

# The Amateur Computerist

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Netizen Journalism and the United Nations

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## Challenging the False Narratives as Basis for a Netizen Press

One particular vision of the role for the press is that it acts as a watchdog over government. (1) This is not a role that the press often succeeds in fulfilling. Writing in the early 1990s, Michael Hauben observed that the Net “gives the power of the reporter to the netizen.” (2) What is this power? Can the Net make it possible for the press to be such a watchdog so that the problems of the society can be brought to the surface and the means found to solve them?

This issue of the *Amateur Computerist* is a collection of articles which explore the potential of the Internet to make possible a journalism which will function as a watchdog. These articles appeared in the online newspaper *OhmyNews International*

(<http://english.ohmynews.com>) and sometimes in the online magazine *Telepolis* (<http://www.heise.de/tp>).

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They are an effort to explore what the power of the reporter makes possible.

The articles cover events over a one year period of time. They have been selected so as to focus on what has happened with the North Korean situation at the United Nations (U.N.) and in the regional efforts related to the Six-Party Talks in Beijing. They are an effort to contribute to a form of press coverage that will provide an accurate narrative of the events that make up the news.

On October 9, 2006, the South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ban Ki-moon, won the Security Council nomination to become the eighth Secretary General of the United Nations. The General Assembly voted in favor of the Security Council recommendation on October 19 to make Ban the next U.N. Secretary General.

This was a historic event for South Korea. This was an evolving story. How would Ban fulfill the obligations of the UN charter as Secretary General? Could the problems of the Korean peninsula, especially the struggle for Korean reunification make steps forward during the period while Ban would be at the helm of the U.N.?

A few months earlier, claiming that it had to protect itself from the hostile actions of the United States, North Korea had tested a nuclear device. The very next day after the General Assembly vote in favor of the Security Council’s recommendation of Ban to be the next Secretary General, the Security Council began its work to pass Resolution 1718, to impose sanctions on North Korea. The Security Council’s actions against North Korea were reminiscent of its actions against Iraq just a few years earlier.

Was there a story developing here? How would Ban do as Secretary General? Would the problems of the Korean peninsula, especially the tension over denuclearization and the struggle for Korean reunification make steps toward resolution or would there

be greater instability in the region?

By fall of 2007, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution supporting the reunification of Korea and the Joint Declaration North and South Korea had issued at their October 2007 summit.

The articles in this issue present an account of what happened in the period between these events. During this period, much of the mainstream media in the U.S. supported the U.S. government's hostile treatment of North Korea, blaming North Korea for any delays that developed in the Six-Party Talks. Such framing helped to create a false narrative reminiscent of the fake claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The articles in this issue, instead are an effort to accurately document the events as they unfold.

During the period leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, much of the mainstream press in the U.S. wrote articles about Iraq's 'Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)' and how Iraq was a threat to the international community. The investigative journalist and author Robert Parry calls this activity the creation of a 'false narrative'. Parry explores the role of much of the mainstream media in helping the U.S. government to establish a pretext for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. (3)

This situation raises a number of questions. When the U.S. President George Bush described Iraq as part of an 'axis of evil', he included Iran and North Korea in this same category. Would the Iraq scenario be repeated with respect to North Korea and Iran? Is it possible for the Internet and netizens press to provide a means to counter the 'false narrative' that the U.S. government was creating to support its hostile policy objectives?

In his article, "Why I write," the writer George Orwell explains that for every piece he writes, "...there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing." (4) Orwell is describing how he strives for truthfulness in his work.

Does the Net give the power of the reporter to the netizens to counter the fictitious accounts that often make up much of the news? These articles are an effort to explore the nature of this power and whether the Net can present the needed challenge to the false narratives presented by much of the mainstream U.S.

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Notes:

(1) "The Computer as a Democratizer" in *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet*

<http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/netbook/>

(2) "The Computer as a Democratizer" in *Netizens: On the History*

*and Impact of Usenet and the Internet*

<http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/netbook/>

(3) Robert Parry, "Why We Write",

<http://www.consortiumnews.com/2007/111207.html>

(4) George Orwell, "Why I write",

[http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/wiw/english/e\\_wiw](http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/wiw/english/e_wiw)

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on October 17, 2006]

## **The Problem Facing the U.N.**

### **Can Ban Ki-moon Help Solve the Problem With the Security Council?**

by Ronda Hauben  
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The official selection on Oct. 13, 2006 of Ban Ki-moon of South Korea as the new secretary general of the United Nations could not come at a more propitious time. Why, one may ask? Hailing from the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Ban will have before him the daunting task of bringing the best possible contributions from the international community to bear on many of the difficult problems that erupt in the world. Along with his appointment to the post at the U.N. this past week, and the congratulations from diplomats from many regions of the world at a ceremony held at the General Assembly, was the event that took place the following day: the imposition of article 41, chapter 7 sanctions on North Korea by the Security Council as punishment for the test of a nuclear device several days earlier.

Though Ban does not take office for his new position until Jan. 1, 2007, a crisis has already developed that will require the best efforts and resources he can muster. In congratulating him on his selection, several of the diplomats noted the great achievements of South Korea in having transformed itself from "the status of least developed country, to an industrialized highly developed nation" and "as the 11th largest economy in the world" (in the words of Gambian Ambassador to the U.N. Crispin Grey-Johnson). Speaking about Ban, Grey-Johnson, who is chairman of the African regional group at the U.N., "the developments in his own region of the world call for wisdom and cautious diplomacy" in order to be able to "mediate this very complex

security situation that is now unfolding in the Korean Peninsula.”

In his acceptance speech to the General Assembly upon his appointment as the eighth secretary general of the U.N., Ban acknowledged that he was following “in a line of remarkable leaders.” That “each of the men in his own way, came on board at the U.N. at a critical juncture in the organization’s history.” That “each wondered what the coming years would require as they took over the leadership role of the preeminent international organization.”

The secretary general elect expressed his respect for the role played by the current secretary general, Kofi Annan, and promised to build on his legacy. Explaining the need to hear the views and concerns of all the member nations of the U.N., Ban pledged to consult widely in his preparations for assuming his new position. “I will listen attentively to your concerns, expectations and admonitions,” he promised the 192 member states.

Congratulating Ban, South African Ambassador to the U.N. Dumisani Kumalo proposed that in order for the secretary general elect to be able to act in the interest of the entire membership, he will need to “listen to the views of each and every member state.”

How the future secretary general can help to solve the problems that come before the U.N. is not only a critical question for the international community, but also a critical task in the face of the increased tension being experienced on the Korean Peninsula.

While several of the speeches at the General Assembly ceremony spoke to the need for wide ranging consultations and discussions in order to diffuse tensions and determine how to solve difficult problems, recent actions at the Security Council the day after the appointment of Ban demonstrate that a very different process is practiced by that body.

Only after an agreement was achieved among the five permanent members of the Security Council and supported by the 10 temporary members, and voted on, did the Council agree to hear the party to the problem that was before them. And only after hearing the views of all the permanent members of the Security Council – the U.S., France, Britain, China and Russia – and some of the temporary members about why they voted for the sanctions on North Korea did the council allow the representative from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), Pak Gil Yon, to have a few minutes to speak. His talk was followed by a brief statement from the South Korean ambassador to the U.N., who spoke in support of the sanctions.

In the brief opportunity he had to speak, Pak indicated that his country felt it was the victim of hostile acts by the U.S. and that it had a sovereign right to defend itself from such hostile acts. Also, he indicated that the process of the Security Council in mandating sanctions on his country was more like the activity of gangsters than an activity representing a legitimate means of investigating a dispute and determining how to diffuse a tense situation.

Thus, the speeches supporting discussion and investigation in the General Assembly on Friday, Oct. 13, and the closed decision-making process that culminated the following day in the issuing of sanctions against North Korea, are in stark contrast to each other.

The statements by several of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the members who have the power to veto Security Council decisions, emphasized that their resolution imposing sanctions against North Korea reflected the condemnation of the “international community” and that all the nations of the U.N. now had a legal obligation to carry out the provisions of the sanctions.

While the Security Council does indeed have the power to impose such sanctions on a country in the name of the U.N., the process by which the sanctions were decided, is a sorry demonstration of power politics that involves very few of the 192 member countries that make up the U.N.

The chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean regional group, in his comments to the future secretary general, explained that there are important challenges for the U.N. in the role it plays in “today’s world.”

“International public opinion demands that the Security Council and other bodies of the organization should perform a much better job. There is a trend at this time for great and infinite opportunities as well as unprecedented risks,” explained Ecuadorian Ambassador to the U.N. Diego Cordovez.

“The United Nations, it is said, should be a base, a forum, a mode that would enable the international community to take advantage of those transcendental opportunities and foresee and neutralize potential risks,” Cordovez added. “For those reasons, it is important to insist on the need to reform thoroughly and deeply the organization and undoubtedly, that would be the main task and responsibility of our new secretary general.” (He was referring to the failure of the member countries to reform the Security Coun-

cil.)

“It is inconceivable,” he said, “that we are discussing the reform of the Security Council for decades, preparing infinite numbers of formulas, doing report after report on that item, and yet it remains – immutable and impossible to the critics for its lack of representation and its parsimonious conduct to confront [the] world’s crises.”

The act of bringing sanctions against a member state by the Security Council, with no investigation into the grievances that motivated North Korea’s actions, stands as an egregious example of the failure of the obligation of the U.N. to hear from each member state and to provide a place where problems can be heard and discussed to find a solution.

North Korea says its problems are with the U.S. and that it has developed nuclear devices because of its need to defend itself from the U.S. That is a serious statement requiring investigation to see who has caused the problem and who merits the imposition of sanctions.

Another aspect of the current process that ended in sanctions is that the five permanent members of the Security Council are powerful countries that possess nuclear weapons. These very countries have failed to meet their obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to carry out disarmament. (1)

Some scholars and diplomats explain that they are not surprised that North Korea believes it needs to develop a nuclear capacity in order to protect itself from danger. Given the actions of the U.S. government in branding North Korea as part of the “axis of evil” and attacking another, Iraq, which it had similarly branded, is but one of the reasons some scholars believe the U.S. government provided North Korea with a legitimate justification to develop nuclear weapons. (2) In its brief talk at the Security Council meeting, North Korea expressed one of its disappointments:

“It was gangster-like for the Security Council to adopt such a coercive resolution against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea while neglecting the nuclear threat posed by the United States against his country ... The council was incapable of offering a single word of concern when the United States threatened to launch nuclear pre-emptive attacks, reinforced its armed forces and conducted large-scale military exercises near the Korean Peninsula.”

It must be remembered that the five permanent members of the Security Council possess thousands of nuclear weapons.

Although commentators and scholars who feel there

is justification for North Korea’s actions want to discourage the proliferation of nuclear weapons, they explain that punishing North Korea, while ignoring those countries who are in the club of nations possessing nuclear weapons, can only breed cynicism and hostility to nonproliferation and enforcement efforts.

That North Korea can claim that it felt compelled to develop a nuclear device, is a signal that the current regime of power politics is not working in a way that provides alternatives for a small nation that feels threatened by the nations that are nuclear powers. North Korea’s situation is a demonstration that there is need for serious discussion by the 192 member states of the U.N. to understand the problems that North Korea claims compel it to develop nuclear weapons as a means of securing its borders and protecting its sovereignty.

There is indeed an international community, and there is indeed a serious challenge facing it. The five big nuclear powers who wield veto power on the Security Council can bring to bear punishment upon a small nation that endeavors to develop nuclear capability. This, however, will only compound the problem as it will only increase the hostility and resentment that the small nation feels from such unequal treatment at the hands of those who themselves possess nuclear weapons and who use the power this capability bestows on them in such a self-serving manner.

The two Koreas have brought to the world stage the need for a truly international organization, one that will consider all its members’ concerns and needs, and find ways to support serious consideration of the problems such nations have but are unable to solve themselves.

The urgent problem facing the U.N. at this juncture in its history is not whether North Korea has developed and tested a nuclear device. It is the breakdown reflected by the lack of participation and investigation by the international community into how a crisis will be handled once it develops, and whether the concerns and problems of those who are involved in the crisis will be considered as part of the process of seeking a solution. It is how the U.N. functions when tensions reach a point where serious attention is needed to help to understand and solve a problem.

Unfortunately for the world, and for North Korea, there was no such process in the decision to

impose sanctions on North Korea. The decision to impose sanctions on North Korea was not made by the international community. It was the decision of a small set of nuclear countries. Who was responsible for the crisis was not explored before determining blame, and thus the proclaimed solution is likely only to worsen the problem rather than solve it. Yet the actual problem exists and the fact that people of the world recognize it is highlighted by a recent poll taken in South Korea, which showed that 43 percent of the population blames the U.S. government for North Korea's test of a nuclear device, while only 37.2 percent blame the North Koreans. (3)

The actions in the Security Council to punish North Korea occurred without the needed exploration of what had motivated North Korea to turn to nuclear weapons as a means of self-defense. Can the U.N. be changed in the needed ways so that it will be able to handle such problems? This is the urgent issue facing the U.N. as the future secretary general takes over the post in January. This is one of the challenges facing Ban Ki-moon, member nations and people who are part of the U.N. organization as it embarks on a new chapter in the history of this needed global organization.

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Notes:

(1) See "Pyongyang's Nuke Test Sparks Fission Over Response."

<http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/140740/1>

(2) See "What About North Korea's sovereignty?"

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=518268>

(3) See "U.S. Most Responsible for Nuclear Test: Poll."

<http://times.hankooki.com/lpage/nation/200610/kt2006101517230011990.htm>

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The above article can be seen at:

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=323351&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=323351&rel_no=1)

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## **The Future of the Korean Peninsula**

### **South Korean Ambassador to the U.N. Choi Young-jin Participates in Columbia Seminar\***

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A seminar about the problems of the Korean Peninsula with the South Korean Ambassador to the U.N., Choi Young-jin, was held at Columbia University in New York, on Thursday, Oct. 19. (1) Ambassador Choi opened the seminar by presenting what he proposed as a framework in which to understand the current problems facing the peninsula, the primary one of which is how to understand North Korea.

The world, Choi proposed, is divided into countries that are interdependent or isolated. The U.S. is the most interdependent country in the world. He gave North Korea as an example of an isolated country. What is happening in the Korean peninsula, he said, is a microcosm of the problems the world is facing in the 21st century.

There is a North-South divide, and the Korean peninsula is characteristic of this divide, only the characteristics that are represented by countries of the North and South are reversed. The divide is one of "haves" and "have nots." North Korea is an example of the countries of the South, which are countries in economic difficulty. At the heart of the question of North Korea, Choi proposed, is the dilemma of "political survival and economic revival."

