

North Korea

A Guide to Economic and Political
Developments

Ian Jeffries



North Korea

North Korea, the 'Hermit Kingdom', is the world's most secretive state. Leaders-for-life Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il have pursued reclusive and repressive policies throughout the 1990s and up until today, even as the country has enacted limited economic reforms, increased its engagement with regional powers China, South Korea and Japan, and entered into a protracted diplomatic battle with the United States over the issue of nuclear weapons.

As one of the nations comprising George W. Bush's 'axis of evil' and a suspected nuclear power in an already tense region, North Korea has been the subject of intense attention recently. Now for the first time there is a comprehensive compendium of political and economic developments in the country from 1989 – when the communist world began to change irrevocably – to the present. This volume includes sections on issues such as the command economy, agriculture, relations with major powers, refugees and defectors, and nuclear weapons. Developments are arranged chronologically by sector, and ample background and summary material is presented in order to place recent developments in the proper historical context.

North Korea: A Guide to Economic and Political Developments is a must-read for Korea scholars and will be of interest to scholars and students studying Asian politics and the 'Hermit Kingdom'.

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Guides to economic and political developments in Asia

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First published 2006
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

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Typeset in Times by Wearset Ltd, Boldon, Tyne and Wear
Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-415-34324-0

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Acknowledgements

I am much indebted to the following individuals (in alphabetical order):

At the University of Wales Swansea: David Blackaby; Siân Brown; Dianne Darrell; Michele Davies; Peter Day; Chris Hunt; Frances Jackson; Jaynie Lewis; Nigel O'Leary; Lis Parcell; Mary Perman; Ann Preece; Paul Reynolds; Kathy Sivertsen; Jeff Smith; Syed Hamzah bin Syed Hussin; Clive Towse; Ray Watts; Chris West.

Professors Nick Baigent, George Blazyca, Paul Hare, Lester Hunt and Michael Kaser. (It is with great regret that I heard of the death of George Blazyca.)

Russell Davies (Kays Newsagency).

At Routledge: Yeliz Ali, Simen Bailey. Amrit Bangard, Matt Deacon, Oliver Escrit, Tessa Herbert, Alan Jarvis, Liz Jones, Alex Meloy, Peter Sowden, Alfred Symons, Annabel Watson, Mike Wendling, James Whiting, Vanessa Winch and Jane Young.

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Introduction

Readers will note in the bibliography that I have published extensively on communist and transitional economies, but most books deal with groups of countries. Since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in and after 1989 the number of countries I have analysed has grown from fourteen to thirty-five! Owing to the large number of languages involved, I have had to rely overwhelmingly on English sources.

I do not even read let alone speak Korean! Thus I am unable to undertake frontier research on the 'Hermit Kingdom', as communist North Korea is still sometimes called. Nevertheless, a vast amount of information is available despite the extreme reluctance of the country to disclose what is going on there. What with globally significant problems ranging from nuclear weapons to famine, there is no problem in justifying giving North Korea the utmost attention. There seems to be an urgent need for a broad-ranging study covering both economic and political developments, with particular emphasis on events since 1991. Since the summer of 2002 North Korea has been making concessions to the market and private enterprise. North Korea has been in dire economic straits in recent years and is aware of the astonishing economic progress that its ally China has been making since 1978 with its model of gradual and partial economic reform.

The two Vietnams were reunited in 1975 and the two Germanys in 1990. But the two Koreas remain divided, with South Korea continuously stretching ahead of its economically benighted twin. Large-scale international aid has kept many a North Korean from death's door. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is a leftover from the Cold War. The invasion of Iraq by George W. Bush's America and US unease at Iran's nuclear policies has given North Korea an added incentive to develop nuclear weapons. Should things go drastically wrong the consequences would, without exaggeration, be catastrophic.

I have tried to write a book which will be of interest to governments, business and academics (from a wide range of disciplines, including economics, politics and international relations). To put North Korea's economic policies in perspective I have included Appendix 1 (on the nature of central planning) and Appendix 2 (on the general issues involved in the transition from command to market economies).

I present a richly endowed ‘quarry’ of up-to-date economic and political information (presented chronologically where appropriate) to allow the reader to dig out any desired facts and figures. This is not (and is not meant to be) original research but a broad-brush painting of the overall economic and political picture. I make extensive use of quality newspapers such as the *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, *Financial Times (FT)*, *The Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and the *Telegraph*. Publications such as *The Economist*, the *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, *The World Today*, *Asian Survey*, *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press (CDSP)*, before 5 February 1992 known as *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, *Transition* and *Finance and Development* have also proven to be invaluable.

A review in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (29 October 1993) kindly referred to my ‘meticulous referencing’, even though detailed referencing has the potential to be tiresome to readers. But since this is not original research and I am deeply indebted to many sources, I feel it necessary to make every effort to acknowledge the material used. It is not always feasible to name the correspondents or contributors, but I try, as far as possible, to ensure that credit goes where it is due. Partly for this reason and partly for accuracy I make extensive use of quotations, although where these include commonly quoted sayings or speeches I leave out specific sources.

1 An overview of political and economic developments

A brief history

First North and South Vietnam (in 1975) and then West and East Germany (in 1990) were reunited. But North and South Korea are still divided and the land and sea frontiers survive as leftovers from the Cold War era despite the historic meeting in Pyongyang of Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae Jung, the leaders of the two countries, on 13–15 June 2000.

Former South Korean president Kim Dae Jung (*IHT*, 20 June 2000, p. 9): ‘We have reached a turning point so that we can put an end to the history of territorial division for fifty-five years ... We have been a homogeneous nation for thousands of years. We lived as a unified nation for 1,300 years.’

A unified state from AD668 to 1945, Korea was liberated (and divided at the 38th parallel) in 1945, having been part of the Japanese Empire from 1910 to 1945. An isolated state, it was known as the ‘Hermit Kingdom’. At the 1943 Cairo Conference the allies had envisaged an independent and unified Korea.

But the North was occupied by Soviet forces in August 1945 and the United States occupied the South. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) was proclaimed on 9 September 1948. In the Korean War (1950–3) China backed the North and UN forces backed the South (the Soviet Union having absented itself from the UN Security Council). North Korean troops had crossed the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950. Apart from Chinese forces, the Soviet air force also took part in the war (although this was not formally admitted by the Soviet Union at the time). The war ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty. The armistice was signed on 27 July 1953 by North Korea, China and the United States acting on behalf of the United Nations. Since July 1953 the two Koreas have been separated by the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which runs to the south of the 38th parallel in the West and to the North in the East. North Korea occupies 55 per cent of the total territory.

Kim Il Sung was born Kim Song Ju on 15 April 1912 and he adopted the name Kim Il Sung after a famous guerrilla who fought the Japanese. (‘Il Sung’ means ‘One Star’.) Kim Il Sung (who became known as the ‘great leader’) was prime minister (1948–72), president (1972–94) and general

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secretary of the Korean Workers' Party (formed in August 1946 when the Korean Communist Party united with the New Democratic Party). Kim Il Sung was named head of the Korean Workers' Party (Communist Party) in 1948. He died on 8 July 1994 of a heart attack at the age of eighty-two. He had groomed his son Kim Jong Il (the 'dear leader'; born 16 February 1942) to take over when he died, thus ensuring the perpetuation of family rule (the first 'dynastic' succession in communist history).

The succession of Kim Jong Il was much smoother than many had envisaged.

Kim Jong Il . . . skilfully tightened his grip on power over the last decade despite critics who once pegged him for a sickly playboy who would not last long . . . When Kim Jong Il took power many outsiders doubted whether he had the charisma or cunning to hold the regime together. But the secretive leader, in his signature jumpsuit, surprised critics with his resilience, rallying the military around him. (www.iht.com, 8 July 2004)

(There seems, however, to be a struggle within the family over who is to succeed Kim Jong Il: see the entry in the chronology for 17 June 2004 and November 2004. There have even been reports of internal opposition to Kim Jong Il, but in such an isolated country it is difficult to know how seriously to take such reports. North Korea thinks there is a US plot to bring about regime change.) Kim Jong Il became general secretary of the Korean Workers' Party on 8 October 1997. On 5 September 1998 Kim Jong Il was made chairman of the National Defence Commission. Although Kim Il Sung was made 'eternal president', Kim Jong Il was head of state, the post of chairman of the National Defence Commission being proclaimed the 'highest post of the state'. Kim Jong Il rarely travels abroad, but he has certainly visited China (e.g. on 15–20 January 2001 and 18–22 April 2004) and Russia (e.g. on 26 July–18 August 2001 and on 20–23 August 2002). He did not visit South Korea as was envisaged after the 2000 meeting in North Korea with the then South Korean president Kim Dae Jung.

Kim Jong Il draws on three separate belief systems to buttress his rule: communism, Confucianism and ancient Korean shamanism. He is also said to have been born on Mount Paekdu, which is linked to Korean myth with the country's founding. In truth he was born in Russia. (*The Economist*, 18 December 2004, p. 109)

North Korea took care not to antagonize either China or the Soviet Union, but after the disintegration of the latter in 1991 (coupled with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in and after 1989) North Korea has been far more beholden to China than Russia (not least in terms of economic aid).

Kim Il Sung practised a strong cult of personality (that has been carried on by Kim Jong Il). The policy of *Juche* (*Chuche*) is normally translated as 'self-reliance'. This helped make North Korea one of the most isolated of the then communist countries. Kim Il Sung described *Juche* as

holding fast to the principle of solving for oneself all the problems of the revolution and construction in conformity with the actual conditions at home and mainly by one's own effort ... Man, a social being that is independent and creative, is master of everything and decides everything. (quoted by Rhee 1987: 890)

'Russia's Itar-Tass agency [is] the only foreign media organization to have a correspondent in [North Korea]' (*Guardian*, 19 November 2004, p. 20).

Relations between North and South Korea

General aspects

Apart from the problem of nuclear weapons (dealt with under the section devoted to relations between North Korea and the United States), North Korea has antagonized South Korea in ways such as the following:

- 1 The *Pueblo* is the [US] navy ship that North Korea seized in 1968 in waters off the country's east coast, setting off an international crisis. One American sailor was killed and eight-two others were imprisoned for nearly a year and tortured into writing confessions' (*IHT*, 20 July 2005, p. 9).
- 2 On 9 October 1983 the assassination, through bombing, took place of seventeen South Korean members of President Chun Doo Hwan's delegation, including three ministers, in Rangoon (Burma).
- 3 'South Korea blames the North for ... the bombing of a Korean Air flight off the coast of Myanmar [Burma] with 115 passengers and crew members on board' (*IHT*, 17 August 2004, p. 6). 'The United States placed North Korea on a blacklist of states fostering terrorism in 1988 after its alleged involvement in the mid-air bombing of a Korean Air jetliner over the Indian Ocean in 1987' (*FT*, 18 September 2001, p. 14). 'Japan accused Pyongyang of kidnapping a Japanese woman so she could teach Japanese to a woman agent who was later held responsible for the 1987 bombing of a South Korean airliner' (*IHT*, 22 November 1999, p. 5).
- 4 On 18 September 1996 a North Korean submarine was found stranded on South Korea's east coast and a manhunt ensued. On 22 June 1998 a North Korean midget submarine was caught in the trawling nets of a fishing boat in South Korean waters. On 12 July 1998 a submersible North Korean boat was found in South Korean waters. On 18 December 1998 South Korean forces destroyed a North Korean semi-submersible.
- 5 On 5 June 1997 there was an exchange of fire between a South Korean patrol boat and a North Korean gunboat escorting fishing boats in what South Korea claims as its waters. On 15 June 1999, in a similar incident, South Korean naval ships actually sank a North Korean gunboat on the South Korean side of the Northern Limit Line, a maritime demarcation line which North Korea has never recognized. There were also naval clashes in disputed waters on 29 June 2002 and 23 August 2003.

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- 6 There were incidents in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on 26 September 2001, 27 November 2001 and 17 July 2003.

On 18 December 1997 Kim Dae Jung was elected president of South Korea. His policy of improved relations with North Korea is called the 'sunshine policy', involving warmer relations between the two countries. South Korea is well aware of the enormous cost of German reunification under more favourable conditions than those facing the two Koreas. President Kim Dae Jung did not wish to see the collapse of North Korea and thus favoured gradual improvements in political and economic relations. South Korea, he believed, should help North Korea via aid, trade and investment.

The 13–15 June 2000 summit in Pyongyang proved to be dramatic, although more in terms of a perceived breakthrough in relations after years of bitter division rather than specific results. This was the first ever meeting of leaders of North and South Korea. The two leaders, Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae Jung, greeted and treated each other warmly and vast numbers of North Koreans cheered them. Contrary to general expectations, Kim Jong Il turned out to have a sense of humour and to be affable, outgoing, self-confident but respectful, relaxed and talkative. Kim Jong Il might even be described as charismatic. Kim Jong Il:

Many people, including those from Europe, say I am leading a hermit's life. I am not such a great figure to be called a recluse. The fact is that I have made many secret trips to countries like China and Indonesia. I have been here and there without people knowing.

There was no formal agenda for the talks but on 14 June the two leaders signed a joint agreement. This included the following: 'Resolve the issues of reunification independently and through the joint efforts of the Korean people'; 'Economic co-operation and the development of the national economy ... in a balanced manner' (South Korea would provide extra aid and encourage South Korean companies to invest more in North Korea); family reunions to be arranged, starting on 15 August (Liberation Day, celebrating liberation from Japanese occupation in 1945; the first official reunion of family members was in 1985); to promote, artistic, cultural and sporting exchanges. The two leaders also agreed to establish a military hotline. Kim Jong Il agreed to visit South Korea 'at the earliest appropriate time'.

