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North Korea: Chronology of Provocations, 1950 - 2003

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North Korea: Chronology of Provocations, 1950 - 2003

Summary

This chronology provides information on selective instances of North Korean provocations between June 1950 and 2003. The purpose of this report is to place current provocations in the context of past actions in order to better judge their significance and to determine changes in trends. The term “provocation” is defined to include: armed invasion, border violations, infiltration of armed saboteurs and spies, hijacking, kidnaping, terrorism (including assassination and bombing), threats/intimidation against political leaders, media personnel, and institutions, and incitement aimed at the overthrow of the South Korean government. Information is taken from South Korean and Western sources and typically is denied by the North Korean government.

The most intense phase of the provocations was in the latter half of the 1960s, when North Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea–DPRK) staged a series of limited armed actions against South Korean and U.S. security interests. Infiltration of armed agents into South Korea was the most frequently mentioned type of provocation, followed by kidnaping and terrorism (actual and threatened). From 1954 to 1992, North Korea is reported to have infiltrated a total of 3,693 armed agents into South Korea, with 1967 and 1968 accounting for 20 percent of the total. Instances of terrorism were far fewer in number, but they seemed to have had a continuing negative impact on relations between the two Koreas. Not counting North Korea’s invasion of South Korea that triggered the Korean War (1950-1953), North Korea’s major terrorist involvement includes: attempted assassinations of President Park Chung Hee in 1968 and 1974; a 1983 attempt on President Chun Doo Hwan’s life in a bombing incident in Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar); and a mid-air sabotage bombing of a South Korean Boeing 707 passenger plane in 1987. Provocations have continued intermittently in recent years, in the form of armed incursions, kidnapings, and occasional threats to turn the South Korean capital of Seoul into “a sea of fire” and to silence or tame South Korean critics of North Korea.

For information on current U.S. policy and relations with North Korea, see CRS Issue Brief IB98045, *Korea: U.S.-Korean Relations – Issues for Congress*, by Larry Nicksch; CRS Issue Brief IB91141, *North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program*, by Larry Nicksch; CRS Report RS21391, *North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons: How Soon an Arsenal?*, by Sharon Squassoni; or CRS Report RL31696, *North Korea: Economic Sanctions*, by Dianne Rennack. This report will be updated as circumstances warrant.

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North Korea: Chronology of Provocations, 1950 - 2003

Introduction

This selective chronology provides information on reported instances of North Korean provocations against South Korea, the United States, and Japan between June 1950 and 2003 and related actions.¹ The term “provocation” is defined to include: armed invasion, border violations, infiltration of armed saboteurs and spies, hijacking, kidnaping, terrorism (including assassination and bombing), threat/intimidation against political leaders and media personnel and institutions, and incitement aimed at the overthrow of the South Korean government. Reports of North Korean involvement in drug trafficking and “political and other extrajudicial killing” are outside the purview of this report.² Information in this report was taken from South Korean and Western sources and typically has been denied by the North Korean government.

North Korean provocations remain a congressional concern because of North Korea’s programs to develop nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems, the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the danger exists that a North Korean provocation could turn into a tragic incident that could escalate into hostilities (e.g. if a North Korean fighter plane collides with a U.S. reconnaissance plane in a manner similar to the 2001 collision off the coast of China of a Chinese fighter plane with a U.S. EP-3 reconnaissance plane). Since President Bush’s inclusion of North Korea (with Iraq and Iran) as an “axis of evil” in his January 29, 2002 State of the Union address, tensions between North Korea and the United States have been rising. This can be seen in the following chronology.

¹ This report is an expanded, revised, and updated version of a CRS memo on the “History of North Korean Terrorist Activities,” March 27, 1997, by Rinn-Sup Shinn. For the earlier version, see *Congressional Record*, v. 143, No. 101, July 16, 1997, S7528-S7530. The chronology from 1950 to 2000 in this report was compiled by Rinn-Sup Shinn, former CRS Analyst in Asian Affairs.

² For information, see CRS Report RS20051. *North Korean Drug Trafficking: Allegations and Issues for Congress*, by Raphael Perl; United States Department of State. International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, March 2000, VIII 39-41. The State Department report states: “There have been regular reports from many official and unofficial sources for at least the last 20 to 30 years that [North Korea] encourages illicit opium cultivation and engages in trafficking of opiates and other narcotic drugs as a criminal state enterprise. These reports continued in 1999”; U.S. Department of State. *1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*, February 25, 2000; “UN Says N Korea Ships ‘Heavily Involved’ in Drug Trade,” *Associated Press*, February 23, 2000.

For information on current U.S. policy and relations with North Korea, see CRS Issue Brief IB98045, *Korea: U.S.-Korean Relations – Issues for Congress*, by Larry Niksch; CRS Issue Brief IB91141, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program*, by Larry Niksch; CRS Report RS21391, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: How Soon an Arsenal?*, by Sharon Squassoni; or CRS Report RL31696, *North Korea: Economic Sanctions*, by Dianne Rennack.

The sources used for this chronology include: South Korean newspapers (*Choson Ilbo*, *Chungang Ilbo* (aka *JoongAng Ilbo*), *Hanguk Ilbo*, *Hangyore Sinmun*, *Korea Herald*, *Korea Times*, *Tong-A Ilbo* (aka *Dong-A Ilbo*), and *Yonhap News Service*; the North Korean ruling party's organ (*Nodong Sinmun*); [North] Korean Central News Agency (*KCNA*) wire service reports; and Japanese newspapers (*Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Sankei Shimbun*, and *Yomiuri Shimbun*) and *Kyodo News Service*; U.S. dailies such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Washington Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times*; other sources cited in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service daily reports; *Associated Press*, *Reuters* wire service reports, and chronologies maintained by Global Insight. CRS has not attempted to verify independently any of these media reports. This report will be updated as circumstances warrant.

Chronology: 1950 - 2000

1950

06/1950 — On June 25, North Korean troops launched a full-scale invasion of South Korea – “an act of aggression” that the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea determined was “initiated without warning and without provocation, in execution of a carefully prepared plan.”³ The Korean War ended in July 1953 with an armistice. Total U.S. casualties included 33,629 killed in action and 20,617 killed in non-battle situations for a total of 54,246 deaths, and 103,284 wounded for total U.S. casualties of 157,530. The Republic of Korea suffered 58,127 combat deaths and 175,743 wounded. Other countries under the United Nations Command had an estimated 2,800 killed and 10,783 wounded. Neither China nor North Korea has released numbers for their casualties, but they are estimated at 900,000 for China and 520,000 for North Korea. In addition, the two Koreas each suffered estimated casualties of one million civilians.⁴

1958

02/1958 — North Korean agents hijacked a South Korean airliner to Pyongyang that had been en route from Pusan to Seoul; 1 American pilot, 1 American passenger, 2 West German passengers, and 24 other passengers were released in early March, but 8 other passengers remained in the North.

³ The invasion followed North Korea’s proposal on June 19, 1950, that the two Koreas should “fully implement all measures related to peaceful reunification” of Korea by August 15; and that, to that end, “North Korea was prepared to dispatch a parliamentary delegation Seoul on June 21, 1950, or to receive a South Korean delegation in Pyongyang” to negotiate unification procedures. *For Independent and Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland* (Documents). [In Korean] Pyongyang: Committee for Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland. 1971, p.22. For a comment that, on June 15, 1950, the North Korean high command had actually begun moving troops toward the 38th parallel, see “The Korean War” by Billy C. Mossman in *Encyclopedia of the American Military*. Vol. II. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1994, p. 1027. For a disclosure by a former North Korean ambassador to the Soviet Union that Kim Il Sung initiated the invasion of the South after consultations with Stalin, see “Former Official Finally Confesses North’s Ruse Started Korean War,” *Washington Times*, July 5, 1990, A9. For a scholarly presentation on Kim Il Sung’s role in the events leading up to the war, see Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*. Stanford University Press, 1993, pp. 136-154.