North Korea's factories are only running at 20-30 percent of capacity. Electricity production is a problem. North Korea, he explained, cannot survive such economic difficulties. How then is it possible to revive its economy? The only way, Choi explained, was to accept trade. Like Vietnam, North Korea needs to open up its society and accept trade with other countries. According to Choi, the threat for North Korea is an internal threat, the threat of self-imposed isolation.

Choi proposed, however, that North Korea, on its own could not choose to change this situation.

That unless a peaceful means could be found to help change the situation, the problem faced by North Korea becomes the problem of the international community.

“How do you manage this complex problem?” he asked. He proposed two different approaches, one that the U.S. was pursuing and one that China was taking. The U.S., he explained, is geographically distant from North Korea and so it would not be affected if there was a clash with North Korea. Thus the U.S. position was to promote “containment with engagement.” The U.S. position is that North Korea cannot be accepted as a nuclear state. It advocated sanctions including the interdiction of North Korean cargo suspected of being related to its nuclear program.

What if, however, it was Mexico not North Korea that had become a nuclear state and threatened to sell nuclear technology to other countries? If the country the U.S. was dealing with was geographically closer to the U.S., what would be the U.S. policy then? Would the U.S. accept interdiction of suspected cargo if it could lead to a military clash?

Choi described the second approach, the approach that China was taking. Since China is so close, if a clash happened, the first victim would be China not the U.S. Similarly, South Korea is geographically close to North Korea. China and South Korea have a lot to lose if something happens. That is why China insisted that the sanctions not be military, but only under Article 41 of Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter. Also China favored that the interdiction of suspected cargo would not be “mandatory” but “as necessary.”

The situation, however, Choi explained, is murky. He asked if North Korea knows what it wants. Also for China and South Korea the desire is that North Korea not be a nuclear state. They want co-existence and that the Korean peninsula be a nuclear free peninsula. He also raised the question of whether the other countries who had been involved in the Six-Party Talks had a strategy. No country appeared to have a clear strategy. The situation appeared dangerous because an explosion would affect the whole region.

The program was opened for questions from the people attending the seminar. The first question was about an article in the Oct. 16 issue of the German publication “Der Spiegel.” The writer quoted an anonymous source that said that North Korea had asked China to guarantee that if it were attacked, it would retaliate on behalf of North Korea. North Korea would have stopped developing its nuclear weapons if the Chinese had agreed to this request. The question was

whether Choi knew anything about this report.

Choi’s response was that he didn’t know anything about this report but that he didn’t think that North Korea saw its major problem as security. His view was that North Korea wanted economic assistance, economic cash.

Professor Samuel Kim, who had introduced the speaker, disagreed that North Korea was not concerned with its national security. Kim referred to an account by Ambassador Charles “Jack” Pritchard. Pritchard said that he was struck by something that Kim Jong Il said to Madeleine Albright about the importance of security to North Korea. When comparing the experience of China and North Korea regarding economic development, Kim Jong Il explained that China had been able to focus its resources on economic development because it didn’t face any security threat. North Korea, however, saw the U.S. as threatening its security and so could not focus its efforts on economic development. North Korea felt it was under a U.S. nuclear threat, and had been for the past 50 years, going back to the period of the Korean War.

Responding to a comment that North Korea had not supported coming to an agreement in the 2005 Six-Party Talks, Professor Kim explained that it was the U.S. not North Korea that was the problem. No sooner was the ink dry, the U.S. imposed financial sanctions on North Korea. These sanctions created a financial stranglehold. Even during the talks, it was the U.S. that was the holdout. It took the U.S. a few days to sign the agreement reached during the Six-Party Talks, and it only did so when it was threatened that the fact it was the U.S. which was delaying the signing of the agreement would be made public.

Answering a question about the fact that a significant percentage of the South Korean population sees the U.S. as responsible for the North Korean nuclear test, Choi explained that people in South Korea are divided over how to deal with the situation. The official position of the URI party in South Korea, is that the U.S. is to blame. Many people in South Korea think of North Korea as a brother. Others see the U.S. as an ally and North Korea as an enemy. The framework he gave at the beginning of the seminar, however, is intended to establish that there is a genuine problem and that the U.S. is forced to work within the context of this genuine problem.

Choi was asked whether it would help that the new secretary-general of the United Nations was from South Korea. He answered that he believed it would definitely help as South Korea has an understanding of the need to work with North Korea.

In response to the question whether any country had previously changed from pursuing nuclear ambitions because of sanctions, some examples were given of countries like Brazil and Argentina which responded to packages that included security guarantees and economic incentives. Another comment made by a participant in the seminar was that it was important that South Korea continue its economic relations with North Korea. It was important for North Korea to be able to make a legitimate living exporting legitimate products and not be forced by sanctions or a boycott to turn to military exports.

One of the problems raised during the question period was that North Korea is looking toward the U.S. not South Korea for a way to solve the problems. Criticism of the U.S. was mounting for not being willing to talk with North Korea. The North Korean focus on the U.S. could be seen perhaps as a fatal attraction.

Responding to the characterization of North Korea as having trouble making strategic decisions, Professor Kim expressed his disagreement. He pointed to the decision by North Korea in 1994 to enter into the Agreed Framework with the U.S., and then the decision to launch the missile test, and the test of a nuclear weapon. These were offered as examples that North Korea was quite capable of making what it deemed strategic decisions.

The seminar provided the participants with an opportunity to exchange views and concerns over what is happening in Northeast Asia. The issues were considered with a seriousness and concern that was encouraging. The discussion in the seminar resulted in recognition of North Korea's concern over the threat it perceives from the U.S., both militarily and economically. The actions of the U.S. toward North Korea coupled with the fact that North Korea therefore feels the need to have a way to respond to the hostile acts, results in a tense situation. The nations that share geographic proximity with North Korea find themselves faced with an increasingly unstable situation. The actions of the U.S. and the pressures from the U.S. on the countries that are in geographic proximity to North Korea, have as their result intensified instability rather than the amelioration of the instability.

The seminar demonstrated the importance of serious

discussion among those who are concerned for the safety and stability of the Korean Peninsula. Ambassador Choi Young-jin, Professor Samuel Kim, and those who attended the seminar, all contributed to creating an environment where fruitful discussion was welcomed. This is an encouraging sign that with the efforts of concerned people, perhaps the issues involved can be clarified, and the needed action can be taken to support a just resolution of the problems that have contributed to the current crisis.

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Note:

(1) [http://calendar.columbia.edu/sundial/webapi/get.php?brand=sipa&id=10714&vt=detail&context=s\\_tandalone](http://calendar.columbia.edu/sundial/webapi/get.php?brand=sipa&id=10714&vt=detail&context=s_tandalone)

\*Columbia University Weatherhead East Asia Institute (WEAI) Center for Korean Research "Contemporary Korean Affairs Seminar – The Korean Peninsula in the 21st Century" with Ambassador Choi Young-jin, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations.

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The above article can be seen at:

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on February 7, 2007]

## **Hardliners Attack U.N.D.P. Aid to North Korea Allegations of Corruption Seen as Attempt to Undermine Engagement**

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"We didn't give them any money to squander," explains Ghulam Faruq Achikzad, who worked as the resident representative for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in North Korea from 1993 to 1996. Though the program that Achikzad worked in differs from the current program, his description of his experience is helpful in understanding the nature of the UNDP country program in North Korea.

The responsibility for the integrity of the program rests with the resident coordinator, says Achikzad. Working for the U.N., he saw himself as

an international civil servant who was responsible for the funds for the program and would not let them be used for anything else.

On Jan. 19, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Fox News* published articles (1) containing a series of unsubstantiated allegations about mismanagement and abuse of UNDP funds by the North Korean government. The allegations in the two articles repeated allegations made in letters made available by the U.S. mission to the U.N. in New York. *Fox News* provided a link (2) to a letter from a Deputy Ambassador at the U.S. mission to the U.N., Mark Wallace, to the UNDP. Wallace's letter claimed that "at least since 1998 the UNDP DPRK program has been systematically perverted for the benefit of the Kim Jong Il regime." In his letter, Wallace further alleged that "the UNDP DPRK program has for years operated in blatant violation of U.N. rules, served as a steady and large source of hard currency and other resources for the DPRK government with minimal or no assurance that UNDP funds and resources are utilized for legitimate development activities." No actual evidence was offered to support the allegations.

Achikzad explains that while he was in North Korea, there was no abuse of the UNDP program. The program utilized relatively little money, approximately \$5 million a year. The money was mostly aimed at technical assistance and training. The North Koreans needed foreign exchange so he helped them to understand that it was important for them to learn about international trade. When they expressed their reluctance because they didn't want to be capitalist, he would advise them that they didn't have to be capitalist to be involved in foreign trade, but they needed knowledge about it to be able to participate. Achikzad even arranged a training session for them with people from the World Bank so they could learn about the operations of the World Bank.

The programs while he was there had to do with international economics, energy, and modernization of agricultural. Also Achikzad explains that there was no abuse of foreign currency going to North Korea when he was in charge of the program. Much of the program involved bringing in people from outside of North Korea to provide training and education.

Neither *The Wall Street Journal* nor *Fox News* provided support for their charges, other than Wallace's letter containing the allegations. Neither these articles, nor most of the articles that appeared in the days that followed in the U.S. press, provided any consideration of the allegations to try to determine if they were well

founded. The UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert, and David Morrison, the Director of Communications of UNDP, responded (3) to the charges of illegality in the Wallace letter, but their explanations were in general ignored by much of the media.

Melkert said that the accusation that the UNDP operated "in blatant violation of U.N. rules" was not true. Under UNDP financial regulations, he explained, the authority to decide the practices to follow was delegated to the resident coordinator in a country. Also misleading was the accusation that the UNDP program was providing hard currency to be misused by the North Korean government. As long as the UNDP operates a program in a country where the currency is not exchangeable outside of the country, there is a need to buy the currency of the country from the central bank. It is not possible to have a program in such a country without buying currency from the bank.

While press reports in the U.S. often just repeated or exaggerated the original allegations, a few other publications provided a different perspective. For example, the Korean newspaper *Voice of the People* pointed out that the allegations of UNDP mismanagement appeared just as the North Korean and U.S. representatives had had productive negotiations in Berlin. The *Voice of the People* asked why the U.S. Mission to the U.N. was raising these issues "at this time."

"Despite the totally unfounded allegation by the hawks," the editors write, "it has a political effect for freezing (the) bilateral relationship between Washington and Pyongyang."

In response to similar allegations by the Heritage Foundation about a program between South Korea and North Korea, the South Korean Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung responded, "this criticism is based on unidentified assumptions (rather) than on firm ground." He went on to point out that the economic cooperation that South Korean aid to North Korea funds "is a short cut to maintain peace on the Korean peninsula."

In summing up the lessons from his experience in the UNDP program, Achikzad emphasized that just as it is important that the resident coordinator in charge of the country program for the UNDP be chosen carefully, it is similarly important that the U.N. continue to conduct programs in North Korea and other countries because the U.N. he explained is "a neutral institution. It's an institution belonging to



all of us, not one powerful country.”

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Notes:

(1) Melanie Kirkpatrick, “United Nations Dictator’s Program” *WSJ*, Jan. 19, 2007. The article says: “The hard currency supplied by the UNDP almost certainly goes into one big pot marked ‘Dear Leader’ which Kim can use for whatever he wants, including his weapons programs.”

George Russell, “U.S. State Department Reveals North Korea’s Misuse of U.N. Development Program Funds and Operations,” *Foxnews.com*, Friday, January 19, 2007

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *TELEPOLIS* on February 14, 2007]

## **What Role Will Ban Ki-moon Play?**

### **[Analysis] The Struggle Over Reform at the U.N.**

by Ronda Hauben  
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As soon as Ban Ki-moon took office as the 8th secretary general of the United Nations, his comments sparked controversy. A statement about Saddam Hussein’s execution, namely that capital punishment was a decision to be made by each nation, drew condemnation from those who compared it with previous U.N. statements, while it was supported by John Bolton, the former U.S. ambassador to the U.N., who praised Ban’s statement about capital punishment as the “right instinct.”

Kofi Annan, Ban’s predecessor, had been willing at times to condemn what he deemed violations of the U.N. charter. For example, before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Annan warned that such “a military action would violate the U.N. charter.” (1) Similarly, during the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Annan stated that Israel’s “‘disproportionate’ use of force and collective punishment of the Lebanese people must stop.” (2) This was a means of condemning Israeli actions as illegal.

Such actions earned Annan praise for being willing to tell “the truth to the powerful”, from Dumisani Kumalo, the South African Ambassador to the U.N., speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77). These actions, on the other hand, were condemned by Bolton who criticized Annan as the U.N.’s “chief moralizer,” whose activities “were not ultimately helpful to the world body.” (3)

Even before he took office, Ban had said he would be open with the press, promising that he could be “a pretty straight shooter when I need to.” Coming to the U.N. from his former position as the foreign minister of South Korea, Ban brought with him a reputation for dodging questions from the press when he deemed that beneficial. This trait led South Korean journalists to nickname him “slippery eel.” (4) Already during his short term in office, there have been several instances when Ban praised the powerful and dodged questions from reporters when asked to explain the basis for his praise.

One example occurred after Ban met with the U.S. President George Bush in Washington on January 16, 2007. At the press conference following the meeting, Ban referred to Bush as a “a great leader.” When Ban returned to the U.N., a reporter asked him why he had used these words to describe Bush. Ban responded: “In diplomacy, it is appropriate to address any Head of State or Government with due respect and courtesy. I hope you will understand what this diplomatic practice is.” (5)

Such comments have earned Ban a reputation as someone who “is an enigma to media and diplomats alike” (6) and whose “statements” are as hard to follow as “a Delphic Oracle.” Bolton, on the other hand, has expressed his approval for what Ban has done or has freely offered his advice on what to do differently. For example, Bolton characterized as a “courageous decision” (7) Ban’s call for the resignations of 60 senior-level officials in the secretariat. Since the contracts of these officials were to expire anyway at the end of February, several reporters wondered why Ban asked for their resignation. When Ban was asked for his response to Bolton’s comments, Ban responded that he agreed with some of them. He did not elaborate.

One of the first promises of the new Secretary General was that he would carry out reform at the U.N. There are different views among the member nations of the U.N. on what reform is needed.

For the U.S. government, as Bolton explains, the

purpose of reform is to make the U.N. a better tool among others “to implement American foreign policy.” (8)

For a number of other nations, the purpose of reform is to foster a multilateral process (9) to prevent war and hostilities among nations. Nations which are part of the group known as the G-77 define a reform agenda quite differently from the agenda promoted by the U.S. and what the G-77 describe as “other developed nations from the North.”

