

CHRONOLOGY

Major Events Around the Korean Peninsula (February 25, 2004 - May 24, 2004)

February

25 The second round of talks on NK's nuclear weapons program is held at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

26 The ninth round of inter-Korean working-level talks for linking cross-border railways and roads and the fourth round of working-level talks for cooperation on marine transportation open Feb. 25 near Kaesong.

27 Japan and the US sign the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, which allows Japan to supply US forces with ammunition in the event of a sudden or foreseen assault on Japan.

28 A delegation from SK led by Kang Man-gil, president of Sangji University, leaves Pyongyang, wrapping up a five-day visit to NK. While there, the delegation took part in an inter-Korean symposium on the designation of the term "East Sea" of Korea rather than the Sea of Japan. The scholars also urged Japan's return of cultural relics it plundered during its 1910-1945 colonial rule.

NK's Foreign Ministry denounces the annual report on human rights published on Feb. 25 by the US State Department as a move to stifle the

North's efforts to join the international community.

March

1 At a speech to mark the 85th anniversary of the March 1 Independence Movement of 1919, SK President Roh Moo-hyun calls on Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to refrain from remarks and actions that are hurtful to Koreans.

The Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland issues a statement calling for Japan's compensation for human rights abuses during its 1910-1945 colonial rule over the Korean peninsula.

2 SK Unification Ministry announces that it will provide NK with 200,000 tons of fertilizer aid and a 47 billion-won (\$40 million) fund to help build infrastructure this year.

The eighth round of the inter-Korean Committee for Promotion of Economic Cooperation opens in Seoul.

Visiting SK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon pays a courtesy call on US President George Bush.

3 SK Red Cross announces that SK

pharmaceutical companies donated medicines worth 593 million won (\$509,000) to support NK hospitals.

- 4 SK's National Security Council announces the four-point basic security policy that features balanced pursuit of cooperative security ties with key allies, and focuses on national self-defense.

Russian Ambassador to SK Teymuraz O. Ramishvili states in a press conference that the international community should show more flexibility toward NK's peaceful nuclear program.

- 5 The annual 10-day session of China's National People's Congress begins.

The KCNA says the Presidium of the SPA on Feb. 25 adopted two decisions on regulations for management of foreign currency and advertisements in the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

- 8 *Rodong Sinmun* comments that unless the US first abandons its stance on the North's nuclear programs and changes its hostile policy toward the North, the nuclear stand-off between Pyongyang and Washington will not be resolved.

- 9 A KEDO delegation visits Pyongyang to discuss ways of preserving the light reactor construction site in Sinpho.

A SK delegation arrives in Pyongyang to take part in inter-Korean joint events from March 9 through 14, related with the South-North Joint Declaration of June 15, 2000.

SK Defense Ministry announces that SK will deploy a battalion of Russian

tanks (T-80 U) and armored vehicles (BMP-3) for the first time along the border with NK.

- 11 NK's Navy Command of the People's Army warns that the joint sea exercise of SK's navy and maritime police, conducted near the *de facto* sea border (NLL) on the Yellow Sea might touch off an inter-Korean naval clash. SK on March 2 said the joint sea drill, planned for the near future, was to prevent Chinese fishing boats from fishing illegally in its territorial waters.

- 12 KCNA denounces the SK-US combined military exercises RSOI and Foal Eagle as a war exercise targeting North Korea.

SK National Assembly approves President Roh Moo-hyun's impeachment. Prime Minister Goh Kun takes over as interim president.

- 13 Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, visits Pyongyang.

The KCNA lashes out at Japan's recent stamp issue featuring the Dokdo Islets as a move to publicly claim possession of those islets in the international community. The islets are controlled by SK but also claimed by Japan.

- 14 NK calls for a change of venue, from the South's city Paju to Kaesong for the third round of inter-Korean working-level meetings for talks to discuss inter-Korean settlement of trade accounts, giving as the reason the South's political instability triggered by the SK's passage of the impeachment motion.

Russian President Vladimir Putin wins the 2004 presidential election.

