

# The Amateur Computerist

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Netizen Journalism and North Korea

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## Editorial: Netizen Journalism Counters Media Myths

This issue of the *Amateur Computerist* is a follow-up to the Vol. 16 No. 1 issue<sup>1</sup>, the first issue exploring Netizen Journalism and the United Nations.

In that issue we raised the question of whether the Internet and netizen media make it possible to counter the "false narratives" in the mainstream media, like those which provided the pretext for the U.S. government to invade Iraq.

This issue continues the focus on news and feature articles about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) also known as North Korea. In general the subject of the DPRK is treated by the U.S. government and the mainstream media with hostility toward both the country and its policies. Many myths are presented about the DPRK, like it is a reclusive isolated state, even though it has relations with most other countries of the world and participates in many international organizations.

This is similar to how Iraq was treated by the U.S. government and mainstream media. The U.S. mainstream media reported that there were Weapons

of Mass Destruction in Iraq. There were no such weapons. The media coverage was contrary to the facts.

With regard to the DPRK, the hostile mainstream media coverage supports the U.S. government's unwillingness to relate to the DPRK as a normal country with a different political system. Such coverage is a road block to the accurate information needed so there can be public support for a constructive national policy toward the DPRK.

The question raised in Vol. 16 No. 1 was, "Does the Net give the power of the reporter to netizens to counter the fictitious accounts that often make up much of the news?" This continues as the question for this issue.

In November 2009, Robert Carlin came to the United Nations to speak with journalists as part of a program sponsored by the United Nations Correspondents' Association (UNCA). In the 1990s during the presidency of Bill Clinton, Carlin was part of the U.S. government team negotiating with the DPRK. At his UNCA presentation, Carlin described how negotiating with DPRK officials was fruitful.<sup>2</sup> Of the 22 different sets of substantial negotiations, 16 were successful. With the election in Nov. 2000 of George W. Bush and the change in the U.S. administration, however these agreements reached under the Clinton presidency were abandoned. So far, President Obama has only increased the hostile policy which sees the DPRK as an enemy state. (See "U.S. Policy Toward North Korea Fails to Engage" in this issue.)

Carlin expressed his view that accurate press coverage in the U.S. is needed if there is going to be a change from the current hostile policy of the U.S. government toward the DPRK. The myths support the hard line, while an accurate reporting would support the development of normal relations between the U.S. and DPRK. We present this issue of the *Amateur Computerist* as a step toward that more accurate

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Webpage: <http://www.ais.org/~jrh/acn/ACn18-1.pdf>

coverage.

Several of the articles report on the circumstances of the negative treatment of the DPRK by the UN Security Council. Another article considers the change in policy made by President Obama which even increased the hard line against the DPRK. A book review of the *Hidden History of the Korean War* documents some of the background of the U.S. aggressive policy toward the DPRK.

In contrast to these negative events, this issue contains two articles about the concert by the NY Philharmonic Orchestra in Pyongyang in February 2008. It also contains an article about a conference on June 15, 2009 of overseas Koreans celebrating the historic friendly meeting between Kim Dae Jung, the president of the ROK (Republic of Korea also known as South Korea) and Kim Jong Il, the leader of the DPRK in June 2000. This is after the bitter legacy bequeath to all Koreans by the forceful separation of the nation of Korea into two separate countries. An artistic view of DPRK life is represented in the article about the exhibit of wood block prints. All the articles in this issue originally appeared in *OhmyNews International*.

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Notes:

1. Winter 2007. <http://www.ais.org/~jrh/acn/ACn16-1.pdf>
2. See, "Negotiating with North Korea: 1992-2007" [http://fsi.stanford.edu/publications/negotiating\\_with\\_north\\_korea\\_19922007/](http://fsi.stanford.edu/publications/negotiating_with_north_korea_19922007/)

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on June 17, 2009]

## **Overseas Koreans Remember 6.15 Joint Declaration Conference Discusses Struggle for Peace and Reunification of Korean Peninsula**

by Ronda Hauben

Though the Sunshine Policy that has officially guided the struggle for Korean Reunification since June 15, 2000 (6.15) may be under siege by the current government of South Korea, the U.S. government, and the United Nations Security Council, it was very much alive at the Overseas Koreans Conference

for Peace and Reunification of Korea held in Washington, D.C. The conference, marking the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic agreement between the Heads of State of North and South Korea, was held on June 12-14.



**Conference participants**

It was with a sigh of relief that I left New York on Friday morning June 12 to travel to Washington, D.C. where the June 15 Joint Korea Declaration Overseas Committee for Peace and Reunification of Korea was hosting this three-day event.

At noon, in New York City on Friday, June 12, the United Nations Security Council passed SC Resolution 1874 imposing harsh sanctions against North Korea. The voice of reason has been drowned out in a sea of "waiting for Obama" sentiment, giving the Obama administration license to continue and even outdo the anti democratic policies of the Bush administration.

For example, Obama's administration has increased the U.S. troop level in Afghanistan, and encouraged extensive military actions displacing the civilian population in Pakistan. But when it comes to North Korea, government policy has been especially harsh. This has been documented in an earlier article in *OhmyNews International: U.S. Policy Toward North Korea Fails to Engage*.

The presentations and discussion at the 6.15 anniversary conference helped to put what is happening at the UN into the bigger framework of U.S., Korean relations and North Korea-South Korea relations.<sup>1</sup> This broad focus is one where several generations of Koreans have grown up since the rivalry between U.S. and Soviet Union following World War II, imposed arbitrary separation on the Korean Peninsula.

"The separation itself is violent," explained Park Soh-eyn, the first speaker at the Saturday morning panel, who came to the conference from Germany.

She observed that the June 15 Declaration had a significant symbolic effect. It provided a common approach toward reunification for both North Korea and South Korea. After 60 years of separation, just to be able to look at the North Korean and South Korean flags in the same space was touching, she recalled.

Part of the impact in South Korea of the 6.15 Joint Declaration was to legalize discussions of reunification which had been previously forbidden and criminalized by the National Security Law. The 6.15 Declaration had also broadened the reunification movement so that people from different sectors of society participated, including diverse religious organizations, and diverse non-religious organizations including conservative and progressive political groups. Park Soh-eyn pointed out that there have been many exchanges between the Koreas since the 6.15 Joint Declaration.

Park Soh-eyn offered the analogy that if we consider the separation like a disease with its harmful effects, the reunification process provides a medication, with curing qualities.

On Friday evening there had been a short set of talks at the dinner held at a Korean restaurant in Tysons Corner, Virginia. U.S. Congressman Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa, who is the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, gave a short presentation about his support for the Sunshine Policy and his respect for the work done by former South Korean President Kim Dae Jung.



U.S. Congressman Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa

I was invited to present a greeting at the dinner. I described how as a featured writer for *OhmyNews International*, I have reported on UN events, particu-

larly focusing on the frustrations among delegates and others with the actions of the UN Security Council. I noted the widespread feeling that there is a need for an English language publication to counter media myths as about North Korea.

Another talk at the Saturday Conference was presented by Kim Chang-soo, who had been on the South Korean National Security Council in the Roh Moo-hyun administration. Kim Chang-soo reviewed some of the recent events in the relations between the two Koreas. President Lee Myung-bak has not recognized the June 15, 2000 or October 4, 2007 agreements with North Korea negotiated by the previous two governments. The Lee regime, in abandoning the Sunshine policy, turned to criticizing North Korea as well as conducting military exercises with the U.S. that are viewed as hostile activities by North Korea.