Kim Jong Il also showed flexibility on the issue of US troops on the Korean Peninsula.

President Kim Dae Jung on his return to South Korea (16 June) stated:

The danger of war on the Korean Peninsula has disappeared ... The North will no longer attempt unification by force and ... we will not do anything to harm the North ... The dialogue [on security issues] was very fruitful ... We did talk about nuclear weapons and missiles ... I told him [Kim Jong Il] that the missile and nuclear problems do not help regional and world peace as well as inter-Korean co-operation.

President Kim Dae Jung (*IHT*, 20 June 2000, p. 9):

We were able to reach agreement on a ... 'loose form of confederation' on the Korean Peninsula in the future – a concept that requires maintaining two governments for the two sides as they are now and creating a conference of ministers and an assembly with which the two sides can jointly solve problems step by step. We also talked about nuclear and missile issues and the issue of United States forces stationed in the South ... We have reached a turning point so that we can put an end to the history of territorial division for fifty-five years ... We have been a homogeneous nation for thousands of years. We lived as a unified nation for 1,300 years ... I have returned with the conviction that, sooner or later, we will become reconciled with each other, co-operate and finally become unified ... Let us coexist and proceed on the path toward unification ... None of this means that everything went smoothly in our talks ... There should not be the slightest wavering in the resolve on the part of the Republic of Korea to maintain national security and sovereignty. But we must ultimately go on the path toward unification by solving one thing at a time ... The North will no longer attempt unification by force and, at the same time, we will not do any harm to the North. In short, the most important outcome of the summit is that there is no longer going to be any war.

Kim Dae Jung (17 July 2000):

Full unification is very difficult to foresee at this point. It could take as long as twenty to thirty years. My point is that it is not important when it occurs but rather how we work together towards that goal by eliminating the danger of war, living together peacefully and extending economic cooperation. (*FT*, 17 July 2000, p. 18)

Kim Dae Jung (18 July 2000): 'Peaceful co-existence and exchanges may go on for twenty or thirty years. We must not make haste. But in the process we will be working towards ultimate unification' (*IHT*, 20 July 2000, p. 4).

North and South Korea halted propaganda attacks against each other, e.g. switching off the giant loudspeakers along the heavily fortified border that vilified each other and urged soldiers to defect.

(In 2003 the South Korean company Hyundai was found guilty of secretly and illegally transferring funds to North Korea shortly before the 2000 summit. 'Hyundai was at the time negotiating a \$350 million contract to exclusively develop businesses in the North. Kim's government persuaded the group to increase its payment by \$100 million, funded by secret loans from the state-run Korea Development Bank ... Kim Dae Jung: "We wanted to provide \$100 million of support. But there was no legal way to do it ... This was a great investment in the future ... As president I authorized it and I have no regrets"': *FT*, 19 June 2004, p. 12; *FT*, Magazine, 19 June 2004, pp. 14–15. Kim Dae Jung himself was not prosecuted.)

In late June 2000 Chung Ju Yung (the founder of Hyundai, South Korea's

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largest chaebol or conglomerate) and one of his sons visited North Korea. The visit resulted in plans to increase investment in the North, including the establishment of a North Korean 'Silicon Valley' in the Mount Kumgang region a few miles north of the Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas. Hyundai has been developing the Mount Kumgang region as a tourist destination. (On 10 August 2000 the Hyundai Group announced that it had signed an agreement with North Korea to build an industrial park in Kaesong. The agreement also provided for South Korean tourists to visit Kaesong: *IHT*, 11 August 2000, p. 11. 'North Korea . . . signed an agreement with [Hyundai] . . . to develop a permanent meeting place for separated families at Kaesong, North Korea': *IHT*, 16 August 2000, p. 5.)

'The foreign ministers of North and South Korea met for the first time Wednesday [26 July]' (*IHT*, 27 July 2000, p. 5).

Negotiators from North and South Korea met for talks in Seoul. On 31 July 2000 they announced an agreement, including the following:

- 1 To reopen liaison offices at Panmunjom on 15 August, the date observed by both North and South Korea as a national holiday celebrating the end of Japanese rule in 1945. (The offices were first opened in 1992 in accordance with the 'basic agreement' between the two countries in that year. They were closed in 1996.)
- 2 To 'rehabilitate' the rail link that was destroyed in the Korean War. The railway passes through Panmunjom. (A road link was announced later. Work began on the South Korean side on 18 September 2000.)
- 3 To open South Korea to visits by Koreans living in Japan who hold North Korean passports.
- 4 To continue 'ministerial talks in accordance with the spirit of the South–North declaration' signed by the leaders at the June summit. Negotiators were next to meet in Pyongyang, from 29 to 31 August 2000.

On 2 September 2000 sixty-three North Koreans held as spies and guerrillas in South Korean prisons were allowed to go to North Korea. (The problem of South Koreans held in North Korea remained unsolved.)

On 13 September 2000 it was reported that Kim Jong Il would visit South Korea in the spring of 2001. (The visit did not take place.) It was also announced that the defence ministers of North Korea and South Korea would meet in Hong Kong on 26 September.

On 15 September 2000 North Korea and South Korea marched under a special unification flag and wore identical white uniforms during the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games. But the two Koreas competed as separate teams, with their own uniforms, flags and anthems.

The defence ministers of North Korea and South Korea met for the first time on 25–26 September 2000.

North Korea and South Korea reached agreement Tuesday [26 September] on the limited reopening of the Demilitarized Zone that separates the two countries to allow repair work on a rail link that has been

severed for more than fifty years ... Co-operation from the North Korean military is crucial because the no-man's land across which the two armies face off contains as many as a million mines ... The agreement, which was announced at the first talks between defence ministers from the two Koreas since the civil war they fought from 1950 to 1953, is the highest level confirmation of the reconciliation between the two countries since a historic summit meeting in the North Korean capital in June ... The defence ministers agreed to 'working level' military talks starting in October and a second round of ministerial meetings in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, in November ... The two sides have also agreed to discuss the creation of a hot line linking the two military commands in their future meetings. (*IHT*, 27 September 2000, p. 5)

'While the military delegations were meeting Monday [25 September], two other delegations met in Seoul to discuss investment possibilities in North Korea' (*IHT*, 26 September 2000, p. 8). 'The rapprochement was further confirmed by a simultaneous meeting of finance ministers from the two countries in Seoul. That meeting reached agreement on legal protections for South Korean companies that invest in the ... North' (*IHT*, 27 September 2000, p. 5).

[On 8 October 2000] the South Korean authorities ... decided to allow twenty representatives of the government and non-government organizations to fly to Pyongyang aboard a North Korean plane Monday [9 October] for observances on Tuesday [10 October] marking the fifty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Korean Workers' Party. (*IHT*, 9 October 2000, p. 8)

On 13 October 2000 Kim Dae Jung was awarded the Nobel peace prize.

The Kaesong industrial complex ... was the main reason for a groundbreaking economic agreement between ... South and North Korea on Saturday [11 November 2000]. The two ... signed a deal to protect investment, end double taxation, open a direct route for financial transactions and establish a panel to settle trade disputes. (*Guardian*, 14 November 2000, p. 31)

'North and South Korea signed an agreement designed to improve economic co-operation. They provisionally agreed measures to allow remittances across their border, avoid double taxation, provide guarantees for investment and settle cross-border payments' (*FEER*, 23 November 2000, p. 12).

Kim Dae Jung (27 November 2000):

In a series of talks [in Pyongyang] over three days, I was able to engage him [Kim Jong Il] in serious and sincere discussions that produced some significant successes. First, we agreed that the Korean people must first take the initiative on the road to national unification. But we also acknowledged that immediate and complete unification would be difficult to achieve. We concurred that for now the two Koreas should focus

on realizing peaceful co-existence and exchanges. What was noteworthy was that the North withdrew its long-standing demand that a centralized federal government be established for all of Korea to achieve unification. Instead, the North proposed a 'loose form of confederation' as the formula for unification. Its new proposal is very similar to the South's formula of a South–North confederation of one people, two systems and two governments ... Second, North Korea has consented to the South's view that US troops should continue to stay on the Korean Peninsula. Korea is the only country in the world surrounded by four big powers – the United States, Japan, China and Russia. I have long been convinced that the US presence is necessary for the stability and balance of power in North-east Asia ... Kim Jong Il also agreed to visit Seoul ... We expect his visit to take place by next spring ... The defence ministers have met. They agreed never to wage another war on the peninsula, actively to support the 15 June South–North Joint Declaration and to co-operate with each other in the demilitarized zone to relink the severed inter-Korean railroad ... We are trying to ascertain how many of the 10 million members of separated families are still living, and their reunions are taking place ... Apart from rejoining the railroad between South and North Korea, a new highway is also under construction linking the South to Kaesong City just north of the demilitarized zone, where an industrial complex will be built. The South and North have initialled agreements on investment protection, avoidance of double taxation, clearance of accounts and settlement of business disputes ... By passing through North Korea the cost of transporting cargo can be reduced significantly.

Kim Dae Jung's successor, Roh Moo Hyun, who was elected South Korean president on 19 December 2002 and inaugurated on 25 February 2003, has basically followed Kim Dae Jung's 'sunshine policy'. The official policy is called Peace and Prosperity. The agreed road between North and South was opened on 5 February 2003 (the first road tour to Mount Kumgang taking place on 14 February 2003) and the rail link was established on 14 June 2003 (although the rest of the rail network remained incomplete).

North and South Korea have agreed to open their first road and rail link by October [2004] ... Authorities would open by October two north–south roads – one up the east coast, the other up the west coast. Also by October freight trains would make test runs on two north–south railroads that parallel the roads. The rail links are expected to open in 2005, five years after they were promised in [the June 2000 summit]. (*IHT*, 7 June 2004, p. 4)

Roh Moo Hyun was elected on a ticket that was cooler towards the United States, reflecting the views in particular of those many young people who do not see North Korea the way many older South Koreans do (being much more influenced by North Korea's invasion in 1950). Popular opinion in South Korea is very much split, particularly between generations, over rela-

tions with the United States. But the new president soon adjusted to the reality of continued dependence on US military support, and US talk of redeploying and even reducing its troops brought the message home:

1 'The United States and South Korea yesterday [5 June 2003] agreed plans to withdraw US troops from the South's border with North Korea for the first time since the Korean War ended ... US troops will be redeployed from the border to more southerly locations on the peninsula' (*FT*, 6 June 2003, p. 12). The redeployed troops would be outside artillery range. 'Earlier this year [2004], to allay fears over the American redeployment away from its "tripwire" position on the Demilitarized Zone, the United States promised to spend \$11 billion to upgrade American forces in the south be' (www.iht.com, 17 May 2004).

2 In May 2004 announced that the United States was moving 3,600 of the 37,000 troops stationed in South Korea to Iraq.

South Korea had agreed to send some 3,000 of its own combat-ready troops to Iraq (to join the 600 plus non-combat troops – medical and engineering specialists – already there) but delays were experienced.

('South Korea has had 600 troops in Iraq since last year [2003] ... The dispatching of the new contingent ... originally scheduled for the spring [of 2004] had been delayed over questions about which area of Iraq they should be sent to and worries about the safety of the troops ... The full complement of 3,600 troops will make South Korea the third largest member of the US-led coalition, after the United States and Britain ... The South Korean government has stressed that its contingent will be engaged in "peace-building and reconstruction" operations, though special forces are reportedly part of the unit': www.iht.com, 12 August 2004. 'The much-delayed deployment of South Korea's brigade to Iraq has gone ahead ... [with the deployment of] 2,800 troops and will add 800 once the brigade has expanded its base in Erbil, in northern Iraq ... The deployment of the 2,800 men took fifty days ... The unit's operations are expected to be peacekeeping and reconstruction rather than combat. The deployment was planned for this spring ... The deployment started in August under conditions of strictest secrecy': www.iht.com, 22 September 2004.)

3 'The United States wants to withdraw a third of its 37,000 troops stationed in South Korea by ... December 2005 ... The figure [of about 12,500] would include about 3,600 already slated to be redeployed this summer ... The withdrawal [announced on 6 June 2004] would be the first major troop reduction on the Korean Peninsula since 1992 ... The announcement comes amid lingering uncertainty over the unresolved twenty-month standoff over North Korea's quest for nuclear arms and growing concern about the health of the US–South Korean military alliance ... Any troop withdrawals are certain to have a deep impact in South Korea, amid fears of conservatives that North Korea could exploit any security vacuum left by departing US troops ... Many still have painful memories of the North

Korean invasion that triggered the 1950–3 Korean War ... The proposed changes, along with anti-American sentiment among many young Koreans, have triggered concern that President Roh Moo Hyun may be endangering the US-South Korean alliance by advocating a greater role for his country in its defence'. (*IHT*, 8 June 2004, p. 5)

The US troops along the border have long been considered a 'tripwire' to ensure US intervention if the North attacked. Many in the South also see them as a healthy restraint on the United States, believing that Washington would not take military action to provoke the North when US troops were in harm's way on the border. The US proposal to pull out 12,500 of its soldiers nationwide by the end of next year [2005] would force South Korea to shoulder more responsibility for defending itself from any North Korean military aggression. But the plan, announced Monday [7 June], has raised concern that the North could view a US withdrawal as a sign of weakness ... The troop reduction would be the first major cut in South Korea since the early 1990s, when the allies co-ordinated the removal of 7,000 soldiers. The United States has stationed troops in South Korea since the end of the Korean War – partly as a deterrent against North Korea and partly as a counterbalance to other regional powers. (www.iht.com, 8 June 2004)

The United States and South Korea could not agree on a set of principles to relocate American troops remaining in South Korea away from the Demilitarized Zone and to withdraw all but a handful of American troops from a base that sits atop some of the most valuable real estate in downtown Seoul. (www.iht.com, 9 June 2004)

Senior Bush administration officials insist that plans to withdraw one-third of the 27,000 US troops in South Korea will not be viewed by Kim Jong Il as a weakening of US commitments to South Korea's security or a lessening of resolve to force North Korea to dismantle its nuclear arsenal ... [It is argued that] the North Koreans do not see the initiative to reduce forces as a sign of America's diminishing resolve. 'They were the first to complain about the plan to relocate our forces and realign our forces south of the Han river', said Richard Lawless, the [US] deputy under-secretary of defence for Asian and Pacific affairs. They suggested that we would be adding to our combat power by doing that. North Korea's response to previous indications of the American plan has been to say that the United States was positioning itself for a first strike ... The presence of US troops within range of 10,000 artillery pieces and rockets that North Korea hides in caves along the border ... makes those troops a target for a first strike ... US officials said technology would do better at deterring North Korea than US prowess measured solely in numbers of troops. (www.iht.com, 9 June 2004; *IHT*, 10 June 2004, p. 5)

The United States is planning to reduce its troops in South Korea by a third over the next eighteen months as part of the Pentagon's restructur-

ing of its worldwide forces ... The United States has insisted that it remains committed to its military presence in South Korea and pledged \$11 billion of investment to strengthen the US forces that will stay in the country. But many in Seoul believe the partial withdrawal reflects a weakening in the fifty-year-old alliance with Washington, following a wave of anti-American sentiment among young South Koreans and the election of a left-leaning ruling party. (*FT*, 8 June 2004, p. 11)

‘The United States agreed under pressure from South Korea on Wednesday [6 October] to stretch out over an additional three years until 2008 the withdrawal of 12,500 US troops from that country’ (www.iht.com, 6 October 2004).

