



Press Review South Korea – July 2015

1. Foreign Policy

'Seoul condemns Tokyo's renewed claim to Dokdo'

Korea Herald, 21.07.2015

South Korea strongly protested Japan's repeated claim to its easternmost islets of Dokdo in Tokyo's 2015 defense white paper on Tuesday, demanding "rectification" and warning of a negative impact on the Seoul's condemnation came right after Tokyo's annual defense policy paper was presented to its Cabinet. Tokyo has included its sovereignty claim on Dokdo, called Takeshima in Japan, in its white paper for 11 consecutive years.

Seoul's ministries of foreign affairs and defense called in senior officials from the Japanese Embassy in Seoul to lodge a protest against the white paper.

"Tokyo's act of including its frothy claim to Dokdo in its 2015 defense white paper is an act of denying its imperialist history of the invasion of the Korean Peninsula, and it let the international community know that it still does not recognize history accurately, even as it marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II," Seoul's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150721001064>



[Picture: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7504933.stm>]

'US six-party talks envoy to meet Seoul officials'

Korean Times, 26.07.2015

Sydney Seiler, the U.S. special envoy to the six-party talks, will meet South Korean officials, Monday, in his first visit to Seoul since the U.S.-led nuclear deal was reached between Iran and six world powers on July 14.

Seiler, who arrived in the capital, Sunday, will discuss ways to step up efforts to denuclearize North Korea with Hwang Joon-kook, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It said the U.S. envoy will also meet Kim Gunn, who serves as director general for North Korean nuclear affairs.

Seiler's visit to Seoul comes as part of his trip to three six-party member countries, including China and Japan, until Aug. 1 amid growing interest in whether North Korea will follow Iran's footsteps to dismantle its nuclear program.

Seiler will leave for Beijing, Tuesday. From there he will travel to Tokyo before returning home.

The foreign ministry did not comment whether its officials and Seiler will discuss Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions in relation to Tehran's deal with the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany, a group collectively known as the P5+1.

Analysts, however, said that the U.S. envoy's visit is seen as a warning against North Korea to resume the long-stalled six-party talks and settle its nuclear program through dialogue.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/07/120_183530.html

'Asia-Europe rail union to pave way for Seoul's membership'

Korea Herald, 30.07.2015

The Organization for Cooperation between Railways will crank up efforts to ratify a new convention, with a special working group, which could pave the way for South Korea's full membership and boost the pan governmental rail industry, the agency's chief said Wednesday.

Despite Pyongyang's unfaltering opposition to Seoul's joining, Tadeusz Szozda gave an upbeat outlook as the Warsaw-headquartered body seeks to scrap the longstanding consensus-based decision-making procedure in favor of one that will allow a new member with a three-quarter majority.

The 16-member working group is expected to draw up an outline of the accord later this year and send it to 28 member countries for domestic approval. The ratifications would then be submitted to the U.N. to go into effect.

"If the new convention is introduced and adopted, it will facilitate the joining of new member countries including South Korea," the chairman of the OSJD Committee said in an interview with some visiting reporters at its office in Warsaw.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150730001134>

Link: <http://www.en.osjd.org/>

2. Domestic Policy

'S. Korea's spy agency denies hacking its own citizens'

Yonhap News Agency, 14.07.2015

South Korea's top spy agency has purchased a hacking program from an Italian company but denied using it to monitor South Koreans, a ruling party lawmaker said Tuesday.

The National Intelligence Service told lawmakers that it bought RCS software to boost South Korea's cyber warfare capabilities against North Korea, Lee Chul-woo, a lawmaker of the ruling Saenuri Party, told reporters after attending a closed-door briefing on the issue by the spy agency.

Lee said the spy agency bought RCS software for 20 people from Hacking Team, an Italian surveillance malware vendor, in January and July 2012, referring to Remote Control System technology.

The technology can be used to hack data by installing spyware, allowing hackers to manipulate and track smartphones and computers.

The NIS said it purchased the program to analyze technology for cyber warfare, noting North Korea has obtained the financial information of South Koreans by hacking into 25,000 phones in the South, Lee said.

South Korea was hit by a series of cyber-attacks in recent years that were blamed on North Korea. Still, the North has denied its involvement.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/07/14/32/0301000000AEN20150714006451315F.html>

'Nation declares de facto end to MERS outbreak'

Korean Times, 28.07.2015

Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn Tuesday declared a de facto end to the outbreak of MERS which has claimed 36 lives in the country since May.

The prime minister also offered an apology for the country's poor early response to the outbreak of the disease.

http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/07/113_183639.html

3. Economy / Finance

'Samsung C&T wins court battle against Elliot over treasury share sale'

Yonhap News Agency, 07.07.2015

A Seoul court on Tuesday turned down a U.S. hedge fund's request to stop a friendly shareholder of Samsung C&T Corp. from voting on a proposed merger with another Samsung unit with treasury shares bought from the builder.