The media has focused on internal problems in North Korea, failing to take into account broader issues and context. North Korea has indicated it is willing to talk about the nuclear issues with the U.S. on a one to one basis, which would include talking about U.S. protection of South Korea under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Kim Chang-soo proposed that North Korea is trying to get diplomatic recognition from the U.S. as well as to address its economic issues. But the current world media focuses on problems with North Korea, rather than why the U.S. is not doing anything to encourage negotiations.

Kim Chang-soo suggested that the upcoming summit between Lee Myung-bak and Barack Obama was important and has the potential to have serious military implications. He cautioned against Obama failing to realize that Lee Myung-bak is considered as a repressive dictator and that there is a long tradition of the U.S. government supporting dictatorial regimes in South Korea. Such support for Lee Myung-bak by the U.S. government would remind the people of South Korea of this past history, including the resentment that spread across South Korea in 2002 when two middle school girls were killed by a U.S. military tank. Kim Chang-soo advised Obama to keep this all in mind when he meets the President of South Korea.

Kim Chang-soo offered some observations about the current tense situation created between the U.S. and North Korea by U.S. support for the harsh Security Council Resolution that has recently passed at the UN. He referred to several analogous periods when the U.S. made progress in normalizing relations. One such example was when China and the U.S. began to

normalize relations in the early 1970s. Similarly despite the hostility of the Bush administration years, negotiations with North Korea began in earnest toward the latter part of Bush's tenure in office.

The current sanctions, against North Korea, are problematic. They even go beyond the mandate of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) that in itself has the potential to provoke military encounters. The Security Council's sanctions present a contradiction with the Armistice Agreement between North Korea and the UN Command, which forbids one side from blockading the other side. The provision to forcibly inspect North Korean ships contradicts the terms of the Armistice, as do the provisions cutting off financial interactions with North Korea.



Ronda Hauben speaks at conference

Kim Chang-soo observed that Obama's policy is similar to Bush's earlier policy. We need to ask for a fresh policy approach from the Obama administration, he suggested. He advised that there is a need for a very special high level envoy to go to North Korea to change the direction. Also he proposed that an exchange of cultural events and people to people interactions could be helpful.

For the upcoming meeting between the U.S. and South Korean presidents, Kim Chang-soo proposed that relations with North Korea need to address not only denuclearization, but also diplomatic recognition, inter Korea exchanges, and forging peace in Northeast Asia. Kim Chang-soo advised that Lee Myung-bak recognize the significance of the June 15 Declaration and continue to implement that spirit and to promote this spirit when he meets with Obama, rather than a tough military approach to North Korea.

In thinking about the impact of the events at the conference, it seems that U.S. and North Korean relations are at a particularly low point with the danger of a military confrontation. At such a time, it

is particularly important to consider the achievements of the Sunshine Policy and the 6.15 Joint Declaration as a means to support peace and reunification, rather than war, on the Korean Peninsula.

The continuing tragedy of the two Koreas is a serious problem for the world, not just for the Korean people. Also the U.S. government's refusal to negotiate a peace treaty to end the Korean war means that there is a particularly dangerous situation on the Korean Peninsula. The Armistice is but a temporary truce, not a means of more permanently preventing a return to military action.

A number of conversations at the conference, however, emphasized that people in Korea have faced many hardships over the years so that this difficult time is not unusual for them.

One speaker on Friday evening summing up this sentiment admitted, "I feel sometimes hopeless." But along with this sentiment, he explained his belief that there is a basis for hope. He reminded those at the conference, "But our people have been through so many hardships.... We shouldn't be passive. As our voices get bigger, we'll get more power. We shouldn't appeal to Lee Myung-bak. We should appeal to the people."

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Note:

1. Most of the talks presented at the conference and dinner were in Korean. This account of the conference is based on translations from Korean into English provided by several colleagues.

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on June 12, 2009]

## **U.S. Policy Toward North Korea Fails to Engage** **[Opinion] UN Security Council Should be Neutral in its Dealings with North Korea**

by Ronda Hauben

U.S. policy toward North Korea since Barack Obama assumed the U.S. presidency is very different from the promises of engagement which he made during his election campaign. This policy presents a striking example of the disparity between pre election promises and the action taken thus far during the

Obama presidency.

On the first day of the new administration, sanctions were authorized against three North Korean firms under the Arms Export Control Act, along with several nonproliferation executive orders. The three firms were KOMID, which had been sanctioned by other administrations, Sino-Ki and Moksong Trading Company, which were being sanctioned for the first time.<sup>1</sup>

The hostile direction of Obama's policy, however, has been signaled most clearly by the change made when the new administration failed to reappoint Christopher Hill to his position as Undersecretary of State for East Asia and the head of the U.S. negotiation team for the six-party talks with North Korea.

Not only was Hill not reappointed, but the role of U.S. negotiator with North Korea was downgraded and split among several different officials. A part time position was created for an envoy. Another person would be the U.S. representative to the six-party talks. And still another official was to be appointed to the position of Undersecretary of State for East Asia, which was Hill's former position.

Stephen Bosworth accepted the position as envoy. His official title is Special Representative for North Korea Policy. Bosworth did so on a part time basis. At the same time, he maintained his full time position as Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University along with his new part time job.

There has been little public discussion about why the Obama administration made such significant changes. The *Boston Globe*, in an article about Bosworth's appointment, refers to the concerns expressed by Leon Sigal, the director of the Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project at the Social Science Research Council in New York. The article quotes Sigal saying that there are officials in the new administration, "who don't think we can get anywhere, so they don't want to do the political heavy lifting to try."<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to the loss of Hill as a negotiator with North Korea, the Obama administration reappointed Stuart Levey, as the Undersecretary of Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. Levey's office in the Treasury Department, was created in 2004 under George W. Bush. This office was used to impose economic sanctions on North Korea. One such action was the freezing of funds that North Korea had in a bank in Macao, China, the Banco Delta Asia

(BDA).

North Korea was not only denied access to U.S. \$25 million, but it was also denied the use of the international banking system. This freezing of North Korean funds was announced shortly after North Korea and the five other nations who were part of the six-party talks signed the September 19, 2005 agreement to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.<sup>3</sup> The announcement by the Treasury Department sabotaged the implementation of this important agreement which would have gone a long way toward the goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. North Korea withdrew from the six-party talks until the \$25 million was returned.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant here to note that Levey and his office briefly came under public scrutiny in 2006 when the *New York Times* published an article exposing how the office has access to and uses the SWIFT Data Base to do intelligence work targeting people and transactions that it claims are in violation of U.S. law.<sup>5</sup> The SWIFT Data Base contains the transactions and identification information for the hundreds of thousands of people and entities that do electronic banking transactions using the SWIFT system.

The action by the U.S. Treasury using a section of the Patriot Act against the Banco Delta Asia Bank, however, demonstrated that the U.S. government has the ability to use this data base information against those it wants to target politically, rather than those who have committed any actual illegal acts. Testimony by former U.S. government officials to the U.S. Congress, and documents submitted to the U.S. government by the bank owner and his lawyer, demonstrated that there was never any evidence offered of any illegal acts. Instead the Patriot Act had been used to allow the U.S. government to act against this bank for political objectives. (See "Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia: Is the policy aimed at targeting China as well as North Korea?")

