Aiding Militarization: Role of South Korea's ODA in "Peacekeeping" Activities in Asia
Youngah Lee, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy – South Korea

In February 2016, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) agreed to update and modernize the Official Development Assistance (ODA) reporting directives on peace and security expenditures. Accordingly, peace and security expenses for military and police training to ensure public safety in partner countries, including the supply of military equipment and activities preventing violent extremism, are now included as part of ODA.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are deeply concerned as the aid mandate is, once again, being shifted to the field of peace and security, thereby potentially promoting the geopolitical interests of the donor countries, while risking the already small amount of ODA intended for poverty eradication and social development of developing countries.

South Korea is also not exempt from criticism of its use of its ODA for militarization and securitization purposes. The Republic of Korea (RoK) Armed Forces have been active in dispatching troops for reconstruction and emergency relief. South Korea has allocated nearly half of Korea grants to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan for a considerable period of time,[1] and the government has recently sent troops for disaster relief in addition to the inter-ministerial team for overseas emergency relief.

As the field of peace and security has increasingly becoming part of ODA mandates, it is likely that the militarization of South Korea's ODA will also intensify. There is a growing concern that ODA expenditures for military and security will increase and that the role of military and police in ODA execution will expand.

Dispatch for Korean Troops for the Afghan PRT

South Korea dispatched the ROK PRT force, Ashena Unit to Charikar, Parwan, Afghanistan in July 2010. The Korean government sent around 2,500 PRT soldiers in total for about four years until the end of June 2014 when the final withdrawal was made. The amount of ODA put into the region was very large. Since 2009 when the PRT was not yet started, Afghanistan already became the country that received the biggest part of the Korean government's ODA budget. Then, what was the effect of this development aid? A recent government review, when Korean troops were removed last year, praised the program whereby Korea shared its development experiences directly with Afghan people through public-private partnerships.

However, it is very unlikely that the ROK PRT Force resolved issues with the PRT model, commonly faced by the US and other NATO members. The Afghan PRT was designed not as a direct occupation policy, but as one to win the support of the local population. The initiative was largely in response to

international politics, and proper development strategies or plans were not prepared in advance. This fact is also seen in the country assessment report presented by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), an organization in charge of the national grant aid.

> "Even if the Korean government sent a research group and underwent procedures of specifying the budget input size and support areas and strategies in making annual plans, when deciding to implement the Afghan reconstruction support project, it is hard to make a goal-based assessment as the performance index was incomplete and the county program was not set."[2]

The ROK PRT, similar to other donor PRTs, was also repeatedly attacked by armed forces. Concerns over the PRT personal safety were always present. It is widely known that active participation of local populations in development aid projects implemented by military forces can hardly be expected, especially when the PRTs become legitimate military targets. Sustainability and effectiveness of PRT development projects is very limited. A domestic researcher who had personally visited a Korea-Afghanistan vocational school casted doubt on why they decided to build such a huge school where threats of war and attacks are still present. This review observed

> "Even as trainees could get a considerable sum of training allowance and go through a vocational course in luxurious facilities, many of them failed to complete one-year training period or dropped out and gave up. And even those that were invited to Korea and received training often did something else or gave up teaching in the school after they came back to Kabul."[3]

Dispatch for Disaster Relief: Araw Contingent in the Philippines

The dispatch of troops for emergency relief and disaster response has been gradually increasing. The first overseas dispatching of RoK Armed Forces for disaster recovery and humanitarian aid occurred in November 2013. The Araw Contingent was sent to the Philippines, following the deadliest Philippine typhoon in history. Unfortunately, the activities of the Araw Contingent in the Philippines raised concerns about the appropriateness of this deployment for the purpose of emergency relief.

