



NORTH KOREA CHRONOLOGY 2015

Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project
Social Science Research Council

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Kim Jong-un's New Year address: "Seventy years have passed since our nation was divided by outside forces. In those decades the world has made a tremendous advance and the times have undergone dramatic changes, but our nation has not yet achieved reunification, suffering the pain of division. It is a deplorable fact known to everyone and it is lamentable to everyone. **No longer can we bear and tolerate the tragedy of national division that has continued century after century.** Last year we put forward crucial proposals for improved inter-Korean relations and national reunification and made sincere efforts for their implementation. Our efforts, however, could not bear due fruit owing to the obstructive moves by the anti-reunification forces within and without; instead the north-south relations have been on a headlong rush to aggravation. However complicated the situation may be and whatever obstacles and difficulties may stand in our way, we should unfailingly achieve national reunification, a lifetime wish of the President and the General and the greatest desire of the nation, and build a dignified and prosperous reunified country on this land." Let the whole nation join efforts to open up a broad avenue to independent reunification in this year of the 70th anniversary of national liberation!"-this is the slogan of struggle the entire Korean nation should hold up. **We should remove the danger of war, ease the tension and create a peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula. The large-scale war games ceaselessly held every year in South Korea are the root cause of the escalating tension on the peninsula and the danger of nuclear war facing our nation.** It is needless to say that **there can be neither trustworthy dialogue nor improved inter-Korean relations in such a gruesome atmosphere in which war drills are staged** against the dialogue partner. To cling to nuclear war drills against the

fellow countrymen in collusion with aggressive outside forces is an extremely dangerous act of inviting calamity. **We will resolutely react against and mete out punishment to any acts of provocation and war moves that infringe upon the sovereignty and dignity of our country.** The South Korean authorities should **discontinue all war moves including the reckless military exercises they conduct with foreign forces** and choose to ease the tension on the Korean peninsula and create a peaceful environment. The United States, the very one that divided our nation into two and has imposed the suffering of national division upon it for 70 years, should desist from pursuing the anachronistic policy hostile towards the DPRK and reckless acts of aggression and boldly make a policy switch. The north and the south should refrain from seeking confrontation of systems while absolutizing their own ideologies and systems but achieve great national unity true to the principle of By Our Nation Itself to satisfactorily resolve the reunification issue in conformity with the common interests of the nation. If they try to force their ideologies and systems upon each other, they will never settle the national reunification issue in a peaceful way, only bringing confrontation and war. Though the people-centered socialist system of our own style is the most advantageous, we do not force it on South Korea and have never done so. The South Korean authorities should neither seek "unification of systems" that incites distrust and conflict between the north and the south nor insult the other side's system and make impure solicitation to do harm to their fellow countrymen, travelling here and there. The north and the south, as they had already agreed, should resolve the national reunification issue in the common interests of the nation transcending the differences in ideology and system. **They should briskly hold dialogue, negotiations and exchanges** and make contact to relink the severed ties and blood vessels of the nation and bring about a great turn in inter-Korean relations. It is the unanimous desire of the fellow countrymen for both sides to stop fighting and pave a new way for reunification by concerted efforts. They should no longer waste time and energy over pointless arguments and trifling matters but write a new chapter in the history of inter-Korean relations. Nothing is impossible if our nation shares one purpose and joins efforts. On the road for reunification the north and the south had got such charter and great program for reunification as the July 4 Joint Statement, the historic June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 Declaration, thus demonstrating to the whole world the nation's determination and mettle to reunify the country. We think that **it is possible to resume the suspended high-level contacts and hold sectoral talks if the South Korean authorities are sincere in their stand towards improving inter-Korean relations through dialogue. And there is no reason why we should not hold a summit meeting if the atmosphere and environment for it are created.** In the future, too, we will make every effort to substantially promote dialogue and negotiations. The entire Korean nation should turn out together in the nationwide movement for the country's reunification so as to glorify this year as a landmark in opening up a broad avenue to independent reunification. Last year, in the international arena, hostilities and bloodshed persisted in several countries and regions due to the imperialists' outrageous arbitrariness and undisguised infringement upon their sovereignty, which posed a serious threat to global peace and security. **Especially, owing to the United States' extremely hostile policy aimed at isolating and suffocating our Republic, the bulwark of socialism and fortress of independence and justice, the vicious cycle of tension never ceased and the danger of war grew**

further on the Korean peninsula. The United States and its vassal forces are resorting to the despicable "human rights" racket as they were foiled in their attempt to destroy our self-defensive nuclear deterrent and stifle our Republic by force. **The present situation**, in which high-handedness based on strength is rampant and justice and truth are trampled ruthlessly in the international arena, **eloquently demonstrates that we were just in our efforts to firmly consolidate our self-reliant defense capability with the nuclear deterrent as its backbone** and safeguard our national sovereignty, the lifeblood of the country, under the unfurled banner of Songun. **As long as the enemy persists in its moves to stifle our socialist system, we will consistently adhere to the Songun politics** and the line of promoting the two fronts simultaneously and firmly defend the sovereignty of the country and the dignity of the nation, no matter how the international situation and the structure of relations of our surrounding countries may change. On the basis of the revolutionary principles and independent stand, we will expand and develop foreign relations in a multilateral and positive way, giving top priority to the dignity and interests of the country." (KCNA, "Kim Jong-un's New Year Address," January 1, 2015)

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The Obama administration doubled down on its allegation that North Korea's leadership was behind the hacking of Sony Pictures, announcing new, if largely symbolic, economic sanctions against 10 senior North Korean officials and the intelligence agency it said was the source of "many of North Korea's major cyberoperations." The actions were based on an executive order President Obama signed on vacation in Hawaii, as part of what he had promised would be a "proportional response" against the country. But in briefings for reporters, officials said they could not establish that any of the 10 officials had been directly involved in the destruction of much of the studio's computing infrastructure. In fact, most seemed linked to the North's missile and weapons sales. Two are senior North Korean representatives in Iran, a major buyer of North Korean military technology, and five others are representatives in Syria, Russia, China and Namibia. The administration has said there would be a covert element of its response as well. Officials sidestepped questions about whether the United States was involved in bringing down North Korea's Internet connectivity to the outside world over the past two weeks. Perhaps the most noticeable element of the announcement was the administration's effort to push back on the growing chorus of doubters about the evidence that the attack on Sony was North Korean in origin. Several cybersecurity firms have argued that when Mr. Obama took the unusual step of naming the North's leadership – on December 19 the president declared that "North Korea engaged in this attack" – he had been misled by American intelligence agencies that were too eager to blame a longtime adversary and allowed themselves to be duped by ingenious hackers skilled at hiding their tracks. But Obama's critics do not have a consistent explanation of who might have been culpable. Some blame corporate insiders or an angry former employee, a theory Sony Pictures' top executive, Michael Lynton, has denied. Others say it was the work of outside hacking groups that were simply using the release of "The Interview" as cover for their actions. Both the F.B.I. and Mr. Obama's aides used the sanctions announcement to argue that the critics of the administration's decision to attribute the attack to North Korea have no access to the classified evidence that led the intelligence agencies, and Mr. Obama, to their conclusion. "We remain very confident

in the attribution," a senior administration official who has been at the center of the Sony case told reporters in a briefing that, under guidelines set by the White House, barred the use of the briefer's name. Still, the administration is clearly stung by the comparisons to the George W. Bush administration's reliance on faulty intelligence assessments about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction before the 2003 American-led invasion of the country. They note how rare it is for Mr. Obama, usually cautious on intelligence issues, to blame a specific country so directly. But they continue to insist that they cannot explain the basis of the president's declaration without revealing some of the most sensitive sources and technologies at their disposal. By naming 10 individuals at the center of the North's effort to sell or obtain weapons technology, the administration seemed to be trying to echo sanctions that the Bush administration imposed eight years ago against a Macao bank that the North Korean leadership used to buy goods illicitly and to reward loyalists. President Bush, speaking to reporters one evening in the White House, argued that those sanctions were the only ones that got the attention of Kim Jong-il, whose son has ruled the country since his death in 2011. In another sign of how Mr. Obama was seeking to punish individual leaders, the executive order he signed gives the Treasury Department broad authority to name anyone in the country's leadership believed to be involved in illicit activity, and to take action against the Workers' Party, which has complete control of North Korea's politics. In a statement, Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew suggested that the sanctions were intended not only to punish North Korea for the hacking of Sony – which resulted in the destruction of about three-quarters of the computers and servers at the studio's main operations – but also to warn the country not to try anything like it again. "Today's actions are driven by our commitment to hold North Korea accountable for its destructive and destabilizing conduct," Lew said. "Even as the F.B.I. continues its investigation into the cyberattack against Sony Pictures Entertainment, these steps underscore that we will employ a broad set of tools to defend U.S. businesses and citizens, and to respond to attempts to undermine our values or threaten the national security of the United States." Beyond the initial sanctions, the power of the president's order might come from its breadth and its use in the future. One senior official said the order would allow the Treasury to impose sanctions on any person who is an official of the North Korean government or of the Worker's Party or anyone judged "controlled by the North Korean government" or acting on its behalf. Yet it is easy to overestimate the impact of sanctions. Six decades of efforts to isolate North Korea have not stopped it from building and testing a nuclear arsenal, launching terrorist attacks on the South, testing missiles or maintaining large prison camps. In addition, the Reconnaissance General Bureau, the country's main intelligence organization, has long been under heavy sanctions for directing the country's arms trade, including the Proliferation Security Initiative, an effort started by the Bush administration to intercept the sales of missiles and other arms. Still, the Treasury's statement that "many of North Korea's major cyberoperations run through R.G.B." was more than has been said publicly about how the North Koreans structure their cyberoperations. And administration officials insisted again that the Sony attack "clearly crossed a threshold," in the words of one senior official, from "website defacement and digital graffiti" to an attack on computer infrastructure. (David E. Sanger and Michael S. Schmidt, "More Sanctions on North Korea After Sony Case," *New York Times*, January 3, 2015, p. A-1) The U.S. government is increasingly committed to publicly calling out foreign governments

when there is evidence that they are responsible for cyberattacks, a senior Justice Department official said January 8. Once U.S. officials determined that North Korea was behind a massive intrusion at Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc., publicly announcing it was made part of the U.S. response, said Assistant Attorney General John Carlin, head of the Justice Department's National Security Division. "We know you did it, and we're going to say you did it," Carlin said of the government's approach. That decision, along with last year's indictment of five Chinese military officials on charges of vast corporate espionage, is part of a new approach by the U.S. government to publicly identify foreign culprits behind digital attacks, Carlin said. Law enforcement is generally loath to point fingers at suspects before an arrest is made, and standard policy has long been to keep investigative details closely held. But the U.S. government increasingly sees value in speaking out publicly when there's evidence a foreign government was responsible, according to Carlin and other officials. Carlin appeared at a cybersecurity conference at Fordham University in New York, where he and other Obama administration officials reaffirmed their conclusion that North Korea was responsible for the Sony hack in the face of continued skepticism from some independent experts. Some have suggested that the intrusion could have been the work of disgruntled employees or hackers unrelated to the North Korean government, but FBI officials have said there's no credible evidence of an inside job or that anyone other than the isolated county was responsible. Lisa Monaco, President Obama's homeland security adviser, said during a panel discussion earlier in the day that those who were challenging the government's findings did not have access to all of the evidence the government is seeing. FBI Director James Comey made a similar point during an appearance January 7 at the same conference, where he revealed new details by saying that hackers mistakenly sent messages directly that could be traced to IP addresses used exclusively by North Korea. "If you're going to be making statements about the activities of a nation-state having crossed a threshold into very destructive and coercive action, a.) you'd better be right, and b.) you want to be able to do so with ... people having confidence in your judgment," Monaco said, later adding that the decision to deliver a public announcement was not made lightly. Joseph Demarest, the head of the FBI's cyber division, said it was hard to look through all the Sony evidence and reach a different conclusion. He said the FBI had studied North Korea for a long time. "Overwhelmingly, it came out as **North Korea or a proxy put up by North Korea**," he said. (Eric Tucker, "U.S. officials: Decision to Name Sony Culprit Made Carefully," Associated Press, January 8, 2015)

President Park convened a New Year's meeting with nearly 200 top government officials this afternoon at the Blue House, where she said that her administration "will try its utmost on practical preparations needed for tangible and real [unification] to be realized." The meeting included leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties, the prime minister, the National Assembly speaker, presidential secretaries, ministers and vice ministers, and judicial and economic leaders. Because the Blue House has indicated its intentions to improve North-South relations, questions arose a day after Kim's proposal over how Park would respond. On December 29, the South's Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation initially proposed to Pyongyang a minister-level meeting this month to discuss a range of issues, including reunions for aged families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War. President Park said in her New

Year's address to the nation that the government "will work to put an end to the 70-year division that has caused severance and conflict, and would encourage North Korea toward a path of trust and change." She added that her administration plans to "lay a substantive, concrete foundation on which to achieve unification." "We are not concerned about the format," said a high-level government official. "Rather, the act of holding talks is what's important," whether that be high-level talks or the minister-level talks as proposed by Seoul. He indicated that a leaders' summit could be discussed in such platforms. If government talks with the North manifest, family reunions would be the top priority, he added. "If we do not resolve the issue, our people will have to hold this history in shame," the government official said. "If things go well, confirming their identities and if they are alive will take less than three years. ... If this follows through, it will considerably alleviate the grievances of these separated families." "In the New Year, the North-South relations have to be eased. The Unification Ministry's task is to improve North-South relations, and to move toward a path of unification," he added. "The 70th anniversary of liberation and separation is not just a number but is important in many other aspects. Depending on how we proceed, the next five, 10, 30 years are decided." "The government position is that North Korea's New Year address proposing talks, cooperation and contact shows a sincere posture toward dialogue and cooperation," Ministry of Unification spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol said in a briefing today. He added that the government "adheres to the stance that we need to resolve issues with the North through dialogue, and North Korea's New Year address once more provided an opportunity to reconfirm this. So if North Korea sincerely intends to improve inter-Korean relations, it will need to come to the talks without any preconditions." President Park earlier in the day also held a phone conversation with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to "discuss cooperation with Korea and the United Nations and mutual concerns," according to Blue House spokesman Min Kyung-wook. They were said to have discussed the situation on the Korean Peninsula as well as Kim's proposal for a leaders' summit. (Sarah Kim, "Government Weighs N. Korea's Remarks," *JoongAng Ilbo*, January 3, 2015)

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DPRK FoMin spokesman: "The U.S. on Friday [December 6] issued the presidential executive order to impose "new sanctions" upon the DPRK under the pretext of the cyberattack on the Sony Pictures Entertainment. The Sony Pictures Entertainment produced a disgusting movie openly agitating terrorism against a sovereign state only to invite bitter censure and criticism of public at home and abroad. But the U.S. is kicking off a noisy anti-DPRK campaign, deliberately linking the "cyber terror" with the DPRK. Many countries formally clarified their negative stand on the U.S. absurd assertions and major media and prestigious experts of the U.S. and the West are becoming vocal claiming that the recent hacking attack was not made by north Korea. The U.S. anti-DPRK hostile act that kicked off from the outset of the year is aimed to save its face and tarnish the image of the DPRK in the international arena at any cost, upset by the increased international skepticism about its "results of the investigation" which termed the recent cyber attack the one made by the DPRK. The U.S. is persistently turning down the DPRK's just proposal for joint investigation to probe the truth about the cyberattack on the Sony Pictures Entertainment. This behavior itself brings to light its ulterior motive prompted by its guilty conscience. **The persistent and unilateral action taken by the White House to slap "sanctions" against the**

DPRK patently proves that it is still not away from inveterate repugnancy and hostility toward the DPRK. Now is the time for the U.S. to know that its sanctions did not weaken the DPRK but proved counter-productive as shown by the DPRK's measures to further sharpen the treasured sword of Songun. The policy persistently pursued by the U.S. to stifle the DPRK, groundlessly stirring up bad blood towards it would only harden its will and resolution to defend the sovereignty of the country, the dignity of the nation and the sovereignty by dint of the Songun politics." (KCNA, "DPRK FM Slams U.S. for 'New Sanctions,'" January 4, 2015)

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KCNA: "Supreme leader Kim Jong-un in his New Year address urged the U.S. to desist from pursuing the anachronistic policy hostile towards the DPRK and make a policy switchover. Last year the U.S. more extremely schemed to isolate and stifle the DPRK, a fortress of socialism and bulwark of independence and justice. It persisted in military pressure and economic blockade against the DPRK, recklessly trying to provoke it by force. The U.S. introduced huge armed forces in south Korea and its vicinity and staged war maneuvers against the DPRK ceaselessly, claiming that its having access to nuclear deterrent for self-defence is "threat" and "provocation." When the attempt to destroy nuclear deterrent of the DPRK and stifle it proved to be futile, the U.S. kicked off the base "human rights" racket, politicized and internationalized it and prodded its followers into cooking up even the "human rights resolution" against the DPRK. The evil cycle of tension persists and the danger of a nuclear war increases on the Korean peninsula day by day due to the U.S. hostile moves against the DPRK. **In order to cope with the prevailing situation** in which the U.S. high-handed practices are rampant and justice and truth are ruthlessly trampled down, the DPRK has further bolstered up its military capability for self-defense with nuclear deterrent as a pivot, holding higher the banner of Songun. **This is a product of the U.S. policy error in its Korean issue.** This is clearly evidenced by the history of confrontation between the DPRK and the U.S. The U.S. policy makers have long pursued anti-DPRK moves including military pressure, sanctions and economic blockade while sticking to its hostile policy toward the DPRK but this got the U.S. nowhere. **The U.S. withdrawal of the hostile policy toward the DPRK is a very urgent issue in view of the requirement of the prevailing situation** and the trend of the times. **In case the U.S. does not take a correct choice in the Korean issue, the DPRK's possession of war deterrent will be prolonged and bolstered** and the U.S. will face ever more fatal consequences. **If the U.S. respects the sovereignty of the DPRK and does not interfere in its internal affairs and approaches it with good faith, though belatedly, the latter will act in line with it.** This is the fixed stand of the DPRK. The U.S. had better face up to the changed situation and the trend of the historic development and make a political decision to boldly roll back its policy hostile towards the DPRK in keeping with the interests of the U.S. and the aspiration of the world peace-loving people." (KCNA, "U.S. Should Roll Back Hostile Policy toward DPRK and Make Policy Switchover," January 6, 2015)

How advanced is North Korea's nuclear weapons program? Seoul appears less sure about its progress than the head of the U.S. military in Korea. South Korea's defense ministry said Tuesday that Pyongyang's ability to produce a nuclear warhead was "at a significant level" and that North Korea had "the capability to threaten the contiguous

U.S. with a long-range ballistic missile." But a ministry spokesman later said the technology for miniaturizing a nuclear warhead to put on such a missile was assessed to be "incomplete," a slightly cagier characterization than one U.S. assessment last year. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula, told reporters in October that he believed North Korea was capable of building a miniaturized nuclear warhead. He said Pyongyang had "the technology to potentially actually deliver what they say they have," referring to the technologies needed to launch a nuclear-tipped missile towards the U.S. Those comments suggest a difference in the assessments of the North's progress in developing nuclear arms technology, though Gen. Scaparrotti qualified his remarks, saying it was unlikely Pyongyang could stage an attack with such weapons without exhaustive testing, a process that had yet to take place. (Jeyup S. Kwaak, "Seoul Less Sure Than U.S. General of Pyongyang's Nuclear Weapons Progress," *Wall Street Journal Korea Real Time*, January 6, 2015)

"North Korea's capabilities of miniaturizing nuclear weapons appear to have reached a significant level," the paper said. "North Korea is presumed to have secured some 40 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium by reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods multiple times, and it is evaluated to have been working on the highly enriched uranium program." Pyongyang has yet to demonstrate the miniaturization capability, though officials and experts from South Korea and the U.S. have said the communist country is believed to have the technology to build nuclear-tipped missiles. "We don't have any intelligence that North Korea completed the miniaturization. In consideration of the fact that acquiring such technology takes around two to seven years in general and eight years have passed since the North conducted its first nuclear test, however, its capability for small nuclear warheads would have reached a significant level," a ministry official said. In the paper, South Korea also assessed that North Korea is "presumed to have (missiles) capabilities that could threaten the U.S. mainland, having fired off long-range missiles five times." The evaluation was based upon the North's successful sending of a satellite into orbit on an Unha-3 long-range rocket in December 2012, according to the official, noting that its Taepodong-2 long-range rocket is believed to have a range of 10,000 kilometers. Despite Pyongyang's push to develop long-range missiles, no signs have been detected that Pyongyang has put them into service, he added. In the face of such growing threats from the bellicose regime, South Korea defined the North Korean regime and its military as South Korea's "enemy" in the paper as the communist country has posed "serious threats to our national security." South Korea had dropped the definition in 2004 after 10 years of use, but revived the expression in its 2012 white paper after the North carried out a series of military provocations in 2010 including torpedoing the South Korean naval corvette Cheonan, killing 46 sailors, and shelling the western sea border island of Yeonpyeong, killing four. (Oh Seok-min, "N. Korea Has 'Significant' Technology for Miniaturized Nukes: Seoul, Yonhap, January 6, 2015)

North Korea has set up posts along its border with South Korea to be able to more quickly invade its neighbor, while also expanding its artillery and mechanized forces, according to South Korea's Defense Ministry. Kim Jong-un's regime is setting up "infiltration facilities" along the demilitarized zone to be able to both accommodate and rapidly deploy special forces into South Korea if war breaks out, the ministry said in its latest white paper released today. It didn't say how many posts there are or whether they included tunnels and housed weapons. North Korea has also probably developed ballistic missiles capable

of threatening the continental U.S., according to the report, the first time South Korea has made the assertion in its white paper. "These are newly spotted structures and could be part of a wider network of military bases and tunnels," Park Chang Kwon, a senior research fellow at the state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses in Seoul, said by phone. South Korea is also "formally saying that North Korea has very much addressed the issues of accuracy and reliability for its intercontinental ballistic missile." North Korea's capacity to miniaturize nuclear warheads is also believed to have reached a "considerable" level, according to the paper. No South Korean or U.S. officials have said the North has yet obtained the ability to tip a long-range missile with a nuclear warhead. North Korea is also building a fleet of high-speed boats while developing submarines capable of carrying ballistic missiles, according to the white paper. In his New Year address broadcast Jan. 1, Kim Jong-un said he would beef up his country's war-fighting forces, which includes the development of nuclear weapons. At the same time, he raised the possibility of a summit with South Korean President Park Geun Hye to ease tensions between the two countries more than 60 years after the end of their civil war. (Sam Kim, "North Korea Boosting Ability to Attack South, U.S.," Bloomberg News, January 6, 2015)

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DPRK National Defense Commission spokesman's statement "urging the south Korean authorities to clarify their stand on some problems: Talking about "sincerity of the New Year address of the north", politicians of south Korea have described the DPRK's historic appeal as an "attempt to embrace the south aimed at breaking down south Korea-U.S. cooperation" and a "dialogue offensive to get rid of the international pressure." Worse still, they estimated the U.S. "high-profile additional sanctions" against the DPRK as "proper counteraction" and again prodded the human scum into scattering anti-DPRK leaflets in frontline area for confrontation. ... **Firstly, do the south Korean authorities have an idea to bring about a great change in the north-south relations through dialogue, negotiation, exchange and contact or to persist in the confrontational racket such as leaflet scattering?** What matters is the fact that they still claim they can hardly stop such confrontational racket conducted under their jurisdiction on the pretexts of "freedom of expression, characteristics of social system and absence of legal grounds." **The south Korean authorities should make clear their stand** on whether they will choose dialogue or confrontation. **Secondly, do they intend to create a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula or to go on escalating the tension? Instead of responding to the DPRK's peaceful call for a halt to the joint military rehearsals staged in league with outside forces, the south Korean military has declared from the outset of the new year the continuation of nuclear war exercises against the DPRK, asserting that the rehearsals would go on to keep their combat capabilities as long as "south Korea-U.S. alliance" exists.** The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the south Korean army flew into the sky over the southwestern territorial waters, sensitive hotspot, by a fighter, blustering that "if the north provokes, the south will not hesitate to punish it mercilessly." The south Korean authorities should clarify their stand on whether they intend to create a peaceful environment or go on escalating the tension. Thirdly, do they have a will to achieve the great unity and cohesion in the spirit of By Our Nation Itself or to resort to the moves for "unification of social systems" and "confrontation of social systems"? In south Korea, politicians and even the authorities are **scheming to subordinate the**

dialogue and contacts for national reunification to the materialization of the present chief executive's "doctrine of gaining a great opportunity of unification."

Such nonsense as "Let us achieve unification under the system of liberal democracy at the risk of our lives in 2015" is heard from them, and the minister of Unification went the lengths of calling in a public appearance for the "south-led unification." The present chief executive of south Korea did not hesitate to contend that the north should be led to make a "meaningful change" in 2015 without fail. The south Korean authorities should have a clear understanding of the DPRK's resolution and will reflected in the positive call for writing a new history of the north-south relations. **The DPRK will watch the future movement of the south Korean authorities with vigilance.**" (KCNA, "NDC Spokesman Urges S. Korean Authorities to Clarify Stand on Improving North-South Relations," January 7, 2015)

DPRK National Defense Commission Policy Department statement "The U.S. ruling forces are more persistently resorting to their harsh policy hostile to the DPRK. Typical of its hostile policy is that U.S. President Obama slapped "high-profile additional sanctions" against major institutions and bodies and individuals of the DPRK from the outset of the new year and issued a "presidential administrative order" for enforcing them. As regards the historic measures declared by the DPRK for improving the inter-Korean ties and creating a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula, the U.S. authorities have already begun talking rubbish, blustering that the U.S. should not react to them with payment of excessive expenses. They are openly revealing their ulterior intention, asserting that the relations should be improved on the premise that the north shall make a sincere change in its attitude towards the denuclearization. The Policy Department of the NDC of the DPRK in its statement on Jan. 7 notifies the Obama Administration of its following principled stand as it is pushing the DPRK-U.S. relations to the worst phase of confrontation from the outset of the year: **Firstly, the U.S. should lift all unreasonable "sanctions" against the DPRK in all fields.** We have taken this stand because all "sanctions" the U.S. has imposed against the DPRK so far are based on the inveterate hostility and repugnancy towards it and Washington's hostile policy towards it. This is also because "sanctions" were invented under absurd pretexts and conditions. The U.S. should know that such tragicomedy as issuing the above-said order over the case without any sure ground would only bring bitterer disgrace and shame to it. **Secondly, the U.S., availing itself of this opportunity, should make a bold decision to unconditionally stop all reckless hostile acts of creating the danger of war on the Korean Peninsula.** The U.S. should properly know that its attempt to infringe upon the sovereignty of the DPRK and bring down its dignified social system by force of arms will never come true. The U.S. should make a bold decision to stop all hostile actions, if it does not want to follow in the footsteps of preceding U.S. warmongers who confessed after drinking a bitter cup of defeat that they fought a wrong war against a wrong rival at a wrong time and in a wrong place. **Thirdly, the U.S. should not forget even a moment that the army and people of the DPRK have already launched the toughest counteraction.** We **have already declared the toughest counteraction** against the outrageous hostile acts the U.S. has perpetrated against the DPRK. The U.S. took part in wars of aggression, big and small, including two world wars. But it has never experienced a hail of bullets and shells on its own territory. The U.S. should roll back its hostile policy towards the DPRK of its own

accord if it does not want to suffer a war disaster. One is bound to go to ruin if one fails to understand one's rival and one's own position. **We will closely follow the U.S. policy switchover.**" (KCNA, "NDC of DPRK Notifies U.S. Administration of Its Principled Stand," January 7, 2015)

The government should not hurry to host an inter-Korean summit in spite of signs of a thaw in Seoul-Pyongyang relations, according to Chung Chong-wook, one of the two vice chairmen of the Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation. He also said the government should intervene to stop activist groups to refrain from carrying out disputed airborne propaganda campaign against the North. "It would be risky to think that an inter-Korean summit would settle all inter-Korean issues," he said during a luncheon with the reporters in Seoul. "I don't mean I'm opposed to the summit. However, I want to stress having too much expectation would not lead to progress on inter-Korean dialogues," Chung said. Chung welcomed Kim's speech on January 1. But he added the summit would require other steps in advance. "I highly value Kim's address. However, it requires tremendous effort to hold the summit. And such meetings will be made possible only when the minister-level officials lay groundwork." Chung urged the government to intervene in stopping activist groups from floating balloons containing anti-Pyongyang leaflet across the demilitarized zone. The Stalinist State has been furious about the campaigns and demanded that Seoul ban such anti-Pyongyang activities. "I hope the government plays a role in making activists to refrain from such activities because we need to restore inter-Korean dialogues," he said. (Yi Whan-woo, "Govt. Should Be in Hurry to Hold S-N Summit," *Korea Times*, January 7, 2015)

The Ministry of Unification is under mounting pressure to prevent civic activists from launching balloons containing anti-North Korean leaflets amid optimism for thawing Seoul-Pyongyang relations. KNCA demanded Seoul take measures on disputed campaigns, saying, "it has been acquiescing anti-North Korean activities." Yesterday, Uijeongbu District Court ruled such campaigns should be banned if they threaten people's lives. It cited that North Korean soldiers opened fire from their side of the demilitarized zone in October 2014 in an attempt to shoot down the balloons. Also yesterday, the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and Inter-Korean Policies Committee passed a resolution that calls for a ban on the leaflet propaganda campaigns. However, the unification ministry, which deals with inter-Korean affairs, said today it will not ban the campaigns although it respects the Uijeongbu ruling. Ministry's spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol said it will do so to ensure freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution. According to experts, the government's effort to restore high-level inter-Korean talks would be disrupted unless it takes measures against the anti-Pyongyang activist groups. "North Korea has not tolerated any slanderous acts against its supreme leader and it will not in this case either," said Cheong Seong-chang, a senior researcher at the Sejong Institute. "It would not be possible for Pyongyang to ignore this as if nothing happened and resume inter-Korean dialogue as long as activist groups send balloons containing leaflets that denounce Kim." Cheong said. Paik Hak-soon, also a senior researcher at the Sejong Institute, voiced a similar view. "The unification ministry showed that the government is not willing to change its inter-Korean policy regardless of a change in situation," he said.

"It's unlikely that the talks between deputy-ministers or those at higher levels would take place if the ministry goes on like this." The Campaign for Helping North Korean in Direct Way, an activist group, triggered the dispute over airborne leaflet propaganda campaign yesterday. Led by a former North Korean defector, Lee Min-bok, it floated two balloons containing some 600,000 leaflets at around 7:30 a.m. The leaflets criticized the Kim regime for causing extreme poverty. The campaign came after Seoul's Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation suggested holding the talks this month. . (Yi Whan-woo, "Govt. Urged to Block Balloon Campaign," *Korea Times*, January 7, 2015)

1/8/15

The United States has no evidence yet that North Korea has mastered the technology to make nuclear warheads small enough to fit atop ballistic missiles capable of reaching the U.S., a Defense Department official said. South Korea's Defense Ministry said in its defense "white paper" report published earlier this week that it believes the communist nation has reached a "significant" point in efforts to mastering the warhead miniaturization technology. "Gen. Scaparrotti stood in our briefing room several months ago and spoke, I think, very eloquently about this," Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, said, referring to the commander of U.S. Forces Korea, Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti. "He said that it is prudent for him as a commander to prepare for such a contingency, but that we have no evidence yet that they have achieved that level of technology," Warren said in response to a Yonhap question about the U.S. assessment of the North's nuclear capabilities. (Chang Jae-soon, "U.S. Has No Evidence Yet That North Has Mastered Miniaturization Technology," Yonhap, January 9, 2015)

South Korea again signaled that it may block a local activist group from sending DVDs of a controversial U.S. film about the assassination of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un across the border. The Fighters for a Free North Korea is planning to launch balloons containing the DVDs of "The Interview" later this month as part of their activities of spreading dissenting political messages in the communist country. "The government plans to request (that the group) make a wise decision in order to prevent physical or property risks among local residents at the border area," unification ministry spokesman Lim Byeong-chul said in a regular briefing. (Yonhap, "Seoul Hints at Stopping DVD Launch across Border," *Korea Herald*, January 9, 2015)

China offered its clearest signal yet it was ready to work with North Korea toward warmer ties this year, vowing efforts to boost friendship and cooperation with Pyongyang. China's foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei made the comments in a statement, which also reconfirmed that Beijing sent a message of congratulations to North Korea on the birthday of its young leader Kim Jong-un. "In the new year, the Chinese side will push forward its traditional friendship and cooperation with the DPRK (North Korea) in keeping with the principles of carrying on the tradition, looking to the future, developing good-neighborly and friendly relations, and enhancing cooperation," Hong said in the statement. During a regular press briefing yesterday, Hong told reporters that China had sent the congratulatory message to North Korea but failed to comment on bilateral relations. (Yonhap, "China Signals Warmer Relations with N. Korea," January 9, 2015)

More and more South Koreans have become interested in reunification over the last five years, a poll suggests, partly as a result of government and press campaigns. In the survey by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies of 1,500 adults released on Tuesday, 82.6 percent said they are interested in reunification, compared to just 52.6 percent in 2010. Although there are clear differences according to age group, interest in reunification increased across the spectrum. Among people in their 20s, a whopping 71.8 percent expressed an interest, up from just 39.2 percent five years ago, and among 40-somethings the figure rose from 57 percent to 81.8 percent over the same period. Among people over 60 it reached almost complete support, growing from 58.3 percent to 91.9 percent. But the reasons why people favor reunification have changed. The largest group or 40.8 percent cited ethnic or national reasons -- 33.2 percent want to restore ethnic unity and 7.6 percent call for families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War to be reunited. But almost the same proportion cited pragmatic reasons with 37.7 percent. Some 23 percent said reunification would stimulate economic growth and 14.7 percent said it would substantially reduce defense spending. Among people in their 40s, 47.8 percent feel economic factors are the most important reason for reunification, compared to only 34.2 percent who thought ethnic or national unity is the chief driver. "People in their 40s, who play central roles in the economy, approach reunification from an economic standpoint," the institute said. "In contrast, among people in their 60s or above, who experienced the pain of war and separation, 20 percent more cited ethnic unity as the main reason." (*Chosun Ilbo*, "Interest in Reunification Rises Again," January 9, 2015)

Bermudez: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that the conning tower of a new North Korean submarine first seen in July 2014 houses 1-2 possible vertical launch tubes for either ballistic or cruise missiles. The boat could serve as an experimental test bed for land-attack missile technology, which if successful, may be integrated into a new class of submarines. In addition, imagery over the past six months indicates that North Korea has been upgrading facilities at the Sinpo South Shipyard in preparation for a significant naval construction program, possibly related to submarine development. ...Exactly what missile system would be used in a ballistic missile submarine (SSB) is purely speculative at this point. Several possibilities are a shorter naval version of the Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile, a Nodong medium-range ballistic missile, naval versions of the solid-fuelled KN-02 short-range ballistic missile or an entirely new system. While it appears that North Korea's current efforts are focused on developing a ballistic missile submarine, a less likely alternative would be a guided cruise missile submarine (SSG). This, however, would only be possible if North Korea could access foreign vertical-launched cruise missile technology. Such a route might present an easier, faster route to a submarine-launched missile system. The presence of vertical launch tubes, if confirmed by additional evidence, would signal a significant advance in North Korean naval construction capabilities and could represent an embryonic step towards expanding Pyongyang's missile threat to South Korea, Japan and US bases in East Asia. It would also complicate regional missile defense planning, deployment and operations. North Korean missile-carrying submarines could be challenging to locate and track, would be mobile assets with the capability to attack from any direction, and would be able to operate at significant distances from the Korean peninsula. Such a threat, however, is not present today.

Moreover, North Korea's development of an operational missile-carrying submarine would be an expensive and time-consuming endeavor with no guarantee of success." (Joseph Bermudez, Jr., "North Korea's SINPO-Class Sub: New Evidence of Possible Vertical missile Launch Tubes; Sinpo Shipyard Prepares for Significant Naval Construction Program," *38North*, January 8, 2015)

1/9/15

KCNA report: "Recently the DPRK government proposed a crucial step to the U.S. government to remove the danger of war, ease tension and create a peaceful climate on the Korean peninsula, prompted by the desire to join efforts of all Koreans to open up a broad avenue to independent reunification in 2015 marking the 70th anniversary of the division of the Korean nation. The large-scale war games ceaselessly held every year in south Korea are the root cause of the escalating tension on the peninsula and the danger of nuclear war facing our nation. It is needless to say that there can be neither trust-based dialogue nor detente and stability on the peninsula in such a gruesome atmosphere in which war drills are staged against the dialogue partner. The United States should desist from pursuing the anachronistic policy hostile towards the DPRK and reckless acts of aggression and boldly make a policy switch. If this significant year can be made a year free from joint military exercises on the peninsula, it will greatly contribute to providing reconciliation and trust for Korea's reunification and, furthermore, for peace and security in Northeast Asia. **The message containing the proposal of the DPRK government was handed to the U.S. side through a relevant channel on January 9. The message proposed the U.S. to contribute to easing tension on the Korean peninsula by temporarily suspending joint military exercises in south Korea and its vicinity this year, and said that in this case the DPRK is ready to take such responsive step as temporarily suspending the nuclear test over which the U.S. is concerned. And it expressed the DPRK's stand that if the U.S. needs dialogue as regards this issue, the former is ready to sit with the U.S. anytime.** If the joint military exercises staged by the U.S. in south Korea and its vicinity every year are targeted on the DPRK only, there will be no reason why the former cannot accept the DPRK's proposal. Now is the time for the U.S. to make a bold decision for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia." (KCNA, "KCNA Report," January 10, 2015)

1/10/15

A South Korean-born American citizen who has spoken warmly about her trips to North Korea in public appearances and articles was deported from South Korea after an outcry from conservatives who accused her of sympathizing with the North Korean government. Shin Eun-mi, 54, said she would not challenge the immigration authorities' decision to deport her, and she boarded a plane to Los Angeles. But she said she was deeply disappointed with the South Korean government. "I feel as if I am betrayed by someone I have loved," she said before Justice Ministry officials escorted her from the immigration office in Seoul to Incheon International Airport. "My body is leaving my home country, South Korea, today, but they can never deport my soul, too, from the mother country that I love." By law, she cannot return to South Korea for five years. The move to deport Shin has drawn criticism from Washington, where the State Department yesterday reiterated long-held misgivings about South Korea's National Security Law, which bans praise or support for the North and which officials here invoked to expel Shin. "We're concerned that the National Security Law, as interpreted

and implied in some cases, limits freedom of expression and restricts access to the Internet,” a State Department spokeswoman, Jen Psaki, said when asked about Shin’s case. Prosecutors here said last week that Shin had made supportive comments about North Korea during a series of talks in South Korea late last year, describing three trips she made to the country between 2011 and 2013. They accused her of violating the National Security Law but apparently did not consider her offense serious enough for a formal indictment, instead asking the Justice Ministry to deport her. Shin denied violating the security law, saying that her lectures were not aimed at praising the North Korean government but at promoting reconciliation between the Koreans. She said she was a victim of a witch hunt by conservative South Korean news media outlets, bloggers and activists campaigning against what they call *jongbuk*, or followers of North Korea. Under the National Security Law, South Korea blocks access to North Korean websites and jails people for circulating pro-North propaganda on the Internet. For years, international human rights groups have recommended that South Korea repeal or amend the law, saying that it hinders freedom of expression and political association. But mainstream conservative parties have blocked any attempt to change it, saying that it protects the South against real threats from the North. Critics said the law’s loosely worded definition of illegal “activities benefiting the enemy” leaves it open to abuse. Such fears increased after President Park Geun-hye – daughter of the former military dictator Park Chung-hee, who used the law to arrest many political dissidents – took office two years ago. Last month, her government won a Constitutional Court ruling that disbanded a small leftist party accused of following North Korean ideology. Shin, whose American passport gives her name as Amy Chung but who has used her Korean name here, emigrated to the United States after graduating from college in Seoul. In a series of articles online about her North Korea trips, she described the people there as warmhearted and called for Korean reunification. She has appeared in a documentary on the North that was sponsored by the South Korean government, and in 2013, a book she wrote on her North Korea trips was included on a Culture Ministry recommended-reading list. But the ministry withdrew its recommendation after the current controversy erupted. The denunciations of Shin began after she gave a series of joint lectures with a leftist activist, Hwang Sun, last year. Hwang, notorious among conservatives for having given birth to her daughter in Pyongyang while on a visit in 2005, was once convicted and imprisoned on charges of aiding the North. Prosecutors recently accused her of violating the National Security Law and asked a court to issue a warrant for her arrest. During the joint lectures, Shin, a trained singer, sang a North Korean song that officials here said praised the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, who died in 2011. She was also quoted by the South Korean news media as saying that North Koreans appeared to be happy under the rule of the current leader, Kim Jong-un, one of Kim Jong-il’s sons. Shin also said that she liked North Korean beer, and that North Korean defectors living in the South had told her that they wanted to go home. Such comments infuriated conservative critics, including defectors from the North, who accused her of creating a distorted and naïve picture of the country and ignoring its dire human rights conditions. Last month, a high school student threw a homemade explosive device toward a podium where Shin was speaking. She was unhurt, and the student was arrested. Shin has accused her conservative critics of taking her remarks out of context. In her online articles and talks, she has often quoted her husband, who traveled to

North Korea with her, as asking pointed questions of North Korean officials that indirectly pointed out some of the absurdities of the totalitarian government. (Choe Sang-hun, "South Korea Deports American over Warm Words for Trips to North," *New York Times*, January 11, 2015, p. A-6)

A senior North Korean official is expected to meet with former U.S. diplomats in mid-January in Singapore to discuss bilateral and nuclear issues, diplomatic sources said. The planned trip by Ri Yong Ho, North Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, comes as Pyongyang is seeking to engage more actively in diplomacy with some other countries despite a standoff with the United States over a cyberattack on Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc. Ri is expected to meet with former U.S. envoys for North Korean negotiations Stephen Bosworth and Joseph DeTrani on January 18-19, according to the sources. (Kyodo, "N. Korea's Nuclear Envoy to Meet Former U.S. Diplomats in January," January 10, 2015)

1/12/15

DoS: **Q:** A few days ago, we know North Korea said if Washington canceled a joint annual military exercise with South Korea, it would halt nuclear tests. Any comments on that? **HARF:** Yes. **The DPRK statement that inappropriately links routine U.S.-ROK exercises to the possibility of a nuclear test by North Korea is an implicit threat.** A new nuclear test would be a clear violation of North Korea's obligations under multiple UN Security Council resolutions, would also contravene North Korea's commitments under the 2005 Six-Party joint statement. Our annual joint military exercises with the Republic of Korea are transparent, defense-oriented, and have been carried out regularly and openly for roughly 40 years. We call on the DPRK to immediately cease all threats, reduce tensions, and take the steps toward denuclearization needed to resume credible negotiations. And we do remain open to dialogue with the DPRK, as we've said, with the aim of returning to these credible and authentic negotiations. **Q:** But it seems every time when the joint military exercise starts, it creates some tensions in Korean Peninsula. **HARF:** Well, it shouldn't, given that it's defense-focused, defense-oriented, transparent, and regularly every 40 years. I'm not sure what is a surprise about it. **Q:** Do you interpret the North Korea statement as an implicit threat? Are there any plans for the U.S. to respond to that? **HARF:** I think I just did. **Q:** I mean with more than words. **MS. HARF:** Well, we're going forward with the planned exercises, so I'm not sure - which usually take place in late February or early March. No specific date yet. But nothing else that I know of. **Q:** So which means the joint military exercise will continue? **HARF:** Yes. **Q:** So you don't think it will - because the United States won't like to talk to North Korea. I mean -- **HARF:** I just said we remain open to dialogue with the DPRK. **Q:** Okay, but it seems that although you open dialogue, but you don't think this military exercise creates some tensions in this -- **HARF:** No. A military exercise that is transparent and defense-oriented has no reason to. **Q:** Are you aware of the report that former Special Representative for North Korea Policy Steven Bosworth, he and other - some other American security experts have all been meeting with North Korea's chief nuclear negotiator and some other senior diplomats in Singapore? **HARF:** I wasn't aware of that. I wasn't. Let me check. Obviously, they're not current U.S. officials, but I'm happy to check. **Q:** South Korean President Park Geun-hye, she has said she's open to a summit with North Korea and she has no preconditions for holding such a meeting. Any comment? **HARF:** Well, we welcome ROK efforts to improve inter-

Korean relations and urge the DPRK to reciprocate in kind." (Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf, DoS Daily Briefing, January 12, 2015)

It is never easy to know what people in North Korea are thinking, given the police state's tight restrictions on access. But defectors have been able to crack the information barrier just a little, and if what they are hearing is any guide, it appears that "The Interview," the Sony Pictures comedy about a fictional C.I.A. plot to assassinate Kim Jong-un, is not going over well with North Korean viewers, even among people who oppose the country's dictatorship. Several democracy activists with contacts in the North said the North Koreans they spoke with reacted to the film first with fear of punishment for watching it but also with derision and wounded feelings over the depiction of their country. To put it simply, national pride trumped their dislike for Kim Jong-un, their country's young and often ruthless leader. "They cursed at the movie," said Chung Kwang-il, a North Korean defector and democracy activist in South Korea who said that his associates in China had smuggled digital copies of the movie into the North and that he had since spoken by cellphone with eight people who surreptitiously watched it. "They were angry it depicted North Koreans as a bunch of idiots," he said. "Now, these are not people worshipping Kim Jong-un; they are ones who wish he were gone." Pirated copies of "The Interview," with Korean subtitles, are easily accessible online for smugglers who are trying to cash in on a growing black market for outside entertainment inside North Korea. But even some of the activists sending the film in said it was unlikely that many people would risk watching it. The United States-funded Radio Free Asia as well as Daily NK, a Seoul-based website that says it has informants inside North Korea, reported that the North's State Security Department recently tightened surveillance along its border with China, warning of severe punishment for anyone smuggling or watching the "reactionary movie the external hostile forces are spreading to insult the country's supreme dignity," a common reference to Kim. "It's certain death if they were caught with this film," said Kim Heung-kwang, another North Korean defector living in the South. Still, he said, a small number of his contacts did watch the comedy. Based on feedback from three of them, he said that most of the jokes appeared to be lost in translation, like a scene in which fruit in a supermarket in Pyongyang, the capital, were fakes made of plaster that were put on display to fool visitors. "That doesn't happen in Pyongyang, and people who were not used to American-style comedy would find it insulting," he said. "But it's largely fear of punishment, rather than such faults, that keeps people from watching the movie. So I think it may spread once the crackdown subsides in a month or two." Chung said the North Koreans also heaped criticism on the film for the actors' bad North Korean accents and for using clunky imitations of Workers' Party slogans ubiquitous in the totalitarian state. Kim Sung-min, a North Korean defector who runs Free North Korea Radio, a Seoul-based website, wrote there that he spoke to two North Korean viewers and one of them said that he was thrilled by the scene in which an American talk-show host visiting Pyongyang asked the Kim Jong-un character why he was starving his people. (Hunger attributed to failed economic policies is widespread in North Korea.) Nonetheless, Kim quoted the viewer as saying that "the movie will only increase animosity among us because it not only failed to understand our feelings, but didn't even try to." He said the North Korean added: "It humiliates Kim Jong-un, treating him like a child. To us, who have been educated on his greatness,

this is a public insult." In South Korea, where the movie was not expected to have wide viewership, opinions of those who have seen it so far were mixed. Although some conservative bloggers and activists supported the film, others were offended. "Even if the movie is somehow smuggled into North Korea and North Koreans see it, there's nothing for North Korean authorities to worry about," Bae Myung-bok, a well-known editorial writer for *JoongAng Ilbo*, wrote in a column about the movie, which he called "Hollywood trash." "Instead, some may be disappointed by the low quality of the Hollywood movie and feel offended that the United States derided North Korea." Some analysts in South Korea feared that the worsening relations between the United States and North Korea over "The Interview" might derail cautious attempts for a warming of ties on the divided Korean Peninsula. Amid the hubbub, Park Sang-hak, a Seoul-based North Korean defector and activist opposed to the North's government, said he still planned – with the help of donations from the Human Rights Foundation in New York – to launch balloons carrying DVDs and USB memory sticks containing the film into North Korea later this month. "North Korea will collapse if we send in one million copies," he said. On January 7, North Korea threatened to kill Park. (Choe Sang-hun, "Disliking Kim Jong-un, and Film Even More," *New York Times*, January 12, 2015, p. A-4)

North Korea has drastically shortened the time it takes to prepare for missile launches by improving liquid fuel quality for ballistic missiles, a government source here claimed. This could virtually incapacitate South Korea's current missile defense system. "It used to be thought possible to detect a North Korean launch of ballistic missiles in advance because the liquid fuel had to be pumped into the missiles right before the launch," the source said. "But analysis of various intelligence reports last year shows that the North's ballistic missiles can now stay in standby mode for a long time even after they are injected with liquid fuel because its quality has improved." That would give the renegade country more flexibility in deciding when to launch a missile. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "N. Korean Missile Launches 'Harder to Predict,'" January 13, 2015)

1/13/15

The United States aims to use new sanctions imposed on North Korea over the cyber attack on Sony Pictures to cut off the country's remaining links to the international financial system, Daniel Glaser, assistant secretary for terrorist financing at the U.S. Treasury Department, told a House of Representatives briefing. Glaser said past sanctions had already discouraged "hundreds" of overseas banks, including China's major commercial banks, from doing business with North Korea. New sanctions announced by President Barack Obama on January 2 provided "a tremendous amount of flexibility" and the goal was to identify remaining financial institutions that allowed North Korea access to the global system, which could face sanction themselves. "We could target any North Korean government agency; we could target any North Korean government official ... we could apply sanctions with respect to any individual or entity who is providing them, in turn, material support," he said. Ed Royce, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, called for use of the full scope of the new sanctions announced after U.S. authorities said North Korea was behind the Sony attack. "The significance of this new Executive Order may come from the broad power it gives the president to target anyone who is a part of the North Korean government, or is assisting them in any way ... that is if the administration chooses to use it to its full

advantage," he told the briefing. "We need to step up and target those financial institutions in Asia and beyond that are supporting the brutal and dangerous North Korean regime." When challenged by Royce about "a number of small banks" still doing business with North Korea and the need to choke off the country's access to hard currency, Glaser replied: "That's exactly what we are trying to do." Royce said he hoped a bipartisan bill he sponsored that would label North Korea "a primary money laundering concern" would be passed by the Senate this year. At a news conference at the United Nations in New York, North Korea's Deputy U.N. Ambassador An Myong Hun reiterated his country's position that it had nothing to do with the Sony hacking and said the United States should provide evidence. (David Brunnstrom, "U.S. Takes Aim at North Korea's Remaining Financial Links," Reuters, January 13, 2015)

South Korea has no intention of absorbing North Korea as a way to unify the two Koreas, but it will seek to achieve unification peacefully and in a step-by-step manner, a official of the Ministry of Unification. On January 8, the North's National Defense Commission demanded the South come up with a clear stance on unification, asking whether Seoul is willing to have a peaceful unification or stick to ideological confrontations. "Our government is not seeking unification by abortion as the North claims," the ministry official said. "The incumbent government is on the same line of previous governments' unification policy, which seeks unification (of the Koreas) in a gradual and step-by-step manner, based on autonomy, peace and democracy," the official noted. The government's stance is that the two Koreas should first built trust through dialogue and cooperation for the phase-in of unification because the South and the North currently suffer a lack of trust and dialogue, the official added. The official also repeated the ministry's intention to intervene in a local activist group's provocative campaign to send DVDs of an anti-Pyongyang film in balloons across the border. The U.S. comedy "The Interview" revolves around a plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. "We plan to ask them to make a wise choice (to stop) to prevent any risks that can be posed on the life and property of citizens at the border area," the official said. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Does Not Seek Unification by Absorption: Official," January 13, 2015)

South Korea and the United States plan to carry out a large-scale joint military exercise in early March, a source here said, despite North Korea's recent calls for halting joint drills this year. The military source said Key Resolve, one of the two major annual combined exercises on the Korean Peninsula between the allies, "is scheduled to take place in early March to check and boost their joint readiness posture." The war game used to take place in late February. The remark came after *Hankook Ilbo* reported today, citing a government official, that Seoul and Washington have agreed to delay the Key Resolve exercise by about a week, a move believed to factor in recent developments in inter-Korean ties. (Yonhap, "Korea, U.S. to Conduct Military Drills in March," *Korea Herald*, January 13, 2015)

North Korea is seeking to revive a moribund project to develop the border areas along the Tumen River and a pipeline to transport Russian gas as part of efforts to build trust and expand economic cooperation with South Korea and other neighbors, according to a report. The Tumen River Area Development Project, which was later renamed the

Greater Tumen Initiative, was launched in 1992 as a joint initiative among China, Russia and Japan and the two Koreas following a proposal a year earlier by the U.N. Development Program. But it had made little progress in the face of military tension, lukewarm participation and sluggish investment by private businesses. The paper, published in November in the journal by the country's Academy of Social Science, also indicated the communist country's resolve to kick-start an ambitious yet dormant project to lay a natural gas pipeline and railway through North Korea to the South. "The development of the Tumen River and surrounding regions has emerged as a key item for economic cooperation among the countries in Northeast Asia over the some 20 years since the 1990s," the report reads. "The establishment of an oil and natural gas pipeline and the Trans-Siberian Railroad and the Trans-Korea Railway is another cooperative project that is gaining attention." (Shin Hyon-hee, "North Korea Seeks to Revive Tumen River Development," *Korea Herald*, January 13, 2015)

Within the next two years North Korea could have enough fissile material to build a nuclear arsenal of about 20 weapons, according to Siegfried S. Hecker, a senior fellow and affiliated member at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation. Hecker notes that "Pyongyang likely has roughly 12 nuclear weapons with an annual manufacturing capacity of possibly four to six bombs." He believes the arsenal is primed for even greater growth in the next couple of years: "By the time the president leaves office, North Korea may conduct another nuclear test and have an arsenal of 20." He is unsparing in his assessment of the past three decades' of presidential administrations and their failure to restrain North Korea's program: "Five US administrations determined to prevent North Korea from becoming a nuclear weapon state through various combinations of diplomacy, threats, ultimatums, and sanctions all failed. The George W. Bush administration failed miserably and, to date, the Obama administration has done as badly." (Jeremy Bender, "Top Expert: North Korea Could 20 Nuclear Weapons by the Time Obama Leaves Office," *Business Insider*, January 13, 2015)

North Korea said that "many things will be possible this year on the Korean Peninsula" if the United States agrees to suspend its annual military exercises with South Korea in exchange for Pyongyang's suspension of nuclear tests. North Korea's new deputy U.N. ambassador, An Myong Hun, refused to give details during a news conference but said the suspensions would open "genuine dialogue" between the two Koreas and remove the risk of war. He urged the Obama administration to reverse its rejection of the proposal and said his government "is ready to explain its intentions behind its proposal directly to the United States." An said North Korea sent the proposal to the U.S. on December 9 through the "appropriate channel" used for communications between the two countries "in order to remove the danger of war and ease the tension and create (a) peaceful atmosphere on the Korean peninsula." State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki objected January 10 to linking a possible North Korean nuclear test – which is banned by the U.N. Security Council – to military exercises. She said this constituted "an implicit threat" and called on the North to immediately cease all threats and reduce tensions. Psaki said the U.S. remains open to dialogue with North Korea, but only "with the aim of returning to credible and authentic negotiations on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." An said Washington's refusal to

accept the proposal for suspensions demonstrates again that the United States will continue to increase the capabilities of the South Korean military while trying to prevent North Korea from having its own national defense. The U.S. should now stop pushing its "hostile policy ... and should be bold enough to choose a different approach, to change its course – that is, change its policy hostile to the DPRK," An said. "If this proposal is put in practice this year, many things will be possible this year on the Korean peninsula that has very meaningful implications, and that's why we have put forward this proposal directly to the United States government," An said. He refused to answer several questions on what could happen if the U.S. accepted – or what might happen if it again said "no" to the proposal. (Edith M. Lederer, "North Korea Again Urges U.S. to Suspend Military Exercises," Associated Press, January 13, 2015)

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Noting that North Korea's voluntary give-up of nuclear weapons is fantasy, the U.S. government said that Washington will expand sanctions by mobilizing all means at our disposal. On North Korea and some others, President Barack Obama declared that the U.S. will ensure to make the North feel judgment of justice in full force. Sung Kim, the U.S. State Department's Special Representative for North Korea Policy who is in charge of Washington's North Korea policy, told a hearing at the House Foreign Relations Committee on the day that Washington will broadly pressure Pyongyang by mobilizing all measures at disposal to ensure that Pyongyang will pay the price for its illegal acts, adding that Washington has no fantasy that Pyongyang will voluntarily give up provocations such as illegal weapons and nuclear tests, and human rights violations. He went on to say that if North Korea makes decision on destructive policy, the U.S. will ensure that the communist regime pays a high cost, and eventually curtail options for it to choose by reducing funds used in nuclear and ballistic missiles. Mentioning executive order No. 13687 on sanctions against North Korea that was issued after the North's hacking of Sony Pictures, Daniel Glaser, assistant secretary for terrorist financing at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, also told the hearing that it is an expression of resolution meant to hold the North accountable for its acts, adding that the Department of Treasury will use far-reaching, strong measures of sanctions to crack down on the North's illegal acts. Meanwhile, on the South Korean government's recent offer to the North to hold dialogue, Sung Kim told reporters from South Korea and other countries that the U.S. trusts in constructive dialogue, but expects that inter-Korean dialogue (will be conducted under the condition) should support the U.S.' efforts for denuclearization (of the Korean Peninsula). He indicated that improvement in inter-Korean relations should be done under the condition that practical measures for North Korea's denuclearization are taken, remarks that could be effectively interpreted as Washington's demand to South Korea to adjust speed in pursuing inter-Korean dialogue, and hence will likely spark possible controversy. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, "Obama Vows to "Judge N.K. in Full Force for Hacking," January 15, 2015)

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Rodong Sinmun: "The United States announced that it would stage joint military maneuvers from the beginning of March, insisting that it cannot cancel Key Resolve and Foal Eagle because they are "drills for defense." Timed to coincide with this, provocative outbursts extremely rattling the nerves of the DPRK are heard from the U.S. riff-raffs vied with each other to claim at a recent Congressional hearing that it is necessary to use all possible means to force north Korea to dismantle nukes and

missiles. They are crying out for tightening the sanctions against the DPRK with not only its vassal forces but countries around the Korean peninsula involved, urging it to observe regulations and norms of international law and asserting that Pyongyang should be re-listed as a sponsor of terrorism. ...The U.S. is scheming to bring the situation on the peninsula to the brink of a war this year, too, by pursuing a policy for pressure upon the DPRK, not for detente. ...There is no reason for the U.S. not to cancel the projected joint saber-rattling if it is truly concerned for peace and security on the peninsula. The U.S. is talking about "observance of regulations and norms of international law" while brandishing the stick of sanctions against the DPRK. This is absolutely illogical. The DPRK will not recognize all sorts of unreasonable resolutions on sanctions cooked up by the hostile forces to infringe upon its sovereignty and will never be bound to them in the future, too. The U.S. is sadly mistaken if it calculates it can bring the Korean people who regard independence as their life and soul to their knees through sanctions. Pressure will not help solve any issue. Whoever comes in attack, ignorant of his rival, is bound to suffer a big setback. The U.S. would be well advised to properly understand its rival and approach it. No vicious and sinister trick and method can ever work on the DPRK as it has the great Songun politics and such powerful weapon as single-minded unity. The U.S. had better make a bold policy switchover, not clinging to its reckless hostile policy toward the DPRK." (KCNA, "Neither Pressure Nor Sanctions Can Work on the DPRK: *Rodong Sinmun*, January 18, 2015)

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South Korean President Park Geun-hye called on officials to create conditions to allow North Korea to come forward for talks in the latest conciliatory gesture toward Pyongyang to jump-start stalled dialogue. Park also said the two Koreas should start substantial dialogue to lay the groundwork for their potential unification. The call came as North Korea has remained silent on South Korea's recent offer to ministerial talks in January to discuss such bilateral issues as the reunion of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War. "I hope that you will make efforts to come up with conditions under which North Korea can respond," Park said in a meeting at the presidential office where she received a briefing on South Korea's policy on North Korea, defense and foreign affairs. She did not elaborate on what she meant by conditions, though they appear to suggest that South Korea should take steps to stop its people from sending propaganda leaflets to North Korea. Park's thinly veiled request came days after North Korea's powerful National Defense Commission urged South Korea to clarify whether Seoul is serious about dialogue with Pyongyang or whether it will persist in the anti-North Korean leafleting campaign. (Yonhap, "Park Calls for Creating Conditions for Talks with N. Korea," January 19, 2015) South Korea plans to ramp up efforts to prepare for unification and seek dialogue with North Korea on a variety of cooperative projects this year, the government said Monday. Under the plan, Seoul will push for a trial run of a rail line connecting Seoul to the North Korean cities of Pyongyang and Sinuiju and try to enact a law to lay the foundation for the peaceful reunification of the divided Korean Peninsula, the unification, foreign and defense ministries said in their joint policy report to President Park Geun-hye for this year. Details and schedules of the plans have yet to be determined through future discussion with the North, officials said. "The government has set this year as a starting point for widening discussion over unification and making progress in inter-Korean

relations as it marks the 70th anniversary of independence from Japanese colonial rule, as well as the South-North division," a unification ministry official said. Under the policy plan, Seoul will also push for a variety of joint inter-Korean commemorative events to mark the 70th anniversary of what are now the two Koreas' independence in 1945 from Japan's colonial rule. The South also plans to set up Korean cultural centers in Seoul and Pyongyang to induce better cultural exchanges. Besides that, Seoul will seek other joint projects with the North on the three non-political fields of humanitarian assistance, environment and culture as part of the unification preparatory efforts. Other envisioned joint plans include the opening of a logistics route that connects a South Korean port to the railway linking North Korea's Rajin port to the Russian border city of Khasan. Despite the envisioned fence-mending measures, South Korea will go ahead with its annual joint military exercises with the United States this year, a high-ranking defense ministry official said on background, rejecting the North's recent calls for scrapping them. " [The government] maintains its stance that joint South Korea-U.S. exercises should be carried out continually and consistently ... because they are a core part of strong national defense capacity building," the defense official said, adding that "for that reason, the defense ministry cannot accept North Korea's calls over joint South Korea-U.S. exercises." (Yonhap, "S. Korea to redouble Efforts to Prep for Reunification," January 19, 2015) The feasibility of many of the proposals, however, remain unclear as almost all require North Korea's acceptance and cooperation. Among the proposals presented was an ambitious plan by the Ministry of Unification to restore the two Koreas' western and eastern railways to operate trains from Seoul to the North Korean cities of Rajin and Sinuiju. "Because this year marks the 70th anniversary of liberation, we decided that the timing is right to push forward this project," said Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae. "The two Koreas must reach an agreement first, but we believe this project can be carried out easily once Pyongyang accepts it." He said the Park government's goal is linking the railways and operating trains in time for the August 15 Liberation Day. Because the Gyeongui Line is already linked and the government has enough data based on past surveys, Ryoo said he sees no particular problem in operating a train from Seoul to Sinuiju. According to the ministry's plan for trial operations of the inter-Korean railways, a train will depart from Seoul using the Gyeongui Line to reach the northeastern city of Sinuiju via Pyongyang. On another route, a train will depart from Seoul to reach Rajin, located near the northwestern border with China. It will travel to the North using the Gyeongui Line but change lines at Pyongsan and go through Wonsan to the northeastern city of Rajin. It was not the first time that inter-Korean railroad projects were discussed by the South Korean government. The two Koreas already restored the severed segments of the western Gyeongui Line and the eastern Donghae Line and operated trains in trial programs in May 2007. The two cross-border railways, however, were never put in actual use. Other proposals announced today included a plan to appoint officials in each ministry to oversee tasks related to unification preparation. Plans to create inter-Korean agricultural complexes and expand health assistance to mothers and children as well as the globalization of the Kaesong Industrial Complex were also announced. The Foreign and Unification Ministries also said they will put efforts into ways to dismantle the North's nuclear programs and improve inter-Korean relations, but they presented no specifics. Today's presentation prompted criticism that hasty ideas without substance were made public for the sake of briefing the president. "Many of

the ideas are abstract," said Park In-hwi, professor of international relations at Ewha Womans University. "They make us wonder how possibly the government can realize them. Because the government was overly ambitious, ministries appeared to have presented doubtful, unfeasible visions." "It's not surprising that the ministries are carrying out plans to implement the leader's will to prepare for unification this year," said Koh Yu-hwan, professor of North Korea studies at Dongguk University. "But preparing for unification without a tangible vision or a specific direction and without keeping in mind the need to cooperate with the North, it will all end up as a castle in the air." Experts also said the government failed to present proposals attractive enough to lure Pyongyang to sit down at the negotiating table. "The North has insisted that lifting the May 24 economic sanctions and resuming the Mount Kumgang tour program are pre-conditions for the talks, but the government failed to present any ideas on resolving either of those issues," said Yang Moo-jin, a North Korea expert at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. Even the unification minister admitted that the government is in a basic dilemma. "For the various projects to succeed, the two Koreas must have talks," Ryoo said. **"The first step to resolve distrust and military tensions between the two Koreas is an inter-Korean dialogue**, but the North is not responding to our talk offers, while it keeps making complaints, making us doubt its willingness for talks." Even the railway proposal, which the government explained in some detail, was received pessimistically. "If the Park government is pushing forward the railway project as a one-time event, it can't have any significance," said Cho Bong-hyun, an analyst at the IBK Institute. "The North will accept the plan only when the proposal comes with the possibility of having further cooperative logistics and economic projects in the future." The Foreign Ministry presented an even more ambitious plan of operating an express train from Seoul to Europe via China, Mongolia and Russia. Its feasibility is also dependent upon the North's acceptance. "I cannot say whether the train will pass through the North or not, but we are pushing it forward as part of a bigger picture," said Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se. At the session, President Park urged the government to create an environment in which the North can respond to the South's offer of talks, reiterating her position that starting government-to-government talks with the North is Seoul's top priority. (Ser Myo-ja and Jeong Won-yeob, "Seoul Proposes Linked Railroads with the North," *JoongAng Ilbo*, January 20, 2015)

He was the poster boy for human rights atrocities in North Korea; a soft-spoken survivor of the North's cruel gulags who eventually met such dignitaries as John Kerry in his campaign to focus attention on the North's abuses. His harrowing tales of life in a prison camp – including being forced to watch his mother and brother being executed – stunned even those steeped in defectors' stories and made him a star witness for an unprecedented United Nations' investigation of abuses by the North's rulers. Now, that survivor, Shin Dong-hyuk, is retracting central facts of his life story, memorialized in a 2012 book, "Escape from Camp 14," by a former Washington Post reporter that has been published in 27 languages. Shin, who gives his age as 32, now says that the key fact that set him apart from other defectors – that he and his family had been incarcerated at a prison that no one expected to leave alive – was only partly true, and that he actually served most of his time in the less brutal Camp 18. He also said that the torture he endured as a teenager, instead happened years later and was meted out for

very different reasons. Shin's confession has raised fears among other prison camp survivors and South Korean human rights activists that it could stall an already difficult campaign by the United States and other nations to get the Security Council to push for an investigation at the International Criminal Court. In a twist, Shin's story began to unravel because of his fame – and his success in helping push for the United Nations inquiry. Increasingly angry over the push for accountability at the United Nations, North Korea posted a nearly 10-minute video in October, called "Lie and Truth," exposing what it called Shin's many lies. The video was laced with propaganda for the brutal police state, but it also included an interview with his father, who was recognized by another defector, a woman who had served time at Camp 18. She and other defectors then began to talk quietly with a handful of South Korean reporters about their suspicions that Mr. Shin and his family had never served time at the harsher camp in what is known as a "total-control zone." As questions mounted, Shin came under increasing pressure to defend his story. On January 17, he confessed to the author of "Escape from Camp 14," Blaine Harden, and confirmed his retractions yesterday in a phone interview with the *New York Times*. "I am sorry to a lot of people," Shin said by telephone from the United States, where he recently married a Korean-American woman. "I knew I could hide it no longer, but I dithered because friends feared the damage my coming out might do to the movement for North Korean human rights." A post on his Facebook page urged his supporters to fight on to expose North Korea's treatment of its people. "For my family, for the suffering political prisoners, for the suffering North Korean people, each of you still have a voice and an ability to fight for us and against this evil regime," the post says, adding that he may no longer be able to carry on his own campaign. It is difficult to overestimate the influence Shin has had in the long effort to bring international attention to rights abuses in the North. Activists have long contended that the United States and others mainly ignored the abuses and focused instead on the external threat posed by the North's growing nuclear arsenal. In December 2012, Shin, together with another gulag survivor, took part in a meeting with Navi Pillay, then the United Nations human rights chief, in her Geneva office, according to Rupert Colville, who had served as her spokesman. Ms. Pillay cited the survivors' accounts the next month when she publicly urged stronger international action against North Korea and the creation of an international inquiry into human rights conditions. After the commission issued its scathing report, Shin appeared with Kerry at an unusual event on the sidelines of the General Assembly in which Kerry, too, added his voice to efforts to draw attention to human rights in North Korea. Brad Adams, Asia director for Human Rights Watch, said yesterday that Shin's change of heart did not diminish the findings of the yearlong United Nations inquiry, which relied on the testimony of 80 witnesses and more than 240 confidential interviews with victims and other witnesses who would not speak publicly for fear of reprisals. "The commission report is air tight with or without Shin," Adams said. In a phone interview, Michael Kirby, the Australian judge who led the United Nations investigation, noted that the "commission deals with very serious abuses of human rights that go back over 70 years." In his revised account, Shin stuck to many of the key details he gave to the United Nations Commission of Inquiry. Shin's story, which he repeated many times in recent years, is remarkable. He said he was born and grew up at Camp 14 – a sprawling cluster of villages in mountains north of the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, surviving hunger and torture until he miraculously escaped in 2005, at 22,

by crawling over the body of a dead friend electrocuted by a fence surrounding the camp. He was the first North Korean who claimed to have escaped from a prison camp in the North. More than a dozen other camp survivors have escaped to South Korea, but all had been freed after serving terms in prisons that are used for re-education as well as punishment. Among his more gruesome tales, Shin had said sadistic prison guards dangled him over a fire when they suspected him of plotting to escape with his family and chopped off a fingertip when he dropped a sewing machine. He now says the guards actually hurt him because he had escaped from Camp 18 and been caught. The *Washington Post* first reported Shin's revisions. Yesterday, Harden declined to be interviewed, but in a statement he provided to the *Times* he said that Shin said he had not realized that changing the details of his story for the book would be a problem. "I didn't want to tell exactly what happened in order not to relive these painful moments," the statement quoted Shin as saying. It is difficult to verify the accounts of North Korean defectors because the country is so isolated. In an email yesterday, Harden said he had stressed in his book that Shin could be an unreliable narrator of his life. When asked if copies of the book would be pulled from stores, a spokeswoman for Penguin Books, said that "we are working with the author on an accurate understanding of the facts." Shin's latest account has raised its own questions. He now says he escaped Camp 18 twice, in 1999 and 2001, was caught both times, and eventually handed to the infamous Camp 14. "He is still lying," said a North Korean defector who said he was in Camp 18, speaking on condition of anonymity because he has family in the North. "You just cannot escape a North Korean prison camp twice, as he said he did, and is still alive and manages to escape a third time, this time from the total-control zone." During the phone interview, Shin cited "great mental stress" while declining to explain how he escaped so many times from heavily guarded camps. Another former inmate, Chung Kwang-il, said he could not understand why Shin lied. "Without saying he was from Camp 14, he had remarkable stories to tell, a good witness to North Korean human rights abuse," he said. "I guess he somehow thought he needed a more dramatic story to attract attention." (Choe Sang-hun, "Prominent North Korean Defector Recants Parts of His Story of Captivity," *New York Times*, January 19, 2015, p. A-9)

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An American delegation of academics and former senior officials urged the resumption of official nuclear talks during two days of informal meetings with North Korea's top nuclear envoy, a former senior U.S. diplomat said. The North Korean diplomat, Ri Yong Ho, repeated to reporters his country's longstanding demand that Washington and Seoul stop annual military drills that Pyongyang says are invasion preparations. The U.S. and South Korea say the drills are routine and defensive. Neither Ri nor former U.S. special envoy for North Korea policy Stephen Bosworth said anything likely to change the deadlock between North Korea and its neighbors and Washington over Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear-armed missiles that could hit the American mainland. But even an informal discussion is seen as a small step forward at a time of high tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Washington and Pyongyang have no formal diplomatic ties, but former U.S. officials occasionally meet with North Korean diplomats in so-called Track Two talks to discuss the North's nuclear program and other issues. North Korea has indicated willingness to rejoin long-stalled nuclear talks, but has balked at the U.S. demand that it first take concrete steps to show it remains

committed to past nuclear pledges. North Korea recently told the United States that it is willing to impose a temporary moratorium on its nuclear tests if Washington scraps its military drills with South Korea this year. Washington called the linking of the military drills with a possible nuclear test "an implicit threat," but said it was open to dialogue with North Korea. Pyongyang is thought to have a handful of crude nuclear bombs and has conducted three nuclear tests since 2006. But experts are divided on how far the opaque government has come in the technology needed to miniaturize a warhead so it can be placed on a missile. Bosworth told the reporters that the U.S. side sees a "priority need to get official discussion back underway to resume a dialogue" among the Koreas, the U.S., Japan, Russia and China. Those six-nation talks over Pyongyang's nuclear program haven't been held since late 2008. Since then North Korea has conducted nuclear and missile tests and threatened Washington and Seoul with nuclear strikes. Ri reiterated his country's position that the "root cause that aggravates the tension on the Korean Peninsula is none other than the large-scale joint military exercise between U.S. and South Korea, which is being held annually." (Maye E. Wong, "U.S. Concludes Nuke Talks with N. Korean Diplomat," Associated Press, January 19, 2015) The chief nuclear negotiator of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said on Monday that he has explained the intentions and purpose of the recent proposal put forward by the DPRK at an unofficial meeting with former senior officials and experts from the United States. "We provided detailed information of the intentions and purpose of this proposal," Ri Yong Ho, the DPRK's Six Party Talks representative, told reporters after the two-day meeting in Singapore. Ri said that the root cause aggravating the tension on the Korean Peninsula is "none other than" the large-scale joint military exercises between the United States and South Korea which has been held annually. "To put an end to this large-scale joint military exercise...is the first step towards easing the tension on the Korean Peninsula," he said. Asked what pre-conditions the DPRK is setting for it to return to the six-party talks, Ri said "For the first time, we had proposed the meeting without any preconditions." The closed-door meeting in Singapore concluded today. Former US special representative for DPRK policy Stephen Bosworth, one of the US participants in the meeting, said that the two sides also had extensive exchanges of views as to the atmosphere in the United States. "We had very useful discussions of not so much what's happened but what could happen in the future," he said, reading a prepared statement. Bosworth, who emphasized that he and his colleagues from the United States were participating in the meeting as private citizens, said that the priority for the US side is the need to get official discussions underway, resume the multilateral talks and deal with the issues of denuclearization and other elements of the joint statement from the Six-Party talks of September 2005. He said that there is no plan for a next meeting at present. The meeting in Singapore came after the United States rejected the proposal by the DPRK that it stands ready to suspend its nuclear tests if the United States suspends its annual joint military exercises with South Korea. The United States has obviously downplayed the importance of the meeting, with its embassy in Singapore saying that the US government is not involved. Leon Sigal, director of the Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project at the US-based non-profit organization Social Science Research Council, told reporters that the meeting would cover the DPRK's nuclear missile programs. "It's one of two ways of taking each other's temperature," he said yesterday. (Xinhua, "DPRK Negotiator Explains Proposal at Unofficial Meeting," January 19, 2015)

Stephen Bosworth, a former U.S. special envoy for North Korea policy, met with North Korean Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ri Yong Ho, the country's senior representative to the six-party talks on the nuclear issue, in Singapore on January 18 and 19. In an interview on the phone with the *Dong-A Ilbo* on January 21, the former U.S. envoy for North Korea policy put weight on the possibility for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to visit Russia. "North Korea seemed to have interest in multilateral talks (with China and Russia, etc.), as much as the North-U.S. dialogues," said the U.S. ex-official on the likelihood that the communist regime's supreme leader would visit Russia to attend the May 9 celebrations of the anniversary of the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. "Although Ri did not talk about plans or schedules to visit Russia in detail, I had an impression that the North was exploring possibilities of multilateral talks (beyond North Korea-the U.S.) through multiple dialogue channels to resolve the current (diplomatic) challenges," said the ex-special representative for North Korea. "North Korea's vice foreign minister asked many questions on the atmosphere in Washington in regards to strict sanctions against North Korea, expressing keen attention on the issue. It gave an impression that he wanted to hear even from us about it. There were conversations about cyber-attacks on Sony Pictures Entertainment." The former U.S. special envoy for North Korea policy said, "New concession (required by the international community or the U.S. such as denuclearization) was not discussed or any alternatives was provided." When asked about the attitude of North Korea on the inter-Korean high-level talks, Bosworth answered, "Ri emphasized the necessity of dialogues. But the inter-Korean talks were not a core agenda of this meeting and in-depth discussion was not held on the issue." (*Dong-A Ilbo*, "North Korea Pays Much Attention to Multilateral Talks," January 24, 2015) The United States and North Korea have been actively discussing the possibility of returning to denuclearization talks, raising the prospect of a new round of diplomacy even as Washington takes a tougher line against Pyongyang. The countries' nuclear envoys have been discussing the idea of "talks about talks," according to multiple people with knowledge of the conversations. But they have not been able to agree on the logistics – in no small part because of North Korea's continuing Ebola quarantine. "We want to test if they have an interest in resuming negotiations," a senior U.S. administration official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "I think we've made it very clear that we would like to see them take some steps first." Those steps would include suspending work at North Korea's nuclear facilities and pledging not to conduct any further nuclear tests, he said. After years of broken North Korean promises, American negotiators are wary about taking Pyongyang at its word. But North Korea reacted angrily yesterday to the suggestion that it, not Washington, was the hurdle to resuming talks. When North Korea said it was willing to suspend nuclear tests if the United States and South Korea canceled annual military drills, the State Department turned down the offer, calling it "an implicit threat." The immediate response surprised proponents of engagement, who say the offer, although unacceptable, represented an opening from North Korea that should have been considered. But behind the scenes, former and current officials have been discussing the idea of holding talks about how to resume the six-party negotiations aimed at persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Last month, a group of former American officials – including Stephen Bosworth and Joseph DeTrani, both of whom have a long history of dealing with North Korea – met in Singapore with Ri Yong Ho, North Korea's vice foreign minister and lead nuclear

negotiator. The meeting was designed to check "the lay of the land," according to one person familiar with the talks. Multiple Americans with knowledge of the various discussions spoke about them on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. **The Singapore meeting resulted in the suggestion that Sung Kim, the U.S. special envoy for North Korea policy, meet with a North Korean counterpart.** He was in Asia last week for meetings with Japanese, South Korean and Chinese officials, and he is understood to have raised the prospect of holding a meeting with the North Koreans in Beijing. North Korea offered to send Ri to Beijing or suggested that Sung Kim meet in Pyongyang with Kim Kye Gwan and Kang Sok Ju, both more senior in the Foreign Ministry than Ri. U.S. officials thought Kim's and Kang's ranks were better matched with Sung Kim's position but did not like the "optics" of the American envoy traveling to Pyongyang, because it would have made the North Koreans look as though they were in the stronger position, according to the people close to the discussions. Another big hurdle: North Korea still has strict quarantine rules in place following last year's Ebola outbreak in West Africa. All people who have traveled outside the country – including, apparently, Ri, after his return from Singapore – are required to stay at home for 21 days. (Anna Fifield, "U.S. and North Korea Have Been Secretly Discussing Having 'Talks about Talks,'" *Washington Post*, February 2, 2015)

DeTrani: "On January 18 and 19, six North Korean officials, with its Vice Foreign Minister, Ri Yong Ho, in the lead, met with me and three colleagues for unofficial track II discussions on the poor state of relations between the US and North Korea (DPRK). Our last meeting with this group was in October 2013. The discussions were cordial and candid. North Korea's objective was clear: Argue for the suspension of joint military exercises between the US and South Korea, in return for a moratorium on nuclear tests. Vice Minister Ri said military exercises were a threat to a North Korea convinced that its objective was regime change. Suspending military exercises would build trust, he said, with North Korea then halting nuclear tests and efforts to miniaturize its nuclear weapons. Ri's initial comments also dealt with efforts to improve North Korea's economy and efforts to improve relations with countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America. He mentioned China once, saying relations were normal, while noting that relations were improving with Russia. He contrasted US improved relations with Cuba and Iran with its hard line policy toward North Korea. He said the lead role of the US in condemning North Korea in the United Nations for human right violations and, separately, for the hacking of Sony Pictures were proof of a hostile policy. My colleagues and I told Vice Minister Ri that the North's recent proposal to suspend joint military exercises with South Korea was unrealistic. The US and South Korea are allies and have conducted these joint military exercises for over 40 years, insuring that the US-South Korea Joint Military Command is prepared to respond to any military provocation from the North. Regime change in the North is not the objective of these military exercises. Indeed, the exercises are between allies and never part of denuclearization negotiations. Much time was spent telling Vice Minister Ri that in our opinion no one in Washington currently is interested in a dialogue with North Korea. That since Kim Jong-un took over in December 2011, relations with the US and the international community have deteriorated to its lowest level. Launching missiles, conducting a nuclear test, threatening the US with a pre-emptive nuclear

attack and its recent cyber attack on Sony Pictures convinced the US that North Korea was and is a threat to regional and global security. The subject matter experts who follow North Korea also are convinced that North Korea will never dismantle its nuclear weapons program and thus dialogue and negotiations with North Korea would be useless. That the North's decision to enshrine its nuclear program in the state's constitution, in line with its Byongjin policy of pursuing economic development and nuclear progress, was further proof that North Korea would never dismantle its nuclear weapons. In that context, Minister Ri was told that any remote chance of a dialogue with the US, in our unofficial view, would at a minimum require a commitment from North Korea that the leadership in Pyongyang was and is committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, in line with the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement signed in Beijing, between North Korea and the other five countries part of the Six Party Talks negotiations. Thus any North Korea overture to the US, via unofficial or official channels, must include, in our view, a statement that North Korea is committed to the ultimate objective of the comprehensive and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Vice Minister Ri said that many in Pyongyang don't like the September 2005 Joint Statement, maintaining that the Joint Statement requires that the North dismantle its nuclear weapons and nuclear programs before they accrue any benefits. Vice Minister Ri was told that his colleagues in Pyongyang who negotiated this agreement know that it's based on an "action for action" formula, whereby all actions by the six countries are taken simultaneously, with North Korea receiving security assurances and economic assistance as they take steps to dismantle its nuclear programs, with an eventual dialogue on the provision of light water reactors, as they make progress with dismantlement. Vice Minister Ri rhetorically asked if normalization of relations with the US would follow the dismantlement of its nuclear programs. He was told what he knew: Normalization is a bilateral issue and with denuclearization, bilateral discussions with the US would be possible. These discussions would focus on North Korea's illicit activities, i.e. counterfeiting of US currency and pharmaceuticals and detailed discussions on human rights issues, to include transparency and benchmarks on progress dealing with this issue, and time lines for progress. It was mentioned that with such a dialogue and with progress on these important bilateral issues, the establishment of Interest Sections or Liaison Offices in our respective capitals could be possible, in our unofficial view, prior to the establishment of normal relations. After two days of these frank but cordial discussions, Vice Minister Ri left us with the clear impression that he would share with his leadership our view that North Korea must include, in any overture to the US, a statement committing North Korea to the eventual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, in line with the September 2005 Joint Statement. With this commitment, we said, there may be a better chance that the US would be willing to enter into direct official discussions with North Korea. For someone like me who has been working and following issues with North Korea since 2000, it would seem prudent to meet officially with North Korea if they express a willingness to dismantle all of its nuclear programs, to include their uranium enrichment program, and pursuant to the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement, eventually permit IAEA monitors and inspectors into North Korea to insure that dismantlement of these programs is comprehensive and verifiable. Given enduring religious and territorial conflict in the Middle East and the escalating terrorist threat in that region and in Africa and Russia's moves in Ukraine, it may

develop that issues with North Korea prove to be less enduring and resolvable. Only be engaging with North Korea will we be able to make this determination." (Joseph DeTrani, "Candid Talks with North Korean Officials," *Asia Times*, February 3, 2015)

1/20/15

A South Korean activist group led by a defector from North Korea said it had launched balloons with messages critical of the North's leader across the border, defying a request by Seoul to refrain as it pursues dialogue with Pyongyang. Park Sang-hak, the North Korean defector who has previously launched message balloons into the North, said his group late yesterday had secretly sent about 100,000 leaflets. He said at a news conference that if Pyongyang did not respond to the South's call for a meeting by February 18, his group would send a massive number of DVD and USB (memory sticks) copies of the film 'The Interview' to the North. The movie features a fictional plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. The North has said Washington has committed "an act of war" by allowing the movie to be made. The North has previously fired at the protest balloons near the border with shells landing in the South. The leaflets often single out the North's young leader Kim Jong-un, questioning his legitimacy to rule a country where people struggle with poverty while his family lives in luxury and scarce resources are channeled to arms programs. (Jack Kim and Sohee Kim, "Leaflet Activist Urges North to Talk," Reuters, January 20, 2015)

1/21/15

DoS: **Q:** As we know, some former U.S. officials and experts and some DPRK diplomats had a meeting in Singapore to talk about the nuclear issue. And even after the meeting, the DPRK's chief negotiator for the Six-Party Talks, he still emphasized that he wanted the United States to suspend the military trio with South Korea. As I understand, last week you have already rejected the proposal suspending the military trio. But I wonder, it looks like during the meeting they explained the intention and the purpose of the proposal. So I wonder if you have changed your position or if you are considering making some changes about the position. **PSAKI:** Nothing has changed on our position and we're not considering making changes to our position. **Q:** And also according to some media coverage, the chief negotiator of the Six-Party Talks, he said this time it's the first time he proposed no precondition to return to the negotiating table. So what do you think of this approach? ... **PSAKI:** Well, I think the important point here is that the view of the United States, as well as our Six-Party partners, is that the - North Korea would need to abide by their international obligations, including the 2005 joint statement. And so we - the ball has long been in their court, but we certainly reject new proposals that don't have any backing." (Spokesperson Jen Psaki, DoS Daily Briefing, January 21, 2015)

The half-brother of late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il was recently appointed Pyongyang's top envoy to the Czech Republic after serving 17 years as ambassador to Poland, a South Korean government official said. Kim Pyong-il is a younger brother of Kim Jong-il, the father of current leader Kim Jong-un. He will be replaced in Warsaw by Ri Kun, the director general for North American affairs at North Korea's foreign ministry, the official said. "It has been determined that Kim Pyong-il recently took office as ambassador to the Czech Republic and Ri Kun has received (Poland's) agreement to become ambassador to Poland," the official said, referring to diplomatic protocol in which a host country endorses a candidate for ambassador. Cheong Seong-jang, a

senior researcher at Seoul's Sejong Institute, said the new assignment appears to be a move to prevent Kim Jong-il from building a power base around him as he has held one position for 17 years. "Kim Jong-il has been under Pyongyang's watch and held in check all his life," he said. (Yonhap, "Kim Jong-il's Half-Brother Named Ambassador to Czech Republic," *Korea Times*, January 21, 2015)

1/22/15

President Barack Obama believes that North Korea will eventually collapse, and that the Internet will ultimately be more effective in changing the regime than military options or sanctions. Obama made the remark in an interview on Youtube at the White House, calling the North "the most isolated, the most sanctioned, the most cut-off nation on Earth. "The kind of authoritarianism that exists there, you almost can't duplicate anywhere else," He said. "It's brutal and it's oppressive and as a consequence, the country can't really even feed its own people. Over time, you will see a regime like this collapse." Because of the proximity of ally South Korea and the North's nuclear arsenal, **"the answer is not going to be a military solution,"** Obama said. **"We will keep on ratcheting the pressure,** but part of what's happening is that the environment that we're speaking in today, the Internet, **over time** is going to be penetrating this country," Obama said. "And it is very hard to sustain that kind of brutal authoritarian regime in this modern world. Information ends up seeping in over time and bringing about change, and that's something that we are constantly looking for ways to accelerate," he added. (Kim Young-jin, "Internet, Not Military Options, Will Bring down N.K.," *Korea Times*, January 24, 2015)

The Obama Administration has a penchant for talking tough on sanctions while following through with little. The prime example is Iran, and now the pattern may repeat with North Korea. Washington this month responded to North Korea's cyberattack on Sony Pictures by sanctioning 10 individuals and three entities tied to Pyongyang, including its Reconnaissance General Bureau, known as Unit 586 and believed to oversee Kim Jong-un's cyberwarfare squads. "This step," said the White House, "reflects the ongoing commitment of the United States to hold North Korea accountable for its destabilizing, destructive and repressive actions, particularly its efforts to undermine U.S. cybersecurity and intimidate U.S. businesses." Yet the intelligence bureau and two trading firms blacklisted were already under U.S. sanctions for involvement in Pyongyang's weapons programs and other illicit activities. So the new measures are "pretty light and symbolic at best," said former CIA Director Michael Hayden. By contrast, Washington's 2005 sanctions on Macau-based Banco Delta Asia forced a cascade of banks to cut ties with North Korea, imperiling Pyongyang's access to military equipment and luxury goods. "These sanctions," said Hayden, "are not that." The best that can be said is that the new measures have potential, if implemented aggressively. The U.S. Treasury and State Departments now have the "flexibility" to target any North Korean official or agency, along with "any individual or entity who is providing them, in turn, material support," said Treasury official Daniel Glaser last week. Yet the target list remains short and redundant. As sanctions expert Joshua Stanton asked, "Are Kim Jong-un's billions in overseas assets blocked now, or only after State and Treasury get around to deciding that he's an official of the North Korean government?" Though it runs a slave state of 23 million people, the Kim regime isn't under the U.S. human-rights sanctions covering Burma,

Congo and Zimbabwe. Nor is it designated a "primary money-laundering concern" under the Patriot Act, à la Burma and Iran, despite its leading role in currency counterfeiting and methamphetamine trafficking. Thanks to a Bush Administration blunder, Pyongyang was taken off the U.S. terror-sponsor list in 2008, even as it maintains ties to Iran and Syria. Returning North Korea to that list would trigger a range of export and financial sanctions and demonstrate U.S. seriousness. So would designating North Korea a primary money-laundering concern, as urged by the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act, which passed the House last year and will soon be reintroduced by Republican Ed Royce and Democrat Eliot Engel. Any bank doing business with a North Korean entity would then risk exclusion from the U.S. financial system—the sanction that caused a run on Banco Delta Asia in 2005 and spurred others to drop their North Korean accounts until the U.S. relented a year later. Treasury's Glaser appeared to endorse the Banco Delta Asia model in Congressional testimony last week, yet he also acknowledged that major Chinese banks still conduct business with sanctioned entities such as Korea Kwangson Bank. Glaser also wouldn't say whether North Korea should be labeled a primary money-laundering concern. If the Obama Administration plans to oppose the Royce-Engel legislation, as it has several Iran sanctions bills, then North Korea has little to worry about. Blinking on sanctions would invite further aggression from Kim Jong-un. (*Wall Street Journal*, "Blinking on North Korea Sanctions: Kim Jong-un Is Getting off Easy on Sony Hack," January 22, 2015)

1/23/15

CPRK spokesman's statement: "Shortly ago, the south Korean authorities asserted that it is the "national obligation" and the "top priority task" to settle the issue of "divided families," adding that it is necessary to realize the reunion of "divided families" if the north-south dialogue is resumed. The south Korean chief executive, in particular, urged the north to come out for dialogue with "open heart" in order to fundamentally solve the issue of "divided families." She claimed that the north was to blame for the failure to arrange the reunion of "divided families." A spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea in a statement [today] terms this acts of misinterpreting the essence of the grave situation where the issue of the inter-Korean relations including the reunion of divided families and relatives from the north and the south remain unsettled, and acts of misleading the public. This is an unbearable mockery and insult to the desire of all Koreans for the improved inter-Korean relations and the nation's unity and reunification. ...It was due to such hurdles as the "May 24 steps" taken by the south Korean authorities that reunification events which had been brisk between the north and the south since the publication of the June 15 joint declaration and cooperation undertakings between the north and the south, including joint unearthing of historical relics, academic symposiums, social and cultural exchange and tour of Mt. Kumgang, were suspended overnight and the most urgent humanitarian cooperation undertakings including the reunion of divided families and relatives failed to make progress. All these facts are well known to the world. Nevertheless, the south Korean authorities are talking a lot about the reunion of "divided families" and "exchange at non-governmental level" after blocking the north-south exchange and cooperation by themselves. This is self-contradictory sophism and height of shamelessness. No matter how noisily the south Korean authorities may talk about the reunion of "divided families" and "exchange" after building institutional

barriers barring the reunion of divided families and relatives, no one will pay heed to those useless wordplays and hypocritical remarks. Even if the reunion of divided families and relatives takes place with "the May 24 steps" remaining in force, it will only serve the purpose of propaganda and will not help fundamentally settle the issue. If the south Korean authorities are truly concerned for the humanitarian issue, they should not only pay lip-service to the issue of "divided families" but lift before anything else the steps deliberately taken for confrontation. If they have true will to settle the issue of the north-south relations including the reunion of divided families and relatives, they should not play poor tricks to misrepresent the essence of the present situation and mislead the public but show their will in practice from a proper stand on the DPRK's just proposal. The DPRK will follow what change the south Korean authorities will make in their stance together with all the compatriots." (KCNA, "S. Korean Authorities Should Not Pay Lip Service to the Issue of 'Divided Families,'" January 23, 2015)

1/25/15

NDC Policy Department statement: "Growing stronger than ever before at present is the unanimous desire of the nation to break with the inglorious past and write a new history of the north-south relations, true to the noble intention of supreme leader Kim Jong-un, peerless great man. World people are also growing strong in their support and encouragement to it in response to the historic appeal for defusing the danger of war and creating a peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula. But even a basic climate for dialogue has not been created as the north-south relations are not freed from the phase of freeze. Noting that what is happening at present is very grave, the statement clarified the following principled stand: 1. The south Korean authorities should stop making willful interpretation of the measures of great significance in the nation's history taken by the DPRK, and wagging their tongues at will. The great calls made at the outset of the new year reflect the ardent desire to put an end to the 70-year long national division and build earlier on this land a reunified powerful country, dignified and prosperous. But the south Korean authorities backed by their American master are deliberately interpreting and slandering the measures taken by the DPRK, far from deeply studying them and positively responding to them. To cite a typical example, they are slandering the precious historic measures hailed by all Koreans as an "option to get rid of international isolation", "the last resort to have economic blockade lifted" and "a peace offensive aimed at stirring up conflict among south Koreans." They have even gone so blind as to term those measures "proposals little different from the past ones," "measures devoid of sincerity" and "sleight of hand to hold initiative." It was not out of any calculation that the DPRK took such new measures. It was neither economic difficulties nor isolation and blockade that prompted it to take those measures. The undesirable and hostile forces should clearly understand that political isolation, economic blockade and military pressure will never work on the DPRK. We have never been benefited from the U.S. nor have we thought the south Korean authorities would help improve the living standard of our people. The south Korean authorities should neither misjudge nor make a mockery of the sincere will of the DPRK to put an end to the history of national division, a tragedy being suffered only by the Korean nation in the world. 2. The south Korean authorities should stop disappointing the nation with their double-dealing words and deeds. They are now loudly trumpeting about north-south dialogue and the improvement of the relations.

The present chief executive has talked volumes, regardless of time and place, about "steadily stepping up preparations for unification," "creating conditions for holding dialogue of any form", "conducting trial operation of cross-peninsula railways" and holding dialogue and negotiations for "opening three channels for people's livelihood, environment and culture" and giving "priority" to the reunions of divided families and relatives, while calling for "putting an end to the 70 years of severance and conflicts." Her loud words are quite different from her practical deeds. South Korea has already made it an established fact to conduct Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises from March and Ulji Freedom Guardian joint military exercises from August as planned while creating impression that they have nothing to do with the removal of the danger of war and the creation of a peaceful climate. Under the pretext of making full preparations for "taking combined defence posture", south Korea, while currying favor with its American master, has introduced aggression troops including a flying corps of strategic bombers carrying nuclear warheads to its land and vicinity, souring the atmosphere for the improvement of the relations with saber-rattling. What matters is that such moves are being pushed forward in an undisguised manner as part of preparations for a preemptive attack on the DPRK in the run-up to the 65th anniversary of the conclusion of the shackling and sycophantic south Korea-U.S. "mutual defense pact." 3. The south Korean authorities should clearly know that in case they persistently refuse to respond to the call of great significance in the nation's history made by the DPRK, they will not be able to escape a stern punishment. Improving and developing the inter-Korean relations is the task of the times which brooks no further delay. The south Korean authorities should sincerely respond to our call for opening up a broad avenue to independent reunification by concerted efforts. Intolerable and unpardonable are the incompetent behaviors of the south Korean authorities criminalizing the just acts to improve the inter-Korean relations and allowing human scum inciting confrontation with fellow countrymen to go scot-free, their poor position of failing to create elementary atmosphere of dialogue and their treacherous acts of joining the U.S. in its moves against national reunification and moves for disturbing dialogue. It is nonsensical to allow another long period of the tragedy to last, though the nation has spent 70 years in misfortune and pain. The whole world knows well about the will of the DPRK to mercilessly punish the treacherous, anti-peace and anti-reunification acts of the hostile forces. The south Korean authorities should ponder over their behavior more than once. **They should not forget even a moment that all Koreans are following all their moves with high vigilance, ready to punish them.** The army and people of the DPRK will resolutely punish the south Korean authorities in case they continue challenging the historic steps taken by it to re-link the severed bonds and blood vessels of the nation and bring about a great change in mending the inter-Korean relations. (KCNA, "South Korean Authorities Should Not Forget That All Koreans Watch Them with High Vigilance: NDC," January 25, 2015)

DPRK FoMin spokesman "answer to the question raised by KCNA as regards a string of accusations again let loose by U.S. President Obama against the DPRK: When interviewed by YouTube manufacturers on January 22, Obama talked about "system change" while slandering the Korean-style socialist system centered on the popular masses. He poured a whole gamut of accusations, calling the DPRK the most isolated, solitary and authoritarian country and the cruelest and repressed nation. He even

talked rubbish that over time internet will find its way to north Korea and the flow of information into it will bring about a change, asserting that they keep exploring ways of speeding up the change. We cannot but be shocked to find that Obama, president of a "big country," is so preoccupied with the inveterate repugnancy and hostility toward a sovereign state. The recent wild remarks made by Obama are nothing but a poor grumble of a loser driven into a tight corner in the all-out stand-off with the DPRK. **This is little short of admitting himself that the U.S. lacks ability to stifle the DPRK and that a military option is not workable.** After a series of defeats in its military attempts to stifle the DPRK, the U.S. now turned to internet to undermine the DPRK through the "influx of information." It is, however, gravely mistaken if it thinks it can break the single-minded unity of the DPRK, which it failed to do with sanctions and pressure, with internet. The more openly the U.S. presses for the moves to undermine the DPRK, the stronger the single-minded unity of the DPRK will be. Over time the world will clearly see how the U.S. undergoes decline along with its totally bankrupt hostile policy toward the DPRK." (KCNA, "DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman Blasts Obama's Anti-DPRK Accusations," January 25, 2015)

The United Nations will provide \$2 million in aid to North Korea as part of its humanitarian efforts. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, part of the U.N. Secretariat responsible for humanitarian actions, plans to deliver the financial support to its peer organizations working in the reclusive regime, according to Radio Free Asia. The aid will be provided through the Central Emergency Response Fund, which has offered a total of \$6.5 million to Pyongyang since 2011. The annual sum given to the communist state has varied each year: \$5 million in 2011, \$7 million in 2012 and \$2.1 million in 2013. U.N. offices based in the North decide on the spending through negotiations with the head of United Nations Development Program stationed there. Other U.N. affiliated organizations that provide financial aid to the North include the World Food Plan, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. (Yonhap, "U.N. to Provide N. Korea with \$2 Million in Aid," *Korea Herald*, January 25, 2015)

1/26/15

South Korea and four parties to the six-way talks on ending North Korea's nuclear program share the need to break the stalled process for Pyongyang's denuclearization as early as possible, a Seoul official said. The official at Seoul's foreign ministry said that the five parties, except for North Korea, have agreed on three principles for North Korea's denuclearization. "The five parties have believed that there is the need to break the status quo as North Korea has been advancing its nuclear capabilities," the ranking official told reporters, asking not to be named. "They also shared the view that the process for the denuclearization talks should be resumed as early as possible and the parties need to continue to explore creative ways to kick-start such a process." (Yonhap, "S. Korea, 4 Nations Hope for Early Nuke Talks: Official," January 26, 2015)

North Korea's annual trade with its economic lifeline, China, fell 2.4 percent from a year ago in 2014, marking the first decline since 2009, data compiled by South Korea's government trade agency showed. North Korea's trade with China totaled US\$6.39 billion last year, compared with \$6.54 billion in 2013, according to the data provided by the Beijing unit of South's Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA).

At least on paper, there were also no shipments of crude oil from China to North Korea for all of last year. A South Korean diplomatic source with knowledge of the matter, however, cautioned against reading too much into the official trade figures because China has provided crude oil to North Korea in the form of grant aid and such shipments were not recorded on paper. (Yonhap, "N. Korea's 2014 Trade with China Marks 1st Drop in 5 Years," January 26, 2015)

The commander of U.S. military forces in Korea is leading a high-level military strategy meeting this week examining how U.S. forces would respond to North Korea's new mobile long-range missiles and the use of other weapons and capabilities, according to defense officials. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, will direct what the command is calling the Korean Strategy Seminar (KSS) at the U.S. Special Operations Command Wargame Center in Tampa. "The KSS brings together key leaders from across the U.S. government to consider how we can proactively support enhancing stability on the Korean peninsula," said spokesman Andre Kok. "This includes consideration of the challenge presented by North Korean weapons of mass destruction, as well as how we may potentially enhance our support to the Republic of Korea's role in maintaining regional stability." The current seminar is the second of its type and "is an important step to ensuring interagency coordination and engagement," he said. Defense officials said several North Korean conflict scenarios will be played out in the Tampa session, including efforts to counter North Korea's new road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, the KN-08, as well as discussion of how to counter Pyongyang's cyber warfare capabilities. The KN-08 is a 6,000-mile range road-mobile ICBM that has been observed in North Korea on Chinese-made transporter erector launchers. Engine tests of the missile were carried out last year but a flight test has not been observed. Additionally, the seminar will examine the use of U.S. special operations forces that in the past have planned and practiced operations to sabotage North Korean weapons of mass destruction facilities and stockpiles inside the country, one of the most regimented totalitarian police and military states in the world. The war games are also expected to include discussion of how to counteract North Korea's expected infiltration of large numbers of elite special operations commandos into South Korea during a conflict, considered a key asymmetric military threat. Defense officials said the seminar also could be preparation for U.S. retaliation against North Korea for the cyberattacks that damaged Sony's computer networks, involved the theft of large amounts of proprietary information, and prompted the movie company to delay release of the comedy *The Interview*. Military spokesman declined to provide specifics on the war games. Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Jeffrey Pool said the seminar will include senior officials of the Office of Secretary of Defense who will take part in portions of the classified strategy seminar. "The reason for hosting the seminar in Florida is the facility is able to accommodate discussions from a large number of participants at a high level of security classification," he said. U.S. military officials in recent months have expressed growing worries over the KN-08, a missile with enough range to hit parts of the United States with a nuclear warhead. North Korea unveiled six KN-08s during a military parade in April 2012. An additional worry is recent intelligence indicating North Korea is developing a submarine-launched ballistic missile. Satellite photographs revealed the work on a submarine launcher and the disclosure that the North has a submarine capable of firing missiles. The *Free Beacon*

first disclosed the SLBM work in August. The four-star Army general in October told reporters he believes North Korea has the capability of miniaturizing a small warhead and mating it to one of the KN-08 missile. "I don't know that they have that capability," he said Oct. 24 at the Pentagon. "I'm just saying as a commander, I've got to assume they have the capabilities to put it together. We've not seen it tested at this point. And as you know, for something that's that complex, without it being tested, the probability of it being effective is pretty darn low." Scaparrotti also said North Korea's cyberattack capabilities are not as formidable as others around the world, but that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un "is focused on developing cyber capabilities." "We've seen where he has had impact, obviously, in South Korea and their business and commercial entities. It's things like disruption of service, et cetera," he said. The Obama administration imposed sanctions on several North Korean entities in response to the Sony hack. Defense officials said that because North Korea is not heavily reliant on information systems, a U.S. cyber counterattack against the communist state is only one option among many being considered by commanders. Military options could include covert sabotage or intelligence operations targeting high-value North Korean military or political entities. David S. Maxwell, a North Korea expert at Georgetown University's Center for Security Studies, said the Korea Strategy Seminar could include an array of scenarios, such as how to deal with North Korean military provocations aimed at gaining political and economic concessions, a catastrophic collapse of the Kim family regime, or a North Korean military strike aimed at reunifying the Korean peninsula under Pyongyang's control. Other contingencies that could be explored may include an examination of the North's global illicit activities, such as currency counterfeiting and illicit drug trafficking, or how to deal with the North's trafficking in weapons of mass destruction and missile technology. "I do not know what the focus is on but given the complexity of the security situation, this range of challenges provides a variety of scenarios for an exercise and in particular an interagency exercise," Maxwell said in an email. The use of Special Operations Command's Wargame center also is significant, Maxwell said, as the command provides support for all major combatant commands during war or major military operations. "What I think is important about this exercise is that it does illustrate the importance of the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and conducting it at USSOCOM allows Gen. Scaparrotti and his team to capitalize on not only a world class gaming and simulation center at the headquarters, but also the fact that USSOCOM is probably the most advanced command in bringing together the interagency [process] outside of Washington to look at U.S. strategic problems." The special operations command has developed strong interagency ties that "have tremendous value in any strategic security scenario to include those on the Korean Peninsula," Maxwell said. In September, Adm. Samuel Locklear, then-commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, also expressed worries over the new KN-08. Locklear said North Korea is working to deploy the mobile ICBM and said "road-mobile systems" limit the "amount of time you have to deal with it, particularly if you want to deal with it before they launch it." The four-star admiral said it was difficult to assess how close North Korea is to fielding the KN-08. "So we watch it very, very carefully and it's kind of just on an upward trajectory of the things that over time can give us concern," he told Bloomberg News. Dealing with North Korea is one of the "most dangerous" security challenges, Locklear said, because Pyongyang has produced "pictures of mushroom clouds over New York City

and Washington." On the overall threat posed by Pyongyang, Scaparrotti said in October: "In recent years, North Korea has focused on development of asymmetric capabilities. These capabilities include several hundred ballistic missiles, one of the world's largest chemical weapons stockpiles, a biological weapons research program, and the world's largest special operations force, as well as an active cyber-warfare capability." The command's Wargame Center, where the KSS is being held, conducts war games, rehearsal of concept drills, senior seminars, and other planning efforts, according to the Special Operations Command website. The Pentagon's annual report to Congress on the North Korean military described the KN-08, which the Pentagon calls the Hwasong-13. "If successfully designed and developed, the Hwasong-13 likely would be capable of reaching much of the continental United States, assuming the missiles displayed are generally representative of missiles that will be fielded," the report said. On North Korea's military cyber warfare capabilities, the report said North Korea "probably has a military offensive cyber operations (OCO) capability." "Given North Korea's bleak economic outlook, [offensive computer operations] may be seen as a cost-effective way to develop asymmetric, deniable military options," the report said. "Because of North Korea's historical isolation from outside communications and influence, it is also likely to use Internet infrastructure from third-party nations. This increases the risk of destabilizing actions and escalation on and beyond the Korean Peninsula." North Korea's large special operations forces (SOF)—some 60,000 commandos—were described in the report as "among the most highly trained, well-equipped, best-fed, and highly motivated forces" in the North Korean military. "As North Korea's conventional capabilities decline relative to the ROK and United States, North Korea appears to increasingly regard SOF capabilities as vital for asymmetric coercion," the report said. Maxwell, the Georgetown North Korea expert, said the last time he could recall an interagency exercise focusing on Korean security was after President Bill Clinton in 1997 signed Presidential Decision Directive-56 (PDD-56) on managing complex contingency operations. That directive coincided with fears at the time that the regime in Pyongyang might collapse, creating a catastrophic situation in the region. "It seems to me that this exercise being conducted by [U.S. Forces Korea] with the support of USSOCOM is the best opportunity for interagency planning since 1997," he said. (Bill Gertz, "U.S. Commander in Korea Leads Secret Strategy Session," *Washington Free Beacon*, January 26, 2015)

1/?/15 Japan and North Korea held unofficial talks in late January in Shanghai, but Pyongyang did not present new information about the fate of Japanese citizens it abducted decades ago, a Japanese government source said February 12. But Tokyo sees the two sides "appear to have come to build a relation of mutual trust" because Pyongyang sent a senior official of the Ministry of State Security, North Korea's secret police organ directly linked to leader Kim Jong-un, to the talks, the source said. Kang Song Nam, a director at the North's ministry, may have been the official who met with Junichi Ihara, director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, in Shanghai, according to a diplomatic source. (Kyodo, "N. Korea Fails to Present Abductees' Info in Secret Talks in Late Jan." February 12, 2015)

1/28/15 The Russian presidential office said that North Korea's leader will attend a war anniversary event in Moscow in May. The heads of state from about 20 nations

confirmed their plans to join the ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in World War II and North Korea's leader is among them, according to the Kremlin. (Yonhap, "N. Korean Leader to Visit Russia in May: Kremlin," January 28, 2015)

Nick Hansen: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates new activity at the 5 MWe Plutonium Production Reactor at North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center after an almost five-month hiatus in operations from late August until mid-December 2014. One possibility is that the North is in the early stages of an effort to restart the reactor. However, since the facility has been recently observed over a period of only a few weeks, it remains too soon to reach a definitive conclusion on this and also on whether that effort is moving forward or encountering problems. ...Imagery beginning December 24, 2014 through January 11, 2015 indicates new activity at the 5 MWe Reactor that may be related to a process of attempting to restart the plutonium production reactor after an almost five-month shutdown. On December 24: steam was observed coming from a probable pressure relief valve on a steam pipe just before it enters the turbine building; a small amount of melted water is running off the center of the turbine-building roof and snow has melted off the reactor roof over the southern heat exchanger. It also appears some hot water is draining into the river via the pipe from the turbine building, which indicates that some steam is being produced by the reactor, passed into that building, is cooled and the resulting water dumped into the river. The river is mostly frozen over with the exception of several pools where warmer water is present. The largest of these pools is where the hot water from the turbine building enters the river. Snow had melted where a new pipe joins the turbine waste steam and water drainpipe on the riverside near the perimeter road and fence. This could indicate that discharged steam is being diverted into the new pipeline identified in previous imagery, possibly to heat other buildings at the center. In imagery from January 1, 2015, a week later, little has changed although there are hints of additional activity. Two streams of melted water are seen on the turbine-building roof. Also, snow has now been melted off the reactor's roof over the north heat exchanger. There appears to be steam coming from the pipe, which exits the reactor building from that exchanger. While it is not possible to tell how much water is being released into the river, the pools are still ice-free. ...Despite previous predictions that Pyongyang would have begun operations of the experimental light water reactor (ELWR) already, the ELWR continues to remain dormant. One major change occurred in July 2014 when a flood destroyed an earthen dam constructed to ensure that the reactor's cooling system had a reliable supply of water. As of early 2015 there has been no attempt to rebuild the dam or provide a new source of water." (Nick Hansen, "North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Facility: Restart of the 5MWe Reactor?" *38North*, January 28, 2015)

Hwang Joon-kook met with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts, Sung Kim and Junichi Ihara, in a trilateral meeting in Tokyo earlier in the day to discuss ways to resume the long-stalled six-party talks on North Korea's denuclearization. "The U.S. and Japan expressed strong support for Seoul's efforts to mend its ties with Pyongyang and to seek inter-Korean dialogue," Hwang told a group of reporters in Tokyo, disclosing that his itinerary also includes bilateral meetings with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts.

The trilateral meeting came amid growing concerns that there might be a gap between Seoul and Washington in dealing with North Korea. Hwang dismissed the view that Seoul and Washington are not on the same page, saying it is a misunderstanding to believe that Washington has shut its door for dialogue with the North. "The U.S. is seeking a two-track strategy of pressure and dialogue. Under this context, the U.S. is actively supportive of Seoul's initiative," he said. U.S. nuke envoy Kim reiterated that Washington will not rush back into any negotiation until the North shows its willingness to abandon nuclear weapons in a "concrete manner." Kim told reporters in Tokyo, "We are not rushing back to negotiations because we want to make sure that there should be adequate preparation and adequate demonstration of commitment by North Korea toward denuclearization," saying that the North has not shown such signs so far. (Yonhap, "U.S., Japan Back Seoul's Efforts for Inter-Korean Talks: Envoy," January 28, 2015)

Sung Kim: ... "I want to thank Director General Ihara for organizing this trilateral meeting. It was very productive, as I'm sure you heard from Director General Ihara and Ambassador Hwang. It was a very timely opportunity to exchange views regarding recent developments with regard to North Korea. Not surprisingly, we stand united. The three countries are united in our common pursuit of the denuclearization of North Korea. We will continue our closest possible coordination going forward. We agreed that it is important for us to continue to enforce our sanctions in light of North Korea's continued violation of international obligations and commitments. At the same time, we will energetically look for opportunities to return to credible negotiations towards denuclearization. In this regard, North Korea needs to demonstrate its commitment to denuclearization in a concrete manner before we can resume any serious negotiations. Thank you. **Q.** Ambassador, you are always talking about dialogue with the D.P.R.K. Today, did you discuss this issue? And have you reached an agreement about how you are going to resume the talks for the United States and DPRK or other countries? **KIM:** Well, **we discussed various possibilities for engaging the North Koreans, including bilateral dialogue.** And it's not just U.S.-North Korea bilateral dialogue, but Japan's ongoing efforts with the North Koreans regarding the abductee issue, about which we express very strong support. And of course South Korea's efforts to initiate North-South dialogue. So I think there are various opportunities out there. What's important is whether the North Koreans are ready to engage in serious and substantive dialogue on denuclearization. That is what all of us are looking for. **Q:** Ambassador, you just mentioned the implementation of sanctions, and the U.S. government announced its unilateral sanctions against North Korea just after the cyberattack on Sony Pictures. Will you expect Japan and South Korea to take similar sanctions against North Korea? **KIM:** Well, we continue to coordinate very closely on sanctions enforcement for Security Council resolution sanctions, as well as our unilateral sanctions. Japan and Korea already have a robust set of sanctions against North Korea in place. I think going forward, as we build on our efforts with regard to the new Executive Order signed by the President earlier this month, we will continue our close cooperation and coordination with our partners, including Japan and Korea. **Q:** Ambassador, is there any possibility that you will in the near future visit the DPRK? **KIM: I can tell you that I have no plans to visit North Korea on this trip. Q:** Is there any possibility? **KIM:** Well, **I don't want to hypothetically dismiss all possibilities,**

but it's really not a question of whether we are willing to visit Pyongyang or not. It's a question of whether the North Koreans are ready for a serious dialogue focused on denuclearization. And we just haven't seen that sign yet. Q:

Ambassador, what do you think of the role of China in terms of restarting the Six-Party discussions? **KIM:** We continue to believe that China has a very important role to play. They are the chair of the Six-Party Talks. They have strong historical ties with North Korea, and we do expect China will exercise its leadership and use its leverage on North Korea to persuade North Korea back to the path of denuclearization. **Q:** You just said that you want to see North Korea withdraw their nuclear reactors, and then the Six-Party Talks will resume. What kind of action do you want North Korea to take? They start to withdraw the nuclear reactor, or something, or you just have an agreement, and then the Six-Party Talks will resume? **KIM:** I don't want to get into too much detail here, but I think there's very strong consensus among not just the three parties - the U.S., Japan, and Korea - but among the five parties including China and Russia, that North Korea needs to demonstrate its commitment to denuclearization in a concrete manner before we can resume any serious negotiations. I think that would give us a much better chance to actually make lasting progress in denuclearization. **Q:** But how can you make sure that they won't start it again, because it's happened? **KIM:** I'm very well aware of the difficult past on this issue, and this is why we're coordinating closely and moving very deliberately. We're not rushing back into negotiations. **We want to make sure there is adequate preparation and there is adequate demonstration of commitment by all parties - especially North Korea - to denuclearization**, so that if and when we resume negotiations and the Six-Party Talks, we have a much better chance of making some real progress." (DoS, Remarks, Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim, Tokyo, January 28, 2015)

North Korea secretly sought to arrange an inter-Korean summit in return for large-scale economic aid when he was in office, says former President Lee Myung-bak. In an extract of his forthcoming memoir released to the media, Lee claims that Pyongyang requested Seoul to arrange a summit through correspondence from its officials as well as through former Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. The memoir, titled "The President's Time," will be published on February 2. Lee wrote that all negotiations failed because he would not comply with demands from then-North Korean leader Kim Jong-il that a summit take place on basis of preconditions being met. According to Lee, the North Korean leader proposed that the summit be arranged through a message delivered secretly in August 2009. Lee dispatched then Labor Minister Yim Tae-hee, a confidant of Lee, to Singapore in September 2009 to meet Kim Yang-gon and discuss related issues. Kim Yang-gon heads the United Front Department (UFD), which is Pyongyang's main policymaker on inter-Korean issues. Lee claims that Pyongyang demanded Seoul supply 400,000 tons of rice, 100,000 tons of corn, and 300,000 tons of fertilizer. He stated that the impoverished regime also asked for petroleum tar worth \$100 million for road construction and \$10 billion in cash to set up a state-run bank for economic development. According to Lee, then Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao hinted at Kim Jong-il's desire for an inter-Korean summit in October 2009 during an ASEAN+3 meeting in Thailand. The ASEAN+3 meeting involved 10 ASEAN member countries plus South Korea, China and Japan. In November 2009, the repressive state reiterated its demand for economic aid during a

meeting between working-level officials from the Ministry of Unification and their North Korean counterparts in Gaeseong, a border city in the North. Pyongyang adopted a slightly different tactic in July 2010 in the wake of the North's sinking of the Cheonan according to Lee. The military regime asked for 500,000 tons of rice in return for accepting demands from the Lee government to make an apology for the deadly incident. In December 2010, Pyongyang secretly sent a four-member delegation to visit Seoul and "made noticeable progress" toward a summit, according to Lee. However, the delegates, including two high-ranking military officials, were executed for unknown reasons in 2011, Lee wrote, citing sources in Washington and Beijing. The negotiations continued in 2011 in both Beijing and New York but instead, the two Koreas clashed over the sinking of Cheonan, Lee stated. Former ambassador to China Kim Ha-joong wrote in his memoir that Kim Jong-il rejected U.S. offer to visit Washington in December 2000. (Whan-woo, "Former President Claims N.K. Sought 'Cash-for-Summit,'" *Korea Times*, January 29, 2015) In a telephone interview on February 2, a source familiar with North Korea who was deeply involved in these negotiations said, "North Korea told us they wanted to set up a financial institution similar to South Korea's development bank [KDB], and they asked us to help them. But this was not a precondition for holding a summit." "Since it would have been hard for us to help North Korea set up the bank without American help [given the great amount of capital required], the idea was that we would help North Korea raise funds internationally if the summit was held. If North Korea had kept making such absurd demands, discussion of the summit probably wouldn't have continued through 2011," the source said. During an interview with a monthly magazine in February of last year, former Labor Minister Yim Tae-hee, who took part in behind-the-scenes negotiations with North Korea in Singapore in October 2009, was asked about rumors floating around that Pyongyang had wanted compensation for a summit. "If North Korea had made that kind of request, President Lee would never have allowed the negotiations to go on. The fact is that Kim Yang-gon, Minister of North Korea's United Front Department, never made such a request," Lee said, strongly denying such rumors. The claims made by Kim and in Lee's memoirs are based on ignorance about North Korea's negotiation strategy, some experts say. "North Korea's strategy is to make the most extreme demands during the early phase of defining the agenda for the talks and then back off later. But South Korea tends to make more reasonable demands up front because of public pressure to achieve its goals," said one government official who was frequently involved with negotiations with North Korea. The very fact that the Lee administration took the extreme demands that North Korea made initially at face value illustrates the administration's faulty understanding of the North. In addition, the other forms of aid requested by North Korea - 100,000 tons of corn, 400,000 tons of rice, 300,000 tons of fertilizer, and so on - were to be received in exchange for granting South Korean requests such as allowing South Korean abductees and prisoners of war to visit South Korea, the source familiar with North Korea emphasized. Consequently, these experts say, North Korea's demands were not so much a precondition for the summit meeting as they were part of the process of hammering out the agenda items for that meeting. In addition, the memoirs do not mention the weaknesses of the Lee administration's intelligence assets in North Korea. Until corrected by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the Lee administration mistakenly assumed that it was not Kim Jong-il, but Kim Jong-un, who was visiting China in May 2011. And when Kim Jong-il died in

December of the same year, the Lee administration was completely in the dark about it for 51 hours and 30 minutes. In short, figures from the Lee administration are focusing solely on North Korea's excessive demands while concealing their own failures. (Yi Yong-in, "Experts Say Lee MB's Memoir Claims ZAre of Questionable Accuracy," *Hankyore*, February 3, 2015)

1/29/15 South Korea said on Jan. 28 it will resume a program to support North Korean medical doctors' training in Germany. The move, the first of its kind in seven years, is in line with the Park Geun-hye administration's push for expanding humanitarian aid for the impoverished neighbor. The unification ministry plans to provide a North Korea-Germany group with 90 million won (US\$83,000) from the inter-Korean cooperation fund. It will be delivered through the (South) Korea Foundation for International Healthcare. In 2001, the North Korea-Germany Medical Association launched a project to help train the communist nation's doctors. A number of North Korean doctors were invited to Germany to learn the latest medical techniques for several months at local hospitals. South Korea offered funds for the program in 2007 and 2008, but cut the assistance amid worsened relations with Pyongyang. (Yonhap, "S. Korea to Support N. Korean Doctors' Training in Germany," January 29, 2015)

1/30/15 Sung Kim: "**Q:** Ambassador, there was a media report that the U.S. side offered a bilateral with North Korea in Beijing shortly before your trip here. Can you confirm and comment? **KIM:** We have made it very clear publicly that we are open to engagement, substantive dialogue with North Korea about the issue of denuclearization. I don't want to get into details of diplomatic communication, **but North Koreans were aware that I would be in the region and I think they understood that this would be an opportunity for substantive dialogue on the nuclear issue. But unfortunately, we are not having a meeting on this trip.**" (DoS, Remarks, Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim, Beijing, January 30, 2015)

1/31/15 KCNA: "It has been disclosed recently by U.S. media that the U.S. has snooped on the computer system and other communication facilities in the DPRK. According to the report based on a top secret document of the U.S. National Security Agency and testimonies made by former government officials of the U.S., it has run the whole gamut of base espionage acts such as gathering information about nuclear development in the DPRK through its cyberattacks for several years. Snowden, former agent of the CIA, at an interview with German media, disclosed that U.S. agents had illegal access to the computer network of the DPRK a few years ago and have regularly monitored it after setting up the hacking and tracking program CNE they obtained by hacking at the south Korean computer network. This is clear evidence revealing once again the true colors of the U.S. as a cursed empire of hackers. Whenever an opportunity presents itself, the U.S. made much fuss over heavy loss it suffered due to cyberattacks by other countries. For example, the U.S. kicked off a racket for slapping "additional sanctions" against the DPRK after deliberately linking the cyberattack on the Sony Pictures Entertainment to the latter. The U.S. advanced the theory on cyber warfare in the 1990s. Since then, it has organized lots of cyber warfare units, beefing up and developing them. It has stepped up preparations for a cyberwar, steadily increasing military expenditure for it under the pretext of "protecting national

interests." It set up the cyber command in May, 2010. In October, 2012 Obama issued a secret presidential order regarding U.S. policy on cyber warfare operations, which was meant to enable the U.S. army to mount a sudden preemptive cyberattack upon any country by mobilizing all means. Pursuant to the scenario, the U.S. Department of Defense is developing new type cyber weapons capable of jamming and disabling the military systems of other countries even under the conditions that the systems are not connected with the Internet if necessary. At a secret presidential order, the U.S. agents mounted a cyberattack code-named "Olympic Games" upon a nuclear facility of Iran and seized the design for its interior operation. They secretly input the malignant virus "Stuxnet" to the inner network system of the Iranian nuclear facility, causing delay in its nuclear activities for peaceful purposes. Such criminal acts of the U.S. are being openly perpetrated against not only those countries opposed to it but also its allies. The U.S. has further intensified hacking and espionage operations in various parts of the world. This is aimed to gather data necessary for realizing its wild ambition for dominating the world as well as improve and test the methods and means to be used for the future cyber wars. It is a serious challenge to the international community aspiring after world peace and stability that the U.S. is abusing the latest sci-tech successes for making a weapon for dominating the world. The U.S. is, indeed, a country of war maniacs running riot to realize their wild ambition for hegemony by infringing upon the sovereignty of other countries and even violating and stamping out human civilization. It is also a chieftain of aggression and intervention and a plot-breeding base. It is by no means fortuitous that the world public is censuring the U.S. acts of harassing the security of the cyber space. It would be well advised to stop running riot, well aware that successes made in the latest information technology are by no means its monopoly." (KCNA, "KCNA Commentary Accuses U.S. of Hacking at DPRK's Computer System," January 31, 2015)

2/1/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman: "as regards the fact that the U.S. is working hard to shift the blame for the failure to hold dialogue with the DPRK onto the latter: Kim Song, special representative for north Korea policy of the U.S. Department of State, in an interview during his tour of China on Jan. 30 let loose a spate of outbursts that the U.S. always keeps the door of dialogue for engagement and denuclearization open. This is a foolish attempt of the U.S. to fan up an atmosphere of sanctions and pressure on the DPRK through "international cooperation" by shifting the blame for the failure to hold dialogue and negotiations for the settlement of the issue of the Korean peninsula onto the DPRK. As well known to the world, entering the new year, the DPRK made bold and flexible proposals to defuse the danger of war, ease tension and create a peaceful climate on the Korean peninsula and is making every possible sincere effort to put them into practice. It clarified its stand that it is ready to take responding steps for putting a moratorium on nuclear test, a concern of the U.S., in case the latter temporarily halts joint military exercises in south Korea and its vicinity. It, at the same time, clarified that it is ready to sit at a negotiating table with the U.S. any time. **It also invited [Sung Kim] to visit Pyongyang as he expressed his willingness to meet with his counterpart of the DPRK during his visit to Asia this time.** However, the U.S., in disregard of this, is working hard to shift the blame onto the DPRK, misleading public opinion by creating impression that dialogue and contacts are not realized due to the latter's insincere attitude. While talking about dialogue, Kim insisted on the

stance that the DPRK should first take its sincere attitude toward denuclearization if dialogue is to start. This means, in essence, refusing dialogue as it is aimed to disarm the dialogue partner, first of all. Even the U.S. president openly said that it would bring down the social system in the DPRK. It is preposterous and a height of American-style shamelessness and hypocrisy to claim that the U.S. keeps the door of dialogue with the DPRK open. The DPRK feels no need to sit at a negotiating table with the party totally denying the ideology and social system chosen by the Korean people and desperately working to bring down them. The DPRK will resolutely counter the U.S. as long as it refuses to make its Korea policy switch and seeks "collapse of system" in the DPRK." (KCNA, "DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman Refutes Senior U.S. Diplomat's Remarks on Dialogue with DPRK," February 1, 2015)

2/2/15

The United States and North Korea have been actively discussing the possibility of returning to denuclearization talks, raising the prospect of a new round of diplomacy even as Washington takes a tougher line against Pyongyang. The countries' nuclear envoys have been discussing the idea of "talks about talks," according to multiple people with knowledge of the conversations. But they have not been able to agree on the logistics – in no small part because of North Korea's continuing Ebola quarantine. "We want to test if they have an interest in resuming negotiations," a senior U.S. administration official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "I think we've made it very clear that we would like to see them take some steps first." Those steps would include suspending work at North Korea's nuclear facilities and pledging not to conduct any further nuclear tests, he said. After years of broken North Korean promises, American negotiators are wary about taking Pyongyang at its word. But North Korea reacted angrily yesterday to the suggestion that it, not Washington, was the hurdle to resuming talks. When North Korea said it was willing to suspend nuclear tests if the United States and South Korea canceled annual military drills, the State Department turned down the offer, calling it "an implicit threat." The immediate response surprised proponents of engagement, who say the offer, although unacceptable, represented an opening from North Korea that should have been considered. But behind the scenes, former and current officials have been discussing the idea of holding talks about how to resume the six-party negotiations aimed at persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Last month, a group of former American officials – including Stephen Bosworth and Joseph DeTrani, both of whom have a long history of dealing with North Korea – met in Singapore with Ri Yong Ho, North Korea's vice foreign minister and lead nuclear negotiator. The meeting was designed to check "the lay of the land," according to one person familiar with the talks. Multiple Americans with knowledge of the various discussions spoke about them on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. **The Singapore meeting resulted in the suggestion that Sung Kim, the U.S. special envoy for North Korea policy, meet with a North Korean counterpart.** He was in Asia last week for meetings with Japanese, South Korean and Chinese officials, and he is understood to have raised the prospect of holding a meeting with the North Koreans in Beijing. North Korea offered to send Ri to Beijing or suggested that Sung Kim meet in Pyongyang with Kim Kye Gwan and Kang Sok Ju, both more senior in the Foreign Ministry than Ri. U.S. officials thought Kim's and Kang's ranks were better matched with Sung Kim's position but did not like the "optics" of the American envoy traveling to

Pyongyang, because it would have made the North Koreans look as though they were in the stronger position, according to the people close to the discussions. Another big hurdle: North Korea still has strict quarantine rules in place following last year's Ebola outbreak in West Africa. All people who have traveled outside the country – including, apparently, Ri, after his return from Singapore – are required to stay at home for 21 days. The few foreign arrivals have similarly been quarantined in Pyongyang; their only contact with the world outside their apartments is when a state-appointed doctor comes each day to check their temperatures, said foreigners living in the North Korean capital who have been subjected to the rules. This practice is continuing, even as the Ebola crisis subsides. But the bigger problem is the crevasse between the countries' starting positions. "We have made it very clear publicly that we are open to engagement, substantive dialogue with North Korea about the issue of denuclearization," Sung Kim said after his meetings in Beijing on Friday. The United States' fundamental position is still that "we're willing to deal with the government that's in power in North Korea if they will work with us sincerely towards credible negotiations on the nuclear issue," he said. North Korea responded angrily yesterday. In rejecting its invitation to host Sung Kim in Pyongyang, the United States was instead "working hard to shift the blame onto [North Korea], misleading public opinion by creating [the] impression that dialogue and contacts are not realized due to the latter's insincere attitude," an unnamed Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement carried by KCNA. David Straub, a former U.S. negotiator with North Korea, said the North Koreans "want to give the impression that it's the Americans who are being unreasonable right now." But both sides have wanted to talk to each other for decades, he said. "The issue is not whether they want to talk but on what terms? What do they want to achieve?" Straub said. "The North Koreans have made it clear publicly and privately that they are a nuclear weapons state and that they intend to be a nuclear weapons state forever." Scott Snyder, a Korea expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, said getting back to talks is just the first test. "The challenge of pursuing talks is how to resume them without accepting North Korea's nuclear status, while simultaneously keeping up the pressure," he said. "In the past, renewed dialogue has been accompanied by relaxation of pressure, especially from Beijing." (Anna Fifield, "U.S. and North Korea Have Been Secretly Discussing Having 'Talks about Talks,'" *Washington Post*, February 2, 2015)

2/3/15

North Korea and Russia are planning to conduct a joint military drill and boost their improving bilateral relations. "We are planning an expansion of the communication lines of our military central command," said Valery Gerasimov, the chief of staff of the Russian armed forces. "We are entering preliminary negotiations with the armed forces of Brazil, Vietnam, Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are going to conduct a series of joint naval and air force exercises, as well as joint drills of our ground troops and air assault troops." (Vasudevan Sridharan, "North Korea and Russia Planning to Conduct Joint Military Drill," *International Business Times*, February 3, 2015)

A campaign within the United Nations to haul North Korean leader Kim Jong-un before an international court for crimes against humanity has touched off a defensive fury in Pyongyang, where it's being treated like a diplomatic declaration of war -- an

aggressive act aimed not only at shutting down prison camps but also at removing Kim and dismantling his family's three-generation cult of personality. Actually, according to the U.N.'s point man on human rights in North Korea, that is not too far off the mark, though he stressed no one is advocating a military option to force regime change. "It would be, I think, the first order of the day to get these 80,000 to 100,000 [prisoners] immediately released and these camps disbanded," Marzuki Darusman, the U.N.'s special rapporteur on human rights in North Korea, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "But that can only happen if this cult leadership system is completely dismantled. And the only way to do that is if the Kim family is effectively displaced, is effectively removed from the scene, and a new leadership comes into place." (Associated Press, "U.N. Official Says North Korean Regime Must Be 'Dismantled' for Human Rights to Thrive," February 3, 2015)

2/4/15

NDC statement: "-- Obama announced new "additional sanctions" on the DPRK through a "presidential executive order" at the outset of the year and slandered it as "the most isolated, severed and cruel dictatorial state" on January 22. Not content with it, he cried out for bringing down the DPRK at an earlier date through information inflow by cyber warfare, saying such regime would collapse with passage of time. Meanwhile, politicians and military bosses of the U.S. have vied with each other in calling for tightened siege and blockade against the DPRK through re-listing of sponsor of terrorism and "high-profile additional sanctions." Typical of this is that the U.S. decided to stage war drills it planned in south Korea and its vicinity, **including the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle** joint military exercises under the pretext of "keeping alliance system," held a secrete confab to disable the nukes and missiles of the DPRK at the command of the special operation force in Florida State, and then formed even the U.S.-south Korea joint division to put it into practice. In this regard the National Defense Commission of the DPRK in a statement on February 4 clarified the following principled stand of its army and people: 1. Now that the brigandish U.S. imperialists' hostile policy toward the DPRK is getting extremely ferocious, the army and people of the DPRK will take stronger counteraction of justice to shatter it. Once the U.S. policy makers were so impudent that they had no hostile policy toward the DPRK. **But, Obama revealed himself that the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK is the harshest hostile policy and it is chiefly aimed to "bring down" the DPRK.** As long as the U.S. imperialists' hostile policy towards the DPRK is getting evermore ferocious at an extreme phase, its army and people will **indefinitely ratchet up its retaliatory action of justice** to counter the mounting mud-slinging of the Obama group at them, **its escalating harsh sanctions and pressure** and **the ever-expanding scale and scope of war drills** against it. The U.S. should clearly know it is long since the words that the U.S. imperialists are the sworn enemy became phraseology commonly used by all people and the whole army of the DPRK and the resolution to take revenge upon the U.S. under the slogan "Let's wipe out and annihilate the enemy and give death to him!" shaking this land is now growing so strong that they are ready to dash ahead like the wind towards the center of the U.S., the cesspool of crimes. 2. Now that the gangster-like U.S. imperialists' military strategy towards the DPRK is inching close to the stage of igniting a war of aggression, the just counteraction of the army and people of the DPRK will be focused on inflicting the bitterest disasters upon the United States of America. By origin, the U.S. imperialists are a group of gangsters accustomed to

making profound confusing of right and wrong and unleashing a war on the basis of plots and lies. It was none other than the U.S. which escalated the Vietnam war of aggression by faking up the Gulf of Tonkin incident and occupied Iraq by orchestrating a farce called "operation to eliminate weapons of mass destruction". It was again the U.S. which ignited the Korean war under the pretext of "southward invasion" in the 1950s. Today the Obama group is going so foolish as to try to "bring down" the DPRK through a cyberwarfare by fabricating the non-existent "human rights issue" of the DPRK and floating the fiction about its "cyberattack" on the Sony Pictures Entertainment. Under this dangerous situation the army and people of the DPRK have decided to write the last page of the U.S. history of shameful defeat about its final ruin exactly on the U.S. land by dint of Paektusan arms. **If the U.S. ignites a war of aggression against the DPRK by conventional forces**, the latter will fight the former by conventional forces of its style, **if the former unleashes a nuclear war against the latter, it will counter through its own nuclear strikes**, and if the former tries to bring down the latter through a cyberwarfare, it will react with its own preeminent cyber warfare and will thus bring earlier the final ruin of the U.S. This is a decisive option of the DPRK. The U.S. had better clearly know that **the DPRK's smaller, precision and diversified nuclear striking means and ground, naval, underwater, air and cyberwarfare means will be used** through the service personnel and people's display of the strongest mental power and indomitable ideology and will which the gangster-like U.S. imperialists can never think of and by the Juche-oriented strategy and tactics and unique war methods unprecedented in human history of wars. **3. It is the decision of the army and people of the DPRK to have no longer need or willingness to sit at negotiating table** with the U.S. since the latter seeks to stamp out the ideology of the former and "bring down" its social system. The Obama group is so impudent as to claim repeatedly that the DPRK should be led to changes and "collapse" of social system through "two-way strategy"--"pressure" and "dialogue" by force. Since the gangster-like U.S. imperialists are blaring that they will "bring down" the DPRK, oblivious of its poor plight facing adverse fate, the army and people of the DPRK cannot but officially notify the Obama administration of the USA that the DPRK has neither need nor willingness to sit at negotiating table with the U.S. any longer. The U.S. should no longer talk under the eyes of the world such nonsense that dialogue will be impossible before "change." The tradition of eternal victory for the DPRK and disgrace and defeat for the U.S. imperialists, recorded in the past history of showdown between the DPRK and the U.S., will be carried forward forever. Running high are the extraordinary spirit and readiness of the army and people of the DPRK to turn out in the toughest battle to settle accounts with the U.S. imperialists. The U.S. imperialists, engrossed in the hostile policy toward the DPRK century after century, should be mindful that the time of nightmare is coming nearer when they will meet the most disastrous, final doom on the U.S. mainland." (KCNA. "U.S. Imperialists Will Face Final Doom: NDC," February 4, 2015)

DPRK spokesman: "as regards the fact that the south Korean authorities are spreading the rumor that dialogue has not started due to the north, toeing the line of the U.S. which is displeased with any effort to mend the inter-Korean relations: ... These days those of the Ministry of Unification of south Korea talk rubbish that the north should stop making exhausting assertions and come out for dialogue as early as possible if it

has the willingness to mend the relations. Timed to coincide with this, the conservative media of south Korea are floating the rumor that it is hard to expect north-south dialogue for the time being due to the north. This is an intolerable insult to the DPRK's sincere efforts to bring about a great change in the north-south relations in this significant year and revelation of the clumsy and sinister intention to pass the buck for the daily escalating tension to it. Now the rabid dogs of the U.S. obsessed with the anti-DPRK hostile conception are openly barking that they will bring down the DPRK by leading it to "changes" in utter denial of its ideology and social system, and obstructing the south Korean authorities in every way so that they may not opt for mending the relations with it. This is well known to the world. **There are heaps of realistic issues pending solutions between the north and the south but there is not a single problem the south Korean authorities can settle without the U.S. interference.** This is the DPRK's judgment. It is the stark reality that without setting right the abnormal master-servant relations with the U.S. it is hard to expect a fundamental change in the north-south relations. The DPRK can never believe the south Korean authorities' will for dialogue as long as such situation goes on. The south Korean authorities should not just pay lip-service to "dialogue" and "confidence" but make a bold decision to settle national issues and reunification issue with their fellow countrymen through frank discussions, free from the U.S. control, and show the will for the improvement of the relations by taking practical and trust-based measures. They should also stop such acts of doing harm to fellow countrymen and escalating tensions by toeing to the U.S. policy. To talk about "dialogue" without taking practical measures is not an attitude to truly settle the issue of the north-south relations. Such behavior cannot be interpreted otherwise than a poor charade to make the public at home and abroad believe that they are interested in improving the north-south ties and to shift the blame for the failure to open dialogue on to the DPRK side. As we have repeatedly clarified our stand, **we are fully ready to bring about a fresh landmark phase in the north-south relations** for the dignity and destiny of the nation. The prospect of the north-south relations entirely depends on the attitude of the south Korean authorities." (KCNA, "S. Korean Authorities Urged to Take Practical Measures for Dialogue," February 4, 2015)

DPRK FoMin spokesman "as regards the fact that the "special rapporteur" on human rights issue in the DPRK recently slung mud at the dignity of its supreme leadership: Darusman, called "special rapporteur" on human rights issue in the DPRK of the UN Human Rights Council, in an interview with AP on Feb. 2 called for "change of leadership" in the DPRK, saying that "human rights and the present government cannot coexist in north Korea." His reckless remarks were just an imitation of calumnies on the DPRK of the U.S. ruling quarters obsessed with the inveterate repugnancy towards it, and this fully revealed his true colors as a dirty stooge under the veil of human rights champion who acts a shock brigade in implementing the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK. It is no wonder that AP expressed astonishment at the remarks, saying that they could be heard only from U.S. officials. Darusman threw mud at the dignity of the DPRK supreme leadership absolutely trusted by its army and people. It is as foolish an act as trying to get the sun eclipsed by palms, and such impudent behavior deserves the punishment of Heaven. In fact, he is implicated in the case of the massacre of 500 000 people linked to the leftist or labor groups in

Indonesia in 1965 committed with CIA help. He is also a dirty man who is a member of the Global Leadership Foundation, whose patrons include U.S. unsavory characters. Such guy, turned into a disgusting imposter and hack writer for money from the U.S., now goes recklessly to take the lead in the anti-DPRK "human rights" campaign. Darusman, a hand-raised stooge of the U.S., recruited "testifiers" like Sin Tong Hyok and took them from place to place to tell the false stories according to the U.S. scenario, so as to cook up an anti-DPRK "human rights resolution", befooling the international community. Upset by Sin's confession of his false "testimonies", Darusman is seeking to justify the false document, cooked up by himself, with sophism that it was based on "testimonies" of hundreds of people. To make it clearer, he should open to the public the names of hundreds of "defectors" from the DPRK whom he asserted he met. Then, the DPRK will reveal to the whole world the true identities of each and every one of those false "testifiers" and the crimes committed by them one by one. Consequently, the truth behind the anti-DPRK "human rights" racket by Darusman and his master, the U.S., will be brought to light more evidently. The DPRK does never pardon anyone for hurting the dignity of its supreme leadership, and it is its unchangeable temper and will to defend the best socialist system of Korean style. The DPRK will continue to toughly counter the mad-cap anti-DPRK "human rights" racket the U.S. and other hostile forces kicked up by employing such dishonest elements as Darusman." (KCNA, "DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman Blasts Remarks of 'Special Rapporteur' of UN Human Rights Council," February 4, 2015)

The U.S. says North Korea has not yet shown it is serious about restarting negotiations over its nuclear weapons program. But top U.S. diplomat for East Asia, Daniel Russel, says he has not given up hope, and is monitoring statements by Pyongyang. Russel said the North's recent offer of a nuclear test moratorium if annual U.S.-South Korea military exercises are canceled was a non-starter. He told reporters, "North Korea does not have the right to bargain, to trade or ask for a pay-off in return for abiding by international law." (Associated Press, "U.S.: No Sign Yet N. Korea Serious on Nuke Talks," February 4, 2015) North Korea should learn from Myanmar's opening and change course, a senior American diplomat said Wednesday, stressing Pyongyang can implement reforms without "regime change" as seen in the Southeast Asian nation. "The transformation in the (Myanmar) economy, the transformation in the lives of Burmese people, the opportunities that have opened and the scope of international cooperation has not come at the cost of a revolution," Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel said at a Foreign Press Center briefing. "A change in North Korea does not mean to be regime change as the example of Burma shows," he said. Reforms in Myanmar have led to the "pouring-in of significant development economic support." Russel stressed the U.S. is willing to hold talks with Pyongyang, but what's more important than simply holding talks is to hold serious negotiations aimed at ending the country's nuclear program, and for such negotiations to reopen, Pyongyang should first demonstrate its denuclearization commitments. "We are open to dialogue. We have no problem talking to North Korea. We talk to North Korea. What we want, however, are negotiations to implement the agreements reached to fulfill the mandate of the U.N. Security Council resolutions to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula," he said. "We are always alert to and seeking indicators of seriousness of purpose on North Korea's part that it is prepared to negotiate, that it's prepared to come to the

negotiating table, ready to take the concrete steps, take the reversible steps that will be necessary to freeze, roll back and eliminate ultimately the nuclear program and missile program," he said. The senior diplomat also dismissed as a "nonstarter" Pyongyang's recent offer to suspend nuclear tests in exchange for a halt to joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea, saying the North has no right to "bargain, to trade or to ask for a payoff in return for abiding by international law." "That's not how it works. The issue is this. Will North Korea agree to negotiate denuclearization in the six-party context and ... how will we know that there is a sufficient prospect of making progress toward denuclearization to warrant restarting that entire effort," he said. (Chang Jae-soon, "Change in N. Korea Does Not Mean Regime Change: Senior U.S. Diplomat," Yonhap, February 5, 2015)

China's defense minister expressed concern over a possible deployment of the United States' advanced missile-defense system in South Korea, Seoul's defense ministry said. "Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan expressed concern over the possible THAAD deployment on the Korean Peninsula," defense ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok told reporters, without further elaboration. Chang made the remark to his South Korean counterpart Han Min-koo during a two-hour defense ministers' meeting in Seoul. "In response, Minister Han reaffirmed Seoul's stance that Washington has not made any decision on the matter and has not asked South Korea (for any consultation). No agreement between Seoul and Washington exists on the issue," Kim noted, adding that the missile-defense system "aims to solely deter and counter missiles from North Korea." It is the first time that a ranking Chinese official has raised the THAAD issue to South Korea publicly. (Oh Seok-min, "China Voices Concern over U.S. THAAD on Korean Soil," Yonhap, February 4, 2015) Han and Chang agreed to follow-up measures to establish a hotline between the two countries' defense ministries. The channel, if completed, will be Seoul's third Defense Ministry hotline, following ones with the United States and Japan. "Low-level talks will start next week for the hotline project," said a South Korean official. "We want to open the channel before the end of this year." Chang is the third Chinese defense minister to visit South Korea. The last such visit was made in 2006. The two countries had their last defense ministerial talks in Beijing in 2011. Following the defense ministerial talks, Chang visited the Blue House and met with President Park. (Ser Myo-ja, "China's Defense Chief Raise THAAD," *JoongAng Ilbo*, February 5, 2015)

The nominee for the next U.S. secretary of defense vowed to use the "full range of capabilities" to defend against North Korean ballistic missiles, saying they could pose a "direct threat" to the country. Ashton Carter made the pledge in a written answer submitted to the Senate Armed Services Committee for his confirmation hearing, saying he would deploy more ground-based missile interceptors in California and Alaska, regions that could fall within the North's missile ranges. Carter also said the North's intercontinental ballistic missile threat is "very real." "North Korea's ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction capabilities clearly present a serious and direct threat to U.S. forces postured in the Asia-Pacific region as well as to our regional allies and partners," Carter said. "These capabilities, although untested at longer ranges, could also pose a direct threat to the United States ... If confirmed, I will ensure that we draw upon the full range of our capabilities to protect against, and to respond

to, these threats," he said. North Korea's history of proliferation activities amplifies the dangers of its asymmetric programs, he said. In addition to deploying more missile interceptors, Carter also said he would enhance the Pentagon's ability to highlight and disrupt the illicit proliferation networks that North Korea uses and promote cooperation with partners to interdict shipments of proliferation concern. "With respect to ballistic missiles that could threaten the United States, I think that's one of the reasons why we need to keep our missile defenses and especially our ICBM defenses current, capable and large enough in size to deal with both the prospective Iranian threat and the also very real North Korean ICBM threat," he said during the hearing. North Korea's missile program has long been a key security concern in the region and beyond. He added the limited information on the North, leader Kim Jong-un and the regime's motivations "add to my concern." "Despite the recent signals from both North and South Korea about openness to inter-Korean engagement, the U.S. should remain vigilant against the strong possibility that North Korea will use brinkmanship and provocations to try to coerce the United States and its allies and partners back into negotiations on its own terms," he said. He rejected the North's recent offer to suspend nuclear tests if the U.S. and South Korea halt joint military exercises, saying the annual drills are "routine, transparent, and defensive exercises that are meant to strengthen military readiness and alliance preparedness." "There is no equivalence between conducting these exercises and North Korean nuclear tests, which are violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions," he said. Carter said the North's hack on Sony is "serious and deserving of a response" but that he does not believe it rises to the level of an "act of war." (Yonhap, "Carter Vows to Use 'Full Range of Capabilities' to Defend against N.K. Missiles," *Korea Times*, February 5, 2015)

King: "The DPRK has not requested humanitarian aid from the United States since 2011, and we do not have any plans to provide such assistance. But the need for food, medical, technical, and educational aid is still urgent in North Korea. This is why people and NGOs like the ones that are here today are so important. They are able to engage with North Korea under different circumstances. Whereas North Korea has set up road blocks to government-to-government engagement, it has demonstrated a willingness to work directly with NGOs. NGOs are able to do things the United States cannot do. This is why we admire and encourage their efforts to provide much needed aid to the people of North Korea. To the extent that we can be helpful, we seek to support NGO efforts. The United States has long made clear to North Korea that we are open to improved relations if it is willing to take concrete actions to live up to its international obligations and commitments. We remain gravely concerned about the ongoing systematic and widespread human rights violations in the DPRK and about the well-being of the North Korean people, who bear the brunt of their government's decision to perpetuate its self-impoverishing policies. These policies deny the people of the North human and civil rights and the quality of life which they could and should have. Addressing these human rights abuses in North Korea remains an essential component of U.S. policy. We believe direct people-to-people contact, which occurs through the provision of humanitarian aid, such as that provided by private organizations, can have a positive long term impact on advancing change in the country. As such, we support efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the people of

North Korea. And we call on North Korea to honor its international obligations and agreements and to allow the international humanitarian assistance groups and independent monitors unfettered access to all areas of the country to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches its intended recipients." (Robert R. King, Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues, "Getting Beyond Politics: Creating Lasting Impact in North Korea," SAIS, Washington, February 4, 2015)

2/5/15

The U.S. says North Korea has not yet shown it is serious about restarting negotiations over its nuclear weapons program. But top U.S. diplomat for East Asia, Daniel Russel, says he has not given up hope, and is monitoring statements by Pyongyang. Russel said the North's recent offer of a nuclear test moratorium if annual U.S.-South Korea military exercises are canceled was a non-starter. He told reporters, "North Korea does not have the right to bargain, to trade or ask for a pay-off in return for abiding by international law." (Associated Press, "U.S.: No Sign Yet N. Korea Serious on Nuke Talks," February 4, 2015) North Korea should learn from Myanmar's opening and change course, a senior American diplomat said Wednesday, stressing Pyongyang can implement reforms without "regime change" as seen in the Southeast Asian nation. "The transformation in the (Myanmar) economy, the transformation in the lives of Burmese people, the opportunities that have opened and the scope of international cooperation has not come at the cost of a revolution," Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel said at a Foreign Press Center briefing. "A change in North Korea does not mean to be regime change as the example of Burma shows," he said. Reforms in Myanmar have led to the "pouring-in of significant development economic support." Russel stressed the U.S. is willing to hold talks with Pyongyang, but what's more important than simply holding talks is to hold serious negotiations aimed at ending the country's nuclear program, and for such negotiations to reopen, Pyongyang should first demonstrate its denuclearization commitments. "We are open to dialogue. We have no problem talking to North Korea. We talk to North Korea. What we want, however, are negotiations to implement the agreements reached to fulfill the mandate of the U.N. Security Council resolutions to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula," he said. "We are always alert to and seeking indicators of seriousness of purpose on North Korea's part that it is prepared to negotiate, that it's prepared to come to the negotiating table, ready to take the concrete steps, take the reversible steps that will be necessary to freeze, roll back and eliminate ultimately the nuclear program and missile program," he said. The senior diplomat also dismissed as a "nonstarter" Pyongyang's recent offer to suspend nuclear tests in exchange for a halt to joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea "because North Korea has no right to bargain, to trade or to ask for a payoff in return for abiding by international law." "That's not how it works. The issue is this. Will North Korea agree to negotiate denuclearization in the six-party context and ... how will we know that there is a sufficient prospect of making progress toward denuclearization to warrant restarting that entire effort," he said. (Chang Jae-soon, "Change in N. Korea Does Not Mean Regime Change: Senior U.S. Diplomat," Yonhap, February 5, 2015)

Jeffrey Lewis: "On December 20, 2014, the South Korean Ministry of National Defense (MND) released a white paper that contained a surprising statement about North Korea's nuclear program. "North Korea seems to have made significant progress in

miniaturizing its nuclear weapons.” The MND Minister had made a similar statement in October, but for some reason, this time his statement sparked a flurry of stories in South Korean press, such as the *Chosun Ilbo* and *JoongAng Ilbo*, as well as in US publications like the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. This chatter forced the South Korean government to clarify the statement. “Seoul and Washington have reached consensus that the North already reached a significant level of technology to miniaturize nuclear weapons through three nuclear tests,” an MND official told the *Chosun Ilbo*. **“But there is no intelligence report that the North has already succeeded in miniaturizing nuclear weapons.”** Well that clears it up. This is now the third time something like this has happened in the past few years—a statement that North Korea has developed a nuclear weapon small enough to arm a ballistic missile of one sort or another, followed by oddly parsed statements suggesting that maybe they haven’t. In Spring 2013, for example, a US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) threat assessment was mistakenly marked unclassified stating that North Korea might be able to arm ballistic missiles with nuclear weapons, prompting the Department of Defense and Director of National Intelligence to release clarifications of their own. And, in October of that year, the Commander of US Forces Korea stated his personal opinion that North Korea probably could do so, prompting a statement by the ROK Minister of National Defense. At some level, this debate strikes me as a bit bizarre. The North Koreans have conducted three nuclear weapons tests since 2006, including one they openly declared to have been of a “miniaturized” device; they have also created a Strategic Rocket Force and published a picture of a map showing their nuclear targeting plan against the United States. I realize that North Korean propaganda is often balderdash, but the idea that North Korea might be developing nuclear-armed ballistic missiles isn’t really in the same category as claims that Kim Jong-un doesn’t poop. Whether North Korea can arm a ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead, particularly a ballistic missile that can reach the United States, depends on the answer to three questions: Can North Korea make a nuclear weapon small enough? Can North Korea’s compact nuclear weapon survive the shock, vibration and temperature change associated with ballistic missile flight? Can North Korea construct a “reentry vehicle” that can survive the extreme heat of reentry, a problem that gets worse with range? I think the answer to each of these questions is, “yeah, probably.” While I understand the caution in crediting the North Koreans for capabilities that are only under development, there is ample open source information to support such a judgment. Reasonable people may still disagree, but no one should be surprised by the prospect of nuclear-armed North Korean missiles. The simplest question is whether North Korea can build a nuclear weapon small enough—both in terms of mass and compactness—to fit atop a ballistic missile. The United States intelligence community has a term of art—simple fission device—to describe first generation nuclear weapons, like the aptly named “Fat Man,” that are much too large to place on a ballistic missile. As a general technical matter, however, the US intelligence community has always stated that a country could skip right toward building much smaller devices on the order of 1,000 kg—although such weapons would be unreliable without nuclear testing. This device would look something like the US Mark 7, which weighed about 750 kg. Some of my colleagues have pointed out that North Korea could probably do much better, trying out something like the Mark 12 which weighted on 450 kg. Not surprisingly, as early as 1999, DIA was arguing that North Korea might try to build a 650-750 kg device, even if

others in the US intelligence community were skeptical. **DIA just assumed that North Korea would go straight to a Mark 7-like design. There is plenty of reason to think that North Korea tried to do precisely that.** During the 2000s, there were many reports of North Korea conducting extensive testing of high explosives. **A nuclear weapon is mostly a conventional explosive. Making the bomb more compact largely involves design innovations that require fewer explosives to achieve a given level of compression (such as levitated pits and better electronics). One explanation for all the testing of conventional explosives is that North Korea was trying to develop a device small enough to be delivered by missile.** In 2005, a North Korean defector stated that North Korea had done precisely that, build a 1,000 kilogram device that was—just as the US intelligence community would have predicted—not reliable. (The defector also said the next device would be smaller.) When North Korea’s first test in 2006 produced a very disappointing yield, many of us took the small yield to be confirmation of this general hypothesis—North Korea had tried to skip directly to a compact device and it did not work. At one point, a reporter told me this was also the working hypothesis within the US intelligence community. Since then, North Korea has conducted two more nuclear tests that produced far higher yields—a few kilotons in 2009, followed by several kilotons in 2013. Following that latest test, the North Koreans announced they had “miniaturized” their nuclear devices. **It seems very plausible to me that, after three tests, the North Koreans have a nuclear weapons design somewhere in the Mark 12 to March 7 range—450-750 kg in mass with a diameter between 60-90 cm.** Lots of states have moved quickly to develop relatively smaller devices. The Chinese provided a uranium-based design to Pakistan that was 500 kg and 90 cm in diameter, which the Pakistanis miniaturized and passed on to Libya and lord knows who else. **Such a warhead is certainly small enough to arm a Nodong and might just fit on a notional DPRK inter-continental ballistic missile.** The problem here is how to estimate the capabilities of a DPRK ICBM that does not exist—based on Unha technology or the KN-08 mockups? **If North Korea can’t make a warhead compact enough for its ICBMs, it is more likely to be because the ICBM doesn’t have enough payload space.** Can North Korea’s Compact Nuclear Weapon Survive the Shock, Vibration and Temperature Change Associated with Ballistic Missile Flight? This is a more interesting problem. It’s all well and good to design a much smaller nuclear weapon using fancy electronics and so on, but the design must be rugged enough to survive the shock, vibration and temperature extremes of taking a ride on a ballistic missile. **“The difference has to do with the confidence level in the actual ability of the North Koreans to make a weapon that will work in a missile,”** James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, explained in 2013, **“And neither we nor the North Koreans know whether that’ll actually—whether they have that—such capability, if they have it, will actually work.”** This was a real problem for the Chinese in the 1960s, too. The Chinese developed a missile-delivered warhead for their DF-2 ballistic missile—the same design that China provided to Pakistan—and originally planned to simulate the abuse suffered during a real launch, followed by an underground test of the roughed-up bomb. The Chinese, however, decided that it was too hard to simulate the extreme conditions of flight. After a fair amount of back-and-forth between the weaponeers and the central leadership, Zhou Enlai authorized a very unusual live test of a real nuclear weapon on a real ballistic missile. China fired a nuclear-armed DF-2 in October 1966. It

worked. The Chinese weren't alone. We had the same debate in the United States a few years before. Like China, we also settled for a one-off demonstration called Operation Frigate Bird, in which a US submarine fired a nuclear-armed Polaris missile at a nuclear test site in the South Pacific. It worked too, although it later turned out that the warhead in question was judged unreliable. We might lack confidence in North Korea's ability to manufacture a reliable miniaturized nuclear weapon. I wonder, though, how much that matters. Do the North Koreans lack confidence in their warheads? What if we underestimate them? What if they are drunk off *Juche*? What if, like Operation Frigate Bird, the unreliable weapon just happens to work when it's fired? There is an interesting discussion to be had about reliability, confidence and deterrence, but I wonder whether it adds much to our assessment of North Korea. Finally, no matter how rugged one makes a nuclear warhead, it has to be packaged in a reentry vehicle that can survive the heat created as it reenters the earth's atmosphere. The North Koreans could certainly package a warhead in a blunt reentry body that would be inaccurate, very heavy and potentially vulnerable to theater missile defense systems—but it would still survive reentry. **The North Koreans, however, have paraded missiles with so-called "triconic" reentry vehicles that are sort of a compromise between blunt reentry bodies and the slender cones that arm missiles in the US and other advanced nuclear powers. A triconic reentry body must deal with heat through ablation—in other words, the reentry body must be made of material that burns off, taking the heat with it. This can be a significant challenge for an ICBM, where reentry speeds can reach 7 km/s.** China, for example, struggled in the 1970s with developing a reentry vehicle for the DF-5 ICBM that could handle such temperatures. *China Today*, a series of publications on the technical history of China's defense industries, describes the problem as "a technical difficulty" which is about as colorful as *China Today* gets. Ultimately, though, the Chinese solved that problem. In fact, I can't think of a single state that has been able to build an ICBM, but not able to put a passable reentry vehicle on top of it. It is common to say North Korea would require a program of testing to overcome these problems. That's understandable. In the 1960s, reentry vehicle designers probably struggled to model reentry environments and had a limited choice in materials. But today? After more than fifty years of space flight? With a large body of open source information, better computer simulation capabilities and fancy new materials? Maybe a little help from their friends? And maybe a little overconfidence? And, let's be clear about the problem here. The warhead probably won't burn up. Even the North Koreans don't suck that badly. When designers talk about how hard it is to design an ablative reentry vehicle, what they really mean is designing one where the ablation occurs evenly around a spinning reentry vehicle. The Chinese were as worried about "the stability of the warhead in flight" as they were about protecting the bomb package inside. An unstable reentry body might fail completely, but it is more likely to just wildly miss the intended target—say landing in San Jose when it was aimed at San Francisco. That's a problem, of course, but Kim Jong-un might be content with such an outcome. It is not surprising that some people in the US or ROK government think that, yes, North Korea might be able to do these things. Nor is it surprising that others would counsel caution, suggesting that North Korea hasn't put all together in a single test. North Korea's missile and nuclear "developments have been accompanied with extremely belligerent, aggressive public rhetoric toward the United States and South Korea,"

Clapper testified in 2013. "North Korea has not, however, fully developed, tested or demonstrated the full range of capabilities necessary for a nuclear- armed missile." In other words, *prove it*. But is that really what we want? Looking at the Chinese example, do we really want to insist that North Korea arm a missile with a live warhead and conduct a demonstration? A much better solution is trying to negotiate limits on North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. Such limits would not eliminate the threat these programs pose, but they might keep them unreliable. That would be an achievement. I'll be the first person to say that we should not exaggerate the capabilities of North Korea's nuclear forces, but underestimating them is every bit as bad. The North Koreans are developing military capabilities that we will, sooner or later, have to deal with. I just happen to think that negotiations, as frustrating as they may be, are the best of a series of unappealing options. Moreover, underestimating the North Koreans often means that, when they surprise us, our political system over-compensates, passing from denial straight into panic. Consider the case of the August 1998 Taepodong launch. The US intelligence community had assessed, in 1995, that "No country, other than the major declared nuclear powers, will develop or otherwise acquire a ballistic missile in the next 15 years that could threaten the contiguous 48 states and Canada." As it turns out, more than fifteen years later, they were right. (And the fine print on North Korea and the Taepodong program was pretty decent, as well.) So, when North Korea launched a Taepodong in 1998 with an unexpected third stage that failed, the intelligence community got a great big "congratulations" for a job well done. *Oh, wait, no it didn't*. The intel was right, but that didn't matter in part because the technical assessment didn't convey North Korea's ambitions to develop a capability that outstripped its abilities. Just imagine if North Korea were to conduct a live demonstration of a nuclear weapon on a Nodong out to sea. Even if it didn't work, Washington, Seoul and Tokyo would go bonkers. That's worth keeping in mind. Yes, the North Koreans probably stink at making compact warheads and accurate reentry vehicles. But that's not quite the same thing as saying they aren't trying, that they don't have some confidence in these capabilities or that we shouldn't keep trying to find ways to discourage them from testing these systems." (Jeffrey Lewis, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: The Great Miniaturization Debate," *38North*, February 5, 2015)

2/6/15

South Korea is prepared to roll back a set of sanctions on North Korea if conditions are met through dialogue, a top official here said. Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae said he government has already completed a relevant "study." "Once talks are held between the South and the North, I believe it can serve as a chance for lifting the May 24th Measure," he said at a forum in Seoul. The South wants the North to take responsible measures with regard to the Cheonan incident, while Pyongyang calls for the lifting of the sanctions as a precondition for reuniting families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War. The minister, however, admitted that the government will come under growing pressure to ease or remove the May 24th Measure if the South's trilateral logistics project with North Korea and Russia moves forward. The South aims to sign a formal contract on the so-called Rajin-Khasan project, in which the South's top steelmaker, POSCO, will bring in Russian coal via the North's port of Rajin. The government, Ryoo said, plans to allow social, cultural, religious and sports exchanges with the North as much as possible this year, the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's 35-year-long colonial rule. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Signals Flexibility on N.K. Sanctions,"

February 6, 2015) "Economic cooperation isn't happening right now because of the May 24 measures, but the administration has actually done all the studies on those measures," Ryoo said on February 6 in a lecture held at Seoul's Ritz Carlton Hotel at the invitation of Woori Bank. "If South Korean capital is invested after the main contract for the Rajin-Hasan project is completed, the situation with the May 24 measures starts to become very awkward," he added. Ryoo also said the administration was likely to be more accepting of exchange because of events related to the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial occupation. "This year is the 70th anniversary of liberation, so the administration is planning to allow as much [exchange and cooperation] as possible in areas like society/culture, religion, and sports," he explained. Another factor addressed by Ryoo was North Korea's special economic zone development projects. "North Korea isn't going to come right out and say it, but there have been messages that they would appreciate South Korea's help," he said. "If North Korea is pursuing economic openness, then their economy could develop very quickly with South Korean help," he added. "We can't do that now because of the nuclear issue." While insisting that North Korea's "attitude on the nuclear issue and other issues needs to change," Ryoo also stressed the importance of Seoul taking the initiative. "Obviously, we have to make the first efforts to change that," he said. "There is no objection whatsoever to the idea that we need to be act more preemptively and flexibly." Ryoo went on to stress the importance of dialogue. "Even if [North and South Korea] have conflict, we still have to meet," he said. "And I think that if we do meet, North Korea is obviously going to try some tricks and fail to keep its promises. But we still have to meet. We have to keep working to convince them to honor their promises." Ryoo expressed unhappiness with the recent publication of memoirs by former President Lee Myung-bak containing previously undisclosed information about diplomatic efforts between Seoul and Pyongyang. "He shouldn't say things like that. Just because you know about them doesn't mean you should say them," he said. "I actually know all about the back story behind the memoirs that President Lee Myung-bak recently wrote," he added. His remarks sent a stronger message than the one recently coming from the Ministry of Unification, which has previously maintained that it would be "inappropriate" to comment on the content of a former president's memoirs. Ryoo's open displeasure may reflect a more general current of criticism within the current Park Geun-hye administration - and the perception that Lee acted imprudently by hampering efforts to improve inter-Korean relations with the release of previously undisclosed diplomatic details. Lee's memoirs were previously subject to a strong denunciation in a February 5 statement from North Korea's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, which accused Lee of "slandering us and giving a skewed portrayal of behind-the-scenes meetings between North and South." Ryoo also voiced displeasure over the Lee administration's attempt to merge the Unification Ministry with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when it first took office in 2008. "The Unification Ministry nearly disappeared in 2008," Ryoo said. "Some staffers are suffering even now from the trauma." "Eighty employees at the main office lost their jobs. It makes no sense. And then to talk about 'unification' after that. . .," he continued. "We're the world's only divided nation, and if we have created an exclusive agency [for that], then we should stand behind it," he added. (Son Won-je, "Unification Minister Says Sanctions on North Could Be Lifted If Dialogue Takes Place," *Hankyore*, February 7, 2015)

North Korea has taken several measures to cooperate with the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, Jang Sam-ryong, deputy governor of North Korea's central bank, told AP Television News in a rare interview this week. He said that the North has joined the body as an observer nation. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "N. Korea Cooperating with Anti-Money-Laundering Body," February 6, 2015)

2/7/15 Ri Gun, a seasoned diplomat who has handled U.S. affairs, has been named as North Korea's new envoy to Poland, the country's state-run news agency KCNA said. Ri, the director general in charge of North American affairs at the North's foreign ministry, will replace Kim Pyong-il who has recently been transferred to the Czech Republic. Kim, a younger half-brother of late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, had served as the North's ambassador to Poland for 17 years. (Yonhap, "Seasoned Diplomat Named to Serve as N. Korea's New Envoy to Poland," February 7, 2015)

2/8/15 North Korea test-fired five short-range missiles into the sea off its east coast Sunday, raising cross-border tensions ahead of Seoul's planned joint army drills with the US. The North fired the missiles into the East Sea (Sea of Japan) from its eastern city of Wonsan between 4:20-5:10 pm, (0720-0810 GMT) Seoul's defense ministry spokesman told AFP. They flew about 200 kilometers (124 miles) before landing. "We are closely watching for any signs of additional missile launches by the North," said the spokesman. Yesterday, the North said it had test-fired an "ultra-precision" anti-ship rocket, which will be deployed across its navy "before long." (AFP, "North Korea Fires Short-Range Missiles into Sea," February 8, 2015)

2/9/15 Only 53.1 percent of North Korean defectors were employed in 2014, 7.7 percent less than the overall employment rate of 60.8 percent in South Korea, a survey of defectors by the Korea Hana Foundation, which helps defectors adjust to life in the South, shows. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "Nearly Half of N. Korean Defectors Unemployed," February 10, 2015)

North Korea's total grain production last year reached its highest level since the country's economy began its collapse in the mid-1990s. According to the World Food Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization, the North produced nearly 5 million tons of rice, corn and beans in 2014, an increase of 130,000 tons from a year earlier. (Arirang News, "N. Korea's Grain Production at Highest Level Since 1990s," February 9, 2015)

2/10/15 The United States "strongly supports" South Korea's initiative for inter-Korean dialogue as it could help prod North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program, a ranking U.S. official said Tuesday. At a meeting with university students in Seoul, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken said Washington is supportive of South Korean President Park Geun-hye's bid to improve ties with North Korea, stressing that the two allies have "the exactly same approach" to Pyongyang's nuclear issue. "If there is progress there, it would demonstrate that North Korea is actually prepared to engage with us. It might create a better environment also where we can pursue denuclearization," Blinken told a group of students at the U.S. embassy in Seoul. "So we have total harmony in policy approach between Washington and Seoul on this."

