to the U.S. / Chair Professor at Kyungnam University]

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The Middle East Crisis and Changing Security Dynamics in Northeast Asia: A Chinese Perspective on South Korea–China Cooperation

May 26, 2026. Bo An [Northeast Asia Research Center, Zhejiang Yuexiu University]

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3. IFES Update

A. President Park Jae Kyu of Kyungnam University Visits Shandong University in China—Agreement Reached to Expand Joint Research on Korean Peninsula Issues and Academic Exchange (April 28, 2026.)

President Park Jae Kyu of Kyungnam University visited Shandong University's Weihai Campus on April 21, 2026 to discuss ways to expand academic exchange and cooperation between the two institutions.



The Korean delegation included Park Jae Kyu, President of Kyungnam University; Kim Sun Hyang, Chairperson of University of North Korean Studies; Lee Kwan-Sei, Director of the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University; and Oh Hyunjoo Senior researcher at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University. The Chinese delegation included Qiu Daobin, Party Secretary of Shandong University's Weihai Campus; Zhang Wenling, Director of the Institute of International Studies at Shandong University; Zuo Feng, Deputy Director of the Institute of International Studies at Shandong University; Han Feng, Visiting Professor of International Studies at Shandong University; Li Qingsi, Research fellow of International Studies at Shandong University; Yang Yanlong, Research fellow of International Studies at Shandong University; and

Kong Yushan, Researcher the School of Northeast Asian Studies at Shandong University.

Both sides agreed on the need for joint research and academic cooperation focused on the Korean Peninsula issue, and decided to actively expand exchanges, including mutual visits by researchers and graduate students. In particular, they reaffirmed the importance of research on the Korean Peninsula as a foundation for the stable development of Korea-China relations, and agreed to cooperate in order to contribute to the improvement of inter-Korean relations and the promotion of regional cooperation.



In addition, the two institutions agreed to pursue joint research on peace on the Korean Peninsula, and the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University and the Institute of International Studies at Shandong University agreed to collaborate to build a body of research findings. Both sides agreed that this research would make a tangible contribution to promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia.

This visit will serve as an important opportunity to strengthen the foundation for academic cooperation between the two institutions and to expand ongoing exchanges and joint research in the future.

B. AP Editor-in-Chief Visits IFES (May 22, 2026.)

On Friday, May 22, 2026, Dr. Ho-fung Hung of Johns Hopkins University, visited the Institute for Far Eastern Studies of Kyungnam University in Seoul. Dr. Hung serves as the Henry M. and Elizabeth P. Wiesenfeld Professor of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University, and as the Editor-in-Chief of the institute's journal, Asian Perspective.



Dr. Hung paid a courtesy visit to President Jae Kyu Park's office, where over a tea time he and the president exchanged views on the significant growth and rising status of the journal. Celebrating the journal's 50th volume this year, Dr. Hung said he looks forward to a bright future for the journal's next fifty years.

Following their meeting, Dr. Hung met with members of the IFES and Kyungnam University faculties, along with the journal's managing editor, Prof. Dean Ouellette, for a luncheon discussion on various topics of interest and global issues of concern.