

CHRONOLOGY

Major Events Around the Korean Peninsula (May 25, 2003 - August 25, 2003)

May

- 25 The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland warns South Korea of the possibility of a terrible catastrophe, if “further steps” against NK, which were mentioned in a Seoul-Washington joint statement on May 14, are carried out.

- 27 *Rodong Sinmun* issues a commentary that Japan will “meet a fatal fiasco” if it continues to blindly follow US policy, after the Japanese cabinet’s approval of a statement defending US use of cluster bombs in Iraq.

The SK Red Cross ships NK 15,000 tons of fertilizer. The delivery is the first of 200,000 tons SK has promised to donate to NK.

Visiting Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Vladimir Putin hold summit talks.

- 29 USFK Commander General Leon LaPorte explains US plans to invest \$11 billion for the next three years to SK Defense Minister Cho Young-gil.
- 30 A party of six U.S. Congressmen, led by Rep. Curt Weldon, visits North Korea. They are the first US officials to be invited to NK since the nuclear crisis erupted in Oct. 2002.

June

- 1 US President George W. Bush and Chinese President hold their first summit talks in Evian where the G-8 meeting is held.
- 2 US Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz announces that realignment of the USFK will not undermine the deterrent power of US troops, at a news conference in Seoul.
- 3 General Leon LaPorte states at the SK National Assembly, that there will be modifications to the operations plan of the SK-US combined forces to beef up defense of the capital region.

The SK Joint Chiefs of Staff announces that the SK navy fired warning shots to repel a NK fishing boat that crossed the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea. NK fishing boats have violated the NLL every day since May 26, except for May 29.

- 5 SK and US officials announce that US troops will withdraw from the DMZ, and will be redeployed back to positions at least 75 miles from the DMZ.

- 7 Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and visiting SK President Roh Moo-hyun hold summit talks.
- The fifth SK-NK working-level talks on the connection of railroads and roads across the DMZ is held in Kaesong.
- 8 KCNA denounces an 11 billion-dollar US plan to boost the war capability of SK troops that it is part of US preparations to “ignite a war.”
- The SK Justice Ministry announces that inter-Korean traffic totaled 201,600 persons, 197,525 of them South Koreans. Among the SK total, 92 percent went as tourists, 6.2 percent went on business, 1.1 percent went for visits, 0.3 percent went for sports or cultural events and 0.2 percent went for official reasons.
- 9 KCNA, for the first time, states that it is seeking nuclear weapons and blames the “hostile” US policy for forcing it to develop a deterrent. Since the NK nuclear crisis, it has carefully avoided admitting in public to either seeking or possessing nuclear weapons.
- 10 The director of the SK Defense Ministry Cha Young-gu, for the first time as a high government official, confirms the existence of SK’s missile defense plan in an interview with a SK media. He states SK urgently needs to secure a missile defense capability and denies reports that the USFK demanded SK purchase Patriot missiles and Apache helicopters.
- 11 US ambassador to SK Thomas Hubbard states that the “further steps” and “tougher measures” mentioned during US meetings with SK and Japan did not directly suggest military action towards NK.
- 12 KCNA announces that South Korean gunships violated the North’s territorial waters.
- The first PSI meeting is held in Madrid.
- 13 SK Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun warns NK that if the North worsens the nuclear situation, it will inevitably affect SK-NK exchanges and cooperation.
- 14 Ceremonies are held to link the railways of the two Koreas.
- 15 The Grand Festival for National Reunification is held in Pyongyang to mark the 3rd anniversary of the announcement of the June 15 inter-Korean joint declaration.
- 16 *Rodong Sinmun* says Japan’s restrictions on the Mangyongbong-92 amounts to a declaration to sever relations between NK and Japan.
- 17 A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry denounces the U.S. report on human trafficking, which designated the North as a country abetting human smuggling, as another falsehood.
- The ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting is held in Phnom Penh.
- The US has drawn up a measure called “preemptive preemption,” in cooperation with allies, to keep countries like NK, Iran, Libya and Syria from transporting arms across allied waters or airspace, *Chosun Ilbo* reports.
- 18 Former President Kim Dae-jung’s