⁴ A virtually total embargo on U.S. commercial and financial transactions and freezing of North Korean assets in the United States has been in force since the North Korean invasion of 1950. For legal restrictions relating to the U.S. sanctions, see U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Korea: Procedural and Jurisdictional Questions Regarding Possible Normalization of Relations with North Korea*. op. cit.

1965

- 04/1965** — Two North Korean MiG jet fighters “attacked and damaged” a U.S. RB-47 reconnaissance plane over the Sea of Japan, about 50 miles east of the nearest North Korean coast.

1968

- 01/1968** — A 31-member commando team, disguised as South Korean soldiers and civilians, infiltrated within striking distance of President Park Chung Hee’s office/residence complex (The Blue House) before they were intercepted by South Korean police; 29 commandos were killed and one committed suicide; one who was captured revealed that their mission was to kill President Park and other senior government officials.⁵ Two South Korean policemen and five civilians were killed by North Korean infiltrators.⁶
- 01/1968** — Two days after the commando attempt on President Park, North Korea seized the U.S. intelligence ship *Pueblo* with a crew of 83 officers and men off Wonsan in international waters outside the 12-mile limit claimed by North Korea; the crew was finally released in December 1968, but not the vessel.
- 10/1968** — One hundred and thirty sea-borne commandos infiltrated the Ulchin and Samchok areas on the eastern coast of South Korea; 110 were killed, 7 were captured, and 13 fled.⁷

1969

- 03/1969** — Six North Korean infiltrators killed a South Korean policeman on guard duty in an eastern coastal area near Chumunjin, Kangwon province.

⁵ In a secret meeting with South Korea’s Yi Hu-rak in May 1972, then-head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, then-Premier Kim Il Sung reportedly acknowledged that the Blue House raid was staged by North Korean “leftwing adventurers,” a raid Kim Il Sung claimed had nothing to do with “his or Party’s intention” and, in fact, “we did not even know about it at the time.” See “Top Secret: The Full Text of a Secret Meeting Between Yi Hu-rak and Kim Il Sung,” *Wolgan Choson* in Korean [Seoul], January 1991, pp. 352-353.

⁶ The peak years of infiltration were 1967 and 1968, accounting for 743 armed agents out of some 3,693 infiltrators between 1954 and 1992. *Vantage Point* [Seoul], November 1995, p.17.

⁷ North Korea described these armed infiltrators as “South Korean revolutionary armed guerrillas” engaged in the armed struggle to “drive out the U.S. imperialist aggressors and to overthrow their lackeys...” *KCNA* in English, November 8, December 10, and December 28, 1968.

- 04/1969** — North Korean *MiG* jet fighters shot down an unarmed U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance plane over the Sea of Japan, about 90 miles off the North Korean coast, resulting in the loss of 31 lives.⁸
- 06/1969** — North Korean agents infiltrated Huksan Island off the west coast; 15 were shot dead.
- 07/1969** — North Korea unveiled the formal establishment of a United Revolutionary Party (aka: the Party for Unification and Revolution) as “an underground revolutionary organization of South Korea.” The aim of the organization was to overthrow the South Korean government and replace it with a pro-North Korean “democratic regime.”⁹
- 10/1969** — Four U.S. soldiers were ambushed and killed by North Korean intruders near the southern boundary of the DMZ.
- 12/1969** — North Korean agents hijacked a South Korean airliner YS-11 to Wonsan en route from Kangnung to Seoul with 51 persons aboard; in February 1970. 39 of the crew and passengers were released. As of January 2001, the remaining 12 were still detained in North Korea, along with 454 other South Koreans abducted since 1955, according to the South Korean government. In March 1999, South Korea’s National Intelligence Service disclosed the names of 454 South Koreans being detained in the North; also disclosed was the identification of 407 South Korean prisoners of war (POWs) in the North. According to a revised January 2001 estimate by the South Korean defense ministry, 268 POWs (compared with 351 announced in September 2000) were presumed to be still alive in North Korea.¹⁰

⁸ In response to U.S. appeal for assistance, the Soviet Union dispatched two destroyers for cooperation with the U.S. in a search for survivors and debris from the downed plane.

⁹ In July 1985, the United Revolutionary Party was renamed “the [South] Korean National and Democratic Front,” with a parallel, new emphasis on an intensified campaign against U.S. military presence in South Korea.

¹⁰ *Yonhap* in English, March 9, 1999. As of September 2000, a total of 16 South Korean POWs have returned home since 1994, after years of hard labor and re-education in North Korea. *Choson Ilbo* (Internet version) in English, September 3, 2000. See also *Korea Herald* (Internet version) in English, September 6, 2000; *Korea Herald* (Internet version) in English, December 9, 2000; *Korea Times* (internet version) in English, January 28, 2001. According to a revised estimate by the South Korean defense ministry, 268 POWs were presumed to be still alive in North Korea. *Korea Herald* (Internet version) in English, January 29, 2000.

1970

- 03/1970** — North Korea provided sanctuary to 9 members of a Japanese radical left-wing “Red Army” group who had hijacked a Japanese airliner to Pyongyang. (For recent developments, see 10/2000 below.)
- 04/1970** — Three North Korean infiltrators were shot to death at Kumchon, Kyonggido, south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas. Five South Korean soldiers were wounded during the encounter.
- 06/1970** — North Korean patrol boats seized a South Korean broadcast vessel with 20 crew on board off the west coast near the military demarcation line.

1971

- 01/1971** — A North Korean attempt to hijack a Korean Airline plane F-27 en route from Seoul to Sokcho on the east coast was foiled.

1974

- 02/1974** — North Korean patrol vessels sunk two South Korean fishing boats and detained 30 fishermen.
- 11/1974** — A first North Korean infiltration tunnel dug across the DMZ was discovered.
- 08/1974** — South Korean President Park Chung Hee’s wife was killed during another attempt on his life. An agent of a pro-North Korean group in Japan who entered Seoul disguised as a tourist fired several shots at Park at a major public function; Park escaped unhurt, but the First Lady was hit by stray bullets and died several hours later. The agent, Mun Se-gwang, was tried and convicted, and executed.

1975

- 09/1975** — Two North Korean infiltrators were intercepted at Kochang, Cholla Pukdo; one was shot dead. During the encounter, two South Korean soldiers were killed and two wounded.

1976

- 06/1976** — Three North Korean infiltrators were shot to death in the eastern sector south of the DMZ, and the South Korean side suffered the loss of six soldiers and injuries to six others.
- 08/1976** — A group of North Korean soldiers, wielding axes and metal pikes, attacked a U.S.-South Korean tree-trimming work team in a neutral

area inside the DMZ at Panmunjom, killing 2 U.S. army officers and wounding 4 American enlisted men and 5 South Korean soldiers. In a message to UN Commander General Richard G. Stillwell, North Korea's Kim Il Sung described the incident as "regrettable," without admitting North Korean responsibility for what the U.S. government condemned as a "vicious and unprovoked murder" of the officers.

