

# VANTAGE POINT

DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH KOREA

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**COVER PHOTO** : Ahead of the 65th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War, which falls on June 25, a photo exhibition on North Korea's human rights abuse is being held on June 22 in downtown Seoul amid North Korea's growing criticism over the opening of a U.N. field office to probe into the country's human rights issues. (Yonhap)

## U.N. Office in Seoul to Monitor N.K. Human Rights

**The U.N. outpost is expected to conduct an in-depth investigation into allegations concerning human rights abuses in North Korea, interviewing North Korean defectors and collecting relevant material.**

■ By Lee Kwang-ho

Amid Pyongyang's repeated warnings of retribution, the United Nations opened its field office in Seoul on June 23 to investigate North Korea's dire human rights situation. North Korea has repeatedly issued belligerent responses against the opening of the U.N. human rights office.

The North's rhetoric against the international community's efforts to address the brutal rights conditions in the North came in recent months as South Korea prepares to establish the office. The office where six U.N. workers reside is located at the Seoul Global Center in downtown Seoul.

Pyongyang has denounced criticism of its human rights record as a U.S.-led attempt to topple the socialist regime, saying the envisioned U.N. office is an "unpardonable provocation" and an "open declaration of war against it."

The North will "mercilessly punish" South Korea by mobilizing all means possible if a U.N. office were set up in Seoul, the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said in a recent statement.



The Seoul Global Center, South Korea's largest one-stop support service center for foreigners, opened on June 21, 2013, in downtown Seoul. The U.N. Human Rights Office is located in the 19-story building, with four floors underground, which houses an immigration office, international conference facilities, the Seoul International Resolution Center and banking services. (Yonhap)

In late May, South Korea and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) signed an agreement on the establishment of the field office in Seoul.

The U.N. outpost is expected to conduct an in-depth investigation into allegations concerning human rights abuses in the country, interviewing North Korean defectors in the South and collecting relevant material.

### U.N. Field Office in Seoul

The establishment of the U.N. field office came from a recommendation by the U.N. Commission of Inquiry (COI) tasked with probing human rights violations in the North. In February 2014, the U.N. agency unveiled its report that accused Pyongyang of “systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights.”

In December, the U.N. General Assembly adopted its toughest resolution against Pyongyang on its human rights record. The U.N. action calls for the Security Council to consider referring the North Korean human rights situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands, as “crimes against humanity.”

The U.N. has annually adopted a resolution on North Korea’s human rights violations since 2005. But the latest resolution -- hailed by some advocates as a historical milestone -- goes beyond just expressing concerns to propose for the first time referring the issue to the ICC and punishing those responsible for crimes against humanity, which have been the



The U.N. Human Rights Office in Seoul opens its Facebook account on June 18, 2015, ahead of the office’s official launch. The office said, “Our office will be launched very soon,” on its Facebook page. (Yonhap)

result of policies formed at “the highest level.”

Last year, the OHCHR selected South Korea as the location to establish a new field office, beating out other potential host countries like Japan and Thailand. The OHCHR said the two Koreas are close to each other and share the same language. In addition, it is easier to interview victims and witnesses of human rights abuses by the North.

The U.N. has increased pressure on Pyongyang to tackle its human rights violations since the COI filed an official report documenting the issue early last year. Citing the COI’s report, the U.N. resolution accused the reclusive state of running political prison camps where up to 120,000 people are thought to be detained.

Pyongyang has long been labeled as one of the worst human rights violators in the world, ranging from holding political prisoners in concentration camps to committing torture and carrying out public executions.

Pyongyang flatly denies the accusations as a U.S.-led attempt to topple its regime. “If the

American-style ‘standard of human rights’ is universally accepted, the world will turn into a lawless one, a tundra of human rights and one of darkness,” Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the North’s ruling Workers’ Party, said in a commentary on April 25. “The U.S. human rights racket against the DPRK (North Korea) is nothing but a desperate bid of those who failed to disable the nuclear deterrence for self-defense and stifle the DPRK by force,” it said.

In an earlier statement, Pyongyang’s Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea lashed out at the South Korean government, arguing that the U.N. field office would be used as a base for campaigns against North Korea. “As soon as that anti-North base is set up in the South, it will be our very first target with merciless retribution,” it said.

In March, North Korea’s human rights abuses resurfaced at a U.N. conference in Geneva where South and North Korea engaged in hectic sparring over the rights issue. Their bickering came at the high-level segment of the 28th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which kicked off a four-day run in the Swiss city.

This year’s U.N. council meeting in Geneva came amid keen attention as North Korea’s top diplomat, Ri Su-yong, delivered a speech on March 3, the first of its kind, in a bid to vindicate Pyongyang’s stance over its rights records. The month-long U.N. Human Rights Council meeting also adopted another resolution supporting the 2014 resolution at the U.N. General Assembly.

The resolution, co-sponsored by 53 countries, including South Korea, and adopted by a vote of 27-6, welcomes the installment of a U.N. field office in Seoul and calls on North

Korea to respect the rights of its citizens.

South Korea urged the North to take action to improve its human rights situation, lambasting its ongoing attempts to undermine a landmark U.N. report. As expected, North Korea angrily denied there were any “widespread” violations in the country whose political system “enjoys the eternal vitality.”

## N. Korea’s Top Diplomat in Geneva

North Korean foreign minister Ri decried a 2014 report based on the COI investigation, saying it was based on false defector testimony and demanding that a U.N. resolution based on the findings be revoked. Ri criticized “hostile forces” such as the U.S. only listening to the “scum of mankind, as these so-called defectors from the North fled, abandoning their parents, wives and children after committing crimes at home.”

Specifically, Ri referred to a controversy over the fabrication of parts of a memoir by high-profile North Korean defector Shin Dong-hyuk. Based on the testimony of North Korean exiles, it detailed a vast network of prison camps and documented cases of torture, rape, murder and enslavement. The report formed the basis of the resolution adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December. But in January, Shin -- one of those who testified for the COI -- acknowledged that some elements of his story as told in the memoir were inaccurate, although he stressed that the crucial details of suffering and torture still stood.

North Korea has since leapt on this admission as proof that the entire report is invalid, which Ri reiterated during his speech at the council. “In any court, a ruling based on false testimony is to be nullified,” he said. “The

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su-yong speaks to the 28th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 3, 2015. Ri insisted that the U.N. resolution on North Korea's human rights should be nullified as it was based on what he claimed was false testimony by a North Korean defector. (Yonhap)



anti-DPRK resolutions based on the report should be revoked immediately without delay.”

Shin Dong-hyuk has recently apologized for lying about some facts about his survival in North Korean political prison camps, confessing that some of the accounts of the hardships he faced in the North were embellished.

### Seoul-Pyongyang Bickering

More recently, South and North Korea exchanged accusations at a U.N. meeting over the establishment of the U.N. field office in the South. The exchange occurred at a U.N. Human Rights Council session in Geneva on June 15. South Korean Ambassador to the U.N. Choi Seok-young said his country supports the establishment of the field office.

“The Republic of Korea (South Korea) stands ready to lend our full support to the activities of the field office. In the same vein, as the host country, the Republic of Korea will

support the field-based structure on DPRK human rights in successfully discharging its mandate,” the envoy said.

Japan also showed its support, deploring the human rights situation in the socialist country. “The human rights violations in the DPRK continue to be extremely grave, and the continued involvement of the international community is necessary,” said Misako Kaji, Japan’s deputy permanent representative to the International Organizations in Geneva.

The North dismissed the U.N. move. “We regard it as a political plot aimed at overthrowing the social system of the DPRK by fabricating and propagandizing the human rights issues of the DPRK,” said Kim Yong-ho, counselor at the North’s mission in Geneva.

Meanwhile, South Korea, the U.S. and Japan did not rule out the possibility that they could bring up the issue of dire human rights conditions in the North in their efforts to put more pressure on the Kim Jong-un regime.

In Seoul on May 27, representatives of the

three countries said they would increase pressure on North Korea to bring it back to the six-party talks on denuclearization, which have been suspended for more than six years.

Seoul's top nuke envoy, Hwang Joon-kook, hinted at using the North's human rights issue as one of the key tools to pressure Pyongyang. "We had in-depth talks over producing additional measures that will curb the North's provocations,"

South Korea's top envoy said during the talks following a trilateral meeting in Seoul. Echoing Hwang's remark, U.S. envoy Sung Kim said the three countries "agreed on the importance of enhancing pressure and sanctions on North Korea even as we keep all diplomatic options on the table."

### Seoul, Washington, Tokyo's Pressure

The State Department's Asia policy chief said on May 27 that the U.S. will keep pressing North Korea, welcoming the upcoming establishment of a U.N. office in Seoul. Daniel Russel, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, made the remark in New York during a speech at the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the United States.

"We will continue to maintain pressure on the DPRK. To that end, we support and look forward to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights opening a field-based structure in Seoul that will monitor and document the human rights situation in the DPRK in order to



North Koreans march in Pyongyang on Nov. 27, 2014, to condemn the United Nations resolution on the North's human rights. (KCNA-Yonhap)

help seek justice for those accountable," he said.

Moreover, leaders of the world's Group of Seven industrialized nations condemned North Korea's dismal human rights conditions and its pursuit of nuclear and missile programs on June 8 as they wrapped up a two-day annual meeting in Germany.

"We strongly condemn North Korea's continued development of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, as well as its appalling human rights violations, and its abductions of nationals from other countries," the leaders said in a joint declaration.

In Seoul, South Korea's ruling party is moving to legislate a North Korean human rights bill aimed at enhancing North Korea's rights conditions. This move came as an association of North Korean defector groups called on lawmakers recently to pass a pending bill on the North's human rights situation.

Introduced in August 2005, the bill has been languishing in the National Assembly, apparently out of concern its passage could have a negative impact on inter-Korean relations. The bill was resubmitted in 2008 and passed a par-

liamentary committee. But it made no headway at the plenary session as opposition parties blocked its passage, saying it would provoke North Korea and damage already strained inter-Korean ties.

The bill was put back into the spotlight last year when the United Nations adopted a landmark resolution against Pyongyang, calling for a referral of North Korea to the ICC for human rights violations.

### **S. Korea's Human Rights Bill**

The bill calls for, among other things, establishing a foundation and an archive focused on North Korean human rights conditions and strengthening support for escapees staying in a third country. Its legislation would be a key part of preparing for the eventual unification of the two Koreas.

The ruling Saenuri Party and the Seoul government said recently that they would consider fast-tracking the North Korean human rights bill in June to expedite the legislation, unless they reach an agreement with the main opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy.

Boosted by the U.N. resolution, Rep. Kim Young-woo of the Saenuri Party and fellow lawmakers repackaged previous legislation and proposed a comprehensive version of the North Korean human rights bill in November.

The updated bill calls for the government to appoint a special ambassador for North Korea's human rights; to establish a comprehensive archive to investigate and collect human rights abuse cases; and to offer support for activities by human rights groups.

The opposition party and progressive bloc, however, criticized the conservatives' version as not comprehensive enough. The liberals

pointed out that the bill lacks direct support for North Korean people such as food and medical aid, while the conservatives place importance on transparency over assistance.

The opposition also claimed the bill could cause unexpected clashes with the North. They believe it would encourage anti-North groups to "further provoke" Pyongyang, such as by sending leaflets to the North. In October, North Korea responded by shooting down balloons carrying the leaflets.

Earlier this year, the opposition proposed its own version of the North Korean human rights bill. It highlighted improving the livelihoods of North Koreans by providing direct humanitarian support. It also planned to build a dedicated agency to oversee the distribution of assistance.

As political bickering continued over the bill, other countries have come forward to address the North's human rights abuses. The U.S. passed the North Korea Human Rights Act in 2004 and extended it until 2017. It aims to help North Korean refugees by providing humanitarian and legal assistance to them and grants to organizations to promote human rights in North Korea.

Japan also enacted a similar act in 2006. It is designed to resolve the abduction of Japanese nationals to the North while bringing the public and the international community's attention to North Korea's human rights conditions.

Unlike the bills by the U.S. and Japan, experts believe that Seoul's version will take on a more profound and significant meaning. They point out that South Korea has a higher stake with the inter-Korean relationship.

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, suggested

that the government take a cautious approach in legislating the bill. “Even if the bill were to be passed, the (Korean) government should apply it carefully so as to not provoke the North. Until then, the government should serve as a middleman between the North and regional powers such as the U.S. and Japan,” Yang said.

Earlier this year, U.S. organizations hosted North Korea-related events. The North Korea Freedom Coalition, a U.S. nonprofit group of dozens of organizations working to improve human rights conditions in the North, hosted the “North Korea Freedom Week 2015” starting April 26 in Washington and New York.

In Washington on April 27, a North Korean defector-turned-activist said he and other defectors would appeal to the United States to toughen sanctions and relist their former communist homeland as a terrorism sponsor of human rights violations.

Kim Seong-min, head of Free North Korea Radio, based in Seoul, made the remark during a news conference to announce action plans for the North Korea Freedom Week, an annual set of events aimed at drawing international attention to Pyongyang’s rights abuses.

About a dozen North Korean defectors, including Kim, visited Washington for the annual events, including a House Human Rights Commission hearing on Pyongyang’s provision of forced labor to foreign governments.

North Korea was put on the U.S. terrorism sponsor list for the 1987 midair bombing of a Korean Air flight that killed all 115 people aboard. But the U.S. administration of former President George W. Bush removed Pyongyang from the list in 2008 in exchange for progress in denuclearization talks.

During the freedom week, a U.S.-organized event on North Korea’s human rights briefly turned into chaos at the U.N. on April 30 as North Korean diplomats insisted on reading a statement of protest, amid shouts from defectors, and then stormed out. The North Korean diplomats briefly disrupted the U.N. event, accusing the North Korean defectors of betraying their homeland as they gave testimony.

The incident occurred when defector Joseph Kim spoke about his father dying of starvation and his mother getting jailed for traveling to and from China. As Kim finished his testimony, one of the North Korean diplomats, Ri Song-chol, abruptly began reading a prepared statement from the audience.

## Prospects of U.N. Office

Still, some observers have expressed pessimistic views on the prospects of the U.N. office in Seoul. They said the U.N. office will aggravate the already-frayed inter-Korean ties without resolving the basic problems involving the human rights issue.

North Korea has adamantly rejected all recent offers for talks from the South. The North has refused to hold talks to discuss the potential lifting of economic sanctions imposed in retaliation for its sinking of the Cheonan warship, which left 46 South Korean sailors dead in 2010. South Korea maintains that the warship was torpedoed by a North Korean submarine, but the North denies its involvement in the sinking. Instead, the North has demanded that the South lift the sanctions, which ban inter-Korean economic cooperation with the exception of the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

“There was widespread speculation that the rapport between the two Koreas would



### Chronology on U.N. Actions against N. Korea's Human Rights in 2014

- Feb. 17 The U.N. Committee of Inquiry (COI) releases its final report in Geneva saying that the North has committed organized, extensive and grave crimes against humanity, citing the socialist country's keeping of political prison camps, abducting foreigners and forcing people to starvation all conducted to keep its regime afloat.  
The report also includes its recommendation to the U.N. to refer the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC), setting the stage for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to be charged with crimes against humanity.
- March 28 The U.N. Human Rights Council endorses the COI report to be presented to the U.N. Security Council in a vote of 30-6, with 11 abstentions. The council resolution condemns "the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations and other human rights abuses" in the North.
- April 17 The U.N. Security Council holds informal discussions on human rights violations in North Korea in the absence of standing committee members China and Russia.
- Oct. 8 A draft U.N. resolution, written by the European Union, is circulated behind closed doors at the U.N. The resolutions calls for referring North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to the ICC.
- Nov. 18 The Third Committee of the U.N. General Assembly passes a highly symbolic resolution calling for referring North Korea to the ICC in a 111-19 vote. Fifty-five countries abstained.
- Dec. 18 The U.N. General Assembly formally adopts a landmark resolution calling for referring North Korea to the ICC for human rights violations in a vote of 116-20 with 53 abstention.
- Dec. 22 The U.N. Security Council adopts North Korea's human rights record as an official agenda item for the first time, a highly symbolic move designed to increase pressure on Pyongyang to improve the treatment of its own people.  
The issue was adopted in an 11-2 vote with two abstentions among the 15 council members. China and Russia voted against adopting the issue as an official agenda item.

improve after the joint military exercises (with the U.S.) ended late in April, but closely looking at the North's moves, there are growing negative views on the expectations," said Cheong Seong-chang, senior fellow at the Sejong Institute.