The G-77, originally formed in 1964 when 77 developing nations signed a Joint Declaration at the end of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), has a reform agenda that focuses (10) on development issues and on promoting the importance of the U.N. as the preeminent international institution. There are now 130 nations that are part of the G-77. Many of these nations are also part of the Non-Aligned Movement.

During Ban’s first few weeks in his new position, he has appeared to vacillate between the reform agenda of the G-77 and the reform agenda supported by the U.S. and other powerful developed nations. The U.S. wants the U.N. to be run more like a business, with business processes and management goals, Bolton said in a talk (11) he gave at Columbia University in April 2006. Other nations differ.

Describing how the U.N. differs from a business organization, in a talk also given at Columbia University, Choi Young-jin, the Ambassador to the U.N. from South Korea, explained that there are 192 nations belonging to the U.N. and “every one is on the board of governors.” (12)

Choi maintained that you can’t run an organization with 192 members on the board the same way you can run a business. While a business has a goal of generating profit, “the strongest point of the U.N.,” Choi said, “is its moral authority. The focus of any reform has to be on that moral authority, not on ‘efficiencies.’”

Another characteristic of the differences in the reform agenda of the different nations is the importance with which many nations view the need for a reform of the Security Council. In December 2006 there was a debate in the General Assembly about reform of the Security Council that drew 70 speakers and substantial proposals for changing its composition and working methods.

Subsequently at the first meeting (13) of the new year of the Security Council on Jan. 8, 2007, several of the non-permanent members raised (14) the need for

Security Council reform. One nation’s representative explained that the issues taken up by the Security Council should be more carefully chosen so they do not to encroach on the mandate of other U.N. organs. Similarly, he proposed that the Security Council should not fail to act in situations consistent with its mandate, situations that pose a threat to international peace and security, such as in the “Palestine-Israeli issue.” Other issues raised during the Jan. 8 meeting included the desirability of involving regional and subregional groups in solving problems when feasible, that diplomatic solutions should be utilized before resorting to sanctions, and that nations like Iran and North Korea should not be denied the right to undertake research and development for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

This meeting was also Ban’s first official meeting with the Security Council. He gave a brief presentation. (15) Though he spoke about U.N. reform, he didn’t mention Security Council reform. Later at a press conference (16) with Ban’s spokesperson, a reporter asked if Ban deliberately choose not to mention Security Council reform. The spokesperson responded: “I don’t think it was deliberate. I think he is certainly interested in the issue – definitely concerned about the issue. He has talked about it before, but as you know with Security Council reforms there was a proposal made, and now, it is in the hands of the Member States.”

In general, the mainstream U.S. media provides little coverage of the controversy over reform at the U.N. Allegations of U.N. mismanagement, however, are pursued with a vengeance, just as they had been in the “Oil for Food” scandal.

More recently articles by *Fox News* (17) and in *The Wall Street Journal* (18) alleged that tens of millions of dollars of hard currency had been subverted by the government of North Korea from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and used to fund North Korea’s nuclear program. Also the press reports charged that the UNDP had kept the scam secret. *Fox News* asked if Kim Jung Il “subverted the UNDP program” and possibly stole “tens of millions of dollars of hard currency in the process.” In their article “United Nations Dictators Program”, the *WSJ* alleged that “the hard currency supplied by the UNDP almost certainly goes into one big pot marked ‘Dear Leader’ which Kim can use for whatever he wants.”

These allegations were made without any actual

evidence to back them up, but just in time to coincide with the UNDP Executive Board meeting that was to approve the programs for 2007 and on. The result of the articles was to block the approval of the 2007-8 UNDP program in North Korea, and to exert pressure so that the Secretary General recommended an external audit of all U.N. programs, beginning with the North Korean UNDP program. Headlines alleging North Korean abuse of U.N. programs quickly spread in the U.S. and international media.

Subsequently, the U.N. announced that their audit plans were focused on North Korea. There is to be an external audit of all U.N. programs in North Korea. The audit is “to be completed by the Board of Auditors within a three-month time frame, as per the Secretary General’s proposal of 22 January 2007.”

Both the U.S. and the Group of 77 supported Ban’s candidacy for the position of Secretary-General. Now that he is in the position, he is faced with the ongoing struggle of contending forces over the U.N.’s reform agenda. How he will handle the different pressures is one of the important challenges he and the U.N. face in the coming months and years of his term.

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The above article can be seen at:

<http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/html/result.xhtml?url=/tp/r4/artikel/24/24577/1.html&words=Hauben&T=hauben>

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## **EI Baradei Argues for Negotiation With Iran Sees “Window of Opportunity” to Diffuse Crisis**

by Ronda Hauben  
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Many nations use nuclear fuel to generate electricity. Nations like South Africa who use nuclear energy have to buy the enriched uranium from nations that can do the enrichment. The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohamed ElBaradei, says there are 12 or 13 countries with the technical capability to do the 5

percent uranium enrichment needed for nuclear energy fuel production. Iran says that given the difficulties it has had in having access to advanced technology, it needs to be able to enrich uranium for its own generation of electricity.

The U.S. government claims that Iran has other intentions and that once Iran masters uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes it will acquire a capability that can lead to the creation of nuclear weapons. The U.S. government has taken the position that the right to do uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes is a loophole in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). (1)

The production of nuclear weapons requires significantly greater technical capacity than the ability to do 5 percent enrichment of uranium. The U.S., however, wants to stop Iran from any development of uranium enrichment technology. The U.N. Security Council supported this effort by imposing sanctions against Iran in December 2006 as part of Security Council Resolution 1737. For the sanctions to end, Iran would have to stop its enrichment activity.

Iran, for its part, insists that it has the right to master the technology needed for the peaceful production of nuclear energy and that it won't stop its peaceful enrichment program. As a signatory of the NPT, Iran has the right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

The Iranian government says it is willing to negotiate but it is not willing to accept the precondition that it cease enrichment activity before being able to negotiate. It is in this context that the drama is unfolding at the U.N. in the Security Council.

In an interview (2) with the Financial Times, IAEA Director General ElBaradei argues for negotiations with Iran rather than hostile actions that will further polarize the underlying disagreements. ElBaradei maintains that hostile actions are counterproductive to the aims of the NPT.

ElBaradei oversees the inspection and monitoring of nuclear activity of all countries that are signatories to the NPT. Explaining why he is in favor of dialog and of negotiation, ElBaradei says, "I know if you engage people, you moderate their behavior. If you isolate them you radicalize them."

"What is really important to have," says ElBaradei, is "a proper diagnosis of the problem, assess the problem properly."

ElBaradei explains that the hostile actions and words against a nation are a pressure that can provoke a

nation to feel it needs a nuclear deterrent. Applying such reasoning to the situation with Iran he explains:

"Even if they were not going to develop a nuclear weapon today, this would be a sure recipe for them to go down that route."

ElBaradei advises the U.S. give Iran security guarantees, "Then we should also stop calling names and threatening regime change."

When Ban Ki-moon, the U.N. Secretary General, visited Vienna on Feb. 23, he met with ElBaradei. When asked if there is anything the Secretary General is doing to encourage negotiation in this period. Ban's spokesperson Michele Montas replied:

"The Secretary General met with ElBaradei. They discussed it and Mr. ElBaradei is doing that effort you are talking about." (3)

ElBaradei notes that the IAEA has issued its report as required by Security Council Resolution 1737, but that the report will not be acted on until March 6, 2007 when the IAEA Council meets and the IAEA member nations vote to approve or reject the report. Until that date he can change the report. "I can add or reverse judgments there until the March 6," said ElBaradei. This means, he explained, that the period between Feb. 22 and March 6 presents a "window of opportunity" for negotiations with Iran.

He urged Iran and the nations on the Security Council to utilize this opportunity to find a way to have engagement based on dialog to reconcile their differences.

Iran has indicated it is willing to negotiate but will not agree to the precondition that it suspend its enrichment before such negotiations take place.

Hans Blix, the former chief weapons inspector in Iraq has explained that it is a "humiliating" and a "neocolonial attitude" to demand that Iran cease its enrichment activity before any negotiations are possible.

Iran contends that 5 percent enrichment of uranium is its right under the NPT. And that it is being singled out and denied the right that the NPT provides.

ElBaradei explains that as long as Iran's enrichment activities are carried out under the IAEA, oversight to limit the degree of enrichment to 5 percent can be maintained. Also he would like to get Iran to agree to the Additional Protocol which would provide the IAEA with additional authority for other forms of inspection. Iran had voluntarily signed the

Additional Protocol but withdrew from it when the IAEA 35 nation board voted to require Iran to suspend enrichment activity. ElBaradei says that Iran's agreement to accept the Additional Protocol would give the IAEA the authority it needs to better inspect the manufacture of equipment.

On Sunday, Feb. 25, Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani met with South African President Thabo Mbeki and explained that: "Setting a precondition for negotiation means reaching a conclusion ahead of the talks, which has been an unsuccessful policy." (4)

South Africa is currently a non-permanent member on the U.N. Security Council and holds the presidency of the Council during the month of March. South Africa has one nuclear plant for the production of nuclear energy and has "voiced its firm decision to build a second nuclear power plant." It intends to study various methods of uranium enrichment to produce the fuel needed by its power plants rather than only rely on foreign sources. (5)

Italy is also a non-permanent member of the Council. On Sunday, Feb. 25 and Monday Feb. 26 the Century Foundation sponsored a program at the Millennium U.N. Plaza Hotel on "Weapons threats and International Security: Rebuilding an Unraveled Consensus" (6) The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the U.N. provided the idea and support for the program. Both Blix and Iran's Ambassador to the U.N. Javad Zarif spoke during the events of the conference.

The upcoming deliberations in the Security Council also come at a time of discussion about the need for reform of the Security Council's practices and composition by a number of U.N. member states, including several of the non-permanent members of the current Security Council. (7)

Among the issues being raised by those advocating reform, is the concern that the Security Council takes up issues that are not appropriate under its mandate and doesn't take up other issues that are appropriate.

Iran contends that the issue of its enrichment activity is an issue that belongs in the IAEA not in the Security Council. It has complained that transferring the issue of how it adheres to the obligations under the NPT to the Security Council has served to politicize what is a technical process.

Whether the U.S. and other proponents of sanctions against Iran will prevail in the Security Council deliberations, or whether the voices of those nations which argue for a negotiated process to find a solution to the dispute will succeed, will become apparent in upcoming developments in the Security Council. But the controversy

over whether under the NPT a nation is allowed to develop a 5 percent uranium enrichment capacity to make possible the production of nuclear fuel for nuclear energy generation is a controversy that merits public understanding and consideration.

ElBaradei, stressing the importance of keeping Iran's nuclear development within the confines of the oversight of the IAEA and the NPT explains: "to aim at denying a country knowledge is almost impossible, to say the least. And there's a big difference between acquiring the knowledge for enrichment and developing a bomb."

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## **U.S., North Korea Move to Open Ties**

### **Christopher Hill and Kim Kye-gwan Hold Meeting in New York on First Steps**

by Ronda Hauben  
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"This process, not unlike a video game, gets more and more difficult as you get to different levels," said Christopher Hill, U.S. Assistant Secretary

of State, speaking at a press conference held at the Foreign Press Center in New York City shortly after he had finished two days of meetings with North Korea's lead negotiator for the Six-Party Talks, Kim Kye-gwan. Hill is the chief negotiator for the U.S. The Six-Party Talks include the U.S., North Korea, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan

Hill characterized the activities of the past two days as "good discussions" which were "very comprehensive." Both sides were optimistic that they would get through the first 60-day period's tasks that were outlined in the Feb. 13 agreement signed in Beijing.

A reason for the optimism, Hill explained, was that his talks with Kim not only discussed the issues that had to be resolved at this 30-day stage, but they also explored what they would need to do to go forward after the 60-day period, which will end in mid-April.

Hill explained that five working groups have been set up. His working group with Kim on normalizing U.S.-North Korean relations finished their tasks within the 30-day time schedule that they had set for the five groups to begin their process. Another group, the bilateral group between North Korea and Japan will meet in Hanoi and the three other groups will be meeting in Beijing.

Hill was interested in the efforts to get an agreement between the U.S. and North Korea in the 1990s and had learned some of the background from his discussions with Kim.

A focus of their talks, Hill explained, was on the upcoming meetings that would take place with the six parties in Beijing and how to make those productive. "The ministers from each of the six parties to the talks will be meeting in Beijing then and assessing where we will go the next 60 days," Hill said.

Hill was asked how this negotiation was different from previous ones with North Korea. He described how the tight deadlines were one aspect. Another was that the agreement involved the six parties and the bilateral talks between the U.S. and North Korea and the other parties were within this framework.

Also Hill credited the close work between the U.S. and China for some of the progress. Not only did the U.S. and China have the common goal of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula, he explained, but also the two countries shared a similar strategy and even tactics. Negotiators from both countries worked closely together, even on the text for the agreement.

When he was asked, "What support will you have that will keep this on track?" Hill replied that he had

tremendous support from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. She kept on top of all the details and he would be briefing her shortly on the recent discussions. "I feel I've got a lot of support," he said, "and as long as I can show some results I'll get more support. Diplomatic negotiation is sort of like managing a baseball game. As long as you win, everyone's happy."

Hill emphasized that there would be the need to keep the process moving and showing some progress.

When asked if he had been invited to visit North Korea, Hill said that his counterpart had raised the idea in a general sense but nothing specific had been discussed as they focused on Beijing and the upcoming round of Six-Party Talks.

With regard to how to manage the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, Hill said they discussed how to get experts in on the matter. There would need to be some technical discussions. It was a good step, Hill said, that Director General Mohamed El-Baradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had been invited to North Korea and was planning a trip soon.

Hill indicated that the problem with Banco Delta Asia would be solved soon. The U.S. has committed itself to find a solution within the first 30-day period.

Hill stressed that the historical background of the particular situation with North Korea was important to keep in mind and not to draw too many analogies with other situations.

He compared the negotiations to someone always pushing a rock uphill, and the rock always seems to come down to the base of the hill. The discussion he just had with Ambassador Kim, Hill said, reflected the sense that "we can get through this." He had been encouraged by his counterpart to look ahead.

Because the negotiators are getting to know each other from so many different meetings, when issues come up, they don't need to reiterate points. That way they are able to cover more ground.

The atmosphere in the room during the press conference captured some of the excitement that the negotiations between Hill and Kim were another step toward the fulfillment of the September 2005 Six-Party agreement. This represents significant activity toward the peaceful resolution of the hostility between the U.S. and North Korea that has lingered for the past 50 years, since the days of the

Korean war.