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=362192&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=362192&rel_no=1)

The new positions, designated to negotiate with North Korea, are at a lower administrative level than was Hill's former position. In addition, the Obama administration, by not reappointing Hill, has lost his valuable expertise. Hill had effectively countered the sabotage to negotiations caused by Levey's office during the Bush administration.

Hill was met with opposition from some in the Bush administration at each step along the way.

Remarkably, Hill effectively countered much of this opposition, making progress in the negotiations. In August 2008, however, the Bush administration unilaterally changed what it claimed North Korea's obligations were as part of Phase 2 of the six-party Feb 2007 agreement, and falsely declared that North Korea was in violation.<sup>6</sup>

With Hill gone from the North Korean desk at the State Department, and Levey reappointed to his position at the Treasury Department, it is significant that Obama sent an inter-agency group to visit the capitals of Japan, South Korea and China to discuss punishments for North Korea. Levey was featured as one of the U.S. government officials on the trip.

But is punishment appropriate? There has been no similar effort to open negotiations with North Korea.

Instead, the U.S. administration has given its support to Levey and others whose actions have sabotaged the success of the six-party talks. This failure of the Obama administration is similar to previous U.S. policy on North Korea.

Robert Carlin, part of the U.S. government negotiation team with North Korea under the Clinton Administration, documents that there were significant and successful negotiations on 22 issues carried out in the period between 1993 and 2000.<sup>7</sup> These achievements, however, could not survive into the transition to the Bush Administration.

Similarly, Mike Chinoy, a former *CNN* journalist, in his book *Meltdown*, documents both the Clinton years and much of the Bush years. He chronicles how negotiations were torpedoed not by North Korea, but by forces within the U.S. government itself.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, the U.S. conducts frequent military maneuvers close to North Korea which North Korea has claimed as a threat to its peace and security.

On April 5, 2009, North Korea test launched a communications satellite using a rocket of advanced design. This test broke no international law or treaty to which North Korea is a party.<sup>9</sup> Still the launch was condemned by the UN Security Council in a Presidential Statement. Also new sanctions were imposed on North Korea, stating as authority, a previous Security Council Resolution 1718.<sup>10</sup>

North Korea has been the target of hostile acts by the U.S. North Korea has tested rockets and has done tests of two nuclear devices, which it claims it needs as a deterrent. The U.S. has military agreements with Japan and South Korea, including them under the

protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella. There is only an armistice ending the fighting of the Korean War. The U.S. as the head of the UN command has not been willing to negotiate a treaty ending the Korean War.

The failure of the UN Security Council to explore North Korea's problems in trying to check U.S. hostility demonstrates its failure to carry out its obligations under the UN charter. The failure of the Security Council to protect Iraq from U.S. invasion is a warning that the Security Council should reform its processes so that it doesn't just become a vehicle for the political targeting of a nation as happened with Iraq.<sup>11</sup>

In his comments to journalists in response to the sanctions put on North Korea in April 2009, the Deputy Ambassador to the UN from North Korea, Pak Tok Hun said, "The recent activity of the security council concerning the peaceful use of outer space by my country shows that unless the security council is totally reformed and democratized we expect nothing from it."<sup>12</sup>

The challenge to the nations of the UN is to provide a more neutral and considered investigation of the problem it is trying to solve rather than just carrying out the punishment a P-5 nation may endeavor to inflict on another nation.

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Notes:

1. Karin Lee and Julia Choi, "North Korea: Unilateral and Multilateral Economic Sanctions and U.S. Department of Treasury Actions, 1955-April 2009," National Committee on North Korea, (Paper last updated April 28, 2009), p.26. <http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/09035LeeChoi.pdf>
2. James F. Smith, "In role as envoy, Tufts dean carries hard-earned lessons," *The Boston Globe*, May 26, 2009, [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/05/26/in\\_role\\_as\\_envoy\\_tufts\\_dean\\_carries\\_hard\\_earned\\_lessons/?comments=all](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/05/26/in_role_as_envoy_tufts_dean_carries_hard_earned_lessons/?comments=all)
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4. Ronda Hauben, "Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia: Is the policy aimed at targeting China as well as North Korea?," *OhmyNews International*, May 18, 2007. [http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=362192&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=362192&rel_no=1)
5. Erick Lichtblau and James Risen, "Bank Data Is Sifted by U.S. in Secret to Block Terror," *New York Times*, June 23, 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/23/washington/23intel.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/23/washington/23intel.html?_r=1)

6. Ronda Hauben, "U.S. Media and the Breakdown in the Six-Party Talks," *OhmyNews International*, September 28, 2008. [http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=383769&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=383769&rel_no=1)
7. Robert Carlin, "Negotiating with North Korea: Lessons Learned and Forgotten," *Korea Yearbook 2007*, Edited by Rudiger Frank et al, Brill, 2007, p. 235-251.
8. Mike Chinoy, *Meltdown*, St. Martin's Press, 2008,
9. Ronda Hauben, "Controversy at UN Over North Korea's Launch: Reconvening six-party talks or penalizing Pyongyang?" *OhmyNews International*, April 10, 2009. [http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=385061&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=385061&rel_no=1)
10. Ronda Hauben, "Security Council's Ad Hoc Actions Increase Tension on Korean Peninsula: [Analysis] North Korea responds by withdrawing from six-party talks as promised," *OhmyNews International*, April 17, 2009. [http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=385093&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=385093&rel_no=1)
11. Seumas Milne, "After Iraq It's Not Just North Korea that Wants a Bomb," *Guardian Comment Is Free*, May 29, 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/27/north-korea-nuclear-weapons-us>
12. Pak Tok Hun, Informal Comments to the Media at the UN Media Stakeout, April 24, 2009. <http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/stakeout/2009/so090424pm2.rm>

[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on April 17, 2009]

## **Security Council's Ad Hoc Actions Increase Tension on Korean Peninsula**

### **[Analysis] North Korea Responds by Withdrawing from Six-Party Talks as Promised**

by Ronda Hauben

On April 13, the UN Security Council (UNSC) issued a presidential statement condemning North Korea's satellite launch on April 5. The Security Council statement declared the launch "in contravention" of UNSC Resolution 1718 (2006), even though there was no wording in the 2006 statement against satellite launches. In the 2009 statement, the Security Council demanded North Korea not conduct further launches, including of satellites. The presidential statement also mandated that new sanctions would be added to the sanctions list in the 2006 resolution.

Usually, a presidential statement issued by the

Security Council is considered a non binding statement. Suddenly, the Security Council has changed its processes, using a presidential statement to deny North Korea the right to launch satellites, and to impose a new set of sanctions.

South Korea has recently noted that the trajectory of the North Korean launch was indeed the trajectory for a satellite launch.<sup>1</sup> Lee Sang-hee, the South Korean Defense Minister, in response to a question asked during a hearing held in South Korea's National Assembly, replied that "The rocket launched by the North followed the trajectory of a satellite and later separated in its final two stages before crashing into the Pacific Ocean." South Korea's *Yonhap News Agency* reported the minister's remarks, adding that these remarks were an official acknowledgment that the rocket was the effort to launch a satellite, not a ballistic missile.