(Kim Soo-yeon, "Better Inter-Korean Ties Could Pave Way for N.K. Denuclearization: U.S. Official," Yonhap, February 10, 2015)

2/11/15

South Korea and the United States plan to carry out a three-day joint exercise starting today on shaping deterrence strategies to counter threats from North Korea, the defense ministry here said. The allies will hold the annual discussion-based tabletop exercise (TTX) at Seoul's state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) "to discuss how to politically and militarily respond to North Korea's nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles," according to the ministry. South Korea will be represented by Ryu Je-seung, South Korea's Deputy Minister for National Defense Policy, and the U.S. by Elaine Bunn, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy and David Helvey, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia, the ministry said, adding some 40 officials from the two sides will be on hand. Prior to the exercise, Seoul and Washington plan to hold the "Track 1.5" deterrence dialogue bringing together security experts and TTX participants to check the allies' readiness posture and to explore ways to strengthen defense capabilities, the ministry said. "The TTX this year will be the first one that the South Korean ministry took the lead from planning to the execution," the ministry said in a release. "We expect the exercise to lay the groundwork for the allies to have in-depth discussions and to practically implement their strong will and policy measures against North Korea's threats posed by its nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles," it added. (Oh Seok-min, "S. Korea, U.S. to Stage Deterrence Drill against N. Korea," Yonhap, February 10, 2015)

North Korea's former deputy chief of its mission to the United Nations has been named as new head of the North American affairs department at Pyongyang's foreign ministry, a diplomatic source said. Han Song-ryol, who assumed the No. 2 post at the North's U.N. mission from 2009-2013, will replace predecessor Ri Kun, the source said. The appointment was made as Ri has been named North Korea's new ambassador to Poland. Han also served as the deputy chief of the North's mission to the U.N. from 2002-2006. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Names New Point Man on U.S. Affairs," *Korea Times*, February 11, 2015)

2/16/15

The National Assembly narrowly endorsed President Park Geun-hye's nominee for prime minister, reflecting deep rifts over his eligibility for the job. Lee Wan-koo passed the confirmation motion 148-128. Only 281 of 295 legislators showed up to vote, and confirmation of a prime minister requires a simple majority. At least seven lawmakers in the ruling Saenuri Party either opposed Lee or abstained. Lee was already Park's second pick for the country's No. 2 job and replaces Chung Hong-won, who resigned in April last year over the deadly ferry disaster. But Park bungled two efforts to appoint a successor and prevailed on Chung to stay in the job. There are concerns, however, that the embattled replacement has already lost too much momentum to do the job effectively. Lee, like almost every one of Park's candidates, has been criticized for alleged speculative land deals, as well as attempts to influence media executives to stop reporters writing negative stories about him. But his supporters are banking on his strong political support from the Chungcheong region. Lee is from South

Chungcheong Province, which has been a major swing region in general elections.
(*Chosun Ilbo*, "National Assembly Narrowly Backs New P.M.," February 16, 2015)

North Korea said it is not worried about a threat to refer the country to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, because it is not guilty and wants to attend a U.S. meeting on its rights situation to defend itself. "We are not worried at all because at every move we can strongly respond to such a move and we are not guilty of any crime," U.N. Ambassador Jang Il Hun told a news conference at the country's mission to the United Nations. "We totally reject and categorically deny all those claims," he said. Jang also said he asked the United States to scrap a conference on human rights in North Korea to be held at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) think tank tomorrow. "We also demanded that in case the conference is enforced as scheduled then we had to participate ... as a party directly concerned," he said. "I sent a formal request to my counterpart in the State Department and he responded that it's not a U.S. government event. So it means our request was denied." Asked about the North Korean request, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department said it was a privately organized event, while adding: "The wide range of participants from around the world reflects the international community's continued concern with the dire human rights situation in North Korea." Conference chair Victor Cha, the head of the CSIS Korea program, said the meeting was open to the public and the think tank generally does not issue specific invitations. North Korean diplomats at the United Nations need State Department permission to travel outside of New York City, Cha said. "This event is a futile attempt on the part of the United States and South Korea to give credibility to the Commission of Inquiry report amid increasing skepticism ... the report was based on fabricated forced testimonies," Jang said. (Michelle Nichols, "North Korea Says Unworried by ICC Threat Because It's Not Guilty," Reuters, February 16, 2015)

2/17/15

President Park Geun-hye tapped her secretary for unification affairs as South Korea's new point man on North Korea in a Cabinet shake-up, an official said. Hong Yong-pyo, 51-year-old Oxford-educated expert on North Korea, will replace Ryoo Kihl-jae as unification minister, who is in charge of relations with the communist country. Hong "is the right person who can resolve pending inter-Korean issues as he has an in-depth understanding of the government's policy and philosophy on North Korea," senior presidential press secretary Yoon Doo-hyun said. It's not clear whether Hong's nomination will signal any policy shift toward North Korea. Park also nominated Yoo Ki-june, a U.S.-educated ruling Saenuri party lawmaker, as her new maritime minister, a post that has remained vacant since December. She also named Yoo Il-ho, another ruling party lawmaker as her new minister of land, infrastructure and transport while nominating Yim Jong-yong, chairman of Nonghyup Financial Group Inc., as head of the Financial Services Commission, the country's financial regulator. The Cabinet shake-up came a day after Lee Wan-koo, Park's choice for prime minister, won parliamentary endorsement. It is widely seen as Park's attempt to try and refresh her team as she enters her third year in power. (Yonhap, "Park Taps Adie As New Point Man on N. Korea," February 17, 2015)

China sent no delegation to the birthday anniversary of North Korea's late leader, Kim Jong-il, China's foreign ministry said.

Asked whether China sent a delegation to the North Korean event, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying replied, "Yesterday was the Day of the Shining Star in North Korea. The Chinese embassy in North Korea attended the relevant activity upon the invitation of the North Korean side." (Yonhap, "China Sent No Delegation to Birthday Anniversary of Kim Jong-il," February 17, 2015)

2/18/15

North Korea conducted the first flight test of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile last month, defense officials said this week. The flight test of what the Pentagon is calling the KN-11 missile took place January 23 off the coast of North Korea from a sea-based platform—not a submarine—located off the coast of the communist state, said officials familiar with reports of the flight test. U.S. intelligence ships and aircraft monitored the test and tracked the successful missile firing. Additional details of the flight test could not be learned. The flight test followed a land-based ejection test of the KN-11 in November from a static launcher located at the North's Sinpo South Shipyard in November. Sinpo is a port city on North Korea's southeastern coast about 100 miles from the Demilitarized Zone separating North Korea from rival South Korea. The flight test is being viewed by U.S. intelligence analysts as a significant step forward for Pyongyang's submarine-launched ballistic missile program. The new program was first disclosed by the *Washington Free Beacon* August 26. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Vincent R. Stewart, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told the House Armed Services Committee Feb. 3 that North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs "pose a serious threat to the U.S. and regional allies." "Pyongyang maintains that nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities are essential to ensure its sovereignty," Stewart said in a prepared statement. "Because of its conventional military deficiencies, the DPRK [North Korea] also has concentrated on improving its deterrence capabilities, especially its nuclear technology and ballistic missile forces." Stewart added that DIA is concerned North Korea will conduct a fourth underground nuclear test in the future. The DIA director's testimony made no mention of the SLBM program. But he said: "Pyongyang also is making efforts to expand and modernize its deployed missile forces consisting of close-, short-, medium-, and intermediate-range systems." "It seeks to develop longer-range ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons to the United States and continues efforts to bring its KN-08 road-mobile ICBM to operational capacity. Other analysts assess the SLBM missile will be developed as a nuclear delivery system for Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal. A submarine-launched nuclear missile would add a more-difficult target to U.S. regional deterrence and missile defenses. Since the SLBM program was disclosed last year, South Korea's government has confirmed the program. Rick Fisher, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, said the use of a floating launch platform indicates the KN-11 could be launched from a military or commercial ship as well as from a submarine. Platform test launches also indicate that the weapon is in an early stage of development and is not ready to be launched from a submerged submarine. "For Pyongyang, using the KN-11 from ships as well as submarines rapidly increases the number of potential launch platforms, as it also complicates U.S. and allied efforts to monitor a new North Korean missile threat," Fisher said. "Firing the KN-11 from a

floating platform is still useful, as it would go far to help verify whether the missile's guidance system is able to compensate very quickly for wave motion in order to achieve the desired trajectory for the greatest accuracy." As for why Pyongyang is building the underwater missile, Fisher said: "The advent of the KN-11 offers North Korea the means to launch missile strikes against U.S. forces in Japan or against South Korea and Japanese targets, from multiple directions, from land bases, and from the sea." Fisher said in response to the missile that the Pentagon should urgently build up additional missile defenses and revive U.S. sea-based tactical nuclear arms in the region to bolster deterrence. The Pentagon's retirement of submarine-launched Tomahawk missile in 2010 was a "major mistake," he said. Bruce E. Bechtol, a North Korea specialist, said the major threat from any North Korean ballistic missile is whether the weapon is mobile—thus more difficult to target—and whether it can hit U.S. cities and carry a nuclear warhead. U.S. intelligence agencies suspect North Korea in 2013 had developed a small nuclear warhead for delivery on long-range missiles after its third nuclear test. "The North Koreans appear to be moving toward at least two of the three key parts of the threat a missile could pose to the United States," said Bechtol, a former Defense Intelligence Agency official currently at Angelo State University. "If and when they are able to launch the SLBM from a submarine, it means a platform that is mobile enough that it would likely be difficult for U.S. missile defenses to track," he said. "The fact that the submarine could move to within just a few miles of American coastlines such as Alaska, Hawaii, or the west coast of the United States, means they could meet the second part of the missile threat to the U.S." North Korea probably obtained small nuclear warhead know-how from the Pakistani nuclear supplier group headed by A.Q. Khan. "The fact that the North Koreans have test-launched this missile—even though it was not from a submarine—means that the DPRK is advancing their SLBM program," Bechtol said. "This is a threat—a direct threat—to the United States that should be taken seriously if it comes to fruition." North Korea obtained from Russia SS-N-6 submarine-launched ballistic missiles several years ago. The missile was adapted to North Korea's Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile. North Korea also has six KN-08 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles that were developed with launchers supplied by China. The submarine North Korea plans to deploy the KN-11 on is not known. North Korea obtained several decommissioned Soviet-era Golf II ballistic-missile submarines in the early 1990s. Pyongyang may seek to copy or adapt the design of the Golf II for an indigenous missile submarine. (Bill Gertz, "North Korea Flight Tests New Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile," *Washington Free Beacon*, February 18, 2015)

2/20/15

Frank Rose: "As you're all aware, China is continuing to develop its BMD capabilities. Although China does not say much about its BMD programs, China publicly announced that it conducted ground-based mid-course BMD tests in 2010, 2013, and 2014. I'll say more about the 2014 "BMD" test later. Chinese state media has stated that such tests are defensive in nature and are not targeted at any country. I was in Beijing earlier this month, and the message I delivered was clear: It is important that our governments have a sustained dialogue on the role that our BMD systems have in our respective defense policies and strategies. We would welcome an opportunity to learn more about how BMD fits into China's defense policy and strategy. More broadly, a sustained dialogue would improve our understanding of China's strategic perspective

and enhance China's understanding of U.S. policy and strategy. Institutionalizing discussions of strategic issues is a prudent long-term approach to strengthening strategic stability and exploring means for strengthening mutual trust and risk reduction. To encourage that dialogue, we have taken and will continue to take steps to keep China informed about developments in U.S. BMD policy. The U.S. experience with BMD and specifically with our Ground-based Midcourse Defense System, or GMD, provides a useful lens for examining the challenges the Chinese would face in developing a BMD capability to threaten our nuclear deterrent. We have been clear that our homeland BMD capabilities provide for defense of the U.S. homeland from limited ICBM attack, and are purposely not intended to affect Russia's or China's strategic deterrent. The GMD system is designed to support that policy, and it is not scaled, intended, or capable of defending the United States against the larger and more sophisticated arsenals of Russia and China. GMD is designed to protect the U.S. homeland only from limited ICBM attacks from states such as North Korea and Iran. The U.S. experience with BMD suggests that attempting to develop a comprehensive homeland BMD system to defend against ballistic missile attack from China or Russia would be extremely challenging - and costly - given the size and sophistication of Chinese and Russian ICBMs. This owes to several factors, including the relatively low number of GMD interceptors and the sophistication and large numbers of Russian and Chinese missiles. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated this publically on May 18, 2010, in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when he said that trying to eliminate the viability of the Russian nuclear capability would be "unbelievably expensive." Given these factors, we could potentially expect a notional Chinese equivalent to the GMD system to provide at most a limited defense of the Chinese homeland, which would not counter the U.S. strategic deterrent and therefore would not undermine strategic stability. This is for the same reason that GMD does not impact strategic stability: the number of interceptors is low and they are not designed to deal with complex threats, and developing a comprehensive system to cope with a full-scale attack from another nuclear-armed great power would be expensive and ultimately unsuccessful. There is another important aspect of China's BMD program that bears discussing, which is its connection with China's anti-satellite, or ASAT, weapons program. On July 23, 2014, the Chinese Government conducted a non-destructive test of a missile designed to destroy satellites in low Earth orbit. However, China publicly called this ASAT test a "land-based missile interception test." Despite China's claims that this was not an ASAT test; let me assure you the United States has high confidence in its assessment, that the event was indeed an ASAT test. The continued development and testing of destructive ASAT systems is both destabilizing and threatens the long-term security and sustainability of the outer space environment. A previous destructive test of the Chinese system in 2007 created thousands of pieces of debris, which continue to present an ongoing danger to the space systems—as well as astronauts—of all nations, including China. The destructive nature of debris-generating weapons has decades-long consequences: they can increase the potential for further collisions in the future, which only create more debris. A debris-forming test or attack may only be minutes in duration, but the consequences can last for decades. It is for these reasons that the United States believes testing debris-generating ASAT systems threaten the security, economic well-being, and civil endeavors of all nations. ...China's ASAT program, and the lack of transparency accompanying it, also impedes

bilateral space cooperation. While we prefer cooperation, it will by necessity have to be a product of a step-by-step approach starting with dialogue, leading to modest CBMs, which might then perhaps lead to deeper engagement. However, none of this is possible until China changes its behavior with regard to ASATs.” (DoS, “Remarks by Frank A. Rose, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance,” Federation of Atomic Scientists, Washington, February 20, 2015)

When the North Korean carpenter was offered a job in Kuwait in 1996, he leapt at the chance. He was promised \$120 a month, an unimaginable wage for most workers in his famine-stricken country, where most people are not allowed to travel abroad. But for Rim Il, the deal soured from the start: Under a moonlit night, the bus carrying him and a score of other fresh arrivals pulled into a desert camp cordoned off with barbed-wire fences. There, 1,800 workers, sent by North Korea to earn badly needed foreign currency, were living together under the watchful eyes of North Korean government supervisors, Mr. Rim said. They worked from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or, often, midnight, seven days a week, doing menial jobs at construction sites. “We only took a Friday afternoon off twice a month but had to spend the time studying books or watching videos about the greatness of our leader back home,” Rim said at a recent news conference in Seoul, the South Korean capital. “We were never paid our wages, and when we asked our superiors about them, they said we should think of starving people back home and thank the leader for giving us this opportunity of eating three meals a day.” Tens of thousands of North Koreans work long hours for little or no pay, toiling in Chinese factories or Russian logging camps, digging military tunnels in Myanmar, building monuments for African dictators, sweating at construction sites in the Middle East or aboard fishing boats off Fiji, according to former workers and human rights researchers. For decades, North Korea has been accused of sending workers abroad and of confiscating most of their wages. But in the years since Kim Jong-un took over as leader, human rights researchers say, the program has expanded rapidly as international sanctions have squeezed the country’s other sources of foreign currency, like illicit trading in missile parts. A 2012 study by the North Korea Strategy Center, a group in Seoul that works with North Korean defectors, and the private Korea Policy Research Center estimated that 60,000 to 65,000 North Koreans were working in more than 40 countries, providing the state with \$150 million to \$230 million a year. That number has since grown to 100,000, human rights researchers said. “North Korea is exploiting their labor and salaries to fatten the private coffers of Kim Jong-un,” said Ahn Myeong-chul, head of NK Watch, a human rights group in Seoul. “We suspect that Kim is using some of the money to buy luxury goods for his elite followers and finance the recent building boom in Pyongyang that he has launched to show off his leadership.” In a report published late last year, the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies said that the revenue from overseas workers helped the North Korean government bypass international sanctions, which have been tightened in recent years. “Earnings are not sent back as remittances, but appropriated by the state and transferred back to the country in the form of bulk cash,” it said, noting that sanctions ban the transfer of bulk cash to the Pyongyang government. “Returning workers also act as mules to carry hard currency earnings back to North Korea.” NK Watch has collected the testimony of 13 former North Korean workers now living in South Korea, in support of a petition to the United Nations asking for an investigation into what it

calls "state-sponsored slavery." The petition, to be filed next month to the United Nations' special rapporteur on contemporary slavery, said the migrants worked a minimum of 12 hours a day, were given a few days off a year, and commonly received only 10 percent of their promised pay, or none at all. NK Watch said that there had never been an official investigation into the practice and that it was appealing to the United Nations in hopes of building on the work of a report last year that documented widespread human rights abuses inside North Korea. The workers interviewed by NK Watch said they were victims of a chain of exploitation and deception. They described a system where government minders monitored their movements and communications and required them to spy on one another. The minders often confiscated the workers' passports. "These workers face threats of government reprisals against them or their relatives in North Korea if they attempt to escape or complain to outside parties," the State Department said in a report published last year. "Workers' salaries are deposited into accounts controlled by the North Korean government, which keeps most of the money, claiming various 'voluntary' contributions to government endeavors." The Workers' Party, the ruling party in North Korea, instructed a group in Kuwait to send home \$500,000 a month, more than its members' regular salaries combined, a North Korean supervisor who worked there from 2011 to last year told NK Watch. Former workers in Kuwait and elsewhere said they were forced to work even longer hours and seek odd jobs in the local community, splitting the earnings with government minders who demanded bribes in return for allowing them such opportunities. One worker told NK Watch that he received only \$160 in the three years he worked in a Siberian logging camp in the 1990s, toiling up to 21 hours a day in temperatures often colder than minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit. He was told the rest of his wages were sent home to his family. But families were given only coupons for state-owned stores, where there was often nothing to buy, former workers said. Still, in North Korea, the opportunity to work overseas was considered such a privilege that the jobs had to be bought with bribes. Former workers said their biggest fear was when supervisors threatened to send them home when they failed to meet exorbitant production targets or offer bribes. And compared with many of their compatriots at home, they were well fed. Kim Yoon-tae, a researcher on North Korean human rights, said that the international community could pressure countries that use North Korean labor to honor basic international standards for labor protection, including an end to the practice of giving workers' salaries to the government. Rim said he was paid in cash only once during the five months he worked in Kuwait before he escaped into the South Korean Embassy there in 1997. To celebrate the birthday of Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un's father and predecessor, supervisors gave each worker about \$65 to buy cigarettes. "Our life was nothing but slavery," Rim said. (Choe Sang-hun, "North Korea Exports Forced Laborers for Profit, Rights Groups Say," *New York Times*, February 20, 2015, p. A-8).

2/21/15

Kim Jong-un has inspected an artillery and landing exercise by front-line units deployed near the Yellow Sea. The drill, joined by artillery forces of the 4th Corp. and island defense units, focused on training for "striking and seizing an island," said KCNA. The 4th Corp. led the North's shelling of a South Korean border island, Yeonpyeong, in November 2010, which killed four South Korean marines and civilians and wounded more than a dozen others. Conducted at the direct instruction of Kim,

the main aim of the latest training was to prepare for a fight against the United States, it added. "The entire army should make their training more intense, as the anti-Japanese guerrillas did in Mount Paektu, to prepare all soldiers as stalwart combatants and turn all units into an iron-willed guards unit and thus bring the anti-U.S. confrontation to the final conclusion by crushing the enemies promptly in case they pounce upon the DPRK," Kim was quoted as saying. (Yonhap, "N. Korean Leader Inspects Island Landing Training," February 21, 2015)

2/22/15 The Navy carried out two flights tests of the Trident II nuclear missile last month, weeks after China and North Korea conducted submarine-launched ballistic missile test firings. The two Trident II D5 missiles were launched from a submerged Ohio-class missile submarine in the western Pacific on February 22. "A credible, effective nuclear deterrent is essential to our national security and the security of U.S. allies and friends," Admiral Cecil D. Haney, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, said March 2 in announcing the test. "Strategic weapons tests such as these are a visible demonstration for assuring our allies and deterring our adversaries that our nation's strategic triad is safe, secure and effective," the four-star admiral said. The missiles carried dummy warheads. (Bill Gertz, "North Korean Hacking Tests Nations," *Washington Times*, March 4, 2015)

2/23/15 KCNA: "An enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) took place under the guidance of Kim Jong-un, first secretary of the WPK, chairman of the Central Military Commission of the WPK, first chairman of the National Defense Commission of the DPRK and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA). Attending the meeting were members of the Central Military Commission of the WPK, executive members of the KPA Committee of the WPK and commanding officers of services and corps-level units. The participants observed a moment's silence in memory of leader Kim Jong Il at the proposal of Kim Jong-un. The meeting discussed important strategic issues of bringing about a radical turn in the overall work for national defense as required by the prevailing situation and developing revolution and an organizational matter. Kim Jong-un made a historic speech. He said that over the past three years since the demise of Kim Jong Il the service personnel of the KPA have safeguarded the WPK and the revolution with pure conscience and clear mind, regarding the loyalty to the party and leader and moral obligation as dearer than their own lives despite the graver situation at home and abroad than ever before. The enlarged meeting is of weighty significance in clearly indicating the future orientation of building the army for carrying out the behests of Kim Jong Il and letting the People's Army, the main force for the Songun revolution, win victories in defending socialism and all sectors for building a thriving nation this year so as to successfully greet the 70th anniversaries of the WPK and the liberation of the country as grand political festivals, he noted. ...**Emphasizing the need for the KPA to focus all its efforts on rounding off combat readiness this year**, he said to this end, it was necessary to simplify the machinery of the KPA and indicated the orientation and ways for reorganizing the machinery in such a way as to realize the strategic intention of the Supreme Command any time. Calling on the KPA to be fully ready to react to any form of war to be ignited by the enemy, he clarified the methods of fighting a war with the U.S. imperialists and corresponding operational and tactical

matters." (KCNA, "Enlarged Meeting of WPK Central Military Commission Held under the Guidance of Kim Jong-un," February 23, 2015)

2/24/15

Five countries to the six-party talks on ending North Korea's nuclear program have reached a consensus on the need to have exploratory dialogue to gauge Pyongyang's willingness to denuclearize, Seoul's top nuke envoy, Hwang Joon-kook, after he and his Russian counterpart, Morgulov Igor, held a meeting in Moscow to discuss ways to resume the long-stalled six-party talks. Hwang left for Russia yesterday for a three-day visit. Hwang said that five countries -- South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia -- have narrowed gaps over conditions for the resumption of the denuclearization talks that also involve North Korea through a series of recent bilateral and trilateral meetings among the five nations' top nuke negotiators. "The five countries have built consensus about the need to have 'exploratory talks' to gauge whether North Korea is serious about denuclearization before reopening the six-party forum," Hwang told Korean correspondents in Moscow. "Six-way exploratory dialogue involving the North can be also taken into account." Hwang said that the consensus will be delivered to Pyongyang in an appropriate manner, expressing hope that North Korea could respond to such a request with sincerity. The format of such talks can be seen as a compromise as Seoul and Washington stressed Pyongyang show sincerity toward denuclearization, while the North, China and Russia put more focus on the reopening of the six-party talks without preconditions. South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se told YTN cable news that excluding the North, the other four nations have considerably appreciated the so-called Korean Formula, Seoul's initiative to resume the six-party talks in a "multifaceted and creative" manner. "We believe that the level to which North Korea can show its sincerity toward denuclearization is neither too high nor too low. (The Korean Formula) contains contents involving a proper level to which the North is able to begin to denuclearize," Yun said, without elaborating. (Yonhap, "5 Nations Want Exploratory Talks on N.K. Nuke Program: Seoul Envoy," February 25, 2015)

2/25/15

North Korea has continued high-explosive detonation tests and its possible nuclear test is forecast to be much more powerful both in scale and yield than previous ones, Seoul's intelligence authorities said. "North Korea has been carrying out high-explosive tests at a test site in Pyongyang to secure technology for weapons miniaturization and stronger explosive power," an official said. "Should the North conduct a fourth round of nuclear test, its explosion would have a yield of at least 10 to 15 kilotons with a larger scale compared to the previous ones," he added. The North's initial underground test in 2006 measured 3.9 on the Richter scale with a yield of less than 1 kiloton. In May 2009, Pyongyang carried out the second test that created a 4.5-magnitude tremor with a yield of 3 to 4 kilotons. During the third and the latest test in February 2013, the figures jumped to 4.9 on scale and 6-7 kilotons, according to South Korean and U.S. authorities. "No unusual signs have been detected in and around its nuclear test site of Punggye-ri in North Hamkyong Province. But Pyongyang has been ready to carry out a fresh test round whenever it wants," the official noted. In its 2014 white paper, Seoul said the North is presumed to have secured some 40 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium, "but the figure is literally nothing but a presumption," he said. Yesterday, Joel Wit, the chief analyst running the website 38 North at Johns

Hopkins University, said Pyongyang is currently believed to have 10-16 nuclear weapons -- six to eight of them based on plutonium and four to eight based on weapons-grade uranium -- and its nuclear stockpile could expand to as many as 100 weapons by 2020. (Oh Seok-min, "N. Korea's Possible Nuke Test Forecast to Be More Powerful: Seoul," Yonhap, February 25, 2015)

2/26/15

North Korea is not yet likely to have miniaturized nuclear warheads to mount on ballistic missiles, though it appears to have been developing related technology to a "considerable" degree, Seoul's Defense Ministry said. "They have technology of a considerable level but it is unlikely they are capable of miniaturizing nuclear warheads. In other words, they have not mastered the weaponization process," ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said at a regular news briefing. "Would you be able to make nuclear weapons without succeeding in miniaturizing them?" Kim said. "(Wit's assertion) is simply an assumption by some private organization or experts, not substantiated by any evidence. We assess that (North Korea) has yet to secure the technology."

No signs of another underground blast have been detected from across the border, Kim noted, despite a news report that the communist country is gearing up to detonate an atomic device in May. "As we've repeatedly said, North Korea appears to be ready to go ahead with a fresh test whenever it wants. But it should make a decision, facing a significant level of political pressure including U.N. sanctions," the spokesman said. (Shin Hyon-hee, "N.K.'s Nuke Miniaturization Limited," *Korea Herald*, February 26, 2015)

ISIS: "As of the end of 2014, the DPRK is estimated to have a stock of 30-34 kg of separated plutonium, or an average of 32 kg. ...Adjacent to the 5 MWe reactor, the DPRK is constructing what is called an experimental light water reactor (ELWR) with a stated power of about 100 MWth and an electrical output of about 30-35 MWe. The ELWR has not yet started operation but could do so in 2015 or 2016. Whether the ELWR will be strictly for civil purposes is not known ...If the ELWR were limited to strictly civilian use and optimized to make electricity economically, it would produce plutonium that is not ideal for nuclear weapons--called reactor-grade plutonium. Typically, the fuel, in which the plutonium is produced, contains low-enriched uranium (LEU) containing about 3-4 percent uranium-235, and this fuel is typically heavily irradiated in this type of reactor, creating the reactor-grade plutonium rather than the more desirable weapons-grade plutonium sought by nuclear weapons programs. Moreover, North Korea's Radiochemical Laboratory is not designed to separate the plutonium from the ELWR fuel, and would require significant modifications to do so. If North Korea wanted to use this reactor to produce weapons-grade plutonium, it could do so using a more practical method developed in the 1980s by the US Department of Energy when it was considering alternative methods of making weapons-grade plutonium and tritium for US nuclear weapons. In this case, a light water reactor uses enriched uranium driver fuel (10-20 percent enriched in the isotope uranium-235) and natural or depleted uranium targets, where the weapons-grade plutonium is produced in the targets. Reactor-grade plutonium would be produced in the driver fuel. The weapons-grade plutonium in the targets would be recovered, and targets can be designed to make them relatively straightforward to process in the Radiochemical

Laboratory, requiring manageable changes to this plant. An advantage of this method is that there would be no need to process the ELWR driver fuel; it can be stored indefinitely. The processing of this driver fuel would require major modifications to the Radiochemical Laboratory that would be hard to achieve in practice. However, with a driver/target system, the DPRK could efficiently and on a sustained basis make weapons-grade plutonium. Depending on design, it could produce up to 20 kg of weapons-grade plutonium per year. ...Any nuclear weapons program is likely to pursue successive designs that use smaller quantities of plutonium in each weapon. In the case of North Korea, faced with a limited stock of plutonium, one would expect that the nuclear weaponization program focused early on developing designs requiring less plutonium than that of first generation fission weapons of the type detonated by the United States during the World War II Manhattan Project. The Trinity explosion contained about 6 kg of plutonium. Over time, North Korea likely reduced the amount of plutonium it needed in each weapon to significantly less than 6 kg. In its Six Party declaration, the North stated that the 2006 nuclear test contained only 2 kg of plutonium. Although there is wide skepticism about this particular declaration, it reinforces the point that North Korea is likely seeking to use less plutonium in each test than the United States used in the Trinity test. A North Korean nuclear weapon is assumed in this analysis to contain between 2 and 5 kg of plutonium, where values in the middle of the range are weighted more than those at the ends of the range. This weighting reflects a judgment that North Korea is unlikely to use on average as little as 2 kg or as much as 5 kg per weapon. The most likely values are about 3-4 kg. With this range and a separated plutonium inventory of 32-34 kg, Crystal Ball™ software is used to estimate the number of nuclear weapons that can be made. The results are a slightly skewed distribution with a median of 9.6 nuclear weapons, which would imply 9-10 nuclear weapons. The distribution's standard deviation is 1.7, reflecting the weighting of the amount of plutonium per weapon discussed above. The standard deviation measures how many results are within almost 70 percent of the median. It can be used to produce a range of values that likely capture the true value. In this case, this range would be about 8-11 nuclear weapons. It should be noted that this assumes all the available plutonium is used in nuclear weapons. Thus, these values provide the nuclear weapons equivalent of a given amount of plutonium. The actual number of nuclear weapons would be expected to be fewer in number. A fraction of this plutonium would be tied up in the manufacturing complex that makes plutonium components of nuclear weapons or lost during such processing. Some separated plutonium may be held in a reserve for underground nuclear testing or for new types of weapons. In this estimate, it is assumed that only about 70 percent of the total amount of plutonium is used in nuclear weapons. Applying this assumption, North Korea would have approximately 6-8 nuclear weapons made out of plutonium as of the end of 2014. Great uncertainty surrounds the DPRK's production of weapons-grade uranium, the type of enriched uranium typically used in nuclear weapons. 6 WGU is enriched uranium that contains 90 percent or more of the key nuclear explosive isotope uranium-235. This section focuses on estimating weapons-grade uranium production through 2014. North Korea is believed to have been using a P2-type centrifuge in its uranium enrichment program, which is composed of a single rotor tube with a bellows in the middle of the tube. It received several such centrifuges from Pakistan and a great deal of associated manufacturing and assembly technology. It is also believed to have produced P2-type

centrifuges in large quantities. It remains uncertain how many centrifuge plants North Korea has built. In addition to the production-scale plant at Yongbyon, US intelligence officials have long asserted that the North has another, hidden, production-scale centrifuge plant. An estimate of WGU production depends on several factors, including whether there is a secret centrifuge plant in addition to the Yongbyon plant, how many P2-type centrifuges have been deployed successfully, and how well have these centrifuges operated. For example, the centrifuges are assessed as relatively inefficient when operating in production-scale cascades, where a centrifuge in such a cascade achieves an average enrichment output that is only 50-80 percent of the output of a centrifuge operating alone....To better understand the amount of weapons-grade uranium that North Korea could have produced through 2014, two scenarios are considered based on the available evidence. The first assumes that a second centrifuge plant is operating. The second assumes that the Yongbyon plant is the only one. Both scenarios assume that North Korea is making weapons-grade uranium. Other scenarios are possible, resulting in more or less WGU, but these two are judged as realistic possibilities that do not dramatically over or underestimate the actual WGU stock. The main characteristics of the two scenarios are:

- **Scenario 1:** North Korea operates two production-scale centrifuge plants, the first of which started production sometime between the end of 2005 and 2010. The first plant is assumed to have produced WGU and contain 2,000-3,000 P2-type centrifuges. The second one is the Yongbyon centrifuge plant, which is assumed to have made LEU for reactor fuel only through 2014. It contains at least 2,000 P2-type centrifuges and could produce WGU but does not. One reason may be that North Korea does not want any evidence of WGU production to be detected by international inspectors in case a negotiated freeze at Yongbyon leads to a monitored shutdown of the centrifuge plant.
- **Scenario 2:** North Korea has only one production-scale centrifuge plant that started in 2010. During 2010 and 2011, the plant made LEU for the ELWR; afterwards, for three years, it produced WGU. This scenario is close to North Korea's public statements about its centrifuge program. The plant is assumed to have 2,000 P2-type centrifuges; additional centrifuges are assumed not to have become operational as of the end of 2014, for example, as a result of the recent expansion in the size of the Yongbyon centrifuge plant. It is a matter of speculation how North Korea would use WGU in nuclear weapons. It could use the WGU to fashion fission weapons similar to its plutonium-based fission weapons, albeit necessitating more fissile material and a larger-diameter warhead design. Alternatively, North Korea could use WGU in conjunction with plutonium, or a "composite core," to seek fission weapons with a significantly greater explosive yield. The North could also use the WGU with plutonium in designing one-stage thermonuclear explosive devices. The last option is possible in the future with further nuclear tests but unlikely as of 2014. North Korea is likely able to build composite core designs but no evidence of such work has emerged, and this option is also considered unlikely as of the end of 2014. Using Crystal Ball™ software to perform the calculation, the median estimate of Scenario 1 is about 240 kg of weapons-grade uranium through 2014, with a standard deviation of about 70 kg. With this amount of WGU, the number of nuclear weapons equivalent has a distribution with a median of 12 nuclear weapons equivalents and a standard deviation of about four. The slightly skewed distribution is: If the WGU were used in crude fission weapons without any plutonium, then North Korea would likely need less than a "significant

quantity" (SQ) of WGU. The SQ is technically defined by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the "approximate amount of nuclear material for which the possibility of manufacturing a nuclear explosive device cannot be excluded." In the case of WGU, which is 90 percent enriched in the isotope uranium-235, a SQ is 25 kg of uranium 235 in 27.8 kg of WGU. How much less is unclear, but 15-25 kg of WGU per weapon would likely include many possible weapons designs. Over time, the North would likely learn to use less WGU per weapon of a fixed explosive yield, and in later future projections, the lower part of the range will be weighted as more likely. Using Crystal Ball™ software to perform the calculation, the median estimate of Scenario 1 is about 240 kg of weapons-grade uranium through 2014, with a standard deviation of about 70 kg. With this amount of WGU, the number of nuclear weapons equivalent has a distribution with a median of 12 nuclear weapons equivalents and a standard deviation of about four. ...Nuclear weapons can be made from either plutonium or WGU or both combined. To give an indication of the potential number of nuclear weapons equivalent possible, the number of WGU- and plutonium-based nuclear weapons are added independently. The resulting distribution has a median of 22 nuclear weapons equivalent and a standard deviation of 4.5. ...Again, it is assumed that only about 70 percent of the total amount of plutonium and WGU is used in nuclear weapons. Applying this assumption, North Korea would have approximately 15 nuclear weapons with a standard deviation of 3 weapons as of the end of 2014. The number of weapons made from plutonium is estimated at approximately 7 and the number made from WGU is about 8.4, where the latter value is represented as 8-9 weapons. Once again, using Crystal Ball™ software to perform the calculation, the median estimate of Scenario 2 is about 100 kg of weapons-grade uranium through 2014, with a standard deviation of 15 kg. With this amount of WGU, the number of nuclear weapons equivalent has a distribution with a median of 5 nuclear weapons and a standard deviation of about one. ...As discussed above, nuclear weapons can be made from either plutonium or WGU or both combined. To give an indication of the potential number of nuclear weapons equivalent possible, the number of WGU- and plutonium-based nuclear weapons are added independently. The resulting distribution has a median of 15 nuclear weapons and a standard deviation of 2. ...Again, it is assumed that only about 70 percent of the total amount of plutonium and WGU is used in nuclear weapons. Applying this assumption to the Scenario 2 distribution, North Korea would have approximately 10-11 nuclear weapons with a standard deviation of about 1.4 weapons as of the end of 2014. The number of weapons made from plutonium is estimated at approximately 7 and the number made from WGU is about 3.5. In the latter case of 3.5 weapons, partial nuclear weapons are of course not possible, and the result is represented as 3-4 weapons. Over the next several years, North Korea could pursue quantitative and qualitative improvements in its nuclear weapons stockpile. This section lays out a set of projections through 2020 that capture the boundaries of North Korea's possible nuclear arsenal futures. ...

Low-End Projection through 2020: Progress is slow as economic and technical constraints are numerous (including no further nuclear tests); difficulties are encountered in advancing current nuclear efforts and the North's political commitment wanes. ·

Medium Projection through 2020: This projection assumes moderate growth based on a continuation of its current nuclear trajectory and development practices as well as political and economic commitment. The program is a mixture of successes and

failures. Efforts to acquire technology/assistance from abroad make slow progress as does Pyongyang's effort to achieve self-sufficiency. · **High-End Projection through 2020:** The general assumption underlying this projection is that nuclear weapons progress is steady and successful. North Korea steps up its commitment to build a nuclear arsenal, vigorously pursues technology development through, in part, increasing the number of nuclear tests and faces few economic constraints. Pyongyang also achieves a high level of success in acquiring technology/assistance from abroad as well as in achieving self-sufficiency. **Low-End Projection through 2020** North Korea's production of fissile material is limited to the 5 MWe reactor and centrifuge plant at Yongbyon. It either does not or cannot militarize the ELWR to make weapons-grade plutonium. The centrifuge plant is limited to 3,000-4,000 P2-type centrifuges, and North Korea does not deploy any more advanced than the P2-type. Moreover, the North will need to produce LEU for the ELWR. The centrifuges operate with poor efficiency, as they have done up through 2014.¹² The 5 MWe reactor will experience outages and poor operational efficiencies, limiting production to an average of 2-3 kg per year of weapons-grade plutonium. In this scenario, Pyongyang does not conduct any further nuclear tests. Nonetheless, it would make limited advances in its nuclear weapons skills and designs, such as achieving some additional miniaturization of warheads without sacrificing the explosive yield. However, the North would not be able to reduce the amount of plutonium or WGU needed in a nuclear weapon. Marginal improvements would be made in the safety, security and reliability of its nuclear weapons. Finally, without testing there would be limits to developing more advanced weapons. The North would be limited in using shells of fissile material or other shapes for the core that would permit significant additional miniaturization. It would be unable to develop boosted or thermonuclear weapons as well as a reliable source of tritium for thermonuclear devices. North Korea's arsenal would be limited to fission-only weapons made from either plutonium or WGU. The explosive yields would not be high, likely on order of 10 kilotons. Its arsenal would involve a small number of weapon designs, or physics packages, and they would be adapted to various delivery systems, such as the Nodong and possibly longer-range missiles. While Pyongyang will require foreign goods for its various nuclear programs, such as vacuum equipment, pumps, instrumentation, sophisticated computer-numerical control (CNC) machine tools and specialized chemicals and metals, it will experience difficulty procuring them. These procurement challenges will reduce the efficiency of its centrifuges and 5 MWe reactor. Moreover, the North will not succeed in procuring nuclear weapons data or designs overseas that would help further modernize its stockpile. Any nuclear cooperation with other countries—such as Iran—would be minimal and achieve few results. By 2020, North Korea would modestly increase the size of its nuclear arsenal, which would be comprised of fission weapons with explosive yields of about 10 kilotons. Miniaturization would allow the North to mount nuclear weapons on ballistic missiles but limited to existing types like the Nodong and a Taepodong deployed as an ICBM. Each weapon would be made from either separated plutonium or weapons-grade uranium. The stockpile would not include any composite cores or thermonuclear nuclear weapons. To derive the total amounts of plutonium and weapons-grade uranium through 2020, the amounts of plutonium and weapons-grade uranium produced through 2014 under Scenario 2 (one centrifuge plant) are added to the values from the period 2015-2020, where the assumptions above are used to

derive inventories in the latter period with the Crystal Ball™ software. The median of the total plutonium estimates through 2020 is 50 kg with a standard deviation of 2 kg. The median of the WGU estimate through 2020 is 280 kg with a standard deviation of 60 kg. Assuming that each weapon contains either plutonium or WGU, the median of the number of nuclear weapon equivalents is 29 with a standard deviation of 5.13. About half of these weapons contain plutonium and half contain WGU. From 2014 through 2020, the number of weapon equivalents grows at an average rate of about 2.3 weapons equivalent per year. Only a percentage of plutonium and WGU is used in the actual weapons—some will be tied up in the manufacturing process, lost to waste, or held in a reserve. In the low-end projection, with about 70 percent of the plutonium and WGU used in the weapons, the DPRK's total arsenal will consist of approximately 20 fission nuclear weapons at the end of 2020. **Medium Projection through 2020**

North Korea operates the 5 MWe reactor reasonably well, producing an average of about 3-4 kg of weapons-grade plutonium per year. The ELWR is partially militarized and makes a moderate amount of weapons-grade plutonium—5 to 10 kg—each year. The plutonium from the ELWR will become available starting in 2018. North Korea operates two centrifuge plants limited to a total of 6,000-7,000 P2-type centrifuges throughout this period. Moreover, the Yongbyon plant will need to produce LEU for the ELWR. The centrifuges will continue to work with relatively poor efficiency, but better than in the low-end projection.¹⁴ North Korea will conduct development work on a centrifuge similar to the Pakistani P3-type centrifuge, which has four maraging steel segments and three bellows, giving an output double the P2-type centrifuge. Nonetheless, during this period the North does not deploy any advanced centrifuges. In this scenario, North Korea conducts nuclear tests at its current rate of about one every 3-4 years. Advances are made in nuclear weapons development skills and designs, such as achieving additional miniaturization of warheads without sacrificing explosive yield. The North makes progress in using shells of fissile material instead of solid core designs and developing non-spherical shapes of the plutonium or WGU core, allowing further miniaturization. However, it does not reduce the amount of plutonium or WGU needed in a weapon. Improvements are also achieved in the safety, security and reliability of the North's stockpile. The North develops and deploys an additional weapon design that contains plutonium and weapons-grade uranium in the same core, allowing a significant increase in the weapon's explosive yield up to 50 kilotons. Fission weapons with either plutonium or weapons-grade uranium will remain the majority of its stockpile. However, their yields are larger on average, in the range of 10-20 kilotons, another benefit of continued nuclear testing and advances in design skills. By the end of 2020, advances in miniaturization will result in a stockpile of warheads that can be deployed on missiles of various ranges beyond those in the low-end projection, including shorter-range ballistic missiles for battlefield use or more modern intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and ICBMs such as the Musudan and KN-08 road-mobile missiles. In addition, Pyongyang will develop a more advanced nuclear weapon design although it will not be fully tested or deployed by 2020. It will develop a reliable but small source of tritium and deuterium. Both could be used to boost the explosive yield of a fission weapon and to achieve a one-stage thermonuclear weapon, which uses tritium, deuterium and lithium within a composite core of plutonium and weapons-grade uranium. The North will be able to test these designs, likely with a reduced yield because of test site limitations. North Korea will

continue to require foreign goods for its various nuclear programs but will experience only mixed success in procuring them. Progress will be made in producing some key materials and equipment domestically. Nonetheless, overseas procurement failures will reduce the efficiency of its centrifuges, reactors, and nuclear weapons program, but not as severely as in the low-end projection. While the North will not succeed in procuring nuclear weapons data or designs overseas, it will benefit from limited nuclear cooperation with Iran, which will aid Pyongyang's centrifuge program and procurement efforts. By 2020, North Korea would increase the size of its nuclear arsenal several fold. The arsenal would consist of mostly fission weapons with explosive yields of about 10-20 kilotons. Several will have composite cores. These weapons could be mounted on a wide range of delivery systems. The total amounts of plutonium and weapons-grade uranium is based on the amount of plutonium and weapons-grade uranium produced through 2014 under Scenario 1 (two centrifuge plants) added to the values from the period 2015-2020, where the assumptions above are used to derive inventories in the latter period with Crystal Ball™ software. The median of the total plutonium estimates through 2020 is 80 kg with a standard deviation of 5 kg. The median of the WGU estimate through 2020 is 790 kg with a standard deviation of 105 kg. Assuming that each weapon contains either plutonium or WGU, the median of the number of nuclear weapon equivalents is 69 with a standard deviation of 8.15 About one-third of these weapons contain plutonium and two-thirds contain WGU. From 2014 through 2020, the number of weapon equivalents grows at an average rate of almost eight weapons equivalent per year. In this scenario, less fissile material is assumed to be tied up in-process or lost in waste than in the low-end estimate. In addition, some of the plutonium and WGU will be in nuclear weapons composite cores (say <5 weapons), reducing the total number of weapons as derived above, where each weapon is assumed to contain only plutonium or WGU. On balance, in the medium projection, the number of nuclear weapons is assumed to be about 75 percent of the nuclear weapons equivalent, giving an arsenal of about 50 nuclear weapons.

High-End Projection through 2020 In this projection, North Korea operates the 5 MWe reactor efficiently, making use of overseas procurements that allow an increase in reactor power to 25 MWth and effective maintenance. The result is an average production of about 5-6 kg of weapons-grade plutonium per year. Pyongyang militarizes the ELWR, enabling it to produce more weapons-grade plutonium than in the previous scenario, 15-20 kg each year. Also, the plutonium would become available two years earlier, starting in early 2016. North Korea will operate two centrifuge plants with a combined 8,000-9,000 P2-type centrifuges. One will be the Yongbyon centrifuge plant with a capacity of 4,000 P2-type centrifuges starting at the beginning of 2015. The other will be an upgraded centrifuge plant at another location containing 4,000-5,000 P2-type centrifuges operating at this level in early 2015. As before, the Yongbyon centrifuge plant will need to produce LEU for the ELWR. The reactor will achieve higher capacity factors than in the medium scenario. The centrifuges will work with better efficiency than in the previous projections.¹⁶ Moreover, the North will complete development work on a new centrifuge similar to the Pakistani P3-type, with an output that is double that of the P2-type centrifuge. The first 2,000 P3-type centrifuges will become operational at the start of 2019. These centrifuges will be in addition to 8,000-9,000 P2-type centrifuges already in operation. Under this scenario, nuclear weapons tests are increased to a rate of one per year

enabling the North to make significant advances in its nuclear weapons skills and designs. It develops smaller diameter, lighter-weight nuclear weapons able to fit an increasing variety of shorter range missiles for battlefield use. Pyongyang is able to make further reductions in the amount of plutonium and WGU used in a nuclear weapon. It makes significant improvements in the safety, security and reliability of its nuclear weapons, allowing nuclear weapons to be deployed more easily. As in the medium scenario, additional designs that contain plutonium and weapons-grade uranium in the same core are developed and deployed, allowing a significant increase in explosive yield up to 50 kilotons. The North also continues to field weapons with either plutonium or weapons-grade uranium, as in the two other projections. But in the high-end scenario, it increases the average yield of its fission weapons to 20 or more kilotons. While developing a reliable source of tritium and deuterium for nuclear weapons development, the North makes significant progress in using both to boost the explosive yield of a fission weapon. A new boosted yield design is tested and incorporated into a significant number of composite core weapons although the bulk of the stockpile remains centered on weapons using either plutonium or uranium. Pyongyang also develops a one-stage thermonuclear weapon, which uses tritium, deuterium and lithium within a composite core of plutonium and large quantities of weapons-grade uranium. One such device is tested by 2020, with a yield of about 100 kilotons. However, this one-stage weapon is too large for missile delivery, but North Korea is aiming to make it deployable as soon as possible. Work is done on designing and developing a two-stage thermonuclear weapon but not tested by 2020. North Korea will be very successful in procuring foreign goods for its various nuclear programs and will achieve greater self-sufficiency in making key materials and equipment domestically. Procurements, whether domestic or abroad, will be adequate and not interfere with the programs' progress. Moreover, Pyongyang will succeed in procuring nuclear weapons data and an advanced weapon design overseas, making an important contribution to speeding up the North's nuclear weapons developments. It cooperates actively with Iran on all nuclear areas, reducing inefficiencies in facilities and bottlenecks in procurements. By 2020, North Korea would increase the size of its nuclear arsenal many fold. The arsenal would still consist of mostly fission weapons but the explosive yields would average 20 kilotons or more, which is greater than in the medium estimate. Several will have composite cores and North Korea will be working to deploy one-stage thermonuclear weapons with yields of about 100 kilotons. With the exception of thermonuclear weapons, the North's arsenal could be mounted on a wide range of delivery systems from short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) to the newer road-mobile Musudan IRBM to possibly the KN-08 ICBM currently under development. To derive the total amounts of plutonium and weapons-grade uranium through 2020, plutonium and weapons-grade uranium produced through 2014 under Scenario 1 (two centrifuge plants) are added to the values from the period 2015-2020, where the above assumptions are used to calculate inventories in the latter period. The median of the total plutonium estimates through 2020 is 154 kg with a standard deviation of 8 kg. The median of the WGU estimate through 2020 is 1,230 kg with a standard deviation of about 110 kg. Assuming that each weapon contains either plutonium or WGU, the median of the number of nuclear weapon equivalents is about 125 with a standard deviation of 13. About 40 percent of these weapons contain plutonium and 60 percent contain WGU. From 2014 through 2020, the number of weapon equivalents grows at

an average rate of about 17 per year. In this projection, much less fissile material is assumed to be tied up in-process, lost to waste, or held in reserve than in the medium scenario. However, a couple factors reduce the number of weapons made from plutonium and WGU. An increased number of composite cores, namely 5-10, will contain plutonium and WGU, and one test of a single-stage thermonuclear device will have used several tens of kg of WGU. On balance, the number of nuclear weapons is taken as 80 percent of the nuclear weapons equivalent. The end result is an arsenal of about 100 nuclear weapons. In the medium and high-end scenarios, Pyongyang's arsenal would be expected to grow at a faster rate, mainly due to production of more WGU. The increase would result from the deployment of more centrifuges, including more advanced ones. ...After 2020, even in the medium scenario, North Korea is likely to deploy more advanced centrifuges. With greater numbers of centrifuges, including a growing fraction of more powerful ones, North Korea's rate of WGU production would grow. North Korea's nuclear weapons would likely become more sophisticated across the board in both the medium and high-end scenarios, as underground tests continue and the North's nuclear weapons experience matures and grows. Particularly, in the high-end scenario, Pyongyang would be expected to deploy an increasing number of more accurate long-range missiles and a growing variety of shorter range battlefield weapons. It would also likely be able to finish developing and then deploying a one-stage thermonuclear weapon with a yield of about 100 kilotons. Also, it may make significant progress in developing two-stage thermonuclear weapons." (David Albright, "Future Directions in the DPRK's Nuclear Program: Three Scenarios for 2020," Institute for Science and International Security, February 26, 2015)

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South Korea and the United States began joint naval maneuver drills as part of their annual spring Foal Eagle military exercise, the Navy said. It added the two allies will carry out the drill in South Korean territorial waters on the West, East and South seas until mid-March. "We expect to boost joint operational capabilities between Seoul and Washington and solidify a strong joint defense posture," the Navy said in a statement. South Korea's three naval fleets will mobilize their ships, including 4,400-ton KDX-II type destroyer, the Ganggamchan, as well as Lynx helicopters, P-3C patrol planes and Coast Guard boats. From the U.S. side, the USS Michael Murphy (DDG-112) destroyer and MH-60 Seahawk helicopters will take part. (Yi Whan-woo, "Seoul-Washington Begin Joint Naval Drill," *Korea Times*, February 27, 2015)

President Park Geun-hye appointed spy agency chief Lee Byung-kee as her new chief of staff, wrapping up her reshuffle of key officials aimed at restoring public support for her reform drive. Lee, a former career diplomat, replaces Kim Ki-choon 10 days after Park accepted his resignation. Kim had been under pressure to quit as opposition parties accused him of exercising too much power in state affairs and personnel choices. Lee, one of Park's closest aides, was tapped to lead the National Intelligence Service last year. Before this, he had served as South Korean ambassador to Japan. Park also named Lee Byung-ho, former deputy director of the NIS, as new head of the spy agency. (Cho Chung-un, "NIS Head Named New Chief of Staff," *Korea Herald*, February 27, 2015) Reactions from those involved in politics were mixed. Some saw Park's pick as a reflection of the public mood, with Lee seen as a rational presence who values communication. Others criticized Park for once again showing her reliance

on a narrow recruitment pool by picking a longtime associate who had been in his NIS director position for just seven months. The circumstances suggest he was chosen late in the game as someone without major negative baggage on either the ruling party or opposition sides who was seen as capable of reaching out to the opposition and press, amid concerns that the previously considered candidates would only hurt public opinion further. Lee's selection could mark a shift from Park away from a "directed" approach toward a more bureaucratic one, with the Cabinet given more weight in directing practical business. Sources acquainted with Lee's style said his focus was more on overall administration and coordination - a contrast with predecessor Kim Ki-choon, who was known as a micromanager who insisted on handling matters himself. Kim's departure as Chief of Staff also means he could be heading for Park's loyalist Cabinet alongside Lee Wan-koo, who recently announced a "three strikes, you're out" system for ministerial evaluations, and a host of other pro-Park ministers. Park may take advantage of Lee Byung-kee's expertise in foreign affairs and security by assigning him a role in exploring potential changes in inter-Korean relations. The expectation is that the Blue House, which is in desperate need of third-year results, could assign economic and social service duties to the Cabinet while focusing itself on relations with Pyongyang, an area where short-term results are easier to produce. Supporting this prediction is the shift from a hawkish Chief of Staff with a background in public security prosecution to a relative "dove" who favors dialogue, coming fast on the heels of a new Unification Minister pick from the Blue House secretariat. As a replacement for Lee, 68, as NIS director, Park named Lee Byung-ho, 75, a former second deputy director with the Agency for National Security Planning, the NIS's predecessor, under the Kim Young-sam administration. Kim Sung-woo, now a special presidential aide on society and culture, was tapped as senior Blue House secretary for public relations. A newly formed team of special presidential aides on political affairs was filled with key members of the National Assembly's pro-Park wing, prompting even members of Park's own ruling Saenuri Party (NFP) to worry that the perceived lack of communication in the President's leadership will only worsen if the team represents only a particular faction's perspective rather than a diverse range of opinions. (Seok Jin-hwan, "President Park Names NIS Director as New Chief of Staff," *Hankyore*, February 28, 2015)

The United States believes North Korea has already taken steps toward deploying the KN-08 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, feared to be capable of reaching American territory, the U.S. intelligence chief said Thursday. "Pyongyang is committed to developing a long-range, nuclear-armed missile that is capable of posing a threat to the United States and has publicly displayed its KN-08 road-mobile ICBM twice," Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said in a statement for a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. "We assess that North Korea has already taken initial steps toward fielding this system, although the system has not been flight-tested," he said. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Has Already Taken Steps toward Fielding KN-08: U.S. Intelligence Chief," *Korea Herald*, February 27, 2015)

South Korea proposed talks with North Korea on the Kaesong Industrial Complex in mid-March, three days after the communist neighbor announced a unilateral decision to raise wages for its workers there by more than 5 percent. "If the North has a will for

the development of the Kaesong Industrial Complex, it should stop unilateral acts and resolve pending problems through consultations between authorities," ministry spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol said in a statement. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Offers Talks with N. Korea on Kaesong Complex," February 27, 2015)

Wendy Sherman: "I am one of the relatively few American diplomats who have negotiated directly with North Korea's senior officials. In the process, I found first of all that those leaders do indeed follow international affairs closely, even though the lens through which they view events is narrow. Second, they would very much like to drive a wedge between America and our allies in Seoul and Tokyo, and even our relationship with China, but that's not going to happen. Third, they see in Pakistan - a country whose nuclear program was first protested, then accepted - and hope to follow that example, which also isn't going to happen. Fourth, they have known for many years that their economic model is a failure, but fear that opening up as China and Vietnam have done would entail too much political risk. Finally, the authorities in Pyongyang crave attention and respect, but they haven't a clue about how to obtain either except through the threat of force. They are apparently under the illusion that the best way to conceal a weak hand is with a clenched fist. In the last quarter century, the contrast has widened between the prosperity generated by the South's freedom and the hardships spawned by the North's repression. Despite its bluster, the North's strategy has failed utterly. Instead of gaining acceptance, the country is increasingly isolated. Instead of self-reliance - *juche* - it has lost strength from within. Instead of bold reforms, it has settled for ineffective steps that leave the majority of its citizens malnourished, saddled with obsolete technology, politically impotent, and eager to get out. **It was suggested to me during my recent trip that by insisting on the goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, we are ensuring, because of Pyongyang's stubbornness, that nothing will change. But that conclusion is simplistic.** The fact is that a great deal is happening. The diplomatic pressure on North Korea continues to intensify. President Obama recently signed an executive order that authorizes new sanctions. In September, the IAEA General Conference unanimously condemned North Korea's nuclear program, which China has exhibited unprecedented firmness in opposing. And late last year, the UN Security Council undertook a first-ever public review of the DPRK's abysmal human rights practices. We all understand that the situation on the Korean Peninsula does not have a quick or simple solution. After all, U.S. troops have been deployed there for 65 years. But our resolve is undiminished and our patience to get to the right answer is inexhaustible. At the end of the day, North Korea cannot obtain the security, prosperity, or respect it wants without negotiating an end to its provocative nuclear and missile program." ... **Q:** Chris Nelson, Nelson Report. Thanks for a really comprehensive speech and thanks for the reminder that you have your days constantly enlivened by the Middle East and Iran and all kinds of things that us Asia-types tend to not to - we have that luxury, perhaps. You made some really interesting remarks about the North Korea policy. Those of us who only get to worry about North Asia I think are - find ourselves worried that we're - **we have the worst of both possible worlds. They are refusing to negotiate their nukes. We are saying because of that, we're not going to negotiate a cap and a freeze,** perhaps. Fifteen years ago, you were in the vanguard of the State Department people working really hard for a forward-leaning North Korea policy with some success. You'd had freezes on

the nukes, and you were, as I recall, working on a missile freeze. What's the difference then and now that we are not willing to try to cap the threat of proliferation and continued development? Why are we not doing that? Because we know they're not going to negotiate their nukes, per se. That - it just - that confuses us. Perhaps you can clear that up, and then just quickly on the - you mentioned the economic reform program that seems to be underway. Are we going to encourage that and hope for a revolution of rising expectations, perhaps? Or are we going to hold back because of the nukes and continue a stronger sanctions policy? Does that contradict, in a sense, what we're hoping for in the economic reform? So, the two questions. **SHERMAN:** Thank, Chris. Look, the policy that we have towards North Korea is one that we believe in but we also share with our partners, the five parties of the Six-Party process. Obviously, North Korea doesn't quite share the strategy. And to that extent, we have all said to North Korea we are open to conversation, but the conversation is really about their nuclear program. And there are other things that can be discussed, of course, but at the core is the nuclear program. And China has consistently said that. I think, quite frankly, North Korea is rather irritated with China at the moment because the Chinese have been very clear about that. They have taken some unprecedented steps towards North Korea to make it clear what is expected here. We fully support President Park's initiative to have bilateral discussions with North Korea. So far, North Korea has not agreed to that. There have been times when the Japanese have wanted and have had bilateral conversations, particularly around the ongoing concerns, which we certainly understand, of their abducted citizens. And **we have been quite open to having a bilateral conversation with North Korea as long as denuclearization is understood to be a topic of those conversations.** So I would say that the world has had an open door to North Korea to have talks, but this young leader has decided to take perhaps his father's and his grandfather's approach to a new level. It will be very interesting to see what happens this year. As I think everyone knows, the Russians have invited Kim Jong-un to Moscow for VE Day. We'll see if he comes. We - he's been invited other places as well. I think the entire world community understands that something has to give here, and that if there is a way to engage North Korea's leader to deal with the security issues facing North Korea, if he ever wants to see his people have prosperity, that's what it's going to take. Because even trying to advance economic reforms inside the country will not get very far if all of the members of the Six-Party talks are putting pressure on North Korea to do what is necessary for the future of its own people." (DoS, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, "Remarks on Northeast Asia, Carnegie Endowment, Washington, February 27, 2015)

The sharp fall in global commodity prices is starting to have an impact on North Korea, economists say, hurting a state that relies heavily on exports of minerals to keep its economy afloat - and its gargantuan military funded. Combined with China's economy coming off the boil, the recent slump in coal prices in particular could hurt Kim Jong-un's "byungjin" policy: his stated desire to simultaneously develop North Korea's economy and its nuclear weapons program. "Commodity prices are dropping, so it's becoming more and more difficult for North Korea to earn foreign currency," said Choi Kyung-soo, president of the North Korea Resources Institute in Seoul. "I think last year, minerals trade decreased by about 10 percent by volume and about 15 percent by price." Mining makes up roughly 14 percent of the North Korean economy,

which, although in a parlous state and under heavy financial sanctions, appears to have been growing modestly in recent years, when China still was booming and commodity prices still were surging. "North Korea is heavily reliant on commodities such as anthracite and iron ore for its export revenues, and just as it rode the resource boom to its apex in 2011, it is now the victim of a steady and steep decline in world prices," said Kevin Stahler of the Peterson Institute for International Economics. The overwhelming majority of North Korea's trade is with China and more than 70 percent of its exports to China are mining products, according to the Seoul-based Korea International Trade Association. The prices that North Korea can get from China for anthracite coal and iron ore, its main mineral exports, fell by 26 percent and 35 percent, respectively, between their peak in 2011 and last year, Stahler said in a recent note on the institute's NK Witness blog. Furthermore, Beijing is trying to reduce China's dependence on coal, and North Korea's coal reportedly does not meet the new sulfur standards introduced to try to tackle China's air pollution problems. All this is bad news for Kim, who has made industry a priority. In his New Year's address, he said that improvements in a range of sectors, including coal mining, were "opening up bright prospects for the building of an economic giant and improvement of the people's living standards." Underlining the importance of mining in the North Korean economy, the Obama administration this year has slapped restrictions on North Korean officials working at North Korea's Mining Development Trading Corporation, which Washington says is responsible for the country's arms dealing and weapons export business, in the wake of the devastating cyberattack on Sony Pictures. This is in addition to the heavy restrictions on North Korea's financial activities, which make it difficult to receive payments for its exports. But North Korea's mining sector itself is not under sanctions; its trade in natural resources is legal. "There are very limited ways for North Korea to make money: selling weapons, smuggling and mining," said Choi of the North Korea Resources Institute. "Because of sanctions, it's very hard for them to make weapons or to sell [narcotic] drugs, so the only legitimate way for North Korea to make money these days is from selling minerals." Selling mineral resources abroad doesn't require any politically risky changes to the North Korean system, said Leonid Petrov, a Russian expert on North Korea who has been closely monitoring its mining activity. "The North Koreans are following the Russian pattern of development," he said. "They don't want any structural or institutional reforms, so the export of natural resources is perfect. They don't need to make any major changes, and without changing anything they can exist for decades." China is nevertheless investing heavily in the North Korean industry. Choi estimates that about 20 Chinese companies have invested in various North Korean mines, including a \$500 million investment in the huge mining complex at Musan. "North Korea needs the infrastructure and China needs the minerals," he said. Certainly, North Korea's mining sector remains technologically backwards. "The technology hasn't changed since the 1960s," said Cha Ji-song, who worked at a copper and zinc mine in North Korea for 14 years, until he defected to South Korea three years ago. "Almost everything is still done by manual labor." At the mine where Cha worked, in Hyesan on the Chinese border, white panels with red letters were fixed to the side of the mountain, blaring: "Long live General Kim Jong Il, the sun of the 21st century." But thanks to Chinese investment, copper production at the Hyesan mine, which fell to barely 700 pounds a year in the late 1990s, rose to 1,500 tons by the time Cha escaped from North Korea in 2012. And although prices are not as good as they

once were, experts say that North Korea is still sitting on a gold mine. It has significant deposits of more than 200 different minerals, including the second largest magnesite reserves in the world, after China, and the sixth-largest tungsten deposits, according to the United States Geological Service. North Korea has dramatically stepped up its production of molybdenum, a rare mineral that can be used in high-tech industrial production, including as an alloying agent in steel and cast iron, for corrosion resistance, and for radiation shielding. It could also be used in North Korea's nuclear and conventional weapons programs. "They could use small quantities in high-tech weapons – but they are probably only using a small component for that," said Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. an expert on North Korea's weapons programs and chief analytical officer at AllSource Analysis, a consulting firm. "The primary objective is to earn foreign currency." North Korea, thought to have huge reserves of molybdenum amounting to about 54,000 metric tons, has opened a huge new plant near the Chinese border to process the mineral. Satellite pictures and photos from official North Korean media show a huge open pit mine surrounded by production facilities, including a covered conveyor belt and refurbished rock crusher. North Korea also has huge stocks of "rare earth" metals, minerals that are sometimes called "the vitamins of the high-tech industry" because they are needed to make semiconductors and smartphones, although they can also be used in building tanks and missiles. SRE Minerals, a mining company in a joint venture with a North Korean state business, last year said it had discovered what is believed to be the largest deposit of rare earth elements anywhere in the world. All told, South Korea estimates the total value of the North's mineral deposits at more than \$6 trillion – more than enough, as one analyst puts it, to fund several more generations of leaders called Kim. (Anna Fifield, "Cash-Strapped North Korea Steps up Mining Output," *Washington Post*, February 27, 2015)

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KPA General Staff spokesman's statement: "The U.S. imperialists and south Korean puppet forces decided to kick off adventurous Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises on March 2 despite strong protest and denunciation at home and abroad. The three services of the U.S. imperialist aggressor forces have already been deployed in south Korea and its vicinity for these war maneuvers and huge forces of the south Korean puppet army, war servants of their master U.S., are fully ready for them. Involved there are the U.S. satellite forces including the UK, France, Australia and Canada. Key Resolve and Foal Eagle which will last till April 24 are dangerous nuclear war drills for invading the DPRK as they are aimed at swiftly hurling and forward-deploying the U.S. imperialist aggressor forces in contingency on the Korean peninsula, mounting a surprise preemptive attack on it by "combined forces", "liquidating" the DPRK's headquarters and "occupying Pyongyang." The gravity of the situation lies in that these war exercises started in the wake of the recent undisguised declaration made by Obama, the chieftain of war of the U.S. imperialists, that it is the policy target of the USA to stamp out the ideology chosen by the DPRK and "bring down" its social system. In a word, Key Resolve and Foal Eagle are an undisguised encroachment upon the sovereignty and dignity of the DPRK and an unpardonable war hysteria of dishonest hostile forces. In the final analysis, the above-said saber-rattling clearly proves that the claim of the U.S. imperialists and their followers that the war maneuvers are of "defensive nature" is crafty sophism to conceal their reckless preemptive nuclear attack on the DPRK and their rhetoric about "annual drills" is

nothing but a smokescreen to cover up their surprise invasion of the north. The situation on the Korean peninsula is again inching close to the brink of a war. In view of the prevailing situation the General Staff of the Korean People's Army clarifies the following principled stand internally and externally: Now that the dangerous war drills of the U.S. imperialists and their followers have been kicked off, **our revolutionary armed forces will never remain a passive onlooker to this grave situation.** The DPRK had already declared before the world that as the Obama group is becoming all the more desperate in its smear campaign against the DPRK, the group is ratcheting up its harsh sanctions and pressure on the DPRK and its war drills against the DPRK are gaining in scope and strength, pursuant to its outrageous hostile policy towards the DPRK, the DPRK will take toughest measures to cope with them. Key Resolve and Foal Eagle go to prove that the U.S. extreme hostile policy towards the DPRK is being implemented through dangerous practical actions. The Korean People's Army will never overlook the saber-rattling as its aggressive and offensive nature has been brought to light. Our revolutionary armed forces never make an empty talk. The U.S. imperialists and their allies should bear in mind that all **the ground, sea, underwater, air and cyber striking means of our revolutionary armed forces always aim at their designated targets and are fully ready to strike them.** They should clearly know that our revolutionary armed forces will never allow their slightest intrusion into the DPRK's territory, territorial air and waters. The DPRK had already declared internally and externally its firm determination that it would bring earlier the final ruin of the U.S. imperialists and their allies by conventional war of Korean style if they unleash a conventional war against it, through powerful nuclear strikes of Korean style if they ignite a nuclear war against it and by preeminent cyber war of Korean style if they attempt to "bring down" it by cyber war. Our powerful revolutionary Paektusan army has bolstered up its weaponry to take revenge upon them for the last several decades to put its pledge into practice. Those drills are the most undisguised infringement upon the DPRK's sovereignty and dignity and a grave military provocation to it for which they can never excuse. It is the consistent stand of our revolutionary armed forces that in case even a single shell drops on any place over which the sovereignty of the DPRK is exercised, it will promptly take counteractions. 3. The U.S. imperialists and their allies should clearly know that their outrageous and vicious aggressive actions being staged under the signboard of peace will never work on the DPRK in this bright world. It is the gangster-like U.S. that claims Key Resolve and Foal Eagle are aimed to "conquer" the capital city of the sovereign state and "liquidate" its headquarters but insists that they are "defensive and "annual" ones. The U.S. scenario is to make a unipolar world dominated by the USA and where U.S.-style democracy and market economy hold sway. The evermore undisguised military moves of the U.S. imperialists on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity such as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle are not targeted on the DPRK only. It is the real intention of the U.S. expanded hostile policy toward the DPRK to lay a vast siege to the continent and let the Far East and the Asian continent allow the U.S. high-handed and arbitrary practices. The U.S. is seriously mistaken if it thinks such moves will work on the Korean peninsula and the rest of this bright world. The revolutionary armed forces of the DPRK will further bolster up weapons to annihilate the enemies as the U.S. imperialists become ever more ferocious in their aggressive nature, the south Korean puppet forces escalate confrontation with the fellow countrymen in the north to prolong their remaining days

and dishonest hostile forces blindly follow them. The only means to cope with the aggression and war by the U.S. imperialists and their followers is neither dialogue nor peace. They should be dealt with only by merciless strikes. The DPRK's revolutionary armed forces will sharply watch with a high degree of combat alertness the dangerous saber-rattling of the U.S imperialists and their followers. The U.S. imperialist aggressors, the south Korean puppet forces and their followers will have to bitterly regret the irretrievable consequences to be entailed by Key Resolve and Foal Eagle." (KCNA, "KPA Will Never Remain Passive Onlooker to Key Resolve and Foal Eagle Exercises: Spokesman for KPA General Staff," March 1, 2015)

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North Korea fired two short-range missiles into the East Sea in an apparent saber-rattling against annual military drills between South Korea and the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. Seoul and Washington kicked off their joint annual Key Resolve and Foal Eagle military exercises earlier in the day as part of efforts to improve the combined forces' operation and combat capabilities to deter threats from the communist country. "North Korea fired two short-range missiles with a range of some 490 kilometers into the East Sea from its western port city of Nampo between 6:32 a.m. and 6:41 a.m. today," the JCS said in a short release. Factoring in its range, the missiles are presumed to be Scud-C ones, according to Seoul's defense ministry, adding they appear to have landed in the East Sea after flying across its inland areas. Today's firing is the North's fourth missile launch this year. Noting that the firing "appears to be the North's provocations in opposition to the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle exercises," the JCS said it "remains vigilant against any additional launches while strengthening the readiness posture." In a statement later in the day the North's foreign ministry vowed to step up its countermeasure, labeling the drills again as a plot to topple its socialist system: "The countermeasure of justice by our military and people will step up furthermore in order to shatter (the joint drills)." (Oh Seok-min, "N. Korea Fires Two Short-Range Missiles into East Sea," Yonhap, March 2, 2015)

DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement "in connection with the fact that the U.S. started with the south Korean puppet forces Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises, war exercises for invading the DPRK, despite its repeated warnings: The drills to be staged across south Korea from March 2 to April 24 are said to involve huge U.S. forces in south Korea, the U.S. mainland, Japan and other overseas bases, south Korean puppet forces and massive war means including a U.S. coastal warship that was manufactured to suit the seabed features off the Korean peninsula. The exercises are intolerable aggression moves pursuant to the U.S. Korea strategy designed to "bring down" the socialist system chosen by the Korean people. By putting sustained military pressure on the DPRK the U.S. seeks to prevent it from concentrating efforts on economic construction and the improvement of the people's living standard, and by describing those exercises as "annual and defensive ones", it seeks to make the DPRK accustomed and get used to its war exercises and grow lax and then invade the DPRK in the end. The U.S. launch of the joint military exercises on the Korean peninsula in defiance of the unanimous protest and denunciation by people around it is prompted by a sinister trick pursuant to its pivot to Asia-Pacific strategy. Through the continued joint military exercises the U.S. intends to keep the south Korean puppet forces, its servants, close to it, stem the north-south relations from advancing and use the puppet

forces as cannon fodder for besieging and containing surrounding countries. At the same time, the U.S. also seeks to keep the situation on the peninsula tense and maintain the pretext for arms buildup in the Asia-Pacific region. The joint military exercises this year have more provocative nature than ever before. **The DPRK set forth bold and flexible proposals to remove the danger of war, defuse tension and create a peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula this year and has made sincere efforts for their realization. It clarified that in case the U.S. stops for the time being joint military exercises in and around south Korea, we have the willingness to respond to it with a moratorium on a nuclear test** which the U.S. is much concerned about, and expressed the stand that we are always ready to sit with the U.S. at a negotiating table. But from the outset of the year the U.S. president personally declared "additional sanctions" against the DPRK and blustered that it will "bring down" the socialist system which the Korean people regard dearer than their own lives, and started the aggression war exercises with the south Korean puppet forces against the DPRK, thereby blatantly challenging the sincere proposals and efforts made by the DPRK. This has only brought to light the nature of the U.S. as the chief culprit escalating tension and harassing peace and the deceptive nature of its hypocritical talk about dialogue. The exercises have especially high possibility of causing a spark, given the grim situation and atmosphere caused by the U.S. and the south Korean puppet forces' provocative anti-DPRK confrontational frenzy. Now that the U.S. has become all the more pronounced in its hostile policy toward the DPRK, bereft of reason, **the army and people of the DPRK will take tougher counteraction of justice.** As already declared, they are fully ready for any form of war which the U.S. wants and may opt and are full of the firm will to counter the enemies' slightest provocation with the just great war for national reunification. In case a war breaks out on the Korean peninsula at last, the U.S. and the south Korean puppet forces can never evade consequences and responsibilities." (KCNA, "FM Spokesman Denounces U.S.-S. Korea Joint Military Exercises," March 2, 2015)

Rodong Sinmun: "Obama malignantly termed the DPRK the "most isolated, most sanctioned and most cut-off dictatorial state on earth" after proclaiming new "additional sanctions" against it through presidential executive order from the outset of the year. ...There is no need to explain which is the most cut-off dictatorial state on earth. The U.S. outrageous and heinous state-sponsored politically-motivated terrorism against the DPRK is pursuant to its deep-rooted policy for stifling the DPRK. ...After defining the DPRK as the enemy the U.S. has never recognized its sovereignty but escalated the hostile acts to bring down its social system. Much earlier than the spawning of the nuclear issue, institutional and legal mechanisms were set up against the DPRK and scenarios for military attacks and nuclear threats were undisguisedly worked out to bring down its ideology and social system. The U.S. has run the whole gamut of base plots to destroy the DPRK, while talking it has no "hostile intent." This year the U.S. let loose a spate of invectives against the DPRK and set it a policy to bring down its social system, going busy with war maneuvers. This proves that the U.S. hostile acts against the DPRK have reached an extreme phase. **Now that the U.S. imperialists try to stamp out the ideology of the DPRK and "bring down" its social system through provocative saber-rattling, the DPRK neither feels any need to sit at a negotiating table with them nor has any willingness to deal with them. It is**

necessary to settle accounts with those kicking up war hysteria while openly crying out for "collapse" of the DPRK only through resolute military reactions.

This is the determination of the army and people of the DPRK." (KCNA, "Rodong Sinmun Calls for Settling Accounts with U.S. through Military Reactions," March 2, 2015)

3/2-24/15

South Korea and the United States will conduct their annual joint military drills next month, the Combined Forces Command (CFC) said February 24, amid heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula following repeated threats against the exercises from North Korea. The computerized command post exercise, called Key Resolve, will be held from March 2-13 to improve the combined forces' operation and combat capabilities to deter threats from the North, according to the CFC. The two-week war game will involve about 10,000 South Korean and 8,600 American troops to test various scenarios in which South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff plays a leading role in conducting operations. "It is important to maintain our high level of proficiency on key tasks while exercising different scenarios," CFC commander Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti said in a statement. "Exercising our multinational force is an important component of readiness and is fundamental to sustaining and strengthening the alliance." Separately, the allies are scheduled to hold the field training exercise Foal Eagle, which involves a set of land, sea and air maneuvers, from March 2 to April 24. Drawing attention is the participation of the USS Fort Worth, a 3,450-ton Freedom-class littoral combat ship (LCS), in the drill during its rotational deployment to the 7th Fleet. "It is the first time an LCS has trained with the South Korean Navy and 7th Fleet ships in Northeast Asia," U.S. Naval Forces Korea spokesman Arlo Abrahamson said in a statement. "The exercise provides a great chance to increase our combined readiness, which ultimately contributes to greater stability for the region." The combat ship, complete with surface warfare mission package capabilities including an MH-60R helicopter and Mark 110 57-millimeter gun, is capable of getting closer to shore than larger ships during diverse scenarios, which "brings speed, maneuverability and shallow draft to this exercise," according to the U.S. navy. "Earlier in the day, the Military Armistice Commission of the United Nations Command informed North Korea about the exercise plan," a CFC official said. "The North has not made any official response to it." (Yonhap, "S. Korea, U.S. to Stage Annual Joint Military Drills Next Month," February 24, 2015)

3/3/15

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong said that his country had the power to deter an "ever-increasing nuclear threat" by the United States with a pre-emptive strike if necessary. His rare speech at the U.N.-backed Conference on Disarmament drew a rebuke from U.S. Ambassador Robert Wood, who urged Pyongyang to stop making threats and rid itself of nuclear weapons. Ri said joint military exercises currently being staged by South Korea and the United States were "unprecedentedly provocative in nature and have an especially high possibility of sparking off a war." **"The DPRK cannot but bolster its nuclear deterrent capability** to cope with the ever-increasing nuclear threat of the U.S.," he told the Geneva forum. "Now the DPRK has the power of deterring the U.S. **and conducting a pre-emptive strike** as well, if necessary." (Stephanie Nabehey, "North Korea Warns U.S. about Preemptive Strike 'If Necessary,'" Reuters, March 3, 2015)

KCNA: "Ri Su Yong, foreign minister of the DPRK, made a speech at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on March 3. He said: Overall disarmament process remains deadlocked contrary to expectations of the member countries. Arbitrary and double-dealing attitudes of some countries bring about negative consequences of sparking off an arms race, far from seeking genuine disarmament negotiations based on mutual trust among member countries. The NPT was adopted at the disarmament talks in the last century but nuclear disarmament was not completely realized. Consequently, the nuclear map of the world today has significantly changed. Less people in the media and academic circles pay attention to this issue. If the CD fails to sufficiently play its role any longer, the issue of nuclear disarmament may disappear from the UN agenda once and for all. The Korean peninsula is a nuclear arsenal as the world's largest nuclear weapons state and the youngest nuclear weapons state are technically at war. The Korean peninsula may be called a ground showcasing the consequences proving that a nuclear weapons state failed to keep promise made to non-nuclear state at a time when the NPT was adopted. Instead of providing assurances of non-use of nukes against the DPRK which acceded to the NPT in 1985, the U.S. has not de-escalated its nuclear threat to Pyongyang at all but further increased it. The hostile policy of the U.S. towards the DPRK for over half a century, not just a few years, compelled the DPRK to have access to nukes. **The DPRK cannot but bolster its nuclear deterrent capability to cope with the ever-increasing nuclear threat of the U.S.** The DPRK's future counteraction will depend on whether the U.S. rolls back its hostile policy toward the DPRK or not. **As long as Korea remains divided, lasting peace on the Korean peninsula and the regional security cannot be ensured.** When Korea is reunified, it will definitely help realize the cherished desire of the nation and, at the same time, will be a decisive contribution to the peace and security on the Korean peninsula and, furthermore, those in Northeast Asia where the interests of big powers clash. The DPRK will not spare its sincere efforts to bring about a great change in the inter-Korean relations this year.

The government of the DPRK expresses conviction that CD will pay due attention to the situation on the Korean peninsula and give support for the efforts to ease the tension." (KCNA, "DPRK Foreign Minister Urges U.S. to Roll Back Its Hostile Policy toward DPRK," March 6, 2015)

North Korea appears prepared to fire medium-range Nodong ballistic missiles amid heightened inter-Korean tensions over the ongoing South Korea-U.S. military exercises, a source here said. "We've detected signs that North Korea has deployed two transporter erector launchers (TELs) since a few days back in its Nodong missile station in North Pyongan Province," the military source said. "We are closely monitoring their movements bearing in mind chances of their actual launches." North Korea last fired two Nodong missiles last March using the launchers, the first launch in nearly five years. The single-stage ballistic missile has an estimated range of 1,300 kilometers with a payload capacity of 700 kilograms, according to South Korea and U.S. intelligence. "It would not be easy for us to detect missiles in a swift manner in case they are fired from a mobile launcher," said a military officer, saying the authorities have been operating the crisis management system against possible military provocations by the North. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Ready to Fire Nodong Medium-Range Missiles: Military Source," March 5, 2015)

North Korea has reopened its borders to tourists and lifted strict quarantine measures after four months. "According to Air Koryo, everything is back to normal!" U.S.-based Uri Tours said. (AFP, "North Korea Reopens Borders after Ebola Travel Ban," March 3, 2015)

3/4/15

U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert needed 80 stitches to his face after being slashed by a North Korea sympathizer demanding an end to joint U.S.-South Korea military drills. Kim Ki-jong was born in 1959, according to the website of his "Our Square" activist group. The group wants the U.S. to withdraw troops from South Korea and sign a peace treaty with North Korea to replace the 1953 truce that ended the Korean War, echoing the demands of the regime in Pyongyang. He received a suspended jail term in 2010 for throwing a lump of concrete at the Japanese ambassador; and in 2007, he set himself on fire near the presidential Blue House office to demand the reopening of an investigation into the 1988 rape of a fellow group member, according to South Korea's CBS News. He visited the North Korean border city of Gaeseong eight times in 2006 and 2007 to participate in a tree-planting project, according to a Unification Ministry official, who asked not to be named. (Sam Kim and Rose Kim, "U.S. Envoy to South Korea Needed 80 Stitches after Knife Attack," Bloomberg, March 4, 2015) KCNA called the attack "deserved punishment." The dispatch, titled "Deserved punishment for warmonger United States," said the assailant, Kim Ki-jong, gave a "knife shower of justice" to the envoy in a reflection of South Korean public sentiment that condemns the U.S. for raising tensions on the Korean Peninsula through joint military exercises with Seoul. (Yonhap, "N.K. Hails Attack on U.S. Envoy to Seoul," March 5, 2015) The man who attacked Lippert is a fringe political activist with a history of violence, and he acted alone. "We are looking broadly and deeply into whether there was a behind-the-scenes force at home and abroad," Yun said. He said Kim visited North Korea seven times from 1999 to 2007. But those visits were approved by the South Korean government and took place during a period when many South Koreans, including government officials, journalists and scholars, were allowed to visit the North under Seoul's "Sunshine Policy" of encouraging exchanges and reconciliation. Kim was among a small minority of progressives in South Korea who tried to build a funeral altar at the center of Seoul to encourage South Koreans to express condolences over the death of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in late 2011. The progressives said such a gesture would help promote reconciliation with the North, but their attempt crumbled in the face of protest from conservative South Koreans, who denounced them as "jongbuk," or North Korean sympathizers. As the police raided Kim's home, the government of President Park Geun-hye and her Saenuri Party called his act, which took place as Lippert was about to give a speech this morning, "terror against the South Korean-United States alliance" and called for an inquiry into whether "behind-the-scene forces" had been involved in the attack. That raised fears among progressives that conservatives would use the attack to suppress dissidents. (Choe Sang-hun, "South Korea Says Attacker of U.S. Ambassador Acted Alone," *New York Times*, March 6, 2015, p. A-6) Korean politics is falling into yet another ideological spat as the ruling party blames North Korea sympathizers as being connected to last week's knife attack on the top American diplomat here, while the main opposition accuses its rival of political demagoguery. Washington has shown a relatively subdued stance about the attack on Ambassador

Mark Lippert, viewing the incident as an attack by a radical individual. Yet, right-wingers in Seoul called the attack an act of terrorism triggered by pro-North Korea forces, sparking a confrontation with those on the other side of the political spectrum. Capitalizing on the worsening public opinion against extremist activists with ties to Pyongyang, the Saenuri Party has called for "driving out" pro-North Korean forces and criticized the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy for having sided with Pyongyang sympathizers in the past. On March 9, Saenuri spokesperson Park Dae-chul called the NPAD a onetime "host of pro-North Korean forces," prompting a strong protest from its rival party. Park said, "It is the time for the NPAD to write a letter of repentance." The NPAD, which had remained cautious to fend off any fallout from the attack by an ultra-left activist, countered the Saenuri's offensive, arguing that the ruling party has been politically exploiting the incident and fanning a hackneyed ideological dispute concerning the communist state. "The U.S. did not use the word 'terrorism' when referring to the incident. It instead used the word 'attack,' and has showed a calm, reserved response to it," said NPAD Rep. Jung Chung-rae during a meeting with senior party officials. "The ruling party should refrain from making remarks that undermine national interests and get out of its excessive ideological campaign to blame pro-North Korean forces." NPAD Rep. Oh Young-sik said, "The Saenuri Party's chronic illness of a campaign against pro-North Korean forces has re-emerged. Such old-fashioned moves ahead of an election (the April by-election) should be stopped." (Song Sang-ho, "Attack Reopens Political Divide," *Korea Herald*, March 10, 2015)

Andrea Berger: "The 2015 PoE [UN Panel of Experts] report explores North Korea's global proliferation network through an extensive investigation into the operations and sanctions-evasion tactics of Ocean Maritime Management (OMM), the firm that facilitates shipping and logistics for Pyongyang's proliferation-related activity. Details of OMM's actions after it was designated by the Security Council in 2014 show how quickly the network adapted to the new constraints by re-naming and re-registering its vessels. Information on the company's overseas offices shows that it rarely registers in countries where it operates, that its representatives embed with other corporations to avoid detection and that it cooperates actively with DPRK diplomatic representatives stationed abroad to facilitate illicit transactions. Space constraints do not permit me to recount their insights as fully as is deserved, so a full read of the report is recommended. The report also focuses on the DPRK's procurement of foreign components for its nuclear and missile programs, as well as for its conventional defense industrial pursuits. This is by no means a new phenomenon. For example, a 2003 *Wall Street Journal* article outlined how a North Korean couple in Bratislava was actively procuring goods from around the world in support of a North Korean missile project in Egypt. More recently, the PoE's 2014 report shed light on the foreign components that the DPRK uses in its domestic programs, specifically in the Unha-3 space launch vehicle launched in December 2012. This year's report offers yet more evidence of the difficulties in identifying and preventing exports of arms-related material to the DPRK and the consequences of failing to do so. Members of the PoE investigated North Korean unmanned aerial vehicles that crashed in South Korea, and found a number of parts sourced in counter-proliferation active countries such as Canada, the United States, Switzerland, South Korea and Japan. In short, the report

offers a sobering reminder that, despite the existence of sanctions, North Korean proliferation networks have proven themselves to be adept at circumventing them, quick to adapt to new constraints imposed against them, and resourceful in their quest to source and ship the goods they need. In most cases, the counter-proliferator is likely to continue playing catch-up. The report outlines the ways in which North Korean activity has exploited the grey areas of the sanctions regime. Four examples are identified below. The first relates to North Korean participation in the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, “an international intergovernmental scientific research organization” based in Russia that was founded in 1956. North Korea is one of its 18 Member States, while most of the others are former Soviet republics. According to the Institute’s website, “[T]he main fields of JINR’s activity are theoretical and experimental studies in elementary particle physics, nuclear physics, and condensed matter physics.” Responding to inquiries from the PoE, the Institute affirmed that four North Koreans are currently working there: one at the Flevrov Laboratory of Nuclear Reactions’ Scientific and Experimental Physical Department, one at the Laboratory of Information Technologies, and two at the Laboratory of Nuclear Problems. In addition, representatives of the North Korean Embassy in Moscow recently took part in the Institute’s Scientific Council and the Committee of Plenipotentiaries. In defense of these activities, the Institute argued that it is an international organization, conducting research with exclusively peaceful applications, and that no North Korean individuals designated by the Security Council were involved. In addition, representatives from 16 non-nuclear weapons states participate in the Institute’s activities without inciting any concern that their research is proliferation-sensitive. On the other hand, North Korea has been repeatedly instructed by the Security Council to abandon its *entire* nuclear program and related activities, peaceful or otherwise. So is offering Pyongyang an outlet to conduct peaceful nuclear research a violation of the letter and spirit of the sanctions regime? And if so, who is responsible for that breach when the host is an international organization?

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles In 2014, three North Korean unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) crashed in South Korea after flying reconnaissance missions over military facilities. Examination of the debris did not determine whether the vehicles were North Korean or foreign made. Either way, these incidents suggest that Pyongyang is likely to continue to incorporate unmanned aerial systems into its operations. Seoul has flagged this practice as a potential sanctions issue and has “notified the Panel that the supply, sale or transfer of these unmanned aerial vehicles and of their components could constitute a violation of paragraph 10 of resolution 1874 (2009) prohibiting the supply, sale, or transfer of all arms related materiel [to the DPRK].” Current Category 1 restrictions forbid the sale to North Korea or purchase from it of “complete unmanned aerial vehicle systems (including cruise missile systems, target drones and reconnaissance drones) capable of delivering at least a 500 kg payload to a range of at least 300 km.” The shorter range of the three crashed drones means they did not fall into that category, but Seoul appears to believe that they should still be considered “arms-related” and therefore subject to sanctions. This is a point that will likely be debated in the United Nations and outside of it in coming months.

“Arms-Related” Training Services In the past two years, Uganda has drawn considerable attention for its curious military partnership with North Korea. High-level delegations from Pyongyang were warmly welcomed in Kampala, most recently in October 2014. Uganda explained that its military ties to North Korea are transparent

and benign, and centered on training for security forces and the provision of non-lethal equipment. Specific forms of training were previously said to include: martial arts, marine rescue, and “security and technical training courses for the Ugandan Police Special Force, Police Construction Unit, Criminal and Forensic Investigation.” It is uncertain whether the Sanctions Committee would consider any of this activity to be a violation of sanctions, as North Koreans were allegedly not training their Ugandan counterparts in the use of lethal arms. Instead, their cooperation would have occupied yet another grey area. However, the proximity of the DPRK-Ugandan cooperation to the boundaries of the sanctions regime did raise doubts that this was all that there was to the relationship. The new PoE report confirms those suspicions. In December 2014, Uganda responded to the PoE’s inquiries stating, “Field Force Unit Training carried out by Democratic People’s Republic of Korea instructors at the police training schools at Kabalye, Masindi and Butiaba, Wantembo (both former military bases) included training on the use of AK-47s and pistols. The training for the Marine Police Unit included sharp shooting.” Other forms of training such as martial arts may have taken place along the lines of Uganda’s earlier suggestions. However, the PoE expressed its belief that training specifically related to lethal weapons would be a breach of Security Council Resolution 1874. Since that training is ongoing, Uganda appears to still be violating sanctions. Unfortunately, the PoE did not address these previous ambiguities. It refrained from commenting on the legality of purchasing non-lethal weapons from North Korea (such as tear gas guns), or contracting Pyongyang to provide training in their use or in combat tactics. Questions about this issue may therefore arise again in the future, particularly if in response to the PoE report, Uganda now ceases only the types of activities that have been explicitly called out. *Commercial vs. Non-Commercial Luxury Goods Transactions* Dennis Rodman may be a subject of confusion for many, but the Sanctions Committee has not been among them. On his most recent visit to Pyongyang, Rodman imported whisky, crystal glassware and a Mulberry handbag as gifts for Kim Jong-un and his family. Some of the gifts were likely considered ‘luxury goods’ for the purposes of sanctions against North Korea. However, Ireland (the location of Paddy Power, Rodman’s sponsor) concluded that the “one-off” transaction was not a “commercial transaction” and therefore was not a sanctions violation. This raises questions as to whether or not the luxury goods ban exempts gifts or applies only to “commercial” deals. A few miscellaneous points of interest are worth noting when reading the report: North Korea recently had Reconnaissance General Bureau operatives stationed in UNESCO and the World Food Programme. France allegedly possesses evidence that they were involved in activities relevant to sanctions resolutions. In February 2014, DPRK officials were caught travelling back to North Korea via Southeast Asia with suitcases containing \$450,000 in cash payment for an arms deal. The role of officials and diplomatic personnel in facilitating payment is also illustrated by a 2008 Republic of Congo deal, in which Embassy officials were confirmed to have been responsible for receipt of payments and customs clearance. The PoE compared the North Korea-Cuba and North Korea-Congo military relationships. In doing so, they mentioned that part of the contract between North Korea and Cuba involved Pyongyang providing “technical assistance.” In other words, the North Korea-Cuba military relationship was not merely a case of North Korea sourcing arms and related material, as was apparent with the *Chong Chon Gang* incident in 2013. Havana appeared to be receiving arms-related services from

Pyongyang as well. The PoE concluded that vessels controlled by the designated entity Ocean Maritime Management (and its various incarnations) are included within the sanctions definition of 'assets.' Member States are therefore obliged to "freeze" such assets, in accordance with the definition supplied by the Financial Action Task Force, as a matter of practice. This may be a difficult measure for Member States to stomach, as its implementation could involve a large burden on local authorities." (Andrea Berger, "Further Shades of Grey: North Korea Sanctions and the 2015 UN Panel of Experts Report," *38North*, March 4, 2015)

3/5/15 A North Korean diplomat was caught with 27kg of gold by Bangladeshi authorities at the Hazrat Shahjalal International airport in Dhaka, according to customs officials. "We recovered the gold both in the form of bar and ornaments from Son Young Nam, the First Secretary of the North Korean Embassy in Dhaka," Moinul Khan, the Director General of the Custom Intelligence department, told Reuters. According to local reports 19kg of the gold was in the form of 170 bricks while the other 8kg were made up of ornaments. *Reuters* placed the value of the haul at \$1.4 million. Although regular checks are relatively rare for passengers passing through the green channel, customs officials searched Son following a "tip off," local media said. "We stopped him on a secret tip off as he tried to go out of the airport through the green channel," Kazi Mohammad Zia Uddin, the Joint Commissioner of Customs, told reporters. In September 2014, Moinul had told various media outlets that customs authorities at Bangladesh's two main airports had seized over 600kg of gold since July 2013, up from 15kg over the previous five years. (Hamish MacDonald, "North Korean Diplomat Caught Smuggling 27 Kg of Gold into Bangladesh," *NKNews*, March 6, 2015)

3/6/15 South Korea needs to think more carefully about how to "balance" its relations with the United States and China, the outgoing South Korean ambassador to China said Friday, warning that China's "assertive diplomacy" could put Seoul in a dilemma. While South Korea has repeatedly stressed the importance of Seoul-Washington ties, analysts say China's rise could put South Korea in a strategic dilemma amid possible conflicts of interests between the U.S. and China in Northeast Asia. "Although Korea-China and Korea-U.S. relations are not said to be a 'zero-sum game,' there could be a situation where we are forced to make a choice between the two relations," Ambassador Kwon said. "So, we need to think more carefully about how to strike a balance between China and the U.S.," Kwon said. Referring to "China's rise" and "China's assertive diplomacy," Kwon said it is time for South Korea to pay more attention on its diplomacy with China. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Needs to 'Balance' Ties with U.S., China: Outgoing Envoy," March 6, 2015)

3/8/15 The leaders of North Korea and China may meet when their schedules are "convenient," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said, signaling the possibility of a North Korea-China summit despite long-running standoffs over the North's nuclear ambition. North Korea's young leader, Kim Jong-un, has yet to visit China since taking the helm of the reclusive state in late 2011. Asked whether North Korea's Kim could visit China this year, Wang replied, "As to when our leaders will meet, we will have to see when it is convenient for both parties." "The China-North Korea relationship has a strong foundation. It should not and will not be affected by temporary events," Wang

said. (Yonhap, "China Says Summit with N. Korea to Take Place When 'Convenient,'" March 8, 2015)

Choe Ryong-hae, for some time North Korea's de facto No. 2 official, has been demoted from the Politburo standing committee to ordinary membership in the Workers Party. *Rodong Sinmun*, reporting a party rally marking International Women's Day, identified Choe by his new role. As recently as a party meeting on February 16 Choe was credited with the grander old title, which suggests he was demoted at on February 18. Choe, who ascended to the second-most powerful man after Kim Jong-un took office but has recently been eclipsed by military politburo chief Hwang Pyong-so. But not long earlier Choe himself had returned from a spot in the wilderness to assume his old role, firming suspicions that Kim Jon-un is playing a complex game of musical chairs at the top to prevent anyone ever amassing power like his late uncle. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "Kim Jong-un Keeps All Guessing Who's in Favor," March 10, 2015)

3/9/15

A United Nations human rights investigator called for sustained international action to pressure North Korea into accounting for hundreds of foreign citizens it is believed to have abducted over several decades. Marzuki Darusman, the special rapporteur on human rights in North Korea, urged "sustained and resolute action" by the international community aimed at "shedding light on all cases of abductions" and returning those still alive to their countries of origin. His report, on strategies for resolving those cases, is to be presented next week to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. North Korean agents abducted hundreds of foreign citizens from the 1960s to the 1990s, mostly from Japan, China and South Korea, the report states, but a commission of inquiry into North Korea's human rights practices also recorded abductions of people from Lebanon, Malaysia, Romania, Singapore and Thailand, and possibly other countries. The Japanese authorities have identified 12 abducted citizens who still have not been returned to Japan, but they are investigating 881 other possible abductions, Darusman said. In view of the number of countries whose citizens are said to have been seized, "an international approach to the issue is now required," he said in his report, urging the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly to take up the issue and recommending the convening of an international conference to address forced disappearances. (Nick Cuming-Bruce, "North Korea: U.N. Urges Action to Resolve Abductions," *New York Times*, March 10, 2015, p. A-6)

3/12/15

North Korea has test-fired seven ground-to-air missiles into the East Sea in an apparent saber-rattling against the South Korean-U.S. joint military exercises, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said March 13. Yesterday's missile launch came a day before Seoul and Washington wrapped up their combined annual war game Key Resolve, which Pyongyang denounces as a rehearsal for invasion of the communist country. "The North Korean military fired multiple rounds of ground-to-air missiles into the East Sea from Seondok, South Hamkyong Province, at around 6-7 p.m. yesterday," the JCS said in a brief statement. The JCS believes that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un guided the test-firing, a JCS officer said. "The missiles fired were presumed to SA-2 and SA-3 types that have a range of dozens of kilometers as well as a SA-5 one that flew some 200 kilometers," the officer said, adding it was the first time for the North to test-fire the

SA-5 missile. Noting that the firing "appears to be the North's provocations in opposition to the joint exercises," the JCS said the South Korean military "has strengthened the readiness posture and plans to solidify the alliance through the exercises." (Oh Seok-min, "N. Korea Fires 7 Ground-to-Air Missiles into East Sea: JCS," *Yonhap*, March 13, 2015)

3/13/15

North Korea and Russia discussed security issues over the Korean Peninsula and East Asia during their foreign ministerial meeting in Moscow, according to Russia's Foreign Ministry. The meeting between Pyongyang's top diplomat Ri Su-yong and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov came amid speculation that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may visit Moscow in May. (Yi Whan-woo, "N.K., Russia Discuss Security Issues," *Korea Times*, March 15, 2015)

The textile factories producing "made in China" goods from compounds just across the Yalu River from North Korea offer a glimpse into a hidden world that is helping North Korea's economy to thrive. Operated by North Koreans, the factories produce clothes and other goods that are exported under foreign-company labels, making it impossible to tell that they have been made with North Korean hands and have contributed to North Korean profits. The thriving operations belie the perception in Washington that U.S. and international sanctions are working to strangle North Korea's ability to make money. While an overwhelming majority of North Koreans live in poverty, the country's output has been steadily increasing, and an estimate by South Korea's Hyundai Research Institute forecasts that the North's economy will grow this year by a whopping 7 percent. A lot of that growth comes through Dandong, a hive of North Korean and Chinese managers and traders, with middlemen helping them all cover their tracks. One local Chinese businessman estimates that one-quarter of this city's population of 800,000 is involved in doing business with North Korea in some way. In one factory on a recent day, dozens of North Korean women sat under fluorescent strip lights sewing seams and pressing pockets on pants, some of which were destined for the United States. "They are here to make money for the country," a North Korean factory manager said of the workers. This scene is repeated in dozens, perhaps hundreds, of labor compounds all along the border, which in effect is little more than a line on the map. The extensive range of commercial activity suggests that it would be wrong to think that China's leadership is now so annoyed with Kim Jong-un, who took control of North Korea at the end of 2011 after the death of his father, that it is tightening the economic screws on the young leader next door. This is a very sensitive part of China – during a week of reporting along the North Korean border, *Washington Post* reporters were monitored by police – and doing business with North Korea is a very sensitive subject. The textile-factory manager would allow himself to be identified only as Kim; he and other North Korean businessmen who agreed to speak about their operations otherwise did so on the condition of anonymity for fear of jeopardizing their livelihoods. North Korea's economy is still a basket case, barely more than one-fiftieth the size of South Korea's. But in talking about the changes underway, the businessmen described a North Korean economy that is increasingly run according to market principles, where people want to be in business, not the bureaucracy, and where money talks. Kim, the textile manager, said he has no qualms about making pants to be worn by men going to work in "imperialist aggressor"

countries such as the United States, South Korea or Japan – the three most hated enemies of his country. He was only interested, he said, in maximizing profits for Pyongyang, wherever they come from. “It doesn’t matter whether they’re an enemy country or not,” Kim said. In the clothing factory, the women work 13 hours a day, 28 or 29 days a month, and are paid \$300 each a month – one-third of which they keep. The rest goes back to the government in Pyongyang. “Even though I want to pay them more, I have to send a certain amount home to my country, so this is all I can give them,” Kim said in his office at the factory. On his desk, an open laptop revealed that visitors had interrupted his game of solitaire. The women work on the third floor, wearing their coats inside to guard against the cold, and live on the second floor in shared, dormitory-style rooms decorated with a banner declaring, “Let’s realize the revolutionary ideas of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il” alongside portraits of the two former leaders, grandfather and father, respectively, of Kim Jong-un. Signs on the doors read, “Call each other comrade.” North Korea is thought to have at least 50,000 workers outside the country earning money for the regime, and 13,000 of them work in Dandong. This neon explosion of a city contrasts starkly with the North Korean city of Sinuiju, on the opposite bank of the river, where there is only a smattering of light at night. But there are signs of large-scale construction on the North Korean side: a half-completed apartment tower with a crane on the top and other new buildings underway. Although the traffic crossing the bridge between the two cities is far from jammed, it is constant. A steady flow of vans and container trucks, and the occasional black sedan with tinted windows, crossed in both directions over the course of a week. Passenger and freight trains ran regularly, carrying cargo such as steel bars for construction and unrefined gold dirt. Consumer goods go in the other direction. The most popular items to sell in North Korea these days are TV sets hooked up to solar panels – preferably with USB ports for watching smuggled dramas. Here, North Koreans are coming to grips with the fundamentals of capitalism, even if they still won’t use the term. Over dinner one night at a Chinese restaurant, another North Korean factory manager happily chatted about his corporate role models. Chief among them: the titans of South Korean conglomerates such as Samsung and Hyundai who propelled that country’s rapid economic transformation. What had he learned from those tycoons in the South? “Perseverance, the need to diversify,” said the businessman, who manages a factory that produces goods related to the construction industry and was sporting a Tissot watch. “We’re living in a world where new things keep appearing. Who would have thought Nokia would have collapsed? Their mistake was sticking with the same product.” He has absorbed some of these lessons from the outside world, describing steps he has taken to increase productivity at his factory – mainly by creating better working conditions so his employees want to work more – and boost his profits. This is emblematic of the tentative economic experimentation taking place since Kim Jong-un became leader. Reports from inside North Korea suggest that even state-run companies are increasingly operated according to market principles, with managers empowered to hire and fire workers – previously unimaginable in the communist nation – and conduct businesses the way they see best. There are frustrations here. The biggest one – literally – has to be the four-lane, \$350 million New Yalu River Bridge, a huge steel structure that traverses the river from a glitzy urban development, Dandong New District. The whole development project is now on ice, partly because of the demise of Jang Song Thaek, the businessman and

uncle of Kim Jong-un who was executed at the end of 2013, partly because of his “decadent capitalist lifestyle.” Since then, Jang’s colleagues have been recalled to Pyongyang or have disappeared – sometimes with millions of dollars in Chinese money, according to businessmen here. Beijing is clearly none too happy about this, and smaller Chinese operators also have complaints about dealing with North Korea. One Korean Chinese businessman named Ri who exports raw materials from North Korea said there are lots of “fraudsters” there. “Sometimes the North Korean takes the money, but then you can’t find the person,” he said. “As the middleman, I have to take responsibility for that. There are some people here who’ve committed suicide because they’ve lost everything.” A well-to-do Chinese couple who run an exporting business in Dandong – she was carrying a Chanel bag, he had an Armani sweater – could barely conceal their distaste for the state across the river. They used to export kitchen goods to North Korea but have stopped, saying it was too hard to make money there. Asked if they had seen signs that North Korea is opening up its economy, the woman said, “Oh, you’re so naive!” “I haven’t seen any signs of that,” her husband chimed in. “We built this whole new bridge, but North Korea hasn’t built anything.” But while the political chill between North Korea and China might have had an impact on state-level economic cooperation, and those who played in the big leagues with Jang might have been scared away, there are still plenty of small businessmen looking for – and finding – ways to make money. “These guys are out there to make a buck – they’re not the World Food Program – and as long as these opportunities exist, private, profit-seeking, market-conforming trade and investment will continue,” said Marcus Noland, an expert on the North Korean economy at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. Take Zhang, a Korean Chinese merchant who runs one of the 30 or so Chinese businesses in Dandong that ship fabric to North Korea to be turned into clothes there for European companies. Zhang said that he employs a few dozen people on the Chinese side of the border but that his workforce in North Korea fluctuates between 3,000 and 10,000 people, depending on how many orders he has. North Koreans are particularly good at painstaking, manual work such as lace-making and hand-stitched beadwork. He pulls out his smartphone and shows a photo of a blond woman wearing an intricately embroidered pink and white dress, a product of North Korean labor. Zhang, who speaks Korean and Chinese, does not even need his passport to enter North Korea. He has a permit that allows him to travel back and forth freely. He talked about how he’s developed good relations with his business partners there. “Over the past few years, I’ve built trust with the North Koreans,” he said. “Every year around the birthdays of the leaders, I go there in person and take fruit and flower baskets. I pay my respects to the leaders, and I’m sure my clients report this back to the authorities.” For North Koreans who make money on the Chinese side of the border, one question is how to get it back to Pyongyang. Since the start of the Korean War in 1950, when it included North Korea in the Trading With the Enemy Act, the United States has sought to restrict North Korea’s ability to bank and trade. This has tightened markedly over the past decade, with the United States imposing rounds of sanctions designed to curtail North Korea’s ability to procure materials for its nuclear weapons program by shutting the country out of the international financial system. The latest measures were imposed in January as punishment for the hacking of Sony Pictures Entertainment. The restrictions hurt at first. But North Korea has wised up. It uses small banks in China or Russia to transfer money – several banks in Dandong said it was

possible to wire money to Pyongyang, for a hefty commission – or simply reverts to old-fashioned suitcases full of cash, which are much harder to stop with sanctions. There is a sense in Dandong that sanctions are an issue for Washington and Beijing but that they don't apply here on the border. "I'm just a local businessman," Zhang said, adding that sanctions "apply to big, international companies, not to private individuals like us," clearly considering his business with North Korea domestic. "Anyway, we find ways to get around them." Ri, the Korean Chinese trader, said that his business partners always want cash. "So they come out or I go into North Korea to settle the bills," he said in his office in Dandong, running wooden beads through his fingers. "They like to be paid in U.S. dollars, euros, Japanese yen." (North Koreans returning to Pyongyang apparently like to carry American dollars for the cachet.) Everyone interviewed said that it is entirely possible to send cash to North Korea – people usually just carry it in bags over the bridge – and that while there might technically be limits on how much a person can carry, in practice there are no checks, or at least no checks that cannot be overcome by greasing a few palms. But the regime doesn't always want cash. The North Korean businessmen who talked to The Post said they buy goods according to orders from Pyongyang and ship those back instead. Recently, they have been asked to send back solar panels and generators to help deal with North Korea's chronic electricity shortage. Relations between China and North Korea are complicated, but one thing is clear: Politics and economics are not entirely intertwined. "There is a lot of jumping to conclusions in Washington and discussion about China showing a strong hand to North Korea," said John Park, a North Korea sanctions expert at MIT. "I don't see the evidence for that." Although trade appears to have dipped recently, that is the result of sharp declines in prices of commodities such as coal and iron ore – two of North Korea's biggest exports to China – rather than some kind of punishment for Kim's lack of deference to Xi Jinping, the Chinese president. The young North Korean leader has not made the traditional pilgrimage to visit the state's patron. But pragmatic China, Park said, does not want North Korea becoming unstable and risk unsettling this precarious northeastern part of China. "As you must have watched lots of historic soap operas in South Korea, you will know that China and North Korea are like lips and teeth," said the North Korean factory manager over dinner, repeating an old saying about the neighbors. "Economically, nothing has changed." (Anna Fifield, "North Korea's Growing Economy - And America's Misconceptions about It," *Washington Post*, March 13, 2015)

3/14/15

CPRK spokesman's statement: "On March 10, Jong Jong Uk, vice-chairman of the south Korean "preparatory committee for unification", opened to public at a working breakfast the fact that there existed "a team for unification lacking agreement and unification of social systems" in the "preparatory committee for unification" and confessed that they were preparing in secret "other form of unification without south-north agreement" and other organization in the regime was also studying the "unification of social systems." He went the lengths of letting loose a spate of sophism that the regime had a concrete measure to deal with people of various social origins in the north in case of "unification through absorption of social system." ...In the past the puppet group trumpeted about "unification of social systems" and "unification through absorption" whenever an opportunity presented itself. But this is the first time that it openly disclosed the inside story about its scenario. The disclosure of this fact sparked

off uproar in south Korea. ...Much upset by this, puppet Chongwadae and the coteries of the "preparatory committee for unification" claimed that "it was not true" and let him appear before media persons to assert that the "preparatory team for unification through absorption" didn't exist in a bid to evade the catastrophic consequences to be entailed by his remarks. But this is like crying over spilt milk. As far as the "preparatory committee for unification" is concerned, it was set up as a mechanism directly under the "president" and its chairperson is Park Geun Hye herself. It was created by Park in July last year involving the authorities, political camp and NGOs including the puppet Ministry of Unification, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Intelligence Service, Ministry of Justice and "National Assembly" under the pretext of working out a "blueprint for peace and unification" and "constitution for unification" for the purpose of realizing the "confidence-building process on the Korean peninsula." The successive rulers of south Korea had dreamt of wild ambition for confrontation of social systems and "unification through absorption" but there were no such heinous anti-reunification confrontation maniacs as the present puppet forces keen on confrontation of social systems by making the above-said team. The puppet forces, having an axe to grind and daggers hidden behind belts to hurt fellow countrymen, are talking about "dialogue", "confidence" and "improved relations". This is an unpardonable mockery and insult to the DPRK and the south Korean people's mindset, public opinion at home and abroad and all Koreans. The puppet forces are no more than cat's paws disgustingly kowtowing to their U.S. master keen to bring the dark clouds of nuclear war to the nation and colonial stooges who cannot exist even a moment without the U.S. backing. Yet, they are crying out for "unification of social systems" and "unification through absorption" in an effort to bring down the inviolable and dignified social system in the DPRK. This is nothing but a silly charade that makes the boiled head of a cow provoke a side-splitting laughter. The "unification through absorption" touted by the puppet group is no more than a daydream. The DPRK asserts the improved inter-Korean relations and peace and reunification not because it does not know other form and method of reunification or it lacks strength and ability. Park Geun Hye, as the head of the "preparatory committee for unification", should give a clear and responsible clarification of those outbursts and make apology for them before the entire nation and dissolve at once the "committee." Park should know that if she fails to do so, the DPRK will not deal with the present south Korean authorities." (KCNA, "S. Korean Plot-Breeding Organization against Reunification Should Be Dissolved: CPRK," March 14, 2015)

3/15/15

The United States has included its advanced missile-defense system as part of the support it would provide South Korea in emergency situations on the Korean Peninsula, a South Korean military source said. "The U.S. plans to deploy a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) in case of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula," a military source told Yonhap. "My understanding is that THAAD is easily transportable with a U.S. military aircraft." Washington has recently hinted at the deployment of a battery on Korean soil to better deter the North's growing nuclear and missile threats. The U.S. stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War, which is technically ongoing since no peace treaty has been signed to end it. The issue of whether or not South Korea should host the American missile defense system has caused a bipartisan divide in local politics. While

conservatives support the system, the liberal side has not been so welcoming since it believes the U.S. presence here undermines South Korean sovereignty. The U.S., meanwhile, claims the battery is defensive in nature. Sources within the South Korean government also said Seoul has no intention to shoulder any of the cost involved in stationing THAAD on local soil. South Korea also says it opposes the U.S. deployment of AN/TPY-2, an early missile warning system that detects missiles up to 2,000 kilometers away, which would include China's military facilities. "Our military has our own missile warning system, the Green Pine, which has a range of 600 km, so we don't need AN/TPY-2," a source within the South Korean government said. (Yonhap, "THAAD to Be Deployed in S. Korea in Emergencies: Source," March 15, 2015)

3/17/15

The Ministry of National Defense issued a warning to China over its attempts to intervene in the possible deployment of a U.S. anti-ballistic missile defense system in Korea. "Neighboring countries must not try to influence our defense policy," Kim Min-seok, spokesman of the National Defense Ministry, said during a regular press briefing. "They can have their own opinions, but we will judge the situation and make a decision based on our own military interests if the U.S. government makes a decision [to deploy the missile defense unit to Korea] and requests a consultation. That is our government's consistent position." Kim's remarks came as Seoul is being pulled in opposite directions by China and the United States over the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, better known as Thaad. As signs grow that Washington will ask Korea to use the system, Beijing has stepped up its pressure on Seoul to steer clear of it. Both China and Russia are against deployment of a Thaad battery in Korea because they worry that its radar system, which can cover more than 1,000 kilometers (621 miles), could be used as a method of surveillance against them. Yesterday, Chinese Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu Jianchao met with Lee Kyung-soo, his Korean counterpart, and voiced Beijing's concerns. The Ministry of Defense's Kim expressed rare public support for the Thaad deployment, a change from Seoul's position that it wants to maintain strategic ambiguity on the issue. The Foreign Ministry and the Blue House go so far as to say that the issue has never even been discussed with Washington. Kim said Korea already told China about its backing for the Thaad deployment to protect against North Korean threats. "The issue of the Thaad deployment started as a way to deter and counter the intensifying nuclear and missile threats of North Korea," Kim said. "The Ministry of National Defense will make a decision to defend our people's lives and safety." "Defense Minister Han Min-koo said last October 7 that the Thaad deployment by U.S. Forces Korea should be seen from the perspective of national security and defense," Kim said. "Because we have limited means to use against the nuclear and missile threats, Han said the deployment would benefit our national security and defense." Kim said Seoul has expressed this position to Beijing. "The government's stance was clearly delivered to China during the defense ministerial talks between the two countries in Seoul on February 4," Kim said. A visiting U.S. senior official also criticized China's attempts to influence Korea. "I find it curious that a third country would presume to make strong representations about a security system that has not been put in place and that is still a matter of theory," said Daniel Russel, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Russel was on his way to meet with his Korean counterpart, Assistant Foreign Minister Lee, when he answered reporters' questions on THAAD. "I'm not an expert on ballistic missiles, but I

do know that [Korea] and the United States face a significant threat from North Korea's growing ballistic missile program. It's a program that North Korea is pursuing in violation of international law and our military authorities have a responsibility to consider systems that would protect the Republic of Korea and its citizens, protect the United States from that threat. How they do it, when they do it is something that the experts will have to determine but I think that it is for [Korea] to decide what measures it will take in its own alliance defense and when," he said. Asked if he will discuss the Thaad issue with Lee during the meeting, Russel said he originally had no intention to do so, but admitted that it could happen. "The issue, I think, is very much in the public domain now because of the comments of our Chinese colleague yesterday, but that is not part of my agenda," he said. Experts blamed the Park Geun-hye administration for having fueled the diplomatic quandary over the Thaad deployment by insisting on "strategic ambiguity." As Beijing intensified its pressure, the United States decided to make a move first by announcing last week that it has already conducted site surveys in Korea for a Thaad battery. Provoked by the move, China apparently decided to step up its pressure and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Liu spoke unusually strongly and publicly about the issue. "Even when the U.S. forces introduced nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula, we didn't have this debate," a retired general who had worked in the Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command told *JoongAng Ilbo*. The nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the peninsula in 1992. Thaad should have been approached as a security issue, not a diplomatic issue, he said. Kim Jong-dae, editor-in-chief of *Defense 21 Plus*, said Washington started considering the Thaad deployment to Korea in 2013 and the Park administration had two years to prepare for it. "But it failed to use the time wisely," he said. Another former diplomat criticized the Park government's use of the term "strategic ambiguity." "The United States and China can both have doubts," he said. "When you cannot have a candid conversation, how can it be called a healthy alliance?" Others said the time has come for the Park government to become more decisive, expressing suspicions that the information sharing and policy coordination among the Blue House's National Security Council, the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry were probably insufficient. "If we need Thaad, the National Security Council must make a decision and express our intention to the United States and make aggressive efforts to persuade China," said Moon Chung-in, a political science professor at Yonsei University. "Indecisiveness was often packaged as strategic ambiguity in the past," said Prof. Kim Hyun-wook, head of the Department of American Studies at the state-run Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security in the Korea National Diplomatic Academy. "We must make a decision that will heighten the strategic value by carefully calculating when to move forward and when to step back." (Ser Myo-ja and Kwon Ho, "Seoul Rebukes China on THAAD," *JoongAng Ilbo*, March 18, 2015)

3/18/15

North Korea's exports to Russia soared 31.9 percent in 2014 from a year ago, according to the Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency. North Korea's outbound shipments to Russia reached \$10.17 million in 2014. By item, textile exports came to \$4.7 million, or 46.2 percent of the total, followed by machinery with \$1.6 million, musical instruments with \$1.37 million and electrical equipment with \$670,000. Pyongyang also sold \$250,000 worth of cars to Russia last year, 2.3 times more than the previous year, with shipments of optical devices soaring more than 60

times to \$190,000. Bilateral trade volume, however, fell 11.4 percent on-year to \$92.34 million last year as Pyongyang's imports from Russia shrank 14.9 percent to \$82.17 million. Crude imports dropped 7.9 percent on-year to \$33.98 million last year, taking up the largest 41.7 percent share of the total imports. "North Korea has been striving to strengthen economic cooperation with Moscow, though it will take time for the North to diversify its trade markets due to its heavy dependence on China in the past," said Cho Bong-hyun, a senior research fellow at the state-run Industrial Bank of Korea in Seoul. Last year, more than 90 percent of its exports were bound for China. Bilateral trade between North Korea and China, however, fell 2.4 percent from 2013 to \$6.39 billion in 2014, the first annual decline since 2009, according to Seoul data. (Yonhap, "North Korea's Exports to Russia Jump 32 Pct in 2014: Report," *Korea Herald*, March 18, 2015)

3/20/15

North Korea's ambassador to the UK Hyun Hak-bong has told Sky News Defense Correspondent Alistair Bunkall that his country could fire a nuclear missile "anytime." This is a big deal and a frightening prospect - if it's true. "We are prepared," the ambassador said. "That is why I say if a sparkle of a fire is made on the Korean Peninsula, it will lead to a nuclear war. We don't say empty words. We mean what we mean. It is not the United States that has a monopoly on nuclear weapons strikes." Bunkall sought clarification: "So can I just be clear: you are telling me that the North Korea has the ability now to fire a nuclear missile?" "Anytime, anytime, yes." the ambassador said. (Mark Stone, "North Korea Nuke Threat Frightening - If True," *Sky News*, March 20, 2015)

South Korea vowed to take steps preventing activists from sending copies of Hollywood film "The Interview" into North Korea next week, citing a "limit" to freedom of expression. Activists plan to launch some 10,000 copies of the film – a comedy about a fictional CIA plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong-un whose release infuriated Pyongyang – as well as 500,000 propaganda leaflets by balloon across the heavily. The South's unification ministry called Friday for pre-emptive steps to protect local residents, saying there is a "limit" to freedom of expression. "If such a movement is detected in advance, the government will take necessary measures because it may threaten the security of residents there," ministry spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol told reporters. (AFP, Jiji, "South Korea Says It Will Prevent Activists Dropping 'The Interview' DVDs from Balloons in North Korea," *Japan Times*, March 20, 2015)

The UN Panel of Experts (PoE) has recommended that North Korea's space agency, the National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA) be added to the list of sanctioned entities. In a draft version of their 2015 report the PoE states, "The National Aerospace Development Administration has taken over the function and responsibilities of the Korean Committee for Space Technology, which defies the (UN) resolutions. It has also taken over the country's General Satellite Control and Command Center." (Leo Byrne, "Sanction North Korean Space Agency, Says U.N. Panel of Experts," *NKNews*, March 20, 2015)

Amid continued controversies over the proposed deployment of the U.S.-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea, the U.S. military has concluded that North Korea has already succeeded in making some nuclear weapons small enough to fit atop missiles. "We know North Korea's ambitions in terms of their demonstrated cyber, their ambitions for nuclear weapons, the tests that have already occurred," Adm. Cecil Haney, the commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, said during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. "And we think (North Koreans) already miniaturized **some** of this capability." In written testimony to the U.S. House appropriations subcommittee on defense, General Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of the U.S. Forces Korea, stressed the need for a "layered" and "interoperable" ballistic missile defense capability. The "layered" missile defense is interpreted as an indication of the THAAD deployment. A THAAD missile would intercept an incoming North Korean missile at a high altitude. If the interception fails, a Patriot missile would make another attempt to shoot down the incoming missile at a low altitude. Adm. Samuel Locklear, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, also said in written testimony to the subcommittee that the command will continue "its efforts in maintaining a credible, sustainable ballistic missile defense" to cope with the North's continued ballistic missile threats. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, "U.S. Strategic Command Chief: N. Korea 'Miniaturized' Nuclear Warheads," March 21, 2015)

3/21/15

KCNA: "The frontline units of the Korean People's Army decided to send an open notice to the south Korean authorities [today] which said: The south Korean puppet authorities are egging despicable confrontational villains on to flock to the areas along the Military Demarcation Line and scatter leaflets slandering the DPRK. A few days ago, a group of hooligans more dead than alive who belong to the ultra-right conservative organizations such as the "Alliance for the Movement of Free North" announced they would get balloon-borne anti-DPRK leaflets numbering 500 000 and thousands of DVDs scattered in the air above the DPRK before and after the upcoming March 26th, the 5th anniversary of the sinking of Cheonan warship even with the U.S. "Human Rights Foundation" involved. It is the height of hostility that the south Korean puppet forces still misuse the warship sinking case, that has long been branded as the unprecedented hideous conspiratorial farce, for escalating confrontation with the DPRK by linking the case with it. They are mulling scattering DVDs and USBs containing "The Interview", a reactionary film that has been censured worldwide for seriously hurting the dignity of the supreme leadership of the DPRK. This is the gravest politically-motivated provocation against the DPRK and **a de facto declaration of a war** against it. Their reckless acts are aimed at deliberately escalating tension on the Korean peninsula where the situation has reached the brink of a war due to Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint war rehearsals. **All the firepower strike means of the frontline units of the KPA will launch without prior warning indiscriminate operations to blow up balloons carrying those leaflets.** Whether scattering operations are conducted in areas along the MDL or in any point of sea or in the air, whether balloons or drones are used for those operations and whether they are carried out openly or secretly, they will never escape strikes of firepower strike means of the KPA to be involved in the operations for blowing up the balloons. Powerful firepower strike means deployed in the frontline units will go into action. Any challenge to the DPRK's just physical countermeasures will entail double and treble

merciless retaliatory strikes. **Inhabitants of the south side in the areas close to or bordering the MDL are recommended to evacuate in advance** for their safety if the above-said leaflet scattering operations are conducted. We do not want to see innocent inhabitants of the south side suffer any slight harm due to the reckless acts of the confrontational villains. The south Korean puppet authorities will be held fully accountable for all the catastrophic consequences to be entailed by their leaflet scattering operations." (KCNA, "KPA Will Blow up Balloons Carrying Anti-DPRK Leaflets: Open Notice of KPA Frontline Units," March 22, 2015)

South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and his Chinese and Japanese counterparts Wang Yi and Kishida Fumio agreed to continue efforts to hold a trilateral summit of their leaders at an early date as they seek to revive cooperation amid history and territorial rows. The trilateral meeting was held for the first time in almost three years. "The three ministers decided to continue their efforts to hold the trilateral summit at the earliest convenient time for the three countries," Yun told a press conference. A trilateral summit has not been held since May 2012. In November, South Korean President Park Geun-hye expressed her hope to meet with the Chinese and Japanese leaders following a meeting of their top diplomats. "By facing history squarely and advancing toward the future, the three foreign ministers also agreed that the three nations should address related issues properly and to work together to improve bilateral relations and to strengthen trilateral cooperation," Yun added. (Kim Soo-yeon, "S. Korea, China, Japan Vow Efforts to Hold Summit at Early Date," Yonhap, March 21, 2015) During the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that China keeps an eye on historical issues, saying, "We should deal with historical issues in an appropriate manner and work on maintaining the right direction of cooperation between the three countries in accordance with a spirit to move toward the future by learning lessons from history." Although the details of their discussions were yet to be revealed, a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official said Friday the meeting was expected to focus on strengthening cooperation among the three countries in a wide range of fields, including disaster management, environmental issues, youth exchange and a free trade agreement. Kishida, who was visiting South Korea for the first time since he assumed the post in December 2012, held bilateral talks with Yun and Wang prior to the trilateral meeting. During the talks with Wang, Kishida said, "We positively evaluate the fact that the Japan-China relationship is improving," and, "It is important to develop a future-oriented relationship between Japan and China." In reply, Wang said, "We take note that normal exchanges [between the two countries] are gradually recovering." He added that whether the China-Japan relationship can develop normally depends on whether the two countries can comply with a four-point agreement reached in November to improve bilateral ties. The four-point agreement incorporates policies to ease tension over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. Yun took up the so-called comfort women issue in the talks with Kishida. He also said South Korea will pay close attention to a statement Prime Minister Abe Shinzo plans to issue this summer on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Kishida told him that the Abe Cabinet inherits the past cabinets' position on historical perception. (Oka Seima, "Japan, China, South Korea Agree to Realize Early Summit," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 21, 2015) In a trilateral setting, the participants would normally focus on issues in which the three nations could cooperate, such as improving

the safety of nuclear power generation, dealing with terrorism and environmental issues. However, the sensitivity to the historical recognition issue was evident in the emphasis placed on it by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang, both in the meeting with Foreign Minister Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun, as well as in the joint press release issued after their meeting. The document said the foreign ministers agreed to improve bilateral relations "in the spirit of facing history squarely and advancing toward the future." Wang took up the history issue from the start of the three-way meeting. In the joint news conference afterward, the Chinese foreign minister touched upon the joint press release and said the inclusion of the phrase "facing history squarely" was "the most important outcome" of the meeting. While the comment was likely intended to demonstrate the significance of reaching a certain degree of agreement with the Abe administration given the many differences existing over historical understanding issues, a high-ranking Japanese Foreign Ministry official explained that the phrase also appeared in past joint documents issued on the occasion of meetings between the leaders of the three nations. The agreement on holding the three-way foreign ministers' meeting was a sign that China still considered that framework important. However, Beijing is still far from comfortable with holding a meeting of the leaders of the three nations. Both Japan and South Korea want to hold such a meeting, and that posture led to the inclusion in the joint press release of the phrase "the three ministers decided to continue their efforts to hold the trilateral summit at the earliest convenient time." However, Wang later told reporters, "There is no timetable (for such a summit meeting). There is a need for the proper environment." According to officials in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Wang told Chinese media organizations, "If one views history squarely, it would not be possible to deny the historical fact of aggression and colonial rule." According to Japanese government officials, Wang also emphasized historical recognition in his talks with Kishida ahead of the trilateral meeting of foreign ministers. Wang told Kishida, "Attention is building on the attitude with which Japan will face up to its history." The comment was likely in reference to the statement that is to be issued by Abe this year to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Yun also expressed interest in the Abe statement in his bilateral discussions with Kishida. After the joint news conference, Kishida told reporters, "During the talks with Wang, I gave a careful explanation of Japan's thinking and position in relation to history." (Matsui Nozomi, Hayashi Nozomu, and Higashioka Toru, "Foreign Ministers Raise Concerns over History Issues in First Trilateral Meeting in 3 Years," *Asahi Shimbun*, March 22, 2015)

3/23/15

Anti-North Korea activists announced a provisional halt to their controversial campaign to fly propaganda leaflets across the border amid military tensions on the peninsula. Park Sang-hak, a North Korean defector leading a related group, said he will postpone their plan to send half-a-million leaflets to the North until after March 26, the fifth anniversary of the North's deadly sinking of a South Korean naval ship, the Cheonan. His decision was conditional, however, as he said he is giving Pyongyang a chance to apologize for the attack. Speaking to Yonhap by phone, he said his group, which calls itself the Fighters for a Free North Korea, and several other civic organizations will wait until the anniversary. If the North does not budge, they will discuss a new date for sending the leaflets, he added. They initially planned to hold an event near the border sending gigantic balloons or drones, if possible, across carrying leaflets and thousands

of DVDs of "The Interview," a Hollywood comedy about a plot to assassinate the North's leader Kim Jong-un. (Yonhap, "Activists to Halt Leaflet Campaign amid N. Korea's Threats," March 23, 2015) A leading anti-North Korean activist vowed March 24 to continue his campaign to send leaflets critical of the communist country across the border despite bitter military threats from the North.

"Balloons (carrying anti-Pyongyang leaflets) that convey news from the outside are a kind of media to North Koreans, which should not be an object of any political negotiations," Lee Min-bok, head of the Campaign for Helping North Korea in a Direct Way, said in an e-mail sent to journalists. "Upon a favorable flow of wind, (the group) will scatter anti-North Korea leaflets any time," said Lee, a North Korean defector. "We will never stop the leaflet campaigns until the North Korean regime allows North Koreans the freedom to use radio and the Internet." (Yonhap, "Activist Vows Leaflet Drop despite N. Korean Threats," *Korea Herald*, March 24, 2015)

South Korea has decided to join a Chinese-led development bank and is expected to announce the decision soon, a South Korean diplomatic source with direct knowledge of the matter said, despite U.S. concerns over the new multilateral lender in Asia. The Chinese-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has recently gained traction as major Western economies, including Britain, Germany and France, decided to join. South Korea, a close ally of the U.S. in Asia, has said it will make a decision by the end of this month. The end of March is the deadline set by China for interested parties to become members of the AIIB. Many experts see the bank as a counterbalance to the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank which have been dominated by the United States and other Western economies. "We will make an announcement on joining the AIIB sometime this week or early next week," said the source, who is in regular contact with Chinese officials over the matter. "Once the announcement is made, we will begin negotiations with member states of the AIIB over our stake," the source said. China has offered US\$50 billion and seeks a reported stake of up to 50 percent in the AIIB, which South Korea views negatively because China could make unilateral decisions in the bank's operations. Details of the AIIB are still sketchy, but the source said European countries would have a combined 25-percent stake in the AIIB. So far, about 30 countries have decided to join the AIIB and they will hold a working-level meeting in Kazakhstan later this month, the source said. Yesterday, Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli dismissed concerns about the governance structure and decision-making process of the AIIB, saying it will follow "internationally accepted rules." (Yonhap, "S. Korea to Join China-Led Development Bank: Source," March 23, 2015) South Korea will join the China-led regional development bank as one of its founding members, the finance ministry announced Thursday, helping bolster the Asian neighbor's growing clout in the region that is alerting the U.S. (Yonhap, "S. Korea to Join China-Led Investment Bank," March 26, 2015)

3/24/15

NDC Policy Department spokesman's statement "to clarify its principled stand on the "May 24 step": The south Korean authorities are kicking up a noisy racket against the DPRK over the Cheonan warship sinking case which has nothing to do with it. The warship sinking case and the "May 24 step" taken by them in its wake were a vivid manifestation of the anti-reunification acts as they were deliberately cooked up to

nullify the historic June 15 joint declaration and the October 4 declaration. But the present authorities of south Korea are still spreading the cock-and bull-story that there should be a "change in attitude of the north" such as "admission," "apology," "expression of regret" over the Cheonan case if the "step" is to be lifted. They even absurdly call for putting the issue of lifting the "step" on the table. ...**Firstly, we remain unchanged in our stand that the south has to immediately lift the ill-famed "step" which they cooked up under the absurd pretext of the Cheonan warship sinking case**, not dragging on time. This is because the "step" is based on the fictitious story about the north's "involvement in the sinking." Lack of just ground will prove any step unreasonable. **Secondly, the south should clearly understand that its sophism that "apology" and "expression of regret" have to precede the lifting of the "step" can never work.** Should anyone demand the north "apologize" and attempt to table the "step," that will be regarded as an intolerable mockery of the DPRK and the declaration of stand-off with it. If the south Korean authorities truly wish for the improvement of the north-south relations, they should bear in mind that they have to move first to lift the "step." Thirdly, it is the invariable stand of the DPRK to immediately start **reinvestigation** for the scientific clarification of the truth behind the sinking that resulted in the ill-famed "step", if necessary, though belatedly. If the south Korean authorities truly stand for the settlement of the issue, they should take a bold decision of accepting all the proposals made by the DPRK for the settlement of the issue concerning the sinking. **If they find it difficult to respond to the DPRK's proposals, they can just bring to Panmunjom or any other places agreed all materials and evidence related to the sinking to just let the DPRK expose roundly before the world the truth behind the case.** The statement warned that the south Korean authorities should not forget even a moment that if they persist in their vociferous talk about the "May 24 step" by groundlessly linking the sinking case with the DPRK, they will be branded as the second Lee Myung Bak group of traitors and a group of those who are more dead than alive." (KCNA, "NDC Policy Department Clarifies DPRK's Principled Stand on 'May 24 Step,'" March 24, 2015)

3/25/15

KPA Panmunjom mission "indictment exposing the U.S. criminal act of cooking up the Cheonan warship sinking case and abusing it for stepping up its hostile policy toward the DPRK: The U.S. is the arch criminal that engineered the case by instigating the south Korean puppet forces. ...**The U.S., which had repeated plots to save its policy for invading the DPRK and its pivot to Asia-Pacific strategy from crises and give a shot in the arm of its colonial stooges, concluded that it needed a shocking case. Accordingly, the U.S. imperialist aggression forces command in Pacific held a confab with stooges of the "Institute for National Defense Studies" and the "Pacific Strategy Institute" of south Korea and suddenly launched the joint naval drills in waters off the five islands in the West Sea where tensions between the north and the south constantly ran high. According to the scenario worked out by the U.S. in top secret, the Cheonan warship sank at night on March 26, 2010, leaving 46 puppet army soldiers dead.** It was orchestrated by the U.S. out of its sinister intention to hold control of south Korea and Japan, use them as a shock brigade in realizing its ambition for world domination and intensify the moves to isolate and stifle the DPRK after securing justifications for arms buildup in the region. A typical example was the scientific clarification made by competent naval military

experts of the Russian Pacific Fleet of the fact that the warship sank by a special torpedo from a smaller diving apparatus launched by the nuclear-powered submarine of the U.S. forces, not by a "torpedo of the north." The indictment also exposed that the U.S. has persistently stood in the way of a fair probe into the truth about the case. It continued: The U.S. brought to rupture the colonel-level working contacts between the militaries of the DPRK and the U.S. in Panmunjom that were held on seven occasions from July 15 to October 27, 2010 for the probe into the truth behind the case. The indictment termed the U.S. a backstage wire-puller that instigated the south Korean puppet forces to cook up a story about "the north's attack." The U.S. didn't hesitate to run the whole gamut of base acts to put under carpet the fabrication of the warship sinking case, it noted, adding: A particular mention should be made of the fact that the U.S. egged the south Korean puppet forces on to spread the story of "north's attack" and asserted it was an established fact that the north was a suspect, claiming that "there were almost no other suspects except for north Korea" and "the warship sank by a torpedo attack of north Korea." While egging the puppet forces on to stage a farce "proving" the story about "the north's torpedo attack," the U.S. got zealous in building up public opinion to justify it. The indictment branded the U.S. as hordes of warmongers who abused the warship sinking case for its moves for invading the DPRK. No sooner had the case occurred than the U.S. pushed the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of a war, getting frantic with its war racket targeting the DPRK. ...Right after the "results of investigation" peppered with sheer lies were published on May 20, 2010, Obama instructed the U.S. Department of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff to make thorough military preparations to "cope with future invasion by north Korea." Pursuant to it, U.S. warships sailed into the West Sea of Korea and largest-ever joint submarine, naval mobile, air mobile and naval landing drills and other joint maneuvers of various forms were staged almost every day. Arms buildup and deployment of forces were stepped up according to the conversion of the command of the U.S. Eighth Army into the "one for executing a war." War servants of the U.S. were busy visiting south Korea and Japan, where they were loudmouthed about "very dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula" and held confabs for tightening the military alliance for aggression among the U.S., Japan and south Korea to cope with contingency on the Korean peninsula. The U.S. zealously hurled war maniacs of the south Korean puppet military into reckless military provocations to escalate confrontation with compatriots in the north. The U.S. scenario to abuse the warship sinking case for laying a siege for international "sanctions" against the DPRK was executed at an ever more serious phase. The U.S. should admit before the Korean nation and the world public its criminal fabrication of the case and abuse of it for carrying out its hostile policy toward the DPRK and escalating confrontation between Koreans and make an apology for them, though belatedly." (KCNA, "KPA Panmunjom Mission Discloses U.S. Criminal Abuse of Cheonan Warship Sinking for Hostile Policy toward DPRK," March 25, 2015)

3/26/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman: "The U.S. has undisguisedly revealed its ulterior design to deploy at any cost THAAD in south Korea, trumpeting about the missile "threat" from the DPRK more noisily than ever before. ...The U.S. is busy staging joint military drills against the DPRK in a bid to push it to taking strong counteractions and steadily escalate the tension on the Korean peninsula, one of immediate goals of which is to

press for the deployment of THAAD in south Korea. What the U.S. seeks in this deployment is to round off its preparations for mounting a preemptive strike at the DPRK and create favorable conditions for containing China and Russia, its strategic rivals, pursuant to its strategy for dominating the world. **The projected THAAD deployment was prompted by the U.S. strategic purpose to form the U.S.-Japan-south Korea triangular military alliance**, the Asian-version of NATO, and set up a global missile defence system at any cost. The south Korean puppet forces with inveterate humiliating sycophancy toward the U.S. are making no scruple of perpetrating acts of blocking the reunification of the country and harassing peace and stability in the region as a shock brigade of the U.S. for carrying out its strategy for dominating the world. The south Korean puppet group is keen to maintain its power and realize its wild ambition for stifling the DPRK with the backing of the U.S. The group is working hard to turn the Korean peninsula, a hotspot where the complicated interests of big powers are intermingled, into a theatre of fierce scramble among them by introducing the dangerous war hardware into south Korea. In case THAAD is deployed in south Korea, that will establish a new Cold War structure in Northeast Asia and the peninsula will be again exposed to the danger of being reduced to the theatre of a war of big powers. The more desperately the U.S. and the south Korean puppet forces resort to their war drills and arms buildup against the DPRK, the further the latter will bolster up its war deterrence to cope with them." (KCNA, "DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman Censures U.S. Projected Deployment of THAAD in S. Korea," March 26, 2015)

Russia and China discussed resuming six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program this week, while a South Korean diplomat said five of the participants had agreed on conditions to present to Pyongyang for restarting the negotiations. Earlier this month, South Korea's representative to the talks said China and Russia, as well as the United States, Japan, and South Korea, have reached "a certain degree of consensus," on how to restart the process. "Now is the time for 'exploratory talks,' to deliver the common view of the five parties to North Korea and to check its response," Hwang Joon-kook, South Korea's ambassador to the talks, said in a March 12 speech, without giving specifics. "If such talks can prove North Korea's sincerity towards the negotiations on denuclearization, the Six-Party Talks can be resumed," he said. (Reuters, "North Korea's Neighbors Push to Restart Six-Party Talks," March 26, 2015)

3/27/15

South Korea called on North Korea to immediately release two of its nationals detained on espionage charges. North Korea announced yesterday that it has arrested the two South Korean men on charges of espionage for the South's state spy agency. "It's very regrettable that the North is making such a groundless claim about them," the unification ministry said in a statement. "We strongly call for their quick release and repatriation." Speaking at a press briefing, unification ministry spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol confirmed that Kim and Choe are South Korean nationals. But he refused to clarify whether they are related to the NIS. It is a matter that requires a South Korean government probe after they are freed and repatriated here, Lim said. The North held a press conference for the two, which it identified as Kim Kuk-gi and Choe Chun-gil, at the People's Palace of Culture in Pyongyang yesterday. An unnamed official at the North's Ministry of State Security branded them as "heinous terrorists," according to

Pyongyang's media. "They zealously took part in the anti-DPRK smear campaign of the U.S. imperialists and the puppet group of traitors to isolate and blockade the DPRK in the international arena by labeling it 'a country printing counterfeit notes' and 'sponsor of terrorism' while pulling it up over its 'human rights issue,'" the North's official was quoted as saying. The official also accused the two of gathering information on the Workers' Party of Korea and other state and military secrets. Pyongyang released public footage and audio files of what it claims to be the two men's confessions of spying for the South's National Intelligence Service (NIS). With the North's security agents standing next to them, Kim and Choe said they were bribed by a senior NIS agent to collect information on the communist nation and criticize its system. In 2010, Kim said, he received an "instruction" from the NIS that the North's top leader might visit China by train and he provided the Seoul-based agency with information related to a railway station in a Chinese border town. He also said he offered information on the North's nuclear program. He admitted to have committed a grave crime and apologized for that. Kim was born in Daejeon, a South Korean city, and he had operated an underground church in the Chinese border city of Dandong since 2003, the North said, without specifying when and how he was arrested. As to Choe, it said, his hometown is the South's eastern city of Chuncheon, and the 56-year-old left his country in 2003 and spent many years in China. He was caught by the North's border guards after illegally entering the nation. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Urges N. Korea to Released Two Arrested Nationals," March 27, 2015)

The UN Human Rights Council strongly criticized North Korea for "systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent enforced disappearance of persons, including those from other countries, on a large scale and as a matter of state policy" after a UN investigation found it had snatched up to 200,000 foreign nationals. But the 47-member rights body's resolution was dismissed by North Korean foreign ministry official Ri Hung-Sik, as a "political plot filled with frauds and distortions" which was "intended to bring down the system and ideology" of his country. The adopted text decried North A UN-mandated investigation issued a searing report in February 2014 accusing North Korea of committing human rights violations "without parallel in the contemporary world," including the abductions of an estimated 200,000 foreign nationals from at least 12 countries. Most of them were South Koreans left stranded after the 1950-1953 Korean War, but hundreds of others from around the world have since been taken or disappeared while visiting the secretive Stalinist state. The number of Japanese citizens believed to have been taken to train North Korean spies in Japanese language and customs are now estimated "in the hundreds," the UN's top investigator on the rights situation in North Korea, Marzuki Darusman, told reporters last week. Darusman, whose mandate was extended for another year by today's resolution, has called for the international community to resolve the fate of the abductees, and to refer the perpetrators to the International Criminal Court. In 2002, North Korea admitted that it had kidnapped 13 Japanese citizens to train its spies. Five of the abductees returned home, but Pyongyang said -- without producing credible evidence -- that the eight others had died. Pyongyang agreed last May to reinvestigate the cases of Japanese nationals kidnapped in the 1970s and 1980s in return for Tokyo lifting sanctions. Today's resolution said it was "expecting concrete and positive results" from that probe. Speaking to reporters, Ri harshly criticised Japan, a co-

sponsor of the resolution, for bringing up abduction issue despite knowing "the issue is under investigation". "This issue is to be... addressed bilaterally between the DPRK and Japan," he said. Speaking through a translator, he acknowledged that "it is wrong to abduct the nationals of other countries", but stressed that North Korea and Japan had been "in hostile relations" when the admitted abductions took place. He also insisted that the Japanese citizens "were abducted, not by the country authorities, but by some agencies" inside North Korea. As for the suspected kidnappings of people from other countries, he insisted: "There were no abductions of the other nationals." (Nina Larson, "UN Criticizes N. Korea for 'Systematic' Abduction of Foreigners," AFP, March 27, 2015)

3/30/15 Thousands of US and South Korean troops, backed by helicopters and jet fighters, staged a massive, amphibious landing drill March 30 – the centerpiece of an annual military exercise condemned by North Korea. A total of 7,600 soldiers, including 3,500 marines, along with 80 aircraft, 30 ships, and scores of armored vehicles and tanks, took part in the drill to secure a bridgehead along the coast of Pohang, some 360 kilometers (223 miles) south of Seoul. (AFP, "U.S., S. Korea Marines Stage Major Landing Drill," March 30, 2015) The amphibious drill will run until April 1 at the port of Pohang, some 360 kilometers (223 miles) south of Seoul, the US-South Korea Combined Forces Command said in a statement. US sailors and Marines from the Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) based in Okinawa, Japan, are also participating in the drill, known as Ssangyong in South Korea and the Korean Marine Exchange Program (KMEP) in the United States. "KMEP is designed to strengthen our interoperability in amphibious operations between the US and ROK Forces, which contributes to the security and stability on the Korean Peninsula as well as the entire Asia-Pacific region," the statement said. The scale of the drill has been downgraded compared with last year, though it marks the peak of the eight-week Foal Eagle joint US-South Korea military exercise which started on March 2 and is scheduled to end on April 24. (AFP, "South Korea, U.S. to Start Amphibious Drill," March 19, 2015)

3/31/15 A North Korean diplomat says his country's nuclear weapons program is not subject to negotiation, rejecting a U.S. call for its denuclearization. The diplomat, from the North Korean mission to the United Nations in New York, told VOA his country will not negotiate away its nuclear weapons. "Denuclearization should not be an objective of any future talks with us," said the official, who preferred to remain anonymous. "We will never give up nuclear weapons before the U.S. and the world are denuclearized." The diplomat reiterated Pyongyang's longstanding position that it must have nuclear weapons to deter the U.S. threat, saying his country has no "expectations of negotiations as the U.S. is increasing its hostile policy" against North Korea. (Baik Sungwon, "N. Korean Envoy: Nuclear Weapons Not Negotiable," VOA, April 1, 2015) Hopes are fading for a resolution to the dispute over North Korea's nuclear programs as Pyongyang sticks to its adventurism and Washington seems unlikely to focus on the issue with Iran topping its denuclearization agenda. In a media interview, the North's delegation at the U.N. said it would not engage in any negotiations over its denuclearization, including the six-party talks that involve the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia. On March 30, *Rodong Sinmun* said that Pyongyang would

not renounce its "byungjin line" — simultaneously pursuing the development of nuclear weapons and its economy, stressing that the policy would lead the country in a "direction of peace and prosperity." "We should hold fast to our invincible byungjin line, and conscientiously push for a struggle to build a strong and prosperous nation," the paper said as it marked the second anniversary of the announcement of the policy line. (Song Sang-ho, "'Hopes Dim for Resolution of N.K. Nuclear Dispute,'" *Korea Herald*, April 1, 2015)

North Korea applied to join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank but its membership was denied in February. The reclusive regime sent a message to the bank's inaugural president, Jin Liqun, through diplomatic channels indicating its interest, but according to the online British publication *Emerging Markets*, China refused to meet North Korea's request. North Korea reportedly expressed shock at China's rejection of its request. Chinese authorities replied through diplomatic channels to explain North Korea's economic fundamentals and financial condition disqualify Pyongyang from membership in a new bank poised to become one of Asia's largest financial institutions. (Elizabeth Shim, "China Rejects North Korea Request to Join Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank," UPI, March 31, 2015)

4/2/15

North Korea told Japan that official negotiations resumed one year ago are facing difficulties, criticizing Tokyo for playing an active role globally in condemning Pyongyang's human rights records. In a notification sent through diplomatic channels, North Korea blamed Japan for "internationalizing" the issue of its past abductions of Japanese nationals at the United Nations, which has undermined the trust between the two countries. North Korea also accused Japanese police of "illegally" raiding the home of the head of the pro-Pyongyang association in Japan late last month, KCNA said. "Under such circumstances, it is becoming difficult to carry out negotiations between the two governments," KCNA said. After resuming official talks for the first time since November 2012, Japan and North Korea struck a deal in Stockholm last May on guiding principles for their negotiations. Among other points, North Korea promised to conduct a comprehensive survey of all Japanese in the country, including those it abducted in the 1970s and 1980s, in exchange for Tokyo lifting some of its unilateral sanctions against Pyongyang. In early July, Japan lifted some of those sanctions. However, Pyongyang failed to meet its promise of providing an initial report on the findings of the probe by early autumn last year. On March 26, police searched the Tokyo home of Ho Jong Man, who heads Chongryon, as well as other locations in connection with alleged illegal imports of *matsutake* mushrooms from North Korea. Japanese officials said the search was independently conducted by the police and unrelated to the stalled negotiations. (Kyodo, "N. Korea Tells Japan Ongoing Talks Facing Difficulties," *Japan Times*, April 2, 2015)

KCNA: "The DPRK sent a notice to the Japanese side [today] through diplomatic channel, clarifying its stand on Japan's grave political provocation and encroachment on the state sovereignty of the DPRK which are going beyond tolerance limit. Recalling that the DPRK is sincerely implementing the DPRK-Japan Stockholm Agreement, the notice said that Japan is internationalizing the abduction issue and hyping it as a main issue at the UN human rights forum in violation of the agreement in which both sides

decided to settle the issue, thus making it hard to trust the dialogue partner. Strongly denouncing the Japanese police for perpetrating the unheard-of encroachment on the sovereignty of the DPRK by searching the houses of the leading officials of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan who are deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK, the notice demanded the Japanese government make a thoroughgoing probe into the case and make an apology. Under such situation it is hard to hold DPRK-Japanese inter-governmental dialogue, it said." (KCNA, "DPRK Notifies Japanese Side of Its Stand on Grave Political Provocation and Encroachment on State Sovereignty," April 2, 2015)

Rodong Sinmun commentary "blasts the south Korean puppet forces for zealously joining in railroading the anti-DPRK 'human rights resolution' through the recent 28th session of the UN Human Rights Council. ...The puppet forces were busy hailing the adoption of the 'resolution' and expressing "expectation." They behaved ridiculously, talking rubbish about 'recommendations.' They, at the same time, revealed their design to allow the setting up of the UN 'office on the human rights of the north' in Seoul in the foreseeable days. There can never be any human rights issue under the Korean-style socialist system centered on the popular masses. The DPRK has already clarified that the opportunity of holding north-south dialogue and improving the inter-Korean relations has already been scuppered **and there remains only the stand-off by force** as the puppet forces have sparked off the campaign for escalating the confrontation with the fellow countrymen in the north. The recent confessions made by spies who had been on the payroll of the puppet Intelligence Service glaringly laid bare the criminal nature of the anti-DPRK 'human rights' campaign. This goes to prove truth that the DPRK can never sit at a negotiating table with the group of thrice-cursed traitors as they are keen to stifle it awake or asleep and that it should boldly retaliate against them with merciless punishment only. The DPRK will never pardon the puppet forces going reckless, seized by the wild ambition for 'unification of social systems' but strongly react against them. **We have already issued a stern warning against the puppet group's move to set up the above-said office in Seoul at any cost.** This is not an empty talk." (KCNA, "DPRK Will Resolutely Counter S. Korean Puppet Forces' Anti-DPRK Moves: *Rodong Sinmun*," April 2, 2015)

South Korea is still cautious about holding summit talks with North Korea on the occasion of the ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in World War II, a Seoul official said. Both South Korean President Park Geun-hye and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un have been invited. Kim is expected to attend but Park has not announced a decision yet. If both of them attend the ceremony, it would set the stage for another historic meeting between the leaders of the two Koreas amid drawn-out tensions on the peninsula. Conservative and progressive forces here are split over whether Park should accept Russia's invitation. The senior official indicated a negative view within the administration. It's a matter of whether Park can have a "substantive dialogue" when she meets with the North's leader, he told reporters on background. "The government remains open to an inter-Korean summit any time. But we have said it should be held for a substantive dialogue," he said. Some people say Park's meeting with Kim, albeit brief, would be of significance itself but "we need to think about how meaningful it would be," he added. On Pyongyang's protest against

the cross-border spread of propaganda leaflets, the official said there is no guarantee of resuming talks even if the South curbs the campaign. The official also stressed the need for developing the so-called Korean Peninsula Trust-Building Process aimed at building mutual trust and paving the way for re-unification. "The policy represents our will to make ceaseless efforts for a change in North Korea," he said, adding that it takes two to tango. As to two South Korean men detained in the communist nation on espionage charges, he said that sending a special envoy to Pyongyang for their release is not a realistic option being considered. He cited the unique characteristics of inter-Korean ties. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Seems Negative about Inter-Korean Summit in Russia," April 2, 2015)

4/3/15 North Korea test-fired four short-range missiles into the West Sea on Friday in an apparent saber-rattling against the ongoing Seoul-Washington military exercise, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. The North Korean military "launched four short-range projectiles presumed to have a range of some 140 kilometers into the West Sea in succession between 4:15 p.m. and 5 p.m. today from Dongchang-ri, North Pyongan Province," the JCS said in a brief statement. Friday's launch came after the bellicose regime's test-firing of a rocket of the same kind the previous day, the JCS added, without further elaboration. "What the North fired are believed to be KN-02 ground-to-ship missiles, factoring in their range, speed and trajectory," a JCS officer said on condition of anonymity. "Some of the rockets appear to have landed inland in its own territory, which is not usual." Friday's firing "appears to be the North's provocations in opposition to the ongoing Seoul-Washington joint military exercise and civic groups' move to launch anti-Pyongyang leaflets," the JCS said. (Oh Seok-min, "N. Korea Fires 4 Short-Range Rockets into West Sea," Yonhap, April 3, 2015)

4/5/15 North Korea has declared a no-sail zone for its ships off its east coast, South Korean media reported, suggesting more missile launches are possible before the U.S. defense chief visits Seoul this week. It was not clear if the latest warning for ships to stay clear of an area off the Korean peninsula's east coast was a direct indication of an imminent missile launch. "There are no signs of peculiar movements," South Korean defence ministry deputy spokesman Na Seung-yong told a briefing. Na said a no-sail warning had not been sent to Seoul or the International Maritime Organization (IMO). (Reuters, "North Korea Declares No-Sail Zone, Missile Launch Seen as Possible - Reports," April 6, 2015)

4/7/15 North Korea has fired two surface-to-air missiles off its west coast, South Korea said, with the latest in a string of short-range firings by the North coming shortly before the US defense secretary arrived in the region. The two short-range missiles, South Korea's defense ministry said, and followed the launch on April 3 of four short-range missiles off the west coast of North Korea. US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter arrived in Japan this afternoon and travels to South Korea on April 9, where he is expected to discuss a response to North Korea's growing missile and nuclear threat. "It's just a reminder of how tense things are on the Korean peninsula. That's the reason I'm going," Carter told reporters at Yokota air base in Japan before departing for South Korea. "If it was a welcoming message to me, I'm flattered." A senior US official described the missile test as a provocative act ahead of Carter's visit. "Their missile inventory is growing and their

willingness to test those missiles appears to be growing as we've just seen today," the official said. (Reuters, "N. Korea Fires Missiles into Sea as U.S. Defense Chief Visits Region," April 9, 2015)

U.S. intelligence believes North Korea is capable of miniaturizing a nuclear weapon and putting it on its KN-08 intercontinental ballistic missile, Adm. Bill Gortney, the head of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said. "Our assessment is that they have the ability to put a nuclear weapon on a KN-08 and shoot it at the homeland," Gortney told reporters during a Pentagon briefing. "That is the way we think, and that's our assessment of the process. "We haven't seen them test the KN-08 yet and we're waiting for them to do that, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they will fly it before they test it," he added. Even without seeing a test of a nuclear-capable KN-08, Gortney called it "prudent" to plan for the threat. Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, pointed out that there have been previous assessments, both from the US and South Korea, that the Kim regime could equip a KN-08 with a nuclear weapon. The challenge, he said, is getting that payload to be effective. "It's not that hard to shrink it down, but what happens is you start to encounter reliability problems, especially if it's got a ride on an ICBM," Lewis said. Given that there are doubts in many sectors about whether a KN-08 could ever deliver a nuclear payload, Lewis said different parts of the national security apparatus have handled it differently. The Pentagon, he said, errs on the side of caution when discussing and planning for the threat. "I think they are getting the underlying intelligence assessments, which say they can make it small enough to fit on the missile," Lewis said. "Then they have to go out and fend for themselves in public, and what else can they say? They can't say North Korea can't do this, because that's not what the assessment says. So it wouldn't surprise me they say they have to assume it works." Gortney's comments come as Secretary of Defense Ash Carter begins his first trip to Asia since he took office in February. Carter is spending two days in Japan before moving on to Seoul for talks that, Carter said in a speech yesterday, will "reinforce deterrence and improve capabilities on the peninsula to counteract an increasingly dangerous and provocative North Korea." The proliferation of mobile ICBMs is an issue for missile defense systems as a whole, and Gortney acknowledged the cost curve for missile defense needs to drop for the future. To help drive prices down and keep up with current threats, Gortney would prefer to see the money Congress wants to spend on an East Coast missile defense network instead be reinvested into new technology development. "If I had one more dollar to do ballistic missile defense, I wouldn't put it against the East Coast missile site," he said. "I'd put it against those technologies that would allow us to get to the correct side of the cost curve in ballistic missile defense." "It is a proliferating threat. It is growing. Countries are developing those capabilities, they can threaten their neighbors with power projection with that, and our current approach has us on the wrong side of the cost curve," he continued. "So I would take those dollars and invest it in those necessary technologies." (Aaron Mehta, "U.S.: N. Korean Nuclear ICBM Achievable," *Defense News*, April 7, 2015)

Rodong Sinmun commentary: "Some days ago a spokesperson for the south Korean puppet Ministry of Unification, citing "achievements" one year since the chief executive

made public the "Dresden declaration," tried hard to mislead public opinion by claiming that the absence of any dialogue and process to improve the relations between the north and the south is attributable to the "north's refusal to respond to it." Earlier, mandarins of the ministry blustered that the "May 24 step" was taken for the security required for "normal development of the south-north relations." ...The litany of rhetoric let loose by the spokesperson to create impression that south Korea has made certain efforts to mend the inter-Korean relations over the past one year since the publication of the ridiculous declaration while advertising its implementation is nothing but profound confusing of the right and wrong. ...The nonsense talked by the authorities about the "May 24 step" is no more than sheer sophism justifying their acts of pushing the inter-Korean relations to catastrophe. This kind of tongue-lashing only touches off derision of people. **A wide avenue to improved inter-Korean relations and independent reunification can never be paved as long as the "May 24 step" aimed to totally block dialogue and cooperation between the north and the south remains in force.** The frozen inter-Korean relations are a natural outcome of the confrontation policy deliberately pursued by the puppet regime in league with outside forces. The reality goes to prove that inter-Korean relations can neither improve nor can the nation escape a nuclear disaster as long as the south Korean authorities persist in their sycophancy towards the U.S. and confrontation of social systems while disregarding the call for achieving peace and reunification by the concerted efforts of the Koreans. The clumsy wordplay of the puppet forces to evade the blame for the frozen inter-Korean relations would only bring them shame and stronger criticism from the public at home and abroad." (KCNA, "Rodong Sinmun Holds S. Korean Authorities Wholly Accountable for Frozen Inter-Korean Relations," April 7, 2015)

Schilling and Kan: "Pyongyang's current inventory of delivery systems, consisting largely of ballistic missiles with some light bombers, is reliable and nominally able to reach most targets in Northeast Asia. Moreover, it is comparatively more advanced than most countries at a similar early stage in the development of their nuclear arsenals. ...North Korea may already be able to deploy a Taepodong-2 ICBM—essentially a three-stage military version of the Unha space launch vehicle (SLV) that could carry a 500-1,000 kg warhead 10,000-15,000 km, far enough to reach the US mainland—in an "emergency operational status." However, such a weapon would represent more of a political statement than an operational capability since it would suffer from potentially significant problems including: low reliability given the very limited number of tests of its SLV counterpart and the high percentage of failures—three out of four flights; vulnerability to a preemptive strike since it would probably be deployed at an above-ground facility; and a limited ability to operationally deploy a relatively advanced reentry vehicle due to lack of testing—the weapon would probably have to use a crude and highly-inaccurate blunt body reentry vehicle (RV) similar to those on early American ICBMs (the Thor and Atlas systems) in the 1950s, making it more vulnerable to missile defenses. ...The overwhelming majority of North Korea's delivery systems are about 1,000 ballistic missiles based on old Soviet technology. The backbone of its current deterrent is the Nodong medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) with a range of 1,200-1,500 km that can reach any target in South Korea and most of Japan. While mobile and probably capable of cross-country travel, the Nodong can also be tucked away in one of the North's many underground tunnels and

bunkers. Based on early 1960s Soviet technology, it is an effective, reliable weapon accurate enough to hit within one or two kilometers of targets, enough to destroy cities, ports or military bases. In addition to the North's large stockpile of old shorter-range Scud missiles able to carry a nuclear payload 300-600 km, Pyongyang has begun to field the newer KN-02 Toksa solid-fuel, road-mobile missile. Derived from a 1980s vintage Soviet weapon and probably available in only limited numbers, the shorter-range Toksa is a more responsive, accurate and mobile system by virtue of its solid fuel. The older Soviet model was able to carry nuclear, chemical and conventional warheads, but it remains unclear whether the Toksa is intended for the nuclear mission. Finally, North Korea's up to 60 Il-28 light bombers built to a 1950s Soviet design would be a capable delivery system. Individual airplanes would have significant trouble penetrating modern air defenses, but with the element of surprise or attacking in large numbers, a few could possibly penetrate to their targets. The Il-28 might also be able to reach American installations on Guam, the site of a major air base and logistics hub currently out of range of North Korea's missiles, on a one-way mission. However, such an attack would be detected far in advance by US, Japanese and ROK air defenses. North Korea appears to have an ambitious development program focusing on a number of new systems including: **KN-08 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM):** Development of this missile began in the late 1990s or early 2000s. While the KN-08 design is original to North Korea, it likely incorporates technologies from the Musudan IRBM and Unha SLV. The KN-08's interior configuration is still subject to speculation. Recent analysis⁷ suggests a range of 7,500-9,000 km, enabling it to reach the West Coast of the United States carrying a warhead package of 500-700 kg. Accuracy would likely be barely adequate to target large cities, mobility would be limited to paved roads, and the system will require 1-2 hours for pre-launch fueling. Some analysts believe the KN-08 is part of North Korea's strategic deception effort since it has not been flight tested but there are reports of ground testing of the missile's first-stage engines. The KN-08 may achieve an "emergency operational status" by 2020 before or with very limited flight testing. **Large liquid-fueled space launch vehicle:** Pyongyang has announced its intention to build an SLV larger than its existing Unha SLV over the next five years. Moreover, beginning in late 2013, the North embarked on a year-long program to upgrade the launch gantry at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station to handle a new larger rocket. While probably intended to place larger satellites into higher orbits, the new SLV may also contribute to the further development of the North's long-range missile program through the testing of common technologies such as high-energy rocket engines, guidance system components and even reentry vehicles (in a sub-orbital mode). A new SLV might also serve as an interim ICBM, supplementing or replacing any deployed Taepodongs. **Musudan road-mobile intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM):** Pyongyang appears to be moving towards the deployment of this single-stage missile, a slightly longer variant of the old Soviet SS-N-6 sea-launched ballistic missile that incorporates technology from that system.⁹ With a range of 2,500-3,500 km, depending on the weight of its warhead (500-1,000 kilograms), the missile could reach all of East Asia, including important American bases on Guam and Okinawa. While some experts claim the Musudan is also a strategic deception since the system has not yet been flight tested, it seems more likely that it is a work in progress. Indeed, there have been reports that the missile may have already been deployed. Moreover, during the 2013

crisis on the peninsula, media reports indicated that the Musudan had been spotted in the field, possibly preparing for a flight test although such a test never took place.