The above article can be seen at:

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=348974&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=348974&rel_no=1)

[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on March 21, 2007]

## **North Korea's \$25 Million and Banco Delta Asia**

### **[Opinion] Another Abuse Under the U.S. Patriot Act (2001)**

by Ronda Hauben  
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A little known provision in the U.S. Patriot Act (2001) has been used by the Bush administration against North Korea to freeze \$25 million dollars of its funds and to deny it access to the international banking system and to hard currency. Actions under this provision of the Patriot Act effectively stymied progress in disarmament talks between the U.S., North Korea, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan for over 18 months. North Korea says that only when the seized \$25 million and access to the international banking system are restored is it willing to continue negotiations under the Six-Party agreement concerning security and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The little known provision of the Patriot Act is Section 311. It is also known as the "International Money Laundering Abatement and Financial Anti-Terrorism Act of 2001." (1)

The original purpose was allegedly related to the prevention, detection and prosecution of money laundering connected to the financing of terrorism. The law has rarely been used for its original purpose. Instead it has been used by the Bush administration as a means of unchecked political power against financial institutions like the Banco Delta Asia. This case has an impact on those nations or institutions who used the bank, like North Korea.

Two other sections of the Patriot Act currently under scrutiny, the use of the Patriot Act to illegally obtain personal information on U.S. citizens, and the use of a provision in the Patriot Act to replace U.S. Attorneys, have been identified as being used by the Bush administration for expanding and abusing executive

power. Section 311 provides another means for sidestepping international and national legal practices and substituting an ad hoc set of processes that leave the victims with no means of due process or defense.

Section 311 has been called by its supporters "a diplomatic sledgehammer that gets results" and by its critics a provision that denies the accused "due process and presumes guilt."

Critics say that this provision of the Patriot Act applies U.S. law to the financial institutions of other countries. In a proceeding under Section 311 of the Patriot Act (2001) the U.S. Treasury Department acts as accuser and judge, in international jurisdictions. Also, often the evidence used by the Treasury Department is classified and thus not available for examination by the accused so that it can't be refuted.

This provision gives the U.S. Treasury the ability to use an Executive Branch administrative procedure rather than a legal proceeding as a way to accuse a financial institution that is part of another nation's regulatory system of wrong doing, and then to find it guilty. Under this provision of the Patriot Act, the accused is denied knowledge of the evidence against it and is denied the right to speak in its own defense. Section 311 of the Patriot Act (2001) was used against the BDA, a small bank in Macau, to freeze substantial financial assets of North Korea and also to deny North Korea access to the international banking system. (2) The case against the BDA was instituted in September 2005 just after the U.S. had signed the Six-Party agreement.

The accused under Section 311 is presumed to be guilty and the burden falls on it to prove its innocence without being able to know the evidence or charges. (3)

Invoking Section 311 against the BDA effectively sabotaged the implementation of the Six-Party agreement of September 2005 for 18 months as BDA did not have a process to challenge the Treasury Department action, nor did those whose accounts at the bank had been frozen, like North Korea. It was only after North Korea conducted a missile test in July 2006 and the test of a nuclear device in October 2006, that the Bush administration was willing to agree to negotiations over the Treasury action.

Negotiations in Berlin between the U.S. government and North Korea in January 2007 and then in Beijing in February 2007 with the U.S., South Korea,

China, Russia and Japan, resulted in the Six-Party agreement announced on Feb. 13, 2007.

The difference that most analysts point to in comparing the Feb. 13 2007 Six-Party agreement with the Six-Party agreement of September 2005 is that the more recent agreement includes a series of processes and a time table. The critical difference that has been overlooked, however, is that a requirement of the Feb. 13 agreement was that the U.S. restore the funds that were frozen by the actions of the U.S. Treasury Department. Also North Korea's access to the international financial system was to be restored.

These requirements caused "intense friction" in Washington between officials in the State Department and "officials in the Treasury Department and in the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney who were said to favor maintaining maximum pressure" on North Korea. (4) There were reports of urgent telephone calls between officials in the State Department and the Treasury. Assistant Secretary of State John Negroponte finally got a decision from the Treasury Department by Friday, March 16. The Treasury Department had ruled against the BDA. U.S. banks would not be allowed to do business with it. The U.S. government announcement said that it would be up to the Macao authorities to decide if they would unfreeze and restore some or all of North Korea's funds.

By the weekend of March 17, a behind the scenes drama continued to unfold. China announced that it regretted the U.S. action. The owner of the Macao bank said he would go to court to attempt to challenge the decision. Getting off the plane in Beijing on Saturday to attend the next stage of Six-Party Talks, Kim Kye-gwan, North Korea's lead negotiator for the Six-Party Talks, told reporters that all of the \$25 million had to be returned if North Korea was to go to the next step of the Six-Party Talks.

Hill announced that he would explain the settlement to the Chinese and North Korean negotiators. China announced that a settlement had been reached but that the details of it couldn't yet be revealed. Subsequently, there was an announcement that all of the \$25 million in funds would be returned to North Korea and deposited in China in an account held by the North Korea's Foreign Trade Bank at the Bank of China in Beijing. U.S. Treasury Secretary Daniel Glaser, in a press conference held with Hill, confirmed the U.S. government decision. It was unknown he said, when the funds would actually be put in the North Korean bank account.

Subsequently, diplomats who were in Beijing to

continue the Six-Party Talks told reporters that North Korean diplomats said the funds had to be in the bank account for them to continue with negotiations.

Though there have been many newspaper articles reporting the standoff in the Six-Party Talks caused by the dispute over the use of Section 311 against North Korea, few of the articles provide an understanding of the underlying issues involved. A commentator on BBC, for example, demonstrating a serious lack of understanding of the use of Section 311 and the abuse of power it represents said this is an example of the high price that North Korea will extract for its cooperation in the talks.

It is not without cause then, that in describing the process of the Six-Party Talks Hill compared the process to a video game. He warned: "This process, not unlike a video game gets more and more difficult as you get to different levels." (5)

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Notes:

- (1) <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/Section301.html>
- (2) "Treasury Casts a Wide Net Under Patriot Act"  
[http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/kevin\\_g\\_hall/16889790.htm](http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/kevin_g_hall/16889790.htm)
- (3) "The U.S. government has never publicly detailed evidence behind its charges. Nor has it sought to initiate legal action, relying instead on Section 311 of the Patriot Act, which critics say extends U.S. laws to cover other countries." "Bush Administration Plan May Unfreeze North Korean Funds"  
[http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/kevin\\_g\\_hall/16904105.htm](http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/kevin_g_hall/16904105.htm)
- (4) "Administration Reconsiders Some North Korea Restrictions"  
[http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/warren\\_p\\_strobel/16554751.htm](http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/columnists/warren_p_strobel/16554751.htm)
- (5) "U.S., North Korea Move to Open Ties"  
[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=348974&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=348974&rel_no=1)

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[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=351525&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=351525&rel_no=1)

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on May 19, 2007]

## **Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia Is the Policy Aimed at Targeting China as Well as North Korea?**

by Ronda Hauben  
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U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, speaking at the Korea Society's 50th Anniversary dinner in New York City on May 15, said that he was determined not to "allow \$26 million or \$25 million get between us and a deal that will finally do something about nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula." He promised that Kathleen Stephens at the Korea desk at the State Department was working on the problem and that "we are going to keep after this problem till we solve it." His statement didn't give further details about how this problem was to be solved, a problem that had interrupted the progress that seemed at last possible in the Feb. 13 Six-Party agreement. (1)

Just two days later, on May 17, the U.S. Wachovia Bank announced that it is exploring a request from the State Department to transfer the funds from the BDA (Banco Delta Asia) to North Korea. Wachovia Bank reported that it would require the necessary approvals from bank regulators to do the transfer.

Until this latest announcement, banks have been unwilling to do the transfer because of the legal action that the U.S. government took against the BDA, by ruling that it was involved in criminal activity under Section 311 of the U.S. Patriot Act. Banks which deal with a bank that has been found guilty of such illegal acts risk losing their access to the international financial system. North Korea has said that the denuclearization and other aspects of the Six-Party agreement that it has been part of can only go forward when the BDA situation is resolved. "To make the money transfer possible freely just like before has been our demand...from the beginning," a spokesperson from North Korea said. (2)

In his daily press briefing on May 17, Scott McCormack at the U.S. State Department said, "We all want to see the BDA issue resolved, obviously resolved within the laws and regulations of the United States as well as the international financial system, and we'd like to move on and get back to the business of the Six-Party Talks, which is really focused on the issue of

denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula." (3)

Whether this latest development with Wachovia Bank will provide the needed breakthrough, it is too soon to tell. But there are other developments which may provide the needed pressures on the U.S. government to decriminalize the \$25 million it has frozen of North Korean funds and restore North Korea's access to the international banking system. Their access was severely impeded by the action that the U.S. Treasury Department took against the BDA.

The developments I am referring to are the release in the public domain of several documents related to the U. S. Treasury Department's actions against BDA. One of the documents is a sworn statement by the owner of the BDA, Mr. Stanley Au, in support of his petition to revoke the rule imposing the special measures taken by the U.S. Treasury Department against his bank. Another document is the petition in support of his case. Also the Treasury Department finding against the bank has been put online. These documents have been made available on the blog "China Matters." (4)

In his statement, Au explains the history of his bank's relations with North Korea and how there was only one experience, which occurred in June 1994, when there was a problem with counterfeit U.S. dollars. At the time, the bank reported this incident to the U.S. government. Agents from the U.S. government came to the bank and questioned Au. He answered their questions and asked if the agents recommended that the bank "desist from doing business with North Korean entities." The agents said "they would like us to continue to deal with them as it was better that we conducted this business than another financial entity that may not be so cooperative with the United States government."

Au explains that there was no further experience with counterfeit money showing up in the transactions of the bank. All "large value deposits of U.S. dollar bills from North Korean sources" were sent to the Hong Kong branch of the Republic National Bank of New York (which became HSBC) to be certified that they were authentic via advanced technology possessed by that bank. Smaller quantities of bills were examined in accord with common banking practices by the bank itself.

Au also explains that he had not been approached by U.S. government agents alerting him to any problem or illegal activity. The first he learned that his bank was being charged as a bank

engaged in “illicit activities” came when he saw a report in the Asian Wall Street Journal in September 2005 that his bank was a candidate for a U.S. money laundering blacklist. He tells how “this news came as a bolt out of the blue – the Bank had never been informed by the United States that its practices were a cause of any money laundering concern, and the counterfeiting event that the media reported as the basis for the designation had occurred more than ten years earlier and had been promptly reported to the authorities by Banco Delta Asia.” (5)

Stanley Au’s statement is in sharp contrast with the account in the U.S. government’s Federal Register of the finding against the bank by the U.S. Treasury Department. (6)

The Federal Register finding states that the bank had provided financial services for more than 20 years to multiple North Korean-related individuals and entities that were engaged in illicit activities. It provides no specific details of what such illicit activities were. It claims that the entities paid a fee to Banco Delta Asia for their access to the bank. The finding claims that the bank facilitated wire transfers and helped a front company.

In his statement, Stanley Au maintained that the BDA did not charge a fee for its services nor did it conduct illicit services for North Korea or any other customer. The bank was only one of the banks in Macau that did business with North Korea. The business his bank had with North Korea began in the mid 1970s and was to assist North Korea with its foreign trade transactions. Also Au described North Korea as a gold producing country and that in the late 1990s the bank had acted as a “gold bullion trader on behalf of the North Koreans”. Also the BDA bought or sold foreign currency notes for North Korea, including U.S. dollars, because North Korea had a limited banking system and so it couldn’t do such transactions itself (see Statement, pp. 3-4).

The petition submitted to the U.S. Dept of the Treasury to challenge the finding against BDA proposes that BDA was targeted not because of any “voluminous” evidence of money laundering but “because it was an easy target in the sense that it was not so large that its failure would bring down the financial system.” (7)

In the substantial and prolific analysis of the BDA problem that has been developed on the blog “China Matters”, there is the assessment that North Korea has legitimate financial activity and that the BDA was legitimately serving as one of the banks for that activity. Even with the U.N.’s sanctions, it was not appropriate to

target for blacklisting the legitimate financial activities of North Korea. The sanctions that the U.N.-imposed against North Korea were to be aimed at its activity that was related to nuclear weapon development, not to normal financial transactions.

The author of China Matters blog writes (8):

“The alternative view...is that legitimate North Korean financial activity does exist, BDA had a right to solicit North Korean accounts and handle North Korean transactions, and Stanley Au should be allowed to run his bank as long as he conforms to the laws of his jurisdiction--and (the bank) not be used as a political football in Washington’s dealings with Pyongyang.”

To put it more succinctly, the blog China Matters quotes David Ascher, who had been the coordinator for the Bush Administration working group on North Korea and a senior adviser in East Asian affairs in the State Department, in testimony to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade on April 18, 2007, explaining why Banco Delta was chosen to be blacklisted from the international banking system (9):

“Banco Delta was a symbolic target. We were trying to kill the chicken to scare the monkeys. And the monkeys were big Chinese banks doing business in North Korea...and we’re not talking about tens of millions, we’re talking hundreds of millions.”

The purpose of the action against the BDA appears not only to have been to target North Korea and its access to the international banking system, but also to send a message to China.

Therefore it would appear that the action against BDA is a carefully crafted political action and that it will be necessary that there be public understanding, discussion and debate about what is behind this action in order to find a way to have the policy that gave rise to the BDA action changed.

Instead of the U.S. mainstream press carrying out the needed investigation about why BDA has been targeted and what is behind this action, there have been continual condemnations of North Korea. Fortunately there are journalists like those who work with the McClatchy News Service who have made an effort to probe what is happening behind-the-scenes in the BDA affair and blogs like China Matters which have taken the time and care to begin uncovering what the BDA affair is really all about.

This is but one of the stories of what is really going on behind the scenes within the U.S. government that has been hidden from the public. This is one of the stories yet to be unraveled by bloggers, and citizen journalists. (10)

Notes:

(1) See earlier article "North Korea's \$25 Million and Banco Delta Asia."

[http://english.ohmynews.com/ArticleView/article\\_view.asp?menu=A11100&no=351525&rel\\_no=1&back\\_url=%3Cbr%3E](http://english.ohmynews.com/ArticleView/article_view.asp?menu=A11100&no=351525&rel_no=1&back_url=%3Cbr%3E)

(2) "North Korea says work to transfer bank funds under way," *AFP*, May 15, 2007

[http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_asiapacific/view/276391/1.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/276391/1.html)

(3) Scott McCormack, Daily Press Briefing, Washington DC, May 17, 2007

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2007/may/85132.htm>

(4) "Bank owner disputes money-laundering allegations."

<http://chinamatters.blogspot.com/2007/05/stanley-au-makes-his-case-for-banco.html%3Cbr%3E>

(5) Statement of Mr. Stanley Au in Support of Petition to Revoke Rule Imposing Special Measures Against Banco Delta Asia, p. 7.