(‘In the biggest realignment of forces since the Cold War President George W. Bush announced on Monday that US military strength in Europe and Asia would be reduced by 60,000 to 70,000 over the next decade’: *IHT*, 17 August 2004, p. 5.)

On 26 May 2004 the first meeting took place between military generals from North and South, the first since the end of the Korean War. This was significant because North Korea views South Korea as a puppet state. On 4 June 2004 North and South Korean generals agreed to take steps to avoid clashes at sea (by, for example, using a standard radio frequency) and to stop using loudspeaker broadcasts and large billboards along the DMZ.

By 15 August [2004] the hundreds of propaganda signs and loudspeakers are to be entirely removed from both sides of the inter-Korean border ... Kim Dae Jung’s ‘sunshine policy’ was devoted both to avoiding a second Korean war and to diminishing the huge socio-economic gap between the two neighbours. South Korea’s agriculture ministry is drawing up plans to revive the North’s failed farm sector. Other ministries are working to rehabilitate the North’s electric power system and railroads. If South Korea’s electric grids and rail lines are linked to Russia, the North could earn large royalties. South Korea’s unification ministry is planning to start broadcasting North Korean news programmes next month [July 2004] ... Last week a South Korean charity opened a 100-bed children’s hospital in Pyongyang. The group, which brought eleven South Korean children to the opening, is also building a milk factory in Pyongyang. (*IHT*, 26 June 2004, p. 6)

North Korea now has embassies in forty-one countries (up from nineteen in 2000) and diplomatic ties with 155 ... North Korea began opening up immediately after its first summit meeting with South Korea in 2000. Since then it has established diplomatic ties with nineteen new countries, including Britain, Australia and nations of the EU. (*IHT*, 21 August 2004, p. 4)

In August–September 2004 South Korea admitted that its scientists (without permission, according to the government) had conducted small-scale nuclear experiments – in 2000 involving enriching uranium with lasers

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and in 1982 involving plutonium extraction. 'North Korea warned on Wednesday [8 September] that the uranium enrichment experiment in 2000 could "accelerate a north-east Asia nuclear arms race" and accused the United States of applying a "double standard" to the nuclear programmes of the two Koreas' (www.iht.com, 9 September 2004).

Two large explosions on 8 and 9 September 2004 in North Korea close to the Chinese border led to much speculation. It quickly became clear that there was no nuclear test. North Korea claimed that the explosions were connected with a hydroelectric project.

The government's low key approach to human rights problems in North Korea is controversial.

Ko Kyung Bin (a senior official at the unification ministry in South Korea, which handles relations with North Korea): 'The question is whether we take a "loud and symbolic" approach or a "silent and substantial" track. If we get loud about human rights North Korean authorities will make the country more isolated and the human rights situation there will get worse' ... It is an approach that drives the government [in South Korea] ... to abstain from voting on the UN Human Rights Commission's annual resolution condemning North Korea. (www.iht.com, 14 July 2005)

Economic and social comparisons between North and South Korea

Although it is notoriously difficult to quantify economic and social magnitudes in North Korea, the following give some idea of comparative dimensions.

Demographic comparisons

In 1987 North Korea's population was 21.7 million compared with South Korea's 42.8 million (Jeffries 1990: 263). In 1996 the respective figures were 23.9 million and 43.5 million (*IHT*, 5 March 1997, p. 6). In 1997 the respective figures were 23 million and 46 million (*The Economist*, Survey, 10 July 1999, p. 24). In 1998 North Korea's population was 21.9 million compared with South Korea's 46.4 million (*The Economist*, 1 July 2000, p. 83).

In 1996 life expectancy at birth in South Korea was seventy for men compared with sixty-seven in North Korea, while the respective figures for women were seventy-seven and seventy-four (*IHT*, 5 March 1997, p. 6). In 1997 male life expectancy was sixty-nine years in South Korea and sixty-one years in North Korea, while female life expectancy was seventy-six years and sixty-five years, respectively (*The Economist*, Survey, 10 July 1999, p. 14). 'Life expectancy [in North Korea] has fallen from 66.8 years in 1993 to 60.4 years' (*Guardian*, 6 August 2002, p. 13).

In 1996 the infant mortality rate was eight per thousand live births in South Korea compared with twenty-six per thousand live births in North Korea (*IHT*, 5 March 1997, p. 6).

In 1987 nearly 70 per cent of the North Korean population was urbanized

(Jeffries 1990: 263). Only 25 per cent of the work force is employed in agriculture (*Transition*, April 1998, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 20). 'North Korea is at least half urban' (*IHT*, 5 August 2002, p. 6). 'Two out of three North Koreans live in the towns and cities . . . Huge but unknown numbers of workers have been moved into farming' (*The Economist*, 13 March 2004, p. 64).

Family members and exchanges

More than 7 million South Koreans have relatives in North Korea (*FEER*, 26 February 1998, p. 13). 'An estimated 15 per cent of South Koreans have relatives living in the North, but they have been unable to contact them because of a ban on postal and telephone links between the two Koreas since the civil war' (*FT*, 1 July 2000, p. 6). 'More than 7.6 million people in the South have relatives on the other side of the border' (*The Economist*, 1 July 2000, p. 83). 'There are some 1.2 million people in the South with immediate family members in the North. If second and third generations are added, the total reaches nearly 7.7 million' (*FEER*, 24 August 2000, p. 21). 'South Koreans have relatives living in the North, but they have been unable to contact them because of a ban on postal and telephone links between the two Koreas since the civil war' (*FT*, 1 July 2000, p. 6). 'Approximately 10 million family members [have been] unable to contact each other since the peninsula was divided' (*FEER*, 28 September 2000, p. 14). 'Approximately 10 million family members [have been] unable to contact each other since the peninsula was divided' (*FEER*, 28 September 2000, p. 14). 'South Korea estimates that 7 million of its own people and 3 million from the North have relations they have not seen since 1953' (*The Economist*, 30 September 2000, p. 91). Former South Korean president Kim Dae Jung (27 November 2000): 'We are trying to ascertain how many of the 10 million members of separated families are still living.'

The first official family exchange visits took place in 1985.

Meetings . . . have been organized unofficially for years, mostly in northern China. According to Seoul's unification ministry, 458 families were reunited in the 1990s. Most of these reunions are arranged by brokers who employ a network of ethnic-Korean Chinese nationals and North Koreans. For a fee, typically \$1,500, they track down family members in the North; another \$5,000 to \$7,000 buys a reunion . . . Most of the 1.5 million first-generation North Korean refugees still living are now in their seventies and eighties. So the South's unification ministry does what it can by referring families to recommended brokers and helping cover costs by giving each reunited family 3 million won (\$2,600). And it will continue to do so even with the official reunions taking place next week . . . Only fifty families have been officially united in the forty-seven years since the end of the Korean War. (*FEER*, 19 August 2000, p. 18)

An exchange (the second) took place on 15–18 August 2000 involving 100 family members from North Korea flying to Seoul and 100 family members from South Korea flying to Pyongyang.

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The third reunion of family members took place on 30 November–2 December 2000, involving 100 people from South Korea and 100 from North Korea flying to Pyongyang and Seoul respectively. The reunion was meant to have taken place earlier.

North and South Korea exchanged mail for 600 families on Thursday [15 March 2001], the first contact in more than fifty years for the relatives. ‘We exchanged 300 letters from each side with North Korean officials at Panmunjom after checking their names and addresses’, South Korea’s Red Cross said . . . The exchange was the first since the Korean Peninsula was partitioned in 1945. (*IHT*, 16 March 2001, p. 6)

The fourth family reunion took place on 28–30 April 2002, 100 travelling to North Korea and 100 travelling to South Korea.

More than 100 South Koreans flew to Pyongyang . . . for a five-day visit on the first commercial flight between the countries since they were divided . . . Previous flights by South Koreans for brief family reunions have been funded by their government. (*The Times*, 15 September 2003, p. 12)

(The issue of defections to South Korea is dealt with, below, under the section entitled ‘Political prisoners, kidnappings and refugees’.)

Per capita and total income

‘*Per capita* GNP in the two Koreas may have been equal as late as 1975. Between 1975 and 2003, however, South Korea’s *per capita* output nearly quintupled’ (Nicholas Eberstadt, *FEER*, March 2005, p. 31).

In 1995 *per capita* income in North Korea stood at \$957, compared with \$10,076 in South Korea (*FEER*, 27 June 1996, p. 71).

The South Korean central bank estimates that in 1997 North Korea’s *per capita* income was \$741, about one-thirteenth of South Korea’s (*FEER*, 2 July 1998, p. 63). In 1997 GDP per head was \$9,500 in South Korea and \$741 in North Korea (*The Economist*, Survey, 10 July 1999, p. 14).

‘In rare official data given to the United Nations Development Programme last year [1998] Pyongyang claimed that *per capita* income had halved in three years to just \$481 in 1996’ (Aidan Foster-Carter, *The World Today*, 1999, vol. 55, no. 3, p. 11).

In 1998 GDP per head was \$6,823 compared with \$573 in North Korea (*The Economist*, 1 July 2000, p. 83).

In 1999, according to South Korea’s central bank, North Korea’s *per capita* GDP was \$714, only a twelfth of that of South Korea (*FT*, 21 June 2000, p. 10).

According to Seoul’s Korea Development Institute, *per capita* income in North Korea is below \$400 (*FEER*, 22 June 2000, p. 20).

South Korea’s *per capita* income in 2002 was \$10,013 compared with North Korea’s \$762 (*FT*, 6 June 2003, p. 12).

'North Korea's *per capita* income has fallen to 8 per cent of that of South Korea' (www.iht.com, 3 June 2004).

'North Korea's *per capita* income reached \$818 last year [2003]' (www.iht.com, 8 June 2004). '[The figure of] \$818 [amounts to] a sixteenth of South Korea's' (*FT*, 9 June 2004, p. 11).

'[North Korea's] *per capita* income rose to \$914 in 2004 ... less than one-fifteenth the \$14,162 posted by South Korea ... [according to] the central bank of South Korea' (www.iht.com, 31 May 2005).

North Korea's annual economic output was \$23 billion in 1990 and \$16 billion in 2000 (*FT*, 21 February 2002, p. 10). 'North Korea has ... a GDP that is 4 per cent of that of South Korea' (*IHT*, 12 March 2003, p. 3). In 2002 GDP in South Korea was \$505 billion. In North Korea the figure was \$15 billion (*IHT*, 28 July 2003, p. 2). 'The North's nominal national income [in 2003] was the equivalent of \$18.8 billion, about 3 per cent of that of South Korea' (www.iht.com, 8 June 2004).

'The North, with a population of 22.5 million, had a Gross National Income of \$20.8 billion in 2004 ... [according to] South Korea's central bank' (*FT*, 1 June 2005, p. 9).

In the 1930s the area now constituting the North was more rapidly industrialized, especially in terms of heavy industry, than the South (Suh 1983: 199). In 1946 agriculture in North Korea contributed almost 60 per cent of national product (Yoon 1986: 61).

A [South Korean] report spells out how North Korea, once the peninsula's industrial showcase, is now an industrial wasteland ... In 1945 industrial development was concentrated in the north ... North Korea can [now] boast industrial equipment with a value of \$2 billion, according to the Bank of Korea, South Korea's central bank. By contrast, the same industrial inventory in South Korea is worth \$489 billion. (www.iht.com, 29 April 2004)

Energy needs are dominated by coal (75 per cent), backed up by hydro-electric power (15 per cent), with a deliberately low importance attached to oil (10 per cent), which the country lacks (figures quoted by Halliday 1987: 30). 'North Korea is a land rich in minerals such as coal, iron ore and tungsten' (*Foreign Policy*, November–December 2003, p. 46).