07/1977 — A North Korean attempt to abduct a South Korean couple failed in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

1978

02/1978 — South Korean actress Choi Eun-hee and her film-director husband Shin Sang-ok were kidnaped in Hong Kong and taken to Pyongyang. (In April 1984, South Korean government officials stated that the kidnappees were working in North Korea producing propaganda films that glorified Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il). The couple escaped to South Korea in 1986 while on a filming assignment in Vienna.

10/1978 — A third North Korean infiltration tunnel dug under the DMZ was discovered. The tunnel is considered especially significant because of its location, extending 400 meters south of the DMZ, barely two kilometers southwest of a forward U.S. army base and four kilometers from the truce village of Panmunjom. Military experts judge that 30,000 fully armed men accompanied by light artillery could pass through every hour.¹¹

11/1978 — A team of three North Korean armed agents killed four South Korean citizens—two in Hongsong County and one in Kongju County, Chungchong Namdo; and one at Osan, Kyonggido.

1979

06/1979 — A South Korean teacher Ko Sang-moon was abducted by North Koreans in the Netherlands.

10/1979 — Three North Korean agents were intercepted while trying to infiltrate the eastern sector of the DMZ; one was killed.

07/1979 — A North Korean attempt to abduct Han Yong-gil, an employee of the Korea Trade Promotion Agency, failed in France.

¹¹ Korean Overseas Information Service, *Tunnels of War: North Korea Catacombs the DMZ*. Seoul, Korea. November 1978, p.2.

1980

- 03/1980** — Three North Koreans tried to infiltrate the South across the estuary of Han River; all were killed.
- 11/1980** — Three North Korean infiltrators were shot to death at Whenggando, Cholla Namdo. One South Korean civilian was killed and six others wounded.
- 12/1980** — Three North Korean agents were shot dead off the southern coast of Kyongsang Namdo. Two South Korean soldiers were killed and two others wounded.

1981

- 03/1981** — Of three North Korean infiltrators at Kumhwa, Kangwondo, one was shot dead.
- 06/1981** — A North Korean spy boat was sunk off the coast of Sosan, Chungchong Namdo; 9 agents were shot to death and one was captured.
- 07/1981** — Three North Korean agents were shot to death in the upper stream of Imjin River, while trying to cross the river into the South.

1982

- 05/1982** — Two North Korean infiltrators were spotted on the east coast; one was shot to death.
- 08/1982** — Police in Canada uncovered a North Korean plot to assassinate South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan during a visit to that country.

1983

- 10/1983** — The explosion of a powerful bomb, several minutes before South Korean President Chun was to arrive to lay a wreath at the Martyr's Mausoleum in Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar), killed 17 senior South Korean officials and injured 14 who were accompanying President Chun, then on the first leg of a six-nation Asian tour. Among the killed were: presidential chief-of-staff and another senior presidential assistant; deputy prime minister/minister of economic planning; three cabinet members including foreign minister; 3 deputy ministers; and the South Korean ambassador to Burma. The explosion also killed four Burmese nationals and wounded 32 others. President Chun stated that the killings were "a grave provocation not unlike a declaration of war," and warned the North that "should such a provocation recur, there would be a corresponding retaliation in

kind.”¹² North Korean leader Kim Il Sung dismissed Chun’s statement as “a preposterous slander.”¹³ Two suspects were arrested and tried in the Rangoon Divisional Court: North Korean army major, Zin Mo, and captain, Kang Min Chol. Captain Kang Min Chol confessed to the bombing and gave details of his training in North Korea and transport to Burma on a North Korean freighter. He also disclosed that after the arrival of his assassination team in Burma, the team stayed in the home of a North Korean embassy councillor. On November 4, Burma broke off diplomatic relations with North Korea.¹⁴ In February 1984, the Burmese Supreme Court sustained the death penalty handed down by the lower court.

12/1983 — Two North Korean armed spies, Chon Chung-nam and Yi Sang-gyu, were captured at Tadaepo.

1984

02/1984 — Two Canadians, Charles Yanover and Alexander Gerol, testified in a Canadian court that North Korean agents hired them in 1981 for \$600,000 to assassinate South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan. They were convicted and sentenced to prison terms of one-to-two years. The assassination was to take place during Chun’s visit to the Philippines in July 1982.

09/1984 — A North Korean agent killed 2 residents of Taegu, South Korea, and severely wounded another before committing suicide.

¹² As cited in *Keesing’s Contemporary Archives* [London], December 1983, pp. 32566-32567. Senior Reagan administration officials reportedly stated October 12 that the United States had urged South Korea to show “restraint” and not to retaliate with force even if the North was discovered to be behind the bombing.

¹³ For Pyongyang’s suggestion that the bombing incident was “masterminded” by Chon Doo Hwan for a “hideous purpose,” see a commentator’s article (“With No Fabrication Can They Conceal the Truth”) in *Nodong Sinmun* in Korean, October 18, 1983.

¹⁴ North Korean foreign ministry termed the Burmese government action as “an unjustifiable act of ignoring international law and usage and infringing upon the dignity and authority of our Republic.” It also proclaimed: “We had already made it clear that we had nothing to do with the incident. We, by nature, have never resorted to individual terrorism and assassination and such thing is alien to us.” A foreign ministry statement as carried by *KCNA* in English, November 4, 1983. As of January 2001, diplomatic relations remained severed, despite Pyongyang’s unofficial gestures since 1997 aimed at resuming such relations. The Myanmar government reportedly is moderating its earlier rigid position that North Korea should acknowledge its terrorist act in 1983 and make an official apology prior to any diplomatic resumption. *The Nation* (internet version) in English [Bangkok], July 7, 2000; *Asahi Shimbun* in Japanese (Morning Edition), August 24, 2000; *Hanguk Ilbo* in Korean, July 29, 2000.

1985

10/1985 — A North Korean spy ship was sunk by the South Korean navy off the coast of Pusan, South Korea.

1986

09/1986 — A bomb blast at Kimpo International Airport in Seoul killed five and wounded over 30. The chief of the South Korean National Police believed that North Korean agents, or individuals under North Korean direction or influences, planted the bomb.

1987

01/1987 — A North Korean attempt to abduct a South Korean citizen (Yoon Tae-shik) failed in Hong Kong.

01/1987 — A South Korean fishing boat (#27 Tongjin-ho) was abducted along with 12 crewmen.¹⁵

08/1987 — A South Korean student at MIT, Lee Chae-hwan, was kidnaped in Austria.

11/1987 — A bomb planted by two North Korean terrorists on a Korean Airline Boeing 707, with 20 crew members and 95 passengers aboard, exploded in midair over the Andaman Sea off the coast of Burma. The plane was en route from Baghdad to Seoul. Kim Hyon-hui, one of the terrorists who was arrested in Bahrain and confessed to the crime, was tried and convicted in a Seoul court. The sabotage bombing was reportedly a North Korean warning against those planning to take part in the Seoul Olympics. (In January 1988, Kim, the self-confessed agent, stated that she had been trained for two years to pass as Japanese by a Japanese woman of Korean descent, Yi Un-hye, who Japanese police believe had been kidnaped by North Korean agents).

1988

01/1988 — U.S. Secretary of State determined “that North Korea is a country which has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism,” under the authority of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended (50 U.S.C. App.2405(j)).¹⁶

¹⁵ In April 1999, North Korea claimed that these crewmen were “voluntary defectors” to the North.

¹⁶ As a result, exports to North Korea of goods or technology that are determined of being able to make a significant contribution to its military potential, or enhance its ability to (continued...)

06/1988 — The head of a North Korean trading company revealed after his defection to the South that North Korean embassies around the world had been ordered to do everything possible to stop other countries from participating in the Seoul Olympics.