[http://www.fileden.com/files/2007/5/15/1081304/Statement\\_of\\_St Stanley\\_Au.PDF](http://www.fileden.com/files/2007/5/15/1081304/Statement_of_St Stanley_Au.PDF)

See also Kevin G. Hall, "Bank owner disputes money-laundering allegations," McClatchy Newspapers, May 16, 2007.

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/krowashington/17236073.htm>

(6) Department of the Treasury, 31 CFR Part 103/RIN 1506-AA83, Federal Register/ Vol 72, No. 52/ Monday, March 19, 2007/ Rules and Regulations.

[http://www.fileden.com/files/2007/5/15/108134/bda\\_final\\_rule%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.fileden.com/files/2007/5/15/108134/bda_final_rule%5B1%5D.pdf)

(7) Petition of Mr. Stanley Au and Delta Asia Group (Holdings) Ltd. to Rescind Final Rule, p. 12.

[http://www.fileden.com/files/2007/5/15/1081304/Petition\\_to\\_Rescind\\_Final\\_Rule.pdf](http://www.fileden.com/files/2007/5/15/1081304/Petition_to_Rescind_Final_Rule.pdf)

(8) "Stanley Au Makes His Case for Banco Delta Asia," Tuesday, May 15, 2007

<http://chinamatters.blogspot.com/2007/05/stanley-au-makes-his-case-for-banco.html%3Cbr%3E>

(9) "David Asher's Dead End," Saturday, April 28, 2007

<http://chinamatters.blogspot.com/2007/04/david-ashers-dead-end.html>

See also "China's Proliferation to North Korea and Iran, and its role in addressing the nuclear and missile situations in both nations," Hearing, Sept 14, 2006, Nov. 2006, p. 115-116.

[http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2006hearings/transcripts/sept\\_14/06\\_09\\_14\\_trans.pdf](http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2006hearings/transcripts/sept_14/06_09_14_trans.pdf)

(10) Ronda Hauben, "Bill Moyers and the Emergence of U.S. Citizen Journalism: Power of government creates need for investigative news."

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/%3Cbr%3Ehttp://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=360069&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/%3Cbr%3Ehttp://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=360069&rel_no=1)

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on June 24, 2007]

## **Weapons of Mass Destruction Syndrome and the Press**

### **[Analysis] How Does One Prove a Negative?**

by Ronda Hauben  
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April 5, 2006. Congressman Ron Paul (Texas) makes a speech "Iran: The Next Neo-con Target." (1) He reviews the scenario of how the invasion of Iraq was prepared in the U.S. "We demand that Iran prove it is not in violation of nuclear agreements, which is asking them impossibly to prove a negative," Paul observes.

Mohamed ElBareidei, the IAEA Director, Paul explains, has supported Iran's contention that it has been in compliance with its rights under the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) IAEA safeguard agreement.

What have we learned from the experience in Iraq, Paul asks?

Four years have passed since the U.S. government mobilized much of the U.S. press to create the "spin" which provided a pretext for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. The U.S. government accused Iraq of having "Weapons of Mass Destruction." How could Iraq prove they didn't have any of a whole catalogue of things that they were accused of having? There was no way for Iraq to disprove the accusations. Thus much of the U.S. press, in cooperation with various U.S. government officials, used the impossibility of proving a negative to create a media environment in which the U.S. government could falsely claim they had a justification for a war against Iraq.

Fast forward to April 18, 2007. The same U.S. Congressman's comments seem like a lone voice of reason during a hearing in a U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs subcommittee about how to craft financial sanctions against North Korea and

Iran. (2) In this hearing, the witnesses and some of the Congressmen discuss what they claim is the great success that the sanctions against North Korea have been. They review how the U.S. Treasury Department froze \$25 million of North Korea's funds in a bank account at the Banco Delta Asia (BDA), a bank in Macau China. The action by the U.S. Treasury Department against this bank resulted in North Korea losing access to the international banking system. David Asher, one of the witnesses, tells how he was part of a team carefully planning such consequences of an action taken by the U.S. Treasury Department under Section 311 of the U.S. Patriot Act. (3)

Asher acknowledges that he was involved in instigating investigations against North Korea in a whole variety of law enforcement entities.

"Sanctions are an act of war," Congressman Paul inserts into the hearing. (4) They mostly harm innocent citizens, he points out and they are used by governments preparing the population of their country to accept a war. The Chair of the hearing wonders aloud whether such sanctions hurt the people of a country versus whether they bring regime change.

This hearing and other U.S. government activities demonstrate that the U.S. Treasury Department's action against Banco Delta Asia was a carefully prepared political act calculated to accomplish a political end. (5) It was not an unintended consequence of some legitimate legal process. It was not the result of a judicial process which gathered evidence, made allegations, presented its evidence and rendered a decision by an impartial judge based on the evidence. Instead the Treasury Department was the accuser and the judge and never presented any evidence. The accused was automatically declared guilty. Even after the guilty verdict there were few avenues available to challenge the whole procedure. The blacklisting of the Banco Delta Asia and of North Korea from the international banking system was done with no due process procedure.

It is therefore all the more revealing to see the many press accounts which accepted that North Korea was guilty of crimes and was unreasonable in turning to its sovereign right to self defense. Similarly it is revealing to see how most of the U.S. media treat Iran's right to develop and operate nuclear enrichment technology for peaceful purposes. Zbigniew Brzezinski, appearing on the Charlie Rose show on Friday, June 15, acknowledged that under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Iran has the right to the peaceful development of nuclear technology and hence to do nuclear enrichment

for nuclear energy production.

Yet much of the U.S. media, to the contrary, pronounces Iran guilty of producing nuclear weapons though there is no proof that this is true. It is left to Iran to prove it isn't true, something which would not be possible for any country to do.

Just as the *New York Times* and other U.S. media unswervingly presented the accusations against Iraq in the run up to the Iraq war, so similar press reports abound accusing North Korea of illicit activity and Iran of preparing to produce nuclear weapons. It is up to the accused to disprove the accusations, despite the fact that no evidence has been presented to support the accusations.

There is no way to prove a negative. That is why the legal system is premised on the obligation of the accuser to present the evidence of a crime and the accused is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. In the reversal of these norms, however, the accuser makes unsubstantiated allegations and much of the mainstream media repeats the allegations, without any investigation to determine if there is any factual basis for the allegations.

Thus much of the U.S. media has become complicit in carefully preparing the court of public opinion against the countries the U.S. government has labeled as part of the so called "axis of evil."

Judith Miller was a *New York Times* reporter who reported unsubstantiated allegations accusing Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction. When she was confronted with the proof that her stories were false but were used to create a pretext for the U.S. invasion of Iraq, she responded that she wasn't an intelligence agent who was able to determine what was true or false. A journalist, however, has an obligation to present the public with accurate information, contrary to Miller's protestations to the contrary.

What is the significance of such drumbeats for war being orchestrated so freely? With regard to the Banco Delta Asia accusations, there are a few exceptions to the general acceptance by much of the media of unsubstantiated allegations. Publications like the McClatchy publications, *OhmyNews International*, and some blogs like China Matters have provided articles challenging the dominant media barrage. (6) Similarly, there are a few publications presenting the right of Iran to peaceful development of nuclear energy under the NPT and the fact that there is no proof for the allegation that it is developing nuclear

weapons. These publications include Seymour Hersh's articles in the *New Yorker Magazine* and Herb Blix's recent book *Target Iran: The Truth about the White House's Plans for Regime Change* (Nation Books, 2006)

Why haven't more of the U.S. media devoted resources to investigate the actual circumstances of the allegations being so freely and doggedly circulated by U.S. government officials to back up their political objectives against North Korea and Iran?

The group known as the White House Iraq Group, a group created inside the White House itself, conducted a campaign to spread the case for an attack on Iraq and to discredit critics of its pro war propaganda. (7)

The growing online community of citizens in the U.S. challenged the White House and mainstream media's drumbeats for war. The online community was a force, though not strong enough to prevent the war against Iraq.

The strategy of the White House to involve the mainstream media in the process of creating a false set of allegations in order to prepare the population for a war has been exposed in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq. Historically and currently in the U.S. there is a need for a press that challenges such government propaganda campaigns and provides the needed questioning and debate on vital issues of public policy. Part of the vision inspiring the birth of the Internet was that the Internet would make possible more political participation of the citizens in the critical issues of the day. (8) Whether the online community of netizens can succeed in building the kind of investigatory press so critically needed in the U.S. is a challenge still to be met.

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Notes:

(1) See Paul's speech

<http://www.house.gov/paul/congrec/congrec2006/cr040506.htm>

(2) House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation, and Trade, April 18, 2007, Isolating Proliferators and Sponsors of Terror: The Use of Sanctions and the International Financial System to Change Regime Behavior

(3) "North Korea's \$25 Million and Banco Delta Asia" [Opinion] Another abuse under the U.S. Patriot Act(2001)

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?article\\_class=3&no=351525&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=3&no=351525&rel_no=1)

(4) Webcast of April 18, 2007 hearing (17:30)

[http://boss.streamos.com/real/international/56\\_tn041807.smi](http://boss.streamos.com/real/international/56_tn041807.smi)

(5) "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?article\\_class=13&no=362192&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=13&no=362192&rel_no=1)

(6) McClatchy publications:

[http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/kevin\\_hall/story/16472.html](http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/kevin_hall/story/16472.html)  
China Matters

<http://chinamatters.blogspot.com/2007/04/david-ashers-dead-end.html>

*OhmyNews International*: See for example

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

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[http://english.ohmynews.com/ArticleView/article\\_view.asp?menu=A11100&no=351525&rel\\_no=1&back\\_url=](http://english.ohmynews.com/ArticleView/article_view.asp?menu=A11100&no=351525&rel_no=1&back_url=)

(7) "Heat Is On for CIA Leak Probe Prosecutor":

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?article\\_class=3&no=253530&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=3&no=253530&rel_no=1)

With his Grand Jury term about to expire, Washington is wondering if Patrick Fitzgerald will indict

(8) "Citizen Model for the Study of the Internet"

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=296646&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=296646&rel_no=1)

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[Editor's note: June 30, 2007 marked the first six months that Ban Ki-moon has held the position as Secretary-General of the United Nations. The following article is an effort to look at the role of the Secretary General and some of the challenges he faces. The article appeared in two parts on *OhmyNews International*, June 30, 2007 and July 4, 2007]

## **Ban Ki-Moon's Role of U.N. Secretary General Ronda Hauben Asks if There is a Guiding Vision in the Organization**

by Ronda Hauben  
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### **Part 1**

#### **Introduction**

Ban Ki-moon's nomination by the Security Council to be the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations was sent to the General Assembly on Oct. 13, 2006. Ban succeeded in winning the nomination after a difficult and contested campaign. (1) But his trial by fire was only just beginning. Ban had succeeded in winning the votes of China and of the U.S. Winning the votes of these two nations, who are

permanent members of the Security Council, was seen by a number of commentators as the critical step needed to win the nomination for Secretary General. (2)

Would this very achievement, especially the achievement of winning the vote of the U.S. government in the Security Council, become a handicap that would negatively affect Ban's ability to succeed in the position as the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations?

### **Goals Expressed in *Hankyoreh* Interview**

An interview with Ban Ki-moon on Oct. 30, 2006, shortly after Ban won appointment by the General Assembly as the new Secretary General, and in the interval before he would assume the office in January 2007, offers a rare glimpse of how the soon-to-be-appointed Secretary General viewed his hopes and goals for his new position.

The interview was conducted in the offices of the Korean newspaper *Hankyoreh*, by Moon Chung-in, a Professor at Yonsei University and an Envoy for International Stability. (3) The interview was done in Korean, and translated and published in the English edition of *Hankyoreh*. The goals Ban outlined in this interview provide a yardstick to measure how successfully he is in fulfilling the obligations of his new position.

In the interview, Ban describes a recent visit to the White House shortly after he won the appointment as Secretary General. President Bush greeted him as "Mr Landslide" congratulating him on his victory. The plan had been for Ban to see Steve Hadley, the U.S. National Security Advisor and if time permitted, to briefly meet Bush. Instead he spoke with Bush for more than 20 minutes.

Ban recounts how he and Bush spoke about U.N. reform and the North Korean nuclear program. "Bush," Ban says, "requested that I drive forth with U.N. reforms, assuring me that the U.S. would actively lend its support." In the interview, Bush promised to work with the South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear problem.

Ban also visited China. He describes his meeting with the Chinese President Hu Jintao on this visit. Hu told Ban that "the role of a newly appointed Secretary General is very important and that China would be of active assistance." Ban revealed that during his campaign for the nomination, China "could not make public its support," but that it had "actively helped out behind the scenes." Though it is not yet apparent how China's support for Ban's nomination affects Ban's actions as Secretary General, U.S. support for Ban's nomination

appears to have a significant effect on his activity as Secretary General.

During the *Hankyoreh* interview Ban expressed a belief he has reiterated many times since, that the U.S. is "the U.N.'s most important member." Ban proposed that the U.N. needed the "proactive participation" of the U.S. in order to function properly, just as he believed the U.S. needed the U.N. for its interests.

Also during the interview, Ban expressed his commitment as Secretary General to work to help resolve the problems with North Korea. "I will appoint a politician or diplomat," he asserted, "with the confidence of the international community, someone who has the trust of both North and South Korea to actively push the issue forward. This envoy," he explained, "must be one to impel the Six-Party Talks to action when they stagnate, and must be prepared to play a direct role when necessary. I am ever ready to intervene directly when intervention is called for." Ban also proposed that the U.N. had to find a means to help with transforming the cease-fire that was signed by the U.S. and North Korea at the end of the Korean War into a more permanent peace agreement.

Ban promised to present a blueprint for what he hoped to accomplish in his first 100 days, in his first year, and in his five year term. His priority, he explained, would be in the appointments he would make for U.N. personnel and that these would "raise morale and cultivate professionalism."

Ban's goal at the end of his five year term or ten years if he were to win reappointment for a second term, would be "to create a U.N. reborn as an organization that enjoys much greater international confidence. I will make the U.N. into a body fit for the challenges and themes of the 21st century," he promised. To obtain this objective, he proposed to support "development", especially, "development in Africa and the Millennium Development Plan." His aim would be to "make certain that the U.N. has a role at the center of multilateral diplomacy."

In the interview, Ban also describes how Roh Moo-hyun and the South Korean press helped his candidacy to succeed by "campaigning for me at every opportunity while meeting with foreign heads of state." The South Korean media "also helped a great deal," Ban notes. Ban was aware, too, that it was a particular source of pride for Korea that the 8th Secretary General would be from Korea.

## Comments on Ban's 100-day Anniversary

By Ban's 100 day anniversary, April 10, media commentary on his accomplishments documented the frustration he had experienced. Comments from several diplomats were testimony to the mistakes made as he and his advisors rushed to put their reform agenda into effect.

