

# How the public participate in taking the position and action against FTA?

- outline -

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\* This outline is about experiences & strategies for radical communication in (counter) public sphere around Kor-US FTA talk during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2006.

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## **0. Background for (anti-) FTA talk and communicative interactions**

### 0-1. Kor-US FTA in 2006

- So-called Four Preliminaries in 2005 as isolated in the surface. [see [nofta.or.kr/en](http://nofta.or.kr/en), [bilaterals.org](http://bilaterals.org)]
  - : "suspending regulation on pharmaceutical product prices"
  - : "easing government regulation of gas emissions in imported U.S. cars"
  - : "resuming importation of U.S. beef"
  - : "reducing the compulsory South Korean film quota for cinemas from 146 days per year to 73 days"
- so called "public hearing" Feb. 2nd. [it's dismissed, see [video from chamsaesang](#)]
- public announcement on opening of the Kor-US FTA negotiation in Feb. 3rd.
- Korean Alliance against Kor-US FTA([nofta.or.kr](http://nofta.or.kr)) was formed in March 28<sup>th</sup>, a coalition made up of about 300 social movement/ civil society organizations. [see [inauguration paper](#)]
- 1st Kor-US FTA talk in Washington D.C. June 5th-10th, where about 40 Korean Struggle Delegation protested. [see [video from MBC iMTV](#)]
- so called 2<sup>nd</sup> "public hearing" June. 27th. [it's also dismissed, see [video from Indie Video TFT](#)]
- 2nd Kor-US FTA talk in Seoul, July 10th-14th, where more than 50,000 people protested. [see [videos from Media Culture Action, KoA's Newsletter#1](#)]

### 0-2. dynamic interaction of media

\* mainstream broadcasting + internet portals + independent media

(1) mainstream media (broadcasting and newspaper)

- mostly conservative and commercial

- mainly ignorant of FTA issues, but full of programming on Worldcup in April and May for example.
- a few progressive producers & journalists grounded on movements of media labor union as well as media reform since 1980's.

## (2) internet

- \* penetration - 32 million Internet users (71.9%) and 12 million broadband internet users (out of about 58 million population in S. Korea).
- commercial
  - : internet portals - major portals(naver.com, daum.net, kr.yahoo.com, empas.com and so on for the services of search, e-mail, web-community etc.)
- progressive
  - : progressive internet media such as "people's media Chamsaesang"(www.newscham.net), "Voices of People"(www.voiceofpeople.org) etc.
- independent
  - : independent web communities and ISPs such as [jinbo.net](http://jinbo.net)(korean progressive network), [nodong.net](http://nodong.net)(labornet) etc., and progressive organizations' each website.
- popular
  - : BBS, weblog, cyber-cafe, mini-homepage, (web)community, portal discussion room, cyworld(myspace) etc. in each category as above.

## (3) independent/alternative media (audio-visual production & distribution)

- non-for-profit and alternative/autonomous media (production/distribution)
- public screenings in unions/orgs/locals for education, discussion, and mobilization.
- more web-related circulation through all categories of internet spaces.
- public access structure in the mainstream broadcasting(terrestrial, cable, satellite)

## (4) overview of dynamic interaction of media

- government's media play: up to propaganda by using big budget.
- a few critical TV programs from mainstream media was triggering the public's awareness of what the "hell" out of FTA is. Two TV programs for example showed Mexican and Canadian reality of NAFTA, and hidden and un-democratic process of kor-US FTA.
- A number of public opinions have suddenly formed at internet portals, with the public getting to know FTA and self-expressing one's opinion.
- And independent/alternative media, constantly criticizing FTA and the Roh's government, have been relatively more exposed to the public at the same time.
- Such rapid and vast process that the public opposition to the FTA has formed feeds back to the government, the mainstream media and ...

## 1. Government's propaganda and KoA's counter-information activities.

- The government manages KTV(state TV channel, [www.ktv.go.kr](http://www.ktv.go.kr)), Government Information Agency([www.allim.go.kr](http://www.allim.go.kr))'s official FTA website, Kor-US TALK! TALK! lounge([fta.news.go.kr](http://fta.news.go.kr)) etc. And It spent 3.8 million U\$ dollars for such propaganda such as public advertisements( for TV, radio, internet, subway, etc. [see [the government's ad video \(no. 2\)](#)])
- diverse ways of communicative practices by PR task force team in Korean Alliance against Kor-US

FTA, collaborating with indie/alt/community media/cultural organizations and individuals.

- The "committee for supporting FTA" Launched by government, after 2nd round of talk and increasing public opposition to the FTA.

## 2. A few TV programmes critical of FTA from mainstream broadcasters

- "[12 years of FTA – the bright and the dark of Mexico](#)" in [KBS Special](#) from KBS in June 4th. and some more programs. [see
- "[Lone Star and Participatory Government](#)" in [PD Note](#) from MBC in July 4th, and July 17th.
- And some other discussion programs and radio shows.
- These two 1-hour programs played a crucial role to raise big awareness of the problem relating FTA and this government, when it comes close to 2nd round talk in Seoul.
- Their main focus: secrecy policy and undemocratic process, what'll be good and bad (not that much in-depth analysis, though). Those are KoA's continuously-requesting fair coverage, but government said "extremely unbalanced".
- In general, mainstream media are not critical of FTA issues with such few exceptions.