1990

03/1990 — Another North Korean infiltration tunnel dug under the DMZ was discovered; this was the fourth one uncovered since November 1974. (The second one was discovered in March 1975.) South Korean authorities believe that there may be as many as 17 tunnels in all (see 10/1978 above).

1991

06/1991 — The North Korean ruling party's daily news organ, *Nodong Sinmun*, called on South Korean youths, students, and people to "eliminate the Roh Tae-woo fascist regime and establish a genuine democratic regime."

1992

05/1992 — Three North Koreans, in South Korean uniforms, were shot dead at Cholwon, Kangwondo, south of the DMZ. Three South Koreans were wounded in this encounter.

10/1992 — A North Korean 400-member spy ring in South Korea, directed by North Korean Communist party official Lee Son-sil, was uncovered by South Korea's Agency for National Security Planning. It was revealed that the mission of the spy ring was to establish an underground command center for subversive operations in the South. According to the South Korean agency, North Korean agents had infiltrated through South Korea's coastlines.

1993

12/1993 — Vice Marshal Choe Kwang, Chief of the General Staff of the North Korean military (and defense minister, 1995-97), declared at a major state function that the military "has the heavy and honorable task of reunifying the fatherland with guns in the nineties without fail."¹⁷

¹⁶ (...continued)

support acts on international terrorism, require a validated license. Denial of the license, in effect, would constitute a ban on such exports. For more on this point, see U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Korea: Procedural and Jurisdictional Questions Regarding Possible Normalization of Relations with North Korea*, op. cit., pp. 27-28, p. 34.

¹⁷ [North] *Korean Central Broadcasting Network* [Pyongyang], December 23, 1993.

1994

- 03/1994** — For the first time in more than two decades, North Korea issued a threat of war in an inter-Korean meeting in Panmunjom. In response to Seoul's chief delegate mentioning the possibility of UN sanctions against the North for its refusal to accept full international nuclear inspections, Pyongyang's chief delegate reportedly replied: "Seoul is not far away from here. If a war breaks out, Seoul will turn into a sea of fire."¹⁸
- 06/1994** — A North Korean attempt to abduct a South Korean professor, Lee Jin-sang, from an Ethiopian university in Addis Ababa was foiled.

1995

- 05/1995** — A North Korean patrol boat fired on a South Korean fishing vessel, killing three South Korean fishermen; North Korea released 5 other fishermen in December 1995.
- 06/1995** — North Korean soldiers threatened the captain of a South Korean vessel with harm in a North Korean port unless he hoisted the North Korean flag while the vessel was there to deliver a South Korean humanitarian rice shipment to the North.
- 07/1995** — A team of three North Korean agents and their two Korean-Chinese collaborators in Jilin¹⁹ abducted a South Korean pastor, the Reverend Ahn Seung-woon, in southern Manchuria. Pyongyang claimed that Reverend Ahn defected voluntarily. (A North Korean, convicted in a Chinese court of masterminding the abduction, was deported to North Korea by China in July 1997 upon serving a two-year prison term.)
- 08/1995** — North Korea seized a South Korean rice delivery vessel and arrested its crew in a North Korean port after a South Korean crewman took photographs from the ship. The ship was released 12 days later.
- 10/1995** — Two armed North Koreans were intercepted at the Imjin River just south of the DMZ; one was shot to death and the other escaped.
- 10/1995** — Two North Korean agents were intercepted at Puyo, about 100 miles south of Seoul; one was shot to death and the other was taken alive. The captured agent disclosed that he had infiltrated two months

¹⁸ North Korea's "Sea of Fire" Threat Shakes Seoul, *Financial Times* [London], March 22, 1994, p. 6.

¹⁹ As reported by Sang-ho Yoon, "North Korean Secret Agents in China Operate in the Guise of Defectors," *Tong-A Ilbo* in Korean, February 22, 2000.

earlier, with a mission to contact anti-government dissidents, politicians, and an organization of underground cells.

1996

- 04/1996** — On three occasions, a combined total of several hundred armed North Korean troops crossed the military demarcation line into the joint security area of the DMZ at Panmunjom and elsewhere in violation of the Korean armistice agreement, after Pyongyang's unilateral announcement that it no longer would abide by the armistice provisions concerning the integrity of the DMZ.
- 05/1996** — Seven North Korean soldiers crossed the military demarcation line facing South Korean defensive positions just south of the DMZ, but withdrew when South Korean troops fired warning shots.
- 05/1996** — Five North Korean naval patrol craft crossed into South Korean-defended waters off the west coast and withdrew after a four-hour standoff with South Korean naval vessels. A similar three-hour incursion by three North Korean craft in the same area occurred in June 1996.
- 07/1996** — A North Korean spy was captured in Seoul after posing as a Filipino professor for 12 years. Chung Su Il (alias: Mohammed Kansu), 62, told police that "scores, perhaps hundreds" of North Korean spies were operating in the South.
- 09/1996** — A disabled North Korean submarine was spotted bobbing off the shore near the city of Kangnung. Twenty-six North Korean military personnel landed on the east coast from the submarine that was found to be on an espionage/reconnaissance mission. According to South Korea, eleven of the infiltrators were shot to death by North Korean commandos who were on the submarine; 13 others refused to surrender and were killed in battle with South Korean troops; one was captured and one escaped. During the South Korean hunt for the infiltrators, North Koreans killed 11 South Korean military personnel and civilians and wounded five others.²⁰
- 10/1996** — Choi Duk Keun, a South Korean diplomat, was murdered in Vladivostok, Russia, following a North Korean threat to "retaliate" for the submarine incident. Circumstantial evidence initially pointed to North Korean complicity in the murder, and later autopsy results showed that poison found in Choi's body was the same type of poison carried by North Korean infiltrators from the grounded submarine in September.

²⁰ After three weeks of negotiations with U.S. officials, North Korea on December 29 expressed its "deep regret" for the infiltration and vowed it would "make efforts to ensure that such an incident will not recur." *Facts on File Yearbook 1996*, p.1008.

1997

- 02/1997** — In Seoul, Lee Han-yong was shot by two hit men believed to be North Korean agents. Nephew of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's former wife, Song Hye-rim, Lee had defected to the South in 1982. The shooting took place three days after Hwang Jang-yop, a high ranking North Korean party official, walked into the South Korean consulate in Beijing for defection to the South. After being in a coma, Lee died 10 days later in a Seoul hospital. The shooting was believed to be a warning to Hwang and other would-be defectors to the South.²¹
- 02/1997** — North Korea threatened unspecified "retribution" against the South Korean newspaper *Chung'ang Ilbo* for publishing an account of Kim Il Sung's death occurring in the course of a heated verbal exchange between Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in July 1994—a story attributed to Hwang Jang-yop, a North Korean defector via Beijing in February 1997.
- 03/1997** — Japan's daily newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*, based on an interview with a former North Korean agent An Myong-chin (who defected to South Korea in September 1993), reported that in November 1977, Megumi Yokota, a 13-year-old Japanese school girl was abducted in Niigata City and taken to North Korea for use as a teaching aide at a North Korean school for spy training. Japanese authorities disclosed that An's description of the girl matched the profile of a girl reported missing in Niigata, Japan, at that time. Japanese authorities suspect that North Korea may have kidnaped at least nine other Japanese nationals since the mid-1970s.²²
- 04/1997** — Five North Korean soldiers opened fire at South Korean positions after crossing the Military Demarcation Line in the Cholwon sector.

²¹ A member of a North Korean spy ring uncovered by South Korean authorities in November 1997 reportedly confirmed the fact that Lee was assassinated by a three-man North Korean terrorist ring. *Korea Times* (Internet version) in English, November 23, 1997.