Trade

According the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), North Korea spent more than a quarter of GDP on defence in 1996, compared with the USA's 3.6 per cent (*The Economist*, 18 October 1997, p. 164). The military budget is around \$5.4 billion a year, according to the IISS – anything from a fifth to a third of GDP. The armed forces run a parallel economy, with their own mines, farms and factories (*The Economist*, Survey, 10 July 1999, p. 112). Edward Olsen estimates that North Korea spends 30 per cent of its budget on defence, while the IIST estimates that in 1998 North Korea spent

an estimated \$2.4 billion on its armed forces compared with a South Korean military expenditure of \$10.2 billion (Smith 2000: 599–600). ‘As of mid-2000 the North Korean armed forces are the world’s fifth largest, its ground forces are the world’s third largest, and its special operations are the world’s largest’ (Samuel Kim, *Asian Survey*, 2001, vol. XLI, no. 1, p. 26). There are 1.17 million men under arms in North Korea. South Korea has 672,000 (Selig Harrison, *FT*, 18 July 2003, p. 19). ‘The North spends 14.3 per cent of the country’s GDP on its military compared to the 3.1 per cent by the South’ (*FEER*, 25 October 2001, p. 65). ‘The CIA estimates that 30 per cent of the country’s GDP goes to the military’ (*IHT*, 3 January 2004, p. 4).

Economic links with South Korea were largely severed and the commission set up in 1985 to deal with the re-establishment of commercial links became bogged down by intense rivalry. Nevertheless, the two countries have started to trade (albeit indirectly via third countries) on a small scale, with no duties on the North’s imports into South Korea (*FT*, 17 January 1989, p. 6; *IHT*, 2 February 1989, p. 1, and 3 February 1989, p. 2; EIU, *Country Report*, 1989, no. 1, p. 31).

It was not until 27 July 1991 that North Korea actually officially recognized that direct trade had taken place (the first since 1948), specifically an exchange of southern rice for northern coal and cement (Shim Jae Hoon, *FEER*, 22 August 1991, p. 21).

In 1997 North–South trade amounted to \$308.3 million, much of it in textiles going to North Korea where workshops turned them into clothing for sale in South Korea (*IHT*, 20 June 1998, p. 11).

In 1999 inter-Korean trade amounted to \$333.5 million, ‘its highest total since it began in 1989’ (*The Economist*, 15 April 2000, p. 22). ‘[In 1999] goods and services worth \$122 million moved from North to South, while \$212 million headed in the opposite direction’ (*IHT*, 15 April 2000, p. 9). Inter-Korean trade amounted to \$333 million in 1999, most of it humanitarian aid such as fertilizers and food (*FEER*, 22 June 2000, p. 20).

In 2001 inter-Korean trade was \$223.4 million (*Asian 2001 Yearbook*, *FEER*, December 2000).

‘Inter-Korean trade reached \$406 million in the first eight months of 2003, up 45 per cent from the 2002 total’ (Park 2004: 146).

‘Inter-Korean trade grew by one-eighth in 2003 to \$724 million ... South Korea’s shipments of food and other relief goods to the North totalled \$435 million’ (www.iht.com, 8 June 2004).

In a policy that started 14 May [2004] the South Korean government will reimburse half of all financial losses incurred by South Korean companies trading with the North. Designed to promote inter-Korean trade, the policy affects 480 companies and sets an annual \$421,000 limit per company. (*IHT*, 25 May 2004, p. 5)

‘Inter-Korean trade fell 3.8 per cent to \$697 million last year [2004] as South Korea imported fewer agricultural products from the North’ (www.iht.com, 31 May 2005).

Foreign direct investment

Foreign direct investment (mainly South Korean) in North Korea has to date been very limited despite attempts to improve inducements since the September 1984 joint venture law (.e.g. wholly foreign-owned companies are now permitted). The Rajin–Sonbong special economic zone has (founded in 1991) has proved to be a disappointment. It is North Korea's contribution to the Tumen River development area, which also involves Russia and China. South Korean companies are involved in other areas in North Korea, such as Nampo and Kaesong. South Korean companies have continued to invest in North Korea despite it being typically unprofitable to do so. Family connections and patriotism (eventual reunification) explain their willingness to take a very long-run view of commercial prospects. South Korea's Hyundai company has made such large losses in the Mount Kumgang tourist resort in North Korea that the South Korean government has had to provide subsidies.

South Korea's largest watchmaker and thirteen other companies on Wednesday [30 June 2004] broke ground for factories in North Korea in the first industrial zone created by the two neighbours . . . Kaesong is the third zone North Korea has opened to try to attract overseas investment . . . North Korea's two earlier industrial zones – Rajin–Sonbong on the Russian border and Sinuiju on the Chinese border – have not been successful, according to South Korean analysts. (www.iht.com, 30 June 2004)

The Kaesong industrial zone was inaugurated in October 2004. High hopes are being placed in the zone as a boost not only to the North Korean economy but also to the South Korean one. 'The initial thirteen companies have invested about \$50 million in the project . . . It is expected eventually to draw billions of dollars in investment' (www.iht.com, 20 October 2004).

A generous South Korean attitude towards aid, trade and foreign investment is in part a result of the effort to ameliorate the cost of any possible reunification of the two Koreans. Estimates of the cost vary enormously, but the more the economic situation in North Korea improves the lower that cost will be.

Relations between North Korea and the United States

The Clinton administration

On 12 August 1994 the United States and North Korea reached a preliminary nuclear agreement. In return for a freeze in North Korea's nuclear programme, the United States was to move towards diplomatic relations, reduce barriers to trade and investment, and help arrange for the construction of two light-water reactors (which produce less plutonium than the graphite-moderated type). Alternative energy supplies were to be provided until the new reactors came on stream. The United States and North Korea formally

signed an agreement on the latter's nuclear programme on 21 October 1994. In March 1995 a US-led consortium, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), was set up to deal with the problem. South Korea bears by far the largest share of the cost. Japan is the second largest contributor and the United States is third. (The eventual bill for the two reactors will be around \$5.2 billion. South Korea and Japan have formally agreed to pay 70 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, while 10 per cent has yet to be assigned: Aidan Foster-Carter, *IHT*, 15 May 1998, p. 8.) There was at the time considerable unease about policies that in effect 'bought off' North Korea whenever it caused international alarm. The danger, critics of Western mollifying policies argued, is that 'bad behaviour' is actually encouraged. The accord came to grief in the administration of George W. Bush, as is discussed below. Supporters of the 1994 accord argue that it was better than any alternative policy and that it hindered North Korea's development of nuclear weapons.

The first of a series of four-nation talks between North Korea, South Korea, the United States and China took place in March 1998.

On 16 March 1999 North Korea agreed to allow repeated US inspections (starting in May 1999) of the suspected nuclear weapons underground site at Kumchangri (about 40 kilometres north-west of Yongbyon. The United States subsequently provided aid but denied that this was connected with the agreement. (North Korea had demanded \$300 million as the price for access to the site.) On 27 May 1999 US officials reported on their investigation on 20–24 May of the North Korean site. The team found an unfinished site, the underground portion of which was an extensive, empty tunnel complex (*IHT*, 28 May 1999, p. 7).

North Korea agreed Sunday [12 September 1999] to a de facto freeze in its [long-range] missile-testing programme ... In exchange the United States agreed to encourage the process of developing normal relations and of eventually removing the array of decades-old sanctions that have banned all commercial and other exchanges except for humanitarian food aid. (*IHT*, 13 September 1999, p. 1)

'North Korea agreed to refrain from additional tests of the missile as long as negotiations with the United States continued' (*IHT*, 16 September 1999, p. 5).

The United States lifted much of a more than four-decade-old trade embargo against North Korea on Friday [17 September 1999] after what American officials called a pledge ... not to test-fire a long-range missile ... Trade in consumer goods and raw materials will now be legal. American airlines will have their government's blessing to land in North Korea, US companies to invest there and American citizens to remit money. Trade in goods with military use will remain prohibited. (*IHT*, 18 September 1999, p. 1)

The US yesterday [17 September] lifted many of the sanctions imposed on North Korea ... The US administration said it would allow trade and

travel links with North Korea in recognition of its pledge to refrain from testing long-range missiles ... Trade in most consumer goods, commercial transport of cargo and passengers, and funds transfers between individuals in the US and North Korea would be allowed in most cases ... Strict controls will remain over goods that could also be used in weapons manufacture, and international-based sanctions – restrictions based on multilateral arrangements – will remain in place ... US sanctions under the Trading with the Enemy Act have barred trade with the country for nearly half a century. (*FT*, 18 September 1999, p. 4)

Pyeongyang signalled it was placing its missile development programme on hold 'to preserve a positive atmosphere' during continuing talks with the United States. A joint statement ... said the two sides will continue talks over missile testing and other matters. (*FEER*, 23 September 1999, p. 14)

A US presidential spokesman:

The United States is taking this action in order to pursue improved relations with North Korea. It is our understanding that North Korea will continue to refrain from testing long-range missiles of any kind as both sides move towards normal relations.

A special Clinton administration panel led by a former defence secretary, William Perry, has recommended [it was reported on 15 September 1999] that the United States step up diplomatic and trade relations with North Korea at a 'markedly faster rate' in hope of ending the communist government's programme to develop nuclear weapons ... The classified final report ... [was] presented to Mr Clinton a few days ago ... The panel ... recommended that the United States attempt to improve relations with North Korea at 'a markedly faster rate, but as North Korea takes steps to address our security concerns' ... Mr Perry's eighteen-page report recommended that the White House appoint an ambassador-level senior official to oversee all aspects of policy toward North Korea. (*JHT*, 16 September 1999, p. 5)

Former US defence secretary William Perry's report was formally published on 13 October 1999.

William Perry ... has recommended ... that the United States and its Asian allies try to coexist with ... North Korea rather than seek to undermine them or to promote internal reform ... Mr Perry said that the United States should gradually eliminate sanctions and reduce the pressures that North Korea sees as threatening, in exchange for assurances that North Korea does not have a nuclear weapons programme and will not test, deploy, produce or export long-range missiles ... Mr Perry, who spent ten months reviewing North Korea policy at the request of President Bill Clinton, concluded that an attempt to hasten the demise of the North Korean government would take too long and had no guarantee of

success. Such a policy would raise the risk of a destructive war on the Korean peninsula and would give ... [North Korea] time to proceed with its weapons programme ... His recommended strategy includes these points: (1) the United States should seek complete and verifiable assurances that North Korea does not have a nuclear weapons programme and the complete and verifiable cessation of testing, production, deployment and export of long-range missiles; (2) step by step the United States would ease pressures on North Korea...; (3) the United States would normalize relations with North Korea and relax trade sanctions. (*IHT*, 14 October 1999, p. 4)

On 19 June 2000 the United States eased economic sanctions against North Korea. 'The move [was] foreshadowed in September [1999] ... US officials say the step Monday [19 June] was unrelated to the historic meeting last week in Pyongyang' (*IHT*, 20 June 2000, p. 9).

On 19–20 July 2000 President Vladimir Putin of Russia visited North Korea. Russia had rejected the US proposal to set up a national missile defence (NMD) system, a missile shield to defend the whole of US territory against a small number of strategic (intercontinental) nuclear missiles from what are now called 'states of concern' (formerly 'rogue states') such as North Korea, Iran and Iraq. Putin believed that there were other ways of tackling the problem, including diplomacy and security guarantees for North Korea. (On 1 September 2000 Bill Clinton announced that a decision regarding deployment of the NMD would be left to his successor as US president. Factors included technical failures during tests.) The Putin visit resulted in a specific proposal relating to North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile programme. Putin (19 July):

[Kim Jong Il] voiced an idea under which North Korea is even prepared to use exclusively the rocket equipment of other countries for peaceful space research if they offered it ... North Korea is even prepared to use exclusively the technology of other countries if it is offered rocket boosters for peaceful space research ... One should expect other countries, if they assert that the DPRK poses a threat for them, would support this project. One can minimize the threat by supplying the DPRK with its rocket boosters ... The efforts of Russia alone are not enough.

It was not clear exactly what the idea involved. The United States indicated that it would be prepared to launch satellites for peaceful purposes on North Korea's behalf but would not transfer rockets or technology to North Korea for the purpose.

In a confidential exchange of letters North Korea is reported to have reaffirmed to Russia that it will drop its intercontinental ballistic missile programme if other countries will launch two or three satellites a year for Pyongyang at their expense ... The letters described Thursday [4 August], with their demand that the launches be paid for by countries

with concerns over the missiles, strongly suggest that Pyongyang envisages that the launches indeed would be outside North Korea . . . Well-informed sources here [in Moscow] said the letter to Mr Putin reiterated that North Korea would abandon its intercontinental ballistic missile programme in exchange for the help with satellite launches, which Pyongyang say are for peaceful purposes. Going a step further than what was earlier disclosed, the North Koreans also asked that the ‘concerned countries’ – those that have criticized its missile programme – pay for the two or three launches a year Pyongyang was requesting, the sources said. (*IHT*, 5 August 2000, p. 2)

On 12 August 2000 Kim Jong Il met forty-six South Korean media executives in Pyongyang. He seemed to cast some doubt upon the seriousness of the missile offer (*IHT*, 15 August 2000, pp. 1, 4).

On 28 July 2000 US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met North Korean foreign minister Paek Nam Sun: ‘the highest diplomatic contact between the two nations since the Korean War’ (*IHT*, 29 July 2000, p. 5); ‘the first ministerial level talks between the USA and North Korea’ (*FT*, 29 July 2000, p. 9).

On 10 October 2000 President Bill Clinton met in the White House with Jo Myong Rok. ‘Jo Myong Rok, the first vice-chairman of North Korea’s National Defence Commission . . . is considered to be second in command to . . . Kim Jong Il’ (*IHT*, 4 October 2000, p. 6).