The analyst suggested that the Park Geun-hye administration take forward-looking measures in order to create a thaw in the relationship. "With the May 24 sanctions and the suspension of Mount Kumgang tours remaining, Park's North Korea policy has limits. So, she needs to effectively handle those issues, link-

ing them to resolving the family reunions and others that will help activate the bilateral ties," Cheong said.

Cheong warned that the lack of reconciliation with the North may strip the South of its leadership in resolving pending issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula. "While the China-North Korea ties are recently recovering thanks to Beijing's conciliatory gesture, the South's frayed ties with the North will prevent Seoul from raising its voice on the issues regarding the North," he said. (Yonhap)

# Purge of Hyon Yong-chol and Outlook on Party-Army Relations in N. Korea

■ By Cheong Seong-chang

*Director of the Department for Unification Strategy Studies at the Sejong Institute in Seongnam, South Korea*

The National Intelligence Service (NIS), the chief intelligence agency of South Korea, on May 13 this year revealed it had obtained surprising secret information that Hyon Yong-chol, North Korean minister of People's Armed Forces, known as No. 2 man in the North's military, was executed about two weeks earlier by a firing squad armed with an anti-aircraft gun in Kang Kon Military Academy in Pyongyang, the North's capital, adding that the execution was watched by hundreds of senior North Korean army officers.

The North Korean military leader was purged because he had expressed his unsatisfactory feelings toward young North Korean

leader Kim Jong-un and failed to follow Kim's instructions several times while falling asleep in the fifth meeting of training officers from the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) held in Pyongyang from April 24-25 under Kim's "guidance," according to the NIS.

But the NIS official, who briefed members of a South Korean parliamentary committee of the serious development in the North behind the curtain, failed to clarify the reason for Hyon's complaints and the contents of instructions which Hyon was reluctant to follow. He said that there could be additional factors responsible for Hyon's removal but that the NIS could not confirm them. While announc-



Hyon Yong-chol (1st from L), the late and former North Korea's defense minister, appears drowsy in his seat at the fifth meeting of training officers from the KPA held from April 24-25, 2015 in Pyongyang presided over by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (far R). (Yonhap)

ing information on Hyon's public execution, however, the NIS man showed a somewhat equivocal attitude on the matter. He said that the NIS was reluctant to conclude that information is definitely true, because there was no announcement from the North on Hyon's purge, albeit his status as one of the key members of the North Korean power hierarchy, and the North's TV stations have continued to telecast some documentary films for the North Korean leader accompanied by Hyon, among others, without doctoring them in a way to erase Hyon's image there.

In North Korea, the images and the names of purged senior North Korean officials have been usually deleted from documentary films and official media including Rodong Sinmun, organ of the Workers' Party, plus the websites run by the North Korean regime. But North's TV stations continued to telecast Hyon's image until one month after the NIS's announcement of his alleged execution, and his name and image remained intact until after one month after his reported purge. For this reason, some North Korea watchers in Seoul and elsewhere questioned the credibility of the NIS disclosure while arguing that possibilities are high that Hyon is receiving an education for "revolutionization."

An education for "revolutionization" in the North refers to a measure to punish senior North Korean officials committing a serious fault. In the course of disciplinary actions against them, they are usually sent to plants,



This capture taken from the footage of a documentary aired by the Korean Central Television on May 19, 2015, shows North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un holding a baby with defense minister Hyon Yong-chol (in circle) applauding as they participate in a photo session with families of exemplary soldiers in December 2014. (Yonhap)

enterprises, or farms to work, aimed at making them reflect on their misconduct. In contrast, the purge of senior officials is meant for their removal from the political scene, housing them in a political prison camp or executing them.

Under these environments where no one is confident of the real situation facing the former North Korean defense minister, this writer could get information on the crimes committed by him from the editor of Daily NK, one of the internet media in South Korea specializing in North Korean affairs, and an elite North Korean refugee, who wanted to be identified simply as "J," in telephone talks with them.

Noteworthy was the common point in their information that Hyon was purged on a charge of "militarism-oriented bureaucracy," which was not mentioned by the NIS official.

North Korea Korean dictionary defines the "militarism-oriented bureaucracy" as "the bureaucracy that executes extreme military dictatorship in the military."

## Hyon 'Refuses to Accept Suryong's

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***Noteworthy was the common point in their information that Hyon was purged on a charge of “militarism-oriented bureaucracy,” which was not mentioned by the NIS official. North Korea’s Korean dictionary defines the “militarism-oriented bureaucracy” as “the bureaucracy that executes extreme military dictatorship in the military.”***

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### **Leadership’ and ‘Respects Militarism-based Bureaucracy’**

Quoting North Korean sources in South Phyongan Province as having said in telephone conversation, Daily NK reported on May 15 this year that in a class organized by the political department of a high military unit for army officers, the instructor branded Hyon as an arbitrary, despotic militarist who refused to accept the leadership of Kim Jong-un as suryong (absolute leader), adding that the instructor attributed his purge to his behavior based on sectarianism, like Kim Chang-bong who served as defense minister during October 1962-December 1968, but was purged while in office on a charge of his behavior oriented with “militarism-based bureaucracy.”

In a meeting with a group of senior officials from the Organization-Guidance Department under the umbrella of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK, to be mentioned simply as the Party below) and the General Political Bureau (GPB) of the army on Jan. 19, 1969, Kim Jong-il said, “In a recent plenary session of the KPA Party Committee, uncovered and criticized seriously was the crime committed by some senior officials at the Ministry of National Defense in the past,” in a move to describe Kim Chang-bong as a militarism-based bureaucrat. Kim also

said, “The worst of the crimes committed by the militarism-based bureaucrats was the one aimed at paralyzing functions of the Party organization and political institutions and weakening Party’s leadership in the KPA.” He continued to say, “The ideology for almighty military respected by the militarism-based bureaucrats has eventually broken the back of the Party’s projects and resulted in the Party’s inability regarding the implementation of its military line,” indicating that they attached more importance to professionalism in the military arena than political projects.

Kim Il-sung also said in the fifth Party congress held in November 1970, “During the period for our solidarity we have overcome in time the tendency in the army to weaken the Party’s leading role, neglect the political projects, prevent even the regular military exercises and stimulate militarism-based bureaucracy to encroach on the army; have strengthened Party’s leadership in the army and Party’s political projects in the army; and thus have further increased the combat power of the KPA,” in an effort to justify the purge of Kim Chang-bong.

On the occasion of its purge of the militarism-based bureaucrats in the late 1960s, the Party assigned a political officer, called a “commissar,” to each of the divisions and regiments in the army and placed all senior offi-

cers of the army under the control of the Secretariat and the Organization-Guidance Department of the Party Central Committee.

The North Korean refugee called J told this writer that he had heard from North Korean sources in telephone that Hyon was put to death because of his taste for militarism-based bureaucracy and his tricky, or shrewd behavior, and that the North Korean authorities concerned have decided to make Hyon's execution classified information while notifying it only to the senior army officials with the ranks above lieutenant colonel. J quoted his sources as having said that Hyon has once complained that Kim Jong-un backs the GPB chief, rather than military professionals such as the chief of the General Staff and minister of People's Armed Forces.

In the North Korean regime where Party's leadership is viewed as the same as the leadership of Kim Jong-un as the suryong, someone's view or the statement calling for valuing military professionals more than the GPB chief, whose job is to guarantee Party's leadership in the army, is risky because it can be interpreted as a position oriented with militarism-based bureaucracy.

### **Hyon's Remarks Degrading Kim Jong-un as Decisive Factor for His Execution**

According to J, Hyon's behavior had been already subject to the intensive monitoring of the North Korean authorities concerned, and his execution was decisively ascribable to his remarks aimed at degrading the North Korean leader.

Hyon visited Moscow in mid-April this year in his capacity as North Korean minister of



North Korean defense minister Hyon Yong-chol speaks during a conference on international security, organized by the Russian Defense Ministry, at a Moscow hotel on April 16, 2015. Hyon said that Pyongyang will not give up its nuclear weapons as long as the United States poses nuclear threat to the country. (Yonhap)

people's armed forces to attend the fourth Moscow Conference on International Security and a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Shoigu. At that time, Hyon believed that Russia was to give military equipment, including bombers, in aid to the North. But in the meeting of defense ministers between the North and Russia, the Russian side reportedly said that Russia can hardly provide the North with military equipment because North Korean TV programs have trumpeted the North's "developed, modern" military equipment and that North Korean propaganda touched off the concern of the international community.

Disappointed by this Russian position, Hyon has reportedly told North Korean officials attending him during his visit to Moscow, "The young man (referring to Kim Jong-un) is

inefficient in politics,” while making complaining remarks that the North fell into a situation where it cannot eat even a ready meal. His comment was passed to the North Korean leader, angering him and inciting him to make an instruction for “executing Hyon without mercy,” said J. If J’s information on Hyon’s remarks degrading Kim Jong-un is true, possibilities are high that the hot-tempered young leader has made an instruction for Hyon’s execution by a firing squad armed with an anti-aircraft gun.

The Daily NK report quoted North Korean military sources in Ryanggang Province as having said in a telephone conversation on May 15, “We have heard from senior military officers 10 days ago that Hyon was executed by a firing squad armed with an anti-aircraft gun while a group of senior officers was watching it,” adding that they have also heard that Hyon was unfaithful to the “supreme dignity (referring to Kim Jong-un),” has attempted to work in his own way and fell asleep during a meeting attended by the North Korean leader.

“After all, Hyon was executed because of his militarism-based behavior challenging the authority of the supreme leader and disregarding instructions of the supreme dignity,” the Daily NK quoted the North Korean sources as having said. This Daily NK’s report accords largely with J’s information. But J said it is not true that a North Korean firing squad used the anti-aircraft gun to shoot Hyon to death.

### **Party and GPB Expected to Intensify Their Control of KPA**

The North Korean leadership has valued the political elite more than the top brass of the army, in a move to maintain the army’s loyalty

to the suryong and the Party. All military commanders in the North have undoubtedly unsatisfactory feelings toward this policy of the North Korean regime, but they have been trapped in a serious situation if and when they exposed their complaints on this matter.

In various functions held during the Kim Jong-il era, in the list of very important persons (VIPs) attending them, the name of the GPB chief has always come before the names of the chief of the General Staff and the minister of People’s Armed Forces, indicating clearly the superiority of the political officer over the military professionals.

In the Kim Jong-un era, meanwhile, Choe Ryong-hae with no military background was named to head the GPB and his successor was Hwang Byong-so, who has no military background either and has worked for a long time at the Organization-Guidance Department of the Party Central Committee, undoubtedly nourishing the unsatisfactory feelings of army commanders.

In May this year, apparently after Hyon’s purge, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un promoted Colonel General (three star) Pak Yong-sik, deputy chief of the GPB, to full (four star) general. If Pak has maintained his job in the bureau as deputy chief in charge of organization after the promotion, it probably indicates Kim Jong-un’s intention to firmly control military commanders through the GPB. The deputy chief of the bureau in charge of organization is most powerful in the bureau next only to its chief. This office monitors the ideological behavior of all senior army officers and deals with the personnel administration regarding them.

For this reason, even if the GPB deputy chief in charge of organization is lower than

minister of People's Armed Forces, or chief of the General Staff in military rank, there is no trouble for him to politically control them. Pak's promotion to full general implies that the bureau's influence over army commander will become stronger than before.

When Kim Jong-un visited a tree nursery run by the Ministry of People's Armed Forces on May 29 this year, Gen. Pak Yong-sik greeted Supreme Commander Kim Jong-un upon his arrival there, implying the possibility that Pak was promoted to minister of People's Armed Forces, succeeding Hyon. It is so because whenever Kim has made an inspection visit to an army unit, he is usually received by its commander, and not by a senior officer from the GPB.

In general, the commander of an army corps, or former chief of the General Staff, is appointed as minister of People's Armed Forces. It is hard to deny the possibility that Park, deputy chief of the GPB, became minister of People's Armed Forces because there is a precedent. Kim Jong-gak, first deputy chief of the bureau, was appointed to that ministerial office in April 2012. If the deputy chief of the GPB in charge of organization, who corresponds to first vice minister in South Korea, was named to take the office of People's Armed Forces minister, all political officers in the North Korean army would enjoy more of their influence.

Reportedly, most senior officers in the North Korean army are dreadfully afraid that the aftereffect of Hyon's purge will adversely affect them. But the possibilities are slim that any army commander will choose such an extreme means as rebellion to get out of their troublesome situation, because they cannot move their troops without political officers'

approval and their every movement is monitored by a military unit organized for safeguarding the North Korean leader, called the Safeguard Command.

For three years and a half after Kim Jong-un took power immediately after his father Kim Jong-il died in December 2011, the replacement of the GPB chief was made just one time, but that of the chief of the General Staff was three times, and that of the people's armed forces minister five times. These developments indicate that the top brass of the army are unstable in their positions, while the elite political officers in the army enjoy their stable status. Hyon's purge will undoubtedly further increase the influence of the already powerful senior political officers in the army while causing other senior army officials likely to shrink much more.

And because Hyon was purged not only because of his refusal to accept the suryong's leadership but because of his behavior oriented with the militarism-based bureaucracy, the army section in the Organization-Guidance Department under the Party Central Committee and the GPB in the army, both of them responsible for promoting servicemen's loyalty to the Party and the suryong, will likely enjoy their much more expanded influence over the army.

As the aforementioned purge of Kim Chang-bong was followed by an increase in the influence of the Party and Kim Jong-il over the army, Hyon's purge will most likely result in more intensified control of the army by the Party and Kim Jong-un, rather than causing instability of the North Korean regime. (Yonhap)

## Stepping up Pressure and Sanctions on North Korea

**The prospects of the six-party talks remain bleak as Pyongyang refuses to talk about its nuclear program, a critical tool for regime survival and national security.**

■ By Lee Kwang-ho

For nearly seven years, the six-party talks to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program have been dormant since they were last held in December 2008. Despite a flurry of diplomatic activities, hope for resuming the multilateral talks has dimmed further recently as the main players, namely the North and the United States, have remained stubborn in their conflicting stance.

To break the nuclear impasse, chief nuclear envoys from Seoul, Washington and Tokyo gathered in Seoul in late May. There they agreed to step up pressure and sanctions on North Korea to curb further provocations and the North's nuclear program, while continuing efforts to encourage the country to return to the negotiation table.

The chief nuclear negotiators shared the view that the North's advancement of its nuclear capabilities is "serious" and had a common sense of urgency in addressing the problem. They are chief delegates to the six-way talks also involving China and Russia.