²² *Kyodo* in English, March 31, 1998. North Korea maintains, "not only does kidnaping not exist in our country, but it also has never occurred in our country....No one in our country is interested in terrorism such as kidnaping and murder....Based on our investigation, we already notified Japan that there were no such people in our country...In other words, the issue has already been settled." [North] *Korean Central Broadcasting Station* in Korean, February 11, 2000. On March 10, 2000, the North Korea Red Cross Society announced a "restart" of an investigation into the whereabouts of 'missing' Japanese under an accord it had reached with its Japanese counterpart on December 21, 1999. *KCNA* in English, March 10, 2000. Currently, some 25 Japanese civic groups are reported to be actively seeking the whereabouts of Megumi Yokota and nine other missing nationals. *Kyodo* in English, October 10, 2000; "Japanese Press North Korea on Old Kidnapings," *New York Times*, October 15, 2000. On January 12, 2001, the Japanese government reportedly stated that the abduction issue must be resolved as a precondition for normalizing North Korea's bilateral ties with Japan. *Tokyo Shimbun* in Japanese, January 13, 2001.

- 06/1997** — Three North Korean patrol boats slipped into South Korean-controlled waters in the Yellow Sea, about two miles south of the Military Demarcation Line, and opened fire at South Korean patrol boats, the first such attack since October 1995 when a North Korean shore battery at Ongjin did so against South Korean naval vessels.
- 06/1997** — North Korea's ruling party organ, *Nodong Sinmun*, continued to incite "pro-democratic" South Koreans to "overthrow" South Korea's Kim Young Sam government as "an urgent requirement" in a patriotic, anti-fascist struggle for "independence, democracy, and reunification."
- 06/1997** — North Korea issued a threat to deliver "a merciless retaliatory blow" to South Korea's daily newspaper *Choson Ilbo* for its June 24 editorial urging Kim Jong Il to relinquish power in favor of "a new reform-oriented [North Korean] group." Denouncing the editorial as "the most provocative declaration of war against us," North Korea retorted that it had the right to retaliate "until . . . the *Choson Ilbo* ceases to exist."
- 07/1997** — Fourteen North Korean soldiers intruded some 70 meters south of the military demarcation line — the midpoint of the four-kilometer-wide DMZ — ignoring South Korean broadcast warnings to withdraw. The incursion led to a 23-minute exchange of heavy gunfire, the most serious since the intrusion of September 1996.
- 11/1997** — North Korea threatened to "demolish" South Korea's state-run Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) alleged to be "a mouthpiece of fascist dictatorship." It vowed to "kill everyone involved" in the production of a KBS TV mini-series depicting the life of repression and corruption in North Korean society "without so much as waking up a mouse or a bird" unless the KBS dropped the production forthwith.²³
- 11/1997** — A North Korean ring of six espionage agents was uncovered in Seoul, including a noted professor emeritus, Ko Yong-pok, at the elite Seoul National University. Often hailed as "the founder of sociology" in Korea, Ko repeatedly spied for the North since 1973, while posing as a "conservative" consultant to the South Korean government on inter-Korean issues.
- 1998**
- 04/1998** — A South Korean news dispatch quoted a member of the North Korean delegation to an inter-Korean conference in Beijing as making a "provocative statement" to the effect that North Korea would rather

²³ *KCNA* in English, December 16, 1997; *Yonhap* in English [Seoul], November 17, 1997.

have a “liberation war” than capitulating to the South Korean attempt to “politicize” the food-and-fertilizer aid issue.²⁴

- 06/1998** — In a show of defiance against the United States, North Korea declared its intention to continue to develop, test, and deploy missiles as a means of countering the alleged U.S. military threat, adding that it had few options of earning foreign currency other than exporting missiles as a result of the U.S. policy aimed at “economic isolation” of the North. It also asserted that the United States should lift its economic embargo and compensate for losses that could be caused by termination of missile sales, if it is really concerned over North Korean missiles.²⁵
- 06/1998** — On June 22, a North Korean midget submarine was seized after it was spotted entangled in South Korean fishing nets off the South Korean town of Sokcho, south of the DMZ. When brought to shore three days later, the nine crew aboard were found dead from an apparent group suicide.
- 06/1998** — On June 27, breaking a four-day silence on the incident, North Korea blamed the South for the death of the North Korean crew and demanded the immediate return of the bodies and the submarine. South Korean President Kim Dae Jung, stating that the submarine intrusion violated the armistice agreement as well as the basic inter-Korean agreement of 1992 for reconciliation, exchange and cooperation, urged North Korea to “admit responsibility and take reasonable measures.”²⁶

²⁴ Song Dae-su, North Korea: “Liberation War Rather Than Negotiations,” *Hanguk Ilbo* [U.S. edition], April 18, 1998.

²⁵ *KCNA* in English, June 16, 1998. Kevin Sullivan, “N.Korea Admits Selling Missiles,” *Washington Post*, June 17, 1998, A1, A2. In August 1998, North Koreans told a visiting delegation of congressional staffers that Pyongyang would stop ballistic missile sales to countries such as Iran in exchange for U.S. compensation of \$500 million annually. See Staffdel Kirk Final Report to Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY), Chairman, International Relations Committee, U.S. House of Representatives: Mission to North Korea and China, August 11-23, 1998, p.4. On a related matter, the Department of State (Public Notice 2798) announced sanctions against North Korea, effective April 17, 1998, for engaging in missile technology proliferation activities pursuant to the Arms Export Control, as amended, and the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended (as carried out under Executive Order 12424 of August 19, 1994). *Federal Register*. V.63, No.85, May 4, 1998, p.24585. North Korean exports of missiles to Iran and Syria since the 1980s as well as the recent transfer of missile technology including major components to Pakistan remain a concern of the U.S. government. For more information, see Congressional Research Service. *North Korea: Military Relations with the Middle East*, by Kenneth Katzman and Rinn-Sup Shinn. CRS Report 94-754 F, September 27, 1994.

²⁶ South Korea played down the incident in an apparent effort to sustain President Kim Dae Jung’s so-called “sunshine policy” toward the North, or a conciliatory policy of engagement. *The Korea Herald* [Internet version], July 16, 1998.

- 07/1998** — A body of a North Korean frogman was found on a beach south of the DMZ, along with paraphernalia suggesting an apparent infiltration/espionage mission.
- 08/1998** — U.S. intelligence agencies reportedly “detected a huge secret underground complex in North Korea that they believe is the centerpiece of an effort to revive the country’s frozen nuclear weapons program,” a development that could possibly signify Pyongyang’s decision to abandon a 1994 “agreed framework” on suspending its suspected nuclear weapons program.²⁷ However, North Korea maintained that the underground complex in question was a civilian economic facility under construction as part of an unspecified economic undertaking. North Korea also claimed that the United States “should ... compensate for groundlessly humiliating and slandering us with fabrication and for infringing on our sovereignty and defaming us.”²⁸ In the days following the disclosure on the underground complex, Washington and Seoul reportedly concluded that the underground facilities do not violate the 1994 agreed framework freezing the North’s suspected nuclear weapons program.²⁹ (In May 1999, a group of U.S. inspectors visited the underground site; the suspected site at Kumchang-ri reportedly was “an extensive, empty tunnel complex”).³⁰
- 08/1998** — On August 31, North Korea test-fired a new 3-stage Taepodong-1 missile in an arc over Japan, causing angry reactions from Japan and the United States as a provocation that stoked tensions in Northeast Asia. Several days later, however, North Korea claimed that it used a multistage rocket to successfully launch a satellite into orbit for peaceful exploration of space, not a ballistic missile as alleged by U.S. and other sources.³¹

²⁷ David E. Sanger, “North Korea Site an A-Bomb Plant, U.S. Agencies Say: Could Break ‘94 Accord,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1998, A1, A4; “North Korea’s Nuclear Ambitions,” *New York Times*, August 19, 1998, A34; “Politics of Blackmail,” *Washington Post*, August 24, 1998, A18.