The forty-five-minute session [was] the first between an American president and a senior North Korean official . . . The North . . . is keen to be dropped from the US list of terrorist nations, which includes Libya, Iraq and Cuba. There were hints Friday [6 October], after the two sides issued a joint communiqué in which North Korea said it was opposed to all forms of terrorism, that it might soon be granted. Washington has demanded such a renunciation of terrorism as a condition for removing North Korea from the state department list of terrorist sponsors. Its removal would open the way for aid beyond strictly humanitarian assistance . . . and open the door to Pyongyang’s involvement in international financial institutions. (*IHT*, 11 October 2000, p. 7)

President Bill Clinton may visit North Korea before leaving office, a joint US–North Korean communiqué said Thursday [12 October]. The communiqué, issued at the end of two days of talks with a special envoy from North Korea, came after Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced plans to visit Pyongyang in the near future . . . Mrs Albright said her visit to North Korea would probably take place before the end of the month [October] . . . The visit to Washington by Jo Myong Rok, first deputy chairman of North Korea’s National Defence Commission, included talks with Mr Clinton, Mrs Albright and defence secretary William Cohen. (*IHT*, 13 October 2000, p. 10)

(President Clinton did not, in fact, visit North Korea.)

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited North Korea on 23–24 October 2000.

During the final hectic weeks of his administration, President Bill Clinton secretly invited Kim Jong Il to come to Washington . . . Kim turned down the invitation, according to Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright . . . Albright's account appears in her new book, *Madam Secretary* . . . The invitation to Kim was extended after Clinton concluded that time constraints and other factors did not allow him to accept a publicly announced invitation from the North Korean leader to visit Pyongyang. (*IHT*, 7 August 2003, p. 5)

The Bush administration's approach to negotiations over North Korea's nuclear programme

President George W. Bush (inaugurated on 20 January 2001 after a disputed election) has been hamstrung by the quagmire (unexpected by the US administration) resulting from the invasion of Iraq (which began on 20 March 2003). The United States has at least shelved any thought of an attack on North Korea, while Iraq has added to the incentive of countries like North Korea to acquire nuclear weapons as a way of deterring a US attack. ('After the US-led invasion of Iraq last year [2003] Kim Jong Il said the United States would not have attacked Saddam Hussein if he had had nuclear weapons': www.iht.com, 9 September 2004. 'Kim Jong Il has said in the past Mr Bush would not have invaded Iraq if Saddam Hussein had had nuclear weapons capable of use': www.bbc.com, 12 September 2004. Vice-foreign minister Choe Su Hon in an address to the United Nations General Assembly on 28 September 2004: '[North Korea [has] no other option but to possess a nuclear deterrent [because of US policies designed to] eliminate [North Korea and make it] a target of preemptive nuclear strikes . . . Our deterrent is, to all intents and purposes, the self-defensive means to cope with the ever-increasing US nuclear threats and, further, prevent a nuclear war in north-east Asia': www.iht.com, 28 September 2004.) Countries like Japan and South Korea could very quickly develop nuclear weapons of their own if they felt threatened enough.

President Bush has a visceral dislike of Kim Jong Il which rules out any direct negotiations. Among other things he has described the North Korean leader as 'untrustworthy' and North Korea itself (on 29 January 2003) as 'an oppressive regime'. President Bush has used the term 'rogue nation' to describe North Korea (e.g. on 27 February 2001). (On 19 June 2000 the former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declared that the term 'rogue state', which referred to countries like North Korea, Iran and Iraq, would no longer be used to describe countries such as North Korea. Instead, the term 'states of concern' would be used.) On 30 January 2002 President Bush described North Korea, Iran and Iraq as 'an axis of evil'. Six-nation talks (involving North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Russia

and Japan) were first held in Beijing on 27–29 August 2003. Talks between North Korea and the United States were, however, held on the sidelines of the main talks.

The United States has not ruled out any option in its policies towards North Korea. Although it has often said that it has no ‘intention’ of attacking the country, the United States has rejected a non-aggression treaty demanded by North Korea. Such a treaty would rule out any preemptive strike by the United States. The most the United States has offered are ‘security guarantees’, which would appear to rule out a US attack if North Korea dismantles its nuclear programme. North Korea has offered a ‘simultaneous package solution’ of synchronized concessions. The United States has no intention of reviving the idea in the 1994 accord of building two light-water reactors in North Korea. Work stopped on the reactors on 1 December 2003. The United States has involved other countries in ‘tailored containment’ and the Proliferation Security Initiative. The idea is to prevent the export (including through means such as naval interceptions) of weapons of mass destruction, drugs (such as heroin and amphetamines) and counterfeit money.

President George W. Bush, in a significant shift in his approach to North Korea, authorized US negotiators to say last week that he is prepared to take a range of steps to aid [North Korea] . . . from gradually easing sanctions to an eventual peace treaty, according to senior officials. But, officials emphasized, these inducements would be phased in slowly only as North Korea starts surrendering its nuclear weapons, dismantling the facilities to develop them and permitting inspectors free run of the country. The proposals were described to the North Koreans at the talks in Beijing last week. They constituted a major departure from the official White House statements earlier this year that North Korea would see no benefits until it shipped all its weapons out of the country and dismantled all of its nuclear facilities. (*IHT*, 6 September 2003, p. 3)

A senior US official suggested last week that North Korea could expect reciprocal steps by the United States and its allies as Pyongyang moved towards full, verifiable dismantling of its nuclear weapons . . . US officials deny a policy shift, though White House comments suggest the United States would respond after North Korea began to disarm . . . Charles Pritchard, who resigned as special envoy for negotiations with North Korea just before the Beijing talks resumed, said there was a shift in the US position, but only a small one. (*FT*, 9 September 2003, p. 11)

One of the fiercest US critics of the Bush negotiating approach is Charles Pritchard. ‘Charles Pritchard resigned [on 22 August 2003] as special envoy for negotiations with North Korea . . . Mr Pritchard hinted at why he had to quit, saying the United States needed to engage North Korea in direct, bilateral talks with a full-time negotiator’ (*FT*, 9 September 2003, p. 11).

Charles Pritchard, who resigned this summer [2003] as the State Department special envoy for North Korean nuclear issue . . . [said]: ‘We’ve

gone under his [Bush's] watch from the possibility that North Korea has one or two weapons to a possibility – a distinct possibility – that it now has eight or more.' (*IHT*, 15 October 2003, p. 1)

Charles Pritchard was a member of the unofficial US delegation that visited Yongbyon nuclear site in January 2004.

Mr Pritchard was the envoy in talks with Pyongyang in October 2002 when, according to the US account, North Korea admitted that it possessed a secret HEU [highly enriched uranium] programme. North Korea has since denied it made such an admission, but Mr Pritchard said he stood by the US account and continued to believe US intelligence on the programme's existence. Describing last week's visit, he confirmed reports that the delegation toured the Yongbyon facility . . . and that they were shown empty ponds and canisters that had stored 8,000 fuel rods. (*FT*, 16 January 2004, p. 7)

Jack [Charles] Pritchard (who resigned as special envoy for negotiations with North Korea in August 2003): 'Time is not on the American side', Kim Gye Gwan, deputy foreign minister off North Korea, told me a few weeks ago. 'As time passes our nuclear deterrent continues to grow in quantity and quality.' Those words are an indictment of US intelligence as well as a potential epitaph on the Bush administration's failed policy in North Korea. On 8 January North Korean officials gave an unofficial American delegation, of which I was a member, access to the building in Yongbyon where 8,000 spent fuel rods had once been safeguarded. We discovered that all 8,000 rods had been removed. Whether they have been reprocessed for weapons-grade plutonium, as Pyongyang claims, is almost irrelevant. American intelligence believed that most if not all the rods remained in storage, giving policy-makers a false sense that time was on their side as they rebuffed North Korean requests for serious dialogue and worked laboriously to devise a multilateral approach to solving the rapidly escalating crisis . . . In December 2002 North Korea was suspected of having one or two nuclear weapons, acquired before agreeing in 1994 to freeze its known nuclear programme and to allow it to be monitored. More than a year later North Korea may have quadrupled its arsenal of nuclear weapons. During the intervening period the Bush administration has relied on intelligence that dismissed North Korean claims that it restarted its nuclear programme at Yongbyon with the express purpose of reprocessing previously sealed and monitored spent fuel to extract plutonium to make a 'nuclear deterrent'. Now there are about 8,000 spent fuel rods missing – evidence that work on such a deterrent may have begun . . . American policy in North Korea is hardly better than American intelligence. At best it can be described only as amateurish. At worst it is a failed attempt to lure American allies down a path that is not designed to resolve the crisis diplomatically but to lead to the failure and ultimate isolation of North Korea in the hope that its government will collapse. (*IHT*, 23 January 2004, p. 6)

Charles Pritchard [is] a retired [US] army colonel and the former point man on North Korea for Secretary of State Colin Powell ... Charles Pritchard: 'This [Bush] administration has adamantly refused to deal directly with North Korea, and they are not going to make any progress until that happens ... Now they [the North Koreans] may have developed as many as six nuclear weapons to add to the two that they confirmed that they have.' (*IHT*, 7 May 2004, p. 2)

Former US president Bill Clinton said the following:

North Korea has greater capacity to produce atomic weapons than Iraq does. So for the North Koreans their 'cash crops', if you will, are missiles and bombs. So I think it is urgent that before they, out of economic necessity, get more irresponsible, we do what we can with the South Koreans and the Russians to make a big deal with them, a verifiable deal to end all nuclear programmes and their long-range missile sales ... [In return North Korea should get] the international recognition they crave [as well as cash for food and energy programmes] ... [The United States should] give them a non-aggression pact if they want that, because we'd never attack them unless they did something that violated that pact anyway ... [North Korea's] behaviour is a form of attention-seeking and it wishes to be reconciled with its neighbours and the United States]. (*IHT*, 28 January 2003, p. 4)

The third round of six-nation talks were held in Beijing on 23–26 June 2004.

President George W. Bush has authorized a team of US negotiators to offer North Korea ... a new set of incentives to give up its nuclear weapons the way Libya did late last year [2003] ... The proposal would be the first significant, detailed overture to North Korea since Bush took office three years ago. (www.iht.com, 23 June 2004)

'Administration officials described the proposal they made as more tangible and more specific than any offered in the past' (*IHT*, 24 June 2004, pp. 1, 8). 'Under the US proposal ... the North must first commit to dismantle its nuclear programmes, including a highly enriched uranium programme that Pyongyang denies it has' (www.iht.com, 19 July 2004).

[North Korea] would have three months, what the [US] officials call a 'preparatory period of dismantlement', to seal and shut down the North Korean nuclear facilities, similar to what Libya committed to ... After that, Bush's aides say, the continuation of the oil and the talks would depend on North Korea's permitting international inspectors to inspect suspected nuclear sites and meeting a series of deadlines for disclosing the full nature of its facilities, disabling and dismantling them, and the shipping them out of the country ... The Japanese, the South Koreans, the Russians and the Chinese ... but not the United States ... would provide North Korea with fuel oil roughly the equivalent to the 45,000

tonnes the United States was sending the country under the 1994 agreement. The United States halted those shipments eighteen months ago. (www.iht.com, 23 June 2004)

[The United States] called for a three-month freeze of Pyongyang's plutonium- and uranium-based weapons programmes in return for fuel-oil assistance from South Korea and Japan. This would be followed by a complete dismantling of North Korea's nuclear programme, with all nuclear materials removed from the country. The North Koreans would in exchange receive security assurances from the United States and its Asian allies and a dialogue with Washington on lifting American economic sanctions and removing North Korea from a list of terror-sponsoring countries ... [Under the 1994 agreement] North Korea received energy aid for simply freezing its nuclear programmes following inspections ... North Korean diplomats responded to the US disarmament plan by offering a counter-proposal of their own ... [namely] a freeze at Yongbyon that would be verified by the United States or China but not by the IAEA [United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency] ... North Korean negotiators implied that their proposal dealt only with the Yongbyon plutonium reactor ... There was no mention of the country's nuclear weapons and its enriched-uranium programme, which North Korea now denies exists. On top of that North Korean officials said any disarmament moves should be preceded by large-scale economic aid and normalization of diplomatic relations ... North Korea is unlikely to reject the proposal out of hand, but it will probably delay its response as long as possible, says Charles Pritchard, a former US negotiator with North Korea. 'The benefit to them of stringing it out and not answering ... without discarding the package now is that it keeps the Bush administration ... from declaring the process dead immediately after the [November US presidential] elections and moving toward a more confrontational approach,' he says ... Few anticipate much progress in resolving the nuclear crisis prior to the presidential shutdown in November ... Democratic Party challenger John Kerry ... has said he would pursue bilateral negotiations along with the six-party talks. (*FEER*, 8 July 2004, pp. 18–19)

(‘Analysts have argued that it would not make sense for Pyongyang to grant concessions to US President George W. Bush’s administration now when it might get a better deal should John Kerry, the Democratic candidate be elected’: *FT*, 17 August 2004, p. 10.) ‘US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly ... said North Korea proposed at the Beijing meeting it would freeze its nuclear weapons programmes for rewards, including energy, lifting of sanctions and removal from the list of nations sponsoring terrorism’ (www.iht.com, 16 July 2004).