- NK's People's Army Mission in Panmunjom calls for an end to the SK-US combined military exercises RSOI and Foal Eagle.
- 15 IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei states that he wants inspectors to return as early as possible to NK.
- KCBS criticizes SK's four-point basic security policy issued on March 4 as contrary to the spirit of the inter-Korean Joint Declaration announced on June 15, 2000.
- 17 Acting SK President Goh Kun put SK on high alert against possible terrorist attacks, saying the country was among the main targets for terrorism following the Madrid bombings. SK plans to send 3,000 troops to take control of rebuilding efforts in Kirkuk, Iraq.
- 19 NK's Foreign Ministry announces that if the US further strengthens its military threat against NK by staging military exercises in SK, the North will build up its nuclear deterrence in direct proportion to the US, both in size and strength.
- Mass anti-impeachment candlelight rallies take place throughout SK cities attracting 100,000 people to Seoul's Gwanghwamun area.
- SK Defense Ministry announces that it has cancelled plans to send troops to Kirkuk, Iraq, citing US pressure to participate in offensive operations that are contrary to its mission of peaceful reconstruction.
- SK Unification Ministry announces that a total of 299 NK citizens have defected to SK so far this year and the number is expected to increase significantly by year's end.
- Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian and Vice President Annette Lu suffer minor injuries after being shot during an election campaign parade.
- 20 Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian wins presidential election.
- 22 NK boycotts scheduled Kaesong railway-rebuilding talks, citing tensions allegedly caused by RSOI and Foal Eagle exercises.
- SK and US stage two annual joint military exercises—Foal Eagle and RSOI.
- 24 NK's SPA unanimously approves the 2004 budget, which increased by 8.6% from the previous year.
- NK leader Kim Jong-il hosts a rare meeting with visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing.
- Japanese police arrest seven Chinese activists who landed in disputed territory, the Uotsuri Islands, in the East China Sea.
- 25 SK Unification Minister announces that inter-Korean trade declined 26.4% to \$65 million in the first two months of 2004 that was attributed to a steep reduction in non-trade transactions.
- 27 *Rodong Sinmun* again criticizes the SK-US combined military exercises, RSOI and Foal Eagle as a "test war" aimed to threaten the North.
- 28 SK's Supreme Court convicts former national security adviser Lim Dongwon and three others of illegally sending \$450 million to NK ahead of the 2000 inter-Korean summit.
- 29 The ninth reunion of separated fami-

lies from the two Koreas begins a 6-day run on Mt. Kumgang.

Korean talks stalled over US-SK military drills.

- 31 NK's Foreign Ministry announces that North Korea will take "decisive countermeasures" against the US plan to deploy a destroyer equipped with an advanced Aegis anti-missile system in the East Sea.

The KCNA maintains in a commentary that the "1-4-2-1 defense strategy" worked out by the U.S. Defense Department is a preemptive nuclear attack strategy to simultaneously strike several countries, and mainly targets the North and China.

April

- 1 SK's acting President Goh Kun calls for strengthening an alliance with the US as the "No. 1 priority" in SK's foreign policy.

- 7 Japan's Fukuoka District Court rules that Junichiro Koizumi violated the Constitution in August 2001 when he visited Yasukuni Shrine as Prime Minister.

Two leading members of Japan's ruling party hold an unauthorized meeting with NK officials in China.

Senior diplomats from SK, the US, and Japan hold informal talks on NK nuclear issues in San Francisco.

- 4 Quoting an unnamed SK official, *Yonhap News Agency* reports that NK told visiting China's Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing that it intended to give up its entire nuclear program if corresponding measures were provided to them.

- 9 SK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon states SK troops to Iraq would be deployed as planned despite security fears triggered by a spate of kidnappings in Iraq.

- 5 *Rodong Sinmun* claims in a commentary that SK's conviction of those involved in funneling illegal funds to NK before the inter-Korean summit in 2000 goes against reunification and is a stumbling block to inter-Korean reconciliation.

- 10 Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk arrives in Pyongyang to pay a goodwill visit to NK.

Working-level officials of the two Koreas end the three-day inter-Korean talks on linking inter-Korean roads and railways, as well as steps to prevent flooding from the Imjin River, which flows across the inter-Korean border. The talks were held at a hotel in the NK city of Kaesong.

- 6 Buddhists from the two Koreas join in a groundbreaking ceremony on the site of Sinkye Temple on Mt. Kumgang. The temple, built in 519, was demolished by US Air Force raids in the 1950-53 Korean War.

- 12 US Vice President Dick Cheney hold talks with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Tokyo.

Japan's ruling coalition submits to the Diet a bill designed to prevent NK vessels from entering Japanese ports.

- 13 The Mangyongdae Cup Games open in Pyongyang on the birthday of the late Kim Il-sung.

SK proposes resumption of inter-

South Korea signs with the North a

- 50-year lease of 1 million pyong of land in Kaesong (one pyong=3.3 m²).
- 14 Vice President Cheney meets Chinese leaders including President Hu Jintao.
- 15 NK holds various events to mark the 92nd anniversary of the late leader Kim Il-sung's birth.
- SK holds general elections. Ruling reformist Uri Party becomes the biggest single party with 152 seats in the 299-seat National Assembly chamber.
- The UN Human Rights Commission adopts a resolution concerning NK human rights situation.
- Three Japanese nationals abducted in Iraq are released.
- 18 NK's Foreign Ministry announces that if the US continues to demand the "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of NK's nuclear weapons program, the North has no intention of dealing with it.
- NK leader Kim Jong-il begins unannounced four-day visit to China.
- KCBS says that North Korea has issued stamps featuring the Dokdo Islets, which lie about halfway between the Korean peninsula and Japan in the East Sea.
- 19 A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry issues a statement criticizing the EU for pushing a resolution on the North's human rights situation through the 60th session of the UN Human Rights Commission.
- KEDO and NK officials hold working-level meetings.
- 20 Korea Land Corporation and Hyundai Asan decide to supply electricity directly to SK firms undergoing construction in NK's Kaesong Industrial Complex through SK's Korea Electric Power Corporation.
- The third round of inter-Korean working-level meetings for the clearance of debts is held in SK's Paju.
- 21 Charles Kartman, executive director of the KEDO, and Japanese officials hold talks.
- 22 A train explosion occurs at a railway station in Ryongchon, North Pyongan Province.
- 24 A delegation of the SK's Red Cross returns home, winding up its visit to NK that began on April 20.
- KCNA announces that "The April 22 explosion at Ryongchon railway station in North Pyongan Province was caused by electrical contact, as a result of carelessness during the shunting of wagons loaded with ammonium nitrate fertilizer and tank wagons."
- 25 NK's Panmunjom Mission of the People's Army announces that the army will comprehensively examine all the provisions of the Armistice Agreement concluded in July 1953 related to the issue of security at the joint security area in the truce village of Panmunjom, and slammed the replacement of US troops there by SK troops.
- 27 Inter-Korean working-level talks to discuss aid for victims of the Ryongchon train explosion are held in Kaesong.
- KCNA says that further investigation into the train explosion revealed that