²⁸ [North] *Korean Central Broadcasting Network* in Korean, September 19, 1998.

²⁹ “Pyongyang’s Provocation,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 1, 1998, A18.

³⁰ *Yonhap* in English, June 5, 1999.

³¹ North Korea also claimed to have reached “a world-class level in the technological and engineering field of rocketry and developing artificial satellites” and been “lauded by mankind as a powerful state of ideas, military, and creation.” [Political Essay]: “Magnificent Gun Roaring of Building a Powerful State,” [North] *Korean Central Broadcasting Network* in Korean, October 6, 1998. The International Civil Aviation Organization condemned North Korea for its test-launching, without advance notification, over an area affecting the safety of some 180 daily flights between North America and Asia. *Kyodo* in English [Internet Version], October 3, 1998. On February 9, 2000, U.S. CIA official in charge of strategic and nuclear issues was reported to have told the Senate Governmental Affairs Subcommittee that North Korea appeared to be “continuing its ballistic missile program and
(continued...) ”

- 11/1998** — A North Korean high-speed spy boat got away from pursuers in South Korean waters near the west coast island of Kanghwa, aborting an apparent operation to infiltrate agents into or ferry agents back from the South.³²
- 12/1998** — At a Pyongyang rally, North Korean youths and students vowed to turn Washington into “a sea of fire and to crush Seoul and Tokyo.”³³
- 12/1998** — In a firefight, the South Korean navy sank a North Korean semi-submersible high-speed boat some 150 kilometers southwest of Pusan. The body of a North Korean frogman was recovered near the site. The vessel was first spotted two kilometers off the port city of You.³⁴
- 1999**
- 03/1999** — Two suspected spy ships of North Korea entered Japanese territorial waters off Noto Peninsula facing the Sea of Japan (a.k.a. the East Sea), disguised as Japanese fishing trawlers (without fishing nets but bristling with an array of antennas)³⁵. They led a small armada of Japanese coast guard and naval ships and aircraft on a high-speed chase before fleeing into the North Korean port of Ch’ongjin, known

³¹ (...continued)

selling technology to other nations despite a well-publicized testing moratorium” [as agreed in Berlin between the United States and North Korea in September 1999]. Tom Raum, *Associated Press*, February 9, 2000; “N. Korea Continuing Missile Program: CIA Official,” *Kyodo in English*, February 9, 2000.

³² After warning North Korea to cease “provocative actions,” the South Korean Ministry of Defense disciplined six military officers for failing to capture or sink the boat. North Korea claimed innocence, saying that the South Korean charge was a premeditated anti-North Korean slander. This infiltration came on the day President Clinton landed in Seoul for talks with President Kim Dae Jung; it also coincided with the start of an inter-Korean tourism cooperation project involving scenic Mt. Kungang (Diamond) north of the DMZ. *Korea Herald* [Internet version] in English, November 23, 1998; *Yonhap* in English, November 26, 1998; and *KCNA* in English November 23, 1998.

³³ This belligerent rhetoric was in reaction to a media report on a putative U.S. operational plan to deal with “any possible North Korean invasion” of South Korea. [North] *Korean Central Broadcasting Network* in Korean, December 10, 1998; Richard Halloran, “S. Korea, U.S. Draft Deadly Response Plan: If North Invades, Destruction is Goal,” *Washington Times*, November 19, 1998, A1, A13. In a similar vein, a North Korean vice minister of defense is quoted as having declared that the Korean People’s Army will “blow up the U.S. territory as a whole”; a day earlier, North Korea had disclosed that it had its “own operation plan” to deal with its enemies. *KCNA* in English, December 2 and 3, 1998.

³⁴ *Yomiuri Shimbun* in Japanese [Tokyo], December 19, 1998.

³⁵ The area of incursion is off the coastal region where the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korean agents was reported to have taken place in the 1970s and 1980s. *Asahi Shimbun* in Japanese (Morning Edition), March 25, 1999, p.5.

to be frequented by North Korean spy operations vessels. North Korea denied its involvement in the reported incident.³⁶

- 06/1999** — Several North Korean ships provoked a nine-day naval confrontation off South Korea’s western coast in disputed waters on the Yellow Sea—over the disputed sea border known as the Northern Limit Line (NLL)³⁷. On June 15, 1999, when the confrontation ended in an exchange of fire, both sides blamed each other for starting the firefight. One North Korean torpedo boat caught fire and sank with its entire crew on board, while five others were heavily damaged. Two of the more modern South Korean vessels sustained minor damage. It was the most serious naval clash since the end of the Korean War — and the second such incident since December 1998 (see above). Since the June encounter, North Korea asserted that more bloodshed would be “inevitable” unless the South Korean intrusion into “our territorial waters is checked.” It also called on the U.S. side to renounce the NLL and to “withdraw all its ships from the disputed waters.”³⁸
- 09/1999** — On September 9, 1999, the South Korean National Intelligence Service announced the arrest of five South Koreans, alleged to be members of a pro-North group called the “Revolutionary Party for People and Democracy.” It was reported that the group had been formed in March 1992 to radicalize South Korean college campuses for revolutionary and anti-American activities, getting instructions from Pyongyang through the “Hotmail” web-based e-mail service³⁹ — this despite Pyongyang’s solemn pledge in 1992 to the South not to attempt to sabotage or undermine it.⁴⁰ On October 7, 1999, South Korean security authorities identified nearly 20 more members as

³⁶ In the course of the chase, for the first time in the postwar era, Japanese naval and air patrol pursuers fired warning shots at the unidentified ships and dropped four bombs in the waters nearby. *Ibid.*; *Yomiuri Shimbun* in Japanese, March 25, March 26, 1999.

³⁷ The NLL was drawn (“unilaterally,” according to Pyongyang) by the United Nations Command (UNC) after the Korean War to prevent armed clashes between the two Koreas. While North Korea never accepted its validity, the NLL as the de facto maritime border was honored by the North until it decided to force the issue in June 1999. Pyongyang reportedly violated the NLL 37 times from 1994 to 1997 and 35 times in 1998, more in the seasonal crab-catching months of May to September. *Choson Ilbo* in English (Internet version), September 5, 1999; *Choson Ilbo* in English (Internet version), September 8, 1999.

³⁸ “Five-Point Proposal Set Forth by KA Side,” *KCNA* in English, July 2, 1999. North Korea claims that the disputed waters belongs to the North under the international maritime law defining 12 nautical miles as territorial waters. See “Balderdash About ‘Northern Limit Line,’” *KCNA* in English, July 11, 1999.

³⁹ *JoongAng Ibo* in English (Internet version), September 9, 1999; *Korea Herald* (Internet version) in English, September 10, 1999.