"In order to deal with it, we agreed to put stronger pressure on Pyongyang and make active efforts for dialogue," Hwang Joon-kook, South Korean special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs,

told reporters during a joint press briefing on the three-way discussion with his American and Japanese counterparts -- Sung Kim, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, and Junichi Ihara, Japanese director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau.

### Pressure on N. Korea

The three nations even added one more stick -- criticizing the North's dismal human rights record -- to pressure the recalcitrant regime. To help change Pyongyang's strategic calculations, Seoul is poised to use the North's woeful human rights record.

Seoul believes the sensitive issue could help pressure the North to return to the negotiating table, while some observers warned that the human rights issue could further complicate the already challenging denuclearization task.

But doubts linger over whether applying additional pressure on the North would help create momentum for talks. North Korea demands the unconditional resumption of negotiations, while the U.S. says that Pyongyang must first take concrete steps demonstrating its commitment to denu-





S. Korea's top nuclear envoy Hwang Joon-kook (C) and his U.S. and Japanese counterparts -- Sung Kim (R) and Junichi Ihara -- finish a photo session during their meeting at a Seoul hotel on May 27, 2015. (Yonhap)

clearization.

As the six-party talks have been idle, the North has bolstered its nuclear capabilities and stockpiles, and conducted its second and third nuclear tests, in 2009 and 2013, after detonating a nuclear device for the first time in 2006.

Some experts now warn that the socialist nation's nuclear arsenal could increase to 100 bombs by 2020. North Korea is already under a wide array of U.N. and other international sanctions for its past missile and nuclear tests.

More recently, Pyongyang purportedly test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), posing a new threat to regional security. It further escalated tensions when it claimed to have built technology to make nuclear warheads small enough to be mounted on missiles.

South Korean chief negotiator Hwang 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.

Some critics say, however, if Washington increases hurdles to the six-nation talks, it will further spread suspicion that the U.S. administration prefers some tension being maintained on the Korean Peninsula both to keep a resurgent China in check and satisfy the needs of the U.S. military-industry complex.

## Pyongyang's Angry Response

As expected, North Korea issued an angry response to what it sees as the three capitalist nations blaming the isolated regime for the suspension of the denuclearization talks.

"It is the United States that has destroyed the relationship between North Korea and America as well as the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," the North's foreign ministry said on May 31, adding, "It's too late already."

North Korea vowed to ensure a "balance of forces" with the U.S. through its continued development of nuclear weapons.

"As has been already proved in history, the

only way to prevent a war between the DPRK (North Korea) and the U.S., who 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,” the North’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

The North argued that the three parties attempted to distort the truth by giving the impression that they wanted to have a dialogue, but the North 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,” the ministry said.

It said the North’s nuclear arsenal and missiles are “neither a means for threatening anyone nor a bargaining chip for something.” Those are “self-defensive deterrents 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,” it said.

### **Submarine-launched Ballistic Missile**

Meanwhile, North Korea strongly voiced its opposition to the U.N. Security Council’s handling of its recent submarine-launched ballistic missile test, saying that it would prove itself to be a “political tool” of the U.S. 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 United Nations, Ja Song-nam, claimed in a letter sent to the Security Council president in late May, that the South Korea-U.S. military drills were

“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.

Last year, North Korea twice asked the Council to deal with the issue, but no formal discussions took place. Pyongyang has long accused the U.S. and South Korea of plotting to invade the country, using their annual military exercises as part of preparations for it. But Seoul and Washington have rejected the claim, saying the annual maneuvers are purely defensive in nature.

The North’s letter came after South Korea asked the Security Council’s North Korea Sanctions Committee to look into the North’s submarine missile test to determine whether it violated U.N. resolutions banning Pyongyang from any ballistic missile activity.

Despite Pyongyang’s evolving nuclear technologies, the prospects of dialogue remain bleak as Pyongyang refuses to talk about its nuclear program, a critical tool for regime survival and national security.

“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.

Chang said for inter-Korean dialogue to resume, Seoul needs to recognize Pyongyang as a legitimate interlocutor rather than indicating that Pyongyang is one that will collapse or be



In this photo provided on May 29, 2015, by the South Korean Embassy in Beijing, South Korea's top nuclear envoy Hwang Joon-kook (3rd from L) talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei (2nd from R), during their meeting in Beijing on May 28, 2015, to seek ways to resume long-stalled multilateral talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons program. (Yonhap)

absorbed into the South to achieve reunification.

For the North Korean leader, nuclear arms are critical tools to show off to the international audience his country's military might, analysts said. For domestic purposes, Kim can use the nuclear program to promote national pride and unity, they added, noting the North is highly unlikely to bargain away its nuclear arsenal.

Some observers said that before Seoul seeks to reopen the six-way talks, it should first try to improve inter-Korean relations so as to revive and speed up the hitherto dormant multilateral dialogue process.

### Stance of China and Russia

China and Russia remain major factors in deciding the future of the stalled six-party talks. China's top nuclear envoy, Wu Dawei, gave a lukewarm response to growing calls to ramp up pressure on North Korea to get it to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

In his meeting with South Korea's Hwang

in Beijing, Wu only repeated China's long-standing policy of dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue, saying, "The Chinese will continue to play its due role in the proper settlement" of the issue.

China is widely believed to have significant leverage over North Korea, which has long been dependent on Chinese diplomatic support and economic aid. According to experts, China is more interested in maintaining ties with North Korea, its traditional ally, to prevent the U.S. from seizing hegemony in East Asia than resolving North Korea's nuclear programs.

Ambassador Sung Kim, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, also met with Wu Dawei in Beijing on May 29. After the meeting, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, emphasized the need for dialogue in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

Hua said, "The proper settlement of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue concerns peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula

and Northeast Asia, meets common interests, and remains a common responsibility of the concerned parties.”

Traditionally, Russia has supported North Korea's position. Moscow will not allow any deal on North Korea's nuclear issue being negotiated on the back of Pyongyang, Moscow's top envoy to Seoul said on June 11. He said that international pressure will not lead North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program, calling for a peaceful and diplomatic solution.

Ambassador Alexander Timonin's remarks are a clear departure from the stance of South Korea, the U.S. and Japan, whose nuclear envoys agreed to enhance pressure on North Korea amid its continued provocations. Timonin said Moscow's position is “persistent and principled.”

“We are against any pressure on any country,” he told Yonhap News Agency during a function at the Russian Embassy.

## Clandestine Nuclear Facilities

At this juncture, a U.S. State Department report said that North Korea may have clandestine nuclear facilities in addition to the main Yongbyon nuclear complex, raising the specter of nuclear weapons proliferation in the socialist state.

The 2015 Report on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments released on June 5 also suggested that Pyongyang may have no intention to comply with its denuclearization commitments.

Pyongyang imploded the cooling tower at the Yongbyon facility in June 2008 with much fanfare, inviting the international media to

cover the event. However, Pyongyang has conducted two nuclear tests after that event.

In 2013, North Korea restarted its 5-megawatt, graphite-moderated reactor at its Yongbyon research complex, which allowed Pyongyang “to resume the process of producing weapons-grade plutonium.” It has been suspected for some time that North Korea may be operating other nuclear facilities at different sites around the country, including additional uranium enrichment sites which cannot be easily detected.

The report said that North Korea's statements and activities did not signal any intention or commitment to denuclearization despite the continued demand by the U.S. to resume the stalled six-party talks. It also called attention to the fact that the North Korean nuclear activities of the past year are in violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution.

This is the first time that the U.S. State Department has expressed its opinion in an official document about intelligence related to additional North Korean nuclear facilities. The document does not specify what evidence there may be for this opinion.

After visiting the nuclear enrichment facilities at Yongbyon in November 2010, Siegfried Hecker, a nuclear physicist and expert on North Korea's nuclear program, assessed that North Korea had a secret facility somewhere other than Yongbyon for producing highly enriched uranium.

In regard to a light water reactor (LWR) that North Korea is currently building at Yongbyon, the report said that “if successfully completed and operated, the LWR could provide North Korea with a relatively small source of electricity.” (Yonhap)

## N. Korea Offers to Have Inter-Korean Talks with Preconditions

**Experts said the ball is now in South Korea's court as the North at least showed its readiness for talks... South Korea needs to be active in having talks with North Korea for better inter-Korean ties.**

■ By Kim Tae-shik

North Korea expressed its willingness to have official dialogue with South Korea on June 15, a departure from its previous attitude of not accepting the South's call for intergovernmental dialogue, although it attached certain preconditions for the talks.

In a rare government statement, the North 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 the statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency (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.



An anchorwoman for the (North) Korean Central Television announces North Korean government statement that the North could have talks and negotiations with South Korea if its preconditions were met on June 15, 2015. (Yonhap)

The government statement came as the North has not accepted the South's repeated proposals for dialogue, claiming that annual joint military drills between Seoul and Washington are raising tension on the divided peninsula.

## Seoul's Reaction

In response to the North's offer, Seoul's unification ministry called on Pyongyang to come to the talks "without laying out improper pre-conditions."

"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 an attempt to restore national unity.

Commenting on the North's proposal, South Korea's unification minister Hong Yong-pyo said on June 17 that the North's offer is seen as a step forward in bilateral ties, but it is regrettable that the North attached preconditions for dialogue.

Hong said it is a good sign that the North appears to be softening its stance, compared with its latest provocative acts and slander toward the South.

The North's proposal came one day after it test-fired three short-range missiles into the East Sea. The North's provocative acts have never ceased, raising tension on the divided peninsula. In May, the North claimed it had successfully fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

"The statement seems to mark a step for-



Armored amphibious vehicles move toward a beach amid a smoke screen as South Korean and U.S. soldiers engage in a joint landing drill on the coast of Pohang, southeastern South Korea, on March 30, 2015. (Yonhap)

ward. But it is regrettable that the North presented a set of conditions for talks," the minister told a group of reporters.

## North's Preconditions

Pyongyang called on Seoul to first suspend its military exercises with Washington. It also

urged the South to abolish the legal and institutional systems that hamper inter-Korean exchanges, referring to the removal of the punitive sanctions South Korea has imposed.

Seoul imposed a set of sanctions on North Korea on May 24, 2010 which suspended almost all inter-Korean exchanges except for those at the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the North. This came after the South Korean Navy corvette Cheonan sank in the Yellow Sea, killing 46 sailors, which the South concluded was the work of North Korea.

South Korea maintains that Pyongyang must first apologize for its deadly attack while North Korea has refused to admit its responsibility and claimed the South's conclusion was "totally fabricated." The North has persistently demanded the lifting of the sanctions as a prerequisite to the improvement in inter-Korean relations.

The minister called on North Korea to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to have frank discussions over an array of pending issues.

On the North's intention behind the dialogue offer, experts in Seoul said the North may want to show the outside world its willingness for dialogue with the South and take the upper hand in future inter-Korean dialogue while passing the buck for the frayed South-North relations to the South.

"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," the North's statement read.

A senior North Korean official urged South Korea to take Pyongyang up on the offer if it wants to see inter-Korean ties improve.

"If South Korea truly wants to restore the

frayed ties and resolve the matter of unification in accordance with our people's wishes, then it will have to respond to our fair offer," said Yang Hyong-sop, vice president of North Korea's Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly shortly after the North announced the government statement.

He made the remarks during the briefing session commemorating the 15th anniversary of the inter-Korean summit, which was aired on Korean Central Television.

Yang argued that South Korea has challenged North Korea's "patriotic" proposals for talks with a series of provocations that have insulted Pyongyang's dignity and its regime.

Yang reiterated Pyongyang's oft-stated disdain for Seoul's joint military exercises with Washington, saying that sincere dialogue couldn't be held in such a warlike atmosphere.

## Ball in Seoul's Court

Experts said that the ball is now in South Korea's court as the North at least showed its readiness for 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 will blame the South for a possible rupture of inter-Korean talks," the professor added.

In a reconciliatory gesture, North Korea repatriated two South Koreans who allegedly sneaked into the nation in May during a trip to China on June 17.

The unification ministry said the North sent a 59-year-old man, only identified by his surname Lee, and a 51-year-old woman, surnamed Jin, back to the South via the truce village of Panmunjom, which sits on the inter-Korean border, Deputy Spokeswoman Park Soo-jin said in a press briefing. North Korea has still detained four other South Koreans, including a New York University student, spurning Seoul's request to set them free.

Meanwhile, the two Koreas have failed to organize a joint event to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the June 15 inter-Korean summit. North Korea has blamed South Korea for the aborted joint celebration, claiming that the South is responsible for aggravated inter-Korean relations.

In response to the North's blame, the South has called for the North to stop its "preposterous claim," expressing deep regret over the North's groundless accusations.

Civilian groups from South and North Korea tentatively agreed in Shenyang, China, in early May to jointly celebrate the summit anniversary for three days starting June 14 in

Seoul. But no progress has been made as the North has turned to a lukewarm stance.

On June 1, the North Korean side said in a letter sent to the South's side that it "would be better" to separately hold the summit anniversary events, according to a statement from the South's preparatory committee.

North Korea cited South Korea's attitude as the reason, referring to Seoul's positions that the June 15 events should be limited to non-political areas and the venue for the Liberation Day celebrations should be in Seoul.

While the Seoul government maintains a position that the June 15 joint commemorative events should be confined to non-political areas like sports and culture, North Korea asserted political events should not be excluded.

Following the Shenyang meeting on May 4-7, the South proposed to the North on May 14 to hold working-level contacts to discuss the matter further in the North Korean border city of Kaesong on May 19-20, but the North did not respond.

Instead, the North claimed in a statement on May 15 that it cannot accept the South's position to hold a joint commemoration of the Aug. 15 liberation in Seoul.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's colonial rule on Aug. 15, 1945, and the two sides have been preparing for joint celebrations of the summit and liberation day anniversaries.

Both sides want to see that the liberation day celebrations be held in each country's capital. (Yonhap)



## N. Korea's Desire for New Satellite Development

The U.S. State Department says any satellite launch using ballistic missile technology would be a clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions.

■ By Kim Tae-shik

North Korea has said it is developing a new satellite more advanced than the previous one and defended “peaceful space development” as its sovereign right while U.S. officials say the North’s plan is a violation of the U.N. Security Council’s resolutions banning the launch of a rocket using ballistic missile technology.

Paek Chang-ho, vice director of the Scientific Research and Development Department at North Korea’s National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA), said on June 4 that his country is developing a more advanced earth observation satellite and will inform international organizations and other countries when it’s completed before launching it.

The North Korean space agency official, however, did not provide further details of how far the development of the satellite has gone or when the launch might be.

In an interview with AP Television in Pyongyang, Paek made clear that North Korea will continue launching satellites, whenever



This image captured from the video footage released by the (North) Korean Central Television (KCTV) on May 3, 2015, shows the front of the General Satellite Control and Command Center of the National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA) in Pyongyang. (Yonhap)

necessary, from its designated site.

“Now we are developing a more advanced earth observation satellite, and when it’s completed, before launching it, we will inform international organizations and other countries, and then the media will know too.”

Paek reiterated the North’s argument that development of a satellite is the North’s just and legitimate right as a sovereign state and claimed the U.S. has tried to persecute the

North under a misrepresentation of its satellites as missiles.

“America and its impure allies are always trying to persecute us, and they say that our peaceful satellite control center is a facility for coordinating long-range ballistic missile launches, that it’s a cover for missile development,” the North’s official said.

### Pyongyang’s Claim

“We cannot accept the misrepresentation of our National Aerospace Development Administration’s peaceful space development work as the development of ballistic missiles, nor the abuse of our space development program, calling it a provocation that threatens world peace and security, while we are a signed member of the U.N. Treaty on Principles on Outer Space, which prescribed the peaceful use of outer space as a universal right of all independent nations.”

