



Press Review South Korea – May 2015

1. Foreign Policy

'North test-fires its first missile from a submarine'

Korean Joongang Daily, 11.05.2015

Pyongyang successfully test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) under the order of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un Friday, a South Korean government source confirmed on Sunday.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Saturday that it had successfully test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine in an undisclosed underwater location. North Korea deployed a newly constructed 2,000-ton submarine to shoot the missile, according to the Seoul source. It was able to test out a new vertical launcher that allows it to fire a ballistic missile from a submarine.



<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3004012>

'S. Korean special envoy meets N.K.'s No. 2 man in Moscow'

Yonhap News Agency, 10.05.2015

A South Korean special envoy has met with a top North Korean official in Moscow during a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, diplomatic sources here said Sunday.

Rep. Yoon Sang-hyun of the ruling Saenuri Party encountered Kim Yong-nam, North Korea's ceremonial head of state, during the Saturday ceremony in Moscow's Red Square, they said. Kim attended the ceremony on behalf of leader Kim Jong-un. Yoon and Kim exchanged just pleasantries during the short encounter, the sources said, without elaborating.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/05/10/12/0301000000AEN20150510002400315F.html>

'U.N. chief to visit S. Korea for education forum'

Yonhap News Agency, 12.05.2015

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will travel to South Korea next week to attend a global education forum, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. It would draw more than 2,000 officials and experts from UNESCO member states and other relevant international organizations, according to the ministry.

During his five-day stay in his homeland, Ban is also scheduled to meet with President Park Geun-hye, Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and National Assembly Speaker Chung Eui-hwa. "To be discussed in the meetings are South Korea-U.N. relations, climate change, post-2015 development agenda and other major pending issues as well as security conditions on the Korean Peninsula," the ministry said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/full/2015/05/11/23/1200000000AEN20150511007100315F.html>

'Park to visit Washington in June for a summit'

Korean Joongang Daily, 12.05.2015

President Park Geun-hye will visit the United States next month for a summit with U.S. President Barack Obama, sources from the government said Monday. The trip, scheduled to take place in mid-June, will be Park's third presidential visit to the United States. Park visited Korea's most important ally in May 2013, shortly after she took office, and in September last year to attend the United Nations General Assembly.

In her upcoming meeting with Obama, Park is expected to discuss a wide range of issues concerning security affairs surrounding the Korean Peninsula as well as bilateral relations.

The summit comes at a sensitive time, just briefly after Washington and Tokyo took new steps in their relationship following Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit last month to the United States. Foreign affairs officials for the Park administration have since been at the end of criticisms that Seoul is being left out in the cooperative framework pushed by the United States in the region. Analysts have speculated that Obama will recommend that Park work to improve strained ties between Korea and Japan, possibly through a summit with Abe.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3004055>

'Envoys discuss pressure on North'

Korean Joongang Daily, 22.05.2015

Representatives of South Korea, Japan and the United States said they would increase pressure on North Korea to bring it back to six-party talks on denuclearization, which have been suspended for more than six years.

"We had in-depth talks over producing [additional] measures that will curb the North's provocations," said South Korea's top envoy to the talks, Hwang Joon-kook, following a three-way meeting at the Lotte Hotel in Seoul on Wednesday.

Hwang stressed that while the international community has urged the North to return to the six-party talks with no preconditions, North Korea "has not been answering the calls."

The Korean envoy said that aside from pressure, the countries will also open diplomatic channels to bring the North back to the Beijing-based negotiations.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3004698>

'Int'l women activists cross DMZ for peace'

Korean Times, 26.05.2015



[Picture: <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3004564>]

About 30 women activists from around the world marched from the North to the South across the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) at the western Dora-Kaesong border [ndlr], Sunday, anchoring their hope on helping establish everlasting peace on the divided Korean Peninsula.

Those who participated in the event dubbed "Women Cross DMZ," designed to mark International Women's Day for Disarmament, included U.S. activist Gloria Steinem and Nobel Peace Prize winners Mairead Maguire and Leymah Gbowee.

Steinem told a press conference on arrival in the South. "We were able to be citizen diplomats.

She expressed hope that their peace march could be the beginning of contact across the "artificial barrier" and promote peace and understanding between the two Koreas.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/05/116_179490.html

'Two Koreas fail to agree on joint summit anniversary'

Korea Herald, 02.06.2015

The two Koreas failed to co-organize a joint event commemorating the 15th anniversary of the first-ever inter-Korean summit, dealing another blow to the chilled cross-border ties.

The civilian preparatory group here said Tuesday that they have failed to see progress in their talks with the North as Pyongyang has turned reluctant. The civilian groups of both sides had tentatively agreed to jointly celebrate the anniversary by hosting a three-day event starting June 14 in Seoul.