On Saturday [24 July] North Korea said ... [that the Bush plan] was a ‘sham offer’ because it required North Korea to disarm and submit to intrusive inspections before it could get the full benefits of economic con-

cessions from the United States, Japan, South Korea and Russia. North Korea has insisted on returning to a 'freeze' in its nuclear programme, similar to the one in effect from 1994 until late 2002 . . . Bush has vowed never to return to a freeze, saying it enables the North to resume work on nuclear weapons. In its statement Saturday North Korea said that because it would not be rewarded for merely freezing its programmes, 'the landmark proposal made by the United States' was not worthy of consideration . . . North Korea's statement seemed to dispute the sequence of concessions, not the goal. 'It is a daydream for the United States to contemplate forcing' North Korea 'to lay down arms first under the situation where both are in a state of armistice and at war technically', it said. (*IHT*, 26 July 2004, p. 7)

North Korea rejected a United States proposal that it should follow Libya's lead and give up its nuclear ambitions if it wanted a swift end to its international isolation and to open the way for an influx of economic aid. North Korea called the US proposal a 'daydream' that was 'not worthy of future discussion'. (*FEER*, 5 August 2004, p. 10)

'North Korea is deploying new land- and sea-based ballistic missiles that can carry nuclear warheads and may have sufficient range to hit the continental United States, according to the authoritative *Jane's Defence Weekly*' (*IHT*, 4 August 2004, p. 1). 'Japanese military analysts are sceptical that North Korea possesses miniaturization technology to fit a nuclear warhead into a missile' (*Guardian*, 4 August 2004, p. 10).

A new assessment of North Korea has come in one of three classified reports commissioned by the Bush administration earlier this year [2004] from the American intelligence community. Circulated last month [July] the report concluded that nearly twenty months of toughened sanctions, including ending a major energy programme, and several rounds of negotiations involving four of North Korea's neighbours had not slowed the North's efforts to develop plutonium weapons, and that a separate, parallel programme to make weapons from highly enriched uranium was also moving forward, though more slowly. (*IHT*, 9 August 2004, p. 1)

North Korea said Monday it would not attend working meetings before the next round of six-party talks . . . and it also said it had no intention of immediately shutting down its nuclear facilities 'A nuclear freeze is possible and it can lead to the dismantlement of the nuclear programme only when the situation develops in the direction of the United States dropping hostile acts' against North Korea, the [foreign] ministry official said . . . In June North Korea offered to freeze its nuclear programme in exchange for energy, a lifting of US economic sanctions and removal from Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism. It said the freeze would be a step toward eventual dismantling of the programme . . . Under the [US] plan some benefits would be withheld to ensure that North Korea co-operates. (www.iht.com, 16 August 2004)

'The US House of Representatives has passed a bill to promote human rights in North Korea and make it possible for refugees from there to seek asylum in the United States, prompting sharp complaints from the North' (www.iht.com, 5 October 2004).

[US] Secretary of State Colin Powell wound up a three-day visit to East Asia on Tuesday [26 October] . . . Another source of possible disagreement in the American approach toward North Korea emerged, this time over a new law passed by the [US] Congress calling on the United States to make human rights an element in the nuclear talks. (www.iht.com, 26 October 2004; *IHT*, 27 October 2004, p. 6)

'One month ago President George W. Bush signed into law the North Korean Human Rights Act, which provides funding for refugees and for increased American radio broadcasting into North Korea' (www.iht.com, 17 November 2004).

President George W. Bush signed a bill to promote human rights in North Korea and to provide humanitarian aid to its citizens and refugees, as well as making them eligible for asylum in the United States. The North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 allows Congress to spend at least \$20 million on programmes aimed at promoting the rule of law and developing a market economy. The law says that any such aid must be closely monitored to ensure that it does not go toward military spending. (*FEER*, 28 October 2004, p. 13)

The North Korean Human Rights Act . . . authorizes up to \$24 million annually through 2008 to promote North Koreans' human rights through humanitarian aid and to protect refugees from retribution by Pyongyang by providing humanitarian and legal assistance and helping them obtain political asylum in the United States. (*Asian Survey*, 2005, vol. XLV, no. 1, p. 19)

(President George W. Bush was reelected in November 2004 and was sworn in on 20 January 2005.)

US condemnation of North Korea for its human rights violations have not seemed to threaten Pyongyang's co-operation in the search for missing servicemen . . . In the months after the Korean War ended in 1953 Pyongyang and its Chinese allies turned over the remains of several thousand American servicemen. Then all co-operation ground to a halt until 1990, when North Korea began turning over remains to visiting US congressional delegations . . . In 1996 Pyongyang agreed to stop excavating and repatriating remains on its own and to allow American forensic experts to lead the operations. (*FEER*, 14 October 2004, p. 20)

Although they remain technically at war, the militaries of the United States and North Korea are successfully co-operating at one level: repatriating the bodies of US troops killed in action in the North . . . With

8,100 US personnel still unaccounted for from the Korean War ... [the US military] has been conducting missions to locate fallen troops in North Korea since 1996. (www.iht.com, 16 October 2004)

Another round of six-party talks was generally anticipated before the end of September 2004, but they were delayed until July 2005. (See below.)

Selig Harrison (chairman of the Task Force on US Korea Policy at the Center for International Policy):

Although it is now widely recognized that the Bush administration misrepresented and distorted the intelligence data it used to justify the invasion of Iraq, most observers have accepted at face value the assessments the administration has used to reverse the previously established US policy toward North Korea. But what if those assessments were exaggerated and blurred the important distinction between weapons-grade uranium enrichment (which would clearly violate the 1994 Agreed Framework) and lower levels of enrichment (which were technically forbidden by the 1994 accord but are permitted by the Non-proliferation Treaty and do not produce uranium suitable for nuclear weapons? A review of the available evidence suggests that this is just what happened. Relying on sketchy data, the Bush administration presented a worst-case scenario as an incontrovertible truth and distorted its intelligence on North Korea (much as it did in Iraq) and seriously exaggerated the danger that Pyongyang is secretly making uranium-based nuclear weapons ... To break the diplomatic deadlock the United States urgently needs a new strategy. Washington should first deal with the very real and immediate threat posed by the extant stockpile of weapons-usable plutonium that Pyongyang has reprocessed since the breakdown of the Agreed Framework ... [Since the 1994 agreement collapsed there is clear evidence that Pyongyang has reprocessed some or all of the 8,000 plutonium fuel rods at the Yongbyon reactor that had been safeguarded under the accord; Harrison 2005: 109] ... Measures to locate and eliminate any enrichment facilities that can produce weapons-grade uranium are essential but should come in the final stages of a step-by-step denuclearization process ... What first deputy foreign minister Kang Sok Ju ... actually told James Kelly [on 4 October 2002] ... according to foreign minister Paek Nam Sun, was deliberately ambiguous: that North Korea is 'entitled' to have such a [uranium enrichment] programme or 'an even more powerful one' to deter a preemptive US attack. According to Paek, Kang also stated that North Korea is entitled to pursue an 'NCND' (neither confirm nor deny) policy concerning the specifics of its nuclear capabilities, just as the United States does. (Harrison 2005: 99–101)

'Mr Harrison, who has had high-level access to North Korea since 1972, helped broker the 1994 pact' (*FT*, 10 December 2004, p. 10).

'The Task Force on Korean Policy ... includes former US chiefs of staff and ambassadors' (*Guardian*, 11 December 2004, p. 17).

The idea that America should set aside its uranium concerns is given a bipartisan rebuttal in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs* by Robert Gallucci, who negotiated the 1994 plutonium deal with North Korea under the Clinton administration, and Mitchell Reiss, the just departed head of policy planning in the Bush administration's State Department. Turning a blind eye to evidence of North Korea's enrichment work would, they argue, leave Mr Kim with a covert supply of fissile material, whether for bomb making or for export, including terrorists groups. (*The Economist*, 12 February 2005, p. 57)

In mid-2002 the Bush administration obtained clear evidence that North Korea had acquired material and equipment for a centrifuge facility that, when complete, could produce enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year . . . Pyongyang's dismal record demonstrates both the centrality of the uranium enrichment issue to the six-party process and the need to ensure that any solution to the North Korean nuclear issue is thorough and verifiable. The United States and its partners in the six-party talks are not willing to negotiate over part of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme while leaving Pyongyang in possession of the capability to continue its nuclear weapons effort. To focus solely on the more visible plutonium programme would mean turning a blind eye to a parallel programme that has the potential to provide North Korea with a covert, steady supply of fissile material for the fabrication of nuclear weapons or export to terrorist groups. (Reiss and Gallucci 2005: 142–4)

Richard Haass, who served as director of policy planning in the State Department during Bush's first term, is highly critical of the Bush administration's approach in a new book, *The Opportunity* (published by Public Affairs). The Bush approach, he wrote was a 'diluted hybrid' of diplomatic options that lost 'valuable time' that could have been used to stop North Korea from moving forward with its weapons programme. Haass said Bush's vague proposal, which was largely drafted by Stephen Hadley, now the national security adviser, fell 'short of what the North would accept', but also failed to include any clear penalties for refusing to co-operate. North Korea felt no pressure to negotiate, Haass concluded, and never returned to the table. Haass, who has supported diplomatic approaches, also wrote that the United States should not rule out the use of military force. He said it should make clear to North Korea that any retaliation for attacks on its nuclear sites would 'lead to a war that would end with regime change, that is their removal from power, and the effective end to North Korea as a separate state'. (www.iht.com, 5 June 2005)

Pyongyang rejected the incentives Washington offered it last year [2004] and the failure to include any clear penalties in the deal put little pressure on North Korea to compromise. Neither the carrot nor the stick was

adequate. In addition, the Bush administration lost valuable time by resisting the prospect of bilateral talks with North Korea. This was a mistake . . . The best path available now is to continue to work with these states . . . China, Japan, South Korea and Russia . . . on a diplomatic package that would give North Korea security assurances, energy assistance, and specified political and economic benefits in exchange for forgoing its nuclear programmes (fuel and weapons alike) and agreeing to robust international inspections. Sequence matters in all this; it is unrealistic to expect North Korea to satisfy all nuclear-related requirements before it receives any benefits. Washington and its partners should also agree on what economic and political sanctions would be imposed on Pyongyang if it failed to accept such an agreement by a specified date or if it crossed a red line, such as testing a nuclear device . . . There is always the option of accepting a de facto nuclear status for North Korea . . . The United States should declare publicly that any government that uses weapons of mass destruction, threatens to use them, or knowingly transfers WMD or key materials to third parties opens itself up to the strongest reprisals, including attack and removal from power. (Haass 2005: 74–7)

‘Thus far the Bush administration has consistently shown that it would rather resolve . . . challenges through regime change . . . [But] it is highly unlikely to have the desired effect soon enough’ (p. 67).

Regime change, limited military action, diplomacy and deterrence can all be considered as alternative policies. They are better understood, however, as components of a single comprehensive approach toward state such as North Korea . . . Deterrence is a way to make the best of a bad situation. Military action or, more precisely, the threat of it can buttress diplomatic prospects. But diplomacy should be the heart of US policy . . . because it could succeed, because it must be shown to have failed before there is any chance of garnering support for other policies, and because all the other options are so unattractive. (pp. 77–8)

(Richard Haass is President of the Council on Foreign Relations. He was Director of the US State Department’s Policy Planning Staff from 2001 to 2003. This article was drawn from his recently published book entitled *The Opportunity: America’s Moment to Alter History’s Course*.)

‘[North Korea’s] ambiguous attitude toward six-party talks keeps officials guessing whether it is willing to negotiate away its nuclear threat or is simply prevaricating to buy time for a bigger arsenal’ (www.iht.com, 3 July 2005).

‘President George W. Bush insists that he wants to resolve the nuclear crisis through diplomacy, but he has not officially ruled out a military option, which he has called a “last choice”’ (www.iht.com, 7 July 2005).

The six-party talks resumed on 26 July 2005.

How many nuclear weapons does North Korea have?

Anyone trying to come to a definitive answer to North Korea's position on nuclear weapons would be driven mad by years of inconsistent or ambiguous statements about whether or not it has nuclear weapons and about whether or not it has embarked on an alternative method of producing weapons via highly enriched uranium (HEU, which requires centrifuges but not nuclear reactors). The United States claims that in the meetings that took place in North Korea on 3–5 October 2002, North Korea, presented with new US intelligence, admitted that it has been conducting a clandestine HEU programme in violation of the 1994 accord (which froze the plutonium route). (See Selig Harrison, above.) Pakistan has admitted helping North Korea with the HEU programme in exchange for missile technology. In May 2004 the International Atomic Energy Authority claimed that North Korea had supplied Libya (which gave up its nuclear programme in December 2003) with enough uranium hexafluoride to make one nuclear weapon if the already slightly enriched material were to have been enriched in centrifuges. (North Korea has maintained its moratorium on the testing of long-range missiles, agreed on 12 September 1999, but it has tested others.)

North Korea's inconsistencies and ambiguities may well constitute a deliberate policy of keeping others guessing. North Korea has consistently maintained, however, that it is 'entitled' to have nuclear weapons because without them it would be vulnerable to a preemptive attack by the United States. North Korea's major moves are as follows:

North Korea formally lifted its nuclear freeze on 12 December 2002 (reasons given including the suspension of oil deliveries on 15 November 2002 and the alleged threat of a US attack). The United States has no intention of ever allowing the completion of the two light-water nuclear reactors involved in the 1994 accord (work on which was suspended on 1 December 2003). North Korea consistently complained about delays in the construction of the two reactors and other problems experienced with the 1994 accord. For example, on 4 June 2001 the executive director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) said that the first reactor would not be delivered until 2008 – five years late. What part such problems played in explaining North Korea's actions is, of course, difficult to say.

On 10 April 2003, having given the required ninety days notice, North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (which it signed in 1985) – the only country to have done so.

On 12 May 2003 North Korea nullified the 1992 South–North Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. There has been no nuclear test in North Korea, but some claim that there was a joint test in Pakistan on 30 May 1998.