The interview followed a KCNA report that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un inspected the newly built General Satellite Control and Command Center of NADA.

Kim said during the inspection on May 3 that peaceful space development “is an option taken by our Party and people and a legitimate right of Songun Korea.”

“Satellites of Juche Korea will as ever be launched into outer space at the time and locations set by the Party Central Committee,” the KCNA quoted Kim as saying.

Songun, which literally means military first, is North Korea’s official policy that prioritizes strengthening the military while concurrently developing the economy. Juche is the North’s guiding ideology, which emphasizes self-reliance and independence.

Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the North’s ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, also said, on June 2, “The United States is incriminating the DPRK for launching satellites for peaceful purposes while deliberately launching its space weapons in breach of international law.” DPRK is the acronym for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the North’s official title.

“The U.S. ever-more undisguised space militarization is sparking off new global arms race, gravely threatening the right of humankind to existence,” the commentary carried by the KCNA read.

The paper claimed news analysts are concerned that the U.S. hypersonic missiles now under development may cause accidental retaliatory strikes and even a nuclear war as it may be misinterpreted as a nuclear weapon and argued that the U.S. should never be allowed to turn space into a war theater for world domination.

### U.S. Reaction

Commenting on the report of the North’s development of a new satellite, the U.S. State Department said on June 4 any satellite launch using ballistic missile technology would be a clear violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. It said the resolutions require North Korea to suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program and abandon the program, verifiably and irreversibly.

State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said any rocket capable of placing an object in orbit is directly relevant to the development of long-range ballistic missiles and that the U.S. will be watching this.

Japan’s Kyodo News Service earlier report-



This image, taken from Google Earth on May 5, 2015, shows a new North Korean satellite command center (in left lower circle) located next to one of late leader Kim Jong-il's residences (in upper circle) in downtown Pyongyang, which is also believed to be used by his successor, Kim Jong-un. The site is also adjacent to a luxury housing complex (in right lower circle) where No. 2 Kim Yong-nam and other senior officials live under tight security. (Yonhap)

ed Kim Jong-un ordered NADA earlier this year to launch a satellite in October to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea on Oct. 10 this year, raising suspicions of a plan to test-fire a long-range missile. Kyodo reported it on May 18 citing government sources in a number of countries. The U.S., Japan and South Korea suspect the project will "effectively be a test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile that the North is allegedly developing, according to the report.

North Korea put a satellite into orbit on an Unha-3 long-range rocket in December 2012 in a surprise move that demonstrated that it has moved closer to developing a nuclear missile that can reach the U.S. mainland.

Meanwhile, the U.S. website 38 North,

which specializes in North Korean affairs, said on May 28 that North Korea is adding more facilities to its recently expanded rocket launch site on the country's west coast, casting doubt over speculation Pyongyang may launch a long-range rocket in October.

The North completed the upgrading of the Sohae Satellite Launching Station in 2014 to make it accommodate larger rockets with heavier payloads. The site is where the North successfully fired a long-range rocket and put a satellite into orbit in late 2012.

Though the upgrading of the gantry to support a larger rocket was completed, Pyongyang has been further modifying the launch area to include a new support building at the east end of the pad and a platform that appears to be able to move along rails from

that building to the launch tower, 38 North said, citing recent satellite imagery.

“While the exact purpose of this building remains unclear, one possibility is that the North Koreans are building a complex similar to facilities observed in China, such as at the Jiuquan Launch Center, that include buildings where the launch vehicle is assembled, processed and checked, then placed on a movable platform and rolled to the launch tower,” the site operated by the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies said.

North Korea, which has conducted three nuclear tests -- in 2006, 2009 and 2013 -- has continued to develop asymmetric capabilities, such as ballistic missiles. It announced in May a successful test-launch of a submarine-launched ballistic missile, while claiming to have already secured technology for miniaturizing nuclear warheads to fit atop missiles.

### **Command Center near Kim's Residence**

In his visit to the General Satellite Control and Command Center in May, Kim Jong-un vowed his country will continue developing space technology despite international sanctions. Kim lauded his father and late leader Kim Jong-il, saying the senior Kim “ushered in the new history of space development and brought about the greatest event of satellite launch in the Korean nation’s history of 5,000 years.”

North Korea will continue its efforts to emerge as “a space power and thus hand down the undying feats of the Generalissimo (Kim Jong-il) to posterity,” he said, stressing the need to “provide more cutting-edge facilities for the center, build a base in which satellite

test can be done in the same circumstances with outer space and erect something symbolic of the center.”

The new satellite command center was built next to one of leader Kim Jong-un’s houses located in the capital city of Pyongyang, satellite imagery showed. According to Yonhap’s analysis of the latest satellite imagery taken by Google Earth in September 2014, the center’s image was identical to a building located close to late leader Kim Jong-il’s residence in downtown Pyongyang, which is believed to be used by his successor.

Rodong Sinmun said the 13,770-square-meter complex is composed of main and annex buildings, as well as an observation tower, a description that also fits the satellite image. The center was located about 400 meters southwest of a big blue-roofed house with a wide garden, which is known as one of the residences the late leader often visited along with other houses in Pyongyang.

The site is also adjacent to a luxury housing complex where other party officials, including the country’s nominal head of state, Kim Yong-nam, live under tight security. The proximity between the house and the command center raised speculation that Kim Jong-un may stay there if the socialist state launches long-range missiles during national events.

Experts said building a command center near his residence illustrates Kim’s keen attention to the weapons development program.

“Kim Jong-un may often visit (the center) from his residence to check rocket development and launch preparations as part of efforts to monitor and support the program,” said Chang Yong-seok, a senior researcher at a Seoul National University institute. (Yonhap)

# N. Korea's 2014 Trade and 2013 Power Production

## N. Korea's Trade Expands but Trade Gap Widens in 2014

North Korea's global trade expanded in 2014 from a year earlier, but its trade deficit also widened due to a drop in exports, a report showed on June 5.

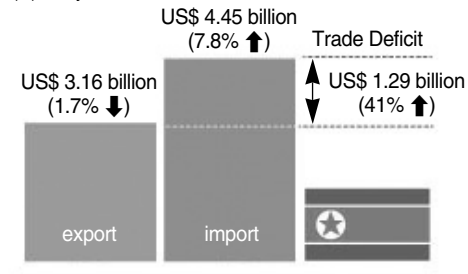
According to the report by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), North Korea's trade came to US\$7.61 billion last year, up 3.7 percent from a year ago. The figures did not count its trade with South Korea. North Korea's exports shrank 1.7 percent on-year to \$3.16 billion last year, while 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. China was the North's biggest trade partner. 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.

China was trailed by Russia, India, Thailand

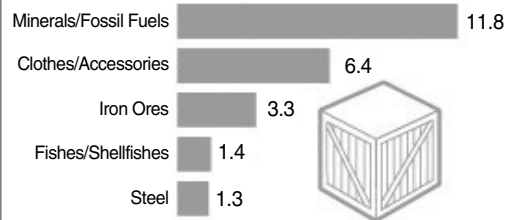
### N. Korea's Trade Volume in 2014

( ) : on-year rate



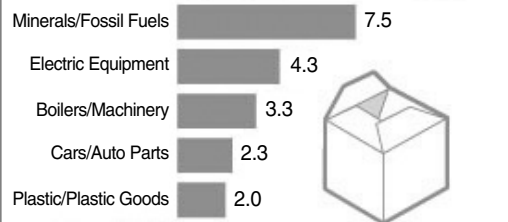
#### Key Export Items

unit : US\$ 100 million



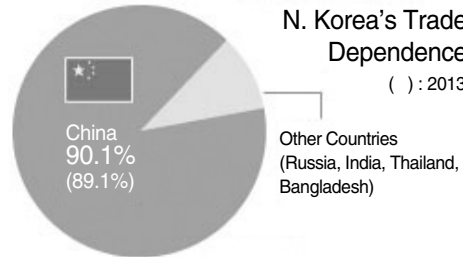
#### Key Import Items

unit : US\$ 100 million



#### N. Korea's Trade Dependence

( ) : 2013



Source/Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency

and Bangladesh. Hong Kong and Ukraine dropped out of the top 10 trading partners, while Pakistan and Germany ranked eighth and tenth.

There have been no records of the North's trade with Japan since 2009. There are also no records of its trade with the U.S. in 2014 due to economic sanctions, except for humanitarian relief supplies such as medical equipment and medicine.

### South-North Power Production Gap

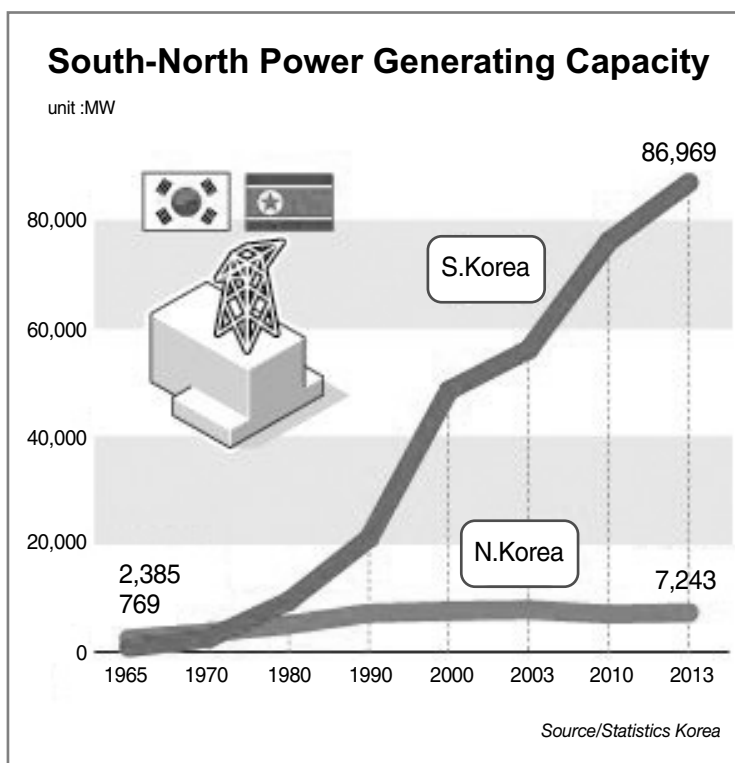
South Korea's electricity generation capacity was 12 times that of North Korea in 2013, data showed on June 8, demonstrating the widening economic and technological gap between the archrivals. The electric power generating capacity for the South reached 86,969 megawatts (MWs) in 2013, compared to the 7,243 MWs tallied for North Korea, according to the data compiled by Statistics Korea, South Korea's statistical agency.

The latest figures mark the largest disparity in power production between the neighboring countries since the statistical agency first began collecting relevant data in 1965. In 2003, the South's power generation capacity reached 56,053 MWs, nearly seven times that of the North. Over the last 10 years, the South's power generation capacity rose 55 percent to 39,016 MWs in 2013, with that of the North falling by 529 MWs.

The North initially had a higher power production capacity until the 1970s, but it was later surpassed by the South, whose power supply grew 113 times in the last 50 years compared with the threefold growth seen in the North, according to the data.

The yawning gap comes as the disparity in economic and technological development between the neighboring countries has been widening, according to industry watchers.

Currently, South Korea relies on nuclear power for nearly a fourth of its electricity demand, whereas the North is reportedly using only hydroelectric and thermal power generators. The poverty-stricken country lacks the technology to build nuclear power plants. (Yonhap)



# The Division of the Korean Peninsula and Human Rights: Reframing Discussion about the North Korean Human Rights Issue

## I. Introduction

Since its Commission on Human Rights (CHR) adopted a resolution in February 2003 only to express grave concern about serious abuses of human rights in North Korea, the United Nations has continued to take a similar measure every year to date. This U.N. action indicates that the troublesome human rights situation in the North has touched off the concern of the international community over that issue and made it awaken to the need for its interference with the matter. In February 2014 the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in North Korea, established by the U.N. Human Right Council (UNHRC), which replaced the UNCHR in 2006, recommended even the referral of the troublesome human rights situation in the North to the International Criminal Court (ICC) “to render accountable all those, including possibly North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who may be responsible for the crimes against humanity.”

Until 2007 South Korea has been inconsistent in its position on the U.N. resolution regarding the poor human rights situation in the North, sometimes abstaining from voting on the matter and sometimes casting an aye vote. But since 2008 it has continued to vote aye on the resolutions sponsored by the UNHRC that condemns the North for “widespread and grave” abuses of human rights.

And it is the time for them to examine the situation where they did not put into consideration the division of the Korean peninsula while dealing with the question of human rights in the North. Is it universally valid, or useful, to exclude the division in discussion of the human rights situation facing North Korean citizens? Does the question of human rights in the North have nothing to do with the division? If we deal with the question of human rights in the North along with the division issue, will it undermine the universal nature of the question

By Suh Bo-hyuk,  
*Research Professor at the Institute  
for Peace and Unification Studies,  
an affiliate to Seoul National  
University in Seoul, South Korea*

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***The question of the human rights situation facing North Koreans, rather than an issue regarding inter-Korean relations or South Korea's policy toward North Korea, is in the spotlight as a matter of universal concern in the international community. There is the need for North Korea watchers in Seoul and elsewhere to consider the how this development will affect discussions aimed at improving the poor human rights situation in the North, plus the South Korean policy regarding human rights in the North.***

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regarding human rights in the North? These are among the questions inciting this writer to write this essay.

The question of human rights in the North can be defined in various ways. It can be viewed as a typical case of human rights violations in the international community, or simply as one of the various issues regarding the country. It can also be defined in various ways according the importance of that question in the North among Korean issues being dealt with.

Here in this essay, the human rights situation in the North will be dealt with in close connection with various discussions of that issue and an array of moves for improving the troublesome human rights situation facing North Koreans. Drawing the attention of North Korea watchers are South Korea's position and role on that matter.

As a regular member of the international community, South Korea has a universal view of the international norms. The point of interest lies in the position of South Korea, which is in special relations with North Korea, toward the relations between the universal validity of human rights and the special nature of human rights in the North, in terms of theory and practice.

Noteworthy is the fact that the division of

the Korean Peninsula is not put into consideration in discussions of the human rights issue involving the North made not only in the U.N. but in South Korea.

Of course, both the two Koreas are sovereign states acknowledged by the international community because they won membership in the U.N. in 1991. But it is a fact recognized by the international community that the two Koreas are in special relationship because the Korean Peninsula, the homeland for Koreans for nearly 1,300 years, was divided into two states, namely the two Koreas, under foreign influence upon Koreans' liberation from 36-year Japanese colonial rule in 1945, with the Korean people having dreamed of achieving a unified Korea to date.

In front of this backdrop, the following question is raised: Is the South Korean policy regarding human rights in the North effective if the South deals with the issue in separation from the special inter-Korean relationship, simply riding on the moves of the international community blaming the extremely poor human rights situation facing North Koreans?

This essay is aimed at examining the meaning and implications of the division imposed on the Korean Peninsula in discussions of the question regarding human rights in the North.



## II. The Division of the Korean Peninsula and Human Rights There

### 1. Understanding of the Division

The situation facing the divided peninsula is probably characterized by face-to-face confrontation between the two Koreas -- usually resulting in tensions there--plus an ever escalating development in that direction. A system resulting from the division imposed on the Korean peninsula, to be mentioned simply as the "division system" below, includes its sub-system settled under the lasting division, and concerns its visible and invisible behavior. To mention it concretely, the behavior of the division system appears in 1) three arenas comprising North Korean societies, relationship between the two Koreas and international politics around the peninsula, and 2) their sectors including political, economic, cultural and military ones, 3) with mutual relationship between each of the arenas and the sectors, and 4) in hostility or conspiracy between the leaders in the arenas and sectors.