## 3. internet

**: commercialized but relatively open space for the public's autonomous organizing.**

- There are websites, web-communities, blogs, mailing lists, BBS etc. against FTA, including formal website for Korean Alliance([nofta.or.kr](http://nofta.or.kr)), most circulation of which are mainly within the organized communities in terms of language, level of discourse, and way of communication(either vertical or horizontal).
- continuous efforts(articles, columns and videos) by independent internet media, special webpages for NoFTA in Chamsaesang([www.newscham.net/nofta\\_2006.php](http://www.newscham.net/nofta_2006.php)) for example.
- "F-killer"(cyber-cafe, [cafe.naver.com/ftakiller.cafe](http://cafe.naver.com/ftakiller.cafe)) coordinated by research machine 'suyu + trans'([www.transs.pe.kr](http://www.transs.pe.kr))
- : "F-killer" has opened since April, in which its main members(open membership) have paraphrased abstract and complex discourse about FTA into easy-to-understand stories and more accessible by the public(at least netizen). eg. "[A and Q](#)" to respond to government's "[Q and A](#)", and [FTA grand dictionary project\(wiki\)](#).
- : "spraying"(so many duplications by copy & past) critical materials into portal's discussion rooms and other sites.
- : radio programs, "F-killer news" since June (daily and then weekly) [in English and Japanese](#) as well as [in Korean](#).
- ongoing netizen petition for 300,000 till the end of August (180,000 as of July 27th) to stop the FTA at [agora.media.daum.net/petition](http://agora.media.daum.net/petition) [see [the online petition](#)]
- Right after those progressive TV programs, hundreds of comments on FTA-related (online) news articles and so many peoples' posts to criticize the FTA issues in portals etc.
- And rapidly growing visits on KoA's website and F-killer cafe as well as other progressive websites with DIY media-remaking(and parody). [see [one of parody of government's ad video](#) and [images](#)]

- people's autonomous discussions of self-organization is converged into KoA's rally in July 12th.
- one of popular cartoonist GangPull's cartoon(July 20th): "talk about FTA" at [issue.media,daum.net](http://issue.media.daum.net) with 4390 comments as of July 25th [see the [cartoon](#)]
- But the limitation is that the major (if not most) critical public opinion is not to down FTA, but to delay (Kor-US) FTA till the time ready to (at least partly) compete with U.S.

#### 4. independent media and cultural actions

- Before the opening of Kor-US FTA in April 3rd, progressive internet media solely kept digging up what's the behind the FTA, neoliberal globalization as before-mentioned, while the mainstream media have ignored it.
- independent film/video makers and media activists linked with social justice movements: self-organizing workshops and educations for alternative media making.
- common cultural actions at rally, protest, conference etc. in each Joint Countermove Councils/Federation/Coalition/Committee/locals.
- Independent film/video makers' Task Force team([indieaction.net](http://indieaction.net)) against FTA was formed and is doing video-making and tries to submit one of program to "open channel" in KBS as the public access.
- ongoing activities of Media Culture Action against neoliberal globalization([gomedaction.net](http://gomedaction.net)) and FTA recently: internet (live) broadcasting[[video on air](#)], [series of photo essay](#), (weekly) [NoFTA news](#) etc.
- using diverse communicative ways such as Intellectual Property-related cartoon series([blog.jinbo.net/nofta\\_ip/?pid=30](http://blog.jinbo.net/nofta_ip/?pid=30)) for the public
- cultural action: performances and cultural festivals. In particular, 100 hours non-stop relay artists' cultural actions during 5days in 2nd round of FTA talk.
- These sectors 'should'(if not ever) focus on raising the public's awareness of fundamental aspect of FTA, neo-liberal structural adjustments, and how to(re-)build up democracy and the alternatives.

#### 5. lessons and suggestions

(1) what we want to communicate with the public:

- the public likes/needs to know that
  - : what's wrong with FTA (and neo-liberalism), what lies the government tell us,
  - : how the FTA can be terminated,
  - : what steps can be taken to counter any other potential attacks by U.S.,
  - : and what measures can be used to continue our country's trade relations.
- and discussion and public dialogue must be accompanied by
  - : a set of alternative (economic/political) strategy,
  - : including an economic development program, a social development plan, etc.
  - : And building a new political consensus process around this program and strategy.

(2) How we want to communicate those with the public:

- communication strategies and the popular education
    - : media strategies for radical communication is mainly for the popular education to mobilize public opposition to the corporate free trade to the death of all people, and involve them in making alternatives.
    - : The more public opposition to the profit-driven FTA are mobilized, the more pressure on government and US empire, and the more grows the alternatives to neoliberal globalization.
  - using all kind of media
    - : What is important thing to influence on the public as many media as you can utilize to expose what's the lie and truth, and to facilitate the public awareness and discussion.
  - freedom of expression and people's expression
    - : let's encourage people to get involved with autonomous media production/circulation not only by declaring freedom of expression, but providing means of expression, places/spaces, and democratic ways of communication.
  - radical communication and independent media
    - : As for independent media (you have them, or find'em near you unless you be the media), you want to make an in-depth analysis on the fundamental aspects of FTA as the finalization/renewal of a neoliberal structural adjustments which have resulted in complete destruction of people's lives and environments for decades.
  - It is very important for all fighting people and the public in general to hear, see, and get to know each other's struggles at every each corner: There needs local/translocal/interlocal flows of radical communication among fighting activists against FTAs and neoliberal globalization all around world.
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### **Media Culture Action against Neo-liberal Globalization**

: Act with Media! Resist with Culture! Let's Go Media Action! [www.gomediaction.net](http://www.gomediaction.net)

- \* One of networks of media and culture movements in S. Korea
  - for struggling against neo-liberal globalization that is deepening poverty, un-equality, discrimination, and warfare.
  - for organizing and activating a diversity of actions of independent media and autonomous culture in parallel with progressive social transformation at every corner.
- \* Under organizing process
  - starting from anti-APEC(Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit event in Pusan, November of 2005
  - to anti-WTO 6th ministerial conference in Hongkong, December of 2005,
  - now No-FTA media/culture activism and beyond.