The Araw Contingent's main tasks included: (1) restoring public facilities and cleaning up disaster stricken areas, (2) providing free medical services and activities to prevent epidemics, (3) running vocational schools and Korean language programs, (4) providing feeding programs and (5) screening movies. Some activities were implemented through NGOs on the request of the Araw Contingent. In addition to these tasks, the troop also performed activities that had nothing to do with reconstruction and relief. These included the construction of the Araw Memorial Park honoring the dispatch of the RoK Armed Forces and the building of a statue commemorating the joint operation.

The appropriateness of Korean language training in the context of an emergency should also be questioned. Although the Philippines is a country with a high demand for learning the Korean language, it is hard to believe that the troop's running Korean classes was a priority immediately

after the disaster. Korean classes, vocational training and as they were out of the scope of emergency relief and were irrelevant to the restoration and recovery work, and fail to meet the criteria for development effectiveness.

Prior to sending the Araw Contingent, the South Korean government had dispatched the Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) to the Philippines. This was consistent with its Overseas Emergency Relief Act, which mandates RoK to organize an overseas emergency relief team in specialized areas, conduct rescues and emergency medical service, health care, and international development. Under the Act, RoK Armed Forces can also respond to calls for urgent needs such as military transport aircraft or carriers and the rapid transport of personnel or supplies for emergency rescue and relief, upon the request of the Public and Private Joint Council for Overseas Emergency Relief. Despite this, the Ministry of National Defense decided to send troops separate from the Korea Disaster Relief Team. This is against the Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defense Assets In Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines), which states that "military and civil defense assets should be seen as a tool complementing existing relief mechanisms" and "should be employed as a last resort only in the absence of any other comparable civilian alternative."[4]
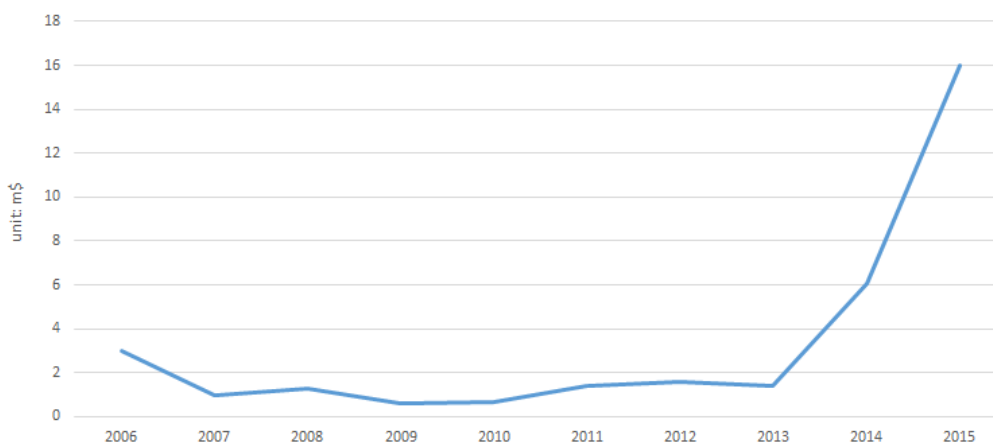
Some evaluations have claimed that diplomatic and military considerations of the South Korean government had an influence on the decision of dispatch troops. When the Philippines faced growing tensions with China relating to territorial sovereignty over Scarborough Shoal in South China Sea (Huangyan Dao in Chinese), it resumed joint military exercises with the United States Armed Forces. The US military has wanted to station rotating forces in the Philippines since 2013.In the meantime, the country suffered from damages wrought by typhoon Haiyan. South Korea sent troops to the Philippines along with the United States, Japan and Australia. Later, the US government evaluated that its military's aid for typhoon relief was a great help in enhancing military cooperation between the United States and the Philippines.[5]

It is unavoidable that political, diplomatic, and military factors for both the country sending the troops and the country accepting their presence are part of the equation. The dispatch of troops to a non-conflict region should be done with careful consideration of intended and unintended consequences.Without due consideration based on solid principles such deployments can result in arbitrary and unforeseen ripple effects in and out of the country.   For these reasons, it is difficult not to be critical of including the mobilization of military support for humanitarian activities in the scope of ODA.