The Chinese Ambassador to the U.N., Wong Guangya commented on how Ban tried to impose changes in the structure of the U.N. Secretariat, only to meet opposition from a number of countries, observes, "His intentions are good. He is trying to make the Secretariat work more effectively. But personally I feel he's a new comer and he does not understand the culture and the environment in this house. You have to identify who are the stakeholders and how to test the temperature before jumping in. He hasn't done that and he has felt the heat." (4)

Similarly, South African Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo is quoted as being frustrated by Ban's "'decide first, consult afterward' behavior." (5)

Even the American Ambassador, Alejandro D. Wolff, who originally replaced John Bolton, said that there were those "convinced that Ban was 'essentially responding to American demands.'" (6) This impression, Wolff explained, helped to generate distrust in the reforms Ban is trying to implement.

## Role of Secretary General

The role of Secretary General has a number of constraints. It also is a role that carries certain obligations. During his inauguration, Ban took an oath that he would uphold the interests of the United Nations above any national interests and "not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any government or other authority external to the Organization." (7)

In a "Report to the Preparatory Commission of the U.N. 23 Dec 1945," a set of duties and responsibilities are elaborated as a means of stating what is explicit and implicit in the Secretary General's role as provided for by the U.N. charter.

While the Report specifies administrative and executive functions for the Secretary General, it also states that "He is the channel of all communication with the United Nations in any of its organs. He must endeavor, within the scope of his functions, to integrate the activity of the whole complex of United Nations organs and see that the machine runs smoothly and effectively." (8)

Along with the obligation for internal smooth functioning of the U.N., the report proposes an external function. It says, "the Secretary General, more than anyone else, will stand for the United Nations as a whole. In the eyes of the world, no less than the eyes of his own staff, he must embody the principles and ideals of the charter to which the organization seeks to give effect." (9)

## Elements for Creating a Vision

Shashi Tharoor, one of the other candidates for the nomination by the Security Council for the position of Secretary General maintained that emanating from the job description for the Secretary General that each Secretary General wrote for himself, "must shine the vision of the incumbent of the office," a vision which transcends the more practical aspects of the job. (10)

Describing the nature of the job, Tharoor proposed that what was needed was a person with the ability and talent to respond to a wide range of issues "and to know where to go for expert judgment when he or she feels unqualified or uninformed on specific issues. Somebody who recognizes he does not have all the answers but trusts himself to ask the right questions." (11)

Tharoor, who had worked at the U.N. for almost 28 years, said that for him the U.N. was more than a job. "It has always been a cause.... For me the U.N. is far more than an institution.... It represents the vision and foresight of the leaders of the world who wanted to make the second half of the twentieth century better than the first." (12) He described how the U.N. was formed in response to a world that had experienced two world wars, a number of civil wars, several instances of mass population displacements, genocide, the holocaust, and Hiroshima. "The U.N. was part of an attempt to genuinely make a better world and I believe for all its limitations and failures, it did succeed in doing so," he noted. (13)

When Ban outlined the beginning elements for the new role he was to assume in the *Hankyoreh* interview, he planned for the U.N. to play a constructive role in helping to facilitate the Six-Party Talks between North Korea, South Korea, China, the U.S., Japan, and Russia. He had expressed his determination to appoint an envoy to help overcome obstacles that might impede the Six-Party process. This provided an example of a goal he was bringing to his new role at the U.N. How he would carry out this

goal would be a concrete sign of whether he could be guided by a vision for his role as Secretary General.

## Part 2

### Impact of the Press

How has the role of the press affected the actions of the new Secretary General? There is an important example that has developed which helps to demonstrate the impact that the press has had on Ban Ki-moon.

In the interview with *Hankyoreh* before he took office, (14) Ban described how he would act to support a solution to the problem of relations between North Korea and the Northeast Asia region, and the disarmament of the Korean peninsula.

On January 19, 2007, just a few weeks after Ban became Secretary General, there were news reports of a breakthrough in negotiations between the Christopher Hill for the U.S. and Kim Kye-gwan for North Korea. (15) The *International Herald Tribune* reported (16):

“The movement toward a possible breakthrough came during the talks in Berlin between Hill and Kim, Chosun Ilbo reported, citing unidentified officials in Seoul and Beijing.”

Timed, it appeared, to coincide with the breakthrough, however, was the publication in the Wall Street Journal (*WSJ*) of an article “United Nations Dictator’s Program” by Melanie Kirkpatrick. A similar article was published by *Fox News*. These articles alleged that North Korea was manipulating funds from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in North Korea. These press accounts reported that UNDP funds were being used by Kim Jong-il, for whatever he wanted, including “his weapons program.” (17) No proof was provided for this accusation. The articles included other unsupported allegations.

While most of the press reports in the U.S. just repeated or exaggerated the original allegations, a few Korean publications provided a different perspective. The Korean newspaper *Voice of the People* pointed out that the allegations of UNDP mismanagement appeared just as the North Korean and U.S. representatives had had productive negotiations in Berlin. (18) The *Voice of the People* asked why the U.S. Mission to the U.N. was raising these issues “at this time.”

“Despite the totally unfounded allegation by the hawks,” the editors write, “it has a political effect for freezing (the) bilateral relationship between Washington and Pyongyang.” (19)

Ban Ki-moon’s response to the *WSJ* and *Fox News*

articles was to call immediately for an audit of all U.N. programs. The audit was to start with an audit of all programs in North Korea. A few days later the call for an audit of all U.N. programs was dropped. The audit was to be only of North Korea’s UNDP program. (20)

### Some Background

A difficult period for Ban’s predecessor, Secretary General Kofi Annan was caused by the “Oil for Food Scandal.” Annan had refused to support a U.S. backed Security Council resolution authorizing an invasion of Iraq. Annan held that such an invasion would be a violation of the U.N.’s charter. Reports say that in response, right wing neoconservatives in the U.S. government brought forward accusations that there had been corruption in the U.N.’s administration of the “Oil for Food” program. (21) This program had been created by the Security Council supposedly to alleviate some of the harmful effects on civilians of the Security Council sanctions against Iraq.

While the “Oil for Food Scandal” investigation recommended systemic reforms, there was little evidence of corrupt activity by members of the U.N. Secretariat. The investigation created, however, a difficult environment for Annan and other U.N. officials.

When the *WSJ* articles appeared in January 2007 alleging corruption in the UNDP program, they brought up memories of the difficult situation created for the U.N. during the “Oil for Food Scandal.”

### South Korean Press Responses to Allegations

Several articles appeared in the South Korean press which analyzed rather than just repeating the allegations of mismanagement in the UNDP program in North Korea. One article in *JoongAng Ilbo* on January 22, for example, described what happened after the news reports appeared on January 19. Ban met with the Associate Administrator of the UNDP, Ad Melkert, and “vowed a thorough investigation.” (22) The *JoongAng Ilbo* article, in addition, however, noted that this accusation came at a “sensitive time in negotiations” between the U.S. and North Korea.

The article also noted that this action by the UNDP “might be considered another financial sanction by Washington against North Korea just as the six party anti-nuclear talks were expected to resume.” The reporters reminded readers that the



“financial sanctions brought by the U.S. treasury office on Banco Delta Asia which led to freezing \$24 million of North Korean funds” had become a “major sticking point” causing a deadlock in the Six-Party Talks.

Similarly, the article in *Voice of the People* on January 30, 2007, asked, “Now we have to see who’s intriguing against whom because somebody is suffering from pain for it. We should not listen to the shameless and unscrupulous who are trying to curtail humanitarian aid for those who are in need of food.” (23)

An article in *OhmyNews International (OMNI)* and a report by the Civil Network for a Peaceful Korea (Peacekorea) explain that UNDP administrators had denied that there were violations of UNDP policy in the North Korean program. (24) Both articles referred to the fact that the Resident Coordinator of the UNDP Program in North Korea had the authority to decide the financial practices to follow. Another report by Peacekorea noted many people think that Ban is “kind of pro American.” (25)

Peacekorea advocated support for restarting the Six-Party Talks and not letting the U.S. accusations against North Korea divert from support for the unification of the Korean peninsula. Such a policy is presented as a long term vision. Also the report explains that development aid to North Korea is preferable to humanitarian aid, as development aid sets a basis for self sufficiency, while humanitarian aid is expended after it is given. (26)

The Six-Party Talks did resume and came to an agreement on February 13, 2007. Peacekorea offered a critique of the conservative South Korean newspapers which “made comments devaluing the agreement.” (27) The report explained, “Korea’s major newspapers spread a hostile perspective of North Korea on the Korean peninsula. This is not helpful toward gaining denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.” The report proposes that “Under Kim Jong Il’s dictatorship, North Korea, a weak nation, has developed nuclear weapons as a deterrent against the threat of an American attack, as exemplified by the Iraq war, and as a diplomatic tool for bilateral contact with the U.S.” (28)

### **Alternative Approach to Ban’s Policy on Korea**

Such accounts in the South Korean press demonstrate an alternative approach to the policy that the Secretary General is implementing regarding the North Korean situation. For now Ban is not carrying out the policy he had proposed in the *Hankyoreh* interview with regard to the Korean peninsula. To the contrary,

coinciding with pressure from the U.S. press and the U.S. government, he has adopted a policy which has allowed the politicization of the UNDP program that was in North Korea. This has resulted in an audit of previous UNDP programs in North Korea and the ending of the current UNDP program in North Korea.

Similarly, for more than four months, from February through the end of June, the Six-Party Talks hit a deadlock over the decision by the U.S. government to find a small bank in Macau in violation of provisions in the U.S. Patriot Act. The bank complained that it never saw the evidence against it nor did it have a chance to refute the evidence. (29) Yet by using Section 311 of the Patriot Act against this bank, the U.S. Treasury Department was able to freeze \$25 million of North Korean funds and impede North Korea’s access to the international banking system.

Much of the U.S. press has been promoting a hostile policy toward North Korea. (30) Some of the South Korean press echo what appears in the U.S. press, or reprint articles from the conservative interests who are trying to impede further negotiations. Other South Korean publications, however, provide a critique of the hostile attitude of the U.S. press toward North Korea. For example, an article by Tim Savage in *OMNI* documents the internal struggle within the U.S. government between the interests which are hostile to negotiations with North Korea in contrast to the efforts at negotiations by Christopher Hill. (31)

Though he has occupied the office of Secretary General for over six months, Ban has yet to implement the program he proposed before taking office, the program of active U.N. support for a negotiated agreement in the Six-Party Talks. Ban’s original plan was to appoint a diplomat or politician who would be available to intervene when needed to keep the negotiation process on track. Instead the U.N.’s Secretariat has become embroiled in the controversy generated by unsubstantiated charges from the U.S. mission to the U.N. about the UNDP funding of North Korea’s UNDP program.

### **‘We Can’t Prove a Negative’**

The U.S. press continues to echo the U.S. government’s unsubstantiated charges against North Korea and the UNDP, in a way reminiscent of how the same press supported the unsubstantiated and inaccur-

rate U.S. government claims that Iraq possessed “Weapons of Mass Destruction”. The unsubstantiated allegations being spread by the U.S. press about the UNDP, have the effect of politicizing the UNDP program rather than providing the public with the accurate information that is needed to understand the problems and challenges faced by such a program.

David Morrison, the press spokesman for the UNDP, explained that “the point I’m trying to make is we can’t prove a negative,” (32) at a press conference held to answer the June 2007 set of unsubstantiated allegations made by the U.S. mission against the UNDP program in North Korea. This set of allegations appeared in the U.S. press just before the beginning of the June UNDP Executive Board meeting in a way reminiscent of how the previous set of allegations first appeared in the U.S. press just before the January UNDP Executive Board meeting.

Just as the impossibility of proving a negative created a media environment in which the U.S. government could falsely claim they had a justification for a war against Iraq, so a hostile environment is being created to impede the Six-Party Talks by the unsubstantiated allegations against North Korea and the UNDP. (33)

Ban’s original plan for the region provided a means to counter those interests which might impede a negotiated solution to the North Korean conflict. Much of the U.S. press has maintained a hostile attitude toward North Korea, even though there are signs that within the U.S. government there are forces interested in pursuing a negotiated settlement. The South Korean media landscape, however, presents a broader spectrum of opinion on what should be done with regard to North Korea, a spectrum of views which includes support for the policy that Ban originally proposed to implement for the region when he became Secretary General.

## Conclusion

There are many people in Korea and elsewhere, who are watching Ban Ki-moon and are hopeful that he will do good as Secretary General. As the experience of former Secretaries General demonstrates, however, there is a need for a vision to guide him if he is to be able to fulfill on these expectations.

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### Notes:

(1) See for example: Ayca Arlyoruk, “Korean Minister Likely Candidate to Replace Kofi Annan, but Will the General Assembly Approve?”, *UNA-USA*  
<http://www.unausa.org/site/pp.asp?c=fvKRI8MPJpF&b=2116545>

Ban was chosen as Secretary General in a process that is basically secret with voting by the members of the Security Council that is not public. The five Permanent members hold the ability to veto a candidate at a certain stage in the process. Questions have been raised about what criteria are used and what is traded with whom is left as an open question.

Also there were allegations that the South Korean government used grants and various financial rewards to gain support for its candidate from several of the nonpermanent nations that were on the Security Council at the time of the voting for the next Secretary General. See for example:

Richard Beeston, Richard Lloyd Parry, and James Bone, “Millions of dollars and a piano may put Korean in U.N.’s top job”, *Times Online*, September 29, 2006  
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article654479.ece>

Tran Van Loi, “ROK Buying U.N. Post: Times Millions of dollars have been spent in lobbying for Ban ki-moon, says British newspaper”, *OhmyNews International*. October 1, 2006  
[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=320700&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=320700&rel_no=1)

(2) See for example, “Restoring the Vitality of the United Nations”

[http://www.cfr.org/publication/10833/restoring\\_the\\_vitality\\_of\\_the\\_united\\_nations\\_rush\\_transcript\\_federal\\_news\\_service\\_inc.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10833/restoring_the_vitality_of_the_united_nations_rush_transcript_federal_news_service_inc.html)

(3) [Interview] Next U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. in conversation with Moon Chung-in, translated by Daniel Rakove, *The Hankyoreh*. November 3, 2006.

<http://www.hani.co.kr/popups/print.hani?ksn=169339>

(4) Maggie Farley, “New Secretary General Is Still Finding His Footing at the U.N.”, *LA Times*, April 9, 2007

<http://www.globalpolicy.org/secgen/ban/2007/0409footing.htm>

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) *Ibid.*

(7) Ronda Hauben, “Ban Ki-moon Inaugurated, Pledges to uphold the interests of the United Nations above all else”, *OhmyNews International*, December 15, 2006.