Under these conditions, the inter-Korean relationship gives rise to such developments as a war, a system competition, or reconciliation-cooperation, revealing the nature of that between the same races, between enemies and between quasi-states, and changes in line with differences in their power and the formula of their connection.<sup>1</sup> The division system has three levels: event, system and consciousness. Disputes between the two Koreas give rise to one's own legal system against the other party, reinforcing it and internalizing one party's consciousness while excluding the other party. Fundamentally, a virtuous cycle of events, systems and consciousness cements the division

system and brings about a vicious cycle to justify confrontation between the two Koreas. Of course, the division system does not always surface in the form of dispute and confrontation. But signs of an unsettled division system can hardly last unless there comes an institutional change in supporting the system. Moreover, even if there is an institutional change in the division system, it will take more time for Koreans to see a change in their consciousness as they become accustomed to taking the division for granted and supporting it.

If the division system as aforementioned is applied, it can be assumed that it will affect directly and indirectly the behavior, system and consciousness of the two Koreas. Therefore, the division systems must be viewed by examining its initiation and its continuation separately. It started under the influence of various internal and external factors, including class disputes on the Korean peninsula and the worldwide cold war. And the division system secured its own power by itself and affected the living of citizens of the two Koreas and the inter-Korean relationship.

### 2. Division System's Influence over the Human Rights Situation in the Two Koreas

We can discuss the influence of the division system over the human rights in the two Koreas in three ways. In the first case, the division system directly affects the human rights situation there as an independent variable. It refers to various acts of violating human rights under the belief of one party that denying, excluding and suppressing the other party is essential for justifying its existence. In a Korean film titled "The Attorney," a detective who tortures a college student arrested for

his dissident movement for democracy, says that his father is an escapee from North Korea and that he arrests communists with patriotic passion. In a typical case of abusing human rights ascribable to the division system, members of the South Korean families led by the fishermen, who were abducted to the North, were once discriminated under collective responsibility. The authoritative military regimes in the South have oppressed campaigners for democracy or human rights, branding them as pro-North communist elements, while even limiting citizens' rights for free expression and academic activities. This behavior was justified by the "North Korean threat of another invasion."

In South Korea, if its citizens make contact with North Koreans without the government's approval, he or she can be punished for anti-state activities. The case is the same with the North. For this reason, North Korean refugees contact South Koreans in a foreign country at the risk of their lives. North Korea is still reluctant to respond to the South Korean demand for arranging meetings of members of the families who are living separately in the two Koreas, undoubtedly violating their rights for happy lives.

A report from the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the North in February 2004 said: "In the light of the dire social and economic situation of the general population, the commission does not support sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council or introduced bilaterally that are targeted against the population or the economy as a whole." The report, however, said as aforementioned: "The Security Council should refer the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North's official name), to the International Criminal Court for action in

accordance with that court's jurisdiction. The Security Council should also adopt targeted sanctions against those who appear to be most responsible for crimes against humanity."

Violations of human rights in the North, which are ascribable to the division system, are constant and structural as mentioned in the resolution regarding the human rights situation in the North adopted every year by the human rights agency of the U.N. for more than 10 years in the past. The behavior of the North Korean regime for intensive control of the North Korean citizens and restriction of their basic human rights shows that not only the dictatorial ruling system but the division system are responsible for the extremely poor human rights situation in the North.

The hostile relations between North and South Koreans, restrictions on their peaceful life and other undesire developments on the Korean peninsula are all meant for structural abuses of their human rights attributable to the division. In both the two Koreas, the abuse of human rights riding on the division system was encouraged under statism,<sup>2</sup> which refers to the theory or practice of concentrating economic and political power in the state.

In the second case, the division system affects human rights as an intervening variable. This refers to the formula under which the political system, consciousness and customs in a country affects human rights there. The division system can be an attractive topic for the political elements in both the two Koreas who are earnest in seeking political interests.

Many North Korea watchers in Seoul and elsewhere believe that the North's provocations against the South and formation of tensions on the Korean peninsula have been often out of political interests for the North Korean

regime or military. A dispute related to traditional state interests can involve the position of a bureaucracy or individuals in the bureaucracy.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the North's belligerent policy line oriented with military adventurism formed under the initiative of its military in the latter half of the 1960s, plus North's bombing of a South Korean warship, named Cheonan, in the Yellow Sea in March 2010 and its shelling of a South Korean islet of Yeonpyeong in the Yellow Sea in November that year can be viewed as the results of a strategy for reinforcing the political agenda of the military and for cementing the regime for Kim Jong-un's hereditary succession to power, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

In the third case, the division system serves as an initial condition for two Koreas' policies, namely policy conditions, rather than as a factor influencing their human rights situation. The division system can form the environment for human rights if and when such factors as the political system, the educational level and economic development have an influence on their human rights situation.

The division system, for instance, works as one of preconditions for two Koreas' fiscal policy regarding defense expenditures, with the North allotting vast sums of money for national defense. This North Korean policy behavior indicates that in the North the initial condition can turn easily into an independent variable or an intervening variable. North Korea, for instance, attributed a famine in the mid-1990s to the U.S. "hostile" policy toward the country and formalized its military-first politics and military-first revolutionary line on the basis of this argument.

### **III. Many-sided Nature of Human Rights in North Korea and the Division System**

#### **1. The Nature and Category of North's Human Rights Issue**

The nature of the human rights issue in the North may vary according to the viewpoints of the observers. First of all, this issue can be viewed as a combination of the question regarding the North and that concerning human rights. And the question of the North can comprise such factors involving the North as a nuclear weapons development program, narcotics, continued hereditary power succession, provocations against South Korea, plus an undemocratic, authoritative governing system. The poor human rights situation is also one of the problems facing the country. We, however, need to understand the question of the North in a way that the question includes not only the aforementioned factors but the issues regarding the efforts of the two Koreas to reconcile with each other, settle peaceful relations between them and eventually establish a nation-state for all Koreans.

When dealing with the question of the human rights situation in the North, focusing simply on human rights, it is meant for stressing concern over the worst human rights situation there. Then, it is important to observe the human rights situation in the North according to the universal theory and mechanism prevailing in the international community. In particular, the evaluation of the human rights situation in the North under the international standard is meant for the provision of a basis of measures for improving the troublesome human rights situation facing North Koreans. The category

of human rights can be outlined and then the human rights in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) can be evaluated. In this case, however, it is undesirable to apply the general view of the international community mechanically to the category of human rights in the North. Holistic understanding of human rights in the North can be hampered when discussing human rights in the North in a simple way, excluding the fact that North Korea is in confrontation of South Korea and under an armistice.

The human rights situation in the North regards not only the international standard on human rights but the humanitarian issue originated in the special situation facing the Korean Peninsula, human rights of North Korean refugees, plus Koreans' right to peace, and that for economic development and national self-determination. In other words, what is desirable is to include in the agenda regarding human rights in the North even the latest idea on human rights yet to be documented by the international community.

## **2. Factors Responsible for Abuse of Human Rights in North Korea**

The international community's impression of the human rights situation in North Korea has continued to worsen even in this 21st century. During the first nine years after the turn of the new century, that impression was expressed as follows: "There are reports that large-scale and systematic human rights violations are committed continuously in North Korea." But this expression changed to this:

"Such human rights violations are committed in North Korea continuously." In other words, in the international community, a presumptive statement on the troublesome human situation in the North changed to a conclusive one on the matter.

And under a proposal in a 2005 world summit and a resolution adopted by the U.N. General Assembly that year that "each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity,"<sup>6</sup> the international community began thereafter to campaign for referring to the ICC all of those who are responsible for crimes against humanity.<sup>7</sup> Under a resolution of the UNHRC in March 2013, the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in North Korea was established for one-year activities. And the commission submitted a report to the council in February the next year.

"Systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have been and are being committed" in the North, said the report, adding that there were crimes against humanity at least in five categories. And as aforementioned it called for measures for punishing all of the people accountable for the crimes. But the report emphasized that the extremely poor human rights situation in the North "has been shaped by the historical experiences of the Korean people," which regard Confucianism, the decades-long Japanese colonial rule over them and the division imposed on the Korean peninsula, among other things. For this reason, it called for various efforts to improve the troublesome human rights situation in the country. Let's discuss the North Korean political system, North Koreans' perception, their customs and the division system as factors

responsible for human rights abuse in the North.

The North Korean regime is the factor cited first and most widely as responsible for human rights abuses prevalent in the North. This refers to the North Korean socio-political system, or simply the political regime. Here in this essay, it refers to both of them because the writer believes a combination of them is responsible for human rights violations in the country. The existence of political prison camps in the North indicates the nature of the North Korean regime, which does not allow pluralism or freedom of expression.

The North Korean regime forcibly sends back home their citizens who deserted their country and treats the repatriates cruelly while maintaining a negative position on handling humanitarian issues, which regard, among other things, the meeting of members of the families who live separately in the two Koreas. The North Korean authorities concerned even view foreign criticism of human rights abuses in the country and foreign demand for improving its poor human rights situation as a challenge to the North Korean regime and system, plus the “supreme dignity,” a reference to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.<sup>8</sup>

North Koreans’ perception and the custom in the North can be cited as factors responsible for worsening the human rights situation there. It is hard to observe their perception, unlike the political system. But we can monitor their customs like the political system. Their way of thinking and customs were shaped under the influence of the Confucian culture, the Korean War, bureaucracy of a collective nature and even the decades-long Japanese colonial rule over Koreans.<sup>9</sup>

These two factors responsible for human rights violations are not specific ones applied only to the North, but also all countries when the international community evaluates their human rights situation. In the case of the human rights situation facing the two Koreas, however, there is the need for handling the division system as a special factor affecting it. It should be so because the division 1) threatens the right to peace held by all residents on the Korean Peninsula,<sup>10</sup> 2) has threatened the rights to seek happiness by the people who suffered damage from the division and the Korean War. 3) serves the foundation for structural violence restricting overall human rights, including civil liberties. For this reason, an improvement in the human rights situation in both the two Koreas requires overcoming of the division system, among other things.

As far as its relations with the political system, Koreans’ perception and custom are concerned, the division system probably affects the human rights situation in the North more than that in the South. This is evidenced by the fact<sup>11</sup> that the North Koreans, who attempt to contact South Koreans, or go to the South, or even help others leave for the South, are charged with treason and sentenced to death, or housed in a political prison camp.

#### **IV. Efforts to Overcome the Division and an Improvement in the North Korean Human Rights Situation**

If the division imposed on the Korean peninsula is a key factor affecting the nature and category of the human rights situation in

North Korea, there could be a close relationship between an improvement in the human rights situation there in the North and efforts to overcome the division system. This essay will deal with this issue in two directions below.

### **1. An Improvement in North's Human Rights Situation through Efforts to Overcome the Division System**

Above all, an improvement in the poor human rights situation facing North Koreans can be considered through efforts to overcome the division system. Measures for the efforts in that direction may include 1) humanitarian assistance to the North and support for socioeconomic development programs there, aimed at improving North Koreans' rights for survival and socioeconomic development, 2) various inter-Korean civilian exchange programs aimed at improving their approach to external information and promoting their sense of comparison, and 3) inter-Korean economic cooperation aimed at improving their social rights. And brisk inter-Korean talks will undoubtedly promote these processes and progress in inter-Korean talks is meant for an expansion of South Korea's policy channel and space for improving the human rights situation in the North. In other words, for the South inter-Korean talks and the question of human rights in the North are not the issues in confrontation but in complementary relationship.

The South Korean governments led by President Kim Dae-jung and President Roh Moo-hyun have actively promoted inter-Korean exchange programs, contributing to improving the human rights situation in the North to some extent. They focused their

North Korea policy on the reconciliation of the two Koreas, undoubtedly in an effort to overcome the division system. But they linked that effort unlikely with an objective to improve the human rights situation in the North.<sup>12</sup> Despite many stumbling blocks to this effort the South exerts alone or jointly with the North, moves in that direction will undoubtedly pay off on a long-term basis when they are based on mutual trust between the two Koreas. And this approach will be meaningful when it is supplemented by efforts in an opposite direction, namely efforts aimed at overcoming the division system through an improvement in the human rights situation in the North.

### **2. Overcoming the Division System through an Improvement in the Human Rights Situation in the North**

There are two ways for South Korea to overcome the division system through an improvement in the North Korean human rights situation. One way is to promote inter-Korean conciliation and cooperation while joining the international efforts for improving the human rights situation facing North Koreans, and the other one is to directly contact the North for that effect. The writer believes both the ways are useful and effective for improving the human rights situation in the North. But this essay will discuss only the second way because it regards the division system.

In this way the South may ask the North to confirm whether or not members of separated families in the North, South Koreans abducted to the North and South Korean prisoners of war there are still alive and arrange their meetings with their relatives in the South while

holding inter-Korean talks exclusively for human rights and enacting a law regarding human rights for North Koreans.

The North has occasionally held talks on human rights and political affairs with some western countries and human rights organizations during about 10 years starting in the early 1990s.<sup>13</sup> And during the U.N. General Assembly in October 2014 top diplomatic officials from the two Koreas agreed on the need for inter-Korean talks on human rights and some human rights organizations in the South proposed such meetings. It, however, is doubtful that the enactment of a human rights law, which is resisted by the North, is compatible with inter-Korean talks on human rights. In this situation, the South may need to enact a law for inter-Korean cooperation on human rights, a move to approach the question of the human rights situation in the North in a way to promote inter-Korean cooperation, peace on the Korean peninsula and mutual benefits for the two Koreas.

The idea of overcoming through an improvement in the North Korean human rights situation is aimed at realizing the universal value. It is meaningful because it will upgrade inter-Korean talks which have been idle in dealing with the human rights issue. This approach guides one to the theory of “universalism-based unification.”<sup>14</sup> It reflects the new trend in South Korea towards post-nationalism and is compatible with the prevalent international view. According to opinion surveys conducted by the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies affiliated with Seoul National University, when asked about the most important reason why they wish for the unification of two Koreas, 57.9 percent of the pollees numbering 1,213 said in 2008 that they

do so because Koreans are racially homogeneous. But the same answer came from 42.4 percent of the pollees numbering 1,200 in 2014.

In the 2014 survey, the most urgent requirement for the unification was an improvement of the human rights situation in the North for 81.6 percent of the pollees, followed by the easing of military tensions between the two Koreas, reforms and an opening-up of the North, the settlement of the issue regarding separated families and South Korean prisoners of war in the North, the regular convening of inter-Korean summit talks and withdrawal of U.S. troops from the South.

## V. Conclusion

Before concluding this essay, this writer will evaluate its objective in two ways. First, it seems to be self-evident that the division imposed on the Korean Peninsula will affect in various ways the human rights situation in both the two societies on the Peninsula, namely, the two Koreas.

It is difficult to conceive the human rights situation facing both of them when dealing with it simply as a political issue, unlike in other countries. It is so because the two Koreas, which were established as a result of the division, are under a specific situation where they define their identity or legitimacy in relations with each other and the question of human rights for their citizens is an extension of their unique situation. Noteworthy is the logic omitting these circumstances facing the two Koreas and reducing the question of their human rights simply to an issue regarding their political system, plus its practical prob-

lem. Of course, it can be hardly denied that the North Korean political regime of an extremely authoritative nature serves as the most significant factor affecting the troublesome human rights situation in the North. Baek Nakcheong, professor emeritus at Seoul National University, who is known for his theory of a division system, admits the effect of the political system, arguing that although the division has served as the foundation for dictatorships in both the two Koreas. He pointed at the fact that South Korea, which succeeded in replacing the decades-long dictatorship with a democratic government in 1987, did not return to dictatorship thereafter, albeit ebb and flow of the campaign for democracy.