New solid-fuel missiles: The Toksa SRBM could serve as a test bed for the development of longer-range, solid-fuel missiles, possibly to replace the Scud, that would have distinct advantages—greater mobility and the ability to launch within minutes—over Pyongyang’s current liquid-fueled inventory. North Korea already has extensive experience producing small solid-fuel rockets. Moreover, in mid-2014, it conducted a series of tests of an extended-range Toksa able to fly 160-200 km. However, it is unclear whether those tests reflect the use of a higher-energy solid propellant, a lightening of the missile’s payload or flying the weapon at minimum energy trajectories. Cooperation with Iran, which has already developed such missiles, may represent a more promising alternative path for North Korea.

Sea-launched land-attack missiles: Commercial satellite imagery, ROK official statements and other press reports indicate that Pyongyang may be developing a capability to launch ballistic or cruise missiles from surface or cargo ships and from submarines.¹² In the near term, Pyongyang might be able to develop the ability to launch existing short-range cruise or ballistic missiles from sea-based platforms. However, development and deployment of longer-range weapons, particularly submarine-launched ballistic missiles may still be years away. Sea-based land-attack missiles would increase the survivability of North Korea’s nuclear forces, expand its threat to South Korea, Japan and US bases in East Asia and complicate missile defense planning since a mobile platform would be able to attack targets from any direction.

Unconventional delivery options: North Korea could attempt to deliver nuclear weapons covertly. Doing so, however, would have significant drawbacks, particularly the requirement for a pre-delegation of authority to use the weapon down to the small unit level that would be contrary to the expected preferences of an authoritarian North Korean regime. Two possibilities could be: (1) The placement of nuclear devices on the Korean peninsula in narrow invasion routes leading into the North in order to block and stun invading forces. In the short term, this approach seems unrealistic since the number of devices needed to accomplish this objective could exceed the North’s current small arsenal; and (2) The covert delivery of a nuclear weapon by container ship is also possible given the North’s history of using merchant vessels to deploy special operations forces around the world dating back to the 1970s. However, this option also seems implausible because of concerns over command and control as well as the North’s lack of commercial interaction with most potential target countries and the dangers of discovery beforehand.

Future Developments: Significant Hurdles Must Be Overcome Delivery systems that appear to be under development are an important indicator of North Korea’s objectives for the future of its force. If the North continues to move down this road, it will likely focus on the following improvements.

Increase range, accuracy and reliability: North Korea’s nuclear delivery systems suffer from limitations in all three areas. While its current systems are capable of reaching most regional targets, improvements in range would allow the North to reach new ones outside the immediate theater, such as Guam, Okinawa, Hawaii or the West Coast of the United States. Better accuracy would open up the possibility of attacking a larger target set beyond soft targets such as cities or large military bases. Improving reliability would provide greater confidence that the missiles would reach and destroy their targets. In this context, testing—ground, but especially flight testing—will play a critical role,

particularly if the North is seeking to deploy more sophisticated delivery systems using high-performance engines and high-speed reentry vehicles. Indeed, testing missiles equipped with these technologies will require establishing a limited infrastructure, such as including downrange ships to monitor data, that may prove challenging.

Increase survivability: Given the limited size of Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal, increasing survivability is essential to withstanding preemptive strikes and to providing significant retaliatory responses. The North's current delivery systems—largely focused on mobile liquid-fueled Nodong MRBMs—would prove difficult to destroy in a preemptive strike. Nevertheless, Pyongyang could take a number of steps to improve survivability, including: 1) basing any Taepodong ICBMs in hardened silos rather than on an above-ground launch pad; 2) deploying solid-fueled missiles that allow full off-road mobility and the ability to launch with a few minutes' notice; and 3) basing on ships or submarines that are more difficult to track. **Diversify delivery systems:**

Diversification of different basing modes—the underlying principle of the US strategic triad of air, land and sea-based weapons—would complicate any effort to launch a preemptive strike, since destroying systems in a short time frame would prove extremely difficult. Second, diversification of different delivery systems could provide greater flexibility/options for the use of nuclear weapons whether on the battlefield, in the theater or directly against the United States. **Achieve greater self-sufficiency:**

While Pyongyang has built a strong indigenous capability to deploy missiles, largely based on Russian technology and assistance, it has not yet proven itself able to replicate advanced components acquired from abroad, such as Russian high-energy propellant engines, or to move beyond these technologies. In contrast, Iran, Pakistan and other countries with active missile programs have developed more advanced designs, including long-range solid-fueled rockets. The challenges Pyongyang faces in developing new delivery systems over the next five years and beyond are likely to be greater than those encountered in its nuclear program, where basic designs and production infrastructure are already largely in place. These challenges could result in slower than anticipated progress or even the cancellation of weapons systems under development. Particularly important will be North Korea's ability to overcome technological and engineering hurdles that more advanced industrialized countries would find daunting. In this context, since the North is not self-sufficient in missile production, the level of foreign assistance could be a critical factor determining how much progress Pyongyang is able to make in critical technologies such as high-performance liquid-fuel engines, solid-fuel rocket motors, high-speed heat shields and reentry vehicles, guidance electronics, sophisticated machine tools and high-strength, lightweight materials. Experienced engineers may also help the DPRK surmount technical hurdles. While Pyongyang has been successful in securing foreign assistance in the past, whether that can continue remains unclear. Despite all these potential hurdles, it is worth noting that North Korea may have a far less demanding definition of "success" in the development of new missiles than countries like the United States, whose systems are extensively tested before becoming operational to ensure a high degree of reliability. Other small, emerging nuclear powers have had the same view of new missile delivery systems, deploying them with few flight tests or even though they have experienced technical problems. This practice highlights another important consideration for North Korea (and these other countries), namely that deployments of new delivery systems, even if not fully tested, can have an important political purpose

in sending deterrence signals to potential adversaries." (John Schilling and Henry Kan, *The Future of North Korean Delivery Systems*, U.S.-Korea Institute, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, April 7, 2015)

4/8/15

The United Nations has called for \$111 million to fund crucial humanitarian needs this year in North Korea, which it said remains drastically under-funded. Funding for U.N. agencies in North Korea fell from \$300 million in 2004 to less than \$50 million in 2014 and the country urgently needs money for food and agriculture, health and nutrition, and water and sanitation programs, the world body said. "(North) Korea is both a silent and under-funded humanitarian situation," Ghulam Isaczai, U.N. resident coordinator for North Korea, said in a statement released late on Wednesday. "Protracted and serious needs for millions of people are persistent and require sustained funding." About 70 percent of North Koreans are food insecure and almost one third of children under five are stunted, the United Nations said in its report on North Korea "Humanitarian needs and priorities 2015", released before the funding appeal. (Magdalena Mis, "U.N. Calls for \$111 Million for Crucial Aid for North Korea," Reuters, April 9, 2015)

North Korea said that Mexico had "forcibly detained" one of its ships for months after the vessel ran aground in the Gulf of Mexico, and the North blamed the United States for blocking the ship's release. But the coordinator of a United Nations panel of experts said that the ship, the *Mu Du Bong*, was owned by a North Korean company that was under United Nations sanctions and should be "frozen" and that the panel had received excellent cooperation from Mexico in tracking the company and its assets. "In the case of the *Mu Du Bong*, the evidence is overwhelming," the panel's coordinator, Hugh Griffiths, wrote in an email. The United Nations sanctions were imposed in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. Sanctions were imposed on the ship's owner, the Ocean Maritime Management Company, in July after the Panamanian authorities found two Cuban fighter jets, missiles and live munitions beneath a cargo of sugar in another ship the company operated. The company responded by renaming 13 of its 14 vessels in an effort to avoid detection, the panel reported in February. North Korea has a history of using front companies for that purpose. None of the ships had been frozen by United Nations member states as recommended, the panel had said at the time. North Korea's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations said today that his country would take unspecified "necessary measures to make the ship leave immediately." The diplomat, An Myong-hun, said the *Mu Du Bong* was strictly a commercial ship. He denied that it was carrying anything prohibited by the United Nations sanctions and said it had no relationship with Ocean Maritime Management. An also said that the Mexican authorities in January had decided to release the ship but "suddenly" revoked the decision. The United Nations panel's report said experts had informed the Mexican authorities that the ship was an Ocean Maritime Management asset. The ship ran aground in July and damaged nearly an acre of coral reefs. The North Korean Embassy in Mexico was asked to post a \$770,000 bond for any damage assessment. Mr. An said his country had paid the necessary fees and had "no legal obligation" to wait to move the ship. Ricardo Alday, political coordinator for Mexico's mission to the United Nations, said in an email that Mexico was not forcibly detaining the ship and that his country was

fulfilling its international obligations. He said the 33 North Korean crew members "have absolute freedom of movement" and sleep in a hotel in the port of Tuxpan, where the ship is anchored. (Associated Press, "North Korea Blames U.S. for Blocking Release of Ship Held by Mexico," April 8, 2015)

4/9/15

South Korean police prevent activists Park Sang-hak and members of his group, Fighters for a Free North Korea, from launching balloons delivering 'The Interview' into North Korea. *Chosun Ilbo* reported that the activists had been looking to launch balloons containing 300,000 leaflets and 100,000 copies of "The Interview" on DVDs and USB sticks. (Steven Borowiec, "South Korean Police Halt 'The Interview' Balloon Drop," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 2015) Anti-North Korea activist Park Sang-hak said that he launched balloons on April 15 carrying anti-Pyongyang leaflets and DVDs of the U.S. movie "The Interview," a U.S. fictional comedy about a plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. "Last night, other activists and I flew anti-Pyongyang leaflets to the North that I was supposed to send last week," Park said. "I will continue to fly leaflets to the North." Park made an attempt to do so last week, but was scuttled by police. (Yonhap, "Activists Resume Anti-N. Korea Leaflet Campaign," April 16, 2015)

A bill now making its way through the U.S. Congress – and being watched closely in Pyongyang – is designed to shut off the North, and anyone who deals with it, from the dollar. Supporters say the tactic directly targets the wallets of North Korea's senior leaders. But opponents warn that over-politicizing the greenback might have more impact on its standing as the world's most influential reserve currency than on a country already largely excluded from international finance. The House bill would block dollar-denominated trade or investment deals with North Korea as they pass through the U.S. controlled, dollar-based financial system. The vast majority of all international financial transactions are denominated in dollars and nearly all of them are cleared through U.S.-based banks, which are regulated by the Treasury Department. That gives Washington its leverage. The bill would punish North Korea's enablers by limiting their access to the dollar-based financial market, even on business that doesn't involve North Korea. "By shutting down North Korea's illicit activities, we deprive the Kim regime of the money it needs to pay the generals and to conduct nuclear weapons research," House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce, R-Calif., said after the act was introduced in February. He said the act, updated after the massive cyberattack on Sony Entertainment, would "step up the targeting of those financial institutions in Asia and beyond that are supporting this brutal and dangerous regime." A sanctions bill is also planned in the Senate, but President Obama's administration remains wary of new legislation that would make future negotiations with Pyongyang more difficult, or open up a new fight with China, which is where most of the potentially sanctionable banks would likely be. Obama already has authority to take some action, and has used it. After pointing the finger at North Korea for the cyberattack on Sony Pictures, he took executive action allowing the U.S. to sanction any entity, including a foreign bank, working with the North. Treasury officials say their problem isn't the lack of power, but the dearth of targets. (Eric Talmadge, "Dollar May Be the Next Screw for U.S. to Tighten on North Korea," Associated Press, April 9, 2015)

DPRK Institute for Disarmament and Peace: "...The two sides of Korea have traveled along different paths of development, maintaining different ideologies and political systems for almost 70 years since the division. Neither of them wants to abandon their respective ideologies and systems, although reunification remains their common aspiration. Under this stark reality, if one side tries to force its ideology and system on the other, it will bring about a war, severely threatening peace and stability in Northeast Asia. ...The north and the south agreed on improved inter-Korean relations and the reunification formula set out in the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 Declaration. They are, in a nutshell, improving inter-Korean relations and achieving national reunification peacefully while leaving the two different systems intact. When the north and the south resolve the reunification issue according to this formula, it will promote regional peace and stability by turning the Korean Peninsula, the hot-spot zone in Northeast Asia, into a buffer zone. In terms of the politico-military aspect, it has been rigidly viewed that only when the armistice is terminated and a peace mechanism is established on the Korean Peninsula could the hostility be ended and reunification be achieved. However, **if reunification through coexistence of systems is promoted by the north and the south, the armistice and hostility will naturally recede and a peaceful environment will follow. Reunification through coexistence of systems inevitably gives birth to a neutral state.** The process of **guaranteeing the neutral position of neighboring countries will disintegrate the confrontational security structure**, forming a peace-promising one in Northeast Asia. In terms of the economic aspect, this format will create tremendous benefits not only for the Korean Peninsula, but also Northeast Asia as a whole. Recently, many region-wide initiatives of bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation projects can be found. They are aimed at moves to connect railways, roads, gas pipelines, electric power networks and the development of energy, natural resources, seaports, special economic zones and environment cooperation. Of course, these initiatives require the stable development of inter-Korean relations on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, **promoting peaceful reunification through the coexistence of systems agreed upon by the two Koreas will satisfy the demands for regional cooperation so that the peninsula and the region will get off to a flying start.** It will further serve other regional member states, including Europe, by providing chances for economic cooperation around the Korean Peninsula. Consequently, smooth resolution of the reunification issue according to the formula agreed upon by the north and the south is a well-balanced resolution in favor of the peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, so as to push and enlarge regional economic cooperation. These points prove the validity of the reunification ideas clarified by the respected 1st Chairman Kim Jong Un of the National Defense Commission of the DPRK in his 2015 New Year's address. **He stated that the north and the south should refrain from seeking system confrontation and from absolutizing their ideology and system, instead satisfactorily resolving the reunification issue in the common interests of the nation, transcending differences in ideology as they have already agreed to do. Reunification through system coexistence is the only way to resolve the Korean issue peacefully and reasonably.** When this is realized, the world will give its blessing and credit to the wisdom and dignity of the Korean nation." (Kim Ye Jin, "A Well-Balanced Approach to Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula," DPRK Institute for Disarmament and Peace, April 9, 2015)

4/10/15

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said his country is not ready to begin discussions on the possible deployment of its advanced missile defense system on the Korean Peninsula. "THAAD was not on the agenda today ... This is the program that is in production in the U.S.," Carter told a joint press conference here with South Korean Defense Minister Han Min-koo. Citing a series of steps to be taken before the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery, Carter said, "We are not at a point yet of determining where it might be suitably deployed in the future ... We are not a point where we will begin discussions with anyone around the world." Whether the U.S. chief will bring up the issue during his first face-to-face meeting with Han has drawn key attention here amid heated controversy at home and abroad with opposition from China and Russia. Washington has expressed its willingness to deploy the battery here to better protect South Korea and some 28,000 U.S. troops from North Korea's threats, though officials of the two sides have said no official consultations or decisions have taken place on the matter. As an integral part of the U.S.-led missile defense system, THAAD is designed to shoot down short, medium and intermediate ballistic missiles at a higher altitude in their terminal phase using a hit-to-kill method. Carter instead stressed Washington's plan to deploy its cutting-edge weapons in the Asia-Pacific region. "Our newest things, best things are being deployed in this part of the world," he said, citing such examples as new stealth bombers and new classes of naval vessels. "That is the biggest part of our rebalance (to Asia)." "If history serves as any guide, I think chances are always high for North Korea to be provocative in case it fails to achieve its strategic goals," Han said, though he added that the allies have not confirmed any imminent signs of Pyongyang's additional nuclear tests and missile launches. Stressing that Pyongyang is "intent on continued provocations" by making good on its nuclear and ballistic missile threats, Carter said the U.S. "is committed to stability in the region and the combined defense of the Republic of Korea." "On the peninsula, the deterrence and readiness are at a premium. So we are investing advanced capabilities to make sure that our top new investments are tailored to this dynamic security environment," he said, vowing to continue to stage Seoul-Washington joint exercises. After the press conference, the two chiefs visited the Navy's 2nd Fleet Command to pay tribute to South Korean sailors who died in the sinking of the country's warship, Cheonan. The Cheonan case is "a solemn reminder of the threat that North Korea poses to our alliance," Carter said, underlining that the allies stand ready to respond that threat accordingly. Carter is the first U.S. defense minister to have visited the memorial. "We have a lot of respect for historical legacy issues in this region and we think it's important," the top Pentagon official said, while making it clear that the U.S. will not "interpose itself between the parties here." He also watered down his call on the U.S., South Korea and Japan to "look forward to the future" as "the potential gains of cooperation ... outweigh yesterday's tension and today's politics." He made the remarks in an interview with *Yomiuri Shimbun* ahead of his Asian trip, which flared up strong opposition from South Koreans who still have painful memories of Japan's harsh 1910-45 colonial rule. "In speaking of the future, I was referring to the agreements to share information in the future among the three militaries, which I think has a great promise for the security of all of us," Carter said, stressing that he "was not referring to the past." (Oh Seok-min, "Carter: U.S. Not Ready to Discuss THAAD Deployment in S. Korea," Yonhap, April 10, 2015) Adm. Samuel Locklear, Commander of the US Pacific Command, said at a

Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on April 16 that the US was “in discussions about potential deployment of an additional THAAD [Terminal High-altitude Area Defense] battery, beyond the one that’s in Guam, but on the Korean Peninsula.” Also present at the hearing was USFK Commander Curtis Scaparrotti, who fielded a question from Republican Senator Deb Fischer on whether South Korea and US were pursuing a THAAD deployment at the risk of Chinese objections. “The decision process is under way right now,” Scaparrotti said in response. He later added that while he could only discuss the issue from a military standpoint, South Korea and the US were currently considering the possible effects of a THAAD battery deployment on the Korean Peninsula in terms of political and strategic aspects. The views expressed at the hearing differed from those voiced just a week before in a press conference following an April 10 meeting between the South Korean Minister of National Defense Han Min-koo and US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, who said the THAAD program was still “in production” in the US. (Park Hyun, “U.S. Commanders’ Comments Contradict Previous Government Statements on THAAD Deployment,” *Hankyore*, April 18, 2015)

South Korea’s vice defense minister dismissed an assessment from a senior U.S. military official that North Korea is able to mount a nuclear weapon on a missile that could threaten the U.S. mainland. The comments from Baek Seung-joo mark a high-level public split over the level of North Korea’s threat as Washington considers a request to put a new missile defense system in South Korea. Adm. William Gortney, head of the U.S. Northern Command, said last week that North Korea is capable of mounting a nuclear warhead on an intercontinental ballistic missile known as the KN-08. “Our assessment is that they have the ability to put a nuclear weapon on a KN-08 and shoot it at the homeland,” he said during a Pentagon press briefing. Baek, who spoke at a news conference in Seoul, said Adm. Gortney’s remarks were “not made with a thorough assessment of North Korea’s capabilities.” A defense ministry spokesman confirmed that Seoul’s official position is that while North Korea has made progress in reducing the size of a nuclear device, it hasn’t yet made one small enough to mount on a missile. The Pentagon stood behind Adm. Gortney’s assessment of North Korea’s capabilities and said that the admiral’s views were in line with the U.S. view that it needed to plan for the worst-case scenario. “The U.S. government assessment has not changed,” said Lt. Col. Jeff Pool, a Pentagon spokesman. “As the admiral noted, we have not seen North Korea test or demonstrate the ability to miniaturize a nuclear weapon and put it on an ICBM.” Even so, he said, “given the consequences of getting it wrong, it is prudent for a military planner to plan for the worst.” The assessment of the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency that North Korea could be capable of putting a nuclear warhead on a missile was revealed publicly in 2013. Col. Pool downplayed the differences with South Korea, which the Pentagon frequently calls the Republic of Korea or ROK. “We continue to work with the ROK to improve our understanding [of] the North Korean and missile threat and will continue to consult on ways to strengthen our comprehensive alliance responses to the threat to the alliance,” he said. The disagreement over the level of North Korea’s nuclear threat could complicate any discussions on introducing Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense battery, or THAAD, in South Korea. Washington has conducted a site survey in South Korea for possible sites for a Thaad battery but the allies have had no

official talks on a deployment, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said on Friday during a visit to South Korea. Baek said Seoul has completed a review of the effectiveness of THAAD but declined to specify the results. He said South Korea was also reviewing its own missile defense capabilities. Seoul has long preferred to develop its own missile defense systems and has come under pressure recently to reject THAAD, apparently due to Beijing's concerns that it could also be aimed at restraining China. "We hope that China's concerns and worries [about Thaad] will be respected," Chinese assistant foreign minister Liu Jianchao said to reporters on a recent visit to Seoul. Many analysts are skeptical of North Korea's claims through its state media that it is able to threaten the U.S. mainland with a nuclear weapon delivered by a ballistic missile. U.S. military figures mostly say that North Korea does have that ability but there is no overall consensus. (Alistair Gale, "Seoul, U.S. Split on North Korea Nuclear Threat," Wall Street Journal, April 13, 2015)

4/14/15

Rodong Sinmun commentary: "Shortly ago, the south Korean chief executive, when meeting with a delegation of the U.S House of Representatives, talked rubbish that the "nuclear issue of the north" is a big "threat to security" and a "serious destabilizing factor" of posing a threat to the peace in Northeast Asia and the world and the north is following the "road of isolation, rejecting changes" and the "unification" of the Korean peninsula is "a solution to the nuclear issue of the north." Yun Pyong Se, south Korean puppet foreign minister, grumbled that the "north is refusing the dialogue for denuclearization while sticking to the line of simultaneously developing the two fronts. ...Their utterances [are] rigmarole and sophism that can be let loose only by stooges of the U.S. bereft of any elementary national self-respect and ability to judge the situation. The puppet group should repent of the crimes it perpetrated by staging ceaseless nuclear war drills against the north in collusion with outside forces, spawning the nuclear issue on the peninsula and blocking its solution before talking about the "threat" from the north. ...It is the height of folly for the puppet group to work hard to eliminate the nuclear deterrent of the DPRK. The puppet group's reckless moves for achieving "unification of social systems" will only result in the miserable end of the U.S. corrupt colonial ruling system and "liberal democracy." They should stop dreaming of the north's "dismantlement of nukes." **The DPRK's denuclearization will never happen unless the U.S. hostile policy toward it is rolled back and the latter's nuclear threat to the former defused and the world is free from nukes.** (KCNA, "Rodong Sinmun Slams S. Korean Authorities' Moves to Eliminate DPRK's Nuclear Deterrence," April 14, 2015)

4/15/15

South Korea and the U.S. agreed to establish an operational plan to destroy North Korea's road-mobile launchers to better cope with the communist regime's evolving nuclear and missile threats. To craft the plan, the allies launched the "Deterrence Strategy Committee," a body that combines the two existing military consultation bodies — Extended Deterrence Policy Committee and Counter Missile Capability Committee. These decisions were made during the two-day Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue, a biannual security meeting between the allies. South Korean Deputy Defense Minister Yoo Jeh-seung and U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretaries David Helvey and Elaine Bunn signed the bilateral agreement to launch the DSC tasked with developing the allies' antimissile operational concept into a concrete

operational plan. "The allies have so far discussed how to respond to North Korea's possible nuclear and missile attacks at a conceptual level," said a Seoul official on condition of anonymity. "But we have decided to create an operational plan that involves concrete military procedures." The official added that the operational plan would aim to strengthen the efficacy and capabilities of the U.S.' extended deterrence by mobilizing its conventional strike capabilities as well as the nuclear umbrella. At the DSC, the allies will focus on developing the so-called "4D" concept, the allies' proactive defense concept. The 4D stands for "detect, defense, disrupt and destroy" — the four major steps to handle Pyongyang's nuclear and missile attacks. The "detect" represents the allies' procedures to track North Korea's missile movements with various intelligence-gathering assets, while the "defense" refers to a set of the allied defensive operations to minimize any damage from potential attacks. The "disrupt" means striking North Korea's core missile facilities including supporting installations, while the "destroy" refers to the allies' efforts to demolish the North's mobile launchers, called TEL (transporter erector launcher), and incoming missiles. "Through the operation of the DSC, the allies will be able to effectively deter and respond to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, based on the 4D concept and the tailored deterrence strategy," said Seoul's Defense Ministry in a press release. "The DSC will also help enhance interoperability of the allied forces, and make it possible for the allies to more systematically utilize America's capabilities — both on the peninsula and outside it — and South Korea's Kill Chain and KAMD capabilities." The Kill Chain and KAMD are Seoul's preemptive strike system and Korea Air and Missile Defense system, both of which are under development. Launched in 2011, KIDD is a comprehensive defense meeting between the allies that integrates the four existing consultative meetings — the Security Policy Initiative, Extended Deterrence Policy Committee, Strategic Alliance 2015 Working Group and Counter Missile Capability Committee. The EDPC and CMCC were merged to launch the DSC. (Song Sang-ho, "Korea, U.S. to Devise Plan to Negate N.K. Launchers," *Korea Herald*, April 16, 2015)

4/16/15

Despite international pressure to abandon its nuclear weapons program, North Korea's defense minister said that its possession of nuclear bombs is the direct result of the hostile policy by the United States and is aimed at eliminating its nuclear threat. Hyon Yong-chol, the chief of North Korea's People's Armed Forces, said at an international security conference in Moscow that his country will continue to build up military capabilities including nuclear deterrence. Minister Hyon said, "When the Korean nuclear issue was nonexistent, the U.S. never replied to our proposal to conclude a peace agreement between the DPRK and the U.S." "If Washington had agreed to conclude a relevant deal, if they did not foment the nuclear threat in relation to our country, the issue of the DPRK's possession of nuclear weapons would not have emerged at all," he said. "Today the DPRK's nuclear weapons are a strong deterrence power, it's strategic balance guaranteeing peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in the entire region," the minister said. "The aggressive nature of the United States has not changed, and it is only possible to defend oneself, frustrate attempts of interference by external forces in domestic affairs by strong military power," he said. "In other words: the DPRK's possession of nuclear weapons is the result of a hostile policy and nuclear threat on the part of the U.S. Their strategy is aimed at deposition and suffocation of our state system," the minister said. Hyon said that the United States'

far-reaching aim is to overthrow the government of the DPRK and establish a monopolar world. "At the moment the threat to peace and the international community's security is soaring with every single day," he said. "The root cause of these misfortunes is violence, outright military intervention and threats from the United States and its satellites." (Yonhap, "N. Korea's defense Chief Renews Pledge to Cling to Nuclear Program," *North Korea Newsletter* 359, April 23, 2015)

The United States still holds a hostile view of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its belligerence, nuclear weapons and human rights abuses. But there is at least an openness to bringing the hermit state out of its reclusion. So when North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong paid a rare visit to Delhi this week, it was not surprising that India's diplomatic engagement with Pyongyang was welcomed by the United States as a "positive development." Yong was in India for a three-day visit - the first by a North Korean foreign minister in at least 25 years - at the invitation of Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj. During the course of their talks, Yong sought more humanitarian assistance from India and reportedly asked Delhi to include Pyongyang in its Act East policy. India responded to the aid request positively, but raised concerns about the peace and stability in the Korean peninsula for the implementation of the Act East policy. An official from the US Army Pacific, or USARPAC, which commands the army in the Asia-Pacific region including North Korea, said India's engagement with Pyongyang is a positive development and the US looks forward to learning from Delhi's perspective. The official, who requested anonymity since he was not authorised to speak with the media, said that besides India, other democratic countries like Mongolia have opened their door to North Korea for engagement. "We need to share their perspectives as it can help us [the US] to improve our own understanding and perhaps approach towards North Korea," the official said. He added that New Delhi's view will be particularly important since the US regards India as a regional leader working towards stability and security in the Asia-Pacific. (Shweta Desai, "Why Is U.S. Pleased with India's Outreach to North Korea?" *Scroll.in*, April 16, 2015)

4/20/15

Russel: "Q: I have a question for Assistant Secretary Russel, please. China and the U.S. both have the objective of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but North Korea's development continues apace and there's a sense that this is not a top priority issue for the administration. Question to you is, how would you characterize the urgency of this situation? And what is the potential for U.S.-China cooperation to bring North Korea back to the standards they had agreed to some years ago, including the NPT? RUSSEL: Thank you. This is an issue of tremendous salience to the U.S. government and to our national security. It's something that I know firsthand President Obama, the vice president, the national security adviser, the secretary and other Cabinet officials, as well as myself, are very focused on and work hard on. It will require some level of cooperation from the North Koreans for there to be the kind of negotiations that are essential to a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear and missile program. **There are other paths to resolution that are pretty messy. But to get a peaceful resolution, we need to negotiate.** North Korea is, thus far, unwilling to negotiate. The Chinese, who have tremendous leverage over North Korea, also have tremendous fears of a messy implosion or collapse. And they're very direct with us in saying that they're looking for a middle ground that maintains pressure sufficient to convince Kim

Jong-un that, as hopefully the supreme leader in Iran is concluding, that this nuclear path is a dead end, but that there is an alternative path that will lead to not only sanctions relief, but also normalization and the wholesale improvement of relations, which will in turn lead to real regime stability. We're trying. Now, in the meantime, since the one thing we can't control is Kim Jong-un's decision-making, what we can control is some of the environment that can shape that. We are working very closely with the Chinese, but from the base of trilateral cooperation with Japan and the ROK to try to sharpen the choice for Jim Jong-un and reduce the options to allow him to have his cake, a nuclear program, and eat it, too, to be able to provide the wherewithal that any authoritarian dictatorship needs in order to maintain regime loyalty and stability. It is very much on our minds. It's very high on our agenda. And pending success in bringing North Korea to meaningful negotiations that have a chance of getting back to and implementing the commitments that North Korea already made, we're maintaining strong, allied unity, close coordination with China and, I dare say, even with Russia. But we're also maintaining very strong deterrence." (Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "Perspectives on the Rebalance," Council on Foreign Relations, New York, April 20, 2015)

4/21/15

The U.S. envoy to the moribund six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program said progress in negotiations with Iran clearly demonstrates a U.S. willingness to negotiate a resolution of the nuclear standoff with Pyongyang (DPRK). Speaking at the Washington D.C.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), U.S. envoy Sydney Seiler said the North Korean leadership faces two choices: the path to denuclearization and prosperity or its current approach of ignoring its international obligations and deepening isolation. He said Washington has left the door of negotiation open to Pyongyang six years after the North Koreans walked out of the talks with the United States, Japan, South Korea, Russia and China in 2009. "Progress in our nuclear talks with Iran clearly demonstrates our willingness to engage countries with whom the United States has had longstanding differences," he said. "And there should be no doubt we remain committed to negotiations and a negotiated resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue on the basis of the 2005 Joint Statement of the six-party talks the fundamental roadmap for achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula." (Victor Beattie, "U.S. Envoy: Iran Nuclear Talks Prove U.S. Willing to Engage N. Korea," VOA, April 22, 2015)

After a mere 63 days on the job, Prime Minister Lee Wan-koo expressed his intention to step down over a payoff scandal last night, leaving the president with the big challenge of finding a successor. The Prime Minister's Office said today that Lee offered his intention to resign to President Park Geun-hye on Monday night. Park is in the middle of a 12-day Latin America trip. She is expected to accept the resignation when she returns to Korea April 27. Expressing concerns about affairs of state during her absence, Park urged the cabinet and presidential secretariat to perform their jobs properly, according to a statement from the Blue House released in Lima, Peru. "It is a pity and I can feel the agony of the prime minister," Park was quoted as saying. "The prosecution should clearly shed light on everything by conducting a thorough investigation." The president's remarks, an obvious acceptance of the resignation, came about five hours after Lee expressed an intention to step down. Park named Lee,

a politician who built his career in the Chungcheong region by climbing his way up from police chief in the small village of Hongseong, as prime minister in February after a series of botched nominations for the post. The former South Chungcheong governor, who also served three terms in the legislature, has been implicated in a snowballing scandal over payoffs by Sung Wan-jong, a construction tycoon-turned-politician who committed suicide earlier this month as he was being investigated for corruption. After assuming the post on February 17, 2015, Lee issued a grand statement in March to champion the Park government's war against corruption. That prompted a probe into Sung and his company's alleged bilking of state investments in overseas resources development projects. Complaining that he was being made a political scapegoat, Sung dropped a series of bombshell revelations about years of money dealings with top politicians and committed suicide on April 9. Describing Lee as "greedy," Sung said he gave 30 million won (\$27,668) to Lee in 2013. Lee vehemently denied the charge, but the prosecution and media uncovered evidence to prove otherwise. Before leaving for Latin America April 16, President Park sat down with the leader of the ruling Saenuri Party, Kim Moo-sung, and said she would decide the fate of the embattled prime minister after her return. Lee, however, could not endure growing pressures as the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy (NPAD) threatened to introduce a motion for his dismissal in the National Assembly this week. "I highly respect Lee's agonizing decision," Kim said. "It's regretful that a political fight flared too intensively." The opposition NPAD welcomed Lee's decision, calling it the "start of a fair investigation." "Lee made the right decision," Moon Jae-in, NPAD chairman, said. "This is not about his personal corruption. This is a matter of the Park administration's integrity and legitimacy. Park can only regain the public trust by demonstrating her strong will to remove all the festering problems." Even before her inauguration, Park struggled with prime minister nominations. So far, Park named five people to the job but only two of them, including Lee, actually survived National Assembly hearings to serve as prime minister. After winning the December 2012 presidential election, Park nominated Kim Yong-joon as her first prime minister in January 2013. Days after, he gave up the nomination due to his sons' alleged draft-dodging and the family's real estate speculation. Chung Hong-won was nominated and passed a confirmation hearing to become the first prime minister for the Park government in February 2013. Although Chung offered to step down last year in the aftermath of the Sewol ferry's sinking and the government's botched attempts to rescue more than 300 passengers, Park had to keep him as two nominees - Ahn Dae-hee and Moon Chang-keuk - dropped out due to scandals. Then she appointed Lee. NPAD senior lawmaker Jung Chung-rae said today that Park must create a nonpartisan cabinet by appointing the next prime minister from outside her inner circle. "Among Park associates, will there be anyone clean?" Jung asked in an interview with CBS radio. "I think she should receive recommendations from the opposition party or civic groups to form a nonpartisan cabinet." Following its successful political campaign to go after the prime minister, the NPAD also demanded the heads of more top Park administration officials. "Resignation of the prime minister is not the end but is just a beginning," said Rep. Woo Yoon-keun, floor leader of the NPAD. Rep. Min Byung-doo went after President Park, calling Lee only a small branch of the big tree of corruption. "The core of Sung's exposures was illegal presidential campaign funds in 2007 and 2012," Min said. "It is a grave misconception that the prime minister's resignation will

end the scandal. We just opened the first gate. We, therefore, demand that the former and current presidential chiefs of staff and Hong Moon-jong, Suh Byung-soo and Yoo Jeong-bok be investigated right away." Shortly before he hung himself with a necktie on a tree branch on April 9, Sung told *Kyunghyang Shinmun* newspaper that he had paid off members of Park's inner circle for years and some of the money was used to finance her 2007 primary and 2012 presidential campaign. He also left an apparent bribery list in his trouser pocket containing the names of eight politicians. Among them were Yoo Jeong-bok, Hong Moon-jong, Hong Joon-pyo, Huh Tae-yeol, Kim Ki-choon, Lee Byung-kee and Lee Wan-koo. The list also referred to an unidentified Busan mayor. Saenuri lawmaker Hong Moon-jong, Busan Mayor Suh Byung-soo and Incheon Mayor Yoo were in charge of organization and finance during Park's presidential campaign. Huh and Kim were former presidential chiefs of staff and Lee Byung-kee is the current chief of staff. The ruling party launched a counterattack on Monday by linking the main opposition party to the scandal and questioning the integrity of the liberal Roh Moo-hyun administration, which held power from 2003 to 2008. While Sung's revelations were focused on Park's inner circle, rumors are spreading in the political arena that opposition lawmakers may also have received payoffs. Rep. Kweon Seong-dong of the ruling Saenuri Party held a press conference today and demanded that the Roh administration's special pardons for Sung must be investigated. Moon, chairman of the opposition NPAD, was a key member of the Roh government. "Sung was pardoned twice during the Roh presidency, and that supports the suspicion that Sung bribed senior members of the opposition party," Kweon said. "We need to have an investigation into the pardons. It is extremely extraordinary for someone to be pardoned twice by the same president, unless that someone has a special relationship with the administration." Sung was convicted of a political funding law violation in 2002 when he was serving as a special adviser to Kim Jong-pil, then head of the Chungcheong-based United Liberal Democrats. He was convicted of embezzling 1.6 billion won from his company and providing that money illegally to the party. He was pardoned on May 13, 2005. At the time, Moon was the civil affairs presidential secretary. His second conviction came in November 2007. He was convicted of breach of trust for lending 12 billion won of company money with no interest to the developer of the Haengdamdo project. Only one month later, on Dec. 31, 2007, Sung was pardoned. At the time, Moon was the presidential chief of staff. Kweon said the second pardon in 2007 was particularly suspicious because it was given over the Justice Ministry's strong opposition. "The Blue House at the time postponed a cabinet meeting by six days to persuade the Justice Ministry," he said. "The ministry eventually agreed under the presidential office's pressure, but it did not make public that Sung was pardoned." The Saenuri lawmaker also criticized Moon's remarks. "Moon said the special pardons are the business of the Justice Ministry and had nothing to do with the Blue House," he said. "That is ridiculous. Pardons are the exclusive right of the president according to Article 79 of the constitution, and the Blue House's opinion is absolute. It is a classic case of special treatment if Sung was pardoned twice by Roh." Justice Minister Hwang Kyo-an told the National Assembly yesterday that it was rare for a convict to receive a second presidential pardon. "I understand the people's concerns," he said. (Ser Myo-ja, "Prime Minister Decides to Resign," *JoongAng Ilbo*, April 22, 2015)

Carlin: "It may seem like hubris to suggest the US government should have done something differently with North Korea a couple of months ago. After all, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is easy to dismiss as an outlaw operating outside the legitimate world order. And there are virtually no limits when it comes to condemning or satirizing the North Korean regime. As a result, creative thinking about policy toward Pyongyang is not easy to find. For the next 1,000 words, let's examine what the US might have done differently, and why. The issue before us here is – or was for a few hours on January 9th – how Washington should have responded to North Korea's proposal to suspend nuclear tests if the US suspended this year's scheduled joint military exercises on the Peninsula. It took Washington somewhat less than 24 hours to reject North Korea's proposal. Publicly, the rationale for that decision was three-fold: • Linking military exercises with nuclear tests was inappropriate and an implicit threat; • North Korea is already banned by UN Security Council resolutions from testing, so these aren't something North Korea can offer to suspend; • Our joint exercises are defensive and have been held regularly for roughly 40 years. From the outset, let's agree it was out of the question to accept North Korea's proposal as presented. In mid-January, there was no way Washington and Seoul could stop major joint exercises set to start in only 6 weeks' time. I'd argue that Pyongyang understood that. Why make the proposal, then? First, let's look at Washington's options. Quick, outright rejection of North Korea's offer was certainly the easiest, and is what Washington quickly selected. Whether the US seriously considered a second option must be left for someone in the administration to reveal. Given how fast the rejection came, however, it is hard to imagine a second option received much thought. And what was the second option? It was to probe to determine what the North Koreans actually had in mind. ("Probe" avoids the dirty "E" word – engage.) Based on my 10 years of direct experience in negotiations with Pyongyang, I'm confident that this second option – probing – made sense precisely because North Korea never expected the US to accept the proposal as first presented. Instead, the proposal was almost certainly meant as an opening bid. Such an interpretation is reinforced by the wording of North Korea's proposal itself – "...if the US needs dialogue as regards this issue, the former is ready to sit with the US anytime." A North Korean diplomat at the UN reinforced that message a few days later. The frame of North Korea's proposal was the well-established practice of parallel, initial steps designed to create an atmosphere for subsequent, more substantive talks. The two sides had taken that route before with a positive outcome, notably in September 1999. In other words, the idea of parallel action to create space for broader talks did not drop from the sky in January 2015. Moreover, this particular idea – a US move on exercises linked to a North Korean move on the nuclear issue – had been kicking around for many months. North Korean diplomats – who come to talks fully prepared – would have used this intervening time to refine their fallback positions. In its January proposal, Pyongyang was hearkening back to a deal in 1992, in which the South Korea and the US suspended the joint military exercise "Team Spirit" in return for something we considered an important step by North Korea on the nuclear issue, i.e. ratifying its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement. The similarities are striking, important, and hardly accidental. In this case, by pointing to this precedent, North Korea was signaling that the nuclear issue was, indeed, on the table (as Pyongyang has been saying since a high-level statement in June 2013). Mentioning nuclear tests was not an implicit threat

but rather a gesture calculated to signal that Pyongyang would be willing to entertain additional trade-offs on the nuclear issue. Which ones, how much, and at what pace, of course, would remain for subsequent discussions. The proposal was thus couched in terms the North Koreans felt sure Washington would consider as moving in the right direction. They obviously misjudged. The objection will be heard (and was) that our exercises can't be part of a trade-off. History suggests otherwise. As noted above, Washington and Seoul suspended Team Spirit in 1992, and there were plans to suspend it again in 1994 under the right circumstances. Military exercises, let us be clear, are not sacred rituals. They have both a symbolic and a substantive purpose. If they can be refined, trimmed, rescheduled, or redirected in ways that will advance US foreign policy goals without jeopardizing either our national security or South Korea's, then it seems incredible that we would not do so. North Korea may well have figured (another miscalculation) that both Seoul and Washington would see that its proposal, though to the US, was linked to dialogue with South Korea, i.e. that some sort of gesture on the exercises this year would create the conditions mentioned by Kim Jong-un in his New Year's address for an inter-Korean summit. The idea that we can't accept a proposal by the North Koreans to suspend nuclear tests because these are already banned under UN Security Council resolutions is specious. The US accepted a test moratorium as part of the Feb. 29, 2012 deal with Pyongyang. If this was acceptable then, why the objection now? Let's imagine that instead of rejecting North Korea's proposal in less than 24 hours, Washington had urgently raised the question with Seoul, and the two capitals had agreed that the answers to five questions made it worthwhile and feasible to probe to see where North Korea's offer might lead. *What is there to talk about?* *Answer:* The talks could serve as a starter engine, exploring and hopefully agreeing on parallel, initial steps opening the way to negotiations on the range of issues – including North Korea's nuclear weapons program – of concern to all sides. *Why move to exploratory talks?* *Answer:* North Korea appears capable every three months of making enough fissile material for several – upwards of four – nuclear weapons. Not talking to Pyongyang doesn't slow expansion of its stockpiles. Maybe talks won't do that either, but given what is at stake (potentially, a North Korean arsenal of at least 30 nuclear weapons by the time this administration leaves office) there would seem to be a good reason to explore what is possible. This is not, as many in Washington appear to believe, a feckless exercise. A close reading of North Korean policy over the past several years suggests that Kim Jong-un is quite serious about improving the North Korean economy. That raises the possibility that his two-line (byungjin) policy does not really put equal weight on nuclear and economic development. It is worth testing the proposition that under the right circumstances, Kim would lean toward action favoring the economic side. *How to conduct these initial talks, in other words at what level?* *Answer:* Ambassador Sung Kim and Ambassador Ri Yong Ho are the appropriate officials. *Where to hold talks?* *Answer:* Anywhere that both the US and North Korea have secure communications. *When to meet?* *Answer:* They should have started Jan. 23. That would have given talks at least five weeks to run before the start of the US-South Korean joint exercises. Even if they couldn't reach full agreement, these contacts could have at least provided a basis for returning to talks once the joint exercises ended in late April. They might even limit the uptick in tensions that is often a part of the exercise period." (Robert Carlin, "The Meaning of a Missed Opportunity to Talk," *Global Asia*, Spring 2015)

4/22/15

China's top nuclear experts have increased their estimates of North Korea's nuclear weapons production well beyond most previous U.S. figures, suggesting Pyongyang may already have 20 warheads, as well as the capability of producing enough weapons-grade uranium to double its arsenal by next year, according to people briefed on the matter. The latest Chinese estimates of North Korea's nuclear capability were shared during a February meeting at the China Institute of International Studies, the Chinese foreign ministry's think tank. The Chinese brought technical, political and diplomatic experts on North Korea's nuclear program, as well as military representatives, said people familiar with the meeting. The estimates showed that North Korea "I'm concerned that by 20, they actually have a nuclear arsenal," said Siegfried Hecker, a Stanford University professor and former head of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, who attended the closed-door meeting in February. "The more they believe they have a fully functional nuclear arsenal and deterrent, the more difficult it's going to be to walk them back from that." Chinese experts now believe North Korea has a greater domestic capacity to enrich uranium than previously thought, Hecker said. "We saw how North Korea was able to game this whole process," U.S. Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in an interview. "I wouldn't be surprised if Iran had its hands on the same playbook." The pace of North Korea's nuclear arms growth depends on its warhead designs and its uranium-enrichment capacity, Royce said: "We know they have one factory; we don't know if they have another one." Recent estimates by U.S. experts range from 10 to 16 nuclear bombs today. Royce said he met Chinese academics on a recent trip to Beijing and was struck by the concerns he heard about Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities. Hecker declined to comment on the meeting but said he had met with Chinese experts to discuss North Korea's capabilities at least once a year since 2004. "They believe on the basis of what they've put together now that the North Koreans have enough enriched uranium capacity to be able to make eight to 10 bombs' worth of highly enriched uranium per year," said Hecker, who added that estimates by China and the U.S. involved a great deal of guesswork. U.S. officials didn't attend the meeting but some expressed surprise when they were later briefed on the details, said people familiar with the matter. Some Chinese experts said the estimates revealed in February were at the higher range among local peers. Hecker said he estimated North Korea could have no more than 12 nuclear bombs now, and as many as 20 next year. "Some eight, nine or 10 years ago, they had the bomb but not much of a nuclear arsenal," he said. "I had hoped they wouldn't go in this direction, but that's what happened in the past five years." (Jeremy Page and Jay Solomon, "China Warns North Korean Nuclear Threat Is Growing," *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2015)

Korea clinched a newly revised civilian atomic energy accord with the U.S., paving the way for a more stable supply of nuclear fuel, better management of used rods, related research and future exports of reactors. The preliminary signing followed four years and seven months of grueling negotiations since their launch in October 2010. The ceremony was in Seoul and led by Park Ro-byug, Korea's chief negotiator and ambassador for nuclear energy cooperation, and Ambassador to Seoul Mark Lippert. The revamped agreement, last amended in 1974, will expire in 20 years, but the two countries have installed options for additional modifications or an early closure. The existing deal was due to expire in March 2014 but extended by two years for further

consultations. The text establishes a legal framework of conditions and controls to govern commercial atomic activities involving U.S.-origin materials or others used in U.S.-origin facilities. It has 21 articles and two separate agreed minutes, each on detailed implementation plans and a high-level joint panel to be set up to oversee the pact on a standing basis. "As the existing accord sealed 40 years ago had various components that needed to be improved, the new one contains various progress focusing on three main areas — spent fuel management, a steady fuel supply and reactor export promotion," Park said at a news conference after the ceremony. "While affirming the two countries' 'inalienable right' to the peaceful research, production and use of nuclear energy as members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the document stipulates that there ought not be any breach of sovereignty as they expand cooperation," the government said in a statement. While Washington ensures a reliable supply of fuel for 24 reactors here, the allies will be able to pursue Korea's enrichment of U.S.-origin uranium up to 20 percent if necessary, through the high-level commission. The panel is to be jointly headed by Seoul's vice foreign minister and U.S. deputy energy secretary, and operate four working groups on the three major fields and nuclear security. The accord will also facilitate bilateral cooperation as Seoul explores ways to tackle the pressing issue of spent fuel management. An advisory panel consisting of municipal leaders, scholars and environmental activists has been established to look into various options in partnership with the government, including storage, disposal and reprocessing at home or overseas. The two countries are conducting a 10-year fuel cycle study to review a technology called pyroprocessing, which Korean experts have floated as a possible solution to handle Korea's mounting spent fuel inventory, instead of traditional reprocessing capabilities that run against the longstanding U.S. nonproliferation drive. They will decide on the technique's commercial feasibility and proliferation implication after the study is completed. The method is known to be less likely to be used for military purposes and thus less prone to proliferation because it leaves separated plutonium mixed with safer fissile materials. On the research front, Seoul secured Washington's long-term advance consent for such activities as post-irradiation examination and electroreduction, as well as for medical studies, using U.S.-origin spent fuel. Scientists here were previously required to seek U.S. approval on a regular basis, about which they had long grumbled due to delays in their work schedule and what they call bureaucratic hassle. "A research reactor currently being constructed in Busan will help the production of medical isotopes, which we have been importing entirely from other countries for a fortune because they have to be carried by aircraft given their short half-life," a ministry official said. "With the change, some 1.3 million cancer patients will get examinations more easily, the costs plummet from the current 20 million won (\$18,500), and the door opens for us to export the isotopes when the generally old overseas reactors retire." Long-term consent was also given for the retransfer of U.S.-origin fissile material and equipment to a third country that has nuclear agreements with both countries. The U.S. would speed up the authorization process for imports and exports. For the text to come into force, it will undergo a review in Korea by the Ministry of Government Legislation, intra-agency vice-ministerial and Cabinet meetings and presidential authorization. In the U.S., it is subject to intra-agency and nonproliferation assessments before being delivered to the president for approval. After a formal signing by the two administrations, the accord will be sent to Congress for a 90-day

review and, if it does not disapprove, take effect. (Shin Hyon-hee, "Korea Gains More Nuclear Leeway," *Korea Herald*, April 22, 2015) The new treaty does not allow South Korea to enrich uranium or reprocess spent fuel anytime soon. But it does not commit South Korea to legally renounce these techniques either. Instead, it leaves open the possibility that South Korea could enrich uranium for civil nuclear energy "in the future through consultations with the United States." In the meantime, Washington promised to help secure a supply of nuclear fuel for South Korean atomic power plants, Seoul said in a news release. The deal also created the option for South Korea to have its spent fuel reprocessed abroad in countries that both Seoul and Washington believed posed no proliferation risk. The United States also promised to help South Korea find new nuclear waste management options that would be economically viable and more proliferation-resistant. As part of such efforts, South Korea said its scientists would be allowed to do early experiments on a kind of nuclear reprocessing known as pyroprocessing. The new treaty also establishes a high-level committee that will assess the implementation of the treaty. (Choe Sang-hun, "U.S. and South Korea Reach Revised Nuclear Deal," *New York Times*, April 22, 2015)

One of six North Korean children under age 5 have been suffering from chronic malnutrition, a report showed, raising alarm over food situations in the North. The portion of underweight children suffering from malnutrition accounted for 15.2 percent of all of North Korea's children under age 5 as of end-2013, according to the World Development Indicator 2015 released by the World Bank. (Yonhap, "N. Korea's Children Suffer from Severe Malnutrition," April 22, 2015)

South Korea said it has eased donor eligibility requirements to facilitate private groups' humanitarian aid to North Korea amid lingering inter-Korean tension. Seoul's ministry on inter-Korean affairs unveiled the decision to open more doors for the participation of private organizations at a time when the government's assistance to the North has stalled following the 2010 deadly warship sinking. "Easing of the standards will help more non-government agencies increase aid to North Korea in such areas as maternal and child health care, agriculture and forestation," said Lim Byeong-cheol, spokesman at the unification ministry, at a press briefing. The new move will allow private groups with no history of assistance to the North to join the drive to help cope with North Korea's severe food shortage and other challenges. Meanwhile, Lim said that Seoul plans to provide necessary support to foreign activists who hope to walk across the heavily fortified inter-Korean border if North Korea approves their plan. About 30 female activists from around the world, including U.S. activist Gloria Steinem and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mairead Maguire from Ireland, plan to march from the North to the South across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that bisects the two Koreas to mark the May 24 International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament. Crossing the inter-Korean border requires approval from the two Koreas and the United Nations Command. "If the North's nod is confirmed, the Seoul government will offer cooperation on the basis of the truce treaty and precedents," Lim said. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Eases Bar for Donors to N. Korea," April 22, 2015)

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo said in Jakarta that international conflicts should be settled in a peaceful manner, but stopped short of apologizing for his nation's past

aggression. "Japan, with feelings of deep remorse over the past war, made a pledge to remain a nation always adhering to those very principles throughout, no matter what the circumstances," he said in a speech at the summit meeting of the Asian-African Conference. The principles of peaceful resolution to conflicts were adopted at the conference in 1955 when it was held for the first time in Bandung, Indonesia. More than 100 countries and international organizations were invited to participate. As Abe plans to release his statement this summer to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, attention has been focused on his comments concerning historical recognition. In his speech, however, the prime minister avoided such phrases as "colonial rule and aggression" and "heartfelt apology," and placed importance on future relations. In the Asian-African Conference in 2005, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in a speech referred to "colonial rule and aggression" and "deep remorse and heartfelt apology," by citing phrases from the 1995 Murayama statement, which apologized for Japan's aggression during the war. The speech led to the Koizumi statement issued in the summer of 2005. (Funakoshi Takashi, "Abe Offers 'Remorse' for War But Eschews Apology in Speech in Jakarta," *Asahi Shimbun*, April 22, 2015)

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo met Chinese President Xi Jinping for the second time in less than six months, in a sign his efforts to turn the page on Japan's past aggression won't derail improvement in ties. The longer-than-expected 29-minute meeting came hours after Abe barely mentioned remorse over World War II in a speech in Jakarta that will set the tone for his statement on the 70th anniversary of the end of the conflict. A day earlier he drew Chinese criticism after sending an offering to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, which is seen by many in China and South Korea as a symbol of Japan's past militarism. (Bloomberg, "Abe Meets Xi in Sign Differences over History Won't Derail Ties," *Japan Times*, April 22, 2015) At the beginning of the meeting, Xi said relations between China and Japan have recently improved to some extent amid joint efforts by representatives of both countries. Abe said he appreciated that bilateral relations have improved since their meeting in November last year. The two leaders agreed to promote a mutually beneficial strategic relationship, and contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region and the world. China has called for the creation of huge "One Belt, One Road" economic zones and the establishment of the AIIB – both of which, Xi said, have been hailed worldwide. Xi said he had not expected that China would be able to obtain understanding from such a variety of countries about the establishment of the AIIB. He said he believes Abe will also express his understanding of the project, indicating hopes for Japan's participation. Abe said, "[Japan] shares the recognition that it is necessary to strengthen financial mechanisms as infrastructure demand in Asia is growing," but maintained a cautious stance. He went on to say: "I've heard that there are problems in areas including governance. I expect working-level officials will hold talks, and I'll wait for reports from them." Regarding historical perception, Xi said squarely facing up to history would promote mutual understanding. He invited Abe to a Sept. 3 ceremony, which China describes as commemorating the anniversary of its victory in the war of resistance against Japan, and said he has no intention of criticizing the Japan of today during the event. Abe said the Japanese government has inherited the position of previous Cabinets as a whole, including statements by former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Junichiro Koizumi, and will continue in the same vein. "Our stance to seek the path of a pacifist nation, which is based on our profound

remorse for World War II, will remain unchanged," Abe said. (Kaiya Michitaka and Takekoshi Masahiko, "'Abe, Xi Agree on Efforts to Promote Bilateral Ties; P.M. Maintains Caution on AIIB," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 23, 2015)

4/23/15

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will visit Moscow for the May 9 celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of Russia's victory in the war, a Russian diplomat said. If he visits Russia, it will be his first foreign trip since taking power in late 2011. Citing a Russian news report that quoted a top presidential official, Ambassador Alexander Timonin said Russia is expecting Kim's visit. "His participation was confirmed maybe through diplomatic channels, the details of which aren't always disclosed," he told a meeting with reporters at the Russian Embassy here. "So you don't need to worry. He will likely come." (Lee Haye-ah, "Kim Jong-un to Visit Moscow: Russian Envoy," *Yonhap*, April 23, 2015)

Three Cabinet ministers visited the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, just a day after Japanese and Chinese leaders held a bilateral meeting, drawing a rebuke from China, which views the Shinto shrine as a symbol of Japan's past militarism. The visits by Takaichi Sanae, internal affairs minister, Yamatani Eriko, disaster management minister, and Arimura Haruko, minister in charge of female empowerment -- all female -- came amid signs of reconciliation between Japan and China despite friction over territorial and historical issues. Some 106 lawmakers from both the ruling and opposition parties visited the shrine yesterday, the second day of its three-day spring festival. (Kyodo, "Cabinet Ministers Visit War-Linked Shrine a Day after Abe-Xi Meeting," April 23, 2015)

Victor Cha: "The big takeaway from the report is instead the prediction that North Korea could be in a position to double its arsenal by next year with weapons-grade uranium. If that assessment is correct, and Pyongyang can indeed boost its nuclear stockpile by the end of this year to around 40 warheads by utilizing highly-enriched weapons-grade uranium, then the plutonium program that the U.S. and members of the Six-Party talks had been negotiating over this past quarter century would suddenly seem trivial. After all, the plutonium program might be capable of spitting out maybe a few weapons worth of plutonium annually. This news could be much more serious. Why? For a start, it would mean that North Korea's activities would undoubtedly meet the definition, if it had not already, of a runaway nuclear weapons program, with the potential to be fueled by a large supply of raw uranium buried in North Korea's mines. In addition, while the plutonium program at Yongbyon has a clear and detectable profile, the thousands of centrifuges that spin in a uranium-based program have no detectable heat signature or topographic profile, meaning you could store the stuff not just in the labyrinth of underground tunnels in North Korea, undetectable from the sky, but in any large warehouse. Washington and Seoul have tended to have a policy that leans toward downplaying North Korean threats, at least when there isn't a full-fledged crisis going on. For example, the United States downplayed North Korea's missile threat until the country successfully put a satellite into orbit in December 2012. **And up until 2006, no one thought the Kim regime would actually dare undertake a nuclear test.** [?] These new estimates could therefore be a timely reminder that we may have downplayed the threat North Korea poses once again. But today's report isn't the only troubling information we have had recently. Just as concerning is the

NORAD commander's assessment on North Korea's missile capabilities. On April 7, Adm. Bill Gortney said during a press briefing that the Defense Department believed Pyongyang's KN-08 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is operational, with a warhead capacity. This statement is troubling for two reasons. First, Gortney's statement, when combined with the latest Chinese assessment, implies that North Korea now not only has nuclear weapons, but the ability to miniaturize such weapons for a warhead that could be placed atop a missile with range rings extending to the U.S. mainland. Second, and just as importantly, Pyongyang's advances in mobile ICBM capabilities could end up undermining the state of stable deterrence that currently exists on the Korean Peninsula. Put simply, these capabilities could give North Korea confidence that it is immune from any U.S. counterstrikes. (Victor Cha, "North Korea's Troubling Nuclear Progress," CNN, April 23, 2015)

4/24/15

South Korea and the United States are to complete their annual joint military drill Foal Eagle today, officials here said, amid Pyongyang's continued threat of retaliation, according to the Combined Forces Command (CFC) and Seoul's defense ministry officials. "The tactical training has been carried out without a hitch," said a CFC official, noting that the exercise mobilized about 200,000 Korean and 3,700 American troops and has involved a set of land, sea and air maneuvers as originally planned. Five countries -- Australia, Canada, Denmark, France and Britain -- have participated in the drill, with the Neutral Supervisory Commission observing and monitoring them to ensure they do not break the Armistice Agreement signed at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. Drawing attention was the participation of the USS Fort Worth, a 3,450-ton Freedom-class littoral combat ship (LCS), in the drill for the first time. Expressing a strong opposition to the exercises and issuing threats of harsh retaliation, North Korea had fired rounds of rockets multiple times during the exercise period, with the latest in early April when Pyongyang test-fired four short-range projectiles believed to be the KN-02 ground-to-ship missiles into the West Sea. "The level of the North's provocations during the exercise period does not seem to be as intense as last year," an official of Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said on condition of anonymity. "But we are closely monitoring their moves," he said, pointing to chances of live-fire drills or test-firing rockets to mark the foundation of the North's military that falls tomorrow. (Oh Seok-min, "S. Korea, U.S. to Wrap up Joint Drill This Week," Yonhap, April 23, 2015)

South and North Korea agreed to hold another round of talks next week for a breakthrough over a prolonged wage row at a joint industrial park in the North, Seoul's unification ministry said. The two Koreas have been embroiled in the wage dispute after the communist country has unilaterally decided to hike the minimum monthly wage of its 53,000 workers working for 124 South Korean companies at the Kaesong Industrial Complex by 5.18 percent to US\$74 starting in March. Seoul has not accepted the North's move, saying that Pyongyang violated a 2004 agreement that calls for the two sides to set the wages together. The wage cap has been set at 5 percent per year. Today was the renewed deadline by which the firms should pay the March wages to the North Korean workers. "Today, the two sides held a discussion over the wage issue. No conclusion was made, but the two sides agreed to meet on Monday for additional consultations," the ministry said in a brief release. The two Koreas have held talks on the issue through quasi-government committees from each side three times so

far. The North has threatened to collect arrears charges if the Seoul firms pass today's deadline for the wage payment. So far, a total of 18 South Korean companies have been found to pay the wage, a move against Seoul's guideline. "The government has set forth the guideline concerning payment (of the increased wages) after discussions with companies concerned. Those who turn out to violate this intentionally will be subject to corresponding measures," the ministry said. Earlier in the day, Vice Unification Minister Hwang Boo-gi vowed to impose punitive actions on the companies that paid wages to North Korean workers despite the government's warning. "The government plans to take the necessary actions against those firms after closely reviewing why they violated the government's guidance," Hwang said during a meeting with officials from the local firms who operate factories in the industrial complex. He also called on the officials to join the government's efforts to tackle the wage dispute. (Yonhap, "Two Koreas to Continue Talks on Kaesong Wage Next Week," April 24, 2014)

SRE Minerals, a British private equity firm, estimates that the North could be sitting on a whopping 216 million tons of rare-earth minerals, which are vital for many high-tech applications, including clean energy, defense systems and consumer electronics. China controls about 90 percent of the rare-earths market. It has large stockpiles after the central government relaxed environmental regulations, making mining highly economical. North Korea does not have the ability to mine the minerals itself, so the Korean Natural Resource Trading Corporation (KNRTC) has signed a 25-year joint-venture agreement with SRE for the rights to develop all rare-earth deposits in Jongju. The discovery has promoted China and Russia to increase their mining investment in North Korea. Russia recently agreed to invest \$25 million towards upgrading the North's railway system, in exchange for mineral reserves. And while China has denied North Korea's entry into the new Asian Infrastructure Bank, it has allowed Chinese companies to move into the region to work on transport and power projects. (John-Patrick Gerard Thackeray, "N.K. Unearths Rare 'Gold Mine,'" *Korea Times*, April 24, 2015)

The South Korean government reportedly allowed the late former President Kim Dae-jung's widow, Lee Hee-ho, to visit North Korea at the end of May. Lee plans to arrange detailed schedules with North Korea from next week at the earliest. "We've received an approval from the government for pre-contact with the North and proposed to have the second working-level meeting in Gaeseong in the North. As the ROK-U.S. joint Key Resolve military drill (that the North has protested) ended, the North would respond probably next week or in early May," a Kim Dae-jung Peace Center insider said in a phone interview with *Dong-A Ilbo*. "Accommodation and schedules were almost set and arranged during the first meeting in last September. What is left is to set the date." The center plans to invite members of North Korea's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee (KAPPC) to Seoul on May 9, and hold a ceremony to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the June 15 Declaration, a deal reached at the historic inter-Korean summit. The center will discuss who to invite at the working-level meeting prior to the ceremony. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, "Ex-President's Widow Plans to Visit N. Korea in May," April 25, 2015)

UN Office of Disarmament Affairs: "Nuclear-weapons-free zones have made an invaluable contribution to not only the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, but also to regional and international security. They provide tangible security benefits for all participants. Not only do they contain negative security assurances provided by nuclear weapon States, but, as verifiable and enforceable confidence-building measures, they assure member states that their neighbors are not pursuing nuclear weapon capabilities. The dividends produced by nuclear weapon-free zones for the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are, to my mind, obvious. First, they are a practical means for outlawing nuclear weapons within a specified geographic area. Second, in parts of the world where so many have suffered from the effects of nuclear tests, they are a means to ensure future generations will not endure the same fate. Third, they are an essential building block for a world free of nuclear weapons. Fourth, and above all, these agreements represent a broad regional consensus to reject nuclear weapons and the grave dangers they pose to humanity and the environment. ...Finally, I urge you to work together to facilitate a proliferation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones. Three potential new zones spring immediately to mind. One of the most economically dynamic regions in the world, North-East Asia is also home to some of its most intractable disputes. I encourage you to work with states of the region, civil society and international bodies to explore the possibility of removing the threat that nuclear weapons pose to this region." (Anela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, "Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones: Building Blocks for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons," Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties That Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, New York, April 24, 2015)

4/25/15

North Korea is expected to stage massive firing demonstrations and missile launches to mark the founding day of its Army, the ROK Defense Ministry here said April 20. The exercises bring together of thousands of Army, Navy, and Air Force troops. The North has moved patrol boats near South Korea's northwesternmost islands and the Northern Limit Line, the de facto maritime border, and readied field and coastal artillery, the ministry said in a report to the National Assembly's Defense Committee. The North has designated a no-fly, no-sail zone in the East Sea since April 1 while gathering tanks and artillery pieces in a drill ground near Pyongyang. The ministry said the regime is already staging frequent fire drills of anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns across the border from the launch point of propaganda balloons from South Korean activists. Earlier it reportedly dug a new tunnel at a nuclear test site in Punggye-ri, North Hamgyong Province. Adm. Choi Yoon-hee, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a visit to the 2nd U.S. Infantry Division in Dongducheon, Gyeonggi Province that the Seoul-Washington alliance is "vital" as the North prepares for a possible provocation near the NLL and in frontline areas. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "N. Korea to Stage Massive Military Drills," April 21, 2015)

North Korea has requested a formal partnership with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a top Malaysian Foreign Ministry official said. Othman Hashim, secretary general of the ministry, said North Korea, along with Norway, Ecuador and Mongolia, have applied for formal partnerships with ASEAN. He said there are different categories of partnership with the grouping and ASEAN is evaluating the requests to decide what category is suitable for each of these countries

in their engagement with ASEAN. The official made the remarks to reporters at the end of the first day of the meeting of ASEAN senior officials to prepare for the ASEAN summit that will be held in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi in two days. North Korea's engagement with ASEAN so far has been through its membership to the ASEAN Regional Forum, a multilateral ministerial forum on security that is spearheaded by ASEAN and which is attended by the North Korean foreign minister. ASEAN already has a "dialogue partnership" with South Korea, a status that the grouping offers to countries that are its biggest economic partners, such as the United States, Japan and China. (Manila Bulletin, "North Korea Requests 'Formal Partnership' with ASEAN," April 26, 2015)

4/26/15

Trade between North Korea and China, its economic lifeline, slipped 13.4 percent on-year in the first three months of this year amid frayed bilateral ties, data showed. Bilateral trade volume fell to US\$1.1 billion in the January-March period, compared with \$1.27 billion for the same period last year, the Beijing unit of South's Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said, citing Chinese customs data. No crude oil was officially sent to North Korea from China for all of last year. China's shipments of crude oil to North Korea were also absent during the first quarter of this year. South Korean diplomatic sources in Beijing, however, have cautioned against reading too much into the official Chinese trade figures because China has provided crude oil to North Korea in the form of grant aid in the past and such shipments were not recorded on paper. (Yonhap, "N. Korea's Trade with China Dips 13.4 Pct. in Quarter," April 26, 2015)

Minju Chosun: "An enlarged plenary meeting of the Cabinet of the DPRK ... was attended by Premier Pak Pong Ju and members of the Cabinet. Present there were leading officials of institutions under the Cabinet, directors of its management bureaus, chairpersons of the provincial, city and county people's committees, chairpersons of the provincial rural economy committees, chairmen of the provincial regional planning commissions, directors of the provincial management bureaus of food and consumer goods industries and managers of major industrial establishments as observers. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the first quarterly year plan of the national economy for carrying out the militant tasks set forth by Marshal Kim Jong-un in his New Year Address and discussed the measure for the second quarter of the year. Vice-Premier and Chairman of the State Planning Commission Ro Tu Chol made a report at the meeting to be followed by speeches. The meeting referred to the achievements made in carrying out the behests of leader Kim Jong Il and implementing the first quarterly year plan of the national economy and the state budget. The field of mining industry increased the production of iron ores and realized the local production of glass fiber, laying the foundation for self-supporting economy. The agricultural field opened a prospect for achieve the goal for the grain production set forth by the party despite difficult conditions for farming due to last year's severe drought. The field of light industry produced and supplied quality school uniforms and school things to students of universities and colleges and new primary school children across the country and worked hard to supply lots of confectionery to children and students. The field of coal industry produced more 323 000 tons of coal than the same period of last year and achievements were made in the field of fisheries. The plan of state budgetary

revenue was overfulfilled by 8 percent and all provinces, cities and counties overfulfilled the plan of local budgetary revenue. The reporter and speakers said that all these achievements are the proud fruition of the energetic leadership of Kim Jong-un. The meeting seriously analyzed and reviewed wrongdoings and discussed the tasks and ways to be fulfilled in the second quarterly year. It said that the main tasks facing the Cabinet in the second quarterly year are to continue pushing forward the work for carrying out the behests of Kim Jong Il and, at the same time, increase the power production at thermal power stations, step up the work to put the metal industry on a Juche basis and focus all efforts to farming work. The meeting underlined the need to take the behests of Kim Jong Il as the lifeline, key point, and thoroughly carry out them without an inch of deflection and concession. It called for turning out as one in the efforts to bring about **fundamental turn in improving the people's living standard**, channeling efforts into putting the metal industry on a Juche basis and increasing electricity power to effect a great surge in the production of all sectors of national economy. It advanced concrete tasks for learning major projects on a regular basis and supplying equipment, raw materials and funds in good time. The meeting adopted Cabinet decisions "'On correctly fulfilling on DPRK state budget for Juche 104 (2015),' ordinance of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly" and "On correctly fulfilling the cash distribution plan for Juche 104 (2015)." (KCNA, "Enlarged Plenary Meeting of DPRK Cabinet Held," April 26, 2105)

4/27/15

South Korea approved a private fertilizer shipment to North Korea for the first time in five years, flagging a possible easing of strict sanctions imposed on the North for the sinking of a naval vessel. The move came days after South Korea and the United States wrapped up their annual joint military exercises which are always accompanied by a rise in cross-border tensions. The Unification Ministry said it would allow Ace Gyeongnam, a South Korean aid group, to deliver farming materials, including 15 tonnes of fertilizer, for a greenhouse project in the North. But the Unification Ministry said approval of the fertilizer shipment should not be seen as a relaxation of the sanctions regime. "It's only a small amount of fertilizer and, because the particular organisation in this case was able to guarantee transparency on where and how it would be used, the government chose to approve the proposal," a ministry official told AFP. "The 2010 measures remain in place, but where transparency can be guaranteed and the aid is intended to improve the lives of North Korea residents, the government will let it happen," the official said. (AFP, "South Korea Allows First Fertilizer Aid to the North Since 2010 Sanctions," April 27, 2015)

Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee "The New Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, April 27, 2014: "1. OVERVIEW Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida, Minister of Defense Nakatani Gen, Secretary of State John Kerry, and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter convened the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC) in New York on April 27, 2015. In light of the evolving security environment, the Ministers reconfirmed the Alliance's commitment to the security of Japan and to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Ministers announced the approval and release of new, revised "Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation" (the Guidelines), which update the roles and missions of the two countries and promote a more balanced and effective Alliance to meet the

emerging security challenges of the 21st century. The Ministers discussed a variety of regional and global challenges, initiatives to enhance bilateral security and defense cooperation in various areas, promotion of enhanced regional cooperation, and moving forward on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan. As articulated in its 2015 National Security Strategy, the United States is actively implementing its rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. Central to this is the ironclad U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan, **through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, including nuclear and conventional.** Japan highly values U.S. engagement in the region. In this context, the Ministers reaffirmed the indispensable role of the Japan-U.S. Alliance in promoting regional peace, security, and prosperity. As Japan continues its policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace," based on the principle of international cooperation, the United States welcomes and supports Japan's recent monumental achievements. Among these are: the cabinet decision by the Government of Japan on July 1, 2014, for developing seamless security legislation; the creation of its National Security Council; the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology; the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets; the Basic Act on Cybersecurity; the new Basic Plan on Space Policy; and the Development Cooperation Charter. The Ministers affirmed that the Japan-U.S. Alliance, strengthened by the new Guidelines and the two countries' respective security and defense policies, continues to serve as the cornerstone of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region as well as a platform for promoting a more peaceful and stable international security environment. **The Ministers also reaffirmed that the Senkaku Islands are territories under the administration of Japan and therefore fall within the scope of the commitments under Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, and that they oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of these islands.**

2. THE NEW GUIDELINES FOR JAPAN-U.S. DEFENSE COOPERATION The Guidelines, which were first approved on November 27, 1978, and revised on September 23, 1997, have provided a general framework and policy direction for the roles and missions of the two countries, as well as ways of cooperation and coordination. At the SCC meeting in Tokyo on October 3, 2013, the Ministers shared views on the evolving security environment and directed the Subcommittee for Defense Cooperation (SDC) to draft recommended changes to the 1997 Guidelines to ensure that the Alliance continues its vital role in deterring conflict and advancing peace and security. Today, the SCC approved the SDC's recommended new Guidelines, which accomplishes the objectives outlined by the Ministers in October 2013. The new Guidelines, which replace the 1997 Guidelines, update the general framework and policy direction for the roles and missions of the two countries and manifest a strategic vision for a more robust Alliance and greater shared responsibilities by modernizing the Alliance and enhancing its deterrence and response capabilities in all phases, from peacetime to contingencies. Recognizing the significance of ensuring consistency between the new Guidelines and Japan's efforts to develop seamless security legislation, the Ministers acknowledged that such legislation would make bilateral efforts under the new Guidelines more effective. The United States welcomes and supports the ongoing efforts to develop the legislation, which is to reflect Japan's policy of "Proactive Contributions to Peace" and its July 2014 cabinet decision. The core of the Guidelines

continues to be the steadfast commitment to Japan's peace and security. The new Guidelines detail the ways and means through which the two governments continue to strengthen their ability to fulfill that commitment through seamless, robust, flexible, and effective Alliance responses while expanding bilateral cooperation across a range of other areas, such as: Alliance Coordination Mechanism: **Under the new Guidelines the two countries are establishing a standing, whole-of-government mechanism for Alliance coordination, enabling a seamless response in all phases, from peacetime to contingencies.** Regional and Global Cooperation: **The new Guidelines enable the Alliance to make greater contributions to international security initiatives wherever appropriate in a way consistent with Japanese laws and regulations, such as peacekeeping operations, maritime security, and logistic support.** The Ministers reiterated the importance of cooperating with regional and other partners as well as with international organizations. New Strategic Cooperation: A dynamic world requires a modern Alliance, and the new Guidelines lay a foundation for the two countries to cooperate in space and cyberspace and in conducting operations intended to have effects across domains. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: The new Guidelines describe ways the two governments can work together to improve further the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation in responding to a large-scale disaster in Japan or around the world. A Strong Foundation: The new Guidelines also describe programs and activities that pay dividends in every aspect of bilateral cooperation, including defense equipment and technology cooperation, intelligence cooperation and information security, and educational and research exchanges. The Ministers confirmed their intention to start bilateral work under the new Guidelines. In this context, the SCC directed the SDC to implement the new Guidelines, including establishing the standing Alliance Coordination Mechanism and upgrading the Bilateral Planning Mechanism, thereby strengthening bilateral planning. The Ministers also expressed their intention to negotiate expeditiously an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement to operationalize the mutual logistics cooperation envisioned by the new Guidelines.

3. BILATERAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE COOPERATION

The Ministers noted with satisfaction ongoing progress to strengthen the Alliance's deterrence and response capabilities by enhancing bilateral security and defense cooperation in a variety of areas. The Ministers: confirmed the strategic importance of deploying the most modern and advanced U.S. capabilities to Japan, which enhances Alliance deterrence and contributes to the security of Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the deployment of U.S. Navy P-8 maritime patrol aircraft to Kadena Air Base, the rotational deployment of U.S. Air Force Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles to Misawa Air Base, the deployment of the USS Green Bay, an upgraded amphibious transport ship, and U.S. plans to deploy Marine Corps F-35B aircraft to Japan in 2017. In addition, the Ministers welcomed U.S. plans to deploy additional Aegis ships to Yokosuka Naval Base by 2017, as well as the swap-out of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington with the more advanced USS Ronald Reagan later this year; committed to continued engagement through the bilateral Extended Deterrence Dialogue, which reinforces the credibility of the U.S. defense commitment to Japan, including through discussion of nuclear and conventional capabilities; **stressed the importance of sustained cooperation in enhancing Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) capabilities, particularly the deployment of a second AN/TPY-2 radar (X-band radar) system to**

Kyogamisaki in December 2014 and the planned deployment of two additional BMD-capable destroyers to Japan by 2017. Working in concert, these assets are to directly contribute to the defense of Japan and the United States; highlighted enhanced collaboration on space security, particularly in the areas of resiliency and developing capabilities, through the whole-of-government Japan-U.S. Comprehensive Dialogue on Space and the Space Security Dialogue. The Ministers also highlighted increased cooperation resulting from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's provision of space situational awareness (SSA) information to the United States, as well as the establishment of a new framework to discuss space-related issues between the two defense authorities;

called for continued progress in cooperation on cyberspace issues, particularly in the areas of threat information sharing, mission assurance, and critical infrastructure protection, through the whole-of-government Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue and the Cyber Defense Policy Working Group; lauded enhanced Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) cooperation, particularly the rotational deployment of U.S. Air Force Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles to Misawa Air Base and Japan's plans to procure advanced ISR platforms; praised expanded logistics and defense equipment cooperation, as reflected by Japan's new Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and the recent U.S. decision to establish an F-35 regional maintenance, repair, overhaul, and upgrade capability in Japan. The Ministers highlighted strengthened defense equipment cooperation through the linkage of the Systems and Technology Forum and the Alliance Roles, Missions, and Capabilities dialogue, which facilitates joint research and development of advanced capabilities; and affirmed the importance of enhanced information security cooperation, as reflected by continued progress through the Bilateral Information Security Consultations and by Japan's implementation of the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets. As a result of this legislation, the Government of Japan has put in place the policies, practices, and procedures necessary to facilitate the secure exchange of sensitive information in peacetime and during contingencies. In addition, the Ministers affirmed that host nation support has demonstrated continued Japanese support for the forward-deployed presence of U.S. forces in Japan, which contributes to Japan's peace and security in an increasingly complex security environment. The Ministers, noting that the current host nation support commitment, as stipulated in June 2011 SCC documents, expires in March 2016, expressed their intention to start consultations on future arrangements to provide an appropriate level of host nation support. Recognizing the expanding scope of bilateral activities, the Ministers affirmed their intent to consider at the earliest opportunity an appropriate bilateral consultation framework that would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Alliance management processes.

4. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Recognizing the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the cornerstone of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region as well as a platform for promoting a more peaceful and stable international security environment, the Ministers highlighted recent progress in the following areas: Increased cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief operations, as reflected by close coordination in responding to the November 2013 typhoon in the Philippines; Continued close coordination on partner capacity building, particularly in Southeast Asia, including through the provision of coastal patrol vessels and other maritime security capacity building endeavors; and Expanded trilateral and

multilateral cooperation, particularly with key partners such as the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Australia, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The Ministers highlighted the recent signing of a trilateral information sharing arrangement with the ROK concerning the nuclear and missile threats posed by North Korea, and resolved to utilize the framework as the foundation for expanded trilateral cooperation into the future. The Ministers also affirmed their intention to pursue closer cooperation with Australia on capacity building activities in Southeast Asia, and on security and defense issues through the Security and Defense Cooperation Forum. 5.

REALIGNMENT OF U.S. FORCES IN JAPAN The Ministers reaffirmed the two governments' continued commitment to implement the existing arrangements on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan as soon as possible, while ensuring operational capability, including training capability, throughout the process. The Ministers underscored their commitment to maintaining a robust and flexible force posture that enhances deterrence by strengthening the capability to respond effectively to future challenges and threats, while also mitigating the impact of U.S. forces on local communities. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the relocation of the KC-130 squadron from Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to MCAS Iwakuni and confirmed their commitment to continue aviation training relocation, including to locations outside of Okinawa, through efforts such as the development of training areas and facilities. As an essential element of this effort, the Ministers reconfirmed that the plan to construct the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) at the Camp Schwab-Henokosaki area and adjacent waters is the only solution that addresses operational, political, financial, and strategic concerns and avoids the continued use of MCAS Futenma. The Ministers reaffirmed the two governments' unwavering commitment to the plan and underscored their strong determination to achieve its completion and the long-desired return of MCAS Futenma to Japan. The United States welcomes the steady and continuing progress of FRF construction projects. The Ministers also reconfirmed the importance of land returns south of Kadena Air Base based on the 2006 "Roadmap" and the April 2013 Consolidation Plan, and reiterated the two governments' determination to work continuously on the implementation of the plan and anticipated the update of the plan by Spring 2016. The Ministers highlighted the on-time return of the West Futenma Housing Area of Camp Zukeran on March 31 of this year, which marked the most significant land return completed to date in accordance with the plan. The Ministers confirmed that the two governments are steadily implementing the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to locations outside of Japan, including Guam, based upon the amended Guam International Agreement. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation to protect the environment and confirmed the importance of making further efforts in environmental matters. To that end, the Ministers welcomed progress on a supplementary Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship and confirmed their intention to continue negotiating the ancillary documents of the Agreement as expeditiously as possible."

NSC senior director for Asian affairs Evan Medeiros supported this assessment during an on-the-record briefing at the Foreign Press Center to preview Abe's visit to the U.S. Asked by the *Korea Times*, "When President Obama meets Prime Minister Abe, will he offer a new kind of approach to the North Korean nuclear issue, or are they just going

to confirm the same approach of staying the course, doing nothing, unless and until North Korea shows something different?," Medeiros replied: "Our approach is not doing nothing. I've never liked the term 'strategic patience' because it implies passivity. We've had a very active approach to North Korea. First and foremost, it begins with the priority on denuclearization. It begins with the premise of holding North Korea to account for its international obligations ... numerous UN resolutions. It begins with the premise of strong unity between the U.S. and five parties of the six-party talks to ensure North Korea keeps its obligations. So it's a practical approach. We don't believe in talks for talks' sake because North Korea wants them. We need to see some signs that there is their seriousness in purpose to denuclearization. This is our basic approach. There is broad agreement with Japan that this approach is the right one." (Tong Kim, "No Change in U.S. Policy on North Korean Nuclear Issue," *Korea Times*, April 28, 2015)

4/28/15

Rodong Sinmun: "Ill-famed Foal Eagle joint military exercise kicked off by the south Korean warmongers with the U.S. came to an end on April 24. This saber-rattling seriously affected the inter-Korean relations and the situation on the Korean peninsula. ... Their muscle flexing taught a serious lesson that neither dialogue nor negotiations nor improved relations are possible under the situation where the U.S. and south Korean puppet group stage military exercises for invading the DPRK. ... Dialogue can never go together with war exercises. **There is in south Korea a rumor that the end of Foal Eagle would help defuse the tension and pave the way for dialogue. However, it is too early to expect dialogue, cooperation and improved relations now that the south Korean authorities show no willingness to terminate the military exercises with the U.S. They plan to stage Ulji Freedom Guardian military drills in south Korea from coming August which is little short of Key Resolve and Foal Eagle.** It is the height of shamelessness for the south Korean authorities to talk about "dialogue and cooperation", feigning ignorance of the dangerous saber-rattling staged by them with the U.S. to carry out their sinister scenario for invading the DPRK. They should draw a due lesson from the catastrophic consequences entailed by their reckless military exercises against the DPRK and make a bold decision to put an end to them before talking about "dialogue." They had better behave themselves, facing up to the trend of the times and the desire of the compatriots." (KCNA, "Inter-Korean Dialogue Impossible amid Ceaseless Saber-Rattling: *Rodong Sinmun*," April 28, 2015)

4/29/15

ISIS: "In October 2014, ISIS assessed that the 5 MWe reactor at Yongbyon in North Korea, was shut down or partially shut down for either partial refueling or renovations. This assessment derived from the analysis of satellite imagery dated September and October 2014, which showed no steam venting from the turbine building and no visible water being discharged from the secondary cooling system's discharge pipeline (the most important external signatures related to the operation of the reactor). The absence of these two important signatures was also noted in imagery dated December 1, 2014. Subsequent Airbus and Digital Globe high resolution images dated January 19, February 6, March 20, and April 15, 2015 do not show clear evidence that the reactor has resumed full power operation. However, the presence of snow and ice in the January and February images allow the observation of some additional signatures that suggest that the reactor may be operating at low power or

operating intermittently. This assessment of partial operation derives from the analysis of melting snow patterns on the reactor and turbine buildings. On January 19, 2015, the site was covered in snow and there is very little indication of any melting, which could imply that it either recently snowed or the temperatures were too low for widespread melting. However, on February 6, 2015, the snow had melted in very specific areas at the site. For example, the snow on the roof of the 5MWe reactor had melted in an irregular manner compared to the snow on surrounding roofs. This irregular melting could be caused by the combined effect of sun and heat from the inside of the building. In addition, little snow is present on the roof of the reactor's turbine building, again indicating that the inside of the building could be hot and therefore melting the snow on the roof. Another important signature visible in the January 19 and February 6, 2015, images is the presence of a weak stream of warm water being discharged from the 5MWe reactor's discharge pipeline, which was identified when the reactor was operating prior to September 2014. It is important to note that this weak stream of water could have been present also in previous imagery but is only visible now because of the presence of snow and ice. The presence of this water signifies that the 5MWe reactor's secondary cooling system is active. The secondary cooling system intakes water to cool the carbon dioxide gas heated by the reactor's operation. However, determining whether it is active for low power operation or simply operating intermittently is not possible from the image. In the March 20 and April 15, 2015 images, an outflow of water is not visible at the discharge point mentioned above. But a weak stream of warm water could be present but not visible without the presence of ice and snow. Another piece of evidence possibly suggesting operation involves the turbine building which may be emitting steam at the time of the February 6, 2015 image. There is an irregular white shape, consistent with a small batch of steam, visible on the turbine building roof beside the two original vents. Because several months have gone by since a clear discharge of water from the 5 MWe reactor was visible, ISIS has been looking for alternative water discharge locations. North Korea may have decided to change the manner or location in which it discharges the water from the 5MWe reactor's secondary cooling system. Based on the analysis of recent imagery, two possible discharge locations are noted. The first one can be seen in January and February 2015 winter images and is located slightly down river from the known discharge point on the river bank. Its exact purpose, however, is unknown. It is plausible that this pipeline may be connected to the other activities at the reactor site. The second possible discharge location is on the other side of the reactors and involves two artificial water canals. Although the precise origin of the water is unknown, the two canals seem to originate from the top half of the reactor site, which is where the 5 MWe reactor is located. The two canals converge and then flow under a road toward what may be a small pump house before ending at the river. A historic analysis shows that the canals were created at the time when light water reactor (LWR) construction started (note that the 5 MWe reactor's cooling tower had also been destroyed). Also, the water in these canals was not always present. For example, in January 2013 there was water only in one of the two canals while in January and April 2015 water is present in both. The fact that water is visible in winter imagery (with snow and ice) suggests that the water is either flowing or is warm." (David Albright and Serena Kelleher-Vergantini, *Yongbyon: A Better Insight into the Status of the 5MWe Reactor*, Institute for Science and International Security, April 29, 2015)

Kim Jong-un ordered the execution of 15 senior officials this year as punishment for challenging his authority, South Korea's spy agency told a closed-door parliament meeting. A vice minister for forestry was one of the officials executed for complaining about a state policy, a member of parliament's intelligence committee, Shin Kyung-min, quoted an unnamed National Intelligence Service official as saying. "Excuses or reasoning doesn't work for Kim Jong-un, and his style of rule is to push through everything, and if there's any objection, he takes that as a challenge to authority and comes back with execution as a showcase," Shin said. "In the four months this year, fifteen senior officials are said to have been executed," Shin cited the intelligence official as saying, according to his office. (Jack Kim and Jung-min Park, "North Korea's Kim Ordered 15 Executions This Year: South's Spy Agency," Reuters, April 29, 2015)

American lives lost in the Second World War were "sacrifices in defending freedom," Abe Shinzo told the US Congress in an emotive speech that nonetheless stopped short of the reckoning with history his critics have called for. As the first Japanese prime minister to address a joint session of Congress, Abe mentioned Pearl Harbor, where Japan's surprise attack began the Pacific war; and Bataan Corregidor, a battle followed by a death march of US prisoners. But Abe, whose conservative nationalism causes unease in northeast Asia and occasionally in Washington, offered no direct apology. His speech on Wednesday gave little sense that any part of Japan's wartime history required a special reckoning. Abe said that "our actions brought suffering to the peoples in Asian countries" and that he would uphold official statements made by previous prime ministers about Japan's wartime record. "History is harsh. What is done cannot be undone," said Mr Abe. "I offer with profound respect my eternal condolences to the souls of all American people that were lost during World War Two." Abe's reticence about wartime actions has been criticised by some US politicians. "For the interest of geopolitical stability, not to mention for historical accuracy, I think it's important for the government of Japan to be more forward-leaning in the pronouncements they're making," Republican senator and presidential candidate Marco Rubio said. Mr Abe's speech was sharply criticized by some Democratic members of Congress. Mike Honda, a House member from California, said it was "shocking and shameful" that he "continues to evade his government's responsibility . . . for the so-called 'comfort women'." Judy Chu, another California Democrat, said she was "incredibly disappointed that he failed to directly address the problem of comfort women." (Robin Harding and Geoff Dyer, "Abe Stops Short of Apology in Congress," *Financial Times*, April 30, 2015)

The ruling party won surprise victories in three out of four National Assembly by-elections despite a snowballing scandal engulfing President Park Geun-hye's inner circle, while the main opposition party suffered a crushing defeat across the board after struggling with independent liberal rivals. Four vacancies in the legislature were filled through the by-elections including three districts previously controlled by the now-disbanded leftist Unified Progressive Party: Gwanak B in Seoul, Jungwon in Seongnam, Gyeonggi, and Seo B in Gwangju. The fourth seat – Ganghwa B in Incheon's Seo District – was formerly controlled by the ruling Saenuri Party. The ruling party added three more seats to its 157 majority in the 300-seat National Assembly. And in the fourth district in Gwangju, Chun Jung-bae, a former veteran lawmaker of

the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy (NPAD), won the race. He ran as an independent. Since three of the four constituencies were traditional liberal turfs, initial expectations were that the NPAD would score easy victories. But the main opposition party failed to keep unity in the liberal camp and its candidates ended up running against other liberal rivals running as independents. The failure was particularly serious in Seoul's Gwanak B constituency and Gwangju's Seo B. In Gwanak B, six candidates ran: the Saenuri's Oh Shin-hwa, the NPAD's Jeong Tae-ho and also Chung Dong-young, who left the main opposition party earlier this year to establish his own political group. Two of the other three trailing candidates were conservative and one was liberal. Chung is a major political player who ran in the 2007 presidential election as the opposition candidate but suffered a crushing defeat against Lee Myung-bak. As the liberal votes were split between Jeong and Chung, the Saenuri's Oh won the race in Gwanak B. Cho Young-teck, the NPAD candidate in Gwangju's Seo B district, faced even a tougher liberal rival - Chun, a former justice minister and four-time lawmaker. Chun left the NPAD last month to run as an independent, refusing to compete in the internal primary of the NPAD. Although Gwangju is a traditional stronghold of the NPAD, liberal votes were split between Cho and Chun. The Saenuri Party's Shin Sang-jin, a doctor-turned-lawmaker, won a victory for the ruling party in Jungwon in Seongnam, Gyeonggi, against his NPAD rival Chung Hwan-suk. In Ganghwa B in Incheon's Seo District, Ahn Sang-soo, former Incheon mayor, won the race against his NPAD contender Shin Dong-geun. (Ser Myo-ja, "NPAD Crushed in All 4 By-Elections," *JoongAng Ilbo*, April 30, 2015)

4/30/15

Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea, will not attend a celebration in Moscow in May of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany, a top Russian official said. Dmitri S. Peskov, President Vladimir V. Putin's spokesman, said that Moscow had learned of Mr. Kim's decision through "diplomatic channels," and that the tentative plans were canceled because of "internal Korean affairs," the Interfax news agency reported. (Andrew Roth, "Kim Jong-un Won't Attend WWII Celebration in Moscow," *New York Times*, April 30, 2015)

South Korea denounced Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo for his failure to apologize for Japan's wartime atrocities, saying he thwarted chances to mend ties with Seoul. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said he should have used the occasion to show "righteous history perceptions." Although he expressed "deep remorse" over Japan's conduct during World War II and said he "upholds" apologies by his predecessors, he did not offer his own apology. He made no direct mention of Japan's sexual enslavement of many Korean, Chinese and other Asian women for its troops. If he did so, it could have become a "turning point" toward genuine reconciliation and cooperation with South Korea and other countries, the ministry said in a statement. "It's very regrettable that there were no such perceptions and a sincere apology." If Japan wants to contribute to world peace, its leaders should try to win international trust through an apology for the past, it said. "But Japan is going in the opposite direction." (By Lee Chi-dong, "S. Korea Says Abe's Speech 'Very Regrettable,'" *Yonhap*, April 30, 2015)

South Korea will try to mend ties with Japan over history rows this year, a senior aide to President Park Geun-hye said, stressing the need to enhance security ties between Seoul, Washington and Tokyo amid rising threats from nuclear-armed North Korea. The comments by Ju Chul-ki, senior presidential secretary for foreign affairs, came after hopes were dashed that Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo would change his course to apologize for Japan's wartime atrocities during his trip to the United States this week. "We are making efforts with Japan to seek solutions to history matters," Ju said in a forum organized by the state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) in Seoul. "We are determined to resolve (pending issues) regarding the Seoul-Tokyo relations within this year, while separating security issues from history," he stressed, without elaboration on how to achieve the goal. (Oh Seok-min, "S. Korea Seeks Better Ties with Japan: Cheong Wa Dae," Yonhap, April 30, 2015)

DPRK FoMin spokesman: "Diplomatic and military authorities of the United States and Japan held a security meeting on April 27 to revise the "U.S.-Japan defense cooperation guidelines." In the new "guidelines" the U.S. set major five sectors for security cooperation with Japan ranging from "peace time" to "contingency," calling for such strengthened role of the Japan "Self-Defense Forces" (SDF) as ballistic missile interception, logistic support to the U.S. forces worldwide, guarantee of maritime security, search and mine sweeping, non-proliferation of WMDs, inspection of vessels and anti-terrorism operation. After all the U.S. expanded to the whole world the sphere of SDF's activities, which had been limited to the vicinity of Japan, and made it possible to get military support from Japan during its military operation in any part of the world. ... What cannot be overlooked is the fact that the U.S. pulled up the DPRK, contending that the revision was needed to "deter any provocative action" of the latter. ...The U.S. asserted that the revised "guidelines" are to cope with "threat" from the DPRK. But it is the ulterior objective of the U.S. to lessen its heavy burden of military spending with the strengthened role of SDF, use Japan as a shock brigade for realizing its ambition for world supremacy, encircle and contain its rivals in Eurasia by force of arms and maintain its hegemonic position. The U.S. has fanned up Japan's revival of militarism to attain its goal, in disregard of the world concern over the latter's attempt to embellish and deny the past history. The strengthened U.S.-Japan military alliance will inevitably harass the stability of Northeast Asia, foment confrontation and friction in the region and spark off disputes and arms race. No matter how the structure of relations among neighboring countries may change, the DPRK will invariably hold fast to the Songun politics and the line of simultaneously developing the two fronts and bolster up its capabilities for self-defense with the nuclear deterrent as a pivot unless the U.S. gives up its hostile policy aimed to stifle the former." (KCNA, "DPRK FM Spokesman on Revised 'U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines,'" April 30, 2015)

A U.S.-organized event on North Korea's human rights briefly turned into chaos at the U.N. on as North Korean diplomats insisted on reading a statement of protest, amid shouts from defectors, and then stormed out. The U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Samantha Power, tried to quiet the diplomats at the event that featured more than 20 defectors. She called North Korea's statements "totally self-discrediting." The North Korean diplomats did not comment as they left the chamber after diplomat Ri Song Chol read out a statement in protest of the event, even as North Korean defectors

stood and shouted in their faces. Defectors stood up and shouted in Korean as Power and others called for calm and a U.N. security team assembled. An observer who speaks Korean said the shouts included "Shut up!" "Free North Korea!" "Down with Kim Jong-un!" and "Even animals know to wait their turn." "There is no need for a microphone," Power said as one North Korean diplomat persisted in reading out a statement that referred to "ungrounded allegations" and "hostile policy" toward his country. A microphone was briefly turned on for the diplomats. Power continued: "Please shut the mike down because this is not an authorized presentation. ... Please ensure that the microphone is not live. ... We are calling U.N. security." As soon as the North Korean diplomat stopped talking and the next featured defector, Jay Jo, started speaking, the North Korean diplomats stood and walked out. (Cara Anna, "North Korean Diplomats Cause Chaos at UN Event on Rights," Associated Press, April 30, 2015)

5/1/15 South Korea said it will help spur civilian exchanges with North Korea to mark the 70th anniversary of their liberation from Japan's colonial rule. The Ministry of Unification said it will encourage civilian groups to boost inter-Korean exchanges in such areas as culture, sports and history to help "restore national unity and open channels for cooperation." "Seoul expects that more exchanges and cooperation will pave the way for broadening mutual understanding and improving inter-Korean relations," said a ministry official. He said that private groups have made more requests for inter-Korean exchanges as a joint military drill between South Korea and the United States ended last week. Inter-Korean exchanges have been suspended since 2010, when Seoul imposed punitive sanctions on North Korea by banning economic and cultural exchanges to punish the North's torpedoing of the South Korean warship Cheonan in March of that year. (Yonhap, "Seoul to Boost Inter-Korean Civilian Exchanges," May 1, 2015)

5/2/15 *Rodong Sinmun* commentary: "Recently the U.S. and south Korean puppet forces concluded the negotiations for revising the "atomic energy agreement." Under this agreement south Korea is allowed to enrich uranium and reprocess the spent nuclear fuel. ...The revised "agreement," the U.S. criminal act of paving the way for south Korea's nuclear weaponization, is little short of a dangerous gambling as it escalates the nuclear arms race and increases the danger of a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula and in the rest of Northeast Asia to an extreme pitch. By revising the "agreement" the U.S. made south Korean puppet forces' development of nukes legal, self-exposing that it is the main nuclear proliferator and the arch criminal creating a nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. ...The U.S. and south Korean puppet forces should be brought to justice for their nuclear proliferation but they are pulling up the DPRK over its "nuclear threat" and "nuclear proliferation." This is like a thief crying "Stop the thief!" **The prevailing grave situation once again goes to prove that the DPRK took a just option to consolidate nuclear deterrence for self-defense as firm as a rock**, guided by its own viewpoint and faith. The U.S. and south Korean puppet forces have neither qualifications nor face to take issue with the DPRK's measures for bolstering up its nuclear deterrence." (KCNA, "U.S. Denounced for Paving Way for S. Korea's Nuclear Weaponization," May 2, 2015)

KCNA: "South Korean resident in the U.S. Won Moon Joo, 21, student of New York University, was arrested while illegally entering the DPRK after crossing the Amnok River from Dandong, China on April 22. He is a permanent resident in 56 C Westervelt Avenue, Tenafly, New Jersey, U.S. He is now under investigation by a competent institution of the DPRK. He admitted that his illegal entry was a serious violation of the law of the DPRK." (KCNA, "South Korean Permanent Resident in U.S. Arrested for His Illegal Entry into DPRK," May 2, 2015) "I wanted to be arrested," Joo told a CNN reporter, looking relaxed and even smiling as he walked into a conference room at Pyongyang's Koryo Hotel for the interview. He told CNN he had crossed two barbed-wire fences and walked through farmland until he reached a large river. He followed the river until soldiers arrested him. "I thought that by my entrance to the DPRK (North Korea), illegally I acknowledge, I thought that some great event could happen and hopefully that event could have a good effect on the relations between the North and (South Korea)," Joo said, without elaborating on the event. "I hope that I will be able to tell the world how an ordinary college student entered the DPRK illegally but however with the generous treatment of the DPRK that I will be able to return home safely," he said. (AFP, "NYU Student Held in N. Korea Says He 'Wanted to Be Arrested,'" May 5, 2015)

5/3/15

Kim Jong-Un vowed to launch more "satellites" in order to become a space power, state media said, despite global condemnation on past launches, dubbed disguised ballistic missile tests. Kim, during a visit to the North's newly-built satellite command center, urged scientists to work harder to "further glorify the (North) as a space power," state-run KCNA said. "The status of the (North) as a satellite producer-launcher remains unchanged though the hostile forces deny it and its space development can never be abandoned, no matter who may oppose," Kim was quoted as saying. (AFP, "N. Korea's Kim Vows More Satellite Launches," May 3, 2015) KCNA: "Kim Jong-un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, first chairman of the DPRK National Defence Commission and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA), inspected the newly-built General Satellite Control Centre of the National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA). The successful construction of the centre as a monumental edifice in the era of the Workers' Party provided a solid springboard **for continued launch of various working satellites** essential for the country's sci-tech and economic development **and national defense**. ... The status of the DPRK as a satellite producer-launcher remains unchanged though the hostile forces deny it and its space development can never be abandoned, no matter who may oppose, he said.

Satellites of Juche Korea will as ever be launched into outer space at the time and locations set by the Party Central Committee, he added. **He expressed great expectation and belief that the scientists and technicians of the NADA would bring about a fresh turn in space scientific research and satellite launch.**" (KCNA, "Kim Joing-un Visits Newly-Built General Satellite Control Center," May 3, 2015)

Two South Koreans awaiting trial in North Korea on espionage charges have admitted to spying for Seoul in interviews with CNN in Pyongyang conducted in the presence of North Korean minders. The television news network said it had been unable to independently verify the accounts provided by the two men, who were interviewed separately in different rooms of a Pyongyang hotel today. Although both Kim Kuk-Gi

and Choe Chun-Gil claimed they had not been coerced or coached on what to say, CNN noted that their accounts were "strikingly similar." (AFP, "South Koreans Detained in the North Say They Spied for Seoul: CNN," May 3, 2015)

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's recent revocation of his anticipated visit to Russia may have resulted from Moscow's lukewarm response to Pyongyang's plans to purchase its air defense missile systems, a news report said Saturday. Hong Kong's Phoenix TV cited a Russian defense expert, reporting that the North floated a proposal to purchase four sets of Russia's S-300 long-range surface-to-air missile systems during a visit by Hyon Yong-chol, minister of the People's Armed Forces, to Moscow last month to take part in an international security conference. The fully-automated equipment was first deployed by the former Soviet Union in the late 1970s to defend its airspace, military bases and industrial and administrative facilities against aircraft and cruise missiles. But Moscow declined Pyongyang's offer of barter in favor of cash, and indicated that it could upset the "strategic balance" in the region and thus needs the consent of China and other neighbors, the expert was quoted as saying. The report came shortly after the Kremlin announced that the Kim regime had delivered via diplomatic channels his decision to back out of what would have been his first overseas trip since taking power in December 2011, citing "domestic affairs." The trip was chiefly designed to attend a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II on May 9 and on its sidelines to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. While Beijing has apparently leaned toward lingering uncertainties until the last minute, some Seoul officials also raised the possibility that the young ruler had indeed planned to go but did an about-face after certain demands were not met. Meanwhile, Kim has inspected a new satellite control and command in charge of rocket launches, calling space development a "critical task" for the people and vowing to carry on the project, the North's official media reported Sunday. Run by the National Aerospace Development Administration, the 13,770-square-meter facility is responsible for satellite launches and consists of chambers to show the entire launch process in real time, a control room, observatory, e-library and other spaces. "Peaceful space development is an option taken by our party and people and a legitimate right of Songun (military first) Korea," Kim said. "The status of (North Korea) as a satellite producer-launcher remains unchanged though the hostile forces deny it and its space development can never be abandoned, no matter who may oppose." (Shin Hyon-hee, "Kim Nixed Russia Trip after Failed Missile Buy: Report," *Korea Herald*, May 3, 2015)

5/4/15

The South Korean government approved a plan by civic groups to meet North Koreans this week to discuss joint events. The five-member delegation from a related coalition plans to hold two-day talks starting tomorrow in the Chinese city of Shenyang. The meeting is to prepare for inter-Korean ceremonies to mark the 15th anniversary of the June 15 Joint Declaration and the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's colonial rule. "The government has permitted the planned meeting only," an official at the Ministry of Unification said. "It will be decided later whether to approve joint events, depending on the results of the consultations." (Yonhap, "S. Korea OKs Civilian Meeting with N. Korea on Joint Events," May 4, 2015)

5/5/15

Hwang Joon-kook, Seoul's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, arrived in Washington earlier in the day for talks with Ambassador Sung Kim, special representative for North Korea policy, and other U.S. officials. Details of Hwang's discussions with Kim were not immediately available, but a State Department spokesperson said they had "a very productive discussion on a wide range of issues related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Upon arrival in Washington, Hwang said the current situation is "fluid." "We will exchange assessments of the situation with each other and discuss the direction of our response. In particular, we will focus our discussions on how to move forward 'exploratory talks' and denuclearization talks," Hwang told reporters at the airport. The term "exploratory talks" refers to a compromise form of negotiations aimed at meeting both Pyongyang's demand for unconditional resumption of talks and U.S. insistence that any formal negotiations should begin only after Pyongyang takes concrete steps demonstrating its denuclearization commitment. (Yonhap, "S. Korean, U.S. Nuclear Envoys Discuss 'Exploratory Talks' with N. Korea," May 5, 2015) North Korea's five nuclear dialogue partners are now ready to hold "exploratory talks" with Pyongyang without any preconditions to test the communist nation's denuclearization commitment before resuming formal negotiations. "As a result of close consultations among the five parties, there is a degree of consensus formed on conditions for the resumption of six-party talks. Based on this, we're pushing for unconditional exploratory talks," Hwang told South Korean correspondents. The term "exploratory talks" refers to a compromise form of negotiations aimed at meeting both Pyongyang's demand for an unconditional resumption of talks and the U.S. insistence that any formal negotiations should begin only after Pyongyang takes concrete steps demonstrating its denuclearization commitment. Exploratory talks can take any format, multilateral or bilateral, Hwang said. "As exploratory talks are to confirm North Korea's intentions, **we will hold meetings without conditions** and confirm the North's sincerity," he said. "What's important is for a responsible person from North Korea to come and listen to what we intend to say and show the North's response." Hwang also held talks with Daniel Glaser, the Treasury's assistant secretary for terrorist financing, and discussed sanctions imposed on North Korea. He left for Beijing later Tuesday for talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei. (Chang Jae-soon, "Seoul's Nuclear Envoy Says No Precondition for 'Exploratory Talks' with North Korea," Yonhap, May 6, 2015)

Trade volume between the two Koreas reached an all-time high last year despite the May 24, 2010, punitive sanctions on North Korea, data by Seoul's Unification Ministry showed. Inter-Korean trade surged 106.2 percent on-year to reach \$2.34 billion. The rise was largely attributed to businesses at Kaesong industrial park in the North's border town. The volume of exchanges is expected to grow as the Seoul government recently announced it would allow social and cultural interchanges with the North on the municipality and humanitarian levels this year. (*Korea Herald*, "Inter-Korean Exchanges," May 5, 2015)

5/5-6/15

Civilian representatives from South and North Korea held preparatory talks in Shenyang, China on plans to jointly celebrate the 15th anniversary of a historic inter-Korean summit after Seoul eased some cross-border exchanges. The meeting, held in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang, marks the first time in five years that the

two sides have discussed the joint celebration. Last week, South Korea said it will actively support inter-Korean exchanges in sports, culture and other civilian programs. This year marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule, as well as the division of the two Koreas. The anniversary commemorates the June 2000 summit between then-South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and then-North Korean leader Kim Jong-il that produced a landmark agreement, the June 15 Joint Declaration, which outlines reconciliation and economic cooperation between the two sides that have yet to officially culminate the 1950-1953 Korean War. The conflict ended in a truce. If the talks are successful, the two Koreas would hold joint events in Seoul on June 14-16, according to South Korean officials. The South Korean Council for the Implementation of the June 15 Joint Declaration dispatched its eight-member delegation with the approval of the Unification Ministry. Lee Seung-hwan, who attended the Shenyang meeting as the head of the Civil Society Organizations Networks in Korea for the South side, said he was cautious about the meeting's outcome. "Both the preparatory committee and government are cautious," Lee said, adding, "It is difficult to predict" the outcome of the closed-door meeting. A North Korean delegate also declined to give an answer to a question about the prospects of the meeting, saying, "Stop it." The Unification Ministry said it will encourage civilian groups to boost inter-Korean exchanges in such areas as culture, sports and history to help "restore national unity and open channels for cooperation." "Seoul expects that more exchanges and cooperation will pave the way for broadening mutual understanding and improving inter-Korean relations," said a ministry official, asking not to be named. He said that private groups have made more requests for inter-Korean exchanges as a joint military drill between South Korea and the United States ended on April 24. The discussion comes amid a second trial run of a joint logistics project between the two Koreas and Russia, fueling speculation that Seoul may lift its May 24 economic sanctions against Pyongyang. Under the unification ministry's supervision, 140,000 tons of bituminous coal produced in Siberia will be shipped to South Korea by May 9 via the Russian border town of Khasan and Rajin, a port city in North Korea. The shipment will be made to three port cities -- Dangjin and Boryeong in South Chungcheong Province, and Gwangyang in South Jeolla Province. The trial run this month follows the previous one in December, when some 45,000 tons of bituminous coal was transported to Pohang, North Gyeongsang Province, after traveling a 54-kilometer cross-border railway between Khasan and Rajin. On April 17, Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo voiced hope that strained inter-Korean relations will begin to thaw in the near future. The North has not responded to Seoul's offer for dialogue, citing the joint exercise between Seoul and Washington. In late April, the ministry unveiled plans to hold a soccer game and "ssireum," or traditional Korean wrestling matches, with Pyongyang. Other projects being pursued include performances involving musicians from the two Koreas and academic events, as well as an ongoing program to publish a joint dictionary of their language. Seoul will also permit journalists to visit North Korea to cover a variety of events to be pursued by civilian groups. The ministry will allow more private organizations to increase humanitarian assistance to North Korea by easing standards for donor eligibility and expanding the scope of aid. As part of such efforts, Seoul plans to tap more inter-Korean cooperative funds to support people-to-people exchanges. In this connection, South Korea's provincial governments on May 3 unveiled plans to resume long-suspended aid to and

exchange projects with North Korea under a new inter-Korean reconciliation policy by the Park Geun-hye government. Gyeonggi Province, which surrounds Seoul, has been in talks with the ministry and other relevant organizations to resume three projects with North Korea, officials said. One project aims to preserve traditional Korean houses, known as "hanok," in North Korea's border city of Kaesong, while the others deal with drawing up joint preventive measures against malaria and building a joint tree nursery. North Jeolla Province, which has carried out large-scale projects to support North Korea's agricultural and livestock industries, will also consider ways to resume cross-border projects, officials there said. South Jeolla Province, located on the southwestern tip of the Korean Peninsula, is focusing on promoting exchanges with North Hamgyong Province at the northern tip. Following the ministry's announcement, the South Jeolla government has begun to study ways to send seaweed and rice to mothers and underprivileged children in North Hamgyong. "As the government has allowed the expansion of aid projects for the North, we will confidently make active efforts," a South Jeolla government official said. Officials in the southern port city of Busan welcomed the Park administration's new policy, citing their interest in participating in a logistics project involving the two Koreas and Russia. If the project succeeds, South Korea will be able to ship goods from Busan to the North Korean city of Rajin, where a railway linking the city to the Russian city of Khasan could help transport the goods to Europe. Still, any optimistic outlook in the inter-Korean relations is not guaranteed. North Korea blasted South Korean Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo, claiming, in a direct rebuttal to a remark he made criticizing the regime's denial of its abduction of South Koreans during the 1950-53 Korean War, that it was Hong and Seoul that were breaking moral laws. The North's propaganda arm, *Uriminzokkiri*, ran an article on May 5 entitled "Who is breaking moral laws?" in which it blamed South Korea for "abducting North Korean citizens," and argued it was Seoul that was breaking those codes. "The majority of North Koreans in the South who live under dismal conditions and suffer from blatant discrimination are the people who were abducted to the South," the North said through its mouthpiece. Pyongyang's media outlet also went so far as to deny the existence of North Korean defectors. The North's harsh rhetoric against Hong was in response to a remark he made on April 29, when he met with the relatives of the abductees. During the meeting, Hong said North Korea was "breaking the moral laws of the family relationship" by denying its abduction of South Koreans. He also promised that the government would do its best to coordinate reunions. But despite its strongly worded response, North Korea insinuated that it would be willing to discuss holding reunions for the families separated by the war, saying the South "should lift the May 24 sanctions that have been standing in the way of fostering inter-Korean cooperation." The North also called on the South to prohibit activists from launching balloons containing leaflets critical of the regime across the border if Seoul is interested in holding family reunions. Seoul, on the other hand, has hinted it may lift sanctions if the North apologizes for the torpedoing incident in 2010. Another issue at stake is four South Koreans being detained in the North. South Korea urged North Korea on May 4 to release a South Korean college student with a U.S. green card detained in the North for illegal entry. North Korea announced over the weekend that it has detained a 21-year-old man studying at New York University. The North said it arrested him on April 22 for illegally entering the communist nation through a Chinese border city. Pyongyang identified him as Joo Won-moon, a resident

of New Jersey. "It is deeply regrettable that North Korea is detaining Joo Won-moon, who is a South Korean national, without any explanation to our government and his family," Lim Byeong-cheol, spokesman at the Ministry of Unification said in a statement. "The government strongly demands that the North immediately release Joo and return him to the arms of his family." Lim stressed Pyongyang should guarantee his security and permit him consular access in accordance with international law and practices. (Yonhap, "Seoul Steps up Efforts for Inter-Korean Cooperation," *North Korea Newsletter* 361, May 7, 2015)

5/6/15

Ever since President Park explicitly linked addressing the issue of the comfort women to holding a summit with Japan during a luncheon for newspaper editorial writers on July 10, 2013 - she said, "a summit with the Japanese leader must take place in a future-oriented atmosphere" - she has held to the strategy of linking the two. While PM Abe has indicated on several occasions his wish to hold a summit, South Korea has rejected all of his overtures. The logic is that if the comfort women issue blows up after the summit is held, bilateral relations will only get worse. However, the strategy of predicating the summit on the single matter of resolving the comfort women issue is gradually becoming more of an obstacle for South Korea's foreign policy. The US and Japan are moving closer together while China and Japan are also working to improve their relations, leaving South Korea with less and less room to maneuver. As South Korea effectively isolates itself, Japan has even less reason to meekly submit to its demands. Circumstances such as these prompted the South Korean government to emphasize a "two-track" diplomatic strategy with Japan, which distinguishes historical and territorial issues from cooperation in the areas of security, economics, and culture. This can be seen as a compromise approach that takes into consideration the US desire for trilateral security cooperation with South Korea and Japan. However, there are concerns that, with the US openly siding with Japan, the South Korean government's two-track approach could lead to a worst-case scenario in which it is dragged into a trilateral cooperation regime with the US and Japan without receiving any apology from Japan about historical issues. Given South Korea's territorial dispute over Dokdo (islets called Takeshima in Japan) and its experience with Japan's imperial aggression, South Koreans are very uncomfortable with cooperating with Japan on security issues without first dealing with these historical and territorial issues. Another concern is that China views trilateral cooperation between South Korea, the US, and Japan as being basically intended to check China. Some experts think that, before splitting historical issues from cooperation in other areas, it is important to treat the idea of holding a summit independently from historical issues. "South Korea needs to find a way to address the questions of a summit and the comfort women separately," said Cho Se-yeong, visiting professor at Dongseo University and former Northeast Asia bureau chief for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other analysts suggest that, since historical issues and security are connected, it would be more effective to adopt a revised two-track approach that would link those two issues while treating the areas of economy and culture separately. The idea would be to redefine the goals of foreign policy and to put options like summits on the table. (Son Won-je, "In Japan Policy, Seoul Trying to Disentangle History and Contemporary Issues," *Hankyore*, May 6, 2015)

5/7/15

When officials informed us that we'd be granted a sit-down interview with a high-ranking member of North Korea's inner circle with no preconditions, it was a real surprise. Senior figures in Pyongyang don't do interviews, especially not with the international press. "I do not like talking to foreign media," Park Yong Chol said frankly as we shook hands ahead of our meeting. He said that we report rumor and fabrication about his country. Park is the deputy director of the DPRK Institute for Research into National Reunification -- a think tank with links to the highest levels of North Korea's government. In spite of his misgivings, he sat down to talk with us beneath the ubiquitous portraits of late North Korean leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Our conversation lasted nearly two hours and no topic was off limits. The only instruction we were given was to break from our traditional CNN interview format of two chairs facing each other, so that we could sit across a large conference table, and so that the two portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il could be seen directly over Park. We agreed to do this, as our government guides explained the symbolism of the Great Leaders appearing overhead was very important to their country. We quickly got onto a touchy subject: the recent reports from South Korea's National Intelligence Agency that Kim Jong-un had personally ordered the execution of about 15 officials so far this year. "Malicious slander!" he replied. "Especially as they try to link the allegations against to the august name of our Supreme Leader Marshall Kim Jong-un." But he did not deny that executions take place here of those who try to overthrow the government or subvert the system. "It is very normal for any country to go after hostile elements and punish them and execute them." Park maintained that his country does indeed have the missile capability to strike mainland United States and would do so if the U.S. "forced their hand." It has been a costly strategy, but a necessary one, he admitted. "We invested a lot of money in our nuclear defense to counter the U.S. threat -- huge sums that could have been spent in other sectors to improve our national economy. But this strategic decision was the right one." The next goal is economic. **"We're a major power politically, ideologically and militarily," he said. "The last remaining objective is to make the DPRK a strong economic power."** But to do that North Korea would have to improve ties with the international community. With mutual distrust and Pyongyang's refusal to disarm its nuclear arsenal, there seems to be no clear path to moving forward. (Will Ripley and Tim Schwarz, "North Korea Would Use Nukes If 'Forced,' Official Says," CNN, May 7, 2015)

5/8/15

KPA Southwestern Command: "The warmongers of the south Korean puppet military have recently reached the height in their provocative hysteria in the hotspot waters of the West Sea of Korea. They committed military provocations by infiltrating a total of 17 speedboats of the puppet navy two-three times every day deep into the territorial waters of the DPRK from May 1 to 7. A total of five speedboats of the puppet navy intruded into the territorial waters of the DPRK several times from 06:30 to 13:50 on April 26. The intrusions were made under the pretext of "intercepting fishing boats" of a third country but its ulterior purpose was to "defend the northern limit line", the illegal line. Such reckless intrusions are escalating in the hotspot waters in the overall southwest sea including Paekryong, Taechong and Yonphyong Islands. These naval intrusions timed to coincide with the leaflet scattering operations being conducted openly on the whole front are lashing the service personnel of the Korean People's Army in the southwestern sector of the front into a great fury. In view of the prevailing

situation, the command of the KPA in the southwestern sector of the front made public the following emergency special warning on Friday upon authorization: 1. **From this moment, it will make a sighting strike without any prior warning at any warship of the south Korean puppet navy intruding into the extension of demarcation line in the hotspot of the West Sea of Korea.** There is a limit to the patience of the KPA service personnel in the southwestern sector of the front. The DPRK had already announced several times that self-defensive military strikes would be made at the provocateurs intruding into the territorial waters of the DPRK even 0.001mm. The KPA service personnel in the southwestern sector of the front do not make an empty talk. 2. **In case the provocateurs challenge the self-defensive sighting strike of the KPA, it will successively deal strong second, third and more retaliatory strikes at them.** Its successive retaliatory strikes will prove what miserable end the provocateurs would meet. This warning is based on the resolute decision to mercilessly punish with arms the provocateurs hell-bent on confrontation with compatriots. In case the utmost patience exercised by the KPA service personnel in the southwestern sector of the front turn into resentment of justice and their repeated warnings lead to prompt actions, the south Korean puppet authorities will be held wholly accountable for the ensuing consequences as they orchestrated and incited the provocations." (KCNA, "'Command of KPA in Southwestern Sector of Front Issues Emergency Special Warning," May 8, 2015)

South and North Korea exchanged barbs over Pyongyang's claims of South Korean ships' violation of the western sea border. Flatly dismissing the North's claims, South Korea expressed "serious regrets" over the warning against "our ships' normal operations." "It is not our side but your side that brings up tension along the NLL. Your threatening words and deeds by distorting facts are stoking unnecessary military tension between the two Koreas," Defense Ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said in a message to the North Korean command. "If you act provocatively while ignoring our warnings, we will sternly and strongly respond to them to the degree where you will bitterly repent," Kim said, calling for Pyongyang's full respect for the maritime border. The latest incident came amid an increasing number of North Korean and Chinese fishing boats operating near the border. Every year, North Korea gets paid from the Chinese side in exchange for offering China the right to fish in its waters, according to officials here. Pyongyang has included part of the South Korean territorial waters near the western sea border when selling the rights to China, prompting the Seoul military to beef up surveillance, they said. "We've never violated the NLL, while the North has often done so," said a defense ministry official, requesting anonymity. In the latest case, a North Korean patrol boat crossed the border into the South due to engine failure. The South Korean military "is analyzing what prompted the North to make such absurd remarks, while maintaining the strong posture against any possible scenarios," although there is no indication yet of unusual military movement from the North, he added. (Kim Soo-yeon and Oh Seok-min, "'Two Koreas in Verbal Clash over Yellow Sea Border," Yonhap, May 8, 2015)

While the Obama administration spent the past two years getting within striking distance of a deal to delay Iran's race for a nuclear bomb, North Korea went on an atomic spending spree: an expansion officials here fear Washington has little hope of

stopping. Satellite photographs of the North's main nuclear facility at Yongbyon, released in 2013, have shown a doubling in size of the nuclear enrichment plant there, which the United States did not know about until 2010, and American officials strongly suspect there is a second one. A consensus is emerging that the North most likely possesses a dozen or so nuclear weapons and could be on the way to an arsenal of as many as 20 by the end of 2016. "In my view, 20 is a hell of a lot of bombs," Siegfried S. Hecker, a former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory and a professor at Stanford, said in an interview. But Hecker, who was the first American invited to see the enrichment plant and has made some of the best unclassified estimates of its future capabilities, said he was doubtful of recent claims by American military officials that the North was on the verge of shrinking a nuclear weapon to fit on a long-range missile capable of hitting the western United States. The apparent buildup in nuclear bombs, after 20 years of failed efforts by the United States to keep North Korea from reaching this point, has become a rallying call for both sides debating the agreement with Iran. Republicans and Israeli officials, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, cite the trail of broken agreements with the North as a warning of what they say will become of the Iran deal. President Obama's allies turn that argument on its head: The lesson, they say, is that an enforceable, verifiable deal is the only way to keep Iran from doing in the next decade what North Korea has done in the past few years. Both sides are, of course, selectively plucking arguments to support their case. The reality is that the Iranian and North Korean programs, while often referred to in the same breath by politicians, are so different that all the analogies are flawed. For starters, no agreement with North Korea was ever as specific as the proposed Iran accord, which Congress is moving to review after a bill cleared the Senate on Thursday. The Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea in 1994 was a few pages long, compared with the hundreds of pages and annexes in the Iran deal. In addition, Iran says it will abide by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which provides a legal underpinning for the final deal that is supposed to be sealed by June 30. In contrast, North Korea boasts that its atomic arsenal is enshrined in its Constitution, and it withdrew from the treaty long ago. (The club of nuclear nations that have not signed the treaty is a small one: India, Israel and Pakistan. All are believed to have 100 to 200 weapons, and many suspect that range is the ultimate goal of North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un.) Inspectors have regular access to Iran's major nuclear sites, although they have been stonewalled on some details of alleged work on past weapons designs. The deal includes provisions for monitoring equipment in every known facility and requirements that Iran dilute its stockpiles of weapons-grade fuel or ship them out of the country. In contrast, there have been no inspectors in North Korea for years. Not least, Iran's leadership is under domestic political pressure to end sanctions and normalize relations with the West, but North Korea sees near-total isolation as the key to its survival. American strategy has also gone in opposite directions. Obama made overtures to North Korea during his first months in office, but his view quickly changed when the country responded by conducting a nuclear test. He and his advisers decided that Iran was the far better strategic bet: With luck, it could be stopped from building weapons. North Korea's arsenal, one of Obama's top Asia aides said, "is already in the rearview mirror." The administration began discussing "strategic patience," which essentially meant continuing pressure through sanctions and other levers until North Korea decided to negotiate. But the North says the prospect of

disarmament is long past. It wants what amounts to arms control negotiations that acknowledge it as a nuclear power – which the Obama administration, like the Bush administration, says it will never accept. Behind the scenes, Sydney A. Seiler, the State Department's coordinator for eliminating North Korea's nuclear program, and his counterparts from China, Japan, Russia and South Korea have been putting together a package of proposals to show to the North that would find a basis for resuming negotiations. Several officials involved described a package that sounds, in broad strokes, a lot like the secret diplomacy that preceded the negotiations with Iran: a freeze on all current production so that the North's arsenal would not be expanding as negotiations resumed. But in interviews in Seoul, senior South Korean officials said they were concerned that the events of the past two years, while the United States was focused on Iran, had left them with a far more complex situation. "Some in my government feel that we may now face the point of no return on the North's nuclear technology and their missile capability," one official said. "The point of no return" is a phrase the Israelis used to use about Iran, fearing that its program was too large to ever contain. The concern about the North's nuclear expansion is not that it would launch a pre-emptive strike on South Korea or Japan, because North Korean officials know their government would be decimated in minutes or hours. But South Korean and American strategists are worried that a stockpile of 20 weapons, and perhaps 50 or more by 2020, could give the country enough extra supply to sell highly enriched uranium, much as it has sold missile and other technology to Iran, Pakistan and Syria. "It would be an enormously risky thing for them to do," one senior American military official here said. "But we've seen them take other very risky actions in the past," including building a reactor in Syria, which Israel destroyed in an airstrike in 2007. Apart from the destruction of the reactor itself, the North suffered little for that action, and the sanctions placed on it in January in retaliation for the cyberattack on Sony Pictures, for which Obama said North Korea was responsible, have been viewed as largely ineffective. Some American officials say they have one last hope: If the deal with Iran works and sanctions are lifted, North Korean officials, who are following the negotiations closely, might conclude that their nuclear program could be traded for economic integration. Other senior officials say that is a pipe dream. "For Iran, some degree of integration is part of how you build national power," one of those officials said. But for North Korea, he added, "it's the pathway to disintegration." (David E. Sanger, "With U.S. Eyes on Iran, North Korea's Arsenal Expanded," *New York Times*, May 8, 2015, p. A10)

5/9/15

South Korea's National Security Council held an emergency meeting as North Korea ratcheted up tension by repeating threats to fire without warning on South Korean naval vessels it accused of violating its territorial waters. North Korea today test-fired three anti-ship missiles into the sea off its east coast in what was seen as its latest show of force against Seoul. South Korean military officials identified the North's anti-ship missiles KN-01 cruise missiles and said the missiles were fired off into the sea off Wonsan, a major port on the North's east coast, in a span of one hour starting at 4:25 p.m. The missiles with a range of 100 kilometers are believed to have been modified from Chinese Silkworm missiles, they said. (*Korea Times*, "N. Korea Test-Fires Three Short-Range Missiles," May 9, 2015)

Admiral Choi Yun-hee, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), promised to execute immediate retaliations against the North if the hermit state causes any military threats to the South.

"We must keep unwavering readiness conditions and will make sure we protect the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which has been defended with the blood of our seniors," he told navy officials during a visit to the 2nd Fleet headquarters. Choi's remark came a day after the North claimed South Korean Navy speedboats intruded into the North's territorial waters in the Yellow Sea earlier this week. The North then said it will make a "sighting strike" at any South Korean warship without prior warning. Choi met with U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti yesterday to discuss the situation and countermeasures following the North's threats. (*Korea Times*, "Military Chief Vows to Protect NLL from N. Korea," May 9, 2015)

KCNA: "There took place an underwater test-fire of Korean-style powerful strategic submarine ballistic missile. The ballistic missile was developed on the personal initiative of Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army Kim Jong-un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and first chairman of the National Defense Commission of the DPRK, and under his meticulous guidance. Kim Jong-un learned about the tactical and technological specifications of the newly developed ballistic missile and watched its test-fire. As soon as he issued an order to begin the test-fire, a combat alarm was sounded inside the strategic submarine and it submerged up to a depth for firing the ballistic missile. After a while, the ballistic missile soared into the sky from underwater. The test-fire proved and confirmed that the ballistic missile fired from the submarine fully met the requirements of the latest military science and technology. He highly praised the officials, scientists and technicians in the field of defense science and a munitions factory for having successfully perfected the technology of firing ballistic missile from the strategic submarine underwater in line with the strategic intention of the Central Committee of the WPK. He said that the successful test-fire of ballistic missile from Korean-style attack submarine [?] is an eye-opening success as signal as satellite launch. A wonderful gift was presented to the 70th anniversary of the founding of the WPK thanks to the painstaking efforts of the officials, scientists, technicians and workers in the field of defence science and a munitions factory, he noted, extending his thanks to them on behalf of the C.C., the WPK. He stressed that the acquisition of the technology of firing ballistic missile from a strategic submarine underwater made it possible for the KPA to possess a world-level strategic weapon capable of striking and wiping out in any waters the hostile forces infringing upon the sovereignty and dignity of Songun Korea and conduct any underwater operation." (KCNA, "Kim Jong-un Watches Strategic Submarine Underwater Ballistic Missile Test-Fire," May 9, 2015) U.S. intelligence agencies closely monitored North Korea's test of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile and were anticipating the launch for several days, according to U.S. officials. The missile test Saturday of a purported North Korean missile, known as the KN-11, was closely watched by U.S. intelligence monitoring equipment, including satellites, aircraft, and observation ships, said officials familiar with intelligence reports. U.S. intelligence agencies assessed that the missile test was more of an ejection test—a launch from underwater that fires the missile out of a simulated launch tube into the air. The missile then ignited its engine and flew a short distance, the officials said. U.S. officials do not

believe the missile was launched from a submerged submarine. A similar test was carried out April 22. The missile appears from the photographs to be a variant of North Korea's Musudan intermediate-range missile. According to Yonhap, South Korean officials assessed the submarine-launched missile to be an ejection test, and said that the missile flew only about 328 feet after launch. KCNA described it as "an underwater test-fire of Korean-style powerful strategic submarine ballistic missile." The missile test was not officially confirmed by U.S. or South Korean officials. A Pentagon official said: "We're aware of the reporting, but have no comment on North Korea's claims." A State Department official declined to comment, citing a policy of not discussing intelligence matters. However, the official said ballistic missile launches "are a clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions." "We call on North Korea to refrain from actions that further raise tensions in the region and focus instead on taking concrete steps toward fulfilling its international commitments and obligations," the official said. No date or location was given for the test. However, it is believed that the test firing was carried out near the port of Sinpo, which has been identified in commercial satellite photographs as the location for the development of the SLBM. Another KCNA dispatch stated that Kim Jong-un, the North Korean supreme leader, on Saturday visited a fisheries complex near Sinpo. U.S. officials have said the new SLBM has been under development since last year, but the first official confirmation of the new weapon came during congressional testimony in March by U.S. Strategic Command commander Adm. Cecil Haney. The missile was flight tested in February and the Pentagon has designated the new system as the KN-11. Together with North Korea's road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, the KN-08, the KN-11 is the third long-range missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to a target thousands of miles away. (Bill Gertz, "U.S. Spy Agencies Closely Watched N. Korea Underwater Missile Test," *Washington Free Beacon*, May 11, 2015) The Defense Ministry downplayed May 11 the significance of North Korea's claim that it successfully launched a ballistic missile from a submarine. "The North should first have the skills to produce miniaturized submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) warheads," a high-ranking military official told reporters. He also said that to pose a genuine clear and present danger to the United States, it first needs to master the technology related to re-entry warheads from an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM). The military believes that the North test-fired a dummy ballistic missile near Sinpo, South Hamgyeong Province. The missile allegedly traveled some 150 kilometers. "The North has conducted similar underwater test-fires several times in the past and last week's launch was made public for the first time, with its leader in attendance," the military official said. "The North should cease SLBM development that undermines security on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia," spokesman Kim Min-seok said in a briefing. He added that the North's underwater missile program is in its early stages. "Advanced nations fully developed their SLBMs four to five years after they first test-fired them," Kim said. (Kang Seung-woo, "Seoul Downplays NK's Missile Claim," *Korea Times*, May 11, 2015) A group of international military analysts has played down North Korea's capability to deploy a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in a year or two, saying concerns are overblown. They also raised questions about the credibility of the reclusive country's claim that it successfully test-fired a ballistic missile from underwater. "This is an emerging threat. It's still going to take years," Joseph Bermudez, a U.S. analyst on North Korean defense and intelligence affairs, was quoted as saying by the Korean-

language edition of the Voice of America (VOA) online, March 12. A U.S. defense official agreed. "That was not a ballistic missile," the official, who asked not to be named, told AFP March 11. The official added there was no "imminent" threat of an SLBM arsenal coming on line in North Korea, although the country is developing such a capability. In his VOA interview, Bermudez said the deployment of an SLBM requires a cycle of steps in advance – research, test, development and evaluation. He also said North Korea does not have a 3,000-ton submarine, which military analysts say is crucial to mount an SLBM and operate in deep sea before attacking targets on land. Bruce Bennett, senior defense analyst at the U.S. RAND Corporation think tank, had a similar view. "Given the small size of North Korean submarines and the state of their missile technology, I suspect this missile will not have enough payload to carry a nuclear warhead, and may have only a few hundred kilometers' range," he said. "A true North Korean SLBM with land-attack capabilities would be a serious new threat. But, so far, I believe that we only have North Korean statements and pictures describing these missiles. And North Korea often seriously exaggerates its military capabilities," Bennett added. (Yi Whan-woo, "Concern over N. K. Missile Overblown," Korea Times, May 12, 2015) North Korea is "many years" away from being able to launch ballistic missiles from a submarine but that capability could eventually pose a threat to U.S. allies Japan and South Korea, Adm. James Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Center for Strategic and International Studies May 19. The North Koreans "have not gotten as far as their clever video editors and spinmeisters would have us believe," he said. "They are many years away from developing this capability. But if they are eventually able to do so it will present a hard-to-detect danger for Japan and South Korea as well as our service members stationed in the region. This only reinforces the importance of regional ballistic missile defense." (Matthew Pennington, "U.S.: N. Korea 'Many Years' from Developing Submarine Missile," Associated Press, May 19, 2015) Photos showing a North Korean missile launched from a submarine were manipulated by state propagandists, and the isolated country may still be years away from developing the technology, Winnifield said.. "They have not gotten as far as their clever video editors and spinmeisters would have us believe." (James Pearson, "North Korea 'Modified' Submarine Missile Launch Photos, U.S. Official Says," Reuters, May 20, 2015) Joseph Bermudez: "Using a combination of ongoing research, analysis of a May 10, 2015 DigitalGlobe commercial satellite image of the Sinpo South Naval Shipyard and the recent North Korean news releases, *38 North* has reviewed its earlier analytical conclusions. This review concludes that: 1. The earlier assessment that North Korea was in the initial stages of developing a seaborne ballistic missile launch capability remains valid. 2. North Korea is expending significant resources to develop a SLBM capability. 3. The Sinpo South Naval Shipyard is continuing to be modernized, likely in preparation for a new submarine construction program. 4. North Korean camouflage, concealment and deception (CCD) efforts are in full effect and that there is an even chance that the recent SLBM test was conducted from a submerged launch platform rather than a submerged submarine. With regards to CCD, some of the imagery released by North Korea may have been altered. 5. The concurrent development of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile system and an associated ballistic missile capable submarine are within the upper limits of North Korea's industrial and technical capabilities. 6. The earlier assessments that under optimal conditions North Korea possesses an emerging regional seaborne ballistic missile

threat rather than an imminent threat and that it does not represent an emerging intercontinental threat, remain valid. KCNA announced on May 9, 2015 that the Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un had observed an “underwater test-fire of Korean-style powerful strategic submarine ballistic missile.” Subsequent statements by South Korean officials indicated that the test was more accurately an “ejection test” to evaluate stabilization systems and the process of ejecting a ballistic missile from a submerged submarine rather than a full-scale test of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile system (sometimes identified as the KN-11). These same officials indicated that the missile flew a short distance before it impacted into the sea. Preliminary information suggests that this test, as well as previous ejection tests, were very likely conducted from the general area of the SINPO-class submarine’s homeport at the Sinpo South Naval Shipyard and that the short flight trajectories were either northeast towards Kimchaek or southwest in the direction of Wonsan. The images of the test released by KCNA depict Kim Jong-un standing on a boat with a submarine in the background that one is led to believe conducted the test. (Joseph Bermudez, “Underwater Test-Fire of Korean-Style Powerful Strategic Submarine Ballistic Missile,” *38North*, May 13, 2015) Michael Elleman, who served as a missile expert for the UN team that conducted weapons inspections in Iraq after the Persian Gulf War, said in a May 19 e-mail that the test is likely the “second step in the overall [North Korean] process of developing an SLBM capability.” The United States performed similar “pop-out” tests for the Polaris SLBM program, he said. The first step is ejecting a missile from a launch tube on the ground, Elleman said. Elleman, who is now with the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said North Korea still must take a number of steps before it can reliably deploy an SLBM. A typical sequence would include additional ejection tests from a submerged barge, land-based tests of the missile, and then a full flight test of the SLBM from the barge and submarine, he said. At a May 19 event at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Adm. James Winnefeld, vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that North Korea is not as far along as its “spinmeisters would have us believe” and remains “many years away” from an SLBM capability. Elleman said North Korea has “demonstrated a willingness to accept risks for weapons performance and reliability,” so the SLBM could be deployed sooner, but would likely have a reliability of less than 50 percent. Elleman noted several operational obstacles to North Korean deployment of SLBMs, including developing secure communications with the submarine and establishing a command-and-control system. The latter could be difficult for the Kim Jong-un regime, Elleman said, as most dictators “do not enjoy delegating authorities,” especially with nuclear warheads involved. North Korea’s capability to deploy an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of delivering nuclear weapons also is in dispute. North Korea claims its KN-08, or Hwasong-13, a road-mobile ballistic missile, is capable of reaching the United States with a nuclear warhead. That distance is more than 5,500 kilometers and therefore puts the KN-08 in the ICBM category. North Korea is estimated to have six to eight plutonium-based warheads and may have additional warheads that use highly enriched uranium. The KN-08 was first paraded in April 2012. At that time, many analysts said they believed the missile to be a mock-up. Subsequent displays of the missile have featured more-plausible design features, but there is still controversy about the extent of the missile’s development and how close the missile is to operational status. It is not known to have been flight-tested. A May 20 story on *Foreign Policy’s* website quoted National Security

Council spokesman Patrick Ventrell as saying that the United States does not think that North Korea can miniaturize a warhead to put on a ballistic missile. But Adm. William Gortney, the head of U.S. Northern Command, told reporters at the Pentagon on April 7 that it is the U.S. assessment that the KN-08 is operational and North Korea could use the missile to shoot a nuclear warhead at the United States. Elaine Bunn, deputy assistant secretary of defense of nuclear and missile defense policy, said at an April 7 event at CSIS that the "reliability of an untested KN-08 is likely to be very low." In the May 19 e-mail, Elleman said that if the KN-08 were deployed today, it would likely "fail more often than not" but that, for deterrence purposes, North Korea "gain[s] considerable dissuasive capacity" by deploying the missile. (Kelsey Davenport, "North Korea Tests Missile for Submarine," *Arms Control Today*, June 2015)

North Korea met a U.S. diplomatic overture with a fresh show of force, seemingly testing the Obama administration's resolve for new nuclear talks. After three years of diplomatic deadlock, the U.S. had appeared receptive to preliminary discussions to assess North Korea's intentions and the prospects of ridding the country of nuclear weapons. Then came Saturday's claim that North Korea successfully test-fired a newly developed ballistic missile from a submarine. Not long after that announcement, South Korean officials said the North fired three anti-ship cruise missiles into the sea off its east coast. The State Department said launches using ballistic missile technology are "a clear violation" of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Washington urged North Korea "to refrain from actions that further raise tensions in the region and focus instead on taking concrete steps toward fulfilling its international commitments and obligations." (Matthew Pennington, "North Korea's Show of Force Slaps at U.S. Diplomatic Overtures," Associated Press, May 9, 2015) Some North Korea observers believe the provocative acts are apparently aimed at pressuring South Korea and the U.S. to change their policy toward the reclusive country. Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, said, "The North is trying to increase political and military uncertainties on the peninsula to create an impetus for talks with the South or the U.S." Prof. Koh Yoo-hwan of Dongguk University also said that a series of provocations from the North was testing U.S. "strategic patience." "By flexing its military muscles, the North wants to show that U.S. policy is a failure, urging it to change its policy toward the country," Koh said. The North is expected to stick to a show of force for the time being. "During the first half of the year, the North is likely to provoke the South," said World Institute for North Korea Studies head An Chan-il. But he said that to ease its financial difficulties, the North might shift to dialogue mode ahead of the 70th anniversary of the division of the Korean Peninsula and Korea's liberation from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule. "The North is likely to commit itself to holding a high-level meeting or an inter-Korean summit in its efforts to lead the South to lift its May 24 economic sanctions or resume tours to Mt. Geumgang," An said. (Kang Seung-woo, "Pyongyang Spiking Tensions on Peninsula," *Korea Times*, May 10, 2015)

While some analysts perceived a severe blow to U.S. appetite for dealing with North Korea after that failed deal, current and former administration officials say that efforts have continued unabated. "This is an administration that has taken risks, shown flexibility, engaged countries with which we've had difficult relationships," Syd Seiler,

Washington's special envoy for the six-party talks, told a conference in Seoul last week, calling them the "best environment" for renewed dialogue. "It's a caricature . . . that the US is demanding that North Korea should denuclearise before talks resume," he added. Yet Washington has not specified what prior steps North Korea should take to clear the way for talks. Some in Washington argue that North Korea should first take measures promised under previous pacts – such as freezing nuclear development and accepting international inspectors – but Pyongyang says talks should happen without preconditions. "My feeling is that if the North Koreans would commit to a test moratorium, that could be a basis for going back," says Victor Cha, who served as an adviser on Asia policy to former president George W Bush. He says the Obama administration believes its diplomacy is transformational "and they just need a shot." Washington, according to Cha, has "taken the lead" on some areas of North Korea policy from Seoul, where President Park Geun-hye has made calmer relations with Pyongyang a key pledge of her administration. But the redoubled efforts to resume talks have sparked alarm from some South Korean conservatives. Talks without preconditions would "be the starting point for another failure", says Kim Tae-hyo, former chief foreign policy adviser to Park's predecessor Lee Myung-bak. "If you really want negotiations, you have to gear up pressure against North Korea from the beginning." Chinese vice-foreign minister Wu Dawei this week affirmed Beijing's position that Pyongyang should halt nuclear activities and readmit international inspectors, while pledging to push it to return to talks, South Korea's foreign ministry said. But some analysts warn that the would-be negotiators have only a few months to begin talks before US-South Korean joint military exercises in August, which typically bring fierce protests from Pyongyang. Others argue that talks and offers of assistance cannot push Pyongyang to step back from its nuclear work, arguing for new sanctions that would more severely disrupt the North Korean economy – despite the potential knock-on effects for parts of China's financial sector. "I don't agree with those who think North Korea will never abandon its nuclear ambitions under any circumstances," Chun Yung-woo, South Korea's chief negotiator at the six-party talks from 2006 to 2007, said after Seiler's remarks at last week's conference. "But under the current sanctions regime, even if I were Kim Jong-un, I would have no incentive." (Simon Mundy, "U.S. and China Seek to Restart Nuclear Talks with Pyongyang," *Financial Times*, May 9, 2015)

5/10/15

A South Korean special presidential envoy met briefly with North Korea's No. 2 man during a weekend war victory ceremony in Moscow, but they had no "serious talks" on bilateral relations, diplomatic sources here said. Rep. Yoon Sang-hyun, the special envoy for South Korean President Park Geun-hye, encountered Kim Yong-nam, North Korea's ceremonial head of state, during the Saturday ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, according to the sources. During the ceremony, Yoon encountered Kim and had a brief conversation with the North Korean official, a Seoul official said, adding that the two just exchanged pleasantries and had "no significant dialogue." Yoon, a member of South Korea's ruling Saenuri Party, is said to have expressed his hope that inter-Korean relations will make steady progress down the road. Kim attended the ceremony on behalf of leader Kim Jong-un, according to Seoul officials. Yoon, who doubles as one of Park's special advisers for political affairs, has called for "active, disclosed, behind-the-scene contacts

with North Korea" to find a breakthrough in the inter-Korean relations. "I have no plan (to meet with Kim Yong-nam in Moscow). But if there is a chance to contact the North Korean side, I will express the Park government's sincerity on inter-Korean dialogue," Yoon said on March 8 before departing for Russia. He did not carry any of President Park's messages for North Korea. (Yonhap, "S. Korean Special Envoy Meets N.K.'s No. 2 Man in Moscow," May 10, 2015)

Kim Kyok-sik, the hard-line North Korean general who South Korean analysts and officials have said was behind two deadly attacks on South Korea, died, *Rodong Sinmun* reported. He was 77. General Kim was the commander of a North Korean Army corps whose units South Korea accused in the sinking of a South Korean Navy ship, the Cheonan, in March 2010. General Kim's front-line units were also accused of shelling a South Korean border island, Yeonpyeong, that year, killing two marines and two civilians. South Korean officials singled out General Kim as one of the top North Korean military officers who plotted the attacks. General Kim held crucial military posts, including the head of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces and the chief of the General Staff of the North Korean People's Army, under the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his late father, Kim Jong-il. Although Kim Kyok-sik retained his four-star rank, he recently retired from central military posts as Kim Jong-un elevated younger generals in the military hierarchy. (Choe Sang-hun, "Kim Kyok-sik, Hard-Line North Korean General, Dies at 77," *New York Times*, May 12, 2015, P. B-15)

5/11/12

CRS: "Congress has at times expressed concern regarding ballistic missile and nuclear programs in Iran, North Korea, and Syria. This report focuses primarily on unclassified and declassified U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) assessments over the past two decades. These assessments indicate that there is no evidence that Iran and North Korea have engaged in nuclear-related trade or cooperation with each other, although ballistic missile technology cooperation between the two is significant and meaningful, and Syria has received ballistic missiles and related technology from North Korea and Iran and also engaged in nuclear technology cooperation with North Korea." (Congressional Research Service, *Iran-North Korea-Syria Ballistic Missile and Nuclear Cooperation*, R43480, May 11, 2015)

A delegation from the Foreign Ministry of Thailand is currently visiting Pyongyang, according to KCNA. The group is led by Thailand's Vice Foreign Affairs Minister Don Pramudwinai, but the article gave no further details on the visit. The diplomatic visit comes just four days after the DPRK and Thailand issued joint postage stamps depicting North Korean and Thai birds to commemorate 40 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, according to North Korea's *Pyongyang Time*. Relations between Thailand and the DPRK have warmed recently, after a long-standing chill arising from North Korea defaulting on a large rice debt early in the last decade. So far in 2015, Thailand has been North Korea's top import partner, according to figures from the UN Comtrade database. Although China and South Korea do not report their North Korea statistics to the UN, trade with Thailand appears to have bounced back after dramatic decreases after 2006. Last year North Korean imports of Thai goods were nearly five times their 2011 equivalents, at more than \$100 million in value. So far in 2015, North Korea has continued its policy of buying relatively large

quantities of tin and rubber from Thailand. Overall, DPRK traders have already spent more than \$11 million the raw materials from the southeast Asian country. A previous *NK News* investigation indicated that Thailand may have breached UN luxury sanctions in exporting luxury cars to North Korea last year. Other exports included motorbikes and a very large quantity of chicken curry. (Leon Byrne, "Thai Delegation in North Korea amid Growing Ties," *NKNews*, May 12, 2015)

5/12/15

President Park Geun-hye in a rare meeting of top security officials, said, "North Korea's development of a submarine-launched ballistic missile is a serious challenge that undermines stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia," noting Pyongyang is banned from any ballistic missile activity under U.N. resolutions. She also called on officials to maintain strong deterrence in cooperation with the United States over North Korea's provocative acts, presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook said in a written briefing. The participants included Park's security adviser, the spy chief, the defense minister, the foreign minister and South Korea's point man on North Korea, Min said. The meeting -- the first in a year -- came three days after North Korea claimed that leader Kim Jong-un oversaw a successful underwater test-launching of a "strategic submarine ballistic missile." (Yonhap, "Park: N. Korean Development of Submarine Missile Serious Challenge," May 12, 2015)

China's trade with North Korea fell 13 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, data showed, as an indication of Beijing's frayed ties with Pyongyang. Beijing's trade with Pyongyang reached \$1.1 billion in the January-March period, down from \$1.27 billion in the same period last year, according to data by the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). It posted a trade surplus of \$17.7 million. China's exports to North Korea came in at \$563 million in the first quarter, down 15.6 percent from a year earlier. Beijing's imports from its neighbor reported a 9.8 percent on-year fall to reach \$545 million in the cited period. China's trade with North Korea reached \$6.36 billion in 2014, down 2.76 percent from a year earlier and the first yearly decline since 2009. The downward trend is seen as being extended into this year, the data showed. (Yonhap, "China's Trade with N. Korea Falls 13 Pct On-Year in Q1," May 12, 2015)

Japan formally announced the U.S. Air Force will deploy a squadron of tilt-rotor CV-22 Osprey aircraft at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo in 2017. The news immediately drew a chorus of protests from residents of towns and cities in the area. However, Japanese officials immediately welcomed the announcement and tried to downplay concerns about the controversial plane's safety. The U.S. Defense Department said in a statement that the first three aircraft will arrive at Yokota in the second half of 2017, and an additional seven are scheduled be stationed there by 2021. Yokota Air Base occupies parts of the cities and towns of Fussa, Mizuho, Tachikawa, Hamura, Musashimurayama, and Akishima in western Tokyo. "(The deployment) in our country will bolster the deterrent power of the Japan-U.S. alliance and its capability to cope with" various emergencies, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide told a news conference, welcoming the Pentagon announcement. Many local residents have complained of noise generated by U.S. military aircraft taking off or landing at the base and are concerned about the possibility of accidents. "It will also help stabilize the Asia-Pacific region," he added. "Surrounding areas of the base are crammed with

houses," said Katsuhiko Iwata, 75, a leading member of a residential group that deals with issues involving the Yokota base. "If an aircraft were to crash, it would cause a great deal of damage." The base's fences are surrounded by houses, schools and hospitals – a situation similar to the U.S. Marine Corps Futenma base in Okinawa Prefecture. "In the U.S., (Ospreys) don't fly over residential areas," Iwata said. "What do they think Japan is . . . a colony?" (Yoshida Reiji, "U.S. to Station Ospreys at Yokota Air Base Starting in 2017," *Japan Times*, May 12, 2015)

Police arrested the son of North Korea's unofficial ambassador to Japan for allegedly smuggling expensive mushrooms into the country, in the latest incident underlining the increasing tensions between Tokyo and Pyongyang. The arrest on Tuesday of Ho Jong Do, the son of Ho Jong Man, leader of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, also known as "Chosen Soren" in Japanese, was the latest such raid. Ho Jong Do was among three people arrested on charges of smuggling 1,800 kilograms, or about 4,000 pounds, of prized matsutake mushrooms into Japan in September 2010, contravening Japanese sanctions imposed against North Korea in 2006 as punishment for its missile and nuclear tests. He is accused of shipping the mushrooms, with a declared customs value of about \$38,000, into China and then importing them into Japan as Chinese-grown. Police searched the offices of Korean Product Sales in Tokyo, where Ho Jong Do is president, a year ago and searched six Chosen Soren leaders' houses in March. At the time, Korean Central News Agency called the raids "a despicable act of fanning antagonism" toward North Korea. In the absence of diplomatic ties between Tokyo and Pyongyang, the Chosen Soren has functioned as North Korea's de facto embassy in Japan and Ho Jong Man as its de facto ambassador. An angry Ho Jong Man denounced the charges. "It's complete nonsense and a plot. There's not even a 0.1-millimeter violation of the law," he told reporters outside his house. "This is the fault of the prime minister's office for allowing the police to act irresponsibly and groundlessly. This will seriously affect Japan-North Korea relations." But Suga Yoshihide the chief cabinet secretary, said that the investigation was based on law and evidence. "There is no change in our position to strongly demand North Korea promptly carry out an investigation [on Japanese abductees] based on the Japan-North Korea agreement and quickly and honestly report its outcome to Japan," Suga said at a news conference. (Anna Fifield, "Japan Arrests Son of Unofficial North Korean Envoy in Mushroom Case," *Washington Post*, May 12, 2015)

5/13/15

North Korea informed South Korea of its plan to stage firing drills near the tensely guarded western sea border this week, the military here said, in its latest show of force that has heightened inter-Korean tensions. In a notice to Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), "the North's Command in Southwestern Sector of Front said it will carry out firing drills anytime between 3 p.m. today and midnight Friday in their territorial waters just above the Northern Limit Line (NLL)," according to its officials. "The bellicose regime designated two areas just above the NLL for its planned live-fire drills -- one some 10 kilometers away from the South's Baengnyeong Island and 12 kilometers away from the island of Yeonpyeong," the JCS said. (Oh Seok-min, "N. Korea Vows Firing Drills in Yellow Sea This Week: Seoul Ministry," *Yonhap*, May 13, 2015)

North Korea has executed its defense chief on charges of treason, South Korea's spy agency said, in the latest sign of a reign of terror by leader Kim Jong-un. Hyon Yong-chol, the chief of North Korea's People's Armed Forces, was executed by firing squad using an anti-aircraft gun at a military school in Pyongyang around April 30, the National Intelligence Service (NIS) said. Hyon, 66, was seen dozing off during a military event and did not carry out Kim's instructions, a senior official of the agency told a group of reporters. The spy agency also gave a similar briefing to lawmakers in a closed-door parliamentary session. Hyon's execution is the latest in a series of public executions in the communist country. Hyon was named as the armed forces chief in June 2014, the No. 2 man within the North's military after Hwang Pyong-so, director of the general political department of the Korean People's Army (KPA). North Korea has not announced its purge of Hyon yet. The NIS said that given available information, Hyon seemed to be purged not because he sought a rebellion but because he was "disrespectful" to the young leader. Over the past six months, Kim punished other key senior officials including Ma Won-chun, director of the Designing Department at the North's powerful National Defense Commission. "As key officials have voiced more complaints, Kim has deepened a reign of terror by purging them in negligence of proper procedure," the official said. "We believe that there are growing doubts about Kim's leadership among North Korean ranking officials." The Ministry of Unification spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol said at a regular briefing, "North Korea is seeking to create an atmosphere of terror by employing such ways of execution in order to solidify his power," ministry. "The government is closely watching how the young leader's governing style will affect the regime in the long run." The NIS added that since taking power, Kim has had about 70 senior officials executed. "The purge of Hyon seems to show that it is not acceptable to challenge Kim's monolithic leadership," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. "It would be an overestimate if (a series of purges) is seen as a source of instability in the North." Daniel Pinkston, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, said that the purge is "the nature of authoritarian regimes," adding that it is difficult for those thinking about launching a rebellion to take collective action in the North. "Violence always is lurking in the background as the instrument for resolving political differences," he added. Meanwhile, the spy agency dismissed as "groundless" a report that the North's leader ordered his aunt Kim Kyong-hui to be killed via poisoning in May last year. Noting that no abnormal signs within the North Korean military have been detected, Seoul's Defense Ministry said it has been closely watching situations in the North with regards to its series of saber-rattling and internal affairs. (Yonhap, "N. Korea's Defense Chief Executed: S. Korea Intel," May 13, 2015) North Korean armed forces minister Hyon Yong-chol was executed because he fell afoul of a younger generation of technocrats that make up the core of leader Kim Jong-un's regime, American experts estimate. Ex-State Department official John Merrill told Radio Free Asia there was probably conflict between Kim and the military over where to spend resources and money. Merrill based his surmise on the fact that several senior leaders in the unruly military have been purged while the technocrats seem secure in their posts. "Military officials in North Korea seem to be more under fire than those in charge of economic policy," Merrill said. Premier Pak Pong-ju, the most senior technocrat, fell out of favor with former leader Kim Jong-il but was reappointed as premier in April 2013 and has since held on to his post. Meanwhile the chief of the

Army politburo, the minister of the People's Armed Forces, and the Army chief of staff - the top three military posts -- have been reshuffled several times. Armed forces ministers have served on average eight months. Among more adventurous speculation here has been that Hyon was executed because he fell asleep during one of Kim's speeches. But the government here believes Merrill may be on to something. "Since he took power, Kim Jong-un has given more weight to technocrats, promoting them to senior positions in the Workers Party, a supreme body superior to the Cabinet," a government official here said. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "N. Korean Ex-Army Chief 'Locked Horns with Technocrats,'" May 15, 2015)

North Korea carried out firing drills at night just north of the Northern Limit Line near Baeknyeong and Yeonpyeong islands off west coast. The North notified South Korean authorities earlier that the drills could last from 3 p.m. today until midnight March 15. The South Korean military plans to fire back if shells land south of the NLL. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "N. Korea Conducts Firing Drill near Sea Border," May 14, 2015)

5/14/15

North Korea launched a firing drill near the tensely patrolled western maritime border with the South for a second consecutive day, the South Korean military said. The artillery drill began at around 7:10 p.m. near the Northern Limit Line (NLL), but none of the artillery rounds landed on the south side of the sea border, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Launches 2nd Day of Firing Drills," May 14, 2015)

The government approved two security-related bills whose enactment would allow Japan to exercise its right of collective self-defense on a limited basis, taking seamless action in support of multinational forces and responding to so-called gray-zone situations. The bills were approved in an extraordinary Cabinet meeting on this evening and were to be submitted to the Diet the next day. The government and ruling coalition intend to extend the current session of the Diet, which ends on June 24, to pass the bills. "The idea that a nation can protect itself by itself is no longer valid," Prime Minister Abe Shinzo said at a press conference after the Cabinet decision. He stressed the need to shore up Japan's security-related laws and stated that "By demonstrating to the world that the Japan-U.S. alliance functions, this in turn will strengthen Japan's deterrence." Abe also said, "Japan will never be involved in an American war." He pledged to pass the bills during the current Diet session. To illustrate the "dire circumstances" surrounding Japan, Abe cited recent hostage situations in Algeria, Syria and Tunisia that involved Japanese nationals. He also referred to the nuclear and missile threats posed by North Korea, and the repeated approaches by foreign aircraft. The government and ruling parties expect deliberations to begin at the end of this month when they explain the aim of the bills at a plenary session of the House of Representatives and open them up to questions. Prior to the Cabinet meeting, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and coalition partner Komeito held a meeting of their joint council in the Diet building and reached a formal agreement to promote the security-related bills. Later, council chair and LDP Vice President Masahiko Komura visited the Prime Minister's Office with vice council chair and Komeito deputy head Kazuo Kitagawa to report on the completion of the bills. The prime minister commended the council during the meeting, saying the outcome was the fruit of the "25 sessions that the council held to deliberate on and dig into issues."