⁴⁰ Articles 1 through 4 in the historic inter-Korean Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation, effective February 19, 1992.

alleged members of the “Revolutionary Party for People and Democracy.”⁴¹

- 09/1999** — According to South Korea’s National Intelligence Service, South Korean businessman Chang Se-chol was abducted in Dandong, China to North Korea.⁴²

2000

- 01/2000** — South Korean Rev. Dong-Shik Kim, a legal resident of Lynchburg, Virginia, was reported missing in Yanji, northeastern China, since January 16, 2000.⁴³ Rev. Kim is said to have told his coworkers on that day that he would go out for lunch with two North Korean defectors. Citing the report in *Dong-A Ilbo*, a Seoul daily (February 3, 2000), Seoul’s *Yonhap* news agency reported that those defectors were actually North Korean agents disguised as defectors and that ten people were involved in Rev. Kim’s kidnaping. In October 2000, South Korea’s National Intelligence Service reportedly confirmed that Rev. Kim was kidnaped by North Koreans in Yanbian, China, on February 1, 2000.⁴⁴ In October 2000, South Korea’s National Intelligence Service reportedly confirmed that Rev. Kim was kidnaped by North Koreans in Yanbian, China, on February 1, 2000.⁴⁵
- 03/2000** — On March 9, North Korea rejected a U.S. request that it stop providing shelter to members of the now-defunct Japanese Communist League-Red Army faction, who had hijacked a Japanese airliner to Pyongyang in 1970 (see 03/1970 above), and expel or deport those members still in the North. In a statement carried by the

⁴¹ *Choson Ilbo* in English (Internet version), October 7, 1999. An extensive coverage on how this spy ring operated appeared in *Wolgan Choson* in Korean, October 1999, pp 66-89 (available in English translation by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, SK1710141199).

⁴² *Korea Times*, October 24, 2000, p.2.

⁴³ Rev. Kim is reported to have been actively involved since 1995 in evangelical work among North Korean escapees/refugees in Yanji, Jilin Province, China, where he ran a restaurant. Chinese authorities reportedly are suspicious that Rev. Kim was kidnaped by North Korean agents but that, according to the South Korean foreign ministry, there was no official confirmation from the Chinese side. In 1999, Rev. Kim reportedly led a signature drive to urge the United Nations to recognize North Korean escapees as refugees. *Yonhap* in English 0006 GMT February 3 and 0624 GMT February 3, 2000.

⁴⁴ According to a tape-recorded testimony of a former North Korean agent now in hiding in Jilin, China, “a substantial number” of North Korean refugees in China are actually North Korea’s undercover agents disguised as refugees assigned to abduct North Korean escapees/defectors. As reported by Sang-ho Yoon on “the realities of abduction revealed by a North Korean agent” in China, *Tong-A Ilbo* in Korean, February 22, 2000.

⁴⁵ “2 S. Koreans Abducted to NK,” *Korea Times*, October 24, 2000, p.2.

official KCNA news agency, North Korea claimed, “It is the sovereign state’s legitimate right recognized by international law to protect members of the Japanese ‘Red Army’ who sought political asylum in the DPRK, and nobody can put his nose into this issue.”⁴⁶ A State Department counter-terrorism expert was reported as saying that sheltering hijackers remained a serious offence, even if they had not carried out acts of violence for years.

03/2000 — On March 23, North Korea unilaterally declared new navigation “zones and waterways” in the Yellow Sea in disputed waters near the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which the United States-led United Nations Command has maintained as a de facto sea border between the two Koreas since August 30, 1953.⁴⁷ The declaration covers waters near five South Korea-held islands, all located west and south of the NLL but within North Korea’s claimed territorial waters. It would allow passage by South Korean ships near, to and from, the islands but only within and through the North Korean-designated zones and waterways. North Korea threatened military action against intruders “without warnings.” South Korea responded that Pyongyang’s violation of the NLL would constitute “a provocation” and reaffirmed its resolve to “defend” the sea border.⁴⁸

07/2000 — Through its Radio Pyongyang broadcast beamed to South Korea, North Korea threatened to “blow up” (*p’okp’a*) the conservative mass-circulation daily *Choson Ilbo* for “slandering our Republic” by claiming that the Korean War was started by a southward invasion of North Korea. North Korea argued that the newspaper’s action, harmful to national unity and reunification, “is not a matter of freedom of the press but of high treason.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “Statement of Spokesman for DPRK Society for Human Rights Studies,” *KCNA* in English, March 9, 2000; *KCNA* in Korean, March 13, 2000; “N Korea Vows to Protect Japanese ‘Red Army’ terrorists,” *Associated Press*, March 8, 2000.

⁴⁷ The declaration is seen as a follow-up to Pyongyang’s unilateral statement on territorial waters in the disputed areas made on September 2, 1999. See “Northern Limit Line is Invalid: Special Communique of KPA General Staff,” *KCNA* in English, September 2, 1999; *Choson Ilbo* (Internet version) in English, March 23, 2000; “DPRK Sea Border Claim Heightens Tension,” *Korea Herald* (Internet version) in English, March 27, 2000.

⁴⁸ The NLL issue seems likely to receive a new attention on June 12-14, 2000, against the backdrop of North-South Korean summit talks in Pyongyang that also coincides with the first anniversary of the nine-day North-South Korean naval standoff ending in a firefight on June 15, 1999 (see 06/1999 above).

⁴⁹ Radio Pyongyang to South Korea in Korean, July 8, 2000 (Full text of this broadcast is published by *Choson Ilbo* (Internet version) in Korean, July 9, 2000); *KCNA* in English, July 11, 2000. Earlier, on June 27, 2000, North Korea had banned a *Choson Ilbo* reporter from entering the North on assignment to cover the inter-Korean Red Cross talks on family reunion. In early December 2000, a *Choson Ilbo* photographer was detained in Pyongyang for three hours while covering an event of inter-Korean family reunions; North Koreans

(continued...)

- 07/2000** — North Korea assailed South Korea’s opposition leader, Lee Hoi-chang, as “an anti-reunification element...a traitor, a fool, and an imbecile.” Lee was accused of defaming the authority of North Korean leadership when he spoke in the South Korean National Assembly on July 6, on, among other things, the need for reciprocity in inter-Korean cooperation.⁵⁰
- 10/2000** — On October 6, North Korea and the United States issued a joint statement agreeing to oppose all forms of terrorism, to exchange information regarding international terrorism, and to resolve outstanding issues in this regard between the two sides. The two sides also underscored their commitment to cooperate in taking effective measures to fight against terrorism, such measures including “not providing material support or resources, including safehaven, to terrorists and terrorist groups, bringing terrorists to justice, and fighting terrorist acts against the safety of civil aviation and maritime navigation.”⁵¹ The U.S. side noted that it will work toward removing North Korea from a U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, if North Korea will meet the requirements of U.S. law.
- 10/2000** — On October 19, North Korea claimed that any South Korean attempt to link the North with the 1983 terrorist bombing in Rangoon, Myanmar, would amount to a provocation against North Korea, “a criminal attempt to brand the North as a ‘sponsor of terrorism’.” Stating that it will never tolerate such an “anti-North diatribe,” at a time when inter-Korean relations are evolving favorably since the North-South summit in June 2000, North Korea repeated its “unequivocal” position that it had nothing to do with the bombing incident.⁵²

⁴⁹ (...continued)

asked him to apologize for his paper’s allegedly unflattering account of North Korea relating to the family reunions in Pyongyang and forced him to delete filed photographs in his digital camera and notebook computer. *Korea Herald* (Internet version) in English, December 6, 2000; *Choson Ilbo* (Internet version) in English, December 4, 2000.

⁵⁰ North Korea also argued that if Lee Hoi-chang came to power, “the South Korean people will not be able to live in peace...and the improving North-South relations will return to the time of confrontation.” *KCNA* in English, July 11, 2000; *Korea Herald* (Internet version), July 15, 2000. *Radio Pyongyang to South Korea* in Korean, July 11, 2000.