UNSC resolution 1718 (2006) demands North Korea not conduct any launch of ballistic missiles, but does not refer to satellite launches.<sup>2</sup>

Pak Tok-hun, the North Korean Deputy Ambassador to the UN, referred to the fact that his country is being denied a right that other countries have, and that this treatment is not "fair." In an interview with *Aljazeera*, the Ambassador said that if the Security Council acted against his country for its satellite launch, North Korea would respond with harsh measures.<sup>3</sup>

The Ambassador noted that Japan has launched satellites more than 100 times and other countries like the U.S. have launched satellites and the Security Council has not taken up the issue. He complained that North Korea is being treated in a way that is different from how other countries are treated.

Some of what is striking about the action by the Security Council is the closed process used to consider the issue. There was no public discussion. There were several closed meetings, called consultations, among the P-5 members and Japan. During these meetings journalists were told the P-5 and Japan discussed what the response of the Security Council should be to North Korea's launch.

After there was agreement among the P-5 and Japan on what was to be contained in a presidential statement on the launch, the statement was presented to the other elected members of the Security Council for their approval. Despite the obligation specified in Article 32 of the UN Charter that a nation that is a party to an issue being discussed by the Security

Council be invited to the Security Council for the discussion, no such invitation was made, according to sources on the Security Council.

Similarly, though several of the nations on the Security Council indicated that they favored the resumption of the six-party talks as a way to deal with the launch by North Korea, there was no indication that there was any consideration by the Security Council of what led to the breakdown of the six-party talks. The U.S. government's effort to require verification in Phase 2 of the six-party Feb 2007 agreement, rather than in Phase 3, as had been agreed to by the six-parties was not discussed in the Security Council.

Instead of the Security Council members considering the problem which derailed the talks, they agreed to impose new sanctions on North Korea. Since no new Security Council resolution was being issued, there was no appropriate means of issuing new sanctions. They resorted to acting in an ad-hoc manner when they announced they would use a presidential statement to add new sanctions to Security Council resolution 1718 issued in 2006.

One journalist, at the press stakeout after the Security Council meeting issuing the presidential statement, asked:<sup>4</sup> "Mr. Ambassador, Does this presidential statement set a precedent whereby in the future, if you want to adjust the sanctions, supposedly for example for Iran, you can issue another presidential statement to change the content of the sanctions in a resolution? Is this legally speaking, a precedent?"

Baki Ilkin, Turkey's Ambassador to the UN, who is the head of the UNSC Resolution 1718 sanctions committee, responded: "I am a newcomer. I wish you had asked the previous speakers (Several Security Council Ambassadors had spoken before Ambassador Ilkin at the stakeout-ed)."

After the Security Council issued its presidential statement, North Korea announced it is leaving the six-party talks. It announced that it does not recognize the actions of the Security Council condemning its satellite launch. There is justification for North Korea's actions. Yet much of the mainstream media in the U.S. frames North Korea's reasonable response as but an indication of how unreasonable it behaves.

North Korea has asked that the IAEA and U.S. inspectors leave North Korea. It says it will resume its nuclear deterrent development, as North Korean Deputy Ambassador Pak Tok-hun promised would happen if the Security Council acted to condemn

North Korea. The Ambassador told Aljazeera and other media that the Security Council could expect strong measures in response to any action against North Korea. "We don't say empty talk. What we say is what we do," the Ambassador told journalists.

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Notes:

1. S Korean govt. admits DPRK rocket followed satellite trajectory, Xinhuanet, April 14, 2009. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-04/14/content\\_11185140.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-04/14/content_11185140.htm)
2. Ronda Hauben, "Every country has the inalienable right to use the outer space peacefully: UN Security Council Controversy over North Korean Satellite Launch," Telepolis, April 8, 2009. <http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/30/30099/1.html>
3. Aljazeera Interview with North Korean Deputy Ambassador to the UN, Pak Tok-hun, April 14, 2009. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjEIvw7I5Ow>
4. UN Media Stakeout: Informal comments to the Media by the Permanent Representative of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Baki Ilkin, on Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea. April 13, 2009. <http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/stakeout/2009/so090413pm7.rm>

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on April 10, 2009]

## **UN Security Council Controversy over North Korean Satellite Launch Reconvening Six-party Talks or Penalizing Pyongyang?**

by Ronda Hauben

There has been a controversy among the members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) over how to react to the April 5 launch of a satellite by North Korea. The Security Council met for emergency consultations on Sunday, April 5, while the P-5 and Japan have met in other consultations after the Sunday meeting.

Japan and the U.S. have encouraged the UNSC to take strong measures against North Korea to punish it for launching the satellite. The Russian Ambassador to the UN, Vitaly I. Churkin warned against a "knee jerk" reaction and proposed that the crucial goal was to ensure the continuation of the six-party talks toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.



These talks broke down during the Bush administration and have not yet been resumed.

The Chinese Ambassador to the UN, Zhang Yesui said that the reaction of the Security Council had to be “cautious and proportionate.” He said that his delegation would be most willing to consider constructive responses.

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice, called the launch by North Korea, “a clear-cut violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1718.”

She said that it is the view of the U.S. government “that this action merits a clear and strong response from the United Nations Security Council.”

Her position was that SC Resolution 1718 “prohibited missile related activity and called on the DPRK to halt further missile related activity.”

Vietnam, one of the elected members of the Security Council, called for a “prudent reaction.” A spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry said that Vietnam “hopes the relevant parties have a prudent reaction, find a reasonable solution and do not complicate the situation and affect peace and stability in the Northeast Asia region.”<sup>1</sup>

While Vietnam said that it was opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, an earlier statement indicated that Vietnam supports “the rights of countries to use science and technology for peaceful purposes.”

The Japanese Ambassador to the UN, Yukio Takasu requested an emergency consultative session of the Security Council on Sunday, April 5. His position was that North Korea’s launch of a satellite was banned by SC Resolution 1718 which demands that North Korea suspend all activities “related to its ballistic missile program.”

While SC Resolution 1718 explicitly demands that North Korea not conduct any “launch of a ballistic missile,” the members of the Security Council disagree about whether SC Resolution 1718 forbids the launch of a communication satellite.

Countries advocating the position that North Korea violated SC Resolution 1718, point to parts five and 8(a)ii of the resolution as the parts violated.

Part 5 reads that the Security Council: “Decides that the DPRK shall suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program and in this context re-establish its pre-existing commitments to a moratorium on missile launch.” (SC Resolution 1718, p.2)

Section 8(a)ii is about member states preventing the sale or transfer to North Korea of “materials,

equipment, goods and technology as set out in the lists...which could contribute to DPRK’s nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related or other weapons of mass-destruction related programs.” (SC Resolution 1718, p. 2-3)

North Korea was not invited to participate in the emergency consultations of the Security Council, despite the fact that Article 32 of the UN charter requires that a “party to a dispute under consideration by the Security Council shall be invited to participate, without vote, in the discussion relating to the dispute....”

Speaking to reporters at the UN on Tuesday, April 7, the Deputy Ambassador to the UN from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), Pak Tok Hun said:<sup>2</sup> “Every country has the right, the inalienable right to use the outer space peacefully. Not a few countries, many countries, they have already launched satellites several hundred times.”