Abe said he intended “to thoroughly explain to the public [the aim of the bills] in the Diet.” One of the two security-related bills would create a permanent law to support international peace, which would enable the Self-Defense Forces to provide logistic support to multinational forces. By enacting a new permanent law, the government would no longer be required to legislate a special measures law each time such action is called for. However, prior Diet approval would be required to dispatch the SDF on overseas missions. A new rule was also included that would require both the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors to endeavor to give their approval within seven days if the prime minister asks for a swift decision. The second bill is a legislative package aimed at revising 10 existing peace and security-related laws, including the Armed Attack Situation Response Law (to be renamed to include situations where threats to Japan’s survival are imminent), the Self-Defense Forces Law and the United Nations Peacekeeping Activities Cooperation Law. With regard to exercising the nation’s right of collective self-defense, the Armed Attack Situation Response Law would be revised to include the new idea of “threats to Japan’s survival.” Such threats would be defined as “situations where an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result, threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to overturn fundamentally its people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.” The revised law would enable the SDF to mobilize on this premise. Furthermore, the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan would be revised and renamed in connection with security in “situations that could significantly affect Japan.” The words “areas surrounding Japan” would be deleted from the revised law to make clear that geographical restrictions no longer apply. Amendments would also be made to enable the SDF to provide support to military forces other than U.S. forces. The peacekeeping activities cooperation law would be revised to expand Japan’s contributions by including international activities that are similar to U.N.-mandated missions but have no direct connection with the United Nations. The government also decided in Thursday’s Cabinet meeting to hold extraordinary Cabinet meetings by phone if a quick response is needed to a gray-zone situation, which cannot be immediately determined to be an armed attack. Cabinet meetings by phone would be called in three scenarios: a militant group lands on one of Japan’s remote islands; a foreign vessel violates international law within Japan’s territorial waters; or a privately owned Japanese vessel is raided in the high seas. (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, “Cabinet Approves 2 Security Bills; Turning Point for Japan’s Defense Policy,” May 14, 2014)

5/15/15

Jeffrey Lewis: “Most of the people who invoke the failure of the Agreed Framework couldn’t tell you the first thing about it—other than that they “know” it didn’t work because North Korea now has nuclear weapons. But they are misguided. The 1994 Agreed Framework was a good deal. Would that we had been wise enough to keep it. Let’s start with three statements about North Korea and the Agreed Framework. These statements are *basically* accurate, but there are some very important clarifications and corrections. And it is within those corrections and clarifications that the logic of the Agreed Framework is evident. **Assumption 1: In 1994, North Korea already had enough plutonium for one, possibly two nuclear weapons.** Not quite. The US intelligence community believed North Korea had a stockpile of undeclared plutonium, but did not know whether that stockpile was a few grams or a few

kilograms. There were good reasons to suspect that North Korea had a stockpile of undeclared plutonium. In 1989, the DPRK shut down the reactor at Yongbyon for about 70 days. North Korea may have unloaded some or all of the fuel rods in the reactor's core during this period. There are good reasons for such a suspicion. Satellite images show the DPRK constructed what appear to be camouflaged waste tanks. Environmental samples taken by the IAEA showed the DPRK had conducted more reprocessing "campaigns" than Pyongyang had declared. But how much fuel was unloaded? How much plutonium was in the fuel? The US Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee assessed the worst-case scenario of 8.3-8.5 kilograms of plutonium, revised down from an earlier estimate of 12 kilograms. That is enough for "one, possibly two" nuclear weapons depending on a number of factors such as how much plutonium the North Korean design required and how much might be lost during processing. This was a worst-case estimate. While it is important to ensure that our policies hedge against worst-case estimates, it is also important to hedge against uncertainty. The North Koreans might not have had more than few grams of separated plutonium. Or perhaps they had a few kilograms, but not enough for a bomb. We simply did not know then, and do not know now, how much plutonium North Korea squirreled away. The North Koreans, of course, admitted to only a few grams in 1994. Interestingly, they denied it again in 2006 when they declared a plutonium stockpile of 37 kilograms. **Assumption 2: North Korea cheated on the Agreed Framework.** Well, again, not quite. We should give the devil his due: North Korea largely kept its commitments regarding its plutonium-production capabilities. Starting a secret enrichment program, on the other hand, clearly violated understood expectations, a classic example of a transgressor obtaining a slight advantage in comparison with a relatively large inconvenience imposed upon the aggrieved party. This will get its own section. But freezing North Korea's plutonium production was nothing to sneeze at. We might not have known how much separated plutonium North Korea possessed, but we had a pretty good idea how much *unseparated* plutonium was sitting in North Korea's spent fuel pond in 1994. Moreover, we know how much plutonium North Korea would be able to produce each year if it completed the two much larger reactors under construction at Yongbyon and Taechon. The CIA spelled all this out quite clearly in 2002: "If North Korea abandoned the Agreed Framework Pyongyang could resume production of plutonium. Reprocessing the spent 5 MWe reactor fuel now in storage at the Yongbyon site under IAEA safeguards would recover enough plutonium for several more weapons. Restarting the 5 MWe reactor would generate about 6 kg per year. The 50 MWe reactor at Yongbyon and the 200 MWe reactor at Taechon would generate about 275 kg per year, although it would take several years to complete construction of these reactors." The remaining 8,000 spent fuel rods—containing about 20-28 kilograms of plutonium—were placed in canisters and under IAEA safeguards. The 5 MWe reactor at Yongbyon was shut down and construction stopped at the 50 MWe reactor at Yongbyon and the 200 MWe reactor at Taechon. In 1998, the United States accused North Korea of building a secret plutonium production reactor and reprocessing facility underground, near a place called Kumchang-ri. Well, strictly speaking, DIA suspected that Kumchang-ri was an underground reactor and someone fed this to the *New York Times*, which ran it under the headline: NORTH KOREA SITE AN A-BOMB PLANT, U.S. AGENCIES SAY. The United States negotiated access to the site. When US inspectors arrived, they could not determine the purpose of the site,

but concluded that Kumchang-ri, laid out as a grid of tunnels, was “unsuitable” for a nuclear reactor and “not well designed” for a reprocessing facility. The Agreed Framework was premised on a transformation of the political and economic relationship, a perhaps too ambitious expectation since even a DPRK without nuclear weapons is fundamentally unlikeable. North Korea’s human rights situation remained appalling. And the North Koreans continued to show an appalling enthusiasm for grabbing people, whether Japanese abducted in secret during the 1970s or Americans detained in recent years. The North Koreans also continued to develop, test and sell increasingly long-range ballistic missiles, something the Clinton administration sought to address after the 1998 Taepodong test. And, of course, we now know that the Clinton Administration was starting to get wind of the relationship with AQ Khan—which ultimately resulted in the missiles for centrifuge barter that would create so much turmoil in 2002. But in terms of the fundamental purpose of the agreement—to freeze the DPRK’s plutonium production capabilities—Pyongyang complied. **Assumption 3: The Agreed Framework collapsed because North Korea started a centrifuge program.** Again, not quite—but starting a secret centrifuge program certainly didn’t help, that’s for damned sure. The Agreed Framework was already under a lot of pressure as the Clinton Administration drew to a close. Congress exercised its power of the purse to involve itself in the implementation of the Agreed Framework, resulting in irregular deliveries of heavy fuel oil to North Korea and delays to the construction of light-water reactors. Even if Kumchang-ri turned out to be a dead-end, the leaks had weakened the agreement. And North Korea’s missile program, following the shock of the 1998 Taepodong test and continuing sales abroad, was a significant barrier to normalization of relations. The Clinton administration had asked former Secretary of Defense William Perry to review US policy toward North Korea. His approach, dubbed the “Perry Process,” implied seeking to build additional agreements on top of the Agreed Framework—starting with an agreement to end North Korea’s development of long-range ballistic missiles. The Clinton administration was *this* close to an agreement on missiles when the clock ran out. The Clinton administration, too, knew about North Korea’s centrifuge work—and had pressured Pakistan to cut off Pyongyang. The newly installed Bush administration undertook a policy review that stretched into 2002. The result of this review, it is often forgotten, was a version of the Perry Process, safely rebranded as the “bold approach.” This is forgotten because, before anyone could tell the North Koreans, the US received intelligence that indicated North Korea’s centrifuge program was much further along than previously thought. While the US intelligence community had known about North Korea’s interest in centrifuges, the scale of the procurement suggested a much more mature program. I do not want to suggest, as others have, that the DPRK’s enrichment program was purely for civil purposes. The North Koreans were clearly, in my view, giving themselves a second route to nuclear weapons. But the Bush administration had a fundamental choice: Under the Perry Process, the approach was to treat North Korea’s centrifuge program like its ballistic missile program or its abductions of foreign citizens—yet another instance of terrible North Korean behavior that had to be dealt with in time. In this case, the United States might have negotiated a new agreement to complement the freeze on the DPRK’s plutonium program provided by the Agreed Framework. The alternative, of course, was to blow up everything. Or, as John Bolton would write with exceptional candor, “This was the hammer I had been looking for to

shatter the Agreed Framework." The phrasing—"had been looking for"—is telling. I think this was the wrong choice—although I do suspect¹ a Gore Administration might have let the *Agreed Framework* succumb to political pressures under the same circumstances. The Perry Process was always about bigger carrots *and* bigger sticks, which is how we ended up with Perry suggesting we attack North Korea in 2006. We'll never know how a Gore administration would have responded to new intelligence about the maturity of the North Korean enrichment effort. The politics though, don't change the merits. Why on earth would our response to North Korean bad behavior be to free them from their obligations not to produce plutonium? Still, no one listens to me! The Bush administration decided to suspend US obligations under the Agreed Framework. The consequences were pretty straightforward. North Korea "effectuated" its withdrawal from the *Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty*, opened the cans of spent fuel and separated out the plutonium, restarted Yongbyon to produce even more plutonium, then conducted a nuclear explosion in 2006. I guess that showed ol' Kim Jong Il. This policy was such a rousing success that the Bush administration used the Six Party Talks to renegotiate a much watered-down version of the Agreed Framework with North Korea. Of course, Bush didn't call it that. (And since Bush had criticized the Agreed Framework as a mere "freeze" instead of a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs, they dredged up an archaic word—"disablement"—that sounded enough like dismantlement to save the President from any embarrassment. But come on. Here is how Bush described the Six Party Agreement in his memoir *Decision Points*: "In February 2007, North Korea agreed to shut down its main nuclear reactor and allow UN inspectors back into the country to verify its actions. In exchange, we and our Six-Party partners provided energy aid, and the United States agreed to remove North Korea from our list of state sponsors of terror." Tell me how that isn't an off-brand Agreed Framework, and I'll laugh in your face. The United States even agreed to provide North Korea with light-water reactors, the element of the deal the Bush administration criticized most directly. Strangely, Bush doesn't mention that in his memoir. So, what does all this mean? The fundamental logic of the Agreed Framework was sound. North Korea had a small, unknown stockpile of plutonium in 1994. It was on the verge of having much, much more. The United States successfully froze that stockpile—a freeze that lasted eight years. And when the Bush Administration chose to "shatter" the Agreement (Mr. Bolton's characterization, not mine) the consequences were clear. North Korea has increased its stockpile of plutonium to more than 60 kilograms and conducted three nuclear explosions. Moreover, the United States failed utterly to constrain North Korea's uranium enrichment program, which is now the major source of uncertainty about the size of North Korea's nuclear stockpile. The same President who walked away from the agreement spent the final years of his term trying to resurrect it, albeit under a different name to avoid any admission of failure. The Agreed Framework was a very good deal even if it was an imperfect one. I am reluctant to draw too many conclusions about the framework announced to limit Iran's nuclear program, but perhaps those fiddling with purse strings in Congress or looking for a hammer when they get into office should see the Agreed Framework as a cautionary tale. On the other hand, "disincentive" isn't taken yet. So there's that." (Jeffrey Lewis, "Revisiting the Agreed Framework," *38North*, May 15, 2015)

5/16/15

Speaking at a joint news conference with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing, Secretary of State John Kerry said he believed an Iran agreement could have "a positive influence" on North Korea, because it would show that giving up nuclear weapons improves domestic economies and ends isolation. He stressed, though, that there was no way to tell if North Korea's reclusive leadership would be able to "internalize" such a message. "I am sure Foreign Minister Wang would join me in expressing the hope that if we can get an agreement with Iran, ... that agreement would indeed have some impact or have a positive influence" on North Korea, Kerry said. (Matthew Lee, "Kerry: Iran Deal Could Be Lesson for North Korea," Associated Press, May 16, 2015)

National Coordinating Committee of the DPRK on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism spokesman: "A DPRK delegation visited the Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) in Sidney, Australia on May 3-8, 2015 and held negotiations with the Asia-Pacific Regional Review Group (APRRG) in Jakarta, Indonesia on May 13 and 14 at the invitation of APG. During the visit and negotiations both sides had honest and candid discussion on working issues of strengthening cooperation in anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. APG affirmatively estimated the DPRK's efforts for anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism and invited the DPRK to participate in the annual meeting of APG in July and it was agreed that a delegation of APG would visit Pyongyang in around August to further the discussion on the issues of mutual concern. The DPRK has maintained the consistent stand against anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism and will continue having the relations of close cooperation with international finance control organization in the future, too. (KCNA, "DPRK to Further Its Relations of Close Cooperation with Intl. Finance Control Organization," May 16, 2015)

5/17/15

After decades of maintaining a minimal nuclear force, China has re-engineered many of its long-range ballistic missiles to carry multiple warheads, a step that federal officials and policy analysts say appears designed to give pause to the United States as it prepares to deploy more robust missile defenses in the Pacific. Private analysts said each upgraded DF-5 had probably received three warheads and that the advances might span half the missile force. If so, the number of warheads China can fire from that weapon at the United States has increased to about 40 from 20. What makes China's decision particularly notable is that the technology of miniaturizing warheads and putting three or more atop a single missile has been in Chinese hands for decades. But a succession of Chinese leaders deliberately let it sit unused; they were not interested in getting into the kind of arms race that characterized the Cold War nuclear competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Now, however, President Xi Jinping appears to have altered course, at the same moment that he is building military airfields on disputed islands in the South China Sea, declaring exclusive Chinese "air defense identification zones," sending Chinese submarines through the Persian Gulf for the first time and creating a powerful new arsenal of cyberweapons. American officials say that, so far, China has declined to engage in talks on the decision to begin deploying multiple nuclear warheads atop its ballistic missiles. "The United States would like to have a discussion of the broader issues of

nuclear modernization and ballistic missile defense with China," said Phillip C. Saunders, director of the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs at National Defense University, a Pentagon-funded academic institution attended by many of the military's next cadre of senior commanders. "The Chinese have been reluctant to have that discussion in official channels," Mr. Saunders said, although he and other experts have engaged in unofficial conversations with their Chinese counterparts on the warhead issue. Beijing's new nuclear program was reported deep inside the annual Pentagon report to Congress about Chinese military capabilities, disclosing a development that poses a dilemma for the Obama administration, which has never talked publicly about these Chinese nuclear advances. Already, there is talk in the Pentagon of speeding up the missile defense effort and of sending military ships into international waters near the disputed islands, to make it clear that the United States will insist on free navigation even in areas that China is claiming as its exclusive zone. "This is obviously part of an effort to prepare for long-term competition with the United States," said Ashley J. Tellis, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who was a senior national security official in the George W. Bush administration. "The Chinese are always fearful of American nuclear advantage." [?] American nuclear forces today outnumber China's by eight to one. The choice of which nuclear missiles to upgrade was notable, Mr. Tellis said, because China chose "one of few that can unambiguously reach the United States." In 1999, during the Clinton administration, Republicans in Congress charged that Chinese spies had stolen the secrets of H-bomb miniaturization. But intelligence agencies noted Beijing's restraint. "For 20 years," the C.I.A. reported, "China has had the technical capability to develop" missiles with multiple warheads and could, if so desired, upgrade its missile forces with MIRVs "in a few years." Today, analysts see China's addition of multiple warheads as at least partly a response to Washington's antimissile strides. "They're doing it," Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists said, "to make sure they could get through the ballistic missile defenses." The Pentagon report, released on May 8, said that Beijing's most powerful weapon now bore MIRV warheads. The intercontinental ballistic missile is known as the DF-5 (for Dong Feng, or East Wind). The Pentagon has said that China has about 20 in underground silos. "It's been a long time coming," said Jeffrey Lewis, an expert on Chinese nuclear forces at the Monterey Institute of International Studies at Monterey. In an interview, he emphasized that even fewer of the DF-5s might have received the upgrade. Early last week, Kristensen posted a public report on the missile intelligence. Beijing's new membership in "the MIRV club," he said, "strains the credibility of China's official assurance that it only wants a minimum nuclear deterrent and is not part of a nuclear arms race." (David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, "China Makes Missiles More Potent in Move Seen as a Message to U.S.," *New York Times*, May 17, 2015)

5/18/15

Kim Jong-un has ordered a new aerospace entity to prepare to test-launch what the country calls a rocket carrying a satellite in October to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the country's ruling party, sources in a number of governments said. Kim directly instructed the National Aerospace Development Administration earlier this year to implement the project that the United States, Japan and South Korea suspect will effectively be a test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile the secretive country is allegedly developing, according two of the sources. (Kyodo, "Kim Orders

New Pyongyang Space Entity to Ready October Test-Launch of ICBM: Sources," May 19, 2015)

Kerry: "To date, to this moment, particularly with its recent provocations, it is clear that the DPRK has not even come close to meeting that standard. Instead, it continues to pursue nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles; it continues to break promises and make threats; and it continues to show flagrant disregard for international law, while denying its own people the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights. And that is why it is absolutely critical for the global community to continue to shed light on North Korea's atrocities against its own people. That's why it's important for us to ramp up international pressure for North Korea to change its behavior. And that is why the United States and South Korea will continue to modernize our alliance in order to fully and decisively counter any threat that Pyongyang may pose to peace and security on the peninsula. And it is also why, for the first time, the UN Security Council last year took up the question of a referral of North Korea, and particularly Kim Jong-un's behavior, to the International Criminal Court. And if their horrific conduct continues, it is hard to see how that referral to the Criminal Court would not take place. Their behavior is against all notions of conscience, all standards of behavior, anywhere in the world. It is among the very worst, and we will increasingly shed light on the nature of that behavior against its people - not just against the elite that it's willing to execute, but against its own people who it's willing to oppress and starve. ... Is there a change or a shift? And the answer is we are more determined than ever to find a way to convince Kim Jong-un and North Korea that all they are doing now is isolating themselves further and creating greater risks to the region and to their own country. Everyone is determined to try to get to a genuine negotiation, but not to talks for the sake of talks. We have to have some indication from the leader of North Korea that they're serious about engaging on the subject of their nuclear program. And when some people say, well, why don't you just sit down and talk to them? The answer is everybody that I have listed has tried to reach out and offer a different path. Kim Jong-un recently rebuffed the invitation of President Putin to go to Russia; he has rebuffed the overtures of the leaders of China to engage on this topic; he has rebuffed our quiet efforts to try to reach out and engage in a discussion; and he has rebuffed the efforts of President Park to engage. **So no one should be under any illusion. This is an individual who has said no to every effort to reach out and find a reasonable way forward. And as a result of that, we are indeed talking about ways to increase the pressure and increase the potential of either sanctions or other means of making it clear to him that he is on a very dangerous course in the missile systems and pursuit, continued pursuit of his nuclear weapons program. The SLBM is** just one more example of that: provocative and contrary to the United Nations requirements; contrary to all international standards that he is supposed to live by. It's **one more element of provocation. And it really ties in to this question of the nature of the executions and the behavior of Kim Jong-un. The world is hearing increasingly more and more stories of grotesque, grizzly, horrendous public displays of executions on a whim and a fancy by the leader against people who were close to him and sometimes for the most flimsy of excuses.** That is a manifestation also of the lack of opportunity and possibilities that most of the people of North Korea have in their lives, which makes his leadership one of the most egregious examples of reckless

disregard for human rights and for human beings anywhere on the planet. **That is why the UN is looking at this issue of human rights and International Criminal Court, and I can assure you that we will intend to continue to not only put focus on that part of his behavior but also to find some way to come to a reasonable negotiation.** A final comment: The United States has said many times, and I repeat today, we are not seeking conflict; we are seeking a peaceful resolution of the differences that still exist after so many years on the peninsula. We have offered humanitarian assistance. **We offer the possibilities of a normal relationship with normal economic assistance and other kinds of engagement with the rest of the world if he will simply make the decision to come to the table and deal on the issue of his nuclear program.** There is a stark comparison between the direction in which he is moving and the direction in which Iran has chosen to move, at least to this moment. And our hopes are **that if we can, at the end of June, succeed in achieving an agreement with Iran, perhaps that can serve as an example to North Korea about a better way to move,** a better way to try to behave, a more legitimate entry road to the global community and to the norms of international behavior. ... **Q:** Secretary Kerry, can you give more specifics on how you plan to boost sanctions or pressure against North Korea? And is - and has China come on board with the idea of referring Kim Jong-un to the International Criminal Court? And the rejections from the North Koreans thus far, how much is that an indicator of China not having as much leverage on the North, or perhaps the Chinese haven't exerted enough pressure? ... **KERRY:** So I'll be very quick. With respect to the ICC, the International Criminal Court, no decision has yet been made. What I said in my comments is that the current behavior is certain to attract increased scrutiny of the Security Council, increased scrutiny of the UN, and is well on its way to leading to that kind of referral. But a decision has obviously not yet been made, and no country has yet said publicly what it believes should happen or should not happen. But the behavior gets worse and it's hard to imagine that given the current level of behavior, it isn't going to ultimately wind up in that direction, which is what I said. **With respect to the methodology for the boosting of sanctions and other things, we're discussing all of that now. China obviously has extraordinary leverage. And China, to its credit - and this is very important - China has made many very significant additional steps in order to put additional pressure on North Korea. China, in fact, has not yet even met with Kim Jong-un and has undertaken a number of trade measures, a number of border measures, a number of other decisions which have an impact on the flow of goods into North Korea.** And so there's no issue about whether or not China has been a real partner in trying to move things. Are there some things that all of us think might be able to done - be ratcheted up? I think that's true for all of us that there are things that we could do. But we - this was part of the purpose of my coming out here now to engage in this discussion. And we will have a Security - Economic and Security Dialogue with the Chinese in Washington in June, and that will be the moment where we will table some of these specific steps and begin to see if we can become more defined about the road that we're all prepared to consider in the days ahead." (DoS, Joint Press Availability with ROK Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Seoul, May 18, 2015)

Secretary of State John Kerry called for increased international pressure on the government of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, berating the country's pursuit of

nuclear weapons and its "horrendous" executions of people close to the leader. "The world is hearing increasingly more and more stories of grotesque, grisly, horrendous, public displays of executions on a whim and fancy by the leader against people who were close to him, sometimes on the flimsiest of excuses," Kerry said, referring to Kim, during a news conference in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Kerry made the comment in response to a recent report that Kim had ordered one of his top generals, the minister of the People's Armed Forces, Hyon Yong-chol, executed with an antiaircraft gun for disloyalty. Kerry called Kim's government "one of the most egregious examples of reckless disregard for human rights and human beings anywhere on the planet." He added that Mr. Kim's behavior only increased the likelihood that he would face charges at the International Criminal Court. "That is why it is important for us to ramp up international pressure on North Korea to change its behavior," Mr. Kerry said during the joint news conference with his South Korean counterpart, Yun Byung-se. "If their horrific conduct continues, it is hard to see how that referral to the criminal court would not take place." (Choe Sang-hun, "Kerry Calls for More Pressure on North Korea for Horrific Acts," *New York Times*, May 18, 2015) Kerry threatened tougher sanctions on North Korea to "ramp up" the pressure on the "grisly" regime of leader Kim Jong-un. "This is an individual who has said no to every effort" to hold talks on his country's nuclear program, Kerry said at joint briefing with South Korean counterpart, Yun Byung Se in Seoul. "We are more determined than ever to find a way to convince Kim Jong-un and North Korea that all they are doing now is isolating themselves further and creating greater risks for the region and for their country." Kerry added, "The U.S. continues to offer Pyongyang an improved bilateral relationship if and only if and when it demonstrates a genuine willingness to fulfill denuclearization obligations and commitments and when it shows a willingness to address other important concerns shared by the international community." Kim has since purged dozens of high-level officials and may have executed his defense minister Hyon Yong Chol with an anti-aircraft gun, South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers last week. "It really ties into this question of the nature of the executions and the behavior of Kim Jong-un," Kerry said, adding that his regime was "one of the most egregious examples of reckless disregard for human rights." South Korean President Park Geun Hye called Kim's rule an "extreme reign of terror," saying last week that many South Koreans are frightened about uncertainties in North Korea. On Monday, North Korea called her a "viper," blaming her for tensions between the two countries. "North Korea is reacting violently to Park's remark," said Cheong Seong Chang, a North Korea analyst at the Sejong Institute near Seoul. "Relations between North Korea and South Korea may be as good as over this year." "We have to have some indication from the leader of North Korea that they are serious about engaging the subject of their nuclear program." Kerry said. Kerry said Kim may face prosecution by the International Criminal Court for committing human rights abuses that amount to crimes against humanity. (Sangwon Yoon and Sam Kim, "Kerry Threatens Tougher Sanctions on 'Grisly' North Korea Regime," *Bloomberg*, May 18, 2015)

Controversy over Washington's alleged push to station an advanced U.S. missile defense unit on the peninsula was reignited when U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry raised the issue for the first time during his trip to Seoul. At a meeting with U.S. troops and Foreign Service officers, the top diplomat cited North Korea's ongoing creation of

a nuclear arsenal and other "extraordinarily provocative activities" to stress the significance of the deployment of ships, forces and other assets here to prepare for "every eventual outcome." "Nobody quite knows what America's first line of defense in Seoul will do," Kerry said. "This is why we need to deploy ships, forces ... and we are talking about THAAD," he added. South Korea and the U.S. quickly attempted to downplay his remarks, saying that the issue had not been discussed at all between the two governments including at his talks with Foreign Minister Yun earlier in the day. The U.S. Embassy here also reaffirmed this stance. "The secretary was attending an internal event and speaking to an internal U.S. audience," it was quoted as saying by Seoul officials. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of the U.S. Forces Korea, also said that the allies were "each considering" the matter and will engage in formal discussions "eventually." "At some point in the future I think we will consider it (deployment) when the time is right. ... Both the countries share consideration not only of military factors but also political factors," he was quoted as saying by the *Munhwa Ilbo* after a forum in Seoul. (Shin Hyon-hee, "Missile Defense Dispute Reignited," *Korea Herald*, May 19, 2015)

South Korea said it proposed holding talks last week with North Korea this week on a joint industrial complex in the North amid a row over a wage hike, but Pyongyang has rejected the offer, saying an atmosphere for dialogue has not been created. . (Yonhap, "N. Korea Rejects S. Korea's Offer for Talks on Joint Industrial Park," *Korea Herald*, May 18, 2015)

5/19/15

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he will visit the Kaesong industrial complex this week to help ease inter-Korean tensions. "I reiterate my willingness to do whatever it takes to contribute to improving inter-Korean relations and promoting reconciliation and stability on the Korean Peninsula," Ban said during a press conference at the World Education Forum in Songdo, west of Seoul. On Thursday, Ban, a former South Korean foreign minister, will be the first U.N. chief to visit the complex. He will also be the first U.N. chief to visit North Korea in more than 20 years. "The Kaesong project is a win-win model for both Koreas," he said. "It symbolizes a good way to tap the advantages of the Koreas in a complementary manner." More than 53,000 North Koreans have been hired to work for some 120 South Korean firms located in the complex. "I believe it would be better for North Korea to have close exchanges with the international community, to open up, and to focus on (improving) its living conditions and economic development," he said. Ban also urged the two Koreas to address all pending issues through dialogue. "Peace and security on the Korean Peninsula is one of my top priorities as secretary-general," he said. "All parties will benefit from renewed engagement and commitment to dialogue." (Lee Haye-ah, "U.N. Chief to Visit Kaesong Industrial Complex in N. Korea," Yonhap, May 19, 2015) "I reiterate my willingness to do whatever it takes to contribute to improving inter-Korean relations and promoting reconciliation and stability in the region," he said during a press conference at the World Education Forum in the Songdo Convensia. Whether Ban will meet with any of North Korea's high-profile politicians is unclear yet. For now, he plans to visit South Korean factories operating at the complex and meet with North Korean workers there. "The Gaeseong project is a win-win model for both Koreas," he said. "It symbolizes a good way to tap the advantages of the Koreas in a

complementary manner. "The main purpose of the visit is to encourage more of such cooperation." Jung Min-ho and Jun Ji-hye, "U.N. Chief Offers to Mediate on N.K. Threat," *Korea Times*, May 19, 2015)

South Korea said it has decided to provide about 1 billion won (\$917,850) to support the physically handicapped in North Korea, a move aimed at boosting inter-Korean cooperation. The Ministry of Unification said that it plans to tap into an inter-Korean cooperative fund to provide rehabilitation goods and nourishing food to those who are physically handicapped in the North, the first time since 2009 that Seoul has used the fund to support disabled people in North Korea. The move is part of Seoul's decision to assist the North with a combined 10.6 billion won through the fund, it said. The government said it will offer \$6.1 million to support the U.N. agencies' program to help North Korean mothers and infants. The remainder will be provided to support a set of projects for families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War, it added. "The move will pave the way to open channels for inter-Korean cooperation as it could help improve the humanitarian situation in North Korea and help separated families," a ministry official said. (Yonhap, "S. Korea to Offer 1 Billion to Support Handicapped in N. Korea," *Korea Herald*, May 19, 2015)

Out of 800 surveyed, some 82 percent said they support Seoul's assistance to North Korea, while less than 16 percent opposed it, according to a survey by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) carried out in April. As for reasons for support, about 36 percent of aid proponents cited "humanitarian duty," given the serious food situation facing North Korean children. Some 34 percent said they prioritized children above all else and 18 percent said the situation for North Korean children was just too serious. More than 11 percent of the aid proponents said Seoul's assistance could help relieve inter-Korean tension. Earlier in the day, South Korea approved aid of 1 billion won (US\$917,000) to assist the disabled in North Korea, a move hailed by UNICEF chief Anthony Lake. "This represents the popular will of the people in South Korea," he told Yonhap. (Park Sojong, "Most S. Koreans Support Aid to N. Korea: UNICEF," Yonhap, May 19, 2015)

5/20/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement: "The U.S. going reckless in its smear campaign against the DPRK in a bid to get rid of the miserable position it is finding itself due to the total failure in its hostile policy toward the DPRK. ...While visiting south Korea U.S. Secretary of State Kerry ran the whole gamut of invectives against the DPRK on May 18. He blustered that north Korea is increasing military threats by persistently developing nukes and ballistic missiles, it is necessary to escalate international pressure on it to force it to change its behavior and the world community should jointly react against the state making cyberattack. Kerry went the lengths of pulling up the DPRK supreme headquarters in a bid to tarnish the image of the DPRK and justify the bankrupt "human rights" racket against it. What Kerry uttered was nothing but the jargon let loose by the loser admitting a total failure of the hostile policy of the Obama Administration towards the DPRK as it was its last-ditch efforts to evade the responsibility for having driven the DPRK-U.S. relations to the worst phase. ...The U.S. has already been disqualified to talk about dialogue and the nuclear issue due to the anachronistic moves to stifle the DPRK. **The DPRK provided the U.S. with a series of**

opportunities for realizing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in the past period. But the U.S. did not roll back its inveterate hostile policy toward the DPRK and missed all the opportunities. In January last, the DPRK showed the willingness to put a moratorium on the nuclear test if the U.S. temporarily discontinues the provocative joint military exercises against it. However, the U.S. turned down this offer, scuppering the last chance to settle the nuclear issue. No progress can be made in the DPRK-U.S. relations **unless the U.S. drops its inveterate and chronic repugnance and its hostile policy** towards the DPRK. **The U.S. should fundamentally change its viewpoint on the DPRK in order to stem the current trend of vicious cycle of confrontation and tension. The Obama Administration will have to disappear from the arena, leaving the ill fame as the arch criminal torpedoing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and escalating the tension on it.** The U.S. would be well advised not to forget that its acts of getting on the nerves of the DPRK would only add to its pain." (KCNA, "Reckless Remarks of U.S. Secretary of State Denounced," May 20, 2015)

NDC Policy Department statement: "The U.S. and Japanese reactionaries, south Korean puppet authorities and other hostile forces every day let loose invectives against the DPRK over its underwater test-fire of ballistic missile from a strategic submarine. ... It cannot overlook the sinister aim sought by the hostile forces in taking issue with its legitimate measure to bolster up the self-defense capability as a sovereign state and their provocative behaviors. ...The DPRK's underwater test-fire is part of the measures to increase the self-defense capability of its army and people, pursuant to the line of simultaneously developing the two fronts and **a new higher level in the development of strategic striking means. It is long since the DPRK's nuclear striking means have entered the stage of producing smaller nukes and diversifying them.** The DPRK has reached the stage of **ensuring the highest precision and intelligence and best accuracy of not only medium- and short-range rockets but long-range ones.** It does not hide this. This is the DPRK's just measure for bolstering up the capability for self-defense and a legitimate exercise of its sovereignty **which it can never give up simply because someone brands it as a "provocation" or demands a "stop" to it.** Now that the U.S. and all other undesirable hostile forces kowtowing to it are persistently "threatening" and "blackmailing" the DPRK and stepping up overtly and covertly their brigandish moves to invade it and "bring down its social system", its service personnel and people all out in the drive for defending the security of the country and dignity of the nation **will more dynamically push ahead at increasing speed with the plan for bolstering up the defense capability,** undeterred by the moves. They should no longer dare pull up the DPRK over all its measures for bolstering up its military muscle for self-defense, terming them "provocation" and "threat." It is the stand of the DPRK not to allow the U.S. and its allies to brand the former's above-said test-fire as a "provocation" and "threat" to regional peace, pursuant to the "resolution" of the UNSC. This is because the UNSC was reduced to the one that yields to the high-handed and arbitrary practices of the U.S., forgetful of its mission to ensure the global peace and security and its duty prescribed in the UN Charter, and the one which has abandoned itself the principles of respect for sovereignty of other countries and non-interference in their internal affairs after dropping the principle of impartiality. The U.S. and the Japanese reactionaries, the

sworn enemies of the Korean people, the south Korean puppet forces and all other dishonest forces should not forget even a moment that the powerful strike means of the DPRK to defend the dignity and sovereignty of the nation from the reckless moves of the aggressors keen to intrude into its inviolable territory, waters and sky and "bring down its social system" have been **placed on alert to hit any target not only from their front and flanks but from any place in their rear.**" (KCNA, "Underwater Test-Fire of Ballistic Missile Is Legitimate Exercise of Right to Self-Defense: DPRK," May 20, 2015)

North Korea said it has the ability to miniaturize nuclear weapons, a key step toward building nuclear missiles. But the official U.S. response was skepticism. "Our assessment of North Korea's nuclear capabilities has not changed," National Security Council spokesman Patrick Ventrell said in a statement. "We do not think that they have that capacity." "However, they are working on developing a number of long range missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, that could eventually threaten our allies and the homeland," the U.S. spokesman added. "That is why the Administration is working to improve regional and homeland missile defenses and continuing to work with the other members of the six-party talks to bring North Korea back into compliance with its nonproliferation commitments." But the North Korean assertion was unequivocal. "We have had the capability of miniaturizing nuclear warheads, as well as producing multiform weapons, for some time," the North Korean military said in a statement carried by KCNA. "We can also guarantee the accuracy not only of short-to-mid-range but also long-range rocket launches, for which we have had the technology for a long time." David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector, recently told CNN that Pyongyang could have 10 to 15 nuclear weapons at this point and that it could grow that amount by several weapons per year. Fashioning a nuclear device small enough to fit on the tip of a ballistic missile is difficult. North Korea signaled its intent to achieve that goal at the time of its most recent nuclear test, in 2013. It described the device it tested then as "a smaller and lighter" bomb than the ones it detonated in 2006 and 2009. Albright said he thinks Pyongyang can miniaturize a warhead for shorter missiles, but not yet for intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs. "There's just too much testing they need to do, to make sure the re-entry vehicle -- in essence the missile -- is going to work," he explained. "Also, the warhead is going to have to survive in a much more rugged environment, so that requires further testing too. I don't think they're there yet." (Jethro Mullen, "North Korea Says It Can Miniaturize Nuclear Weapons," CNN, May 20, 2015)

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that North Korea has called off his planned visit to an inter-Korean industrial complex in the North. Ban was scheduled to visit the North's border city of Kaesong on Thursday to meet with South Korean businesses and North Korean workers inside the factory park. "They are reversing the decision for me to visit the Kaesong Industrial Complex. No explanation was given for this last-minute change," Ban said during a speech at the Seoul Digital Forum. "This decision by Pyongyang is deeply regrettable." (Yonhap, "N. Korea Cancels U.N. Chief's Visit to Kaesong Complex," May 20, 2015)

Cheong Wa Dae rebutted a series of remarks made by U.S. officials advocating the need to install America's advanced missile defense system here. Presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook stressed that any decision on the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system will be made "independently." "We will consider it, if the United States formally requests a possible deployment," Min said. THAAD is a touchy issue for Seoul, not just because the need for it is growing in the face of North Korea's missile threats but, more importantly, because any hint of embracing it could significantly damage relations with China, and give the impression that the country is at the beck and call of the United States. "No decision has been made," he told reporters. The comments came hours after Frank Rose, U.S. assistant secretary of state for arms control, verification and compliance, said that the U.S. was considering the permanent stationing of a THAAD unit in South Korea. "Although we're considering the permanent stationing of a THAAD unit on the Korean Peninsula, we have not made a final decision and had formal consultations with the Republic of Korea on a potential THAAD deployment," Rose was quoted as saying during a seminar hosted by the Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS) in Washington. A government official told reporters that Rose apparently crossed the line. It was the first time that a U.S. senior official has mentioned the permanent stationing of a THAAD unit on the peninsula. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said May 18 that recent provocations by North Korea were "why we are talking about THAAD." Kerry made the remarks during a meeting with U.S. service personnel stationed here during a two-day visit to Seoul. (Jun Ji-hye, "Seoul Dances away from THAAD Push," *Korea Times*, May 20, 2015)

5/22/15 North Korea has dropped a demand for a wage hike for its workers at the Kaesong factory park, South Korea said, paving the way for talks to resolve the latest dispute over the zone. An official of the South's Unification Ministry said officials from the two countries and executives from South Korean companies operating in the industrial complex had agreed for the firms to pay back wages under the current terms. "Things will move on by current rules, and South and North Korea will meet again to talk about the minimum wage issue," the official added. (Ju-min Park, "South Korea Says North Drops Demand for Wage Hike at Joint Factory Park," Reuters, May 22, 2015)

5/24/15 NDC Policy Department spokesman's statement: "Five years have passed since matchless confrontational maniac and traitor Lee Myung Bak cooked up the "May 24 step", pushing the north-south ties into a phase of confrontation. The "May 24 step" was the anti-nation, anti-peace and anti-reunification one for escalating the confrontation with the compatriots in the north, an unprecedented one in light of the circumstances of its fabrication and the course of its implementation. What matters is Park Geun Hye and her party's argument that if it is to be lifted, there must be such "responsible step" as the north's "admission", "apology" and "assurances for preventing recurrence". They went the lengths of blustering that their stand is immutable. ...The "May 24 step" is an undisguised denial of the historic June 15 joint declaration, the achievement common to the nation, and its action program the October 4 declaration. Traitor Lee Myung Bak and his party branded the June 15 era of reunification as a "lost decade" and blustered they will bring a "decade of confrontation" to freeze the compatriots' enthusiasm for reunification. This blustering was proved by the Cheonan warship sinking case and the "May 24 step" that ensued.

Five years have passed since then and the chief of the Chongwadae has also changed. But the May 24 step remains a cancer-like entity, blocking the improved relations between the north and the south, spoiling the national concord and unity and escalating the confrontation and tension. This clearly shows that Park Geun Hye and her party are just as same as Lee Myung Bak. The "May 24 step" is a measure for confrontation that was fabricated under the pretext of the sinking of warship "Cheonan." The step based on fabrication cannot but be a measure for confrontation. Availing ourselves of this opportunity, we'd like to urge with courtesy Park and her party as follows: **If they have any ground with which they can prove the DPRK's responsibility for the sinking case, they should respond to its demand to jointly look into the case** in the eyes of the whole nation and the world. There would be no excuse whatsoever for them to decline our demand, if they are not afraid. The investigation into the truth will be easier as the hull of Cheonan warship which had been broken into two parts was salvaged and placed on the land. We still keep a powerful inspection group of the DPRK NDC ready to get down to joint investigation into the case. **If Park and her party turn down this just demand of the DPRK, that will only be their admission of the case as their own farce. The "May 24 step" should, therefore, be naturally lifted.** 3. The ill-famed "May 24 step" is a product of political intrigues which should be thrown into a dumping ground of history. The step is a product of political swindles against the nation, reunification and peace which no one wants, and the biggest trouble of all the Koreans. Park Geun Hye and her party should admit before the whole nation the crimes against fellow countrymen they committed by clinging to the "May 24 step" and throw it away into a dumping ground of history. They talk nonsense such as "dialogue first and lift of the step next", only revealing their cynical ploy to push the the north-south dialogue to another theatre of confrontation. But this is just a waste of time. The people from all walks of life in south Korea should rise up as one in the nationwide struggle to have the "May 24 step" lifted. The great turn and avenue to the improvement of the north-south relations depend on the lifting of the step." (KCNA, "DPRK NDC Policy Department Clarifies Its Stand on Ill-Famed 'May 24 Step' of S. Korea," May 24, 2015)

CPRK spokesman's statement: "A spokesman for the Policy Department of the National Defense Commission of the DPRK in a statement "clarified its principled stand as regards the U.S. and its allies' reckless action of taking issue with the DPRK's successful test-fire of ballistic missile from a strategic submarine. As soon as this statement was reported, the south Korean puppet group is raising hue and cry over a "serious threat" and "a halt to provocations" almost every day. It has gone the lengths of sending what it called "message" to the UN Security Council. Even Park Geun Hye is taking the lead in inciting anti-DPRK confrontation racket while vociferating about "counteraction against unpredictable event" and "violation of UN resolution."In the meantime, puppet military gangsters are letting loose a string of invectives about "scorched earth operations" and "containment" during their visits to forefront areas, the hottest spots, for escalating tensions. They are openly revealing an attempt to introduce THAAD into south Korea from the U.S., the plan they dared not raise for fear of public opinion at home and abroad. ...The provocative act of the puppet group echoing the reckless remarks of the U.S. a last-ditch effort of the pro-U.S. lackeys, taken aback by the leap forward made by the DPRK in bolstering up its military muscle. The south Korean

puppet group, kowtowing to its American master, is a horde of despicable traitors who have sold off the dignity and interests of the nation and increased the tension and danger of a war on the Korean peninsula as a shock brigade in the moves to stifle the DPRK. It has neither elementary face nor qualifications to say this or that about the DPRK's inviolable nuclear deterrence for self-defense. The DPRK's nuclear force for self-defense can never be an object of accusation as it is means of justice for protecting the dignity and sovereignty of the nation. **The puppet group should know at least that the treasured nuclear sword of the DPRK can never be dismantled** no matter how desperately the group decries. The nuclear deterrence of the DPRK has not posed any threat to anybody but has performed the most just and responsible mission to check the U.S. wild ambition for hegemony on the forefront and preserve regional peace and stability. The puppet group is slandering the DPRK's measure to bolster up its military capability and desperately talking about "sanctions" by abusing even the name of the international community in a bid to cover up its despicable nature of straining the situation in the region including the Korean peninsula but no force can bar the DPRK from exercising its legitimate right to self-defense. The south Korean puppet group would be well advised to stop acting recklessly, pondering over the catastrophic consequences to be entailed by its futile action of taking issue with the DPRK's measure to bolster up its nuclear deterrence of justice." (KCNA, "S. Korean Puppet Group Accused of Slandering DPRK's Measure to Bolster up Nuclear Deterrent," May 24, 2015)

Seoul said it is willing to discuss the issue of its sanctions on North Korea if Pyongyang agrees to resume long-stalled inter-Korean talks. Pyongyang has asked Seoul to lift the sanctions before any inter-Korean dialogue, but the South maintains that the North should first take "responsible action" for the sinking of the Cheonan. "South Korea is open to discussing various issues including the sanctions if the North responds to our proposal for inter-Korean talks," the Ministry of Unification said in a statement. (*Korea Herald*, "Seoul Conditionally Willing to Discuss Sanctions on N.K.," May 24, 2015)

A group of 30 female peace activists, including the feminist leader Gloria Steinem and two Nobel Peace Prize laureates, crossed the demilitarized zone from North Korea to South Korea, calling for an end to the Korean War, whose unresolved hostility has been symbolized by the heavily armed border for six decades. It was rare for the two rival Korean governments to agree to allow a group of peace activists to pass through the border area, known as the DMZ. Yet some of the symbolism the activists had hoped to generate with their Women Cross DMZ campaign was lost when South Korea denied them permission to walk through Panmunjom. Instead, the women, who had traveled from Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, were detoured to a checkpoint southwest of Panmunjom. There, convoys of South Korean trucks go to and from a joint industrial park in the North Korean town of Kaesong. The women, carrying banners, were again barred from walking across the border, and had to cross by bus. Still, they considered the endeavor a success. "We have accomplished what no one said can be done, which is to be a trip for peace, for reconciliation, for human rights and a trip to which both governments agreed," Steinem told the South Korean news media. "We were able to be citizen diplomats." The women – including the Nobel Peace laureates Mairead Maguire from Northern Ireland and Leymah Gbowee from Liberia – arrived in

Pyongyang on May 19 for the march, which they hoped would highlight the need to build peace and set the stage for Korean reunification by formally ending the war with a permanent peace treaty. Just two days before the women's arrival in Pyongyang, the North's state-run media hurled one of its harshest – and most sexist – screeds against President Park Geun-hye of South Korea, calling her “a fork-tongued viper” and one “not worth calling a woman” because “she has never given birth to a baby.” Last week, Secretary of State John Kerry said the North Korean government, led by Kim Jong-un, was “one of the most egregious examples of reckless disregard for human rights.” Some rights activists in the United States and South Korea opposed the women's trip, saying that it would be used as propaganda by North Korea. They urged the peace activists to call on the North to dismantle political prison camps and end human rights abuses. When the activists marched in Pyongyang on Saturday, North Korean women in colorful traditional dresses lined a boulevard waving red and pink paper flowers, according to North Korean television footage. One of the roadside signs said “Let us reunify the divided country as soon as possible!” On the other side of the border, hundreds of South Korean activists welcomed the women who crossed into the South Korean city of Paju, north of Seoul. Not far away, however, hundreds of conservative South Koreans, including defectors from the North, also rallied, accusing the activists of “flattering Kim Jong-un” and promoting a “fake peace.” “Go back to the North!” they chanted. The conservative protesters cited reports in the state-run North Korean news media that quoted some of the visitors as praising North Korean leaders. In its reports about the activists' meetings with North Korean women in Pyongyang, the North's Korean Central News Agency also cited “speakers” who it said called the United States “a kingdom of terrorism and a kingpin of human rights abuses.” The conservatives said those reports proved that the activists had been used as propaganda tools by the North. But organizers of the trip said that none of the visiting women had uttered any of the remarks that were reported in the North Korean media. The organizers stressed that their trip had been aimed at easing the mistrust and hostility that not only divided the two Koreas but also people in the South. Several South Korean activists have in the past defied the ban on visiting North Korea without government permission and traveled to Pyongyang to promote reconciliation. When they returned home to face arrest, North Korea gave them a rousing send-off at Panmunjom. South Korean officials did not want Ms. Steinem and her party to cross Panmunjom partly because they did not want North Korea to use the trip for similar propaganda. (Choe Sang-hun, “Female Activists Call for Formal Peace between Koreas,” *New York Times*, May 25, 2015, p. A-8) Steinem, a key figure in the women's rights movement in the United States for decades, decided to join the walk after being approached by organizer Christine Ahn, a Korean-American peace activist. She said she is old enough to remember the 1950-53 Korean War, and she believes that women can play an important role in pushing governments to take more effective action to bring peace. She said she also feels strongly that efforts by Washington and its allies to isolate Pyongyang have failed. “The example of the isolation of the Soviet Union or other examples of isolation haven't worked very well in my experience,” she said. “Isolating North Korea clearly hasn't worked. I think we have to go ahead with the idea of first do no harm. We haven't done any harm, and it might turn out to be a good thing.” Steinem quickly added, however, that coming to North Korea does not mean she is endorsing Pyongyang's policies or ignoring its domestic human rights record. “I don't think that anybody is saying that

because Gloria Steinem is coming, North Korea is fine," she said. "Everybody knows what the problems are. In some situations, I suppose that might be a danger. But I don't see it here and I really don't think we would have gotten all the permissions that we needed if other people saw that danger." The plan to walk across the DMZ has been looked on very differently in the North and South. On May 21, North Korea's state media reported on a peace symposium held by the women in Pyongyang with representatives of North Korean women's groups, saying they branded the U.S. "a kingdom of terrorism and a kingpin of human rights abuses." Yonhap, meanwhile, picking up on the North Korean reports, quoted academics in the South saying the group's activities would not help efforts to pressure the North to give up its nuclear weapons program or improve its human rights record. "Those words were never uttered," Ahn, the walk organizer, told AP. "We spoke about the impact of militarism around the world, including in Liberia, Colombia, Japan, Northern Ireland as well as the United States. We are operating in an environment where multiple sides will take our words out of context to advance their political agendas." Steinem dismissed suggestions the group, which also includes two Nobel Peace Prize winners, was deliberately massaging its message to please their North Korean hosts. "I haven't had to censor myself at all. We've made it a point not to meet with high officials or to play basketball with high officials," she said, referring to former NBA star Dennis Rodman's trip to Pyongyang, when he played basketball and sang happy birthday to leader Kim Jong-un. "Obviously, there's certain things I won't do." She said she refused to bow or stand before statues of the leaders and be photographed, which is often expected of foreign visitors. "At the airport, it's an immediate surprise that you are not allowed to bring books in, or DVDs, and that you have to turn in your cellphone and get a different chip in your cellphone," she said. "This is not good ... The balance between the individual and the community is supposed to be even. And it is out of balance." But, while she sees change in North Korea as a long process, she said she believes the walk across the DMZ is a significant step forward. "We are being met by a couple of thousand women on the other side and a Catholic priest representing the Vatican. That's the first time I've ever been received by the Vatican," she quipped. "It's amazing. It's really, really amazing." (Eric Talmadge, "Steinem Says Isolating N. Korea Not Working," Associate Press, May 23, 2015)

5/25/15

Japan and North Korea held informal talks in Beijing in late May over Pyongyang's reinvestigation into Japanese abductees and others, according to sources. Japanese diplomatic authorities are believed to have urged their North Korean counterparts to promptly submit a report on the results of their re-investigation into the fate of kidnap victims and other Japanese nationals covered by the probe. A year earlier, Japan and North Korea reportedly agreed that the probe would likely be concluded as early as July this year. According to sources, the unofficial talks took place while Ihara Junich, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, was visiting Beijing from May 24 to 26. Ihara was there to meet such Chinese officials as Wu Dawei, special representative of the Chinese government on Korean Peninsula Affairs. Japan-North Korea talks have failed to produce notable progress on issues related to the reinvestigation. Sources said a timetable for the two countries to resume official talks regarding the probe remains unknown. In April, Pyongyang told Tokyo that holding government-to-government talks was impossible, an angry response to

Japanese police searching the home of Ho Jong Man, chairman of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon), in connection with a case involving illegally imported North Korean matsutake mushrooms. Observers have said the talks in May mean North Korea maintained channels for negotiation with Japan despite the search of the Chongryon chief's house. (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, "Japan, N. Korea Held Informal Talks on Abductees," June 7, 2015)

5/26/15

North Korea is building "several" military bunkers on a border island in the skirmish-prone West Sea that pose a "grave threat" to South Korea, Seoul's Defense Ministry said. The facilities on Gal Island, some 2.5 kilometers north of the Northern Limit Line, the de-facto maritime frontier, are expected to house 122-millimeter multiple rocket launchers or guard posts to monitor the movement of South Korean marines and patrol vessels. With a range of 20 kilometers, the weapons were mobilized when Pyongyang bombarded Yeonpyeong Island in November 2010 — merely 4.5 kilometers away from Gal Island — killing two Marines and two residents while injuring more than a dozen. The communist country embarked on excavation activities in the area in March and has since constructed at least five camps, news reports suggested, citing unnamed military authorities here. "The North Korean military is establishing several covered bunkers on Gal Island, north of Yeonpyeong Island in the West Sea," ministry spokesperson Kim Min-seok said at a regular news briefing. "Given Gal Island's geographic location and the distance between the NLL and Yeonpyeong Island, the activities present a grave threat to our military's operations. We are intensively monitoring any deployment of firearms by the North Korean military." If the regime presses ahead to station an artillery battery, Gal Island will be its nearest base to attack the South Korean border islands, which could also make it easier to target warships sailing nearby. The closest existing base is Jangjae Island, around 7 kilometers away from Yeonpyeong Island. The South Korean military has deployed Spike missiles which have a range of about 20 kilometers on Yeonpyeong and Baengnyeong Islands to help defend the region. (Shin Hyon-hee, "N.K. Building Military Bunkers on Border Island," *Korea Herald*, May 26, 2015)

Jeffrey Lewis: "First, let's be clear about what happened. China recently equipped some of its giant DF-5 intercontinental-range ballistic missiles to carry three or four warheads. In peacetime, those missiles are unfueled and the warheads are stored tens of miles away. So "equipped" apparently means each missile has a new post-boost vehicle, sometimes called a "bus," that releases each warhead at its intended target. ...I strongly suspect this is a decision driven by technology, not strategy. That said, I generally think nuclear strategy — in both the United States and China — serves as a post-hoc rationalization of decisions taken for other reasons. (More than a decade in Washington made Jeffrey a cynical bastard.) U.S. officials have long expected China to place multiple warheads on the DF-5. My best guess is that the decision to put multiple warheads is about replacing the vintage 1970s warhead on the DF-5 with something more contemporary. This decision was probably made a long time ago, and perhaps it has simply taken Beijing a while to get around to it. Technical explanations can be a little boring — guess why people opt for the strategic ones? — but let me try. China has a fairly small arsenal of nuclear-armed ballistic weapons, involving two "series" of missiles: one liquid-fueled and solid-fueled. Starting in the early 1960s, China

developed the Dongfeng (DF) series of liquid-fueled ballistic missiles – the DF-3, DF-3, DF-4, and DF-5. Liquid fuel is very energetic (which means the missile can fly really far) but it is also super corrosive, thus one can only fuel such a missile right before launch. The drawback is obvious: Imagine stopping to gas up your car while the United States Air Force is doing its utmost to kill you. ...Starting in the mid-1980s, China began developing a series of solid-fueled missiles to replace the liquid-fueled ones – the DF-21, DF-31, DF-31A and, in due course, the DF-41. The upside to solid-fuel is that it's more stable and manufactured into the missile, making it easily transportable. The downside is that the missile it is harder to make and the fuel isn't as powerful. China has still not completely replaced the first series of liquid-fueled missiles with the second series of solid-fueled ones. China's liquid-fueled DF-5 is the only missile that can reach all of the United States – and it has 18 of these bad boys. It deployed most of the first batch in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and then replaced them with a more modern variant in the mid-2000s. China has an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in the second series, the DF-31A, that can reach targets across much of the United States, but I have some questions about just how much of the United States. Not surprisingly, China is developing something new: a missile designated the DF-41, which should remove any doubts about target coverage. The number of DF-31A missiles is small, too – not much more than 15 according to a recent assessment. If we add up the DF-4s and DF-31s that could threaten Alaska and Hawaii, that's 50-60 ICBMs, each with one warhead. At least that was the case. Each of these missiles had only one warhead because China's nuclear warheads were really, really big. Beijing developed the DF-5's original warhead in the 1970s and 1980s, when China was impoverished. The warhead for the DF-31 was developed during the early 1990s and is lighter – an estimated 470 kilograms – but still big and heavy enough that the DF-31 and DF-31A could carry just one apiece. The U.S. intelligence community has long asked what would happen if China put the smaller DF-31 warhead on the giant DF-5. Leaked U.S. estimates suggest that it could accommodate 3 or 4 such warheads. So why hasn't China put multiple warheads on the DF-5? China would surely prefer to retire the older DF-5 warhead design in favor of a more modern design. And using the newer, smaller warhead leaves tons of room. Literally tons. The DF-5 has between 3,000 and 3,200 kilograms of "throw weight" (that's how much stuff it can heave across the globe). Even if about half the payload goes to the post-boost vehicle, there's enough oomph left over for three or four 500 kg warheads. What else would one do with all that space? Add some penetration aids (decoys and so forth) to defeat missile defenses? Sure, but that's a couple hundred kilograms max. Fill it with ballast for stability? Or maybe those little balls from Panda Pop? Here we come to an important observation about the risks of inferring intentions from capabilities. We act as if there is something morally compromised about placing multiple warheads on missiles. (Those sneaky Chinese!) Sorry, but there isn't. The Russians do it. U.S. Strategic Command was pushing to keep doing it as late as 2007. And the United States and Russia, along with France and Britain, all have multiple warheads on submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Yes, land-based MIRVs are an attractive target for a preemptive strike, which makes them destabilizing – but how destabilizing depends on the context. And at the moment, I have bigger worries about whether U.S. and Chinese nuclear forces will be stable in crisis. Chinese officials don't even use the phrase "minimum deterrence," which American experts take to mean a small force that exists only to deter nuclear

attacks. The Chinese use the phrase “lean and effective.” That is a lot like minimum deterrence ... but minimum deterrence is *our* term, not theirs. And it doesn’t make any sense to try to infer Chinese intentions using U.S. strategic concepts. ...The Chinese nuclear posture, instead, has been driven by an enthusiasm for reaching technological milestones, not big deployments. American experts sometimes describe the missiles in China’s first series– the DF-2 through DF-5 – in terms of their range. China could first hit U.S. bases in the Philippines, then the Japanese island of Okinawa, then Guam, and so on. But that’s not how the Chinese describe these missiles. An official history of China’s missile program, *China Today: Defense Science and Technology*, describes its missiles in terms of its technological accomplishment on the path toward the ultimate accomplishment – an ICBM. The DF-2 was the first indigenously produced missile, the DF-3 the first cluster of engines, the DF-4 the first use of missile stages (one engine stacked atop another), culminating in the 1980s in the DF-5 – a large, powerful ICBM. These two approaches – dwelling on notional strategic details vs. ticking off concrete accomplishments – are really just different ways of answering the questions that confronts every policymaker when it comes to The Bomb. Have I done enough? Will more be better? When answering these questions, policymakers can only roughly approximate rationality. In the United States, policymakers do calculations that mimic a rational choice, with tradeoffs and so on. But we can’t get inside the mind of a foreign leader to determine what deters him or her, so our calculations would be more accurately described as exercises in self-assurance: Would I be deterred, if I were in my enemy’s shoes? In a previous column, I’ve argued that the origins of overkill lay in the nearly impossible task of assuring ourselves that we have attended to every detail possible. I still can’t think of a better explanation for how the United States found itself at the height of the Cold War with 30,000 nuclear weapons, airborne alerts, and targeting plans that ended up putting 69 warheads on one lousy target. Chinese policymakers appear to assure themselves by ticking off technological achievements. ICBM? Check. Thermonuclear warhead? Check. Solid-fueled, mobile missile? Check. And now: MIRVs? Check. That’s sort of crazy in its own way, although coming from the country whose nuclear posture inspired *Dr. Strangelove*, maybe I won’t throw stones. This is why I don’t think of China’s decisions as being driven primarily by U.S. missile defense efforts – that’s an American sort of calculation. The Chinese approach always could be rationalized this way after the fact, but it seems different at its core. From this perspective, there is no obvious reason for a Chinese leader to reject multiple warheads as inconsistent with a lean and effective force. Each missile that survives a sneak attack – and there probably won’t be many of them – represents a greater danger to the attacker. Yes, we can observe that such a posture might be destabilizing, but that requires we sit down to discuss strategic stability – something that isn’t really happening at the moment, at least formally and in the kind of detail that one would expect, given the importance of the U.S.-China strategic relationship. I’ve long argued that U.S. and Chinese policymakers need to find a way to make this dialogue successful. ...My particularly hobby-horse, though, is less important than advancing our dialogue, if we don’t want to have it in the form of an expensive and dangerous competition in arms. I suspect we’ll see a lot more changes to China’s nuclear posture in the years to come. Beijing is on the verge of deploying ballistic missile submarines capable of carrying nuclear-armed missiles, if it hasn’t already. China seems to be flight-testing a new ICBM and a hypersonic glide vehicle (though not always

successfully). And there are interesting discussions in China about launch-on-warning and other operational practices. Each and every modification in China's nuclear posture will trigger another round of hand-wringing about what this means. Of course, it is possible the Chinese don't know what it means any more than we do. It wouldn't be the first time a nuclear power undertook an open-ended nuclear modernization without any clear sense of the final destination. If Chinese policymakers are unthinkingly ticking off technological achievements – just as we Americans unthinkingly chase new missile defense and conventional strike capabilities – then the two parties could stumble into an arms race without really choosing to do so. That seems like what we should be discussing." (Jeffrey Lewis, "Great, Now China's Got Multiple Nuclear Warhead Missiles?" *Foreign Policy*, May 26, 2015)

5/27/15

The top nuclear envoys of the United States, South Korea and Japan agreed to ratchet up pressure on North Korea, including a more effective and creative enforcement of sanctions on the impoverished country. The three allies also said that their efforts to curtail North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions would now include increasing pressure on North Korea to improve its human rights record – a highly delicate topic that they have so far kept separate from their nuclear negotiations with the North. "We agreed on the importance of enhancing pressure and sanctions on North Korea even as we keep all diplomatic options on the table and open," said Sung Kim, Washington's top representative to the six-nation talks aimed at negotiating an end to the North Korean nuclear weapons program. "We also agreed on the importance of working with the international community to address the grave human rights situation in North Korea," Mr. Kim told reporters in Seoul as he emerged from a meeting with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts, Hwang Joon-kook and Ihara Junichi. Kim's trilateral meeting in Seoul followed the test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile by North Korea this month and its subsequent claim that it had been building nuclear warheads small enough to be mounted on a long-range missile. Ihara said that the allies shared a "sense of urgency" over what Hwang later called the "seriousness in the advancement of North Korea's nuclear capability." Kim and Hwang were to meet with Beijing's top nuclear negotiator, Wu Dawei, in the Chinese capital later this week to urge China, North Korea's largest trading partner, to use its economic leverage to curb its behavior. Officials here said that other options under discussion included tightening inspections of cargo traveling in and out of North Korea and squeezing the source of hard currency North Korea earns through the tens of thousands of workers it sends to factories, building sites, logging camps and other work sites in China, Russia and countries in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa. (Choe Sang-hun, "World Briefing | Asia; North Korea: U.S. and Two Asian Allies to Raise Pressure over Nuclear Arms," *New York Times*, May 28, 2015, p. A-10) "In order to deal with it, (we) agreed to put stronger pressure (on Pyongyang) and make active efforts for dialogue," Hwang Joon-kook, Seoul's senior diplomat in charge of North Korea affairs, told reporters. He said the envoys agreed to the "seriousness in advancement in North Korea's nuclear capability." He also warned the North that it will face more international pressure if it stays on the current course. "North Korea's diplomatic and economic isolation will deepen," he said. (Lee Chi-dong and Lee Haye-ah, "Regional Powers Agree to Increase Pressure on North Korea," *Yonhap*, May 27, 2015) The United States extended another offer early this month to hold talks with North Korea, but the communist North has not

yet responded to the proposal, diplomatic sources said May 31. The offer was made via the North's mission to the United Nations before the top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the U.S. and Japan held a trilateral meeting in Seoul to discuss how to deal with Pyongyang, the sources said. The North's failure to respond to the dialogue proposal led to the three countries agreeing to ratchet up pressure and sanctions on Pyongyang when their chief nuclear envoys held the three-way talks in Seoul last week, the sources said. It was not the first time this year the North has rejected a U.S. dialogue proposal. Meanwhile, North Korea strongly voiced its opposition to the U.N. Security Council's handling of recent submarine-launched ballistic missile test, saying that it would prove itself to be a "political tool" of the United States if it were to take issue with Pyongyang while ignoring joint military exercises between South Korea and the U.S. The North's ambassador to the U.N., Ja Song-nam, made the claim in a letter sent to the Security Council president last week, calling the drills "real nuclear war games of aggression" aimed at "occupying Pyongyang" to remove the North's leadership. "The recent underwater test-fire by the DPRK of a ballistic missile from a strategic submarine is a legitimate measure of a sovereign state to bolster up its self-defense capability against the provocative military maneuvers of the United States," the envoy said in the letter, referring to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "The council will be proved to be a political tool of the high-handed and arbitrary practice of one permanent member" if it only takes issue with the submarine missile launch while ignoring the military exercises, he said. Ja demanded the council convene an emergency meeting on the joint exercises. (*Korea Herald*, "North Korea Mum on Fresh U.S. Dialogue Offer: Sources," June 1, 2015)

Sung Kim: "**Q:** Do you have any plan to have a dialogue with North Korea counterparts anywhere? **KIM:** This time? **Q:** This time or in the near future? **KIM:** There are no plans to meet with the North Koreans. But I think they understand that we are willing to engage them in a serious and sincere discussion about the nuclear issue. We have made that point very clear to them publicly, but also privately through the New York channel. **Q:** Did the three parties today agree on how you are going to enhance pressure on North Korea? **KIM:** We agreed that we should be exploring all opportunities to increase pressure, not only in terms of better, stronger implementation of existing sanctions, but also looking at all other opportunities and avenues to increase pressure. **Q:** Could the other options include any more UN sanctions on North Korea [*inaudible*]? **KIM:** Well, we don't have any specific measures to announce today. But I think what's clear is we agree that it's important to enhance pressure on North Korea. As you know, they have rejected all of our sincere, serious, diplomatic outreach efforts so in a sense they have given us no choice but to cooperate on enhancing pressure on North Korea." (DoS, Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim, Remarks to Reporters at the Lotte Hotel, Seoul, May 27, 2015)

5/28/15

Negotiators and representatives from five of the six countries involved in the stalled talks on North Korea's nuclear programs held an informal meeting in Tokyo on Thursday in the absence of Pyongyang, a Japanese diplomatic source said, in a move aimed at stepping up pressure against the North. But the five nations failed to agree on tightened sanctions due to opposition by China and Russia, the source said.

(Kyodo, "5 Nations Meet Informally in 6-Way Framework without N. Korea," May 28, 2015)

5/29/15

Sung Kim: **Q:** What's the Chinese response to the [inaudible] among South Korea and China, and Korea and Japan, to increase pressure on North Korea? **KIM: The Chinese agreed that pressure has to be an important part of our overall approach on North Korea.** They are working with us to implement UN Security Council resolutions to the fullest. And I expect that cooperation to continue. **Q:** Last time you came here, I remember you saying, you were talking about the possibility of going to North Korea yourself to have bilateral talks. How has the mood changed since then? Are they still interested in having bilateral talks? **KIM:** It appears the North Koreans are not interested in any serious diplomacy at the moment. In fact, **they have rejected all of our sincere diplomatic outreach efforts to engage in some serious discussions about the nuclear issue. They have rejected our suggestions. They have rejected South Korea's efforts to initiate inter-Korean dialogue.** Of course, they did not go to Moscow, as some people had anticipated. So, I just don't get the sense that North Koreans right now are interested in any meaningful discussions. ... **Q:** Are you frustrated that North Korea's economy seems to be doing fairly well under sanctions. Does that cause frustration for you and other parties? **KIM:** I'm not sure if we can really describe the North Korean economy as doing well. Our sense is that North Korean people are continuing to suffer, and that the economy is not growing. And it's time for the North Korean leadership to focus on economic reform efforts rather than pursuing dangerous capabilities. **Q:** How amenable is China to a possible new round of sanctions? **KIM:** As I said before, the Chinese agree that pressure and sanctions should be a part of our overall approach on North Korea. We have seen over the past couple of years stronger enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions by the Chinese authorities. And I expect that effort to continue. ... **Q:** Given the recent news of purges in the North, are you concerned that the political situation has gotten more unstable and is getting more and more dangerous? **KIM:** Information regarding the internal dynamics in North Korea is still somewhat uncertain, but we are not seeing any concrete signs of instability. What we would urge the regime to do is to focus on their commitments and obligations, and to work with the international community, particularly with the five parties, towards the goal of denuclearization. (Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim, Remarks to Reporters at the Westin Chaoyang Hotel, Beijing, May 29, 2015)

Fresh satellite images show substantial new construction at North Korea's space rocket launch site, mirroring leader Kim Jong-Un's recent vow to launch more satellites in defiance of UN resolutions, the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University said. Using satellite analysis, USKI had reported last year a substantial upgrade at Sohae -- allowing it to handle rockets up to 50 metres (165 feet) in length -- almost 70 percent longer than the Unha-3. In its latest assessment of images taken in mid-May, the institute noted further modifications, including construction of a new support building next to the Unha-3 launch pad and a rail mobile platform between the two. While the precise purpose of the building was not immediately clear, institute analyst Tim Brown said it could be a facility for assembling a launch vehicle and then rolling it to the launch pad. There has been speculation that the North might launch a long-range

rocket to mark the 70th anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party in October -- a schedule Brown labelled "difficult although not impossible." The ongoing upgrade at Sohae represents a "significant" investment, Brown said, and is "another indicator ... that the North is determined to pursue its space program." (AFP, "Fresh Upgrades at N. Korea Rocket Site: U.S. Think Tank," May 29, 2015)

South Korea and the United States have kicked off a joint committee to look into the incident involving a live anthrax sample that was mistakenly sent to a lab at an American military base at Osan, South Korea and nine states from a military laboratory in Utah the U.S., a diplomatic source said. U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said yesterday that 22 personnel may have come in contact with a live anthrax sample, but none have shown signs of infection. "Given the incident's seriousness and gravity, the South Korean and U.S. militaries have started to run the SOFA joint committee for close cooperation," the source said. The two sides are in consultations on an array of issues such as determining the incident's cause and follow-up measures, the source added. The USFK did not inform the South Korean government of the arrival of the anthrax sample in advance as it believed the sample contained an inactive bacterium which does not pose any health threat, according to a government official. (Yonhap, "Seoul, Washington Kick off Joint committee over Anthrax Mishap," May 29, 2015)

A precision digital weapon reportedly created by the US and Israel to sabotage Iran's nuclear program had a fraternal twin that was designed to attack North Korea's nuclear program as well, according to a new report. The second weapon was crafted at the same time Stuxnet was created and was designed to activate once it encountered Korean-language settings on machines with the right configuration, according to Reuters. But the operation ultimately failed because the attackers were unable to get the weapon onto machines that were running Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. WIRED reported back in 2010 that such an operation against North Korea would be possible in light of the fact that some of the equipment used by the North Koreans to control their centrifuges—the devices used to turn uranium hexafluoride gas into nuclear-bomb-ready fuel—appeared to have come from the same firms that outfitted the Iranian nuclear program. "The computer-control equipment North Korea got was the same Iran got," David Albright, the president of the Institute for Science and International Security and a long-time watcher of both nuclear programs, told WIRED at the time. Albright published a study back then noting that the North Korean control system "is dual use, also used by the petrochemical industry, but was the same as those acquired by Iran to run its centrifuges." Iran uses industrial control systems made by the German firm Siemens to control and monitor the operation of its centrifuges. Stuxnet is believed to have been created sometime in 2006 when President Bush's advisers first floated the idea to him of attacking Iran's program with a digital weapon to avoid bombing it through an airstrike. The first version of Stuxnet was likely unleashed on systems in Iran in 2007—a copy of this version of Stuxnet appeared in the wild in November 2007. A later version of Stuxnet was unleashed on Iran in June 2009 and again in March and April 2010. Stuxnet would infect any computer using the Windows operating system but would only unleash its payload on systems that had a specific configuration. That configuration included Siemens Step 7 or Siemens WinCC software and Siemens S7-315 and S7-417 programmable logic controllers. The

programmable logic controllers are small computers that control the speed at which the centrifuges spin as well as valves through which the uranium hexafluoride gas flows into and out of the centrifuges. The Step7 software is used to program the PLCs, while the WinCC software is used to monitor the PLCs and centrifuges to ensure that they're operating correctly. Once Stuxnet found a system with Step 7 or WinCC installed it would inject its malicious code into the PLCs that were connected to these machines and sabotage the operation in two ways—by either causing the centrifuges to speed up and slow down or by closing exit valves on the centrifuges, causing the gas to build up inside the centrifuges. The targeted machines in Iran, like those in North Korea, are not connected to the internet. So the attackers had to devise ways to get the weapon onto those air-gapped machines. They did so by infecting five Iranian companies that are in the business of installing Siemens and other brands of industrial control systems at Natanz and other facilities throughout Iran. The attackers targeted these companies with the hope that contractors working at Natanz would carry the weapon into the well-guarded facility. While the plan worked beautifully in Iran, it ultimately hit a snafu against North Korea where the nuclear program is even more tightly controlled than Iran's and where few computers—belonging to contractors or anyone else—are online and accessible via the internet. As WIRED reported in 2010, "someone would have to infiltrate the Hermit Kingdom's most sensitive sites and introduce the worm into the command systems, a hard bargain to say the least. In other words, don't go thinking the United States or an ally could magically infect North Korea with Stuxnet. But if more information emerges about the North's command systems, that might provide fodder for a copycat worm—provided someone could introduce it into Yongbyon." (Kim Zetter, "The U.S. Tried to Stuxnet North Korea's Nuclear Program," *Wired*, May 29, 2015)

5/30/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement: **"The U.S., in the recent three-party consultation with Japan and south Korea, attempted to distort the truth and mislead public opinion as if they wanted to have dialogue, but the DPRK refused.** It is a well-known fact that the DPRK had long called for the resumption of dialogue without preconditions, making sincere efforts for it, but the U.S. prevented it, raising unreasonable "preconditions." ...As the DPRK has consistently clarified, its military capabilities for self-defense based on nuclear force are neither means for threatening anyone nor a bargaining chip for something. The DPRK's nuclear weapons serve as self-defensive deterrent to cope with the constant nuclear threat and military invasion from the U.S. and as a force of justice to decisively repel the enemy's invasion and deal a merciless retaliation in case a war breaks out. As been already proved in history, **the only way to prevent a war between the DPRK and the U.S., which lack even elementary trust in each other and have long stood in mistrust and hostility only, is for the former to bolster up its defense capabilities so as to ensure balance of forces. It is a grave provocation to criticize as "provocative" any legitimate self-defensive step taken by a small country to protect itself from the ringleader of aggression and war.** The U.S. should clearly know, though belatedly, that the failure of its DPRK policy is due to its fundamentally wrong viewpoint on the DPRK. It would dislike for no ground and criticize all of what the DPRK does. Such wrong viewpoint spoiled the DPRK-U.S. relations and the denuclearization on the Korean peninsula at last, with the bitter result of lifting an axe to drop it on one's own foot. **If the U.S. fails**

to draw a lesson any longer, the aftermath will be more tragic.” (KCNA, “U.S. Criticized for Attempt to Shift Blame for Ruptured DPRK-U.S. Talks, May 30, 2015)

5/31/15

South and North Korea have agreed on a joint project to excavate an ancient palace site despite continued inter-Korean military tensions, the Unification Ministry said. The ministry has approved the plans by related historians and officials to visit the North's border town of Kaesong for the six-month project to excavate the site of Manwoldae, a Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) palace. Their activity will be financed by 276 million won (US\$248,000) from the South-North Cooperation Fund. A group of 11 members of a related historians' association will travel to Kaesong tomorrow, followed by more trips by about 70 others over the coming six months. Some officials from the Cultural Heritage Administration will also join the program. "Some will make day-long visits, while others will stay at the Kaesong Industrial Complex for the joint work with the North Koreans," a ministry official said. "It's unusual (for the two sides) to agree on a six-month period for a joint archaeological survey." He added that the excavation of Manwoldae, registered as a world cultural heritage in 2013, is a project cared about by late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. The Manwoldae project began in 2007, but suffered setbacks amid drawn-out stand-offs between the two Koreas. (Yonhap, “Koreas Set for 6-Month Historical Project,” May 31, 2015)

Defense Minister Nakatani Gen and his South Korean counterpart, Han Min-koo, have held their first talks in four years and agreed to continue a dialogue to improve strained relations. “It is extremely meaningful” to resume the discussions, Nakatani said at the outset of the meeting with Han, adding “Japan wants to make efforts” through the occasion to improve bilateral ties. In their talks in Singapore, held on the fringes of the annual Asia Security Summit conference, also known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, Nakatani explained the security bills that the government of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo is pushing to pass and the revisions to the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation guidelines, Foreign Ministry officials said. The bills, if passed, would remove geographical restrictions on where the Self-Defense Forces can operate, and under certain conditions allow Japanese forces to defend the U.S. and other allied militaries via collective self-defense, possibly without Diet approval. The revised guidelines reflect the changes contained in the legislation. The two ministers also agreed to resume exchanges between the SDF and South Korean military forces. The meeting was held at Tokyo's request. (Kyodo, Jiji, “Japanese, South Korean Defense Chiefs Hold First Talks in Four Years,” *Japan Times*, May 31, 2015)

Senior South Korean and North Korean officials will attend an international railway meeting this week, raising hopes of a breakthrough in efforts to cooperate in the field, officials said. South Korea will send Vice Minister of Transport Yeo Hyung-koo to the meeting of the Organization for Co-operation between Railways to open in Mongolia on June 2. North Korea will be represented by Minister of Railways Jon Kil-su. In the four-day meeting, the South will push for membership in the OSJD. The North is among 28 member states. "The issue of South Korea's membership in the OSJD is an agenda item in the upcoming session," Yeo said. "If South Korea joins the organization, it would serve as an important chance for the trans-Korean railway project to gain speed." The OSJD is tasked with improving the coordination of international rail

transport, especially in Asia and Europe. South Korea has an ambitious goal of linking the Korean Peninsula with China and Europe by railway via the Trans-Siberian Railway and Trans-Chinese Railway projects and connecting the two Koreas will be the first step. "We are pushing for the trans-Korean train to run from Seoul to Sinuiju and Rajin on the Gyeongui line," a Unification Ministry official said. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Seeks N. Korea's Support on Railway Project," *Korea Herald*, May 31, 2015)

6/1/15

A North Korean diplomat told a German politician Pyongyang would "no longer sit at the same table as the United States," and that it refuses to see the six-party talks as a solution. Kung Sok Ung, vice minister of foreign affairs, made the statement to Hartmut Koschyk, who chairs the German-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Group, according to Deutsche Presse-Agentur and Yonhap. Koschyk was on an official visit to Pyongyang when he met with the North Korean diplomat. (Elizabeth Shim, "N. Korea No Longer Seeks Talks with U.S. Citing 'Threats,' Says Report," UPI, June 1, 2015)

Rep. Keiji Kokuta: The JASDF [Japan Air Self-Defense Force] decided to purchase the top-of-the-line F-35 fighter in Dec. 2011. This aircraft has stealth capabilities that make it extremely difficult for enemy radar to detect it. What is this aircraft's range of activity? Defense Minister Nakatani Gen: About 1,100 kilometers. Kokuta: That means this aircraft is capable of reaching as far as the Korean Peninsula, Russia, and the East China Sea without aerial refueling. Another thing we can't overlook is the weapons it can be equipped with. What is the JASSM [joint air-to-surface standoff missile]? Nakatani: That would be the AGM-158, which is a stealth-capable long-range precision-guided surface-to-air missile. Apparently, this missile is currently carried by American F-15 and F-16 fighters and in the future will also be carried by F-35 fighters. However, there are no plans to equip the JASDF's F-35As with this missile at the present time, and I don't know have any detailed information about it. Kokuta: When you say there aren't any plans to equip this missile at the present time, it sounds like you're not completely denying that there are plans to equip it in the future. This weapon has a range of around 370 kilometers. That's the distance from Tokyo to Nagoya. Isn't the F-35 a fighter that meets all of the requirements for attacking an enemy base? Nakatani: While the JASDF currently possesses some of the equipment required for attacking an enemy base, it does not possess the entire range of equipment for carrying out a series of operations. Fielding the F-35 will not change that fact. Questions by Rep. Kokuta in the special committee of the House of Representatives It was the afternoon of June 1 during a meeting of a special committee in Japan's House of Representatives that was set up to review revisions to security legislation intended to allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense. The last speaker during the day's review was Rep. Keiji Kokuta, 68, a lawmaker with the Japanese Communist Party, who asked a number of trenchant questions about suspicious remarks that key figures in the Abe administration have made recently about attacking enemy bases. These questions abruptly added some tension to a meeting that had been on the verge of drawing to an end. The details of the exchange between Rep. Kokuta and Defense Minister Nakatani Gen goes a long way toward answering a number of questions regarding Japan's enemy base strike capability, an issue that has provoked unusual interest in South Korea and other countries around Japan. Japan has repeatedly said that while attacking an enemy base

is legally permissible, it is not actually capable of launching such an attack. But Kokuta and Nakatani's exchange makes clear that Japan's strike ability will be strengthened considerably when the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) acquires the F-35A (42 fighters are planned). (Gil Yun-hyung, "Could Japan Carry out a Preemptive Strike on North Korea?" *Hankyore*, June 21, 2015)

6/2/15

South and North Korea have failed to organize a joint event this month to mark the 15th anniversary of a historic inter-Korean summit, a preparatory group here said Tuesday, in what could be another setback to Seoul-Pyongyang ties. Last month, civilian groups from South and North Korea tentatively agreed to jointly celebrate the summit anniversary in a three-day event starting June 14 in Seoul. But no progress has been made as the North has turned to a lukewarm stance. The North said it "would be better" to separately hold anniversary events, according to a statement from the South's committee that's preparing for joint commemorative events. North Korea cited South Korea's attitude as the reason. It claimed that the South's government has remained indifferent about the event's venue and set unnecessary preconditions by stating it would only allow inter-Korean civilian exchanges with a non-political purpose. "The North said that as long as there is no change in the South Korean government's stance, there won't be any good results even if working-level contacts for the event are held," the statement read. The South, however, will continue efforts to change the North's attitude on the matter, a committee official said. (Yonhap, "Koreas Fail to Agree on Joint Summit Anniversary," June 2, 2015) On June 2, the spokesperson for the South Korean Preparatory Committee for a Joint National Ceremony Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the Announcement of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration and the 70th Anniversary of Liberation from Japan issued a statement that said, "The North Korean Committee for Implementing the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration sent us a letter on June 1 in which they stated that they had no choice but to hold the Joint National Ceremony on the 15th Anniversary of the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration separately in our respective regions." The reasons the plans fell through, the North Korean preparatory committee said, were the South Korean government's request to exclude political elements and the disagreement between the North and South Korean governments about the site of the event. The North Korean preparatory committee claimed that the South Korean government had placed conditions on the joint ceremony, stating that they would only allow it to go ahead if it was purely social and cultural in nature, and that they had yet to state their position about holding the event in Seoul. Regarding the location of the joint ceremonies on June 15 and Aug. 15, North Korea had wanted to hold them in Seoul and Pyongyang, while South Korea had insisted on Pyongyang and Seoul. Because of the symbolic importance of the 70th anniversary of liberation from Japan, which falls on Aug. 15, both sides had wanted to host that ceremony. The North and South Korean preparatory committees tentatively decided to hold the joint ceremony for the June 15 Joint Declaration in Seoul on June 14-16 during a meeting in Shenyang, China from May 5 to May 7. It was the first time since 2010 that the South Korean government had allowed the two preparatory committees to make preliminary contact, giving rise to the hope that the committees would be able to organize joint ceremonies this year both for the anniversary of the joint declaration on June 15 and for liberation from Japan on August 15. But after a quarrel broke out over the question of location, the North

Korean preparatory committee ignored a proposal by the South Korean committee to hold more working-level talks and then issued a statement by its spokesperson on May 15 criticizing the South Korean government. Some analysts think that the fundamental reason that the June 15 joint ceremony fell through is that South Korean President Park Geun-hye repeatedly commented on North Korea's nuclear weapons program, human rights abuses, and last month's purge of North Korean defense chief Hyon Yong-chol, while North Korea lobbed vulgar insults at Park. "With the leaders of North and South Korea stubbornly insisting on their own positions without any strategy for improving inter-Korean relations, I think that not only the June 15 ceremony but also the joint ceremony on the 70th anniversary of liberation from Japan will fall through," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. "Considering the elections for the National Assembly are next year and the presidential election is the year after that, the prospects for inter-Korean relations during Park's term in office are very uncertain." Lee Seung-hwan, chair of South Korea's preparatory committee, hasn't given up hope yet. "Holding the June 15 ceremony separately cannot help but have an effect on the chances of holding a joint ceremony on the 70th anniversary of liberation from Japan. Still, since North and South Korean officials are taking into consideration a number of possibilities, it's too soon to write it off." (Kim Ji-hoon, "South and North Korea Likely to Hold This Year's Celebrations Separately," *Hankyore*, June 3, 2015)

South Korea is struggling to bring North Korea to the dialogue table with the communist regime shrugging off the mounting denuclearization calls and shifting the blame to Seoul and Washington for escalating military tensions. The North's evolving nuclear technologies including one to develop a submarine-launched ballistic missile have galvanized Seoul into employing a more active diplomacy. Yet the prospects of dialogue remain bleak as Pyongyang refuses to talk about its nuclear program, a critical tool for regime survival and national security. Seoul, along with Washington and Tokyo, recently accelerated its push to strengthen pressure and sanctions against the reclusive regime, as Seoul officials said there were no other viable means to induce the North to engage in talks. But doubts linger over whether applying additional pressure to the North would help create momentum for talks with the North. Analysts pointed out the North's unwillingness to renounce its nuclear ambitions. "North Korean leader Kim Jong-un regards nuclear arms and the development of what the country calls a satellite and SLBM as symbols of self-reliance and self-dignity," said Chang Yong-seok, a senior analyst at Seoul National University's Institute for Peace and Unification Studies. "The symbols will be further emphasized ahead of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party (in October)." As part of its efforts to resume talks with its wayward neighbor, Seoul has been seeking "exploratory dialogue" with Pyongyang, arguing there should be no preconditions for the new form of dialogue, which could lead to in-depth discussions for the resumption of the long-stalled six-party talks involving the two Koreas, the U.S. China, Japan and Russia. Previously, Seoul and Washington demanded that Pyongyang first show "sincerity" in its denuclearization commitments before the resumption of the multilateral talks, which have been stalled since December 2008. But the North has so far rejected the invitation for exploratory talks. "Pyongyang is still opposed to our proposal for exploratory talks even though we have removed all barriers for the talks. This leaves us no option but to raise pressure on the North to come out for dialogue," a senior Seoul

official told reporters. (Song Sang-ho, "Seoul Struggles in Push for Dialogue with N.K.," *Korea Herald*, June 2, 2015)

South Korea and the United States have laid out four principles of their operations to effectively counter missile threats by North Korea, U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said. The principles "will guide decision-making, capability development and operations" of the allies "to counter the growing North Korean missile threat," the USFK said in its yearly magazine titled "Strategic Digest," published jointly by the United Nations Command and the Combined Forces Command. According to the USFK, the first principle of the allies is "to acquire, field, and employ counter-missile capabilities" based upon their combined threat assessment of North Korean missile threats." The capabilities "include South Korea's Kill Chain and Korean Air and Missile Defense System (KAMD) as well as U.S. capabilities on and off the Korean Peninsula," it added. Kill Chain refers to a pre-emptive strike apparatus, and the KAMD is a low-tier air defense program that South Korea has been working to develop in the face of Pyongyang's nuclear and missile threats instead of joining the U.S.-led air defense system. With Washington vowing to deploy its cutting-edge weapons in the Asia-Pacific region as part of its efforts to rebalance toward the region, it has expressed its will to introduce the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system on the peninsula. THAAD is designed to shoot down short, medium and intermediate ballistic missiles at a higher altitude in their terminal phase using a hit-to-kill method. According to the second principle, the allies "will drive progress and enhance proficiency in counter-missile operations through combined exercises, training and inter-operable capabilities and refinement of procedures." In a move to convey their steadfast resolve and ability against the threats from the North, the two sides also vowed to boost capabilities required to implement the so-called 4D strategy, according to the USFK. The 4D strategy, endorsed last year, postures South Korean and the U.S. "to detect, defend, disrupt and destroy" ballistic missile threats by the communist North, and the allies plan to devise operational plans based upon the strategy. In the fourth principle, the two sides "will execute counter-missile operations based upon bilateral consultation and coordination," according to the magazine. (Oh Seok-min, "S. Korea, U.S. Devise Principles against N.K. Missiles," *Yonhap*, June 2, 2015)

6/3/15

South Korea successfully test-fired a domestically built ballistic missile that can hit all of North Korea, an official said, amid continuing animosity between the rivals over the North's push to bolster its nuclear and missile capabilities. The missile, which had a reported range of more than 500 kilometers (300 miles), was fired from a southern launch pad, said an official at Seoul's Defense Ministry. President Park Geun-hye watched the launch, according to her office. At the same launch pad today, South Korea tested another missile aimed at shooting down an enemy ballistic missile, the defense official said an upgraded surface-to-air missile named Cheolmae II, or M-SAM, which is capable of intercepting an incoming target at an altitude of 15 kilometers or higher. (Hyung-Jin Kim, "S. Korea Test-Fires Missile That Can Strike All of N. Korea," *Associated Press*, June 3, 2015)

The radar for the US weapon system known as THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Air Defense) can be converted from a mode with a short detection range to a mode with a

long detection range in eight hours, a Pentagon document confirms. This demonstrates the hollowness of arguments by proponents of THAAD, who have claimed that if THAAD radar in short detection mode were deployed on the Korean Peninsula, its range would be limited to North Korea and would have little effect on China. This information turned up in a document titled "Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Budget Estimates: Missile Defense Agency" that the *Hankyoreh* accessed from the website of the US Defense Department on June 2. This is the first time that the fact that the modes can be switched in eight hours has been confirmed in a Pentagon document. Published in Feb. 2011, the document says, "In a forward-based role, the AN/TPY-2 provides target detection and tracking during the boost phase, reducing uncertainty in target discrimination and reaction time. [. . .] In terminal mode, the AN/TPY-2 provides target acquisition, tracking, and discrimination for fire control of the THAAD Battery." "These radars are transportable, adding flexibility to respond to geographical changes in threat," the document adds. "Eleven additional AN/TPY-2 Radars are needed [. . .] Each AN/TPY-2 radar can be configured for THAAD [terminal mode] or forward-based mode, and can be switched between modes in eight (8) hours," the document says. "The hardware used by the two modes is identical, but their controlling software, operating logic, and communications package are different," a technology manual for the US army says. In other words, it can be inferred that it takes about eight hours to convert to the second set of software. This shows that, even if the US deployed the radars in South Korea in terminal mode, they could still be converted to forward-based mode to detect Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in the event that conflict with China intensified. Some sources indicate that the radar has a detection range of 600-900km in terminal mode and 1,800-2,000km in forward-based mode, but the US army manual only says that the range in forward-based mode is greater than 1,000km. According to analytical findings that two American missile defense experts recently provided to *Hankyoreh*, if the THAAD radar were deployed on the Korean Peninsula, it could detect and track ICBMs launched from China with a maximum range of 3,000km. These two experts were Theodore Postol, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and George Lewis, senior researcher at Cornell University. The experts believe that the time required to switch between the two modes could be considerably reduced. "Since military technology develops so rapidly, the time needed for conversion could be reduced even more," Lewis said. Postol told *Hankyoreh*, "Raytheon executives said last year they can increase the processing speed of the AN/TPY-2 by five times. It shows how readily critical components of the AN/TPY-2 radars can be upgraded." "If a delay between switching from TM to FBM modes might be due to a need to change communication modules, modern electronics would surely make it possible to construct a communications module that does both jobs. Hence, claims about the radar only being usable in one or the other mode are essentially technical nonsense," Postol added. (Park Hyun, "Pentagon Document Confirms THAAD's Eight-Hour Conversion Ability," *Hankyoreh*, June 3, 2015)

6/4/15

CPRK spokesman's statement: "Recently, the south Korean puppet group is behaving so impudently as to noisily trumpet about "dialogue" with the DPRK. Notably, Park Geun Hye lets loose a spate of invectives hurting the social system of the DPRK whenever an opportunity presents itself. She, at the same time, spouts rhetoric urging it to come out for dialogue and not to refuse the south's proposal for dialogue in a bid

to mislead the public opinion, creating impression that a dialogue between the authorities of the north and the south has not yet opened due to the DPRK. Pursuant to her scenario, Yun Pyong Se, Hong Yong Phyo and other mandarins of the south Korean puppet regime held a series of anti-DPRK confabs with their U.S. and Japanese masters, at which they cried out for "leading the north to dialogue in line with the strategy of pressure and dialogue."The above-said moves are no more than renewed politically-motivated chicanery and red herring operation being staged by the puppet group in a sinister bid to shift the blame for the deteriorated north-south relations on to the DPRK, tide over the ever-worsening ruling crisis and escalate confrontation with the DPRK with the backing of outsiders. It is, indeed, the height of impudence for the puppet group to talk about "dialogue" as it has chilled the atmosphere for improving the inter-Korean relations and **scuppered the opportunity for dialogue**. No one will lend an ear to such ill-natured advertisement of "dialogue" by the Park Geun Hye group and it will never be able to evade the responsibility for having deteriorated the north-south relations through such hypocritical burlesque. If the puppet group truly wants dialogue with the north, the group should have elementary qualities as a dialogue partner. First of all, the group should have the viewpoint to independently solve the reunification issue with the concerted efforts of all Koreans and the stand to recognize and **implement the joint declarations agreed upon by the authorities of the north and the south**. It **should stop toeing the U.S. hostile policy towards the DPRK and roll back the policy of confrontation with compatriots in the north and halt at once the north-targeted war drills** straining the situation. Only when it does so, can it claim it has elementary qualifications as a dialogue partner and it will have the face to sit together with the DPRK. The DPRK will closely follow what the south Korean puppet group do in practice, not just talking." (KCNA, "S. Korea Regime Is Not Entitled to Talk about Disalogue: CPRK Spokesman," June 4, 2015)

North Korea's global trade expanded in 2014 from a year earlier, but its trade deficit also widened due to a drop in exports, according to the report by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency. North Korea's trade came to US\$7.61 billion last year, up 3.7 percent from a year earlier. The figures did not count its trade with South Korea. North Korea's exports shrank 1.7 percent on-year to \$3.16 billion last year, while imports grew 7.8 percent to \$4.45 billion over the same period, the report showed. Based on the figures, North Korea posted a trade deficit of \$1.29 billion last year, with its shortfall jumping 41 percent from the year before. Minerals and fossil fuels, including coal, were among the country's major export items as its overseas sales stood at \$1.18 billion, which accounted for 37.2 percent of its total annual exports. The report showed that North Korea continues to depend heavily on China for its trade. Last year, bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$6.86 billion, up 4.9 percent from a year earlier. North Korea's dependence on China in trade increased slightly from 89.1 percent in 2013 to 90.1 percent last year, according to the report. (Yonhap, "N. Korea's Global Trade Expands But Trade Gap Widens," June 5, 2015) North Korean trade with Russia decreased sharply in the first quarter of 2015, according to data from the ITC Trade Map, despite continued attempts to improve bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries. Both imports and exports between Russia and North Korea fell in the first four months of 2015 compared to 2014

numbers. Exports from North Korea to Russia fell from more than \$3 million in the fourth quarter of last year to approximately \$500,000. The drop was mostly on the back of a big reduction of machine and clothes exports to Russia. While the latter group also appears to fluctuate based on the season, imports in the first four months of 2015 were also lower than those a year earlier. Exports from Russia to North Korea account for the largest share of trade between the two countries, and also fell in the first quarter. Overall, Russian exports fell by nearly 20 percent so far in 2015, compared to last quarter of 2014. At \$17 million, the figure was 70 percent of that in the same period last year. North Korea's lower imports from Russia were mainly due to a large decrease in food imports. Throughout the last six months of 2014, the DPRK imported more than \$12 million in cereals from Russia, but these imports appeared to cease in 2015. The overall numbers dropped despite an uptick in North Korean imports of Russian coal. From 2013 to 2014 trade values also fell, but were not as low as the most recent 2015 figures. The news comes despite a flurry of diplomatic and political exchanges between the two countries geared towards increasing economic cooperation and trade, with Russia setting a target of \$1 billion in trade by 2020. Experts, however, remain skeptical on cooperation. "The goal of \$1 billion is not that realistic because both sides cannot make any huge profitable projects. Trilateral projects including South Korea are promising I think but bilateral projects between North Korea and Russia are limited," Cho Han-bum of the Korea Institute for National Unification (KNU) told *NK News* last month. (Leo Byrne, "Russia, North Korea Trade Drops in Q1," *NKNews*, June 4, 2015)

President Obama's top adviser on Asia policy is leaving his post at a time of growing uncertainty over China's assertive behavior in the region, raising questions over the administration's strategy ahead of a high-stakes visit from President Xi Jinping in the fall. Evan Medeiros, a China expert who has worked at the National Security Council during all of Obama's tenure, will step down as the agency's Asia director on Thursday, officials said. He will be replaced by Daniel Kritenbrink, the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. (David Nakamura, "Top White House Adviser on Asia Policy Is Stepping down," *Washington Post*, June 4, 2014)

South Korea again failed to join an international organization for railroad cooperation, a prerequisite for building a trans-Asian railway, due to opposition from North Korea, the Seoul government said on June 4. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Fails to Join Railway Cooperation Body due to N. Korea," *North Korea Newsletter*, 366, June 11, 2015)

6/5/15

Seoul plans to help Pyongyang prevent Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) from spreading at Kaesong Industrial Complex (GIC). South Korean enterprises will supply masks to their North Korean employees at the inter-Korean industrial park in North Korea's border city, the Ministry of Unification said. The ministry, which deals with inter-Korean affairs, said Thursday it would set up three thermal scanners at the GIC next week following Pyongyang's request on June 2. "It will be up to the firms running business there to provide masks to their North Korean workers," a ministry official said on condition of anonymity. "The thermal scanners will be handed over to the North Korean side by Monday [June 8] through appropriate procedures." MERS, a respiratory illness, has killed four people in South Korea since its outbreak in

Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi Province, in late May. (Yi Whan-woo, "Seoul to Lend N.K. Help to Prevent MERS at Inter-Korean Industrial Park," *Korea Times*, June 5, 2015)

Jack Liu: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that North Korea is conducting regular spring construction and maintenance activities at its Punggye-ri nuclear test site. There are no indications of nuclear test preparations at this time. Given the time and effort such preparations require, North Korea is unlikely to conduct another nuclear test until at least fall 2015 at the earliest." (Jack Liu, "North Korea Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site: Spring Construction and Maintenance Continues," *38North*, June 5, 2015)

6/7/15

Officials from the UK government met with North Korean counterparts and discussed concerns over the country's human rights record on three occasions in early 2015, parliamentary transcripts from Thursday showed. Lord Alton of Liverpool asked the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Baroness Anelay of St John's, whether or not the government had raised the issue recently with the DPRK and the contents of those discussions. In her reply, Anelay said the UK government remains "deeply concerned" and detailed three instances of contact in 2015, when human rights issues were discussed. "In January, representatives of EU embassies in Pyongyang, including the UK, met the DPRK Foreign Minister to discuss a range of issues including human rights," Anelay said. Anelay added that FCO officials met North Korean Embassy officials in February to discuss freedom of expression, the March UN Human Rights Council session, which foreign minister Ri Su Yong attended, and the plans for an EU resolution on human rights in the DPRK. "More recently, at a meeting in March with the DPRK Ambassador to the UK, we underlined the strength of British Government and public interest in this issue," Anelay said. Although human rights topics were discussed during these exchanges, the meetings may not have been specifically scheduled for this purpose. However the FCO said the topic is of ongoing concern. "We have longstanding concerns over the human rights situation in the DPRK. Since the establishment of UK-DPRK diplomatic relations in December 2000, we have used critical engagement to raise UK concerns over the DPRK's failure to adhere to international norms, primarily through regular meetings between UK and DPRK officials," an Foreign Office spokesperson told *NK News* on June 5. While there were not many further details provided on the discussions, Anelay said the response from the DPRK was not positive. "The DPRK expressed disappointment over the UK and EU's work to raise our concerns in international fora and challenged international assessments of its domestic human rights situation." North Korea has been under intense pressure over its human rights record following the publication of a 372-page UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) report in February 2014. The report detailed abuses that it said, in some cases, amounted to crimes against humanity. "The UK strongly supported the establishment of the COI, which helped shine a spotlight on shocking human rights violations in the DPRK," the FCO spokesperson told *NK News*. "This has enriched the debate on the human rights situation within the DPRK and provided a further basis upon which to take forward discussion with the DPRK." Alton, who is also the chair of All-Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea (APPGNK), asked multiple questions of Anelay during the session, including on the reported purge of former defense minister Hyong Yong Chol, the proposed UN field office in Seoul and the

current UN World Food Program (WFP) funding shortfall. (Hamish Macdonald, "U.K. Discussed Human Rights Issues with North Korea in Early 2015," *NKNews*, June 7, 2015)

6/8/15 North Korea is believed to have secret nuclear facilities unknown to the outside world in addition to those at the country's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, the State Department said in its 2015 Report on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments. It also said that Pyongyang appears to have no intention to comply with its denuclearization commitments. "The United States believes there is a clear likelihood of additional unidentified nuclear facilities in the DPRK," the State Department report said. (Yonhap, "U.S. Believes N. Korea Has Secret Nuclear Facilities," June 8, 2015)

A sustainable policy on North Korea that can survive different administrations must be created by politicians from different sides of the ideological spectrum and presented to the public, a special National Assembly committee and the Korea Forum for Peace, Prosperity and Unification said.

A group of lawmakers, including the heads of the ruling Saenuri Party and the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy, and experts attended a seminar on Monday hosted by the National Assembly's special committee on inter-Korean relations development and the private think tank. The event, organized by *JoongAng Ilbo*, took place at the National Assembly. After the seminar, a 10-point joint statement was announced by the bipartisan special committee and the forum, participated in by both conservative and liberal experts. They agreed that a sustainable North Korea policy must be established by the National Assembly and major political parties. In the statement, the special committee and the forum said the spirit of the existing agreements between the two Koreas must be respected even after administrations change. **"The July 4 South-North Joint Communiqué, the South-North basic agreement, the June 15 joint declaration and the Oct. 4 declaration must be respected and further developed,"** they said. (Kim Kyung-bin, "North Forum Calls for Bipartisan Policy," *JoongAng Ilbo*, June 9, 2015)

6/9/15 The U.N. Security Council is unlikely to impose new sanctions or issue any formal statement with regard to North Korea's test-launch of a ballistic missile from a submarine, a diplomatic source said. South Korea sent a letter to the North Korea Sanctions Committee requesting a probe and punitive action. "North Korea's firing of an SLBM is a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. But China and Russia maintain a tepid stance," the source told Yonhap. "The U.N. Security Council is a forum where political decisions are made." Some member states apparently believe that the North's SLBM technology is not at a level of serious concern yet, given its complicated nature, added the source. "The U.N. Security Council is instead accumulating records of North Korea's violations of its resolutions for possible future actions," the source said. (Lee Chi-dong, "No Punishment Expected for N. Korea over SLBM," Yonhap, June 9, 2015)

6/10/15 President Park Geun-hye has decided to delay her trip to the United States scheduled for later this week as part of efforts to assuage the public's deepening fears over the

Middle East respiratory syndrome, Cheong Wa Dae said. "To assure the public from growing MERS fears, the president has decided to postpone her trip to the U.S. to look after the people and bring an end to the MERS outbreak," said senior press secretary Kim Sung-woo. "Because the people's safety is her top priority, she will delay the trip to the U.S. and will stay to dispel the public fear," Kim added. The decision came after a phone call between Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry earlier in the morning, according to Cheong Wa Dae officials. The South Korean foreign minister agreed to reschedule the trip at the earliest and most convenient time in the future for both. Park was to leave on June 14 for a six-day trip to Washington and Houston, which was to include a summit with President Obama. "President Obama looks forward to welcoming President Park to the White House at a mutually convenient time in the future to discuss the U.S.-Korea alliance and the critical role it plays in assuring regional stability and security," said White House National Security Council spokesman Alistair Baskey, according to the U.S. Embassy in Seoul. "As just one example of this partnership, the United States is working closely with our Korean partners to support their response to the MERS cases in South Korea," he said. (Cho Chung-un, "Park Postpones U.S. Trip over MERS Crisis," *Korea Herald*, June 10, 2015)

6/11/15

International pressure will not lead North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program, Moscow's top envoy to Seoul said, calling for a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the issue. Ambassador Alexander Timonin's remarks are a clear departure from the stance of South Korea, the United States and Japan, whose nuclear envoys agreed last month to enhance pressure on North Korea amid its continued provocations. "We are against any pressure on any country," he told Yonhap during a function at the Russian Embassy. "All the issues of security must be settled by peaceful, diplomatic means. Because by pressure and by threats, it's impossible to settle any problem, especially in this region." (Lee Haye-ah, "Russia against Pressuring N. Korea over Nuclear Program: Ambassador," Yonhap, June 11, 2015)

Park interview: "**How do you assess the situation in North Korea, with Kim Jong-un executing so many senior officials?** Since [he] took power 3 ¹ / 2 years ago, he has executed some 90 officials. Indeed, the reign of terror continues to this day. Although one can say that the reign of terror might work in the short term, in the mid- to long term, it is actually sowing and amplifying the seeds of instability for the regime. Currently, North Korea is constantly upgrading and enhancing the sophistication of its nuclear weapons, and developing and honing its missile capabilities as well. These represent a threat not just to the Korean Peninsula but also to the international community. So it is extremely urgent that we achieve a denuclearization of North Korea. **How can that be done when they don't seem to care about the outside world?** The Korea-U.S. alliance relationship, as well as the international community and also five of the six parties engaged in talks, need to step up the pressure . . . to bring them back to the negotiating table. We can instill in them the belief that possessing nuclear weapons is an exercise in futility. **How? By increasing sanctions?** We could step up pressure vis-a-vis North Korea. **Last week, the United States government announced that there were "additional unidentified nuclear facilities" in North Korea. Does South Korea think that North Korea's nuclear program is larger than was previously believed?** The International Atomic Energy

Agency inspectors have not been able to go inside North Korea [in quite a while], so there is a probability that what you just said is true. **When you look at the Iranian sanctions regime, which resulted in denuclearization talks, would you like to see a similar approach to North Korea?** Of course things should turn out that way, but I believe in reality [in this part of the world] it might be more difficult. **You have a good relationship with China's president, Xi Jinping. China is one of the last countries to have some influence over North Korea, and it provides the country with much of its energy. Does Xi share your views? Would he cut off some of the energy China sends to North Korea?** I have had summit meetings with President Xi Jinping. In the past, we were not able to engage in in-depth discussions on the topic of unification or North Korean nuclear weapons. But now we have reached a point – between President Xi and myself – where we can talk extensively about North Korea and about peaceful unification as well. President Xi firmly adheres to the position that he will not accept a nuclear-armed North Korea. From the Chinese perspective, on the one hand they say that it wouldn't be wise to rattle the situation too much. On the other hand, [they also believe] that if we let the ongoing enhancement of North Korea's nuclear weapons continue, eventually we will face a situation that will be beyond our control. **So China doesn't want to cut off all the energy it sends to North Korea? China could bring about a collapse that way?** Yes, that would be a fair assessment. **Would you welcome a collapse? Or not welcome one?** My hope is to see a peaceful resolution . . . without seeing a collapse scenario. **It sounds difficult to do anything with North Korea, much as you and others have tried. If it is as dangerous as you say, what is the next alternative? Shutting off banking flows?** We are engaged in a wide range of discussions with the United States on how to deal with this situation. If we are to see a peaceful resolution, the North Koreans also have to step up. As you say in English, it takes two to tango. **Do you see any cracks in the regime in North Korea?** Recently, a senior North Korean defected and confessed to us that because of the ongoing and widespread executions that include even his inner circle, they are afraid for their lives. That is what prompted him to flee. **Was he part of the inner circle?** No, he wouldn't qualify as an inner-circle person. He was part of the cadre of the party. **You recently attended the testing of a South Korean missile that can reach all parts of North Korea.** The North Koreans continue to enhance the sophistication of their nuclear capabilities and also develop a wide range of missiles. So it is incumbent upon us to fashion a response. In the future, this missile will be a key element to our Korean Air and Missile Defense System. **The U.S. reportedly favors deploying Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), the Army's anti-ballistic-missile system, to South Korea. What will you say if the U.S. requests this deployment here?** We would look at this together with the U.S., taking into consideration a variety of elements, including whether it serves our national security interest. **China has asked South Korea not to permit the deployment of THAAD. So China pressures you not to do it while the U.S. pressures you to do it. Do you feel squeezed?** When it comes to security, it shouldn't be about yes or no depending on the position of certain countries. The first priority should be how can we best safeguard the Korean people. **You have had tremendous success in improving South Korea's relationship with China. You have visited China, and President Xi Jinping has visited your country. How do you see China's behavior in the South China Sea, where it has expanded its claims quite aggressively?** China is Korea's largest

trading partner, and China has a huge role to play in upholding peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. . . . As for the South China Sea, the security and freedom of navigation are very important for South Korea. We are watching with concern the developments in that area. We hope that the situation does not deteriorate. (Lally Weymouth, "Eventually We Will Face a Situation That Is beyond Our Control," *Washington Post*, June 11, 2015)

6/12/15

It used to be an often-cited story about Park Geun-hye, the president of South Korea: When her father, the longtime dictator Park Chung-hee, was assassinated by his spy chief in 1979, her first reaction was to ask whether there was any unusual movement by the North Korean military along the border. The episode helped build Park an image as a strong leader who could keep a clear head in a crisis. But that image has come crashing down as Park's government has fumbled in its efforts to contain an outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome, just a year after she and her administration were criticized for their response to the ferry sinking that killed 304 people, mostly teenagers. With her approval rating plunging, critics and political analysts alike are questioning her leadership as the country faces pressing issues like a slowing economy, a national pension system awaiting an overhaul, and nuclear and missile threats from North Korea. "She is too slow, too closed, to be able to deliver a timely message to her people at a time like this," said Choi Jin, director of the Institute of Presidential Leadership in Seoul. "She has turned out to be the most shut-off and people-averse president we ever had. I have serious doubts about the rest of her term." While the outbreak has exposed failings in the country's public health system, like overcrowded emergency rooms, Ms. Park's leadership has also been called into question. Her approval rating, which hovered around 40 percent before the outbreak, has dropped to 33 percent, according to a survey released by Gallup Korea. Reacting to domestic pressure, Park on June 10 postponed a meeting with President Obama in Washington that had been set for next week. "Her lame-duck phase is arriving sooner than expected," said Kim Ji-yoon, a political analyst at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, citing growing questions about her competence. "I don't think the postponement of her U.S. trip does anything good, other than making her look inconsistent." Even the country's powerful conservative news media, which tends to support Park, has begun attacking her amid the MERS outbreak. Her critics say she failed to recognize a national crisis early on and to communicate with the people, acting only once popular opinion had turned against her. They note that she did not convene a meeting of cabinet ministers and civilian experts on MERS until two weeks after the outbreak began. As many as five overlapping task forces from different government agencies have sprung up to deal with MERS, which critics say shows the same lack of efficient leadership displayed during the ferry crisis. (Choe Sang-hun, "MERS Tarnishes Korean President's Image as Leader," *New York Times*, June 13, 2015)

6/13/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman: "The U.S. State Department let its senior advisor on strategy and communications cry out for international pressure on the DPRK, terming its satellite launch a violation of the UNSC "resolutions" which ban all lift-offs by use of ballistic technology. The U.S. accusation against the DPRK over its just and legitimate satellite launch under the pretext of violation of the "resolutions" is a wanton

infringement and challenge to its sovereignty. The DPRK's satellite launch for peaceful purposes is inviolable as it is an exercise of a legitimate independent right of a sovereign state publicly recognized by international law, which is above UNSC resolutions. Among UN member states the U.S. is the only country which takes the lead in taking issue with the DPRK's legitimate satellite launch, another example clearly proving the U.S. extreme hostile policy toward the latter. The U.S. asserts that all its satellite launches are legitimate but the DPRK's all satellite launches are illegal. This robber-like insistence is the height of the U.S.-style double standards and a revelation of ill-intentioned inveterate repugnance toward the DPRK. The DPRK's status as a satellite manufacturer and launcher can never change no matter how desperately the hostile forces negate it, and its space development is not something which can be given up because of someone's opposition. It is the firm resolution and will of the DPRK to push back the frontiers of latest science and technology in the field of space development, too, in order to protect the self-esteem and dignity of the nation. The U.S. and other hostile forces will have no alternative but to watch the DPRK's satellites soaring into the outer space one after another till they will come to realize how illegal and foolish their attempt to check the DPRK's legitimate satellite launches by dint of the above-said "resolutions" is." (KCNA, "FM Spokesman Accuses U.S. of Again Pulling up DPRK over Its Satellite Launch for Peaceful Purposes," June 13, 2015)

6/14/15 North Korea fired three short-range missiles into the East Sea on Sunday, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. The communist North "fired three KN-01 missiles from its eastern border town of Wonsan onto Mayang Island (in the East Sea) between 4:21 p.m. and 4:47 p.m. today," the JCS said in a statement. The launch is presumed to be Pyongyang's additional test-firing of the anti-ship projectiles after two rounds of the same tests were carried out in February and last month, one of the JCS officers said, noting that the cruise missiles flew some 100 kilometers. (Yonhap, "N. Korea 3 Short-Range Missiles into East Sea," *Korea Times*, June 14, 2015)

6/15/15 DPRK government statement: "Leader Kim Jong Il provided the Pyongyang summit and adopted the June 15 joint declaration true to the noble intention of President Kim Il Sung who dedicated all his life to the cause of national reunification. It marked a historic event which brought about a turning-point in improving the north-south relations and achieving national reunification. ...The publication of the June 15 joint declaration made it possible for the north and the south of Korea to defuse the distrust and confrontation which had lasted for more than half century and greet a new era advancing toward reconciliation, unity and reunification by concerted efforts of the Koreans. Had the north-south relations made steady advance along the way indicated by the June 15 joint declaration, eye-opening changes and successes would have been achieved in the drive for national reunification, the desire of the Korean nation. However, the north-south relations were brought back to the era of confrontation in the past due to the despicable moves of the Lee Myung Bak conservative group which totally denied the north-south joint declarations and this catastrophe has reached a grave phase at present. **Upon the authorization** the DPRK government in its statement clarifies the following stand, prompted by the will to save the north-south relations from a serious crisis and bring about a landmark turn in national reconciliation and unity: It is necessary to have a firm stand to improve the north-south relations and

solve the reunification issue independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation. It is the basic spirit of the June 15 joint declaration to solve issues related to the inter-Korean relations and the matter of the country's reunification independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation responsible for it. The north and the south should settle all the issues arising in improving the inter-Korean relations and achieving reunification in line with the interests and desire of the nation with strong national self-respect. The south Korean authorities should stop soliciting "international cooperation" to hurt the fellow countrymen in the north by relying on outside forces, not leaving the national issue to their tender mercy. They should come out for improving the inter-Korean relations and solving the reunification issue by the concerted efforts of the Koreans. **The south Korean authorities should not seek "unification of social systems" inciting distrust and confrontation** between the north and the south. Now that differing ideologies and social systems have existed in the north and the south for the past seven decades, any attempt to achieve reunification under one social system would bring nothing but confrontation and war. The north and the south recognized the common points in the north-proposed federation of lower stage and the south-proposed confederation in the June 15 joint declaration and agreed to work for reunification in this direction. **The south Korean authorities should clearly understand that the co-existence and co-prosperity of the north and the south irrespective of ideology and social systems are the most reasonable and realistic way** for national reunification. The south Korean authorities should **stop north-targeted war exercises in collusion with the U.S.** The south Korean authorities staged ceaseless war rehearsals against the north such as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises in league with the U.S., chilling the desire of all Koreans for reunification and scuppering the golden chances for improving the inter-Korean relations. The inter-Korean relations can never improve nor can the Korean peninsula get rid of the danger of a nuclear war as long as these military threat and provocations persist. The south Korean authorities should halt such dangerous act as leaving the life and safety of the Koreans exposed to the war shambles of aggressors as a shock brigade in carrying out the U.S. strategy for dominating the Asia-Pacific region. There is no need for them to feel any uneasiness and fear of the DPRK's self-defensive deterrence for protecting the dignity, stability and peace of the nation but they should discontinue acts of treachery of taking issue with it. They should **put a definite end to all military drills with the U.S.** and come out for defending peace and stability on the Korean peninsula by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation. 4. It is necessary to create a climate for mending the north-south relations. Slandering each other is a venomous practice fostering distrust and hatred towards fellow countrymen and such practice, if unchecked, may lead to physical conflict and war. The south Korean authorities should not just pay lip-service to "confidence-building" and "improvement of relations" but stop all provocations of rattling the nerves of the DPRK and slandering it. The south Korean authorities should **boldly remove the legal and institutional barriers blocking north-south contacts, visits, exchange and cooperation** and create environment favorable for repairing the relations. 5. **The north and the south should take practical measures to implement the historic north-south joint declarations.** The June 15 joint declaration and the October 4 declaration are valuable agreements made at the summits of the north and the south for the improvement of the relations and co-prosperity and solemn promises

made by the north and the south authorities to the nation. If the north-south joint declarations should be denied and their implementation suspended because of regime changes, no issue can be settled between the north and the south in the future. The south Korean authorities should not just pay lip-service to respect for the June 15 joint declaration and the October 4 declaration but prove it in practice. The south Korean authorities should bear in mind that they are now standing at the crossroads: Whether they join hands with the north to repair the inter-Korean relations or they will meet the same miserable end as what their predecessors did while standing in confrontation with the north to the last. Consistent is the stand of the DPRK to pave a wide avenue to independent reunification by bringing about a great turn in the north-south relations." (KCNA, "Stand of DPRK to Bring about Landmark Turn in Improving Inter-Korean Relations Clarified," June 15, 2015)

North Korea said it is open to holding talks with South Korea if certain conditions are met, including the suspension of the South's joint military drills with the United States. "If the atmosphere for trust and reconciliation is created, there is no reason not to hold dialogue and talks between the two Koreas," read a statement carried by KCNA. The statement came on the 15th anniversary of a historic inter-Korean summit between then South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and then North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. "South Korea should be aware that it stands at a critical juncture as it should decide over whether to join hands with the North for the better inter-Korean ties or to face a miserable fate by continuing to confront the North," the statement said. In response, Seoul's unification ministry called on the North to come to the talks "without laying out improper preconditions." "North Korea should immediately suspend provocative acts that are raising tension on the peninsula as the North insists that an atmosphere amicable for better inter-Korean relations should be created," the ministry said in a press release. It also urged Pyongyang to accept Seoul's bid to promote inter-Korean civilian exchanges in a bid to restore national unity. Experts said that the ball is now in South Korea's court as the North at least showed its readiness for the talks, though some conditions are attached. "Given the statement was rare, the North appeared to send a message that if the South shows some flexibility over the issues of the drills and Seoul's punitive actions, the North is ready to have talks," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. South Korea needs to be active in having talks with North Korea for better inter-Korean ties, said Chang Yong-seok, a senior researcher at the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies under Seoul National University. "Seoul will not lift the punitive sanctions against Pyongyang, but it can show sincerity for the talks by curbing Seoul activists' launch of anti-Pyongyang leaflets or approving inter-Korean exchanges," he added. But Kim Young-soo, a professor at Sogang University, cast a pessimistic view. "Seoul will not be able to accept Pyongyang's offer as preconditions set by the North cannot be met. Then, the North would blame the South for a possible rupture of inter-Korean talks," the professor added. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Says It Is Open to Talks with S. Korea," June 15, 2015)

North Korea notified South Korea of its plan to repatriate two South Koreans, alleged to have illegally entered the communist nation, later this week, the Unification Ministry said. In a fax message, the North said it will send a 59-year-old man, only identified by

his surname, Lee, and a 51-year-old woman, surnamed Jin, back to the South on Wednesday via the truce village of Panmunjom that sits on the inter-Korean border, according to the ministry. The North said they "illegally" entered its soil in May without elaborating on when or why they did so. The ministry said it accepted Pyongyang's proposal. (Yonhap, "N. Korea to Send Two S. Koreans Back Home," *Korea Herald*, June 15, 2015)

6/16/15

South Korea and the United States have reaffirmed their resolve to ratchet up pressure on North Korea in their high-level talks, the Foreign Ministry said. On his trip to Washington, Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se held a series of meetings with U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice and other top officials. "The two sides agreed to make efforts for the resumption of meaningful talks with North Korea, along with stronger pressure," the ministry said in a press release. It added the allies will deal resolutely with Pyongyang's provocations on the basis of robust combined deterrence, citing "unstable internal situations" in the reclusive communist nation. Yun also had a group dinner meeting yesterday with Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel; Sung Kim, special representative for North Korea affairs; Sydney Seiler, special envoy for six-party talks; and Allison Hooker, director for Korea at the National Security Council. He is also scheduled to meet Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken, Undersecretary Wendy Sherman, and John Hamre, president and CEO of Center for Strategic and International Studies, on Tuesday before returning home. (Lee Chi-dong, "S. Korea, U.S. to Put More Pressure on N. Korea," Yonhap, June 16, 2015)

Sigal: "While the Obama administration negotiates with Iran, North Korea is giving every indication it intends to attempt another satellite launch this fall. If, as expected, the UN Security Council responds with more sanctions, Pyongyang will take that as a pretext for conducting its fourth nuclear-weapons test. As its Foreign Ministry spokesman put it on May 30, "[T]he only way to prevent a war between the DPRK and the U.S., which lack even elementary trust in each other and have long stood in mistrust and hostility only, is for the former to bolster up its defense capabilities so as to ensure balance of forces." To many in Washington, further arming by Pyongyang is a foregone conclusion. That assumption is wrong. The belief in North Korea's determination to arm is belied by the fact that from 1991 to 2003, it reprocessed no fissile material and conducted very few test launches of medium- or long-range missiles. It suspended its weapons programs again from 2007 to early 2009. Over the past two years, while it continued to enrich uranium and resumed generating plutonium, it refrained from testing what it called its new "miniaturized" nuclear weapon or test launching any of its new longer-range missiles, a signal that it wanted to renew negotiations with the United States. To many in Washington, such negotiations, unlike those with Iran, seem pointless if North Korea is unwilling to give up the handful of crude nuclear weapons it has. That ignores the potential danger that Pyongyang's unbounded weapons programs pose to U.S. and allied security. It is on the verge of testing an advanced nuclear device that could be mounted on new, as yet untested longer-range missiles. That assumption also ignores the possibility that Pyongyang may be willing to suspend its nuclear and missile programs if its security concerns are addressed. That was the gist of its January 9, 2015 offer of "temporarily suspending the nuclear test over which the U.S. is concerned" if the United States

"temporarily suspend[s] joint military exercises in South Korea and its vicinity this year." Like most opening bids, that was unacceptable, but instead of probing further, Washington rejected it out of hand within hours. It turned out that the North seemed ready to settle for modulating rather than cancelling the largest exercises and seemed prepared to suspend not just nuclear testing, but also missile and satellite launches and fissile material production in return. Its main point was the need for reciprocal steps to address both sides' security concerns. That opened the way to a resumption of talks this January, but after some back and forth, that initiative was squelched in Washington. Instead, U.S. officials continued to insist that Pyongyang take unilateral steps to show it was serious about denuclearizing and ruled out reciprocity by Washington. As the senior U.S. diplomat for East Asia, Daniel Russel, put it on February 4, "North Korea does not have the right to bargain, to trade or ask for a pay-off in return for abiding by international law." The Obama administration tried again to open talks last month, but North Korea was unresponsive. Some attribute this change of course to Kim Jong-un's internal troubles. While resisting military demands for a budget increase, demands that may have led to the defense minister's execution, it is possible Kim decided to "strengthen his deterrent" in his own version of Eisenhower's bigger bang for a buck. While that explanation is plausible, it conveniently ignores Washington's unwillingness to meet Pyongyang partway. To some, it seemed that negotiating with Iran and North Korea at the same time was more than the traffic could bear, but compared to the heat for dealing with Iran, fanned by Israel and Saudi Arabia, opposition to negotiating with Pyongyang is tepid. Perhaps worse than what Washington was reluctant to do was what it was all too willing to say. In an interview with YouTube posted on January 22, President Obama observed, "The kind of authoritarianism that exists there, you almost can't duplicate anywhere else. It's brutal and it's oppressive and as a consequence, the country can't really even feed its own people. . . . *Over time*, you will see a regime like this collapse." He acknowledged, however, that "the answer is not going to be a military solution," adding, "We will keep on ratcheting the pressure, but part of what's happening is that the environment that we're speaking in today, the Internet, *over time* is going to be penetrating this country." He went on, "And it is very hard to sustain that kind of brutal authoritarian regime in this modern world. Information ends up seeping in *over time* and bringing about change, and that's something that we are constantly looking for ways to accelerate." [emphasis added]. In a January 25 rebuttal, the DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman did not miss the gist of the president's remarks, "This is little short of admitting himself that the U.S. lacks ability to stifle the DPRK and that a military option is not workable." At a May 18 press conference in Seoul, Secretary of State John Kerry chimed in with less diplomatic rhetoric of his own. "The world is hearing increasingly more and more stories of grotesque, grisly, horrendous, public displays of executions on a whim and fancy by the leader against people who were close to him, sometimes on the flimsiest of excuses," he said. Calling the Kim regime "one of the most egregious examples of reckless disregard for human rights and human beings anywhere on the planet," he said, "If their horrific conduct continues, it is hard to see how that referral to the criminal court would not take place." He added, "That is why it is important for us to ramp up international pressure on North Korea to change its behavior," citing China's "extraordinary leverage." Almost lost in the nastiness, Kerry noted, "We offer the possibilities of a normal relationship with normal economic

assistance and other kinds of engagement with the rest of the world if he will simply make the decision to come to the table and deal on the issue of his nuclear program." Such rhetoric from top officials was hardly conducive to bringing the North to the negotiating table. While not nearly as vituperative as Pyongyang's anti-U.S. diatribes, it stands in sharp contrast to how respectfully Obama and Kerry talk in public about Iran and its leadership. Could negotiations this year have succeeded in heading off further nuclear arming by Pyongyang? Everyone in Washington seems to have an opinion, but no one knows—except Kim Jong-un, and he's not talking any more. Now talk of ratcheting up the pressure and waiting for the North to collapse is all the rage in Washington. That's like whistling past the graveyard. Better to hope that Pyongyang's tests fail and look for another opening to negotiate." (Leon V. Sigal, "Wake up America: North Korea Is Running out of Patience," *The National Interest*, June 16, 2015)

6/17/15

JCS chairman, Adm. Choi Yun-hee, while visiting a front-line Army unit in Hwacheon, Gangwon Province, two days after a North Korean soldier defected to the South after crossing the military demarcation line in the region, said, "It is necessary to make every effort to maintain full readiness by effectively managing guard troops and border defense equipment," noting the high probability "of North Koreans' border intrusions or defections through the region by making use of the thick woods and heavy fog." Public criticism has mounted over the latest defection case, as the 19-year-old North Korean private was found to have stayed overnight near a South Korean guard post inside the Demilitarized Zone before being caught. The chairman also urged the troops to respond to any provocations by the communist country "in a swift, precise and perfect fashion," pointing to high possibilities for the bellicose regime to launch "surprise attacks." Choi stated, "North Korea has heightened tensions near the border areas and the Northern Limit Line to break through unfavorable internal and external conditions." According to the JCS data, North Korean patrol boats have crossed the NLL, the de facto inter-Korean sea border in the Yellow Sea, four times this month alone. (Yonhap, "JCS Chairman Orders Full Readiness against N.K. Provocations," June 17, 2015)

38North: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that North Korea has initiated new construction at its still incomplete experimental light water reactor (ELWR) at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center. Imagery from May 24, 2015 shows Pyongyang is building a structure probably intended to support transformers and power distribution equipment for the production of electricity. Nearby power lines can be extended to the building once it is completed, allowing the North to begin reactor operations when ready. It remains unclear, however, whether any other additional work needs to be completed before the North can start reactor operations. The May 24 imagery also indicates that the 5 MWe Reactor, which appears to have been experiencing operating difficulties since fall 2014, was either operating at low power levels or not at all on that day. Finally, imagery indicates the possible presence of new hot cells to be used for the remote handling of radioactive material for civilian or military purposes at a building under construction near the Yongbyon Uranium Enrichment complex. Five adjoining, still incomplete, thick-walled rooms at ground level, visible at one end of the structure, appear to be hot cells under construction, although it is too early to reach a conclusion as to their purpose. ...Construction

activity observed on satellite imagery from May 24, 2015 indicates that electrical equipment is probably being installed and a building constructed using a large mobile crane. The structure appears intended to support transformers and power distribution equipment for the production of electric power, the stated purpose of the ELWR. Once this construction project is complete, power lines can be extended into the transformer yard/building allowing the North to begin reactor operations when ready. It remains unclear, however, whether any other additional work needs to be completed before the North can start reactor operations." (William Mugford, "Update on North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Facility," *38North*, June 17, 2017)

6/18/15

North Korea has been hit by its worst drought in a century, state media say, raising fears of another looming food crisis in the impoverished communist country. The drought has devastated agricultural land in Hwanghae and Pyongan provinces, KCNA said, noting that more than 30 per cent of rice paddies across the country were " parching up." "The worst drought in 100 years continues in the DPRK, causing great damage," the KCNA said. "The water level of reservoirs stands at the lowest, while rivers and streams [are] getting dry." Last week Seoul's unification ministry estimated that North Korea's crop output could fall by up to 20 per cent this year if the drought continues until next month. Rainfall hit a 15-year low last year, 40 per cent below the average rainfall between 1981 and 2010, the ministry said. The World Food Program, the UN food agency, is preparing to send emergency assistance if the situation deteriorates. The UN has said that chronic food shortages have left about a third of North Korean children stunted because of malnutrition, with two-thirds of the population enduring "chronic food insecurity." But international funding for North Korean aid is drying up, held back by concerns over its nuclear ambitions and Pyongyang's restriction of aid workers' access to the needy. The UN called in April for \$111m to fund crucial humanitarian needs in North Korea this year, with funding for its agencies in North Korea falling from \$300m in 2004 to less than \$50m in 2014. However, food security is not as precarious as in previous droughts, analysts say, with private farming playing a growing role in the country's economy. New farming rules allow North Koreans to run small family farms and keep surplus crops, while markets have sprung up nationwide fuelled by such surplus income. "About 400,000-500,000 tonnes of food shortages are expected this year due to the drought," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. "But the food shortages are not likely to be as severe as those of the 1990s because North Koreans are reacting to it more resiliently, with more private farming allowed." (Song Jung-a, "North Korea Drought Prompts Food Crisis Fears," *Financial Times*, June 18, 2015, p. 3)

South Korea's ruling party-controlled legislature approved President Park Geun-hye's choice for prime minister, Hwang Kyo-ahn, by a vote of 156-120, ending a lengthy merry-go-round at the country's No. 2 job caused by political wrangling and corruption scandals. Hwang has been the country's justice minister. He successfully petitioned the country's constitutional court last year to disband a small leftist party accused of pro-North Korea views, a decision critics said exposed the limits of freedom of expression in a nation once ruled by military dictators. (Associated Press, "South Korean Lawmakers Approve New Premier," June 18, 2015)

6/22/15

The leaders of South Korea and Japan both called for progress in the two countries' fraught relations, and a new era of cooperation as they marked the 50th anniversary of the normalization of bilateral ties. Their remarks, focusing on forging a future-oriented partnership, are expected to create much-needed momentum in improving relations, which have been strained amid escalating historical and territorial feuds. At a commemorative event arranged by the Japanese Embassy in Seoul to mark the anniversary, South Korean President Park Geun-hye said it was time to "put down the heavy burden of history with the spirits of reconciliation and coexistence." "This year, which marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of bilateral ties, is a historical opportunity. We should make it a turning point for South Korea and Japan to move forward toward a future of new cooperation. This is also our obligation for future generations," she said. "Our governments should unite the minds of the two countries, and cooperate on the issues that require bilateral cooperation." The same message was delivered to an anniversary event arranged in Tokyo by the South Korean Embassy there. The message was read out by Seoul's Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se who arrived in Japan yesterday for talks with his counterpart Kishida Fumio and to attend the event. Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo attended the anniversary event in Tokyo, urging Seoul to open another 50 years of cooperative relations. "Let's look back on the 50 years of the development of our friendship, look ahead into the next 50 years and hold our hands together to open a new era," he said, stressing that South Korea and Japan are the "most important neighbors" to ensure regional peace and stability. "The two countries cooperating to tackle regional and global tasks, and cooperating globally would lead to an establishment of new bilateral relations. (I) will join forces with President Park Geun-hye (to evolve the relations)." Reflecting the deterioration in bilateral relations, Park and Abe have yet to hold a summit. They met for a trilateral summit, arranged by U.S. President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, the Netherlands in March 2014. (Song Sang-ho, "Park, Abe Stress Forward-Looking Partnership," *Korea Herald*, June 22, 2015)

6/23/15

President Park Geun-hye called for increased civilian exchanges with North Korea as part of efforts to lay the groundwork for a peaceful unification with the North. She made the comment in a meeting with members of the National Unification Advisory Council, the presidential advisory body on unification. The comment came a week after civic groups from South and North Korea failed to hold a joint ceremony to mark the 15th anniversary of the first inter-Korean summit. (Yonhap, "Park Calls for Increased Civilian Exchanges with N. Korea," June 23, 2015)

North Korea sentenced two South Koreans detained there, Kim Kuk-gi and Choe Chun-gil, to hard labor for life for spying for the South's intelligence agency, Korean Central Broadcasting Station reported, in a move seen as dampening the strained inter-Korean ties. The North's supreme court held a court session for the two South Koreans who were arrested for suspected spying for the United States and the South," it said. "Kim and Choe were sentenced to hard labor for life on charges of spying." Two other South Koreans detained in North Korea are missionary Kim Jung-wook and Joo Won-moon, a 21-year-old South Korean student with a U.S. green card. The North's announcement came as the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights opened its

office in Seoul, which will be tasked with monitoring the human rights situation in the North. North Korea has threatened to retaliate against South Korea over the U.N.'s move to open the field office, saying it will "mercilessly punish" South Korea by mobilizing all means possible. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Sentences 2 S. Korean Detainees to Life Terms," June 23, 2015)

DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement: "The dishonest hostile forces are getting extremely reckless and provocative in their moves to tarnish the dignity and image of the DPRK and bring down its ideology and social system at any cost under the pretext of non-existent "human rights issue." The hostile forces finally set up the ghost-like "UN office of human rights" in south Korea despite the DPRK's repeated warnings and strong protest of different countries and their people. This is a hideous politically-motivated provocation challenging the dignity and social system of the DPRK and a criminal act of escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula and in the region and inciting confrontation under the pretext of "protecting human rights." The hostile forces are advertising the establishment of the "office" was pursuant to the "resolution" of the UN Human Rights Council but they can never cover up their true colors as plot-breeders. The DPRK categorically opposed and rejected the "human rights resolution" railroaded through the 25th meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in March last year as it was a product of the U.S. vicious hostile policy toward the DPRK. The DPRK, therefore, never recognizes the "office" set up, pursuant to the "resolution." The DPRK vehemently condemns the ruckus of setting up the "office" in Seoul as another form of the anti-DPRK "human rights" campaign launched by the hostile forces seized with the inveterate repugnance towards the DPRK. The south Korean puppet authorities have turned south Korea into a tundra of human rights by invoking the "Security Law" and other evil laws. It is the height of impudence for them to have taken the lead in setting up such "office", talking volumes about the "human rights issue" in the DPRK. They allowed the setting up of the "office" in Seoul though no country in the world dared do so. This is an anachronistic behavior and a grave provocation pushing the inter-Korean confrontation to an extreme phase contrary to the desire of all Koreans for improved inter-Korean relations. It is as clear as noonday that the "office" is no more than a center for gathering misinformation cooked up by "defectors from the north" and other riff-raffs to earn money as it is set to implement the U.S. hostile policy towards the DPRK from A to Z. It is ridiculous, indeed, for the U.S. and other hostile forces to work hard to save the anti-DPRK "human rights" campaign from bankruptcy by patronizing the human scum who eke out their living through false propaganda. It is no more than a daydream for them to try to do harm to the DPRK standing highly dignified for its independence and Songun by employing such base means and methods as setting up the "office." The DPRK will decisively foil the reckless "human rights" racket against the DPRK **through resolute toughest counteractions.**" (KCNA, "DPRK FM Spokesman Accuses Hostile Forces of Setting up Anti-DPRK 'Human Rights Office,'" June 23, 2015)

The U.S. strategic commander reaffirmed his commitment to strong deterrence against potential threats by North Korea. Adm. Cecil Haney, who leads the U.S. Strategic Command, made the remarks while in Seoul for a four-day trip starting Sunday at a time when tensions remain heightened on the Korean Peninsula over North Korea's continued provocative actions. Haney's trip here is part of his visit to the Asia-Pacific

region, which also includes stops in Hawaii, Japan and Alaska. The visit to South Korea serves as "the opportunity to continue strengthening partnerships and our alliance by discussing topics of mutual interest, including strategic deterrence," Haney said in an email interview with Yonhap. The commander, however, refused to comment on his assessment about the situation in North Korea and its capabilities, as well as the potential deployment of the advanced U.S. missile defense system, the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense battery, on the Korean Peninsula. In a meeting between Haney and the chairman of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Choi Yun-hee, they "assessed a wide range of threats by North Korea, including its nuclear and missile programs and cyberattacks," reaffirming the importance of the Seoul-Washington alliance for regional peace and stability, the JCS said in a statement. The focus of the talks was "the discussions about how to effectively respond to them by deploying the U.S. assets in emergency cases," the statement said without further elaboration. Officials at the JCS refused to specify on what kinds of U.S. assets would be deployed to the peninsula to deter and counter the communist North, while noting that the THAAD issue was not on the table for the meeting between Choi and Haney. (Yonhap, "U.S. Strategic Commander Vows Strong Deterrence against N. Korea," June 23, 2015)

6/25/15

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party demanded that the government tighten sanctions on North Korea to prod it to provide information as soon as possible about Japanese nationals abducted by the North decades ago. The LDP Headquarters for North Korean Abductions called for reinstating sanctions the government lifted in July last year. The LDP group also requested the government impose new sanctions such as banning remittances to North Korea, except those up to 100,000 yen (\$809) sent for humanitarian purposes, among other punitive measures. (Kyodo, "LDP Calls for Tighter Sanctions on N. Korea," June 25, 2015)

The US Missile Defense Agency (MDA) has claimed that Terminal High Altitude Aerial Defense (THAAD) interceptors have demonstrated effectiveness against short- and medium-range targets, announcing that in nine flight tests so far, THAAD intercepted all 10 target ballistic missiles. However, the tests were conducted under circumstances that provide little, if any, information about how the THAAD interceptors would actually perform in real combat. Theodore Postol, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and George Lewis, a senior researcher at the Cornell University Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, have raised questions about the MDA's performance claims, based on three main factors. First, North Korean ballistic missiles could fly in irregular and unstable ways on the way to targets. Due to their design, these missiles could well tumble at high altitudes and spiral at lower altitudes, as was observed in the Gulf War of 1991, and almost certainly led to the complete failure of Patriot interceptors to destroy even a single SCUD warhead in combat. Patriot interceptor tests prior to the Gulf War were successful in 17 of 17 tests. In Gulf War combat, the Patriot was almost certainly 0 for 44, defined as destruction of SCUD warheads. Missiles tumbled in the Gulf War due to random lateral forces from rocket motors as they shut down. The motors shut down at high altitudes where the air was so thin that the fins at the back of the missiles could not prevent the tumbling. In effect these missiles acted in flight like arrows that had no feathers. When fired from a bow, they simply tumble end over end. The low-altitude spiraling phenomena could be

made intentionally by modifying the fins at the backend of missiles. Tumbling at high altitudes happen intentionally with tiny rocket motors attached to the back of the missile that are fired as soon as the rocket's main motor shuts down. In addition, when the missiles reenter the atmosphere, they could be affected by aerodynamic forces. As shown in the case of Al Hussein Scud during 1991 Gulf War, if the warhead is too light to force the missile to maintain a stable orientation, lateral aerodynamic lift forces are generated that cause it to move laterally, tracing out a spiraling trajectory. The two scholars pointed out that a target following a spiraling trajectory is the most difficult target to hit. According to their analysis, it is estimated that in the case of North Korean Scud B, the THAAD interceptor would have to be launched while the missile is still at an altitude of 60 to 70 km, where the tumbling phenomenon could occur. The spiraling movement could occur at an altitude of 10 to 20 km. In the case of Scud C, if it reenters the atmosphere in a side-on orientation it will likely remain intact until it reaches an altitude of roughly 30 km, where it will break up due to the increase in aerodynamic forces, the two scholars said. If it reenters the atmosphere oriented nose-on relative to its velocity vector, it will disintegrate at about 10 to 12km. Both of these altitudes are below the THAAD minimum intercept altitude, they said. Secondly, the US missile defense systems including THAAD are limited in their capability to discriminate between the real warheads and decoys. It is because the radars and infrared sensors could tell only the exterior properties of missiles in space such as shape and brightness. Potential enemies could undermine the radars and sensors' ability to differentiate between the warheads and decoys by conducting countermeasures including cutting a missile into many pieces using explosive cutting cords. The explosive cutting cord, which is a piece of rope manufactured from strands of high explosives, could intentionally cut the missiles into tens of fragments. If the shape of these fragments is similar to the real warheads, it is difficult to determine which one is the real warhead. These fundamental constraints could be applied when the THAAD intercepts the Nodong missiles. Since THAAD interceptor would have to be launched while the complex of incoming objects is at an altitude of 105 km or higher, the effects of the atmosphere causing the lighter objects to slow up will be minimal, two scholars said. Hence, when the THAAD interceptor needs to be launched, there will be no way for the THAAD system to determine which of the many incoming objects would be the warhead, they said. Proponents of missile defense systems believe that they could succeed in discriminating between the warheads and decoys by conducting more research and development in the future. However, Dr. Postol argued, "Research aimed at exploiting physical phenomena that do not exist can never produce anything but nonsense." He said, "In effect, radars and infrared sensors see the exterior properties of objects in space. Those exterior properties can easily be manipulated so that it is fundamentally impossible to know what is beneath the exterior." Thirdly, if the THAAD systems succeed to intercept the North Korean missiles, it must hit and destroy the front end of target-missiles exactly. However, it would be daunting challenge. The THAAD interceptor would have difficulty in homing on the part of warhead at the front of missile. For instance, in the test of SM-3 took place on July 30, 2009, the infrared sensor failed to determine where the warhead is, even two seconds prior to impact. Postol highlighted an important difference between destroying attacking aircraft and attacking missiles. He said, "Anywhere an anti-aircraft interceptor hits an airplane will likely result in either the destruction of the airplane and loss of its pilot or the inability

of the aircraft to complete its mission. This means that relatively low levels of damaging against an aircraft will result in a successful outcome for the anti-aircraft defense. In contrast, a ballistic missile can be heavily damaged and still succeed in its mission - delivering a warhead into the area under attack." He also warned, "Nuclear warheads that fly on ballistic missiles are by design very rugged. If the THAAD interceptor were to hit any part of the incoming Nodong other than the front end, the warhead could be expected to fall to the ground and detonate." Two scholars pointed out that most of Patriot missiles failed to hit the warhead of Iraqi Scud missiles during the Gulf War of 1991 and also SM-3 succeeded in hitting the warhead only one to two times of ten tests that they analyzed in 2009, all of which were done under exactly the same intercept conditions. The analysis on the intercept tests of THAAD is not available because their detailed results were not disclosed to the public. The point is that North Korea is capable of developing countermeasures to avoid the THAAD interceptors. The two scholars argued that North Korea has it well within their ability to make such countermeasures as tumbling and cutting into fragments. In particular, the technology of explosive cutting cord was demonstrated when they launched both the Taepodong-1 and the Taepodong-2 long-range ballistic missiles. But most high-level decision-makers in the US and South Korea are not familiar with the technological details of these systems. (Park Hyun, "U.S. Experts Question THAAD's Ability to Intercept North Korean Missiles," *Hankyore*, June 25, 2015)

In the middle of last year, the residents of Pyongyang began to notice a new fleet of taxis operating in the North Korean capital. With their maroon and gold bodywork, the gleaming sedans were easy to spot as they cruised the city's orderly streets. The cars bore the taxi company's logo: KKG. The swiftness with which KKG edged out rival taxi operators - one of which was rumoured to be linked to the security services - piqued curiosity about who was behind the new outfit. The same logo has been spotted on 4x4s, on a billboard displaying a planned riverside property development and on buses at Pyongyang airport. Like other North Korean cabbies, the drivers of the KKG taxis asked their fares to pay in foreign currency: mainly Chinese renminbi, but also euros or dollars. And therein lay a clue. But the KKG cabs are just a small part of a much larger endeavor. The KKG taxi fleet is one product of a partnership between a group of Hong Kong-based investors and a secretive arm of the North Korean state that seeks to cut international business deals, a *Financial Times* investigation has found. The North Korean government's alliance with the so-called Queensway Group, a syndicate of businesspeople with a record of forging ties with pariah states, is opaque. But it seems clear that it is one of a handful of crucial business ventures that allow the world's most isolated regime to sustain itself. "KKG is one of several joint ventures in North Korea and it's one of the biggest ones," says an Asian official who asked not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter. "Most North Korean companies are under US or EU or UN sanctions. They always change names, like their ships change flags. But most of the companies belong to military leaders or the ruling Workers' party of Korea. And they are on the sanctions list. So they need any foreign company that could give them an opportunity to trade with foreign countries." The domestic economy has either contracted or grown at 1 per cent in recent years, according to South Korean government estimates based on limited data, with annual exports of about \$3bn falling well short of the import bill. As prices for the coal and

other commodities that North Korea exports to China fall, business networks such as the one behind KKG are likely to become increasingly vital in garnering crucial foreign exchange for the regime. The North Korean end of the KKG network leads to a shadowy organization called Office 39 of the Workers' party, according to Asian and US officials. The US has described Office 39 as "a secretive branch of the government . . . that provides critical support to [the] North Korean leadership in part through engaging in illicit economic activities and managing slush funds, and generating revenues for the leadership." The EU says Office 39 reported directly to Kim Jong Il, North Korea's ruler from 1994 until his death in 2011, when his son, Kim Jong-un, took over. Office 39 is "among the most important organizations assigned with currency and merchandise acquisition", the EU says. The US and the EU also imposed sanctions on what they said were Office 39 front companies. One, which is known as Korea Daesong General Trading Corporation and several similar names, "is used to facilitate foreign transactions on behalf of Office 39", the US Treasury said. The company did not respond to a request for comment. The EU describes it as part of the broader Daesong group, "the largest company group of the country." According to the Asian official and J.R. Mailey, a researcher at the Pentagon's Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Daesong is one of the backers behind KKG. Another, according to these people and court documents from Hong Kong, is the business network known informally to those who have studied it as Queensway Group, after the address of its headquarters at 88 Queensway in Hong Kong's financial district. Over the past decade, the Queensway Group has built a multi-billion-dollar corporate empire that stretches from Zimbabwe to Manhattan. The precise nature of the KKG partnership is unclear – whether it is an incorporated joint venture or a more informal arrangement. Searches by the FT yielded no records for a company called KKG that matched the profile of the one active in North Korea. Nor did searches in English and Korean for Kumgang Economic Development Corporation, KKG's name when written in Korean characters. That suggests that KKG is either simply a brand, or, if it is a company, it is registered within North Korea, which does not keep company records online. The FT was unable to find contact details for KKG. The relationship between KKG's backers was formed around the end of 2006. According to the Asian official, details of whose account were corroborated by others, the Queensway Group's foray into North Korea was spearheaded by the frontman who has advanced its interests in Africa and elsewhere. He goes by at least seven names – but is best known as Sam Pa. An FT investigation last year found that Pa and his fellow founders of the Queensway Group have connections to powerful interests in Beijing, including Chinese intelligence and state-owned companies. They also have ties to big western groups: Queensway Group companies are in business with BP in Angola, Glencore in Guinea and others. Pa did not respond to requests for comment. Only one of the Queensway Group figures and companies contacted for comment replied. Jee Kin Wee, group head of legal at China Sonangol's arm in Singapore, says his company and KKG "are separate and unrelated companies". He did not clarify the link between his company in Singapore and its sister company, China Sonangol International Holding, registered at the Queensway address in Hong Kong. That company is jointly owned by Pa's business associates and Angola's state oil group. It is named in Hong Kong court documents as having made payments related to KKG projects. Wee did not answer specific questions about the Queensway Group's dealings in North Korea. But he stressed that "China enjoys full diplomatic and

economic relations with North Korea and . . . scores of countries around the world, including EU countries, have bilateral diplomatic relations with North Korea." Pa is said to have met senior North Korean officials as he began his courtship of the regime in 2006. At the time, Pyongyang needed new partners. It had found itself increasingly locked out of the global financial system. A year earlier, the US had accused Macau-based Banco Delta Asia of laundering money for the regime, causing the near-collapse of that bank and prompting others to avoid North Korea. Pa struck a deal with Daesong for an eclectic range of North Korean projects, the Asian official says, ranging from power plants to mining to fisheries. Money started to flow – although it is unclear how much flowed directly into North Korea. A ledger published in a 2013 Hong Kong high court ruling in a dispute between some of Mr Pa's business associates refers to Queensway Group payments including "Pyongyang city bus system", "Korea airport", "Korea: 5,000 tons of soyabean oil" and "exhibition sponsored by the Korean consul". There are no further details. But the list of payments also contains references to KKG. Some who have observed Queensway's thrust into North Korea say it is seeking to replicate a model it pioneered in Africa: striking infrastructure-for-natural resources deals with oppressive governments such as Angola's, Zimbabwe's and a military junta that briefly ruled Guinea. The group appears to have set its sights on North Korea's untapped potential for oil. Mailey, who was one of the authors of a 2009 US congressional report who recently published a second detailed study of the group, says: "The KKG taxis might earn the regime some foreign currency from tourists visiting Pyongyang, but most signs point to the oil and mining sectors as the Queensway Group's true target." A 2009 report by the UK's Chatham House think-tank said Queensway's China Sonangol in 2007 lined up a Chinese state-owned group to carry out seismic explorations on two oil prospects in North Korea. A China Sonangol jet was spotted in Pyongyang in 2013. Like the taxi venture and the Pyongyang property project, the search for oil appears to be taking place at least in part via KKG, the Queensway partnership with Office 39. According to the Asian official and an oil industry insider familiar with North Korea, KKG has looked for oil in several parts of the country, so far without success. In November 2013, North Korean state television broadcast footage of an event in the city of Kaesong, close to the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea established in 1953. Dignitaries hailed the start of work on a "high-tech industrial park". According to state media, the park was to house an information technology center, a hotel, houses, a school and a power plant. One of the speakers was a man in a dark suit with a neat haircut, identified by local media as Jang Su Nam. He is described as the representative of the "Peace and Economy Development Group." Mailey says Jang once worked for Daesong. Jang could not be reached for comment. The camera panned across the other honoured guests. Among them was Lo Fong-hung, a petite Chinese businesswoman. According to interviews and court documents, she is Pa's principal business partner in the Queensway Group. Also present were ambassadors from African countries where the Queensway Group has interests. Standing beside them was Nik Zuks, the Australian founder of a London-listed miner of west African iron ore called Bellzone, in which China Sonangol has built a majority stake. Neither Lo nor Zuks responded to requests for comment. Pa was not present for the groundbreaking ceremony. But since Kim assumed the leadership in 2011, Pa appears to have maintained his relationship with North Korea's regime. According to the Asian official, Mr Pa visited Pyongyang as

recently as December and sent the North Korean leader a personal birthday letter in January. The pair have something else in common apart from an urge to do business: Mr Pa was placed under US sanctions last year in relation to his dealings in Zimbabwe, where he has been accused of funding Robert Mugabe's secret police in exchange for rights to trade diamonds. Mr Pa has called the allegations "baseless." "Sam Pa's role is to be a window for the Pyongyang regime to capitalist markets," the Asian official says. "I think his future is bright in that regard." (Tom Burgis, "The Secrets of Office 39," *Financial Times*, June 25, 2015, p. 5, and "North Korea behind Global Network of Businesses," *Financial Times*, June 25, 2015, p. 1)

6/25/15

NDC statement: "65 years since the U.S. imperialists ignited a war of aggression on this land. Many generations have replaced by others and the era has also changed but fragile state of ceasefire which is neither war nor peace persists on the Korean peninsula, the statement said, adding the U.S. imperialists' war moves have become serious by the minute. Far back in the 1950s when the Cold War started, the U.S. launched the war with an intention to wipe out the DPRK after setting it as target "A" in the secret "War Plan A,B,C" and then to stretch the tentacles of aggression to the vast areas of China and the former Soviet Union, targets "B" and "C." The U.S. ambition still lingers on the Korean peninsula as a ghost of aggression and war. This is reflected in the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK, war acts pursuant to it and strategic move for laying a siege to the Asian continent. The U.S. design to politically isolate and stifle the DPRK has reached extremity pursuant to the strategy. Far from drawing a lesson from the defeat in the war in the 1950s, the U.S. has intensified isolation, blockade and suffocation of the DPRK in a bid to ignite the second Korean war. As the U.S. imperialists' moves have reached a serious phase that can no longer be overlooked, the NDC of the DPRK said as follows: **We state to the world that the army and people of the DPRK will launch a nationwide anti-U.S. struggle on a new higher stage** to foil the U.S. imperialists' hostile policy toward the DPRK and their unprecedented moves to isolate and stifle it. June 25 indicts the U.S. imperialists for their ferocity, cruelty and barbarity and makes the army and people of the DPRK to give vent to the pent-up wrath and hatred. What matters is that the U.S. imperialists are working with bloodshot eyes to make the past crime-woven history repeat itself by igniting another war, far from apologizing with their knees bent for their thrice-cursed crimes. The U.S. is bracing for a nuclear war and even a modern germ warfare to exterminate the Korean people. **The new stage of the anti-U.S. struggle will lead to a just confrontation for ending the long history of the DPRK-U.S. stand-off for the victory of the DPRK.** 2. The U.S. should, though belatedly, repeal its hostile policy toward the DPRK that can never come true, and raise a white flag before history and the Korean people. The army and people of the DPRK are not what they used to be in the past when they had no state, being under the jackboots of outsiders as they had not enough rifles and swords. The U.S. had better face up to the reality and stop running amuck. It would be the best policy for it to immediately repeal its desperate hostile policy toward the DPRK. It has to withdraw the war scenario targeting the DPRK and stop the reckless nuclear war racket which it has kicked up on the land and in the sea and air. The U.S. had better look back with a cool head what its hostile policy toward the DPRK has entailed. It should pay heed to the warning of the DPRK that it is ready for a conventional war, nuclear war and cyber warfare. The only way for the U.S.

to take is to make apology before the army and people of the DPRK and hoist a white flag. 3. We appeal to the world to turn out in the worldwide anti-U.S. struggle to dismember the gangster U.S. imperialists. The U.S. is the most shameless chieftain of aggression and war and ill-famed architect of provocation and destruction. It is not time to get afraid of the U.S. bluffing, blindly add voice to the U.S. unreasonable and brigandish sophism and dance to the tune of the U.S. acts of destruction and disturbance. It is still not time to take to flunkeyism and submit to the U.S. to echo whatever it says. Whoever truly hopes for global peace and regional stability has to set right at an early date the dangerous situation on this planet plagued with bloodshed, disputes and upheavals by the U.S. imperialists. Asia should turn out to cut off the U.S. right hand, Africa should rise up to cut off the U.S. left hand, the Mid-east has to cut off the U.S. ankles and Europe has to cut off the U.S. neck. The whole world has to pool efforts to dismember the fatty monster U.S. imperialists. The U.S. is just like a paper tiger easy to be crushed and set on fire. Whoever truly wishes for durable peace in the world, welfare of humankind and lasting security of posterity has to turn out in the anti-U.S. struggle in high spirits. The DPRK will invariably stand in the van of the worldwide just struggle against the U.S. to build a peaceful world and defend genuine life of humankind." (KCNA, "DPRK NDC Statement Blasts U.S. War Moves," June 25, 2015)

6/26/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman "answer to a question put by KCNA condemning the U.S. Department of State for slandering the dignified DPRK once again in its "annual report on human rights": The assistant secretary of the U.S. State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor in a special press conference on June 25 talked about "change", malignantly taking issue with the DPRK over its "human rights issue." He revealed once again the U.S. sinister attempt to carry out its ambition for bringing down the Korean-style socialist system centered on the popular masses at any cost under the pretext of "protecting human rights." The U.S. is dreaming a foolish dream that any "change" may take place in the DPRK, no more than jargon provoking a side-splitting laughter. But it will only see the DPRK's military muscle increasing in every way and its people enjoying a happy life under socialism. **Now that the U.S. persists in the hostile policy toward the DPRK, it will take tougher countermeasures.** The world will clearly see how the DPRK will smash the U.S. moves for isolating and stifling it." (KCNA, "U.S. Moves against DPRK Censured: DPRK FM Spokesman," June 26, 2015)

North Korea is suspected of having provided Iran with engine components for ballistic missiles, violating a U.N. ban on activities related to such weapons, a diplomatic source familiar with North Korean matters said. The source said it is likely North Korea has already begun disassembling more than 10 engines and has shipped some of the parts to Iran, prompting the United States and other Middle Eastern countries to step up relevant surveillance. (Inoue Tomotaro, "N. Korea Suspected of Providing Iran with Missile Components," Kyodo, June 26, 2015)

6/29/15

Ambassador Sung Kim held closed-door meetings with Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun and Hwang Joon-kook, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, while visiting the country to participate in an international forum on Korean reunification. "We discussed a broad range of issues, bilateral issues and our coordination on North Korea," he said as he left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the

meetings. A South Korean official said the two sides reaffirmed their policy to push for talks with North Korea without any preconditions. (Yonhap, "S. Korean, U.S. Nuclear Envoys Discuss N. Korea," June 29, 2015)

6/30/15

Lee Hee-ho, the widow of former President Kim Dae-jung will likely visit North Korea next month and meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, an informed source said June 26. "North Korea has proposed a meeting next Tuesday in Kaesong regarding Lee's possible visit to North Korea in response to our call for talks last week," said Kim Sung-jae, an official of the Kim Dae-jung Peace Center, citing the border town in the North. "Today, we submitted a document to win the government's approval for the visit to Kaesong," he said, noting some five officials from the South are to meet with five North Korean counterparts to arrange her schedule. She is expected to visit Pyongyang as early as next month and no later than Aug. 15, the official said, adding other details will be fixed during the next week's meeting. (Yonhap, "Ex-S. Korean First Lady Plans to Visit N. Korea Next Month," July 26, 2015) Aides to late former President Kim Dae-jung visited North Korea on June 30 for talks on a proposed trip there by Kim's widow but returned home without finalizing a specific date. Lee Hee-ho, who was the South's first lady during Kim's five-year tenure till 2003, is seeking to visit the communist nation as early as next month for humanitarian purposes, a move that may help ease tension on the divided peninsula. Five representatives from the Kim Dae-jung Peace Center returned home in the afternoon after visiting the North's border city of Kaesong to discuss the logistics and other details of Lee's trip, according to the center. Kim Sung-jae, a former culture minister, said that as the two sides have not set a specific date for Lee's visit, they've agreed to have additional talks for fine-tuning her itinerary. "We delivered to the North the ex-first lady's hope to visit the North in relations." If her visit is realized, it is widely expected to help improve the strained inter-Korean ties amid prospects that she may meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, experts said. (Yonhap, "Two Koreas Meet over Ex-First Lady's Proposed NK Visit," June 30, 2015)

7/1/15

Nearly 1,400 North Koreans were executed under the Kim Jong-un regime from 2008 to 2014, according to a report released by the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU). The 455-page report, "White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015," showed that 1,382 were killed during the period. KINU said its findings were based on the testimony of 221 people who defected from North Korea to South Korea in 2014. It added the witnesses were chosen based on their social backgrounds and demographic characteristics. "We believe there were a number of executions that were not witnessed by those whom we interviewed," an official at KINU's strategy and public relations team said. (Yi Whan-woo, "N.K. Executes Nearly 1,400 from 2008 to 2014," *Korea Times*, July 1, 2015)

7/2/15

North Korea has built five long-range 122-mm artillery positions on an uninhabited island just 4.5 km away from South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island. A senior military officer on Wednesday said North Korea started to build the artillery positions in March on an island called Galdo. Surveillance also shows one command tower and three barracks on the island, he added. The military here believes North Korean troops will move to Galdo between July and August. The North apparently built a port and mooring

facilities on the island as well. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "N. Korea Builds Artillery Base on West Sea Island," July 2, 2015)

7/3/15 North Korea has informed Japan that it will postpone its report on the investigation into Japanese abductees that it launched a year ago, the government said. "We are sincerely conducting a comprehensive investigation, but it will take a little more time," the government quoted Pyongyang as saying. The government criticized North Korea for the delay. Prime Minister Abe Shinzo instructed Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio and Yamatani Eriko, minister in charge of the abduction issue, to step up efforts to urge Pyongyang to promptly report the results of its investigation. Kishida, Yamatani and Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide announced North Korea's notice of the postponement at a press conference and elsewhere this morning. Pyongyang informed Japan of the delay via diplomatic channels in Beijing last night. Last July 4, North Korea purportedly set up the Special Investigation Committee and launched an investigation into all Japanese nationals in North Korea, including Japanese abductees, missing Japanese nationals and Japanese spouses. Pyongyang also said it would investigate the remains and graves of Japanese nationals who died in North Korea around the end of World War II, and end the overall probe in about a year. "It is extremely regrettable that the return of abduction victims to Japan has not been realized, even one year after the investigation started," Abe said Friday morning at a meeting of the House of Representatives Special Committee on the Legislation for Peace and Security of Japan and the International Community. "We will step up efforts to urge North Korea to take concrete action immediately." Abe said he has given relevant instructions to Kishida and Yamatani. "We'll stick to the principles of 'dialogue and pressure' and 'action for action' and do all we can to realize the return of all abductees," the prime minister said. (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, "N. Korea Puts off Report on Abductions; Govt. Sees Next Month as Absolute Deadline," July 3, 2015)

7/6/15 The widow of former President Kim Dae-jung, Lee Hee-ho, 93, plans to visit the communist country on August 5-8, arriving via plane, according to officials from the Kim Dae-jung Peace Center. The announcement came as five representatives from the center returned home earlier in the day after visiting the North's border city of Kaesong to set the specifics for Lee's trip. "We hope that Lee's visit could serve as a good occasion to help improve inter-Korean relations and promote cooperation," Kim Sung-jae, an official at the center, told reporters at a checkpoint near the inter-Korean border. Her itinerary includes a visit to a children's hospital and a nursery facility in Pyongyang and Mt. Myohyang in North Pyongan Province, north of Pyongyang. (Kim Soo-yeon, "Ex-First Lady to Visit N. Korea in Early August," *Yonhap*, July 6, 2015)

