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The Work of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) on the Republic of Korea

The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) was founded in 1938. UI is an independent platform for research, analysis and information on international relations and foreign policy. The mission of UI is to inform and enrich public debate by promoting interest in and knowledge of international relations and foreign policy based on research and analysis. UI wants to stimulate dialogue and promote the exchange of ideas, theories, and perspectives. UI funds its activities through a combination of grants from the Swedish government, international organizations, private foundations and companies, as well as membership fees and sales revenue. Within the institute, the Asia Program covers issues related to the Republic of Korea (ROK).

UI researchers and experts author both scholarly publications and popular publications in the form of op-eds and policy briefs. At the time of writing, there are two long-term research projects that include studies on the ROK: “International Relations 2.0: Knowledge, Memory and Power on the Internet in East Asia” and “Power Shift in East Asia”.

UI edits three publication series: *UI Paper* (working papers and similar manuscripts reporting research results), *UI Brief* (short commentaries on international issues, events or trends) and *Världspolitikens Dagsfrågor* (a monthly series on current events in international politics aimed at the public and students). All three series cover Korea-related issues. The first publication on the ROK in *Världspolitikens Dagsfrågor* was written in 1950 with the title *Korea mellan öst och väst* (Korea between East and West). UI has since covered a wide range of topics, such as the ROK’s engagement with Africa (Jonsson and Lagerkvist 2011), the corruption scandal that brought down the ROK’s first female president Park Geun-Hye (Hanssen 2017), and the issue of Korean reunification (Hanssen and

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Woo 2019).

Landguiden, UI's country database, provides information on the history, economy, geography, people and society of the ROK and all other countries in the world. The database caters fact-checked material to high schools, universities and libraries in Sweden. It is an intermediary tool between a news service and an encyclopedia reporting shifts in government, party politics, constitutional changes, major political crises, the launch of important political and social reforms, changes in economic policy, etc. A special feature in the database describes ongoing conflicts, with one section on the Korean conflict. The section gives a historical background to today's tensions based on the division of Korea, the Korean War and North Korea's development of missile and nuclear capabilities. The chapter on the ROK also includes a calendar listing the most important events based on information from news agencies such as BBC, AFP, Reuters and Yonhap.

One of the main activities of UI is the open seminar series. More than 80 open seminars are organized annually, often in collaboration with other organizations. The seminars make research and policy findings available to a broader audience of academics, policymakers, regional specialists, the media, students and the public with an interest in the region. Recent seminars covering events related to the ROK include:

- Diplomatic Developments on the Korean Peninsula – Impending Stalemate or a Glimmer of Hope? (September 2018)
- Promoting Cooperation, Partnership and Connectivity between Europe and Asia (March 2018)
- Explaining North Korea's State Durability (September 2017)
- North Korea and East Asian Security (March 2017)
- A New Approach to the "History Problem" in Northeast Asia (March 2016)
- The Future of Asia and the Role of Korea (September 2015)

The ROK was the guest of honor and the theme country for the 2019 Book Fair in Gothenburg. The country's literature, publishing and culture was presented through several of the foremost South Korean authors. UI took the opportunity to offer a brand-new issue of *Världspolitikens Dagsfrågor* (Hansen and Woo 2019) to the fair visitors, as well as free access to the Republic of Korea and North Korea in *Landguiden* and a series of articles focusing on South Korea in *Utrikesmagasinet*, UI's digital magazine for opinion and analysis. One piece took stock of President Moon Jae-in's economic reform agenda and another one explained current fric-

tions between the ROK and Japan. In cooperation with the Korean Publishers Association, moreover, UI organized the seminar “Peace on the Korean Peninsula and the Future of Humanity” at the Fair.

Lastly, UI experts contribute to the dissemination of knowledge with regards to the Republic of Korea through participating in international networks and projects. Several UI researchers have in recent years visited the ROK for exchanges with local scholars and policymakers. In 2019, UI is writing a chapter on Sweden in the report *Mapping Out EU-Korea Relations: Key Members' Perspectives*. The project is coordinated by the KF-VUB Korea Chair, at Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

References

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- Jonsson, G. and Lagerkvist, J. (2011) ”Foreign aid, trade and development: The strategic presence of China, Japan and Korea in Sub-Saharan Africa”, *UI Occasional Paper*, 5.