“Does it mean it would be OK for them to launch satellites but we are not allowed to do that? It’s not fair. It’s not fair.”

“This is a satellite. Everyone can distinguish (a) satellite with a missile. It’s not a missile. I know most of the countries now recognize it’s not a missile.”

A reporter asked, “But you use ballistic technology. You need ballistic technologies.”

Pak responded: “Those countries who launch satellites use similar technology and if the Security Council, they take any kind of step whatever, this is infringement on the sovereignty of our country and the next option will be ours and necessary and strong steps will follow that.”

Along with the dispute in the Security Council over whether or not the North Korea’s action is an actual violation of SC Resolution 1718, there is a controversy over whether the thrust of the Security Council action should be toward getting the six-party talks reconvened, or toward penalizing North Korea in some way.

The resolution of this controversy depends predominantly upon the U.S. because it can be argued that the U.S. was responsible for the current breakdown of the six-party talks.

In a talk at the Korea Society in NYC last Fall, Leon Sigal of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) explained how the six-party talks broke down over the issue of verification. The U.S. government had changed the terms of the agreement unilaterally,

imposing a condition on North Korea that was not part of the original agreement.<sup>3</sup>

The second phase of the six-party February 2007 agreement required disabling the reactor, and other processes at Yongbyon and declaring the nuclear material and equipment which were to be eliminated in Phase 3 of the agreed actions.

The Bush administration was obligated to provide 'action for action' in response to North Korea's disabling the reactor and other steps.

The verification was to occur only later in the six-party talk process, in Phase 3 "when the dismantling of the North's nuclear facilities and elimination of any plutonium or weapons it has would be taken up." Instead the U.S. continued to press for a verification agreement during Phase 2 of the agreement.

Most of the mainstream U.S. media, with the exception of an important article in the *Washington Post*, failed to explain the reason for the breakdown in the talks.<sup>4</sup> The *Washington Post* article which documented how the hostile U.S. State Department environment eroded the process of negotiation between the U.S. government and North Korea, was only carried on page 20 of the newspaper. It described how U.S. government hardliners fashioned a verification procedure to be imposed on North Korea which was in the words of an expert in nuclear disarmament akin to "a license to spy on any military site they (North Korea) have."

By launching a satellite rather than a ballistic missile, North Korea has avoided violation of the ballistic missile sections of SC Resolution 1718. This gives the U.S. a chance to respond by returning to the six-party-talks and seeking to finish Phase 2 before requiring verification in Phase 3 of the process.

The Security Council has this opportunity to call for all parties to cease any obstruction and to return to the six-party talks and to intensify their efforts to complete Phase 2 and enter the next phase of the agreed path to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

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Notes:

1. Vietnam calls for 'prudent' reaction to DPRK rocket, April 5, 2009.

2. Pak Tok Hun, Deputy Ambassador from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) to the UN, speaking to reporters at the UN on Tuesday, April 7, 2009.

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/stakeout/2009/so090407pm2.rm>

3. Ronda Hauben, U.S. Media and the Breakdown in the Six-Party Talks, *OhmyNews International*, Sept. 29, 2008.

4. Glenn Kessler, "Far reaching U.S. Plan Impaired N. Korea Deal: Demands Began to Undo Nuclear Accord," *Washington Post*, Friday, Sept. 26, 2008; Page A20

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on Sept. 29, 2008]

## **U.S. Media and the Breakdown in the Six-Party Talks America Reneges on Action for Action Obligation to North Korea**

by Ronda Hauben

While much of the mainstream U.S. media has blamed North Korea for any problems that develop in the six-party talks, a significant article has appeared in the *Washington Post* documenting part of the problem that has led to the recent breakdown in negotiations and which threatens to end the six-party talk process if it isn't reversed.<sup>1</sup>

The article, which should be a front page story, instead appears on page 20 and has drawn little attention. The article by Glenn Kessler documents the hostile U.S. State Department environment that has eroded the process of negotiation with North Korea. It describes how U.S. hardliners fashioned a verification procedure to be imposed on North Korea which was, in the words of an expert in nuclear disarmament, akin to "a license to spy on any military site they (North Korea) have."

Overruling Christopher Hill, the Assistant Secretary of State who has been the lead negotiator for the U.S. in the six-party talks, and in spite of warnings from China and Russia, that this was not advisable, U.S. negotiators presented North Korea with a disrespectful verification plan that if accepted would jeopardize North Korean sovereignty. A copy of the four page verification presentation is online.

([http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/kesslerdoc\\_092608.pdf?sid=ST200809260020&s\\_pos=list](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/kesslerdoc_092608.pdf?sid=ST200809260020&s_pos=list))

In addition, the U.S. President, George Bush, failed to fulfill on his obligation to remove North Korea from the nations that sponsor terrorism list. Bush had given notice to Congress on June 26 that he was requesting that North Korea be delisted, giving

Congress the required 45 day notice to enable him to carry out the delisting. Subsequently, however, when the 45 days passed for Congress to respond, and there was no objection, Bush failed to delist North Korea, claiming the need for North Korea to agree to a verification plan.

The Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Korea, Pak Kil Yon, in a speech ([http://www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate/pdf/dprkorea\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate/pdf/dprkorea_en.pdf)) to the UN General Assembly on Saturday, Sept. 27, explained, the U.S. is now using the “pretext of verification as an excuse to hold off on removing the country from its list of State sponsors of terrorism even after officially declaring that the DPRK (North Korea-ed) is not such a nation.”

Discussing the responsibility the Bush administration bears for the break down in the six-party talks, Leon Sigal of the Social Science Research Council described the obligation of the Bush administration to provide action for action in response to North Korea (D.P.R.K.) meeting its obligations in a talk he presented at the Korea Society on Monday, Sept. 22. ([http://www.koreasociety.org/contemporary\\_issues/contemporary\\_issues/updates\\_on\\_north\\_korea\\_a\\_report\\_from\\_the\\_peace\\_foundation.html](http://www.koreasociety.org/contemporary_issues/contemporary_issues/updates_on_north_korea_a_report_from_the_peace_foundation.html))

Sigal detailed how the second phase of the six-party agreement required of North Korea the “disabling the reactor, reprocessing facility and fuel fabrication plant at Yongbyon and declaring the nuclear material and equipment that were to be eliminated in phase three.” Also North Korea pledged “not to transfer nuclear materials, technology or know-how” to third parties. The United States, as its action for action obligation, promised to “begin the process of removing the designation of the D.P.R.K. as a state sponsor of terrorism and advance the process of terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to the D.P.R.K.”

Verification, according to Sigal, was “left to phase three of negotiations when the dismantling of the North’s nuclear facilities and elimination of any plutonium or weapons it has would be taken up.”

Sigal pointed out that the first sign that the administration had “yielded to hardliners” was on July 30 when a National Security Council official, Dennis Wilder, told reporters that the delisting of North Korea from the state sponsors of terrorism would require North Korea agreeing to a verification protocol. Then in a speech on Aug. 7, Sigal explained, Bush informed North Korea, that North Korea would

have to agree to a verification agreement in order to be delisted.