Melissa Hanham: "North Korea's biological weapons program got a lot less secret on June 6, 2015. The same day that a defector reportedly fled the country carrying 15 GB of human testing data, North Korea's state media published photos of Kim Jong-un touring a facility ostensibly for the production of pesticides. However analysis of the images reveals that the facility—the Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute—can produce regular, military-sized batches of biological weapons, specifically anthrax. The North Korean assertion that the plant is intended to produce insecticides is an old and well-used cover for a biological weapons program. In fact, it is not uncommon for biological

weapons facilities to actually function as bio-insecticide plants. Iraq's Al Hakam Factory produced both *Bacillus anthracis*—the causative agent of Anthrax—and *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*)—a bacteria used in Bt bio-insecticide. The Soviet Union's Progress Scientific and Production Association in Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan, was tasked with producing bio-fertilizers in peacetime and biological weapons for war. The same could be true for the Pyongyang facility where the scientists can convert between civilian and military strains of bacteria, by simply sterilizing and resetting the equipment in a matter of days. The modern equipment seen in the images reveal that North Korea is not only maintaining a biological weapons capability, but also has an active large-scale sanctions busting effort to illicitly procure the equipment for the Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute. This effort runs counter to international treaties, regimes and national laws that aim to prevent the spread of biological weapons, the equipment and chemicals used to make them and their means of delivery. Much of the equipment seen in the Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute violates export control laws based on the dual-use control lists of the Australia Group (AG): 41 members—including the United States and the European Union (EU)—who agreed to control lists intended to prevent the spread of equipment for use in chemical or biological weapons programs. Even countries like China, which are not members of the Australia Group, maintain national export control regulations based on the Australia Group control lists. North Korea, as a member of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), is prohibited from biological weapons development, production and use. Any activities involving the trafficking of biological weapons, their means of delivery or related materials are also prohibited by UN Security Council Resolution 1718, adopted in 2006. Based on these images alone, it is not possible to determine that the North has violated its obligations under the BTWC or UNSCR 1718. Kim Jong-un's visit to the plant may have been intended as a veiled threat to South Korea and the United States. The visit occurred days after news broke that the American military had mistakenly shipped live-anthrax to labs in nine US states as well as to the Osan Air Base in South Korea. The shipments appeared to most of the world as an embarrassing and dangerous mistake, but were viewed by the North Koreans as a threat. By June 1, KCNA was blasting the incident as secret "preparations for germ warfare against Koreans" and denounced it as a move toward "Biochemical War." By June 12, North Korea requested a UN Security Council investigation of the United States. This reaction reflects Pyongyang's long-standing accusations that the US intends to use biological weapons against the North dating back to the Korean War when it accused the Americans of conducting BW experiments on Koreans. Additional open-source research reveals that the Swiss branch of an international nongovernmental organization provided training and basic equipment to the North that may have inadvertently contributed to North Korea's ability to produce BW. CABI, a group that runs agricultural aid programs around the world, established a pilot facility in 2005 at the Plant Protection Institute for the production of Bt bio-insecticide with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and using Chinese equipment. Unfortunately, this pilot facility can also be operated to produce anthrax and was possibly a training ground in preparation for the construction and operation of the large-scale facility that Kim Jong-un toured. Images and video from the CABI website show training activities and equipment at the Plant Protection Institute located approximately 15 kilometers from the site Kim Jong-un toured. Bt or *Bacillus thuringiensis* is a bacteria often used as a natural pesticide in organic farming

that can be found at the local nursery or hardware store. The problem is that its cousin, *Bacillus anthracis*—the causative agent of anthrax—is produced through identical means. A facility capable of producing Bt is also capable of producing anthrax. *Bacillus anthracis*, on the other hand, is the bacteria that causes the disease Anthrax. Dried spores can be absorbed through cuts in the skin, inhaled or ingested. Once inside the body, they activate, multiplying and releasing toxin. Inhaled spores are the most difficult to treat because Anthrax progresses rapidly, the symptoms are hard to diagnose and specific antibiotics and antitoxins must be administered early and aggressively. If spores were dispersed over a large crowd without warning, it would be extremely difficult to diagnose and treat on a mass-scale. The most effective way to deliver spores is using a manned or unmanned aerial vehicle like a crop duster to spray the powder up-wind from the targets. To that end, North Korea may seek in the future to outfit its growing drone collection with suitable spray nozzles. Very little is known about the origin or capacity of North Korea's biological weapons (BW) program. While there are assertions that North Korea acquired a sample of *Bacillus anthracis* in Japan in 1968 and subsequently set up BW research centers, there have been varying accounts of their actual ability to weaponize and produce it on a military-scale. In fact, since the late 1990s, statements by US military and intelligence agencies have tended to characterize the DPRK's capability as rudimentary, and have indicated that North Korea *could* build up a supply of biological weapons rather than asserting that it was maintaining active, weaponized BW munitions. In a speech at Osan Air Base in 2005, General Leon LaPorte, Commander of US Forces Korea, stated that he did not believe North Korea had been able to weaponize biological weapons, but that they were working on it and were continuing to experiment. The same year, an international nongovernmental organization may have inadvertently provided training and basic equipment that contributed to Pyongyang's ability to produce BW at the Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute. CABI, a group that runs agricultural aid programs around the world, established a pilot facility¹ at the Plant Protection Institute in 2005 for the production of Bt bio-insecticide with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Chinese equipment. Unfortunately, this pilot facility could also be operated to produce anthrax and was possibly a training ground in preparation for the large-scale facility that Kim Jong-un recently toured. CABI ran a large-scale training program emphasizing capacity building that possibly inadvertently contributed to North Korea's anthrax program. Its train-the-trainers program was designed specifically to spread knowledge of how to make and use Bt. Teaching how to apply Bt to crops is largely harmless, but teaching how to make Bt is essentially the same skill as teaching how to make anthrax. This kind of export is known as an intangible technology transfer (ITT). Even when there is no exchange of a physical good, an export can take place through email, printed documents or verbal training. More information about the exports is needed to determine whether this activity violated any law. Images and video from the CABI website show training activities and equipment at the Plant Protection Institute at the Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Pyongyang, located approximately 15 kilometers from the site Kim Jong-un toured. The Chinese equipment provided by CABI is lower quality and much smaller scale than viewed by Kim at the Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute but is still dual-use. Though there are only two images of the equipment (see below), both show items of a similar type and quality as found in the Iraqi BW program. If these pieces were indeed of Chinese origin

and they were exported after 2002, then the autoclave and laminar flow table could have been subject to China's "catch all" requirements, which prevent exports—even if they fall below control thresholds—if there is reason to believe they would be used in a WMD program.¹ China, like many countries, has had difficulty successfully reaching out to companies to inform them of catch-all requirements. Of course, it is difficult to establish a direct link between the CABI pilot plant and the Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute that Kim Jong-un toured. CABI has worked hard to improve food security, increase internet access and help both farmers and scientists in North Korea. This case, more than anything, demonstrates the challenges facing governments as they try to prevent the spread of biological weapons. ...Biological weapons facilities are notoriously difficult to identify and monitor because of their dual-use nature. What looks like a civilian facility can also function as a military facility. More challenging still, is the fact that these facilities can operate in each capacity as demonstrated by the Soviet and Iraqi BW programs. The Pyongyang Bio-technical Institute clearly fits that mode. Given North Korea's known history and interest in biological weapons, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Institute is intended to produce military-size batches of anthrax. If Pyongyang was interested only in food security, it could have procured Bt bio-insecticide legally and at a fraction of the cost. Instead, by choosing to illicitly import the dual-use equipment, North Korea is likely using the facility to maintain a latent BW capability—or worse—actively producing anthrax. The bottom line is that regardless of whether the equipment is being used to produce anthrax today, it could in the near future." (Melissa Hanham, "Kim Jong-un Tours Pesticide Facility Capable of Producing Biological Weapons," *38North*, July 9, 2015)

7/8/15

Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee spokesman's statement "denouncing the dishonest forces of south Korea including the puppet conservative media for perpetrating the heinous provocative act of hurting the dignity of the supreme leadership of the DPRK over the issue of Ri Hui Ho's visit to Pyongyang: The south Korean puppet group let the conservative media spread misinformation as regards Ri's visit. It claimed that Ri suggested an overland travel but the leadership of the north side proposed a travel by air in a bid to propagandize among south Koreans. Pyongyang International Airport built by the leadership with much effort. And the group also let experts on north Korean affairs float the false story that the north adjusted the timing of Ri's visit to Pyongyang for "its political purpose." The puppet Ministry of Unification let loose a spate of vituperation that it would handle the issue of Ri's visit to Pyongyang with a "principle" despite the fact that officials concerned of the north and the south reached an agreement on it. This is an unpardonable serious provocation against the DPRK as the puppet group brought to light its sinister intention to stand in confrontation with the DPRK to the last, displeased with the process to improve the inter-Korean relations. And this cannot be construed otherwise than a deliberate and vicious obstruction to block Ri's visit by getting on the nerves of the DPRK. In connection with Ri's course of visit to Pyongyang, the DPRK told the Kim Dae Jung Peace Center that it was better for Ri to travel to Pyongyang by air to the best convenience of the guests as the Pyongyang-Kaesong Highway is under repair and the officials concerned of the south side fully agreed with it. It was reported that Ri accepted our sincere proposal with pleasure. The south Korean puppet group should not recklessly wag their tongues, clearly understanding that the Korea Asia-Pacific

Peace Committee and the Kim Dae Jung Peace Center just tentatively agreed on the issue of Ri's Pyongyang visit at the working-level contact and it has not been fully confirmed. We solemnly warn that if the south Korean conservative group persistently hurts the dignity of the supreme leadership of the DPRK and makes provocations against it, the hard-won opportunity may be scuppered. Ri Hui Ho's successful Pyongyang visit depends on the behavior of the puppet group." (KCNA, "Success of Ri Hui Ho's Pyongyang Visit Depends on S. Korean Authorities' Attitude," July 8, 2015)

A pesticide factory recently visited by the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may be used to produce biological weapons, like anthrax, according to an online report posted today. On June 6, the state-run North Korean news media reported that when Kim visited the Pyongyang Biotechnical Institute, he was so happy with scientists' work there in developing insecticides that he "wanted to carry them on his back." But *38 North*, a website run by Johns Hopkins University's U.S.-Korea Institute, said photographs North Korean media released with the reports of Mr. Kim's visit showed that North Korea has been importing dual-use equipment. "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the institute is intended to produce military-size batches of anthrax," it said. "Regardless of whether the equipment is being used to produce anthrax today, it could in the near future." (Choe Sang-hun, North Korea: Pesticide Factory May Have Sinister Purpose, Report Says," *New York Times*, July 9, 2015) p. A-6)

7/9/15

The value of production made at an inter-Korean industrial park rose 26 percent in the January-April period from a year earlier despite a drawn-out row sparked by North Korea's unilateral wage hike, government data showed. The value of production at Kaesong Industrial Complex in the North reached a combined \$186 million in the first four months of the year, compared with \$148 million a year earlier, according to the Unification Ministry. In particular, the production at the park rose 21.8 percent on-year to \$51.1 million in March and gained 19.7 percent to \$50 million in April, when a wage dispute between the two Koreas heightened. The two Koreas have been locked in a months-long wage row following the North's unilateral move to raise wages by 5.18 percent for the some 55,000 North Korean workers at the park in the border city of Kaesong. A total of 124 South Korean small and medium-sized enterprises are operating factories there. (Yonhap, "Production at Joint Industrial Park Rises 26 Pct. in Jan.-April," *Korea Herald*, July 9, 2015)

7/10/15

President Park Geun-hye said reunification between North and South Korea "could happen tomorrow" during a discussion last month with the Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation (PCUP), sources reported. Her remarks were read by some as alluding to a possible reunification following some kind of "collapse" in the North. "Unification could happen tomorrow, so you need to be making preparations," Park was quoted as saying by an attendee at a closed-door intensive round table session among the PCUP's civilian members at the Blue House on the morning of July 10. Another attendee quoted Park as saying, "The experience of Germany shows that unification could happen in a few days or a few months, so you need to prepare." Multiple sources also quoted Park, who chairs the committee, as saying she had received a report disputing accounts of the defection of North Korea People's Army general Park Sung-won. "It is true that influential figures have been defecting," Park

was reported as saying. At one level, Park's remarks could be read as pro forma encouragement of the committee to "be on the alert" and make necessary preparations. But civilian unification experts who attended said she appeared to be alluding to a possible collapse in Pyongyang. "You could understand [the remarks] as saying 'we don't know when unification is going to happen and we need to be prepared,' but there was also a sense to it of the subconscious notion that an upheaval in North Korea was a possibility," said one attendee. Another attendee reported coming away with "the impression that she was making veiled references to strange currents in North Korea." The undertones could have been related to the type of intelligence she was receiving on North Korea at the time. In mid-May, the National Intelligence Service reported to Park that Minister of People's Armed Forces Hyon Yong-chol had been executed. It also delivered a sudden, closed-door report later to the National Assembly Intelligence Committee, despite the intelligence being unverified at the time. "I get the sense that President Park had been getting a lot of intelligence that focused on the fear tactics in North Korea and played up the possibility of a schism in the ruling class, and that may be what led her to put so much weight on the possibility of an upheaval," said one North Korea expert. The Park administration has often voiced expectations of a collapse in Pyongyang. In December of 2013, the first year of Park's term, then-NIS Director Nam Jae-joon is reported to have discussed the scenario of "unification under a liberal democratic system" as early as 2015. Park's reference to the "unification jackpot" in Jan. 2014 was seen by many at the time as no different from a "unification by absorption" scenario, emphasizing only the economic benefits of reunification without discussing the actual process. Park's predecessor Lee Myung-bak (2008-13) made repeated references to South Korea absorbing the North after a regime collapse in Pyongyang, famously remarking that unification would come "like a thief in the night." Regarding Park's remarks, the Blue House said it could not "verify a statement made by the President during a closed-door discussion." PCUP vice chairman Chung Jong-wook said Park had "generally been talking about how unification could come at any time and we needed to be thoroughly prepared." "She did not have any kind of North Korean 'upheaval' in mind," Chung asserted. (Kim Oi-hyun and Choi Hye-jung, "Pres. Park Reportedly Says Unification 'Could Come Tomorrow,'" *Hankyore*, August 18, 2015)

President Park Geun-hye stressed the need to devise a "medium to long-term solution" to help North Korea with disease control and prevention, starting off by providing vaccines and antibiotics to counter tuberculosis (TB) and German measles. Speaking at a morning meeting at the Blue House with civilian members on the presidential Committee for Unification Preparation, Park did not specify how she planned to put the idea into practice, but insisted that the gesture would better the chances for inter-Korean unification. Today's statement came a few months after the local government approved an aid plan in late May of 10.6 billion won (\$9.7 million) under the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund, set up to support mutual exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. Of that, the biggest amounts were announced to go to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP). UNICEF will be allocated with \$4 million to help North Korea obtain vaccines and other medical supplies, while the WFP will be provided with \$2.1 million to deliver nutritional

products to needy mothers and children, the government said. (Lee Sung-eun, "President Proposes Aid for North," *JoongAng Ilbo*, July 11, 2015)

7/11/15

A group of armed North Korean soldiers crossed the military border into the South and returned to the North instantly after receiving warning shots, a South Korean Army source said June 12. "The military sent a warning message and fired warning shots after some 10 North Korean soldiers crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) near Cheorwon, Gangwon Province, at about 8 to 9 a.m. on Saturday [June 11]," the source said. "The North Korean soldiers were armed and retreated after the warning shots. They didn't fire back." This marked the first time this year that the South Korean military has fired warning shots at North Korean soldiers for intruding. In October, soldiers of the two Koreas exchanged fire across the heavily armed border as North Koreans responded to the South's warning shots when they approached the MDL in Paju, Gyeonggi Province. There were no reports of casualties or property damage on both sides. South Korean troops fired warning shots at North Korean soldiers who intruded on the buffer zone marking their heavily armed border, Seoul said, in the first such skirmish this year. The incident occurred this morning when 10 North Korean soldiers crossed the border of the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas, the South's defense ministry said. But the brief intrusion near Cheorwon, northeast of Seoul, triggered no exchange of fire as North Korean soldiers retreated without firing back, it said. (Yonhap, "N. Korean Soldiers Briefly Violate Border with S. Korea," July 12, 2015)

In a report on high-level military talks with Laos held in Pyongyang, KCNA said four-star army General Pak Yong-sik attended the bilateral talks as the head of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, equivalent to South Korea's defense minister. It is the first time the North has confirmed the replacement of the defense minister since South Korea's spy agency, the National Intelligence Service, said in May the previous defense minister, Hyon Yong-chol, was executed in April on charges of treason. Pak has appeared among the top-echelon entourage accompanying North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to major public events in recent KCNA reports, fueling outside assumptions that he must have been appointed the new defense minister. But the appointment was not officially confirmed until today's report. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Confirms Replacement for Purged Defense Minister," July 11, 2015)

7/12/15

The United States voiced concern last month about a possible delay in the relocation of the Futenma military base within Okinawa after Gov. Onaga Takeshi hinted at the possibility of canceling his predecessor's approval for land reclamation to build a new base, according to sources familiar with bilateral relations. The central government dismissed the concern and gave assurances that it will continue with preparatory work for constructing the new base, the sources said. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide has said a decision by the prefectural government to revoke the approval won't affect the central government policy of pushing ahead with the project's land reclamation phase. (Kyodo, "U.S. Aired Concern about Possible Delay in Okinawa Base Relocation," *Japan Times*, July 12, 2015)

7/14/15

Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo said that the South Korean government is ready to provide support to Pyongyang if it chooses to walk on the path toward

denuclearization. But he added that whether the North would give up its nukes is not an "absolute prerequisite" for better inter-Korean exchanges. "It is not the government's stance that only when North Korea abandons its nuclear weapons program that the South would pursue dialogue and inter-Korean exchanges," Hong told a press conference with foreign reporters in Seoul. "North Korea's denuclearization is not the absolute prerequisite for every exchange and cooperative project," he said. But Hong made it clear that Pyongyang should show "sincere" attitude toward denuclearization, calling on the North to make the "right" choice. The minister said that the two Koreas "must engage in official dialogue" for peace and conciliation on a divided peninsula. "The ROK government has always maintained its stance to engage in sincere dialogue with Pyongyang to discuss a broad range of issues of mutual interest. We look forward to Pyongyang's positive response as soon as possible," Hong said. (Yonhap, "N.K. Denuclearization Not a Precondition for Better Inter-Korean Ties: Official," July 14, 2015)

DPRK Red Cross Society Central Committee statement: "Shortly ago, the south Korean puppet regime perpetrated such crime against humanity as detaining three of five DPRK citizens who were adrift in the East Sea of Korea by accident. As already known, the DPRK side sent notices to the south side several times, urging it to repatriate all the crewmen without delay, and their families strongly demanded a face-to-face interview with them. However, the puppet regime has refused to send back three of them under absurd pretext of "defection." In this regard, a spokesman for the Central Committee of the DPRK Red Cross Society made public a statement [today], which branded the detention as an unpardonable grave encroachment on the sovereignty of the DPRK and the rights of its citizens and another hideous provocation. In the past the DPRK sent back all south Korean fishermen and ships drifted toward its territorial waters, irrespective of reason and, in particular, it persuaded some of them eager to live in it to go back home, an expression of noble humanitarianism and compatriotism. ...But the south Korean puppet group illegally detained citizens of the DPRK, forcing them to "defect", and refused even to provide data on their situation and arrange an interview with their families. This is a vivid expression of its rude act against human rights. It is unjust and irritating that relatives are forced to separate from each other in peacetime, not in wartime. Now the puppet group advertise about the "will to defect" in order to quell the public criticism and protest at home and abroad against the detaining of DPRK citizens. But it can never cover up the truth about its heinous crime against the nation and humanitarianism that violated even the elementary morality. The "defection" farce is an extension of the group's persistent anti-DPRK policy getting more reckless day by day, and it is a deliberate and premeditated provocation to justify the story about someone's "instability of social system," impair the high prestige of the DPRK and worsen the north-south relations. The puppet group should stop at once the anti-DPRK smear campaign precipitating its ruin and send back the illegally detained DPRK citizens without delay and any condition, clearly mindful of the catastrophic aftermath to be entailed by such provocation." (KCNA, "South Korean Authorities Accused of Detaining DPRK Citizens," July 14, 2015)

Since North Korean leader Kim Jong-un took power, about 20 to 30 percent of senior party officials and more than 40 percent of senior military officers have been replaced,

the National Intelligence Service told lawmakers here. The sweeping personnel reshuffles presumably served to tighten controls based on more party-centered rule and rein in the unruly military, which had assumed monstrous powers due to former leader Kim Jong-il's "military-first" doctrine. Saenuri Party lawmaker Lee Cheol-woo of the National Assembly Intelligence Committee briefed the media on the report. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "Over 40% of N. Korean Brass Replaced in Purges," July 15, 2015)

7/15/15

The Iranian nuclear deal shows the U.S. willingness to engage even countries "with long-standing differences," State Department spokesman John Kirby, stressing the U.S. is ready for negotiations as long as Pyongyang is serious about denuclearization. "Progress in the nuclear talks with Iran clearly demonstrates our willingness to engage countries with whom the United States has long-standing differences," Kirby said in response to a Yonhap question on the Iranian deal's possible implications on the North Korean standoff. "We are prepared for negotiations, provided that they are authentic and credible, get at the entirety of the North's nuclear program, and result in concrete and irreversible steps toward denuclearization," he said. "Pyongyang's attempts to engage in dialogue while keeping critical elements of its weapons program running are unacceptable." (Yonhap, "After Iran Deal, U.S. Says Ready for 'Authentic, Credible' Negotiations with N. Korea," July 15, 2015) The landmark agreement yesterday between Iran and U.S.-led negotiators to curb Tehran's nuclear program may help in denuclearizing Pyongyang in the long-term if Washington takes an "open-minded" approach toward the reclusive country, analysts said Wednesday. North Korea and Iran are not quite alike in their nuclear ambitions — the two Koreas are still technically at war, with South Korea backed by the United States. Analysts said Washington should refrain from insisting on Pyongyang's nuclear disarmament as a pre-condition for any bilateral dialogue, citing U.S. Department of State spokesman John Kirby's comments on the issue. "The Tuesday deal gives room for Washington to focus on North Korea to fulfill U.S. President Barack Obama's utopian vision for a nuclear-free world," said Park Won-gon, an international studies professor at Handong University. Park cited Obama's speech in Prague on April 5, 2009. Paik Hak-soon, director of the Center for North Korean Studies at the Sejong Institute, agreed with Park. "Washington should reconsider Pyongyang's demand for a change in its hostility to the Kim Jong-un regime," he said. An Chan-il, the head of the World Institute for North Korea Studies, suggested that the U.S. take a more diverse approach, such as offering economic incentives for North Korea. (Yi Whan-woo, "Denuclearizing N.K. Requires Talks with U.S.," *Korea Times*, July 15, 2015) Some analysts say that after the U.S. took steps to normalize relations with Iran and Cuba -- two of its three longtime foes, conditions have become more conducive for Washington to pay more attention to North Korea's nuclear issues. But others argue that with a full plate of policy tasks concerning the implementation of the multilateral deal with Iran, Washington may already have its hands full and still remain reluctant to deal with the North that has claimed to be a nuclear-power state. "After the Obama administration took power from the Bush administration, a series of issues stemming from the Cold War era, such as those concerning Cuba and Myanmar, have been addressed, forming the broad international landscape for openness, coexistence and compromise," said Park Myung-lim, a political scientist at Yonsei University. "So in light of this trend, the Iran deal could play a positive role in terms of adding pressure for North Korea's denuclearization." Park, however, noted that the

most challenging issue for now is that, unlike two former North Korean leaders who stably managed the regime, current leader Kim Jong-un is likely to adhere more to the nuclear program due to the country's deepening isolation and moribund economy. "Kim could be using the nuclear card to address all of its internal and external issues, including domestic instability, isolation, poor economy and the normalization of ties with the U.S. and South Korea, and so forth." Taking a cautious stance on the implications of the Iranian deal for North Korea, analysts said it was inappropriate to compare North Korea and Iran, given the different status of their nuclear weapons technology and their participation in the global non-proliferation regime. Iran is still a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Chang Yong-seok, a senior analyst at Seoul National University's Institute for Peace and Unification Studies, expressed doubts over the speculation that after the deal with Iran, the U.S. could pay more attention to Pyongyang. "I am rather cautious about whether the U.S. would move in the near future to address the North Korean issue, as there would be many follow-up measures to do to implement the Iran deal including its talks with the Congress," he said. "Plus ... when there is no guarantee that there would be progress to be made in negotiations with the North, which sticks to its nuclear weapons program and calls itself a nuclear power, Washington may not want to spend much time or put policy efforts into the issue." After all, Seoul will have a critical role to play in bringing Pyongyang to the negotiating table and seeking a resolution to the nuclear issue, particularly when Washington faces a domestic political situation which is unfavorable to tackling the North Korean nuclear issue, analysts said. "North Korea sticks to its nuclear program for its regime and national survival. So, Seoul needs to find a way to assure the North that denuclearization would not endanger its regime, and that it is not pursuing any regime instability or unification by forcibly absorbing the North," a North Korea expert said. "Of course, the critical thing for Seoul is to gain U.S. support for its North Korea policy, particularly, there is growing strategic distrust from the U.S. due to its policy to strengthen its strategic partnership with China." (Song Sang-ho, "Iran Deal Magnifies N.K.'s Isolation," *Korea Herald*, July 15, 2015) U.S. analysts have said that North Korea stands low in the U.S. priority list and that the Obama administration has little interest in resuming nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang as it has been preoccupied with the Iranian nuclear issue. The Iran deal "will almost certainly embroil the Obama administration in a domestic political debate over its provisions and implementation," said Joel Wit, editor of the website *38 North*, sponsored by the U.S.-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. "And given all the other problems the administration is facing abroad, the chances of the U.S. making a concerted effort to restart nuclear negotiations remain small. To be fair, I don't think North Korea is interested in such talks since its policies have been successful in building up its nuclear arsenal while moving forward with some economic improvements," he said. Ken Gause, a North Korea expert at CNA Corp., agreed that chances of a breakthrough are low. "While the deal will free up time for the U.S. to focus on North Korea, which it might or might not do, I don't think it will lead to a breakthrough on the six-party talks," he said. "North Korea's calculus will not be impacted by the Iran deal." Jonathan Pollack, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said the two issues are fundamentally different as the North has an ongoing weapons program and has withdrawn from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, whereas Iran agreed to meaningful constraints on even the possibilities of a weapons

option. "I don't anticipate any major implications for North Korea's nuclear program," he said. "Barring profound change in DPRK thinking and strategy, the impasse will remain undiminished. Nor do I envision any significant changes in U.S. policy toward North Korea." Douglas Paal, vice president and director of the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, also noted that for Iran, its nuclear program was "an option, not a prerequisite for the regime's survival" but Pyongyang believes its weapons capabilities are vital to regime survival. "So the two situations are not analogous," he said. Richard Bush, a senior researcher at Brookings, said he sees no implications on the North Korean issue. "Iran is not as far along as North Korea," he said, adding that Tehran was willing to place significant limitations on its nuclear program in return for economic benefits while Pyongyang is unwilling to do so. "So Iran's present won't be North Korea's future." (Yonhap, "Iran Deal Unlikely to Have Implications on N. Korean Standoff: U.S. Experts," *Korea Herald*, July 15, 2015)

Japan's ruling bloc rammed two security bills through a special committee of the Lower House – amid a chorus of yelling opposition lawmakers – clearing a critical step toward the enactment of legislation that would expand the scope of Self-Defense Forces' missions overseas. Opposition lawmakers mobbed committee chairman Hamada Yasukazu of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and tried to halt the voting procedure. But amid the clamor, ruling lawmakers stood up to show their support for the bills, and Hamada declared that the legislation was passed. The bills would lift a number of restrictions on the SDF's operations, including a ban on exercising the right of collective self-defense, or the right for a country to use force to aid an ally under attack even when not under attack itself. Article 9 of the pacifist postwar Constitution was long considered to prohibit exercising the right. The Abe administration amended the government's official interpretation of the text, and then submitted the security bills to the Diet, but many experts have argued the reinterpretation is unconstitutional. The bills are now expected to clear the lower chamber's plenary session tomorrow and to be sent immediately to the Upper House. That would leave more than 60 days before the current Diet session ends on Sept. 27, a period of time that all but guarantees enactment. If the Upper House fails to vote on a bill within 60 days of its passage by the lower chamber, it can be sent back to the Lower House and enacted there if more than two-thirds of attending members of the lower chamber agree. The ruling camp of the LDP and Komeito currently holds a more than two-thirds majority in the Lower House, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe appears determined to enact the bills by the end of the current Diet session. Today's row at the Diet, however, may mark a turning point for the Abe administration. It enjoyed generally strong opinion polls following its inauguration in December 2012, but surveys show a majority of voters oppose the enactment of the security bills and that support is dwindling. A survey by *Asahi Shimbun*, conducted July 11-12, found a 42 percent disapproval rate for the Cabinet. The figure is significant because it exceeds the approval rating for the first time since November. Senior officials apparently fear the planned reactivation of the Sendai reactor in Kagoshima Prefecture could further eat away at the Cabinet's ratings. Kyushu Electric Power Co. plans to restart the Sendai reactor as early as Aug. 10, making it the first reactor to be reactivated on a long-term basis following the triple meltdown at Tepco's Fukushima No. 1 plant in 2011. The Cabinet has long pushed for reactivation of the nuclear reactors halted in the wake of the nuclear disaster. On Wednesday, the three largest

opposition parties – the Democratic Party of Japan, Ishin no To (Japan Innovation Party) and the Japanese Communist Party – opposed the ruling camp’s proposal to have a vote on the government-sponsored security bills. (Yoshida Reiji and Aoki Mizuho, “Amid Angry Scenes, Ruling Parties Force Security Bills through Lower House Committee,” *Japan Times*, July 15, 2015)

7/16/15

A top American diplomat urged North Korea to learn from the landmark Iranian nuclear deal, negotiate away its nuclear programs and enjoy the benefits of denuclearization. “The one thing I will say, and I would say to the North Koreans, is that this agreement demonstrates that one can come out of isolation, one can come out from under sanctions, one can become part of the world community or have the potential to become part of the world community and end isolation, and do so in a peaceful way,” Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman said at a briefing. “It perhaps might give North Korea second thoughts about the very dangerous path that it is currently pursuing,” she said. “I still think that the work that we are doing with partners in the region to try to move forward in a united front is critical,” she said when asked whether she believes the long-stalled six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue are still worthwhile. The Iran deal “demonstrates multilateral diplomacy can work and that United Nations actions have meaning if done in the right way and pursued in the right way and used as leverage in the right way,” she said. (Yonhap, “U.S. Urges N. Korea to Learn from Iranian Deal,” *North Korea Newsletter*, 372, July 23, 2015)

7/17/15

Multiple rounds of negotiations between the two Koreas on wages and other issues involving the Kaesong Industrial Complex collapsed early this morning after North Korea’s envoys stormed off. Yesterday and today, the joint committee managing the industrial complex held its first meeting in 13 months, and the two sides met for five sessions through both days. North Korean chief envoy Pak Chol-su angrily left the meeting, saying the committee is completely useless and that he would never come back to negotiate. “We regret that we could not reach any agreement as North Korea did not sincerely engage in the issues that would eventually lead to development of the complex,” said South Korean head envoy Lee Sang-min after the last session. “But it is still meaningful that the joint committee of the two Koreas shared opinions on current issues.” The key topic in the meetings was wages for North Korean workers at the complex. Last November, the North unilaterally announced it was revising 13 items in the operational regulations, including abolishing a cap on wage increases. The regime said it was going to raise the monthly minimum wage by 5.18 percent, from \$70.35 to \$74. The cap on wage increases was five percent annually. South Korea objected to the North’s decision. The Ministry of Unification blamed the North for maintaining an inflexible posture on the issues. “It’s meaningful that we had talks after a long time, but North Korea needs to work more for development of the complex,” said ministry spokesperson Jeong Joon-hee on Friday. “We’ve been flexible enough and said that we could accept a 5.18 percent wage increase even though both sides previously agreed on five percent.”

“But we also suggested that we could accept the offer if the North agrees on other issues,” Jeong continued, “such as wage system reform, communications and customs and improving the working environment at the complex.” The ministry said it was not taking the comments of Pak, the North’s chief envoy, seriously. “Pak knows that they

need the committee for the complex and its global competitiveness," spokesperson Jeong said. "He may have said something to vent his anger, but we don't assume it's the basic posture of North Korea on the committee. The next meeting will be held naturally when the atmosphere allows." (Kim Bong-moon, "North Envoys Sotrm out of Kaesong Talks," *JoongAng Ilbo*, July 17, 2015)

South Korea's Defense Ministry invited North Korea's vice minister-level officials to attend its annual high-level security forum, slated for September, setting the stage for cross-border defense dialogue. The invitation came the day after the two sides failed to compromise over the wages of North Koreans working in the joint industrial complex in Kaesong and other issues concerning the complex at their first meeting in more than a year. "Via the western military communication line, we have sent a message to the North's Ministry of the People's Armed Forces to invite its vice minister-level officials to the Seoul Defense Dialogue," a senior official at Seoul's Defense Ministry told reporters. "Should the North accept our invitation, there could be a bilateral meeting on its sidelines. We hope that the North will join our efforts to promote understanding and trust among nations in the Asia-Pacific region through this forum." (Song Sang-ho, "Seoul Invites N.K. to September Security Forum," *Korea Herald*, July 17, 2015)

The Bank of (South) Korea unveiled the North Korean economic growth rate, noting that its gross domestic product increased 1 percent in 2014 from the previous year. The North's mining industry grew by 1.6 percent, and manufacturing showed 0.8 percent of growth due mainly to increasing production of textiles and shoes. The service industry, including restaurants, accommodation, transportation and communication showed 1.3 percent growth. The overall structure of the industry has changed slightly. Agriculture and fisheries accounted for 21.8 percent in 2014 and 22.4 percent in 2013. Service has increased to 31.3 percent from 30.0 percent in 2013 and 29.4 percent in 2012. "The increase in the service industry is a coherent trend according to the marketization of North Korea. However, stagnant agriculture and fisheries is short-term change, partly due to drought from last year, which is too early to define it as a transition in industry," Lee Seok-ki, senior researcher of Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade told *NK News*. Weather affected electric power supply as well. Overall power supply has decreased by 2.8 percent, mainly due to the decrease in hydro power. "Last year, hydro power plants couldn't operate well because of frozen water, and the drought made it difficult to operate them in spring," Lee said. Building construction led the growth in the construction industry, even though the construction on roads and power plants has been stagnant. "This means construction by individuals and institutions has increased, compared to construction by government," Jung Eun-lee, professor at Kyungsang University told *NK News*. Jung said that this speedy manner is possible thanks to investment from the *donju* (wealthy class). "It used to take the state five to 10 years to complete one building," Jung said. "This accelerated construction indicates that the *donju* class can get construction material and labor force quickly." Following this change, Jung said the quality of apartments has improved. "More construction materials are imported from China, which is better than North Korean ones, and these days apartments equipped with

refurbished interior design are sold." (Choi Ha-young, "N. Korea's Economy Evolving," *NKNews*, July 17, 2015)

7/18/15

The U.S. recently conducted the first test flight of a bomber carrying new type nuclear bomb B61-12. It was reported that beside the test conducted under the supervision of the U.S. Nuclear Security Agency and its Air Force, two more tests are expected within this year. The U.S. squandered a stupendous amount of funds every year for implementing its plan for modernizing nuclear weapons and is contemplating spending one trillion U.S. dollars for modernizing land-based missiles, SLBM and long-range bombers. The increased spurs put by the U.S. to the modernization of nuclear force are quite contrary to its talk about building "a world without nuclear weapons." (KCNA, "KCNA Denounces U.S. for Conducting First Test Flight of Bomber Carrying New Type Nuclear Bomb," July 18, 2015)

The approval rating for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo plunged by 9.7 percentage points from June to 37.7 percent, the lowest since he returned to power in December 2012, as a majority of the public objected to the ruling camp ramming controversial security bills through the lower house, a Kyodo News poll showed. The disapproval rating rose to 51.6 percent from 43.0 percent last month, surpassing the approval rating. In the telephone survey conducted yesterday and today, 73.3 percent of respondents said they do not support the way the security bills were passed, while 21.4 percent expressed support. The ruling coalition on July 16 pushed the bills through the Lower House despite strong objections by opposition parties, with many lawmakers from the camp boycotting the vote in protest. The move also prompted demonstrations in Tokyo and elsewhere throughout the country. The bills would allow Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defense – or coming to the aid of the United States and other friendly nations under armed attack, even if Japan itself is not attacked. This represents a major shift in the country's postwar security policy. The poll also captured public unhappiness over the Abe government's explanation of the legislation, with 82.9 percent calling it insufficient. That compared with just 13.1 percent who said the explanation was sufficient. More than half of the respondents, 56.6 percent, said they believe the bills violate the war-renouncing Constitution, while 24.4 percent said the legislation does not. A total of 68.2 percent voiced opposition to the enactment of the legislation in the current Diet session, which runs through late September, up 5.1 points from the previous survey, while 24.6 percent said they support the enactment. Those backing the security legislation reached 27.5 percent, compared with 61.5 percent who are opposed to it. (Kyodo, "Abe Cabinet Support Level Plunges after Security Bills Rammed through," *Japan Times*, July 18, 2015)

7/21/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman: "The U.S. is talking this and that over the nuclear issue of the DPRK in the wake of the conclusion of the agreement on the nuclear issue of Iran. A spokesperson of the U.S. Department of State said on July 14 that "Washington is ready for dialogue with Pyongyang if discussion is made on the nuclear issue of north Korea and it helps put it on a concrete and full-fledge stage of nuclear disarmament." A U.S. undersecretary of State uttered on July 16 that it was his hope that the conclusion of the agreement with Iran would help the DPRK rethink of its nuclear issue. Iran's nuclear agreement is the achievement made by its protracted

efforts to have its independent right to nuclear activities recognized and sanctions lifted. But the situation of the DPRK is quite different from it. **The DPRK is the nuclear weapons state both in name and reality** and it has interests as a nuclear weapons state. **The DPRK is not interested at all in the dialogue to discuss the issue of making it freeze or dismantle its nukes unilaterally first.** The nuclear deterrence of the DPRK is not a plaything to be put on the negotiating table as it is the essential means to protect its sovereignty and vital rights from the U.S. nuclear threat and hostile policy which have lasted for more than half a century. It is illogical to compare Iran's nuclear agreement with the situation of the DPRK which is exposed to constant provocative military hostile acts and the biggest nuclear threat of the U.S. including its ceaseless large-scale joint military exercises. **The DPRK remains unchanged in the mission of its nuclear force as long as the U.S. continues pursuing its hostile policy toward the former.**" (KCNA, "FM Spokesman Slams U.S. for Deliberately Linking Negotiations with Iran over Nuclear Issue with DPRK," July 21, 2015)

7/22/15

North Korea has almost completed modifications to its long-range rocket launch facility near the border with China, government sources here said. A new 67-meter-tall gantry has been spotted in the Dongchang-ri site, which the North calls the Sohae Satellite Launching Station, a source said apparently on the basis of satellite imagery. "We believe that the North will use the extended gantry in Dongchang-ri to fire a long-range missile longer than the Unha-3," the source said. "We think (the North) will carry out a provocation around the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party on Oct. 10." South Korea's Defense Minister Han Min-koo earlier said the North is expected to take "strategically provocative action" around the anniversary. "Our military is closely watching and monitoring movements related to North Korea's missile launches, including the construction activity at the Dongchang-ri missile launch site," Defense Ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said. The North began work in late 2013 on the new structure. Military and intelligence officials said they believe the upgraded facility can be used for the launch of long-range missiles twice the size of the 30-meter-long Unha-3, which put a satellite into orbit in December 2012. The extended gantry appears capable of firing long-range rockets with a range of more than 13,000 kilometers, they said. North Korea is banned under U.N. Security Council resolutions from carrying out any launch using ballistic missile technology. It has defied the resolutions, however, insisting on its right to use the technology for scientific purposes. "We think there is credibility in the intelligence that (North Korean leader) Kim Jong-un has ordered the launch of a satellite to mark the Workers' Party anniversary," said another government source, also requesting anonymity. "We have detected signs of what appears to be the manufacturing of a long-range rocket at an arms factory near Pyongyang." (Yonhap, "N. Korea Upgrades Long-Range Missile Launch Facility," July 22, 2015) Brown and Liu: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that construction begun in spring 2015 after the earlier modification of the Sohae gantry for space launch vehicles (SLVs) has been completed. It appears that the SLV stages and payload can be prepared horizontally in a new launch support building at the end of the pad, then transferred to a movable support structure that is several stories high, where they will be erected vertically, checked out and finally moved to the launch tower. Imagery of the Sohae engine test stand also indicates that preparations were underway as of July 21, including the presence of a moveable crane and probable

ground support equipment, for an engine test in the near-term. A subsequent unconfirmed Yonhap report on July 24 stated that a test had taken place. Construction of a shelter covering the Sohae rail spur where SLV stages and associated equipment are delivered from offsite has also been completed. The shelter would prevent the observation of rail activity at this location, and make it more difficult to observe the arrival of missile-related railcars and shipping containers by satellite imagery. Despite these developments and statements by the ROK Ministry of Defense that Pyongyang is likely to conduct a "strategic provocation" around the time of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea, there are still no indications at Sohae that test preparations are underway to support a long-range SLV launch. There is also no public evidence to suggest that a decision has been made by the leadership in Pyongyang to move forward with a launch. In the coming weeks, if preparations are indeed underway, we would expect to see other on-the-ground indications at Sohae including increased rail activity and the possible arrival of missile related railcars, activity at facilities associated with rocket assembly, the filling of oxidizer and fuel storage tanks associated with the launch pad, activity at range radars intended to track a launch and possibly the arrival of VIPs to observe a launch." (Tim Brown and Jack Liu, "North Korea: Sohae Facility Ready to Support Future SLV Launch; Preparations for Engine Testing Identified," *38North*, July 18, 2015)

7/23/15

The United States imposed sanctions on a Singapore-based shipping company and its president, accusing them of providing support for North Korea's illicit imports of arms and related materials. The Treasury Department said Senat Shipping Company provided extensive support to the North's Ocean Maritime Management Company that has already been under sanctions for attempting to import a concealed shipment of arms and related materials to the communist nation. The department also sanctioned Senat's president, Leonard Lai, for supporting the North Korean firm. "Arms shipments transported by OMMC serve as a key resource for North Korea's ongoing proliferation activities. Sales from these shipments contribute to North Korea's other illicit programs," Acting Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Adam J. Szubin said in a statement. "We are working to make it as challenging as possible for North Korea to continue its unlawful behavior by actively targeting anyone or any business that supports these illicit arms transfers," he said. The sanctions call for freezing "any property or interests in property of the designated persons that are or come within U.S. jurisdiction." In addition, transactions by Americans or people within the U.S. involving the property of designated people, including the identified vessel, are prohibited under the measures. (Yonhap, "U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Singapore-Based Firm," *Korea Herald*, July 24, 2015)

Mugford: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that North Korea's 5 MWe Plutonium Production Reactor may not be operating or is only functioning at low power levels. The presence of what is likely a vehicle to transport carbon dioxide used in the reactor's cooling system may indicate that maintenance activities are underway. The reactor appears to have been operating only sporadically since fall 2014 perhaps because the facility is aging. Construction that began in late spring 2015 continues at the incomplete Experimental Light Water Reactor (ELWR). Imagery from July 2 shows that the construction adjacent to the reactor hall can now be identified as a transformer

yard to connect the electricity producing reactor to the grid. The yard appears to be complete but all the equipment is probably not yet installed. Once finished, the North Koreans will have taken another step towards beginning initial operation of the reactor. Work also continued at a rapid pace at the Uranium Enrichment complex at Yongbyon. The roof of the building that contains the probable hot cells is nearly externally complete, as is the large unidentified L-shaped building. ... Imagery from July 2 indicates that the North Koreans have finished the initial construction of the transformer yard at the ELWR that will connect the electricity-producing reactor to the grid. The large mobile crane spotted in imagery from late May has now departed. The yard extends west from the southwest end of the reactor building and covers an area approximately 25 meters long and 18 meters wide. The access pathways to each equipment area are clearly defined, and probably made of concrete or white rock. While the yard appears to be complete, all the equipment probably has not been installed. ... Construction in the Uranium Enrichment Facility is proceeding rapidly. In the seven weeks since last imaged, the North Koreans have completed more than 75 percent of the roof of a large new building. Previous analysis identified what appeared to be five probable hot cells for handling nuclear material in the building. That conclusion was consistent with their shape and the fact that the cells have a typically large foundation. **Nevertheless, the July 2 imagery showing the east facing outside wall of the cells at least raises the possibility that these cells may instead be used to assemble or store conventional high explosive components of a nuclear weapon.** The wall's five evenly spaced panels that are a different tone and texture than the rest of the wall are probably a decorative or imagery anomaly. However, **if there is a difference in the construction of the outside walls of the cells, they could be blow-out panels. Found on high explosive (HE) assembly and storage buildings to reduce the level of damage if an HE assembly explodes during assembly or storage, a blow-out panel directs most of the energy outside the structure, so adjacent cells are not damaged. The energy directed outside is deflected upward by a surrounding earthen berm. A key consideration will be whether the North Koreans construct such a berm around the area intended to deflect the explosion.** Whether that is possible remains unclear since the rear of the building is very close to the adjacent L-shaped structure, leaving little room for a berm. The L-shaped building has a fixture for a probable stack on the eastern end of the roof, indicating an operational structure. There are also two cylindrical mounted tanks outside the south end of the building, and a third tank on the ground, perhaps to be placed inside the structure. The stack and tanks are clues to the purpose of this building, but not sufficient to identify how it will be used." (William Mugford, "North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Facility: Sporadic Operations at the 5 MWe Reactor But Construction Elsewhere Moves Forward," *38North*, July 24, 2015)

7/25/15

KPA Panmunjom mission spokesman's statement "denounced the south Korean puppet warmongers for staging frantic shelling drills in the areas of Paekryong and Yonphyong Islands every day as part of desperate military provocations against the DPRK: What matters is that the **U.S. is behind all these military provocations.** ... On July 20, too, U.S. imperialist aggressor forces brought with them loudspeakers and blared near the Military Demarcation Line in Panmunjom that the drills being staged by the puppet forces in waters southwest of the West Sea, a hot spot, are "regular ones"

and they are "not related to the situation at all". They did this as a very shameless "prior notice." On the day of provocative shelling they brought riff-raffs of an "international visiting group" to the scene of provocation under the pretext of "confirming" the observation of the armistice agreement, fanning up hysteria of the puppet warmongers. The U.S. is hurling the puppet forces into ceaseless arms buildup and military provocations in the above-said waters in a sinister bid to preserve the illegal "northern limit line", to begin with. According to the conspiratorial plan to preserve the "northern limit line" in recent years, the U.S. is hurling the puppet forces and human scum into waters southwest of the West Sea including Paekryong Island to scatter leaflets, deliberately straining the situation there. It is none other than the U.S. which frequently infiltrated the puppet warships and fishing boats into the territorial waters of the DPRK side under the pretext of "intercepting illegal fishing boats" and it is again the U.S. which often let manned and unmanned aircraft fly in the sky above those sensitive waters. Lurking behind these military provocations is a foolish intention to preserve the waning justification for keeping the "UN Command." **The U.S. should never forget even a moment that its bases of provocations are within the range of indiscriminate sighting strike of the KPA.** These reckless military provocations of the U.S. will only precipitate its doomsday." (KCNA, "U.S. Accused of Kicking off Reckless Military Provocations: Spokesman for KPA Panmunjom Mission," July 25, 2015)

7/27/15

After the Obama administration's groundbreaking nuclear deal with Iran, there have been calls to replicate that pact with North Korea, a rogue state that already has nuclear-weapons capability. But Kim Jong-un's regime has made it clear that it expects to be accepted as a nuclear power – saying this month it is "not interested" in an Iran-style deal. The Obama administration is instead focusing on human rights to further isolate North Korea, encouraged by the outbursts this approach has elicited from Kim's stubbornly recalcitrant regime – apparently because the accusations cast aspersions at the leader and his legitimacy. "There is a growing assumption that the North Koreans are not going to surrender their nukes," Andrei Lankov, a North Korea expert based in Seoul, said after recent meetings with officials in Washington. Human rights are Washington's "next political infatuation," he said. This is likely to increase as a U.N. committee reports back in October on a resolution condemning North Korea's human rights violations and seeking to refer its leaders to the International Criminal Court. Although such a resolution would be certain to be vetoed in the U.N. Security Council by China and probably Russia, American officials say that simply keeping the issue alive and continuing the drumbeat of criticism against the regime has more of an impact than forcing the resolution to a vote. "I think this focus on human rights is beginning to get their attention," a senior State Department official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity under ground rules imposed by the department. "We've been able to push on [the Commission of Inquiry report], and we are continuing to keep these efforts going." Pyongyang's reactions to the human rights push have been similar to its visceral reaction to American financial sanctions in 2005, said William Newcomb, a former Treasury official who served on a special U.N. panel of experts on sanctions against North Korea. By sanctioning Banco Delta Asia, a small bank based in Macau that handled North Korean money, the United States effectively cut off North Korea's access to the international financial system. That brought Pyongyang back to the nuclear negotiating table. "I perceive their response as being similar to how they

reacted once they realized what had been done to them via BDA – and that took a while to sink in,” Newcomb said. “Even then, they really didn’t understand how BDA could be leveraged to have lasting negative consequences on their access to the international finance system. “Exposing their horrible human rights record similarly puts them on the defensive, and, unlike with nukes, they have no counterargument to justify their actions that anyone could buy,” he said. (Anna Fifield, “U.S. Planning to Press Harder against North Korea on Human Rights,” *Washington Post*, July 27, 2015)

Chinese President Xi Jinping made a one-day visit to the northeastern city of Shenyang near the border with North Korea in a trip that could be seen as a message of willingness to improve relations with Pyongyang, diplomatic sources said. Xi stressed the importance of promoting industrial bases in the northeastern region, according to local businessmen and diplomatic sources. Xi also called for greater efforts to open up the province of Liaoning, they said. The visit came just nine days after Xi traveled to the nearby province of Jilin on July 16-18, a trip seen as leaving open the possibility of economic cooperation with North Korea. Such successive visits to the northeast region near the North are considered unusual, and some observers interpret these trips as a message of his willingness to mend fences with Pyongyang. (Yonhap, “Chinese President Visits Shenyang near N. Korean Border,” July 28, 2015)

Seiler: “I just finished some very valuable meetings with my counterparts in the Republic of Korea government to include Director General Kim Gunn, and of course his boss and the lead senior representative for this issue in the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Hwang Joon-kook. It’s particularly auspicious to come here on July 27th, the anniversary of the Armistice Agreement ... **Q:** Is there any outlook for dialogue with the North Korean delegation on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum next month? **SEILER:** You know, we have long been open to dialogue with the DPRK. And we have made quite clear to the DPRK that we are willing to engage in discussions on a range of issues. I can’t speak to the possibilities for any contacts in the near future. Unfortunately we are in this protracted period where the DPRK has been reluctant to engage in dialogue with us. I know that’s been equally frustrating for the Republic of Korea as you’ve worked so hard to try to get inter-Korean dialogue going. It’s been frustrating for the other Six-Party Talks members, who sought to bring the DPRK back to meaningful negotiations. ... **Q:** Do you think there is a fresh momentum to deal with the North Korean issue because of the Iran nuclear deal? **SEILER:** I think that is a question that is ultimately best directed towards the DPRK. Again, the Iran deal demonstrates the value and the possibilities that negotiations bring. It demonstrates again our willingness when we have a willing counterpart. It demonstrates our flexibility when the DPRK makes the decision that it wants to choose a different path. So that question is really one for Pyongyang more than it is for us, because we have always stood ready to engage in dialogue on this issue. **Q:** Jay Kwaak, *Wall Street Journal*. Are you considering any fresh incentives or measures of pressure on North Korea in order to bring them back to dialogue? **SEILER:** Well, I don’t really want to get into the details of our diplomacy. I would continue to say that **we have had a two-track approach that seeks negotiations as possible and pressure as necessary.** Pressure is a key component, not only of convincing the leadership of the DPRK of the need to return to negotiations but also to do what we can as an international

community to impede the growth of the DPRK program, to inflict a cost for its unwillingness to negotiate. And indeed to create the conditions necessary for resumed authentic and credible negotiations. I think what you will find is a consistency to our approach, a consistency to our policy, that includes a consistency to our openness, to dialogue as the opportunities present themselves, and a consistency to take the measures that we find to be important to counter the DPRK and its nuclear program.

Q: What kind of efforts does the US government and Korean government want from the Chinese side and what will be the main subject for your trip to China? **SEILER:** I look forward to my visit to Beijing. I'll be meeting with my new counterpart there. China, of course, was a close partner in our efforts towards concluding the agreement with Iran. China's been a long time partner as we come upon the 10th anniversary of the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement. As the host of the Six-Party Talks. As a country with a unique relationship with the DPRK. So, we will continue to have the same type of discussions that we've had with the government of China to date. They've been a good partner until now and we will continue to explore the lessons learned, as it were, from our experience in negotiations on the Iran deal. And see what we can do to apply those lessons to bring the DPRK back to the negotiating table." (DoS, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks Sydney Seiler, Remarks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Seoul, July 27, 2015)

North Korea is not interested in reopening talks with the United States on freezing or dismantling its nuclear program "unilaterally first," Ji Jae-ryong, ambassador to China said, dashing hopes that Pyongyang may follow the path of Iran in dealing with its nuclear ambition. Ji also declined to comment on China's role in resolving the North's nuclear issue, apparently reflecting strained political ties between the allies. "On the question related to the bilateral relationship between the DPRK and China, I have no more information so far," Ji said. "We are not interested at all in dialogue to discuss the issue of freezing or dismantling our nukes unilaterally first," Ji told about 50 journalists from international media organizations in a rare press conference at the North Korean Embassy in Beijing. "The nuclear deterrence of the DPRK is not a plaything to be put on the negotiating table," Ji said. His remarks were translated into English by an interpreter. Ji said at the conference that Iran's nuclear agreement is an achievement made by "protracted efforts to have its independent right for nuclear activity." "But, the situation of the DPRK is quite different from that of Iran. The DPRK is a nuclear weapons state both in name and in reality," he continued. "And it has an interest as a nuclear weapons state." Wearing a dark-blue suit, the North Korean ambassador read out a prepared statement before answering three short questions. Ji's statement called for South Korea and the U.S. to halt their annual joint military drills on the Korean Peninsula in the coming weeks, while blaming Washington's "hostile policy" toward North Korea for the long-running impasse over the North's nuclear program. "We have the power to cope with any kinds of war methods of the U.S. imperialists and have the strong power to restrain the provocative nuclear war acts of the U.S.," Ji said. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Says No Interest in Talks on Freezing Its Nuclear Program 'Unilaterally First,'" July 28, 2015)

The South Korean government has decided to stop providing large-scale aid to North Korea annually, which often included as much as 400,000 tons of rice and 300,000 tons

of fertilizer. Instead, it plans to recalibrate its North Korean aid efforts to individual development and cooperation projects spearheaded by the private sector in the areas of public health, agriculture and stockbreeding, and forestry. "We will overhaul the current budget system for the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund, moving from organization-based aid by the government, the private sector, and international organizations to project-based aid starting with the 2016 budget," a Ministry of Unification official said. This will end budget allocations for food aid and fertilizer aid to North Korea, which are classified as government assistance. In the future, budget allocations will be made in the categories of young children and public health, agriculture and stockbreeding, and forestry. The Ministry is moving to adopt the model of the Ace Gyeongam Foundation, which provided 15 tons of fertilizer assistance in an agriculture cooperation project in North Hwanghae Province last April. Between 1995 and 2007, South Korea provided a total of 2.03 trillion won (US\$1.74 billion) worth of rice (2.66 million tons) and fertilizer (2.55 million tons) to North Korea. This accounted for 62% of the 3.28 trillion won of aid given to North Korea over this period. But when Lee Myung-bak was elected president in 2008, large shipments of rice and fertilizer were discontinued in response to a controversy about giving unconditional aid to North Korea. Now the government intends to write that policy into the system, starting with the budget allocation for the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund. "We took into account the fact that North Korea, which is no longer dealing with an extreme food shortage, is more interested in development projects than in material assistance," the Ministry of Unification official said. But experts are concerned that the government is moving to discontinue the food and fertilizer assistance without thoroughly considering its full ramifications in order to avoid criticism from conservatives about unilateral aid to North Korea. "Large-scale rice and fertilizer assistance has given North Korea an incentive to engage in high-level talks and reunions for divided families. It is short-sighted to end this assistance when inter-Korean relations are already strained. It is a rash move to announce the end of government-level aid while North Korea still faces a food shortage," said Kang Yeong-sik, secretary general of the Korean Sharing Movement. "North and South Korea need to sit down at the table to explore ways to lift the May 24 Measures and to provide assistance for the drought," said Kim Chang-soo, director of research at the Korea National Strategy Institute. (Kim Ji-hoon, "S. Korea Moving away from Large-Scale Aid to North Korea," *Hankyore*, July 28, 2015)

7/28/15 Eight officials from the state-run Korea Forest Research Institute and Hyundai Asan will be allowed to visit the North starting tomorrow for three days to look into what went wrong with the pine trees at Mount Kumgang on the North's east coast, according to the Unification Ministry. "Some pine trees at the mountain withered and turned yellow," a ministry official said. "A recent drought that hit the North may be blamed for that, but more probing is needed." The North has proposed for a joint survey on the pine trees at Mount Kumgang, which sits on the east coast near the heavily fortified inter-Korean border. (Yonhap, "S. Korean Forestry Experts to Visit N. Korea This Week," July 28, 2015)

7/30/15 DPRK FoMin spokesman's "answer to the question raised by KCNA as regards the fact that the U.S. is working hard to shift the blame for the stalled dialogue over the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula on to the DPRK at any cost: Visiting south Korea and its

surrounding countries from July 25, the special envoy for the six-party talks of the U.S. State of Department is misleading the public opinion to give impression that the dialogue has not been resumed due to the DPRK, asserting that the U.S. is keeping the door of dialogue open but the DPRK is reluctant to come out for dialogue and if the DPRK makes a decision to go other way, the U.S. would flexibly react to it. As can be judged by anyone with reason, the escalated tension without dialogue persists on the Korean peninsula due to the U.S. hostile policy towards the DPRK, the ceaseless joint military maneuvers for aggression, its military expression, in particular. **If the U.S., not the DPRK, stops such hostile acts as joint military maneuvers and makes a decision to go other way, it will be possible to resume dialogue and settle many issues.** It is the height of shamelessness and hypocrisy that the U.S. is trumpeting about "will for dialogue" and "flexibility" while resorting to military maneuvers ceaselessly. This is nothing but a petty trick to shift the blame for the stalled dialogue on to the DPRK in a bid to tide over the crisis when the public in the U.S. is becoming increasingly vocal blaming the Obama administration's failed policy toward the DPRK. The evil cycle of tension will persist and dialogue will not be held before the U.S. shows its much-touted sincere "will for dialogue" by stopping the joint military maneuvers." (KCNA, "FM Spokesman Urges U.S. to Show Its Sincere 'Will for Dialogue,'" July 30, 2015)

7/31/15

The government has asked the United States to help rescue Japanese citizens abducted by North Korean agents decades ago in the event of a crisis on the Korean Peninsula, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo said. "Assuming a situation in which the United States would be capable of rescuing the abduction victims, we're offering information about the victims and seeking assurances of their safety," Abe said Thursday at a meeting of the Upper House special committee on the security bills aimed at allowing Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defense. (Jiji, "Japan Has Asked U.S. to Rescue Abductees If a Crisis Breaks Out," *Japan Times*, July 31, 2015)

North Korea's refusal to give up its nuclear weapons program is a sign Pyongyang is responding to the Iran nuclear deal with a strong countermeasure, analysts said. David Straub, associate director of the Korean Studies Program at Stanford University, told Voice of America the North Korean leadership was feeling the threat of becoming the sole rogue nation after the Iran nuclear settlement. The pressure on Pyongyang is showing in the statements North Korean diplomats recently made in Beijing and Moscow, according to Straub and other analysts. Straub said the diplomats' statements have a preemptive aim, and that they are trying to present North Korea as a victim of U.S. foreign policy, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported. Evans Revere, former principal deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, also said North Korea is reacting to the Iran nuclear deal. Revere said North Korea intends to take part in any future negotiations as a nuclear weapons state, and that it would rule out denuclearization in favor of discussing a peace treaty with Washington, or disarmament on the Korean peninsula. On Tuesday, three Korean War veterans in Congress introduced a peace treaty calling for a formal end of the Korean War, according to Rep. B. Rangel's, D-N.Y., office. Revere, however, said sanctions must be strengthened and North Korea must be further isolated in order to push Pyongyang into talks. The added pressure would bring about steps toward denuclearization,

Straub said in a separate statement to VOA. But Frank Jannuzi of the Mansfield Foundation said North Korea has linked its nuclear program to its very survival for 30 years, and that it would be difficult for the United States to persuade Pyongyang to give up its weapons. (Elizabeth Shim, "U.S. Needs to Step up Pressure on North Korea, Analysts Say," UPI, July 31, 2015)

8/1/15 Satellite imagery indicates that North Korea has completed upgrades to a rocket launch pad in the country's northwest and is proceeding with work to install a cover over it, diplomatic sources familiar with the developments said. U.S. intelligence agencies, believe the cover at the launch site in Tongchang-ri, North Pyongan province, is an attempt to evade surveillance by spy satellites, the sources said. There are no indications that a rocket has been placed on the pad at the site, called the Sohae Satellite Launching Station. According to the diplomatic sources, the previous 50-meter-tall gantry at the site has been extended to 60 meters in height. Military and intelligence officials believe the facility is now capable of firing long-range missiles twice the size of the 30-meter-long Unha-3, which Pyongyang claims was used to put a satellite into orbit in December 2012. (Kyodo, "North Korea Installing Cover at Launch Site in Bid to Evade Surveillance," *Japan Times*, August 2, 2015)

8/2/15 North Korea has moved the entrances to the military's howitzer bunkers in the border area to a northward direction from the south, making it more difficult for South Korea and the U.S. to curb the howitzer attacks in a war situation, a government source said. "Changes have been detected in the shape of the bunkers for self-propelled guns in artillery units of the North's 4th Corps in Hwanghae Province," the source said. "Previously south-oriented doorways of the bunkers have been closed while new ones have been made facing a northward direction." (Yonhap, "N. Korea Shifts Entries of Border-Area Howitzer Bunkers Northward," August 2, 2015)

8/3/15 Bermudez: "For almost six decades, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) has pursued a nuclear program that has gradually developed in size, complexity and capabilities from a small scientific research effort into a comprehensive effort to produce nuclear weapons. At present, North Korea is estimated to possess an inventory of 10-16 nuclear weapons that could rapidly expand by 2020. As this nuclear program has evolved, the North Korean leadership and the Korean People's Army (KPA) have also gradually developed a nuclear strategy for deterrence that appears to have progressed from viewing these weapons as primarily political tools to deter an attack from the United States to operational strategic defensive weapons to inflict unacceptable losses upon attacking forces and assured retaliation, and possibly today, into viewing nuclear weapons as both strategic political weapons and for use in a range of strategic, operational and "battlefield" (i.e., tactical) situations during wartime. This evolving nuclear weapons strategy has implications for the United States, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), China, and Japan. Up until now, North Korea has been deterred by a complex set of political and military factors. Among these are US security commitments and the presence of US military forces in South Korea and Japan, the strength and capabilities of the South Korean government and armed forces, and the desires of both China and Russia to maintain the status quo in the region. However, the combination of a growing nuclear weapons inventory, a

developing ballistic missile force and a nuclear strategy that may be evolving into including options for limited use of these weapons, combined with a new, young and inexperienced leader, could heighten the fears that US extended deterrence will erode and increase the likelihood of greater instability in the region. At the outset, a brief caveat is in order regarding the analysis of North Korea in general and its nuclear weapons program and strategy specifically. Any research looking into these issues is faced with numerous imponderables owing in large measure to the closed and highly centralized nature of the North Korean political system; the nation's strategic, operational and tactical efforts at camouflage, concealment and deception; and the resulting absence of specific, reliable unclassified information. Hence, this discourse relies to a considerable extent on inferential evidence gleaned through prolonged study of North Korea's national security strategy and takes an overarching holistic view. ... [1950-60]While Kim Il Sung and the North Korean leadership were probably already aware of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the atomic "doomsday" weapon, in part through stories told by returning Koreans who survived the attack, the belief in the assured destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the lack of defense against them was significantly reinforced by US threats to employ these weapons to end the Korean War. These threats had the desired effect—an Armistice Agreement was reached—as well as a truly profound impact on the North Korean leadership's thinking that cannot be overstated. The danger that US nuclear weapons might be used against the North has been a central principle in its strategic thought and actions ever since. The nuclear threat resulted in practical steps. First, even before the signing of the Armistice Agreement the KPA began to address what was then called "ABC" (atomic, biological and chemical) weapons by reestablishing chemical defense units. These units were responsible for defensive preparations against a nuclear attack. During the immediate post-war years the KPA initiated a series of national level "Atomic Warfare" defensive exercises and subsequently established an "Atomic Weapons Training Center" near Kilchu to train division-sized units to conduct conventional operations (offensive and defensive) on an "atomic" battlefield. Second, Pyongyang began to lay the groundwork for the development of its own rudimentary nuclear scientific infrastructure. The Academy of Sciences expanded a program begun before the war that sent promising individuals to the Soviet Union to be trained as scientists and technicians in related fields. Some of these individuals would subsequently come back and play crucial roles in the North's nascent nuclear program. By the end of the war, the North had established a basic "atomic" research program at Hungnam. During the late 1950s, several nuclear cooperation agreements were signed with the Soviet Union and related curricula were established at Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek College of Science and Technology. Funds for these activities were allocated in the 1956-1961 5-Year Economic Plan. [1960-76]Frustrated by the North's inability to take advantage of civil unrest in South Korea during the 1960s, Kim Il Sung initially enunciated a strategic vision known as the "Four Military Lines" that called for the arming of the whole people, the fortification of the entire country, the training of soldiers as a cadre force and the modernization of arms. Kim subsequently expanded upon the mid-to-late 1960s, tensions on the peninsula escalated as the North oversaw an increasing level of aggression—guerilla warfare operations and assassination attempts in the South—as well as acts against the United States—the capture of the USS Pueblo in 1968 and the shooting down of an American

EC-121M reconnaissance aircraft in 1969. This escalation brought what the North Korean leadership perceived as new US nuclear threats and renewed fears from the Fatherland Liberation War. It ended with Kim's purge of the "Partisan Generals," one of the strongest political factions not completely under his control that oversaw these operations and also interfered in domestic affairs. Aside from eliminating the last major obstacle to Kim's complete control of North Korea, with the purge, KPA strategy and doctrine began to transition away from guerrilla warfare to combined operations employing both conventional and special operations forces. During this period, the North also continued to expand its nuclear research infrastructure through three steps:

- The program sending promising individuals to the USSR to be trained as scientists and technicians in related fields continued to grow, although the availability of sufficient numbers of fully qualified personnel would present a challenge throughout this period.
- Building upon previous experience, earlier agreements with the Soviet Union and funding from the first 7-Year Economic Plan (i.e., 1961-1967), the Academy of Sciences embarked upon what may be called first phase development of its nuclear program. In 1962, two atomic energy research centers were established at Pakchon and Yongbyon where the North's first nuclear research reactor and a 0.1 MWt critical facility for the production of medical and industrial isotopes as well as basic research were installed.
- The reorganization of the North's military-industrial infrastructure as well as the establishment of the Second Economic Committee and the Academy of Defense Sciences laid the organizational foundation for the research, design and production of nuclear weapons. These organizations faced significant challenges in rationalizing a diverse, inefficient and highly politicized weapons research, development and production system often at odds with itself. The continuing reconstruction of North Korea's industrial and agricultural capabilities, aside from allowing for the modernization and expansion of the KPA, including the domestic production of a large percentage of its weapons, also facilitated the development of a large chemical industry. By the end of the decade, it appears that the North had begun production of chemical weapons, a decision probably meant as a response to the threat of US nuclear weapons and the belief that these weapons could help deter such threats. Further manifestations of this concern over the US nuclear threat were the establishment of a systematic program for the construction of underground facilities and a new emphasis on operations on the chemical and nuclear battlefield in KPA training. The Soviet Union is also believed to have provided some assistance in advanced defensive nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) training and small quantities of related equipment. By the mid-1970s, the DPRK seems to have been well prepared for passive NBC defense while also possessing an offensive chemical warfare (CW) capability. Since the production of nuclear weapons was likely only an aspirational goal at this time, the development of any coherent strategy built on these weapons had not begun. However, the North viewed chemical weapons as a viable substitute that, in combination with an expanding and modernizing KPA, could successfully deter the use of nuclear weapons by the United States. [1976-89]

The transition in KPA strategy from guerrilla warfare to a focus on asymmetric warfare based on employing conventional and special operations forces continued, reinforced in part by lessons learned from the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War such as the utility of ballistic missiles and the effectiveness of massive use of artillery. It was also supported by the continued production of chemical weapons, the introduction of large numbers

of new artillery systems, the mechanization of the ground forces, the expansion in the size of the armed forces and the introduction of short-range Scud ballistic missiles. This expansion and modernization was facilitated during the mid-1980s by a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, which provided deliveries of modern weapon systems, training and other military and economic assistance. By the late 1970s, planning was well underway for the second phase development of the North's nuclear infrastructure that would take place through the 1980s. This phase included the construction of new reactors, a radiochemical separation plant, the establishment of additional research centers and a host of supporting developments. By the end of this period, the nuclear program had transitioned to the production of weapons-grade plutonium and the design of a weapon. **By the mid-1980s North Korea was believed to be well on its way to producing prototype first generation implosion designs, including for a missile warhead, as a prelude to the production of fissile material.** [?] Pyongyang's nuclear program entered a new phase at the end of that decade. Numbers of personnel sent overseas earlier to train in fields useful for developing a domestic nuclear program declined. The majority—many born during or immediately after the war and raised in a system that viewed the US as wanting to use nuclear weapons against the North—would now come out of domestic educational programs that continued to expand. Planning had also begun for a third phase of nuclear infrastructure development including construction of additional reactors and facilities (e.g., a 200 MWt reactor, waste storage facilities, etc.). Complementing this thinking was the acquisition of MiG-23 and MiG-29 aircraft, Scud B ballistic missiles, the establishment of a domestic ballistic missile production infrastructure and planning for longer-range ballistic missiles that supported KPA thinking about the need for nuclear weapon delivery systems. As Pyongyang's nuclear development program advanced and missile and aircraft delivery systems were acquired, the KPA initiated a systematic study of US, Soviet and Chinese nuclear warfare concepts and strategies. By 1989, a rudimentary deterrence strategy had been developed that focused on the political and diplomatic utility of nuclear weapons rather than as tools to fight a war. The view appears to be supported by Kim Il Sung's reported pronouncement during this period that nuclear weapons could not be used on the Korean peninsula due to its small size. In the minds of the North Korean leadership, the correctness of pursuing nuclear weapons as tools to enable room for political maneuvering was likely reinforced by the international political pressure brought to bear to compel them to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1985. Until the time when nuclear weapons would become available, it appears that the North Korean leadership still viewed chemical weapons and expanding conventional armed forces, combined with emerging asymmetric capabilities, as the primary means of deterring the threat of US nuclear weapons. [1989-Early 2000's] This period, the most tumultuous in North Korea since the Korean War, included the collapse of its Soviet ally, China's rapprochement with South Korea, the rapid US victory over Iraq in Operations Desert Storm/Desert Shield, the death of Kim Il Sung and a deteriorating economy as well as widespread famine. Under these circumstances, in 1994, the North sought to capitalize on the political and diplomatic utility of nuclear weapons by accepting significant limits on its fissile material production program in the 1994 US-North Korea Agreed Framework in return for better relations with the United States. While the Agreed Framework froze the North Korean plutonium production program and effectively disabled much of

Pyongyang's third phase nuclear infrastructure construction projects, it did not result in the elimination of the North's nuclear weapons ambitions or program. Despite the 1994 agreement, Pyongyang continued, at the very least, to hedge against the possible failure of that arrangement and to consider the possible role of nuclear weapons in its future defense strategy. Nuclear research and development programs continued, as did the development of ballistic missiles—although longer-range weapons were subject to an agreed test moratorium with the United States. While foreign personnel would occasionally provide lectures or training, the nuclear program now received sufficient numbers of personnel from indigenous educational programs. The notable exception was the relationship with Pakistan and AQ Khan, which was initiated during the early 1990s during a visit by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Pyongyang. By the end of the decade, that relationship would allow the North to move forward with a uranium enrichment program. Work on nuclear weapons design progressed, possibly to second-generation designs. Nuclear cooperation with Iran is believed to have also begun during this period although the level of cooperation and the effect it had upon the North Korean nuclear program is unclear. In the midst of these events, Pyongyang's thinking about nuclear strategy also evolved. Detailed study of Operation Desert Storm probably resulted in the conclusion that the North's chemical weapons did not hinder the US from soundly defeating that nation nor could they deter nuclear use on the peninsula. Rather, chemical weapons were now increasingly viewed as basic tools with which to fight a war. Only nuclear weapons were seen as serving to deter the US nuclear threat and as political tools to ensure the North's deserved political prestige on the international stage. KCNA would state that: "The bloody lesson of the war in Iraq for the world is that only when a country has physical deterrent forces and massive military deterrent forces that are capable of overwhelmingly defeating any attack by state-of-the-art weapons, can it prevent war and defend its independence and national security." The adoption of a deterrence strategy, based on the KPA's study of other countries' nuclear strategies as well as the Iraq experience emerged in the early 2000s. This was after the collapse of the 1994 Agreed Framework when the North may have achieved an emergency nuclear capability based on a handful of weapons and ballistic missile delivery systems, primarily the Nodong medium-range ballistic missile. (Ballistic missiles were also a key component in the North's evolving asymmetric warfare strategy that had been given a new impetus during the decade as famine and economic collapse resulted in a decline in conventional military strength and an increase in weapons reaching obsolescence.) This in turn led the KPA to establish the Ballistic Missile Training Guidance Bureau to oversee the training, deployment, operation and development of doctrine for all ballistic missile units. Supporting the evolving views of nuclear deterrence, there was a gradual shift in North Korean language about responses to US nuclear threats, emphasizing the role of these weapons as a political tool, reflected in rhetoric about the use of overwhelming artillery, conventional ground forces and ballistic missiles as well as Pyongyang's right to possess nuclear weapons as a deterrent to the US nuclear threat. For example, a 2002 Foreign Ministry statement declared that North Korea is "entitled to have nuclear weapons and more [powerful weapons] than those to safeguard our sovereignty and right to survive in response to the increasing US threat of crushing us with nuclear [weapons]." [Early 2000's -2014] North Korea's development of a nuclear force and strategy to deter the United States and to ensure

regime survival continued during the years leading up to Kim Jong Il's death and afterwards. Two events—Libya relinquishing its WMD programs under pressure from the United States in 2003 followed eight years later by the March 2011 US attack on that country and the 2007 Israeli airstrike destroying a North Korean reactor under construction in Syria at al-Kibar—reinforced Pyongyang's view that neither event would have occurred had those nations possessed nuclear weapons. Indeed, key nuclear and missile programs accelerated under Kim Jong Il and became more visible at the end of his life. Since his death, Pyongyang under Kim Jong-un's leadership, has taken political steps to emphasize the importance of nuclear weapons, including enshrining their possession in its Constitution and emphasizing the simultaneous development of these weapons and the North's economy (the "byungjin" line). Important developments point to the further elaboration of requirements for deterrence to buttress assured retaliation and perhaps some initial thinking on the use of nuclear weapons in a wider range of contingencies:

- The reorganization of the Ballistic Missile Training Guidance Bureau into the Strategic Forces Command that appears to have the same status as the ground forces, Navy and Air and Anti-Air Commands, a clear indication of the elevated significance of ballistic missiles as a deterrent in the North's defense strategy.
- The continued acquisition of weapons necessary to further develop a survivable nuclear force and better able to fulfill a deterrence mission including: longer-range mobile weapons—the Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) and the KN-08 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)—and possibly sea-launched cruise and ballistic missiles based on surface ships or submarines.
- Significant progress in the production of fissile material, including the unveiling and expansion of a modern uranium enrichment facility and bringing back online a small plutonium production reactor as well as striving to develop more advanced, miniaturized weapons that can be mounted on delivery systems. During this period, Pyongyang conducted three nuclear tests presumably for this purpose and has made numerous public references to the importance of developing miniaturized nuclear warheads for ballistic missiles.
- North Korea has conducted a growing number of ballistic missile exercises during the last five years that have increased in size, realism (e.g., shoot-and-scoot), complexity (e.g., volley and time-on-target fire missions) and demonstrated capabilities (e.g., atypical flight trajectories). These capabilities are applicable to the use of both conventional and nuclear weapons in wartime. The past five years have also witnessed a new sophistication in the North's articulation of its nuclear weapons strategy—the practical military application of these weapons and their utility in pursuing political priorities—that may be intended for external as well as internal audiences. Much of the rhetoric is very similar to US and Russian terminology with nuclear weapons usage characterized in battlefield, operational and strategic terms. However, while these statements on the surface suggest an important evolutionary step in the North's thinking about deterrence and strategy, they may also be understood as political rhetoric employed to mimic US statements or as an aspirational objective of KPA planners given the current small size of the North's nuclear stockpile and limited delivery capabilities.

[2020] All of these developments would seem to indicate that Pyongyang is striving for a policy of deterrence based, at the very least, on a more credible assured retaliation capability. This approach is reflected in North Korea's policy adopted by the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) in 2013: "(Nuclear weapons) serve the purpose of deterring and repelling the aggression and attack of the enemy against the DPRK and dealing

deadly retaliatory blows at the strong holds of aggression....” The key question for the future is whether Pyongyang has the ambition to establish deterrence based on a strategy beyond assured retaliation that includes options for the limited initial use of nuclear weapons in order to bolster the credibility of deterrence. The SPA “Law on Consolidating Position of Nuclear Weapons State,” appears to at least posit the expansion of the role of nuclear weapons beyond deterring high-end attacks to also deter and repel lower levels of aggression using its nuclear weapons as a future objective. The law states: “The DPRK shall take practical steps to bolster up the nuclear deterrence and nuclear retaliatory strike power both in quality and quantity to cope with the gravity of the escalating danger of hostile forces’ aggression and attack.” Logically, it may make sense for Pyongyang to move beyond relying on assured retaliation to a posture that threatens the limited early use of nuclear weapons to deter attacks by superior conventional forces. Just like NATO confronted by the Soviet Union during the Cold War and Pakistan faces India today, Pyongyang faces more capable American and South Korean conventional forces. However, if the North evolves in this direction, it will have to address some difficult challenges that will increase as the country’s nuclear inventory continues to grow and its arsenal of delivery systems expands. Many of these challenges revolve around the classic question of “how much is enough” to deter the United States and other potential enemies, a question faced by every country that has decided to build nuclear weapons. While that determination is often driven by factors other than logic—such as technological momentum, resource constraints, and bureaucratic and political considerations—a related question is “what will be the DPRK’s theory of victory in a conflict that may involve threats or even the use of nuclear weapons?” That, in turn, would seem to lead to the possibility of the North considering whether nuclear weapons would be an appropriate response to a limited conventional attack as well as determining when and where to use these weapons. There are hints that Pyongyang may move to address this question. The Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) released a report one day before the SPA Law was issued directing the military to begin such planning: “The People’s Army shall perfect the war method and operation in the direction of raising the pivotal role of the nuclear armed forces in all aspects concerning war deterrence and war strategy, and the nuclear armed forces should always round off the combat posture.” But if Pyongyang does move down this road as its nuclear stockpile grows and its delivery systems diversify, it will face a number of additional hurdles. One major challenge will be the issue of command and control, namely can Pyongyang adopt a model that requires some pre-delegation of release authority for nuclear weapons in order to make the threat of early use credible, particularly given the assumption that an authoritarian regime like North Korea will be loathe to do so. Indeed, at least as of today, launch authority remains highly centralized and the prerogative of the “Supreme Commander of the Korean People’s Army.” While change in this practice appears unlikely, predicting the future is complicated by the reality that Kim Jong-un’s leadership style is still evolving. A number of other challenges will also have to be addressed by the North should it choose to move in the direction of planning for the possible limited use of nuclear weapons in response to a conventional attack. These include: •The advanced deployment of delivery systems with their nuclear weapons to units as well as the necessary security for those deployed systems; •A far greater requirement for coordination of nuclear use—tactics and doctrine—with ground force

plans and operations to avoid high personnel and equipment losses; •Access to greater real-time intelligence to address the fluidity of the modern battlefield, prevent a nuclear strike that would hit friendly troops and to maximize the effects of a strike on enemy forces; and •More sophisticated command and control equipment and networks that work in concert with real-time intelligence to ensure friendly troops are not in the target area of a nuclear strike and more significantly control support, planning and firing commands that nuclear weapons units require to launch an effective strike. These command and control networks, and their associated equipment, have to be robust and secure enough to withstand concerted attack from an enemy. Aside from technological and operational challenges, an additional factor to consider in predicting the future of Pyongyang's nuclear strategy is unique national circumstances. North Koreans often argue that military hardware has to be adapted to Korean circumstances and realities, an argument that probably also applies to nuclear weapons and seems relevant given Kim Il Sung's past skepticism about the use of these weapons. To the extent that Pyongyang's war plans are based on the expectation of actually winning a war and inheriting South Korea's wealth, avoiding widespread, indiscriminate and unnecessary damage would seem to be important, once again driving the North in this direction. However, even in the context of building a force of more accurate, lower yield nuclear weapons, there also may be a significant political/psychological barrier to their use by North Korean leaders on the peninsula, namely these weapons would be used against the Korean people." (Joseph Bermudez, *North Korea's Development of a Nuclear Weapons Strategy*, U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, August 3, 2015)

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At around 7:40 a.m., two Army staff sergeants were critically wounded in a mine blast while patrolling the southern part of the heavily fortified demilitarized zone in Paju, Gyeonggi Province, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said August 10. The explosion nearly severed the right ankle of 23-year-old Kim and a larger part of both legs of 21-year-old Ha. (Shin Hyon-hee, "Seoul Resumes Propaganda Broadcasts," *Korea Herald*, August 10, 2015) North Korean troops crossed the border August 4 and deliberately planted the three land mines that inflicted serious injuries on two South Korean soldiers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, condemning the provocation and warning of "severe punishment." At around 7:40 a.m., two Army staff sergeants were critically wounded in a mine blast while patrolling the southern part of the heavily fortified demilitarized zone in Paju, Gyeonggi Province. The explosion nearly severed the right ankle of 23-year-old Kim and a larger part of both legs of 21-year-old Ha. "The enemy's act this time was clearly a deliberate provocation that directly defies the truce and inter-Korean nonaggression pacts," Defense Minister Han Min-koo told the troops during a visit to a guard post 750 meters away from the blast site. Following a two-day joint probe through August 7 with the United Nations Command, the JCS has concluded that steel springs, firing pins and other perceived debris of the detonated devices retrieved from the scene corroborate with the wooden-box mines used by the North Korean military. The JCS ruled out the possibility that the equipment had drifted south with the soil, such as by torrential rains, citing the lack of dirt around the mines, their buried position until the detonation and the "strong odor" of pine resin that exuded from the wreckage. "The incident has been found to be a clear provocation in which North Korean soldiers illegally breached the Military Demarcation Line and intentionally

emplaced wooden-box mines," said Koo Hong-mo, a two-star general in charge of operations at the JCS, issuing condemnation over what he called a "nasty act that any normal military cannot even think of." The UNC issued a separate statement lambasting Pyongyang's violation of the armistice agreement, calling for general-level talks with its military. "The investigation determined that the devices were recently emplaced, and ruled out the possibility that these were legacy land mines which had drifted from their original placements due to rain or shifting soil," the UNC said. In a video clip of the second detonation filmed through a thermal observation device and unveiled by the JCS, a cloud of dust suddenly soared into the air, sending several soldiers flying. They were rushing to rescue Ha who was injured in the first explosion about five minutes before. Despite the series of accidents and their colleagues' wounds, the servicemen managed to retreat and evacuate in a calm manner. The latest border intrusion appears to be aimed at interfering in the Ulchi Freedom Guardian, an annual South Korea-U.S. military exercise expected to kick off later this month for a two-week run, another JCS official said. "It apparently sought to interrupt the forthcoming UFG by obscuring the instigator of the provocation and creating discord inside the South," the official told reporters. (Shin Hyon-hee, "Seoul Resumes Propaganda Broadcasts," *Korea Herald*, August 10, 2015)

An Israel-based civil rights group is trying to seize a North Korean ship being held in Mexico in a rare effort to make Pyongyang pay at least part of a rare \$330 million U.S. District Court judgment against it. The Shurat HaDin law center in April won the ruling over the abduction of a South Korean-born pastor in China and his presumed torture and killing in North Korea. Now the center seeks whatever assets it can find from the largely isolated country. It has focused on the cargo ship the Mu Du Bong, which has been held in Mexico after it ran aground there last year. Civil courts in Mexico City and the state of Veracruz have declined to hear Shurat HaDin's request, but it is now appealing. (Associated Press, "North Korean Ship Pursued for Seizure in Case," August 4, 2015)

8/5/15

South Korea and Japan resumed their annual defense dialogue, after last year's meeting was canceled due to diplomatic strains over historical and territorial disputes. Seoul's defense ministry said the bilateral meeting – held every year since 1994 except for 2014 – began in Seoul between delegations led by Yoon Soon-Gu, director general of international policy at Seoul's defense ministry, and his Japanese counterpart Suzuki Atsuo. The officials discussed North Korea as well as Japan's recent moves to revise its pacifist constitution, a defense ministry spokesman said. Seoul reacted negatively to Japan's proposal for the signing of new bilateral accords on military information and logistical support, he said. South Korea also expressed concern about the possibility of Japan exercising the doctrine of "collective self-defense" around the Korean Peninsula without its consent. (AFP, "South Korea, Japan Resume Annual Defense Talks," August 5, 2015)

Just after South Korean President Park Geun-hye made a string of proposals for talks with North Korea to exchange lists of names for reunions of the families divided by the Korean War, sources said on August 17 that North Korean officials told the group accompanying Lee Hee-ho to North Korea early this month that the North would not

engage in dialogue with the Park administration. Multiple people who joined Lee on the trip to North Korea said that, during dinner on Aug. 5, the first day of their trip, at the Paekhwawon State Guesthouse, North Korean Asia-Pacific Peace Committee Vice Chair Maeng Kyong-il said, "We're not going to talk with South Korea during this administration," referring to the Park government. "Maeng made the remark during conversation while he was sitting between Lee and Kim Seong-jae, the head of the delegation. Anyone could have guessed this was coming. It shows [North Korea's] distrust for this administration," one source said. Kim is the director of the Kim Dae-jung Peace Center as well as a former Minister of Culture. Recently, there was speculation that Maeng, who accompanied Lee for the entirety of her four days in the North, had been promoted to first vice minister of the KWP United Front Department. The promotion would make him the second-most important official in terms of North Korea's relations with the South. Signs that North Korea is shutting down dialogue can also be seen in a recent spate of rejections of South Korean proposals for talks. On August 5, while Lee was in the North, the South Korean government announced that it would send a letter to North Korea from Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo to propose talks. North Korean officials rejected the letter, however, explaining that they could not receive it since they had not received any such orders from their superiors. Around the same time, North Korea announced that it would boycott a number of international sporting events (the Gwangju Universiade and the CISM World Games Korea) to be held in South Korea. It also rejected proposals made by President Park during her address on Liberation Day, August 15, to exchange lists of names of divided families and to build a world ecological park in the DMZ (demilitarized zone). (Kim Oi-hyun, "Sources: N. Korea Says No to Dialogue with Park Administration," *Hankyore*, August 19, 2015)

Earlier this year Rice embarked on an effort to trim that number, hoping to make the policymaking process more agile. By mid-July, she said in an interview, the staff had been cut by 6 percent. But it may be too late to change impressions of an NSC whose size has come to symbolize an overbearing and paranoid White House that insists on controlling even the smallest policy details, often at the expense of timely and effective decisions. In the Defense Department, where mistrust of the White House has persisted since the administration began, Obama is described as resolute and bold when a quick executive action is needed on operations such as hostage rescues and targeted captures and killings. However, when the president has wanted to move swiftly on some of his most ambitious policy initiatives – the opening to Cuba and the early Iran nuclear negotiations – he has circumvented the usual practice for decision-making and kept a close hold within the White House. Two senior NSC officials – deputy national security adviser Benjamin J. Rhodes and then-Latin American director Ricardo Zuniga – handled secret talks leading to last December's announced opening to Cuba. The White House did not inform Secretary of State John F. Kerry until the discussions were well underway, and State Department officials in charge of the region found out only as they neared completion. The success of those policies – along with a climate deal with China, trade agreements and other legacy-building achievements in recent months – have boosted internal morale and for some, at least, validated the way the administration operates. But on a host of other important issues, the NSC, designed in Harry Truman's time to coordinate sometimes-conflicting diplomatic and

defense views, is still widely seen as the place where policy becomes immobilized by indecision, plodding through months and sometimes years of repetitive White House meetings. In addressing challenges where there is internal disagreement or there are no good options – civil war in Syria, Russians in Ukraine and military dictatorship in Egypt, for example – policymaking has been “sclerotic at best, constipated at worse,” a senior Defense Department official said. “Time seems to be all this process produces. More time, more meetings, more discussions,” the official said. Others fume that the NSC has taken over things that could and should be handled elsewhere in the government. Former CIA director and defense secretary Leon Panetta, who left the administration in February 2013, has spoken of the “increasing centralization of power at the White House” and a “penchant for control” that in his case included submission of speeches and interview requests for White House approval. His predecessor at the Defense Department, Robert M. Gates, has said that “micromanagement” by the Obama White House “drove me crazy.” Many inside Cabinet departments and agencies complain that their expertise and experience is undervalued and that they are subjected to the whims of less knowledgeable NSC staffers. With such a large structure that in some areas duplicates their own departments, senior officials see the NSC as usurping their responsibilities, leaving them feeling unappreciated and frustrated. “If assistant secretaries, deputy assistants, don’t have a sense of authorship and accountability, they tend to get beaten down,” said a recently departed high-level administration official. “When large agencies – the Defense Department or State or others – don’t feel as much a part of the takeoff, implementation tends to suffer. It’s just human nature.” Others are less diplomatic. “Any little twerp from the NSC can call a meeting and set the agenda,” a senior State Department official said. More than a dozen current and former senior officials in national security departments and agencies, and in the White House, discussed the NSC for this article, some of them in several interviews. Most spoke only on the condition of anonymity, whether to criticize or to praise. Outside the administration, some lawmakers, policy experts and scholars charge that a bloated NSC staff, filled with what they describe as acolytes who distrust the rest of the government and see protecting the president as their primary job, has helped make Obama’s foreign policy ineffective and risk-averse. “There are problems that call for a real ‘whole of government’ solution,” said David Rothkopf, who has written extensively on the history and structure of the National Security Council and served in the Clinton administration. “I’ve never seen an administration that says it more and does it less.” The White House thinks that some administration officials blame the NSC to disguise disorganization and disagreements within their own departments or when decisions don’t go their way. “I’m not saying there isn’t micromanagement at the NSC. There is,” Rhodes said. But “sometimes I think the NSC just becomes kind of the boogeyman.” “This will likely piss everybody off,” Obama observed at a national security meeting last March, when he decided to end an 18-month long internal argument by releasing weapons shipments to Egypt. The arms – F-16 aircraft, Abrams tank components and Harpoon missiles – had been on hold since the July 2013 military overthrow of elected president Mohamed Morsi and the installation of Gen. Abdel Fatah al-Sissi as president. Several months of debate ensued over whether to call the military action a coup – a designation that would have required all military assistance to be withheld. The White House decided to leave its options open. Some assistance would continue while major military items would be

withheld as a message of disapproval. Obama ordered a review of the overall U.S. aid relationship with Egypt, a strategic ally in the Middle East, and said the full partnership would not be restored until Sissi took steps toward a sustainable, nonviolent democracy. As the review dragged on for months, internal frustration grew. Kerry and then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel argued that the United States needed Egypt as a reliable, well-armed ally in the region and should restore the weapons aid. Partner nations in the Persian Gulf region – already stung by Obama’s refusal to take military action in Syria – warned that the administration was alienating the Egyptians when it should be working with them. Others, including departmental officials under both Kerry and Hagel, along with Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power and outside human rights advocates, took a different view. They insisted that Obama needed a sign from the Egyptians: some indication they were prepared to stop rounding up political opponents and journalists, release the ones they had thrown in jail, and stop dealing with dissent by killing and execution. By the time Obama decided in March to lift the ban on the planes and other big-ticket items, no one’s view had changed. Little to nothing had been gained on the human rights front. Sissi’s distrust for the administration had deepened, and Persian Gulf partners thought that the administration had once again let them down. To many on the inside, Egypt policy has been a prime example of the NSC’s failure to bring together disparate Cabinet views and fashion options for timely presidential decision. On both Egypt and Ukraine, where there has been similar reluctance to make final decisions, there has been “a lateral difference between principals” and those beneath them, a senior official said. “Both are sets of issues where decisions have had to go directly to the president and where the decisions haven’t always been popular.” “We’re working to fix it,” the official said. “It’s everybody’s problem. It frustrates everybody.” Some remain unsatisfied, however. A senior State Department official recently described White House meetings held four or five days a week on an issue of current concern, with little turnaround time to prepare ordered documents or consider what was discussed the day before. Often, the meetings amount to time-wasting repetition of the same arguments. In another example, the Justice Department indicated in a high-level meeting last summer that a proposal to hold in indefinite detention older children who crossed the Mexican border without their parents was likely illegal. Yet the same proposal appeared repeatedly on the agenda for discussion by ever-more senior officials, eventually rising to Obama – who pointed out that in addition to being unwise, it was likely illegal, a participant said. On some issues, meetings at the level of Cabinet deputies – the place where options are supposed to be refined before consideration by department heads and then the president – grew so repetitive last year that deputies stopped coming, sending assistant secretaries and below in their stead. “It was like ‘Groundhog Day’ . . . with no progress, no refinement,” said one official. “In fairness, these are all tough questions. But eventually, you’ve got to make a choice.” A former White House official said: “The thing I think is fundamentally wrong with the NSC process is that there’s too much process. There’s too much airing of every agency’s view and recommendations, and not enough adjudicating. . . . Someone’s got to be the decision-maker, who’s just going to say, ‘We’re going to do this’ and ‘We’re not going to do that.’” Crucial delays can be as much about what a policy will look like as about what it actually is. During NSC-led meetings early last year over Ukraine’s list of requested military assistance, “most items were seen as ‘too military,’” a senior Defense Department official said.

"We were not sure how far Russia was going to go" in helping a separatist takeover, "and whether this would provoke them." The Ukrainian military's urgent need for blankets and packaged meals was easily agreed at the start. The question was how to get them there. Over multiple NSC meetings, "there was a lot of discussion about optics," the official said, and whether to send the items by military cargo aircraft or overland. Eventually, it was decided to ship the supplies by European-licensed trucks, to avoid the provocative sight of U.S. military transport planes on the ground. But a few weeks later, this official flew into Kiev airport for a meeting with Ukrainian officials, only to spot several large, grey C-130 U.S. military transports on the runway. Vice President Biden was visiting, and the planes were there to deliver his communications equipment and sensitive gear. "Things like that color moods and sour people," the official said of the lengthy debates. "When you litigate all the small stuff, it makes the big stuff even worse." Debates over Ukraine's request for heavy weapons have now gone on for well more than a year. The White House has not said yes, but it has never said no. Established in the years following World War II to help the president coordinate and reconcile diplomatic and military perspectives, the National Security Council initially included only the president and the secretaries of state and defense. Since the Truman administration, each chief executive has added, or on rare occasions subtracted, seats at the head table. A small secretariat eventually developed into a presidential staff led by the national security adviser. Different presidents have put the staff to different uses, but virtually all have increased its size, and the staff itself is now more commonly known as "the NSC." Jimmy Carter managed with about 25 NSC staffers and a powerful and outspoken national security adviser in Zbigniew Brzezinski, who often eclipsed Cabinet secretaries. Ronald Reagan went through six national security advisers in eight years, and an "operational" NSC that led to fiascoes such as the Iran-contra scandal. Under Bill Clinton, the NSC doubled in size to about 100. George W. Bush doubled it again, to 200. The first indication of how Obama planned to use the NSC came with Presidential Policy Directive 1, issued three weeks after his inauguration. Following the Scowcroft structure, it established a Principals Committee of Cabinet secretaries and top agency officials, chaired by the national security adviser, as the last stop before policy options reached the president. The Deputies Committee, of No. 2 agency officials, analyzes issues and options before they reach the principals, handles day-to-day crisis management and monitors policy implementation. A third, lower level of interagency committees generally determines what will rise up to the deputies. In previous administrations, the committees usually were chaired by a lead department or agency – normally the State or Defense departments. Obama's directive moved them into the White House, chaired by the NSC. Former officials who participated in Obama's White House transition and later served in senior administration posts described that decision as a crucial driver toward more centralization. "It was a conscious decision to elevate the NSC's role by having it chair those committees," one said. But it was far from the only reason for growth. The staff grew by 35 almost immediately, when Obama folded the Homeland Security Council established by his predecessor into the NSC. Slightly more than half of today's NSC personnel – many of them detailees from other agencies who are not on the White House payroll – are what Rice calls "policy people." The rest are divided among management and human resources staff and about 100 who supply technology support, including manning the White House Situation Room in shifts, 24 hours a day.

Staffing of traditional NSC “directorates” and “coordinators,” organized by function and geographic regions, ballooned with each new crisis. Surging issues such as cyber- and health security – including Ebola – brought additional staff. Each subject area produces White House-run meetings, often overlapping sessions called by separate NSC chieftains on security, economic and diplomatic aspects of the same issue. For every meeting, both NSC and agency personnel are tasked with writing issue and option papers that can run to a dozen or more pages. Rice – who came to the job with unique prior experience at the NSC and the State Department and as a Cabinet member during Obama’s first term – resisted her initial impulse to cut staff until she understood the reasons for the growth. This year, as part of her review, she has folded the separate Bush-era NSC office in charge of Afghanistan-Pakistan affairs back into the South Asia directorate. Implementation of the recently completed Iran nuclear agreement has been based at the State Department, along with the coordinator of the U.S.-led coalition fighting against the Islamic State. The office that opened at the NSC last year to coordinate the Ebola response among agencies has also been closed, as that crisis has ebbed. But Rice strongly defended its establishment in the first place. With participation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the State, Defense and Health and Human Services departments; and the U.S. Agency for International Development, she said, the U.S. response “wasn’t working until we sucked it into the White House and the president put his personal muscle behind it.” Nearly every Thursday morning since the September 2012 terrorist attacks on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, Libya, senior and mid-level officials from at least five government agencies have gathered at the White House to talk about security for U.S. facilities and personnel overseas. To the White House, this makes perfect sense. Many agencies have personnel based overseas, and many of the resources to protect them reside outside the State Department. “It used to be that State ran foreign policy,” said a former White House official. “Now, everyone’s got a hand in it. Go around the table, and they’ve all got equities, they’ve all got personnel out in the field, and all that needs to be managed.” But others drew a direct line from White House management of the issue back to the political embarrassment of the Benghazi attacks, which resulted in the deaths of four U.S. officials. Nearly three years later, a Republican-led congressional committee is still searching for a smoking gun of administration cover-up. “Benghazi is a good example,” the former official said, “and . . . Ebola. That can’t just be left to CDC and State and others to manage. No. You have to have a czar and a whole team of people. And why is that? Because the politics on this issue have become so much more corrosive and challenging that it’s a natural instinct for the White House to say, ‘We’ve got to have an eye on this. On everything.’” The embassy security meetings have frequently bogged down over minor issues, such as whether to deploy a handful of Special Operations troops or to approve a State Department request for an additional 10 diplomats at an embassy. One official recalled that White House oversight even extended to the overseas deployment of dog handlers and their bomb-sniffing canines. “The first thing I’m going to do is to stop all this micromanagement from the NSC,” Deputy Secretary Antony J. Blinken joked as he chaired his first senior staff meeting at the State Department in December, after moving there from his White House job as Rice’s deputy. Blinken, who has gone back and forth among buildings several times, knows better than most that where one sits usually indicates where one stands on the subject. “When you look at it” from the White House’s perspective,

another former official whose career has traveled much the same path said of micromanagement charges, "and you're just constantly worried about something going wrong, and you're wearing the shirt for it, you can understand how this happens." In January, as internal administration complaints about the NSC escalated, Rice acknowledged the problems but praised the policy outcomes. "If you look at where we started in 2014, we had no Ukraine and Russia, no Ebola, and no ISIL as the next major counterterrorism threat, she said in an interview at the time, referring to the Islamic State. "In each of those instances of unforeseen crisis, on top of all the business we were having to do anyway, with some complexity and obviously not always with perfect form, we bent the curve. "Style points? Sure. Take some off at the margins," she said. "Substance? Managing an unprecedented array of complex crises and continuing at the same time to pursue the president's long-term agenda on things that will matter when the music stops, like climate change and Cuba? I feel pretty good." But at the same time, she decided she had seen and heard enough to know that her initial reaction to the NSC's size and structure might have merit. At her direction, aides drew up staffing charts and held focus groups to solicit suggestions for improvement. Senior officials were interviewed; organizational meetings were held. By June, a statement posted on the White House blog promised a newly "lean, nimble, and policy-oriented" NSC, with "fewer, more focused meetings, less paper to produce and consume, and more communication that yields better policymaking." In late July, more than half a year after she began the exercise, Rice said that she was satisfied with the results. "We're going to keep going" with staff trims, she said. "But we're going to do it in a thoughtful way. . . . We need to not compromise quality simply for the sake of structure." Opinions on the depth of the changes differ. One senior department official agreed last month that there were fewer NSC meetings and less paperwork. Another official, en route to a third White House meeting on a single recent day, hadn't noticed any change. (Karen DeYoung, "How the Obama White House Runs Foreign Policy," *Washington Post*, August 5, 2015)

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North Korea lashed out at the U.S. for "aiming to remove" its socialist regime, saying that whether it would push ahead with another nuclear test depends on the "U.S. attitude." On the sidelines of the multilateral ASEAN-related meetings in Malaysia, Ri Tong-il, Pyongyang's former deputy U.N. representative, also warned that the U.S. military buildup targeting the communist state could result in a second Korean War. "While the U.S. resorts to its measures to choke up our economy, it is evading negotiations and dialogue (with the North)," Ri said. "The U.S.' strategic goal is to eliminate the North's socialist system." (Song Sang-ho, "N. Korea Threatens to Push for Another Nuclear Test," *Korea Herald*, August 6, 2015) "It depends on the attitude of the United States and the U.S. is hell-bent on increased level of provocations in front of the door of the DPRK," the official said in English. "Nobody will feel safe if somebody comes up with massive, more sophisticated nuclear weapons. Nobody will be safe and DPRK has no other option but to have self-defensive means to safeguard sovereignty, national dignity and to protect our people from nuclear disaster," he stressed. The spokesman warned that North Korea will continue to strengthen and increase its "already diversified with high precision miniaturized nuclear forces to operative level." (Lee Haye-ah, "N. Korea Says Future Nuclear Test Depends on U.S. Attitude," *Yonhap*, August 6, 2015)

Japan urged North Korea to uphold a bilateral accord in 2014 in which Pyongyang agreed to reinvestigate the fates of Japanese citizens abducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio also called on his North Korean counterpart Ri Su Yong to compile an early report on the outcome of the probe, according to a Japanese government official. The rare meeting between the two countries after official bilateral negotiations resumed more than one year ago was held on the sidelines of a regional security forum in Kuala Lumpur for about 30 minutes. Japan and North Korea agreed in Stockholm in May last year that Pyongyang would launch the reinvestigation into 12 Japanese it recognizes as abductees who are still missing, as well as a comprehensive probe into all Japanese nationals residing in North Korea. In return for Japan's lifting of some unilateral sanctions, North Korea launched the comprehensive investigation on July 4 last year. But North Korea said last month it needs more time to complete the investigation. North Korea's delay in reporting has frustrated the abduction victims' families, many of whom are aging and want the issue settled as soon as possible. The Kishida-Ri meeting was set up following Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent instructions to step up efforts to make progress on the long-stalled abduction issue. (Kyodo, "Japan Urges N. Korea to Uphold Bilateral Accord on Abduction," August 6, 2015)

The U.S. Department of Treasury fined a New York based company \$271,000 on Thursday for insuring North Korean ships between 2008 and 2011. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said the company, called Navigation, was responsible for 48 sanctions violations involving vessels from Iran, Cuba and North Korea. "Between May 8, 2008 and April 1, 2011, Navigators and its London, U.K. branch ("Navigators U.K.") issued global protection and indemnity ("P&I") insurance policies that provided coverage to North Korean-flagged vessels," the OFAC press release reads. Representatives from Navigator's Chinese and London offices declined to comment on the news. According to the OFAC statement, over the course of three years North Korea paid Navigator over \$1 million for 24 insurance policies. The company also paid out over \$12,000 for seven claims during the same period. Navigation cooperated with OFAC and took action quickly, which in part mitigated the fine. Exactly who insures North Korean ships has been the cause of much speculation, with a minimum level of coverage mandatory in order to make use of foreign ports and international waterways. Maritime insurance is an opaque industry, and previous North Korean insurers have been less reputable organisations like the Bermuda based South of England Protection and Indemnity Association, which was wound up in 2011 when it couldn't meet its financial obligations. In contrast, OFAC however concluded Navigation was a "commercially sophisticated financial institution," though lacking any formal sanctions compliance programs. "Often pulling the string back to find out who provides certain services in shipping can be a confusing exercise. It's not just insurance firms that skirt sanctions, there's a raft of other service providers making their dime from the likes of the regime in Pyongyang," Sam Chambers, editor of shipping site Splash told *NK News*. (Leo Byrne, "U.S. Treasury Fines American Company for Insuring N. Korean Vessels," *NKNews*, August 7, 2015)

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Navy Chief of Staff Jung Ho-sup ordered his troops to retaliate decisively against any North Korean provocations near the western sea border amid increasing signs of

military tensions there. Military tension is growing near the Northern Limit Line, the de facto inter-Korean sea border in the Yellow Sea, as North Korea forward deployed its major artillery in the border area. He cited North Korea's fresh vessel deployment and the construction of the military outpost as signs of potential provocations, the Navy said in a statement. "The troops should ensure a combat readiness position so any trivial changes from the enemy can be analyzed thoroughly to detect signs of provocations," Jung was quoted as telling the troops. The military should also be prepared to "retaliate ruthlessly and decisively upon any provocation," he said. Servicemen should always stand ready to open fire and be equipped with a fight-tonight spirit, he said. (Yonhap, "Navy Chief Orders 'Ruthless' Reaction against Any N. Korean Offensive," August 7, 2015)

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's omission of the "three non-nuclear principles" during his speech in Hiroshima on August 6 has caused concerns that Japan may be about to ditch a long-held and highly cherished philosophy. "We will make further efforts toward realization of a world without nuclear weapons," Abe did say in this year's ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city on Aug. 6, 1945. But it's what he did not say that is causing anxiety, particularly among atomic bomb survivors. He failed to confirm the nation's three non-nuclear principles: Japan does not possess or produce nuclear weapons and also does not permit other countries to bring those weapons into Japan. Only after the ceremony, when Abe met with representatives of atomic bomb survivors, did the prime minister say, "I pledge that, by firmly maintaining the three non-nuclear principles, we will continue to lead the efforts toward abolition of nuclear weapons and realization of permanent peace to prevent a recurrence of disasters brought by nuclear weapons." As criticism spread over his omission at a widely reported ceremony attended by 55,000 people, Abe was forced to respond at a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee on Aug. 7. "It is a matter of course that (Japan will maintain) the three non-nuclear principles," he said. "The stance is not changing at all." Abe also said he would confirm Japan's adherence to the non-nuclear principles in his speech in Nagasaki on August 9. (*Asahi Shimbun*, "Anxiety Rises over Abe Omitting Non-Nuclear Principles from Hiroshima Speech," August 7, 2015)

John McLaughlin: "In the wake of the Iran agreement, North Korea is now coming under U.S. and international pressure to return to the bargaining table, which it abandoned in 2008 after years of what were called "six-party talks" (the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and North Korea). But the North's ambassadors in China and Russia slammed the door on a renewal just last week. Why is North Korea so adamantly against talks, and what are the prospects for changing that? The primary motive is simple: regime survival. Long squeezed by international sanctions and regarded as the globe's most repressive political system, North Korea revolves around a cult of personality centered on the Kim dynasty. The leadership has long seen nuclear weapons as the key to survival, often citing Libya as its own cautionary example. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi surrendered his nuclear program in 2004 and was killed in 2011, as his regime collapsed during Libya's violent version of the so-called Arab Spring. The Kim dynasty and the system around it are not the only ones interested in its survival. In South Korea and China, there is constant fear that the North

Korean regime will simply collapse under greatly increased economic and other pressures. That would trigger massive refugee flows to the north into China and south onto the peninsula. Sorting this out – essentially uniting the two Koreas – would be a huge project that in cost and complexity would dwarf the union of the two Germans in the 1990s. The prospect for movement toward talks is bleak but not hopeless. Even if it had no intention to give up its nuclear weapons, the North might be lured into talks if it thought it could use them as a stalling mechanism, while angling for food and economic assistance. It has done so in the past. For others, the benefit would be the prospect of slowing the North's nuclear progress and tying it up at the bargaining table, instead of letting it progress, full steam ahead. This strategy, such as it is, boils down to buying time, and it's not a terrible one. Churchill's theory was that "to jaw-jaw is better than to war-war." The key to any movement sits with China. It is, far and away, the country with the most economic and political leverage over the Hermit Kingdom, by virtue of supplying 90 percent of its energy and most of its food aid. China surely wants to avoid the chaos of a North Korean collapse, or Pyongyang's reckless use of its nuclear or missile capability. But the wild card is the North's new ruler, 30-year-old Kim Jong-un. He is still erratically consolidating his power through purges and executions, and he is not, it seems, as close to Beijing as his father, Kim Jong Il, had been. The bottom line? Leverage on North Korea is more limited than in the past, in part because it is so dramatically different from Iran: much farther along the nuclear path, less engaged with the world outside and with not a speck of democracy (compared to Iran's controlled but reasonably fair elections that often surprise the regime). As often in hard times, we are probably best advised to fall back on the wisdom of the founders, in this case Benjamin Franklin's adage that "persistence is the secret to success." That's not much, but with North Korea, it's better than nothing." (John McLaughlin, "Cheating Nukes in North Korea," *Ozy*, August 7, 2015)

8/5-8/15 Lee Hee-ho, 93, widow of the late South Korean President Kim Dae-jung returned home after wrapping up her rare four-day visit to North Korea, without meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. "We should not hand this tragic division over to the next generation," Lee said after arriving at Gimpo Airport. Lee flew back from North Korea to Seoul after visiting care facilities in Pyongyang and a mountain in the northwestern region, according to the Kim Dae-jung Peace Center, the organizer of the trip. Her high-profile trip had prompted speculation that she might meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who extended the invitation. Lee's visit had sparked hopes that it may help ease tension on the divided peninsula, prompted by the North's nuclear and missile tests. The two Koreas have not held high-level talks since February 2014. During her stay in the North, Lee visited a maternity hospital and homes for orphans and the elderly in the capital. She delivered knitted scarves and medicine to North Korean children, according to the peace center. Yesterday, she toured an exhibition center and a Buddhist temple at Mount Myohyang, about a three hour drive north of Pyongyang. The mountain is believed to be frequented. (Bahk Eun-ji, "Ex-First Lady Returns Home after Trip to N. Korea; No Meeting with Kim," *Korea Times*, August 8, 2015) North Korean leader Kim Jong-un turned down a request by the widow of former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung for a meeting during her recent cross-border visit, an official who joined the trip said August 9. The official said Lee asked for a meeting with Kim, but her request was rejected. "We made the trip hoping to have

talks with Kim Jong-un, and it's quite disappointing that they didn't happen," the official said. "Still, Lee conveyed the message that the Koreas need to talk and cooperate with each other, and I think that alone is a major accomplishment." The official said there were "many reasons" that the meeting never materialized but declined to specify further. The official also thanked his North Korean counterparts for hosting Lee and her delegation. When the South Koreans arrived at Sunan International Airport in Pyongyang, they were escorted through the special gate reserved for VIPs, and an ambulance was also handy in case the elderly ex-first lady became sick. The South Korean government, which had insisted that Lee was traveling in a personal capacity and didn't ask her to deliver any government message, has faced some criticism that it didn't try hard enough to make the Lee-Kim talks happen. A Unification Ministry official, however, countered on August 9 that it was Pyongyang that didn't seem interested in such a meeting in the first place. "Contrary to our expectations here, North Korea might not have given any thought to Kim's meeting with Lee from the beginning," the ministry official said. "From the preparatory stages (of the trip), North Korea didn't take much initiative. If we had asked Lee to deliver our message, it would have put a burden on North Korea and set us up for a major disappointment if the talks didn't take place." Another government official said: "It's not appropriate to measure the success of Lee's visit just on whether she met Kim Jong-un. If anything, it takes away from the significance of her trip." (Yonhap, "Kim Jong-un Rejects Ex-S. Korean First Lady's Meeting Request: Official," August 9, 2015)

8/9/15

The draft of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's statement to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II does not include the word "apology" to Asian countries, which was included in two past landmark statements, according to sources. Abe showed the draft to executives of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and junior coalition partner, Komeito, at a meeting on the night of August 7. According to attendees, Abe reiterated that he will "inherit as a whole" the statements issued by former Prime Ministers Murayama Tomiichi and Koizumi Junichiro to mark the 50th and 60th anniversaries, respectively. However, the draft of Abe's statement did not include "apology" or similar wording for Japan's role in the war. Regarding the omission, one Komeito leader told Abe, "You have said that you will follow the past statements. Your statement must convey the feeling of apologies to other countries." The draft included the word "remorse" for the war. However, the words "colonial rule and aggression" were not clearly explained to the junior coalition partner's satisfaction. One Komeito participant asked Abe to put the word "aggression" in a clear context, saying, "Why is Japan showing remorse? Unless you make clear what Japan is showing remorse for, your statement cannot convey (the feeling of remorse)." The draft also included the strides Japan has made in the postwar era and international contributions the nation should make in the future, the sources said. In response to the suggestions from Komeito, Abe said, "I have heard (your opinions)." The focus will now shift to how much of Komeito's input Abe will incorporate into his statement. "(The meeting held on the night of August 7) is the last one in which we will meet with Komeito representatives to discuss the statement," an LDP executive said. However, a Komeito executive said, "We have not yet left (the contents of the statement) entirely up to the prime minister." The meeting included Komeito leader Natsuo Yamaguchi and Komeito Secretary-General Inoue Yoshihisa. LDP Secretary-General Tanigaki Sadakazu and Chief Cabinet

Secretary Suga Yoshihide also were in attendance. Abe's Cabinet is scheduled to approve his war anniversary statement on August 14. (*Asahi Shimbun*, "Draft of Abe Statement Does Not Include 'Apology' for Japan's Role in WWII," August 9, 2015) A draft of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's statement to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II includes all key words used in the 1995 Murayama statement, including "apology" and "aggression," NHK reported August 10. Officials in the ruling coalition welcomed the inclusion of these words in the draft, whose final, official version is scheduled to be released August 14. (Reuters, "Abe War Anniversary Statement to Include Terms 'Apology' and 'Aggression': NHK," *Japan Times*, August 10, 2015)

8/10/15

"Denuclearization remains our top priority," Rose Gottemoeller, U.S. under secretary of state for arms control and international security, told reporters in a conference call from Tokyo. "We remain in close contact with other five party partners on our shared goal of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and we want to see it pursued in a peaceful manner." Washington has urged Pyongyang to demonstrate its sincerity about denuclearization before returning to the six-party talks. "While we remain open to dialogue with North Korea, our policy has not changed and we're going to judge North Korea by its actions, not its words," Gottemoeller said. "I will emphasize ... our view is that enhanced pressure remains essential to compel North Korea to change course," Gottemoeller added. "So we've been calling on all states participating in the six party talks and regionally to implement the U.N. Security Council resolution concerning North Korea fully and exercise robust vigilance against North Korea's proliferation activities." (Lee Haye-ah, "N. Korean Denuclearization Remains Top Priority: U.S. Official," *Yonhap*, August 10, 2015)

North Korea has rejected South Korea's proposal for high-level talks on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan on August 15, the Ministry of Unification said. It said Pyongyang gave a "negative response" to Seoul's proposal at the government level on August 5 when former first lady Lee Hee-ho embarked on her four-day goodwill trip to the reclusive state as a civilian delegate. "We still have not heard from North Korea regarding our request to accept our letter of proposal last week," unification ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-hee told a media during a regular briefing. "The Pyongyang officials keep saying they have not received any related orders from their superiors. And it's regretful that North Korea fails to show a minimum level of respect to inter-Korean relations." Jeong cited the letter that was signed by Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo, South Korea's point-man on inter-Korean affairs. It proposed discussing arrangements for an inter-Korean family reunion, resuming the South Korean tour program to North Korea's Mount Kumgang and other pending issues that are seen as crucial to restoring the deteriorated Seoul-Pyongyang ties, according to the unification ministry. Seoul has sought to deliver the letter to Kim Yang-gon, the head of the United Front Department (UFD), **via messengers**, which have been a conventional communication channel between the two Koreas. UFD is Pyongyang's main policymaker on inter-Korean issues. "We highly doubt whether North Korea is willing to engage in a dialogue in a sincere manner," Jeong said. He turned down speculation that Seoul may have provoked Pyongyang by trying to deliver the letter last week and that it allegedly ruined Lee's trip. "We thought last week was the best time to create a mood for inter-Korean dialogue considering

Liberation Day on August 15 is approaching fast," Jeong said. "Besides, Lee primarily visited for humanitarian purposes, which we think she accomplished." (Yi Whan-woo, "N.K. Rejects Seoul's Proposal for High-Level Talks," *Korea Times*, August 10, 2015)

North Korean troops crossed the border August 4 and deliberately planted the three land mines that inflicted serious injuries on two South Korean soldiers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, condemning the provocation and warning of "severe punishment." At around 7:40 a.m., two Army staff sergeants were critically wounded in a mine blast while patrolling the southern part of the heavily fortified demilitarized zone in Paju, Gyeonggi Province. The explosion nearly severed the right ankle of 23-year-old Kim and a larger part of both legs of 21-year-old Ha. In retaliation, the South Korean military restarted loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts in more than 11 years, on an irregular basis in two frontline regions as of 5 p.m. Related equipment was pulled out in 2004 in line with an inter-Korean agreement and then reinstalled at 11 spots after the North's 2010 sinking of the South's corvette Cheonan, but had since remained idle. "The enemy's act this time was clearly a deliberate provocation that directly defies the truce and inter-Korean nonaggression pacts," Defense Minister Han Min-koo told the troops during a visit to a guard post 750 meters away from the blast site. "I will have the enemy pay a severe price of its provocations. ... In case of its provocation, you must not hesitate and resolutely and firmly respond with confidence, under the command of the GP chief." Following a two-day joint probe through August 7 with the United Nations Command, the JCS has concluded that steel springs, firing pins and other perceived debris of the detonated devices retrieved from the scene corroborate with the wooden-box mines used by the North Korean military. The JCS ruled out the possibility that the equipment had drifted south with the soil, such as by torrential rains, citing the lack of dirt around the mines, their buried position until the detonation and the "strong odor" of pine resin that exuded from the wreckage.

"The incident has been found to be a clear provocation in which North Korean soldiers illegally breached the Military Demarcation Line and intentionally emplaced wooden-box mines," said Koo Hong-mo, a two-star general in charge of operations at the JCS, issuing condemnation over what he called a "nasty act that any normal military cannot even think of." The UNC issued a separate statement lambasting Pyongyang's violation of the armistice agreement, calling for general-level talks with its military. "The investigation determined that the devices were recently emplaced, and ruled out the possibility that these were legacy land mines which had drifted from their original placements due to rain or shifting soil," the UNC said. In a video clip of the second detonation filmed through a thermal observation device and unveiled by the JCS, a cloud of dust suddenly soared into the air, sending several soldiers flying. They were rushing to rescue Ha who was injured in the first explosion about five minutes before. Despite the series of accidents and their colleagues' wounds, the servicemen managed to retreat and evacuate in a calm manner. The latest border intrusion appears to be aimed at interfering in the Ulchi Freedom Guardian, an annual South Korea-U.S. military exercise expected to kick off later this month for a two-week run, another JCS official said. "It apparently sought to interrupt the forthcoming UFG by obscuring the instigator of the provocation and creating discord inside the South," the official told reporters.

Given Pyongyang's longstanding disapproval of the loudspeaker program, tension is

set to only escalate and concerns over another provocation ahead of the anniversary of the founding of its ruling Workers' Party in October. The blast also triggered concerns over the seemingly porous defense posture around the highly tense area given that the mines were embedded just underneath a gate to the DMZ, which is watched by the South Korean Army, 440 meters south of the demarcation line. The North Koreans are likely to have come down between July 23 and August 2, said Army Brig. Gen. Ahn Young-ho, who lead the investigation. The Kim Jong-un regime is believed to have tightened border controls to curb a constant defector outflow since he took power in December 2011. Its military has also been staging more drills for surprise attacks and ambush infiltrations into the DMZ areas, while nearly 1,300 wood or concrete markers have been set up every 200 to 300 meters along the border. Yet the Army has been closely tracking the North's recent mine-planting activities and thus strengthened surveillance, Ahn said, though noting that weather and other factors posed hurdles for their efforts. "The area is easily eclipsed by the iron fence and surrounded by trees, making it difficult for us to monitor if the enemy enters north of the fence, which I believe the enemy took advantage of," he said at a news conference. "And as the gate area is where we always come and go by, we might have somewhat neglected detection activities, assuming that there would not be any mines there." According to an August 2014 report by the Human Rights Watch, only 11 countries around the world still produce the weapons or sustain the right to do so, four of them are thought to be actively churning them out — South Korea, India, Pakistan and Myanmar. The U.S. has not produced antipersonnel mines since the late 1990s and pledged last year to destroy its stockpiles not required for the defense of the southern part of the peninsula. (Shin Hyon-hee, "Seoul Resumes Propaganda Broadcasts," *Korea Herald*, August 10, 2015) "As previously warned on many occasions, our military will make North Korea pay the equally pitiless penalty for their provocations," Maj. Gen. Koo Hong-mo, head of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), said in a warning statement to the communist country. In the statement, the South Korean military also sternly urged the North to apologize and punish those who are responsible for the mine explosion. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Warns N. Korea Will Face Pitiless Costs for Mine Provocations," August 10, 2015) Tension is building along the inter-Korean border as the South is beefing up military readiness in response to last week's mine explosion in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) blamed on the North. The Ministry of National Defense said August 11 troops along the border are on high alert to ensure an immediate response to any additional provocations by North Korean troops. The South Korean military resumed loudspeaker propaganda broadcasting August 10, after having not done so for 11 years, as the first step in retaliation against the North for the land mines that maimed two South Korean soldiers. When the South announced a plan to resume the propaganda broadcasting in 2010 as part of a psychological warfare program in the wake of the North's deadly torpedoing of the South Korean Navy frigate Cheonan, the North threatened to shoot at the loudspeakers. The broadcasting did not resume at that time. Defense ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok told reporters that South Korean forces will take immediate action, including firing at anyone in the North who shoots at the loudspeakers. "Our forces are closely monitoring movements of North Korean soldiers and have enhanced their readiness posture in preparation for any additional provocations," he said. "North Korea has yet to show any response to the broadcasting." Officials said the military has reinforced the deployment of unmanned

surveillance vehicles, anti-tank missiles and AN/TPQ-36 artillery location radar in areas where the loudspeakers are placed. Earlier in the day, Defense Minister Han Min-koo told lawmakers that **the military will execute operations to "take control" of the DMZ, a 4-kilometer wide buffer zone separating the two Koreas**, the legacy of the ceasefire that ended the Korean War (1950-53). He made the comments during a meeting with ruling party lawmakers attended Rep. Chung Doo-un, chairman of the National Assembly Defense Committee. "The ministry is reviewing follow-up measures after resuming the loudspeaker propaganda broadcasting," Han said. Kim explained that Han's comments mean **enhancing the military's search and ambush operations** to prevent North Korean soldiers from crossing the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). A ministry official noted on the condition of anonymity that the existing concepts of the operations in the border areas have been designed to **block the enemy's crossing of the MDL**, but this **would be changed to "destroy" the enemy in the DMZ**. Toward that end, the military is seeking to simplify its operations applied to North Korean soldiers who cross the MDL by **reducing the three steps — warning messages, warning shots and aimed shots — to one step — aimed shots**, the official said. He added that the military is planning to carry out search missions at irregular times and places to confuse the North, based on the belief that the reclusive state has already learned the times and places of South searches. It is believed that the North has been able to plant land mines in the DMZ after successfully avoiding South patrols. For its part, the presidential office called on the isolated state to apologize for its provocation. "We demand the punishment of those in charge," said Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Min Kyung-wook. (Jun Ji-hye, "Tension Builds along Border," *Korea Times*, August 11, 2015) North Korea replaced a front-line military commander who played a direct role in the country's deadly landmine blasts near the border in August and a following exchange of live fire with the South, sources said on November 12. "Immediately after the landmine and shelling provocations, North Korea replaced the commander of the second corps Kim Sang-ryong with Pang Tu-sop in late August," one of the government sources said. In the reshuffle, Kim was assigned as the commander of the 9th corps, stationed far back from the inter-Korean border. North Korea's 6th and 15th military divisions are in charge of defending the military demarcation line facing South Korea under the leadership of the second corps. Kim is believed to be among several military officials deeply involved in the provocation that escalated military tension with South Korea. The reshuffle may have been decided in a ruling party meeting held right after the inter-Korean negotiation. Holding the enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea on August 28, the North said it sacked some members of the commission, but details were not released then. "Under the quasi-war state declared after the landmine and shelling provocations, the second corps' shoddy artillery deployment may have been the reason (the reshuffle)," another government source said. (Yonhap, "N. Korean Front-Line Commander Replaced after Inter-Korean Conflict," *North Korea Newsletter* No. 389 (November 19, 2015))

8/12/15

Jeffrey Lewis: "North Korea is expanding its capacity to mine and mill natural uranium. Recent commercial satellite imagery shows that, over the past year, Pyongyang has begun to refurbish a major mill located near Pyongsan that turns uranium ore into yellowcake. The renovation suggests that North Korea is preparing to expand the production of uranium from a nearby mine. The question is: What will North Korea do

with this uranium? One possibility is that North Korea will enrich the uranium to expand its stockpile of nuclear weapons. Another is that Pyongyang plans to produce fuel for the Experimental Light Water Reactor under construction at its Yongbon nuclear scientific research facility as well as future light-water reactors based on that model. A major challenge in estimating the size of North Korea's nuclear weapons stockpile is uncertainty about whether Pyongyang has additional centrifuge facilities for enriching uranium. While such facilities may be hard to detect, the expansion of mining and milling near Pyongsan may allow observers to estimate the size of North Korea's enrichment infrastructure based on its demand for uranium. Closer scrutiny of North Korea's uranium resources, including its other declared mines and mills as well as suspected sites, may help arrive at more accurate estimates of this key capability. ...The North Koreans like to brag about how much uranium they have. One North Korean publication described the DPRK's uranium resources as "infinite." And poor Andrea Berger, a non-proliferation expert at the Royal United Services Institute in London, even got a lecture on the subject from a North Korean official. As it turns out, though, North Korea's uranium resources are probably paltry, which means that we may be able to locate and monitor a relatively small number of sites. That, in turn could help us get a better grip on the North's ability to produce reactor fuel and bombs. Thanks to the collapse of the Soviet Union, scholars now have access to internal Soviet and Warsaw Pact documents describing North Korea's efforts to seek assistance in developing its uranium resources. North Korea asked the Soviet Union for help in the field of the uranium prospecting as early as 1948. The request is described in an internal Soviet memo, translated by the Wilson Center's North Korea International Documentation Project, which suggests such prospecting be postponed. North Korea kept bugging the Soviets, though. By the early 1960s, the Soviets had completed a survey, but concluded North Korean uranium deposits were too poor for exploitation. Two Soviet specialists told their Ambassador in Pyongyang: "Korean uranium ore is not rich and is very scarce. The mining and processing of such ore will be extremely expensive for the Koreans." As it turns out, the North Koreans didn't care that the uranium was extremely expensive. If you wonder whether Kim Il Sung wanted a bomb or not, his abiding interest in a domestic source of uranium at any cost is a hint. The memos also include technical information. One memo, reporting on a 1979 North Korean effort to acquire uranium mining equipment from Czechoslovakia (hey, remember Czechoslovakia?) states: "[T]he DPRK has two important uranium quarries. In one of these two places, the uranium content of the ore is 0.26 percent, while in the other it is 0.086 percent." Based on other information released by the Soviet Union, it appears these mines are near Pakchon and Pyongsan, with Pyongsan likely having the higher quality ore. In 1985, the North Koreans were still pressing the Soviets to speed up prospecting for new sources of ore. In 1992, the DPRK declared, as part of its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), two uranium mines (the Wolbisan Uranium Mine and the Pyongsan Uranium Mine) and two mills for concentration (the Pakchon Uranium Concentrate Pilot Plant and the Pyongsan Uranium Concentrate Plant). While there are naturally questions about whether this declaration was complete, the claim of two uranium mines appears consistent with the Soviet surveys. The IAEA also released videos of Hans Blix, the former Swedish Foreign Minister and then the head of the international organization, visiting both mills. I was able to use the videos to locate both mills ...While North Korea

has operated the facility intermittently over the past decade, new spoil and tailings appeared sometime between 2006-2011, suggesting that the North resumed uranium mining and milling during that period after what appears to have been a lull of many years. This uranium may have been fabricated into new fuel rods for the 5 MWe gas graphite reactor. North Korea had only 2,500 fresh fuel rods for this reactor—less than a third of a full load. (North Korea also had 12,000 rods that had been fabricated for the never completed 50 MWth reactor, which could be converted into reactor fuel.) The uranium might also have been converted into uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) that could be enriched to build nuclear weapons, either at the enrichment plant that the North constructed and revealed to Americans visiting Yongbyon in 2010 or at a covert site. Based on the size of the spoil pile and the tailings, it may be possible to make a rough estimate of how much uranium was recovered, but this estimate would be very approximate. However, North Korea seems to be mining more uranium to meet what may be increasing needs for fuel or bombs." (Jeffrey Lewis, "Recent Imagery Suggests Increased Uranium Production in North Korea, Probably for Expanding Nuclear Weapons Stockpile and Reactor Fuel," *38North*, August 12, 2015)

DPRK Foreign Ministry Disarmament and Peace Institute report: "Korea was divided into two by outsiders against the will of its people. Historically, the Korean peninsula has become the most ideal bridgehead for maritime forces dreaming of continental aggression to kick off their invasion. Outsiders are benefiting more from antagonism and confrontation between the north and the south of Korea than from their reconciliation and cooperation. There are countries which have antagonized the DPRK since the very day of Korea's division, seized with confrontational idea. There are also countries with the history in which they fought alongside the Korean people in the same trench against Japanese imperialism and the U.S. There are outside forces blindly supporting the "theory of unification of social systems" unilaterally pursued by south Korea and others taking an ambiguous stand toward the formula of reunification agreed upon by the north and the south. It is self-evident that the future destiny of the Korean nation is bound to become a plaything of outsiders and scapegoat of their scramble in case such outsiders are allowed to interfere in the issue of Korea's reunification. The most urgent task at present to create a peaceful environment is to defuse the danger of a war on the Korean peninsula and put an end to the vicious cycle of escalating tension. **If the U.S. refrains from antagonizing the DPRK but makes a policy switch to respect the sovereignty and dignity of the Korean nation and the nation's will to achieve independent reunification, the U.S. will also be respected by the Korean nation.** It is good for the U.S. to make a policy switch itself, facing up to the reality, though belatedly. **But if it doesn't do so, the DPRK has its own solution prepared.** Measures are ready to protect the economic concessions of other countries in south Korea in a responsible manner **not only in case the reunification is achieved peacefully but also in case it is done through a war.** The DPRK remains unchanged in its stand to make sure that Korea is reunified in such a way as to be beneficial to the prosperity of other countries in the region including its neighboring countries. North-south relations can never be mended if the north and the south pursue confrontation of social systems, regarding their ideologies and social systems as absolute. The DPRK has never forced its social system upon south Korea though its socialist system of Korean style centered on the popular masses is most

advantageous. If the neighboring countries and other countries concerned sincerely hope for peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula, they should take a correct approach and stand toward the north-south relations. It is a historical fact that the orientation of the north-south relations has been swayed by the approach and stand of the U.S. Other neighboring countries, should observe utmost impartiality and prudence in their policy toward the Korean peninsula, aware of the complexity and sensitivity of the 70 year-long north-south relations since the division of Korea. They should not lend an ear to unilateral solicitation but respect the points agreed upon by the north and the south of Korea and support the ways and efforts for co-existence and co-prosperity of the north and the south. Doing so would help the Korean nation. It is an unshakable will of Kim Jong-un to make a new history of the north-south relations by bringing about a decisive turn and change in the relations." (KCNA, "Report Released by Disarmament and Peace Institute of DPRK Foreign Ministry to Mark Anniversary of Korea's Liberation," August 12, 2015)

8/13/15

North Korea will pursue its "defensive" nuclear program as long as it feels threatened by the United States, its U.N. disarmament envoy in Geneva told Reuters on Thursday. In a rare interview, Ambassador So Se Pyong also denounced the latest joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises, due to start next week, saying they fanned tensions on the divided peninsula as it marks the 70th anniversary of liberation from Japanese occupation at the end of World War Two. "They have to change their attitude, their hostile policies attitude and otherwise ... We'll continue the simultaneous development of the economy and the nuclear program," he told Reuters, speaking English. "It is to make a balance with the United States. It's totally defensive, that is 100 percent sure. But once they do something then we'll do the same. If they break (out in) another war, we are ready to make any kind of things," said So, who is ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and to its Conference on Disarmament. So denied that North Korea had played any role in laying land mines that exploded in the Demilitarized Zone border last week, injuring two South Korean soldiers. South Korea's military has threatened retaliation after it accused Pyongyang of planting the mines, calling it an act of provocation. "If something happens in South Korea, they blame the North - (for) everything. A few years before there was the incident of the ship that sank, they blamed the North also," So said. Pressed to clarify whether his government was involved, he said: "No. How can we make that small notorious things if there is a kind of big military action ... For what purpose?" Asked about reports that North Korea might be preparing another underground nuclear test or long-range missile launch, he said: "That is top secret. How can I say it to you specifically?" (Reuters, "N. Korea Will Pursue 'Defensive' Nuclear Program," August 13, 2015)

8/15/15

South Korea and the United States informed North Korea through a loudspeaker at Panmunjom of their plan to carry out joint military drills starting next week. The ROK-US Combined Forces Command and South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the annual Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercises will take place from August 17-28 to maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula and improve their joint defense posture. (Yonhap, "S. Korea, U.S. Inform N. Korea of Military Drill amid Threats of Military Action," August `15, 2015)

NDC spokesman's statement: **"The further Ulji Freedom Guardian joint military exercises are intensified, the strongest military counteraction the DPRK will take to cope with them.** The gravity of Ulji Freedom Guardian which would kick off on August 17 lies in **mounting a surprise preemptive attack on the DPRK by mobilizing the "south Korea-U.S. joint division" with a mission to "eliminate the headquarters" and "occupy Pyongyang"** and all war means for aggression at home and abroad and deploying all operation command posts. The army and people of the DPRK are no longer what they used to be in the past when they had to counter the U.S. nukes with rifles. **The DPRK is the invincible power equipped with both latest offensive and defensive means unknown to the world including nuclear deterrence. The U.S. had better make a bold political decision of rolling back its anachronistic DPRK policy.** By doing so, it can ensure the security of its mainland facing the DPRK's strongest counteraction. The U.S. should keenly realize that the harsher sanctions and blockade it slaps against the DPRK and the more desperately the U.S. is working to stifle it, the more strongly it will retaliate against the U.S. with tremendous muscle. It is the inevitable truth that force of justice gets stronger than that of injustice. It is necessary for the U.S. to seriously recollect its proverb that it is only corpse and fool that refuse to face up to the trend of the times. It is the only way out for the U.S. for improving its deplorable position to make a switchover in its hostile policy toward DPRK. Always miserable is the end of the war maniacs." (KCNA, "NDC Spokesman Warns U.S. of Its Strongest Military Counteraction," August 15, 2015)

KPA Front Command "open warning notice as regards the fact that the south Korean puppet forces have resumed overall broadcasting for "anti-north psychological warfare" from August 10 by deliberately linking the 'mine explosion' in the demilitarized zone in the western sector of the front with the DPRK and terming it 'a provocation from the north': **The resumption of the above-said broadcasting in the areas along the front is a wanton violation of the military agreement between the north and the south, a grave military provocation against the DPRK and a serious case of pushing the inter-Korean relations to the worst phase.** Upon authorization, the KPA Front Command sends the following open warnings to the south Korean puppet authorities and military: They should take such measures as immediately stopping the resumed broadcasting for "anti-north psychological warfare" and dismantling all stationary or mobile psychological means which have been installed or in the process of setting up. **The resumption of the broadcasting is a direct action of declaring a war against the DPRK. If they turn down the demand of the DPRK, it would start an all-out military action of justice to blow up all means for "anti-north psychological warfare" in all areas along the front.** All means used for 'anti-north psychological warfare,' whether they are fixed or mobile, will never escape the strike of the KPA. **They should not forget that the KPA military action means indiscriminate strikes which envisage even possible challenge and escalating counteraction.** In case a graver situation is created and the inter-Korean relations are pushed to rock bottom due to their defiance of the DPRK's warning, they would be held fully accountable for the ensuing consequences. The KPA makes no empty talk." (KCNA, "KPA Front Command Warns S. Korean Forces of Its Physical Military Actions," August 15, 2015)

Abe Statement: "On the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, we must calmly reflect upon the road to war, the path we have taken since it ended, and the era of the 20th century. We must learn from the lessons of history the wisdom for our future. More than one hundred years ago, **vast colonies possessed mainly by the Western powers** stretched out across the world. With their overwhelming supremacy in technology, waves of colonial rule surged toward Asia in the 19th century. There is no doubt that the resultant sense of crisis drove Japan forward to achieve modernization. Japan built a constitutional government earlier than any other nation in Asia. The country preserved its independence throughout. The Japan-Russia War gave encouragement to many people under colonial rule from Asia to Africa. After World War I, which embroiled the world, the movement for self-determination gained momentum and put brakes on colonization that had been underway. It was a horrible war that claimed as many as ten million lives. With a strong desire for peace stirred in them, people founded the League of Nations and brought forth the General Treaty for Renunciation of War. There emerged in the international community a new tide of outlawing war itself. At the beginning, Japan, too, kept steps with other nations. However, **with the Great Depression setting in and the Western countries launching economic blocs by involving colonial economies**, Japan's economy suffered a major blow. In such circumstances, Japan's sense of isolation deepened and it attempted to overcome its diplomatic and economic deadlock through the use of force. Its domestic political system could not serve as a brake to stop such attempts. In this way, Japan lost sight of the overall trends in the world. With the Manchurian Incident, followed by the withdrawal from the League of Nations, Japan gradually transformed itself into a challenger to the new international order that the international community sought to establish after tremendous sacrifices. Japan took the wrong course and advanced along the road to war. And, seventy years ago, Japan was defeated. On the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, I bow my head deeply **before the souls of all those who perished both at home and abroad. I express my feelings of profound grief and my eternal, sincere condolences. More than 3 million of our compatriots lost their lives during the war:** on the battlefields worrying about the future of their homeland and wishing for the happiness of their families; in remote foreign countries after the war, in extreme cold or heat, suffering from starvation and disease. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the air raids on Tokyo and other cities, and the ground battles in Okinawa, among others, took a heavy toll among ordinary citizens without mercy. Also in countries that fought against Japan, countless lives were lost among young people with promising futures. In China, Southeast Asia, the Pacific islands and elsewhere that became the battlefields, numerous innocent citizens suffered and fell victim to battles as well as hardships such as severe deprivation of food. We must never forget that there were women behind the battlefields whose honor and dignity were severely injured. Upon the innocent people did our country inflict immeasurable damage and suffering. History is harsh. **What is done cannot be undone.** Each and every one of them had his or her life, dream, and beloved family. When I squarely contemplate this obvious fact, **even now, I find myself speechless and my heart is rent with the utmost grief.** The peace we enjoy today exists only upon such precious sacrifices. And therein lies the origin of postwar Japan. We must never again repeat the devastation of war. Incident, aggression, war – **we shall never again resort to any form of the threat or use of**

force as a means of settling international disputes. We shall abandon colonial rule forever and respect the right of self-determination of all peoples throughout the world. With deep repentance for the war, Japan made that pledge. Upon it, we have created a free and democratic country, abided by the rule of law, and consistently upheld that pledge never to wage a war again. While taking silent pride in the path we have walked as a peace-loving nation for as long as 70 years, we remain determined never to deviate from this steadfast course. Japan has repeatedly expressed the feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for its actions during the war. In order to manifest such feelings through concrete actions, we have engraved in our hearts the histories of suffering of the people in Asia as our neighbors: those in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, and Taiwan, the Republic of Korea and China, among others; and we have consistently devoted ourselves to the peace and prosperity of the region since the end of the war. Such position articulated by the previous Cabinets will remain unshakable into the future. However, **no matter what kind of efforts we may make, the sorrows of those who lost their family members and the painful memories of those who underwent immense sufferings by the destruction of war will never be healed.** Thus, we must take to heart the following. The fact that more than 6 million Japanese repatriates managed to come home safely after the war from various parts of the Asia-Pacific and became the driving force behind Japan's postwar reconstruction; the fact that nearly three thousand Japanese children left behind in China were able to grow up there and set foot on the soil of their homeland again; and the fact that former POWs of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia and other nations have visited Japan for many years to continue praying for the souls of the war dead on both sides. How much emotional struggle must have existed and what great efforts must have been necessary for the Chinese people who underwent all the sufferings of the war and for the former POWs who experienced unbearable sufferings caused by the Japanese military in order for them to be so tolerant nevertheless? That is what we must turn our thoughts to reflect upon. Thanks to such manifestation of tolerance, Japan was able to return to the international community in the postwar era. Taking this opportunity of the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, Japan would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to all the nations and all the people who made every effort for reconciliation. In Japan, the postwar generations now exceed 80 per cent of its population. We must not let our children, grandchildren, and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologize. Still, even so, we Japanese, across generations, must squarely face the history of the past. We have the responsibility to inherit the past, in all humbleness, and pass it on to the future. Our parents' and grandparents' generations were able to survive in a devastated land in sheer poverty after the war. The future they brought about is the one our current generation inherited and the one we will hand down to the next generation. Together with the tireless efforts of our predecessors, this has only been possible through the goodwill and assistance extended to us that transcended hatred by a truly large number of countries, such as the United States, Australia, and European nations, which Japan had fiercely fought against as enemies. We must pass this down from generation to generation into the future. We have the great responsibility to take the lessons of history deeply into our hearts, to carve out a better future, and to make all possible efforts for the peace and prosperity of Asia and the world. We will engrave in our

hearts the past, when Japan attempted to break its deadlock with force. Upon this reflection, Japan will continue to firmly uphold the principle that any disputes must be settled peacefully and diplomatically based on the respect for the rule of law and not through the use of force, and to reach out to other countries in the world to do the same. As the only country to have ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombings during war, Japan will fulfill its responsibility in the international community, aiming at the nonproliferation and ultimate abolition of nuclear weapons. We will engrave in our hearts the past, when the dignity and honor of many women were severely injured during wars in the 20th century. Upon this reflection, Japan wishes to be a country always at the side of such women's injured hearts. Japan will lead the world in making the 21st century an era in which women's human rights are not infringed upon. We will engrave in our hearts the past, when forming economic blocs made the seeds of conflict thrive. Upon this reflection, Japan will continue to develop a free, fair and open international economic system that will not be influenced by the arbitrary intentions of any nation. We will strengthen assistance for developing countries, and lead the world toward further prosperity. Prosperity is the very foundation for peace. Japan will make even greater efforts to fight against poverty, which also serves as a hotbed of violence, and to provide opportunities for medical services, education, and self-reliance to all the people in the world. We will engrave in our hearts the past, when Japan ended up becoming a challenger to the international order. Upon this reflection, Japan will firmly uphold basic values such as freedom, democracy, and human rights as unyielding values and, by working hand in hand with countries that share such values, hoist the flag of "Proactive Contribution to Peace," and contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world more than ever before. Heading toward the 80th, the 90th and the centennial anniversary of the end of the war, we are determined to create such a Japan together with the Japanese people." (*Japan Times*, Full Text of Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Released August 14, 2015) Using the carefully chosen words that govern reckonings with Japan's militarist past, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo reiterated his country's official remorse for the catastrophe of World War II on Friday, the eve of the 70th anniversary of the war's end. In a nationally televised address, Abe described feelings of "profound grief" and offered "eternal, sincere condolences" for the dead. He said Japan had inflicted "immeasurable damage and suffering" when it "took the wrong course and advanced along the road to war." But in a potentially contentious break with previous expressions of contrition by Japanese leaders, he did not offer a new apology of his own. The decision, a product of months of deliberation, appeared calibrated to draw a line under what Abe and many Japanese see as an endless and enfeebling cycle of apologies for decades-old offenses. But Mr. Abe sought to do so while still addressing lingering resentment in China and South Korea, nations that bore the brunt of Japan's often brutal empire building in the first half of the 20th century. "Japan has repeatedly expressed feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for its actions during the war," Abe said. "Such positions articulated by previous cabinets will remain unshakable into the future." But, he added, there was a limit to the number of times Japan could apologize. "We must not let our children, grandchildren and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologize," he said. It is enough, he added, "to inherit the past, in all humbleness, and pass it on to the future." Abe has long sought to break with what conservatives call Japan's "masochistic" approach to addressing history. Apologies dating to the 1990s

have not prevented feuds with China and South Korea, which have their own reasons, political analysts note, for keeping public animosity toward Japan alive. In an initial commentary published online, China's official Xinhua news agency said Abe's speech "trod a fine line with linguistic tricks" and was insincere. President Park Geun-hye of South Korea said that Abe's statement "left much to be desired" and that for Japan to earn its neighbors' trust its words needed to be supported with "consistent and sincere conduct." Murayama Tomiichi, a former prime minister who delivered Japan's landmark first war apology in 1995, on the 50th anniversary of Japan's surrender, was also critical. "He used flowery words and talked at length, but he didn't make clear why he was doing it," Murayama, 91, said on a program on the Fuji TV network. Abe's statement included an oblique reference to women and girls exploited in Japanese military brothels. The Japanese right was particularly incensed by an apology in 1993 that acknowledged that many of these "comfort women" were coerced and that the Japanese state was to blame. "We must never forget that there were women behind the battlefields whose honor and dignity were severely injured," Abe said. He said Japan had practiced "aggression," a term first used by Murayama that is disputed by Japanese rightists. Abe himself had previously questioned the labeling, but it has become too integral to Japan's position to cut without being accused of revisionism. Along with "colonial rule," "remorse" and "heartfelt apology," it was widely seen as an unavoidable term. Thomas Berger, a historian at Boston University, said Abe's "sprawling, four-page history lesson" risked giving the impression that he was trying to dilute Japanese responsibility by portraying the war as a "kind of historical tsunami for which no one should be blamed." Abe also drew parallels between history and the present day in ways that seemed likely to antagonize China, even if the absence of an apology did not. A reference in his statement to Japan's past as a "challenger" to "international order" echoed rhetoric that Abe has often used to describe China, whose increasing willingness to assert its power in the region has included challenging Japanese control over islands in the East China Sea. (Jonathan Soble, "Premier's Remorse for Japan's Aggression Stops Short of Apology," *New York Times*, August 15, 2015) South Korea's ambassador to Japan said Prime Minister Abe at least showed "signs of making an effort" in his recent statement to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. However, in an interview with *Asahi Shimbun* on August 20 in Tokyo, Yoo Heung-soo said South Koreans are not fully satisfied with the contents of his message. The former lawmaker also said that the South Korean side will make efforts to prevent Abe's statement from obstructing the two countries' bid to improve soured bilateral relations. "If the statement is viewed comprehensively, there are signs that the prime minister made certain efforts (in compiling the statement)," Yoo said, adding that Abe's remarks would help bring about a summit meeting between the Japanese prime minister and South Korean President Park Geun-hye at an early date. In his memorial statement, released Aug. 14, Abe said Japan must never forget "there were women behind the battlefields whose honor and dignity were severely injured." Yoo said he believes the remark is an indirect reference to the wartime "comfort women" who were forced to serve at front-line brothels, including many Koreans. The ambassador said that the comment can be highly valued because the war anniversary statements by past Japanese prime ministers have failed to mention the comfort women issue. "We would like to believe that there is an intent and idea on (the Japanese side) to address the issue anyhow," Yoo said. While Abe's statement

mentioned key phrases including "aggression," "colonial rule," "deep remorse" and "heartfelt apology" that appeared in the past memorial statements, he did not mention them clearly as his own historical perceptions, Yoo pointed out. "It is regrettable that the statement includes messages that cast doubt on the prime minister's sincerity," the ambassador said. "But we could at least reaffirm his intention to succeed the recognition of history by the past Cabinets through the statement. We expect Abe to act sincerely and consistently in line with the message." As for a bilateral summit between the two leaders, which has not been held for more than three years since diplomatic relations nosedived over territorial and history recognition issues, Yoo said Seoul does not see the settlement of the comfort women issue as a precondition for the meeting. But, he added, "It will really be an even more meaningful meeting if it is held when the settlement of the comfort women issue is in sight." (Takeda Hajimu and Matsu Nozomi, "S. Korean Envoy Says Abe Made Effort to Reach out in War Anniversary Statement," *Asahi Shimbun*, August 21, 2015)

8/17/15

"We need to maintain a strong military readiness to protect our people's lives and their properties from North Korea's provocations ... at a time when military threats posed by North Korea are on the rise," President Park said in a Cabinet meeting. (Yonhap, "Park Calls for Military Readiness against N. Korean Provocations," August 17, 2015)

The United Nations Command has proposed general-level talks with North Korea to discuss the recent mine explosion on the South Korean side of the demilitarized zone blamed on the communist country, the UNC said August 18. But the country has not yet accepted the offer, they said. "The UNC has passed messages to the (North) Korean People's Army, proposing a general officer-level dialogue regarding the August 4 mine incident," a spokesman for the UNC said. The proposals were made on two occasions on August 10 and 13, he said. (Yonhap, "U.N. Command Proposes General Officer-Level Talks with N. Korea," August 18, 2015)

The two Koreas have agreed to raise the minimum wage by 5 percent for North Korean workers at their joint factory park, the Unification Ministry said August 18, following months of grueling negotiations amid strained cross-border ties. The sides held talks at the Gaeseong industrial complex at the North Korean border city on August 17. Under the deal, the monthly pay, which includes insurance fees and other benefits, will increase to \$73.87 from \$70.35 and apply retroactively from March. An inter-Korean committee tasked with the operation of the business district will continue to discuss ways to improve the fundamental wage structure, a ministry official said. "The two sides also agreed to have businesses adjust incentives according to the employees' participation, contribution to production and attitude at work, while ensuring stable labor supplies," the official told reporters. "We resolved the most pressing issues at hand but still have a long way to go. We will work through dialogue to come up with a reasonable wage system in a way that helps enhance productivity." (Shin Hyon-hee, "Koreas Agree to 5%Kaesong Wage Hike," *Korea Herald*, August 18, 2015)

8/19/15

NDC Policy Department statement: "Abe's "statement" on the 70th anniversary of the Japanese imperialists' defeat in the war should have been full of deep remorse and

heartfelt apology for the bloody crime-woven past which inflicted tremendous damage and sufferings on the Korean and other Asian peoples. ... No sooner had Abe's "statement" been published than it aroused hatred and resentment of public at home and abroad. Abe's "statement" is a blatant challenge to the sovereignty and dignity of the DPRK, international justice and conscience of mankind as it concealed, curtailed and avoided the crimes from the beginning to the last. Abe is a typical man of modern samurais who carried forward craftiness and belligerency and is accustomed to ultra-right reactionary idea as he is running the whole gamut of gimmick to bury the unprecedented hair-raising crimes into the oblivion of history. Looking back on the past, what Abe buckled down to right after he became the driver of a militarist chariot running headlong into the road of reinvasion was to revise the constitution in order to totally deny the legal position of Japan as a war criminal state and defeated state which is unable to make any military threat or use and have army after the Second World War. The army and people of the DPRK will certainly and unconditionally force the Japanese reactionaries, the sworn enemy, to pay thousand-fold price generation after generation. If Abe does not want to face nightmare-like tragedy on this planet, he should bring his knees before the Korean people and mankind, unconditionally apologize for the unheard-of crimes and make honest reparation for them, showing his will in practice to prevent Japan from repeating the crime-woven past. This is the best way for saving Japan from running fast to ruin." (KCNA, "Spokesman for NDC Policy Department Warns Abe Group Not to Run Wild for Revival of Militarism," August 19, 2015)

Liu and Bermudez: "Despite speculation that Pyongyang intends to conduct its fourth long-range rocket launch on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea in October, with less than two months to go, recent commercial satellite imagery still shows no signs of launch preparations. As of mid-August, a rail-mounted structure, intended to transport the space launch vehicle (SLV) stages and other equipment from a new processing building on the launch pad to the gantry tower has been completed and aligned with that building. Whether that activity is related to continued work to complete the structures—such as installing equipment inside and checking out the buildings—or launch preparations remains unclear. While there are no visible indicators of launch preparations at the rest of the Sohae Satellite Launching Station—such as a general increase in the level of activity—if Pyongyang were to decide to move forward with a long-range SLV test and the new facilities were not yet fully operational, the North could still utilize existing facilities to support a launch. One significant objective of North Korean construction efforts during the past eight months has been to degrade the ability of outsiders to monitor launch preparations through the building of a covered rail station, an underground rail spur to the launch pad and the movable processing structure that would receive deliveries from that spur. Aside from making it more difficult to gather information on Pyongyang's SLVs and test preparations, these activities may also reduce the amount of warning time that an SLV launch is about to take place. Recent imagery also indicates that the North Koreans have conducted an engine test at the vertical engine test stand since late July. Moreover, they are installing two new, larger, storage buildings for fuel and oxidizer. When complete, they will provide more than double the storage capacity of the existing structures, suggesting that the North Koreans are developing a capability to

test larger, more capable engines. ... First, the August 13 imagery indicates that since the site was last viewed in late July, North Korea has conducted at least one SLV engine test. Additional scarring is visible in the exhaust deflector as is an oblong patch of burnt vegetation measuring about 60 meters long by 27 meters wide immediately south/southwest of and in line with the deflector. Second, preliminary construction on the northeast corner of the test pad's concrete apron seen in late July now appears to be one of two new, larger, storage buildings for rocket fuel and oxidizer—the second located in the northwest corner. Each of the new buildings measures approximately 30 meters by 13 meters. When complete, they will provide more than double the storage capacity of the existing structures, suggesting that the North Koreans are developing a capability to test larger, more capable engines. Work continues as several vehicles probably related to construction are in the area as is what appear to be a number of pre-formed concrete structural members neatly laid out on the apron. (Jack Liu and Joseph Bermudez, "North Korea's Sohae Facility: No Sign of Launch Preparations; New Construction at Engine Test Stand," *38North*, August 19, 2015)

8/20/15

The two Koreas engaged in a brief exchange of shells over the western part of their heavily-fortified border, escalating tensions following the North's recent landmine attack on the South side. President Park Geun-hye, in response, ordered the military to sternly deal with North Korea's provocations and to maintain readiness amid escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, according to an official. She gave the orders at an emergency session of the National Security Council at the South Korean presidential office of Cheong Wa Dae, presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook told reporters. The South Korean military's radar system detected North Korea firing a shell toward a South Korean front-line military unit in Yeoncheon, Gyeonggi Province, northwest of Seoul, at 3:52 p.m., the Ministry of National Defense said. In response, South Korea fired back dozens of 155-millimeter shells at the point where the North fired the shell at 5:04 p.m., the ministry noted. "Our military's sensor system detected the North firing a shell suspected to be from a rocket launcher at the town of Jungmyeon, Yeoncheon," a ministry official said. The engagement ended without further development with no damage of any kind to the South Korean side reported as the shell landed on an uninhabited hill, he said. The South Korean military had some 100 civilians living in the front-line and adjacent areas evacuated and moved them to shelters, according to the ministry. Park also instructed officials to ensure the safety of local residents, said Min. The shelling immediately put the South Korean military on the top-level readiness position. "Our military has carried out our response operations," the ministry said, declining to discuss the kinds of counteraction being taking. (Yonhap, "Two Koreas Exchange Shells over Western Border," August 20, 2015) The JCS said the North fired the rounds around 4 p.m. but they hit several kilometers away from the South Korean loudspeakers. Seoul retaliated by firing 29 rounds toward the North Korean side of the DMZ but did not strike at the source of the attacks as it had vowed to do. South Korea suffered no damage to materiel and personnel, while it remains unclear if the North sustained any damage. The Unification Ministry said the North Korean Workers Party made a phone call through an established channel at 4:50 p.m. urging Seoul to halt the propaganda broadcasts. The North claimed the propaganda broadcasts are "declarations of war" and added that Pyongyang was willing to work to "resolve the current situation and open channels to improve relations." But in another message at 5

p.m. the North Korean People's Armed Forces sent another message demanding that the South halt propaganda broadcasts within 48 hours and dismantle the loudspeakers or face further military action. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "2 Koreas Exchange Fire across Border," August 21, 2015) North Korea will take military action if South Korea does not stop its anti-Pyongyang propaganda campaign at the border, the communist country warned Thursday after firing an artillery shell into the South. The warning message issued by the North's general staff department was delivered to the South around 5:00 p.m., about one hour after it fired the shell over the western part of the border, according to the Ministry of National Defense. "The North side threatened to start military action if the South does not stop its anti-Pyongyang psychological broadcasting and remove all the facilities in 48 hours from 5:00 p.m.," the ministry said, quoting the message from the North. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Threatens Military Action If South Continues Propaganda Warfare," August 20, 2015) Military forces of North and South Korea exchanged fire across the 4 kilometer (2.5 mile)-wide Korean Demilitarized Zone this afternoon. Though the incident itself is a symptom of high tensions between the two Koreas and shows how easily military exchanges can occur, the outcome shows it is possible to effectively handle such an incident without wider conflict and that neither side desires a resumption of open warfare. The KPA first fired one 14.5 mm round toward loudspeakers in the DMZ in South Korea's Yeoncheon County, Gyeonggi Province, at 3:52 p.m. KST. They followed this by firing three 76.2 mm rounds at 4:12 p.m. This second volley was fired toward South Korean forces of the 28th Infantry Division and fell about 700 meters south of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) in a mountainous area near the middle of Yeoncheon County. The Republic of Korea (South Korea) Army measured the ballistic trajectory of the rounds to determine the probable origin and returned fire with 29 shells at a location about 500 meters north of the MDL at 5:04 p.m., more than one hour after the initial firing by North Korea. As a precaution, South Korea evacuated the villages of Hwangsan-li and Sanmgot-li in Yeoncheon County, minimizing the risk of civilian casualties if the event had escalated and resulted in further exchange of fire. South Korea also raised its military alertness level to Jindogae-1. This indicates immediate danger, imminent attack or impending invasion. The North Korean gunfire came from an area under the 2nd Corps of the Korean People's Army, whose most recently known commander of this corps is Lieutenant General Kim Sang Ryong. The ROKA 28th Infantry Division is the South Korean unit responsible for Yeoncheon County, the area fired upon by the North, with the unit itself seemingly the target of the second volley. The division is subordinate to the ROKA VI (6th) Corps. Most early reports described the first round fired by the North as possibly being a small rocket. But later multiple sources consistently described it as a 14.5 mm anti-aircraft machine gun (AAMG), citing the South Korean military. This would likely be either a ZPU-2 or ZPU-4. The ZPU series AAMG is a large-caliber machine gun originally designed as anti-aircraft artillery, though also commonly used for ground warfare as well. The second volley of three rounds was fired from a 76.2 mm gun, likely a ZIS-3 or a North Korean-produced derivative thereof. This is a direct fire gun, meaning it is fired at a target for which the gunners have direct line-of-sight. It is primarily used as an anti-tank weapon. This weapon is relatively small compared to most modern artillery. Even most standard infantry mortars are larger (North Korea's primary infantry mortar has a caliber of 82 mm while South Korea and the United States use an 81 mm mortar). The ROKA 28th Infantry Division returned fire

to the North with 155 mm artillery, possibly the self-propelled K9 Thunder, but also possibly the K55 (a derivative of the U.S.-made M109) or the towed KH179. Though both the choice of weapon caliber and the number of rounds may appear to be South Korea upping the ante on the North, the decision was likely both a matter of availability and a means to counter North Korea with a meaningful impact by dealing more significant damage. Military units along the DMZ- on both sides- should routinely keep artillery batteries on standby to return fire at enemy positions in the event of a provocation. While the side conducting a provocation (i.e. the North) can easily choose which type of weapon to use for the intended purpose, it is in the interest of the responding side to use the unit and weapons most readily available. The KPA fired at 3:52 and again at 4:12, but South Korea only returned fire at about 5 p.m. It is unknown exactly why it took about an hour for South Korea to respond with counter-battery fire, though a few possibilities are likely. It may have been that the South Korean military unit took some caution and waited for approval from a higher echelon. It is known that the ROK military used a counter-battery radar - a radar which detects a projectile and traces its ballistic trajectory to find the probable location of origin - to determine where to fire. However, it should not take nearly an hour to conduct this analysis, relay coordinates to the artillery and return fire. If this is typical of South Korean response time, they will need to improve to be able to effectively return fire in a larger conflict, as it is easily possible for the North Korean artillery unit who fired the rounds to have relocated by the time the South responded. This, however, may itself be the reason for the delay. Perhaps in an effort to avoid escalation, the South Korean may have consciously decided to fire on the suspected position of the North's artillery, but long enough afterward for the Northern artillery to have safely moved away. This would demonstrate the South's ability to find and target the North's artillery without actually inflicting casualties this time. Only the North Korean's would know whether this strategy would effectively deter them or not. The chain of events leading to Thursday's fire exchange began with mine explosion in the DMZ on August 4 which injured two ROK soldiers and which Seoul claims was intentionally caused by North Korea. Though many areas of the DMZ have active minefields, the location at which the explosion occurred on August 4 was not one of them. The explosion occurred at a gate within the southern side of the DMZ used by ROK military troops on patrol. South Korea has claimed that soldiers from the North infiltrated the area and intentionally planted the mine as a booby trap. The North has denied responsibility and claims the mine was likely moved from its original location by water. This is something that happens frequently due to heavy rains, especially in the summer monsoon season. Today's provocation by North Korea was a direct response to South Korea's resumption of propaganda broadcasts. Not only did the initial round fired apparently target a loudspeaker installation, but North Korea reportedly threatened further action if the South does not cease the propaganda broadcasts within the next 48 hours. North Korea could have easily used larger artillery and fired more effectively to destroy the loudspeakers if that were truly intention. The fact that they used relatively low caliber weaponry targeting a military unit for most of the firing, and followed with the 48-hour warning shows that the North seeks to raise the specter of fear without actually engaging in a large-scale attack. The North likely hopes that South Korea will conclude that maintaining the propaganda broadcasts is not worth the risk of another provocation. It is unlikely, though, that Seoul will give in to such demands. A likely

additional factor in North Korea's decision to make this provocation is the joint ROK-U.S. Ulchi-Freedom Guardian (UFG) military exercise currently underway. The exercise, which is held annually, began on August 17. South Korea and the U.S. describe this and other exercises as defensive in nature, but North Korea routinely criticizes them as rehearsals for an invasion of North and considers them provocative. It is not uncommon for tensions on the peninsula to rise during such exercises. Any exchange of fire or provocation involving direct military contact between the two Koreas has the potential for escalation into a wider conflict, whether or not this is the intended outcome (which it rarely is). The risk of escalation is higher at the DMZ than it is at sea or on and around the various islands near the Northern Limit Line, the *de facto* inter-Korean maritime border in the Yellow Sea, where military skirmishes have been more frequent. At sea and on islands, military forces are relatively isolated from the opposing forces and other units from their own side. They have little direct contact with the enemy and can not necessarily expect quick reinforcement or fire support from allied forces. By contrast, units at the DMZ are often in visual contact with both allies and enemies. Each side maintains a more-or-less unbroken chain of guard posts and other positions within visual range of one another. In addition, the concentration of forces on the DMZ on both sides is relatively high as are tensions and alertness. This means that an incident could inadvertently result in a chain reaction of units providing supporting fire to adjacent units, until fighting has broken out along much of the border. Though the North may occasionally engage in military provocation and the South is willing to respond in kind, neither side wants an open conflict. The fact that this incident initially resulted in only controlled return fire by the South and no further military action by either side demonstrates the ability and desire of both sides to limit escalation. Both sides appear to have intentionally fired at such times and/or locations to provoke the opposing side but not actually inflict casualties. Avoiding escalation of an incident into open conflict requires strict discipline, strong command and control, and clear rules of engagement in the military forces on both sides. (John Grisafi, "Analysis: Exchange of Fire Shows Neither Korea Wants War," *NKNews*, August 21, 2015)