Police Training Program: "K-Police Wave"

As the scope of South Korea's ODA expanded last year, financing for routine civil policing functions - the promotion of public safety and preventing and addressing criminal activities - police training became part of ODA.Beginning in 2014, South Korea has been introducing more and more programs through ODA that are related to reforming the police system and enhancing officers' capabilities in

partner countries. ODA statistics for the past decade show that the amount spent in the public safety sector rose by fivefold –US$3 million in 2006 to US$16 million in 2015. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Korean National Police Agency (KNPA) signed a memorandum of understanding for grant aid in the field of public safety in developing countries in October 2014 and have expanded these projects ever since. KNPA has implemented KOICA Fellowship Programs from 2005 to the present, and have shared the knowledge and know-how on public safety system with developing nations, by providing equipment to police officers and sending technical experts. The number of the fellowship programs carried out by KOICA in cooperation with the KNPA for the past six years (2010-2015) has been on a rapid increase, reaching 54 programs as of 2015. They call this police-training program "K-Police Wave".

ODA Statistics on the Management and Improvement of the public safety system (2006-2015)
Source: South Korea's ODA Statistics (2016), ODA Korea

While some Korean partner countries, such as Oman, are not eligible for ODA, in general, from a perspective of improving governance, support for the reform of national security systems is considered to be an important part of development cooperation and the use of ODA. But whether training provided through 'K-Police Wave' satisfies human rights standards remains a question for the international community.

According to Korean media reports, training provided by the South Korean police focuses on public safety techniques to repress protesters.[6] The demands are high for water cannon trucks and a human barricade for female police officers. In 2013-2014 South Korean firms sold US$60 million of gear to Oman, including 57 water cannon trucks and riot shields. They also exported US$16 million of water cannon trucks to Indonesia in 2010.

Countries involved in the Police Training Program: "K-Police Wave," 2015

Country	Areas of Export
Indonesia	Automatic vehicle number recognition
Laos	112 Report Center, Forensic Science Investigation & Crime Prevention
Cambodia	Protest-management skills, Cyber Crime Investigation
Guatemala	Cyber Crime Investigation
Mexico	Protest-management skills
Kenya	Protest-management skills

Source: Compiled by the Author

One fear is that undemocratic leaders could use South Korea's protest-management skills trainings and Korean-made equipment to quash dissent and quell democratization rallies, as has been increasingly true in South Korea itself. When MainaKiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, visited South Korea in January 2016, he said that the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association have been in a gradual regression in South Korea for the past few years. He expressed concern over police tactics used against demonstrators during rallies, such as water cannons and bus barricades. Of particular note is the case of Mr. Baek Nam-gi, a farmer activist, who was left in a comatose state after being pummeled by water cannons at a demonstration in Seoul on 14 November 2015. He passed away after 317 days in a coma. With these cases in mind, it is hard to ensure that the police of the partner countries, which have been trained in public safety and protest-management skills shared under the name of 'K-Police Wave', would not violate the rights of their fellow citizens.

Export Details of Police Equipment

Year	Company	Product	Exported To	Amounts (in USD)
2005	Jino Corporation	24 water cannon trucks	Bangladesh	5 million
2010	Daeji P&I	70 water cannon trucks	Indonesia	16 million
2012	-	1 water cannon truck	Thailand	0.88 million
2012	-	Police communication network build-up	Indonesia	7 million
2013	Daewoo	800 patrol cars	Peru	30 million

	International			
2014	Daewoo International	Police communication network build-up	Indonesia	72 million
2015	-	CCTV and police communication network	Papua New Guinea	3.5 million
2015-2016	Kyungbong	CCTV system build-up	Honduras	3.5 million
2015-2016	Kyungbong	CCTV for vehicle number recognition	El Salvador	2.3 million

Source: Compiled by the author

Providing the equipment used to suppress demonstrationsis not the only issue. With funding of US$6.6 million, KOICA has also implemented 'The Project for Enhancing Criminal Investigation Capability of the Philippines National Police (2016-2018)'. The scope of this project includes providing police equipment worth US$4 million (e.g. patrol cars, patrol motorcycles, investigation devices), dispatching some 60 South Korean experts, and inviting some 50 local officers to South Korea for training.