- closest aide, Park Ji-won, is arrested for taking \$12.5 million in bribes from Chung Mong-hun, a top Hyundai executive, and for persuading a government-controlled bank to give loans to the group.
- 19 A variety of functions are held in Pyongyang to commemorate the 39th anniversary of the beginning of Kim Jong-il's career in the Workers' Party Central Committee.
- 20 *Rodong Sinmun* says that if the U.S. refers the North's nuclear issue to the UN Security Council, the North will take emergency measures against it.
- 23 KCNA claims in a commentary that the U.S.-led sea blockade against North Korea is a declaration of war and a violation of the armistice treaty signed in July 1953 at the end of the Korean War.
- 24 *Joongang Ilbo* reports, without identifying the source, that in late May, NK asked Russia to host bilateral talks with the US in Russia.
- WHO lifts its warning against travel to Beijing, the only remaining site in the world on its SARS blacklist.
- 25 A million NK citizens rally to mark the 53rd anniversary of the start of the Korean War, using the occasion to launch another protest against the US.
- SK special prosecutor Song Doo-hwan, concluding a 70-day investigation, announces that Hyundai in return for obtaining comprehensive economic cooperation rights from NK, promised to send \$400 million before the 2000 summit, while the SK government promised \$100 million.
- 26 NK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun sends a letter to the president of the UN Security Council to explain the North's position regarding the U.S. call on the Council on June 19 to adopt a statement urging North Korea to scrap its nuclear weapons program.
- SK civic groups send 1,000 tons of powdered milk to NK.
- 27 President Roh Moo-hyun states that SK needs the US troops stationed in SK for the long term.
- The seventh round of meeting of separated family reunions begins on Mt. Kumgang.
- 28 In a bid to lure foreign investment, NK makes public four regulations regarding the development of the Mt. Kumgang tourist zone and the Kaesong industrial complex, and business operations in the Mt. Kumgang tourist zone and the Kaesong industrial complex.
- 30 A ground-breaking ceremony for the Kaesong industrial complex is held, with the participation of hundreds of SK and NK officials and businessmen, including Chung Mong-hun, chairman of Hyundai Asan and Ri Jong-hyok, vice chairman of the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee.
- July**
- 1 Chief of the Panmunjom Mission of the NK's People's Army issues a statement that North Korea will "immediately take strong and merciless retaliatory measures" against the US if they infringe upon its sovereignty.
- 2 Senior diplomats from the US, Japan and SK hold informal talks on NK.

- 4 Japan's Lower House passes a law that allows the government to send soldiers to help rebuild Iraq, which marks the first dispatch of Japanese military personnel to a combat zone since World War II.
- The third round of inter-Korean working-level talks for linking cross-border roads and railways closes in Munsan, South Korea's Kyonggi Province, after a two-day run starting July 2.
- 6 NK's Committee of the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland issues a statement denouncing the SK Ministry of Defense, which on July 4, defined the NK regime and its military as SK's main enemy.
- NK agrees to send a large sports team to the 2003 Summer Universiade in Daegu, South Korea, to be held August 21-31.
- 7 KCBS reports that Kim Jong-il was unanimously nominated from all electoral districts as a candidate to the seat of deputy for the 11th term at the SPA.
- 8 Chinese President Hu Jintao and President Roh Moo-hyun hold summit talks in Beijing.
- NK concludes a "protocol on light industry cooperation" with Russia's Far Eastern Maritime Province.
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-il visits the Kumsusan Memorial Palace where Kim Il-sung's embalmed body is laid in state, escorted by senior military officers including two vice marshals: Kim Yong-chun, chief of the General Staff of the People's Army, and Kim Il-chol, minister of People's Armed Forces, on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of his father's death.
- 9 The second round of the PSI is held in Brisbane, Australia.
- The 11th Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks is held in Seoul.
- The SK National Intelligence Service, in a report to the National Assembly, states that NK conducted some 70 high-explosive tests at Yongdok, 40 kilometers northwest of Yongbyon, and it reprocessed part of its stockpile of spent nuclear fuel rods that will yield plutonium for nuclear bombs.
- 11 On the occasion of World Population Day, NK reveals that North Koreans' average marriage age: 27.3 for men and 24.8 for women, part of the results of a survey on reproductive hygiene conducted with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.
- KCNA announces that Russia will supply \$10 million worth of food aid to NK.
- 12 NK resumes trade and tourism between Wonjong township, in Eundok County, North Hamgyong Province, and Hunchun in Jilin, China, which were suspended on April 19 because of SARS.
- NK-US talks to repatriate the remains of US army servicemen, who were killed in North Korea during the Korean War, close in Bangkok, Thailand, after a three-day run starting July 10.
- 14 Kim Jong-il meets in Pyongyang with Dai Bingguo, an envoy of Chinese leader Hu Jintao.