The U.S. government changed the terms of agreement unilaterally, imposing a condition on North Korea that was not part of the original agreement.

The failure of most of the mainstream U.S. media to inform the public of this arbitrary change by the U.S. government, demonstrates once again the role this media plays in helping the U.S. government deceive the public. A similar role the media performed in spreading the Bush administration’s false narrative that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction has since drawn much criticism.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the widespread critique of the past failure of the U.S. media, there is a reluctance on the part of the media to expose what the dispute is about with respect to the recent breakdown of the six-party talks. For example, UPI offered the view of an alleged expert in North Korea from a London think tank advising that North Korea is trying to divide the countries involved in the six-party talks.<sup>3</sup>

Other press reports describe how Chris Hill, the U.S. official for the six-party talks is to go to North Korea to try to salvage the talks from the current break down, but little or no explanation is offered of the problem that has led to the breakdown. And even when there is a news report like the *Washington Post* exposure of the harshness of the verification process presented to North Korea, it is buried in the pages of the newspaper, instead of getting the front page coverage such a story deserves.

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Notes:

1. “Far reaching U.S. Plan Impaired N. Korea Deal; Demands Began to Undo Nuclear Accord,” by Glenn Kessler, *Washington Post* Staff Writer, Friday, September 26, 2008; Page A20.
2. A similar situation with the mainstream U.S. media is documented in the lead-up to the Iraq war. Articles promoting the U.S. government’s false claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction appeared on page one of newspapers like the *Washington Post* and the *NY Times* but articles challenging this view would not appear, would be relegated to some later section of the newspaper. One such example is the White House “disinformation campaign” incident when Tony Blair and George Bush held a press conference at Camp David on Sept. 7 2002. They cited a “new report” from the IAEA alleging that Iraq was six months away from building a nuclear weapon. The fact that no such report existed was not reported by the press, except for an article in the *Washington Times* by Joseph Curl which was carried on page 16, and an article in the *Washington Post* by Karen DeYoung about the press conference quoted an IAEA spokesperson saying that there was no such report, but that

was not featured in her article, but was relegated to the later part of her report 21 paragraphs down.

See "Lies We Bought" *The Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 2003 by MacArthur, John R

([http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3613/is\\_200305/ai\\_n9239827](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3613/is_200305/ai_n9239827)).

3. EU: Iran close to nuclear capability

A version of this article appears on netizenblog.

([http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/2008/09/24/EU\\_Iran\\_close\\_to\\_nuclear\\_capability/UPI-37861222306006/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2008/09/24/EU_Iran_close_to_nuclear_capability/UPI-37861222306006/)).

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on Feb. 27, 2008]

## New York Philharmonic Performs Arirang in Pyongyang Concert as a Normalizing of Relations Between the Two Peoples

by Ronda Hauben

The people of the United States and the people of North Korea want friendly relations with each other. This was the sweet message that the New York Philharmonic's concert in Pyongyang on Tuesday, Feb. 26 made concrete. Not only was an audience present in the wonderful concert hall that the North Koreans had decked with flowers. Significantly the concert could be heard and viewed on radio and television not only in North Korea, but in the U.S. as well.



The program was broadcast on the public television station on Tuesday evening at 8:00 p.m. in New

York. Not only did the broadcast capture the orchestra and its program, but it also gave viewers a glimpse of the audience of North Koreans, and their western guests who had traveled with the orchestra.

Watching the concert, one could think that this was just another concert by the New York Philharmonic. The conductor with his baton flying, as if across the screen, the cellists, the violins, the flutes, the drums, they were all there. But the surface impression is often different from the reality. The reality in this situation was that this was a remarkable event, an event that is rare, and is to be a memorable experience for those who are able to take part in it. The concert was in fact a remarkable event, remarkable because it made normal what should be normal. Why shouldn't there be a performance of the New York Philharmonic in Pyongyang, North Korea? And there was indeed a performance, just as there should be.

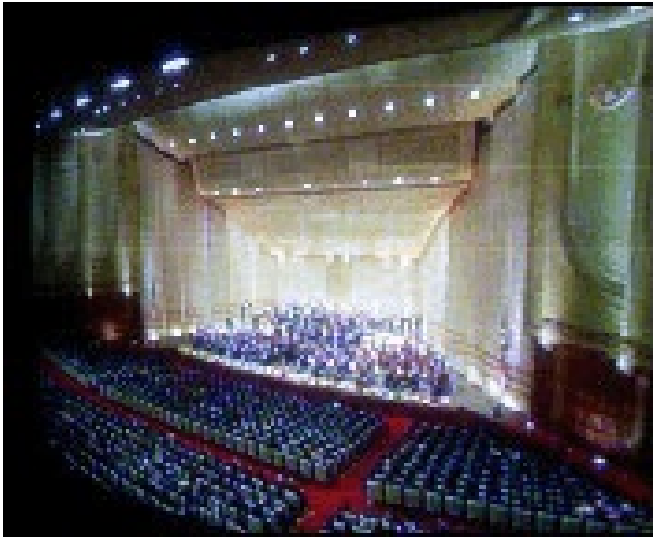
The choice of the music was also remarkable, though on the surface this, too, was not evident. For example, the music of Antonin Dvorak's "New World Symphony" makes one wonder if this does mark the beginning of a new world, a world where friendly relations will replace the hostile relations the U.S. has maintained since the Korean war in relation to North Korea. The trumpets, the violins, the drums, and then the television cameras focus on the audience for a few brief seconds.

Those watching catch a glimpse of others in what for decades has been only a far away land, listening. Or they are clapping. Or they are standing and cheering. This is also as it should be, that the audience at a concert in North Korea is sharing in the experience of a concert with others around the world.

The musicians, they are intent on their performance. It is only after the concert is over, if one reads certain of the reports of the journalists who could be there in person, that one learns of the waving back and forth between the members of the orchestra and the audience. Or one learns that many of the performers were especially moved by the five minutes of applause that their performance evoked.

For those in the orchestra, it was a thrill we are told. They felt that something special happened with their audience. For those of us who could watch in our homes, it was remarkable. It was a normalizing of relations between two peoples of two different lands.

For its final encore, the Philharmonic played "Arirang" the beautiful folksong of Korea. For a few moments the vision of a Korea united some time in



the future comes into view. The lovely strains of the music herald that something new is coming, though how and when is still unknown. And in that future, the people of the United States will have the privilege to have friendly relations with the peoples of Korea, however they choose to relate with each other.

While it is a significant event that the concert was presented and was greeted with such warmth and such a welcoming, it was also a sign that the peoples of the two countries want their governments to find a way to transform the hostility of the relationship into one of reconciliation. It was only disappointing that the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the Chief U.S. Negotiator Christopher Hill weren't part of the audience. Had they been, perhaps they would better understand that they have an obligation to the peoples of the two countries to find a means to bring the peace. Sixty years is too long not to have a peace treaty that will finally end the Korean War.

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on Dec. 13, 2007]

## **New York Philharmonic Accepts North Korea Invitation Concert to Help Show the Way Music Can Unite People**

by Ronda Hauben

The press conference held at the Avery Fisher

Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City on Tuesday Dec. 11, was a rare event in a number of ways. First was the importance of the subject. The press conference was called to officially announce that the New York Philharmonic Orchestra had accepted the invitation it received from the Ministry of Culture in North Korea to bring the orchestra to North Korea for a concert to be given on Feb. 26.