In other words, he acknowledges the structural condition for the two Koreas where the division system affects their human rights situation but stresses that the remarkable gap in the human rights situation between them is ascribable to the political system as a variable. For this reason, this essay can be evaluated as a way to understand the question of human rights in North Korea structurally.

Second, the theory of the division system does not need to be understood in a way that indicates a step-by-step improvement in the human rights situation in the North based on the theory of the special relationship between the two Koreas. It is a generally accepted idea in the South that the theory of the special relationship between the two Koreas is in confrontation with the universal view on the inter-Korean relationship and the North Korean issue. But this matter can be thought of in another way: speciality is a concrete mode manifesting universality of a specific entity's movement.

In other words, speciality and universality are two modes of the same quality manifested

in different ways, rather than the view that they are in confrontation with each other. The relationship between the two Koreas is the operating mode of the division system on the Korean Peninsula in reality, but at the same time it is a province where the universality appears in the two societies on the peninsula in a refracted way. The easing of tensions, the formation of mutual trust, the meetings of separated families, economic cooperation and an improvement in the human rights situation, which are required in both the two Koreas, are the issues of universal value common to human beings today which regard peace, reconciliation, humanitarianism, continued economic development as well as human rights.

The idea regarding the special nature of the inter-Korean relationship, however, needs to be asserted as a fiction. The restoration of national homogeneity and the establishment of a unified Korea is undoubtedly a special issue pending between the two Koreas. But observing the inter-Korean relationship on a basis of reconciliation and humanitarianism, its speciality and universality coexists.

Included in the basic treaty concluded between East and West Germany were the provisions that they respect the Charter of the United Nations and human rights. But the two Koreas could not include even a sentence on human rights in their basic agreement concluded on Dec. 31, 1991. It was so because, unlike the two Germanies, they had to concentrate their efforts for settling the questions of mutual distrust and tensions in relations between them, which have been ever deepening because of the fratricidal three-year Korean War in the early 1950s. Both of them, however, won U.N. membership on Aug. 8 that year, burdened with the duties to abide by the U.N. Charter. Keener is the concern of the



international community over the question of the human rights situation in the North and more brisk is its intervention in the matter today than two decades earlier. Because of the division system in reality and these international trend, the inter-Korean relationship is an issue to be dealt with in line with its universal nature.

Usually under a human rights law, the state is obliged to promote human rights and citizens are entitled to enjoy human rights. Blame should first go to the North Korean regime, which failed to form proper human rights conditions in the North. This socialist country has yet to escape from a situation where it has followed in the footsteps of the Stalinist socialist regime under an underdeveloped, semi-feudalistic state.

In comparison with the political system in South Korea, which lined up together with the North in the same starting block in the mid-1950s, the political regime in the North has served as a factor undoubtedly affecting significantly and much more the human rights situation there than in the South. Excluding the division system, we can hardly explain the fact that for a long time there have been authoritative governments even in South Korea, which has been furnished with a political system with an advantage over that of the North, and that there have been occasionally human rights violations there even after the South escaped from the dictatorial ruling and attained free democracy in 1987.

The resolution of the United Nations on the troublesome human right situation in North Korea, which has been adopted annually for more than 10 years, calls for inter-Korean reconciliation and the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, while mentioning a divided Korean Peninsula and con-

stant military tensions there, along with the question of the human rights situation in the North.

In the past South Korea has seen an argument on the priority of its objective regarding the free democracy and unification, but this writer believes that these objectives are of the same value to be respected. It will be proper for us to exert our best efforts for improving the extremely poor human rights situation in North Korea, along with attempts to change its political system and overcome the division system.

This essay proposes the turning of a narrow view on the question of human rights in the North into a holistic one, asserting that an improvement in the troublesome human rights situation in the North requires a change in its political regime, among other things. Discussion of the human rights issue involving North Koreans will provide a chance to reset the way of achieving the unification of the two Koreas on the basis of realizing a universal value.

The achievement of this objective requires us not to understand the universality of human rights incorrectly as an absolute. Also required is the wisdom to apply to the Korean Peninsula the international principle on human rights in close relationship with other universal values.

*This is an excerpt from the paper carried in *Humanities for Unification* No. 61 (March 2015), a journal of the Institute for Humanities for Unification (IHU) affiliated with Konkuk University in Seoul, South Korea.*

**Notes:**

- 1) Park Myeong-kyu, *Sociology on the Borderline of the Two Koreas* (Seoul, Changbi, 2012), pp. 37-66; The Institute for Humanities for Unification (IHU) affiliated with Konkuk University in Seoul, *Getting over the Barriers Dividing the Korean Peninsula through Humanities for Unification* (Seoul, Alephbook, 2015), Chapter 1 under Part 4, cf.
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## Internal Affairs

### N. Korea releases self-developed tablet PC

North Korea has showcased its self-developed tablet PC at an international trade fair held in Pyongyang, the North's state-run TV station said on May 15.

Pyongje, a North Korean tablet PC maker, displayed its newly developed tablet PC named "Myohyang," at the 18th Pyongyang International Trade Fair, the North's largest trade expo, (North) Korean Central Television (KCTV) said.

About 300 companies from Russia, China, Germany and France participated in the trade fair, which was held from May 11-14.

"While Myohyang enables you to watch TV programs, its batteries have a large capacity and its touchscreen works well," an official at the local tablet PC maker told KCTV.

According to an ad poster for the tablet PC released by KCTV, Myohyang comes with a dual-core central processing unit (CPU), 1 gigabyte of random-access memory (RAM) and a touchscreen panel with a resolution of 1024 × 600 pixels.

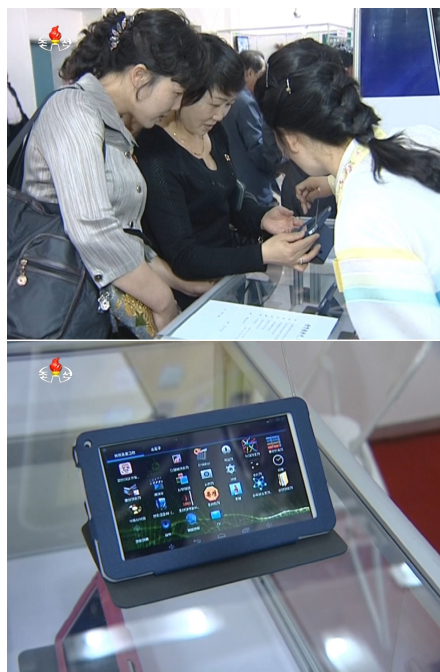
The North's newly introduced tablet PC weighs 250 grams and its battery life extends up to six hours. It also comes with 8-gigabyte or 16-gigabyte memory chips.

The ad poster did not say whether the tablet PC has access to the Internet.

North Korea began to develop tablet PCs in 2010 and released three tablet PC brands, the Arirang, Samjiyon and Achim in 2012, and an upgraded version, the Ryonghung, in 2013.

However, South Korean IT experts said, "Overall specifications (of Myohyang) seem to be similar to the South's tablet PCs launched between 2012 and 2013."

In terms of technology, it is believed to be two or three years behind (South Korea's tablet PCs), they said. (Yonhap)



North Korea showcases its self-developed tablet PC Myohyang at the 18th Pyongyang International Trade Fair held from May 11-14 in Pyongyang. (Yonhap)

### Mystery surrounds whereabouts of brother of N. Korean leader

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's brother Kim Jong-chol attended an Eric Clapton concert in London for the second time in the week which started on May 18, but where the brother of North

Korean leader Kim Jong-un headed remained unknown.

The 34-year-old, known as a big fan of Clapton, was caught on TV cameras attending the concert at Royal Albert Hall in London on May 20 and 21.

He had been scheduled to arrive in Beijing on May 23 from Moscow on his way to Pyongyang, a source with knowledge of the stopover said.

However, the name of Jong-chol was not on the registry of the flight from London to Moscow, according to the source. He also wasn't seen at the Beijing airport on May 23.

It was the first time Jong-chol has been seen in public since the current leader came to power following the death of his father and late leader, Kim Jong-il, in late 2011.

Jong-chol is the second of the three known sons of the late leader.

He and the North's current leader were born to the late leader's third wife, Ko Yong-hi, who died of breast cancer at age 51 in 2004, while the eldest son, Kim Jong-nam, was born to Kim's second wife, Song Hae-rim.

The youngest son was chosen as leader because the first son fell out of his father's favor after he was caught using a fake passport while trying to enter Japan to visit Tokyo Disneyland in 2001. The late leader reportedly determined the second son was too "girlish" to be a leader. (Yonhap)



This photo, taken on May 21, 2015, shows the facade of a hotel where Kim Jong-chol (in circle), an older brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, is reported to be staying. He was caught on camera while attending an Eric Clapton concert at Royal Albert Hall in London that day, Japan's TBS television station reported. (Yonhap)

## N. Korea building military camps on border island: Seoul

North Korea is building military camps for shore batteries on a tensely guarded Yellow Sea border island, the South's military authorities said on May 26.

"Five bunker-shaped camps have been built on the island of Gal," a military officer said, requesting anonymity, citing the North Korean island just above the de-facto inter-Korean western sea border of the Northern Limit Line (NLL).

"The North is expected to either deploy 122-millimeter multiple rocket launchers there or to use them as guard posts," he said, adding the military is closely monitoring the movements there.

The island is located just 4.5 kilometers away from South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, where the North launched an artillery attack in November 2010, killing two Marines and two civilians, and wounding more than a dozen others.

If completed, the facilities will further heighten tensions in the areas, which have seen bloody inter-Korean naval clashes over the decades. (Yonhap)

## N. Korea unveils footage of 'SLBM launch'

North Korea on May 27 unveiled video footage that includes the scene of what it claimed to be a successful test-firing of a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

North Korea's propaganda website Uriminzokkiri made public the two minutes of footage where a projectile that appears to be a ballistic missile was launched from a black submerged vessel. The object flies into the sky with a loud blast after being ejected from underwater in what looks like a test-firing of a ballistic missile.

The footage contains a caption that states North Korea's successful launch of an SLBM will nullify the Seoul-Washington alliance and the U.S. nuclear umbrella. The North also claimed that Seoul will be engulfed with chaos with just one or two SLBMs.

It is not confirmed whether the North's footage is authentic or not.

The first 10 seconds of the clip appears to be an edited version of a YouTube video that features the launch of a U.S. ballistic missile, the Trident I. (Yonhap)

## N. Korean leader's sister re-appears after 50 days amid childbirth rumor

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's younger sister, who was believed to be pregnant, made her first public appearance in about 50 days, the North's media reported on May 29, cementing speculation that she might have given birth in May.

Kim Yo-jong, 28, accompanied the young leader on his field guidance to a tree nursery, which is being constructed by the Korean People's Army (KPA), according to the North's KCNA.

In April, South Korea's spy agency said that Kim would likely give birth in May, adding that her husband may be an alumnus of her alma mater, Kim Il-sung University. The agency did not provide more details.

Kim Yo-jong made her last public appearance April 12 when she accompanied the current leader on his inspection to the construction site of a second airport terminal in Pyongyang. (Yonhap)



Kim Yo-jong (in circle), younger sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears in about 50 days amid childbirth rumor, accompanying his elder brother on his field inspection to a tree nursery, which was reported on May 29 by the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). (Yonhap)

## N. Korea unlikely to conduct nuclear test until fall: 38 North

North Korea is unlikely to conduct another nuclear test at least until this fall, a U.S. think tank said on June 5 (Washington time), citing satellite imagery showing no signs of preparations at the country's underground test site.

“Recent commercial satellite imagery indicates that North Korea is conducting regular spring construction and maintenance activities at its Punggye-ri nuclear test site,” the website 38 North said in a report by analyst Jack Liu.

“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,” the report said.

The North has conducted its three nuclear tests in 2006, 2009 and 2013, all at the Punggye-ri site in the country’s northeast.

Speculation mounted in early 2014 that the North could conduct its fourth nuclear test after the regime threatened to conduct a “new form of nuclear test.”

In November, Pyongyang again threatened to test a nuclear device after the Third Committee of the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution that called for referring the North to the International Criminal Court for human rights violations. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea to hold local elections in July**

North Korea said on June 9 that it plans to select deputies to local assemblies in mid-July for the first time since the North’s leader Kim Jong-un took power in late 2011.

Elections for deputies to provincial, city and county people’s assemblies will take place July 19, according to the North’s official KCNA.

The elections are held every four years, and the number of seats is determined by the population of each area.

However, they are widely considered a formality as the candidates hand-picked by the ruling Workers’ Party are rubber-stamped into office.

The latest local elections were held in July 2011 when Kim was the communist nation’s heir-apparent.

Elected deputies hold a meeting once or twice every year to set their provinces’ budgets and draw up plans for law enforcement, experts said. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea’s crop production may fall 20 pct in drought: S. Korea**

North Korea is likely to see its food production fall by up to 20 percent this year from 2014 if a shortage of rainfall continues until early July, a Unification Ministry official said on June 9.

In May, precipitation in North Korea reached 57 percent of the average rainfall recorded between 1981 and 2010, according to the official.

In 2014, the North reported its smallest rainfall in 15 years and the United Nations has warned that North Korea is likely to suffer from serious food shortages this year due to drought.

North Korea’s crop production could decline by 15 to 20 percent this year compared to last year if it continues to see a rainfall shortage until early July, the official said.

The North is expected to see its food production fall by only 5 to 10 percent if the lack of rainfall

continues into early June. In that case, North Korea is believed to be focusing on producing maize as an alternative to rice.

“This year, the supply of fertilizer is not smooth, compared with last year,” said the official, asking not to be named. (Yonhap)

### **Fire breaks out at hotel in Pyongyang: reports**

A fire has broken out at a hotel frequented by foreigners in Pyongyang, without any information being provided on casualties or property damage, reports said on June 12.

On June 11, a fire occurred at Koryo Hotel in North Korea’s capital, one of the most distinguished hotels in the North, and appears to have been extinguished, according to The Associated Press.

The report said that a witness saw “fire and lots of black smoke” come from several top floors of the hotel.

The hotel, which was opened in 1985, has two 43-story towers that are connected by a bridge on the upper floors.

Reuters reported that “plumes of black smoke” billowed from the walkway linking the two towers, showing images that it had obtained. It is not known whether the hotel was fully evacuated, it added.

There have been no official reports on the fire from North Korean media outlets. (Yonhap)

### **Major N. Korean websites remain unstable for 10th day**

North Korea’s major websites suffered disruptions for the 10th straight day on June 12 for unknown reasons following similar inaccessibility late last year amid a cyber security row with the U.S.

The homepage of the North’s main propaganda organ Uriminzokkiri and several other sites based in China have not been accessible since June 3.

The websites of the North’s official KCNA and the Workers’ Party’s official newspaper, the Rodong Sinmun, however, have not had any problems.

North Korea experienced similar Internet outages for eight days late last year following Washington’s vow to retaliate against Pyongyang’s alleged cyber attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Washington blamed Pyongyang for hacking Sony Pictures to stop the Christmas Day release of “The Interview,” a lowbrow comedy movie involving a fictional plot to assassinate North Korean



In this photo, exclusively obtained and released on June 12, 2015 by local radio station BBS, black smoke and flames billow from a bridge between the 43rd floors of Koryo Hotel in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang on the previous day. (Yonhap)

leader Kim Jong-un.