The United Nations Command (UNC) has proposed having working-level talks with North Korea to discuss escalating tension on the divided Korean Peninsula, sparked by the North's recent firing of artillery shells across the border, a military source said August 21. The UNC sent a message to North Korea on August 20, offering to hold dialogue with Pyongyang following the North's firing of several shells across the heavily fortified inter-Korean border, according to the source. "The UNC has called for North Korea to refrain from worsening the situation on the peninsula as the North's firing of artillery shells is a serious violation of the armistice agreement," the source said. "It has proposed to have a working-level dialogue to prepare for general-level talks." The North has not yet responded to the UNC's proposal, it added. (Yonhap, "U.N. Command Offers Talks with N. Korea over Shelling: Source," August 21, 2015)

A North Korean official who is in charge of negotiations with Japan told Asano Kenichi, an executive of a Kyoto-based organization that promotes Japan-North Korea relations, that the North has informed the Japanese government that its investigation of the abductees is complete and the report is ready and that Japan has refused to

receive the report. A senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official said the claim is untrue. (Jiji, "Pyongyang Says Abductions Probe Report Is Ready, But Tokyo Refused to Receive It," *Japan Times*, August 20, 2015)

8/21/15

President Park Geun-hye ordered South Korea's military to thoroughly and sternly retaliate against North Korea if provoked again, an official said, as the North threatened to take military action against the South over an anti-Pyongyang propaganda campaign at the border. "We can never tolerate any North Korean provocations that could endanger the safety of our soldiers and people," Park said during a surprise visit to the headquarters of the Third Army near Seoul. She also instructed the military to maintain a tight readiness to immediately cope with any additional North Korean provocations, presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook told reporters. North Korea has given a 48-hour ultimatum for South Korea to end the psychological warfare and dismantle its loudspeakers along the heavily fortified border, otherwise it will launch "a strong military action." South Korea has rejected the North's demand, stoking fears of yet another military clash between the two sides after they briefly exchanged artillery shells over the western section of their border on Thursday. "South Korea will strongly retaliate against any kind of North Korean attacks and the North will have to take all the responsibility for such retaliative actions," Defense Minister Han Min-koo warned in a message sent to the North today. Kim has ordered front-line troops to have full combat readiness and front-line areas to be in a "semi-war state" starting at 5 p.m. today, according to the North's state media. Separately, North Korea seems to be gearing up to fire missiles, an official said, a move that could be seen as a show of force against South Korea amid escalating tensions. "The North is showing signs of shooting off a Scud missile near Wonsan and a Rodong missile in North Pyongan Province," the official said, citing detection results of its joint radar system with the United States. Meanwhile, South Korea said it has measures to ensure the safety of its nationals who are temporarily staying in the North. It said it has put a partial ban on the entry of its nationals into an inter-Korean joint factory park in the North's western border city of Kaesong. (Yonhap, "Park Orders Military to Sternly Deal with Any N. Korean Provocation," August 21, 2015) South Korean and U.S. forces were cooperating closely to respond firmly to North Korea's shelling, Thursday, and possible additional provocations under a joint operational plan, South Korean officials said today. "Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Choi Yun-hee and U.S. Forces Korea Commander Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti have shared information on the current situation," a defense ministry official said. "The joint operational plan is a response to the North's attack a day earlier." Under the contingency plan, the U.S. 210th Fire Brigade, which has high-tech weaponry including the M270A1 multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) for counter-fire missions against the North's multiple rocket systems, is ready to support South Korean troops. Considering escalating tensions on the border, the allies also may utilize troops that are now participating in joint live firing drills in deterring North Korea, the official said. (Kang Seung-woo, "N. Korea Declares 'Quasi-State of War,'" *Korea Times*, August 21, 2015)

KCNA: "Upon receiving the news of recent **emergency enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission** of the Workers' Party of Korea and the urgent report of

the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army, all the servicepersons are burning their hearts with the unshakable will to annihilate the enemy. **On orders of Supreme Commander Kim Jong-un, the KPA frontline large combined units entered into a wartime state** all at once, fully armed to launch surprise operations, and wound up their preparedness for action. Now, the KPA soldiers wait for an order of attack to destroy the war maniacs who are getting hell-bent on the anti-DPRK moves, oblivious of their past defeat. **The enemy's provocation bases and anti-DPRK propaganda bases and means for psywar are within the sight of the KPA's multiple rocket launchers and tactical and strategic rocket forces.** Meanwhile, all the civic units in the frontline zone have gone into a semi-war system. They are now speeding up the production and construction while keeping themselves in combat posture." (KCNA, "KPA Units Wind up Preparations for Military Action," August 21, 2015)

DPRK FoMin statement: "The south Korean puppet forces claimed before any others that they made a retaliatory firing because the DPRK's side fired one shell first, but this was a completely sheer lie and fabrication. On Thursday [August 20] the DPRK's side clarified that it did not fire even a single bullet or single shell at the enemy's side first nor it made any accidental firing. The recent shelling incident unilaterally committed by the south Korean puppet forces was neither incidental nor an accident but a carefully calculated provocation committed by themselves. It is a trite method of the successive south Korean rulers to cook up a shocking incident in the area along the MDL whenever they face a crisis in a bid to divert the attention of public at home and abroad elsewhere and seek a way out of it. The recent incident was an undisguised provocation aimed to tide over their crisis, get breathing spell and strain the situation on the Korean Peninsula to an extreme pitch of tension and thus spoil other's festival. The enemy cooked up the "mine explosion" case in an area along the Military Demarcation Line and resumed broadcasting for psychological warfare against the north under that pretext in a bid to rattle its nerve to the worst extent, while staging large-scale joint military exercises together with the U.S. By escalating the tension this way, they carried out the artillery firing after creating psychological situation to make the international community think the DPRK's side might fire one shell first and are now insisting it was "firing in retaliation" against the former's shelling. However, the enemy were seriously mistaken this time. They tried to divert elsewhere the attention of the world people through the shelling, becoming unable to escape the fate of perishing in the flames kindled by themselves. The General Staff of the Korean People's Army sent an ultimatum to the south Korean puppet Ministry of Defense at 17:00, Pyongyang time, on August 20 that a strong military action would be launched unless it stops the anti-DPRK broadcasting for psychological warfare and dismantles all psywar means within 48 hours. The Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea examined and ratified the offensive operation plan of the KPA Front Command to launch retaliatory strike and counterattack on the whole length of the front all at once. It also approved the decision of the KPA General Staff in which it sent an ultimatum to the south Korean puppet Ministry of Defense. Supreme leader Kim Jong-un issued an order of the supreme commander of the Korean People's Army that the frontline large combined units of the KPA should enter a wartime state to be fully battle ready to launch surprise operations and the area along the front be put in a semi-war state from

17:00 on Friday August 21]. The situation which has reached the brink of war is now hardly controllable. We have exercised our self-restraint for decades. Now no one's talk about self-restraint is helpful to putting the situation under control. The army and people of the DPRK are poised not to just counteract or make any retaliation but not to rule out an all-out war to protect the social system, their own choice, at the risk of their lives." (KCNA, "DPRK FM on Situation That Reached the Brink of War," August 21, 2015)

KCNA: "The worst touch-and-go situation was created on the Korean Peninsula. The warlike developments such as crossfire, broadcasting for psychological warfare and scattering of leaflets in peace time throw into uneasiness Northeast Asia including the peninsula. What is the cause and who spearheads it? Now the world attention is focused on large-scale Ulji Freedom Guardian joint military drills being staged by the U.S. and south Korean puppet forces on the peninsula. Due to the exercises, typical north-targeted nuclear test war drill for making preemptive nuclear strike at the DPRK, the sky, the land and seas of south Korea turned into theatres of war maneuvers for invading the north. Timed to coincide with this, the south Korean puppet forces totally resumed the broadcasting for "psychological warfare against the north" under the pretext of the suspicious "mine explosion" that occurred in the demilitarized zone in the western sector of the front on August 4, forcibly linking the case with the DPRK. The puppet military gangsters continue the said broadcasting day and night on the whole front and, at the same time, are carrying out the "operation of scattering leaflets toward the north" with the mobilization of wicked reactionary organizations. Those acts have recently become more intensified than the past period in their scale and frequency to reach the extreme phase which cannot be overlooked any longer. The resumption of the broadcasting on the front is a wanton violation of the north-south military agreements, a grave military provocation against the DPRK and a crucial case pushing the inter-Korean relations to the worst phase. What should not be overlooked is that the puppet military warmongers fired 36 shells at KPA civil police posts under the pretext that the KPA fired one shell at the south side in the central western sector of the front on August 20. The Park Geun Hye group is escalating confrontation with the fellow countrymen in parallel with the broadcasting for psychological warfare while conducting the large-scale joint military maneuvers with the U.S. This means an undisguised advance into the state of war for aggression. **An emergency enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea was convened and the supreme commander of the Korean People's Army issued an order to cope with the prevailing dangerous situation.** This is a historic measure to frustrate the vicious politically-motivated military provocation of the hostile forces aimed at undermining the political idea and social system of the DPRK, overturning its political power and putting all its territory under their control. The army and people of the DPRK are hardening the strong will of retaliation upon the order of the KPA supreme commander. The DPRK army is full of surging indignation at the puppet military's provocative saber-rattling and is high in the spirit of annihilating the enemy with its guns leveled at the means for psychological warfare, ready to completely destroy them through immediate military action. **The ultimatum issued by the General Staff of the Korean People's Army that a strong military action would be launched at once unless the south Korean puppet forces stop the anti-DPRK**

broadcasting for psychological warfare and remove all psywar means within 48 hours is not just a mere warning. The U.S. and the south Korean puppet forces should not act rashly just like a puppy knowing no fear of the tiger, but clearly understand the will of retaliation of the angered army of the DPRK and behave with discretion. Those who pushed the situation to a catastrophic phase are bound to meet merciless retaliation. (KCNA, "KPA's Ultimatum Is Not Just a Warning: KCNA Commentary," August 21, 2015)

8/22/15

South and North Korea agreed to hold a high-level talk at the truce village of Panmunjom at 6 p.m. today in an apparent effort to prevent ongoing tensions from escalating into a full-fledged military conflict. South Korea's presidential office announced around 3 p.m. today, two hours before Pyongyang's deadline for Seoul to stop propaganda broadcasts along the border, that Kim Kwan-jin, a senior presidential security advisor, and Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo will meet with their North Korean counterparts Hwang Pyong-so and Kim Yang-gon. Hwang, the director of the General Political Bureau of the North Korean Army, is considered to be the country's second-most powerful man after leader Kim Jong-un. Kim Yang-gon, secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party, is in charge of inter-Korean relations for the North. "The talk's agenda will include all ongoing inter-Korean matters," said a Unification Ministry official. The South Korean military has stated it will remain at its highest alert level. North Korea first proposed a one-on-one talk between Kim Yang-on and Kim Kwan-jin at around 4 p.m. yesterday, the Blue House said. Two hours later, Seoul demanded Hwang attend the talks instead of Kim Yang-gon. At 9 a.m. today, Pyongyang replied by proposing a four-member talk, which Seoul accepted. The duo from the North met with Kim Kwan-jin 10 months ago, when they visited the South to attend the closing ceremony for the Incheon Asian Games on October 4. (Kang Jin-kyu, "South, North Korea Agree to High-Level Talks," *JoongAng Ilbo*, August 22, 2015)

Japan has protested bitterly after Russia's prime minister visited a disputed island in a row that threatens improved relations between the two countries. Dmitry Medvedev visited the island of Iturup, known as Etorofu in Japan, and declared the Kuril Islands were part of Russia. "This is how it is and how it will be," said Medvedev. Japan summoned the Russian ambassador for a dressing down, telling him the visit was "extremely regrettable" and "injured the feelings of the Japanese people," while the foreign minister will delay a planned visit to Moscow. The tension reduces the chances of a summit this year between Abe Shinzo, Japan's prime minister, and President Vladimir Putin of Russia and hurts a relationship both countries need to offset their frosty dealings with other neighbors. Settling the Northern Territories dispute is one of Abe's most personal diplomatic goals. His father, Abe Shintaro, tried and failed as foreign minister in negotiations with Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s. The younger Abe was at his side as a secretary. "It's kind of a family business," said Shimotomai Nobuo, an authority on Russia at Hosei University in Tokyo. "Mr Abe wants to solve the issue himself with President Putin." People close to Abe say he has good personal chemistry with the Russian leader but many experts doubt whether Putin will ever relinquish territory gained at great cost, and think he is playing "good cop, bad cop" with Medvedev. Hakamada Shigeki, a professor at the University of Niigata, believes Japan suffers from a degree of "Putin illusion" in its fond hopes that the judo-loving Russian

president – who unlike Mr Medvedev has never visited the Kurils – is ready for a deal. In 2012, Putin used the judo term for a “draw” in talking about the islands, referring to a 2008 settlement in which Russia and China agreed to split disputed Bolshoi Ussuriyskiy island down the middle. But the Russian president is now riding a wave of nationalism after annexing Crimea in 2014. That move – and Japan’s support for international sanctions on Russia – has left a more pragmatic diplomatic calculation for both sides. “The Abe administration has a dilemma. If it doesn’t take a strongly critical stance to violations of sovereignty then it risks its future position with China over the Senkaku Islands,” says Hakamada. China claims the Japanese-controlled islands, which it calls the Diaoyu. On the other hand, Abe is determined to make progress on the Northern Territories, and given its difficult relationships with China and South Korea, Japan is reluctant to alienate Russia as well. Russia, meanwhile, is conducting its own diplomatic pivot towards Asia. To avoid that being purely a pivot to China, however, it needs to strengthen relations with other regional players such as Japan – although the strength of Japan’s US alliance gives Russia little incentive to make concessions. (Robin Harding, “Medvedev Visit to Disputed Island Draws Japanese Rebuke,” *Financial Times*, August 24, 2015, p. 2)

8/23/15

South and North Korea held a second round of high-level talks at the truce village of Panmunjom on August 23, less than 12 hours after their first meeting, in an apparent effort to prevent rising tensions from developing into a full-fledged conflict. The resumption of the high-level discussions came 11 hours after the first session was adjourned at 4:15 a.m. today. South Korea’s director of National Security Kim Kwan-jin and Minister of Unification Hong Yong-pyo returned to the table at the border town for discussions with their North Korean counterparts Hwang Pyong-so, the director of the General Political Bureau of the North Korean Army and Kim Yang-gon, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party, who oversees inter-Korean relations for Pyongyang. Talks began at 3:30 p.m. today and were ongoing as of press time. The first round lasted 10 hours. The fact that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent Vice Marshal Hwang, considered the regime’s second most powerful in command, was seen as significant and boosted the expectation that Pyongyang was also seeking to end the military impasse. The official statement announced by the presidential office at 4:53 a.m. Sunday raised speculation that there was a considerable gap in both sides’ stance on inter-Korean issues and did not specify progress made during the meeting. The discussions marked the second time Kim Kwan-jin, the national security adviser, has met with Hwang and Kim Yang-gon, his North Korean counterparts. He previously spoke with them on October 4, when a high-ranking North Korean delegation visited South Korea to attend the closing ceremony of the Incheon Asian Games. Among them was Choe Ryong-hae, another top aide to Kim Jong-un. While the men visited Incheon with the reported purpose of attending the ceremony, their presence was widely seen as an overture by North Korea to improve inter-Korean relations, though their trip failed to yield any tangible outcome. While no details about the second round of talks were available by press time Sunday, expectations that the standoff between both sides could come neatly to an end came Saturday when Pyongyang referred to South Korea as the Republic of Korea, its official name, in its report on the discussions. The reference by the state-run Korean Central Television is something of a rarity, as the regime’s mouthpiece usually addresses South Korea as an “American

puppet." But while the second meeting at Panmunjom continued, South Korea's military remained on high alert, and intelligence obtained over the weekend showed that 70 percent of North Korean submarines had been mobilized for operation, raising red flags over potential strikes from underwater. According to one military source, of the 70 submarines North Korea operates in total, 50 have gone off the radar, meaning they have been dispatched underwater. The official added that the number of submarines suspected of being in operation Sunday was 10 times higher than usual. "The military keeps close watch on the operation of [North Korea's submarines] because it could be a barometer of North Korean provocation," said the official, speaking on the condition of anonymity. The military found that most of the submarines stationed at Navy units along North Korea's east and west coasts had been deployed, prompting the South Korean military to bolster maritime surveillance. The simultaneous disappearance of the 50 submarines was interpreted as a grave security threat to the South Korean military, as it is practically impossible to determine the origin of an attack when it is prompted by a submarine. The military also discovered that the North Korean Army doubled its artillery power along the DMZ over the weekend in what was seen as part of its typically two-faced strategy, stoking tension to pressure Seoul as it participates in high-level talks. An expert on the North Korean military said the tactic by the North Korean Navy could be a strategic calculation to apply further pressure on the talks at Panmunjom. "While it could be a strategic choice [by North Korea] to take the upper hand in the ongoing talks, it could also be military preparation to carry out further provocations in case the talks fall apart," said the expert, who also asked for anonymity. The latest moves by North Korea's military kept tensions high despite the second round of talks at the border. In an apparent show of force, South Korea and the United States flew F-15Ks and F-16s together and ran simulated bombing sorties on Saturday in an apparent warning to the North of the consequences its actions would cause. In the political circle, the ruling Saenuri Party and the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy made a bipartisan pledge on Saturday, vowing to actively cooperate in the face of North Korean provocation by putting aside political bickering for the time being. (Kang Jin-kyu, "Marathon Talks Arranged While Conflict Averted," *JoongAng Ilbo*, August 23, 2015)

8/24/15

North Korea declared a quasi state of war and directed a "war drama" continuing to enhance its fighting power, plainly exposing the "three key forces for infiltration" of the North Korean military, which seeks asymmetric warfare. South Korean intelligence authorities analyzed on August 24 that the North Korean military had moved its ground, sea, air and missile power according to a manual for a quasi state of war. This is why some experts believe that the latest confrontation between the two Koreas provided an opportunity to identify the North's manual for a quasi state of war, intelligence with high value. This day, a day before Songunjol (Day of Songun: a national holiday marking the start of Kim Jong-il's Songun policy) North Korea held a "central report conference," but many military leaders including Chief of the General Staff Ri Yong-gil, Commander of the Navy Ri Yong-ju, and Commander of the Air Force Choi Yong-ho were absent. Their absence may be because the North had engaged in combat readiness. This day a South Korean military official announced, "After North Korea declared a quasi state of war, their military placed more than twenty air-cushioned vehicles (ACV), originally stationed at a base in Cholsan-gun, North

Pyongan Province, to the Nampo Base, which lies closer to the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea." Air-cushioned vehicles, which can quickly transport special forces units for infiltration purposes, are one of the three core forces for penetration possessed by the North. The North positioned two types of air-cushioned vehicles: one was Gongbang II (35t), 21m long with maximum speed of 74-96km per hour; and the other was Gongbang III (20t), 18m long with maximum speed of 96km per hour. Reportedly, the North had planned to place these air-cushioned vehicles even further south at the Goampo Base, if the orders came. The Goampo Base is the closest to the Northern Limit Line, located only 60km north of the NLL. North Korea also deployed more than fifty submarines and submersibles into the water away from ROK-US radar, but most had to eventually return to the base due to the approaching typhoon. North Korean submarines cannot operate in deep waters, so it was inevitable for them to return to the base. North Korea also sent the elite special forces unit to the border area in order to strike the South's loudspeakers. The South Korean military official said, "After the North declared a quasi state of war, movement among the North's infiltration units and penetration power was most active." As the South was able to observe North Korea's asymmetric warfare strategy in practice due to the latest confrontation, some experts are saying that ironically North Korea seemed to have engaged in a losing battle. **Reportedly, North Korea's Air Force virtually ceased all flight activity after the declaration of a quasi state of war.** This was in contrast with the active movements the Air Force had shown so far: due to the falling oil prices this year, the North had significantly increased the number of flight training and had also held an air show of the Korean People's Army's fighter jets early this month. North Korea moved its air power such as fighter jets to the igloo (a hangar) and some models were known to have moved to other air bases. Experts believe such a move was caused by the awareness that the jets would be the most likely targets in the early stages of a military clash, if one ever occurred between the two Koreas. An official from the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, "The ROK-U.S. surveillance units caught every movement of the North Korean military which was different from normal after the declaration of a quasi state of war." (Bak Seong-jin, "N.K. Mobilized Its '3 Key Forces for Infiltration' Air-Cushioned Vehicles, Submarines, and Special Forces: Exposed Manual for Quasi State of War, *Kyunghyang Shinmin*, August 25, 2015)

The Air Force will send three B-2 bombers to Guam as part of a normal rotation to bolster ally South Korea, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said. "We are in the process right now of deploying three B-2s on a scheduled rotation to Andersen Air Base in Guam," Welsh said. "We continue to have airmen stationed on the Korean Peninsula who are there full time who are ready for whatever might happen, and they are ready everyday." (Phillip Swarts, "B-52s to Deploy to Guam in Support of South Korea," *Defense News*, August 24, 2015)

8/22-25/15

Following a hard-fought breakthrough, the two Koreas began taking steps August 25 to defuse tension on the peninsula, as the South halted anti-Pyongyang broadcasts along the border as of midday and the North lifted its "quasi-state of war" and was seen reinstating some frontline military forces. The broadcasts and wartime declaration came to an end at noon, hours after the two sides clinched a six-point agreement in which Pyongyang displayed regret over a recent land mine blasts in the Demilitarized

Zone and ensuing wounds on two South Korean soldiers in return for Seoul's conditional cessation of loudspeaker operations. They also agreed to hold formal talks in Seoul or Pyongyang "at an early date" to explore ways to mend their ties and have a working-level meeting in early September to arrange a fresh round of reunions of separated families in time for the Chuseok holidays at the end of the month. The announcement followed 43 hours of negotiations that kicked off August 22. Kim Kwan-jin, chief of Cheong Wa Dae's National Security Office, and Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo sat face-to-face with Hwang Pyong-so, vice chairman of the North's National Defense Commission and director of the General Political Bureau of the Korean People's Army, and Kim Yang-gon, director of the North's United Front Department and a secretary of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee, in the border village of Panmunjeom until early August 25. "We focused on extracting an apology for the land mine provocation and other recent incidents by North Korea as the subject (of the talks), and a promise to prevent a recurrence, which in fact resulted in protracted negotiations," Kim Kwan-jin said at a news conference at Cheong Wa Dae. "But the reason why we ceaselessly called for preventive steps was that otherwise, there would be one provocation threatening public safety after another -- we would not have been able to break the vicious circle." But criticism lingers over Seoul's failure to include in the accord a clear articulation of apology and preventive measures, as well as who is to blame for the mine explosions. Seoul officials defended themselves by saying that the word "regret" had never been stipulated in any past inter-Korean statements, while the caveat attached -- "unless any abnormal situation takes place" -- ensured that the propaganda broadcasts could be resumed at any time if the communist country staged a provocation in the future. In an apparent attempt to play down the show of regret, the North's Hwang Pyong-so later in the day repeated Pyongyang's denial of responsibility for the recent series of its provocations, saying that Seoul fabricated "groundless incidents" and only escalated tensions that could induce an armed clash. "Through the urgent talks, the South Korean authorities should have realized that its fabrication of groundless incidents and unilateral judgment and behavior would only heighten tensions and could give rise to a military confrontation," he said in an interview with the North's Korean Central TV as he assessed the outcome of the talks. "But we think that it is a relief that our joint efforts set the mood for the improvement of inter-Korean relations," he was quoted as adding. Following an 11-year break, the broadcasts were restarted on August 11 along the Military Demarcation Line in retaliation for the August 4 explosion of three mines suspected to have been buried by North Korean soldiers who illegally crossed the border. While welcoming the breakthrough, the South Korean military remained cautious, saying it was maintaining maximum readiness, which it would adjust according to the North's movements. U.S. Forces Korea are likely to take similar steps before lowering their Watch Condition level. Defense Minister Han Min-koo convened two separate meetings August 25 to discuss follow-up measures with top military commanders and ministry and Joint Chiefs of Staff executives. "Even if the North does rescind the semi-war state, it will take a considerable amount of time and effort to bring the already deployed frontline artillery and other military forces back to normal," Kim said at a news briefing. "Our military will flexibly downgrade its readiness, taking into account the level of threat from North Korea." (Shin Hyon-lee, "Koreas Set out to Defuse Military Tension," Korea Herald, August 25, 2015) The two Koreas will capitalize on their agreement at high-

level talks to "regularly and systematically" hold inter-Korean dialogue, the government said August 25. "This is only the beginning," an official at the Ministry of Unification told reporters on condition of anonymity. "Seoul and Pyongyang officials reached an implicit consensus during their Tuesday meeting that the two countries should hold dialogue regularly and systematically in accordance with their six-point agreement." He referred to the first point of the accord, which was mainly aimed at ending the military standoff between the two in the wake of North Korea's landmine attack on August 4. The other contentious issues include resuming South Korea's tour program to Mount Geumgang in North Korea, scrapping annual Seoul-Washington joint military exercises and lifting economic sanctions imposed on May 24, 2010 against Pyongyang after it sank the South Korean frigate Cheonan. The unification ministry said Hwang and Kim raised the issue of the suspended tour program to Mount Kumgang. "But they did not raise objections to the May 24 sanctions and ongoing Ulchi-Freedom Guardian (UFG) exercise," it said. UFG is an annual military exercise between South Korea and the United States that is held in August. "Pyongyang's nuclear program was also not on the negotiation table because we had to settle the military standoff first." (Yi Whan-woo, "Seoul, Pyongyang to Hold Dialogues Regularly," *Korea Times*, August 25, 2015) South and North Korea reached a deal on a six-point agreement early August 25 after 43 hours of talks, putting a halt to rising tensions on the peninsula that brought the two rivals on the brink of an armed conflict. The two sides wrapped up discussions around 1 a.m. Tuesday, defusing tensions that had escalated over the past few days after Pyongyang agreed to express regret over land mine blasts on August 4 that left two South Korean soldiers seriously injured. In return, South Korea consented to stop propaganda broadcasts via loudspeakers along the demilitarized zone (DMZ), which will go into effect at noon on today, accepting Pyongyang's demand that the psychological warfare be halted. At a briefing at the Blue House, arranged at around 2 a.m. on Tuesday following his return to the South from the Panmunjom truce village, national security adviser Kim said that it was "very fortunate" the two sides were able to reach a deal that provided a momentum for an improvement in inter-Korean relations, adding that the outcome reflected the South Korean government's "strong principles" on North Korea policy. On the prolonged talks, the former defense minister said the two sides had initially had wide differences on the land mine incident but that the South insisted on drawing out a promise from the North that such provocations would not recur. "We halted our broadcast campaign on the condition that there should be no recurrence [of military provocations along the DMZ], which is significant and allowed us to achieve our objective [on the issue]," he said. "Until now, North Korea gained concessions from the South by stoking tensions among our people. But it must have realized this time that such tactics would not work anymore under any circumstances," Kim added. He continued that it was too early to discuss the possibility of a summit between President Park Geun-hye and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. (*JoongAng Ilbo*, "Two Koreas Reach Deal to Avoid Military Confrontation," August 25, 2015) According to a senior official in the ruling camp on August 27, Kim Kwan-jin, director of South Korea's National Security Office, insisted during the contact that the North admit its land mine provocation and make a clear promise to prevent the recurrence of such provocation whereas Hwang Byong-so, director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA continued to deny Pyongyang's responsibility. A senior official at Seoul's presidential office Cheong Wa Dae was

monitoring the talks through a camera installed at the venue. The official sent a message to the South Korean delegates, asking them to take Hwang to the men's room for private talks. The intention was to let the North Korean official speak candidly at a place where there was no camera, as North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was also monitoring the negotiations. "Kim and Hwang who met separately at the men's room had an opportunity to talk a lot relatively freely," said the senior official in the ruling camp. As the private talks progressed, the official said, Hwang showed some flexibility and said, "Wouldn't it be all right if this will not happen again?" It was the first remark by a North Korean official indicating the North's responsibility for the land mine provocation. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, "N. Korea's No. 2 Man Admitted Responsibility for Landmine Provocation at Inter-Korean Contact," August 28, 2015)

KCNA: "A north-south high-level urgent contact which had started at Panmunjom last Saturday ended Monday [August 22-24]. Present there from the north side were Vice-Marshall of the Korean People's Army (KPA) Hwang Pyong So, member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), vice-chairman of the National Defence Commission of the DPRK and director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA, and Kim Yang Gon, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the C.C., the WPK, and from the south side were Kim Kwan Jin, chief of the State Security Office of Chongwadae, and Hong Yong Phyoo, minister of Unification. At the contact the north and the south had an in-depth discussion of the principled issues arising in defusing military confrontation, preventing conflict and promoting the development of the bilateral relations, and made public the following joint press release: A north-south high-level urgent contact was held at Panmunjom from August 22 to 24, 2015. Present there from the north side were Hwang Pyong So, director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA, and Kim Yang Gon, secretary of the Central Committee of the WPK, and from the south side were Kim Kwan Jin, chief of the State Security Office of Chongwadae, and Hong Yong Phyoo, minister of Unification. Both sides discussed the issues of defusing the acute military tension aggravated recently between the north and the south and bettering the north-south ties and made public the following agreement: The north and the south agreed to hold **talks between their authorities in Pyongyang or Seoul at an early date to improve the north-south ties and have multi-faceted dialogue and negotiations in the future.** The north side expressed **regret** over the recent mine explosion that occurred in the south side's area of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), wounding soldiers of the south side. The south side will **stop all loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts** along the MDL from 12:00, August 25 **unless an abnormal case occurs.** The north side agreed to **lift the semi-war state** at that time. The north and the south **agreed to arrange reunions of separated families** and relatives from the north and the south on the occasion of the Harvest Moon Day this year and continue to hold such reunions in the future, too and to have a Red Cross working contact for it early in September. The north and the south **agreed to vitalize NGO exchanges** in various fields." (KCNA, "North-South High-Level Urgent Contact Held," August 24, 2015) North Korea has deployed six more patrol vessels near the sea border with South Korea as the North continues its campaign to invalidate the maritime boundary in the Yellow Sea."The North Korean military has stationed six additional patrol ships near the Northern Limit Line and newly

built artillery bunkers inside the island of Gal this year," the Navy said in its audit report to lawmakers. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Deploys Six More Patrol Ships along NLL Border: Navy," September 22, 2014) J. James Kim: "It began with a North Korean artillery fire on August 20th 3:52pm (0652 GMT) when a single 14.5 mm shell hit an uninhabited hillside in Jung-myeon, Yeoncheon County of Gyeonggi Province....Twenty minutes later (at approximately 4:12pm), two rounds of shells were fired from a 76.2mm direct fire weapon aimed at a location near the first target but 700 meters south of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). **At about 4:50pm, the Blue House National Security Chief Kim Kwan-jin receives a letter from the Director of the United Front Department Kim Yang-gon stating that South Korea's resumption of broadcasts through its loudspeakers aimed at North Korea is tantamount to a "declaration of war" but that North Korea is willing to resolve the current situation and "open a way out for the improvement of the relationship."** According to the South Korean Ministry of National Defense, **the General Staff Department of the North Korean People's Army issued a statement at about the same time via a border telephone channel stating that they would initiate "military action if the South does not stop its anti-Pyongyang psychological broadcasting and remove all facilities in 48 hours from 5pm."** At 5:04pm, the South Korean military responded with "dozens of rounds of a 155mm self-propelled gun as warning shots" aimed at an uninhabited location 500 meters north of the MDL. At 5:10pm, the South Korean military issues an evacuation order for approximately 2,000 residents of Yeoncheon, Paju, Gimpo, and Kanghwado. At 5:40pm, the South Korean military raises its security posture to the highest level of readiness. At 6 PM, the Blue House convenes an emergency National Security Council meeting under the direction of President Park. Geun-hye. ..., it may be worthwhile reviewing whether the existing ROE was applied properly. As the above timeline indicates, it took the South Korean military over an hour to respond to the initial mortar fire by its North Korean counterparts. From a security standpoint, an hour is more than adequate time necessary for the North Korean artillery at its full force to cause significant damage to the South Korean capital as well as the rest of the country. With respect to this issue, there are at least three areas of concern. One is detection and tracking. Reports suggest that it took some time for the R.O.K. military to identify where the initial mortar fire was originating from. It is worth considering whether this delay was due to technical or human failure. A second concern is the delay with the decision making mechanism itself. Either the institutional and/or human factor(s) could have played a role. Again, some review and oversight may be necessary. Lastly, even after the decision is made, the response itself could have been delayed by lack of readiness. To be fair, all of these measures could have functioned properly but it is worth reviewing whether any of these failures were behind the response timing since an argument can be made that the delayed timing of the response sends a wrong signal to North Korea about South Korea's readiness during military confrontation." (J. James Kim, "Another 48 Hours: Some Lessons from Recent North Korean Provocation," Asan Column, Reuters, August 22, 2015)

8/25/15

Choe Ryong-hae, a member of the Politburo Presidium and the secretary of the Central Committee of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party, will visit China next week to attend the military parade on September 3, marking the end of World War II, Chinese Vice

Foreign Minister Zhang Ming said. (Yonhap, "N. Korea's Choe Ryong-hae Will Attend Chinese Military Parade," August 25, 2015)

8/26/15

South Korea left open the possibility of holding further talks with North Korea to discuss the lifting of sanctions on Pyongyang amid easing tensions between the two sides. "On the issue of the May 24 (sanctions), if government-level talks are held and various sub-meetings are held within that framework, I believe it will be the North, which has an interest in the issue, that will bring it up," Jeong Joon-hee, spokesman of the Unification Ministry, said during a press briefing. "I think it's an issue that could totally be handled through dialogue then." (Yonhap, "S. Korea Open to Talks with N. Korea on Sanctions," August 26, 2015)

Torrential rains soaked the northern part of North Korea, leaving at least 40 people dead and affecting about 11,000 people over the weekend, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) said. Caused by Typhoon Goni, the heavy rains particularly hit the border town of Rason, where a special economic zone is located and borders with China and Russia, said Hler Gudjonsson, a spokesman for the Red Cross in Beijing, in a statement. "Although the typhoon did not make landfall in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) heavy rains accompanying the storm caused flash floods in Rason City over the weekend, killing 40 people and affecting more than 11,000 inhabitants," Gudjonsson said. The Red Cross Society in North Korea quickly dispatched an 80-member team to respond to the disaster, according to the statement. (Yonhap, "40 People Killed, 11,000 Affected in N. Korean Floods," August 26, 2015)

North Koreans who fled the country in recent years said public support for dictator Kim Jong-un appears solid despite citizens' frustrations about the poor state of the economy, according to a new report. The report, based on annual surveys, suggests grass-roots capitalism continues to spread in North Korea to substitute for the failed state distribution system and is likely to continue its uncomfortable coexistence with the nation's repressive regime. The Seoul National University Institute for Peace and Unification Studies annually surveys more than 100 North Koreans who defected in the previous calendar year. The results provide firsthand insight into developments in the isolated state, though its researchers say they shouldn't be read as generalized facts due to the small pool of respondents. The latest survey, of 146 North Koreans who escaped in 2014, shows a significant growth from the previous year in the number of people saying they conducted private business activities and paid bribes to enable them. A little more than half said they received no money from the state, down from last year's survey but up from the one released in 2013. Experts say between half and three-quarters of North Koreans' income comes from quasi-illegal market activities, such as trade of basic goods smuggled in from China, but sporadic crackdowns by national or regional security officials lead to irregular business and bribery. Defectors say officials often collect fees when they set up a booth at a market. Most in the survey blamed the regime for economic hardship, including more than 70% who held Kim as the most responsible. But combined with respondents who fled from 2010 to 2013, nearly 63% of the 656 people that answered said they believe a majority of North Koreans support Kim. While the results don't prove a majority actually supports Kim,

such perceptions help Pyongyang leadership to tighten its grip on power, defectors say. North Korea observers say Pyongyang uses tensions with the southern rival and the U.S. for a similar reason. In a sign that Pyongyang's anti-American and anti-South Korean propaganda may be working, the latest survey of escapees showed about half supported North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Nearly 55% said they believe a South-led invasion of the North could take place. More than 28,000 North Koreans have escaped and settled down in the South, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry, its main agency for inter-Korean affairs. Since Mr. Kim came to power in late 2011, defector numbers have fallen, which activists attribute to harsher crackdowns on the China-North Korea border. Just 614 North Koreans made it to the South in the first half of this year, compared with 2,706 in the 2011 calendar year, according to the most recent ministry data. (Jeyup Kwaak, "North Korea Escapees Report Solid Support for Dictator Kim," *Wall Street Journal*, August 26, 2015)

8/27/15

One of the two North Korean negotiators involved in recent crisis talks with South Korea spoke of a "dramatic turning-point" for relations between the two countries. In an upbeat and conciliatory assessment of the agreement struck at the talks, Kim Yang-Gon, a senior party official responsible for South Korean affairs, said it carried the potential for a genuine improvement in cross-border ties. His comments, reported by KCNA, contrasted with those of lead negotiator Hwang Pyong-So, who focused on spinning the accord as a victory for the North and a salutary lesson for the South. In his assessment to KCNA, Kim said the deal had not only resolved a "touch-and-go situation," but also represented a "dramatic turning-point for peace, stability, reconciliation and cooperation." Stressing that "both sides" should learn a lesson from the recent crisis, Kim urged Seoul and Pyongyang to be bold and avoid complacency, so as to maintain the momentum provided by the agreement. "We will actively make efforts to improve relations," he added. (AFP, "N. Korean Negotiator Hails 'Turning-Point' for Ties with South," August 27, 2015) "Based on the spirit of the urgent high-level contact between the North and South, we will work actively to improve North-South relations, in line with the aim and wish of our people," he said in an interview with KCNA. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Committed to Improving Ties with South: N.K. Official," August 27, 2015)

KCNA: "Kim Yang Gon, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, gave the following answers to questions raised by KCNA Thursday as regards the recent north-south high-level urgent contact: As was already reported, the north and the south held a high-level urgent contact at Panmunjom from August 22 to 24 and had a wide-ranging discussion on various issues of putting under control the recently created grave situation and improving the north-south relations and made public a joint press release on the basis of its results. The joint press release reflected the will and stand of both sides to prevent armed conflicts, de-escalate tensions and promote the development of the bilateral relations. It was very fortunate that the recent contact helped defuse the danger of the touch-and-go situation that may plunge not only the Korean peninsula but the whole of Northeast Asia into the whirlpool of an upheaval and offered an opportunity of a dramatic turn in achieving peace, stability, reconciliation and cooperation between the north and the south. We are pleased over the fact that the

north and the south sat face to face, sympathized with the danger of the situation and had an exhaustive discussion to reach an agreement on issues of common concern, thus opening up an epochal phase for turning misfortune into blessings in the north-south relations. The public at home and abroad are unanimously welcoming the north and the south for preventing the situation from plunging into an unpredictable conflict and joining hands for reconciliation. The north and the south should value the spirit of the agreement reached at the contact and not just feel complacent at tiding over the extreme crisis but advance the north-south relations in the constructive direction for reunification. It is my view that the contact would not have considerable meaning if it just ends up as a stop-gap measure. Both sides should wipe out mistrust and confrontation and opt for mending the bilateral relations from a bold stand through dialogue and negotiations. As was agreed in the joint press release, the north and the south should resolve issues of common concern through dialogue and negotiations between the authorities and reenergize broad exchanges and cooperation in various fields. To this end, it is of priority importance to keep afloat and develop the present trend of situation in which the north and the south put on the track of detente with much effort. The north and the south should never allow such happening which makes them get inveigled in a disturbing situation for uncertain reasons, leading the situation to an extreme phase. In fact, the north and the south should not have been embroiled in such abnormal case as the recent one. Both sides should learn a lesson from the recent case, should not lose reason and temper when complicated problems arise in the inter-Korean relations but make efforts to prevent the recurrence of such incident. The north and the south should no longer be bound to the past but care about the future of the nation first and look far into the future and join hands for repairing the relations and achieving reunification. There can be forces unwilling for the rapid development of the north-south relations. So, we should be vigilant against them. From this viewpoint, the north and the south should pay particular attention to preventing any unexpected incident from happening and firmly maintain the idea of By Our Nation Itself. Consistent is the stand of the DPRK to bring about a great change and surge in the north-south relations and open up a wide avenue to independent reunification this significant year of the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation. **We will make positive efforts to improve the north-south relations as desired by all the Koreans in the spirit agreed upon at the recent north-south high-level urgent contact.** (KCNA, "North, South Should Improve Relations on Basis of Results of Urgent Contact: Koim Yang-gon," August 27, 2015)

South Korea and the United States have updated their war plan to counter a North Korean invasion with a more assertive scenario, a senior military official told *JoongAng Ilbo*. The new plan, code-named Operations Plan (OPLAN) 5015, replaced an earlier war plan known as OPLAN 5027. The two countries started discussing the new war plan in 2013 and completed it recently after three years of discussion, according to the source. OPLAN 5027 was based on the concept that if North Korea invaded, South Korean and U.S. forces would first retract, realign, and strike back. Under the new war plan, if there is a clear sign of an invasion, the combined forces will strike back at the North as soon as it launches the attack, focusing on destruction of nuclear and missile facilities as top priority targets. This translates into de facto preemptive strikes against the North's weapons of mass destruction. According to the source, OPLAN 5015 was

signed in June between top military officials of South Korea and the United States. Admiral Choi Yoon-hee, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of South Korea, and General Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of the U.S. Forces Korea and the Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command, signed the updated plan, he said. OPLAN 5015 was first used during the latest joint military exercise, Ulchi-Freedom Guardian, which started on August 17, the source said. South Korea and the United States also agreed to reflect the North Korean military buildup and mobilization of the past week, when tensions rose over land mine explosions and shelling across the border, to further upgrade the war plan. At a National Assembly hearing on Wednesday, National Defense Minister Han Min-koo said the plan has recently been updated and will be modified after the joint military drill. He refrained from elaborating further on the details. In 1974, South Korea and the United States created OPLAN 5027, which is updated periodically. The first update was in 1994, when the United States created a plan to bomb the North's nuclear complex in Yongbyon. That war plan was named OPLAN 5027-94. After Seoul and Washington agreed that South Korea will take over wartime operational control of its troops by the end of this year, the two sides started discussing a new war plan, OPLAN 5015, to replace OPLAN 5027. Although the two sides agreed to delay the timing of the transfer to early 2020, they continued to work on the new war plan and completed OPLAN 5015 earlier this year. "The North recently bolstered its capabilities with nuclear arms and missiles," the source said. "If we strike back after an attack has already taken place, the damage will be too devastating. So the concept will be incapacitating the North's attack capabilities within the shortest time period." **The new war plan also includes a contingency plan, signed by Seoul and Washington in March 2013, to counter small-scale North Korean attacks like the 2010 shelling of Yeonpyeong Island.** Although the South Korean military wants to operate the contingency plan separately from OPLAN 5015, **the United States wanted to have a role in any local provocation because the South's response could trigger a war.** While the war plan for the Joint Chiefs of Staff level has been completed, more work is needed to create detailed operational plans for lower units. The specific plans will be wrapped up before the end of this year, the source said, adding that the latest North Korean military movements would be factored into them. The latest tensions on the Korean Peninsula also provided South Korea and the United States with a rare opportunity to study North Korea's preparation for a war. After tensions escalated last week, the North activated some of its air defense radars, indicating that it was preparing to shoot down incoming South Korean and U.S. aircraft with missiles. The North also deployed additional artillery pieces near the demilitarized zone, hinting that their targets would be populated areas in the capital region. Signs were also detected that the North was preparing to launch short- or medium-range SCUD missiles. The missiles can reach all areas in the South, including the U.S. military base in Pyeongtaek, southern Gyeonggi. Special warfare forces, which normally stay in the rear, also moved to frontline units using trucks. Military planners said they would be used to infiltrate the South immediately after artillery firing. The North Korean Navy also moved. The biggest concern was the mobilization of submarines in the eastern and western waters. "More than 70 percent of the North's submarines left their bases," a National Defense Ministry official said. The mobilization indicated that dozens of submarines would infiltrate special warfare forces into southern territory. (Jeong Yong-

soo and Ser Myo-ja, "South, U.S. Upgrade Joint War Plan to Repel North," *JoongAng Ilbo*, August 27, 2015)

Osaka Mayor Hashimoto Toru and Osaka Gov. Matsui Ichiro, founders of Ishin no To (Japan Innovation Party), said they will leave the party to concentrate on local politics in Osaka, a move that is likely to considerably – if not critically – weaken the second largest opposition force. Ishin has so far avoided seeing many Osaka-based lawmakers follow suit by exiting the party, as Hashimoto urged them to stay by sending a message by email to the party's Diet members. The party has been deeply split between its Osaka-based members who are willing to cooperate with the administration of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, and Tokyo-based members who are trying to remain in the opposition camp in the hopes it will help them survive the next election. Today, Ishin president Matsuno Yoriyoshi called a meeting of the party's Diet members, reading out the email message sent by Hashimoto. In it, Hashimoto urged party members to remain united to avoid a party breakup. "(Hashimoto) said we should put an end to something like an internal struggle," Matsuno said. Hashimoto also wrote that he and Matsui will leave the party to concentrate on local political affairs. Ishin's crisis started yesterday as Matsui threatened to quit the party unless Kakizawa Mito, its secretary-general and a close aide to Matsuno, stepped down immediately. Matsui also said Hashimoto was likewise ready to quit. Matsui and Osaka-based members have criticized Kakizawa for supporting a candidate backed by the Japanese Communist Party and the Democratic Party of Japan who is running in the September 13 mayoral election in the city of Yamagata. But in an apparent reversal, Hashimoto said in the email that Kakizawa should retain his current position – a proposal immediately endorsed by Matsuno. A former Democratic Party of Japan member, Matsuno is believed to be a leader of the Tokyo-based party members who wish to remain in the opposition camp. Matsuno has called for the creation of a new party that would combine lawmakers from various opposition forces, including Ishin. The departure of the pair may weaken Ishin's Osaka faction and lend momentum to Matsuno's drive to combine opposition forces. It would mean trouble for Prime Minister Abe, who has counted on Hashimoto's pledge to cooperate with his government, including the drive to revise the pacifist postwar Constitution. Some Ishin members voiced concerns that the departure of the party founders could considerably weaken Ishin. Hashimoto, a polemicist and master of TV debates, has garnered strong support from numerous voters, in particular right-leaning, conservative ones. Ishin executive meeting chairman Katayama Toranosuke said their departure will deal a blow to the party because they were the most prominent stars for Ishin. "Hashimoto and Matsui are, in some ways, Ishin's face itself," Katayama told reporters after the meeting of Diet members in Tokyo. Their departure "is really painful," he said. Matsui and Hashimoto have already formed a separate political group called Kansai Ishin no Kai, which consists of about 200 Ishin members from local municipal and prefectural assemblies. This has fueled speculation that many Osaka-based Diet members of Ishin, too, may eventually leave the party and join Kansai Ishin no Kai. Some Kansai-based members said they are still deeply frustrated over the Ishin leadership led by Matsuno. "It's really disappointing that the two founders will leave the party. I would like those people who created the cause to reflect" on what they have done, Nobuyuki Baba, an Ishin Lower House member who was elected in Osaka, told reporters at the Diet building in Tokyo. During

today's meeting, Kakizawa apologized to the party members for causing a stir, and pledged to devote his efforts to fulfilling his role as secretary-general. But he also said the internal feud should not have made public. "I believe there were things that I should reflect on. But, on the other hand, I wonder if (it was a wise move) to speak about dividing the party or not," Kakizawa said. (Aoki Mizuho and Yoshida Reiji, "Hashimoto, Matsui Leaving Ishin no To As Split in Party Worsens," *Japan Times*, August 27, 2015)

8/28/15

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has dismissed some members of the ruling party's central military commission, state media reported. The dismissals took place at an enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea, according to KCNA. It did not say when the meeting was held, but the communist nation is known to often report events a day after they take place. The meeting "dismissed some members of the WPK Central Military Commission and appointed new ones and dealt with an organizational matter," KCNA said in an English dispatch, monitored in Seoul. It did not elaborate on the reasons for the dismissals but the report has prompted speculation here that it may be related to the August 4 land mine explosion inside the Demilitarized Zone that maimed two South Korean soldiers. Kim spoke in detail about the agreement, saying "under the touch-and-go situation the WPK displayed correct leadership art by steering the whole country, all the people and the service personnel, and made resolute decisions and set forth strategic policies for putting the difficult situation under control." On August 20, North Korea fired artillery shells across the border in apparent anger over the broadcasts, leading to a rare exchange of fire between the sides. That day, Kim ordered the military to move into a war footing as he presided over the same enlarged session of the party's central military commission.

"Kim Jong-un analyzed and reviewed the preparations for military operations made by the frontline units which had been in the state of war, and the work done in various fields in the areas where the semi-war state had been declared and how the north-south high-level urgent contact was made and appreciated them," KCNA said. Peace was restored because of the North's "tremendous military muscle with the nuclear deterrent for self-defense," he noted, "underscoring once again the need to channel top priority efforts into bolstering up the military capability for national defense." Kim "specified strategic tasks and ways for doing so," but KNCA did not elaborate.

(Yonhap, "N. Korea's Kim Fires Party Officials," August 27, 2015) North Korean leader Kim Jong-un officially announced his commitment to improving relations with Seoul. Speaking during an extended meeting of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Military Committee on August 28, Kim said the agreement reached at a recent "two-plus-two" meeting with the South "should be cultivated to bear rich fruit." Kim also dismissed a number of members, raising questions about their possible involvement in the situation following an August 4 landmine explosion that injured two South Korean soldiers at the Demilitarized Zone. Kim's comments were reported in a piece on the extended meeting by KCNA. "The results of this meeting are a victory for a noble philosophy of concern for the [Korean] people's destiny and deep regard for peace. This agreement that turned a disaster into a blessing at a crucial moment should be prized and cultivated to bear rich fruit," Kim was quoted as saying. Kim was also quoted as calling the issuing of a joint statement by North and South Korea at the high-

level meeting a “momentous turning point that eased severe military tensions and turned North-South relations from the brink of catastrophe onto a path of reconciliation and trust.” At the same time, Kim also said the agreement was made possible by North Korea’s military capabilities, including its nuclear deterrent, the KCNA piece reported. The report on Kim’s activities and statements was the first in the North Korean press since another extended Central Military Committee meeting on the evening of August 20, when a “quasi-state of war” was announced. Experts noted the significance of Kim stressing improvements in inter-Korean relations in his first statement after the eight-day silence. “Kim Jong-un talking openly about the results of a high-level meeting between North and South Korean government officials and needing to ‘cultivate’ them is unprecedented for a North Korean leader,” said Cheong Seong-chang, Director of Unification Strategy Studies at the Sejong Institute. “I expect dialogue between the North and South Korean governments to proceed smoothly for the time being,” Chung predicted. Despite the cautious attitude from Seoul in the wake of the talks, Pyongyang could make even more aggressive attempts to pursue inter-Korean dialogue. Dismissals and appointments of Central Military Committee members were also reported in the KCNA piece as having taken place at the extended meeting, although no specific names were given. For now, the list of figures considered likely to have been dismissed include former Minister of People’s Armed Forces Hyon Yong-chol, who was reported executed around late April, as well as Kim Chun-sam, who was dismissed as Korean People’s Army General Staff operations bureau director earlier this year. According to analysts, possible replacements may include People’s Armed Forces first vice minister No Kwang-chol and general politburo organizational bureau director Cho Nam-jin, both of whom were appointed after Hyon’s purge. That some front-line unit leaders in the operational command line responsible for the landmine blast could have been dismissed, including Chief of General Staff Ri Yong-gil, presumed operations bureau director So Hong-chan, general reconnaissance bureau director Kim Yong-chol, and the associated corps commander. Cheong Seong-chang advised caution in predicting the membership changes. “We’re going to have to wait and see if anyone from the command line was dismissed in connection with the mine provocation,” he said. Similarly, an administration source said it was “currently difficult to presume who was dismissed and why.” Analysts also noted the difference from Kim’s father Kim Jong-il and grandfather Kim Il-sung in organizing extended Central Military Committee meetings and publicly announcing decisions made there. “One of the characteristics of the Kim Jong-un era is that they have their own system for showing the making of decisions involving major state issues,” said University of North Korean Studies professor Yang Moo-jin. Cheong Seong-jang called for a proactive stance from both sides in the days to come. “Given all the obstacles with the distribution of propaganda leaflets in North Korea and the international community’s complaints about the North Korean human rights situation, a strong commitment to improve from both sides is essential if relations are going to continue proceeding smoothly,” he asserted. Kim Yong-hyun, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University, cautioned against triumphalism from Seoul. “The Park Geun-hye administration shouldn’t let itself think, ‘We won because we asserted ourselves, and that means we can control North Korea freely,’” Kim said. “If we approach things humbly instead, this could be an opportunity for making major strides in inter-Korean relations.” (Kim Ji-hoon, “Kim Jong-un Says Recent High-Level Inter-

Korean Meetings Could 'Bear Rich Fruit,'" *Hankyore*, August 29, 2015) North Korea is believed to have used the latest military standoff with South Korea to get inter-Korean talks started so as to win economic cooperation and investment necessary to rebuild its broken economy, a U.S. expert said September 3. "Whatever the motivation for the mine incident was, I think the motivation for the resolution of the crisis was to get a dialogue started again, which is where the North Koreans had suggested in January they wanted to be," Robert Carlin, a North Korea expert, said during a discussion organized by *38 North*. Carlin, a visiting fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University, pointed out that the North sent the dialogue proposal the same day its military issued an ultimatum warning of strong strikes. Carlin said that reviving the economy is believed to be behind the North's push for a dialogue. "I think that a very consistent theme since Kim Jong-un took office is the focus on reviving the economy. It began with his very first speech in April 2011 where he ... said that people would no longer have to tighten their belts. I think most of his appearances have probably been on economic projects," he said. "I think he's serious about reviving the economy and one of the best ways to do that is to patch things up with the South Koreans," he said, adding that Pyongyang would like investment from South Korea to balance all the investment from China. The window of opportunity created by the North's willingness to talk can be short-lived, Carlin said. "History tells us the windows open and close pretty rapidly but a wide open window as there has been for the last few weeks is not likely to stay open that long," he said, adding that Pyongyang could shut the window depending on South Korea's attitude. Joseph Bermudez, an expert on North Korea's military, noted that the North sent out about 70 percent of its submarines, or about 50 submarines, during the crisis and such capabilities show that Pyongyang's efforts to improve its submarine capabilities produced concrete results. "The ability to flush your submarine force, and to do it well and quickly, is a demonstration of your level of capability. Typically, the North Koreans only have two to six submarines out on patrol at any one time. To send out a high percentage of your force, in this case 70 percent, shows a level of readiness," he said. "It proves to them that the work they've done, the initiatives they had undertaken, the training programs have actually resulted in solid, concrete results," he said. "They intend that their submarine force be a key component of any future conflict. Knowing how the Japanese, South Koreans, the United States will react to a submarine operations, large scale submarines operations, will help them better plan their operations going forward." (Yonhap, "Economic Revival Appears to Be Behind N. Korea's Push for Dialogue with S. Korea: U.S. Expert," *Korea Herald*, September 3, 2015)

President Park Geun-hye presided over a live-fire artillery drill by South Korean military and U.S. forces in the border city of Pocheon, Gyeonggi, in a symbolic gesture reaffirming the Korean-American alliance and demonstrating the country's military readiness just days after the two Koreas signed a deal to defuse tensions on the border. The exercises, which involved 47 military units and 2,000 soldiers from the two allies, are the first such joint live-fire drills in three years and the largest since Korea and the U.S. first conducted such heavy-weaponry exercises in 1977, according to the Ministry of National Defense. It was Park's first time presiding over such a drill, known as the Integrated Firepower Exercise 2015, since she took office in February 2013. This

year was the eighth such exercise. The military made clear the exercises were designed to deter North Korean provocations such as the planting of three land mines in the southern border of the demilitarized zone near Paju, Gyeonggi, which were triggered Aug. 4, maiming two South Korean soldiers. "[President Park's decision to] observe the drill will serve as momentum to ensure our military's dignity and state-of-the-art military prowess," said Blue House spokesman Min Kyung-wook. He said her presence would also solidify ties between the United States and South Korea. Friday was the last of the four sets of drills, which took place over 17 days. In this year's exercise, K-2 Black Panthers, FA-50 fighter jets and K-21 armored vehicles were mobilized from the Korean side. U.S. forces dispatched Bradley fighting vehicles, Apache helicopters and A-10 Thunderbolts among other weapons. (Lee Sung-eun, "Park Attends Live-Fire Drill by Korea and U.S.," *Joong Ang Ilbo*, August 29, 2015)

Beset by crisis, scandal and a sluggish economy in the first half of her single five-year term, South Korean President Park Geun-hye's approval rating soared in a poll released after a pact with North Korea brought back the rivals from the brink of conflict. Park's rating in a Gallup poll climbed a remarkable 15 percentage points from a week earlier to 49 percent, the highest in nearly a year, after the accord early on Tuesday ended an armed standoff in one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints and cleared the ground for further engagement with Pyongyang. She also scored points for talking tough in the midst of the negotiations, insisting that North Korea had to apologize for landmine blasts along their border. "This is a beginning to pierce through clogged-up South-North ties, but we don't yet have a legacy," said Choi Jin, the head of the Institute for Presidential Leadership in Seoul, referring to Park's ambition for a lasting peace, and eventually reunification. "How she can continue to achieve outcomes to live up to this higher expectation is the next challenge." (Jack Kim and Ju-min Park, "Ending Standoff with North Korea Boosts South's President Park," Reuters, August 28, 2015)

8/29/15

North Korea accepted South Korea's proposal for working-level talks September 7. (*Korea Times*, "North Korea Agrees to Sept. 7 Red Cross Talks," August 28, 2015) The Ministry of Unification said Korean Red Cross President Kim Sung-joo proposed working-level talks on September 7 about a reunion of family members to Kang Su-rin. Kang is the chairman of the central committee of the DPRK Red Cross. "The message was delivered through a dialogue channel in Panmunjeom at 9:50 a.m.," unification ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-hee said, referring to the truce village in the demilitarized zone (DMZ). "The message asked for Red Cross officials from the two sides to meet at the House of Peace in Panmunjeom to discuss issues on having separated families get together as the two Koreas agreed in their high-level talks this week." (Yi Whan-woo, "Seoul Proposes Talks for Family Reunion on Sept. 7," *Korea Times*, August 28, 2015)

The deputy head of North Korea's United Front Department and vice chairman of the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee has apparently been purged over allegations that he took bribes from a foreign organization. Radio Free Asia cited unnamed sources saying Won Tong-yon was among several senior North Korean officials who were purged after being accused of corruption involving business deals with North Koreans

living abroad. RFA said the purge was triggered by the arrest of Korean-Canadian missionary Lim Hyeon-soo in Pyongyang in January of this year. Won has not been seen in public since he attended talks with South Korea in November of last year. A Unification Ministry official said, "We are focusing on Won's whereabouts since he has not been spotted for some time." (*Chosun Ilbo*, "Senior N. Korean Official Purged for Corruption," August 31, 2015)

8/30/15 Militaries on both sides of the Korean border have relaxed their defense postures to peacetime levels following a landmark deal that defused tensions between the sides, military officials said. South and North Korea raised their militaries' alert levels after tension flared up over a land mine explosion and ensuing artillery exchange earlier this month. "The highest alert level issued for front-line units and the 'Jindotgae-1' issued at times of heightened local threats by the enemy have all been lifted," said a South Korean military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Now, our defense posture has returned to peacetime levels." (Yonhap, "Both Koreas' Militaries Return to Peacetime Mode," August 30, 2015)

8/31/15 Sydney Seiler, the U.S. special envoy to the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear development program, will soon finish his term in the role, according to diplomatic sources. Seiler, who took the job in September last year, was assigned to the State Department on loan from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). Seiler's next appointment is currently unknown, but sources expect him to return to the DNI. It is also unknown who will succeed him. In a reply automatically returned to an email inquiry, Seiler said, "I am out of the office and will be moving on to my next assignment." (Jun Ji-hye, "U.S. Six-Party Talks Envoy Term Ends," *Korea Times*, August 31, 2015)

9/1/15 President Park Geun-hye touted a recent breakthrough between the two Koreas, saying thorough implementation starting with a fresh round of reunions of separated families would bring the peninsula closer to lasting peace and eventually unification. "If we safeguard the hard-won agreement, we will be able to break the vicious cycle of tension that has persisted throughout the 70-year division, and move toward a path of peace and unification on the peninsula," the president said during a Cabinet meeting at Cheong Wa Dae. "Before all, I hope that the family reunions will take place without setbacks so that the aging separated families can fulfill their long-cherished wishes. We should open the door wide for their exchanges starting with this forthcoming session." Despite the diminishing strain, Vice Defense Minister Baek Seung-joo remained adamant that the latest fence-mending dialogue could rather boost the rationale for the Kim Jong-un regime to press ahead with a major provocation to coincide with its planned celebration of the 70th anniversary of the launch of the ruling Workers' Party on October 10. "The possibility that the North will stage a strategic provocation such as a long-range ballistic missile launch or nuclear test has increased somewhat since the agreement," Baek said in an interview with Kyodo. "That's because many people say that the agreement left North Korea with egg on its face," he added, vowing to employ "all retaliatory steps including a restart of propaganda broadcasts" along the Demilitarized Zone in the event of a provocation. His unrefined choice of words aside, the remarks sparked controversy as they run counter to the burgeoning

mood for long-awaited reconciliation and do not reflect the overall government assessment, Defense Ministry officials said. (Shin Hyon-hee, "Park Touts Inter-Korean Deal As Unification Step," *Korea Herald*, September 1, 2015)

9/2/15

North Korea warned the South to "refrain from any words or actions that would ruin the mood for improving inter-Korean relations." It also stated that the expression of "regret" included in the joint statement produced by the "two-plus-two" meeting of high-level officials was "not an apology." According to KCNA, North Korea's National Defense Commission issued a statement in the name of the political bureau spokesperson that said, "The South Korean government must refrain from any words or actions that would ruin the mood for improving inter-Korean relations that was created with such difficulty." The statement said, "Since the release of the joint statement, things continue to be said and done in South Korea that undermine the mood for improving relations. If the status quo is left unchanged, it is inevitable that inter-Korean relations will return to the original point of conflict." North Korea appeared to be responding to the Integrated Firepower Exercise, the largest ever live-fire drill carried out recently by South Korean forces shortly after North and South Korea reached their agreement, and to an official from South Korea's Defense Ministry who publically mentioned a "decapitation strike" as an example of developments in the concept of asymmetric strategies during an academic seminar. North Korea also appears to have been provoked by an interview with Kyodo News in which South Korean Vice Minister of Defense Baek Seung-ju said, "It's becoming more likely that North Korea will commit a provocation by testing nuclear weapons or launching a missile in October. It's widely held that North Korea lost face during the recent talks." While the South Korean government has taken the expression of "regret" about a recent landmine incident that appeared in the joint statement as being an apology, North Korea strongly rebutted such an interpretation. "The expression of 'regret' only means that it was a shame that the soldiers were injured like that," the North Korean statement said. "Expressing our regret was the equivalent of paying a visit to someone in the hospital. For the South Korean government to opportunistically interpret the expression of regret as a North Korean apology is the result of ignorance of the meaning of the Korean alphabet and of the ideas conveyed by Korean words," North Korea said. When asked about this during press briefing on September 3, Ministry of Unification Spokesperson Jeong Joon-hee said, "The point is that the joint statement contained an expression of regret about the landmine provocation." "Both in terms of international customs and when considering our various experience in talks with North Korea, one needs to ask why this expression was included, and I think that also has meaning for North Korea," Jeong said. "Let me emphasize once again that this is not a time to get too emotional or to argue about the joint statement. Rather, this is a time to faithfully implement and comply with the agreement reached by North and South Korea." (Park Byong-su, "North Korea Tells South That 'Regret' Doesn't Amount to 'Apology,'" *Hankyore*, September 3, 2015) North Korea accused South Korea of misreading the two countries' recent agreement on easing border tensions, insisting that Pyongyang's expression of "regret" over the wounding of two soldiers from the South was never meant as an apology. "'Regret' is nothing more than expressing sympathy," it said, comparing the gesture to "visiting a hospital patient" to offer condolences and nothing more. "They are so ignorant of the Korean language they

don't even know the meanings and definitions of Korean words," the North's National Defense Commission said in a statement carried by KCNA. It warned that inter-Korean relations were "bound to return to confrontation" if the South continued what the statement called its distortions of the deal's meaning. President Park Geun-hye of South Korea said the accord was made possible because of her government's strong, principled stance. The North's Kim Jong-un, claimed that the South had been forced to sign the deal because of Pyongyang's "military muscle," including its nuclear weapons. Jeong Joon-hee, a spokesman for the South's Unification Ministry, said the countries should stop nitpicking over the wording of the agreement. He said both sides should instead focus on talks scheduled for September 7 to discuss another commitment in the deal, to resume reuniting divided families. (Choe Sang-hun, "North Korea Denies Apologizing for Land Mine Blasts," *New York Times*, September 3, 2015, p. A-11)

Park-Xi summit meeting. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for a resumption of long-stalled multilateral talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program, China's foreign ministry said. Xi made the call during a summit meeting with South Korean President Park Geun-hye earlier in the day, a statement posted by the Chinese ministry said. China "opposes any actions that may cause tensions" and all relevant parties should make efforts to resume the six-party talks, Xi said, according to the statement. Leaders of South Korea and China took a joint step to press North Korea, stressing that they are opposed to any action that causes tension on the Korean Peninsula, in a landmark summit that highlighted the "best ever" strategic cooperative partnership of the two countries. Presidents Park Geun-hye and Xi Jinping urged resumption of a long-stalled six-way talks to curb North Korea's nuclear ambition as soon as possible, and agreed to hold a trilateral meeting with Japan "at a convenient time" in late October or early November.. The leaders also expressed hopes to accelerate a trust-building process in the region based on the agreements reached at the breakthrough inter-Korean talks last month. They also agreed to seek ways to promote Park's "Eurasia Initiative" aimed at linking a railway between the Koreas and Europe. (Cho Chung-un, "Park, Xi Voice against Provocations," *Korea Herald*, September 2, 2015) At the summit in Beijing, Park stressed the importance of China's role in defusing military tension between the two Koreas and urged her Chinese counterpart to further bolster bilateral ties to secure regional stability amid North Korea's evolving nuclear threat. "I'd like to express my gratitude to China for playing a constructive role in defusing (military) tensions on the Korean Peninsula by closely communicating with each other," said Park at the summit held right after her arrival at the Chinese capital. Touching on North Korea's mine attack in the demilitarized zone last month, Park said the incident was a reminder of a highly volatile security of the Korean Peninsula and of a pressing need to bring peace in the region. "I believe that the incident reflected the importance of the strategic cooperation between South Korea and China and the unification of the two Koreas in securing regional peace." Xi also thanked Park saying that their cooperation had brought the bilateral partnership to the highest level of friendship. "Today, the amicable relationship between South Korea and China has developed to the highest level through the cooperation between President Park and I," said Xi. "Currently, the two countries maintain a partnership in various fields including politics, economy and trade, while civil exchanges are also thriving" President Park Geun-hye said September 4 that South Korea will begin talks

with China about how to achieve peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula as early as possible. "During the summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, we discussed many issues in depth. We talked about how we can work together so we can maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. This took center stage," Park told reporters aboard her flight back to Seoul from Shanghai, China. "Peaceful unification is the fundamental and quickest way to resolve North Korea's nuclear weapons program and other issues and we will have discussions on how to bring unification to the peninsula." Park also said that the Kim Jong-un regime is widely expected to take numerous provocative actions in the future and it is important to deter them. "China made it clear during the summit that it stands firm against any moves to ratchet up tensions on the Korean Peninsula," the President said, adding that Beijing is willing to cooperate with the South Korean government to handle Pyongyang's provocations. (Kang Seung-woo, "Seoul to Begin Discussions with Beijing on Unification," *Korea Times*, September 5, 2015) In opening remarks, Park stressed the significance of the timing of the summit. "We had several summits, but today's summit is particularly meaningful because it takes place in the historic year that marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the World War II, the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation and also national division," Park told Xi. "The history of the two countries, which endured hardships together over the past century, is a precious cornerstone for today's friendship. I hope the two countries will continue cooperation in the various challenges ahead of us." Before Park's opening remarks, Xi noted that the two leaders accomplished a series of important mutual goals through their reciprocal visits. He thanked Park for accepting the invitation to attend Beijing's commemoration of what it calls the "70th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War." A series of lavish events, including a controversial military parade, will take place today, and Park will attend all of them. "I am happy to see that Korea-China relations are progressing forward in the fields of mutual political trust, economic and trade cooperation and people's exchanges at the same time," Xi said. The Blue House said Xi reaffirmed China's support for Park's "Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative." The two sides also agreed that Park's "Eurasia Initiative," aimed at boosting the regional economy through free trade and economic cooperation by reconnecting the railways that link both Koreas, China, Russia and eventually Europe, and China's "One Belt, One Road" policy, also known as the New Silk Road Initiative, share some common links and promised to work together to realize them. Park and Xi also agreed to maintain a close partnership to operate the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Blue House said. Although the Park-Xi summit took little more than half an hour, the two leaders had more opportunity to have a candid dialogue during a special luncheon, the Blue House said. Xi's hosting of a luncheon for Park after the summit was special treatment, according to the Blue House, as no such event is scheduled for other world leaders attending the commemoration events. "It also reconfirmed the ever-growing strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries," the Blue House said. Park's spokesman, Min Kyung-wook, said the two leaders exchanged their remarks during the summit and luncheon through simultaneous interpreters in order to maximize their discussion time. "The mood was great and friendly," Min said. Later in the day, Park attended another meeting with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and discussed a series of economic issues, particularly the expected benefit from the

Korea-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The trade pact, wrapped up in June, will take effect after the two countries' legislatures ratify it. The Blue House said the FTA, once it takes effect, will allow Korea to aggressively enter the rapidly growing consumer market of China. The Chinese market is expected to grow to \$10 trillion by 2020 based on Beijing's policy of shifting emphasis from exports to domestic consumption, the Blue House said. Park also proposed a plan to integrate the cultural markets of Korea and China through joint production and distribution of broadcasting content. The Korea Venture Investment Corporation and China Development Bank Capital Corporation will jointly create 200 billion won (\$170 million) worth of funds to make investments. (Ser Myo-ja, "Park and Xi Put Pressure on the North in Beijing," *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 3, 2015) It was conspicuous that Park used the term, "in the nearest future," as she has not used that term in past remarks. "From now on, the government will sternly counter the North's provocations while making efforts to continue dialogue and exchanges," she said. She also said the reunions of families separated by the Korean War will resume soon and inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation will be expanded. "I also plan to start actual preparations for unification," Park said. She urged China to play a role. "As we have seen in the case of German unification, neighbors' cooperation is crucial for our unification," Park said. "China, in particular, needs to play an important role to induce desirable changes from the North." (Ser Myo-ja, "Park Talks Unification in Beijing," *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 5, 2015)

9/3/15

At a military parade Thursday to mark the end of World War II, President Xi Jinping announced that China will cut some 300,000 soldiers from the country's 2-million-strong armed forces, a move that would accelerate his campaign to modernize the military, shifting resources from land to sea and air. Xi pitched the cuts, and indeed, the entire event, as a peace offering – a tough sell given growing concerns in Asia and around the world about China's maritime claims and military might. The parade featured 12,000 troops, high-tech weapons gleaming in the sun, and a 70-gun salute. There were also olive branches, floral arrangements in the shape of doves and talk of the "sunshine of peace." Replying to questions about why representatives of Japan were not attending, Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun said the parade was "not specifically aimed at any country, not aimed at Japan or the Japanese people, and has nothing to do with the China-Japan relations." But Shen Dingli, a professor and associate dean at the Institute of International Studies at China's Fudan University, said the parade had much to do with Japan – and, as such, with the United States. "We are telling Japan, 'Last time you invaded us, we fought you and we won. If you don't behave in the future, we will fight you again and win again. And we are showing you what weapons we'll be using to win,'" he said. "Should Japan invade again in the future, China will fight it, and if the U.S. stands with Japan, China will fight both of them." (Emily Rauhala, "China to Cut 300,000 Soldiers, Shift Resources to Sea and Air," *Washington Post*, September 3, 2015)

President Park Geun-hye observed China's military parade marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, becoming the first South Korean president to do so. This symbolizes Beijing's changing view towards Seoul and Pyongyang. While the huge military parade was rolling through Tiananmen Square in Beijing, Park was

sitting two seats to the right of Chinese President Xi Jinping on the rostrum of the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Russian President Vladimir Putin sat between Park and Xi. The left side was taken by Chinese high-profile figures. North Korea, China's major ally, also dispatched its representative, Choe Ryong-hae, but the politburo member was seated at the end -- a sharp contrast with previous events, where late founder Kim Il-sung stood alongside former Chinese leaders. (Kang Seung-woo, "President Park Opens New Chapter for Sino-Korea Ties," *Korea Times*, September 3, 2015) Park's attendance at the military review also suggests that her administration's foreign policy took a step up a staircase leading in a completely new and unknown direction. She was the only leader of a US ally that stood on the parapet, and she made her decision despite opposition from people in the US who were displeased with the military review. "The US seems concerned by the fact that this military review was an event that symbolized the rise of China as a rival to its hegemony in East Asia and that it showcased new Chinese weapons that can neutralize the US missile defense system," said Kim Chang-soo, head of research at the Korea National Strategy Institute. During the parade, China flexed its military muscle by parading 40 different kinds of weapons - 500 altogether - including artillery pieces, armored vehicles, tanks, and the Dong-Feng 21 (DF-21) missile, better known as the aircraft carrier killer. "The US is hurrying to promote trilateral cooperation with South Korea and Japan in order to check China, treating a missile defense system linking the three countries as a transitional phase. The US could take Park's attendance at the military review as a subtle hint that South Korea might refuse to cooperate," Kim added. Despite pushback from the US, South Korea's only ally, Park chose to attend the military review. "One could say that South Korea has taken its first step toward carving out a space for taking diplomatic action on its own accord," said Yang Moo-jin, professor at the University of North Korean Studies. "South Korea was showing to the US, China, and North Korea that it has the power to make its own diplomatic decisions," said Lee Nam-ju, professor at Sungkonghoe University. Park's choice seems to have sent a shockwave running through international relations in East Asia. It was North Korea, of course, that received the greatest shock. Vice Marshal Choe Ryong-hae, who visited China as a special envoy of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, was standing the second from the end on the right side of the line of dignitaries atop the parapet. "In order to minimize the shock, North Korea will probably prevent the media from reporting scenes of Park's attendance. There's a good chance that they will only briefly report the fact that the review was held," Yang said. But while attending the military review is the first step in a new direction, it remains unclear whether South Korea can reach the goal of exercising balanced diplomacy as a middle power. There are three possible steps. First, South Korea needs to take the initiative in devising a substantive plan. During her summit with Xi on Sep. 2, the day before she attended the military review, Park succeeded in convincing Xi to resume the trilateral summit between South Korea, China, and Japan. However, she did not make any clear progress on the North Korean nuclear issue. The problem was that she did not bring a detailed plan for addressing this issue. "President Park needs to prepare for her summit with President Obama next month by setting a specific goal such as resuming the six-party talks before the end of the Obama presidency," said Chung Uk-sik, head of the Peace Network. Second, South Korea needs to be firmly committed to improving inter-Korean relations. "If South Korea resolves its conflict with North Korea, it will create a great deal of diplomatic leverage. Instead of pushing

China to put pressure on North Korea, South Korea should look for ways to work with China to bring North Korea to the table for talks," Yang said. Third, South Korea needs to maintain a proper sense of balance. Experts urge South Korea not to fall into the trap of "pendulum diplomacy" - the assumption that, since South Korea has showed off its friendship with China, it now needs to give the US some kind of compensation. "President Park shouldn't assume that she needs to do something nice for the US when she visits for the summit in October to make up for attending China's military review. South Korea needs to keep leading the way toward peace and mediation," said Kim Jun-hyeong, professor at Handong Global University. "Just because President Park did a good job in the summit doesn't mean that she's achieved balanced diplomacy. Balanced diplomacy means taking the lead in inter-Korean relations while establishing a close partnership with each country in the region," said Lee Su-hun, professor at Kyungnam University. (Son Won-je and Kim Oi-hyun, "After Beijing Parade, S. Korea Can Take the Diplomatic Lead in East Asia," *Hankyore*, September 4, 2015) President Park Geun-hye said September 4 that she will start actual preparation for the unification of the two Koreas, urging China to play a crucial role to bring about meaningful changes from the North. Park spoke about Korean Peninsula affairs and her determination for the unification during a luncheon with Korean residents in Shanghai. About 250 people came to the event on the final day of Park's three-day trip in China. During the luncheon, Park told the Korean residents about the latest security crisis on the Korean Peninsula, starting with the North's planting of land mines inside the demilitarized zone, and explained Seoul's determination to end the repeating cycle of Pyongyang's provocations. "From now on, the government will sternly counter the North's provocations while making efforts to continue dialogue and exchanges," she said. She also said the reunions of families separated by the Korean War will resume soon and inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation will be expanded. "I also plan to start actual preparations for unification," Park said. Park has said in the past that unification would be a "bonanza" for Korea. She urged China to play a role. "As we have seen in the case of German unification, neighbors' cooperation is crucial for our unification," Park said. "China, in particular, needs to play an important role to induce desirable changes from the North." Throughout her trip to China, Park stressed the importance of Korean unification. During a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping on September 3, Park had an in-depth discussion about unification, the Blue House said. Joo Chul-ki, presidential senior secretary for foreign and security affairs, however, refused to elaborate on the details of the discussion, citing the sensitivity of the matter. According to the Blue House, Park told Xi that peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula in the nearest future will contribute to the peace and prosperity of the entire region, and China has supported peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula by the Korean people in the future. It was conspicuous that Park used the term, "in the nearest future," as she has not used that term in past remarks. According to aides, Park is expected to call for a general consensus to make preparations for unification when she returns to Seoul. Park also issued a muted criticism of Japan, urging Korea's former colonial ruler to face its militaristic past and join the region's efforts to move forward to a more peaceful future. "History flows to the eternity and remains forever, and denying it is like an attempt to cover the sky with a palm and also an overestimation of one's capability," Park said in a written interview with the People's Daily published September 4.

Instead of condemning the latest moves of Japan to reinterpret its pacifist constitution to rearm itself, Park emphasized diplomatic efforts and the restarting of suspended trilateral cooperation among Korea, China and Japan. "In order to transform the various conflicts and confrontations currently taking place in Northeast Asia into an order of peace and cooperation, countries in the region must put mutual effort to move forward to a new future based on rightful perceptions of history," she said. "When this precondition is met, the wounds from the past can heal." She said a mutual awareness of history and current affairs is important. "Korea's initiative of Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation and the effort to resume the trilateral summit of Korea, China and Japan are also aimed at building a new order of trust through the tradition of cooperation," she said. At the summit in Beijing, Park won Xi's agreement to host a trilateral summit for Korea, China and Japan in the coming months. The annual meeting, which started in 2008, stopped in 2012. The softer tone in her interview appeared to be a part of her campaign to push for the summit. On the morning of September 4, Park attended the reopening of the former home of Korea's provisional government in Shanghai and delivered a speech. Although the memorial was a symbol of Korea's independence movement in China against Japan's colonization, Park once again left out any comment about the country's former colonial ruler. "The reopening ceremony today shows that Korea and China share the historic significance and value of our independence fight," Park said. "I hope this newly remodeled building of the government in Shanghai will become a venue of history education to promote the precious patriotism of many martyrs, cherishing the roots of our history and heightening the pride of our people." Park said the Korean government will continue to work with China to preserve and manage the sites of Korea's independence movement in China. "We will also achieve peaceful unification to complete a true liberation," Park said. About 50 guests including Kim Woo-chun, a 93-year-old Korean independence activist, and descendants of Korean leaders who served as the heads of the provisional government attended the ceremony. Mayor of Shanghai Yang Xiong also attended. Kim was the secretary of Kim Koo, an iconic Korean independence fighter also known by his pen name Baekbeom. According to the Blue House, Kim Woo-chun joined the Korean Liberation Army in 1944 and played a crucial liaison role. He also created the Korean cryptogram during the country's independence movement against Japan. According to the Blue House, the Korean Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs and the Independence Hall of Korea created the design for the exhibitions at the provisional government memorial, and China picked up the entire cost of 700 million won (\$587,150) to refurbish the building. Located in a tiny alley in the Huangpu District of Shanghai, the building was one of the many homes of Korea's provisional government after its establishment on April 13, 1919. The provisional government used the three-story brick building from 1926 until 1932, and it has been a symbol of Korea's independence movement in Shanghai. The building was also the place where Kim Koo started writing his famous Baekbeom Ilji. It was also this building where Kim formed the Korean Patriotic Corps, a group of independence fighters whose members included Yun Bong-gil, who assassinated Japanese military leaders in Shanghai in 1932. Earlier in that year, Lee Bong-chang, another member, attempted to assassinate Japanese Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo with an explosive, but his mission failed. A joint survey by the Korean government and the city of Shanghai conducted in 1988 confirmed the former site of the provisional government, and after two years of

restoration, the memorial was opened to the public on April 13, 1993. It is visited by about 200,000 Korean tourists a year. After the initial opening, more restoration took place on the nearby buildings in 2001 to improve the exhibition and viewing conditions. After the first summit between Park and Xi in June 2013, China continued to support Korea's efforts to restore the former sites of its independence movement. After remodeling that started in June, the building was reopened today. (Ser Myo-ja, "Park Talks Unification in Shanghai," *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 5, 2015) Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se struggled on September 10 to assure opposition lawmakers that President Park Geun-hye's recent trip to China was fruitful in drumming up Beijing's support for Seoul's approach toward Pyongyang. In an annual parliamentary audit of the ministry's work, the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy (NPAD) claimed the Park administration is overstating the results of her visit last week to attend China's World War II anniversary event. Rep. Won Hye-young asked the minister if Park and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed in summit to "cooperate" on the reunification of the two Koreas. He was citing an earlier government statement. Yun was equivocal. "Discussions on unification, along with the North Korean nuclear issue, provocation, and peace issues, have been under way naturally on various levels, including the summit between the two sides, since (President Park's) state visit to China in 2013," he said. "The unification matter is in the direction of being discussed in a natural and frank manner." Yun said it would be impossible to peacefully reunify the two Koreas without denuclearizing the North. He reaffirmed that the government is not seeking any absorption-based unification. Rep. Shin Kyoung-min of the NPAD also took issue with the government's own assessment of the outcome of the latest Park-Xi summit, saying it is "filled with self-praise" and diplomatic rhetoric despite no breakthrough in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. In fact, there is no difference from the results of their previous summit two years ago that called for the early resumption of the six-way nuclear talks and the North to refrain from taking provocative acts, he argued. In response, Yun simply said the government's statement on the summit "considerably reflects the actual content and mood of the summit talks." (Yonhap, "FM Yun Defends China Summit Diplomacy in Parliamentary Session," September 10, 2015)

Inter-Korean trade in the first seven months of this year recovered to levels before Seoul imposed blanket sanctions against the North for the sinking of its naval ship, government data showed, thanks to increased exchange via a joint industrial complex. According to the Korea Customs Service (KCS) data, the value of cross-border trade reached US\$1.53 billion in the January-July period, which is roughly on par with \$1.56 billion reported for January-July of 2009. The total also marks a 22.4 percent increase from \$1.25 billion worth of goods traded in 2014. In the seven-month period, South Korea shipped some \$716 million worth of intermediate goods and components to the North and brought in \$816.5 million in assembled products. The increase was attributed to a rise in the unit cost of products traded through the joint industrial park in the North's border city of Kaesong. (Yonhap, "Inter-Korean Trade Returns to Pre-Sanctions Levels," September 3, 2015)

9/5/15

The U.N. had sent North Korea a request to conduct an on-site survey in the country for an investigation into forced disappearances and abductees, but Pyongyang has yet to

respond to the request. U.N. Special Rapporteur on North Korea Marzuki Darusman said the query was made to comply with recommendations that were made in a U.N. North Korea human rights report issued in March, Voice of America reported. The details of the U.N. activity were included in an annual report from the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances that was submitted ahead of the 30th regular session of the Human Rights Council. North Korea does not acknowledge abductions of South Korean citizens that include Korean War-era prisoners of war who are among the 200,000 abductees that include repatriated Koreans from Japan and kidnapped Japanese citizens, according to a U.N. COI report from February 2014. The U.N.'s annual report raised the issue of six North Koreans, two of whom were defectors living in China at the time of their disappearance. North Korean security agents allegedly kidnapped the married couple in April 2003. The remaining four North Koreans were last seen in Chongjin, North Korea near the China border, and the reason for their disappearance is not known. (Elizabeth Shim, "U.N. Seeks Inspection of North Korea for Forced Disappearances," UPI, September 5, 2015)

9/6/15 Police searched an office building Sunday in Hokkaido of the pro-Pyongyang Chongryon group on suspicion that its affiliate companies swindled the Japanese government out of subsidies for businesses hiring people without jobs. Investigators said several companies in Sapporo linked with the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, which serves as North Korea's de facto embassy in Japan, allegedly misused the state subsidy system by pretending that staff at a school in the city for ethnic Koreans had lost jobs. The school for primary and secondary education was also searched and about 30 investigators scuffled with school workers when the raid started around 8 a.m. (Kyodo, "Police Raid Pro-Pyongyang Group Office over Subsidy Fraud," September 6, 2015)

9/7/15 South Korea plans to expand dialogue channels involving ministries, politicians and scholars in China to flesh out President Park Geun-hye's unification diplomacy, sources said. Researchers from state-run think tanks will discuss security issues, and lawmakers from Seoul's main political parties and members of China's Communist Party will also meet, according to sources. "We'll not create new channels but instead will fully operate the existing ones with our respective counterparts to keep in contact and meet in person more often," a Cheong Wa Dae official said. In accordance with Seoul's efforts to enhance strategic dialogue with Beijing, South Korea's envoy for the dormant six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program is also stepping up efforts to discuss the issues with his U.S. and Chinese counterparts. Kim Gunn, Seoul's deputy envoy for the six-party talks, met his Chinese counterpart Xiao Qian in the South Korean capital today and discussed how to resume the dialogue among the related parties. Xiao also met Hwang Joon-kook, Seoul's top nuclear envoy who is scheduled to fly to Washington D.C. on Wednesday to meet his U.S. counterpart, Sung Kim. Hwang is expected to meet U.S. security experts on the peninsula September 11 as well before going to New York and meeting U.N. ambassadors from 15 member states of the U.N. Security Council. Hwang is expected to share his thoughts about Pyongyang's development of nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass destruction before returning home on the weekend. "We're at the critical moment to resolve North Korea's nuclear threat," said Park Won-gon, an international relations professor at

Handong University. "It's necessary for us to convince Beijing to bring up issues for the agenda at the U.S.-China summit. "Park can then add to what Xi and Obama went over to end Pyongyang's nuclear program when the Seoul-Washington summit takes place a month after. "Based on those discussions, Park, Xi and Abe can share their ideas about the six-party talks if they meet this year. Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, agreed, "Support for the six-party talks should precede talks for inter-Korean unification." Observers, however, were divided over whether Park's push for unification diplomacy with little interaction from North Korea may provoke the internationally isolated Kim Jong-un regime. "I don't see that Park considers North Korea as a partner in her unification policies and it's possible Pyongyang may fire ballistic missiles on October 10," Yang said. He referred to growing speculation that the regime may test-launch missiles on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of its Workers' Party. Park Won-gon, disagreed. "Such provocation could further deepen North Korea's isolation and could stop the country from stepping forward for dialogue with the outside world over the long term," he said. (Yi Whan-woo, "President Park's Drive for Unification to Gain Speed," *Korea Times*, September 7, 2015) Park has recently been drawing praise for showing new possibilities for balanced diplomacy with the US and China following her recent attendance at a military parade in Beijing. But strange signs began to emerge almost immediately in that sense of diplomatic equilibrium with remarks about reunification with North Korea being the direct aim of Seoul's diplomatic efforts. Many are now asking if the administration's high hopes for an "upheaval" in Pyongyang have left it unable to perceive the situation clearly - raising the changes of Seoul being left adrift diplomatically and inter-Korean relations being destabilized. Speaking with reporters on her flight home from China on September 4, Park said that peaceful reunification was the "fastest, ultimate and definite way of resolving" the North Korean nuclear issue. She also said she and Chinese President Xi Jinping had "agreed to cooperate on the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula." Park went on to say that "various diplomatic discussions" would begin on "how to achieve peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula in the near future." Her remarks show two things: a belief that the complex issues affecting the Korean Peninsula can be solved in one fell swoop through reunification, and a vision for discussing reunification as soon as possible with China and other countries. Experts are now calling the approach unrealistic, hollow, and even dangerous. To begin with, Park's emphasis on diplomatic efforts with other countries, while leaving Pyongyang out of the reunification discussions, is being called "out of nowhere" and ineffective. In particular, experts point out that it is impossible to even formulate an approach to unification diplomacy that does not include a methodology for reaching an agreement with the North based on improved relations and dialogue - a key element for peaceful reunification. "While it certainly is important to have dialogue with other countries to achieve reunification, the most important thing is direct dialogue between the North and South Korean governments," said Cheong Seong-chang, Director of Unification Strategy Studies at the Sejong Institute on September 6. "It's not clear to what extent other countries will agree to efforts to draw their support for unification when North and South Korea can't even escape their adversarial relationship - never mind achieving a 'low-level confederation.'" Former Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said unification diplomacy was a matter of "picking away one by one the countries that could function as centrifugal forces against

reunification once inter-Korean cooperation has deepened and reunification is imminent." "That's the sequence we should be planning for. It makes no sense to talk about doing with China what needs to be agreed upon between North and South," Jeong said. Experts also said the likelihood of Beijing and other governments responding well to such an approach to unification diplomacy was slim to none. Indeed, when Park mentioned "achieving reunification as soon as possible" during the recent South Korea-China summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping merely reiterated Beijing's position supporting "autonomous and peaceful reunification at some future date." "By 'autonomous,' they're talking about unification between North and South without the US being involved," explained a former senior diplomatic official on condition of anonymity. "So when President Park talks now about discussing reunification with China, it's totally unclear whether she means having the autonomous discussions on reunification that Beijing wants," the former official added. Chang Yong-seok, a senior researcher at the Seoul National University Institute for Peace and Unification Studies, said China's failure to clear the air may be based on strategic considerations. "The reason they aren't officially disputing Seoul's interpretation that Beijing is 'on board with unification discussions' - even when they're saying two very different things - is because of general considerations about US-China relations and the possibility of trilateral coordination with South Korea and Japan," Chang argued. Park's emphasis on unification diplomacy without mentioning inter-Korean relations may be a signal that the administration is focused too much on the possibility of an absorption scenario following an upheaval in Pyongyang. "In President Park's remarks about reunification at the South Korea-China summit, the emphasis was on the 'as soon as possible' part," said Dongguk University professor Koh Yu-hwan. "During the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations [1998-2008], they used words like 'peaceful' and 'gradual,'" Koh added. "The use of the words 'as soon as possible' show a way of thinking where they're considering other possibilities such as instability in North Korea." The ideas for unification diplomacy based on this mind-set are raising serious concerns for some. "North Korea has shown itself to be positively allergic to talk about 'absorption scenarios' in the past, and the danger here is that this could trigger a backlash and have a negative impact on improvements in inter-Korean relations and our ability to manage the political situation on the peninsula," said Dongguk University professor Kim Yong-hyun. Chang Yong-seok agreed that Park's remarks were "dangerous." "If Pyongyang begins questioning Seoul's sincerity, it could sink the August 25 agreement we fought so hard to achieve," he said. Some argue that making the most of both the hard-won opportunity for inter-Korean dialogue and what would have been a difficult decision to attend the Beijing parade will require a swift adjustment to Seoul's diplomatic priorities. "They need to use the inter-Korean agreements as a basis for improving relations rather than hanging their hopes on an unlikely 'upheaval' in Pyongyang and focusing too much on how we need to be 'prepared' for reunification," argued Korea National Strategy Institute director Kim Chang-soo. "Laying the groundwork for that should also be the focus in our diplomacy with other countries," Kim advised. A former senior diplomatic official said the unification diplomacy approach is meant to send a message to South Korean conservatives. "They're trying to communicate that 'we've been discussing the unification issue with China our way, which means we've got the upper hand diplomatically,'" the former official explained. "Getting away from this approach of

trying to use unification and diplomacy as tools for domestic politics should be our top priority," the source added. (Son Won-je and Kim Ji-hoon, "Why Is Pres. Park Discussing Reunifying 'As Soon As Possible?'" *Hankyore*, September 7, 2015)

9/7/15

North Korea appears to be renovating and building facilities at its Yongbyon nuclear site, the U.N. nuclear agency's head said. "We have observed renovation and construction activities at various locations within the site," IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano told a closed-door meeting of his agency's Board of Governors in Vienna, according to a text of his speech. "These appear to be broadly consistent with the DPRK's statements that it is further developing its nuclear capabilities." (VOA, "IAEA: North Korea Apparently Building Nuclear Site," September 8, 2015)

9/8/15

South and North Korea agreed to hold reunions of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War in late October as the two sides seek to mend ties following their recent landmark deal on easing military tensions. After marathon talks, the two Koreas agreed to hold the reunions for 100 separated families each from both sides on Oct. 20-26 at a facility at Mount Kumgang, a scenic resort on the North's east coast, according to the Ministry of Unification. The decision follows the Red Cross working-level talks which kicked off yesterday. "On the shared perception that South and North Korea need to fundamentally resolve the humanitarian issue, the two sides agreed to hold Red Cross high-level talks at an early date to discuss related issues such as the continuation of reunion events," Lee Duk-haeng, Seoul's chief delegate, said at a press briefing. There are more than 66,000 South Korean family members separated by the Korean War, which ended in a truce, not a peace treaty, leaving South and North Korea technically at war. The issue of the separated families is one of the most pressing humanitarian matters as most of the surviving family members are in their 70s and 80s. About half of the estimated 129,700 applicants for the family reunions have died. Since the first historic inter-Korean summit in 2000, the two Koreas have held 19 rounds of face-to-face family reunion events. Seven rounds of video-based reunions also have been held. Only some 18,800 family members from both sides have been allowed to have face-to-face reunions so far. The main agenda for the talks mainly focused on the details of the upcoming reunions, but the South sought to discuss other related issues such as holding the family reunions on a regular basis and confirmation of the fate of all surviving separated families on both sides. Lee said the North has not laid out preconditions for holding the family reunions such as aid for recovery efforts to combat floods or the North's call for resumption of an inter-Korean tour project at Mount Kumgang, which has been suspended since 2008. "The North did not make any comments related to the flood or other demands in linkage to the family reunion issue," he added. Previously, the North asked the South to provide humanitarian support such as rice and fertilizer through the Red Cross. North Korea has also urged the South to resume the long-suspended joint tour program, in connection with the issue of the family reunions. (Yonhap, "Koreas Agree to Hold Family Reunions in Late October," September 8, 2015) The South Korean government and the Red Cross are now busy with preparations as North and South Korea finalized the date for the reunion of separated families in working-level Red Cross talks on September 8. After about forty days of preparations, one hundred separated family members from the North and the South each will meet on two occasions for the first time in seventy years

beginning October 20. However, whether or not North Korea engages in military provocations such as a long-range rocket launch sometime around October 10, the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea is expected to be a decisive variable in the reunion. If North Korea fires a long-range rocket or conducts a nuclear test sometime around the anniversary of the party's establishment, the Korean Peninsula can once again be engulfed in military tensions, pouring cold water on an atmosphere supporting dialogue, which has been a long time coming. This is also why the South Korean government had tried to set the earliest date possible for the reunion in the working-level talks so that the reunion could be held before October 10. If North Korea really launches a rocket, the South Korean government has stated that it would respond sternly through discussions of UN-level sanctions, so it is difficult to guarantee a smooth organization of the reunion. Kim Yong-hyun, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University said, "Now that the date of the reunion of separated families has been set at a date after the anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea, the South Korean government will have to shoulder the burden of a possible long-range missile launch by the North." (Bak Yeong-hwan, "Ten Days before Reunion Is Founding of the Workers' Party of Korea (October 10): North Korea's Missile Launch to Be the Most Critical Factor," *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, September 9, 2015)

A total of 65 North Koreans have crossed the tightly-patrolled land and sea borders with South Korea to defect to the capitalist country since 2010 with 15 of them breaking the borders undetected, a military report showed. The North Korean conscript who made it to a South Korean guard post near the eastern part of the military demarcation line (MDL) in June was among those who have crossed over, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff's report submitted to Rep. Shon In-choon of the ruling Saenuri Party. The soldier was not detected until after he had crossed the heavily-fortified border, spent one night near the South Korean military outpost and turned himself in the next day. (Yonhap, "65 N. Koreans Cross Sea, Land Borders to Defect to South over 5 Years," September 8, 2015)

9/8/15

Liu: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates new activity is underway at two areas in the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center—the 5 MWe Reactor and Radiochemical Laboratory complex—that are key to the production of plutonium for building nuclear weapons. Specifically: Imagery from August 22 indicates a high level of vehicle activity not previously observed in front of the 5 MWe reactor hall. Vehicle tracks extend into the ground level of the building beneath an overhanging four-story annex on the east end of the reactor hall out to a road where large trucks can easily maneuver. Also, a large truck is seen in position apparently awaiting a load. The level of track activity indicates that this is not the first truck to be loaded with material from the hall. The same imagery shows significant vehicular activity at the Radiochemical Laboratory complex where plutonium is chemically separated from uranium and other radioactive materials as well as converted into metal form, the raw material for building nuclear weapons. Heavy vehicle tracks from the road enter the facility, circle a support building and then extend to the spent fuel receiving building at the southwest end of the 190-meter long reprocessing plant. While some tracks lead directly to the spent fuel receiving building—across the road from where the spent fuel enters the main

reprocessing building—others circle the support building suggesting that there may be a line of trucks waiting to unload at different times. There are a number of vehicles and piles of unidentified material in this area that may be associated with this operation. Given the limited information available it remains impossible to determine the exact reason for this activity. However, there are a number of possible explanations: 1) unidentified and unrelated major maintenance or renovation activities are underway at both facilities as part of an ongoing program to modernize and upgrade the Yongbyon facility; 2) the North Koreans may be replacing contaminated equipment from the 5 MWe Reactor and moving it to the reprocessing complex for storage or decontamination; or 3) significant vehicular traffic involving both the 5 MWe Reactor and the Radiochemical Laboratory complex—including the spent fuel receiving building—may indicate preparations for unloading spent fuel rods from the reactor for the purpose of producing new plutonium. If this explanation proves to be true, it would represent an important step towards the further development of North Korea's nuclear weapons stockpile. (William Mugford and Jack Liu, "North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Facility: New Activity at Plutonium Production Complex," *38North*, September 8, 2015)

9/10/15

The Defense Ministry said that North Korea may launch a long-range missile on the occasion of a key anniversary next month as the North is seen as having completed the upgrade of a missile launch facility. Speculation is rampant that North Korea is expected to launch a long-range missile around October 10, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party. The ministry said in a report to the National Assembly that there is a possibility that the North could fire a missile to commemorate the anniversary as it is currently finishing construction at its rocket launch facility in Dongchang-ri on its west coast border. In recent satellite imagery, a new 67-meter-tall gantry has been spotted on the site, which experts say can be used for the launch of long-range missiles twice the size of the 30-meter Unha-3 that was launched into orbit in December 2012. Whether the North fires a long-range missile near the anniversary is under spotlight as the move will likely hamper the hard-won conciliatory mood on the Korean Peninsula. Defense Minister Han Min-koo told lawmakers that there has been no sign of a missile launch by the North so far. Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said the government does not exclude the possibility of North Korea's long-range missile launch, given the unpredictability of the North's regime. "The government is closely watching related situations," Yun said. "Seoul plans to drum up global support to encourage the North to sincerely implement the inter-Korean deal and to prevent it from making an additional provocation." Touching on a follow-up to the agreement, Han said that South Korea is preparing for the possibility that inter-Korean talks between ranking military officials could take place. "Seoul is preparing for possible military talks with Pyongyang as the deal calls for holding high-level talks," the minister said. The ministry also said it will conduct aggressive military operations near the demilitarized zone which bisects the two Koreas, where the North has frequently made provocations. "South Korea plans to renew its military posture by taking into account the North's land-mine provocations and the outcome of joint military drills between Seoul and Washington," the ministry said. "In particular, the South plans to draw up measures to conduct aggressive military operations at the DMZ." It marked the first time that the government vowed to take aggressive operations near the heavily fortified border following the North's land-mine incident, which seriously injured two

South Korean soldiers. (Yonhap, "N.K. May Launch Long-Range Missile around Its Anniversary: Seoul," September 10, 2015)

North Korea has nearly completed a fresh investigation it promised Japan last year into the fates of Japanese citizens allegedly abducted by the country decades ago, according to a senior North Korean diplomat. "What is obvious is that (North Korea) has conducted the investigation in good faith," Song Il Ho, North Korea's top negotiator in talks with Japan, said in an interview Wednesday. "If we decide to do so, we can unilaterally announce the results of the probe as early as tomorrow." Nevertheless, Song said North Korea has yet to "officially" convey to Japan through diplomatic channels its readiness to deliver the results of the probe. He said one of the biggest obstacles to doing so is that the Japanese government has not created a unified body that can serve as a counterpart to North Korea's special team in charge of the investigation, despite repeated requests. Before announcing the results, Song, who has been serving in his current post since 2006, said in Pyongyang that his country wants to confidentially share information and make consultations with the Japanese government. "It is preferable that the two countries make a joint announcement," he said. "I think we need diplomatic adjustment." To this end, the 60-year-old ambassador for negotiations to normalize relations with Japan suggested the need for holding a formal meeting between senior officials of the two countries in the coming months. Asked if the prepared report is an interim or a final version, he said it is a "comprehensive one." (Karube Takuya, "North Korea Says Fresh Probe into Abductees Almost Done," Kyodo, *Japan Times*, September 10, 2015) North Korea's ceremonial head of state Kim Yong Nam voiced hope of improving relations with Japan, as the two countries face difficulties in making a diplomatic breakthrough in their official negotiations resumed more than a year ago. Citing the policy of the state's late founder, Kim Il Sung, he said North Korea and Japan, which are geographically nearby, should be close in other respects as well. "With this view still in mind, we are dealing with Japanese issues," the 87-year-old president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly said in a meeting with Kyodo News in Pyongyang. (Kyodo, "N. Korea's Top Officials Voices Hope of Improving Ties with Japan," September 10, 2015)

No North Korea cyberattacks have occurred in the United States since Sony Pictures was hacked in late 2014, but FBI Director James Comey said there is evidence Pyongyang has hacked servers in other countries. Speaking at a congressional hearing, Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper said there have been no signs of a North Korean cyberattack against U.S. entities since the Sony case, Yonhap reported. National Security Agency Director Admiral Michael Rogers also said no North Korea activities were detected in the industrial sector aimed at disrupting U.S. businesses. Instead, North Korea has been active in infiltrating servers in other countries while staying away from U.S. servers, according to Comey who testified at the same hearing as Clapper. The FBI director said the White House's vow of a "proportional" response less than a month after the November 24 hack may have had an effect on Pyongyang's decision makers. On December 21 and 22, for 10 hours, North Korea's Internet blacked out, with thousands of computers unable to function. The outage took place not long after the Obama administration named the North Korean leadership as the leading suspect behind the Sony hack. Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, had said in

March a December Internet blackout in North Korea was a retaliatory strike after the data breach at Sony. Clapper said in his statement that politically motivated cyberattacks were a "growing reality," and classified North Korea as a country with "lesser technical capabilities" than Russia or China, but with "possibly more disruptive intent." (Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea Staying away from U.S. Servers Since Sony Hack," UPI, September 11, 2015)

Sigal: "North and South Korea have agreed to back away from deadly confrontation for the moment. But both sides' rhetoric bodes ill for the future. Seoul claims its firm brinkmanship forced Pyongyang to back down. And North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has told his Central Military Commission the agreement "was by no means something achieved on the negotiating table but thanks to the tremendous military muscle with the nuclear deterrent for self-defense." The rhetoric on both sides is likely a sop to hardliners at home. But if the leaders believe their own bluster and their militaries act on it, the two sides may go over the brink the next time tensions rise on the peninsula. Kim Jong-un's motives are misconstrued by those in Seoul who believe him to be moved by economic desperation. Yet his economy has been growing over the past decade, and he needs calm on the peninsula to deliver on his pledge to improve his people's standard of living by reducing military spending. Over the past years, he made repeated efforts to reach out to South Korea's president, Park Geun-hye—efforts that she did not reciprocate. In his 2014 New Year's address, he pledged, "We will make aggressive efforts to improve relations between the North and the South," and this New Year's Day he even spoke of a summit meeting with President Park. He followed up his words with deeds. In February 2014, he agreed to a reunion of families separated since the Korean War without demanding anything in return. Yet, instead of opting for reconciliation by addressing the North's security concerns, President Park went to Dresden that March to echo German chancellor Helmut Kohl's 1989 call for unification. Kim Jong-un tried again last October, sending three top officials to Incheon for the Asian games. In talks with South Korean officials, they urged an easing of enmity, for instance, by ending propaganda ballooning—to no avail. After a brief halt, the ballooning resumed. Having tried the soft approach and failing to get the South's attention, Kim Jong-un reverted to his father's tactic of floating offers on a sea of threats. Seizing on joint U.S.-South Korean exercises, an annual irritant to the North, he rapidly ratcheted up the pressure. Earlier this year, Pyongyang beefed up artillery within range of the contested waters of the West (Yellow) Sea and sowed new landmines in the Demilitarized Zone dividing the Koreas, which gravely wounded two South Korean soldiers. After Seoul responded by resuming propaganda broadcasts on loudspeakers near the DMZ, Pyongyang threatened to destroy them. Its submarines and fast surface vessels put out to sea and the South alerted its forces. South Korea's defense minister then threatened to "take control" of the DMZ. The belligerent rhetoric on both sides strongly implied a change of military rules of engagement both in the West Sea and on the DMZ, raising the risk of deadly clashes like those that rocked the peninsula in 2010. On August 20, the South detected North Korean artillery rounds heading toward the loudspeakers and returned fire. On August 24 the North declared a "quasi-state of war." That same day Kim floated an offer of talks. The allies temporarily suspended their joint exercises, and the South accepted the offer. After forty-three hours of talks, the North and South agreed on steps to ease the crisis and

hold another round of family reunions next month. Why did Kim initiate the crisis? One reason is that he genuinely wants to ease hostility, allowing him to reallocate resources from military to civilian production. The need to cut spending on military hardware is why he introduced his so-called *byungjin* "strategic line on carrying out economic construction and building nuclear armed forces simultaneously under the prevailing situation"—Kim's version of Eisenhower's bigger bang for a buck. He purged his defense minister after cabinet efforts to cut arms spending came under challenge. That's why he's emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons, not conventional arms, in resolving the current crisis. A second reason is that he intends to proceed with a satellite launch this October. In anticipation of additional UN sanctions in response, he wants to temper Seoul's reaction. Either way, South Korea should move ahead with talks and try to address Kim's security concerns. Who knows? With any luck, that might convince him to refrain from following up the satellite launch with a nuclear test." (Leon V. Sigal, "Beware the Rhetoric of Both Koreas," *National Interest*, September 10, 2015)

9/11/15

South Korea is considering a test-launch of a ballistic missile with a range of 800 kilometers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, unveiling the test plan of the missile the country is developing to guard against North Korea's advancing missile threats. "We are reviewing a plan to do a launch into the international sea south of the Korean air defense identification zone (KADIZ) and the island of Ieodo," Maj. Gen. Yang Byung-hee of the JCS said during a parliamentary audit. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Mulls Test-Launch of Ballistic Missile under Development," September 11, 2015)

The Food and Agriculture Organization told Voice of America North Korea has been distributing food rations of 250 grams per day since mid-July. That amount is less than half the FAO's recommended amount for rations, and represents a 21 percent decline from a three-year average of 317 grams daily per person. State food rations in North Korea fluctuate from month to month, but the historical average for rations in North Korea has been 390 grams. The FAO said North Korea's goal is to provide 573 grams of food daily per person - slightly below the U.N. recommended amount of 600 grams. Food produced from double or multiple cropping constitutes 8 percent of North Korea's grain production, but it is an important food source during an annual austerity period that takes place between May and September. According to FAO, North Korean wheat and barley yields had dropped 32 percent between 2014 and 2015 to 36,083 tons, and potato output was down by 20 percent to 232,889 tons. (UPI, "North Korea Reduced Its Food Rations Again in July Says FAO," September 11, 2015)

9/14/15

National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA) director interviewed by KCNA: "The field of outer space development is also registering shining achievements like all other fields this year. **The NADA is pushing forward at a final phase the development of a new earth observation satellite for weather forecast**, etc. positively conducive to the development of the nation's economy and made big progress in the research into the geostationary satellite, a new higher stage in the development of satellite. Successful progress made in reconstructing and expanding satellite launching grounds for higher-level satellite lift-off has laid a firm foundation for dynamically pushing ahead with the nation's development of space science. Space development has become a worldwide trend and many countries are manufacturing

and launching satellites for various purposes including communication, global positioning, crop estimate, metrological observation and resource prospecting. The DPRK's satellite launch is also a peaceful project, pursuant to its sci-tech development plan for building an economic power and improving the people's standard of living. Space development for peaceful purposes is a sovereign state's legitimate right recognized by international law and the Party and the people of the DPRK are fully determined to exercise this right no matter what others may say about it. **The world will clearly see a series of satellites of Songun Korea soaring into the sky at the times and locations determined by the WPK Central Committee.**" (KCNA, "NADA Director on Successes in Outer Space Development," September 14, 2015)

Van Jackson: "North Korea's nuclear posture complicates alliance military strategy. At the strategic level, Pyongyang's nuclear posture is likely to emphasize assured retaliation, which becomes more credible as it increases delivery options and aggregate numbers of nuclear weapons. During a conflict, there is at least a moderate risk that regardless of North Korea's deliberate nuclear posture, it will shift to one of asymmetric escalation—launching nuclear first strikes to compel the US-ROK alliance to stand down or sue for peace. At the operational level, North Korean nuclear missiles strengthen anti-access concepts of operation (CONOPs) by using nuclear-armed missiles to target air bases and ports in South Korea and Japan. In this emerging strategic and operational environment, extreme military solutions—such as unification by military conquest alone—become even less plausible than they are today. This strategic and operational trajectory affects the connection between US-ROK military operations and national strategy in a number of ways. First, to minimize operational vulnerabilities in an anti-access campaign, the alliance needs improved basing and port access in and around South Korea. This places a premium on Japan's involvement in any contingency. Second, consolidating the US military presence in Korea into two "enduring hubs" increases the size and reduces the number of targets at which North Korea could aim its nuclear weapons; US and ROK basing resilience is more likely with a geographically dispersed military basing structure. Third, US and ROK aircrafts need to be prepared to fly missions to and from many different bases—US bases, ROK bases and Japanese air bases as well. Fourth, all alliance operations need to be sensitive to the possibility of triggering a nuclear first strike from North Korea if the regime perceives its defeat is imminent or inevitable. Finally, the alliance needs to focus greater attention on limited war campaign scenarios, specifically campaigns with limited objectives that are tailored to avoid sending signals that regime change is inevitable. ...For North Korea to actually adopt an asymmetric escalation posture in peacetime (as opposed to bluffing) would risk triggering regime change (the eventuality Pyongyang most ardently seeks to avoid) simply for coercive gain. Second, North Korea has a track record of hyping its military capabilities. ...Third, if North Korea were pursuing an asymmetric escalation posture, we should expect to see some evidence that Pyongyang is developing tactical nuclear weapons—nuclear-armed artillery, land mines, short-range rockets or "suitcase bombs." ...Although North Korea lacks sufficient capability for an assured retaliation nuclear posture today, there are several reasons to expect that Pyongyang is making a deliberate move toward such a strategy. First, assured retaliation, especially during peacetime, is the most stable of the various types of nuclear posture because it reserves nuclear use for second strikes

while other posture types incentivize first strikes. Second, North Korea has an incentive not to spark a war that would lead to regime change. An assured retaliation capability guarantees that regime change could not be forced from the outside without nuclear conflict. That, in turn, conditions US and South Korean decision makers to weigh the cost of nuclear attacks in pursuing regime change. Third, and perhaps most importantly, while we lack “smoking gun” evidence about North Korea’s intentions, Pyongyang has made multiple observable decisions that we would associate with a state moving toward an assured retaliation strategy. Survivability of a nuclear force has several requirements, among them are geographically dispersed weapons locations, multiple types of nuclear delivery vehicles and a sufficiently large inventory of nuclear weapons. The most likely capability that assures nuclear survivability for North Korea is mobile missile launchers, which it has already developed. Generally, the capability that best assures nuclear survivability is a submarine-launched ballistic missile because of its mobility and difficulty of detection. All of these conditions fit with North Korea’s current trajectory. North Korea’s expected delivery vehicles for nuclear strikes include various types of ballistic missiles from multiple missile garrisons, KN-08 road-mobile transporter-erector launchers (TELs), the IL-28 bomber, Soviet-era submarines and surface ships. Its navy is making investments in SLBM technology and modernization of its submarine fleet—a highly expensive undertaking. And its nuclear facilities are not consolidated but spread across at least six locations around the country. While SLBMs may represent a “gold standard” for nuclear survivability, it may be possible to achieve that with ground-based mobile TELs as well. There is no consensus threshold in the nuclear literature for when survivability is achieved, and the nuclear-capable KN-08 may make North Korea’s nuclear force as survivable as SLBM systems. Even in a minimal growth/modernization scenario—which assumes no more than 20 nuclear weapons—North Korea may have a sufficient quantity of nuclear weapons to ensure survivability depending on the intended delivery vehicles. While there are both logical and evidentiary reasons to believe that North Korea is pursuing an assured retaliation strategy to the extent its capabilities allow, there are also reasons to expect that North Korea might adopt an asymmetric escalation posture during periods of conflict. In the middle of a conflict, North Korea would have at least two types of incentives for being the first to use nuclear weapons. One type of incentive is, as Keir Lieber and Daryl Press have argued, tantamount to “use or lose.” ...Another type of incentive for nuclear first use during conflict is the operations, maintenance and logistics constraints North Korea would face during any sustained military campaign. ...Rather than increasing readiness through training, many reports suggest parts of the Korean People’s Army (KPA) are routinely diverted to agricultural, resource extraction and industrial—in other words, fundamentally economic—applications of their time and labor. Although elements of the KPA and North Korea’s citizenry would be capable of fighting a localized, long-term insurgency within its own borders, it is difficult to see how North Korea’s ability to sustain an actual war footing with the United States and South Korea—with a unified force and intact command-and-control network—would exceed a couple months at most. This lack of sustained operational capacity creates strong incentives to de-escalate or close a military campaign as quickly as possible. Desperation, in other words, may compel North Korea to launch nuclear first strikes, even with an assured retaliation capability. Whether assured retaliation or asymmetric escalation, each type of North Korean nuclear strategy leaves considerable room for how it is implemented.

Because the CONOPs for any military campaign are likely to be planned and executed by the KPA, it, like all militaries, is likely to plan for military campaigns that achieve maximum effectiveness. Given the large and diverse inventory of missiles the KPA continues to refine and invest in, we might then expect that conventional and nuclear-tipped missiles will be relevant as a “force multiplier” in its operations. Although anti-access operations are most often associated with China in US security discourses, most of Asia’s militaries have been investing in capabilities and reorienting doctrine to emphasize blunting the power projection capabilities of others. North Korea seems to also be capitalizing on this trend, which has largely been enabled by the region-wide availability of precision-guided munitions. Several relatively inexpensive North Korean capabilities seem designed for anti-access CONOPs. Drones can be used as missile and long-range artillery decoys, or to divert alliance air defense resources in order to give North Korea’s anemic air force a fighting chance at an offensive mission. Undersea mines, combined with anti-ship cruise missiles, can create significant barriers for US and ROK naval forces. Nodong missiles can be used to target air bases and ports in South Korea and Japan. And depending on its ability to steal, procure or simply reverse engineer Chinese missile capabilities, a North Korean anti-satellite capability is not inconceivable. ...North Korea’s growing emphasis on missile diversification—even as its ground forces get diverted into non-military activities and the “air gap” between its air force and the South Korean air force expands—incentivizes the country to follow the military-technical trend in Asia favoring anti-access CONOPs. For decades, studies of the KPA suggested it would rely on special operations forces to try to infiltrate behind South Korean lines for the purposes of sabotaging alliance bases, ports and petroleum, oil and lubricant facilities prior to or at the beginning of any conflict. But the North’s missile and rocket force can perform this task more assuredly, faster and potentially at less expense. Such attacks counter the local sources of alliance power projection in South Korea and Japan. If successful, they would delay or altogether prevent alliance and coalition partner force flow (including logistics and ammunition) from outside the Korean peninsula. Moreover, by targeting bases and ports, the KPA would remove locations for aircraft (and ship) recovery and maintenance. A North Korean anti-access CONOP would prioritize conventional and nuclear missile use for four major purposes: delaying or preventing the large-scale flow of US and coalition partner forces into the broader Korean operating area (including United Nations Command rear area facilities in Japan); preventing surface ships from approaching close enough to North Korea’s western and eastern coasts to launch amphibious assaults; eroding alliance air superiority by preventing recurring air sorties for both strikes and surveillance from air bases and aircraft carriers; and disrupting the logistics that support and sustain alliance ground forces that would move forward into North Korean territory. Using missiles to meet these operational objectives makes air bases, naval ports and surface ships critical target priorities. In essence, the US way of war requires projecting sustained power onto North Korea by multiple means; the North’s missiles are best used to block or erode the alliance’s ability to project power locally. ...Some changes, well recognized by Combined Forces Command and US Forces Korea, are already being pursued. These include improved anti-submarine warfare capabilities, which are crucial against SLBMs and surprise attacks like those against the ROK naval ship Cheonan in 2010; enhanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets and coverage to enable precision targeting of missile sites and

launchers; and multilayered missile defense. Such improvements have been publicly affirmed in alliance Security Consultative Meetings dating back to at least 2010. The uncertainty about these capabilities simply centers on whether they can be improved and fielded quickly enough to meet the trajectory of North Korean missile developments. But other alliance changes that are not being undertaken—and are not necessarily even recognized today—should be considered as well. Discussed below are priorities for countering an anti-access, war-fighting CONOP, which emphasizes nuclear and conventional missiles. To minimize operational vulnerabilities in an anti-access campaign, the alliance needs optimized basing and port accesses in and around South Korea to facilitate power projection. At present, there are seven naval ports in South Korea and only one US-designated naval base at Chinhae that coordinates ship visits but does not host any US naval assets. The South Korean navy has long aimed to establish a new navy base on Jeju Island, but progress has been slowed by a combination of domestic opposition and budget priorities favoring South Korean ground forces. US air presence in South Korea is considerably greater than its naval presence, with two permanent air bases at Osan and Kunsan hosting 29 fighter squadrons. Additionally, the South Korean air force operates 11 bases in addition to aircraft at the two US-designated air bases. It would be easy to recommend the construction of more landing strips for aircraft in South Korea, but the country's rocky topography does not allow for it. Similarly, much of South Korea's coast consists of shallow shoals of less than four meters in depth in some parts, making the construction of new naval ports impractical. Nevertheless, three policy decisions would improve the situation:

- First, the South Korean navy should expedite base construction on Jeju Island. Its rear area, offshore location is tactically useful, and the base would provide added diversification of locations where US, ROK and coalition partner ships could dock.
- Second, US air bases and ports located in Japan should offer capacity for not only US but also South Korean air and naval assets. There is a high risk that early in any conflict North Korean missiles would destroy at least some naval and air facilities—especially the Osan and Kunsan air bases, and the port of Busan—even though alliance ships and aircraft might still be intact. Having more diversified facilities minimally requires utilizing United Nations Command-flagged rear area bases in Japan, yet South Korea has not grappled with this eventuality. While having more bases and ports would not make South Korea immune from attack, of course, it would further complicate North Korean targeting and improve alliance options.
- Third, deploying carrier strike groups takes considerable time, and given their city-sized presence, adversaries learn of their approach well before arrival. The United States should consider maintaining a continuous carrier presence in Northeast Asia in order to leverage additional mobile takeoff and landing locations. The presence of carrier strike groups in Northeast Asia now typically occurs only as part of military exercises, freedom of navigation assertions and show of force demonstrations as an occasional political signal of commitment or coercion. Because carrier strike groups consist of many naval assets in addition to the carrier, which adds costs, the United States might explore the possibility of Japanese and South Korean ships partially constituting the non-carrier assets in the strike group. Another imperative in adapting military strategy to an anti-access CONOP is to effectively do the opposite of the current US-South Korea plan to consolidate the US military presence through the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) and Land Partnership Program (LPP) initiatives. These initiatives, launched

during the George W. Bush and Roh Moo-hyun administrations, are intended to shrink the US military footprint on the Korean peninsula, from approximately 104 US installations to 47, organized in two large, dense hubs—one in the Pyeongtaek area southwest of Seoul, and the other in the southern portion of the peninsula. Whatever the original rationale, consolidating the US military presence in South Korea into two “enduring hubs” increases the size of and reduces the number of targets that North Korea needs to attack with nuclear weapons. North Korea does not even need to make major advances in precision-guidance to cause large-scale counterforce damage; it would merely need to aim in the general direction of two densely packed, wide-area targets. Improving the resilience of the US presence on the peninsula in view of North Korea’s growing nuclear arsenal would be aided by a geographically dispersed military basing structure. Dispersal is one of only a limited number of ways to enhance the survivability of important forces and facilities that enable power projection, which is a crucial task in countering anti-access campaigns. A major alternative to dispersal—hardening—might be possible if facilities were targeted by cruise missiles with small payloads, but hardening becomes nearly impossible against nuclear-armed missiles. YRP and LPP improve the political sustainability of the US military presence in South Korea by reducing US military real estate in Seoul—one of the most expensive real estate markets in the world—and by geographically concentrating areas where US military and South Korean civilians are likely to interact. That should reduce opportunities for political friction and military accidents that affect the host nation population. Thus, it would seem that a decision to reverse YRP and LPP is an instance in which political and military strategy may contradict one another. Given the vulnerability of fixed bases to North Korean missile strikes, US and ROK aircraft need to be prepared to fly missions to and from many different bases—US bases, ROK bases and Japanese air bases as well. During combined military exercises, it would improve realism to direct US and South Korean aircraft not to take off and land from their assigned bases, but to treat all bases in South Korea and Japan as a single, large theater basing network, adapting where specific aircraft and squadrons physically end up based on assumptions about “suddenly” inoperable bases during exercises. This is much more difficult to do, in part because of logistical complications associated with maintenance and refueling support for specific types of aircraft, but it more closely replicates the circumstances alliance aircraft would face in a contingency. The traditional template for US war fighting, as Lieber and Press argue, needs to be tailored to take into account inadvertent signaling about alliance objectives. Because the North Korean leadership fears decapitation, there is a high risk of it launching nuclear first strikes during a conflict if it believes the alliance intends to change the regime. If, as a conflict unfolds, the alliance decides it does not wish to compel regime change but rather aim for a more limited objective, all alliance operations need to be sensitive to the possibility of triggering a nuclear first strike from North Korea. This implies that large-scale amphibious assaults, destruction of North Korean air defense systems, and bombing runs against either Pyongyang or nuclear and missile sites need to either be avoided or conducted with a conscientiousness about messaging to North Korean leadership. Stealth aircraft have thus become especially valuable for precision targeting, as have special operations forces. Many types of ground force capabilities, such as counter-artillery fires, could also be employed without posing any kind of imminent risk to the North Korean regime. ...Finally, related to the previous

recommendation, the alliance needs to focus greater attention on limited war campaign scenarios. Specifically, the alliance should devise limited objectives tailored to avoid not only precipitating nuclear escalation, but also sending signals that regime change is inevitable." (Van Jackson, *Alliance Military Strategy in the Shadow of North Korea's Nuclear Futures*, U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS," September 2015)

9/15/15

Atomic Energy Institute of the DPRK Director "answer to question put by KCNA Tuesday as regards the public opinion being built up over the DPRK's nuclear activities: Of late, institutions specializing in nuclear activities and media of the Western world including the U.S. have become vociferous about nuclear activities in the DPRK, saying satellite data made them capture fresh activity in a nuclear establishment in Yongbyon and they are concerned about it. As known by the world, the DPRK's access to the nuclear weapons is an outcome of the U.S. hostile policy towards it. Explicitly speaking, the DPRK took the measure for self-defense in the face of the U.S. extreme hostile policy and nuclear threats towards it. **As was clarified by a spokesman for the then General Department of Atomic Energy of the DPRK in April 2013, all the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon including the uranium enrichment plant and 5 MW graphite-moderated reactor were rearranged, changed or readjusted and they started normal operation**, pursuant to the line of simultaneously pushing forward the economic construction and the building of a nuclear force advanced at the historic plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. **In the meantime, the U.S. anachronistic hostile policy toward the DPRK that forced it to have access to the nuclear weapons has remained utterly unchanged and instead it has become all the more undisguised and vicious with the adoption of means openly seeking the downfall of the latter's social system.** Scientists, technicians and workers in the field of atomic energy of the DPRK have made **innovations day by day in their research and production to guarantee the reliability of the nuclear deterrent in every way by steadily improving the levels of nuclear weapons with various missions in quality and quantity** as required by the prevailing situation. **If the U.S. and other hostile forces persistently seek their reckless hostile policy towards the DPRK and behave mischievously, the DPRK is fully ready to cope with them with nuclear weapons any time.** (KCNA, "Director of Atomic Energy Institute of DPRK on Its Nuclear Activities," September 15, 2015) ISIS: "This announcement implies that the expansion section of the centrifuge plant is operational. However, there is no concrete evidence of such operation visible via satellite imagery. We and others noted snow melt on the building last winter. Although this signature implies the building is heated, it does not reveal whether centrifuges are in operation, particularly in the expansion section. However, there are a range of factors which would support that the plant, in particular the extension, is operational, as North Korea states. North Korean engineers and scientists are experienced enough to have finished the extension and enough time has passed to accomplish this task and get it into operation. Moreover, this plant is a major priority of the government, so the project likely received ample resources. North Korea is also known to have procured many dual-use goods in sufficient quantity for the extension of this facility. These goods were purchased in China and include a range of vacuum equipment, computer control equipment, and frequency - inverters or related subcomponents. Thus, although the available information does not confirm the plant's operation, nothing

contradicts the North Korean statement that the plant, including the extension, is operational. Over the last several years, North Korea has engaged in retrofitting and upgrading its small 5 megawatt-electric (MWe) reactor. Since approximately October 2014, the reactor appears to have operated at low power or operated intermittently. This assessment is supported by historical analysis of satellite imagery gathered during the end of 2014 and January, February, March, April, June and August 2015. Recent imagery dated August 22, 2015 does not show a steady stream of water being discharged from the reactor's discharge pipeline, which is the main sign of full-power operation. Thus, it is harder to confirm North Korea's claim about "normal" operation. Nonetheless, other signatures suggesting renewed activity are visible in this August 2015 image. Several vehicles and trucks are visible at the entrance of the 5 MWe reactor and water runoff is present on the roof of the reactor's turbine building, indicating recent turbine activity. It is, therefore, very likely that the reactor was still operating intermittently as of August. Other analysts have highlighted activity at the radiochemical laboratory which is a facility dedicated to the separation of plutonium from the irradiated 5 MWe spent fuel. As part of the renovation of the reactor, North Korean technicians reportedly installed (or renovated) irradiation channels in the core. These channels would be used to make various types of isotopes, potentially for civilian or military purposes. Earlier, North Korea made isotopes in its Soviet-supplied research reactor but this reactor has not been in operation for several years. Moreover, North Korea lacks fuel to operate this reactor. Although a gas graphite reactor is not an ideal producer of isotopes, it can be used in this way. North Korea would be expected to make a variety of isotopes for use in medicine or industry. **One candidate isotope that must be considered is tritium, which could be used in making more sophisticated nuclear weapons.** The 5 MWe reactor is a military reactor and militarily-useful isotopes would be expected to be the reactor's priority instead of civilian isotopes. North Korea has stated repeatedly its intention to improve the quality of its nuclear weapons, and tritium would enable nuclear weapons designs that could have a greater explosive yield than weapons made from only plutonium or weapon-grade uranium. Whether North Korea can make nuclear weapons using tritium is unknown although we believe that it remains a technical problem North Korea still needs to solve. Solving this problem would likely require more underground nuclear tests. Isotope production requires a facility to separate the isotopes. North Korea built such a facility years ago, called the Isotope Production Laboratory in the northern part of Yongbyon near the old Soviet-supplied reactor. This facility dates to the 1970s and its operational status is unknown. It is also a relatively small facility. As described next, North Korea may be building a larger replacement. For a while, we have been observing a new facility being constructed in the southwest corner of North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear site, at a location adjacent to the train tracks that connect the fuel fabrication complex to other locations within the Yongbyon nuclear complex. ISIS first published information about this new construction activity in April 2015. The facility appears to be a hot cell facility and may be a new facility that will be dedicated to separating isotopes from irradiated material produced in the 5 MWe reactor. ...Although the precise purpose of this site is unknown, the signatures visible through an historical analysis of satellite imagery are consistent with an isotope separation facility, **including tritium separation**, according to an expert we consulted. This assessment is also shared by a government expert we consulted who has long

experience in assessing activities at the Yongbyon site. The presence of three stacks indicates activities that require the release of harmful gases. The presence of tanks suggest processes using chemicals. The signatures of the cells within the larger building are consistent with hot cells possibly for isotope separation. ISIS does not believe this building to be related to reprocessing activities since the thickness of the cell walls is not consistent with that expected for reprocessing activities. (David Albright and Serena Kelleher-Vergantini, *Update on North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Site*, Institute for Science and International Security, September 15, 2015)

In an unusually frank rebuke against its wayward ally, China called for North Korea to comply with U.N. resolutions that ban the North from conducting ballistic missile tests, a day after Pyongyang hinted that it could launch a long-range rocket to mark a key national anniversary. "As a sovereign state, North Korea has the rights for peaceful use of outer space, but these rights are restricted by U.N. resolutions," China's foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei replied, when asked about the North's possible launch of a long-range rocket. "U.N. Security Council resolutions should be followed through." "China hopes that the relevant party can act with caution and refrain from taking actions that may elevate tension on the Korean Peninsula and in the region," Hong said. (Yonhap, "China Urges N. Korea to Comply with U.N. Resolutions over Possible Rocket Launch," September 15, 2015)

9/16/15

North Korea will face additional U.N. Security Council sanctions further deepening its isolation if the regime forges ahead with a banned long-range rocket launch, South Korea's chief nuclear envoy Hwang Joon-kook said after talks with his U.S. counterpart, Amb. Sung Kim. "The right to peaceful use of space, which is possessed by ordinary nations, is clearly restricted in the case of North Korea under Security Council resolutions. In other words, North Korea's satellite launch is considered a test aimed at advancing its nuclear weapon delivery capabilities," Hwang told reporters. "Should North Korea push ahead with the so-called satellite launch, it will bring about additional measures by the Security Council and would be putting itself in deeper isolation," he said. Hwang also urged the North to return to the negotiating table, saying Seoul and Washington are ready to hold "exploratory talks" with Pyongyang without any conditions to test the North's commitment to denuclearization before formally restarting the six-party talks. (Yonhap, "S. Korean Nuclear Envoy Warns N.K. of Tougher U.N. Sanctions in Case of Rocket Launch," September 17, 2015)

North Korea will not be allowed to become a nuclear weapons state -- even if it takes more than sanctions to convince them, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has warned. Speaking at a joint press conference with South African Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Kerry said the imposition of sanctions against Iran, which also has aspirations as a nuclear power, influenced Tehran to change its direction and end their isolation from the international community. But he said Pyongyang's "almost total absence of a legitimate economy" meant that the same strategy may not work with North Korea. Kerry warned there will be "severe consequences" if North Korea does not refrain from "its irresponsible provocations that aggravate regional concerns, make the region less safe, and refuse -- if it refuses to live up to its international obligations. Our position is clear: We will not accept a DPRK -- North Korea -- as a nuclear weapons

state, just as we said that about Iran." (Paul Armstrong and Jethro Mullen, "Kerry: North Korea Sanctions over Nuclear Weapons May Not Be Enough," CNN, September 17, 2015)

9/17/15

China is presumed to have provided North Korea with around 500,000 tons of crude oil so far this year, a similar amount that Beijing offered to its traditional ally last year, despite their apparently strained ties, the Unification Ministry said. The ministry dismissed speculation that China has cut off its oil supply to the North, saying there is no reported abnormality in transportation in North Korea. There have been no reports of a serious fuel shortage in the North, which analysts said indicates that China has been providing crude oil to North Korea in the form of grant aid so that such shipments have not been recorded officially. Changes in the volume of transportation in North Korea can be used as a yardstick to gauge whether the North is suffering from a fuel shortage. The ministry said that North Korea imported around 24,000 tons of grains from China between January and July. Its imports of fertilizer reached some 48,000 tons in the cited period. (Yonhap, "China May Have Offered 500,000 Tons of Crude Oil to N.K. This Year: Seoul," September 17, 2015)

9/18/15

North Korea reiterated its resolve to launch a satellite, calling it a sovereign right, in its latest show of defiance against growing international calls against the provocation. "The more enemy forces will hamper our plan for space development, the more severe our counteraction will be," KCNA said. (Yonhap, "North Korea Renews Its Vow to Launch Satellite," September 18, 2015)

The United States is genuinely interested in holding talks with North Korea about how to resume the long-stalled denuclearization negotiations and it does not matter whether such discussions take place in Pyongyang or elsewhere, the chief U.S. envoy said. Amb. Sung Kim, special representative for North Korea policy, made the remark in an exclusive interview with Yonhap, stressing the North should come back to the negotiating table and honor its own commitment to give up its nuclear program. It is unusual for a senior American official to openly express his willingness to hold talks in the North's capital. The remark is seen as part of an effort to reach out to Pyongyang to dissuade the regime from provocations as fresh tensions have arisen over the North's threats to conduct missile and nuclear tests. **"When we conveyed to Pyongyang that we are open to dialogue to discuss how we can resume credible and meaningful negotiations, of course we meant it. It was not an empty promise. We are willing to talk to them,"** Kim said during the interview at his State Department office. "And frankly for me, whether that discussion takes place in Pyongyang, or some other place, is not important. I think what's important is for us to be able to sit down with them and hear directly from them that they are committed to denuclearization and that if and when the six-party talks resume, they will work with us in meaningful and credible negotiations towards verifiable denuclearization," he said. Kim said it does not matter where or in what format such exploratory talks are held. "For us, the important thing is that we focus on the common goal of denuclearization. In order to resume meaningful negotiations, we need to talk to the North Koreans to prepare for that resumption. Of course, we're willing to talk to them," the envoy said. Kim said the U.S. still maintains contact with the North through the "New York channel," which refers to the North's

mission to the United Nations and has let the North Koreans know that it's open to such exploratory talks. But the North has shown no interest in talks about denuclearization, he said. "I think that's been the problem. That's been the hindrance," he said. Kim said the U.S. approach to North Korea consists of three pillars: deterrence, diplomacy and pressure. In terms of pressure, the U.S. is looking at how it can strengthen enforcement of existing sanctions and whether there are new sanctions it can impose. "It's important that we continue our effort in all three tracks because I think it's clear that just one track isn't going to solve the problem," he said. "The joint statement is a very important document, and it reflects the strong commitment of all of the parties, with the exception of the North Koreans, our strong commitment to the core goal of the joint statement, which is denuclearization," Kim said. "Even though we haven't had any progress in implementing the joint statement for the past six or seven years, we remain committed to the joint statement and to the goal of denuclearization. We will continue to work very hard in cooperation with our partners, with our five-party partners to try to achieve some progress in implementing the joint statement." (Yonhap, "U.S. Willing to Hold Exploratory Talks with N. Korea in Pyongyang," *Korea Herald*, September 19, 2015)

9/19/15

In a middle-of-the night vote that capped a tumultuous struggle with opposition parties in Parliament, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo of Japan secured final passage of legislation authorizing overseas combat missions for his country's military, overturning a decades-old policy of reserving the use of force for self-defense. Abe's critics have a variety of grievances against the defense legislation. Not least is the question of its constitutionality: In multiple surveys of constitutional specialists, more than 90 percent have said they believe that it violates Japan's basic law, laid down by the United States in the postwar occupation, which renounces the use of force to resolve international disputes. But a less abstract fear of being "caught up in war" has been just as important in fueling opposition to the legislation, exposing a strain of public unease about the United States-Japan alliance that is usually kept out of view. Japan has accepted American protection for ever since the end of the United States' occupation, and today there are more than 40,000 United States military personnel stationed in the country. Yet the arrangement has come at the cost of Japanese independence, many here believe. The trade-off has taken on new significance now that Japan could be asked to risk the lives of its own soldiers and sailors for the United States in return. "Japan is caught between fear of entanglement and fear of abandonment," said Watanabe Tsuneo, a senior fellow at the Tokyo Foundation, a policy research group. "It's partly about public distrust of Japan's own government. People think Japanese leaders are too weak to say no to the U.S." (Jonathan Noble, "Japan Approves Law to Allow Broader Role for Military," *New York Times*, September 19, 2015) The approval rating for Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's Cabinet fell to 38.9 percent, with a majority of respondents opposing recent Diet passage of controversial security bills, a Kyodo poll showed. The support rate in the telephone survey conducted on September 19-20 compares to 43.2 percent in the previous survey in mid-August. (Kyodo, "Abe Cabinet's Support Rate Falls, Majority Sees Higher War Risk," September 20, 2015)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called for all relevant nations to avoid raising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, as North Korea has hinted that it may launch a long-

range rocket next month. "Any intention or attempt to disrupt peace and security in Northeast Asia is unjustified and undesirable," Wang told a forum at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. "War or conflict on the peninsula is good for no one," Wang said. "We must not take new actions that could lead to tensions on the peninsula." (Yonhap, "Chinese FM Calls for Avoiding Raising Tensions on Korean Peninsula," September 19, 2015) North Korea's nuclear envoys were absent from a two-day forum hosted by a Chinese state-run think tank to discuss ways to restart long-stalled nuclear talks, a diplomatic source involved in the forum said Friday, in an apparent snub at China's latest push to resume the six-party talks. The forum, organized by the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), is meant to mark the 10th anniversary of a landmark deal in which North Korea agreed to abandon its nuclear program in exchange for aid and security assurances. South Korea and Russia sent their deputy nuclear envoys to the forum that began Friday, while the U.S. and Japanese officials from their embassies in Beijing attended the forum, the source said. The absence of North Korean envoys was in sharp contrast to a similar forum hosted by the CIIS two years ago, when Pyongyang sent its First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan and chief nuclear envoy Ri Yong-ho to Beijing. (Yonhap, "N. Korean Nuclear Envoys Absent from China-Hosted Forum," September 18, 2015)

North Korea has abruptly recalled its ambassador to Indonesia after a series of events in the Southeast Asian nation about the human rights situation in the North. North Korean Embassy staff last week disrupted seminars organized by South Korean and Indonesian activists in Jakarta, and the South Korean Embassy requested police protection. Another event in Bandung yesterday went ahead without a hitch because of the police presence. The North today replaced the ambassador, Ri Jong-ryul, with An Kwang-il, sparking speculation that Ri is being held to account for the *éclat*. Only a few months ago the North Korean Embassy in Jakarta appeared to be in a festive mood after a memorandum of understanding was signed with Indonesia on scientific and cultural exchange and cooperation between universities, a South Korean Embassy official said. But North Korean Embassy officials were upset when they learned of the seminars jointly organized with the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM), an Indonesian policy advocacy organization and South Korea's Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights. The North Korean Embassy also lobbied the Indonesian government to block the seminars, but to no avail. (Kim Myong-song, "N. Korea Recalls Envoy to Indonesia after Eclat," Chosun Ilbo, September 21, 2015)

9/21/15

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov pushed for a formal peace treaty with Japan, officially ending their World War II hostilities, while making it clear to his Japanese counterpart that the Northern Territories were not open to negotiations. Speaking at a news conference after meeting with visiting Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio, Lavrov said, "We did not discuss the (Northern Territories) issue. We did discuss the issue of concluding a peace treaty." His comment shows that Russia has no intention of negotiating with Japan over the status of four small islands that lie off the eastern coast of Hokkaido, which it calls the Southern Kurils. "The Russian approach is that the only way for progress on the issue is for Japan to accept the reality of history since the end of World War II as well as the U.N. Charter," Lavrov added. His remarks are a clear rejection of Japan's stance that negotiations for a peace treaty involve negotiations

over territorial disputes. The meeting between Kishida and Lavrov also did not reach an agreement for scheduling a visit to Japan by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Japan has been pushing for such a visit before year-end. Kishida and Lavrov did announce that vice ministerial talks related to the peace treaty between their two nations would resume in Moscow on October 8. At the news conference, Kishida said, "We must continue with dialogue in order to create a solution that would be acceptable to both sides. I was able to share that understanding with Lavrov." (Suzuki Takuya and Komaki Akiyoshi, "Russian Foreign Minister Urges Peace Treaty, Takes Northern Territories off the Table," *Asahi Shimbun*, September 22, 2015) Lavrov indicated that there is no room for compromise over the disputed islands off Hokkaido and called on Tokyo to "recognize" post-World War II "historic realities." Kishida indicated in his remarks, which were translated into Russian, that the two countries should "create a mutually acceptable solution to the territorial issue" over the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islets. "We had in-depth discussions about the territorial issue," Kishida said at a joint news conference after meeting with Lavrov for almost three hours. "Minister Lavrov and I were able to share a view that our countries should find ways for a mutually acceptable solution." However, Lavrov appeared to reject the Japanese term for the islands itself. "Neither the 'Northern Territories' of Japan nor the 'Northern Territories' of Russia are the subject of our dialogue. On our agenda is reaching the peace deal," he said. "Moving forward on this issue is possible only after we see clearly Japan's recognition of historic realities. The work is difficult and the difference in positions is vast," Lavrov said of peace talks, which Kishida and Lavrov agreed would nevertheless continue October 8 by deputy foreign ministers. Resumption of the talks between Deputy Foreign Minister Sugiyama Shinsuke and his Russian counterpart, Igor Morgulov, could be a key step toward resolving the territorial spat. Sugiyama and Morgulov met in February, but their talks covered broader aspects of bilateral ties. (Kyodo, Jiji, "Moscow Says If Japan Wants Peace Deal, It Must Recognize Postwar 'Historic Realities,'" *Japan Times*, September 22, 2015)

Kim Jong-un has emphasised economic progress, vowing that his people will never have to tighten their belts again, and has overseen agricultural policy reforms that prompted hopeful comparisons with Deng Xiaoping's early experiments in China. But the dancing party comes at the outset of what looks set to be the worst harvest of Kim's reign, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, which is forecasting a 12 per cent year-on-year fall in rice production, with a 30 per cent decline in the smaller wheat and barley crops. "Kim Jong-un has had good harvests so far," says one senior South Korean official. "This will be the first time he is squeezed." Severe drought followed by flooding has caused havoc in North Korea's agricultural system this year, underscoring the country's continuing lack of food security, with the state cutting rations this summer to less than half the level needed for basic nutrition. The grim outlook has tempered optimism about the impact of agricultural reforms in recent years, as described to UN agencies by North Korean officials. In June 2012, six months after Kim took power, the state promulgated new guidelines allowing smaller work teams on farms of as few as 10 people. Two years later, a new set of guidelines declared that teams could now be as small as two households, and that they would be allowed to work the same plot of land for many years at a time. Crucially, these

changes have been combined with reforms allowing the teams to keep up to 70 per cent of what they produce instead of handing it all to the state. State media did not announce the changes but have subsequently referred to them. "The advantage of the 'field responsibility' system is that the workforce at each farm regards a small plot of land as their own," Ji Myong Su, head of agriculture management research at Pyongyang's Academy of Agricultural Science, told the state *Tongil Sinbo* newspaper in June. The speed of grain planting had doubled at the farms where the new system had been implemented, involving some teams as small as four people, he added. Another important change in 2014 was a dramatic increase in the maximum permitted size of "kitchen gardens", from 100 to 3,300 square meters, which will encourage more private food production, says Cristina Coslet, an FAO official covering east Asia. "I could really see the difference between the fields and kitchen gardens [during a 2012 visit] – they look after [the latter] carefully and water them," she says. Testimony from defectors and visitors to North Korea suggests the reforms have been implemented in most agricultural communities but with extensive differences between regions, says Kwon Tae-jin, head of North Korea research at Seoul's GS & J Institute. The changes are part of a long-term expansion of market dynamics in this supposedly planned economy since the devastating famine of the mid-1990s, precipitated by years of under-investment in food production and the abrupt withdrawal of Soviet aid. The public food distribution system broke down, resulting in the starvation of hundreds of thousands, and forcing the survivors to turn to informal markets for survival. Even now, however, 70 per cent of North Koreans rely primarily on the public distribution system for food, the FAO estimates. But provision can be sporadic for many citizens, and even the officially declared rations are well below the government's nominal daily target of 573g of cereal equivalent per person: enough to provide the 2,000 calories widely seen as a minimum for good health. After bad rainfall hit this year's spring harvest, the government cut the daily personal ration to just 250g. The latest cuts – by far the most severe since Mr Kim took power – are set to compound a dire situation in much of the rest of the country. A 2012 UN survey found that more than a quarter of North Korean children under five had moderate or severe chronic malnutrition. Nonetheless, the reforms have provided a significant boost to productivity and helped mitigate the impact of this year's drought, argues Andrei Lankov, a professor at Seoul's Kookmin University, noting that the 2013 harvest was the biggest for 25 years. "People in their twenties and thirties have grown up in a market economy – they don't see the government as the giver of everything, unlike their parents." (Simon Mundy, "Slim Pickings for North Korea's Farmers," *Financial Times*, September 21, 2015)

9/23/15

Senior South Korean and US defense officials met in Seoul for two-day talks focused on responding to the possibility of an imminent North Korean rocket launch and later nuclear test. Opening today's talks in Seoul, Seoul's deputy minister for policy at the defense ministry, Yoo Jeh-Seung, said the meeting would seek to "firm up the combined defense posture" of South Korea and the United States. "(This) carries special importance when North Korea's nuclear and missile threats are growing," he was quoted as saying by Yonhap. The US officials at the talks included Abraham Denmark, deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, and Elaine Bunn, deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear and missile defense policy. The chief US envoy to the six-party talks on ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program arrived

in South Korea yesterday and was expected to join the discussions. (AFP, "U.S., South Korea Discuss N. Korea's Nuclear, Missile Threat," September 23, 2015)

Pyongyang has brought nothing new to the table about the status of Japanese abducted by North Korean agents except for a request for money from Japan concerning a separate issue. Both the "results" of Pyongyang's reinvestigation into the abduction issue and its request for funds to return the remains of Japanese troops from World War II are totally unacceptable for an increasingly frustrated Japanese government. "We hold the understanding that (North Korea) has given a zero response regarding the identified abductees," an aide to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said. "Japan's stance is: 'We cannot accept such a report. Redo the investigation in a more serious manner.'" Abe has said resolving the abduction issue is a priority of his government. Yet Pyongyang has shown no signs of budging an inch. Japan has identified 12 Japanese as victims of abduction by North Korean agents, including Megumi Yokota, who was only 13 when she was taken in 1977. The two countries agreed in May 2014 that Pyongyang would conduct a re-examination into the status of the 12 abductees in exchange for Japan lifting some economic sanctions against North Korea. But during the course of informal talks, North Korean officials indicated they are sticking to the findings of earlier investigations that eight of the Japanese, including Yokota, have died and four never entered the reclusive nation, according to several Japanese government officials. That has been North Korea's position since September 2002, shortly after the country acknowledged it had abducted Japanese for its spy program and said it would allow five surviving abductees to return to Japan. Tokyo views any report that only regurgitates past findings as meaningless and unworthy of being accepted. The lack of progress on the issue is one of the reasons Japanese officials have refused to hold formal meetings with their North Korean counterparts to accept the results of the reinvestigation. During the informal talks, Pyongyang may have revealed its true intentions through requests concerning other issues. North Korean officials had been pressing for a further lifting of sanctions in return for the remains of about 8,000 Japanese who died on the Korean Peninsula in the final days of World War II and after. Sources said North Korea even asked Japan for about 10 billion yen (\$83.4 million), insisting it would cost about 1.2 million yen to dig up and prepare the remains of each individual. "North Korea is trying to release the results of its re-examination on issues other than the abductees," a high-ranking official in the prime minister's office said. "They probably want the money first, but we have told them that is unacceptable." A Foreign Ministry source said negotiations are at a stalemate because of the huge gap in the stances of the nations. According to several government sources, Ihara Junichi, director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and Ono Keiichi, director of the Northeast Asia Division, have held several informal meetings with their North Korean counterparts since autumn 2014 in Dalian and Shanghai. North Korean officials initially said they would reconfirm the process behind how the Japanese abductees entered their nation. But the resulting answer was unchanged from past findings. Pyongyang also delayed the release of its initial progress report, saying it needed "one year" to complete the re-examination. When that deadline arrived in July, North Korean officials informed their Japanese counterparts that a little more time would be required. Four additional meetings were held until early September in Dalian, but no progress was made.