No one knows for sure what is happening in North Korea, but the picture as far as the United States is concerned is becoming clearer:

Until North Korea started to reprocess the approximately 8,000 spent fuel rods which had been kept in storage ponds until the 1994 accord fell apart,

the United States consistently estimated that one or two nuclear weapons had been made from plutonium (in the early 1990s). The number of nuclear weapons capable of being made from these 8,000 or so plutonium rods is not known for certain, the literature mentioning a low of four and a high of ten.

New intelligence estimates that North Korea may have produced one or two nuclear weapons in recent months – or perhaps more – have immersed the Bush administration in another internal debate about the quality of intelligence information about illegal weapons . . . Some of his advisers say it is possible that North Korea is telling the truth about having turned the 8,000 [8,017] nuclear fuel rods into enough weapons-grade plutonium for several warheads . . . Others . . . say there is still no proof and plenty of incentive for North Koreans to bluff. (*IHT*, 15 October 2003, p. 1)

Charles Pritchard: ‘We’ve gone under his [Bush’s] watch from the possibility that North Korea has one or two weapons to a possibility – a distinct possibility – that it now has eight or more’ (*IHT*, 15 October 2003, p. 1).

In December 2002 North Korea was suspected of having one or two nuclear weapons, acquired before agreeing in 1994 to freeze its known nuclear programme and to allow it to be monitored. More than a year later North Korea may have quadrupled its arsenal of nuclear weapons. (Charles Pritchard, *IHT*, 23 January 2004, p. 6)

‘The consensus of US intelligence is that reprocessing [of the 8,000 spent fuel rods] is incomplete, but that the North probably made enough fuel last year [2003] for two or three more weapons’ (*IHT*, 12 January 2004, p. 4).

‘The country is believed to have produced one or two weapons in the early 1990s . . . If it has now produced five or six more, as some intelligence officials estimate, that could create a far more difficult disarmament challenge’ (*IHT*, 4 March 2004, p. 2).

‘It is probable that in the past year North Korea has expanded its nuclear arsenal fourfold and could now possess eight or nine nuclear weapons’ (Jon Wolfsthal, *IHT*, 31 May 2004, p. 8).

North Korea could be producing nuclear weapons at the rate of eight to thirteen a year in the next year or two, the International Institute of Strategic Studies predicted yesterday [21 January 2004] . . . John Chapman, the director of the London-based IISS, said that lots of caveats had to be attached to assessments of North Korea’s activities . . . The IISS said that before 1992 North Korea could have had the ability to produce one or two nuclear weapons. A freeze was agreed in 1994 that lasted until 2002. Dr Chapman said that (based on various assumptions): ‘North Korea’s arsenal could be around four to eight nuclear weapons over the next year. In a worst case, if the facilities are completed within the next year or two, North Korea’s output of nuclear weapons could significantly increase around mid-decade to about eight to thirteen weapons every

year. A more cautious assessment . . . is that these facilities will not be completed until the second half of the decade.' (*Guardian*, 22 January 2004, p. 17)

'The institute says there is no firm evidence that the country has developed nuclear weapons' (*Telegraph*, 22 January 2004, p. 15).

The International Institute for Strategic Studies makes the following estimates:

Nuclear weapons North Korea could have produced enough plutonium before 1992 for one or two nuclear weapons.

Besides that, it has enough additional plutonium for two to five nuclear weapons, and could in a few years be producing five to ten weapons a year.

It is likely to have embarked on a clandestine enrichment programme, though its status and possible time of completion remain unclear.

With enough fissile material it could design and fabricate a simple implosion device, based on either plutonium or highly enriched uranium, with a full nuclear test

Chemical and biological weapons North Korea has probably produced and stockpiled chemical weapons, but there is uncertainty about the amount and types of agents produced, as well as the size of any stockpile.

It has conducted research and development on biological agents, but it is unclear whether it has produced any or put these on weapons, although it is probably capable of doing both (*The Economist*, 24 January 2004, p. 54).

There is also an experimental reactor in the Yongbyon complex that is capable of producing enough plutonium for at least one nuclear weapon (some say up to two weapons) a year.

While intelligence agencies are still arguing about what progress the North's two nuclear programmes have made in the past few years, a consensus is developing that, in the past year, the country has probably fabricated enough plutonium to make six or seven nuclear weapons. (www.iht.com, 23 June 2004)

US intelligence agencies have warned Bush that North Korea is probably putting the finishing touches to six or more nuclear weapons . . . US intelligence agencies, while disagreeing about the details, concluded that most or all [of the 8,000 spent fuel rods] had been converted to bomb fuel, if not actual weapons. (www.iht.com, 24 June 2004)

'The United States believes it [North Korea] could have produced enough fissile material . . . [from] its 8,000-plus existing spent fuel rods . . . for five or six additional nuclear weapons' (www.iht.com, 16 July 2004).

A new assessment of North Korea has come in one of three classified reports commissioned by the Bush administration earlier this year [2004] from the American intelligence community. [The report] circulated last

month [July] . . . The new report on North Korea has circulated among senior US officials and been described to some allies and to *The New York Times* . . . It acknowledges that the whereabouts of North Korea's stockpile of more than 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods has been a mystery since early 2003, but also concludes that the North has had plenty of time to reprocess the rods into enough fuel for six to eight additional weapons. North Korea is judged to have two to six weapons already. (*IHT*, 9 August 2004, pp 1, 7)

The CIA claims the North started . . . the highly enriched uranium programme . . . in the late 1990s. It is estimated that it will be capable of producing sufficient weapons-grade uranium for at least two bombs annually, possibly by the middle of the decade. (Tuva Kahrs, *The World Today*, 2004, vol. 60, no. 10, p. 14)

Pyongyang [has] almost certainly used the time . . . the last two years . . . to reprocess enough plutonium to increase its stock of nuclear weapons from two to as many as ten, and to advance a uranium enrichment programme that will enable it to produce many more. (Gareth Evans, *IHT*, 18 November 2004, p. 8)

Mohamed ElBaradei . . . the director-general of the IAEA . . . says he is now certain that the nuclear material his agency once monitored has been converted into fuel for four to six nuclear bombs . . . 'I am sure they have reprocessed it all,' he said [referring to the 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods] . . . In interviews officials here [in Vienna] said that if their assessment was correct North Korea now had six or more 'bomb cores'. But it is unclear whether those cores have been made into weapons . . . Richard Armitage, who is departing as the deputy secretary of state, warned Congress nearly two years ago that if North Korea reprocessed its fuel rods there was a far more significant risk that it could sell the material . . . [It has also been pointed out that] North Korea could hide its weapons around the country, making them more difficult to target or seize. (www.iht.com, 6 December 2004; *IHT*, 7 December 2004, p. 5)

The report of a [US] presidential commission [published on 31 March 2005] on chronic dysfunction inside American intelligence agencies has warned that the United States 'knows disturbingly little about the nuclear programmes of many of the world's most dangerous actors' . . . One official familiar with the classified parts of the report said they also raised the issue of why the intelligence agencies had provided widely different assessments of how many nuclear weapons North Korea had already built. (www.iht.com, 1 April 2005)

'The CIA believes North Korea already has two [nuclear weapons], plus material for perhaps six to eight more . . . In 2001 the North had zero to two nuclear weapons. Today it may have six to eight' (*IHT*, 27 April 2005, p. 8).

'Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency,

was asked [on 8 May 2005] about estimates that Pyongyang had already assembled up to six nuclear weapons. “I think that would be close to our estimation,” he said’ (*IHT*, 9 May 2005, p. 7). ‘North Korea has “close to six” nuclear weapons’ [he said]’ (*The Times*, 35 May 2005, p. 35). ElBaradei: ‘I think that [the figure up to six] would be close to our estimation. We knew they had the plutonium that could be converted into five or six weapons. We know that they have the delivery system’ (*Telegraph*, 9 May 2005, p. 13).

North Korea announced on Wednesday [11 May 2005] that . . . scientists ‘had successfully finished the unloading of 8,000 spent fuel rods from the five-megawatt pilot nuclear plant in the shortest period recently’ . . . The spokesman said that North Korea was mainly interested in strengthening its nuclear power industry, but that Pyongyang ‘is continuously taking measures necessary to increase its nuclear arsenal for defensive purposes’ . . . [The rods] could yield enough plutonium for two bombs in two or four months. (www.iht.com, 11 May 2005; *IHT*, 12 May 2005, pp. 1, 8)

Stephen Hadley [is] President George W. Bush’s national security adviser . . . [On 15 May 2005 he] appeared to increase the official US estimate of the number of nuclear weapons the North Koreans possess. Officially, the CIA has said one or two, though most government analysts say the number is higher. Hadley said: ‘Estimates range from two to six. We just really don’t know.’ (www.iht.com, 16 May 2005)

Senior North Korean officials say the country has just resumed the construction of two major nuclear reactors that it stopped working on back in 1994. Before construction resumed the CIA estimated that it would take ‘several years’ to complete the two reactors, but that they would then produce enough plutonium to make about fifty nuclear weapons each year . . . The two projects that North Korea is resuming work on are a 50-megawatt reactor in Yongbyon and a 200-megawatt reactor in Taechon. The former is just a shell that has deteriorated in the years since work was suspended, but . . . [a North Korean official] says work on it may be completed this year or next. The Taechon reactor would apparently take at least two or three years to complete. (*IHT*, 13 July 2005, p. 6)

US officials have never made public the details of Abdul Qadeer Khan’s statements to Pakistani officials, who have declined to make him available for direct interrogation. But the United States has shared the information widely with its Asian allies and elements of it have leaked out, including Khan’s assertion – doubted by several specialists in the US intelligence community – that the North Koreans once showed him what they said were three fully assembled nuclear bombs . . . In February North Korea declared for the first time that it was a nuclear weapons state. It said it had reprocessed 8,000 fuel rods, turning them into weapons fuel. Specialists inside and outside the government say the fuel can be used to produce six or more nuclear weapons, but there is no independent evidence to confirm that the weapons have been produced. (www.iht.com, 29 July 2005; *IHT*, 30 July 2005, p. 3)

North Korea and international terrorism

‘[In a] 6 October 2000 joint statement with Washington on international terrorism ... the two sides “underscored their commitment to ... co-operate with each other in taking effective measures to fight terrorism”’ (*IHT*, 4 December 2001, p. 8).

Although Pyongyang called ... the terrorist attack against the United States [on 11 September 2001] ‘regrettable and tragic’, South Korea has been hoping the North will go further by signing a joint anti-terrorist statement ... The joint declaration was Seoul’s top priority going into the talks ... The United States placed North Korea on a blacklist of states sponsoring terrorism in 1988 after its alleged involvement in the mid-air bombing of a Korean Air jetliner over the Indian Ocean in 1987 ... The United States has said it would remove North Korea from the list of terrorist nations if hijackers ... several Japanese Red Army members who remain in North Korea after hijacking a Japanese airliner there in the 1970s ... were released to Japan. (*FT*, 18 September 2001, p. 14)

North Korea ... issued a statement Tuesday [25 September 2001] relating to the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September: ‘[They were] very regretful and tragic. It may be a right option taken in line with the policy of each country opposed to all forms of terrorism to make a due contribution to the efforts of the international community to eliminate the root cause of this terrorism.’ (*IHT*, 26 September 2001, p. 6)

The United States began bombing Afghanistan on 7 October 2001. An official North Korean statement on international terrorism was issued on 9 October 2001:

It is the principled stand of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to oppose all forms of terrorism and any support to it and so the DPRK has been consistently opposed to terrorism ... The use of armed forces or a war to kill innocent people and aggravate the regional situation and disturb regional stability ... cannot be justified under any circumstances ... The world faces another war. (*FT*, 10 October 2001, p. 5)

North Korea is included in Washington’s list of terrorist-sponsoring nations and is suspected of stockpiling both nuclear and biochemical weapons ... [But] on Wednesday [28 November 2001] ... North Korea ... signed a United Nations anti-terrorism treaty, backing up its condemnation of the 11 September attacks on New York and Washington. (*FT*, 30 November 2001, p. 9)

‘Pyongyang condemned the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States and has signed two international anti-terrorism treaties’ (*FT*, 4 December 2001, p. 13).

Han Seung (South Korean foreign minister):

A very strong United Nations resolution condemning the terrorist acts in the United States was endorsed by 189 member states including North Korea. The North Korean foreign ministry officially announced it opposed international terrorism. And in September [2001] they decided to accede to two very important international conventions against terrorism ... North Korea is a party to the Biological Weapons Convention. They are not a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. (*FEER*, 31 January 2002, p. 26)

Relations between North Korea and Japan

General aspects

On 17 July 1997 North Korea announced that it would allow visits to Japan of Japanese women married to North Koreans.

On 31 August 1998 North Korea test fired its longest range ballistic missile (seemingly attempting to launch its first satellite), with the second stage passing over northern Japan. '[The official US position is that] in August 1998 ... the North Koreans flight-tested a medium-range ballistic missile configured to put a small satellite into orbit.' (*IHT*, 9 June 2000, p. 12)

On 2 November 1999 Japan announced that it was lifting the ban imposed on direct charter flights to North Korea. They were started in 1992 and suspended on 1 September 1998 (*IHT*, 3 November 1999, p. 2).