⁵¹ A specific example of “safehaven” is the U.S. demand that North Korea expel members of the radical leftist Japanese Red Army who hijacked a Japanese airliner to Pyongyang in 1970 and who have since been given refuge in North Korea as political asylum seekers. U.S. Department of State. Office of the Spokesman. *Joint U.S.-DPRK Statement on International Terrorism*, October 6, 2000; *KCNA* in English, October 7, 2000; *Reuters*, October 6, October 8, 2000.

⁵² North Korea’s complaint and denial came in the wake of a memorial service held at South Korea’s National Cemetery on October 9 in remembrance of the 17th anniversary of the North’s terrorist bombing in Rangoon, Myanmar. *KCNA* in English, October 19, 2000;

(continued...)

11/2000 — Japanese authorities arrested Kang Song-hui, a former high ranking official of a pro-North Korean organization of Korean residents in Japan, initially on insurance fraud charges. Investigation revealed that Kang, after receiving espionage training in 1979 in the North, served as a North Korean spy for 20 years collecting information on South Korea while based in Japan in a bid to build an underground communist network in South Korea.⁵³

2001

4/9/01 — North Korean patrol boats briefly entered ROK waters, on the southern side of the Northern Limit Line that is the de-facto border in the Yellow Sea. The boats, which ostensibly were guiding North Korean fishing vessels, retreated after being challenged by ROK naval ships. The incident was repeated on April 10. Similar incidents occurred on February 5 and March 3.

5/27/01 — A North Korean patrol boat infiltrated into the southern side of the Northern Limit Line (NLL) northwest of Paekryung Island in the Yellow Sea and stayed for 47 minutes before returning to the North. South Korea said that the violation took place in the process of North Korea cracking down on Chinese fishing boats which were operating nearby. The incident was the second one in May and the seventh incident of its kind in 2001.

6/4/01 — The Korea Herald reported that three DPRK cargo vessels crossed into ROK's territorial waters Saturday and returned to international waters Sunday after being challenged by ROK naval vessels.

7/6/01 — A North Korean patrol boat crossed the Northern Limit Line by about two nautical miles in the Yellow Sea and maneuvered for some 40 minutes before returning to the North's territorial waters. This was the 11th intrusion by a North Korean naval vessel in 2001.

9/17/01 — During Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi's summit in Pyongyang with Kim Jong-Il, the North Korea leader admitted that his country had kidnaped 11 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. He said the actions were "unfortunate," and he apologized. Four abductees were still alive, and six were confirmed dead.

11/18/01 — A North Korean patrol boat crossed the Northern Limit Line in the Yellow Sea 6.5 nautical miles west of Baekryong Island. The vessel

⁵² (...continued)

Yonhap (Internet version) in English, October 19, 2000; *Choson Ilbo* (Internet version) in Korean, October 9, 2000.

⁵³ *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version) in Japanese, December 26, 2000; *The Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version) in English, December 14, 2000; *Yomiuri Shimbun* in Japanese, December 13, 2000; *Choson Ilbo* (Internet version) in English, December 13, 2000.

intruded 1.8nm into South Korean waters for 36 minutes in what was the 12th such incident of the year.

- 11/27/01** – Soldiers in the North fired three rounds at a South Korean guard post leading South Korean soldiers to respond with about a dozen shots. No one was injured.
- 12/22/01** – Japan’s Coast Guard sank a North Korean “spy ship” after a chase and exchange of gunfire when it ignored a warning to stay out of Japan’s 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone. The ship may have sunk itself to avoid capture.

2002

- 1/5/02** – A North Korean patrol boat briefly infiltrated South Korean waters off Yonpyong Island in the Yellow Sea.
- 3/13/02** – The Guinea-Bissau navy discovered a stash of arms aboard the North Korean ship the Golden Like, which then managed to escape, a source close to the navy said Friday. The vessel entered Bissau port on Wednesday, officially to seek a fishing license, but a routine search by the navy’s security services uncovered Kalashnikovs, sub-machine guns and ammunition in various parts of the ship, the source said.
- 6/29/02** – A gun battle erupted between South and North Korean naval ships in the Yellow Sea. North Korean patrol boats allegedly crossed the Northern Limit Line and opened fire on a South Korean patrol boat. Four South Koreans and an undetermined number of North Koreans were killed.
- 10/17/02** – The U.S. State Department revealed that during October 4-6 meetings in Pyongyang between U.S. envoy James Kelley and North Korea, the North admitted that it was pursuing a nuclear weapons development program. This was confirmed two days later by a North Korean delegate to the United Nations, but he said the uranium-enrichment equipment was not yet in operation.
- 10/22/02** – Facing pressure to scrap a nuclear weapons program, North Korea warned the United States that it would take unspecified “tougher counteraction” if Washington did not accept talks on the issue.
- 12/11/02** – A North Korean ship en route to Yemen was stopped by allied forces in the Persian Gulf and was found to be carrying Scud missiles hidden under bags of cement. The ship was released after Yemen said the missiles were for its army.
- 12/26/02** – North Korea moved approximately 1,000 nuclear fuel rods from storage into the Yongbyon nuclear power plant.

2003

- 1/10/03** – North Korea announced it will withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty immediately because it was “most seriously threatened” by the United States.⁵⁴
- 1/11/03** – North Korean Ambassador to China, Choe Jin Su, said Pyongyang no longer felt bound by the 1999 missile test moratorium.
- 1/20/03** – A North Korean diplomat was quoted in a Hong Kong newspaper as saying that, if the North was attacked by the United States, it would retaliate against the United States but would not attack South Korea.⁵⁵
- 2/5/03** – North Korea announced it had reactivated its 5-megawatt nuclear reactor at Yongbyon. The reactor could produce enough material for a nuclear bomb in about a year. North Korea, however, had apparently not restarted the nuclear fuel reprocessing facility at Yongbyon which could generate weapons-grade plutonium more quickly from the 8,000 fuel rods in storage.
- 2/18/03** – North Korea threatened to abandon the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War if the United States imposed trade sanctions against the North claiming that a blockade against it would violate article 15 of the armistice. Pyongyang also accused the United States of plotting an attack.
- 2/19/03** – A North Korean fighter jet briefly crossed seven miles into South Korean airspace over the Yellow Sea prompting the South Korean air force to send six fighter planes of its own and put ground-to-air missiles on alert. The two-minute incursion ended without incident but nonetheless raised tensions at a time when nerves were already on edge over the North’s nuclear program and its threat to pull out of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War. South Korea’s military said that the flight was the first such incursion since 1983 and that it would lodge an official protest.
- 2/24/03** – For the first time in five years, North Korea test-fired a short-range, anti-ship missile into the Sea of Japan just a few hours before a ceremony inaugurating South Korea’s new President, Roh Moo-Hyun. North Korea had notified Japan of the impending tests.
- 3/2/03** – Four North Korean fighter jets intercepted a U.S. Air Force reconnaissance plane in international airspace over the Sea of Japan.

⁵⁴ Text of North Korea’s Statement on NPT Withdrawal. KCNA (North Korean news agency), Pyongyang, January 20, 2003.

⁵⁵ DPRK Consul General: DPRK Will Not Attack ROK in Order to Confront the United States. Ming Pao, January 20, 2002. P. A18. (Translation by FBIS.)

This was the first hostile act by a North Korean aircraft against a U.S. plane since the 1960s.

- 3/10/03** – For the second time in two weeks, North Korea fired a Silkworm ground-to-ship nonballistic missile into the Sea of Japan.