Samsung C&T, the construction and trading arm of Samsung Group, is facing opposition from Elliott Associates over a takeover offer in May by Cheil Industries Inc., the group's de facto holding firm.

The Seoul Central District Court said Samsung C&T's sale of treasury shares to KCC Corp. is "not unfair" and doesn't go against social norms, allowing the Samsung ally to exercise its voting rights at a shareholder meeting next week.

KCC acquired a 5.76 percent stake in Samsung C&T through a deal in June, which Elliott claimed was illegitimate.

The court ruling recognizes the legitimacy of the merger, and it will likely help the company drum up shareholder support.

Elliott immediately said it will appeal the ruling.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2015/07/07/0200000000AEN20150707002552320.html?input=rss>

'Youth unemployment rate in Korea reaches highest in 15 years'*Korea Herald, 26.07.2015*

The number of unemployed young Koreans, which stood at 330,000 back in 2013, rose to 380,000 last year, and reached 410,000 in the first half of this year. This is the second consecutive year for the youth unemployment rate to peak since 2000 -- when the country was still reeling from the aftermaths of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

The statistics show that the government's efforts to tackle youth unemployment have not been effective so far. The Ministry of Labor and Employment allocated 1.5 trillion won (\$1.3 billion) this year for projects to combat youth unemployment, with some 40 policies -- including special programs for those who wish to seek employment overseas and free mentorship service -- specifically aiming to support young job seekers.

In an effort to fight the low employment among the younger people, the ministry even formed a special task force in June to help them find positions or opportunities that match their skills or draw on their formal job training or education.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150726000328>

4. Culture**'Baekje areas added to list of Unesco heritage sites'***Korean Joongang Daily, 06.07.2015*

The Stone Pagoda of Mireuk Temple Site in Iksan, North Jeolla

Korea's "Baekje Historic Areas" are now a Unesco World Heritage Site, after the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee now underway in Bonn, Germany, made the decision to include it on Saturday. The session, which began on June 28, concludes on July 8.

The "Baekje Historic Areas" refer to a group of eight sites located in Iksan, North Jeolla and Gongju and Buyeo, South Chungcheong, which were important settings for the latter part of the history of Korea's Baekje Kingdom (18 B.C. - 668 A.D.).

"The site demonstrates that interactive exchanges took place at the time of the ancient kingdoms in three countries within East Asia - Korea, China and Japan," said Rha Sun-hwa, the head of the Cultural Heritage Administration, explaining the aspects of the area that contributed to the endorsement.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3006255&cid=joongangdaily/home|newslist1>

'Universiade ends with celebration of athletes, volunteers'*Yonhap News Agency, 14.07.2015*

The 2015 Summer Universiade drew to a close in southwestern South Korea on Tuesday with a ceremony saluting the young athletes and people who worked behind the scenes to help run the multisport competition.

Gwangju, some 330 kilometers south of Seoul, and its neighboring sub-host cities opened the multisport competition on July 3. The organizers at first announced that about 13,000 athletes and officials from 146 nations would take part. The final figures showed that 12,885 participants from 143 countries were here, and it still made the 2015 Summer Universiade the largest ever, surpassing the 11,759 who competed in the 2013 event in Kazan, Russia.

Host South Korea, thanks to strong showings in judo, archery, badminton and taekwondo, clinched first place in the medal table with 44 gold medals, followed by Russia with 34 gold medals. China also finished with 34 gold medals but trailed Russia in total medals, 122 to 72.

The Universiade is open to student-athletes or recent graduates between 17 and 28 years of age.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/culturesports/2015/07/14/20/0702000000AEN20150714004051315F.html>

Switzerland won three bronze medals at the Gwangju Universiade 2015: one in judo by the judoka girl Ms. Evelyne Tschopp in the -52 kg category; one by Mr. Marco Walter in artistic gymnastics with the men's floor exercise; and one by the masculine handball team.

5. Switzerland in the local press

'Return of 'Chilseongdo''

Korean Times, 14.07.2015

Buddhist monks unveil three of the 11 paintings of "Chilseongdo" at a ceremony commemorating their return to Bojeru Pavilion at Beomeosa Temple in Busan, Tuesday. The paintings on silk, symbolizing the North Star and the Big Dipper as Buddhist images, were created in 1861 at Pyochungsa Temple in Miryang, South Gyeongsang Province, and enshrined at Beomeosa Temple. They were smuggled overseas around the Korean War (1950-53). The temple acquired the three paintings at the Koller Auktionen in Switzerland for 78,500 Swiss francs (94 million won) in June.

http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/culture/2015/07/135_182764.html



'KIAT signs business agreement with Swissmem'

Korean Times, 19.07.2015

The Korea Institute for Advancement of Technology (KIAT) signed a business deal with Swissmem on July 8 in Zurich, to push forward the Global Meister Program, part of an agreement they signed in January last year.