human and material losses were horrible in a 4-kilometer radius including the Pujung Workers' District as well as Ryongchon Township in Ryongchon County, North Pyongan Province.

- 29 NK's Foreign Ministry announces NK will participate in the working-group meeting ahead of the third round of six-party talks slated for May 12 in Beijing to discuss the proposal of "reward for freeze" under any circumstances.

The first batch of relief supplies from SK, worth \$1 million, for the victims of the explosion in Ryongchon arrives in Nampho port, west of Pyongyang.

May

- 1 An inter-Korean meeting of workers closes in Pyongyang to mark May Day, after two days.
- 2 NK Foreign Ministry criticizes the US for mentioning the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by NK agents in its annual report, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003," which was released by the US State Department on April 29.
- 4 A delegation of the European Regional Office of the World Federation of Trade Unions led by coordinator Georgios Mavrikos visits Pyongyang.

Japan and NK hold government-level abduction talks for the first time since Feb.

Johnny Hon, chairman of the British Global Group, visits Pyongyang.

The 14th round of inter-Korean ministerial-level talks opens in

Pyongyang.

- 6 The Pyongyang Yunisang Orchestra Band leaves Pyongyang for Germany. The orchestra was formed in 1990 in honor of Korean-German composer Yun I-sang, a North Korean sympathizer. Yun died in 1995.
- 7 NK's Asian-Pacific Peace Committee urges South Korea to release former Presidential Chief of Staff Park Jie-won so that he can receive medical treatment. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges of illegally delivering 15 billion won (\$12 million) from Hyundai Group to NK before the June 2000 inter-Korean summit.

- 10 KCNA denounces the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers as savage behavior in the 21st century.

Rodong Sinmun reports that if the US takes practical measures to abandon its hostile policy toward NK for the success of the working-group meeting, the North will take "a corresponding innovative and trustworthy step."

- 11 SK's Hyundai Group Chairwoman Hyun Jung-eun visits Pyongyang.
- 12 NK's Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland issues a statement criticizing the US Congressional move to enact legislation aimed at promoting the North's democratization and improving the human rights situation there. The first round of the six-party working-level talks on NK's nuclear ambitions is held in Beijing.

Two Koreas agree to hold on May 26 on Mt. Kumgang the first general-

- level military talks ever held.
- 13 North Korea sets up diplomatic ties with San Marino.
- 14 Working-level military officers of the two Koreas meet on the border to arrange inter-Korean general-level military talks to be held on May 26 at the Mt. Kumgang resort.
- 15 NK's Foreign Ministry announces that the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by GIs included deliberate, organized criminal acts committed by top authorities of the US.
- A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry says that North Korea will continue dialogues to solve its nuclear standoff with the US, despite the lack of progress, in a working-group meeting held in Beijing.
- SK's Constitutional Court overturns the impeachment motion against President Roh Moo-hyun.
- 17 USAID visits Ryongchon to deliver medical and other supplies.
- 18 A delegation, led by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's special envoy Maurice Strong, visits Pyongyang.
- US Department of Defense announces that the US has notified SK it will withdraw 3,600 US troops from SK for combat duty in Iraq.
- 20 The second round of the international solidarity consultative meeting calling for the compensation for the 1910-1945 Japanese colonial rule over the Korean peninsula is held in Seoul.
- NK's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland urges all Koreans to wage a campaign for the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces stationed in South Korea.
- 21 KCNA announces that the nuclear issue could be resolved if the US accepts a proposal of "reward for freeze" of the North's nuclear programs.
- 22 Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and NK leader Kim Jong-il hold summit talks. After the talks, Koizumi announces that Japan will give NK 250,000 tons of rice and \$10 million dollars worth of medical supplies as humanitarian aid. He also secured the release of the children of two Japanese couples kidnapped by NK decades ago.

ABBREVIATIONS

KCBS	(North) Korean Central Broadcasting Station	RSOI	Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration
KCNA	(North) Korean Central News Agency	SK	South Korea
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization	SPA	Supreme People's Assembly
NK	North Korea	UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
NLL	Northern Limited Line	USAID	US Agency for International Development