At that time, U.S. President Barack Obama had pledged a “proportional” response to Pyongyang’s cyber-attack.

North Korea has denied its involvement in the cyber-attack on Sony Pictures and offered to jointly conduct an investigation into the case with the U.S. government, a move rejected by the U.S. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea plants landmines in DMZ apparently to prevent soldiers fleeing**

North Korea has been planting anti-personnel mines alongside the inter-Korean border for the past couple of months to prevent North Korean soldiers from fleeing to South Korea, a South Korean official said on June 14.

“Under the order of leader Kim Jong-un, the military has gone all-out to prevent soldiers from going AWOL across the North Korea-China border,” the official said, adding the deployment of land mines near the inter-Korean border seems to serve a similar purpose.

Last October, the two Koreas exchanged fire after troops from the country drew near the border. No one was hurt.

A month later, a North Korean patrol approached the land border again, prompting warning shots from South Korean troops.

North Korean troops seem to have collected some military information near the western, middle and eastern fronts of the Military Demarcation Line for the past two months, the official told Yonhap News Agency on condition of anonymity, adding that South Korea has beefed up its defense against a possible southward intrusion.

North Korean soldiers, mostly in groups of up to 20, are also checking signposts marking the MDL and re-erecting any that have collapsed.

There are nearly 1,300 such signs lining the border, spaced out between 200-300 meters from one another. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea leases new passenger jet from Ukraine**

North Korea has leased a new passenger jet from Ukraine, South Korean officials familiar with the issue said on June 14, apparently to beef up its aging aviation fleet.

Ukraine delivered an Antonov An-148 to North Korea on March 14, bringing to two the total number of the twin-engine commercial aircraft in service by North Korea’s state-run airline, Air Koryo.

In 2013, North Korea signed a deal with Ukraine’s Antonov aircraft company to lease two An-148 jets, the officials said, without elaborating on the terms of the deal. The officials asked not to be identified, saying that they were not authorized to speak to media.

The new 75-seat An-148 jet, whose tail number is P-572, has a white fuselage and a gray lower deck, which makes it look similar in color to the Ilyushin IL-62 serving as North Korea’s Air Force



One for its leader, Kim Jong-un.

The name of Air Koryo and the North Korean national flag are painted on the new jet, though there is no red stripe -- a symbol of the carrier -- along the windows, the officials said.

The features of the new jet suggests that North Korea would use it on an international route for ordinary passengers, but it could also be used by Kim and other top officials if necessary.

The new jet is known to have a maximum flight range of 3,498 kilometers. (Yonhap)

## N. Korea fires 3 short-range missiles into East Sea

North Korea fired three short-range missiles into the East Sea on June 14, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

The 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.

"Our military has been closely watching North Korea's movements, and has maintained a full-fledged posture against their possible provocations," the JCS said. (Yonhap)

## N. Korea appears to have appointed new defense chief

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was accompanied by a four-star Army general, viewed as the country's new defense chief, on his visit to a military event, according to Pyongyang's media on June 15.

The KCNA listed top military figures who were in attendance with Kim at the military's art performance, naming Pak Yong-sik just after Hwang Pyong-so, director of the general political department of the Korean People's Army.

The report adds ammunition to speculation that Pak might have been promoted to the post of defense chief, replacing Hyon Yong-chol, who is believed to have been purged, experts said.

South Korea's spy agency said in May Hyon was apparently purged due to his disloyalty to Kim and he even might have been executed with an anti-aircraft gun.

On June 5, the North's Korean Central Television aired documentary footage showing Pak saluting the North's young leader at an event in late May in another indication that he may have been



This photo, released June 15, 2015, by North Korea's state-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper, shows Pak Yong-sik (in circle), a four-star Army general, sitting next to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un (C, front) as they watch a military art squad performance. (Yonhap)

named the new defense minister.

There has been controversy over the credibility of the National Intelligence Agency's findings as Hyon appeared in TV documentary footage even after his alleged purge. Usually, North Korea immediately removes records and appearances of purged officials from all its newspapers and TV footage.

Pak, who was promoted to his current post from a three-star general in April, has been often seen in Kim's "field guidances." (Yonhap)

## External Affairs

### **Kerry hints at possible THAAD deployment on Korean soil to deter N. Korea**

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry vowed on May 18 full preparedness with every possible means, including the controversial advanced missile defense system, to better deter and counter evolving threats.

"Particularly in this part of the world, Kim Jong-un engaged in these extraordinarily provocative activities, building nuclear weapons against all the U.N. conventions," Kerry said in a meeting with U.S. service personnel and officials at its diplomatic establishment here in Seoul.

As Pyongyang is trying to send diplomatic efforts by members of the six-party denuclearization talks involving South Korea, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia nowhere, "nobody quite knows what America's first line of defense in Seoul will do" which called on the U.S. as well as the international community "to be prepared for every eventual outcome."

"This is why we need to deploy ships, forces ... and we are talking about THAAD," he said, citing the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, without further elaboration.

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 the allies 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. (Yonhap)

### **AIIB could be helpful in efforts to resolve N.K. nuclear standoff: expert**

A Chinese-led regional development bank could contribute to efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear standoff and other security issues if it holds out the prospect of infrastructure development assistance as an incentive for Pyongyang to make progress in those matters, a U.S. expert said on May 26.

Bradley Babson, a North Korean economy expert who formerly served as vice president of the World Bank, made the suggestion in an article contributed to the website 38 North, saying the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) could work as “a new tool for productive engagement” with the North.

“By establishing infrastructure development assistance as an incentive for Pyongyang to carry out political and economic reforms, the bank could contribute toward security and economic outcomes beneficial to North Korea and its neighbors,” he said.

China has launched the AIIB with a total of 57 nations as founding members, including Britain, Germany and other key European nations. The move seems designed to bolster its economic clout by creating a counterbalance to the Asian Development Bank, led by the United States and Japan.

The U.S. has not joined the bank, voicing questions about its governance and transparency. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea asks U.N. Security Council to discuss Korea-U.S. military exercises**

North Korea has asked the U.N. Security Council to take up the issue of joint military exercises between South Korea and the United States, officials said on May 28.

The North sent a letter earlier this week to the president of the Security Council, asking for an emergency meeting on the military exercises that the nation has long condemned as a rehearsal for invading the country, according to South Korean diplomats.

The letter has since been circulated among the Security Council members. The Council can take up the matter only if there is a request from a Council member.

Last year, North Korea twice asked the Council to deal with the issue, but no formal discussions took place. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea mum on fresh U.S. dialogue offer: sources**

The United States extended another offer early May to hold talks with North Korea, but the communist North has not yet responded to the proposal, diplomatic sources said on 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, the sources said.

It was not the first time the North has rejected a U.S. dialogue proposal this year. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea refuses to rejoin six-party talks: German lawmaker**

North Korea has refused to rejoin the long-stalled six-party denuclearization talks, citing the U.S.

hard-line approach toward the North, said a German lawmaker who met with top North Korean officials on June 2.

Hartmut Koschyk, head of the German-North Korean friendship association, visited the North for five days through June 1 before coming to Seoul on a tour of Asia. In Pyongyang, Koschyk met with top North Korean officials, including its nominal leader and president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Yong-nam, and Vice Foreign Minister Kung Sok-ung.

"North Korean officials mainly cited the U.S.' attitude as the reason and said they would not sit at the table for six-party talks," the lawmaker told Yonhap News Agency in an interview. "In our meetings with them, we got the impression that we are faced with a firm position."

Koschyk said he did not detect signs of social unrest in North Korea despite the recent execution of the country's defense chief, Hyon Yong-chol, although it was difficult to know for sure on a brief visit to the country.

He also expressed concern that the isolated nation may face greater food shortages due to a lack of energy and poor harvests caused by drought across the country. (Yonhap)

## **Senate resolution calls for N. Korea to allow family reunions for Korean Americans**

Two U.S. senators have introduced a resolution calling for family reunions between Korean-Americans and their long-lost relatives in North Korea.

Sens. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Mark Warner (D-VA) submitted the "resolution encouraging reunions of Korean-Americans who were divided by the Korean War from their relatives in North Korea" to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on June 3 (Washington time).

The resolution (S.Res.190) followed a similar House resolution authored by Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) that passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee in April.

Kirk and Warner submitted a similar resolution in November, but it was scrapped as it did not pass through the Senate before the previous Congress ended its term.

The text of the new resolution was not available, but it is believed to be similar to the November one.

The November resolution called for North Korea to "permit reunions between Korean Americans and their relatives still living in North Korea," and urges the State Department to further prioritize efforts to organize such reunions.

It also called on South Korea's government to include U.S. citizens in future family reunions planned with the North.

Millions of Koreans remain separated by the 1950-53 Korean War.

Since the first-ever 2000 summit of their leaders, the two Koreas have held 18 rounds of temporary reunions of families, with the last round in February last year. But these reunions did not involve Korean Americans.

More than 100,000 Korean Americans are believed to have loved ones in the North.

Earlier this week, Rangel and Royce sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry, urging him to

make greater efforts to realize family reunions involving Korean Americans. (Yonhap)

## **No punishment expected for N. Korea over SLBM**

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 on June 9.

The secretive North announced in early May that it has successfully fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

South Korea sent a letter to the North Korea Sanctions Committee under the U.N. council 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 News Agency on the condition of anonymity. "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.

China, like the U.S., seems to have an assessment that North Korea still has a long way to go to master the SLBM technology and deploy a submarine equipped with the weapon, according to the source.

South Korea's chief nuclear envoy Hwang Joon-kook had talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei, in Beijing at the end of last month. Hwang earlier had a trilateral meeting in Seoul with the top nuclear envoys from the U.S., Sung Kim, and Japan, Junichi Ihara.

They shared notes on the analysis of Pyongyang's recent provocations and discussed ways to coax it back to denuclearization talks.

In March, the North test-launched two Scud-type short-range ballistic missiles with impunity.

"The U.N. Security Council is instead accumulating records of North Korea's violations of its resolutions for possible future actions," the source said. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea demands U.N. Security Council take up U.S. shipments of live anthrax**

North Korea demanded on June 12 (Washington time) the U.N. Security Council take up the recent mistaken shipments by the United States of live anthrax to South Korea and other countries, claiming it shows the U.S. is trying to use biological weapons against the nation.

Amb. Ja Song-nam, chief of the North's mission to the U.N., made the demand in a letter addressed to both U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the president of the Security Council. The letter was dated on June 5.

"This fact clearly proves that the United States not only possesses deadly weapons of mass destruction, which are totally banned under the Biological Weapons Convention, but also is attempting to use them in actual warfare against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Ja said.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the North's official name.

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest terms the United States for its genocidal acts against humanity and strongly requests that the Security Council take up the issue of the shipment of anthrax germs in order to thoroughly investigate the biological warfare schemes of the United States," he said.

Attached to the letter was a statement issued by the North's National Defense Commission on June 3 to condemn the anthrax shipments. In the statement, the North accused the U.S. of trying to turn South Korea into "a hell and a ground for testing biochemical weapons."

The Pentagon has said that live anthrax samples were mistakenly sent from a Department of Defense lab in Dugway, Utah, to South Korea's Osan Air Base, Australia, Britain and Canada as well as laboratories in 19 U.S. states.

The U.S. State Department rejected the North's claim as "ridiculous."

"We've seen the letter which was submitted by the DPRK to the United Nations. The allegations are ridiculous. They don't merit a response, other than to say we've been clear as has the Department of Defense about the circumstances that led to this inadvertent shipment, I think," Jeff Rathke, a department spokesman, said at a regular briefing.

"We've been very clear about the circumstances that led to this, and any suggestion otherwise is baseless," he said. (Yonhap)

## Inter-Korean Affairs

### Most S. Koreans support aid to N. Korea: UNICEF

More than eight out of 10 South Koreans are supportive of their government's aid to North Korea as children there face serious food shortages, a poll by the United Nations' children agency showed on May 19.

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.

A quarter of North Korean children die before their 5th birthday, according to U.N. statistics gathered in 2013. Some 28 percent also face stunted growth due to malnutrition.

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 News Agency. (Yonhap)

## S. Korea to offer 1 bln won to support handicapped in N. Korea

South Korea said on May 19 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.

It marked 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. (Yonhap)

## Female activists cross inter-Korean border for peace on peninsula

A group of foreign women activists crossed the heavily fortified inter-Korean border from North Korea on May 24, voicing hope that their move could help bring lasting peace to a divided peninsula.

About 30 female activists from around the world, including U.S. activist Gloria Steinem and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mairead Maguire, marched down from the North to the South across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to mark the International Women’s Day for Disarmament.

The DMZ, which bisects the Korean Peninsula, is a 259-kilometer-long and 4-kilometer-wide strip of rugged no-man’s land stretching from coast to coast, serving as a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War that ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.

“We are feeling very positive (about) what we’ve accomplished ... which is a trip for peace, for reconciliation and for human rights and a trip to which both governments agreed,” Steinem told a press conference in South Korea. “We were able



Female global activists participating in the Women Cross DMZ Peace Walk, along with their South Korean supporters, stage a march near Imjingak Pavilion in Paju, north of Seoul, on May 24, 2015, after crossing the inter-Korean border to the South Korean side. (Yonhap)

to be citizens' diplomats.”

She voiced hope that their move could become the beginning of contacts across the “artificial barrier” to promote peace and understanding between the two Koreas.

The group arrived in Pyongyang on May 19 to meet with North Korean women to deliver their message and marched down to the South via the western corridor along the Gyeongui railway.

## S. Korea voices woes over N. Korea's erratic behavior

South Korea voiced concerns on May 21 over the instability of North Korea's decision-making process as Pyongyang has abruptly canceled an invitation for the U.N. chief to visit an inter-Korean industrial park in the North.

Without a reason being given, North Korea on May 20 rescinded its permission for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's trip to the Kaesong Industrial Complex, which was originally supposed to be made on May 21.

“South Korea has concerns about the North's unpredictability of its decision-making process,” said a high-ranking official at the Ministry of Unification, requesting anonymity. “It is also regrettable that the North has been posing a threat to the South and making provocative remarks against it.”

It was not the first time that Pyongyang has made a last-minute cancellation of a trip by high-profile figures to the North, including a previously scuttled visit by Robert King, U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights. (Yonhap)



U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon responds to reporters' questions during a press conference in Incheon, west of Seoul, on May 19, 2015. Ban said he will visit the inter-Korean industrial complex in North Korea's border city of Kaesong on May 21. (Yonhap)

## S. Korea condemns N. Korea for insulting President Park

South Korea urged North Korea on May 22 to stop public criticism of President Park Geun-hye, calling for restraint in order to improve inter-Korean relations.

North Korea's Rodong Sinmun, the newspaper of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea, rebuked Park for commenting on the North's governing style and nuclear weapons program, calling her a “malignant tumor” who harms bilateral ties.

“She is shame on the nation, a source of trouble and cancer-like existence hindering the improvement of the North-South relations,” the newspaper said. “It is of urgent necessity to remove such malignant tumor in order to get rid of trouble.”

The Ministry of Unification vehemently criticized North Korea for insulting Park, calling on the



North to reflect on itself and to accept Seoul's offer for dialogue. (Yonhap)

## **S. Korea fails to join railway cooperation body due to N. Korea**

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.

It was the second time Seoul sought to join the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) since 2003 when the country's first attempt was again thwarted by Pyongyang's opposition, according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

New membership with the OSJD requires a unanimous vote from the organization's 28 members, including the communist North.