Japanese officials have rejected Pyongyang's request for funds needed to return the remains of Japanese who died about 70 years ago. The request from North Korea is not unusual. Since 1996, the United States and North Korea have conducted joint studies to dig up the remains of U.S. soldiers who were reported missing during the Korean War. Washington has paid Pyongyang on each occasion when remains have been returned. But the Japanese government is demanding more information on the Japanese abductees before it negotiates on other matters. Pyongyang has identified Japanese nationals who went to North Korea to be with their ethnic Korean spouses but now want to return to Japan. North Korea said it is willing to discuss terms on allowing those individuals to go to their home country. The Japanese government rejected that proposal. (*Asahi Shimbun*, "N. Korea Won't Budge on Abduction Issue; Japan Demands More Serious Study," September 23, 2015)

Russian Ambassador Alexander Timonin said Moscow is concerned about a possible long-range missile launch by North Korea, but he also emphasized that as a sovereign nation, Pyongyang has a right to peaceful space development. "Russia does not recognize North Korea as a nuclear state," Timonin told *JoongAng Ilbo*. "At the same time, we believe that the DPRK as a sovereign state and a member of the United Nations has the right to peaceful space development. But this right has to be exercised under the regulations of the UN Security Council and under the conditions of it returning to the Nonproliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency." "I can't speculate on something that has not happened yet," Timonin said regarding concerns that North Korea may test a nuclear device and launch a satellite into space to mark its Workers' Party anniversary next month. "But I want to emphasize that Russia is paying attention to the preparation of a launch of a satellite and the operation of the Yongbyon nuclear facility in North Korea. I would like to point out that in the most recent years, because of the crisis in Northern African and Middle Eastern countries, North Korea's mistrust of the security regime under international law has grown," said Timonin. "And North Korea's perception that only weapons of mass destruction can guarantee the protection of its country has only been enforced." However, he added, "Russia does not justify Pyongyang's nuclear and missile program" and said the root of the problem has to be tackled. "Military actions and sanctions have to be abandoned, and dialogue between the Koreas has to be adequately restored in order to alleviate the tension on the Korean Peninsula and for inter-Korean cooperation to prosper," he continued. Timonin also addressed Russia's concern over the possible deployment of the U.S.-led Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (Thaad) system in Northeast Asia, with Washington in partnership with Seoul and Tokyo. "Russia, as we have told our South Korean partners several times, said that we cannot allow the United States' efforts to use North Korea's nuclear and missile program as a pretext to build a new defense system in Northeast Asia and enable unilateral military dominance," he said. "We believe a comprehensive missile defense system among South Korea, the United States and Japan, in terms of technical capacity, far exceeds the level of what is needed to counter any potential missile capabilities possessed by North Korea." "We express once more our concern over the deployment of the U.S. Thaad to Korea," a position that is also shared by the Chinese leadership, he said. Such a deployment would "complicate the situation in Northeast Asia." That message was reiterated in a high-level bilateral security dialogue, held two days ago in Seoul and attended by

Secretary of the Security Council of Russia Nikolai Patrushev and Korean officials including Kim Kwan-jin, President Park Geun-hye's chief security aide. Security, stability on the Korean Peninsula and resuming the six-party talks were other key issues discussed. "The secretary especially emphasized that Russia cannot accept the deployment of Thaad on the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of an integrated MD [missile defense] system among the United States, Japan and South Korea," Timonin said. "Such a system is not needed, and the currently existing issues can be solved through political and diplomatic means. "At the same time," he warned, "if an MD system that includes the borders of Russia is built, Moscow will inevitably have to respond accordingly to preserve its security. But we hope such a situation will not happen." South Korean and Russian cooperation "is an important part of seeking a way to resolve the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula," Timonin also said, particularly through the framework of the long-stalled six-party talks. He recalled that the Sept. 19, 2005, joint statement signed in the fourth six-party talks in Beijing between China, Japan, Russia, the United States and the two Koreas recently marked its 10th anniversary. "I want to emphasize as someone who personally participated in the preparation of the statement that the joint statement says not only that North Korea has to abandon all its nuclear programs and return to the Nonproliferation Treaty and restore IAEA safeguards, but also that the United States should not have any hostile intentions toward North Korea and be prepared to improve relations," said Timonin, who is fluent in Korean. He has spent 35 years in diplomacy and 25 years dedicated to Korean issues. He said the agreement allows North Korea the peaceful use of nuclear energy and, at an appropriate time, the provision of a light water reactor. Despite the ending of denuclearization talks since Pyongyang walked out in 2009, Timonin said, "Russia believes the six-party talks are the most appropriate structure to gather all related parties and discuss nuclear issues. "I believe that all parties that support peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula need to exercise restraint and responsibility and cease military displays through sincere dialogue based on mutual respect and trust to alleviate tension," he said. Timonin is the first ambassador to be transferred to Seoul from Pyongyang, where he served from May 2012 to January 2015. The ambassador conducted an hour-long interview in Russian at the embassy in central Seoul ahead of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral ties between South Korea and Russia. "We established bilateral relations on September 30, 1990, a considerable revision to Russia's policy toward the Asia-Pacific region and one of the symbols of the end of the Cold War era," he recalled. "In 1990, we started nearly at a zero point, but since then, we made such symbolic, impressive progress. We have built new economic, science and cultural systems, and regular contact between our leadership became customary." Since 1990, the leaders of the two countries have officially met 27 times, including President Vladimir Putin's visit to Seoul in 2013. He added that the two countries' annual bilateral trade exceeded \$26 billion. He pointed out that on top of trade and economic benefits, "Korea-Russia cooperation has come to play an important role in resolving international political issues. Today, there is no area that our two countries do not cooperate in, whether it is international security, trade, economy, politics, culture, science and technology or energy." (Sarah Kim, "Russian Envoy Discusses Pyongyang Tests, THAAD," *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 25, 2015)

Namkung: "It is difficult to know whether to celebrate or bemoan the Koreans' plans to hold another round of family reunions next month. Of course, we are happy for the families themselves. However, these reunions -- always one-off and a cruel reminder of how so many more will never have a chance to participate -- have left behind nothing more than even more tears in their wake. The problem is that they, along with other "confidence-building measures" such as tourism and industrial parks, far from paving the road to unification, have actually set back hopes for a permanent and lasting solution to the conflict on the peninsula. That solution lies in both sides recognizing that there are, after nearly a century of estrangement if one goes back to the March 1st Independence Uprising whose failure led to the emergence of two divergent ideologies, two separate states on the Korean peninsula. Nearly a quarter-century ago, both Koreas acknowledged this reality when they joined the United Nations as separate entities. That reality was reinforced when the two governments signed the comprehensive but ill-fated South-North Basic Accords and the Denuclearization Agreement. But the immediate post-Cold War starry-eyed obsession with toppling the government in the north and stopping its nuclear program, an effort out of proportion to its actual fledgling nature, doomed the prospects for building on the two-states formula. Today, a generation later, North Korea has not only not collapsed, it possesses the nuclear weapons which protects it from every possible outside foe. The new confidence this has engendered has created, along with the coming to power of a new leader, a new confidence with respect to its relations with the South and a greater willingness to acknowledge the reality of separate states. This is why North Korean TV a few years ago showed the South Korean flag for thirty full minutes at a South Korea event. It is also why the South Korean national anthem was played at an international wrestling competition two years ago. And it is why the official media used the term "Republic of Korea" only a month ago when announcing the onset of talks to resolve the land mines issue. But these are only the more superficial signs. For a more formal statement, we need look no further than at the landmark statement issued by the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 16, 2012 only three months into Kim Jong-un's ascension, in which all of its past major diplomatic achievements -- the U.S.-DPRK Joint Communiqué of 2000, the Pyongyang Declaration with Japan in 2002, and the Six Party Talks -- are said to owe their existence to the success of the two summit meetings with South Korea, a formulation theretofore unseen. And the fact that such a statement was issued by the Foreign Ministry, not the Party, implies an acceptance of the two separate states formula, making it even more surprising. And what is the role of the U.S. in this new iteration of Kim Jong-un's foreign policy? **It is to facilitate the process of the Koreans themselves reaching a settlement, a clear reversal of their decades-old insistence that U.S.-DPRK relations lie at the core of their foreign policy with South Korea at best playing a supporting role.** How should the Republic of Korea and the United States respond to this trend? South Korea needs to take the lead, encouraging the U.S. to take steps to provide the right atmosphere for reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, not occupying the driver's seat. The U.S. needs to entertain the prospect that once again the Koreans themselves can denuclearize the Korean peninsula and produce the Holy Grail it has unsuccessfully sought for an entire generation. Decades ago during the Four Party Peace Talks, the North Korean Foreign Ministry proposed two-way (read North/South) and three-way (read North, South, and the U.S.) talks to take place within the four-party framework, a position from which it

has not wavered. The Six Party Talks can be revived, so long as the parties understand that a six-way pact must take a back seat to agreements reached on a two- and three-way basis. Secondly, the South Korean president needs to empower her Foreign Ministry to take the lead on security discussions with the North. The Unification Ministry can handle issues such as tourism, trade and investment, and family reunions, which are fraternal in nature (and as in all families, liable to produce arguments and even fights). But security issues, including nuclear, missiles, and conventional arms matters, are state-to-state matters, which require Foreign Ministry leadership. Incidentally, North Korea's Foreign Ministry faces the same structural challenge: a Party which traditionally has handled all of the North's relations with the South and is reluctant to cede a role to the Foreign Ministry. It too must persuade its leadership to allow it to handle North/South relations. Kim Jong-un, who has sought to follow in his grandfather's footsteps on many other issues, must embrace the same broad strategic vision that informed his grandfather's decision to make peace with his worst enemies. The sooner the two Foreign Ministries can meet (they have done so under cover to discuss security issues in the past), the more they can strengthen each other's position. A similar broad vision on Park Geun-hye's part as she travels to meet Barack Obama in October might yield new formulas that will finally usher in a prolonged period of peaceful coexistence on the Korean peninsula and a Grand Union in which the Koreas can begin to treat each other as separate states with a mutual respect that is free of the intricacies of family infighting. (Tony Namkung, "South-North Korea Need to Empower Their Foreign Ministry," *Hankyore*, September 23, 2015)

9/24/15

North Korea said a rocket launch for peaceful purposes is "imminent," and Pyongyang has no intention of dropping nuclear missiles on the United States. Hyon Gwang Il, who identified himself as the director of scientific development at North Korea's National Aeronautical Development Association, told CNN that final preparations were in progress to "develop in the shortest possible time, multifunctional, highly reliable Earth observation satellites." Some analysts have said North Korea's claims are a cover for a military program, because satellite and weapons launches use similar rocket technology. Analysts also have said North Korea possesses a nuclear weapon that could be placed on a missile capable of reaching the United States, but North Korean officials said Pyongyang has no intention of harming the United States. "Why on Earth would we have any intention to drop nuclear missiles on the heads of people throughout the world, including of course the people of the United States?" Hyon said. (Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea Says It Has No Intention of Harming the United States," UPI, September 24, 2015)

Liu and Bermudez: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates new activity at North Korea's Punggye-ri nuclear test site, the location of Pyongyang's previous three nuclear detonations. While there has been speculation that the North intends to conduct a fourth nuclear test to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) on October 10, the purpose of this activity at this point remains entirely unclear. It could be related to anything from maintenance work to preparations for another nuclear test. Commercial satellite imagery from September 18, 2015, indicates new activity at the West Portal area—site of North Korea's nuclear tests in 2009 and 2013—around the entrance to a new tunnel that the North has been excavating since May

2013. Four large vehicles, the purpose of which is unknown, are parked side by side near the tunnel entrance. Whether their location next to the spoil cart tracks, used by mining carts to carry away spoil debris created during tunnel excavation is related to the ongoing work is unclear. Camouflage netting is also clearly visible over the entrance as is the usual practice to conceal activity. In addition, there are an unusually large number of vehicles at the Guardhouse Checkpoint leading to the West Portal, also indicating ongoing activities in the area." (Jack Liu and Joseph Bermudez, "New Activity at North Korea's Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site," *38North*, September 24, 2015)

North Korea has shrouded parts of a missile launch tower and a train station in Dongchang-ri due to apparent concerns about U.S. satellite monitoring, according to South Korean military and intelligence officials. This boosts speculation that it may launch a long-range rocket on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the foundation of its Workers' Party on October 10. The officials said covers were draped over the gantry of the missile launch pad, which the military regime has been upgrading and the work on which has been finished. They added the secretive state has installed fences around Dongchang-ri train station, which is connected to Pyongyang directly by railway. "It is suspected that North Korea is trying to cover up its work related to launching a long-range rocket not to reveal the size of the rocket and other characteristics," a military official said. It is speculated a rocket will be assembled at a plant in the North Korean capital and shipped to the missile platform in Dongchang-ri, which is 200 kilometers northwest of Pyongyang. However, it remains to be seen when such a shipment will take place. Citing satellite images, the intelligence officials said no rocket had been spotted in and around Pyongyang. Seoul also rejected speculation that Pyongyang's possible launch of a ballistic missile was "imminent" following a related report by CNN yesterday. "We're closely monitoring the case and there are no signs that the launch is imminent," an official at the Ministry of Unification told reporters, asking not to be named. "There has been no particular activity at the missile launch pad in Dongchang-ri." (Yo Whan-woo, "N.K. Missile Launch Sites Shrouded," September 24, 2015)

9/25/15

North Korea will pay a price if it defies the United Nations and follows through on recent threats to conduct a fourth nuclear test or launch a long-range rocket, South Korean President Park Geun Hye said. "Should the North go ahead with provocative actions that violate the UN Security Council resolutions, there will certainly be a price to be paid," Park said in written answers to Bloomberg News before leaving Seoul to attend the UN General Assembly. "The Korean government is making every diplomatic effort to prevent the North from further belligerence, by working closely together with the international community including the U.S." Park characterized North Korea as both a menace to her country's national security as well as a potential partner in achieving a unification of the peninsula, a prospect she described in her previous interview as a potential bonanza for the economy. Unification would be one way to address what she said in the interview on Thursday was a "major structural crisis" -- an aging population and a low birthrate. Despite years of UN sanctions, North Korea has continued to expand its nuclear arsenal and the range of its ballistic missiles, which the regime in Pyongyang calls its defense against a U.S.-led invasion to forcibly unify the peninsula more than 60 years after the Korean War ended in a stalemate. "Given the North's

isolation, sanctions seem slow to take effect," she said. "But Pyongyang does appear to feel pressured by the range of sanctions in place and it is facing significant hurdles to conducting illicit weapons of mass destruction-related activities." South Korea will stick to its "two track-track approach of pursuing dialogue and applying pressure" and is ready to work with the international community to provide "a range of assistance" if Kim's regime decides to give up its nuclear program, she said. (Sam Kim, "North Korea Would Pay a Price for 4th Nuclear Test, Park Says," Bloomberg, September 25, 2015)

In an apparent warning to North Korea, Chinese President Xi Jinping said he opposes any action that violates U.N. Security Council resolutions as he and President Barack Obama reaffirmed their commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. Xi made the remark during a joint press conference after summit talks with Obama at the White House. "We reaffirm our commitment to realize the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful way and we oppose any action that might cause tension in the Korean peninsula or violate U.N. Security Council resolutions," Xi said. Xi did not mention North Korea by name. It is highly unusual for a Chinese leader to publicly issue such a warning, given that Beijing has been reluctant to criticize North Korea and has usually urged all sides to exercise calm and restraint when it comes to tensions on the Korean Peninsula." Xi also said that a 2005 agreement on North Korea's denuclearization and U.N. resolutions should be "implemented in full and all relevant parties should work together to firmly advance the denuclearization process of the Korean peninsula and maintain peace and stability so as to achieve enduring peace and stability in Northeast Asia." U.S. President Barack Obama also reiterated his commitment to realizing a nuclear-free peninsula. "The United States and China have reaffirmed our commitments to the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner," Obama said. "We demand the full implementation of all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and we will not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state." Obama and Xi found common ground on cybersecurity, but clashed over territorial issues. "We have agreed that neither the U.S. nor the Chinese government will conduct or knowingly support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information for commercial advantage," Obama said. "In addition, we'll work together and with other nations to promote international rules of the road for appropriate conduct in cyberspace. So this is progress, but I have to insist that our work is not yet done. I believe we can expand our cooperation in this area," he said. On the maritime territorial disputes, Obama said the U.S. "will continue to sail, fly and operate anywhere that international law allows" and denounced China's reclamation project in the area for hurting efforts to peacefully resolve the disputes. Xi refused to back down, saying, "Islands in the South China Sea, since ancient times, are China's territory. We have the right to uphold our own territorial sovereignty and lawful and legitimate maritime rights and interests." He also insisted the construction project does "not target or impact any country and China does not intend to pursue militarization." Xi said, however, that China is committed to "managing differences and disputes through dialogue" and to respecting and upholding the freedom of navigation and overflight that countries enjoy according to international law. (Chang Jae-soon, "Xi Voices Opposition to Violating U.N. Resolutions in Apparent Warning to N. Korea," Yonhap, September 26, 2015)

Japan plans to replace its point man on Korean affairs next month in a routine personnel management reshuffle, according to Kyodo. Ishikane Kimihiro, head of the foreign ministry's international legal affairs bureau, will be appointed to lead the Asian and Oceanian affairs bureau. Ishikane, formerly the ambassador to ASEAN, is to succeed Ihara Junichi, who is expected to take up an ambassadorial post abroad. He will likely become Japan's new negotiator in talks with South Korea on the "comfort women" issue. He is also to serve as Japan's top delegate to the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program if they resume. (Yonhap, "Japan to Replace Point Man on Korea: Report," September 25, 2015)

9/26/15

Ties are warming between New Delhi and Pyongyang, with mineral-hungry India looking to boost trade while North Korea, facing sometimes-rocky relations with China, searches for new friends. "We feel that there should not be the usual old hurdles and suspicion," Kiren Rijju, a top official in India's home ministry told *The Hindu* after a recent meeting with North Korea's ambassador. "We have been discussing inside the government ways and means of upgrading bilateral ties." The goodwill began earlier this year, when North Korea dispatched Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong on a three-day trip to India, just a few weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew to Seoul for meetings with South Korean President Park Geun-hye. While Pyongyang and New Delhi have long had diplomatic relations, things cooled a couple decades ago as India blamed North Korea for selling nuclear technology to its archrival, Pakistan, and North Korea grew upset that India was growing close to South Korea. But times change. North Korea, for its part, has had to accept South Korea's economic dominance, and how even a longtime ally like China is anxious to increase trade with Seoul. India, meanwhile, has a growing economy with an increasingly voracious hunger for raw materials. "There is always a resource crunch that pushes countries to look for new friends and new allies," said Vyjayanti Raghavan, a professor at the Center for Korean Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. While the diplomatic moves would not be newsworthy for most countries, and have yet to result in a concrete agreement, they are significant for North Korea, whose foreign relations are largely limited to a handful of other countries. North Korea, Raghavan said, had long been anxious to repair ties with India. "But North Korea had nothing much to offer to India," she said. "Now, India can benefit from the relationship." North Korea's export economy is highly dependent on raw materials, mostly coal and iron ore, though it is also increasingly seen as a potential major source of the rare earth minerals used in high-tech products. Pyongyang is also anxious to forge new alliances. New Delhi may also see the renewed North Korean ties as a way to make quiet advances into a country long seen as part of China's sphere of influence. Chinese-Indian relations are delicate and often-contradictory, with mutual distrust – and occasional squabbling over their long shared border – mixing with a desire to increase trade and avoid open confrontation. India has watched warily as China has made inroads across the Indian Ocean, where New Delhi's traditional dominance has declined as a result of billions of dollars in Chinese aid and construction projects. Simply the choice of Rijju to meet with North Korean diplomats could have been intended to make a point, since he is from Arunachal Pradesh, a state that Beijing has long insisted is actually Chinese territory. And what will India's other allies say about improved ties with North Korea? That probably doesn't matter. While North Korea remains economically isolated from

much of the world, treated as a pariah by Washington and much of the West, India has long charted its own foreign policy course. For instance, even as India became increasingly close in recent years to the U.S., New Delhi remained friendly with such countries as Iran and Syria. "Why shouldn't India have relations with North Korea?" demanded Hamdullah Saeed, an opposition politician who visited North Korea as part of a parliamentary delegation in 2013. "India can have ties with who it wants." (Tim Sullivan, "In Odd Partnership, Ties Warm between India and North Korea As Each Seeks Something New," Associated Press, September 26, 2015)

9/28/15

In an address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, President Park Geun-hye urged Pyongyang to choose reform over attacks and other provocations, and touted her vision for unification of the Korean Peninsula. "[North Korea] would do well to choose reform and opening, rather than additional provocations, and to endeavor to free its people from hardship," said Park at the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly on Monday during a four-day trip to the United States. Her remarks come as North Korea has threatened to conduct a fourth nuclear test or fire a long-range missile, possibly to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the foundation of its ruling Workers' Party on October 10. Both of those acts would violate UN Security Council resolutions, and Park said, "This will not only do harm to the hard-won mood for inter-Korean dialogue, but also undermine the efforts of the members of the six-party talks to reopen denuclearization talks." She was referring to a senior-level inter-Korean dialogue in August that defused recent military tensions and led to an agreement to resume reunions of families separated during the 1950-53 Korean War, as well as denuclearization talks among the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States that have been stalled since 2009. Park underscored that resolving the North Korean nuclear issue should be accorded the highest priority to "uphold the integrity of the inter-national nuclear non-proliferation regime." The South Korean president noted the Iranian nuclear deal in July and added, "Now the international community should focus its efforts on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue - the last remaining non-proliferation challenge." In a speech heavily focused on Pyongyang issues, Park recognized that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations as well as the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule - and the division of the Korean Peninsula. Park spoke of a unified Korea connected by a railway, pointing out that Saturday also marks the 25th anniversary of Germany's reunification. "Just as the UN blessed the birth of the Republic of Korea in 1948, I dream for the day to come soon when the entire world celebrates a unified Korea," Park said. She noted that the separation of the Koreas is the "last remaining vestige of the Cold War" and that "a peacefully unified Korea will be a thriving democratic nation free of nuclear weapons and will uphold human rights." The president also addressed disagreement over historical issues with Japan in her address, as she pointed out this year marks the 15th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. She said more attention was needed on the issue of sexual violence against women in conflict situations - a topic she also addressed last year at the UN. "The most compelling reason is the fact that only a few of the victims of brutal sexual violence during World War II are still alive today," she continued, referring to the euphemistically called comfort women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during its colonial rule over Korea. Solutions that can bring healing

to their hearts need to be devised quickly while these victims are still alive," Park said in a more succinct message than in her UN speech last September. "There is no path to unlocking the future if the past is not acknowledged," she said without specifically referring to Japan by name. However, she did refer specifically to Japan as she spoke of an Asia paradox, "where political and security cooperation lags behind the high degree of economic interdependence among the countries in the region." She pointed to defense and security legislation that was passed by the Japanese Diet earlier in the month, which enables Tokyo to exercise the so-called right of collective self-defense for the first time since the end of World War II. These laws "should be implemented transparently and in a way that is conducive to friendly relations among regional countries," she said. Park described Seoul's efforts to lay the groundwork for peace and security in Northeast Asia, its contribution to humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts globally, and active participation to combat climate change. (Sarah Kim, "Park Pleads to North in General Assembly Speech," *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 30, 2015)

Schilling: "When North Korea launched its first satellite on December 12, 2012, many observers thought the message was clear: the rocket that did this, can deliver atomic bombs to your cities. And indeed it can. But is this really the purpose of the Unha-3? Is it an ICBM masquerading as an SLV, or an SLV that might someday be repurposed as a missile? There is precedent for both. Or, as Pyongyang claims, is the Unha-3 intended purely for peaceful space exploration? There are sound technical reasons for using the same rocket in both applications. The fundamental requirement for an ICBM is to accelerate a hydrogen bomb sized payload to roughly 16,000 miles per hour, just above the atmosphere and aimed about 20 degrees above the horizon. To launch a satellite, you want to be a little bit higher, flying horizontally at 18,000 miles per hour. Until your satellites grow larger than your bombs, there is no reason to develop a second rocket, and no way for suspicious outsiders to know for sure what your real goals are. But if the Unha-3 is intended for use as an ICBM, it's not a very good one. The second- and third-stage engines don't have enough thrust to efficiently deliver heavy warheads; a militarized Unha might deliver 800 kilograms of payload to Washington, DC. The North Koreans can probably make a nuclear warhead that small, but it would be a tight fit. With bigger upper-stage engines, which we know the North Koreans have, they could deliver substantially larger payloads. This would allow bigger and more powerful warheads, more decoys to counter US missile defenses, and a generally tougher and more robust system. The Unha is also too heavy and cumbersome to be survivable in wartime. Too big for any mobile transporter, it can only be launched from fixed sites. Its highly corrosive liquid propellants require hours of pre-launch preparations. That's a bad combination for North Korea; their fixed launch sites are going to be watched very closely, and particularly in a crisis, any indication that an ICBM is being prepared for launch could trigger a pre-emptive strike. ...The North Koreans could press the Unha-3 into limited service as an ICBM, just as the USSR did with the R-7—a temporary measure, until something better is available. They can almost certainly build something better, and they appear to be trying. The KN-08 missile mock-ups, twice paraded through Pyongyang, are exactly the sort of thing a nation like North Korea would build if it wanted to use its eclectic mix of early 1960s rocket technologies to build an ICBM. It is small enough to be mobile and

therefore survivable but with the performance (barely) to reach the enemy's homeland. The Unha-3, by comparison, looks like it was designed to launch satellites rather than warheads. From a historic perspective, it is worth noting that any ICBM the North Koreans might deploy will owe much to the Unha. ICBMs are necessarily multi-stage rockets, and cleanly separating one stage to ignite another is a surprisingly hard problem. North Korea hasn't always been able to do this, and finally got it right with the Unha. North Korea does not have any single engine powerful enough to lift an ICBM; the ability to operate multi-engine clusters is also something it learned with the Unha. Earlier missiles used heavy steel tanks and structures; the Unha taught the North Koreans to use lighter aluminum alloys. And its first successful use of high-energy propellants was in the third stage of the Unha. Almost every technology needed to go from crude short-ranged Scud and Nodong missiles to a fully capable ICBM, North Korea learned in the course of developing the Unha. That's all history. The key question now, in view of speculation that Pyongyang might launch another rocket, is can the North learn anything more from new Unha-3 launches? Of course, we don't know if a launch will take place or if it does, whether Pyongyang will use a new and different rocket. But it is still a question worth asking. If the North Koreans deploy a militarized Unha as an interim ICBM, then every successful flight of that rocket as an SLV will serve to increase the reliability of the ICBM force. Even failed satellite launches would be a learning experience. As the Unha is unlikely to serve as more than an interim ICBM, North Korea may not have time to transfer any valuable lessons from their space launch activities to their ICBM force before the ICBM guys move on to a better missile. But at a minimum, if we see Unha-like missiles sitting in silos presumably aimed at the United States, successful launches of an Unha carrying a satellite would increase the potential threat. However, it is not clear that these lessons will carry over to any new ICBMs North Korea may try to build. Our current best estimate as is that the KN-08 mobile ICBM, has only the third-stage engine and maybe some guidance hardware in common with the Unha. Everything else will be similar in concept but different in execution, and the execution is the part that matters. Remember that the legendary '57 Chevy Bel Air was built by the same people who came out with the "unsafe at any speed" Corvair three years later. No matter how reliable the 2015 Unha turns out to be, the 2020 KN-08 will be an entirely different beast. What if North Korea does launch an even larger rocket than the Unha in October? That may be its game-plan given construction activities over the past few years modifying the gantry to handle a bigger rocket. What may be good news for North Korea on the satellite launch front—a larger rocket would be more useful for launching satellites—would probably not be useful in helping the North build smaller, mobile ICBMs. The Unha, as noted, is already too big and clumsy to be survivable in wartime. Still, there is one area where satellite launches might make a major contribution to North Korea's ICBM program. An ICBM warhead, unlike a satellite, needs to come down as well as go up. North Korea has never demonstrated the ability to build a reentry vehicle that can survive at even half the speed an ICBM would require. If and when they do, what is presently a theoretical threat will become very real and alarming. An SLV gives the North the opportunity to test a reentry vehicle without admitting it is part of a missile. This could be done by launching the reentry vehicle into Earth's orbit, perhaps carrying a scientific payload where a missile warhead would go, and bringing it back down in a controlled fashion. Or it could be done by putting the reentry vehicle under an

enlarged payload shroud, then “accidentally” cutting the third-stage burn short. Oops, our science experiment accidentally fell into the South Pacific at fifteen thousand miles an hour. If anyone is paying attention, the fact that a North Korean ship was parked near the impact zone receiving data on the flight’s performance and plucking the remains from the sea will be a dead giveaway. So we have two warning signs to look for from the North Korean space program. First, using Unha rockets to launch satellites at the same time they are deploying Unha-derived missiles in hardened silos. That might indicate that North Korea is planning to keep an Unha-based ICBM in service long enough to invest in improving its reliability. Second, conducting high-speed reentry vehicle tests during satellite launches. The data from those tests would carry over into any long-range missile program. But it’s not something they can really keep a secret. Outside of those two areas, if North Korea says its program is for launching satellites, they are probably launching satellites. The usefulness of such launches in terms of developing better ballistic missiles is extremely limited. ...” (John Schilling, “Satellites, Warheads and Rockets: Is North Korea’s Space Program Really about Missile Development?” *38North*, September 28, 2015)

9/29/15

CPRK spokesman’s statement: “The south Korean chief executive in her “keynote speech” at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly let loose such invectives that the “nukes of the north constitute a top priority task for building a world without nuclear weapons”, “the north’s additional provocation is aimed at vitiating the atmosphere of the inter-Korean dialogue and hamstringing the efforts of the countries concerned with the six-party talks for resuming the dialogue for denuclearization and “the north would be well advised to strive to help its residents overcome difficulties through reform and opening instead of making an additional provocation.” Not content with hurting the DPRK’s dignity and social system, vociferating about “requirement of the international community” and the “urging the improvement of human rights,” she openly revealed her ambition to achieve “unification through absorption” with the backing of foreign forces under the pretext of “peaceful unification.” This is an unpardonable provocation to the DPRK and a heinous confrontation act of chilling the hard-won atmosphere of improving the inter-Korean relations. A string of silly remarks made by her clearly prove that she is utterly bereft of reason, hell-bent on sycophancy towards the U.S. and confrontation with the fellow countrymen in the north. She is so reckless as to take issue with the DPRK’s nuclear deterrent, a treasured sword of justice for defending the nation while keeping mum about nukes of her American master, the cancer-like harasser of the global peace. This is no more than a sheer jargon of the chief executive, colonial servant who is so steeped in sycophancy towards the U.S. to the marrow of her bones that she does not know what she should support and what she should oppose. It is the height of shamelessness for her to impudently talk about someone’s “human rights” and “living of residents,” pretending not to know about south Korea being denounced as the world’s worst tundra of human rights. What was funny was that she made no scruple of telling cock-and-bull-story that she was dreaming of the arrival of the day when “the world would hail the unification of the Korean Peninsula” just as the U.N. “greeted” the tragic day when the U.S. puppet regime was installed. This is something that provokes a side-splitting laughter. In fact, this was an open revelation of the wild ambition to achieve “unification of social systems,” a foolish act of driving this land into a war and

inviting self-ruin. We had already served a stern warning to the south Korean authorities that they would have to pay dearly for their reckless remarks. **Due to the south Korean authorities' reckless confrontation row not only the north-south relations but the reunion of separated families and relatives in the north and the south now being promoted with much effort has been put at serious peril.** If the south Korean authorities let loose a string of confrontational invectives as now, the event may prove completely abortive. This is the unanimous view of the public at home and abroad. We stand for improved north-south relations but have no idea of continuing to show leniency even to the partner who is persistently pursuing confrontation, turning down our offer of reconciliation and magnanimity. The south Korean authorities should apologize to the nation for recklessly slandering the fellow countrymen and learn how to properly wag their tongues, bearing in mind that their provocative words and deeds may cause unpredictable misfortune at this crucial time." (KCNA, "CPRK Denounces Reckless Remarks of S. Korean Chief Executive," September 29, 2015)

Japan, the United States and South Korea agreed to work closely together to deal with issues related to North Korea, such as a possible test launch of what they suspect to be a ballistic missile, according to a Japanese official. Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio told reporters he and his U.S and South Korean counterparts, John Kerry and Yun Byung-se, reaffirmed their commitment to dealing with a possible provocative act by Pyongyang, in a meeting held on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York. "We shared the recognition that any launch of a long-range ballistic missile would be a clear violation of past U.N. Security Council resolutions even if North Korea calls it a satellite," Kishida said. "We confirmed that we will strongly urge North Korea to refrain from any provocative acts and comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions" as well as an agreement of the six-nation talks on Pyongyang's denuclearization, Kishida said. (Kyodo, "Tokyo, Seoul, Washington on Same Page over Pyongyang Nuclear Arms, Missile Threats," *Japan Times*, September 30, 2015)

9/30/15 North Korea is defiantly prepared and willing to face further sanctions as a result of fulfilling its intention to launch further satellites, DPRK ambassador to the United Kingdom Hyon Hak Bong told a Chatham House event in London when answering a question regarding the prospects of further sanctions if a launch is conducted. "We will go ahead, we will go ahead," Hyon said. "We have nothing to be afraid of. We will go ahead definitely, surely. If they... pass resolutions or sanctions, this (will be viewed as) a provocation and ... can make the situation worse," he said. "I assure you that (the launch) is for a peaceful purpose." (Hamish MacDonald, "N. Korea Unafraid of Further Sanctions Following Satellite Launch: Ambassador," *NKNews*, September 30, 2015)

10/1/15 Oh Joon, South Korea's U.N. ambassador, warned North Korea's action would trigger discussion by the United Nations Security Council of possible sanctions against Pyongyang. "The existing measure bans the export of some luxury items and strategic materials to North Korea. The scope of the sanctions could be expanded," said the envoy in an interview with VOA in New York, in reference to a resolution adopted by the U.N. Security Council in response to North Korea's third nuclear test in February 2013. The South Korean diplomat said Chinese President Xi Jinping's recent warning

against tension raising actions on the Korean peninsula was intended as a warning to North Korea. He added it's worth noticing the Chinese leader explicitly expressed such a position in Washington. "I don't believe it is Beijing's intention to damage the fundamental relationship with Pyongyang. However, I expect Beijing to continue to play a role in keeping Pyongyang from taking provocative actions, such as development of missiles or nuclear weapons," the envoy said. (Baik Sangwon, "Envoy: U.N. Could Expand Ban on Luxury Goods to North Korea," *Voice of America*, October 1, 2015)

10/2/15

DPRK FM Ri Su Yong told the U.N. General Assembly escalation of tensions in August between North and South exposed the fragility of truce between the two sides, and that the United States can no longer delay a peace agreement with Pyongyang, South Korean news network YTN reported. "With the current armistice, peace on the Korean peninsula can no longer be maintained," Ri said, according to Yonhap. The North Korean diplomat said the United States must make a "courageous decision" on this issue, and that the time has come for Washington to pursue a peace treaty. "If the United States agrees to replace the armistice with a peace treaty, North Korea is willing to enter into constructive dialogue, to prevent war and conflict on the Korean peninsula," Ri said in translation. (Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea Calls for Peace Treaty with the United States," UPI, October 2, 2015)

KCNA: "DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong, head of a DPRK delegation, made a speech at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly on October 1. He went on: It is important to draw experiences from the successes and learn lessons from the failures made in the activities of the UN. The world has never been peaceful over the past 70 years. Neither has the humankind ever lived in comfort. Even in the 21st century, the UN Security Council continues to commit arbitrary acts against the DPRK in flagrant violation of justice and international law. In today's world, there exists international law that defines the use of outer space as a sovereign right of every individual country and there are more than 10 countries that launch satellites. However, the UN Security Council passed a "resolution" on prohibiting the DPRK only from launching the satellites. Nine countries in the world have already developed nuclear weapons and conducted over 2 000 nuclear tests in total. But again, the Security Council adopted "resolutions" on prohibiting nuclear test of the DPRK. Our development of outer space for peaceful purposes is a legitimate right of a sovereign state and our nuclear test is a self-defensive measure to cope with the hostile policy and nuclear threat of the United States. It is the steadfast resolve and position of the Government of the DPRK to safeguard its dignity by responding strongly to the end with all available self-defensive measures against the unjust acts of taking issue with the peaceful satellite launch. Late last August, the situation on the Korean Peninsula had once again headed to the brink of war. After going through the August incident that made Northeast Asia and the entire world hold their breath in anxiety, it has become a crucial issue today to replace the armistice agreement with a peace treaty with no further delay. **The Government of the DPRK is willing to hold constructive dialogue to prevent war and conflicts on the Korean Peninsula, once the United States agrees to replace the armistice agreement with a peace treaty. If the United States makes a policy change with courage, dramatic improvement will be effected in the security environment on**

the Korean Peninsula and eventually lead to addressing security concerns of the United States. This is the best option we can afford and the best solution we can offer at this forum of the UN as it looks back on the past 70 years and looks forward to the road ahead. The DPRK is strongly convinced that the urgent replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace treaty is the way to ensure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and redress the abnormal relations between the DPRK and the UN." (KCNA, "Ri Su Yong Urges Change of Armistice Agreement into Peace Treaty," October 3, 2015)

A government source said the Agency for Defense Development has targeted 2017 as the year for extending South Korea's ballistic missile range to 800 km. If launched from Jeju Island, a missile with a range of 800 km could reach Sinuiju on the North Korea-China border, and if fired from an area south of Pohang, North Gyeongsang Province it could hit anywhere along the Tuman River. South Korea was restricted from having missiles with a range longer than 300 km under an agreement with the U.S., but that was extended to 800 km in 2012. Last year Seoul succeeded in developing a ballistic missile with a range of 500 km and in early June this year tested another 500-km missile. South Korea aims for a so-called "kill chain," whereby the military can detect signs of an impending missile launch by North Korea and preemptively destroy it. It also includes purchasing Global Hawk long-range, high-altitude unmanned reconnaissance aircraft in 2018 and 2019. (Yu Yong-won, "S. Korea to Deploy Longer-Range Missiles by 2017," *Chosun Ilbo*, October 2, 2015)

A man who defected from North Korea and entered Japan in 2001 appears to be one of the two Japanese suspects detained by Chinese authorities on spying allegations. The Japanese man detained in Dandong, Liaoning province, has the same name as a defector in his 50s with a record of living in Yamato, Kanagawa Prefecture, according to several sources. According to a source who is acquainted with the suspect, the man was born in Japan to an ethnic Korean father and Japanese mother. The entire family moved to North Korea in the 1960s under a repatriation program conducted by Pyongyang. The man defected in the late 1990s, entered Japan in 2001 and subsequently obtained Japanese citizenship, the source said. (*Asahi Shimbun*, "Japanese 'Spy' Detained by China May Be North Korean Defector," October 2, 2015)

South and North Korea plan to jointly treat pine trees damaged by bugs at a mountain on North Korea's east coast October 5-6, the Unification Ministry said. For this project, Seoul will deliver relevant treatment including insecticide and sprayers worth 130 million won (\$109,900) to the North. (Yonhap, "Koreas to Conduct Pest Control on Pine Trees at N.K. Mountain Next Week," *Korea Herald*, October 2, 2015)

10/4/15

Japan took six years to ratify the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in the 1970s due partly to diplomatic machinations started by U.S. President Richard Nixon. Declassified documents in both the United States and Japan show Nixon urging Prime Minister Sato Eisaku to move slowly on ratifying the NPT, in part, because Washington was then in the process of normalizing relations with China. The Nixon administration apparently felt that leaving open the possibility of Japan possessing nuclear weapons would be a form of pressure on Beijing that would be advantageous to Washington in the course

of U.S.-China negotiations. The early 1970s was a time when the United States and Soviet Union were in the midst of the Cold War, and Washington was trying to find a way out of the Vietnam War. With that as a backdrop, the Nixon administration also sought to improve ties with Beijing after many years of an antagonistic relationship. Japan signed the NPT in February 1970 and the treaty went into effect the following month. However, it took another six years until Tokyo ratified it in 1976. Documents of the U.S. National Security Council show that when Nixon met with Sato on Jan. 7, 1972, in San Clemente, Calif., the president told the prime minister to delay ratifying the NPT because that would raise concerns among a potential enemy nation. Other documents related to Henry Kissinger, Nixon's national security adviser, show that the "potential enemy nation" referred to China. Nixon later told Sato at that same meeting to "forget" that he made the comment about the NPT. Records of a conversation held in the White House on July 9, 1974, also show Nixon taking a passive stance in promoting the NPT. Nixon was asked by James Hodgson, the newly appointed ambassador to Japan, about his real stance on the NPT. Nixon, who would resign a month later due to the Watergate scandal, said the U.S. position was to only pose as a proponent of the NPT. Records in connection with Kissinger also reinforce Nixon's passive stance on the NPT. Conversation records of the White House and State Department show that in June 1972, about five months after the Sato-Nixon meeting in San Clemente, Kissinger was asked by State Department officials to tell Japanese officials that the U.S. government wanted Japan to ratify the NPT. However, subsequent records show that after returning to Washington from a Japan visit, Kissinger informed Nixon that he told Sato and Foreign Minister Fukuda Takeo in Tokyo that the U.S. policy remained unchanged from what Nixon urged at San Clemente. Other records show that Kissinger, who would go on to serve as both national security adviser and U.S. secretary of state under Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, also felt Japan could be used as a diplomatic card in Washington's dealings with China. In a March 11, 1974, meeting with Pentagon officials, Kissinger said that the Self-Defense Forces could become a source of concern for China, but would be an effective tool for the United States. Kissinger added his view that Japan could possess nuclear weapons within a decade and that Japan should be utilized to scare other nations. The United States has long maintained a two-faced approach toward nuclear weapons. After U.S. President Barack Obama called for a nuclear-free world in a 2009 speech in Prague, the 2010 NPT Review Conference approved a final document that included a specific plan for moving toward nonproliferation. However, no such final document could be agreed upon at the 2015 Review Conference because the United States opposed a Middle East proposal for a nuclear-free zone in that region. (Okuyama Toshihiro, "Nixon Administration Urged Japan to Delay Ratifying NPT," *Asahi Shimbun*, October 4, 2015)

10/5/15

North Korea repatriated a 21-year-old South Korean student who has been detained there since April, the Unification Ministry said, in what could be a conciliatory gesture by the North to South Korea. The communist nation freed Joo Won-moon, a New York University student with a U.S. green card, through the truce village of Panmunjom, earlier in the day, according to a ministry official. Joo was arrested on April 22 after allegedly illegally crossing into the North from China. "It's a relief that North Korea has decided to repatriate our national, Joo," the official noted, adding that the North should also send home three other South Koreans still held in the country -- missionary

Kim Jung-wook, Kim Kuk-gi and Choe Chun-gil. KCNA said in a short dispatch that the North deported Joo on humanitarian grounds. In an interview with U.S. news cable network CNN in May, Joo admitted that he had intentionally entered the North on the belief that his arrest could have a good effect on inter-Korean relations. Unlike Joo's case, the other three South Koreans faced criminal punishment as they were sentenced to hard labor for life on charges of spying for Seoul's intelligence agency. "By releasing Joo, North Korea appears to give South Korea a message showing that the North protects human rights," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. The professor said that nevertheless, along with the upcoming family reunions, Joo's repatriation is likely to set the stage for better inter-Korean ties. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Sends Detained S. Korea Student Back Home," October 5, 2015)

North Korea said yesterday that a Chinese delegation to be led by Liu Yunshan, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, will attend the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea, which falls October 10. "The government hopes that this round of exchanges between China and North Korea will contribute to easing heightened tension on the peninsula and maintaining stability," Jeong Joon-hee, Unification Ministry spokesman, told a regular press briefing. He also expressed hope that the move could help make progress toward efforts to denuclearize North Korea, and bring peace and stability to Northeast Asia. It will mark the first time that a Chinese member of the standing committee of the communist party will visit Pyongyang under the regime of Kim Jong-un. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Hopes Top Chinese Official's Visit to N.K. Will Help Ease Tension," October 5, 2015)

Shelving assumptions of a full-scale ground war between the two Koreas, the United States and South Korea militaries have devised a plan that focuses on fighting guerrilla warfare waged by Pyongyang. The new war plan--called Operations Plan 5015--reflects the view that the capabilities and weapons of North Korea's military have deteriorated after years under an anemic economy. Instead, Pyongyang is concentrating its resources on developing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as well as using special forces to assassinate South Korean officials and engage in limited destructive action. Other changes in military planning also reflect new thinking about what might occur in North Korea. Some of the changes would deal with possible regime change, while other parts cover contingencies in which North Korea's nuclear facilities are no longer under military control. According to several sources knowledgeable about relations between the United States and South Korea, the 5015 plan deals with surprise military provocations by Pyongyang through the use of its special forces. Under old plans, military planners envisioned a repeat of the Korean War, in which massive numbers of ground troops poured into South Korea. The new plan would also emphasize the use of special forces whose main duties would include assassinating or kidnapping top North Korean officials as well as destroying specific facilities. One advantage of the plan would be to limit the area where warfare occurs and thereby reduce the number of casualties. The limited nature of the fighting would also restrain military spending. On September 23, the command of South Korea's special forces explained to National Assembly members some of the new measures being considered under plan 5015. One was to organize special forces so they have

the capabilities of attacking "strategically important facilities." Such attacks, as well as the capture of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, would deal a fatal blow to the North Korean regime. The United States and South Korea have other war plans with different objectives. For example, Operations Plan 5026 envisions a limited bombing campaign as a precursor to a full-scale war on the Korean Peninsula. New versions of that plan appear to include the greater use of special forces for fighting in a narrower range of operations. "The United States will likely focus on 5026 and Operations Plan 5029, which is designed to deal with the collapse of the North Korean regime," one military source said. Of greatest concern to the United States under the 5029 plan is preventing North Korea's nuclear weapons and materials from being taken out of the nation and falling into the wrong hands. To prevent such an occurrence, the United States is even considering proceeding with the plan without prior U.N. approval. Critics, however, question whether such a plan is realistic since the United States and South Korea do not appear to know exactly where North Korea's nuclear weapons and control systems are located. The recently enacted security legislation in Japan is designed to greatly expand the overseas role of the Self-Defense Forces. Japan has a plan to assist the U.S. military in replenishing supplies and search-and-rescue missions in the event of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula. However, Japan is still unaware of the plans being drawn up between the United States and South Korea because the SDF does not have an agreement with the South Korean military on the sharing of military intelligence. (Makino Yoshihiro, "South Korea, U.S. Write Plan to Combat Guerilla Warfare Waged by Pyongyang," *Asahi Shimbun*, October 5, 2015)

KCNA: "At around 01:25 on October 1 a south Korean vessel deliberately rammed into Turubong-3, a boat belonging to the Foreign Trade Administration Bureau of North Hamgyong Province when it was conducting fishing operation at location 39°12'56" north latitude and 131°31'26" east longitude, wounding five crewmen and damaging its body before taking to flight. The bulwarks on the portside in the distance of about 20 m from the bow to the middle part of the boat were damaged and the deck of the portside was completely destroyed. The bow mast became bended and lots of lamps in the bow were crushed to pieces, the steel plate in the bow was dented and several structures were destroyed. At that time, the surrounding was very bright as the boat was in a standstill position to catch squid with 12 1kw lamps on. But the south Korean vessel deliberately slammed into the boat before taking to flight. Witnesses said that the hull of the south Korean vessel had its name "HIGHNY" and letter reading "Jeju" signifying port of registry was seen. The captain of Turubong-3 called the south Korean vessel over walkie-talkie to talk to its captain. The south Korean vessel replied that it would tell its captain and wait for him. But the vessel fled away towards 230° course at high speed. This was not only a crude violation of the compulsory requirements of the UN Maritime Law calling any ship which caused a clash in the open sea to help the other ship and an inhumanitarian act bereft of an iota of compatriotism." (KCNA, "S. Korean Vessel Slams into DPRK's Boat in East Sea of Korea, Damaging It," October 5, 2015)

10/6/15

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said his organization has spotted brisk activities at North Korea's main nuclear site. "We have observed the discharge of water, transportation of equipment to the facility, and some indications of

operations of the 5-megawatt reactor," IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano told reporters here, citing the satellite imagery of the Yongbyon nuclear complex. He was speaking after meetings with top South Korean officials including Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and the top nuclear envoy Hwang Joon-kook. (Yonhap, "IAEA Detects Expanded Activity at N. Korea's Nuclear Site," October 6, 2015)

Rodong Sinmun: "The U.S. nuclear-powered carrier Ronald Reagan is reportedly to anchor at Pusan Port of south Korea under the pretext of taking part in the "review of fleet." And a formation of F-22 Raptor of the U.S. Air Force would fly into south Korea. The south Korean warmongers purchased Spike missiles and deployed them on Yonphyong, Paekryong and three other islands in the West Sea, crying out for "precision strike at coastal artillery pieces of the north." ...This is a reckless provocation disturbing the hard-won peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Whenever the U.S. preemptive nuclear strike means were hurled into south Korea, the inter-Korean relations were used to be plunged into the danger of a nuclear war. The south Korean authorities have paid lip-service to "dialogue" and "improved relations" between the north and the south but persisted in the provocations escalating the tension and harassing peace, obsessed with the conception of hostility and scenario of confrontation with the DPRK. This is evidenced by the fact that they are taking issue with the DPRK over its exercise of the right to self-defence as "provocation" and getting more frantic than ever before in the international cooperation in the campaign to pressurize it in league with outsiders including the U.S. They are giving impression that the atmosphere of dialogue is being chilled by the "provocation" from the north, an impudent behavior of those who are working hard to cover up their wicked intention to bedevil the inter-Korean relations. If the U.S. and the south Korean authorities do not want to see catastrophic situation, they had better stop at once military confrontation escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and chilling the dialogue atmosphere." (KCNA, "U.S., S. Korean Authorities Slammed for Their Military Standoff Chilling Dialogue," October 6, 2015)

A senior US official warned that North Korea will face "strong actions" from the international community if it goes ahead with a long-range rocket launch in violation of UN resolutions. "We hope they rethink that idea. But if they don't it's very clear there will be strong actions taken by the international community," US Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken told reporters after talks with South Korean officials. "We are absolutely unified and in solidarity with regard to challenges posed by North Korea," he added. There has been speculation for months that the North might launch a long-range rocket to celebrate the 70th anniversary of its ruling Workers' Party on Saturday. But South Korean officials said North Korea showed no sign of preparing for a rocket launch. "We don't see any signs of making preparations for an imminent launch such as the movement of a launch vehicle" to the launch pad, a Unification Ministry official said. "After moving components of a launch vehicle, it usually takes two to four weeks of preparations to launch." Remarks by the head of the North's space agency had fuelled conjecture about a launch to mark the anniversary. Comments by the chief of the North's national atomic commission led to additional talk of a possible fourth nuclear test. "There is no evidence to support a long-range rocket launch on October 10," Joel Wit, an expert at the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University, said on

Twitter on Monday. "North Korea could be doing things at night that we cannot watch via satellite, but most government officials agree that there will not be a launch," he said at *38North*. (AFP, "U.S. Official Warns of 'Strong' Action over N. Korea Rocket Launch," October 6, 2015)

Blinken: "Well I think, as you heard from the Vice Foreign Minister, we are absolutely united in solidarity with regard to the challenge posed by North Korea. First, the statements that North Korea has made about the possibility of a missile test in violation of the UN Security Council resolutions, we hope that they will rethink that idea, but if they don't, it's very clear that there will be strong actions taken by the international community. Indeed, the last time that North Korea made such a provocation, the Security Council resolution that resulted made it very clear that there would be strong measures taken in the event of further provocative actions. We are united with the United States and South Korea, but also, I believe, with Japan. We've had conversations with Russia and with China and all feel strongly that not only should North Korea not take this step, but it must return to meaningful efforts at denuclearization. But let me just add this if I may. Some people have expressed skepticism about the willingness of the United States to engage in meaningful negotiations with North Korea and I have to tell you that we remain open to such negotiations, provided they proceed on a credible and authentic basis. And the best evidence of that is the agreement that was recently concluded with Iran. I think this demonstrates, more powerfully than anything, that the United States is very open to engaging on these issues and to getting results, but the reason it worked with Iran is that Iran made the important decision to freeze its program, to allow international inspectors in, and that produced an interim agreement and as a result of that, we had the time and the space to be able to negotiate a comprehensive agreement. I think there's an important lesson to be learned from that experience, and we hope that North Korea will look at that. Finally, I would just add that with regard to our openness and willingness to engage, I think you've seen in recent months that the United States has restored diplomatic relations with Cuba, we did the agreement with Iran on the nuclear file, we welcomed to the White House the leader of the Vietnamese Communist Party, and so three countries with whom we've had very challenging relations, Iran, Cuba and Vietnam, we're in a different place that we were as a result of our willingness to engage. And finally, I think that we strongly support President Park's efforts to improve relations between South Korea and North Korea. Our hope is that that can be pursued as well." (Deputy Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken, Remarks with First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yong at ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 6, 2015)

Stephen Blank: "Scholars have long grasped that an essential element of Russia's Asian policies is to obtain the resources from abroad that are needed to develop the RFE and create the material foundation for realizing Russia's status aspirations here. As Vitaly Kozyrev wrote in 2010, 'Indeed, the development of the distant Russian territories in Eastern Siberia and the Far East creates another rationale for integration security strategies with East Asia. The exceptional geostrategic role of Russia's eastern territories, along with a substantial portion of the Siberian and Far Eastern region in the spheres of transportation and energy resources distribution in Eurasia, raises the

importance of Russia's policy of turning these Russian territories into a regional hub of both technological and infrastructural development.' Indeed, the heart of Moscow's proposals for both Koreas is the building of a trans-Siberian and then Trans-Korean railway (TSR-TKR), a proposal that dates back to the 1890s, and a trans-Korean gas pipeline that links up to some of Russia's major gas deposits in Siberia and the RFE. On the basis of these proposals, Moscow hopes to become a major energy provider to North Korea, easing Pyongyang's demand for nuclear energy, and a major supplier to the ROK. It would also gain influence over the economics and politics of both states and pose as a material and vital contributor to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Not only has Moscow long since entered into talks with South Korea about providing it gas, it has also raised the issue of directly supplying North Korea with gas from Sakhalin. Since a Korean war virtually precludes any hope of the RFE's peaceful development and exposes Russia to intense risks that could only undermine both its internal development and quest for independent great power status, Russia regards the prospect of war in Korea as a geopolitical nightmare that must be avoided by all available means. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of Russia's Korean policy is to preserve peace in Korea and Asia generally, as peace is indispensable to any development of Siberia and the RFE on the basis of foreign and domestic trade and investment. Peace is in turn a necessary precondition for Russia to play the role it covets in East Asia. Only if Russia can play the role of peacekeeper can it actively help create and sustain the multipolar world that its officials and analysts either believe exists or should come into being. Accordingly, Moscow's Korean policies are not just part of its overall Asian program but are also an essential component of promoting this multipolar world order. Only in this context can we fully grasp Moscow's goals and motives on the Korean Peninsula. ...In 2010-11, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin, Russia's delegate to the Six-Party Talks, warned that the Korean Peninsula was on the brink of war. Borodavkin further underscored Russia's genuine alarm about Korea by stating that the aggravation of Asian conflicts, together with the global economic crisis had created a situation where, 'Under current circumstances, peace and security in the region is a priority task because we believe that neither nuclear deterrence nor military deterrence may ensure security in this sub-region and in the entire world.' Further North Korean provocations might push one or another actor over the edge and Russia could do nothing to stop it. Indeed, Moscow might be dragged into such a war with no control over any of the protagonists. Thus, Russia could not defend its vital interests yet could be dragged into a war that spilled over into Russian territory or that engendered a Sino-American confrontation. This would also terminate any hope of developing the RFE, the precondition for any effective Russian policy in Asia. These apprehensions drove the rapprochement with North Korea that has lasted since 2011. And they continue to drive Russian military planning. Almost every Russian military exercise in Russia's Far East contains a scenario of a so-called 'ecological catastrophe' and the influx of thousands of refugees due to a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula. Indeed, Moscow deployed its new S-400 SAM to the RFE because it feared that North Korea might launch more missiles that either go awry or worse and provoke a major conflict in Northeast Asia. Russian diplomats and analysts still voice those apprehensions even if they must do so elliptically. In 2011, the commander of Russia's nuclear forces, General Sergei Karakayev, warned that expanding the nuclear club—which he attributed to U.S. policy as part of Moscow's

inveterate anti-American global posture—could drag Russia into war. North Korean and Iranian proliferation could lead the U.S. to attack them and thus start a major war. Moreover, proliferation leads to a reduction of the threshold for nuclear use, thus creating preconditions for a war near Russia that could go nuclear and/or drag Russia into it. This is a common Russian military assessment of the threat and it leads Russia to seek increased leverage over the DPRK through energy and railway projects to reduce the danger to Moscow and the likelihood of such a U.S. or DPRK attack. And as the situation on the Korean Peninsula has not changed but arguably become more intractable and even dangerous, these arguments still hold in Moscow.” (Stephen Blank, “Russia and the Two Koreas in the Context of Moscow’s Asian Policy,” KEI Academic Papers Series, October 2015)

10/7/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman’s statement: “Consistent is the stand of the DPRK to remove the danger of a war, defuse tension and create a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula. Out of its desire to put the earliest possible end to the fragile state of ceasefire that has persisted on the peninsula and build lasting peace-keeping mechanism, the DPRK re-clarified its stand to replace the Armistice Agreement by a peace treaty at the 70th UN General Assembly. More than 60 years have passed since the conclusion of the AA but durable peace has not yet settled on the peninsula. The U.S. and south Korea have staged ceaseless military exercises, big or small, under various codenames in and around the peninsula, increasing the danger of an unpredictable situation to be created by an accidental case. **The lesson taught by the August incident in which the situation reached the brink of a war in a moment due to a minor incident for unknown reason proves that it would be impossible to preserve peace on the Korean Peninsula any longer with the present AA that exists in its name only.** The evil cycle of escalation of tension will repeat itself and the situation leading to the brink of a war will be unavoidable as long as the state of armistice persists on the peninsula. No one can vouch that an all-out war would not break out on the peninsula and in that case that will quickly spill over into a world war. A fundamental way of putting this serious situation under control is for the DPRK and the U.S. to scrap the outdated AA and **sign a new peace treaty as early as possible to build durable peace-keeping mechanism on the peninsula.** Since the conclusion of the AA we have made fair and aboveboard and realistic proposals and initiatives to replace the AA by a peace treaty and have made strenuous and sincere efforts to put them into practice. The U.S. has to part with its anachronistic policy aimed to keep the armistice system and respond to the DPRK’s just proposal for signing a peace treaty. In fact, it is the U.S. which holds OPECON of the south Korean army and it is also the U.S. which manages the AA. **If the U.S. boldly makes a policy switchover, we have the willingness to respond to constructive dialogue and then security environment on the peninsula will witness dramatic improvement and this will help the U.S. clear its security concerns.** We have already sent through an official channel a **message** urging the U.S. side to respond to the proposal for signing a peace treaty with sincerity. We hope that the U.S. will prudently study our proposal for the peace treaty and affirmatively respond to it.” (KCNA, “DPRK FM Spokesman Urges U.S. to Respond to Its Proposal for Signing Peace Treaty,” October 7, 2015)

10/8/15 Admiral Bill Gortney, commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, said he agreed with U.S. intelligence assessments that North Korea had nuclear weapons, as well as the ability to miniaturize them and put them on a rocket that could reach the United States. "We assess that they have the capability to reach the homeland with a nuclear weapon from a rocket," Gortney told an event hosted by the Atlantic Council. (Andrea Shalal, "U.S. Says Ready to Defend against North Korean Nuclear Threat," Reuters, October 8, 2015)

10/10/15 Kim Jong-un declared that North Korea was ready to fight "any kind of war" waged by the United States, as he presided over a huge military parade in the center of Pyongyang to mark the 70th anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party. The highly orchestrated event – complete with goose-stepping soldiers, convoys of rocket launchers and missiles, and fighter jets roaring overhead – was the biggest such parade North Korea has ever held, part of Kim's efforts to bolster his leadership of the world's most closed and authoritarian state. "We have stood up against the American imperialists, and we are ready for any kind of war against the United States," Kim said in a long speech before the parade, his first public address in three years. "Our military's invincible spirit causes anxiety and fear to our enemies," said Kim, who in addition to leading the country as the "Great Successor" holds the post of first secretary of the Korean Workers' Party. "We can firmly declare that we can fight and win against the U.S. anywhere." Wearing his trademark navy blue Mao suit and reading from notes as he stood on a balcony overlooking rows of soldiers lined up in Kim Il Sung Square, named after his grandfather, Kim was flanked by generals decked out with medals. But also at his side was Liu Yunshan, the fifth most senior official in China's Communist Party. Korean Central Television showed footage of the two men laughing and waving throughout. Analysts said it was significant that Liu featured so prominently at the event, wondering if this heralded an improvement in the frosty relations between Pyongyang and Beijing. After Kim spoke, rows of tanks, trucks bearing Scud missiles, and 107mm and 300mm caliber rocket launchers rolled through the square, the center of the capital and home to the Korean Workers' Party headquarters. A formation of military planes flying over the proceedings formed the symbol of the Workers' Party – a hammer, sickle and writing brush – and the number 70, to Kim's evident delight. Banners floating above the square read: "Long live the invincible Korean Workers' Party" while people held up cards saying: "Military-first policy" and "Protect the mother nation." Analysts say that this year's parade, celebrating seven decades since the creation of the Korea Workers' Party, is about boosting the Kim regime's claims to legitimacy and further enabling the 30-something leader to present himself as the rightful heir to the system established by his grandfather, North Korea's "eternal president" Kim Il Sung. The surprising component of the weekend's events was the prominence of Liu, who greeted Kim with three hugs and a broad smile when he presented the North Korean leader with a letter from Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, on Friday evening. Relations between the neighbors, once called "as close as lips and teeth," have soured in the three years since Xi became president and made it clear that he thought little of Kim and his penchant for nuclear and missile tests. Kim did not attend China's own military parade, marking the end of World War II, in Beijing last month. But Liu brought a letter from Xi that said China had "been striving to treat the bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective in a bid to maintain,

consolidate and expand the bilateral relations," according to China's official Xinhua news agency, which carried reports of the letter prominently. "Under the new circumstance, the Chinese side is willing to seek closer communication and deepen cooperation, pushing for a long-term, healthy and stable development of the Sino-[North Korean] ties," the letter said. "The overt embrace of China and the overt diplomatic message was striking," said Adam Cathcart, an expert on China and North Korea who teaches at Leeds University in England. "This seemed like quite a concession on the part of the North Koreans after several years of giving them the cold shoulder." Coming after last month's parade in Beijing, which was attended by South Korean president Park Geun-hye, Liu's prominence at Saturday's event showed that China was not playing favorites between the Koreas and wanted to be seen as the diplomatic power in Asia, Cathcart said. "I don't have high expectations that North Korea is going to do what China wants, but we should be happy that somebody is talking to North Korea," he said. (Anna Fifield, "Kim Jong-un: North Korea Ready for 'Any Kind of War' against U.S.," *Washington Post*, October 10, 2015) North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said Saturday his country is ready to deal with any war threats by the United States as the North staged its largest-ever military parade to celebrate a key anniversary. "Our revolutionary forces are capable of dealing with any kind of war being waged by the U.S.," the North's leader said at his rare public speech during a military parade for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party. "The U.S. has pushed for terrible wars and is posing new threats of aggression...It has also stood in the way of us with unprecedented sanctions and blockades if we intend to develop our economy," Kim said. But the North's leader did not bring up his signature policy of simultaneously developing nuclear weapons and the country's ailing economy during the speech, apparently mindful of China, the North's long-time ally. (Yonhap, "N.K. Leader Voices Readiness to Fight War with U.S.," October 10, 2015)

North Korea showed off what it said were long-range ballistic missiles carrying miniaturized nuclear warheads, its latest claim to the sophisticated technology which state television said could destroy enemies in a "sea of fire". Rows of the intercontinental ballistic missiles known as KN-08, which some think could fly far enough to reach the continental US, were paraded through the capital as part of a massive military parade marking the 70th anniversary of the ruling Workers Party. A defense analyst in Seoul said the new missile appeared to have been modified to allow it to be fitted with a miniature nuclear warhead -- a claim echoed by North Korea's state TV -- but others experts said it was impossible to tell. North Korea has long claimed it has technology capable of launching nuclear bombs at its distant enemies, but experts are sceptical whether the impoverished country has acquired the sophisticated technology needed to produce such weapons. "With the vengeful desire to turn the citadel of our enemies into a sea of fire, our powerful tactical rockets loaded with diversified and miniaturized nuclear warheads are on the move," the commentator said, as rows of missiles were shown on screen. Leader Kim Jong-Un on Saturday told crowds assembled for the parade that the country's armed forces "are capable of fighting any kind of war provoked by the US and we are ready to protect our people and the blue sky of our motherland." Lee Il-Woo, a defense analyst at Korea Defense Network, said the new version of the KN-08 -- which has an estimated range of up to

12,000 kilometers (7,500 miles) -- **had a more rounded end than the version unveiled in 2012.** "This means North Korea might have successfully developed technology to minimise nuclear warheads and fit them on top of missiles," he told AFP. But another analyst, Chae Yeon-Seok at the Korea Aerospace Research Institute, cautioned that the missiles might be mock-ups. "You never know what is inside by just looking at them. It has never been verified that North Korea has developed any nuclear-tipped ICBMs," he said, using a short-hand for intercontinental ballistic missile. (AFP, "N. Korea Showcases New 'Nuclear' Long-Range Missile: State TV," October 10, 2015) South Korea's military said October 11 it is too early to judge whether North Korea's modified intercontinental ballistic missiles could carry a nuclear warhead. "We are conducting a technical analysis of the KN-08 North Korea unveiled yesterday," a military official said. "It's still hard to determine whether they can be fitted with a nuclear warhead." (Yonhap, "S. Korea Cautions over Modified N.K. Ballistic Missile," October 11, 2015)

A top Chinese official told North Korea's young leader Kim Jong-un that Beijing is willing to work with Pyongyang to resume the long-stalled nuclear talks as soon as possible. Kim held talks with Liu Yunshan, who ranks fifth in China's ruling Communist Party hierarchy, in Pyongyang one day ahead of a huge military parade marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the North's ruling Workers' Party. It is the first time for one of the members of the Chinese Communist Party's politburo standing committee to visit North Korea since Kim took power in late 2011. During the meeting, Liu told Kim that China is "willing to work with the DPRK (North Korea) to strive for an early resumption of the six-party talks on the nuclear issue," Xinhua reported in a dispatch from Pyongyang. Kim told Liu that North Korea "needs a peaceful and stable external environment as it is striving to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood," the report said. In the report, Kim made no mention of the country's nuclear weapons program. Instead, KCNA stressed that the alliance between the two nations was "forged in blood." (Yonhap, "China Tells N. Korea's Kim It Is Willing to Resume Nuclear Talks," October 10, 2015)

10/14/15 The United States should consider alternative ways to deal with North Korea, including relaxing its requirement that the North prove its intent to denuclearize, a veteran U.S. diplomat has told *NK News*. Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy from 2009 to 2011, said that this would not mean recognizing the North as a nuclear power; denuclearization would remain Washington's top objective in dealing with the North. However, in the absence of any negotiations, North Korea's nuclear and weapons proliferation is likely to continue, he said. Bosworth, who served as ambassador to Seoul from 1997 to 2001, said the sides could engage Pyongyang in other areas before discussing denuclearization, pointing to measures laid out in the 2005 joint statement of the Six-Party Talks. "I do think that we should look for a different kind of way to address North Korea," Bosworth said this month after a panel discussion with two other former U.S. ambassadors to Seoul, Sung Kim and Kathleen Stephens, at Harvard University. "It's important that we continue to talk both officially and unofficially." *NK News* spoke with Bosworth via phone last week about engaging Pyongyang, the future of the Six-Party Talks, and the Obama administration's approach to the regime. *NK News*: You said after the Harvard Kennedy School event that it is

time to explore a different kind of a way to address North Korea. Why is it important to do that now and what would it take to induce more substantive interactions? Stephen Bosworth: The degree to which you think it's important depends on your assessment of the gravity of the current situation. We've been insisting that we have to deal first with the nuclear question. We've been doing that for the last several years and nothing has happened. So there are other elements of the joint statement of 2005, which may be of more interest to the North Koreans, or at least have that opportunity, such as a peace treaty, compensation, integration economically, etc. But that doesn't mean you drop the denuclearization issue, it's just that you take a look at the sequence. NK News: And relax the stance that concrete evidence of commitment to denuclearization come before any resumption of Six-Party Talks? Bosworth: Yeah. I think that that's always a question of political judgment, but I think that's exactly the right question to ask. NK News: Is there a danger that you are playing into the North's hands in terms of wanting to be recognized as a nuclear state? Bosworth: I've never quite understood that argument because we can continue to say all the time that we do not recognize that they are a nuclear weapons state. Period. NK News: But if you make talks towards a peace treaty, is that not acknowledging ... Bosworth: You would begin to talk about things like that. Again, it's a question of sequencing. I think it's up to us as to how much we want to regard a missile launch, for example, as an acute crisis. NK News: Following the DMZ landmine incident in August, North and South Korea were able to reach an agreement in a timely manner. But Pyongyang is threatening to continue with further satellite launches. How should the international community read this simultaneous charm offensive and belligerence? Bosworth: Well, it's not the first time that the North Koreans have done this. I think it's up to us as to how much we want to regard a missile launch, for example, as an acute crisis. I think we would probably go back to the U.N. and talk about it there. But again, as long as we regard everything they do as a provocation, they are in control. NK News: But some kind of action would be taken in response to these kinds of things. Bosworth: Yeah ... I don't know quite what it is. I think there should be a certain amount of proportionality involved. NK News: The North has adopted nuclear development as part of its state ideology. Is it realistic to expect them to bargain in good faith? Bosworth: Well, it depends. First of all, I don't think we are really going to know until we actually get into a serious discussion with them. I'm not surprised that they say they are non-negotiable, (that) this is a non-negotiable issue. If they said it was a negotiable issue even before you even started talking to them about it, they've sort of given away the store. So I think you've got to get into discussions before you make an assessment. Then the question is, "What is your objective? What is your goal?" Does it remain CVID (complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement)? That's intellectually a coherent goal, but what do you think your chances are realistically, of getting it? I think if we can get, at a reasonable cost a moratorium on testing, that would be worth considering. NK News: Do the objectives of the Six-Party talks need to be changed among the five parties (other than North Korea)? Bosworth: I think we have to start by asking what (the U.S.) objective is, and what is South Korea's objective. First of all, we want to avoid any possibility of instability and conflict on the peninsula, and how do you best bring that about? My view is you do it by talking with them, or at least it gives you a better chance. I'm not saying that we should eliminate complete denuclearization forever as a goal, and I think we've probably got to keep it on the table. But in the meantime what do we do? I

think if we can get, at a reasonable cost a moratorium on testing, that would be worth considering. In essence, that's what the Leap Day Agreement was all about. Get some international inspectors back in there on the ground; get an assessment. NK News: Because if nothing is done now ... Bosworth: They continue to expand their inventory. (Young-jin Kim, "U.S. Should Talk to N. Korea before Denuclearization: Bosworth," *NKNews*, October 14, 2015)

The governor of Okinawa has revoked a permit to build a US military base in a flare-up of an issue that has plagued US-Japan relations for more than a decade. Onaga Takeshi said he was cancelling his predecessor's authorisation for a US Marine Corps air base on the southern island. The facility at picturesque Henoko Bay would replace a base at Futenma in the densely populated south of Okinawa. The central government is likely to take Okinawa to court, further delaying the base, with Henoko remaining an open sore in relations between Okinawa and Tokyo as well as Japan and the US. Onaga said: "The relevant bureaux have examined the permit and determined there are flaws . . . so I judged its cancellation to be appropriate. I'll now put all effort into keeping my manifesto promise of no new base at Henoko." A June poll for the local *Ryukyu Shimpo* newspaper showed opposition to relocation of the base in Okinawa prefecture at a record high of 83 per cent, with 77 per cent support for Mr Onaga's decision to withdraw the permit. Onaga was elected Okinawa governor in November 2014 on an anti-base platform. Since then there have been a series of meetings between the Okinawan side and the Tokyo government, but that process has broken down. The government is likely to seek a temporary injunction to let it keep building at Henoko pending a legal challenge to Mr Onaga's order. If it wins such an injunction, that could give it enough time to make Henoko a fait accompli. (Robin Harding, "Okinawa Governor Revokes License for New U.S. Base," *Financial Times*, October 14, 2015)

10/15/15

Civilian exchanges between South and North Korea are expanding rapidly as Pyongyang has shown some indications of a positive shift in its policy direction, Vice Unification Minister Hwang Boo-gi said. Speaking at a forum in Seoul, Hwang cited the August 25 inter-Korean deal as a turning point. The two Koreas managed to end a military crisis with the agreement reached at rare high-level talks. The North initially wanted to talk selectively about issues of its own concern but "currently, the field (of exchanges) has expanded to religion, sports, and culture," according to the number two official in the ministry. "Several (South Korean) teams are now visiting North Korea in connection with inter-Korean exchange," said Hwang. "I think North Korea is making the right choice in a sense." The North's negative view of the South's humanitarian aid has subsided to some extent, he added. "According to the analysis of North Korean media's reports, Kim made a lot of public activities related to the military at an early stage. Of late, however, more than half of his activities are associated with the economy," Hwang pointed out. (Yonhap, "Two Koreas Expanding Civilian Ties: Top Official," October 15, 2015)

President Park Geun-hye visited the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., 50 years after her father and former President Park Chung-hee, who was keen on advancing science and space

technologies, toured NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida in 1965. She vowed to step up efforts to advance cooperation with the United States in the sector. "Despite Korea's short history in the space sector, it became the 11th member of the Space Club after successfully launching the Naro rocket in 2013. In addition, we are seeking to launch a lunar orbiter and a moon probe by 2020," Park said. The space club is comprised of countries that currently operate space centers and can send satellites into orbit. "I hope cooperation between Korea and the U.S. in lunar and space exploration will broaden and help the two countries share space resources," she said. (Kang Seung-woo, "Park Seeks U.S. Support in Space Program," *Korea Times*, October 15, 2015)

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President Park Geun-hye and U.S. President Barack Obama expressed willingness to engage North Korea, but made it clear Pyongyang must give up its nuclear weapons program. "Our principled North Korea policy is that we are always open to dialogue and try to build confidence, although we are determined to deal firmly with any provocations from North Korea," Park told a joint news conference with Obama after a summit at the White House. Obama echoed Park, saying Washington is prepared to engage North Korea as it did Iran and Cuba. "As my administration has shown with Iran and with Cuba, we are also prepared to engage nations with which we have had troubled histories, but Pyongyang needs to understand it will not achieve the economic development it seeks so long as it clings to nuclear weapons," Obama said. Obama said the U.S. will be "right at the table" if North Korea wants a serious dialogue about giving up its nuclear program. "At the point where Pyongyang says, 'We're interested in seeing relief from sanctions and improved relations, and we are prepared to have a serious conversation about denuclearization,' I think it's fair to say we'll be right there at the table," he said. Park and Obama said they will never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. "Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs have achieved nothing except to deepen North Korea's isolation," Obama said. Park and Obama also agreed to work closely with China to bring Pyongyang back to the negotiating table. Obama also said he's not concerned about South Korea strengthening relations with China, stressing that it's wrong to believe good relations between Seoul and Beijing are bad for the Korea-U.S. alliance. Some U.S. experts expressed such concerns after Park attended a massive Chinese military parade last month. "Sometimes there's a perception that if President Park meets with President Xi, that must cause a problem for us," Obama said, referring to Chinese President Xi Jinping. "We want South Korea to have a strong relationship with China, just as we want to have a strong relationship with China." Park also said Obama affirmed that Korea-U.S. relations and Korea-China relations could be "compatible" and supported Korea's policies toward China. Park also said the main principle in her North Korea policy is to deal "very certainly and decisively" with any provocations while at the same time leaving the door open for dialogue, and will continue to make efforts to build trust. "In August, there was a North Korean provocation in the Demilitarized Zone, and we stuck to this principle and applied it to the situation, and we were very firmly responding to the situation. And as a result, we were able to reach the Aug. 25 agreement between the two Koreas," she said. Obama also stressed that the Korea-U.S. alliance is in the best shape ever. "The U.S.-ROK relationship is stronger than it ever has been ... the alliance is on firmer footing than it's ever been," Obama said. "I

actually feel very good about where the relations between the United States and Korea are." After the summit, the two leaders issued a joint statement dealing exclusively with North Korea's nuclear program and provocations. It was the first time the countries have adopted such a North Korea-focused statement at the leaders' level. The statement said Park and Obama agree to address the North Korean nuclear problem with the "utmost urgency and determination." That was seen as aimed at dispelling criticism that the Obama administration is resigned to the status quo and has little interest in tackling the North Korean nuclear issue in earnest. The two leaders also vowed to intensify high-level strategic consultations to create a favorable environment for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula. Obama said the U.S. will continue to strongly support Park's vision of unification. "In our discussions, we looked beyond the current pressing issues of the Korean Peninsula and engaged in deeper discussions about the future of the Korean Peninsula," Park said, referring to her initiative for unification. Park has called for a peaceful unification, calling it "the fundamental solution" to resolve the nuclear dispute and other problems arising from North Korea. "Unification is something that no one can really predict," Park said. "But no matter when it happens for us, we need to be prepared." Park and Obama also pledged to work with the international community to improve North Korea's dismal human rights record and ensure accountability for human rights violations. "Given the horrific treatment of the North Korean people by their government, our two nations will continue to expose abuses and call for accountability for human rights violations," Obama said. Park also expressed hopes for participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement. "Korea and the U.S. already have an FTA with high standards, and in this respect, I believe that we make natural partners in terms of the TPP," she said. "Since TPP negotiations have now been concluded, we will be engaging in closer cooperation with regard to Korea's possible participation in the TPP." Also, South Korea and the U.S. agreed to push for the signing of a space cooperation agreement and to cooperate in health security and cybersecurity as a new frontier of their alliance. "Given the increasing cyber threats to both our nations, including from the DPRK, we're stepping up our efforts to strengthen our cyber defenses and coordinating at the highest levels, the White House and the Blue House making sure that we are in sync in dealing with that challenge," Obama said. (Chang Jae-soon & Kim Kwang-tae, "Park, Obama Stand Ready to Engage N. Korea; Urge N. Korea to Give up Nukes," Yonhap, October 17, 2015) President Park Geun-hye's bid for a unified Korea has gained momentum after winning support for her vision of unification from U.S. President Barack Obama. It is another milestone for Park's unification initiatives after getting similar backing from Chinese President Xi Jinping. "President Park has articulated a better vision – a unified Korea free from the fear of war and nuclear weapons – and that's a vision that we very much support," Obama said at a press conference following a summit with Park. (Kang Seung-woo, "Unification Diplomacy Gaining Momentum," Korea Times, October 18, 2015) In a joint statement, which was seen as unusual due to its focus wholly on North Korean issues, the allies said that they would intensify "high-level strategic consultations" to create a favorable environment for peaceful unification. Seoul officials said that the high-level consultations mean a vice minister-level or minister-level communication mechanism focusing on unification issues. Also notable is that the U.S. offered greater support for Park's "Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative." Washington appointed its

Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim as an envoy dedicated to supporting the NAPCI. Park has been pushing for NAPCI to build multilateral trust to address the "Asia Paradox," in which regional political and security cooperation is weak, despite deepening socioeconomic interdependence. NAPCI is one of the three major external policy initiatives including the Peninsular Trust-Building and Eurasia Initiatives. (Cho Chung-un and Song Sang-ho, "Park Faces Tasks after U.S. Trip," *Korea Herald*, October 18, 2015) Park's presence at the military parade in Beijing to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II last month was believed to have prompted anxiety in Washington, as the event was shunned by most democratic nations. But the alleviation of jitters over Seoul's close ties with its eastern neighbor in recent months was best captured by Park's visit to the Pentagon on Thursday with Defense Minister Han Min-koo. The scene of the South Korean leader receiving a full military honor parade upon her arrival to meet with U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter appeared to symbolize strong alliance between the two nations, observers said. "The major mission [of the trip] was to dispel worries in Washington that Seoul was leaning toward Beijing. The scene of President Park watching a full military honor parade at the Pentagon has served to ease those worries raised by the picture of Park last month in Beijing watching a military parade alongside President Xi Jinping," said Yun Duk-min, director of the National Diplomacy Academy, on October 18. "Park's chanting 'We go together' with U.S. military officials at the Pentagon symbolized further strengthening of the Korea-U.S. alliance and was therefore a meaningful display," Cho Nam-hoon, a research fellow at Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, noted. Another major theme of Park's second official visit to the U.S. was the reaffirmation of the two allies' firm stance on dealing with North Korea, particularly over its nuclear ambitions, which the two leaders pledged would be addressed with "utmost urgency and determination" in a joint statement issued following a summit at the White House. "We oppose any actions by North Korea that raise tensions or violate UN Security Council resolutions. In particular, if North Korea carries out a launch using ballistic missile technology or a nuclear test, it will face consequences, including seeking further significant measures by the UN Security Council," the statement read. The two allies, however, left open the possibility for talks with Pyongyang to possibly remove economic sanctions. "Washington's hands were tied in recent years when it came to North Korea as it had been preoccupied with dealing with trouble in the Middle East. The fact that the two nations now see resolving the North Korean nuclear issue as the utmost diplomatic priority carries significant meaning," said Park In-hwi, a professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University. While Washington appears to be turning its attention toward resolving the stalemate over North Korea's nuclear program, it remains to be seen whether talks, such as the six-party talks suspended since 2008, could be arranged in coming months to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions at a time when Obama has one year left in office. "The joint statement is filled with preconditions that Pyongyang must fulfill [to resume talks]. It remains unclear whether [the summit] could provide new momentum that could lead to a solution on North Korea's nuclear program," said Moon Chung-in, a professor of international studies at Yonsei University. (Kang Jin-kyu and Yoo Ji-hye, "Park Reaffirms Strength of U.S. Alliance," *JoongAng Ilbo*, October 19, 2015)

Obama: "Madam President, I want to commend you and the people of South Korea for the resolve that you displayed this summer following North Korea's reckless actions in the DMZ that wounded two of your soldiers. North Korea was reminded that any provocation or aggression will be met by a strong, united response by South Korea and the United States. Likewise, Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs have achieved nothing except to deepen North Korea's isolation. Today, President Park and I are reaffirming that our nations will never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. We will continue to insist that Pyongyang must abide by its obligations on the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the peninsula in a peaceful manner. And given the horrific treatment of the North Korean people by their government, our two nations will continue to expose abuses and call for accountability for human rights violations. At the same time, we do support President Park's efforts to improve relations between South and North Korea. As my administration has shown with Iran and with Cuba, we are also prepared to engage nations with which we've had troubled histories. But Pyongyang needs to understand that it will not achieve the economic development it seeks so long as it clings to nuclear weapons. In contrast, President Park has articulated a better vision -- a unified Korea free from the fear of war and nuclear weapons -- and that's a vision that we very much support. Beyond the peninsula, President Park shared her proposal -- the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative -- to build greater cooperation among the countries of the region, and we welcome those efforts. ...Park: Our alliance is now moving beyond a security alliance and an economic alliance, and evolving into a comprehensive global alliance. The biggest threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is North Korean provocation and advancement of North Korea's nuclear capabilities. And President Obama and I shared recognition in many aspects of this issue. First, to deter any strategic provocation by the North, Korea and the U.S. will continue to strengthen coordinated efforts with the international community, including China, Russia and Japan. And to this end, we will try to fully utilize the various regional and multilateral gatherings that are to take place. Second, with a sense of urgency and firm commitment, we have agreed to strengthen diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem. On the basis of Korea-U.S.-Japan cooperation, we will strengthen coordination among the other five parties, while Korea and the United States will deepen consultations with other countries, including China. Third, **should North Korea demonstrate a genuine willingness towards denuclearization**, we reaffirm that Korea and the U.S., along with the rest of the international community, stand ready to extend cooperative measures to the North. In our discussions, we looked beyond today, the current -- we looked beyond the current pressing issues of the Korean Peninsula, and engaged in deeper discussions about the future of the Korean Peninsula. With regard to the changing situation in the Korean Peninsula, and in the process of peaceful reunification, we will continue to pursue mutually coordinated policies on North Korea. At the same time, to create conditions conducive to peaceful reunification, we will also deepen high-level strategic consultations between Korea and the U.S. I would also like to thank President Obama for his support for the Korean government's ideas on peaceful reunification. Today, we adopted a joint statement on North Korea that contains our shared recognition on these related issues. ...Obama: And even though you didn't ask me the question, I'm just going to horn in on the question that you asked President Park, because we

actually discussed Iran and what it could teach us about the situation in North Korea. These are both countries that have a long history of antagonism towards the United States, but we were prepared to have a serious conversation with the Iranians once they showed that they were serious about the possibility of giving up the pursuit of nuclear weapons. And I suspect President Park agrees with me here that, at the point where Pyongyang says, we're interested in seeing relief from sanctions and improved relations, and we are prepared to have a serious conversation about denuclearization -- I think it's fair to say we'll be right there at the table. Now, whether even if they made that gesture, they would then be willing to subject themselves to the kind of rigorous verification regimes that we've set up with Iran, particularly given their past violations of agreements, that's a separate question. But we haven't even gotten to that point yet because there's been no indication on the part of the North Koreans, as there was with the Iranians, that they could foresee a future in which they did not possess or were not pursuing nuclear weapons. ... Q Now, the Korean Peninsula trust-building process has been the basis of the Korean government's efforts to improve inter-Korean relations. But despite these efforts, North Korea has really not changed its attitude towards developing nuclear missile capabilities. Now, in the second half of your term in office, how do you plan on steering inter-Korean ties? And one more. Now, from your visit to China in September, we have been seeing you say that you want to see unification of the Koreas. Do you really think that this will be possible during your term in office? And I have a question for both of you, actually, finally. In Korea, they say that you see each other often and you start to grow fond of each other. Now, this is your fourth time meeting as a summit meeting, and you also see each other a lot at multilateral talks. So I just want to ask, have you grown closer? Park: (As interpreted.) Now, let me answer the last question first. Then, yes -- the answer is yes for me. So let me continue with my answers to your question. Now, the Korean Peninsula trust-building process -- basically we have this principle. We will be very sternly and decisively dealing with any provocations, but we're also leaving the door open for a dialogue, and we'll continue to make efforts to build trust. So this is the basic principle, and this is the basic underlying foundation of all our North Korean policies. In August, there was a North Korean provocation in the demilitarized zone, and we stuck to this principle and applied it to the situation. And we were very firmly responding to the situation, and as a result, we were able to reach the August 25th agreement between the two Koreas. So we had this vicious cycle where North Korea kept on provoking us and then we just rewarded it, and it went on and on. And we want to stop this. And we are very clear that our North Korean policy will not change just because North Korea continues to provoke and threaten us. Now, the Korean government will try to smoothly implement the August 25th agreement. And we seek to put into place concrete measures for reconciliation and cooperation in an effort to maintain this momentum for improved inter-Korean ties. Now, in the past, some people -- you might have thought that, well, if you just let some things slide, won't you get along better? But if you look at the results of that attitude, they really weren't very good. We need a principled approach, and this principled approach might make it difficult for the time being -- the immediate time being -- but that is where improved relationships will actually start. That is my belief. Now, reunification is something that no one can really predict. Now, in the summit earlier too, we talked about Germany and how Chancellor Kohl said that German reunification would happen in 10 years'

time -- but then three days later, the Berlin Wall came falling down. So it's really something that's very unpredictable. But no matter when it happens, for us, we need to be prepared. I think that is the most important point for us. So for any circumstances, we need to be prepared. And we are making efforts in this regard. Now, we do have reunification preparation committee that are looking into the practical aspects of reunification, how we prepare for it. But reunification is actually not just between South and North Korea, it also affects the greater international community. So we need to also look at our neighboring countries, and we need to create an environment throughout the world where there is consensus that people agree that, yes, reunification is needed and this will be good for the region, for peace and prosperity. And we need to be able to tell our neighbors and the greater world that reunification is a good thing for the region and the world. And we will continue to make efforts in this regard as well. ... Q. First, I have a question for President Obama. Within the United States, with regard to the Korea-U.S. alliance, there are some people who are concerned that there are some cracks. What do you see? And in this situation, President Park has visited the United States. What is the significance of her visit? I also have a question for President Park. Now, through this visit, you have said that you would like to open new frontiers of cooperation, and I'd like to hear some details on that, please. Obama: Actually, I don't see any cracks in the relationship at all. I would argue that the U.S.-ROK relationship is stronger than it's ever been, that the alliance is on firmer footing than it's ever been across the spectrum of issues -- military, economic, people-to-people, scientific, development, global issues -- that we have excellent relations with the government. Our communications is strong. Our vision of a continued robust alliance that can deal with any contingency is not just given lip service to, but we invest in it on an ongoing basis. Our vision of what we need to do to see improved relations with the DPRK, we have similar outlooks. And so I actually feel very good about what where the relationship between the United States and Korea are. I think what's interesting -- and this might connect to the earlier question that Carol had -- is sometimes there's a perception that if President Park meets with President Xi, that that must cause a problem for us. Well, President Xi was in this room, eating my food. (Laughter.) And we were toasting and having a lengthy conversation. We want South Korea to have a strong relationship with China, just as we want to have a strong relationship with China. We want to see China's peaceful rise. We want them to be cooperating with us in putting pressure on the DPRK. We want to be working with them to uphold international norms and rules of the road. So there's no contradiction between the Republic of Korea having good relations with us, being a central part of our alliance, and having good a relationship -- good relations with China." (Remarks by President Obama and President Park of the ROK in Joint Press Conference, White House, October 16, 2015)

Joint Statement: On October 16, 2015, President Barack Obama of the United States of America and President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea committed to the following. "The United States-Republic of Korea alliance remains committed to countering the threat to peace and security posed by North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs as well as other provocations. We will maintain our robust deterrence posture and continue to modernize our alliance and enhance our close collaboration to better respond to all forms of North Korean provocations. The United

States and the Republic of Korea share deep concern about the continued advancement of North Korea's UN-proscribed nuclear and missile capabilities and commit to address the North Korean nuclear problem **with utmost urgency and determination**. We reaffirm our commitment to our common goal, shared by the international community, to achieve the **complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea in a peaceful manner**. North Korea's continuing development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs is an ongoing violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and is contrary to North Korea's commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We strongly urge North Korea to immediately and fully comply with its international obligations and commitments. We oppose any actions by North Korea that raise tensions or violate UN Security Council resolutions. In particular, **if North Korea carries out a launch using ballistic missile technology or a nuclear test, it will face consequences, including seeking further significant measures by the UN Security Council**. In this regard, we are committed to working with the international community to ensure the effective and transparent implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions, including sanctions measures, concerning North Korea, and we encourage all states to exercise strict vigilance against North Korea's prohibited activities. The United States and the Republic of Korea maintain **no hostile policy towards North Korea and remain open to dialogue** with North Korea to achieve our shared goal of denuclearization.

Recognizing the common interests of our Six-Party Talkspartners in the denuclearization of North Korea, we will continue to strengthen our coordination with China and the other parties in order to bring North Korea, **which has refused all offers of denuclearization dialogue**, back to credible and meaningful talks as soon as possible. We reaffirm that we will never accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state, and that its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is incompatible with its economic development goals. Along with the rest of the international community, we stand ready to offer a brighter future to North Korea, if North Korea demonstrates a genuine willingness to completely abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and agrees to abide by its international obligations and commitments. **The United States appreciates President Park's tireless efforts to improve inter-Korean relations, including through repeated overtures to North Korea**, and welcomes President Park's principled approach that resulted in a peaceful resolution of the August tensions. The United States will continue to strongly support her vision of a peacefully unified Korean Peninsula, as envisaged in her Dresden address. We will intensify high-level strategic consultations to create a favorable environment for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula. The Republic of Korea and the United States join the international community in condemning the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea as documented in the 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry report. We look forward to supporting the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Seoul). We remain dedicated to working with the international community to improve the human rights situation in North Korea and ensure accountability for human rights violations, as well as to improve the livelihood of the people in North Korea." (Obama-Park Joint Declaration, October 16, 2015)

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DPRK FoMin statement: "As already known to the world, at the recent 70th UN General Assembly the DPRK re-clarified its fair and aboveboard stand to replace the Korean

Armistice Agreement (AA) by a peace treaty. This was prompted by the urgent need to defuse the danger of a war caused by the potential threat to the Korean Peninsula and create climate for durable peace. The situation on the peninsula in last August when **a trifling accidental case created a touch-and-go situation all of a sudden finally proved that the present AA could no longer avert a conflict** and defuse the danger of a war. An agreement was reached between the north and the south with much effort thanks to the DPRK's peace-loving stand and persevering patience but there is no guarantee that the agreement will be preserved and implemented as desired. It is because the south Korean authorities, a party to the agreement, do not have any prerogative of command over any armed force in south Korea and are not in a position to reject any joint military drill imposed by the U.S. It is as clear as noonday that **if a conflict occurs again in the area along the Military Demarcation Line due to the escalating tension, it will spill over into an uncontrollable all-out war**. The course of the negotiations held so far for the settlement of the issue on the Korean Peninsula proved that no issue in which the countries concerned including the U.S. are interested can be settled unless a peace treaty is concluded before anything else. **The DPRK once discussed the issue of denuclearization at the six-party talks by taking into consideration the assertion of the countries concerned that the issue of denuclearization should be discussed before anything else and simultaneously discussed both the nuclear issue and the issue of ensuring peace in the past. But all these discussions proved futile and, even when a partial agreement was reached, it was not implemented. This was mainly because the U.S. persistently pursued its hostile policy toward the DPRK** and its military provocations such as large-scale joint military exercises and introduction of nuclear striking means into south Korea, its vivid manifestation, periodically chilled the atmosphere of all negotiations and ratcheted up the tension on the peninsula. **In order to put a definite end to the evil cycle of escalating confrontation and tension it is necessary to replace the AA by a peace treaty before anything else. This is the conclusion drawn by the DPRK.** There are **two ways for ensuring peace on the peninsula**. The first one is the Cold War way in which the DPRK has to bolster its capability for self-defense with its nuclear force as a pivot in every way so as to cope with the U.S. increased nuclear threat and war provocations. It is entirely thanks to **the DPRK's nuclear deterrence** that all-out war is averted on the peninsula in a state of ceasefire. **The other way is for the U.S. to roll back its hostile policy toward the DPRK and respond to the call for concluding the peace treaty with the latter so as to ensure genuine and lasting peace based on confidence.** The issue of **replacing the AA by a peace treaty is the matter on which the U.S. should make bold decision first and there should be a principled agreement between the DPRK and the U.S., to begin with.** The UN, too, should positively support the conclusion of the peace treaty and thus fulfill its responsibility for putting an end to the abnormal situation where its member country is technically at war with the "UN Command" on the Korean Peninsula. If the confidence building between the DPRK and the U.S. helps remove the source of imminent war, it is possible to finally put an end to the nuclear arms race and consolidate peace. The U.S. should drop the idea of groundlessly shunning the issue of concluding the peace treaty and prudently take a right option.

If the U.S. shuns the conclusion of the peace treaty or puts a conditionality on it even at this time when the situation on the peninsula has reached a crucial

turning point, this attitude will clearly show the world that it has no intention to roll back its hostile policy toward the DPRK. If the U.S. insists on its hostile policy, **it will only see the DPRK's limitless bolstering of nuclear deterrence** and the growth of its revolutionary armed forces **capable of fighting any form of war to be ignited by the former.**" (KCNA, "DPRK FM Urges U.S. Not to Groundlessly Shun Conclusion of Peace Treaty," October 17, 2015)

10/19/15 South Korea could save more than W170 billion in reunification cost and speed up reunification by 11 years if it gives substantial aid to North Korea, a study suggests (US\$1=W1,125). Park Yong-joo of the National Assembly Budget Office announced his findings at a forum hosted by *Chosun Ilbo*. Supposing the two Koreas reunite in 2026, the study says the cost of reunification would vary significantly depending on the amount of aid over the next 10 years. If Seoul continues its limited engagement with Pyongyang, North Korea would only reach two-thirds of the income level of South Korea in 2076, while reunification cost would balloon to W4,822 trillion. But if South Korea were to give W272 trillion to North Korea to develop its food and agriculture industries and W193 trillion in medical aid over the next 10 years, the North would reach the two-thirds income level 11 years earlier or in 2065, while reunification cost would fall to W3,100 trillion. The study said as North Korea's birthrate rises, the chronic aging of South Korean society could be eased, boosting both the labor productivity and economic growth potential. It forecast that South Korea's medical spending and other welfare costs would also decrease following reunification. (*Chosun Ilbo*, "Aid to N. Korea 'Could Save Billions in Reunification Costs,'" October 20, 2015)

10/20/15 North Korea is preparing for a nuclear test, though no test appears to be imminent. Lee Chul-woo of the ruling Saenuri Party made the comment to reporters after being briefed by the National Intelligence Service during the parliamentary inspection of the spy agency. The North has recently hinted that it may conduct a nuclear test in response to what it claims is the hostile policy of the United States and its allies. Lee also said North Korea did not launch a rocket earlier this month on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party due to international pressure, China's opposition and North Korea's technical ill-preparedness. There is lingering speculation that Pyongyang may still launch a long-range rocket in the coming months to put what it claims is a satellite into orbit. The North has claimed that it mastered the technology to make nuclear warheads small enough to mount on missiles. Adm. William Gortney, commander of U.S. Northern Command, said earlier this month he agrees with the intelligence community's assessment the North has the ability and technology to put nuclear weapons on rockets that can reach the continental United States. Lee, however, said North Korea has not mastered the miniaturization technology, citing South Korea's spy agency. Lee said 20 North Korean officials stationed in foreign countries defected to South Korea in the first 10 months of this year, compared to 8 in 2013 and 18 in 2014. A stream of North Koreans continue to defect to South Korea to avoid chronic food shortages and harsh political oppression after being influenced by South Korean and other broadcasts, Lee said. Meanwhile, Kim's aunt, Kim Kyong-hui, is under medical treatment in Pyongyang, Shin Kyoung-min, a lawmaker of the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy, told reporters after attending the close-door session. Kim's aging aunt was last seen in

public on Sept. 9, 2013, when she watched a military performance. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Says N. Korea Preparing for Nuke Test, But Test Not Imminent," October 20, 2015)

Korean families split by the heavily-armed border began to reunite on Mount Kumgang in a major inter-Korean humanitarian program. It is the first of its kind in one year and eight months, a fruit of the August 25 deal between the two Koreas on ending a military standoff. Earlier in the day, 389 South Koreans of 96 families crossed the eastern part of the border by 16 buses to meet 141 North Koreans. The South Koreans, mostly elderly, plan to stay here through October 22 for a series of six brief reunions that will last just a total of 12 hours. Another round of reunions involving 250 other South Koreans of 90 families will be held October 24-26. Nearly 130,000 South Koreans are registered in the government's data system as having families in the North. Half of them have already died, with around 66,000 separated family members on the waiting list. Since the first inter-Korean summit in 2000, the two Koreas have held 20 rounds of face-to-face family reunion events. There were seven rounds of video-based reunions. (Yonhap, "Separated South and North Koreans in Taerful Reunions," October 20, 2015)

North Korea appears to have renewed its demands for a peace treaty with the United States to evade its responsibility to denuclearize, a senior government official said. "Saying they want a peace treaty only with the U.S. amounts to saying they will exclude South Korea," the official told reporters on background. "They want to blur the (current) focus on denuclearization. Because everyone knows that the responsibility for talks lies with the North, it appears they're trying to escape the pressure." If the North denuclearizes, South Korea, the U.S. and other concerned parties will begin talks for a peace treaty in accordance with the Sept. 19, 2005 deal that also involves Russia, China and Japan, the official said. "What the North should do is fully halt its activities at Yongbyon and return the IAEA inspectors who were expelled in 2009," the official said, referring to the North's main nuclear complex. "On this, there is some amount of consensus among the five (other) parties." (Yonhap, "N. Korea Wants Peace Treaty to Avoid Denuclearization Talks: Official," October 20, 2015)

Japanese Defense Minister Nakatani Gen indicated that Japan could conduct military operations in North Korea without consent from Seoul in the event of another war on the Korean Peninsula. His remarks imply that Japan has set up a contingency plan to send its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) into North Korea without seeking consent from the South. He made the comments during talks with South Korean Defense Minister Han Min-koo in Seoul. This clearly shows that there is a wide gap between Seoul and Tokyo about the scope of South Korean territory, adding fuel to controversy over Japan's move to expand its military role by revising the country's Constitution. According to the Ministry of National Defense, Han told Nakatani that Tokyo must seek approval or consent from Seoul first for any military activities on or near South Korean territory, which also includes North Korea according to the Constitution of the Republic of Korea. Nakatani responded: "There have been some opinions that the valid scope of Republic of Korea's governing area is south of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL)." The remark was construed as Japan expressing its position that it does not need to gain agreement before conducting military activities on the North Korean region.

Whether or not the SDF could enter the North without consent from Seoul has been a subject of controversy since Japan's Diet recently passed a set of controversial security bills. The laws allow its armed forces to assist other countries in armed conflict in the name of the right to collective self-defense – the use of force to support an ally under attack. The government has maintained that Seoul's consent is essential before the SDF enters the North, but Tokyo and Washington have not clearly expressed their positions. During today's meeting, Nakatani told Han that Japan will seek approval from countries in accordance with international law before sending its forces into their territories. The remark also showed differences between the two countries about whether North Korea should be included in South Korean territory, because unlike South Korea's Constitution, international law views the two Koreas as separate nations. Nakatani said a trilateral discussion including the U.S. will be necessary. A ministry official said, "We agree with Japan about the need for the trilateral discussion." However, concerns are raised about whether Seoul will be able to properly deliver its position if Japan and the U.S. hold similar positions. According to the ministry, working-level officials from the three countries will hold a meeting for two days from today in Tokyo to discuss their "mutual security concerns." (Jun Ji-hye, "Seoul, Tokyo Apart over Operations in N.K.," *Korea Times*, October 21, 2015)

10/21/15

South Korea is willing to talk with North Korea on all issues of mutual concern if dialogue resumes, Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo said. Hong said the government is conducting an internal review on specific agenda items and the level of discussions, but those have to be finalized through consultations with North Korea. In the Aug. 25 deal ending a military standoff, the two Koreas agreed to hold talks "between their authorities in Pyongyang or Seoul at an early date to improve inter-Korean ties and have multifaceted dialogue and negotiations in the future." "But there has been no big progress yet in (efforts to open) government-level talks," the minister said at a forum in Seoul. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Open to Talks with N. Korea on 'Every Issue': Minister," October 21, 2015)

Carlin and Jervis: "North Korea may already have 10 to 16 nuclear weapons and delivery systems, putting all of South Korea and much of Japan within range. It may have had something close to that capability since at least 2010. In that case, it is worthwhile to begin this paper by asking whether we have seen any changes since then in North Korea's posture or actions that may stem from having this arsenal. At this point, the short answer is no. Apart from bolder rhetoric and more threatening propaganda, there has been very little in the way of unusual or enhanced aggressive action over the past five years. What have been labeled "provocations" consist almost entirely of North Korean test launches, possibly improving capabilities but by themselves posing no immediate threat nor necessitating a military response. A nuclear test in 2013—the North's third, and widely considered its most successful to date—was an unwelcome development, but even that was not in itself a provocation or an act of aggression. The one exception during this period is the Korean People's Army (KPA) shelling of a South Korean-held island in Korea's West Sea in November 2010. This might be seen as a risky probe to gauge the US-ROK response to a new situation in which the North possessed nuclear weapons. Given that North Korea quickly backed away in classic style from the confrontation it set off, however, it is

difficult to attribute this highly unusual DPRK military action against the South solely or even in part to the possession of nuclear weapons. It seems more likely that it was connected with internal North Korean dynamics at the time, possibly a move by Kim Jong-un—at that point his father's chosen successor—to prove himself tough and capable. ... It seems to us that none of these scenarios are likely to change North Korea's strategic vision. The regime does not have regional ambitions, and possession of nuclear weapons in any number is unlikely to change that. Comparisons between North Korea and Hitler's Germany in this respect have always been wide of the mark. The most likely scenario over the next five years, in our view, is for Pyongyang to remain tightly focused on its domestic situation, especially on its economy, and on ways to loosen or blunt the pressures from its neighbors and the United States. That still leaves a core concern that the North could launch an effort to achieve the country's reunification, similar to what it did in June 1950. Feeding such concerns is that under Kim Jong-un there has been a revival of long-dormant, provocative rhetoric about "the great revolutionary event of national reunification," language that reinforces the widespread perception by outside observers that Kim is erratic if not irrational. Nevertheless, so far the preponderance of evidence is that the practical changes to the North's approach to reunification that began in the 1980s, including a change in the definition of reunification to allow for the existence of two Korean governments, remain in place. Circumstances could unleash a decision (on either side) to lunge for solution of the unification question, and recent ROK statements making it clear that Seoul is aiming at a one-state solution may enhance concerns in Pyongyang that its back is closer to the wall in a crisis than it actually is. In that case, we could well enter the danger zone of North Korean fatalism, in which a decision to use nuclear weapons, especially against Japan—the historic enemy—would rise on the list of "patriotic" options. Similarly, if things go wrong (serious domestic disruption, grave economic downturn, pressing external threats to the regime), it will be time to worry that the leadership might become (as Koreans are wont to do) fatalistic and decide that death with "glory" is preferable to defeat. ... It is unclear, to say the least, whether North Korea and the United States understand deterrence in the same way. As is frequently the case, the North Koreans may understand more about US thinking than the other way around. DPRK propaganda generally makes it look as if North Koreans have a completely distorted sense of events, and no connection with what is considered a "normal" understanding of the world. Yet experience has shown that certainly at the working level in the party and at least some of the ministries, North Korean officials read and study much more than just the daily propaganda or the works of their leadership. They are expected to understand their field and, when applicable, the enemy's thinking. In that case, it would be surprising if key working-level officials were not familiar with US deterrence theory. How far up the chain such understanding reaches is another matter. Figuring out ways to feed into internal discussions ideas that may not fit with the views of senior leadership is a constant problem in the North Korean system. There are three key questions to consider in examining how Pyongyang might behave with a growing arsenal of nuclear weapons. • Will possession of a larger arsenal of deliverable nuclear weapons change the North's propensity to engage in behaviors that could trigger a confrontation? • Will possession of a larger arsenal of deliverable nuclear weapons change the North's behavior during a confrontation, whatever its origins? • Will possession of such a capability cause the North to

reexamine and change its overall strategy and goals, i.e., will deterrence theory as understood by the United States and others become central to Pyongyang's thinking, or will it discard such concepts entirely for a new, dangerous, and essentially destabilizing approach? ... As for the more tactical, behavioral issues, there is some limited evidence that countries behave more recklessly soon after they acquire nuclear weapons but after a while settle down to less obstreperous behavior. For example, shortly after the Soviet Union first tested a nuclear weapon in 1949, Stalin authorized Kim Il Sung to attack South Korea. For the Austrian scholar Michael Cohen, the crucial mechanism is learning from the first major crisis that such states face, often brought about by their initial overestimate of how much nuclear weapons can get them and how easy nuclear crises will be to control. In this model, the fear generated by a confrontation is a sharp and powerful learning experience. For Michael Horowitz, the mechanisms are more general and more gradual, and can include the accumulation of experience and internal thinking about the role of nuclear weapons. Neither of these investigations focuses directly on changes in the states' arsenals, however. ... It is also not clear how applicable Horowitz's observation is to North Korea. Over several decades the North has been through numerous sharp confrontations with the United States and in the process has seemingly perfected the art of carefully navigating these situations. In fact, the North's most sustained reckless phase (1966-70) was well before it possessed nuclear weapons and still believed itself highly vulnerable to a nuclear strike by the United States. The North's aggressive posture in those years was based on leadership decisions made in context of the Sino-Soviet split, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and deepening US involvement in the Vietnam War. The best-known consequences were the Blue House raid and the USS Pueblo incident (1968), the EC-121 shootdown (1969), and numerous artillery battles along the military demarcation line throughout that period. These were highly destabilizing actions, and the fact that such provocative, overt risk taking was sustained over a period of several years made the situation extremely volatile. This sort of behavior on the part of Pyongyang has not been the norm, however, and in fact has been quite rare over the past 40 years. Recently, as noted above, the only really "reckless" act in the past five years was the Yeonpyeong Island incident (November 2010), which was a direct, open and carefully planned attack on ROK soil. Going back further, there have been number of smaller confrontations (such as the August 1976 ax incident) or off-peninsula terrorist actions (as in Rangoon in October 1983 and Korean Air flight 858, November 1987), but it is difficult to see how possession of nuclear weapons would have significantly changed either the North's initial acts or its subsequent behavior in these episodes. A number of North-South naval clashes in the West Sea have occurred (1999, 2002 and 2009) but these were, in effect, tactically bounded and, again, the first two of these clashes occurred without reference to possession of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the North's sinking of a South Korean naval vessel (March 2010) was carried out clandestinely and meant to be deniable. It had no larger strategic purpose and is probably best explained as an extension of the long-running inter-Korean dispute in the West Sea. As such, there is no reason to believe that possession of nuclear weapons had any bearing on the decision to undertake that operation. Similarly, the North's cyberattack on Sony Pictures in late 2014 would appear to have everything to do with the perceived need to take revenge against a movie that depicted the assassination of Kim Jong-un. The Sony hack was a function of the North's cyberwarfare capabilities rather

than its nuclear arsenal. The reason for this brief review of the clashes and confrontations over the past several decades is to make the point—one that many North Korea analysts accept—that the DPRK does not behave irrationally but rather with cold, meticulous calculation. In that regard, and to reiterate a key assertion, the North Koreans already have considerable experience dancing on the edge of crisis. Their longstanding practice is to take things only so far before stepping back. That approach was well illustrated in the most recent 2015 crisis, as an exchange of artillery fire and readiness levels increased dramatically on the front lines of both sides along the demilitarized zone. After the crisis, Kim Jong-un claimed that the North's possession of nuclear weapons is what helped bring the situation to a peaceful resolution, but in fact there was no reference at all to the nuclear arsenal during the crisis and no evidence that either Pyongyang or Seoul considered it in play. ... It is hard to imagine North Korea's leaders using nuclear weapons unless they felt that the regime itself was in grave danger of being ousted, most obviously by a conventional war being waged by the United States and South Korea. This highlights a point that was made by Schelling more than 50 years ago but that too often has been lost sight of: that deterrence and the broader policy of coercion can work only if threats are paired with credible promises to refrain from taking particular actions if the other side complies. Much theory and most policy discussion focus on making threats credible, but in the event of fighting on the Korean peninsula it would be vital for the United States to convince the North that it was not seeking regime change. How to make such a promise credible is a very great challenge, to say the least, especially given that both Seoul and Washington in recent years have made little attempt to hide the idea that regime change would, indeed, be their goal. A separate but still major concern is whether possession of a sizable arsenal of nuclear weapons might change North Korea's overall goals, and if so, how. Perhaps that question needs to be refined—how might possession of nuclear weapons change its goals/posture/approach not overall but in particular ways toward particular countries? Pyongyang's estimates of what the traffic can bear—and what it might accomplish—has historically differed depending on the target. One can imagine that such a differential calculus would remain true and that Pyongyang would judge that it had more ability to maneuver with Japan or even the ROK once it has a larger nuclear arsenal even while still seeking to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States. In other words, Pyongyang could adopt a tougher posture vis-à-vis Seoul and Tokyo, believing that the US nuclear umbrella had become less credible in those capitals, and thus the psychological space for North Korean threats to be effective had expanded. On the one hand, the North may decide against pushing too hard for fear that it might drive Japan into going nuclear. On the other hand, Pyongyang might also calculate that signs of Japan going nuclear would put tremendous strains on the US-Japan alliance and would cause China to stiffen even more its posture against Tokyo. The North could also calculate that a nuclear-armed Japan would raise a considerable outcry in South Korea and might make the North's nuclear capabilities seem more like the "Korean" bomb it has been trying to portray. Outsiders have never done a good job understanding the interplay among the domestic political, economic and security considerations in Pyongyang's calculations. From 1994 to 2001, the North froze its production facilities at Yongbyon, in effect putting a major component of the weapons program on hold, and even allowed the condition of those facilities to seriously deteriorate. Kim Jong Il, instead, concentrated on his central strategic goal—improving

relations with the United States—and, beginning in 2000, on improving the economy. There is some evidence that Kim Jong-un may be as concerned with improving the economy as he is with achieving credible status as a nuclear weapons state, and that his strategy and calculations may be as focused as much on the former as the latter. ... The North Koreans see themselves as small, weak and put upon. They may talk big, but that is largely a function of how embattled they perceive themselves to be. They are, as one ROK official who had long experience dealing with them said, poor but proud. They are also intensely pragmatic and non-ideological, certainly when it comes to foreign and security policies. They are not driven by a need to adhere to (or even to be seen as adhering to) ideological principles. None of the organizing principles of recent years—*juche* (self-reliance), *songun* (military first) or even *Kimilsungism* (the ideology and system of power propagated by Kim Il Sung, grandfather of the current leader)—is an overarching ideological system against which all action must be measured all the time. The dynamics of the North Korean system lead to many of the excesses that we see, but there is also an internal policy process—one we don't see but of which we have had more than glimpses over the years—that acts to keep foreign and security policy on relatively realistic and consistent footing. It would be folly at this point to dismiss the possibility that possession of an arsenal of nuclear weapons could lead to a decisive break with the past or a roll of the dice on Pyongyang's part. But this paper is not an exercise in mind reading. We do not think it is beside the point to note that of the eight countries that have developed nuclear arsenals, none has so far decisively altered its fundamental calculations or stepped beyond the bounds of rational action. As noted, there is a long track record that suggests there are normal limits in North Korean actions and risk taking, and we do not believe there is any reason at this point to expect that North Korea would be the exception to the example set by other nuclear states. ... It is true that changes in both behavior and the stockpile could reflect national ambitions and power. That is, an obvious reason for a country to increase its arsenal is that it wants to throw its weight around. The implication of this is that limiting growth in arsenal sizes may be difficult without being able to make fundamental changes in the others' motives and capabilities. As Siegfried Hecker recently stated, "The more they [the North Koreans] believe they have a fully functional nuclear arsenal and deterrent, the more difficult it's going to be to walk them back from that." This does not tell us how North Korean behavior will change, but it is probably correct that an increasing stockpile both indicates a strong commitment to remain a nuclear power and builds bureaucratic and domestic interests that are likely to maintain a program, and indeed move it further to the forefront. In the extreme, of course, this observation is reflected in the argument that the only way to end North Korea's nuclear program is to change the regime, a view that looks more accurate the longer the North possesses nuclear weapons and the larger its arsenal grows. Whether or not this is a sensible goal is a separate question. However, focusing too tightly on the size of the North's nuclear arsenal may be somewhat dangerous in its own right. The problem of mistaking capacity for intent is an old one and has reared its head in many places. For example, often overlooked is that the North has explicitly linked its nuclear weapons program to efforts at reviving the economy. That should raise questions about whether there is a subtle trade-off in the leadership's mind between the two goals—building a nuclear arsenal and enabling economic success. Our own concentration on the North's nuclear arsenal may cause us to imagine that Pyongyang is equally focused. The result could

be that we might miss the possibility that the possession of nuclear weapons will not be the sole (or even the dominant) variable shaping Pyongyang's strategic decisions even after its arsenal grows. This problem with our misperceptions triggering a reaction we hope to avoid is unfortunately too common in dealings with North Korea. If we think the nuclear component has become the most dominant factor in the North's behavior and act to counter it, our actions may, in turn, spark a response from the North that we otherwise would not see. Mitigating against such a negative action-reaction spiral, the United States has considerable experience dealing with the psychological dangers arising in situations in which both parties are armed with nuclear weapons. ...Thinking about North Korean behavior naturally gravitates to questions of when or whether the DPRK will decide to use nuclear weapons, either physically or as a means of coercion. We would add another possibility: that possession of a nuclear arsenal will, in more subtle ways, affect Pyongyang's approach to negotiations—both in deciding what should be on the table, and how it should be discussed. Given the North's view of its perilous place in the world, we doubt that the end result will be Pyongyang believing its nuclear arsenal gives it direct leverage to pry out solutions it would not otherwise achieve in talks. Rather, we think it more likely that the brittleness of what up to now has been the North Korean style and approach to talks—that is, highly defensive and reactive—will be replaced by something with more ballast, in other words, something along the lines of increased self-confidence that was previously noted as a by-product of having nuclear weapons. So far there is little to examine to see what course this self-confidence might take in the diplomatic arena. Since February 2011, there has been essentially no real engagement with the North by either the US or South Korea. One could argue that Pyongyang's failure to engage is a function of newfound confidence and that now, with possession of nuclear weapons, it can afford to play hard to get. A careful look at the situation as it has evolved over the past four years supports such a conclusion. There is no doubt those in Pyongyang gladly use the time without negotiations to further develop the numbers, sophistication and delivery means for the nuclear arsenal. We cannot know if we are in a rapidly diminishing period of opportunity, when North Korean attachment to nuclear weapons is not yet set in stone, whatever its public posture. In early 2013, the North suggested that the question of its nuclear weapons program was off the table. In June of that same year, however, it reversed itself and signaled that the nuclear question was up for discussion, though exactly what was meant by that remained to be seen. Since then, despite frequent reiteration of the propaganda line that nuclear weapons are not a bargaining chip, Pyongyang has kept the door open to discussions on the issue of its nuclear weapons. The issue of international concerns about the state of human rights in North Korea provides an interesting case in point. Rather than being more threatening or even more obdurate, when the human rights issue blew up earlier this year, the DPRK position was to offer to talk about it and hint broadly at the possibility of concessions. Whether these were real or imagined is not the point, nor is the likelihood that these were tactical measures in hopes of diffusing the situation. The point is, possession of nuclear weapons did not alter normal patterns of DPRK diplomatic behavior. Similarly, in January 2015, Pyongyang put an offer on the table that symbolically laid out terms of trade for steps potentially limiting its nuclear program. Specifically, Pyongyang offered to trade a temporary halt to US-ROK joint military exercises in return for a freeze on nuclear testing. Again, this position was not

tougher or even more provocative. Quite the opposite, it was one that, at least on the surface, appeared to open the door to exploring ways to address the nuclear problem. A skeptic could argue that Pyongyang might consider its nuclear program still too vulnerable and is therefore working to keep the situation relatively calm while using the time to develop the capacities it has threatened it already has—smaller, better, more accurate weapons more easily delivered over longer ranges. For now, even several years into its growing nuclear arsenal, there has not been anything North Korea has done that is markedly at variance with its traditional patterns of behavior. (Robert Carlin and Robert Jervis, *Nuclear North Korea: How Will It Behave?* U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, October 2015)

10/23/15 South Korea will push for inter-Korean government and Red Cross talks in the near future after the on-going event of family reunions, Seoul's security adviser said. "Regarding the South-North agreement, we will go ahead with government-level talks some time after the family reunion, although we haven't decided the exact time yet, along with the red cross talks," Kim Kwan-jin, the chief of the National Security Council, said in a parliamentary audit. (Yonhap, "S. Korea to Push for Talks with N. Korea after Family Reunions: NSC Chief," *Korea Herald*, October 21, 2015)

Hwang Joon-kook, South Korean Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Affairs, said South Korea is ready to hold bilateral talks with North Korea over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. "North Korea needs to deal with the nuclear issue in a genuine manner, which entails bilateral talks with South Korea," said Hwang in Seoul. "We are willing to meet with North Korean counterparts responsible for the nuclear issue anytime and anywhere," Hwang added. (Kim Hwan Yong, "S. Korea Seeks Nuclear Talks with N. Korea," VOA, October 23, 2015)

10/24/15 South Korea has fired machine gun rounds at a North Korean patrol boat that crossed into its waters in the Yellow Sea, the South's military said October 25, threatening the conciliatory mood created by the second round of family reunions taking place in the North. The South Korean Navy fired five warning shots at the vessel around 3:30 p.m. October 24 after it crossed the de-facto western maritime border between the two Koreas known as the Northern Limit Line (NLL) by hundreds of meters. The boat was supposedly cracking down on dozens of illegal Chinese fishing boats in waters near South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, the site of a deadly bombardment by the North in 2010, the military said. The boat retreated about 18 minutes after the shots were fired, with no injuries being reported. "There was no violent clash during the warning process," a South Korean military official said, asking not to be named. The North, however, condemned the firing as a "military provocation." "South Korean belligerents carried out a military provocation against our patrol boat, which was carrying out its duties in our waters," a spokesman for the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea told Pyongyang's state media. (Yonhap, "S. Korea Fires Warnings Shots at N. Korean Patrol Boat," October 25, 2015)

CPRK spokesman "answer to a question raised by KCNA Sunday as the south Korean military warmongers committed a serious military provocation against the DPRK in the West Sea of Korea: On Saturday the south Korean warmongers opened fire into a

patrol boat of the DPRK on its routine patrol duty in the waters of the north side in the West Sea, claiming that the boat came close to the "northern limited line" and talking about "warning." The shelling that was committed in broad daylight was a deliberate provocation to spark off a military conflict in the tension-charged waters of the West Sea of Korea and again escalate the tension on the Korean Peninsula. We can not but take a serious note of the fact that the provocation was timed to coincide with the frantic anti-DPRK war exercises like combined naval drill and Hoguk drill which the south Korean warmongers are staging with a U.S. nuclear carrier involved while crying out for "resolute punishment" and "conditioned counteraction" with military brass hats including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff touring the forefront areas including Yonphyong Islet. Now underway at Mt. Kumgang Resort is the reunion of separated families and relatives amid great concern and interest at home and abroad thanks to the positive and sincere efforts made by the DPRK. Seeing them reunite with each other, sharing warm kindred feelings after so many years of separation, all the fellow countrymen keenly feel the urgency of national reunification and hope that the atmosphere of reconciliation will bear a rich fruit. The recent military provocation of the south Korean military gangsters was a dangerous act aimed to chill the hard-won atmosphere of improving the relations and totally derail the process for implementing the north-south agreement. The recent case clearly proves who is to blame for harassing peace, escalating tension on the Korean Peninsula and bedeviling the north-south relations. There will be only a war disaster, far from the improvement of the north-south relations, as long as the south Korean military warmongers go reckless, going against the nation's desire and wish for national reunification. No matter how dear peace is to us, we will never pardon provokers going reckless, being seized by confrontation and war, but mercilessly punish them. If the south Korean military warmongers persist in reckless military provocations, not dropping the bad habit of cooking up a shocking incident and inciting confrontation, they will spark off an unpredictable armed conflict and the north-south relations will again reach the extremes as what they were before the August agreement. The south Korean authorities will be wholly accountable for it. The south Korean warmongers had better act with discretion, clearly understanding it will get nothing through its military provocation against the fellow countrymen." (KCNA, "CPRK Blasts S. Korea Military for Opening Fire into Patrol Boat of DPRK in West Sea," October 25, 2015)

Japanese abduction victim Yokota Megumi was likely sent to a spy training facility in Pyongyang soon after she was taken forcibly from Japan to North Korea in 1977 when she was 13, a South Korean source said Sunday. South Korean abductees in their late teens were being taught about North Korean ideology at the facility then, while Yokota is believed to have been taught the Korean language and received other education there, the source said. The source obtained the information from testimony by a North Korean spy caught in South Korea and other sources. Families of South Korean abductees have asked their government to take up the abduction issue when a bilateral summit with Japan is held in November, according to Choi Song-ryong, head of the South Korean Families of Abducted and Detained in North Korea. Choi said Seoul and Tokyo should cooperate in trying to repatriate their nationals from North Korea, especially knowing now that Yokota was likely trained among South Korean abductees, and that the South Korean government is considering the matter positively.

Yokota disappeared on her way home from junior high school in Niigata on November 15, 1977, and is believed to have been taken forcibly to North Korea on a ship. According to the source, she was educated at the facility, mainly used for teaching North Korean spies about South Korean custom and practices, from January 1978. At the time, two South Korean high school students, aged 18 and 16, who were abducted from the South in August 1977, were there. In August 1978, three 16-year-old South Koreans were abducted and taken to this facility about two months later. The three included Kim Young-nam, who would later marry Yokota. There is also information that in 1982, all six attended lectures at a university, indicating that Yokota may have been fluent in Korean by then, according to the sources. North Korea says Yokota and Kim married in 1986 and had a daughter the following year. According to Kim and North Korean officials, Yokota lived in Pyongyang and studied Korean until the spring of 1981 and was then engaged in teaching Japanese until August 1986. That year, she met Kim and got married. The North initially said Yokota killed herself while being treated for depression in 1993, but later changed the year of her death to 1994. Japan rejects North Korea's claim that Yokota has died, in part because DNA tests conducted in Japan determined that cremated remains Pyongyang turned over, claiming to be hers, were those of someone else. During a summit in 2002 between then-Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and then-North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, Pyongyang admitted having abducted or lured Yokota and 12 others to the country in the late 1970s and early 1980s. (Kyodo, "Yokota Megumi Believed Placed in North Korea Spy Training Facility Shortly after '77 Abduction," *Japan Times*, October 26, 2015)

10/25/15 The remains of a formerly missing U.S. soldier have been returned to California nearly 65 years after he is thought to have died, the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* reported. The remains of Army Cpl. Robert V. Witt, a 20-year-old Bellflower man missing since the Korean War, were returned earlier this week to his sister Laverne Minnick, 82, the paper reported. (Associated Press, "Remains of U.S. Soldier Returned from North Korea to Family," October 25, 2015)

South and North Korea discussed outstanding issues at the Asia-Pacific security cooperation talks, but were not able to make headway on future talks, the government said. The foreign ministry said representatives from the two sides met at the latest Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) meeting in Ulaanbaatar last week. It said Kim Gunn, director general for North Korean nuclear affairs at Seoul's foreign ministry, called on Pyongyang to return to the six-party talks aimed at resolving the nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula. The North countered by stressing the need to sign a peace treaty between North Korea and the United States. The ministry said Kim outlined South Korea's policy stance to build up mutual confidence and peace with its northern neighbor, at a panel discussion session to exchange views on dealing with challenges facing the region. "He urged the North to engage in meaningful six-party talks," it said. The ministry added that its official emphasized that Seoul does not have hostile intentions toward the North and that if the country gives up its nuclear program, South Korea is willing to offer support that can lead to a bright future for the isolated country. Despite such assurances, the North Korean officials reiterated their government's position that Washington must first give up its hostile

policies towards the DPRK. (Yonhap, "Koreas Discuss Outstanding Issues at Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation Talks," October 25, 2015)

10/26/15

One of Pyongyang's ambitious capitalist experiments has picked up speed in recent weeks since top Chinese official Liu Yunshan attended North Korea's celebration to mark the anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party. *JoongAng Ilbo* obtained an exclusive copy of the general development blueprint for the Sinuiju international economic zone, which was agreed upon by North Korean officials and authorities from Liaoning Province in northeastern China.

In September 2002, North Korea announced plans to establish a special administrative region in the northwestern border city of Sinuiju in North Pyongan Province, and appointed Sino-Dutch businessman Yang Bin as administrator. However, Yang was later arrested in China for tax fraud and the Sinuiju development fizzled over the years. The area's name went through two more changes. North Korea declared Sinuiju a special economic zone in 2013 and rebranded it as an international economic zone last year without much progress. However, the newest guidelines signal that development of the Sinuiju economic zone is officially on its way, particularly amid signs of increased economic cooperation between the two countries. Liu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, led a delegation of Chinese officials to Pyongyang to attend the 70th anniversary of the founding of the North Korean Workers' Party on October 10, when he was pictured standing right to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during the large-scale military parade in Pyongyang. The two even held hands as they waved to the crowd. Liu, the most senior Chinese official to visit North Korea since Kim Jong-un took power in December 2011, also delivered a letter to Kim from Chinese President Xi Jinping. On October 15, North Korea and China launched a joint trade fair at Dandong, a border city in Liaoning Province, indicating that economic cooperation between Pyongyang and Beijing was on an upswing. According to newly inked guidelines, North Korea and China plan to build at the Sinuiju special administrative region, which totals 132 square kilometers and would include new industrial areas, public areas, a distribution complex, parks and a water supply treatment plant. This would be in addition to existing factories to manufacture textiles, shoes, chemical fiber and weaving machines. However, the originally envisioned recreational and tourism center, golf course and commercial service district were scrapped from this new master plan. The Chinese government's position was strongly reflected in these plans because businessmen concerned about Chinese competition flooding the region were exempt from negotiations. A key project in the plan includes the construction of a Sinuiju canal and 10 bridges, including a railway, connecting the two sides of the canal, which is expected to bring real estate and public development to the area. Two new bridges between China and North Korea will also be constructed in addition to the Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge and the New Yalu River Bridge connecting Dandong with Sinuiju. The two bridges will end not too far from the northern exit of the New Yalu River Bridge, taking into consideration the increased volume of goods that will need to be transported. A distribution complex will be built as the North Korean branch of the New Yalu River Bridge to support the industrial complex to be established in Sinuiju. This distribution complex will be linked to the city's freight depot and be able to transfer goods straight to Pyongyang. The master plan also describes establishing mobile communication base stations, five in

northern Sinuiju and one in the southern region - a matter of great urgency if North Korea wishes to entice foreign investors to the region. While Liu's visit to Pyongyang and the recent speed in economic collaboration can be attributed to North Korea's good behavior, analysts here say there is a more significant reason. In his talks with Liu earlier this month, Kim indicated that North Korea was looking to improve ties with Japan, likely as a way to avoid any possible cold shoulder from China, according to analysts. So as Beijing frets about the bolstered alliance between the United States and Japan, they added, it took up a long-time favor. (Ko Soo-suk and Sarah Kim, "Pyongyang Moves ahead with Plans for Economic Zone," *JoongAng Ilbo*, October 26, 2015)

10/27/15 A South Korean civilian group crossed the inter-Korean border Tuesday to provide fertilizer and other assistance needed for a greenhouse project in North Korea, relevant company officials said. Representatives from Ace Gyeongam, the foundation run by bed maker Ace, visited North Korea for the first time in six months earlier in the day to deliver items necessary for running greenhouses in Sariwon, about 70 kilometers southeast of Pyongyang, according to the officials. "Most of the materials are greenhouse-related ones. The portion of fertilizer is small," said an official at the Unification Ministry, which approved their visit to the North. In April, Ace Gyeongam provided materials worth 200 million won (US\$177,120), including fertilizer, vinyl and pipes that are needed to build greenhouses. At that time, the South's government approved a private group's bid to send fertilizer to North Korea for the first time since it imposed sanctions on the North over a deadly warship sinking in 2010. (Yonhap, "S. Korean Civilian Group Gives Fertilizer, Other Aid to N. Korea," October 27, 2015)

A progressive group of South Korean Catholic priests will return home Tuesday, wrapping up their first visit to North Korea in seven years for a special Mass, government officials said. A 12-member delegation of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) flew into Pyongyang October 23 from Beijing for a five-day stay in the North to attend a Mass for inter-Korean reunification, according to officials from the Unification Ministry. The visit marked the first since September 2008, when the group traveled to the North to hold a similar special Mass. The North's association on Catholics invited the group to Pyongyang. The CPAJ, critical of the conservative government, actively speaks up on social and political issues. The move may herald more visits to North Korea by South Korean civic and other non-government groups as Seoul is seeking to spur such civilian inter-Korean exchanges this year. "The government approved the group's visit to the North on the ground that it was related to non-political religious exchanges between the two Koreas," a government official said. The government rejected the CPAJ's previous request to visit North Korea for a joint service with a group of Buddhists in 2009. It also did not allow the group to attend a memorial service for former North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in December 2011. (Yonhap, "S. Korean Catholic Priests Make First Visit to N. Korea in 7 Years," October 28, 2015)

10/28/15 The ruling party scored a resounding victory in 24 by-elections despite growing public concern about the conservative government's decision to start writing history textbooks for schools. In the 24 races, the Saenuri Party won 15 while the main

opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy (NPAD) won two. In seven races, independent candidates won. One election was for a county chief, nine were for city and provincial council seats and 14 positions on district legislative councils. (Kang Tae-hwa and Ser Myo-ja, "NPAD Is Trounced in By-Elections," *JoongAng Ilbo*, October 30, 2015)

10/30/15 North Korea has been excavating a new tunnel at its nuclear test site in the country's northeastern tip, an official said, in what may be a show of its nuclear capability. "An increased movement of people and cars has been spotted at the nuclear site," said the official, asking not to be named. "North Korea appears to be in the process of digging another tunnel." Another source said that the North's move indicates its intention to conduct a fourth nuclear test although more analysis is needed to access whether the test is imminent. Experts said that North Korea seems to want to demonstrate its nuclear capability ahead of a series of summits involving the three nations. "North Korea likely doesn't think it is a good time to conduct a nuke test," said Kim Yong-hyun, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University. "But Pyongyang seems to want to politicize its nuclear program in a calculated move." (Yonhap, "N. Korea Digging New Tunnel at Its Nuke Test Site: Official," October 30, 2015) Jack Liu: "Recent commercial satellite imagery from September 27 and October 25, 2015 of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site indicate no signs that North Korea is excavating a new tunnel at the existing test areas. The main observable activity is the construction of a new building at the Main Support Area. Activity at the West Portal has been at a low level and is probably mainly for tunnel maintenance. One indication may be the small piles of spoil alongside the spoil cart tracks that may be dumped by workers at the site. Construction of this tunnel began in May 2013, and major excavation work on it was completed by the fall of 2014. (Previous tunnel entrances for the 2009 and 2013 tests have been sealed and the current cart tracks pass over those entrances.) Activity in the sand pit—equipment or vehicles—a short distance away from the tunnel entrance may be related to building construction since sand is necessary to make concrete." (Jack Liu, "No Signs of New Tunnel Digging at North Korea's Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site," *38North*, November 6, 2015)

11/1/15 The leaders of South Korea, Japan and China agreed to make joint efforts to resume the long-stalled six-party talks aimed at denuclearizing North Korea. In a joint declaration issued after the trilateral meeting at Cheong Wa Dae, President Park Geun-hye, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang said the North Korean nuclear issue should be dealt with immediately. "We reaffirmed our firm opposition to the development of nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, and shared the view that international obligations and commitments under all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and the Sept. 19, 2005 Joint Statement must be faithfully implemented," read the joint declaration. "We decided to continue our joint efforts to resume meaningful six party talks at an early date to make substantial progress in the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner," it said. (Kang Seung-woo, "Leaders Vow to Resume N.K. Nuclear Talks," *Korea Times*, November 2, 2015) Differences over history loomed in the background of the meeting between the leaders of Japan, China and South Korea, the main reason such talks had not been held in more than three years. However, progress was made for future cooperation in

economic ties, dealing with global warming and responding to North Korea's efforts to develop nuclear weapons. "A major result was returning to a more normal condition in the cooperative process between the three nations," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at a joint news conference after the talks with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and South Korean President Park Geun-hye. The three leaders also agreed to resume annual meetings among the heads of the three nations. According to Japanese government officials who briefed reporters, Abe during the meeting touched upon his Cabinet-approved statement in August to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. "While firmly maintaining the position presented by past Cabinets, we also made the promise of further contributing to the peace and prosperity of the international community based on our path in the 70 years after the war as a pacifist nation," the officials quoted Abe as saying. Abe reportedly added: "A posture of focusing attention only on a particular part of the past is not productive. I want to further establish a forward-looking history of cooperation between Japan, China and South Korea." Neither Park nor Li made any specific comment in response to Abe's remark. The issue of "comfort women" forced to provide sex to imperial Japanese military personnel before and during World War II was not brought up at the meeting. However, both Park and Li presented their views on the historical understanding issue at the joint news conference. "We agreed to make efforts to bring about peace and stability in the region on the foundation of a spirit of moving forward while squarely facing history," Park said. While not specifically mentioning Abe or Japan, Li said, "There is a cause that all of you are well aware of that has led to various interference in cooperative efforts by the three nations." (Tsuruoka Masahiro, "Gaps in Historical Understanding Evident in Trilateral Asian Meeting," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 2, 2015)

11/2/15

The new operational concept jointly adopted by South Korea and the United States to destroy North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities is expected to prompt the North to launch fresh provocations, sources said. The allies approved the implementation guidance on the "4D Operational Concept" during the annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) held in Seoul, as a means to carry out preemptive strikes against the North's missile threats, containing nuclear, chemical and biological warheads. The guidance, which is designed to detect, disrupt, destroy and defend – the 4 "D's" – has the major implication that the allies have revived the concept of preemptive strikes against the North's strategic facilities. A ministry official noted on condition of anonymity that "disrupt and destroy" contains the connotation of preemptive strikes. Officials said Seoul and Washington have prepared the guidance since 2013 while having experienced various provocations from Pyongyang including a third nuclear test in February that year and the test-firing of a submarine-launched ballistic missile in May this year. The guidance will reportedly be reflected in a new joint wartime operational plan between the allies, dubbed Operation Plan (OPLAN) 5015, focused on preemptive strikes on strategic sites in the North. The allies signed OPLAN 5015 in June to replace the existing OPLAN 5027, which was more about how to defend the South. "The 4D Operational Concept and the nation's own Kill Chain preemptive strike and Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) systems are complementary," an official said. "The Kill Chain would be on the disrupt and destroy level, while KAMD would be used for defense," he added. He said that the implementation of the guidance is limited within the Korean Peninsula, so the guidance is unrelated to the U.S.-led missile

defense (MD) system. Seoul is seeking to develop the Kill Chain and KAMD systems by the mid-2020s. The allies are planning to create detailed guidelines for each unit based on the 4D Operational Concept, according to officials. Another military official noted on the condition of anonymity that when there is a clear sign that the North will soon fire a missile, the allies would try to jam the enemy's electronic signals and destroy its missile launch facilities by mobilizing the Air Force. "Preemptive strikes and preventive strikes are different concepts," he said. "The former is conducted when there is a clear sign of an enemy attack, while the latter is carried out to remove the enemy's strategic facilities in advance to prevent an attack." He gave an example of the preventive attacks which Israel launched against Iraq's nuclear facilities in 1981. "This kind of attack is not acceptable in international society," he said. But he added that it is also difficult to prove that there was a clear sign of provocation and the preemptive strikes were consequently fair. So the new guidance could provoke the North. (Jun Ji-hye, "Allies' Strike Plan May Provoke N.K.," *Korea Times*, November 3, 2015)

The U.S. and South Korea agreed on the general terms of a conditions-based transfer for Seoul to assume operational control for its defenses in wartime but fell short of nailing down the final details due to concerns over North Korea's nuclear threat, defense leaders for both countries said Monday. Working out conditions for transfer was to be one of the accomplishments of this year's Security Consultative Meeting, where Defense Secretary Ash Carter is meeting with South Korean counterpart Han Min-koo. But concerns that North Korea is preparing a fourth nuclear test and developing long-range missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead delayed the process again. Carter still called signing the conditions-based approach "a major step forward" and said it will ensure South Korean forces have time to acquire the necessary capabilities to "address the North Korean threat." Han added: "In the face of increasing threats, especially in the form of nuclear and missile threats from North Korea, we also agreed that the alliance needs to work in various ways to cooperate and to rise against and respond against these threats." The consultative meeting was aimed at identifying and agreeing upon what defense capabilities South Korea would obtain to set the stage for the transfer of operational control to Seoul for the defense of the peninsula, including the 28,500 U.S. service members stationed here. Currently, a U.S. general would assume that responsibility if war broke out. Wartime powers were to have shifted to a South Korean commander next month, but last year, the U.S. and Seoul agreed to delay the handover, citing North Korea's growing nuclear threat. The U.S. has had lead responsibility for the defense of South Korea since the two countries signed a Mutual Defense Treaty in 1953 following the cease-fire that ended fighting in the Korean War, but not hostilities. The transfer, originally planned for 2007, likely remains years away, and the two sides did not announce any developments on any changes to the U.S.-basing footprint here. Instead, Han said the two sides "aim to reassess many of the issues." Among the issues are the types of counter-battery fires South Korea needs, and the communications, surveillance and intelligence systems it would put in place. Han "affirmed that the ROK is continuing to develop ROK counter-fire forces capable of executing the mission during the early phases of war by around the year 2020." There has been debate in South Korea over whether to allow the U.S. to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense ballistic missile defense system here. China opposes the deployment of THAAD in South Korea, saying it would spark an

arms race. Han said THAAD "was not discussed, and we have not made any agreement related to THAAD." Carter said deploying the system here "would be an alliance decision." Han defended South Korea's continued reliance on the U.S., saying many countries around the globe rely on partnerships for their self-defense, and in deference to the region's security situation, it is in the country's best interests to "maintain its alliances." (Tara Copp, "Nuclear Threat Bogs down Seoul Taking Control of Wartime Defenses," *Stars and Stripes*, November 2, 2015)

South Korea and the United States agreed to open a new high-level group to increase their collaboration in the defense technology sector, but this does not mean reversing the U.S.' previous decision to deny key fighter jet technologies for South Korea, according to the results of the allies' annual defense ministerial meeting on Monday. During their 47th Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) held in Seoul, Defense Minister Han Min-koo and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter decided to establish a high-level Defense Technology Strategy and Cooperation Group, aimed at strengthening coordination in the defense technology industry. "With respect to technology cooperation, the important advance we made today is creating a new body to make possible a wider frame of cooperation in defense technology and trade," Carter said in a joint conference with Han following the SCM. Carter said, "It should make possible cooperation in a lot of programs (including) the KF-X," referring to the local project to build indigenous combat jets, which is in disarray. The 18 trillion won (US\$15.8 billion) project to produce 120 indigenous combat airplanes has hit a major impasse after the U.S. State Department refused to grant export licenses on four out of the total 25 technologies U.S. arms giant Lockheed Martin offered to South Korea. In an unusual move as a South Korean defense minister, Han accompanied President Park Geun-hye to her state visit to Washington last month to win U.S. license permission, but his trip only confirmed the U.S. rejection. Since then, the government has come under intense criticism for their botched technology assistance procurement plan. "The U.S. is very supportive of the KF-X program," Carter said in the news conference. "Our law limits certain technologies in the way they can be shared with Republic of Korea and this body isn't gonna be able to change U.S. laws of course," the secretary said, once again making clear the U.S. refusal. How to define the South Korean territory has been another point of contention in recent months among South Korea, the U.S. and Japan, the three countries allied in trilateral security partnership. Japan enacted a new set of security laws in September, allowing its self-defense forces to fight alongside an ally in foreign combat. South Korea has since asserted that Japan should win prior consent from Seoul before engaging in any military operations on South Korean territory, which encompasses the whole of the Korean Peninsula under the South's Constitution, including the North Korean part. A differing opinion was exposed by Japan last month when Japan's Defense Minister Nakatani Gen noted during his meeting with Han last month that South Korean territory is below the truce line, which separates the two Koreas. The demarcation issue is important for South Korea because with the latest enactment, Japan, an old colonial ruler of the peninsula, would be theoretically able to engage in military action in North Korea even without South Korean permission. Asked on the issue on Monday, Carter did not take sides with either of the neighbors, only saying that "We have important alliances with both Japan and Republic of Korea." "Both of those alliances are based on international law including the respect for the full

sovereignty of all countries. So I believe any issues that arise in connection with North Korea's provocations can be handled in the context of the two alliances." (Yonhap, "SCM Falls Short of Addressing Thorny Defense Issues between S. Korea, U.S.," November 2, 2015)

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and South Korean President Park Geun-hye agreed in their first one-on-one summit in Seoul to strive toward an early resolution of the prickly issue of "comfort women." One possible approach is the expansion of a program the Japanese government has conducted since 2008 to offer care for former comfort women. According to diplomatic sources, although Park strongly demanded that the issue be settled by the end of this year, Abe eschewed setting a definite time frame. "The comfort women issue is the biggest stumbling block for patching up bilateral relations," Park was quoted by South Korea's presidential office as saying at the meeting, which lasted for an hour and 40 minutes. "It must be resolved expediently in a way that can be accepted by the victims and sits well with the South Korean public." The two leaders consequently agreed on reaching an "early resolution" of the issue. The Japanese government has said it would stick to its longtime stance that the issue of war reparations was legally resolved in a 1965 treaty between Japan and South Korea, which normalized diplomatic relations. Japanese officials are expected to call on Seoul to accept measures toward the resolution on the basis of the understanding of Tokyo's position. Abe reiterated the point in an interview on a BS Fuji Inc. news program upon returning to Tokyo this evening. Still, the prime minister said, "It is extremely difficult to come up with a proposal totally satisfactory to the public of both countries, but we may be able to find common ground in the course of discussing the issue." Some members of Abe's Liberal Democratic Party have floated the idea that the program the Japanese government has operated since 2008 to assist former comfort women be expanded to help settle the issue. Members of a commissioned private group visit victims to care for them and offer them medicine and daily necessities as a follow-up to the Asian Women's Fund, which was disbanded in 2007. The fund, established in 1995, was a government-led project aimed to raise money from the public to pay the victims in South Korea and elsewhere "atonement money" and provide other aid. The Japanese government is expected to engage in discussions on resolving the issue with South Korean diplomatic authorities, with an expanded follow-up program as a possibility. (Higashioka Toru and Tsuruoka Masahiro, "Japan Sticks to Stance on 'Comfort Women,' But Will Seek Compromise," *Asahi Shimbun*, November 3, 2015) Prime Minister Shinzo Abe set removal of the "comfort women" statue in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul as a condition for resolving the contentious diplomatic issue with South Korea. Abe made the demand during his first direct talks with South Korean President Park Geun-hye in Seoul on November 2. According to Japanese government officials, Abe called for the removal of the comfort women statue in front of the Japanese Embassy during the first half of his meeting with Park that was limited to a small number of participants. Abe once again explained that the issue of war reparations was legally resolved in a 1965 treaty between Japan and South Korea that heralded normalized diplomatic ties. He added that early resolution of the comfort women issue would require "removal of the comfort women statue as a minimum condition." The comfort women issue has been a nagging thorn in bilateral ties, and discussions within the Japanese government have centered on what it could

do if the statue is removed. One possibility being considered is to expand upon a follow-up project for the Asian Women's Fund, which was disbanded in 2007. Another option being considered is for Abe to send letters to former comfort women that would contain his personal message to them. Only 47 are still alive. (*Asahi Shimbun*, "Abe Demands Removal of 'Comfort Women' Statue as Condition for Resolving Issue," November 19, 2015)

11/3/15

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ordered a further development of "modern and precise" anti-aircraft rockets as he watched a firing drill in a western front-line area, Pyongyang's state media reported. "He underlined the need for the field of national defense science to more dynamically develop various types of new anti-aircraft rockets suited to the demand of a modern war so as to firmly defend the blue sky of the homeland from any air strike of enemies," said KCNA. It did not specify the timing and location of the training conducted by anti-aircraft units deployed on the western sector of the inter-Korean border. Kim instructed the military and scientists to step up efforts to "modernize rockets and ensure their precision," the KCNA added. Yesterday, Defense Minister Han Min-koo and his American counterpart, Ashton Carter, announced a set of four major operational guidelines for countering North Korea's missile attacks after their talks in Seoul. Under the so-called 4D strategy, the allies said they will swiftly "detect, defense, disrupt and destroy" the North's missiles if needed. North Korea watchers noted the timing of the North's report. "I think the military training was held before (the Han-Carter talks). But North Korea released a relevant report just after that," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. "It seems to be strategically intended to counter the South Korea-U.S. coordination." (Yonhap, "N. Korean Leaders Calls for More Precise Rockets," November 3, 2015)

Buddhist leaders of the two Koreas gathered in the North Korean border town of Kaesong, joining voices for reconciliation and peaceful reunification. The representatives, 70 from South Korea's Cheontae Order and 50 from the North's Buddhist federation, held a joint ceremony in Kaeseong to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the reconstruction of Ryongtong Temple. Believed to have been the first Cheontae temple in Korea, Ryongtong Temple was destroyed by fire in the 16th century and damaged further by the 1950-53 Korean War. The temple was reconstructed on Oct. 31, 2005 in cooperation with North Korean authorities and the Cheontae Order. (Yonhap, "Buddhists from Two Koreas Meet in North," November 3, 2015)

North Korea says the United States needs to end its "nuclear blackmail" and respond to Pyongyang's recent diplomatic overture to formally end the decades-old Korean conflict. Speaking during an interview in London with Associated Press Television News, senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official Jong Tong Hak said a permanent peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula first requires a North Korean-U.S. agreement. He blamed the "successive hostile policy by the government of the United States and its continuing nuclear blackmail against the DPRK." "The American administration continues to send its nuclear powered aircraft carrier to the Korean Peninsula and meantime it continues to send nuclear strategic bombers to the Korean

Peninsula," he said. "And the United States of America continues to wage war exercises against the DPRK with the South Korean side." Jong said a compromise to break the impasses requires decisive action by Washington. "The issue of signing a peace treaty between the DPRK and United States can be easily solved by the bold decision of the American government," he said. "If the American government is serious about respecting the sovereignty of the DPRK and ending its ongoing hostile policy against the DPRK then it can be solved very easily between the two sides." Last month, Sung Kim, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, described Pyongyang's latest proposal for treaty negotiations as "disingenuous." (Reuters, "N. Korea Accuses U.S. of 'Nuclear Blackmail,'" November 4, 2015)

Japan and the United States agreed to set up and immediately start the operation of permanent joint consultative panels to strengthen bilateral defense cooperation in order to effectively respond to so-called gray-zone contingencies amid China's accelerating maritime expansion. After a meeting with U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, Defense Minister Nakatani Gen said the panels' establishment is "the first step to highlight the importance of measures to secure the viability of the new guidelines," referring to the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation guidelines, which were revised in April. The panels are called the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) and Bilateral Planning Mechanism (BPM). ACM is aimed at reinforcing coordination of the roles of the Self-Defense Forces and U.S. forces to ensure seamless responses to various situations, while BPM will be tasked with carrying out cooperative planning based on the guidelines. The United States has recently displayed its political will, by dispatching a guided-missile destroyer within 12 nautical miles (22 kilometers) of artificial islands built by China in the Spratly Islands. Nakatani said, "We reaffirmed our resolution to ensure law and order on the seas in an open and free way." They also stressed the importance of continuing dialogues with Beijing. Carter confirmed he was scheduled to meet Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan. Nakatani and Carter also reached an accord on continual Japan-U.S. joint drills while intensifying cooperation with Southeast Asian nations. In addition to trilateral cooperation with South Korea and Australia, Japan and the United States also agreed to strengthen the trilateral defense cooperation with India and the Philippines, separately. Regarding the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from Ginowan to the Henoko district of Nago, both in Okinawa Prefecture, the two sides reconfirmed that it would be the only solution to the issue of the air station, and therefore Tokyo and Washington will continue to make further efforts to realize an agreement at an early stage. (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, "Japan, U.S. to Boost Gray Zone Security," November 3, 2015)

11/4/15

Japanese and Chinese defense ministers agreed that an early launch of a maritime communication mechanism and defense exchanges are important for the countries to prevent accidental clashes in their first such talks since June 2011. Speaking to reporters after his meeting with Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Chang Wanquan, which was held on the sidelines of a regional security gathering, Japanese Defense Minister Nakatani Gen declined to say if they discussed China's contentious moves in the disputed South China Sea. But he said his opinion is "the same as what I have said" during the gathering of 18 defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their regional partners on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, in which he

urged his counterparts to work together to keep the South China Sea "open and peaceful." (Kyodo, "Japan, China Agree on Early Launch of Maritime Communication Mechanism," November 4, 2015)

Summing up a search that has been underway for more than a decade, a South Korean government commission said that the remains of nearly 2,750 people believed to be Koreans who were forced to work in Japan in the World War II era have been found. Historians in South Korea estimate that at least 1.2 million Koreans were coerced, or sometimes duped, into laboring as part of Japan's war efforts in Japan, China and elsewhere. They toiled in mines, airfields and factories for their colonial masters, and thousands died under brutal conditions. Their families in Korea were never told about the locations of their remains. South Korea and Japan began searching for those remains after Roh Moo-hyun, then the South Korean president, asked Junichiro Koizumi, then the Japanese prime minister, for help in returning them home in 2004. From 2008 to 2010, the remains of 423 South Koreans who served in Japan's Imperial Army as soldiers or workers were repatriated after they were found in a Japanese temple. But talks on additional repatriations stalled as bilateral relations deteriorated over disputes rooted in Japan's rule of Korea from 1910 to 1945, especially over "comfort women." (Choe San-hun, "Remains of Nearly 2,750 Korean Wartime Laborers Found in Japan, South Says," *New York Times*, November 4, 2015)

11/5/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman answer question put by KCNA "as regards the decision of Japan and south Korea to make efforts to seek an early solution to the issue of 'comfort women for the Imperial Japanese Army.' It was reported that the Japan-south Korea summit held in Seoul early in November decided to accelerate the discussion on seeking an early solution to the said issue. As the whole world knows, the sexual slavery for the Imperial Japanese Army committed by the state of Japan in an organized manner in the period of the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Korea and during World War II is one of the crimes which Japan should redress without fail as it is the most hideous human rights abuses to which no statute of limitations is applicable because it savagely violated the dignity, virginity and physical bodies of women. In the period of Japan's occupation of Korea for over 40 years in the last century Japan forcibly drafted at least 8.4 million Koreans, massacred more than one million, forced 200 000 Korean women into sexual slaves, forced Koreans to change their names into Japanese ones and committed such unheard-of monstrous crimes as conducting tests on living bodies. It, however, shunned redemption of those crimes though seven decades have passed since its defeat in the war. The most cruel and despicable crimes are not such things that allow the assailant to deal with them with one victimized party only out of the victims to gloss over them. This issue can hardly find a final solution unless the damage suffered by all Koreans is redressed throughout Korea because there are victims of the sexual slavery for the Imperial Japanese Army not only in the south of Korea but also in the north. Japan should admit the state responsibility for all hideous crimes committed against the Korean people including the sexual slavery for the Imperial Japanese Army and the damage done by them and make reparation for them in such a manner as to be understandable to all Koreans." (KCNA, "Spokesman for DPRK FM on Japan-S. Korea Summit," November 5, 2015)

11/6/15

North Korea has averted its ban on the entry of two South Korean officials into the Kaesong Industrial Complex, the Unification Ministry said. Just days ago, the North notified the South of its sudden decision to deny access to the two, including a vice chairman of the South's committee on the inter-Korean facilities near the border. The reclusive North did not clarify the reason for the measure amid speculation that it may be trying to gain leverage in the upcoming talks on the land use fee for South Korean firms operating in the zone. The North informed the South verbally of the lifting of the limited access ban but it did not elaborate, said the ministry. "Fortunately, the North recanted its previous decision," ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-hee, said in a regular press briefing. "Every issue related to the operation of the complex should be resolved through dialogue. We hope there will be no repetition of such an incident." A total of 124 South Korean small and medium-size enterprises operate factories in the industrial park, the last remaining symbol of inter-Korean reconciliation. It has served as a major revenue source for the cash-strapped North, while South Korea has utilized cheap but skilled North Korean labor by hiring about 54,000 North Koreans workers. (Song Sang-ho, "Pyongyang Rejects Seoul's Offer of Dialogue 3 Tuimes," *Korea Herald*, November 6, 2015)

11/10/15

The United States would be happy to meet with North Korea "anytime, anywhere" if the communist nation is ready to talk about giving up its nuclear program, Washington's chief envoy for the nuclear issue said Tuesday. Amb. Sung Kim, special representative for North Korea policy, said, however, during a Wilson Center discussion that the U.S. has seen no signs of willingness to hold such meaningful negotiations that would lead to concrete, irreversible denuclearization steps. **"I think for us it's pretty straightforward: If they're willing to talk about the nuclear issue and how we can move towards meaningful productive credible negotiations, (we would be) happy to meet with them anytime, anywhere,"** Kim said. Kim also said the U.S. offer to hold exploratory talks with the North is still valid. "The idea that we would be willing to sit down with the North Koreans to test their commitment, test, reaffirm their commitment to denuclearization, I think, is still valid. Unfortunately, the North Koreans have shown no interest in such dialogue," he said. "We have no qualms about sitting down with the North Koreans to talk about denuclearization and how we can work together ... toward some meaningful negotiations that result in concrete, irreversible denuclearization steps. So I think that idea is still valid, but it's up to the North Koreans and so far they've shown no interest," he said. The term "exploratory talks" refers to a compromise form of negotiations aimed at meeting both Pyongyang's demand for an unconditional resumption of six-party negotiations and the U.S. insistence that any formal negotiations should begin only after Pyongyang takes concrete steps toward denuclearization. Six-party talks have been stalled since the last meeting in late 2008. Earlier in the day, former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson suggested the idea of expanding the six-party talks to include more countries, such as Norway. But Kim said it is "irrelevant" to talk about the format when Pyongyang has shown no interest in talks. He also said that there is value in maintaining the six-party format in that it was in the talks that a 2005 denuclearization deal was reached. Kim also reiterated U.S. rejection of the North's proposal to hold talks on a peace treaty. "It's not that we have no interest in seeking a permanent peace regime, peace mechanism or peace treaty. But I think they have the order wrong. Before we can get

to a peace mechanism to replace the armistice, I think we need to make significant progress on the central issue of denuclearization," he said. (Chang Jae-soon, "Amb. Sung Kim : U.S. 'Happy to Meet' with N. Korean 'Anytime, Anywhere,'" Yonhap, November 11, 2015)

About half of elderly South Koreans who may have relatives living in North Korea do not want to see them again for various reasons, according to data from the Ministry of Unification. Speaking at a forum in Seoul, Tuesday, Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo said only 30,000 of some 66,000 war-divided South Koreans wanted to find out whether their relatives in the North are still alive. The government recently conducted a survey of war-divided families in line with an inter-Korean agreement to hold more reunion events following the latest one held last month. Hong said that many, contacted by the government, said they do not want to find their relatives in the North. The search is a prerequisite step to help reunite the war-divided families separated by the Demilitarized Zone amid concerns over their deteriorating health conditions. The 66,000 South Koreans are mostly in their 70s or older. It is believed that the 33,000 war-separated South Koreans are concerned that the North's repressive regime may put their loved ones under surveillance if such inter-Korean family relations are revealed. "We've been told that Pyongyang has kept an eye on those who joined the inter-Korean family gatherings," a unification ministry official said. A similar view was echoed by Kang Myung-do, a former North Korean defector who was also son-in-law of a former North Korean prime minister. "Pyongyang lacks a filing system to verify the fate of the war-divided family members in the North and some of them are even registered as deceased," he said. "In that regard, it can be embarrassing for the North when the South requests a search for those people. I've been told the Pyongyang authorities picked on those attending the inter-Korean family reunions and harassed them for no reason." (Yi Whan-woo, "Half of S. Koreans Reluctant to See N.K. Relatives," *Korea Times*, November 10, 2015)

11/11/15

A Russian military delegation arrived in Pyongyang on Monday to conduct a military-to-military dialogue with the command of the Korean People's Army, TASS reports. The Russian delegation, headed by First Deputy Chief of Russia's General Staff Nikolay Bogdanovsky, is slated to begin talks with their North Korean counterparts today and will stay in North Korea until November 13. The precise topics of discussion between Russia and North Korea are unknown, although there have been speculations that a defense agreement "on prevention of dangerous military activities" could be signed as a result of the talks. According to TASS, "This issue was discussed at a meeting held in June this year in Moscow between Russia's State Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin and Chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly Choe Thae-bok. The sides came to the conclusion that the document "is in a quite high degree of readiness" and "may be signed before the end of this year." Back in June, Naryshkin told Russian media that "[w]e consider it appropriate to significantly intensify our efforts to improve and to update the legal framework of our relations. We consider it possible before the end of the year to sign two important documents: a treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and an agreement on preventing dangerous military activities." The draft agreement has already been approved by the Russian government. According to Interfax, the draft agreement states that an agreement between Russia and North

Korea is necessary in order to “to prevent dangerous military activities and promptly and peacefully resolve any incident between the parties’ armed forces, which could arise as a result of dangerous military activities.” Furthermore, the draft agreement emphasizes that “in the interests of mutual security, the personnel of either party shall act with the utmost caution and prudence while conducting activities close to the territory or the armed forces of the other party.” Both countries also pledge not to interfere in each other’s domestic affairs and pledge to prevent “the creation of interferences capable of hampering efforts to provide national security in an area of special consideration.” “The parties shall implement whatever measures possible to promptly ensure discontinuation and peaceful resolution, without resorting to the threat and use of force, of any incident which could arise as a result of dangerous military activities,” the draft agreement further reads. According to North Korean state media both countries declared 2015 a “year of friendship” in order to commemorate “Korea’s liberation and the victory in the great Patriotic War in Russia.” A North Korean delegation, led by Lieutenant General Choe Jang Sik, deputy head of the Korean People’s Army General Staff Operations Bureau, visited Moscow in August to discuss the possible participation of a North Korean team in the “2016 International Army Games,” annually hosted by the Russian Ministry of Defense. (Franz-Stefan Gady, “Putin Sends Russian Military to North Korea,” *The Diplomat*, November 11, 2015)

11/12/15

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has sent his key confidant to the country's top school for re-education, South Korea's intelligence officials said, in an apparent lenient punishment that could set the stage for his political comeback in the coming months, if not years. "Choe Ryong-hae is receiving education at Kim Il Sung Higher Party School," an official said, referring to the top institution named after the country's founder, Kim's late grandfather. The school in Pyongyang is the top institution where party officials are trained. Choe, a senior secretary of the North's ruling Workers' Party, visited China a couple of times and is widely seen as North Korea's point man on China. In 2013, Choe met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing as Kim's envoy. In September, Choe also visited Beijing for China's massive military parade. Choe's whereabouts have been under the intense spotlight among officials and analysts in South Korea and other regional powers as he was not named as a member of a funeral committee for Ri Ul-sol, marshal of North Korea's military, who died of lung cancer at the age of 94. Choe's conspicuous absence November 7 sparked speculation among some analysts that he might have been ousted from the party's key post. (Kim Kwang-tae, “N. Korean Leader Sent His Key Aide to Top School for Re-Education,” *Yonhap*, November 12, 2015)

This spring, the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, led by Premier Li Keqiang, gave the green light for the construction of state-supported joint economic zones at Ji’an on the banks of the Yalu River and Helong on the banks of the Tumen River, both located on the border with North Korea, a recent report confirmed. The last time that China’s State Council approved projects of this sort was in 1992, in the Chinese cities of Dandong and Hunchun. The zones on the border will be state-sponsored areas in which the Chinese central government builds basic infrastructure and provides tax benefits to tenant companies. Until now, the Chinese government had not announced these plans abroad. While the South Korean and US governments had assumed that relations between North Korea and China were strained and weak,

this development is leading analysts to think that North Korea and China are making a clear shift from the previous beneficiary-recipient model to one of economic cooperation and mutual growth. The result is that, with no end in sight to the deadlock in inter-Korean relations, there are growing concerns that South Korea may lag behind while China seizes the advantage in North Korea's economic development. In a report titled "The Reality of North Korea and Sino-North Korean Relations as Seen from the Border," published today, Lee Jong-seok, senior research fellow at the Sejong Institute, announced that he had confirmed these facts through local Chinese media reports, testimony by Chinese sources, and visits to the sites. Lee, who served as Unification Minister during the presidency of Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008), is an expert in relations between North Korea and China and the author of academic books including one titled "Sino-North Korean Relations: 1945-2000." The Ji'an Joint Border Economic Zone is designed to collaborate with the Manpo Economic Development Zone, Wiwon Industrial Development Zone, and the city of Kanggye in Chagang Province, all of which are located across the Yalu River in North Korea. "Construction has been completed on the bridge over the Yalu River, connecting North Korea and China, and construction on the joint economic zone is underway and scheduled to be completed in 2017. In Ji'an, they have already built a town with Korean tiled roofs that they are calling the 'New Town for Border Trade,'" Lee said. According to Lee's analysis, the Helung Joint Border Economic Zone, which will be located at Nanping on the banks of the Tumen River, will focus on developing resources, including the estimated 4.5 billion tons of iron ore deposits at North Korea's Musan Iron Mine. 46,000 square-meters of land have been set aside for construction in the economic zone, and Helung has already signed a contract related to development in the zone with the Sinda (Heundal) Group, a Beijing-based conglomerate that works in resource development. "The growth in the North Korean economy and the structural trend toward strengthening ties in Sino-North Korean relations over the past few years are very likely to even further neutralize South Korea's policy of enforcing sanctions against North Korea, including the May 24 Measures, the effectiveness of which has already been called into question. We need to reassess relevant policies that are based on the political assumption that relations between North Korea and China are strained and weak," Lee said. (Lee Je-hun, "Report: N. Korea-China Relations Maybe Not So 'Strained' at All," *Hankyore*, November 13, 2015)

11/13/15

President Park: "The Korean government believes safeguarding the people on the basis of a solid security posture is the paramount duty of the state. **It also attaches great importance to the efforts to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula through inter-Korean dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, and to lay the groundwork for peaceful unification.** In this context, the government intends to smoothly carry out the Aug. 25 Agreement as planned and advance inter-Korean relations in a stable manner. The government places the highest priority on working to find a solution to the issue of separated families through dialogue between the authorities of the two sides. Many members of those families cannot get around easily because of old age, and, unless one is in their shoes, it is impossible to fully understand their lifelong sufferings. The fact that such a divided country exists on Earth even today should also be addressed. To come up with a fundamental solution, it will be necessary to continue to discuss measures to check the survival of other family

members, exchange letters and regularize reunions. Taking it a step further, exchanges in the fields of culture, environment and quality of life should be facilitated to recover the common identity of the entire Korean people and expand the channel for mutually beneficial cooperation. I am looking forward to revitalizing private-sector interactions, starting with the provision of powdered milk. I have made my position clear that any form of dialogue between the South and North would be possible as long as it would be helpful in opening the door to peace and unification of the Korean Peninsula. **There is no reason not to hold an inter-Korean summit if a breakthrough comes in solving the North Korean nuclear issue and progress is made in improving the South-North relationship.** But it will be possible only when the North comes forward for a proactive and sincere dialogue. What counts most is North Korea's sincerity and determination to act on its words. At the current stage, I believe it is high time for the South and North to faithfully implement what has been agreed upon and gradually build trust. (Full text of President Park Geun-hye's joint interview with Yonhap News Agency and the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, November 13, 2015)

The U.S. Treasury said that it had imposed sanctions on four North Koreans, including the ambassador to Myanmar, over what American officials described as connections to North Korea's illicit weapons proliferation activities. The action, announced by the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, also includes sanctions on a North Korea-owned company based in Egypt that American officials said had helped North Korea market weapons abroad. Under the action, any assets owned by the affected individuals and company that fall within American jurisdiction are frozen. Additionally, all interactions between them and American citizens and entities are prohibited. There was no indication from the announcement that the North Koreans held any assets that could be impounded. The imposition of sanctions on an ambassador is unusual and seemed to reflect higher scrutiny of the country's diplomats. Western officials say North Korea uses many of its envoys as smugglers and abettors of arms sales prohibited by the United Nations Security Council. A North Korean envoy in Bangladesh was arrested this year and accused of smuggling gold bullion, but released because he had diplomatic immunity. The indirect connection to Myanmar in the sanctions appeared to reflect longstanding American concerns about defense-related links between North Korea and Myanmar's military-dominated government, which just lost a parliamentary election to the long-repressed opposition. While the United States has eased some sanctions against Myanmar in the past few years as the military has loosened its grip on society, others remain in force. "North Korea's continued violation of international law and its commitment to the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction pose a serious threat to the United States and to global peace and security," Adam J. Szubin, the Treasury under secretary who oversees sanctions, said in the announcement. "Today's designations underscore our ongoing efforts to obstruct the flow of funds used to augment North Korea's nuclear capabilities," Szubin said. The individuals and company named in the announcement all had ties to the Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation, or Komid, a North Korean company already subject to sanctions for what the Treasury calls its leading role as a weapons proliferator. They were identified as Kim Sok Chol, North Korea's ambassador to Myanmar, who the Treasury said had been paid by Komid; Kim Kwang Hyok, a Komid official in Myanmar; Ri Chong Chol, a Komid official

in Pyongyang, North Korea; and Hwang Su Man, an official at the North Korea-owned EKO Development and Investment Company, based in Egypt. Mr. Hwang and EKO were accused of helping Komid. (Rick Gladstone, "U.S. Treasury Imposes Sanctions on 4 North Koreans, Including Ambassador to Myanmar," *New York Times*, November 13, 2015, p. A-4)

DPRK FoMin spokesman: "Days ago the special representative for north Korea policy of the U.S. Department of State said at a seminar that the DPRK had a wrong order in proposing conclusion of peace treaty, adding that there should be important progress in denuclearization before replacing the Armistice Agreement by peace treaty. This is the height of impudence. **In the past the DPRK discussed the issue of denuclearization first and held many talks on simultaneously discussing the nuclear issue and the matter of ensuring peace, but they yielded no fruits. This is attributable to the unchanged hostile relations between the DPRK and the U.S.** The U.S. must know the fact that the nuclear issue surfaced in the 1980s owing to the DPRK-U.S. belligerent relations that started in the 1950s. It claimed that peace treaty can be concluded only after denuclearization. Its insistence on the order of discussion is, in the final analysis, little short of refusing to roll back its hostile policy toward the DPRK. **The historical experience showed that it is impossible to solve any problem without fundamentally settling the hostile relations between the DPRK and the U.S. by replacing the AA by peace treaty. If peace treaty is concluded and there exists confidence that the U.S. is no longer the enemy of the DPRK, it will be possible to solve all other problems.** The U.S. should not misjudge the good-will of the DPRK calling for the conclusion of peace treaty but think twice over the consequences to be entailed by turning its face away from the proposal." (KCNA, "FM Spokesman Accuses U.S. of Shunning Conclusion of Peace Treaty," November 13, 2015)

Three South Korean firms plan to hold another test run of a trilateral project to ship Russian coal through a North Korean port into South Korea later this month, the Unification Ministry said Friday. Some 120,000 tons of Russian coal will be delivered to South Korea on a ship from the North Korean port city of Rajin after being transported from Russia's border city of Khasan from November 17 to 30 on a re-connected railway in the third run for the so-called Rajin-Khasan logistics project. In November 2014, the first shipment carrying 40,500 tons of Russian coal smoothly arrived in South Korea in the first operation of the project. The second test was conducted in April. The project involves three South Korean firms -- top steelmaker POSCO, shipper Hyundai Merchant Marine Co. and state train operator Korail Corp. "The third test operation is aimed at checking the Rajin port's capacity to handle shipments and to carry out how smoothly vessels can be berthed," said a ministry official. (Yonhap, "Two Koreas, Russia to Carry out Third Run for Pilot Logistics Project," November 13, 2015)

11/?/15

The United States rejected a North Korean proposal to discuss a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War because it did not address denuclearization on the peninsula, the State Department said. State Department spokesman John Kirby made the comment in response to a *Wall Street Journal* report that the White House secretly agreed to peace talks just before Pyongyang's latest nuclear bomb test. The

newspaper, citing U.S. officials familiar with the events, said the Obama administration dropped its condition that Pyongyang take steps to curtail its nuclear arsenal before any peace talks take place, instead calling for North Korea's atomic weapons program to be just one part of the discussion. Pyongyang declined the proposal, and its January 6 nuclear test ended the diplomatic plans, the newspaper reported. "To be clear, it was the North Koreans who proposed discussing a peace treaty," Kirby said in an emailed statement. "We carefully considered their proposal, and made clear that denuclearization had to be part of any such discussion. The North rejected our response," he said. "Our response to the NK proposal was consistent with our longstanding focus on denuclearization." (Reuters, "U.S. Rejected Peace Talks before Last Nuclear Test," February 21, 2016) Days before North Korea's latest nuclear-bomb [test](#), the Obama administration secretly agreed to talks to try to formally end the Korean War, dropping a longstanding condition that Pyongyang first take steps to curtail its nuclear arsenal. [??] Instead the U.S. called for North Korea's atomic-weapons program to be simply part of the talks. Pyongyang declined the counter-proposal, according to U.S. officials familiar with the events. Its nuclear test on January 6 ended the diplomatic gambit. The episode, in an exchange at the United Nations, was one of several unsuccessful attempts that American officials say they made to discuss denuclearization with North Korea during President Barack Obama's second term while also negotiating with Iran over its nuclear program. Obama has pointed to the Iran deal to signal to North Korea that he is open to a similar track with the regime of Kim Jong Un. But the White House sees North Korea as far more opaque and uncooperative. The latest fruitless exchanges typified diplomacy between the U.S. and Pyongyang in recent years. "For North Korea, winning a peace treaty is the center of the U.S. relationship," said Go Myung-hyun, an expert on North Korea at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, a Seoul-based think tank. "It feels nuclear development gives it a bigger edge to do so." The new U.S. sanctions and Washington's efforts to raise pressure on China, Pyongyang's main political and economic ally, will provide a test of whether the deadlock can be broken. The U.S. law goes further than previous efforts to block the regime's sources of funds for its leadership and weapons program, including by extending a blacklist to companies, primarily Chinese ones that do business with North Korea. Existing sanctions targeted North Korean individuals and entities with little presence outside the country. Advocates of the law, many of whom cite the example of Iran, say more pressure was needed to deter North Korea. The law will force Kim to "make a choice between coming back to the table and ending his nuclear-weapons program or to cut off the funding for that program and for his regime," House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce, a California Republican, said recently. Skeptics, including those within the Obama administration, say North Korea is different from Iran because its decades of isolation limits the power of sanctions. Some say Pyongyang is increasingly using domestic technology in its weapons program and that many of the blacklisted Chinese companies are small with few other international dealings. "It's not like Iran where they have a lot of vulnerability because there's a lot of commercial activity," a senior U.S. official said. The sanctions "will have an effect, but the real lifeline is the Chinese assistance." While Obama felt emboldened by his success in reaching a nuclear deal last year with Iran, he has largely tried to use any momentum from that diplomatic effort to push for a political resolution to the conflict in Syria, rather than shift focus to North Korea. Iran and North Korea "are

both countries that have a long history of antagonism towards the United States, but we were prepared to have a serious conversation with the Iranians once they showed that they were serious about the possibility of giving up the pursuit of nuclear weapons," Obama said last October. But he added, "there's been no indication on the part of the North Koreans, as there was with the Iranians, that they could foresee a future in which they didn't possess or were not pursuing nuclear weapons." North Korea's U.N. mission didn't respond to a request for comment. Its state media agency wrote this month of the U.S.'s prioritization of nuclear talks: "This is just like a guilty party filing suit first." The U.S.-South Korean missile-shield talks "further strengthens arguments of those in China who argue North Korea is a strategic liability," said L. Gordon Flake, head of the Perth US-Asia Centre at the University of Western Australia. "It's becoming more difficult for China to give North Korea leeway." For the U.S., coordination with China is important to pass new U.N. sanctions against North Korea. Some American officials said in the past week that China agreed to cooperate. "I think it unlikely that China wants to be seen by the international community as the protector of North Korea, given its recent outrageous behavior in violation of international law and U.N. Security Council resolution," Susan Rice, Obama's national security adviser, said last week. A Chinese vice foreign minister has said Beijing will support a "new, powerful" U.N. resolution, though added that negotiations are key to fixing the problem. But any external pressure faces the challenge of North Korea's unwillingness to yield its nuclear weapons, especially after Pyongyang revised its constitution in 2012 to declare itself a nuclear-armed state. "Submitting to foreign demands to denuclearize could mean delegitimization and destabilization for the regime," said Nicholas Eberstadt, a North Korea expert at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank. (Alastair Gale and Carol Lee, "U.S. Agreed to North Korea Peace Talks before Latest Nuclear Test," *Wall Street Journal*, February 21, 2016) North Korea quietly reached out to U.S. officials through the United Nations in New York last fall to propose formal peace talks on ending the Korean War, a response to President Barack Obama's comments that the U.S. was willing to engage Pyongyang as it has with other rogue regimes, senior U.S. officials told CNN. That effort fell short, the officials said, with the North Koreans refusing to include their nuclear program in any negotiations as the U.S. required and soon after testing a nuclear weapon. But it represented a new step from the Obama administration as it tried to lure the hermetic country out of its isolation and extend its track record of successful negotiations with nations long at odds with the United States, such as Iran and Cuba. The U.S. told North Korea it was willing to discuss a formal peace to replace the 63-year-old armistice that ended hostilities after the Korean War, but only if efforts to curb Pyongyang's nuclear program were part of the discussions. In doing so, the administration dropped a longstanding demand that North Korea take steps toward "denuclearization" before talks on a formal peace treaty began. Still, the North Koreans refused to allow the nuclear issue to be part of any talks. (Elise Labott and Nicole Gaouette, "North Korea offered - Then Rebuffed - Talks with U.S.," February 22, 2016) "The peace treaty negotiations is not just an issue between the United States and North Korea, but needs to be led by South Korea," Jeong Joon-hee, a spokesman for the South Korean Ministry of Unification, said in a briefing February 22. An official from South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs added, "Our government has made efforts to coordinate between the other six-party nations to draw North Korea to the table before its fourth

nuclear test. The five party nations already agree that if North Korea shows concrete signs toward denuclearization, it will be able to resume six-party talks." (Sarah Kim, "Denuclearization Issue Killed Korea Peace Talks," *JoongAng Ilbo*, February 22, 2016)

11/15/15

North Korea has recently declared a no-navigation zone in the waters near its eastern coastal city of Wonsan, a possible indication that the country could test-launch a missile in the area, sources said. "North Korea declared the no-sail zone in the East Sea area near Wonsan, Gangwon Province, effective from November 11 to the 7th of next month," a government source said. "It is a vast area of the sea, so we are closely watching whether the North will launch a Scud or a new type of ballistic missile." Other sources said the test launch could involve a new type of missile that separates into several sub-missiles at a high altitude, a missile technology owned by the North. "It is also possible they could fire a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) during the no-navigation period," another source said. (Yonhap, "N. Korea Declares No-Sail Zone in Possible Indication of Missile Launch," November 15, 2015) North Korea has not notified the International Maritime Organization of its alleged declaration of a no-sail zone, the IMO said two days after a Seoul official said Pyongyang set the zone in the East Sea. Voice of America reported the IMO spokesperson said the U.N. organization was not informed of Pyongyang's no-sail zone.