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=334916&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=334916&rel_no=1)

(8) “Report to the Preparatory Commission of the U.N. 23 Dec 1945,” in *Secretary or General: The U.N. Secretary-General in World Politics?*, edited by Simon Chesterman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 243-244

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 245

(10) Shashi Tharoor, in *Secretary or General: The U.N. Secretary-General in World Politics?*, edited by Simon Chesterman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 46.

(11) Lydia Swart, “Shashi Tharoor Sees his 28 Years at the United Nations as an Asset”, Center for U.N. Reform Education, interview done 12 July 2006.

<http://www.centerforunreform.org/node/61/print>

(12) *Ibid.*

(13) *Ibid.*

(14)[Interview] Next U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. in conversation with Moon Chung-in, translated by Daniel Rakove, *The Hankyoreh*. November 3, 2006.

<http://www.hani.co.kr/popups/print.hani?ksn=169339>

(15) “U.S.-DPRK talks end, no comments on resuming 6-party

talks”, CCTV.com Jan 19, 2007,

<http://www.cctv.com/english/20070119/101358.shtml>

(16) “U.S. envoy confident in North Korea nuclear talks”, *International Herald Tribune*, January 22, 2007

<http://www.cctv.com/english/20070119/101358.shtml>

(17) Melanie Kirkpatrick, “United Nations Dictator’s Program”, *WSJ*, January 19, 2007.

(18) “The U.S. Stands in the Way of Pyongyang”, *Voice of the People*, January 30, 2007.

(19) Ibid.

(20) Ronda Hauben, “Hardliners Attack UNDP Aid to North Korea: Allegations of corruption seen as attempt to undermine engagement”, *OMNI*, February 7, 2007.

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=344001&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=344001&rel_no=1)

(21) Thalif Deen, “Will the New U.N. Chief Stand Up to Big Powers”, *Inter Press News Agency*, December 12, 2006.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35814>

(22) Nam Jeong-ho and Lee Sang-eon, “Report Says Kim Jong-il Cashed in on U.N. Office”, *JoongAng Ilbo*, January 22, 2007.

(23) Ibid., *Voice of the People*.

(24) Ronda Hauben, “Hardliners Attack UNDP Aid to North Korea Allegations of corruption seen as attempt to undermine engagement”, *OMNI*, February 7, 2007. See also: Soohyun Lee, “UNDP’s aid toward North Korea”, *peacekorea*, January 23, 2007

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?article\\_class=2&no=344001&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=2&no=344001&rel_no=1)

(25) Soohyun Lee, UNDP’s aid toward North Korea, *peacekorea*, February 13, 2007

(26) Ibid.

(27) Ji-Hyun Lee, “The Ghost of Anti-communism Reflected in South Korean Media”, *peacekorea*, May 7, 2007

(28) Ibid.

(29) Ronda Hauben, “North Korea’s \$25 Million and Banco Delta Asia: Another abuse under the U.S. Patriot Act (2001)”, *OMNI*, March 21, 2007.

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?article\\_class=3&no=351525&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=3&no=351525&rel_no=1)

(30) The McClatchy Newspapers have been an exception. See for example articles like

“Bank owner disputes money-laundering allegations” Kevin G. Hall about the BDA affair.

(31) Tim Savage, “Six-Party Talks Resume: Expectations high for progress in Beijing,” *OMNI*, February 8, 2007.

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=344245&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=344245&rel_no=1)

(32) David Morrison, Press Conference, June 11, 2007, See Minutes: 38:46

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/pressbriefing/brief070611.rm>

(33) Ronda Hauben, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Syndrome and the Press [Analysis] How does one prove a negative?”, *OMNI*, June 24, 2007.

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?no=368433&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=368433&rel_no=1)

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on October 4, 2007]

## On the Status of the Six-Party Talks ‘It’s Never Been an Easy Sell in Washington,’ Says Chris Hill

by Ronda Hauben  
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At a press conference held in New York City on Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2007, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill answered questions and outlined some of his concerns regarding the recent session of the Six-Party Talks (1) held in Beijing, Sept. 27-30.

Hill said that originally there was not to be a formal statement of agreement, but that on Sunday morning before the session was to end, the Chinese hosts distributed a draft of a short statement for the six parties to consider. Hill said that each of the parties took the statement back to their capitols to seek approval. For Hill, this meant flying to New York City to meet with Secretary of State Rice who had been attending U.N. related events. Then the proposal was brought to President Bush for his approval.

When Hill was asked how difficult was the process of getting an agreement from Washington, he said “It’s never been an easy sell in Washington.” Hill explained the agreement in general terms, as the press conference was held before the statement was officially released.

By Dec. 31, 2007, Hill said North Korea agreed to disable its Nyongbyon nuclear facilities. Also by that date, there was an agreement to provide an accurate accounting for how much fissile material was produced by North Korea. In 2008, the Six-Party Talks will move toward the issue of dismantling the plutonium producing facility. As an outcome of the talks, Hill hoped for the creation of a North East Asian Peace structure, but he felt there was still a long way to go to get to that goal.

When asked about whether the U.S. had agreed to remove North Korea from the U.S. government’s State Sponsors of Terrorists list, Hill said that was something “we are working on with the DPRK.” He

said that “from our point of view any time we can work with a country to get them off the list, that’s what we want to do.” Hill also said that North Korea was being encouraged to improve DPRK-Japan relations. He did not say whether efforts were being made to encourage Japan to improve Japan-DPRK relations.

In response to another question about removing the designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, Hill said that the U.S. wanted to “work through the past history that had led to the DPRK being put on that list.”

A reporter asked what it would take to move from the armistice of the Korean war to a peace agreement ending the war.

“From the U.S. point of view if the DPRK is prepared to denuclearize we are prepared to reach a peace agreement,” replied Hill. There would need to be a number of issues considered, he explained, to reach a peace settlement. When questioned about North Korea’s concern that there be an end of hostility by the U.S. toward it, Hill said that the U.S. was hostile to proliferation and that there was no hostile policy of the U.S. to North Korea.

When asked about the problems that had existed regarding the U.S. Treasury Department’s action freezing North Korean assets in the Banco Delta Asia (2), Hill said that that situation related to the need of the U.S. to protect its financial system and its currencies. “We would like them (North Korea-ed) to have access to the international financial system,” he explained, “but they have to play by the rules everyone else plays by.”

He didn’t elaborate further on this issue or on whether North Korea’s regaining access to the international banking system was a matter being considered in the negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea.

In response to a question about why it seemed negotiations were entering a sensitive stage, he explained that what was happening was to have the U.S. on the ground involved in disabling the nuclear facility. It was “not just paper any more,” he observed.

Another reporter asked Hill what problems he saw in the future that he was concerned about. Hill responded that what keeps him awake is that they are focusing on the step to be taken but that “the process won’t be successful unless we reach the goal.” The DPRK will need to give up its fissile material and weapons, explained Hill, so he was concerned that there were those in the army in North Korea who might not want to get to the last step.

“When we finish this job”, Hill said, the parties will

have come to understand what it means to come together and solve the problems. In this process, Hill felt that North Korea would get the sense of “what it means to be part of a community.”

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Notes:

(1) For an earlier press conference by Hill about the talks, see “U.S., North Korea Move to Open Ties Christopher Hill and Kim Kye-gwan hold meeting in New York on first steps” [http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=348974&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=348974&rel_no=1)

(2) While the \$25 million of North Korean funds have now been returned to North Korea, the problem of North Korea being denied access to the international banking system has not yet been resolved. Describing some of the problems that the U.S. Treasury Department action against the Banco Delta Asia posed as an obstacle to the progress of the Six-Party Talks, see for example: North Korea’s \$25 Million and Banco Delta Asia, Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia, Weapons of Mass Destruction Syndrome and the Press? [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)

#### **Full Text of the Joint Document**

*The Second Session of the Sixth Round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing among the People’s Republic of China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States of America from 27 to 30 September 2007.*

*Mr. Wu Dawei, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, Mr. Kim Gye Gwan, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK, Mr. Kenichiro Sasae, Director-General for Asian and Oceanian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Chun Yung-woo, Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Alexander Losyukov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and Mr. Christopher Hill, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Department of State of the United States, attended the talks as heads of their respective delegations.*

#### **Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei chaired the talks.**

*The Parties listened to and endorsed the reports of the five Working Groups, confirmed the implementation of the initial actions provided for in the February 13 agreement, agreed to push forward the Six-Party Talks process in accordance with the consensus reached at the meetings of the Working Groups and reached agreement on second-phase actions for the implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, the goal of which is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.*

#### **I. On Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula**

*1. The DPRK agreed to disable all existing nuclear facilities subject to abandonment under the September 2005 Joint Statement and the February 13 agreement.*

*The disablement of the 5 megawatt Experimental Reactor at Yongbyon, the Reprocessing Plant (Radiochemical Laboratory) at Yongbyon and the Nuclear Fuel Rod Fabrication Facility at Yongbyon will be completed by 31 December 2007. Specific measures recommended by the expert group will be adopted by heads of delegation in line with the principles of being acceptable to all Parties, scientific, safe, verifiable, and consistent with international standards. At the request of the other Parties, the United States will lead disablement activities and provide the initial funding for those activities. As a first step, the U.S. side will lead the expert group to the DPRK within the next two weeks to prepare for disablement.*

*2. The DPRK agreed to provide a complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs in accordance with the February 13 agreement by 31 December 2007.*

*3. The DPRK reaffirmed its commitment not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how.*

#### **II. On Normalization of Relations between Relevant Countries**

*1. The DPRK and the United States remain committed to improving their bilateral relations and moving towards a full diplomatic relationship. The two sides will increase bilateral exchanges and enhance mutual trust. Recalling the commitments to begin the process of removing the designation of the DPRK 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 DPRK, the United States will fulfill its commitments to the DPRK in parallel with the DPRK's actions based on consensus reached at the meetings of the Working Group on Normalization of DPRK-U.S. Relations.*

*2. The DPRK and Japan will make sincere efforts to normalize their relations expeditiously in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration, on the basis of the settlement of the unfortunate past and the outstanding issues of concern. The DPRK and Japan committed themselves to taking specific actions toward this end through intensive consultations between them.*

#### **III. On Economic and Energy Assistance to the DPRK**

*In accordance with the February 13 agreement, economic, energy and humanitarian assistance up to the equivalent of one million tons of HFO (inclusive of the 100,000 tons of HFO already delivered) will be provided to the DPRK. Specific modalities will be finalized through discussion by the Working Group on Economy and Energy Cooperation.*

#### **IV. On the Six-Party Ministerial Meeting**

*The Parties reiterated that the Six-Party Ministerial Meeting will be held in Beijing at an appropriate time.*

*The Parties agreed to hold a heads of delegation meeting prior to the Ministerial Meeting to discuss the agenda for the Meeting.*

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The above article can be seen at:

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=380575&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=380575&rel_no=1)

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on October 4, 2007]

## **North Korea Addresses U.N. 62nd Session U.N. Officials Express Their Support for Inter-Korean Summit**

by Ronda Hauben  
ronda.netizen@gmail.com

Explaining that North Korea was making a sincere effort to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, Choe Su Hon, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made his nation's presentation at the General Debate opening the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2007.

He described how North Korea had acted in self defense as a small nation, to safeguard its "national sovereignty and dignity in the face of U.S. threats of preemptive nuclear strikes and harsh economic sanctions."

Choe told the United Nations General Assembly that the principle of "words for words and actions for actions" was the basis for progress in the Six-Party Talks that were going on between North Korea, South Korea, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia. This required, he explained, removing the "deep rooted hostile U.S. policy" toward his country that had persisted for "over half a century." This also would involve the normalizing of bilateral relations between the U.S. and North Korea. With respect to Japan, Choe said there was the need for it to "discard its hostility toward the DPRK as they have pledged to do."

While Choe was speaking to the member states of the United Nations in New York City, the inter Korean Summit was taking place in Pyongyang. Choe told his international audience that "the north-south summit now under way in Pyongyang will be of great significance." He said it would take the "inter-Korean relations to a higher stage." As long as the north and south sit face to face, in the spirit of national independence and love for the country and nation, he proposed that all problems between the north and south "can be surely resolved in the interests of our nation regardless of differences in ideas and systems." (1)

The Summit between the north and south was greeted by others at the United Nations with support and encouragement. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed his hope for the success of the summit so that it “will lead to increased inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, as well as promoting co-prosperity.” He said that “the United Nations stands ready to provide assistance as may be required.” (2)

Srgjan Kerim, the President of the General Assembly also offered his congratulations and good wishes for the success of the Summit. His spokesman told the press that, “the President wishes to commend the two leaders for their brave initiative and further encourages them to use the opportunity of their meeting to make progress on promoting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and on inter-Korean reconciliation.” He said that “it is in the interest of all Member States of the United Nations to achieve progress on those issues,” emphasizing that “it is through dialogue that differences between Member States can best be resolved.” (3)

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Notes:

(1) Press Release, Statement , by H.E. Mr. Choe Su Hon, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, in the General Debate of the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Oct 2, 2007

<http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/62/2007/pdfs/DPRK-eng.pdf>

(2) Secretary-General welcomes upcoming summit in pyongyang

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sgsm11197.doc.htm>

(3) Statement on Inter-Korean Summit Attributable to Spokesperson

<http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2007/db071001.doc.htm>

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The above article can be seen at:

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=380581&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?menu=c10400&no=380581&rel_no=1)

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[Editor's note: The following article appeared in *Ohmynews International* on November 1, 2007]

## **U.N. Passes Resolution Supporting Inter-Korean Summit**

**Document A/62/L4 Entitled ‘Peace, Security and Reunification on the Korean Peninsula’**

by Ronda Hauben  
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Just a little over a year ago I began covering the United Nations as a featured writer for *OhmyNews International*. My first day was when Ban Ki-moon’s nomination for Secretary General of the U.N. was approved by the General Assembly. For South Korea this was an exciting event.

The next day, however, the Security Council imposed sanctions against North Korea. (1) The dilemma of a Korea divided North and South was a glaring contradiction facing the international community with the appointment of a Secretary General from the Korean peninsula. Similarly, however, this was a challenge to the international community to support unification on the Korean peninsula.

A little more than one year later, the General Assembly held an event to provide needed support for Korean reunification. In the General Assembly on Wednesday, Oct. 31, the international community approved a resolution supporting the motion toward reunification of the two Koreas and applauding the Second Inter-Korean Summit held October 2-4, 2007 and the joint Declaration issued by the presidents of the two Koreas. (2)

The event was held during the afternoon session of the U.N.’s General Assembly. The U.N. delegate from North Korea, Pak Gil Yon introduced the resolution, saying “Mr. President, I have the honor to introduce a draft resolution contained in document A/62/L4 entitled ‘Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula’.”