- 15 NK officials told the US on July 8 that NK had completed producing enough plutonium to make six nuclear bombs and that they intended to move ahead quickly with making the weapons, the *New York Times* reports.
- 15 The KEDO Executive Board ends a two-day meeting in New York to discuss technical issues concerning a US proposal to call off the construction of two nuclear reactors in NK.
- 16 KCBS says the Chinese government has decided to supply 10,000 tons of diesel oil to NK free of charge.
- 17 China informed the US of NK's three-way talks proposal, the *Washington Post* reports.
- SK and NK soldiers briefly exchange machine-gun fire in the DMZ.
- 19 SK Defense Ministry, in a policy report, states that NK has redeployed 170mm and 240mm long-range artillery closer to the DMZ.
- 20 Sensors set up on NK borders have begun to detect elevated levels of krypton 85, a gas emitted when spent fuel is converted into plutonium, the *New York Times* reports, citing US officials.
- President Roh Moo-hyun and British Prime Minister Tony Blair hold summit talks.
- 21 After discussions with SK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan, visiting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov states that talks should resume as early as possible to resolve the NK nuclear issue, regardless of whether or not Moscow participates.
- 25 At a hotel on Mt. Kumgang, talks between the Asia Pacific Peace Committee and South Korea's Hyundai Asan on the Mt. Kumgang overland tour project close after a three-day run starting July 23.
- 29 US Undersecretary of State John Bolton arrives in Seoul.
- 30 KCNA reiterates in a commentary that North Korea must first take part in one-on-one talks with the US, and next in the multilateral talks proposed by the US to settle the North's nuclear standoff.
- Japan announces that ten NK asylum-seekers have taken refuge at the Japanese embassy in Bangkok.
- 31 NK's Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland denounces US deployment of its "rapid mobile brigade" August 1-10 and the conduct of the combined SK-US Ulchi Focus Lens exercise August 18-29 as "war fuss intended for a preemptive nuclear strike against the North."
- The Russian Foreign Ministry issues a statement that NK has agreed to six-way talks on the nuclear crisis.
- The second meeting of the Inter-Korean Working-level Consultations on Economic Cooperation System, held in Kaesong July 29-31, adopted an agreement after discussing four agreements on inter-Korean economic cooperation, certificate of origin procedures and passage to and from the Kaesong and Mt. Kumgang areas.

August

- 1 The NK Foreign Ministry states in an interview with the KCNA that NK-US contacts took place in New York on July 31 regarding the nuclear

- issue between the two countries.
- 3 The elections of deputies to the 11th SPA start throughout North Korea.
 - 4 Chairman of Hyundai Asan Chung Mong-hun commits suicide.