The Japanese government said Tuesday [14 December 1999] that it would lift restrictions on food aid ... and begin formal negotiations to establish diplomatic relations ... [But Japan said] that the government would not immediately restore food aid to North Korea but instead would 'make a comprehensive decision after closely addressing the progress of the preliminary talks and North Korea's responses ... With today's announcement we have basically returned to where we were in August 1998 before the missile was fired' ... Many Japanese are still upset that North Korea fired a missile over their territory and that the communist country has not accounted for the whereabouts of ten Japanese citizens that intelligence officials maintain were abducted by North Koreans in the 1970s and 1980s. (*IHT*, 15 December 1999, p. 5)

Japan and North Korea opened preparatory talks Tuesday [21 December 1999] on establishing diplomatic ties after Red Cross officials from both sides reached a breakthrough agreement on food aid and other humanitarian issues. Senior foreign ministry officials sat down here [Beijing] to arrange the date, place, level of delegation chiefs and agenda for formal negotiations. The talks began a day later than scheduled after Red Cross

officials had signed a document promising to deal with critical humanitarian issues . . . Japan normalized relations with South Korea in 1965 and began normalization talks with North Korea in early 1991. The talks collapsed in November 1992 after Japan accused Pyongyang of kidnapping a Japanese woman so she could teach Japanese to a woman agent, who was later held responsible for the 1987 bombing of a South Korean airliner. (*IHT*, 22 December 1999, p. 5)

‘Under yesterday’s agreement Japanese Red Cross officials said they would urge Japan to resume food aid . . . while the Koreans would urge Pyongyang to investigate the disappearance of ten Japanese people’ (*FT*, 22 December 1999, p. 8).

Japan moved Tuesday [7 March 2000] to encourage diplomatic and military moderation by the North Korean government, resuming food aid . . . and saying it would hold the first talks in seven years aimed at establishing diplomatic ties . . . Japan last provided humanitarian food aid to North Korea, worth \$27 million, in October 1997. (*IHT*, 8 March 2000, p. 5)

North Korean security forces will help search for missing Japanese allegedly abducted by North Korean agents in the late 1970s, a Japanese foreign ministry official said Monday [13 March]. North Korean Red Cross officials made the pledge during talks on Monday, said the official. (*IHT*, 14 March 2000, p. 4)

A Japanese delegation visited Pyongyang on 4–7 April 2000 to resume discussions on normalizing relations. It was agreed to meet again.

‘Japan and North Korea agreed to meet from 21 to 25 August in Tokyo to resume stalled negotiations on normalizing diplomatic relations’ (*IHT*, 27 July 2000, p. 5).

[North Korean foreign minister Paek Nam Sun] held the first-ever foreign-minister talks with Japan [on 26 July] . . . The ministers agreed that the tenth round of bilateral talks on normalizing diplomatic relations would take place in Tokyo from 21 to 25 August . . . A first-ever foreign minister-level meeting between North Korea and the USA is planned, probably on Friday [28 July]. (*FT*, 27 July 2000, p. 14)

On 10 August 2000 North Korea and Japan announced that they had agreed to allow sixteen Japanese wives of North Koreans to visit North Korea from 12–18 September. There had been two visits by Japanese spouses of North Korea since 1997, but a third was cancelled in 1998 (*IHT*, 11 August 2000, p. 5).

‘[On 22 December 2001] a vessel suspected of being a North Korean spy ship entered Japanese waters, provoking an exchange of fire with Japan’s coastguard’ (*FT*, 24 December 2001, p. 6).

‘If North Korea wants Japanese aid and diplomatic ties it will first have to dismantle its nuclear bomb programme and count for Japanese abducted by

the North, prime minister Junichiro Koizumi said Monday [7 June]' (*IHT*, 8 June 2004, p. 5).

[Prime minister Junichiro] Koizumi had said in interviews with the Japanese news media this week that he wished to normalize bilateral ties with the Stalinist state 'within two years'. Koizumi reaffirmed Friday [2 July] that diplomatic ties would only be established after a resolution was found to the North Korean nuclear crisis and the abduction of Japanese by North Korean spies: 'It will not be enough if only the abduction issue is resolved. A comprehensive solution will be necessary, embracing the abduction, nuclear, missile and other issues.' (www.iht.com. 2 July 2004)

Former Japanese Red Army radicals, who have lived in North Korea since a 1970 hijacking, now want to return to Japan ... They sent a letter to the North Korean government asking for help in returning to their homeland and Pyongyang responded that it has no objections to the request ... Four of the nine hijackers still live in the Stalinist nation. Three have died and two others returned to Japan, where they were arrested and jailed. The hijackers seized a Japan Airlines Boeing 727 airplane at Tokyo International Airport on 31 March 1970 and flew it to Seoul, where they released all 129 passengers. They later flew the plane to North Korea ... The Bush administration has cited their presence as one of the reasons it condemns North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. The hijackers are married to Japanese women, who managed to enter North Korea through different routes, but now many of them have returned to Japan with their children. (www.iht.com, 5 July 2004)

They are the forgotten victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ... survivors of the atomic bomb living in North Korea ... They are the only victims of the US nuclear attacks on Japan that receive no assistance from the Japanese government ... But there are signs that the issue is at least beginning to receive official attention. The Japanese health minister ... [has said]: 'There is one remaining issue involving overseas atomic bomb survivors, and that is North Korea' ... Little is known about the bomb survivors in North Korea, many of whom were repatriated in the 1950s. The Japanese government estimates that there are about 930 of them, but support groups say the real number is twice that, at 1,953 ... Tokyo has long resisted providing full assistance to survivors not residing in Japan, but a 2002 court ruling forced the government to funnel more relief to victims living abroad. Japan provides monthly allowances of up to 140,000 yen (£690) and free medical checkups to survivors in Japan. Foreign-based survivors, mostly in South Korea, are getting a smaller package. Since 2002 the monthly allowances have been available to all survivors as long as they had special certificates available only in Japan. Government officials say they do not know of any North Koreans who registered before leaving Japan ... North Koreans were brought by the hundreds of thousands to Japan as soldiers and labourers during Tokyo's

harsh 1910–45 colonization of the Korean Peninsula ... A state-sponsored repatriation programme ... [began] in 1959. (*Independent*, 7 August 2004, p. 34)

North Korea and Japan: abductions and other issues

On 17 September 2002 prime minister Junichiro Koizumi made a historic (one-day) visit to North Korea, the first Japanese prime minister to visit communist North Korea.

Pyongyang acknowledged that its agents played a part in the disappearance of eleven Japanese citizens who had been missing since the late 1970s ... North Korean officials ... reportedly acknowledged their agents' responsibility for the abductions ... [but it was announced that] six of the eleven people claimed by Japan are dead and another one is missing. North Korea also said that yet another missing Japanese person who was previously unknown had died ... Kim Jong Il said of the deaths, which are laid to natural disasters and natural causes, 'This is truly regretful and I offer my candid apology. This will never happen again' ... Kim blamed the disappearances ... on overzealous members of the security forces who wanted to employ Japanese as language trainers for North Korean special services, or intelligence agencies ... Supporters of the [Japanese] families claim that several dozen more may have been abducted ... In a joint declaration Japan also repeated essentially the same apology it made to South Korea for suffering caused to the people of Korea through its past colonial rule and expressed feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology. (*IHT*, 18 September 2002, pp. 1, 4)

'According to Japanese intelligence sources, up to forty people may have been abducted in the past quarter century' (*Independent*, 18 September 2002, p. 12). 'Japanese officials say that actually fifteen were kidnapped. Two groups of relatives of abductees say the real number may be fifty or sixty' (*IHT*, 16 October 2002, p. 3). 'Abductee groups say that more than 100 people may have been abducted by North Korea over four decades' (*IHT*, 21 August 2003, p. 2).

North Korea admitted that it had kidnapped thirteen Japanese citizens' (*Telegraph*, 18 September 2002, p. 14).

'The dates ... given by Pyongyang ... of the deaths of eight Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korea agents ... have strengthened suspicions that some of the kidnapped had been murdered' (*FT*, 20 September 2002, p. 10).

'[On 2 October 2002 North Korea] gave its fullest account yet of ... thirteen Japanese civilians [abducted] from Japan, Britain and Spain during the late 1970s and early 1980s' (*The Times*, 3 October 2002, p. 17). 'North Korean officials gave details of the deaths ... All died of accidents or illnesses ... but one ... [who] hanged herself' (*IHT*, 5 October 2002, p. 1).

Five abducted Japanese, two men and three women, arrived in Japan on 15 October 2002 for what was to have been a brief visit. Seven children

remained in North Korea, including two daughters belonging to a Japanese woman (Hitomi Soga) who had married an American, Charles Robert Jenkins. The American was a former US soldier serving in South Korea accused by the United States of being a deserter in 1965 (although members of his family believed he was abducted and brainwashed). (The United States thinks that there were five other former American soldiers in North Korea. Four have died, all of natural causes it seems.) The Japanese government, owing to factors such as pressure from the abductees' families, did not allow the five to return. On 22 May 2004 prime minister Junichiro Koizumi paid his second visit to North Korea and returned with five 'children' (aged between sixteen and twenty-two). (While in Pyongyang the Japanese prime minister pledged to give North Korea 250,000 tonnes of rice and \$10 million worth of medical supplies.)

Charles Jenkins and his two daughters stayed in North Korea, but a family reunion began in Jakarta (Indonesia) on 9 July 2004. On 18 July 2004 Charles Jenkins, his wife and his two daughters flew to Japan. He was to have medical treatment. On 3 November 2004 Charles Jenkins pleaded guilty to desertion and aiding the enemy. Among other things, he was given a dishonourable discharge. He now lives in Japan with his family.

Relations between Japan and North Korea were adversely affected when the latter handed over what it said were the remains of two Japanese who had been kidnapped. Japan said that DNA tests proved they were not. 'Half the food and about a third of the medical aid has yet to be disbursed [by Japan] and is now frozen' (*The Economist*, 18 December 2004, p. 113).

Ethnic Koreans in Japan

During Japan's colonial rule some Japanese went to Japan looking for economic opportunities, while others were taken there as forced labourers. By 1944 nearly 2 million Koreans lived in Japan, though most were repatriated after Japan's defeat in World War II, and the number fell to fewer than 600,000 by 1947. In 1952 the 'Zainichi' were made to choose between South or North Korean citizenship, and were recognized as permanent residents of Japan ... 'Zainichi' [is] a term that literally means 'to stay in Japan', but that is usually shorthand for Koreans who came here during Japan's colonial rule and their descendants ... Japanese citizenship [is] a choice that more Zainichi have been making. In 2003 there were only 470,000 officially recognized Zainichi, a drop of about 100,000 since 1993. Naturalized Japanese are no longer counted as Zainichi. (www.iht.com, 1 April 2005)

The *FEER* (9 September 1993, p. 23) cites one estimate that the Chosen Soren (General Association of Koreans in Japan) either collects or helps to channel \$600 million to \$700 million to North Korea every year, the flow of funds including cash carried by hand (by those travelling to the country) and bank remittances. There are 100,000 or so pro-North Korea Koreans living in

Japan. According to the *IHT* (2 November 1993, pp. 1, 8; 15 January 1994, p. 1), 800,000 Koreans live in Japan and around 150,000 are sympathetic to North Korea; the sum transferred annually is in the range \$600 million to \$1 billion. In a later article (*IHT*, 23 March 1994, p. 5), there is reference to 300,000 professing loyalty and sending between \$600 million and \$1.6 billion a year (later still \$600 to \$1.8 billion is cited: *IHT*, 9 June 1994, p. 1; so does *The Economist*: 11 June 1994, p. 72). Another source cites an annual figure of \$570 million (*IHT*, 16 December 1993, p. 10). According to *FT* (21 April 1994, p. 4), there are 700,000 ethnic Koreans in Japan; of these about a third are believed to owe allegiance to North Korea (*IHT*, 17 June 1994, p. 4). The Japanese Foreign Ministry said it had inconclusive evidence that Korean residents in Japan were supplying North Korea with as much as \$1.81 billion a year in financial support (*IHT*, 29 December 1993, p. 6). The *FEER* (10 February 1994, p. 23) cites \$1.8 billion for 1993. The *FT* (22 March 1994, p. 6) cites estimates in the range \$600 million to \$1.8 billion a year provided by the estimated 260,000 pro-North Korean Japanese. *The Economist* (26 March 1994, p. 87; 28 May 1994, p. 24) talks of \$600 million to \$1.8 billion provided by 250,000 or so sympathizers.

Note that it is not certain how voluntary the flow of funds is, e.g. family members still living in North Korea may be under threat. An editorial in *FEER* (16 June 1994, p. 5) claimed that the Korean population in Japan 'is more or less blackmailed into remitting millions in funds'.

In 1994 Japanese police testified in parliament that \$600 million or more was being sent to North Korea. But new US and Japanese estimates say that the amount is now probably \$100 million or less (*IHT*, 8 June 1996, p. 9). Nicholas Eberstadt (*Asian Survey*, 1996, vol. XXXVI, no. 5) also notes that in March 1994 the Japanese parliament was informed that the Chosen Soren was believed to be remitting \$650 million to \$850 million (60 billion to 80 billion yen) a year to North Korea at the exchange rate then prevailing. Some other estimates go to \$1 billion or more (pp. 523–4). In startling contrast, Eberstadt concludes that

Whereas our method generates figures averaging under \$40 million a year for 1990–3, the widely cited figure of 60 billion to 80 billion yen would imply an average annual transfer, at the then current dollar–yen exchange rates, of \$460 million to \$625 million. (pp. 539–40)

In addition, 'Our calculations suggest a sharp drop in hard currency remittances to North Korea after 1989' (p. 538).

Supporters of North Korea are estimated at about one-third of Japan's 666,000 ethnic Koreans. Japanese and Western intelligence officials estimate that \$1.8 billion to \$2 billion is remitted to North Korea each year (*IHT*, 15 May 1997, p. 17).

The pro-North Korea General Association of Korean Residents in Japan is known as Chongryun. According to the pro-South Korea organization known as Mindan, membership of Chongryun has halved to about 110,000 from 224,000 registered in 1990. An independent estimate put the value of