On various occasions, the communist state has notified the IMO of its no-sail zones. But there was no notification in March when the North fired two ballistic missiles into the East Sea. In August, the North set a no-sail zone and put its ship-to-ship missiles and coastal artillery in a combat-ready position, but it did not fire them. (Song Sang-ho, "N.K. Has Yet to Notify IMO of No-Sail Zone," *Korea Herald*, November 17, 2015)

11/16/15

President Park Geun-hye made a fresh aid-for-denuclearization offer to North Korea, Monday, pledging to help the reclusive country attract international investments of up to \$63 billion (73.9 trillion won) annually if Pyongyang gives up its nuclear program. During a session at the G20 summit in Antalya, Turkey, Park called for international support for her initiative to establish a Northeast Asia Development Bank (NADB) to spur economic development in the North and in surrounding areas. "If the North gives up its nuclear program and embraces openness, the South will join hands with the international community to invest in infrastructure in the North and other parts of Northeast Asia," Park said. It was the first time for the President to be specific about Seoul's aid plan. "With growing global infrastructure investments, Park made a proposal that specializes in Northeast Asia to the G20 for the first time, and it attracted interest from world leaders," Cheong Wa Dae said. As part of helping the North win international development funds for economic development, Park seeks to set up the NADB in cooperation with existing global financial bodies. "It is a good idea to work together with the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)," Park said during the meeting. President Park proposed the plan for the development bank in her "Dresden declaration" in March last year. (Kang Seoung-woo, "President Offers Fresh Aid for N.K. Denuclearization," November 16, 2015)

For the first time in 12 years fewer than 100 North Koreans are defecting to South Korea every month. North Korea watchers point to tougher crackdowns along the border with China since Kim Jong-un took power but also to rising living standards

thanks to burgeoning open-air markets in the socialist state. The Unification Ministry says 978 North Korean defectors were debriefed by South Korean intelligence in the first 10 months this year or an average of 98 a month. Monthly defector numbers first rose above 100 in 2003, when they hit 107. A Unification Ministry official said the total this year is expected to remain below 1,200. Last year's figure was 1,400, and the highest was 2,914 in 2009. Lee Soo-seok of the Institute for National Security Strategy said, "The spread of open-air markets has reduced the number of North Koreans who live on the edge of starvation, and tightened security along the Chinese border has made it more difficult to defect." As of the end of October, 28,497 North Korean defectors had settled in South Korea. Mass defections occurred during the famine from 1995 to 1998, which was largely the fault of then leader Kim Jong-il's addle-brained military-first doctrine. But defections kept rising after the disaster, reaching 2,000 in 2006 and nearly 3,000 in 2009. But since 2012 numbers have almost halved. When Kim Jong-il died in December 2011 the military-first doctrine died with him, and control of border guards shifted from the increasingly corrupt military to the State Security Department. A defector who was a chief border guard in Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province until late 2013, said, "Since Kim Jong-un took power, border guards have been punished for taking bribes from defectors even if it only came to light after they'd already left the job. They became terrified and bribes no longer worked." But border guards who capture defectors are rewarded with promotion, Workers Party membership and recommendations to prestigious universities. The regime also installed CCTV on popular defection routes and fortified the border with barbed wire. In some cases North Korean officers have even pursued their prey into Chinese territory. That has not cut off all escape routes, but fees for traffickers have doubled from five years ago as the risks rise. A source said traffickers used to charge W4-5 million to cross the Yalu or Tumen rivers into China, but now they take nearly W10 million. (US\$1=W1,167) In some areas along the Tumen River the cost is W15-17 million. China has also boosted crackdowns on North Korean defectors because it is afraid of a mass exodus, and they are likely to increase now relations between the allies are improving. But better living condition also undoubtedly played a part. One researcher at a state-run think tank here said since there are now some 400 markets in the North, and they have improved the lives of many who might earlier have risked their lives to flee destitution. But the same development has prompted more members of the elite to defect, often to escape the side effects of nascent capitalism. "Capitalism has spawned corruption and business conflicts," said Cho Dong-ho at Ewha Womans University. "It seems a lot of fat cats defect when they lose a battle over business interests or face corruption charges." National Intelligence Service chief Lee Byung-ho last month said 46 North Korean diplomats defected to South Korea over the last three years. Most had had escape plans for years in case their business turned sour, and some managed to spirit out billions of won to set themselves up in style here with a pad in swish Gangnam and imported car. (Kim Myong-song, "Defections from N. Korea Fall below 100 a Month," *Chosun Ilbo*, November 16, 2015)

11/17/15

North Korea appears to have invited U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to visit the repressive country, and he accepted, diplomatic sources said. Both sides have kept mum about media reports that Ban and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may meet in Pyongyang this week. "The Kim regime appears to have invited the U.N. chief to speed

up its efforts to escape international isolation following recent signs of a thaw in its strained ties with South Korea and China," a source said. If realized, Ban will be the first U.N. secretary-general to visit North Korea since Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1993. (Yi Whan-woo, "N. Korea Invited Ban Ki-moon," *Korea Times*, November 17, 2015) "The Secretary-General will not be traveling to the DPRK next week," a U.N. spokesperson said in a statement November 18. Ban will be in "New York most of next week and then travel to Malta for the Commonwealth Summit," the statement added. It was refuting a Xinhua report from Pyongyang, citing information from KCNA, saying said Ban will arrive in the capital city next Monday and stay there for around four days. More specifically, it said, Ban will travel by plane to arrive at Sunan International Airport in Pyongyang. Yonhap News Agency earlier learned that Ban, formerly South Korea's foreign minister, is planning to travel soon to Pyongyang. The North's media have not formally commented on that. But the U.N. kept the door open for Ban's visit there. "The secretary-general has repeatedly said that he is willing to play any constructive role, including traveling to the DPRK, in an effort to work for peace, stability and dialogue on the Korean Peninsula," said the statement. (Yonhap, "U.N. Says Ban Will Not Visit N.K. Next Week," November 18, 2015)

North Korea sent back a South Korean man it held for about six weeks for entering the country illegally, South Korean officials said. The 48-year-old, who was sent by the North through the border village of Panmunjom, is currently being investigated by South Korean officials over why he entered the North without government permission, said an official from Seoul's Unification Ministry. The man, identified only by his surname Lee, was detained by North Korean officials on September 30 after entering the North from China. (Associated Press, "North Korea Frees South Korean Man Who Entered Country," November 17, 2015)

11/18/15 North Korea announced the adoption of a comprehensive plan to develop a free trade zone in Rason, which will focus on promoting the zone as a center of the MICE industry. MICE stands for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. 24 years after the designation of the Rason Special Economic Zone, the North Korean government has agreed to permit North Korean companies that will operate in the zone to receive foreign investment, manage themselves, and make profits. Experts who think the plan is meaningful point to its level of detail and its feasibility, along with its aggressiveness. North Korea made public detailed plans in seven categories, including potential industrial complexes and tourist resorts, tax policies, investment policies, and corporate registration procedures. At the same time, it posted about 50 regulations related to investing in the Rason Special Economic Zone on Naenara, North Korea's official web portal, which is available in English and eight other languages. Ten locations are slated for development as resorts, among which are Sinhae International Meeting District, Bipa Island Ecological Tourism District, and Haesanggeum Tourism District. There will be nine industrial districts, including the Rajin Harbor Logistics Industrial Complex and the Sinheunggyeong Industrial Complex. The Rajin Harbor Logistics Industrial Complex is connected with the Rajin-Khasan Project, a cooperative logistics project involving South Korea, North Korea, and Russia. North Korea announced plans to invest a total of US\$15.48 billion in these development projects, with US\$9.22 billion earmarked for industrial complexes and US\$6.26 billion for

tourism districts. In addition, North Korea agreed to accept foreign investment in the form of joint ventures in the Rason Special Economic Zone, to allow foreign capital to manage their businesses freely, and to guarantee their profits. Investors will be able to remove legally acquired assets from the economic zone without restraints and will be allowed to independently plan their production, sales, and profit distribution. North Korea also defined the taxes that would apply the Rason Special Economic Zone - including transaction tax, management tax, corporate income tax, private income tax, local tax, property tax, and inheritance tax - and provided a detailed explanation of the tax rates and benefits. Experts are paying attention to the Rason development plan because it is specific and practical. In particular, business plans for the areas of logistics, tourism, and meetings are tailored to the needs of China and Russia, which border North Korea. Experts also think that South Korean companies are starting to take more interest in the idea of investing in North Korea. Another noteworthy aspect of the plan is that it specifies the role of North Korean companies and takes into account the North Korean domestic market. "Companies with investment potential from China and Russia - as well as South Korea - are waiting for their chance to move into North Korea. Since this plan means that North Korea is ready to receive them, you could say that the time is ripe for developing economic zones," said Lim Eul-chul, a professor at the Kyungnam University Institute for Far Eastern Studies. "The plan that North Korea just announced implies that North Korean companies, which have been largely sidelined until now, will play a role in developing the special economic zones. While economic zones focus on exports, this plan also keeps the domestic market in mind, indicating that North Korea intends to meet demand in other parts of the North." There is also speculation that the announcement is designed to achieve tangible economic results before the 6th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, which will take place in May 2016, for the first time in 36 years. It also shows that North Korea's economy is more stable than it used to be. It is commonly thought that the success of this plan would lead the North to begin opening up. In 1991, North Korea designated Rason as a free trade zone, with the goal of making it a base for trade, finance, and tourism, but it failed to attract investment. Currently, there are around 20 economic zones in North Korea. (Kim Jin-cheol, "North Korea Releases Detailed Plan for Free Trade Zone," Hankyore, November 19, 2015)

11/19/15

CPRK spokesman "regards the south Korean authorities' floating of misinformation about the north-south dialogue: The south Korean authorities recently created the impression that they were interested in the improvement of the inter-Korean relations, asserting that the "north kept mum" about the talks between authorities and crying out for a "response." Even the present chief executive jabbered that the "north's sincerity and will to implement the agreement were more important." This is nothing but a revelation of their cynical ploy to shift the blame for having failed to hold north-south dialogue onto the DPRK. As recognized by the world public, the DPRK initiated the north-south high-level emergency contact in last August and made every possible effort to sincerely implement the points agreed upon at the contact. It was thanks to the positive and sincere efforts of the DPRK that the reunion of divided families and relatives took place at the Mt. Kumgang Resort days ago and non-governmental contacts and exchanges are being reenergized between the north and the south. The south Korean authorities, however, are staging saber rattling with outsiders against the

north almost everyday, denying their dialogue partner, and ratcheting up the anachronistic nuclear and "human rights" rackets against the north quite contrary to the unanimous will and desire of the compatriots for improved inter-Korean relations. Even at this moment, the present chief executive of south Korea is busy with disgraceful diplomacy for soliciting "cooperation in the nuclear racket against the north" on foreign tours. The confrontation ruckus against the north such as the introduction of "state-compiled" history textbook being pushed forward for the purpose of inciting hostility towards the DPRK is going on in south Korea. The south Korean authorities are disturbing in every way even NGO exchange getting brisk according to the inter-Korean agreement by putting up unreasonable pretexts. It goes without saying that all these acts are diametrically running counter to the spirit of the agreement and rattling the nerves of the dialogue partner. As a matter of fact, there is no change in the attitude of the south Korean authorities before and after the August agreement. No matter how loudly the south Korean authorities may talk about dialogue, no one would believe in their sincerity. The inter-Korean relations cannot be repaired by the unilateral efforts. If the south Korean authorities truly hope to see improved relations, they should stop making empty talk, discard their obstinate confrontation attitude and strive hard to create climate for dialogue, to begin with. They would be well advised to keenly feel responsible for the failure to open inter-Korean dialogue and fulfill their commitment, though belatedly." (KCNA, "CPRK Spokesman Urges S. Korean Authorities to Show Their Will to Improve Inter-Korean Relations in Practice," November 19, 2015)

The U.N. General Assembly's human rights committee adopted a resolution that condemns North Korea's dire human rights record. During its 70th session at U.N. headquarters in New York, Thursday (local time), the Third Committee passed a bill that asks the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) to refer the repressive regime to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The resolution also encouraged the UNSC to punish those who "appear to be most responsible" for such state-perpetrated human rights violations, referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. A total of 112 countries, including South Korea, the United States, European Union member (EU) states, and Japan voted for the resolution. Another 19 countries, including China, Russia, Syria and Cuba, voted against the resolution, with the remaining 50 countries abstaining. The U.N. General Assembly will vote whether to formally endorse the resolution during a meeting expected to take place in mid-December. (Yi Whan-woo, "UNSC Urged to Deal with N.K. Human Rights," *Korea Times*, November 20, 2015)

11/20/15

The two Koreas agreed to hold a working-level meeting November 26 to arrange high-level government talks on a range of bilateral issues, raising the prospects that cross-border relations will improve. Seoul's Unification Ministry said that it accepted Pyongyang's proposal earlier in the day to hold the meeting at Tongilgak, a building on the North Korean side of the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom. Seoul's Unification Ministry said that it accepted Pyongyang's proposal earlier in the day to hold the meeting at Tongilgak, a building on the North Korean side of the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjeom. "Our acceptance of the proposal reflects our resolve to conscientiously execute the August 25 agreement," a ministry official told reporters, referring to the bilateral deal to defuse tensions and improve frosty relations. "At the

working-level talks, the two sides will discuss details about the higher-level talks: who will attend the talks, when they will be held and what kind of issues will be included in the agenda," the official added. In the morning, the North's Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland proposed the talks. The proposal came after Pyongyang rejected Seoul's overtures for dialogue three times in September and October. At the talks, the North's three-member delegation will be led by a senior official of the committee, while the South will be represented by Kim Ki-woong, director-general of the Unification Ministry's Special Office for Inter-Korean Dialogue. Before Pyongyang's proposal for the talks on Friday, Seoul proposed dialogue three times -- on September 21 and 24, and October 30. Seoul made the proposal to Kim Yang-gon, the director of the ruling Worker's Party's United Front Department, in the name of its Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo. Pyongyang rejected the offers, arguing that Seoul was not sincere about the talks. When the North first rejected the offer, it criticized South Korean civic groups' dissemination of anti-Pyongyang leaflets, lawmakers' moves to enact a North Korea human rights law and news reports on North Korean provocations. On the agenda for the high-level government talks are expected to include the lifting of Seoul's "May 24" economic sanctions against Pyongyang, the resumption of tours to Mount Geumgangsan and Seoul's push for building a peace park in the Demilitarized Zone. For the North, the lifting of the May 24 sanctions is critical as it seeks to improve its economy, while the South prioritizes addressing the issue of separated families. Seoul maintains that the economic sanctions, which were imposed after Pyongyang's attack on the Cheonan in March 2010, can only be terminated if the regime's apologizes for the attack, takes steps to prevent a recurrence and punishes those who carried it out. (Song Sang-ho, "Koreas to Hold Working Level Talks Next Thursday," *Korea Herald*, November 20, 2015) Breaking two-months silence for Seoul's repeated proposal for dialogue, the North took a step toward implementing a landmark inter-Korean deal on August 25 on defusing military tension. The North's move came as a surprise as it fiercely blamed the South two days earlier for having failed to hold government-level talks, raising questions about Seoul's sincerity in mending inter-Korean ties. Analysts said that the North's move appears to be aimed at giving an impression at home and abroad that it is taking the lead in improving Seoul-Pyongyang ties. "The North's offer for dialogue seems to be aimed at taking the initiative over inter-Korean affairs," said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies. Yang said that the North appears to show that it is leading efforts to bring peace to the peninsula as it is preparing for a planned congress of the Workers' Party of Korea slated for May. The North's international isolation has been deepening due to its persistent pursuit of a nuclear weapons program. North Korea is also criticized for its grave human rights violations. "North Korea's move demonstrated its stance to improve its overall relations with other countries including the United States," said Chang Yong-seok, a researcher at the Seoul National University Institute for Peace and Unification Studies. "The North's bid to mend external relations would help prop up its fragile economy." (Yonhap, "N. Korea Dialogue Offer Raises Hope for Improved Ties," November 20, 2015)

The South Korean military has decided to deploy Chunmoo, a new Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) model to Baengnyeong Island and Yeonpyeong Island, just a few kilometers away from the North Korean mainland. "Numerous military officials said

that the Chunmoo system will first be deployed to Baengnyeong Island in 2016 and Yeonpyeong Island in 2017 to strengthen the northwest islands' defenses," said an article in News 1 today. Chunmoo, the latest South Korean MLRS, can hit targets up to 80 km away and destroy an area three times the size of a soccer field. With the capacity to fire at least 10 rounds per minute, Chunmoo has twice the range of the Kooryong, the older main South Korean MLRS. The rockets fired from Chunmoo are equipped with GPS and a navigation guide system allowing the rockets to accurately destroy North Korea's long-range artillery from outside their firing range. A civilian military adviser to South Korea's National Defense Committee told *NK News* on condition of anonymity that current Chunmoo deployment plans are only half-complete. "Currently, according to the deployment plan that has been revealed, the Chunmoo to be arranged at the northwest islands are only going to be equipped with short-range unguided rockets that can't even reach Pyongyang," said the adviser. "As Seoul is already within reach of North Korea's long-range artillery range, the South Korean military should consider deploying guided rockets for Chunmoo which will reach all the way up to Pyongyang." The Ministry of National Defense refused to confirm any information related to the deployment plan of Chunmoo to northwest island regions. (J.H. Ahn, "S. Korea Deploying Rocket-Launch System to Islands near N. Korea," *NKNews*, November 20, 2015)

11/22/15

KPA southwestern front command spokesman's statement "in connection with the fact that the south Korean military warmongers are running high fever in their sinister military provocation, oblivious of a lesson drawn from Yeonpyeong Island shelling incident five years ago: As well known, Yonphyong Island shelling incident that happened on November 23, 2010 was recorded as an event to be specially recorded in history of the north-south relations as it clearly proved once again how miserable the doom of those hell-bent on the confrontation with the fellow countrymen is. However, the south Korean military is still resorting to the childish farce to mislead the public opinion and make a mockery of the world. They are planning to conduct a provocative firing at the waters of the DPRK with the military hardware such as K-9, 155 mm self-propelled howitzer, 130 mm multiple launch rocket system, ground-to-ground guided missile "Spike", helicopter gunship AH-1S and other lethal weapons involved in the area around Paekryong Island and Yonpyong Island on November 23, far from drawing a lesson from their bitter defeat on Yonphyong Island five years ago. Prior to this, they opened to public on November 15 the news that the marine corps command is pushing ahead with a proposal for changing the official name of "Yonphyong Island shelling provocation" into "Yeonpyeong Island Shelling Battle." The reason they said is that if they call it the "north's shelling provocation on Yeonpyeong Island", they can mislead the public opinion to give impression that the KPA is the "real provocateur" but it would be hard for them to evade the world criticism that they sustained unilateral heavy blows and thus unable to erase their disgraceful record of defeat. So, they are planning to rename it the "shelling battle" and give impression that there was a close battle between the KPA and them in a bid to paint their defeat as a "victory." The south Korean war-like military forces' act of renaming Yonphyong Island shelling incident is bringing another more serious misfortune to themselves. What should not be overlooked is their remark that they would "raise the level of the honorable treatment" to the dead and the wounded of Yeonpyeong Island shelling. Lurking behind this is a

sinister intention. Their deplorable plight still suffering from persecution mania they caught in the face of strong firepower strike by the KPA is spreading war-weariness and evasion of military service among young and middle-aged south Koreans. The south Korean military, being panic-stricken, is finding a way of putting the situation under control, and it seeks to tempt the soldiers to military service and encourage them to stand in the van of the confrontation with the compatriots in the north by "leveling up honorable treatment" to this end. Herein lies the real purpose of the authorities' renaming. The servicepersons of the Southwestern Front of the KPA take peace dearer than any others. Therefore, they don't and will not have mercy on those who disturb peace even a little as they didn't in the past. **If the south Korean military fires at the waters of the DPRK in the hotspot area of the West Sea of Korea on Monday [November 23], they will experience merciless retaliation** of the Southwestern Front units of the DPRK on the five islands. The bellicose forces of the south Korean military should come to their senses. They should go by the August agreement if it is truly dear to them. They should not dig their own graves with war drumbeats for the preemptive strike against the DPRK but draw a lesson from the bitter defeat they suffered 5 years ago. They would be well advised to remember that the provokers are always doomed." (KCNA, Spokesman for KPA Southwestern Front Command Warns S. Korean Military Not to Forget Its Bitter Defeat in Yeonpyeong Shelling," November 22, 2015)

11/23/15

Abrahamian and Melvin: "Since Kim Jong-un assumed power, he has prioritized economic development in a way his father never did. Indeed, much of his domestic brand is now linked to economic growth and quality of life issues. He has tinkered with the modus operandi of both farms and state owned enterprises, and set forth a very visible economic experiment: the creation of a dozen Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in 2013, followed by a second group in 2014, and two more zones in 2015. Four of these could be considered national priorities—Rason, Unjong, Wonsan and Sinuiju (with the extant Hwanggumpyong/Wiwha Islands)—while the rest are fairly minor in scope, size and potential. These zones, with a variety of intended functions and ostensibly foreign-friendly regulations, signal a willingness of the Kim regime to explore economic policy options. However, their slow progress and development also clearly illustrate the challenges North Korea faces to get these projects off the ground given the current business and investment environment. Despite making SEZ development a policy priority, difficulties in the political arena and a general lack of clear economic goals have meant that Unjong is still in the planning stages, Wonsan awaits international investors and Rason has seen little activity since 2013. Sinuiju/Hwanggumpyong has seen some development, though the unfinished Yalu Bridge is also a reminder of unfulfilled potential. ...Sinuiju was first labeled a Special Administrative Zone in 2002, but quickly languished when Pyongyang's choice to head the project, a Chinese-Dutch businessman, was jailed in China. A rebranded Sinuiju International Economic Zone was announced in 2013 and signaled a second attempt to develop this region. The zone is focused on southern Sinuiju and the neighboring Ryongchon County where the Chinese have built a new bridge over the Yalu (Amnok) River. Although the bridge was essentially complete by late 2014, at a cost of around \$350 million, the North Koreans have yet to build any administrative or transportation infrastructure to support the new border crossing. The North has also failed to

complete road improvements from Sinuiju to Anju, which would facilitate the flow of goods through North Phyongan Province along the country's most important trade artery. These factors have delayed the opening of the bridge. While no significant progress of this zone is yet visible, there is reason to believe that the Sinuiju International Economic Zone may now be a policy priority for both the Chinese and North Korean governments. For instance, in October, South Korean media reported that the Chinese and North Koreans have finalized new plans for the zone: "According to newly inked guidelines, North Korea and China plan to build at the Sinuiju special administrative region, which totals 132 square kilometers and would include new industrial areas, public areas, a distribution complex, parks and a water supplytreatment plant. This would be in addition to existing factories to manufacture textiles, shoes, chemical fiber and weaving machines. However, the originally envisioned recreational and tourism center, golf course and commercial service district were scrapped from this new master plan." Earlier that month, China and North Korea had officially launched the Guomenwan DPRK Trade Zone in Dandong, a project that reportedly cost \$158 million and lies just 3.3 km from the foot of the new bridge. The purpose of the new trade zone is to promote commodity trade between the DPRK and Chinese living within 20 km of the border by reducing tariffs on small purchases. The timing of this launch is interesting, as satellite imagery indicates construction of this 40,000 square meter zone was basically completed in December 2013. This delayed launch could have been due to the execution of Jang Song Thaek in December 2013, but it could have also been for bureaucratic or other economic reasons. The Wonsan - Mt. Kumgang International Tourist Zone, in the southeast of the DPRK, was announced in 2014 and is the only SEZ project to be both publicly referenced and visited by Kim Jong-un. Perhaps not surprisingly, it also appears to have received the most state-directed investment of any of the SEZs that have been announced since 2013. Unlike other SEZ's, which are discrete and often isolated geographical areas, this project encompasses cultural, tourist and leisure destinations scattered throughout Kangwon Province. This zone encompasses the former Mt. Kumgang Tourist Region, which operated from 1998-2008, accommodating mostly South Korean visitors. Rather than drafting all new laws for the new International Tourist Zone, North Korean officials reportedly just extended and updated the regulations that existed under the Mt. Kumgang arrangement. And while, in general, the tax rates, incentives and regulations are largely the same as before, it is worth noting these laws were drawn up in 2002 to facilitate South Korean investment and travel in the zone. In Wonsan, big projects such as a new civilian airport and the Masikryong Ski Resort have been widely publicized, building up the region's tourist appeal. Some lesser known developments have also been underway including upgrades to the sewage system, refurbishment of hotel facilities and the development of a beach area (that is currently still used for live artillery drills). However, problems with transportation infrastructure and electricity supply remain. In private conversations with potential foreign investors, officials At the tourism zone have acknowledged the significant role that South Korean and/or Japanese tourists and companies will need to play in the zone's development in order for it to be successful. Although this may seem plausible in the long-term, the short-term prospects seem bleak. In early 2015, the Wonsan Area Development Corporation was formed, merging previously separate administration teams from Wonsan and Mt. Kumgang. It was given the remit to both attract and execute investments in the tourism

zone. Since then, the corporation has organized at least two investor seminars, one in China in 2014 with about 200 participants and one in May 2015 at the zone itself. Foreign participants in the latter seminar raised a number of concerns, including the need for minders during visits to the region. Currently, the vast majority of foreign visitors to the DPRK have to be accompanied by two Koreans for most of their sojourn. This issue of freedom of movement for tourists poses a particularly sensitive challenge for this region's growth potential, pitting old ways of doing business against more aggressive business goals. For instance, in 2014, Pyongyang stated that its goal was 1 million tourists per year. This year, Kim Sang Hak, a senior economist at the influential Academy of Social Sciences, told the Associated Press that the goal was 2 million visitors per year by 2020. These lofty targets are impossible to achieve under the North's current guide/minder system requirements, given the sheer manpower that would be required. It is no surprise that the North Korean officials at the meeting did not seem to have any easy answers to this challenge, but for the zone to succeed, it will eventually have to grapple with this clash of values. The Unjong High-Tech Development Zone, designated in July 2014, is located in the outskirts of Pyongyang, bordering Phyongsong city. The zone is affiliated with the State Academy of Sciences (SAS), rather than the Ministry of External Economy, which oversees most other SEZs. The affiliation with SAS should be an advantage, as it is the only zone to date with a dedicated and important institutional base that is both focused on its development and vested in its success. The disadvantage is that the managers come from the science and research community and by and large do not have management or investment promotion training officials at the zone describe the goal of bringing together "research, development, production and export" as a "national priority," and this broad remit should promote creative approaches available to zone managers since they will not be limited by a particular industrial focus or numerical goal. Unfortunately, as of summer 2015, they have not secured any significant investment. At this point, domestic investment is the most likely option for any truly high-tech products, given the numerous sanctions in currently in place. That said, the definition of "high-tech" at SAS seems to be broad enough to cover a variety of non-sanctioned products, such as certain household goods or healthcare products. The struggles to find either domestic or international investment may improve once a management committee is established, which, as of late 2015, is said to be "nearly formed." Currently, Unjong is reported to "officially open" at some point in 2016, and will feature an international center with communications and accommodation. There are also plans for a business incubator, from which small teams should be able to develop ideas into commercial products. In preparation for this, Unjong managers have been busy working on a variety of mundane but important issues including taxation, auditing standards and various other rules of governance. The Rason Economic and Trade Zone, the DPRK's oldest SEZ, has seen a relatively quiet two years compared to the period between 2010 and 2013. During that time, two major construction projects were underway: 1) a Chinese-led road transportation project to link Rason with the Chinese city of Hunchun; and 2) a Russian-led project to refurbish the Rajin port and link it to the Russian railway network. Currently, the most significant DPRK-China cooperation project in Rason is the renovation of the Quanhe-Wonjong Bridge that links Rason with Hunchun. A Chinese construction firm has been contracted to build a four-lane bridge, to replace the current two-lane bridge some time in 2016. Although

there were persistent rumors of plans to import electricity from Hunchun to Rason, to be sold at Jilin Province rates, the project was put on hold after the 2013 nuclear test and ouster of Jang Song Thaek. It will take a significant improvement in Sino-North Korea relations for this project to be revived. Reliable electricity supply is only one of a number of conditions necessary to attract larger Chinese companies to join the already-registered 129 foreign companies in Rason. Other conditions include being able to demonstrate a track record of improvement in the general business environment and a perception that Beijing-Pyongyang relations are stable enough for companies to manage the political risk. Some of the autonomy won with reforms in 2010 and 2011 has been curtailed, and over the summer of 2014, Yanji-based businesspeople who work in Rason began describing a greater degree of “negativity” towards Rason. For instance, the border immigration and registration procedures were tightened. Permissions became generally more difficult to obtain. Fundamental business inputs became scarcer. Restrictions were placed on the sale of fuel to foreign-registered vehicles, and less electricity was provided to foreign-invested companies. Unofficial payments to carry out normal tasks also increased, adding to the transaction costs of doing business in Rason. Moreover, new business licenses (or licenses for existing businesses to move into new products or fields) reportedly became more difficult to obtain for the zone as well. To help mitigate these problems, local officials are now looking to agglomerate foreign businesses. However, forced mergers or conglomerations are often an unappealing solution as they can create inefficient pairings of industries, expertise and individuals. While these general frustrations were brewing in 2014, they were aggravated by the Ebola quarantine, which ground many businesses to a near halt over the winter. Some Chinese businesses that couldn’t bridge cash-flow shortfalls and did not have fixed capital on the ground appear to have decided against returning to the DPRK, essentially giving up on Rason. The tightening of controls in Rason is likely connected to personnel reshufflings that took place after Jang Song Thaek’s ouster as well as bureaucratic reorganizations that have taken place in various organs of economic governance since Kim Jong-un assumed power. There is a risk of overstating the former, however. For instance, Hwang Chol Nam, the charming, English-speaking former Vice Mayor of Rason, is no longer involved in the SEZ, having been very much in the public eye for high-profile cruise trial-runs and the first trade fairs. Yet further down the chain of command, most of the staff in Rason’s Economic Cooperation Bureau seems to be the same as in previous years and The bureau still cooperates with officials from Jilin Province on a Rason Joint Management Committee. Aside from these developments in “the big four,” there have been interesting changes in some of the DPRK’s smaller SEZs, and this year two more SEZs were announced. Hwanggump yong and Wiwha Islands Economic Zones: Since 2014, Hwanggumpyong has seen the construction of a single large building. While the purpose of this building is yet unclear—some believe it will be a joint Sino-DPRK SEZ administration office while others believe it might be a hotel being constructed by a Chinese firm—construction seems nearing completion. In December 2013, Chinese media reported that a contract had been finalized for the Onsong Island Tourist Development Zone. According to Chinese media: North Korea planned to develop the zone into a tourism resort that includes a golf course, swimming pool, horse racing, and restaurants to attract foreigners, said Jin Hualin, an expert on North Korea economy at Yanbian University. “But the exact development agenda hasn’t been set as

Tumen will invite investors to make their decisions," he said. To date, little work has been conducted in the zone. Like Hwanggump Yong on the west coast, the Onsong SEZ is on a patch of land on the Chinese side of the Tumen River. It is not connected to the DPRK Mainland either via geography or infrastructure. However, this zone may be unique among the SEZs because part of it lies on Chinese sovereign territory and part of it lies on North Korean sovereign territory. Little work has been done here, although a dirt road was built on the North Korean land between October 6, 2014 and August 5, 2015. In April 2015, KCNA announced the Mubong Special Zone for International Tour [sic] in Samjiyon. The tourism zone is located in the Mubong Worker's District in Samjiyon, which is a pre-existing village that supported visits by North Koreans to Mt. Paektu and other revolutionary sites in the region. The Mubong Worker's District has existed for decades, and it is unclear if any renovations have been made since 2007 or if any are scheduled. Between June 19, 2009 and July 27, 2014, the North Koreans also constructed new border crossing facilities in Samjiyon. It is unclear if this upgraded border crossing is related to the Mubong SEZ or if it was part of an older plan to draw more Chinese tourists to the region. To date, it does not appear to have gone into operation. In October 2015, KCNA announced the creation of the Kyongwon Economic Development Zone in Ryudasom-ri. Like the Onsong Tourist Zone (and only 51 km downstream) Ryudasom-ri is a small piece of DPRK territory on the Chinese side of the Tumen River. In terms of infrastructure, the island is a typical North Korean village that is primarily composed of farmland; however, due to its proximity to the Chinese city of Hunchun, it already has a legal border crossing and bridges over the Tumen River. To date, the North Koreans have not made their plans for the zone public. Although the DPRK intends to continue rolling out new special economic zones, the control, purposes and locations of publicly announced zones are often changed ex-post, raising a concern that when a new zone is announced, key parameters are still subject to future alteration by the DPRK bureaucracy. For instance, when the Chongjin Economic Development Zone was first announced in 2013, it was reported that: North Hamgyong Provincial Chongjin economic development zone will be set up in areas covering part of Wolpho-ri, Susong-dong and Namsok-ri, Songphuyong District. A map of the zone was published in 2014 which basically confirmed the inclusion of the previously specified locations. However, in 2015, the North Koreans released a revised map to potential investors which showed that the Namsok-ri area, which is surrounded by military bases, had been removed from the list; the Wolpho-ri area had been expanded to cover other areas in Songphuyong District; and two new areas of Chongjin-Ryongam-ri in Ranam District and Kwanhae-dong in Chongnam District—had been designated part of the zone. To date, none of the changes made to the makeup of the zone have been reported in the official media, so it is unclear what significance they carry, or what they mean for other "settled" development zones in the country. However, this example illustrates how North Korea's inconsistent SEZ policies and communication can erode investor confidence. Overall, although the Kim regime may be promoting special economic zones as a key piece of its economic development strategy, there is still a long way to go to make these zones successful. Certainly, the North's strained political relations bring about serious financial and reputational challenges to attracting foreign investment; however, it is not the only impediment to success. Inconsistent and unreliable communication about plans for the zones and a lack of strategic planning for attracting either domestic

or international investment reflect limitations of the North's domestic economic policymaking capacity. Despite these structural challenges, localized efforts are underway to try to make individual zones work. For instance, teams from Wonsan and Unjong have begun experimenting with outreach and marketing. They are also trying to create more comprehensive development plans and organizations. Around Sinuiju, there are at least two significant construction projects well underway, reflecting a desire for cross-border cooperation in that region. The unfinished new Yalu Bridge, however, stands as a reminder that the success of most of these zones depends heavily on the DPRK's relations with its neighbors. In particular, Wonsan and Rason eagerly await better days. Until they arrive, Rason will continue to putter along; domestic capital and visitors may have only a small impact on the Wonsan area; and smaller projects, like the newly announced Kyongwon Economic Zone, will likely remain largely undeveloped for the foreseeable future. (Andray Abrahamian and Curtis Melvin, "North Korea's Special Economic Zones: Plans vs. Progress," *38North*, November 23, 2015).

11/24/15

NDC Policy Department spokesman's statement "over one more anti-DPRK confrontation farce staged in south Korea with the lapse of five years after the Yeonpyeong Island shelling incident as a momentum: On November 23 the south Korean military authorities staged a reckless artillery firing drill in the hotspot of the West Sea of Korea. For fear of the retaliatory spirit and retaliation of our servicepersons in the southwestern sector of the front, they retracted their plan for live shell firing toward waters of the DPRK side but staged a firing drill in the waters around the five islands in the West Sea, the most acute area. This was the most vicious military provocation aimed at confrontation with the fellow countrymen in the north and a reckless saber-rattling by those who are oblivious of the defeat they suffered five years ago. What was more serious is a "memorial service on the fifth anniversary" held in Seoul, another anti-DPRK confrontation farce. Attending the service were the authorities including the prime minister and the defense minister and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the chief of staff of the three services and other political and military bellicose elements of south Korea and even the commander of the south Korea-U.S. combined forces. At the "service" they didn't utter a word of apology for the fact that they provoked the Yeonpyeong Island shelling incident, but made absurd remarks aimed to shift the blame for it onto the DPRK. What enraged us is that they conducted without hesitation such horrible deeds as tearing the flag of the DPRK and hurting the dignity of its supreme leadership, a sin to be punished by Heaven. They even used reptile media to spread sheer lies that their shelling in the incident left ten-odd soldiers of the KPA dead and tens heavily wounded. The gravity of the situation lies in that the above-said confrontation farce was staged under the direct wire-pulling of Chongwadae. As soon as the chief executive of Chongwadae came back from her foreign trip, she incited the fever of confrontation with the DPRK in her "video message", in which she expressed "condolence" on the dead provokers of the Yeonpyeong Island shelling incident and called for "rapid counteraction to any provocation by the north" and "perfect military preparedness." After all, the south Korean authorities clearly showed again that their hostile and confrontation "policy towards the north" still remains unchanged. It is as clear as noonday what results such confrontation racket they staged when various pending issues between the north and

the south are put on the agenda, will bring about. We will follow the south Korean authorities' attitude." (KCNA, "NDC Policy Department Spokesman Hits at S. Korean Authorities' Reckless Provocation," November 24, 2015)

11/27/15

South and North Korea agreed to hold vice ministerial talks on December 11 in the North Korean border city of Kaesong, raising hopes for easing strained inter-Korean relations. The agreement came after 11 hours of marathon negotiations that began at 12:50 p.m., yesterday, at the truce village of Panmunjom. "We agreed that the delegation will be headed by vice ministerial-level officials. We will decide on the number of members at each other's convenience," said a joint press release after the meeting. In the talks, Seoul and Pyongyang are expected to discuss whether to resume the suspended Mount Kumgang tour program and normalize reunions of war-separated families, raising expectations for a thaw in inter-Korean relations. "The South stressed that the separated families issue is a major problem that should be resolved," said Ministry of Unification spokesman Jeong Joon-hee in a briefing. "For the North, the Mount Kumgang tour issue is an urgent question." However, skepticism prevails over whether the vice ministerial dialogue will reach any meaningful agreement. Cheong Seong-chang, a senior fellow at the think tank Sejong Institute, echoed this sentiment, saying, "There is a big difference between things that can be agreed upon at vice ministerial-level talks and those that can be decided at ministerial-level talks." He said the agreement on holding vice ministerial-level talks showed a lack of will of the two Koreas to move toward effective dialogue. Cheong added that there remains a further question as to who will be the head of the delegation due to differences between the two sides' political systems -- disputes could emerge over which officials of the two Koreas match up as counterparts.

In June 2013, planned inter-Korean talks were cancelled just a day before the two sides planned to meet due to wrangles over who in the North was on the same level as the South's unification minister. Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, also assessed the agreement as just maintaining the momentum to keep the August 25 inter-Korean agreement alive, but it will not be easy to achieve a substantial outcome from the upcoming talks. The professor also questioned the location, saying, "Holding the talks at Gaeseong is in violation of the August 25 agreement that stated the two would hold inter-Korean talks in Seoul or Pyongyang. It revealed the North's intention not to regularize such talks." Regarding the venue issue, the ministry spokesman said that Seoul demanded that the talks be held here, while the North wanted the talks to be held in Kaesong, Mount Kumgang or Panmunjom, citing convenience of location. "Future talks could take place in different cities including Seoul and Pyongyang," he said. (Jun Ji-hye, "Koreas Agree to Hold Vice-Ministerial Talks," *Korea Times*, November 27, 2015)

11/28/15

North Korea conducted a rare test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile over the weekend, but it ended in failure, said a South Korean lawmaker who attended a closed-door parliamentary briefing by the National Intelligence Service on November 30. Joo Ho-young, a governing party lawmaker and chairman of the National Assembly's Intelligence Committee, cited officials from the intelligence service, the South's main spy agency, as saying that North Korea had conducted the test on Saturday off Wonsan, a port city east of Pyongyang, with its leader, Kim Jong-un,

watching. But there was no sign that the missile was successfully ejected from the submarine and took off, Mr. Joo told reporters after the intelligence officials briefed his committee. No rocket trajectory was detected, and what appeared to be debris from a missile was later seen floating on the surface of the sea, he said. The intelligence service declined to comment on the closed-door parliamentary session. Kim Min-seok, the main spokesman for the Defense Ministry of South Korea, declined to provide details, saying that information related to "the North's launching of an SLBM," or submarine-launched ballistic missile, remained classified. "What we can say is that North Korea is continuing the development and testing of an S.L.B.M.," Mr. Kim said. "It is a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions banning it from developing or testing ballistic missiles." Fears in the South of North Korean missile threats have grown since May, when the North claimed that it had successfully test-fired such a weapon and released photographs of Mr. Kim observing a missile soaring out of the water. Some missile experts have since questioned the claim, however, saying that the photographs appeared to have been modified. They said the North was probably still many years away from developing a submarine-launched ballistic missile, which would present a hard-to-detect danger for its enemies in the region. But South Korean officials maintained that the North had successfully fired a submarine-launched missile, which flew nearly 500 feet before falling into the sea. They said they expected more such tests. As it vowed to counter the North's growing missile threat, South Korea said in June that it had successfully test-fired its first ballistic missile with a range great enough to hit any part of North Korea. The South's president, Park Geun-hye, was said to have watched that test. (Choe Sang-hun, "North Korean Test of Submarine-Launched Missile Was Unsuccessful, South Says," *New York Times*, December 1, 2015, p. A 9) North Korea apparently failed to launch a ballistic missile from a submarine, a South Korean official said, in a sign that Pyongyang has yet to master the technology. North Korea is believed to have fired a KN-11 missile from a submarine in the East Sea roughly between 2:20 p.m. and 2:40 p.m., but the submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) failed to soar from the waters, the official said. "The North appears to have failed in its launch," the official said, citing debris from the missile found on the ocean surface. It is the first time that North Korea has fired an SLBM since May when it claimed its leader Kim Jong-un oversaw a successful underwater test-launch of a "strategic submarine ballistic missile." In May, South Korea's defense ministry described the North's SLBM launch as "very serious and worrying," though the missile appeared to have flown only about 100 or 150 meters from the surface of the water. (Kim Kwang-tae, "North Korea Apparently Fails to Launch Ballistic Missile from Sub: Official," *Yonhap*, November 28, 2015) North Korea's first submarine capable of firing missiles underwater suffered serious damage during a failed test launch last month, according to defense officials. The Sinpo-class submarine attempted to launch North Korea's KN-11 submarine-launched ballistic missile during a test November 28 in the Sea of Japan, but officials said the missile failed to properly eject from its firing tube, causing damage to the submarine and its sail. Details of the damage were not disclosed by officials familiar with intelligence reports of the test. The assessment of damage to the submarine was based on debris analyzed by U.S. satellites and other technical intelligence means. The KN-11 SLBM is part of North Korea's plan to develop missiles capable of hitting U.S. targets in the region and at long distances, analysts said. North Korea is believed to have a small nuclear warhead for its missiles. The failed

test was closely monitored by U.S. intelligence agencies that have been tracking the SLBM development program closely since at least last year. The test was carried out in the Sea of Japan near Wonson, a coastal city in central North Korea. North Korean state-run media made no mention of the failed test. An earlier flight test was trumpeted by North Korea as a major step in the nuclear program. The officials said it is believed North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un was present for the failed test. Kim was photographed visiting a shoe factory in Wonson the day before the missile test failure. The missile was believed to be fired from a modified submarine whose origins are unknown. Bruce Bechtol, a former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst and expert on North Korea, said the SLBM test failure indicates that North Koreans are continuing to make progress in building a larger, blue-water submarine force. "This test appears—at least in the early analysis—to be an actual test of a submarine along with the SLBM,," Bechtol said. "Thus, since reporting confirms that this is the third test this year, Pyongyang seems intent on testing and fielding this submarine and the matching ballistic missile as quickly as possible." Bechtol said more failed tests can be expected on the way toward fielding a missile submarine. The weapon will give Pyongyang "a dual-strike capability against targets all over Asia and perhaps Hawaii," he said. It was the second test of what the Pentagon is calling the KN-11 missile and North Korea calls the Bukgeukseong-1. A KN-11 flight test conducted in May was a success. The KN-11 was ejected from underwater and flew a short distance. Kim was present for that test. A model of the new SLBM was shown for the first time in North Korea in October. The miniature missile model appeared on state media along with two other ballistic missiles at an exhibition in Pyongyang marking the October 10 anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. The design of the SLBM looks similar to China's JL-2 SLBM, suggesting covert cooperation between Beijing and Pyongyang. Adm. Cecil Haney, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, officially confirmed the North Korean submarine missile program in prepared testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March. The Sinpo-class submarine has been seen in commercial satellite photographs at a special shipyard at the Sinpo port. The submarine, which launches missiles from one or two tubes in its sail, may have been redesigned from several Soviet-era Golf II ballistic missile submarines obtained for scrap metal in the early 1990s. The submarine have been refurbished or built new from the Golf II design. North Korea obtained several decommissioned Soviet-era Golf II ballistic-missile submarines in the early 1990s. It is believed the North Koreans either refurbished the subs or copied their design for an indigenous submarine. According to U.S. government documents revealed by Wikileaks, North Korea obtained a submarine-launched ballistic missile known as the SS-N-6 from Russia several years ago. Intelligence agencies disagree on when North Korea will be capable of fielding a ballistic missile submarine. Prior to the failed tests, estimates for the first deployment of missile submarine ranged from one year to five years. U.S. officials have said the submarine-launched ballistic missile tests violate United Nations sanctions imposed after earlier underground nuclear and long-range missile tests. (Bill Gertz, "North Korean Submarines Damaged in Missile Test," *Washington Free Beacon*, December 8, 2015) Following the test of an underwater missile ejection system of the first submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in May this year, North Korea conducted an even more ambitious test towards the end of last month - a flight test of

the aforementioned SLBM, the *Bukkeukseong-1* or "Polaris-1" missile. Despite the test being conducted from a floating barge, implying that Pyongyang lacks the confidence or capability for a full-fledged underwater test, the *Bukkeukseong-1* failed upon launch, with missile debris subsequently seen floating in the Sea of Japan. But even as anti-DPRK watchers might feel a sense of *schadenfreude* when Pyongyang's missile development team stumbles and falls, or even snigger at the lackluster qualities of their missiles, gloating is not only premature but ill-advised. Based on available information, the North Korean *Bukkeukseong-1* is likely a copy of the obsolete Soviet SS-N-5 "Sark" SLBM. Taking the development of the *Sark* as a guideline for the operational introduction of Pyongyang's first SLBM, it can be seen that the Soviets took about four years from 1958-1962 to design and flight test the first SS-N-5. Notwithstanding the fact that Moscow's missile research was backed by the full scientific and industrial muscle of the USSR, while Pyongyang has to make do with the decidedly inferior military-industrial complex driving its missile program, the latter can take however long it needs, and make all the blunders necessary (no matter how embarrassing) to build and deploy its first successful SLBM. It is of little comfort to Washington, Seoul and Tokyo whether the Korean People's Navy fields its first SLBM in 2019, or takes twice the time the Soviets did, and puts SLBMs out to sea in 2023. Next, those who decry the North Korean "Polaris-1" as being inferior or retrograde, citing the missile's predicted short range of 890 nautical miles, which makes even a strike on Guam improbable, and its poor accuracy (only 50 percent of all missiles are likely to land within 2.8 km of a target), should note this is only the DPRK's first SLBM prototype. As long as the Kim regime endures, its missile research and manufacturing sector can adopt a long run time horizon to implement modifications and improvements to this missile while it is still a prototype. Consequently, the final successfully flight-tested version might be a far more threatening creature than the one designed in the initial blueprints. As proof of the non-static nature of North Korean missiles, it can be seen that the DPRK's introduced missiles have increasing range and capabilities. From the *Hwasong-5* in 1985 with a range of 320 km and a 1000 kg warhead, to the *Rodong-1* in 1990 with a 900-km range and identical warhead, and finally the *Taepodong-2*, the technological basis for the *Unha* rocket which successfully lofted a satellite into space on December 12, 2012, it is evident that Pyongyang's scientists and engineers remain determined to advance their nation's missile forces. It can thus be safely assumed that they will be equally committed to their SLBM project. (Nah Liang Tuang, "Rethinking North Korean Missile Capabilities," *The Diplomat*, December 13, 2015)

12/2/15

DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement: "Of late outdated assertions about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and resumption of the six-party talks are being repeated in the vicinity of the DPRK. As well known to the world, the DPRK clarified more than once its fair and aboveboard stand on replacing the Korean Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty for the purpose of defusing the danger of a war and tension on the peninsula and creating a peaceful climate. The U.S. is still talking about the denuclearization and the resumption of the six-party talks everywhere it goes, insisting that it is necessary to make important progress in the efforts for the denuclearization before replacing the AA with the peace treaty. Looking back upon the history, the DPRK gave precedence to the discussion of the issue of denuclearization in the bilateral and multilateral forms and comprehensively discussed

the issue of the denuclearization and the matter of concluding the peace treaty simultaneously but nothing has been settled. From a logical point of view, nobody can understand the U.S. assertion that peace can be achieved when the DPRK unilaterally disarm itself before others under the present situation where the U.S. hostile policy towards the DPRK persists and both sides are still technically at war. It is the truth clearly proved in practice that **nothing can be settled as long as the issue of concluding the peace treaty is mixed with the matter of realizing the denuclearization**. If the peace treaty is concluded and the termination of the U.S. hostile policy towards the DPRK, the root cause of all problems, is confirmed, all problems including the U.S. concern can be settled. The DPRK and the U.S., the parties actually responsible for concluding the peace treaty, should sit at a negotiating table without any precondition to **discuss the conclusion of the peace treaty, to begin with**. The U.S. should stop employing sleight of hand and respond to the DPRK-U.S. dialogue for concluding the peace treaty at an early date." (KCNA, "Spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry Urges U.S. to Discuss Conclusion of a Peace Treaty," December 2, 2015)

Jeffrey Lewis: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that North Korea is excavating a new tunnel for nuclear testing at the Punggye-ri nuclear test site. This tunnel is in a new area of the site in addition to the three others where the North has either conducted nuclear tests or excavated tunnels in the past. While there are no indications that a nuclear test is imminent, the new tunnel adds to North Korea's ability to conduct additional detonations at Punggye-ri over the coming years if it chooses to do so. ...The new tunnel, which provides access to Mount Musan, is located in a new area at the Punggye-ri test site and represents an addition to the three existing areas. All are arranged around a central support facility and are referred to by their location relative to that facility. They are: The **East Portal**, the site of North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, which does not appear to be maintained. The **North Portal**, used for tests in 2009 and 2013 and previously known as the *West Portal*, but more properly is described as lying North of the main support area, which continues to show signs of activity. The **South Portal**, which has been under construction since 2009. The new **West Portal**—North Korea's fourth area at which it can conduct nuclear tests. While some analysts conclude each entrance connects to a single tunnel, it is possible that each portal is an entrance to an underground complex capable of supporting multiple nuclear detonations in branches off a main test tunnel. North Korea conducted nuclear tests in 2009 and 2013, apparently using the same main tunnel. If this is the case, Pyongyang would be able to conduct additional tests in the future. One limiting factor is the physical size of the mountain—how many branches can be constructed with sufficient overburden to contain nuclear explosions conducted within. A second challenge is so-called tired mountain syndrome—the hypothesis that repeated nuclear explosive tests will weaken the rock in the mountain, leaving it unable to contain nuclear explosions. US nuclear weapons designers debated whether cracks observed at Rainier Mesa at the Nevada Test Site indicated "tired mountain syndrome." The North Koreans may have similar concerns or uncertainties." (Jeffrey Lewis, "New Nuclear Test Tunnel under Construction at North Korea's Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site," December 2, 2015) "I'm tempted to believe that the fourth tunnel is just a bluff to put pressure on the international community to resume discussion with them," Lassina

Zerbo, head of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), told Reuters December 7. North Korea has been steadily working on its nuclear program, but a fourth test is not seen as imminent. "One would not anticipate that North Korea would go for new testing at a time when they are engaged in discussions with their brothers from the South," Zerbo said. "In the 21st century, they are the only country to have conducted a nuclear test explosion. In the 21st century, the world is too civilized for anyone to resume testing." (James Pearson, "North Korea Test Site Activity Could Be Bluff, Nuclear Ban Monitor Says," Reuters, December 7, 2015)

12/3/15

China's "normal and stable" relations with North Korea will be conducive to a resolution to the nuclear issue and regional peace, a senior Chinese official said. Hua Chunying, spokeswoman for the Chinese foreign ministry, admitted that the bilateral relationship was frosty until recently due to a dispute over Pyongyang's continued nuclear development but that it is warming up again. With regard to the matter, she said, China has three unswerving principles--realizing the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula and resolving it peacefully through dialogue. North Korea is "displeased" with China's constant call for denuclearization, Hua said in a roundtable meeting with a group of South Korean reporters earlier this week. Pyongyang is also apparently upset about China's close partnerships with South Korea. "Improved relations between China and North Korea are helpful to resolving the nuclear issue and resuming the six-party talks," Hua said through a translator. "So, China will continue efforts for the normal and stable development of relations with North Korea." She stressed that Beijing will seek "friendly cooperative ties" with South and North Korea alike. Hua added China is well aware of growing skepticism over the six-way talks aimed at ending the North's nuclear program. China wants both the U.S. and North Korea to lower their guards, she said, citing Pyongyang's nuclear test in 2013 and Washington's regular joint military drills with Seoul. "There is mutual distrust. In order to restart dialogue, parties concerned should make joint efforts," she said, asking South Korea to play a more active role as well. Hua held out expectations over the upcoming vice ministerial meeting between the two Koreas, which comes weeks after a rare event to have families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War briefly reunited. "Such positive exchanges will be able to not only promote mutual trust and help improve bilateral relations but also contribute to creating conditions for the resumption of the six-way talks," she said. As to the agony of North Korean defectors, she made it clear that the Chinese government regards them as "economic migrants" illegally entering its territory. China deals with them in accordance with its domestic law, related international law and humanitarian principles, she said. Hua also expressed hope that Seoul and Beijing will speed up talks on the demarcation of their maritime boundaries. The two sides have long struggled to resolve the issue of the submerged, Seoul-controlled leodo, a submerged reef that lies within the overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of South Korea and China. leodo is located 149 kilometers southwest of Korea's southernmost island of Marado and 247 kilometers northeast of the nearest Chinese island Tongdao. South Korea has scientific research facilities on leodo. Seoul and Beijing plan to hold a new round of negotiations on their EEZs in mid-December. Since leodo is not a "territory," there is no territorial row between the two nations, Hua pointed out. Once Beijing and Seoul resolve the matter in a "positive and constructive" way, it would be very helpful

to the development of bilateral ties down the road, she emphasized. (Lee Chi-dong, "Improved Pyongyang-Beijing Ties to Help Resume Six-Party Talks: Hua," Yonhap, December 3, 2015)

The chief nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan agreed Thursday to work together to deter North Korea from submarine-launched ballistic missile tests (SLBM) and other provocations, Seoul's nuclear envoy said. Hwang Joon-kook, Seoul's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, made the remark after trilateral talks with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts -- Amb. Sung Kim, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy; and Ishikane Kimihiro, director-general at Japan's Foreign Ministry. "We shared an understanding that the international community should send a strong message to deter strategic provocations like SLBM (tests) or satellite launches," Hwang told reporters. "We also agreed to continue to work together to carry out Security Council resolutions earnestly and to improve the effectiveness of Security Council sanctions." Hwang also urged the North to accept an offer to hold unconditional "exploratory talks" aimed at discussing how to restart the long-stalled six-party denuclearization negotiations. The first steps toward denuclearization would be for the North to refrain from nuclear or missile tests, halt nuclear activity and allow U.N. nuclear inspectors back to the country, he said. Kim, the U.S. envoy, also urged the North to refrain from provocative acts and make good on its own commitments to denuclearization. "North Korea should refrain from any provocation. The numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions made it very clear that North Korea should not be conducting provocative actions," he said. Kim also said he expressed "Washington's very strong support" for Seoul's efforts to improve inter-Korean ties. "I can assure you that there is no daylight in our perspective on how we need to be dealing with the challenges posed by North Korea," he said. After arriving in Washington yesterday, Hwang held a meeting with U.S. Treasury Department officials to discuss how to improve the effectiveness of sanctions on North Korea. He also held a bilateral meeting with the new Japanese envoy. On Thursday morning, Hwang met one-on-one with U.S. envoy Kim. The two sides reaffirmed that "there is no daylight" between the two countries on North Korea, the State Department said in a Twitter message, without elaborating. (Chang Jae-soon, "S. Korea, U.S., Japan Agree to Wrok Together to Deter SLBM, Other N.K. Provocations," Yonhap, December 4, 2015)

The Defense Ministry has launched a full-fledged study on introducing a state-of-the-art U.S. missile defense system to guard against ballistic missiles from North Korea, it was learned today. The ministry is aiming to deploy the ground-based Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system under its next five-year defense buildup program, starting in fiscal 2019, informed sources said. After a meeting with senior officials of the U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii late last month, Japanese Defense Minister Nakatani Gen told reporters: "Introducing the THAAD system could be one of concrete measures to boost Japan's missile defense capabilities. We'll accelerate our study on Japan's future defense system." Japan currently has a two-stage ballistic missile defense strategy that calls for first trying to destroy a missile in space with Standard-Missile 3, or SM-3, interceptors launched from an Aegis destroyer and, in case the SM-3 misses the target, intercepting it within the atmosphere with the Patriot Advance

Capability-3, or PAC-3, surface-to-air missile system from ground bases. The THAAD system is designed to shoot down a missile with higher accuracy than PAC-3 when it reenters the atmosphere. The Defense Ministry is also considering deploying the Aegis-based SM-3 system on the ground, the sources said. The ministry has already asked Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. to conduct research on how to operate the THAAD system and ground-based SM-3 interceptors. But high costs are a major hurdle to introducing the new missile defense strategy. In addition, China could raise its opposition by saying that the Japanese move could destroy the regional balance in terms of missile defense posture, the sources said. (Jiji, "Japan Considers Introduction of New System for Defense against North Korean Missiles, *Japan Times*, December 3, 2015)

12/7/15 A key official of the Chinese Communist Party in charge of political relations with North Korea has said that he wants to improve ties with Pyongyang to a "new level," in the latest sign of warmer relations between the allies. Song Tao, who was recently appointed head of the Chinese Communist Party's international department, made the remarks during a meeting with North Korea's Ambassador to China Ji Jae-ryong in Beijing, according to the Chinese Communist Party's website. Song was believed to have succeeded Wang Jiarui last month. Wang had held the post over the last 12 years and played a key role when leaders of the two nations held summits. "Party-to-party exchanges played an important role in the development of China-North Korea relations," Song told Ji, according to a statement posted on the party's website. Song said he is "willing to promote China-North Korea relations to a new level." (Yonhap, "China Vows to Improve Relations with N. Korea to 'New Level,'" *Korea Times*, December 8, 2015)

12/8/15 DoS: "To further impede North Korea's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs, the Department of State is announcing on December 8 the designation of North Korea's Strategic Force for its contribution to North Korea's WMD-related activities. The Strategic Force has been designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13382 ("Blocking Property of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferators and Their Supporters). The Strategic Force conducted multiple ballistic missile launches during 2014. Specifically, it conducted the launches of two short-range Scud-class ballistic missiles, test-fired two medium-range No Dong-class ballistic missiles, and conducted the launch of a short-range ballistic missile. All missiles had a range of 500km or greater. The launches of these missiles materially contributed to North Korea's ballistic missile program. North Korea's nuclear and missile proliferation activities violate UN Security Council Resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013), and 2094 (2013), destabilize the region, and undermine the global nonproliferation regime." (Department of State Office of Spokesperson Media Note, "Designation of North Korean Entities Pursuant to Executive Order 13382," December 8, 2015)

William Perry: "ACT: In your book, you write that the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons program over the past 15 years "is perhaps the most unsuccessful exercise of diplomacy in our country's history." What could the George W. Bush and Obama administrations have done differently to avoid this outcome? Perry: Well, we

had a negotiation going with the North Koreans in 2000, which was very close to an agreement. When the administration changed, the Bush administration simply cut off any discussions with the North Koreans. That was demonstrated to be not an effective way of dealing with the North Koreans, but it didn't seem to me to be a wise way even before we saw the outcome. We should have kept the dialogue going, and that was a big mistake, I think. ACT: With regard to the Obama administration's approach to North Korea, how would you assess its strategy toward reducing the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program? Perry: It evidently has not been effective. But I would say, somewhat in their defense, that by the time they got into office, North Korea already had nuclear weapons. In 2001, North Korea did not yet have nuclear weapons. There was an opportunity for a much easier negotiation; it was much more feasible to negotiate with them not to develop nuclear weapons and not to produce nuclear weapons. Once they had nuclear weapons, the negotiation got very much harder. Now the administration had to argue with them to give up what they already have, and so I think the opportunity that was lost was between 2001 and 2008. That was when we had the chance to stop the North Korean nuclear program. ACT: Given where we are now, what realistically in your view can be achieved at this point to stop and perhaps roll back North Korea's nuclear weapons program? Perry: I don't have any better advice on that than Sig Hecker, the former director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, has given. He said that, given that they already have the nuclear weapons, making our position in the negotiations that they must give them up is a very hard negotiation. So he argues instead to put that aside for the time being and take a more limited goal in diplomacy. It's what he calls the three noes, which is no new nuclear weapons, no more nuclear weapons, and no selling of nuclear weapons or technology.¹ Those are the three noes that he states, and he offers some positive incentives we might give for that to happen. He said that should be the basis of the negotiation. If we ever succeed in that, then we can take the next step in trying to get them to roll back their arsenal. But as far as I can determine, we have not proceeded along the lines of those three noes. That was a tactical approach that Sig had that I supported at the time and still do. I think it was a reasonable approach to dealing with the North. (Daniel Horner and Kingston Reif, "Lowering Nuclear Risks: An Interview with Former Defense Secretary William Perry," *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2006)

12/9/15

The United States said that denuclearization remains the top priority in its dealings with North Korea as the communist nation has stepped up its demand for peace treaty negotiations. The U.S. has said the North's demand is a nonstarter as long as the North pursues nuclear ambitions. U.S. officials have stressed that the communist regime has got the order wrong and should first focus on negotiations to end its nuclear program. "Our policy has not changed, and we will judge North Korea by its actions, not its words. Denuclearization remains our top priority," Katina Adams, a State Department spokesperson, said in response to a Yonhap question about the North's demand. The U.S. also remains in close contact with the other members of the six-party talks about the "shared goal of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner," she said. (Yonhap, "U.S. Says Denuclearization Remains Top Priority amid N. Korea's Demand for Peace Treaty Talks," December 9, 2015)

Jack Liu: "Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that construction at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station ("Tongchang-ri") of new propellant (fuel/oxidizer) storage bunkers at the launch pad and engine test stand appear to be near completion, signifying what is likely the end of a three-year upgrade program. That program is probably designed to support future activities related to the testing and launching of larger rockets. With the upgrade program nearing completion, North Korea will be ready to conduct further activities at Sohae, including space launches, by the first quarter of 2016 should the leadership in Pyongyang decide to do so." (Jack Liu, "Sohaе Staellite Launch Facility: Three Year Upgrade Program Likely near Completion," *38North*, December 9, 2015)

12/10/15 KCNA: "Kim Jong-un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, first chairman of the DPRK National Defense Commission and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, provided field guidance to the Phyongchon Revolutionary Site rebuilt into an eternal treasure of the Songun revolution. The Phyongchon Revolutionary Site is a historic place associated with the undying feats of President Kim Il Sung and leader Kim Jong Il, who chose the site for the first arsenal in the liberated country and paved an untrodden path for the munitions industry. ... The Phyongchon Revolutionary Site is just a native place of the Songun arms, he said, adding: Every gun, produced thanks to the tireless efforts of the President, has formed a forest of arms defending the Party and the revolution, the country and its people and **the historic gun report made by him at the site turned the DPRK into a powerful nuclear weapons state ready to detonate self-reliant A-bomb and H-bomb** to reliably defend its sovereignty and the dignity of the nation." (KCNA, "Kim Jong-un Visits Remodeled Phyongchon Revolutionary Site," December 10, 2015)

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appeared to claim his country has developed a hydrogen bomb, a step up from the less powerful atomic bomb, but outside experts were skeptical. Kim made the comments as he toured the Phyongchon Revolutionary Site, which marks the feats of his father who died in 2011 and his grandfather, state founder and eternal president, Kim Il Sung, KCNA said. The work of Kim Il Sung "turned the DPRK into a powerful nuclear weapons state ready to detonate a self-reliant A-bomb and H-bomb to reliably defend its sovereignty and the dignity of the nation," KCNA quoted Kim Jong-un as saying. An official at South Korea's intelligence agency told Yonhap there was no evidence that the North had hydrogen bomb capacity, and believed Kim was speaking rhetorically. The Foreign Ministry in China, North Korea's most important economic and diplomatic backer, said China was dedicated to ensuring the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and resolving problems through talks. "We hope that all sides can do more to ameliorate the situation and make constructive efforts to maintain peace and stability on the peninsula," ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing when asked about Kim's remarks. (Jack Kim, "North Korean Leader's H-Bomb Claim Draws Skepticism," Reuters, December 10, 2015) The White House said it doubts North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's claims that the communist nation has developed hydrogen bombs. "We certainly are concerned about the policies and intent and destabilizing actions of the North Korean regime. At this point, you know, the information that we have access to calls into serious question those claims," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said at a regular briefing of the North's H-bomb

claims. "But we take very seriously the risks and the threat that is posed by the North Korean regime and their ambitions to develop a nuclear weapon that doesn't just threaten our close allies in South Korea, but could have a pretty destabilizing impact and even a national security threat to other countries in the region," he said. (Chang Jae-soon, "White House Doubts North Korea's H-Bomb Development Claims," Yonhap, December 11, 2015) Obviously, this is propaganda. Kim was visiting a historical site known as the birthplace of North Korea's domestic armaments industry. It wouldn't be surprising if such a visit was an occasion for Kim to embellish the status of the *Juche Bomb* a bit, as he traced the evolution of North Korea's arms industry from its humble beginnings. But it also follows other statements over the past five years when North Korean flunkies and officials have hinted at a thermonuclear weapons capability. Most recently, the DPRK Ambassador in London claimed, in prepared remarks, that North Korea had weapons ten times as powerful as the ones that had been tested. Given that such speeches are often prepared by local embassy staff, amalgamating previously published statements, it seemed unwise to draw too strong an inference at the time. But the idea of a North Korean H-bomb has been floating around for a bit. Technically, a few words of caution are in order. Building a staged thermonuclear weapon—one in which the radiation from a fission primary compresses a secondary stage of thermonuclear fuel—would seem to be a bit of a stretch for the North Koreans. That is the sort of device one normally thinks about when someone says "H-bomb." Thermonuclear weapons are tricky; making one work requires a bit of test experience. While the North Koreans finally conducted an unambiguously successful nuclear test in 2013, the 2006 and 2009 tests were less so. A more technically plausible scenario is that North Korea might be experimenting with fusion fuels, such as deuterium or lithium, to boost the yield of a fission explosion. Pretty much every country that builds nuclear weapons looks at using fusion fuel to boost the yield of a device. China, for example, burned lithium-6 in its third test, conducted less than two years after its first nuclear test in October 1964. China was committed to developing a staged thermonuclear device, something it accomplished with its fifth and sixth nuclear tests in 1966 and 1967. Pakistan tried to purchase a tritium separation line, something AQ Khan claims it did successfully. Even South Africa had a program to look at boosting its gun-type devices for missile delivery, going so far as to import tritium from Israel. In 2010, I noted that we had little evidence that the DPRK is interested in boosted nuclear weapons or staged thermonuclear devices beyond the May announcement that it had conducted fusion related experiments. Since then, the DPRK propaganda apparatus has made only a few mentions of fusion, all apparently references to the 2010 announcement. Typical, for example, are statements that North Korea was a "socialist powerhouse" because "eye-catching successes were registered in space, nuclear fusion, CNC and other scientific and technological fields and a lot of edifices built throughout the country." There has not been much evidence to document the DPRK's interest in boosted weapons since then, although David Albright points out that North Korea has installed or renovated irradiation channels in the core of the gas-graphite reactor at Yongbyon, which might indicate tritium production. (Carey Sublette has noted that similar channels were visible in the images of the now-destroyed Al Kibar reactor that North Korea assisted Syria in constructing.) While it is best to treat DPRK propaganda with some skepticism, it is also important to note that the North has now had a nuclear weapons program for more than 20 years. This program has yielded

three nuclear tests. North Korean nuclear scientists have access to their counterparts in Pakistan, possibly Iran and maybe a few other places. We should not expect that they will test the same fission device over and over again. We think of the country as impoverished, both in terms of economy and leadership. Well, that's not how the government in North Korea sees itself—and anyone who does, keeps such thoughts to himself. Pyongyang's propaganda apparatus argues—and this is what Kim was saying—that North Korea is a technological powerhouse. The North Korean propaganda line argues that this power is demonstrated by a series of achievements culminating in space launches, nuclear weapons and, yes, even thermonuclear weapons. So, while a staged thermonuclear weapon is likely more than North Korea can, at the moment, achieve technically, it is a mistake to rule out the aspiration by Pyongyang. An H-bomb might not conveniently fit our perception of North Korea, but perhaps that is Kim's point. (Jeffrey Lewis, "Did Somebody Say H-Bomb?" *38North*, December 14, 2015)

The vice-chairman of South Korea's Presidential Committee for Unification Preparation (PCUP) noted the dangers of an absorption scenario on the Korean Peninsula and stressed the need for an eventual peaceful unification while visiting the US this week. PCUP vice-chairman Chung Chong-wook was speaking during a seminar at the Heritage Foundation in Washington. "An absorption scenario would bring about an uncontrollable situation not only for South Korea, but even for the US," he warned. "Not only that, but the more important thing is the possibility it would bring disaster in North Korea," he added. Citing mass violence such as a slaughter of civilians by an organized military as a possible example of a disaster, Chung stressed, "What we want is peaceful reunification, and for North Korea to be a partner in efforts to bring this kind of unification about." Chung went on to say that the PCUP is "working toward unification on the assumption that it has to be peaceful." "We are aware that the path to peaceful unification is fraught with danger, but there is no other alternative," he declared. When asked whether the PCUP would continue to exist after the current administration under President Park Geun-hye, Chung replied, "I hope so." While Chung's remarks about peaceful reunification appeared to reflect the PCUP's position or current mood, they do not appear to have been the result of in-depth discussions with Park or the Blue House. Meanwhile, Seoul National University economics professor and PCUP economic specialist committee member Kim Byung-yun, noting the growth in the North Korean economy over the past four years despite international sanctions, said the "current moment appears to call for engagement policy." (Yi Yong-in, "Vice-Chairman of Preparation Committee Stresses Need for 'Peaceful Reunification,'" *Hankyore*, December 12, 2015)

12/11-12/15 South and North Korea appeared divided on key issues, during their first round of vice-ministerial talks, such as the reunions of families torn apart by the 1950-53 Korean War and the resumption of a suspended joint tour program to Mount Kumgang. The dialogue opened amicably with a 30-minute session at 10:40 a.m. at the joint industrial complex in the North's border city of Kaeseong, at which the two sides shared the need for mutual efforts in mending strained inter-Korean relations. But they made no more progress afterward, dragging their feet to return to the negotiating table in the afternoon. The delay raised speculation that they experienced difficulties in narrowing the differences on key issues such as whether to normalize reunions for war-separated

families and resume the suspended tours to the North's scenic mountain resort. Unification Ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-hee refused to elaborate on the details of the dialogue, only saying, "I hope you understand that I cannot mention anything in detail as the negotiations are ongoing. I will let you know once we finish." He also refused to confirm whether the South suggested the separated family issue as an urgent question to be resolved, saying, "I cannot say that either, as everything is related to the agenda." The talks took place as part of efforts to implement a landmark inter-Korean deal reached on Aug. 25 when military tensions were heightened on the Korean Peninsula after North Korean landmines in the South-controlled section of the Demilitarized Zone maimed two South Korean soldiers. But observers say it would not be easy for the two sides to produce a major breakthrough, given there have been great differences of opinion. They also say that vice ministerial dialogue has some limits in reaching any meaningful agreements. The three-member South Korean delegation, led by Vice Unification Minister Hwang Boo-gi, arrived at Kaeseong about 9:53 a.m., where they were received by Jon Jong-su, the North's chief negotiator. During his introductory comments, Jon said: "We should give our mutual effort to bring warmth to the relations between the two Koreas." For his part, Hwang said: "We should step off on the right foot and open up the great way of unification." Jon responded: "I agree. We should break down barriers, bridge the chasm and open up the passage." (Jun Ji-hye, "Koreas Remain apart on Key Issues," *Korea Times*, December 11, 2015) Two days of high-level talks between North and South Korea ended Saturday with no breakthroughs, South Korean officials said, leaving mixed signals about reconciliation efforts the rivals have made since stepping away from a military standoff in August. The meeting of vice-ministerial officials in the town of Kaesong was not expected to produce any substantial results, but the talks were still considered a sign that the rivals were working to keep alive an atmosphere of dialogue – something they've often failed to do in the wake of conflict. After the talks stretched into the evening on the 12th, as they had done on the 11th, they ended without any statement from either side. The countries were also unable to fix a date for a further meeting among senior officials, raising the likelihood of their relations being set back, analysts said. During the talks, South Korea demanded that the North commit to more reunions between aging family members separated by the 1950-53 Korean War or allow them to communicate through letters, said Hwang Boogi, South Korea's vice minister of unification and head negotiator for the talks. North Korea, however, maintained that it couldn't further discuss the separated families issue without the South agreeing to restart joint tours to the North's scenic Diamond Mountain resort. The South refused, causing the talks to end, Hwang said. The Diamond Mountain tours were a valuable source of hard currency for the North before Seoul suspended them in 2008, following the shooting death of a South Korean tourist. "Our government still maintains its basic stance to cultivate a normal relationship between the South and North, and continue dialogue with North Korea with an open mind," Hwang told reporters. In their opening statements yesterday, South Korea said the North's nuclear weapons ambitions were an obstacle to better ties. North Korea, meanwhile, said the South should be more cautious when talking about the North's nuclear and human rights issues, Hwang said. (Kim Tong-hyung, "North, South Korea Talks End without Any Breakthroughs," Associated Press, December 12, 2015) The rare cross-border talks broke down due to differences over a series of pending issues including the

stalled tours to Mount Kumgang and the issue of families separated by the border. The two Koreas failed to set the date for further talks at the two-day vice-ministerial meeting held at a joint industrial park in the North's border city of Kaesong. Seoul officials said the talks that started on December 11 turned into a tug-of-war as Pyongyang officials insisted on resuming the lucrative tours to the North's scenic mountain and linking the issue to the separated families' issue. The South Korean side insisted the "humanitarian issue" of divided families should be separate from the issue of the resumption of the tour program, which was suspended after a South Korean tourist was shot dead in 2008 for purportedly straying into off-limit areas. "The North Korean side did not budge an inch from its stance that without the resolution of the issue of the tour program, they would not discuss any other issues," Seoul's Vice Unification Minister Hwang Boo-gi told reporters after the two-day talks. Hwang led the South Korean delegation during the talks, while the North Korean side was headed by Jon Jong-su, a vice director of the North's Committee for Peaceful Reunification of Korea which handles inter-Korean affairs. Hwang said that during the talks his delegation prioritized finding a "fundamental" resolution to the issue of separated families. His delegation demanded the two sides allow separated families to find out whether their loved ones are still alive and to enable the cross-border exchange of letters among them. But Pyongyang has kept a lukewarm stance, hoping to barter the issue with the resumption of the tour program. Hwang said he had explained to Pyongyang on the first day that "nuclear weapons are an impediment to advancing South-North relations, so the issue must be resolved." As Pyongyang repeatedly continued to emphasize that it would discuss inter-Korean family reunions only after Mount Kumgang tourism was specified in the agreement, South Korea's top agenda items failed to be discussed in detail. Those included facilitating a letter exchange between war-torn families and verifying surviving relatives, a proposal to build an international peace park in the demilitarized zone, and resolving customs and communications issues at the Kaesong Industrial Complex. South Korea also sought to push for a channel for inter-Korean environmental cooperation, the building of infrastructure to guarantee public welfare and cultural exchange. (Yonhap, "Koreas End High-Level Talks without Agreement," *North Korea Newsletter*, 393, December 17, 2015) CPRK spokesman's statement: "The chief delegate of the south side to the first round of the north-south authorities' talks at a press conference in the Kaesong Industrial Park right after the rupture of the talks on December 12 said the south approached the negotiations with sincerity after advancing various proposals but the north side created difficulties in the way of the talks by calling for the simultaneous solution of the resumption of tour of Mt. Kumgang and the issue of "separated families." The south Korean authorities even let conservative media float story that the "north was only concerned for the resumption of the tour of Mt. Kumgang, money box," malignantly slandering the north and giving impression that it was to blame for the rupture of the talks. A spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea in a statement on Tuesday branded this as an intolerable and serious provocation against the dialogue partner. The talks that were provided with much effort amid expectation and concern of all the Koreans ended without any fruit. This was an inevitable result of the confrontation policy of the south Korean authorities who are interested in neither genuine dialogue nor the improvement of the relations. ...In fact, we were of the view that things can hardly be settled even though we sit face to

face with the south Korean authorities who are keen on the moves for escalating confrontation in total breach of the August agreement. But the south side earnestly called for the authorities' talks, saying any issue can be discussed once they are opened. Our idea was to trust them and sit with them first and then solve issues that are deemed urgent and easy in the bilateral relations. So, we, stressing the need to create the atmosphere of dialogue for improving the bilateral relations, proposed resuming the tour of Mt. Kumgang and settling the issue of separated families and relatives, urgent issues about which all the Koreans are concerned, and reactivating exchanges in various fields. But the south side raised lots of unimportant issues which are not helpful to the improvement of the north-south relations in wanton violation of the agreement made at the technical contact for the authorities' talks on seeking negotiated settlement of pending issues between the north and the south, thus deliberately creating difficulties and obstacles. **The DPRK side proposed simultaneously pushing forward and implementing the issues of the resumption of tour and the separated families and relatives as the south side shunned the discussion of the resumption issue but the south side flatly turned down discussion of the tour issue, saying that "it is principle not to link the issue."** We even allowed the extension of the talks, persuading the south side and showing magnanimity, but the south side insisted that it can never agree on resuming the tour, thus pushing the talks into a rupture. What's more, the south Korean authorities now talk loudly in public that it proposed the issue of "three channels." It had better look back on whether it has face to talk about "channel" as it blocked all the wide avenues that were created in the June 15 era and now goes mischievous not to open even such small channel as tour. The talks clearly proved that as long as the south Korean authorities persist in dependence on outsiders and moves for confrontation with fellow countrymen, the north-south relations can never make even a step forward and that even though dialogue is held, nothing will be settled. (KCNA, "S. Korean Authorities Slammed for Pushing Authorities' Talks to Rupture," December 15, 2015)

12/11/15

The stylish women of North Korea's most famous pop band had just arrived in Beijing for a series of concerts to showcase their country's warming relationship with China when Kim Jong-un made an unexpected announcement that his country had developed a hydrogen bomb, a claim immediately dismissed as far-fetched by the United States and others. Within 48 hours, the Moranbong Band was on its way home. There would be no performances of patriotic tunes in miniskirts, no cheering audiences in China's national concert hall, only a diplomatic mess – and a mystery. The 20 musicians were in such a hurry to leave that they were whisked onto a North Korean plane waiting at the Beijing airport even though they had arrived by train. The North Korean government is so practiced at propaganda especially for its home audience that it seemed strange that an effort to cozy up to its most important ally with song and dance could go so spectacularly wrong. More than a week later, it is still unclear what exactly led Pyongyang to pull the plug on the concerts. Yet some aspects seem clear. A few months ago, after a prolonged chill in relations caused by its distaste for Kim as an impetuous and unreliable partner, China began easing tensions. The Chinese leadership had been unhappy since North Korea conducted an underground nuclear test in February 2013. But Kim appeared to delay another test this year, which gave Chinese officials hope that he had begun to heed their warnings against further

development of nuclear arms. In the first sign that relations were on the mend, a senior Chinese official, Liu Yunshan, traveled to Pyongyang in October to attend a military parade and was shown on state television chatting with Kim on the reviewing stand, so much so that they looked like best chums. It was the first visit by a member of China's seven-man Politburo Standing Committee to North Korea since Kim assumed power at the end of 2011. Speculation followed that Liu was paving the way for Kim to make a state visit to China, as the North Korean leader's father and predecessor, Kim Jong-il, had done several times with great fanfare. Perhaps as a prelude, Kim Jong-un chose to send the Moranbong Band, a troupe of slim young women long associated with his efforts to project a more modern image of North Korea. The concerts were to be held at China's premier site for foreign acts, the National Center for the Performing Arts near Tiananmen Square. Tickets were not sold to the general public. Instead, they were distributed only to members of the Chinese Communist Party, a signal that the band's visit was intended as a gift for the party apparatus, not just for ordinary Chinese. But on December 10, the day the band arrived in the Chinese capital, KCNA reported Kim's assertion about the hydrogen bomb, which it said he made during a visit to a site that honors his father and grandfather, who ruled North Korea before him. The timing of Kim's statement put Beijing in an awkward position. One Chinese expert on North Korean affairs who has worked closely with the Pyongyang government said Kim had essentially set a trap for the Chinese leadership. Because the Moranbong Band was playing exclusively for a Communist Party audience, the North Koreans expected senior party officials to attend, said the expert, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of his seniority and the delicate nature of the matter. But attendance by a top Chinese leader could be interpreted as an endorsement of Kim's government and in particular its claim to a hydrogen bomb, the analyst said. A Chinese scholar of foreign relations said he had heard similar talk. "There appears to have been some discussions about whether Xi Jinping or Li Keqiang should attend," said Shi Yinong, professor of international relations at Renmin University of Beijing. "Then the hydrogen bomb comment came." Given Beijing's opposition to any expansion of North Korea's nuclear arsenal, Shi said, the sudden announcement about the hydrogen bomb meant that Chinese officials dispatched to the concert would have to be of lower rank. That prospect apparently upset the North Koreans and led Kim to call his favorite band home, Shi said. It is also possible, Shi added, that Kim was unhappy with public commentary about the band in China. Social media in China was ablaze with rumors describing the band's leader, Hyon Song-wol, as Kim's former girlfriend. There was also much discussion of reports in South Korea that Ms. Hyon had been executed along with about a dozen other North Korean performers in 2013. Asked by reporters about the rumors as she arrived at her hotel in Beijing, Ms. Hyon smiled and replied, "Where do you come from?" Chinese Internet users also mocked North Korea's claim to have developed a hydrogen bomb, a sharp contrast with the fawning state-controlled coverage that Kim's father received on his visits to China. The Chinese government eventually began deleting all comments about the Moranbong Band from social media. But by then, the women had already left town. (Jane Perlez, "A Propaganda Misstep Sinks a North Korean Pop Group's Tour of China," *New York Times*, December 22, 2015, p. A-8)

Placement of a U.S. mobile missile defense system in South Korea remains unlikely in the near term despite continued concern about North Korea's nuclear program, analysts and government officials say. Top U.S. military officials want the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD, ready to deploy in the Asia-Pacific region on a permanent basis – and its bases in South Korea are ideally where they need to be to counter a possible North Korean offensive. When rumors spread in March of a deal to deploy THAAD to South Korea in an emergency, China decried the possibility as a threat to its security, with Russia voicing opposition as well. That left South Korea uncomfortably positioned in a dispute pitting China and Russia on one side and the United States and Japan on the other, said Kim Hyun-wook, a professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy in Seoul. The result was that despite discussions between President Barack Obama and South Korean President Park Geun-hye earlier this year, along with high-level ministerial talks between both nations, neither side has confirmed ever having had formal talks about THAAD. Seoul's caution in regard to THAAD also comes from concern over harming its recently stabilized relations with Pyongyang, Kim said. The Koreas have technically remained at war since 1953, so everything is relative when it comes to measuring stability. But recent cross-border family reunions and a series of official talks aren't something the South wants to jeopardize, Kim said. "The situation is now considerably better than it was last spring," Kim said. "It would be making a fool of ourselves to [deploy THAAD]." If North Korea carries out another nuclear test, as it occasionally threatens to do through its propaganda channels, that could always cause South Korea to re-evaluate its needs for THAAD, Kim added. Although China objects to THAAD, relations with Beijing probably wouldn't be affected all that much, Kim said. Kim and other analysts have speculated that China is more interested in loosening the U.S.-South Korea alliance than it is actually worried about THAAD. THAAD can detect threats up to about 620 miles away, but its operational range is roughly 125 miles, according to Missile Threat, a project of the George C. Marshall and Claremont institutes. Moreover, THAAD is designed to intercept missiles inside or just outside the atmosphere in their final phase. If THAAD intercepted a Chinese missile, it would be in the unlikely event that China launched one against South Korea, according to a paper published in April by Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Honolulu-based think tank. In the meantime, the Pentagon is keeping THAAD stashed away in Guam, about 2,000 miles from Seoul. Its presence in Guam is rotational, but Army Pacific Commander Gen. Vincent Brooks told reporters Tuesday that it's time to station THAAD there permanently, according to Military.com. Keeping THAAD in Guam "will make it possible for us to have more options for commitment of THAAD in other places if asked," Brooks added. (Erik Slavin, "South Korea Unlikely to Gain U.S. Missile Defense System, For Now," *Stars and Stripes*, December 11, 2015)

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DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement "in connection with the U.S. ever more desperate moves to stifle the DPRK under the pretext of "human rights issue": By taking advantage of holding chairmanship of the UN Security Council for December, the U.S. again tabled on Dec. 10 the agenda item "Situation in the DPRK" which it had referred to the Council for the first time at the end of last year. ...We strongly denounce and categorically reject the U.S. convocation of another meeting of the UN Security Council aimed at finding fault with the "human rights" in the DPRK despite opposition by many

countries. The U.S. put an agenda item represented by an ambiguous word instead of the expression "human rights" up for discussion in order to make sure that the "human rights issue" in the DPRK is included in the agenda items of the Security Council in the wake of the railroading of the "resolution" "Situation of human rights in the DPRK" at the 69th UN General Assembly last year. It also convened the first session by egging some member nations of the Council. This time it suddenly organized a meeting which was not originally included in the December schedule of the Security Council by arbitrarily playing the role of chair country and brought "defectors from the north" to the sacred place of the UN meeting in a bid to fan up atmosphere of international pressure on the DPRK. But at the meeting more countries than last year opposed the convocation and the discussion of issues outside the mandate of the Security Council based on clear reasons. This revealed the sinister aim sought by the U.S. in its farce and hardened the objective understanding that the U.S. anti-DPRK "human rights" racket is a product of its persistent hostile policy toward the DPRK. The UN Security Council should not waste time by intervening in matters outside its mandate but concentrate on dealing with urgent issues of threatening global peace and security. It should handle such issues as the U.S. harsh tortures and the U.S.-south Korea joint military exercises for aggression against which the DPRK had already brought a lawsuit, in particular. If it is to deal with the issues of the DPRK, it had better table the issue of concluding a peace treaty which we proposed again at the 70th UN General Assembly this year in order to avert the danger of war and create a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula. We will counter with high vigilance and tough stand the anti-DPRK "human rights" racket being kicked up by the hostile forces including the U.S. which is getting all the more desperate in the UN arena." (KCNA, "DPRK Will Counter U.S. Anti-DPRK 'Human Rights' Racket with Tough Stand: Foreign Ministry Spokesman," December 12, 2015)

Brad Babson: "Any new negotiation process with North Korea should be anchored in an expectation that North Korea will negotiate in good faith only if it believes this will result in an improvement in its overall security interests. Negotiating with an expectation of eventual regime collapse or subjugation, such as by buying time for other dynamics of change to undermine regime security, will not give North Korea the confidence to negotiate in good faith and deliver on agreed actions. ...Economic security is an essential component of overall national security. ...A corollary of this principle is that any commitments to financial aid or investment as part of a negotiation should be evaluated from the perspective of how this would contribute toward improving North Korea's longer-term security interests in an economically rational way. ...A final basic principle for positive economic inducements (as well as pressure measures) is to seek multilateral support for them. ...One basic question is whether North Korea can further develop its nuclear and missile programs, while at the same time achieving significant progress in economic development. Recent US policy has been to try to deny North Korea the ability to achieve these ambitions by maintaining strong military deterrence, adding economic sanctions and seeking to persuade other parties to increase pressures on North Korea. Legislation in Congress could further ratchet economic pressure by expanding financial sanctions, although an executive order signed by President Barack Obama in December 2014 already provides the legal authority to apply further pressures. There are two aspects to

consider from an economic perspective when shaping a future nuclear strategy in the context of the byungjin policy. The first is whether pressure alone can deny North Korea the ability to develop its nuclear program and simultaneously improve its economy. The second is how to balance military and peaceful uses of nuclear and missile capabilities in a way that might be acceptable to both sides in a negotiation. As for the first aspect, there are good reasons to be skeptical that pressure alone can deny North Korea the ability to both develop its nuclear program and improve its economy. One is that China, South Korea and Russia each have interests that make it unlikely they would adhere to a policy that applies sufficient economic and financial pressure on North Korea in a coordinated way to force Pyongyang's acquiescence on its nuclear program. Despite increasing Chinese dissatisfaction with North Korea, it is unlikely that China would agree to endorse economic pressures that would risk either regime collapse or large-scale refugee flows into China. In fact, China is seeking to change North Korea from within through its economic engagement policies. South Korea has a long-term interest in maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula, improving inter-Korean relations where possible and pursuing a strategy to support improvements in the North Korean economy that would lessen the economic costs of eventual unification. Russia, meanwhile, is seeking to enhance its influence in North Korean affairs through cross-border cooperation, not pressure. And given the current state of US-Russian relations and Moscow's desire to be an active player in security and economic engagement with both Koreas, if the United States seeks more cooperation to pressure North Korea, Russia would likely do the opposite and bolster economic support for Pyongyang. Another factor to consider regarding North Korea's ability to develop its nuclear program as well as its economy is the impact of North Korean domestic economic policy and initiatives. Under Kim Jong-un, North Korea is pursuing two tracks to improve its economy. One is to promote import substitution to reduce needs for foreign exchange for domestic industries and consumption of consumer goods. The other is to seek productivity gains in domestic production. The priority means are advances in the application of science and technology in various sectors; changes in agriculture policy and management to reduce size of production units and increase incentives to produce for personal profit through sales to markets; and the decentralization of decision making in enterprises to allow for more productive use of labor and capital. There are also signs of new initiatives to bring money accumulated in market economic activities into the banking system. These initiatives could lead to a more efficient allocation of domestic savings for productive investment. While modest, these new initiatives for "economic management in our own style" are likely to result in meaningful gains in the use of domestic resources for economic development. In addition to the potential of these state-sponsored initiatives, the continuing growth of the market economy and its role in providing jobs and improving the standard of living for North Korean people is having a positive impact on economic development. Altogether these developments have the potential to increase the productivity of capital and labor without external support. In light of the traction, however modest, that North Korea is experiencing in its internal economic development efforts and tolerances of the market, it is not surprising that the North Korean leadership is confident in its commitment to the byungjin policy and that it can achieve both goals involving the nuclear program and the economy. The second aspect of the byungjin policy that is relevant for future negotiations on the nuclear program is the expansion

of the concept of nuclear development to include peaceful as well as defensive activities. In a negotiation context, the North Koreans potentially could trade their nuclear weapons program for a combination of alternative ways to meet their national security needs and peaceful use of nuclear power. If the negotiation is artfully crafted, the North Koreans could claim that they are still following a byungjin policy, even if the internal content would be modified by the agreements reached. This would also mean that the light water reactor idea could well reemerge as a component of the positive inducements in the negotiation. If this were the case then, in keeping with the principles discussed earlier, any new approach to cooperation on the development of the LWR agenda would need to be set in the context of an economically rational and technically sound energy development plan, with attention paid to the power grid and appropriate balance of nuclear and non-nuclear sources of electric power.

Notwithstanding the discussion above on the prospects of North Korea developing both its nuclear program and its economy, an important perspective to consider for a future nuclear negotiation strategy is how to exploit North Korean economic vulnerabilities using positive inducements. One powerful vulnerability is the fact that by publicly stating to the North Korean people in his first New Year's address that they will never again have to tighten their belts, Kim Jong-un has tethered the perceived legitimacy of his regime to being able to deliver on this promise. Economic development that improves the lives of ordinary North Koreans and not just an inner elite in Pyongyang is a high priority. Kim Jong-un will have a strong incentive to seek opportunities to help him deliver on these expectations. Another looming vulnerability is North Korea's extreme reliance on trade and investment from China. A slowdown in the Chinese economy will have a decidedly negative impact on the North Korean economy. There is already evidence that export earnings are declining because of lower commodity prices and slowing demand in China for North Korean raw materials, notably coal. While North Korea can be expected to intensify its self-reliance efforts, it is in Pyongyang's interest to diversify its external economic relations, especially with South Korea and Japan, but also with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. This is likely to have an impact on North Korean diplomacy toward relations with these countries. Thus, linking improved economic relations with a number of important trade and potential investment partners with progress on the nuclear issues will have more traction in this environment than in recent years. This implies careful consultation and coordination, especially with South Korea and Japan, to build a multilaterally supported approach that provides positive economic inducements for a reinvigorated nuclear negotiation process. A long-standing vulnerability is North Korea's energy needs. The availability of electric power continues to be a major problem. While North Korea has ample coal reserves, it does not have the capital or technology to invest in new-generation power plants. While efforts are being made to rehabilitate and expand hydropower resources, progress has been slow, and hydropower is itself vulnerable to freezing temperatures in winter. Helping North Korea address its energy needs was a central inducement in both the Agreed Framework and the Six Party Talks and can be expected to be a priority area in any future nuclear negotiation. Kim Jong-un has given the cabinet a lead role in economic development strategy and policymaking, turning away from Kim Jong Il's reliance on leadership from the Workers' Party that led to the failed currency reform and effort to eliminate the growing market economy in late 2009 and early 2010. While North Korea has now embarked on a policy of introducing

"improvements in the economic management in our own style," these cannot be considered comprehensive and coherent economic reforms. The evolution of rhetoric in official media, foreign press interviews and diplomatic talking points demonstrates shifts in orientation and policy evolution from the closing days of the Kim Jong Il era. Therefore, it should not be assumed that North Korean thinking and willingness to talk about substantive economic issues will be as constrained in future nuclear negotiations as they were in previous ones. Talk is now quite open about how to attract investment in Special Enterprise Zones, make changes in agriculture under the "pojun" policy and decentralize enterprise management. There are also indications that the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank are being given leeway to move forward with financial system innovations that would mobilize private savings for economic development and bring the banking system closer into compliance with international standards. Markets are officially tolerated and, in reality, North Korea is now a mixed economy with significant reliance on market economic activity in addition to state-directed activity. Many enterprises today have a foot firmly in both, even though the legal and financial systems in North Korea have not evolved in line with the expansion of the role of markets. Despite these realities, socialist rhetoric is dominant in the official media, and the role of markets has been ignored in all New Year's statements on economic progress and forward-looking policies. Also, while sales and the trading of assets (such as housing units) are active, official rhetoric and policy retain the view that the state owns all assets and ignore the growing reality on the ground. Widespread corruption is usurping the space normally filled by a legal and financial system designed to accommodate private ownership of assets and market transactions. In this environment, there are potential hooks of positive developments that could be exploited in a future nuclear negotiation and also areas to avoid because of political sensitivities and policy gaps. Sanctions. An important component of a positive inducement strategy for the nuclear program would be the removal of sanctions that constrain North Korea's ability to attract foreign direct investment, expand commercial trade and participate in a transparent, legally grounded international financial system. Such sanctions have led North Korea to adopt non-transparent methods of conducting international business and have distorted incentives for investment and trade by North Korea and its economic partners. Selective removal of sanctions would thus improve prospects for North Korea to pursue an outward-oriented economic development strategy and integration into the international financial system in ways that will serve its long-term economic security interests. In practical terms, bilateral sanctions would be easier to remove than multilateral sanctions, and there will be considerable resistance from the US government and Congress, as well as the United Nations Security Council, to removing sanctions prematurely. One option to consider is the suspension of sanctions where this is legally feasible, with full removal dependent on continuing progress on the nuclear agenda. Special Enterprise Zones. The North Korean government is giving high priority to the development of Special Enterprise Zones (SEZs). In 2014, a line item for SEZs was added to the national budget approved by the Supreme People's Assembly. Laws that have been approved for the SEZs go a long way toward meeting international expectations on paper, though major obstacles exist to North Korea's ability to realize its ambitions for SEZs as an engine for economic growth and absorption of foreign capital and technology. Among these are risk perceptions of investors that are strongly influenced by North Korea's isolation, lack of

standing in the international financial system and political and security risks. Another major obstacle is lack of funding for the infrastructure (such as power, water and telecommunications) that is required to attract investors to an SEZ. North Korean officials have reached out in foreign academic exchanges to gain advice on international experience in successful SEZs and expert opinions on their situation and efforts. This is a good sign of willingness to work with international expert advice on a high-priority economic topic. A negotiation that leads to an agreement on the nuclear program would significantly improve potential SEZ investors' political risk perceptions. These would be further improved if the positive inducements for reaching an agreement also include support for steps that would help North Korea move toward participation in the international financial system and funding for infrastructure investments in high-priority SEZs that have significant economic potential. Agriculture. North Korea's priority focus on improving agricultural productivity through the new field management system provides an opportunity for tangible assistance to help overcome some of the obstacles it is experiencing in implementing the new approach. The reduction in both the number of people in the work units and the size of land plots that is accompanying the breakup of the large-scale cooperative farms revealed two major issues. One is how to provide a large number of field units with equipment that is appropriate for the smaller plots of land. Instead of field units negotiating shared use of a small number of large tractors and other equipment used for the former cooperatives, it would be desirable to provide more small-sized tractors and harvesting equipment as is now prevalent in China. Similarly, technical expertise on the use of pesticides, new seed varieties and innovative management practices needs to be available to all field units that are operating independently. Previously, experts at the larger cooperative level provided this knowledge for the cooperative as a whole. What farmers now need is a system for obtaining up-to-date technical knowledge through a restructured extension service. Technical assistance and training to build such new knowledge delivery systems to support the agricultural management policy would be one area where international support could be helpful. Energy. A future strategy for inducements to help overcome North Korea's energy vulnerabilities should be grounded in an economically and technically appropriate framework. Ideally, this should start with a collaborative assessment and formulation of a multiyear energy development strategy and plan that could underpin a program of evolving support for the plan in a future nuclear negotiation process. Early tangible support could focus on filling gaps in the hydropower rehabilitation needs and the existing program of building small-scale hydropower systems in rural areas; it could also meet local needs at the provincial level. Linkage to the local grid would also need to be included. Another possible focus could be on reducing energy losses by upgrading priority sections of the existing distribution network. A pilot program of community solar power development could also be considered. Larger projects that might be included as eventual rewards in the nuclear weapons agenda could include new conventional power generation plants using domestic coal with emission control technology and development of a LWR program for power that is rational in the overall power generation plan and complemented by necessary improvements in the distribution system. Funding for conventional power generation and distribution projects could be provided bilaterally or eventually multilaterally if and when North Korea becomes eligible for loans from international financial institutions, including the Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank. Simply resurrecting the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) is probably not a good idea, as it did not involve China or Russia, both of which would be necessary in a new arrangement—although an energy coordination group of some kind would be useful in view of the potential number of actors involved. Money Laundering. In January 2015, North Korea announced that it had been granted observer status at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), linked to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. North Korea has attended meetings of the APG for several years and has signaled its desire to become an observer. Being granted observer status under APG will give the North Korean financial authorities access to technical guidance from the APG Secretariat to make the legal and organizational improvements needed to work toward meeting membership requirements. This development is significant because for the first time, North Korea will be working with outside financial experts in a disciplined process to make important changes in its financial system management that would be recognized as meeting international standards. It is also noteworthy that the Central Bank president said in an interview that the effort to come into compliance with APG requirements was being coordinated by a national committee. This committee is chaired by a deputy premier of the cabinet and includes officials from the Central Bank, Foreign Ministry and Finance Ministry, as well as law enforcement authorities. This signals high-level attention and support for this initiative, as well as a meaningful effort to integrate different parts of the North Korean bureaucracy in the various measures that are necessary to succeed. How the APG process unfolds will provide North Korean financial authorities with experience working with foreign technical experts on changes in the financial system and its management. It will test the political will of the North Korean leadership to accept the legal and transparency requirements they will need to adopt to achieve eventual membership status. It will also be a test of whether cross-agency cooperation and coordination can be effectively managed in a high-profile undertaking of this type. It is noteworthy that Cuba undertook a similar process while still under US sanctions and is now in compliance with FATF standards. The example of Cuba is a good model for North Korea and one that could be encouraged if one important objective of financial and economic engagement with North Korea is to find ways to help Pyongyang integrate in appropriate ways with the international system of financial relations based on non-political criteria and performance in meeting standards. Support for helping North Korea meet its commitment to comply with FATF standards could be a possible area for inclusion in a positive inducement strategy on the nuclear program. This would reinforce the objective of helping North Korea achieve more stable long-term economic security through disciplined integration in the international financial system. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The establishment of the AIIB in June 2015 provides an opening for a new dynamic of economic engagement with North Korea. While North Korea's overture to become a founding member was rejected by China (the sponsoring country), the potential for AIIB to play a significant role in North Korea's economic future is a consideration that could be exploited in a positive inducement strategy for the nuclear program. The fact that the United States and Japan are not founding members could initially make it easier for North Korea to make concessions that might pave the way toward membership and eventual investments. Such an approach would require multilateral

support, but could proceed in a gradual, phased way. This could begin by supporting observer status for North Korea within the AIIB. Such a step would allow North Korea to learn how the AIIB conducts normal business and why the bank adopts particular governance policies and operational procedures. A supplementary technical assistance program could help the North Korean government address policy and capacity obstacles to its eventual membership in a step-by-step manner. A second phase could aim to build confidence in developing an operational relationship between North Korea and the bank, both by helping Pyongyang prepare projects for potential financing and by funding some smaller North Korean initiatives with grants. Membership and access to loan financing would come when North Korea satisfies all of the necessary technical and political conditions for AIIB membership, which include prior membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These could be linked to specific stages in the implementation of a multilaterally supported nuclear agreement. Advancing North Korea's regional integration through the AIIB would reward it with a meaningful economic incentive that could also help advance the cause of dealing with serious security challenges. By helping Pyongyang fund infrastructure that it badly needs for economic growth, the bank could help foster discussions in political talks on security issues—not just on nuclear issues, but also on other opportunities for multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia—and potentially by creating greater economic interdependence with other state participants in AIIB programs. Relations with the IMF and World Bank. In 1997, when North Korea was facing famine and economic collapse, it hosted an assessment mission from the IMF. This led to a report to the IMF Executive Board but no further advancement in relations, as the North Koreans signaled that, while they were interested in receiving technical and financial assistance, they were not prepared to accept IMF requirements for open reporting of national financial and economic statistics or be subject to conditionality for assistance. In early 1998, North Korea hosted an “exploratory” mission from the World Bank to learn more about its policies and ways of operating. In 2000, North Korea was informally consulted and then formally received an invitation to attend the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Prague as a special guest. In the end, the North Koreans did not attend due to embarrassment of the treatment of their delegation en route to the earlier annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In mid-2001, an informal meeting of IMF and World Bank officials took place in London under South Korean auspices to discuss the requirements and process for North Korean membership. Potential follow-up progress was disrupted by the events of 9/11 and suspended after the breakdown in the Agreed Framework in late 2002. While formal relations have not progressed, informal interactions between North Korean officials and those from the IMF and World Bank have taken place occasionally in the context of track 1.5 meetings (in diplomatic terms, meetings between official and private actors). North Korean academics now have access to the internet and frequently visit the websites of the international financial organizations (IFIs) in their research. North Korea has for many years been attracted to IFIs both for knowledge and financial resources, but it remains wary of the institutions' transparency requirements, influence over policies and political dominance by the United States. While North Korea has never been a member of the IMF or World Bank, Cuba was an early member of both organizations but withdrew in 1964 and 1960, respectively. With Cuba now normalizing relations with the United States, its reintegration in the

international financial system is under active consideration. Should that occur, North Korea will be even more isolated in remaining outside the system. Similarly, Myanmar's recent transition from an isolated and sanctioned relationship with the international community to one broadly supported in its efforts to open up and reform has been accompanied by greatly needed support from both the IMF and World Bank. The IMF in particular has played a critical role in helping Myanmar establish credibility for its economic reforms, both internationally and domestically. To pursue its long-term economic security interests, access to technical assistance and a path for eventual membership in the IMF and World Bank would be a meaningful part of a positive inducement strategy for the nuclear program.

Sequencing. In approaching the task of constructing a plan that provides positive economic inducements, it is important to distinguish among three distinct phases:

1. **Pre-Agreement.** Items selected as overtures prior to reaching a nuclear agreement should help build trust and motivation to negotiate in good faith. These should be modest in scope, easy to deliver, attractive to North Korea and help Pyongyang move in desirable directions from the US perspective, even if other issues come up that delay or prevent reaching a nuclear agreement.
2. **Signing of an Agreement.** Items selected for delivery upon signing an agreement should provide tangible positive rewards for actions already taken, provide new incentives for proceeding with implementation of the agreement that can either be rescinded or halted if there is a delay or breakdown in the implementation plan, and form the platform for more expanded inducements dependent on progress during the implementation phase.
3. **Implementation of Agreement.** Items selected for delivery upon reaching key milestones during the implementation phase should provide substantial and not easily reversible benefits that are commensurate with actions taken on the agreed plan. To sustain the achievements of the nuclear agreement, the ultimate objective is for North Korea to believe that its economic security interests have been significantly enhanced and that other measures have allowed the country to maintain its overall national security in an acceptable way.

Clustering. In considering options for specific items to include in a positive economic inducement plan, it is also useful to cluster possible actions in relation to specific objectives. Possible clusters from the considerations discussed earlier in this paper could include:

1. Meeting urgent high-priority social protection needs.
2. Improvements in economic management for improving livelihoods of ordinary people.
3. Support for expanding and diversifying foreign direct investment and commercial trade.
4. Support for integrating with the international financial system.
5. Support for capital investments in public infrastructure.

Specific items and their phasing should thus be framed within a matrix of these three phases and five clusters. Some items may be relevant for more than one cluster. Below are examples of how these could fit together (specific clusters enumerated).

Possible Measures for Phase 1: Trust Building and Incentives to Negotiate

- Provide targeted social protection support to vulnerable groups. (1)
- Offer to provide technical assistance and capacity building for development of a new knowledge distribution system for farmers. (2)
- Offer to collaborate on a technical review of energy needs and to prepare a plan to meet high-priority needs in hydropower, upgrade local power distribution systems and install community solar power systems in the provinces. (2, 5)
- Agree to consider a LWR for power generation as a possible part of a longer-term energy investment program subject to economic and technical justification. (5)
- Offer to provide support for

technical preparation of infrastructure investment plans for high-priority SEZs. (3, 5) • Agree to support North Korea for observer status at AIIB and special guest status at the IMF and World Bank. (4) • Offer to provide support for technical collaboration on meeting APG requirements and national economic and financial statistics. (4) Possible Measures for Phase 2: Value Linked to Real Progress and Future Commitments • Expand targeted social protection support to vulnerable groups. (1) • Provide a package of support for agricultural development including provision of small tractors and support for implementing new knowledge extension services to farmers. (2) • Provide infrastructure (for example, power, water, waste, telecommunications and transport) for an agreed high-priority SEZ on a pilot basis. (3, 5) • Provide a package of energy investments, including a high-priority program for rehabilitation of hydropower plants and the distribution system, small-scale rural and provincial hydropower projects and community solar power projects. (2, 5) • Agree on whether a LWR or new conventional power generation capacity is a higher priority and take next steps for advancing technical preparation of the project and first phase investments. (5) • Support IMF and World Bank technical assistance in economic management and financial system capacity building. (2, 4) • Support AIIB technical assistance in infrastructure investment planning and project design. (2, 4, 5) • Suspend selected sanctions to stimulate investor interest in SEZs and enable transparent financial transactions in keeping with APG requirements. (3, 4) Possible Measures for Phase 3: Increased Value in Tandem with Implementation of Nuclear Agreement • Continue targeted social protection support for vulnerable groups. (1) • Support membership in the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and AIIB. (2) • Provide infrastructure investment for priority viable SEZs. (3, 5) • Provide support to a multi-donor energy investment program, including power generation (with or without a light water reactor), upgrading of the distribution network and an energy efficiency investment program. (3, 5) • Provide support for an expanded agricultural development program. (2, 5) • Remove sanctions that are no longer relevant to their original objectives. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Conclusion. The changing internal and external context for any future serious nuclear negotiation with North Korea will require a new approach to providing inducements that will lead to more successful outcomes than previous negotiations. The priority now being given to economic development by the new generation leadership in North Korea provides a number of potentially attractive opportunities and measures to encourage and support a new nuclear negotiation. Elevating the economic dimension of the negotiations to a higher standard than was adopted in the past is worth exploring. In fact, it may be essential for achieving the political and security objectives of the United States and in bringing North Korea closer to integration in the international community in ways that will improve longer-term stability on the Korean peninsula." (Brad Babson, *Positive Economic Inducements in Future Nuclear Negotiations with North Korea*, U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, December 2015)

12/14/15

Singapore sent a stern warning to companies doing business for North Korea, with a court handing down guilty verdicts to a local shipping agent accused of transferring money to help Pyongyang buy weapons. The case against Chinpo Shipping – which had transferred millions of dollars for North Korea – revealed a trove of information about how the country has been using intermediaries to send money through the

international banking system without detection. "This is a significant case in terms of prosecuting North Korean middlemen," said Andrea Berger, a nonproliferation expert at the Royal United Services Institute in London, noting that this was the first case under a Singaporean regulation that bars companies from helping North Korea with its nuclear and missile programs. "Now there is a possibility of using this case as a precedent for taking action against other middlemen in Singapore, and also potentially abroad, that provide assistance for North Korea's weapons sales overseas or North Korea's proliferation activities generally," she said. The case revolved around Chinpo, a small, family-run Singaporean company that had been working with North Korean shipping and trading entities since 1972. Over the years, the Tan family, the owner, appears to have developed a cozy relationship with North Korea, even allowing the North Korean Embassy to operate out of its modest office in Singapore. The Washington Post recently visited that office, in a shabby tower, and found that both Chinpo and the North Koreans had gone. Chinpo had particularly close dealings with Ocean Maritime Management, a North Korean shipping company that was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department in July 2014 over a case that sounds like something out of a John le Carré novel: In 2013, an OMM ship was caught going through the Panama Canal. On board, underneath 10,000 tons of sugar, were two disassembled MiG aircraft and 15 MiG engines, surface-to-air missile components, anti-tank rockets and other weapons. "This constituted the largest amount of arms and related materiel interdicted to or from [North Korea] since the adoption of Resolution 1718," Judge Jasvinder Kaur said in her summation of the case against Chinpo, referring to the U.N. sanctions against North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006. It transpired that Chinpo had sent \$72,016.76 to a shipping agent operating at the Panama Canal to ensure the passage of the ship, the Chong Chon Gang, on its route from Cuba to North Korea. That was just one of 605 transactions totaling \$40 million that Chinpo carried out for North Korea between 2009 and 2013, when the Chong Chon Gang was caught. "Chinpo believed that OMM was unable to get a bank account and make remittances because OMM was a [North Korean] entity, and so Chinpo readily agreed to make transfers for them," the prosecutors said in their opening statement submitted to the court. Singaporean prosecutors charged Chinpo with breaching U.N. sanctions by transferring money connected with North Korea's nuclear-related program. The U.N. sanctions, designed to make Pyongyang abandon its nuclear ambitions, prohibit trade in large conventional weapons such as combat aircraft, the proceeds of which are thought to be channeled into the nuclear program. Prosecutors also brought a technical charge of remitting money without a license. In finding Chinpo – run by 83-year-old Tan Cheng Hoe and his two daughters – guilty, Kaur described how they had transferred money with no scrutiny through the company's bank accounts and taken steps to obscure the source of the funds. "Since the second half of 2010, Chinpo stopped indicating the name of vessels in the outgoing remittance forms," the judge wrote in her summation. "According to the statement of Tan Cheng Hoe, more questions were asked by the bank in the U.S. when the vessel name was included." Furthermore, Chinpo essentially let OMM use its bank accounts for holding and transferring money, even as the number of ships for which Chinpo was providing services fell to four in 2013. "The reason behind the odd arrangement was obviously to assist [North Korean] entities as they did not have access to the banking system due to U.N. and U.S. sanctions," the judge wrote. Speaking after the court verdict, defense

attorney Edmond Pereira said it was "very disappointing, very anti-climactic." Sentencing will not take place until the end of January. Because the company was charged, and not Tan or his daughters, the maximum penalty is \$71,000 for each of the two charges, with no prison sentence. (Anna Fifield and Monica Miller, "Singaporean Company Guilty of Transferring Money for North Korea," *Washington Post*, December 14, 2015)

South Korea's military expected the DPRK to attempt a nuclear test and conduct submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) tests next year, Yonhap reported citing a military official. The official was quoted as saying that Defense Minister Han Min-koo chaired a meeting with major commanders of the military, where Minister Han and other senior military officials shared the expectation. The South Korean military plans to maintain defense readiness against possible DPRK nuclear and missile tests as well as strategic and tactical provocations, the official was quoted as saying. (Xinhua, "S. Korea Expects DPRK to Conduct Nuke, Sub-Launched Missile Tests in 2016," December 14, 2015)

12/15/15 KCNA: "Kim Jong-un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, first chairman of the National Defense Commission of the DPRK and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, issued an order to conduct the first H-bomb test of Juche Korea on **December 15**, Juche 104 (2015) on behalf of the Workers' Party of Korea and then signed the final written order on January 3, Juche 105 (2016). The DPRK government issues a statement on the first H-bomb test of Juche Korea conducted under the strategic resolve of the Workers' Party of Korea." (KCNA, "WPK Central Committee [!] Issues Order to Conduct First H-Bomb Test," January 6, 2016)

The economic gap between South and North Korea widened in 2014, with the difference in their trade volumes remaining far apart, government data showed. According to data by Statistics Korea, North Korea's nominal gross national income (GNI) came to 34.23 trillion won (US\$28.93 billion) in 2014, with that of the South hitting 1,496.6 trillion won, or roughly 44 times larger. GNI is the total value that is produced within a country, which is comprised of the gross domestic product along with income obtained from other countries such as dividends and interest earnings. In 2013, South Korea's GNI was 42.6 times larger than the North's. On a per-capita basis, South Korea's GNI came to 29.7 million won, 21 times more than that of its northern neighbor, which stood at 1.39 million won. The difference widened slightly from the 20.8 times more tallied in 2013. In addition, South Korea's economy advanced 3.3 percent in 2014, compared to 1 percent for North Korea. On other fronts, as of the end of 2014, South Korea had a total population of 50.42 million compared to the North's 24.66 million, according to the data. South Korea also continued to greatly outperform the communist North in trade. In 2014, South Korea's overall trade volume came to a little under \$1.1 trillion, 144 times larger than North Korea's \$7.6 billion. (Yonhap, "Economic Gap between Two Koreas Widens in 2014: Data," December 15, 2015)

12/16/15 DPRK FoMin spokesman's statement "in connection with the fact that the DPRK government's positive and sincere efforts for ensuring solid and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula are facing blatant challenge of the U.S.: The DPRK proposed the U.S.

side to conclude a peace treaty as the most reasonable way for putting an end to the evil cycle of tension and confrontation that have lasted for more than six decades. It is urging the conclusion of the peace treaty with the U.S. in order to put an end to the hostile policy toward the former by the latter, the root cause of all problems. It is a clear reason everybody can understand and sympathize with that lasting peace and stability are possible on the Korean Peninsula only when the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK is brought to an end and hostile relations between them are defused. Nevertheless, the U.S. is responding to the DPRK's fair and aboveboard proposal by elaborating in action on its hostile policy already branded as "failed strategy" far from taking a sincere approach towards the proposal. Its typical example is its recent ever more reckless moves to ratchet up "sanctions" against the DPRK. It is putting the armed forces, munitions and trade organs of the DPRK and their officials and even diplomats of the DPRK on the list of "sanctions." Lurking behind this action is a sinister political intention to tarnish the international image of the DPRK and make other countries feel uneasy about dealing with it and thus suffocate its overall economy including munitions industry as well as civilian field. The U.S. authorities claim they have no hostile intent toward the DPRK whenever an opportunity presents itself but they are behaving quite contrary to their words. The U.S. is so steeped in ill-intended repugnancy toward the DPRK that it has completely lost sense of the reality and is going reckless, unaware of who its rival is. **The U.S. row about "sanctions" would only heighten the spirit of self-reliance and increase the strenuous efforts among the workers in the field of the munitions industry of the DPRK and boost the proportion of locally available raw and other materials in its munitions industry.** If the U.S. persistently pursues its anachronistic hostile policy toward the DPRK this way, this would only entail unimaginable consequences quite contrary to what the U.S. desires, warns the statement." (KCNA, "FM Spokesman Warns U.S. of Unimaginable Consequences to Be Entailed by Its Persistent Hostile Policy toward DPRK," December 16, 2015)

12/17/15

The South Korean government will not stick to realizing an inter-Korean summit under President Park Geun-hye, Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo said. "We are open to an inter-Korean summit as long as it can lead to productive discussions on healing the wounds from the division of the Korean Peninsula and promoting peace," Hong said during a panel discussion hosted by the Kwanhun Club, a fraternity of senior journalists, in Seoul. "But it wouldn't be appropriate to push for a summit just because the President is nearing the end of her term or that next year is seen as the optimal time for a summit. It won't happen under the current administration." Park and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said in their respective New Year's addresses in January that they are open to meeting each other. (Yi Whan-woo, "South Will Not Stick to Inter-Korean Summit," *Korea Times*, December 17, 2015)

A probe by Seoul and Washington into an erroneous shipment of a live anthrax sample to a U.S. military base in Korea revealed that samples of the deadly bacteria have been brought into the country many more times over the past six years than initially known. Since 2009, a total of 16 anthrax samples were brought into the country by the United States Forces Korea (USFK) without the knowledge of Korean authorities, according to the results of the joint investigation. The USFK initially told the Korean government in

May that only a single anthrax sample was shipped here and that it was the first time for such an occurrence. A live anthrax sample was mistakenly shipped in late April to the Osan Air Base in Gyeonggi, where 22 personnel were possibly exposed to live anthrax spores. These exposed researchers and staff took antibiotics and vaccines and have not contracted the disease so far, and the live bacteria sample was immediately destroyed. However, there was an outcry in Seoul over the potential risks. In response, the United States and Korea in July formed a joint task force to investigate how live anthrax shipments entered Korea undetected. It was composed of military and foreign affairs officials. The 15 other anthrax samples were shipped to the U.S. military base in Yongsan District, central Seoul, between 2009 and 2014 for biological testing purposes, according to the investigation. Korean authorities said they were not aware of these anthrax shipments because customs officials here are not authorized to look into biochemical samples for the USFK that are labeled "inactivated." The joint investigation also found that aside from anthrax, the Osan Air Base also received a 1-milliliter sample of the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium that can cause the bubonic plague, according to the joint group. It was sent in April along with the live anthrax sample. A Korean defense official explained that since 2013, the USFK has participated in a next-generation bio-surveillance program, the Joint USFK Portal and Integrated Threat Recognition (JUPITR), supported by the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, which conducts research and development for non-medical chemical and biological defense. The anthrax and *Y. pestis* samples were sent from the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center in Maryland and passed through Incheon International Airport. However, the joint group said that there were no safety risks involved. "The USFK did not inform the Korean authorities," the official said. "However, this did not violate and regulations." But Korea's Ministry of National Defense said that the joint group has recommended new guidelines to regulate the delivery of biochemical samples to the USFK and bolster the transparency of the process. The two countries held their biannual Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) meeting Thursday in Seoul, and the anthrax issue was raised. "We have proposed joint recommendations to make mandatory steps for a SOFA joint committee to regulate the delivery of such samples," a government official said. "There has been no precedent on measures to bolster security procedures for inactivated samples for testing." The Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday that it received a report from the Korea-U.S. joint working group on the results of the investigation and agreed that the two sides will continue to cooperate in the future based on measures established after this incident. They recommended that the USFK notify the Korean government when bringing in bacterium samples for testing along with providing their details, and enable officials here to examine the samples if they do it jointly, unlike before. There were concerns in Seoul that the results of the joint study were overly reliant on details provided by Washington. Biological testing by the USFK labs has been halted since May. (Sarah Kim, "Bio-Weapons Sent into Korea by U.S. 17 Times," *JoongAng Ilbo*, December 18, 2015)

12/21/15

North Korea's military carried out a successful **ejection** test of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile recently, an indication that an earlier test failure has not derailed the underwater missile program, U.S. defense officials said. The test of the submarine-launched missile, or SLBM, which the Pentagon has called the KN-11, from

a submerged submarine on December 21 took place near the port city of Sinpo, where the capability is being developed. The facility is located along the North Korean coast of the Sea of Japan. The test followed a November 28 ejection tube launch failure that damaged North Korea's first missile submarine, which officials identified as the Gorae, Korean for whale. No additional details of the test could be learned, including whether the missile's engine ignited after the ejection or whether the missile took flight. North Korean state-run media did not publicize the latest test. In May, North Korea announced that its developmental SLBM was flight tested from what analysts believe was an underwater test platform. One official said that based on the latest successful ejection test, North Korea could be as little as a year away from deploying a submarine armed with a nuclear-tipped missile. Other analysts remain skeptical that the North Koreans can master the technology for submarine missile firings. At the Pentagon, spokesman Cmdr. Bill Urban had no comment. "We are not going to be able to provide any information regarding matters of intelligence," he said. But military analysts said the successful test is a significant step forward in the difficult technical challenge of firing a missile from a submerged submarine. North Korea is building up its missile forces in an effort to develop a nuclear strike capability. Its current force of strategic missiles includes long-range Taepodong missiles that are vulnerable to preemptive strike because of the time it takes to prepare the missiles for launch. To develop a more survivable missile force, North Korea has a small number of KN-08 road-mobile ICBMs and has also been developing the KN-11. The SLBM program was first disclosed by the *Washington Free Beacon* in August 2014. North Korea is believed by U.S. officials to have obtained the technology for a small warhead capable of being carried by missile in the late 1990s or early 2000s from the covert Pakistani nuclear supply network led by A.Q. Khan. David Maxwell, a retired Army colonel and expert on North Korea at Georgetown University, said a North Korean missile submarine could be a significant challenge to the United States and its allies. "If they can successfully field an operational SLBM in a capable submarine that can evade advanced anti-submarine measures, it could be a game changer as it could give them a possible second strike capability in a nuclear exchange," Maxwell said. Maxwell said he suspects the North Koreans remain "some ways off" from fielding a missile submarine and the current forces of submarines are not advanced and thus could be tracked. "If we were to determine that they had the capability, we would focus our anti-submarine efforts on perhaps one or two submarines that they might be able to deploy," he added. Maxwell noted that North Korea has "surprised us before" in developing arms and missiles. "What I think is most important is that their pursuit of an SLBM capability is another indicator that they believe their nuclear program is key to regime survival, and that they have absolutely no intention whatsoever of ever giving up their nuclear program," Maxwell said. Bruce Bechtol, a former Defense Intelligence Agency expert on North Korea, said the North Korean missile thought to be used in the test is a variant of an SS-N-6 SLBM obtained covertly from Russia. Bechtol, a professor at Angelo State University, said North Korea, with one of the largest missile arsenals and production capabilities in Asia, appears to have been able to reverse engineer an SLBM from one SS-N-6, just as Pyongyang was able to develop an array of missiles after obtaining a Russian short-range Scud decades ago. "North Korea has moved more quickly than most analysts would have anticipated on the SLBM program," Bechtol said. "Not only do they now have a missile that can successfully be fired using the technically

challenging procedure of sub-surface launching... but now it appears they are actually able to do this from a submarine—as evidenced by the most recent test,” he added. When operational, the submarine and missile capability will provide Pyongyang with a new strike option that could be potentially lethal to the United States and its allies. Iran is believed to have acquired North Korea’s Musudan missile, and reportedly uses technology from the SS-N-6 in the Safir rocket, he said. The origin of the Gorae missile submarine is not known. It is believed to be based on either a Soviet design Golf II-class submarine, or reverse-engineered from Golf II submarines obtained by North Korea in the 1990s. The submarines are designed with launch tubes in the vessel’s sail and are believed to be capable of launching two missiles. Commercial satellite photographs have identified the submarine and a test platform at the coastal facility at Sinpo. Rick Fisher, a military affairs analyst with the International Assessment and Strategy Center, said the latest test indicates the North Koreans are making progress in the SLBM program. “With an operational SLBM, North Korea will have more options for nuclear coercion against South Korea, Japan, and the United States, as well as being able to offer a new weapon of mass destruction for export,” Fisher said, noting Iran would likely be among the first customers of an SLBM design. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un made no mention of the new submarine missile program in his New Year’s day speech. Kim warned that the Korean Peninsula is becoming “the world’s biggest flashpoint and origin of nuclear war today” because of what he said were South Korean and U.S. nuclear war exercises. Meanwhile, North Korea may be preparing to conduct an underground test of a thermonuclear weapon, according to a South Korean military report. “We can’t discount the possibility that the North’s excavation of a new tunnel at its Punggye-ri test site could be designed for thermonuclear weapons tests,” said the Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Defense Command, a Defense Ministry group, in a report made public Sunday. “Considering its research of nuclear technology, its history of underground and projectile tests, and elapsed time since its nuclear development, North Korea has the foundation for thermonuclear weapons,” the report said, according to the official Yonhap news agency. Thermonuclear bombs have more explosive power than early-generation nuclear arms. The weapons use the energy from a primary nuclear fission reaction to compress and ignite a secondary nuclear fusion reaction with greater blast yield. North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un has announced that it is capable of building hydrogen bombs, though the South Korean report contested this assertion. “The North could detonate its boosted fission weapon, but we don’t believe it is yet capable of directly testing hydrogen bombs,” the command report stated. North Korea carried out three nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, and 2013 at the Punggye-ri test facility in the northeastern part of the country. A South Korean Defense Ministry-affiliated think tank warned in a report made public last week that North Korea is pushing ahead with additional nuclear tests. “As threats to conduct nuclear and missile tests themselves have considerable impact on the regional balance of power, the North is expected to remain ready and seek appropriate timing for the tests while maintaining ambiguity about its ultimate intentions,” Institute for Defense Analyses stated in the report made public January 3. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on January 3 warned that North Korea poses a nuclear threat. “Nuclear is a major problem,” Trump said on *Face the Nation*. “And we have major problems, because you have other people that would be very fast on that. You look at North Korea, you look at some of these countries, I don’t think they would

hesitate to use it if they really had it in a proper manner.” (Bill Gertz, “North Korea Conducts Successful Submarine Missile Test,” *Washington Free Beacon*, January 5, 2016) Bermudez: “Reports of a North Korean “ejection” test of the *Bukkeukseong-1* (Polaris-1, KN-11) submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) on December 21, 2015, appear to be supported by new commercial satellite imagery of the Sinpo South Shipyard. This imagery also indicates that despite reports of a failed test in late November 2015 North Korea is continuing to actively pursue its SLBM development program. Specifically: Activity at the secure submarine area may be an indicator supporting reports of a test two days earlier since it is similar to the level of activity that has been previously seen at the SINPO-class submarine prior to the May 2015 test of the *Bukkeukseong-1*. At the Sinpo South Test Stand, the structure used to support a rocket engine, missile or launch tube, usually present either immediately prior to or shortly after a test is conducted, is in place, suggesting that such a test has been conducted recently or will be conducted soon. Imagery shows the SINPO-class submarine docked at the secure boat basin with netting concealing ongoing work. While the nature of the work remains unclear, it seems that although the boat may have been damaged during a recent test as some reports have speculated, it remains seaworthy. The refurbishment and construction program at the Sinpo South construction halls, fabrication buildings and machine shops that will allow building new submarines much larger than the SINPO-class is nearing completion. North Korea’s development of a SLBM and associated ballistic missile submarine has the potential to present a significant threat in the future. However, the development of an operational system will be an expensive, time-consuming endeavor with no guarantee of success. On November 29, 2015 South Korean government sources reported that North Korea had conducted a failed test of the *Bukkeukseong-1* (Polaris-1, KN-11) submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) the previous day. This test was conducted from the North’s sole SINPO-class experimental ballistic missile submarine (SSBA) in the waters of the East Sea northeast of Wonsan. This follows an earlier test during May 2015 that Pyongyang claimed as a great success but was reported by South Korean intelligence sources as a simple ejection test and not a full capabilities operational test. The November test has been assessed as a failure because no missile flight was tracked on radar and debris—sometimes reported as “fragments of a safety cover”—was observed floating on the surface of the water following the test. It has also been suggested that the *Bukkeukseong-1* either never left the launch tube or that it was successfully ejected but the main engine failed to fire. There has also been speculation that the submarine was damaged during the test. While some assess this failure as a significant setback for the SLBM program, it should more accurately be viewed as a normal part of a development program that had likely been anticipated as a possibility by North Korea’s development team. Indeed, the reports of a subsequent December 21st ejection test suggests that North Korean designers, engineers and technicians have probably learned from the previous test failure and actively continuing development of the *Bukkeukseong-1*, launch system and submarine.” (Joseph Bermudez Jr., “North Korea’s Ballistic Missile Submarine Program: Full Steam Ahead,” *38North*, January 5, 2016)

12/22/15

North Korea is believed to have entered the middle stage of developing a hydrogen bomb, according to defense officials here. Some, including retired Army Brigadier

General Lee Sang-chul who is now director of the Korea Arms Verification Agency at the Ministry of National Defense, say the Kim Jong-un regime may have developed a "boosted fission weapon." The development of the weapon, which is said to be two to five times more destructive than an atomic bomb, means that the North has reached the middle stage of producing a hydrogen bomb, they say. "North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's claim that the North has the hydrogen bomb seems highly likely to be aimed at showing off its military might to the North Korean people, but the possible appearance of a boosted fission weapon is threatening enough," he said. He made the remarks during an academic conference discussing the direction of the government's North Korea policy, held at the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday. Joel Wit, editor of the website 38 North run by the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said on Dec. 16 that the North's H-bomb claim is "technically unlikely, but boosting yields with fusion fuels is not." Wit noted that the isolationist nation could deploy a single-stage thermonuclear weapon with a yield of 100 kilotons by around 2020. Both South Korean and the United States governments downplayed Pyongyang's claim. The White House said U.S. intelligence "calls into serious question those claims." South Korea's defense ministry also said there has been no detection of strong seismic waves caused by H-bomb testing. Yang Moo-jin, a professor of the University of North Korean Studies, said, "The North apparently intends to send a message to the U.S. that Pyongyang's nuclear technology has been dramatically developed so Washington had better sign a peace treaty." Kim Yong-hyun, a professor of North Korean Studies at Dongguk University, added, "The North is expected to keep mentioning its H-bomb development frequently to show off its military strength." (Jun Ji-hye, "N.K. in Middle Stage of H-Bomb Development," *Korea Times*, December 22, 2015)

Schilling, Leis, Shmereler: "The intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) displayed by North Korea during the military parade in October appears quite different from the versions seen in 2012 and 2013, but a close examination reveals as many similarities as differences. The missile has been shortened and simplified, with two stages instead of three and a blunt warhead replacing the narrow triconic design. The underlying technology is mostly the same—a blend of North Korean engineering and Cold War leftovers from the Soviet Union—but the structural design has been substantially improved. There is reason to suspect that the new structural technology was illicitly obtained from Ukrainian sources. The overall effect is that the missile's performance is largely unchanged (and remains quite marginal for an ICBM), but the potential reliability has been substantially improved. (However, such a substantial design change late in the missile's development will likely delay its entry into service until 2020 or beyond. Examination of external features such as fuel ports and separation motors indicates that the lower stages use the same engines as the 2012/2013 model. These are most likely a cluster of Scud-type engines for the first stage and a second stage based on the Soviet R-27 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). There is no evidence to suggest that the most recent model incorporates new engines such as those of the R-29 SLBM. However, the propellant tanks for both stages have been lengthened substantially, and the third stage has been removed. The missile's structure, of which the propellant tanks are an integral part, has been substantially improved. The new model does not show the extensive riveting seen on earlier models

and on debris from the 2012 Unha-3 launch. This apparent alteration suggests the addition of a machined isogrid structure common on modern missiles, reducing the weight and extending the range of the KN-08. There is evidence that North Korea is seeking expertise in this area from previously unknown sources. In June 2012, Ukraine reportedly sentenced two North Korean diplomats who had attempted to photograph secret documents from the Yuzhnou Design Bureau relating to the construction of improved fuel tanks. Finally, the triconic warhead of 2012/2013 has been replaced by a short, blunt reentry vehicle. This design is easier to develop and is more likely to survive reentry, at the cost of being less accurate and more vulnerable to missile defenses. It would also allow for a lighter warhead package, perhaps as little as 400 kg. With a light warhead, the new KN-08 would have a range of roughly 9,000 km, enough to cover the US west coast. This is roughly the performance expected from the 2012/2013 model, but that design was a complex three-stage system that was unlikely to function reliably in wartime. The new design is simpler and more reliable, and thus a more credible threat. But with a major redesign four years into the development process and no flight testing so far, our estimate for initial operational capability slips to 2020 or beyond. While North Korea appears to be making progress towards a road-mobile ICBM, progress has been slower than we expected—a threat postponed, but not prevented.” (John Schilling, Jeffrey Lewis and David Schmerler, “A New ICBM for North Korea?” *38North*, December 22, 2015)

12/25/15

South Korea's Defense Ministry said North Korea is capable of producing a nuclear weapon, using less than 13 pounds of plutonium. A government official in Seoul who spoke to South Korea press on the condition of anonymity said North Korea has secured 88 pounds of plutonium, and capable of producing one weapon of mass destruction, South Korean outlet Newsis reported. Yonhap reported a minimum of 13 pounds {less than 6 kg.) of plutonium is required to manufacture a nuclear weapon, and North Korea can manufacture 6-7 weapons. In August, North Korea reportedly restarted its Yongbyon Reactor 2 to resume plutonium production, South Korea press reported. In early 2013, Pyongyang had already begun building light water reactors at Yongbyon. North Korea's nuclear arsenal continues to grow, even as the country has come under attack from the international community for its weapons program. The Institute for Science and International Security issued a report in October stating Pyongyang has enough nuclear material to build 22 nuclear weapons, and more specifically, between 66 and 88 pounds of separated plutonium in late 2014. The report had stated activities captured in commercial satellite imagery at the Yongbyon nuclear site indicated spent fuel has been removed for chemical processing, and the fuel could have been used for nuclear tests. North Korea could produce weapons from plutonium or weapons-grade uranium, the report said, and could make a median of 22 nuclear weapons, but more information is needed on the size of North Korea's centrifuge program. (Elizabeth Shin, “North Korea Has Secured 88 Pounds of Plutonium, Seoul Says,” UPI, December 25, 2015)

A number of scholars both inside South Korea and in other countries have concluded that the North Korean army is composed of around 700,000 soldiers. This is 500,000 fewer than the South Korean government's official estimate of 1.2 million soldiers that appeared in a 2014 white paper by the Ministry of National Defense. “It can be inferred

that the approximate size of the North Korean regular army is between 500,000 on the low side and 750,000 on the high side," said Sogang University Professor Jeong Yeong-cheol in a report recently commissioned by the National Assembly's Intelligence Committee. The report was titled "Population Statistics and Social Change in North Korea: Changes in the Education System and a New Estimate of the Size of the Army." Miyamoto Satoru, a professor at Japan's Seigakuin University, has also estimated the strength of the Korean People's Army - as North Korea's military is called - at 702,372. Satoru made the estimate in a paper titled "The Military Organization and Strength of the Korean People's Army," which he presented at the World Conference on North Korean Studies, held in Seoul this past October. The basis for the estimates by the two professors is 1993 and 2008 census data for North Korea, which is relatively reliable since it was obtained with the help of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Jeong stumbled upon a "statistical error" of 700,000 people between the population by region and the population by age in the census results for 1993 and 2008. In 1993, there were 700,000 more people in the population by region, and in 2008 there were 700,000 more in the population by age. In the 2008 statistics in particular, most of this difference is found in males between 15 and 29 years old - which overlaps with the age when North Koreans do their military service. Drawing upon a number of features in the 2008 census figures - including the difference between the age and regional statistics, the number of employed aged 16 years and above, age brackets, and gender ratio - Jeong was able to estimate the size of North Korea's military. Miyamoto also cited as evidence a 1999 North Korean article explaining the difference of 700,000 between the population by age and the population by region in the 1993 census as having been caused by leaving out soldiers. "It's not appropriate for us to comment on individual research papers. However, the 1.2 million found in the Ministry of National Defense's white paper was accurately calculated by combining various kinds of intelligence," said an official with the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. But the South Korean government refuses to make public the evidence for its estimate of 1.2 million soldiers, making it impossible to verify the claim. This stands in sharp contrast to the government's practice of providing standards and methodology for its yearly estimate of the size of the North Korean economy. The government's estimate of 1.2 million North Korean soldiers is implausible, many say, since it would constitute 5% of North Korea's entire population. There are just 630,000 soldiers in the South Korean military, representing 1.3% of the population. Even in Israel - the country with the highest percentage of people in arms - the army only amounts to 2.2% of the total population. Even an estimate of 700,000 would mean that North Korea's soldiers account for 3% of the population. In 2012, Nakagawa Masahiko, an analyst at the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE), affiliated with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), used Chinese documents to argue that the North Korean army at the point of greatest mobilization - at the ceasefire that ended the Korean War - accounted for 5.3% of the total population. Military experts point out that the Ministry of National Defense's estimate is completely unrealistic, since it implies that North Korea constantly maintains its army at Korean War levels, even during peacetime. Furthermore, North Korean researchers believe that the population loss caused by the terrible famine that struck North Korea between 1995 and 1997 (known as the "Arduous March") would have begun to directly affect the size of the North Korean military between 2007 and the present day. This implies that the North Korean military would have shrunk during

this period. (Lee Je-hun, "Debate over Size of North Korea's Army Reignites," *Hankyore*, December 25, 2015)

12/27/15

South Korea was the world's largest importer of arms in the world last year. Massive purchases of American weapons last year raised the nation's ranking in arms import from the seventh in 2013 to the top in 2014. According to an annual report on arms sales published by the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS) on Saturday, South Korea purchased arms worth 7.8 billion dollars (approx. 9.1 trillion won) last year and 90 percent of the purchases (approx. 7 billion dollars) were from the U.S. Between 2010 and 2013, South Korea imported 3 billion dollars to 3.5 billion dollars worth of arms every year. This means that South Korea spent 20.3 percent of the entire national defense budget (approx. 40 trillion won) last year on the Korea Fighter Program (KFP) and other items including high altitude reconnaissance planes and cargo helicopters CH-47. The KFP was at the center of controversy because South Korea failed to have the U.S. transfer the core technology of F-35 to South Korea, which was a pre-condition of the KFP. This left South Korea with no choice but to replace it with its own technology. "Due to the Korean Fighter Experimental (KFX) program, Korea's contract amount with the U.S. in arms imports drastically increased last year," said Shin In-gyun, president of Seoul-based defense-related civic group Korea Defense Network. "The import amount increased because the statistics were made based on the contract amount of the first year of the KFP." The New York Times said that Korea's tension with North Korea influenced its arms import. The second largest arms importer was Iraq, which purchased arms worth 7.3 billion dollars in order to cover the withdrawal of the U.S. military. The third largest arms importer was Brazil as it purchased Swedish aircraft and other items for 6.5 billion dollars. The largest arms exporter was the U.S., which earned 36.2 billion dollars; a 36 percent increase from the previous year. The major buyers were South Korea, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. The U.S. was followed by Russia (10.2 billion dollars), Sweden (5.5 billion dollars), France (4.4 billion dollars), and China (2.2 billion dollars). The total sum of arms trade last year was 71.8 billion dollars, which is a 2.7 percent increase from 2013. The CRS report speculated that the growth rate of the arms market will slow down due to the impact of the world's sluggish economy. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, "Korea Was the World's Largest Arms Importer in 2015, CRS Says," December 28, 2015)

12/28/15

More than 70 years after the end of World War II, South Korea and Japan reached a landmark agreement to resolve their dispute over Korean women who were forced to serve as sex slaves for Japan's Imperial Army. The agreement, in which Japan made an apology and promised an \$8.3 million payment, was intended to remove one of the most intractable logjams in relations between South Korea and Japan, both crucial allies to the United States. The so-called comfort women have been the most painful legacy of Japan's colonial rule of Korea, which lasted from 1910 until Japan's World War II defeat in 1945. The Japanese and South Korean foreign ministers, announcing the agreement in Seoul, said each side considered it a "final and irrevocable resolution" of the issue. The deal won praise from the governing party of President Park Geun-hye of South Korea but was immediately criticized as insufficient by some of the surviving former sex slaves as well as opposition politicians in South Korea, where anti-Japanese sentiments run deep. "The issue of 'comfort women' was a matter

which, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, severely injured the honor and dignity of many women," the foreign minister of Japan, Kishida Fumio, said, as he read from the agreement at a news conference in Seoul. "In this regard, the government of Japan painfully acknowledges its responsibility." Kishida also said that his boss, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, "expresses anew sincere apologies and remorse from the bottom of his heart to all those who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as "comfort women." Abe later called Ms. Park to deliver the same apologies, Park's office said. "I hope that the two countries will cooperate closely to build trust based on this agreement and open a new relationship," she was quoted as telling Abe. Park, who had refused to hold a summit meeting with Abe until last month, has repeatedly urged Japan to address the grievances of comfort women before the neighbors can improve ties. Although Japan had previously apologized, including in a 1993 statement that acknowledged responsibility for the practice, the agreement signaled a compromise for Abe. As recently as last year, under pressure from his right wing to scrap the apology, Abe and his conservative political allies agreed to review the evidence that led to it. Under the agreement, the Japanese government will give the \$8.3 million to a foundation that the South Korean government will establish to offer medical, nursing and other services to the women. That Tokyo will provide money directly from the national budget is a potentially significant departure. A previous fund created after the 1993 apology, the Asian Women's Fund, relied on private donors and was never fully accepted in South Korea. Although 60 former comfort women from South Korea had received financial aid from the fund, many others refused to accept it. Japan also won an important concession from Seoul, a promise not to criticize Tokyo over the comfort women again. The Korean women who survived the war had lived mostly in silence because of the stigma, until some of them began speaking out in the early 1990s. A total of 238 former comfort women have since come forward in South Korea, but only 46 are still living, most of them in their 80s and 90s. Initial reactions to the resolution from former comfort women in South Korea were far from welcoming. "The agreement does not reflect the views of former comfort women," said Lee Yong-soo, 88, during a news conference held after the agreement was announced. "I will ignore it completely." She said that the deal fell far short of the women's longstanding demand that Japan admit legal responsibility and offer formal reparations. "We are not craving for money," she said. "What we demand is that Japan make official reparations for the crime it had committed." She said she also opposed the removal of a statue of a girl symbolizing comfort women that a civic group established in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul in 2011. During negotiations, Japan insisted that South Korea remove the statue, and South Korea said on Monday that it would discuss the matter with the former sex slaves. The civic group, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery in Japan, called the deal "shocking." "It's a humiliating diplomacy for South Korea to give a bushel only to get a peck," the group said in a statement. "The agreement is nothing but a diplomatic collusion that thoroughly betrayed the wishes of comfort women and the South Korean people." In a statement, Park appealed to South Koreans to accept the agreement in the broader context of the need to improve ties with Japan, a neighbor and important trading partner, adding that her government wanted to seal a deal before the aging women passed away. Japan has maintained that all legal issues stemming from its colonial rule of Korea

were resolved with the 1965 treaty that normalized relations between the two countries. Negotiators from both nations forged a compromise with the vaguely worded agreement on Monday, which did not clarify whether the responsibility that the Japanese government acknowledged was legal or moral. Kishida made it clear that the money Japan was offering was not legal reparation. The deal was announced after Kishida met with his South Korean counterpart, Yun Byung-se, in Seoul. Their meeting came after 12 rounds of negotiations that the two governments have held since spring 2014 to narrow their gaps on the dispute. Yun and Kishida said they hoped that the deal would open a "new phase" in bilateral ties, long strained over historical disputes stemming from colonial rule. They also said that Seoul and Tokyo would refrain from criticizing each other over the issue at the United Nations and elsewhere. The initial reaction in Japan was generally positive. Former Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi, who made a historic apology in 1995 for Japan's role in World War II that many conservatives opposed, said that Abe had "decided well." "It's commendable that the Japanese government admitted responsibility," he said at a news conference. Inada Tomomi, a right-wing member of Abe's Liberal Democratic Party, suggested the deal would be worth it if it succeeded in putting the dispute to rest. "There is great meaning in achieving a final and irreversible resolution," she said. The Democratic Party of Japan, the largest opposition party, welcomed the agreement but cautioned Abe's government that any future support for revisionist causes could undermine it. "We expect further constructive dialogue to prevent any backsliding," the party said in a statement. Watanabe Tsuneo, a senior fellow at the Tokyo Foundation, a research group, said Abe had chosen a pragmatic approach that elevated economic and security ties over the bristly historical revisionism he has sometimes championed. "Team Abe is basically realist, though Abe himself has sometimes veered from that," Watanabe said. Stable relations with South Korea, he added, were vital to Abe's most cherished foreign policy goal: nurturing alliances to counter the growing power of China. "Ultimately, Abe believes in the balance of power." But Shoji Hirokai, a researcher on East Asia at Amnesty International, said the agreement should not be the end of the road in securing justice for the former sex slaves. "The women were missing from the negotiation table, and they must not be sold short in a deal that is more about political expediency than justice," she said. "Until the women get the full and unreserved apology from the Japanese government for the crimes committed against them, the fight for justice goes on." (Choe Sang-hun, "Apology, If Not Closure, for 'Comfort Women,'" *New York Times*, December 29, 2015, p. A-1)

Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion:
"1. Foreign Minister Kishida: The Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between Japan and the ROK at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of Japan, state the following: (1) The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women, and the Government of Japan is painfully aware of responsibilities from this perspective. As Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Abe expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and

psychological wounds as comfort women. (2) The Government of Japan has been sincerely dealing with this issue. Building on such experience, the Government of Japan will now take measures to heal psychological wounds of all former comfort women through its budget. To be more specific, it has been decided that the Government of the ROK establish a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women, that its funds be contributed by the Government of Japan as a one-time contribution through its budget, and that projects for recovering the honor and dignity and healing the psychological wounds of all former comfort women be carried out under the cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK. (3) While stating the above, the Government of Japan confirms that this issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government will steadily implement the measures specified in (2) above. In addition, together with the Government of the ROK, the Government of Japan will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations.

2. Foreign Minister Yun The Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Government of Japan have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between the ROK and Japan at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of the ROK, state the following: (1) The Government of the ROK values the GOJ's announcement and efforts made by the Government of Japan in the lead-up to the issuance of the announcement and confirms, together with the GOJ, that the issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures specified in 1. (2) above. The Government of the ROK will cooperate in the implementation of the Government of Japan's measures. (2) The Government of the ROK acknowledges the fact that the Government of Japan is concerned about the statue built in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul from the viewpoint of preventing any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity, and will strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner through taking measures such as consulting with related organizations about possible ways of addressing this issue. (3) The Government of the ROK, together with the Government of Japan, will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures it announced." (Foreign Ministry of Japan, Provisional Translation, December 28, 2015)

The number of South Koreans who visited North Korea almost quadrupled this year from a year earlier as Seoul has encouraged more civic groups to spur exchanges with the North, a government report showed. The number of South Koreans visiting the North reached 2,035 this year, compared with 552 a year earlier or up 269 percent from the previous year, according to a report by the Unification Ministry. The tally did not include those who moved in and out of a joint industrial park in the North's border city of Kaesong. (Yonhap, "S. Korean Visitors to N.K. Nearly Quadruple This Year: Report," December 29, 2015)

12/28/15

The leaders of South Korea and Japan faced a barrage of criticism from nationalists upset about a landmark deal aimed at resolving a dispute over Korean women who

had been pressed into sexual servitude in Japanese military brothels before and during World War II. President Park Geun-hye of South Korea and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan had long cultivated reputations as hard-liners in their countries' recurring battles over history. While Park had demanded that Japan do more to atone for its 35 years of colonial rule on the Korean Peninsula, Abe had suggested that Japanese rule was less brutal than Koreans said it was. In recent years, their stances had deepened the conflict but won support from professed patriots at home. So the compromise agreement announced on Monday, in which Japan offered a new apology and \$8.3 million to help care for surviving victims – in return for a South Korean promise not to press any future claims – seemed to some observers to borrow a page from the diplomatic playbook of President Richard M. Nixon. They drew comparisons to Mr. Nixon's decision to seek détente with China in 1972, a move that was both surprising and politically feasible given his longstanding anti-Communist credentials. Yet the apparently sudden change of course by Park and Abe has inevitably left some feeling betrayed. And analysts said it carried unequal political risks, with Park facing a fiercer backlash, in part because the surviving women themselves said they had no voice in shaping the diplomatic deal. "Which country do you belong to?" Lee Yong-su, 88, shouted at Lim Sung-nam, the first vice foreign minister of South Korea, as he entered a shelter for the women in Seoul, a visit arranged by Park's government as part of a damage-control effort, according to Yonhap. "You could have at least let us know what kind of deal you were striking with Japan." Only 46 Korean women who said they were among the tens of thousands who were forced to work in brothels from the early 1930s until 1945 are still alive. They are reported to object that the money offered by Japan did not take the form of official reparations, which would carry an acknowledgment of legal as well as moral responsibility, but instead were presented as a humanitarian contribution. And although the two governments did not see the amount paid as being as important as putting the issue to rest, many found the \$8.3 million – roughly \$180,000 per survivor – insulting. "That's really stingy," said Lee Sung-yoon, a professor in Korean studies at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. "You know what you get for a personal injury lawsuit after spilling hot coffee on yourself in America?" He continued, "Victims of systematic and widespread rape or, in today's parlance, crime against humanity, deserve much more than that." Lee said Park's political opponents could now paint her as "a pro-Japanese collaborator, as they already have her father." Her father, the former military dictator Park Chung-hee, had served as an officer in the Japanese Imperial Army. In the South Korean Parliament, some opposition lawmakers called for an apology from Park and the resignation of Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, holding them responsible for what at least one lawmaker called a "traitorous" deal. The two governments may be hoping that pragmatic considerations outweigh such sentiments. The agreement was welcomed by the United States, for whom both South Korea and Japan are vital allies. All three countries are eager to improve security cooperation in the face of an increasingly assertive China and an advancing North Korean nuclear weapons program. South Korean newspapers offered limited endorsements of the deal, tempered by criticism that it did not include an admission of legal responsibility by Japan. "It is pivotal to the Korea-U.S.-Japan alliance," the mass-circulation *JoongAng Ilbo* said in an editorial: "You can choose your friends, but not your neighbors. Both nations must move forward." Park has some political room to

take risks. She is barred by law from seeking another term in the next presidential election, in 2017. The main opposition party is fractured by infighting, and her governing party holds a majority in Parliament and leads by a large margin in approval ratings. Insisting on formal reparations would almost certainly have scuttled the deal. South Korea renounced legal claims against Japan in a 1965 treaty normalizing relations between the two countries. Although South Korea says that the military brothel issue was never discussed during negotiations for that treaty and that it should be treated as an exception, Japan has been adamant in sticking to the letter of that agreement. "For us, 1965 is final, legally speaking," a Japanese government official said. Making an exception for Korean "comfort women" – as they were euphemistically called by the Japanese – he said, would have opened Japan to a deluge of potential claims, including from women from other countries and from men who were rounded up to work in Japanese wartime industries such as coal mining. Many died from the dangerous work, as well as from malnutrition and other ill-treatment. Abe also faced criticism after the deal, though analysts said he would probably gain more support from moderate Japanese voters than he would lose from the far right. "Conservatives won't abandon Abe, and from the point of view of middle-of-the-road Japanese, it's a positive development," said Honda Masatoshi, a professor at Kinjo Gakuin University. "If a dovish prime minister had done it, he would have been eviscerated by the right," he added. "It's precisely because Abe is a conservative that he could pull this off." Some right-wing members of Abe's governing Liberal Democratic Party demanded that the prime minister press Park to remove what they consider a provocative anti-Japanese symbol: the statue of a girl representing the "comfort women" that was installed by a civic group in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. In the deal South Korea agreed only to take the matter up with the group, which has insisted it will not remove the statue. On Tuesday, the group and the women confirmed that they would continue their weekly protests in front of the embassy, which they have held every Wednesday since 1992. In what struck some as an effort to retain credibility with the right, Abe's wife, Akie, visited the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo on December 28. Much of the criticism in Japan came from further in the political margins, including from anonymous online ultranationalists known collectively as the Net Right. Some posted messages on Abe's Facebook page and other forums calling him a "rotten traitor" and worse. "I feel completely deceived," one wrote. Nakayama Kyoko, a former political ally of Mr. Abe's who now leads a small breakaway party of disgruntled former members of the Liberal Democratic Party, denounced the agreement as "the biggest stain on Abe's diplomatic record." (Choe Sang-hun, "Comfort Women Deal Angers Some," *New York Times*, December 30, 2015, p. A-7)

12/30/15

A senior North Korean governing party secretary and key foreign policy aide to the country's young and relatively inexperienced leader, Kim Jong-un, has died in a car accident, the country's official news media reported. The death of Kim Yang-gon, head of the United Front Department of the Workers' Party of Korea, deprived Kim of one of his most seasoned advisers in his country's relations with the outside world. The department is in charge of handling North Korea's dealings with the South. Kim Yang-gon, 73, was a familiar face for negotiators from South Korea who have haggled with the North for years over issues such as its pursuit of nuclear weapons and the two Koreas' efforts to arrange temporary reunions of relatives separated by the Korean War

six decades ago. The North Korean news media did not provide details of Mr. Kim's death; however, it called him "a loyal revolutionary warrior" and one of the leader Mr. Kim's "closest comrades." As recently as August, the party secretary joined the North Korean delegation at talks with the South that defused a military standoff between the two, which was originally caused by an explosion of land mines that maimed two South Korean soldiers on the border. South Korean analysts believe that seasoned policy aides like Kim Yang-gon served as a calming voice for Kim Jong-un, advising him on when to employ gestures of reconciliation and when to use brinkmanship and saber rattling to shore up his leadership image in the highly militarized country. Jeong Joon-hee, a South Korean government spokesman, said it was "too early to determine how Kim's death will affect inter-Korean relations." He said that the unification minister, Hong Yong-pyo, the South's lead official on North Korean affairs, had sent condolences to Pyongyang. The deaths of senior figures in North Korea's secretive government have often been followed by speculation that the official might have fallen out of favor with the top leadership, and that an assassination might have been disguised as an accident. But the laudatory treatment of Kim Yang-gon in the North's state news media, and the announcement that Kim Jong-un would lead his funeral committee, made that appear unlikely in this case, and there was little speculation along those lines in the South's news reports. With the news of Kim Yang-gon's death, North Korean news media delivered another surprise: The list of senior officials joining the funeral committee included Choe Ryong-hae. Choe, once considered No. 2 in the North Korean hierarchy, disappeared suddenly from public view this year. Last month, South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers in Seoul that it believed that Kim Jong-un had banished Choe to a collective farm for re-education. (Choe Sang-hun, "Aide to Kim Jong-un Dies in Car Accident," *New York Times*, December 30, 2015, p. A-10) Official media reports of Kim Jong-un visiting Kim Yang Gon's open casket and lavishing praise on the deceased official raise the likelihood that his demise wasn't planned, said Ken Gause, an expert on North Korea's leadership at CNA Corp. in Arlington, Va. Gause said the death of Kim Yang Gon could herald a shift toward a more hawkish stance toward South Korea by Pyongyang. But Kim Jong-un said in his traditional New Year's address on Friday that he wanted to restart the stalled talks. Gause said that Kim Yang Gon's death could also foreshadow policy changes at a coming party congress scheduled for May, the first for North Korea since 1980. "Kim Yang Gon was really the voice pushing the need for diplomacy as a way out" of North Korea's political and economic predicament, Gause said. "If this voice is gone, there is no obvious replacement for him -- at least no one obvious now." (Jonathan Cheng, "Pyongyang Official's Death Follows a Familiar Pattern," *Wall Street Journal*, December 30, 2015)

12/31/15

South Korea and China set up a hotline between their top defense officials Thursday to reinforce their cooperation on security issues on the Korean Peninsula and in the region. Defense Minister Han Min-koo had his first telephone conversation with his Chinese counterpart Chang Wanquan earlier in the day on the newly established hotline, the Ministry of National Defense said in a press release. "During today's phone call, the two defense ministers shared their understanding of the need to expand defense exchanges between their countries," the ministry said. "The establishment of the hotline has provided new progress in the defense exchanges between South Korea

and China," Han was quoted as telling Chang during the conversation. "I expect it can be well utilized so the countries could enhance their cooperation and communication on security issues." In response, Chang said China places high priority on its military relations with South Korea and the hotline will further deepen their strategic collaboration, the ministry said. In a summit held in July 2014 in Seoul, President Park Geun-hye and Chinese President Xi Jinping reached an agreement to launch the direct phone line. It is South Korea's third defense minister-level hotline with a foreign country, following those with the United States and Japan, which were established in 1995 and 1999, respectively. Apart from the South, China had been running its hotline with North Korea for a long time as well as with Russia and the United States since 2008. (Yonhap, "S. Korea, China Establish Military Hotline," December 31, 2015)

1/1/16

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for improved relations with South Korea, saying that he is open to talks with Seoul in an open-minded manner for unification. In his New Year's message delivered live on the North's television, Kim said North Korea can hold candid dialogue with the South, calling on Seoul to honor an inter-Korean deal reached in August to defuse military tension. "We are willing to have talks in an open-minded manner with anyone who wants peace and unification," Kim said. "South Korea should honor the spirit of the inter-Korean agreement in August. Seoul should refrain from doing acts that hurt the conciliatory mood." Kim did not mention North Korea's nuclear weapons program. (Yonhap, "N.K. Leader Says He's Open to Candid Talks with S. Korea," January 1, 2015)

Kim Jong-un's New Year Address: "...We should concentrate all our efforts on building an economic giant to bring about a fresh turn in developing the country's economy and improving the people's standard of living. **In order to achieve breakthroughs for a turning point in building an economic giant the electric-power, coal-mining and metallurgical industries and the rail transport sector** should advance dynamically in the vanguard of the general offensive. ... **Our Party maintains the improvement of the people's living conditions as the most important of the numerous state affairs. The crop farming, animal husbandry and fishing sectors should make innovations to effect a radical change in improving the people's standard of living.** ... The country's defense capability should be built up. In this year, which marks the 20th anniversary of the movement of winning the title of O Jung Hup-led 7th Regiment initiated by General Kim Jong Il, the People's Army should further develop itself into a revolutionary army of the Party in which the Party's unified command system is thoroughly established, into a steadfast army of the Party that keeps the revolutionary faith to the death, and effect a turnaround in implementing the Party's four-point line of building up the army to be formidable. By keeping it as the seed to conduct training in a real-war atmosphere and put it on a scientific and modern footing, the army should raise the fierce flames of training so that all the service personnel are prepared to be elite soldiers of modern warfare and stout fighters who are equipped with the military strategies and tactics of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the heroic fighting spirit and flawless abilities to fight an actual war. It should become a standard-bearer and shock force of the times to make breakthroughs as intended by the Party on the major fronts where a thriving country is being built, and look for more tasks that are for the good of the people. **Officers and men of the**

Korean People's Internal Security Forces should smash in embryo the maneuverings of the class enemy and hostile elements to harm the leadership of the revolution, our socialist system and our people's lives and property, and members of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Young Red Guards should intensify combat and political training and fully prepare themselves to defend their villages. The munitions industry sector should develop defense science and technology, put the defense industry on a highly Juche-oriented, modern and scientific footing, and give full play to the revolutionary spirit of Kunja-ri, so as to develop and produce a greater number of various means of military strike of our own style that are capable of overwhelming the enemy. ...National reunification is the most pressing and vital task facing the nation. **Last year, greeting the 70th anniversary of national liberation, we appealed to all the compatriots to pool their efforts to open up a broad avenue to independent reunification, and strived for its realization. However, the anti-reunification forces that are not desirous of national reunification and improved inter-Korean relations ran amuck to realize their schemes for a war and even created a touch-and-go situation short of crossfire, causing grave apprehension at home and abroad. The south Korean authorities publicly sought to realize their goal of "regime change" in our country and unilateral "unification of systems" against the trend of inter-Korean dialogue and detente, and fanned distrust and confrontation between the north and the south.** This year we should hold up the slogan "Let us frustrate the challenges by the anti-reunification forces within and without and usher in a new era of independent reunification!" and press on with the national reunification movement more vigorously. **We should reject foreign intervention and resolve the issues of inter-Korean relations and national reunification independently in keeping with the aspirations and demands of the nation. It is none other than the outside forces that divided our nation, and it is also none other than the United States and its followers that obstruct the reunification of our country. Notwithstanding this, the south Korean authorities are clinging to a smear campaign against the fellow countrymen in collusion with the outside forces while touring foreign countries to ask for the solution of the internal issue of our nation, the issue of its reunification. This is a betrayal of the country and nation that leaves the destiny of the nation at the mercy of the outside forces and sells out its interests. The issues of inter-Korean relations and national reunification should, to all intents and purposes, be resolved by the efforts of our nation in conformity with its independent will and demands, true to the principle of By Our Nation Itself. No one will or can bring our nation reunification. The whole nation should struggle resolutely against the sycophantic and treacherous maneuvers of the anti-reunification forces to cooperate with the outside forces. The south Korean authorities should discontinue such a humiliating act as going on a tour of foreign countries touting for cooperation in resolving the internal issues of the nation. It is fundamental to realizing the country's reunification to prevent the danger of war and safeguard peace and security in the Korean peninsula. Today the peninsula has become the hottest spot in the world and a hotbed of nuclear war owing to the U.S. aggressive strategy for the domination of Asia and its reckless moves for a war against the DPRK. The U.S. and south Korean war maniacs are conducting large-scale military exercises aimed at a nuclear war against the**

DPRK one after another every year; this is precipitating a critical situation in the Korean peninsula and throwing serious obstacles in the way of improving inter-Korean relations. Last year's August emergency showed that even a trifling, incidental conflict between the north and the south may spark a war and escalate into an all-out war. The U.S. and south Korean authorities must discontinue their extremely dangerous aggressive war exercises and suspend acts of military provocation that aggravates tension in the Korean peninsula. It is our consistent stand to strive with patience for peace in the peninsula and security in the region. However, if aggressors dare to provoke us, though to a slight degree, we will never tolerate it but respond resolutely with a merciless sacred war of justice, a great war for national reunification. We should value such agreements common to the nation as the three principles for national reunification and declarations between the north and the south, and in conformity with them, open up an avenue to improved bilateral relations. These principles and declarations constitute the great reunification program common to the nation, and all fellow countrymen wish that they are implemented as soon as possible and a radical phase opened up in reunifying the country. **If they are sincere about improving inter-Korean relations and reunifying the country peacefully, the south Korean authorities must not seek pointless confrontation of systems, but make it clear that they intend to respect and implement with sincerity the three principles for national reunification, June 15 Joint Declaration and October 4 Declaration, which crystallize the general will of the nation and whose validity has been proved in practice. They should cherish the spirit of the agreement signed last year at the inter-Korean high-level emergency contact, and desist from any act that will lead to a breach of the agreement and mar the atmosphere of dialogue. In the future, too, we will make strenuous efforts to develop inter-Korean talks and improve bilateral relations. We will also have an open-minded discussion on the reunification issue, one of the national issues, with anyone who is truly desirous of national reconciliation and unity, peace and reunification.** All the Korean people in the north, in the south and abroad will smash all challenges and obstructive moves by the anti-reunification forces in and out of the country and build a dignified and prosperous reunified Korea on this land without fail under the banner of By Our Nation Itself. **The United States has persisted in ignoring our just demand for replacing the Armistice Agreement with a peace pact to remove the danger of war, ease tension and create a peaceful environment in the Korean peninsula. Instead, it has clung to its anachronistic policy hostile towards the DPRK, escalating the tension and egging its vassal forces on to stage a "human rights" racket against the country.** However, no plots and schemes of the enemy could break the indomitable will of our service personnel and people to firmly defend and add brilliance to our style of people-centred socialism, the base of their happy life. The challenges by the hostile forces remain uninterrupted and the situation is as tense as ever, but we will invariably advance along the road of independence, Songun and socialism under the unfurled red flag of the revolution, and make all responsible efforts to safeguard peace and security in the Korean peninsula and the rest of the world." (KCNA, "Kim Jong-un's New Year Address," January 1, 2016)