The NK Foreign Ministry announces that six-way talks will open as soon as the US gives up its demand to “drop nukes first, dialogue later” and Pyongyang accepts the six-party proposal.
 - 5 The US and Japan sign a mutual legal assistance treaty enhancing cooperation in the fight against terrorism and other criminal investigations.
 - 6 The Korea Democratic Women’s Union in NK issues a statement denouncing actions taken by the Japanese against Chongryun, pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.
 - 8 Kang Sok-ju, first vice foreign minister, exchanges views on the six-party talks with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
 - 9 KCNA states in a commentary that the issue of the abduction of Japanese citizens by NK agents was already resolved between the two countries, and blames Japan for raising the issue again during the six-way talks.
 - 11 A memorial ceremony for the late Chung Mong-hun is held on Mt. Kumgang, with the participation of Song Ho-gyong, vice chairman of the (North) Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee.

NK leader Kim Jong-il sends a message of condolence on Chung Mong-hun’s death to the late Mr. Chung’s wife and Kim Yun-gyu, president of the Hyundai Asan, who attended the memorial service at Mt. Kumgang.
 - 12 Border trade through Quanhe port (China) and Wonjong-ri port (NK), banned during the SARS outbreak, returns to normal.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing visits SK.
 - 13 Delegations from the US, SK and Japan hold informal two-day talks in Washington to prepare for the six-way talks.

NK Foreign Ministry issues a three-point proposal on the six nations meeting on the nuclear issue. The three points are : (1) US renunciation of its anti-Pyongyang policies, (2) conclusion of NK-US non-aggression treaty and (3) an absolute refusal to an early inspection of its nuclear facilities.
 - 14 Visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing meets SK President Roh.
 - 15 The Unification Rally for Peace and Unification in commemoration of the August 15 Liberation Day is held in Pyongyang, attended by 339 people from the South, 400 from the North and 150 from abroad.
 - 17 NK’s Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland issues a statement indicating the North will boycott the 2003 Summer Universiade in Daegu hosted by SK due to an anti-North Korea rally held in Seoul on Aug. 15.
 - 18 The 12-day annual Ulchi Focus Lens military exercises, focusing on com-

puterized war simulations with NK, begins.

Various NK propaganda groups denounce the US for devising a new war plan, known as Operations Plan 5030, reportedly formulated by the Pentagon for a possible conflict with NK.

- 19 A SK delegation, led by Kang Mangil, president of Sangji University, arrives in Pyongyang to take part in an inter-Korean joint seminar on the "correct spelling" of the English name of the country: Korea or Corea.

President Roh Moo-Hyun expresses regret over anti-Pyongyang demonstrations on Aug. 15.

- 20 Kim Jong-il meets with a Chinese high-level military delegation led by Xu Caihou, director of the People's Liberation Army General Political Department.

NK sports team, including 218 athletes and 302 supporters, leaves Pyongyang to take part in the 2003 Summer Universiade in Daegu hosted by South Korea.

- 21 SK and NK hold their sixth working-level contact on the connection of inter-Korean railways and roads in Kaesong, to discuss the designs for signals, communication and power systems and technical assistance for the operations of materials and equipment provided to the North.

- 24 A joint Russian exercise with military teams from Japan and SK is launched off Russia's Pacific coast.

NK's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland demands that SK authorities "apologize for anti-NK provocation, punish the criminals and give responsible assurance that such incidents would not occur again," regarding the clash between NK reporters and members of South Korean conservative organizations.

- 25 Mangyongbong-92, a NK ferry previously suspected of smuggling money and drugs, arrives at Niigata.

KCNA says Pyongyang and the provinces of Pyongan and North Hwaghae were hit by torrential rains during Aug. 22-23.

ABBREVIATIONS

DMZ	Demilitarized zone	SARS	Severe acute respiratory syndrome
KCBS	(North) Korean Central Broadcasting System	SK	South Korea
KCNA	(North) Korean Central News Agency	SPA	Supreme People's Assembly
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization	TCOG	Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group
NK	North Korea	USFK	US Forces Korea
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative	WHO	World Health Organization