"We were able to secure explicit support of all other members except North Korea, and the organization is now moving to change its membership procedure from a unanimous vote to two-thirds approval from its members, so we are now looking forward to joining the organization at the next chance," Vice Transportation Minister Yeo Hyung-koo was quoted as saying.

Yeo has been attending the 43rd ministerial talks of the OSJD in Mongolia's Ulaanbaatar. OSJD currently has 28 members, including China and Russia.

For South Korea, joining the OSJD is a necessary step to link the country's own railway system to the trans-Siberian and trans-China railways as part of its long-term goal to reach Europe by land, the ministry said. (Yonhap)

## **Koreas launch joint survey of palace site**

South and North Korea kicked off this year's joint excavation of a medieval royal palace site in the North on June 4 despite lingering inter-Korean tensions, Seoul officials said.

A ceremony to mark the start of the six-month project was held at the scene in the North's border town of Kaesong, attended by relevant officials and historians from both sides, they said.

Kaesong served as the capital for most of the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) and is now home to an industrial complex run by both Koreas.

The two Koreas have conducted six rounds of joint excavations of the site of Manwoldae, a Goryeo Dynasty palace, since 2007. But the progress of the project has been intermittent amid drawn-out tensions between the two Koreas.

This year's excavation will run for six months until Nov. 30, the longest-ever period since the project began.

Manwoldae is part of a group of "historic monuments and sites in Kaesong" that was inducted into the UNESCO world heritage list in 2013. The Manwoldae palace was constructed in 919 but was completely destroyed during the Red Turbans invasions of Korea during the 14th century. (Yonhap)

## **S. Korea to offer MERS detection devices to N. Korea**

South Korea said on June 4 it plans to provide North Korea with devices to detect the MERS virus so they could be installed at a joint industrial zone in the North.

At the request of the North, South Korea plans to soon install three thermal scanners for those who move in and out of the Kaesong Industrial Complex, where about 53,000 North Korean workers are employed, said an official at the Ministry of Unification, asking not to be named.

“The North has recently raised the issue of the MERS outbreak in the South and it has asked Seoul to send such devices to the zone,” the official said.

Concerns about the spread of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome are growing in South Korea as the virus has killed two South Koreans so far, while the number of those infected has increased to 35.

The reclusive country has been highly sensitive to the outbreak of highly contagious diseases due to its weak health system.

Last year, the North imposed a travel ban on incoming foreign tourists for about five months due to concerns over the deadly Ebola virus.

In November, Seoul had lent thermal scanners to Pyongyang when fears of the Ebola virus gripped the world. In 2009, the North made a similar request to the South over concerns about avian flu.

“The scanners will be sent to the North as soon as possible,” the official said. “North Korea has also asked South Korea to provide masks for North Korean workers at the complex.”

“There have been no reported MERS cases in North Korea...Seoul plans to make every effort to prevent the virus from spreading into the industrial complex,” she said. (Yonhap)

## **N. Korea bashes S. Korea for ballistic missile test**

North Korea condemned South Korea on June 4 for its test-firing of a ballistic missile capable of reaching nearly all parts of the nation.

On June 3, the South carried out its first-ever launch of a ballistic missile with a range of more than 500 kilometers as part of efforts to better counter ever-growing nuclear and missile threats by the North. President Park Geun-hye watched the test.

The development of the new striking asset came after Seoul and Washington announced their missile guidelines which enabled South Korea to have a ballistic missile with a range of up to 800 kilometers.

“(The test-firing) is part of acts of treachery as it was aimed to hurt the fellow countrymen with arms provided by outside forces,” an unidentified spokesman for the Strategic Force of the (North) Korean People’s Army said in a statement.

The statement was reported by the communist country’s Korean Central News Agency in its English dispatch.

Calling Park a “wicked woman” and “a military dog” of the U.S., the spokesman even warned that

such acts “will only lead to a dog’s death in the long run.”

The statement also said North Korea has in place “the strongest nuclear deterrent and powerful strategic rockets” and it is capable of “turning the U.S. mainland into a sea in flames,” vowing to push for measures “to bolster up the capabilities for self-defense.” (Yonhap)

### **Park vows to resolve difficulties over N. Korea nuclear program**

President Park Geun-hye vowed on June 6 to resolve difficulties posed by North Korea’s nuclear program and historical disputes with Japan.

Tensions persist on the Korean Peninsula over North Korea’s provocative actions in recent months, including the launch of a ballistic missile from a submarine.

Seoul-Tokyo relations also remain badly frayed largely because of Japan’s refusal to atone for its past wrongdoings stemming from its colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula from 1910-45. One of the key pending issues is a demand by former Korean WWII sex slaves for an apology and compensation from Tokyo.

“We will not succumb to these difficulties. We will resolve them with our power without fail,” Park said in a Memorial Day address. She did not give any details.

The comments came five days after she pressed Japan to take “courageous” action to restore the honor of the former sex slaves while they are still alive. (Yonhap)



South Korea launches successfully a ballistic missile with a range of at least 500 kilometers at a firing range of the state-run Agency for Defense Development in Tae'an, South Chungcheong Province, on South Korea's west coast on June 3, 2015. (Yonhap)

## PEOPLE

**Kim Jong-un** : Supreme Commander of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA), First Secretary of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), First Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC)

- May 19 gives field guidance to the Taedonggang Terrapin Farm.  
 23 gives field guidance to the Sokmak Atlantic Salmon Breed-fish Ground and Raksan Offshore Salmon Fish Farm under the Korean People's Army (KPA) Unit 810.  
 24 inspects the command of KPA Large Combined Unit 264 in Pyongyang.  
 29 inspects a general tree nursery now under construction by the KPA.
- June 1 gives field guidance at the Wonsan Baby Home and Orphanage, which is close to completion.  
 6 sends gifts to the Pyongyang Baby Home and Orphanage.  
 12 sends a message of greeting to Russian president Vladimir Putin to congratulate the national day of Russia.  
 13 inspects Anti-Aircraft (AA) Artillery Academy, the KCNA says without revealing an exact date of the inspection.  
 15 watches a drill of firing new type anti-ship rockets which are being deployed at the naval units of the KPA.  
 16 watches night naval fire strike drill of navy warship sub-unit of the East Sea Fleet of the KPA Navy and ground artillery sub-units under the KPA 10th Corps.  
 17 watches a firing contest of AA artillery personnel which brought together AA artillery companies under the KPA Air and Anti-Air Force, KPA Large Combined Units 963 and 526.

**Kim Yong-nam**: President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA)

- May 21 receives credentials from Milan Lajciak, Slovak ambassador to North Korea, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.  
 25 sends a message of greeting to Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, chairman of the Commission of the African Union, on the Day of Africa.  
 26 receives credentials from Thomas Lehmann, Danish ambassador to North Korea, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- June 1 has a talk with Hartmut Koschyk, chairman of the German-Korean Parliamentary Group, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.  
 3 receives credentials from Thit Linn Ohn, Myanmar ambassador to North Korea at the mansudae Assembly Hall.  
 6 sends a message of sympathy to John Dramani Mahama, president of the Republic of Ghana, in connection with recent fire and floods that hit Accra, claiming huge human losses.  
 11 receives credentials from Phonekham Inthaboualy, Lao ambassador to North Korea, at the

Mansudae Assembly Hall.

- June 16 has a talk with a Taekwon-Do delegation headed by Leong Wai Meng, vice-president of the International Taekwon-Do Federation, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.

### **Pak Pong-ju: Premier**

- May 21 sends a congratulatory message to Abdel Malik Sellal upon his re-appointment as prime minister of Algeria on May 20.
- 29 makes a field survey of farming in South Phyongan Province, including the Paekam Farm in Sukchon, the Wonhwa Co-operative Farm in Pyongwon and the Sangbukdong Co-operative Farm in Mundok County.
- June 3 sends a congratulatory message to Juha Sipila on his appointment as prime minister of the Republic of Finland.
- 6 makes a field survey of the construction site of Sci-Tech Complex.
- 15 makes a field survey of the Ponghwa Chemical Factory.

## **CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW**

### **(Local Events)**

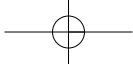
- May 16 North Korean player Kim Son-hui bags a gold medal at the 2015 Taipei Open Track and Field Contest on May 15-16.
- 18 Historical relics are discovered at Manwoldae, the site of the royal palace of the Koryo Kingdom (918-1392), in the area of Kaesong City.
- 18 A new kind of health foodstuff is developed by the Life Science Faculty of Kim Il Sung University. The foodstuff, listed as one of the 10 top inventions in North Korea in 2014, is made of substances extracted from flax, bean and edible herbs.
- 20 A ground-breaking ceremony takes place in Kalma Street, Wonsan, Kangwon Province, to develop the Wonsan area as a world-famous tourist city.
- 22 The 52nd National Sports Contest of Juvenile Sports Schools opens at Mundok County Gymnasium in South Phyongan Province.
- 30 The Kim Jong Il Youth Honor Prize is awarded to Jang Jong-hwa, member of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League, who works at the Chollima District Public Catering Establishment in Nampho City.
- June 2 The KCNA says new posters have been produced in North Korea to dynamically arouse all people to a campaign against drought.
- 4 A groundbreaking ceremony takes place before the Samjiyon Grand Monument to build a broad-gauge railroad from Hyesan to Samjiyon, both in Ryanggang Province.
- 4 Premier league football matches of the Sports Contest for the Pochonbo Torch Prize start in Pyongyang with 11 men's football teams and six women's football teams in competition.

- June 5 The North Korean girl footballers came in first at the 2015 AFC U-14 Girl Regional Championship (East Asia), the KCNA says.
- 6 A performance of the 53rd National Schoolchildren's Art Festival takes place at the Pyongyang Schoolchildren's Palace to mark the 69th anniversary of the Korean Children's Union.
- 7 North Korea marks the 69th founding anniversary of the Korean Children's Union (KCU) with joint meetings of the KCU organizations in Pyongyang and all provinces of the country.
- 8 A national exhibition of children's science fictions and models was held here from June 5 to 8 in celebration of the 69th anniversary of the Korean Children's Union.
- 8 The KCNA says the Kigwancha Sports Team of North Korea showed good results in a weightlifting event of the Mangyongdae Prize Sports Games held in Pyongyang recently winning 19 gold medals out of the 45 in 15 categories.
- 9 The KCNA says elections for deputies to provincial (municipality), city (district) and county people's assemblies will take place on July 19, 2015, in accordance with Article 139 of the Socialist Constitution and decisions of the local people's committees.
- 14 The Central Election Guidance Committee is formed in North Korea for the election of deputies to provincial (municipality), city (district) and county people's assemblies.
- 15 A national meeting takes place in Pyongyang on the 15th anniversary of the publication of the June 15 joint declaration.
- 15 The 18th National Taekwon-Do Championship for Jongilbong Cup opens with due ceremony at the Taekwon-Do Hall in Pyongyang.
- 16 The KCNA says the worst drought in 100 years continues in North Korea causing great damage to its agricultural field.

### (Foreign Events)

- May 19 An international delegation arrives in Pyongyang to take part in the 2015 international women's grand march for reunification and peace in Korea.
- 21 German Hermin Ferras Alvarez, Cuban ambassador to North Korea, arranges a friendship meeting at his embassy on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the demise of the national hero of the Cuban people Jose Marti and the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Cuba.
- 21 A joint meeting is held at the Russian Language Center of Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Russia's victory in the "Great Patriotic War."
- 24 Boxer Won Un-gyong wins a gold medal at the 2015 world juvenile and youth women's boxing championship held in Taipei.
- 25 Yang Hyong-sop, vice president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, has a talk with Le Huu Nghia, vice chairman of the Central Theory Council of the Communist Party of Vietnam, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 26 A delegation of the Foreign Ministry of Oman led by Vice Minister Ahmed Bin Yosif Obaid Al Harthi visits Mangyongdae, the birthplace of President Kim Il-sung.

- May 27 The 2015 Seminar on Investment in Wonsan-Mount Kumgang International Tourist Zone takes place in Mount Kumgang.
- 28 Hartmut Koschyk, chairman of the German-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Group, and his party arrive in Pyongyang.
- 28 Yang Hyong-sop has a talk with a delegation of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia headed by Ivan Abramov, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 29 Talks between Ri Jong-hyok, chairman of the North Korea-Germany Friendship Parliamentary Group, and Hartmut Koschyk, chairman of the German-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Group, take place at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 29 Yang Hyong-sop has a talk with a delegation of the foreign ministry of Oman led by Vice Minister Ahmed Bin Yosif Obaid Al Harthi, which paid a courtesy call on him at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 30 A delegation of the Ministry of Railways led by Minister Jon Kil-su leaves Pyongyang to take part in the 43rd ministerial meeting of the Organization of Railways Cooperation to be held in Ulanbator, Mongolia.
- 30 The KCNA says in a commentary that the United States is stepping up its preparations for a war of aggression against North Korea in real earnest.
- 31 Rodong Sinmun claims the much-touted dialogue by South Korea is no more than a “crafty trick to cover up the crimes it perpetrated against the nation by pushing the north-south relations to an extreme pitch of tension.”
- June 1 A delegation of the Central Bank led by President Kim Chon-gyun leaves Pyongyang to take part in the 24th International Bank Congress in Saint Petersburg, Russia.
- 2 The KCNA says a statement issued by a spokesman for the National Defense Commission clarifying its principled stand as regards the U.S. and its allies’ action of taking issue with the North’s successful test-fire of ballistic missile from a strategic submarine was distributed as U.N. Security Council’s official document S/2015 on May 28.
- 2 Rodong Sinmun says North Korea-targeted war exercises now under way in South Korea are the root cause that escalated tensions on the Korean Peninsula and pushed North-South ties to a catastrophe.
- 4 A North Korean delegation led by Pak Myon-guk, vice minister of Foreign Affairs, leaves Pyongyang to participate in a meeting of high-level officials of the ASEAN Regional Forum to be held in Malaysia.
- 7 A spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) in a statement says that South Korean President Park Geun-hye had better stop making negative comments and take care of the domestic affairs that are on the brink of ruin.
- 11 Choe Ryong-hae, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee, the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK), meets with a delegation of the General Union of Syrian Peasants led by Chairman Hammad Abboud Al Sau.
- 13 A Taekwon-Do delegation headed by Leong Wai Meng, vice-president of the International Taekwon-Do Federation, arrives in Pyongyang to take part in a memorial service marking the 13th anniversary of death of Choe Hong-hui, former president of the federation.
- 15 North Korea says in a government statement it is open to holding talks with South Korea but



added certain conditions should be met, including the suspension of joint military drills with the United States.

- June 17 North Korea repatriates two South Koreans who allegedly entered the North illegally during a trip to China via truce village of Panmunjom on the military demarcation line which bisects the Korean Peninsula.
- 17 An agreement on the cooperation in the fields of science, education and culture between the governments of North Korea and the Republic of Poland is signed in Pyongyang.

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Publisher : Park No-hwang  
Acting Managing Editor : Lee Chang-seop  
Deputy Managing Editor : Lee Dong-min  
Editor : Hwang Seok-joo  
Deputy Editor: Nam Kwang-sik  
Staff Writers : Lee Kwang-ho, Kim Tae-shik  
Copyreaders : Adam Lipper, Steve Beland, Deanne Nguyen, Emma Kalka

Subscription inquiries and address changes should be mailed to :  
**VANTAGE POINT YONHAP NEWS AGENCY** , 110 Susong-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea  
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Internet Address : <http://www.yna.co.kr>  
E-mail Address : [vpnk@yna.co.kr](mailto:vpnk@yna.co.kr).

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