This would be the first such U.S. cultural event in North Korea and would be an event in line with the role that cultural and sports events played to help establish diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 1950s and between the U.S. and China during the Nixon era.

Also it was rare for the North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations, Pak Gil Yon, to appear at a press conference in New York. He, along with Zarin



**North Korean ambassador to the UN Pak Gil Yon (right) shakes hands with heads of the New York Philharmonic Zarin Mehta and Paul Guenter (left).**

Mehta, President and Executive Director of the Orchestra, and Paul B. Guenter, Chairman of the New York Philharmonic, provided substantial time for questions from journalists.

In his remarks, Ambassador Pak welcomed the official decision to accept the invitation. When asked about the origin of the invitation to the orchestra, Pak said that it had been made by the Ministry of Culture, and that the Philharmonic would be welcomed as the first guest of the New Year of 2008.

Pak believed that the visit would be the first of its kind, and would mark a significant occasion in the relations between the U.S. and North Korea. When asked why North Korea extended the invitation, the Ambassador responded that it had been extended in the hopes of encouraging friendly relations between

the peoples of the two countries and to help to promote the bi-lateral relations between the U.S. and North Korea.

The orchestra received many invitations, said Mehta, in his remarks. One concern the orchestra had was whether the concert would contribute to the success of the multinational six-party talks. When the U.S. State Department was consulted, it encouraged the Philharmonic to agree to the invitation. There were a number of other questions to be answered, however, before deciding whether the Philharmonic could agree to the concert, Mehta explained.

He led a small delegation on a five-day visit to Pyongyang in October to determine if the difficulties of such a concert could be effectively handled. For example, he had to know that they would be able to provide for 150 musicians and many instruments, some of which are large instruments. He had to see if there were adequate hotel accommodations and a concert hall large enough for the concert. During this exploratory visit, Mehta was able to determine that these needs could be satisfied.

On his trip, Mehta had a chance to meet conservatory school students. While in Pyongyang, the members of the orchestra will offer master classes for North Korean music students. They will also hold an open rehearsal of the orchestra.

On his trip to Pyongyang in October, Mehta saw an after-school program that provided activities for 5,000 children including calligraphy, choirs and playing instruments. He found the experience fascinating.

Mehta also saw a performance of the mass games, which he said was "quite spectacular." This involved a thousand people performing. There was music and dancing.

During his five-day visit to Pyongyang, Mehta found that North Koreans "do things that we can't do, which were mind boggling." In music and art, he observed, we all have things to learn from each other.

Describing his hopes for the concerts, Guenter explained that "the February concerts on the Korean Peninsula are unique – they grow out of the Philharmonic's tradition of speaking on a world stage, on significant occasions, in the international language of music. From the historic 1959 tour to the Soviet Union, to the 2005 celebration of Dresden's rebuilt Frauenkirche, to the February concerts, it is our hope that the music of the Philharmonic, can, in some way, serve as a catalyst for positive change."

The program for the concert will be Wagner's "Prelude to Act III of Lohengrin," Dvorak's "Symphony No. 9 from the New World" and Gershwin's "An American in Paris."

The symphony will be performed at the East Pyongyang Grand Theater, a hall that can seat 1,500 people. Also the concert will be broadcast to people throughout North Korea. Mehta explained that the Philharmonic encourages the broadcasting of its concerts. "We like to have our concerts diffused to as many people as possible, especially with a first performance," he said.

After the concert in North Korea, the orchestra will fly to Seoul, South Korea where it will give one concert. The program will be Beethoven's 5th Symphony.

When asked about the importance of the planned concert in North Korea and the subsequent concert planned for South Korea toward Korean reunification, he replied that "One small symphony is a giant leap."

"What follows from that is up to the diplomats to deal with, and government officials."

He said the Philharmonic hoped this would help to show the way music can unite people.

Responding to a journalist who asked, "Do you think this visit will go down in history as a milestone," Mehta said, "I expect it will, yes."

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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on Feb.14, 2007]

## **[Book Review]: *The Hidden History of the Korean War***

by Jay Hauben

*The Hidden History of the Korean War*, by I. F. Stone, 364 pages. *Monthly Review Press*. 1952, 1970.

The controversial book, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* by I. F. Stone was originally published in 1952 during the Korean War (1950-1953) and republished in 1970 during the Vietnam War (1960-1975). It raised questions about the origin of the Korean War, made a case that the United States government manipulated the United Nations, and gave evidence that the U.S. military and South Korean oligarchy dragged out the war by sabotaging the peace talks.

Publishing such a book in the U.S. during the time of [McCarthyism](#), while the war was still continuing was an act of journalistic courage. Forty years later, declassified U.S., Soviet and People's Republic of China documents both confirmed some and corrected some of Stone's story.

Until his death in 1989, Stone was an experienced and respected, independent, left-wing journalist and iconoclast. This book-length feat of journalism, with over 600 citations for his quotes and materials, is a testament to Stone's search for a way to strengthen his readers to think for themselves, rather than be overwhelmed by official stories and war propaganda.

The standard telling was that the Korean War was an unprovoked aggression by the North Koreans beginning on June 25, 1950, undertaken at the behest of the Soviet Union to extend the Soviet sphere of influence to the whole of Korea, completely surprising the South Koreans, the U.S., and the U.N.

But was it a surprise? Could an attack by 70,000 men using at least 70 tanks launched simultaneously at four different points have been a surprise?

Stone gathers contemporary reports from South Korean, U.S. and U.N. sources documenting what was known before June 25. The head of the U.S. CIA, Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenloetter, is reported to have said on the record, "that American intelligence was aware that 'conditions existed in Korea that could have meant an invasion this week or next.'" (p. 2) Stone writes that "America's leading military commentator, Hanson Baldwin of the *New York Times*, a trusted confidant of the Pentagon, reported that they [U.S. military documents] showed 'a marked buildup by the North Korean People's Army along the 38th Parallel beginning in the early days of June.'" (p. 4)

How and why did U.S. President Truman so quickly decide by June 27 to commit the U.S. military to battle in South Korea? Stone makes a strong case that there were those in the U.S. government and military who saw a war in Korea and the resulting instability in East Asia as in the U.S. national interest. Stone presents the ideas and actions of them, including [John Foster Dulles](#), [General Douglas MacArthur](#), President [Syngman Rhee](#) and Generalissimo [Chiang Kai-shek](#), which appear to amount to a willingness to see the June 25 military action by North Korea as another [Pearl Harbor](#) in order to "commit the United States more strongly against Communism in the Far East." (p. 21). Their reasoning may have been, Stone

thought, the sooner a war with China and/or Russia the better before both become stronger. President Truman removed Secretary of Defense [Louis Johnson](#), according to Stone's account, because Johnson had been selling this doctrine of a preventive war. (p. 93)

Stone shows that Truman committed the U.S. military to the war in Korea, then went to the U.N. for sanctions against North Korea. "It was neither honorable nor wise," Stone argues, "for the U.N. under pressure from an interested great power to condemn a country for aggression without investigation and without hearings its side of the case." (p. 50) But that is what the U.S. insisted should happen using, Stone argues, distorted reports to rush its case.