He described the Oct. 2-4 summit and the declaration that resulted, explaining that the U.N. resolution being proposed “welcomes and supports the inter-Korean summit including the Declaration and encourages both sides to implement it faithfully and in good faith, inviting member States to support and assist the current positive process.”

The U.N. delegate from South Korea, Kim Hyun Chong was the next speaker. As joint sponsor of the resolution with the delegate from North Korea, Kim described several aspects of the peace accord that the two parties agreed to in their declaration at the end of the Inter-Korean Summit. "Through its various provisions," he explained, "the Declaration points the way forward for common prosperity, eventual peaceful reunification on the Korean peninsula, and the resolution of long-standing regional concerns."

Among those speaking in support of the resolution were Portugal on behalf of the European Union, China, Vietnam, Japan, the U.S., New Zealand, Yemen, Germany, Indonesia, Thailand, Canada, Guatemala, Belarus, Russia, Chile, Poland, Mongolia, Myanmar, Benin, Brazil, Italy, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Cuba.

Yemen and Germany spoke about the difficulties they had experienced as divided nations, and offered whatever support they could provide to the Korean reunification efforts. The German ambassador said that "what we have learned from our own experience is: the separation of a nation is not irreversible. The two Koreas will have to find their own way of tackling these issues, but Germany stands ready, upon request, to share its own experience from the years of German-German relations."

The ambassador of Yemen said that his country had had a long history of division, which was changed with the unification in May 1990. He explained that the unification was difficult and not without defects. He understood the suffering of the divided families and duplication of resources that the division represented and said that his country would do what it could to support the efforts of the two Koreas to implement fully the declaration they had issued.

The ambassador from Vietnam noted that the Summit and the resulting Declaration were of "great historic significance." He said that Vietnam "welcomes and highly appreciates the encouraging outcomes of these developments." He noted that the events of Oct. 2-4 represented an important milestone in the process of the improvement and development of relations between the two Koreans which would bring them "closer to their long-held dreams of national reunification and prosperity." The ambassador from Vietnam noted that his country had good relations with the two Koreas.

The ambassador from Thailand also noted the historic nature of the recent Summit and concluded that "this historic resolution has called for many countries to readjust the attitude and the policy toward the situation in the Korean peninsula."

Indonesia's U.N. ambassador similarly noted that his country has had close ties with both North and South Korea. He, too, saw the Summit of October 2007 as a "major milestone in inter-Korean relations." He called for support from member nations to the process of "inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification."

The U.N. ambassador from Portugal said that the EU stands ready to contribute to the efforts.

Several nations spoke about having been part of KEDO, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization in 1996 and wanting to continue to help in the ways they could. The ambassador from Italy said that his country had worked to support Inter-Korean dialogue. Also Italy was offering to provide the help it could, and had established a way to provide aid to North Korea shortly before the Summit. Italy had been a supporter of KEDO, as had Chile.

Benin's U.N. ambassador explained that his country, too, had friendly relations with the two sister republics on the Korean Peninsula. He described how Benin had been working to promote peaceful reunification of the Koreas for a number of decades. He endorsed the current developments and said that reunification would "put an end to one of the most painful relics of the Second World War."

Brazil expressed its support for the resolution and reminded those in the General Assembly that Brazil had been a co-sponsor for the General Assembly Resolution 55/11 seven years earlier supporting the first Inter-Korean Summit of June 15, 2000.

The U.S. ambassador to the U.N. said that the U.S. was pleased with the draft resolution being discussed by the General Assembly. He stressed that dialogue between the two Koreas was essential for better relations. He explained that this dialogue process was supportive to and complementary to the Six-Party Talks going on.

The Japanese ambassador also expressed his nation's strong support for the draft resolution. In his talk he referred to some of the specifics of the Six-Party Talks.

The ambassador to the U.N. from Chile expressed his sentiments that Korea had one past and one destiny. The declaration from the Inter-Korean Summit was the outcome of a difficult and sensitive process. He explained that no state should fail to join the noble effort to support the Korean people's desire to become one nation.

The ambassador from Cuba to the U.N. was the final speaker in the discussion before action was to be taken on the resolution. He explained that “Cuba has always supported and will continue to support the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.” Also he explained that the Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held last year in Havana stressed the importance of peace on the Korean peninsula. Similarly the NAM Summit “expressed its support toward efforts to reunify the Korean peninsula through the genuine aspirations and concerted efforts of the Korean peoples themselves.”

The resolution was approved by acclamation. Ban Ki-moon was present in the General Assembly during the discussion of the resolution. After it was approved, he made a statement congratulating the representatives of the two Koreas. (3)

“Today’s date,” he explained, “coincides exactly with the date seven years ago when the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/11, following the June 2000 summit of the DPRK and the ROK. I welcome this coincidence. In my homeland of Korea, it is an ancient custom to choose an auspicious day for any celebration or new endeavor.”

“Today,” he continued, “I feel a personal obligation to do all I can to encourage and facilitate the continuing work for peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula. I am convinced that the historic inter-Korean summit will pave the way for a permanent peace regime and eventual reunification.”

“As Secretary-General, I stand ready to provide every assistance required, in close cooperation with the international community,” he said, concluding his statement.

During the press encounter he had outside of the General Assembly, Ban was asked, “[Y]ou just said that you would like to do everything to support peace on the Korean peninsula. Do you have any special plan in mind, as head of the United Nations, and if so, can you please give the details?”

In response, Ban said, “At this time I do not have any detailed or specific plans, but in principle, as Secretary-General, I have a broad mandate and duty to assist any parties to the problems for smooth and harmonious resolution. For that matter, since I served as Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea in the past, and I have expertise and knowledge and experience, whenever I am needed, I will do whatever I can.”

The U.N. resolution supporting the movement toward reunification of the two Koreas, passed on the

last day of October 2007 by the General Assembly, may not seem particularly significant, but it is actually an important event. It reflects the support of the international community for the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula, which is one of the important outstanding problems of our times. As the ambassador from Benin profoundly noted, the reunification of the two Koreas would “put an end to one of the most painful relics of the Second World War.”

The U.N. was created to facilitate such events. Passing this resolution supporting the recent Inter-Korean Summit is a fitting way for the U.N. to mark the one year anniversary since the General Assembly appointed a new Secretary General. The challenge is now for the people of the two Koreas, the Secretary General and the member nations to do what is needed to support the continuing motion toward peaceful reconciliation and Korean reunification.

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Notes:

(1) Ronda Hauben, “The Problem Facing the U.N. Can Ban Ki-moon help solve the problem with the Security Council?”, *OhmyNews International*, October 17, 2006.

[http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article\\_view.asp?article\\_class=3&no=323351&rel\\_no=1](http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=3&no=323351&rel_no=1)

(2) The United Nations A/62/L.4, General Assembly, Sixty-second session, Agenda item 167 Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Republic of Korea draft resolution reads:

***Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula***

*The General Assembly, Recalling its resolution 55/11 of 31 October 2000, in which it welcomed and supported the inter-Korean summit and the joint declaration adopted on 15 June 2000 by the two leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea,*

*Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the maintenance of international peace and security,*

*Convinced that inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation are essential for consolidating peace and security on the Korean peninsula and also contribute to peace and stability in the region and beyond, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter,*

*Recognizing that the summit meeting held in Pyongyang from 2 to 4 October 2007 between the two leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and their Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity represent a major milestone in*



*improving inter-Korean relations and in advancing peace and common prosperity on the Korean peninsula and in the wider region as well,*

*Recalling the statements welcoming the inter-Korean summit made on 1 October 2007 by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, and recalling also the statement welcoming the adoption of the Declaration made on 4 October 2007 by the Secretary-General,*

*1. Welcomes and supports the inter-Korean summit held from 2 to 4 October 2007 and the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity adopted on 4 October 2007 by the two leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea;*

*2. Encourages the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to implement the Declaration fully and in good faith, thereby consolidating peace on the Korean peninsula and laying a solid foundation for peaceful reunification;*

*3. Invites Member States to continue to support and assist, as appropriate, the process of inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification so that it may contribute to peace and security not only on the Korean peninsula but also in northeast Asia and the world as a whole.*

*A/62/L.4*

(3) Ban's statement

<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=2828>

The above article can be seen at:

[http://engdev.ohmynews.com/ArticleView/article\\_view.asp?article\\_class=13&no=380842&rel\\_no=1](http://engdev.ohmynews.com/ArticleView/article_view.asp?article_class=13&no=380842&rel_no=1)

[Editor's note: In August 2007, Ronda Hauben made a presentation at the World Fellowship in New Hampshire, U.S. She spoke about covering the U.N. as a featured writer for OMNI. In the following section from her presentation, she shows there can be a power in netizen reporting.]

## **The Net Gives the Power of the Reporter to the Netizen**

by Ronda Hauben  
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**An Example from My Experience Covering the U.N. for *OhmyNews International***

### **BDA Story**

This spring as a featured writer for *OhmyNews International* I covered the 50th anniversary dinner in

New York City of the Korea Society. One of the speakers at the dinner was U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill. He explained the problem of \$25 million of North Korean money being frozen as part of a U.S. Treasury Department proceeding against a bank in Macau, China, the Banco Delta Asia (BDA). This is a problem that was at the time holding up the implementation of the Six-Party agreement to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. Hill committed himself to work on this problem until it was solved.

There were several Korean journalists covering the event for their publications. They were particularly interested in what Hill said, but Hill's talk in itself did not seem to represent a newsworthy event.

In the next few days, however, an important story was developing.

In the process of trying to unravel the unfolding developments, I found a story online about the activity the bank had engaged in for North Korea. It documented that this was legitimate banking activity, not illegal activity. The news organization which published the story was the McClatchy Newspapers. I also found links on the blog, "China Matters," to some documents refuting the Treasury Department's charges against the bank.

I now had the documents in the case. The U.S. government's findings were general statements providing no specific evidence of wrong doing on the part of the bank. The bank's statements and refutation gave significant documentation refuting charges of illegal activity on the part of the bank. The refutation also made the case that there were political motives for the U. S. governments' allegations rather than actual illegal activity on the part of the bank. The U.S. government had targeted a small Macau bank to scare the many banks in China. "To kill the chicken to scare the monkeys," as the government document explained, quoting an old Chinese proverb.

At last I had the news peg for an important story. I wrote an article, submitting it online around 5 a.m. my time on May 18 to *OhmyNews International (OMNI)*, using the software *OMNI* provides for submitting articles. Also on May 18, the *Wall Street Journal* carried an Op Ed by the former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., John Bolton. His article scolded the U.S. government for negotiating to return the \$25 million to North Korea. By noon that day, my story appeared on *OMNI*. So an Internet

search that day gave people who searched two substantially different analyses to consider. (See **Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia** this issue p17)

This short description was part of a talk that I gave in San Francisco in May 2007 at the International Communications Association (ICA) annual conference.

During the conference, I summed up my experience working on this issue with the conclusion:

There is not yet an OhmyNews (OMN) in the U.S. So my story about the connection of the U.S. government's policy toward China and the U.S. government actions against the Macau bank is not yet likely to be able to impact how the mainstream news media in the U.S. frames the story with North Korea and the Six-Party Talks. But the need for a U.S. model of OMN becomes all the more urgent when one participates in *OMNI* and thus has the experience of exploring the potential of what it will make possible.

### Next Episode

Little did I realize when I gave my talk in San Francisco, however, that this story was not ending, but a new aspect was developing.

When I returned home from the ICA conference, I did a follow-up story to my two earlier stories about the BDA issue.

A short time later, on June 11, I found a surprising email in my mailbox. The email was from a reporter who said she worked for the Korean Service of the *Voice of America News (VOA News)*.

She wrote:

*Hello Ms. Hauben*

She introduced herself as being a reporter with the *Voice of America News* in Washington D.C.

Her email said:

*While I was working on a story about BDA issue, I read your report, 'Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia.' I thought you made some valuable points about the BDA issue in this report, I was wondering if I could have a conversation with you in this matter. Since I am on deadline, I'm trying very hard to get a hold of you. So I would really appreciate it if you call or email me back ASAP....*

She gave her phone number.

The *Voice of American News* is now part of the U.S. State Department.

I called her as she had asked and she said she wanted to interview me by phone. I asked her to let me know what she would want to speak with me about. She sent me an email elaborating:

*The questions I am planning to ask you during the interview are going to be about both the content of your article and how you did it. Although I'd like to ask you, first of all, how you came up with the idea of writing this article, the focus of this interview is not just on how you prepared the article.*

*The purpose of this interview is to let our listeners know what is going on regarding the BDA issue and how the BDA issue is developing. When I read your article, I thought you made valuable and critical points about the BDA issue, and I thought it might be very important to let your idea about the BDA issue be heard by our listeners.*

She listed questions she would ask me in the interview.

- 1. How you came up with the idea of writing this article? How you prepared it? About your sources*
- 2. Briefly summarize your findings or main points of the article?*
- 3. What you are trying to accomplish by writing this article? What needs to be done to resolve the BDA issue?*

She wrote ending the email:

*Finally, I wanted to ask you if we could do this interview sometime between 9am and 9:30am.... Thanks again.*

She did indeed call and we had a substantial phone conversation discussing my stories, the Internet sources I had used, and what I saw as the problem with the American government's freezing the Banco Delta Asia funds.

Afterwards she asked specifically for the urls to follow up on the Internet sources I had cited. These were basically material I had found including a blog, several government documents, and copies of the legal documents submitted by the Bank owner to appeal the Treasury Department ruling against the Bank, all on the Internet.

This was all happening at a time when there were new efforts to find a solution to the roadblock that freezing the BDA funds belonging to North Korea represented to the continuation of the Six-Party Talks.

The *Voice of America News* reporter said she would consider contacting the former U.S. government officials who were responsible for crafting the

plan to freeze North Korea's assets at Banco Delta Asia.

Just at this time, the U.S. government announced a new possible arrangement for returning the funds to North Korea via the international banking system. In the following week it proved successful.

The *Voice of American News* reporter wrote me saying she had other stories to do and was not for now going to pursue this story any longer.

I can only speculate that perhaps her contacting me and interviewing me was part of an effort by some people within the U.S. government to put pressure on others within the government who were creating the roadblocks.

Regardless of her motivation, the *Voice of America News* reporter had contacted me before the situation was resolved. Whether the contact had any impact on the resolution I can only speculate. At the very least, the articles I had done had caught the attention of someone at the *Voice of America News* which is part of the U.S. State Dept. I was given the chance to explain how I framed the story of the BDA and what I saw the controversy surrounding it to be.

So my story did indeed have more of an impact than I thought possible when I gave my talk at the ICA in San Francisco. OMNI and the Internet in general gave these stories about the BDA a power they would not otherwise have had.

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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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