Swissmem is the Swiss association of mechanical and electrical engineering industries.

According to the Embassy of Switzerland, through this additional agreement, the two will propose a demonstration business model for industrial technical manpower next month. Trained Korean students will go to Switzerland next month to enroll in a three-year vocational training course.

http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/07/113_183081.html

'Supervisory panel calls for upgrade of overstretched armistice between Koreans'

Yonhap News Agency, 23.07.2015

What was once devised as a temporary ceasefire to the bloody Korean War has been far overstretched to prop up the truce between the two rival Koreas for the 62nd year, the supervisory panel of the armistice said, stressing that it should be updated to mirror the current naval type of inter-Korean clashes and the latest developments in military technology.

As the Korean War brutally continued for the third year in 1953, the United Nations Command, fighting for the southern side of Korea, signed the Armistice Agreement with what is now North Korea and China to create a 4-kilometer-wide demilitarized zone to be free of armed forces and hostilities in the middle of the peninsula.

But it was only a makeshift halt awaiting a final political solution to end the hostility between the two Koreas, which is still nowhere to be seen as the countries are set to mark the 62nd year since the signing of the armistice on July 27, 1953.



"The initial idea was to separate (hostile) forces to gain time, breathe and come to a political solution. The problem was if this very temporary setting gets too much into time, then you have breaks here and breaks there," Maj. Gen. Urs Gerber said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency, conducted on Tuesday to mark the upcoming 62nd anniversary of the armistice's signing.

"The overall picture to keep the two sides at bay has been OK, but for the (armistice's) objective to get a political

solution, we are a little bit behind than we were in 1953," the Swiss major general noted.

Gerber is one of two generals heading the 10-member Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission launched along with the armistice six decades ago to monitor as a third party whether the Armistice

Agreement is well-heeded on the southern front of the military demarcation line. Sweden is the other member of the South-side of the NNSC.

On the northern front, what was previously Czechoslovakia and Poland represented the NNSC before North Korea kicked them out of the northern half of the DMZ and declared the monitoring group invalid in the light of the fall of communist governments in Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

Major developments in military theory and technology since the signing have also left the armistice out of date and prone to friction, Engman said, calling for efforts to update it.

"Balanced implementation and compliance must be the first and overall objective," he said. "But (countries should) also be able to update the armistice so it includes what is now military significance and current military technology because otherwise even with compliance on the northern side, the significance of the armistice would be limited."

However inclusive, a military armistice never can bring peace, Gerber added. "It's an intermediate step to peace. And that's where we have this extremely difficult missing link to peace," he said, referring to the dearth of dialogue across the border.

Life in the DMZ could look like "a retreat," Engman said of the NNSC mission stationed in the thickly forested military buffer zone, which he described as the last confrontation line of the Cold War.

But from the leadership perspective, the NNSC servicemen always remain on their toes because "if something goes wrong, it can very quickly escalate into something really difficult and dangerous," he said, referring to military tensions lurking in the DMZ.

Still, it's very important not to show we are on our toes because it could give a wrong message to people living below the DMZ, especially expats in South Korea, Gerber said.

"Just imagine, the so-called independent and impartial body up there gets scared, there's a reason to say, well apparently it's a question of minutes and hours, so we have to be balanced at all times. That's pretty important here."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/search1/2603000000.html?cid=AEN20150722008251315>

6. Special Focus: Federal Councilor and Minister of the DETEC Mrs. Doris Leuthard in visit to Seoul

The Federal Councilor Mrs. Doris Leuthard came to Korea for a three-day visit to share Swiss knowledge and practices about sustainable policies and technological innovations. She was accompanied by a business delegation representing the Swiss scientific community and some Swiss clean-tech industries.

The Head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications visited several Korean companies involved in clean-tech innovations such as fuel cells batteries, hydrogen engines and solar cells.

Mrs. Leuthard met also her Korean counterparts the Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning, the Minister of Environment, the Vice-Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the Vice-Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy.

The Federal Councilor ended her visit with a business breakfast meeting titled 'Global energy and environmental issues with a particular focus on Switzerland', co-organized by the Institute for Global Economics, the Swiss-Korean Business Council and the Embassy of Switzerland.



Doris Leuthard, Switzerland's minister of the environment, transport, energy and communications. (Swiss Embassy)
[Picture: <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150712000175>]

Press Release DETEC

<http://www.uvek.admin.ch/dokumentation/00474/00492/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=57982>
<http://www.uvek.admin.ch/dokumentation/00474/00492/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=58061>

Newsletter Embassy of Switzerland in Seoul

<http://mw.weaver.ch/f/view.aspx?166EC3F329665DA412EA968E3442EA863EE4334966AEF4433A1903B107>