The Philippines suffers from poor public safety. Its police corruption is so rampant that officers are often involved in violent crime such as murder, kidnapping, extortion, robbery, and drug dealing. A local media outlet, Manila Standard, released a report that claimed that the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines are the most corrupt government agencies[7]

Another serious concern is the repression of human rights by the Philippine police, a result of theabuse of its authority. President Duterte proclaimed a "War on Drugs" shortly after his inauguration and authorized the police to execute 4,075 people (according to the government figures, as of March 2018) in a summary sentence.

Extra-judicial killings by police are serious crimes against humanity which International Criminal Court (ICC) can launch investigation and international communities including the UN are highly concerned. Also, in April 2016, Philippinepolice opened fireat a protest of thousands of rice farmers who were demanding government assistance after a severe drought. The result was three people being killed and dozens wounded. In October 2016, as the police broke up a large-scale anti-US rally outside the American embassy in Manila, a police van (made in Korea) rammed protesters. Nonetheless, the South Korean government has continued toprovide training and equipment to the Philippines police.

These examples reinforce the importance of close monitoring and evaluation of the effects of

equipment and training provided by a donor countryto another, partner country. It also demonstrates the fact that police training support for a partner country can be harmful to the rights of people seeking their rights as in the case of the Philippines.

Conclusion

With the extension of aid to include more peace and security costs, there is deep concern that this may greatly risk negative impacts on poverty eradication and development efforts. It may also be difficult to ensure that the human rights of residents in partner countries and their neighboring countries will be protected. As seen in South Korea's case, when aid was used for political and military means, aid can move far from its originalgoals.In South Korea's case,this outcome has been confirmed by a long history of failure in development cooperation. Misuse of aid for peace and security agendas is highly likely to result in disputes and conflicts. It therefore would seem absurd to expand the scope of ODA so that it can be used as military and diplomatic tools, despite all the side effects mentioned above.

The Sustainable Development Goalsadopted by the international community are based on values of democracy, human rights and peace. In keeping with Agenda 2030,the South Korean government should carefully examine the possible impact of ODA on the democracy, human rights and peace of partner countries, and ensure monitoring and participation of civil society in the process of ODA policy-making.

---

[1] The dispatching of provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) to Afghanistan and Iraq is a clear example of postwar reconstruction aid by the military. This can be seen as a kind of an appeasement policy to win the hearts of local people instead of a direct occupation policy that depends on advanced military technology. It is one of the civil affairs operations that the United States created to address specific circumstances and environment of each region. International NGOs and emergency relief officials in the United Nations have frequently maintained that the Afghanistan PRT is fundamentally unfit for development aid and that it is difficult to ensure effective implementation.

[2] KOICA, 『Country Assessment Report on the Afghan Reconstruction Support Project』, 2007

[3] Lee Tae-joo, 「Going after a project: International Development and Anthropological Participation」, Cross-Culture Study 17th Series 1st edition, 2011

[4] See https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/OSLO%20Guidelines%20Rev%201.1%20-%20Nov%2007_0.pdf.

[5] Congressional Research Service, Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda): U.S. and International Response to Philippines Disaster. 2014.2.10

[6] The Jong-angIlbo, October 10, 2015http://news.jtbc.joins.com/article/ArticlePrint.aspx?news_id=NB11056565

[7] PNP, AFP still most corrupt govt agencies, Manila Standards, March 08, 2016
http://thestandard.com.ph/news/-main-stories/top-stories/201180/-pnp-afp-still-most-corrupt-govt-agencies-.html.