Then when the war came to a stalemate at the 38th Parallel, Stone makes a strong case that U.S. Army headquarters provoked or created incidents to derail the cease-fire negotiations. When the North Koreans and Chinese had ceded on Nov. 4, 1952 to the three demands of the U.N. side, the U. S. military spread a story that "The Communists had brutally murdered 5,500 American prisoners." The talks were being dragged out, the U.S. military argued, because "The communists don't want to have to answer questions about what happened to their prisoners" and they are lower than "barbarians." (pp. 324-25) At no time after these reports were these "atrocities" reported again or documented. But hope of a cease-fire subsided.

Stone takes the story in time only a little beyond the dismissal of MacArthur on April 11, 1951. He quotes press reports as late as January 1952 that "there still could be American bombing and naval blockade of Red China if Korean talks fail."<sup>1</sup>

The evidence which Stone presents is solid but circumstantial. What else could it be, with the official documents still unavailable? In the 1960s, the Rand Corporation, a major think tank originally funded by the U.S. Air Force, conducted studies with additional information and according to one reviewer came to "almost identical conclusions" as Stone.<sup>2</sup>

Stone's telling of the history of the Korean War, emphasizing the opportunistic response by the forces in the U.S. advocating rollback and also downplaying the role of the Soviet Union challenged the dominant assumption that this was Stalin's war. "Until the release of Western documents in the 1970s, prompted a new wave of literature on the war, his remained a minority view."<sup>3</sup>

Then in the 1990s, documents from the former Soviet archives became available, as did telegrams and other sources from the PRC archives. Scholars examining these documents and fitting the pieces together were able to make the case that Kim Il-sung had sought and eventually received Soviet support for a military effort to unify Korea. Stone had been wrong to suspect that General MacArthur and John Foster Dulles somehow colluded in the start of the Korean War.

But Stone did a service by documenting the role of sectors of U.S. policymakers looking for an opportunity to push the USSR and the PRC back from Northeast Asia. Bruce Cummings studied the detailed policy debate in the U.S. which led to the policy of active containment. Cummings's book, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume II* gives substance to the internal fight between supporters of rollback and those who supported containment, which for Stone was journalistic speculation.<sup>4</sup>

In 1952 when it was published, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* met with almost a complete press blackout and boycott. But that included no rebuttals or answers from official U.S. sources. There was a republication in 1970 and the book has been translated at least into Spanish, Italian, and Japanese. Some chapters also appeared in French. Used copies are still available, especially from online booksellers.

I. F. Stone's case is thought provoking and helpful, especially when tensions are being stirred up again on the Korean Peninsula, and manipulated wars are still in style. Perhaps however journalism like that of Stone's and lessons from the first Korean War are making a second Korean War less likely.

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Notes:

1. *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 17, 1952
  2. Stephen E. Ambrose, Professor of Maritime History at the Naval College in the Baltimore Sun
  3. Kathryn Weathersby, "The Soviet Role in the Korean War: The State of Historical Knowledge," in *The Korean War in World History*, edited by William Stueck, University Press of Kentucky, 2004, page 63.
  4. Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume II: The Roaring of the Cataract 1947-1950*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1990.
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[Editors' note: The following article appeared in *OhmyNews International* on Sept. 10, 2008]

## **North Korean Woodblock Prints on Exhibit at Korea Society in NYC**

### **Exhibit Helps to Highlight Need for More Cultural Exchanges Between North Korea and Other Countries**

by Ronda Hauben

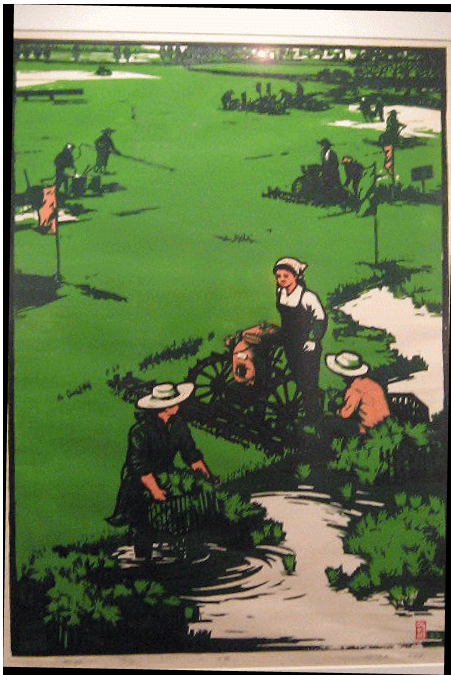
The Korea Society in New York is hosting an exhibit of North Korean woodcut printing. The exhibit which will be on display at their gallery until Dec. 12 will then travel to other sites around the U.S. The exhibit features 24 prints from the Nicholas Bonner collection. The exhibit spans three decades of North Korean woodcut art. The cuts offer a rare glimpse into the life and customs in North Korea.

A number of the woodcuts were from the 1988-1989 period. There are also a few which are from the 1990s. One of the few woodcuts from the early 1990s shows a factory scene where the workers at the factory continued to work during the difficult period of the famine and economic crisis that gripped the country after the breakup of the Soviet bloc countries.

In other woodcuts there are scenes of women workers harvesting shellfish, of workers from all over North Korea who are part of the effort to build a railroad through the mountains, of families with their children, and one woodcut of a teacher being eagerly greeted by her students.

The fact the woodcuts show various aspects of life in North Korea helps to remind the viewer how rare it has been to have any knowledge of the life and experiences of North Koreans. This is in good part the situation because of the hostile policy of the U.S. government toward North Korea. The activities of the Korea Society in holding such an exhibit are especially welcome as the exhibit is helping to spread some of the little knowledge that exists in the U.S. about the life and culture of North Koreans. The colors in the prints are vibrant. There are different textures portrayed. But most special are the details of working life shown in the prints that the exhibit presents. Working life is not often enough the subject of art, despite how central it is to the life of every society. The prints show working life in both urban and rural settings and the integration of the two, as for example, is depicted when soldiers or volunteers go to a rural area to help with a harvest or workers from around the country go to help dig through a mountain so as to make possible a railway.





May 1989: May is the time for transplanting rice in Northern Korea. Collective farmers working in a rice paddy.



May Day Stadium construction 1988.



1999: Potato flower fragrance of Tachongden Province in the North of the country is a major source of North Korea's potato crop Soldiers and sailors who have completed their military service have volunteered to come and help work in the field.



Building a railway thru mountains: Trough the 1980s workers from all over North Korea came to help build a railroad through the country's northern mountains. Suspended on a sheer cliff high above a raging river and buffeted by wind and snow the figures pursue their work.



Shallow sea harvester 1988: Lifting and sorting shell fish which are used widely as part of the Korean's food diet, these women who harvest them are helping to feed the nation.



Happiness of the Miners: Young miners enthusiastically read newspaper article describing their success in exceeding production quotas.



Propaganda Van Girl: She is congratulating jubilant workers for exceeding quotas by 270%.



Constellation of Lake Samji Village: Power from recently built hydro electric station on Lake Samji lights up the windows of a nearby village which presents as a pattern of glowing stars.

The opinions expressed in articles are those of their authors and not necessarily the opinions of the *Amateur Computerist* newsletter. We welcome submissions from a spectrum of viewpoints.

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