The North reportedly said it would be better to separately hold the events, the South Korean group said.

The event was to mark the summit between the leaders of the respective countries at the time — South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and North Korea's Kim Jong-il — on June 15, 2000, in hopes of thawing the inter-Korean ties that had been icy for the preceding several years.

The two sides had held preliminary talks in Shenyang, China last month. The South Korean side proposed to hold a follow-up working-level discussion mid-May, only to be turned down by the North. It

added that despite the North's rejection, it would continue to work on hosting joint-events. Meanwhile, the North's Rodong Sinmun, the communist party's official newspaper, said Tuesday that South Korea's joint drills with the U.S. were to blame for souring the inter-Korean ties ahead of the summit anniversary.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150602000909>

2. Domestic Policy

'Activist arrested for praising N. Korea'

Yonhap News Agency, 07.05.2015

A 28-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly praising North Korea online in violation of an anti-North Korea law, police said Thursday. The man, identified only by his surname Nam, allegedly posted dozens of articles sympathetic to the Pyongyang regime between December 2011 and April 2013. Nam is a member of Corean Alliance, a civic group dubbed "anti-state" by the South Korean government.

More than 20 members of Corean Alliance staged a rally in front of a police station here, insisting the arrest stifled freedom of speech. The National Security Law bans South Koreans from praising or sympathizing with North Korea.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/05/07/30/0302000000AEN20150507001000315F.html>

'President taps justice minister as her new PM'

Korean Joongang Daily, 22.05.2015

President Park Geun-hye nominated Justice Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn as her new prime minister on Thursday, ending nearly a month of deliberation. Hwang still needs confirmation by the National Assembly [ndlr].

The position was left vacant for 24 days following the resignation of Lee Wan-koo, who stepped down over allegations related to a massive payoff scandal that upended the political establishment.

Hwang, 58, a former prosecutor with a record for pursuing anti-state crimes, joined the Park administration as justice minister in March 2013, when the president first created her cabinet. He is also one of the few ministers to have managed to survive the administration's near-frequent reshuffles over the past few years.

"Hwang has a deep understanding of Park's philosophy, having served as the minister of justice in the administration, and he is the most suitable candidate to eradicate societal corruption to build a new Korea and bring about political reform." said Kim Sung-woo, the senior presidential secretary for public affairs. Kim added that the president decided to nominate Hwang for his "quiet, but meticulous and strict working style."

Park's recruitment of Lee, an influential lawmaker, was widely seen as an experiment to empower the nation's prime minister. His term, however, came to an abrupt end last month with his disgraceful exit over his alleged involvement in a major corruption scandal.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3004504&cloc=joongangdaily|home|newslist1>



Hwang Kyo-ahn

3. Economy / Finance

'Samsung to build biggest chip factory in Pyeongtaek'

Korean Times, 07.05.2015

Samsung Electronics held a groundbreaking ceremony for the world's largest semiconductor factory in Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi Province, Thursday. The company said it will invest 15.6 trillion won (\$14.35 billion) in building the first manufacturing line by 2017, under the Park Geun-hye administration's economic vitalization and deregulation drive. The company revealed its goal to become the world's top semiconductor manufacturer. Samsung Electronics has led the global memory chip market for the last 22 years. According to global market researcher IHS, the company ranked in second spot in total semiconductor production last year with a 10.7 percent share, following Intel's 14.1 percent.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/tech/2015/05/133_178485.html

'Samsung to merge two major units'

Korea Herald, 26.05.2015

Cheil Industries and Samsung C&T — two key affiliates of Samsung Group — announced Tuesday they would merge in September, aiming to become a 60 trillion won (\$59 billion) global enterprise by 2020.

Timeline of Samsung's restructuring

July 31, 2013	Samsung C&T acquires stake in Samsung Engineering
Sept. 23	Samsung Everland takes over Cheil Industries' fashion business
Sept. 27	Samsung SDS decides to acquire Samsung SNS
March 30, 2014	Samsung SDI announces merger with Cheil Industries
May 8	Samsung SDS announces plan to go public
May 10	Chairman Lee Kun-hee hospitalized because of heart attack
Nov. 26	Samsung Techwin and three other subsidiaries sold to Hanwha Group
May 15, 2015	Jay Y. Lee appointed to run Samsung's two charitable organizations
May 26	Cheil Industries to acquire Samsung C&T

Source: each company's regulatory filing

Cheil Industries is the de facto holding company of Samsung Group, and Samsung C&T is the group's construction and trading arm. "The merger will pave the way for us to become a leading company in people's lifestyles ranging from fashion to food, housing and leisure, alongside bio-industry. It will also create new opportunities and synergy for

both," said Yoon Ju-hwa, CEO of Cheil Industries' fashion division.

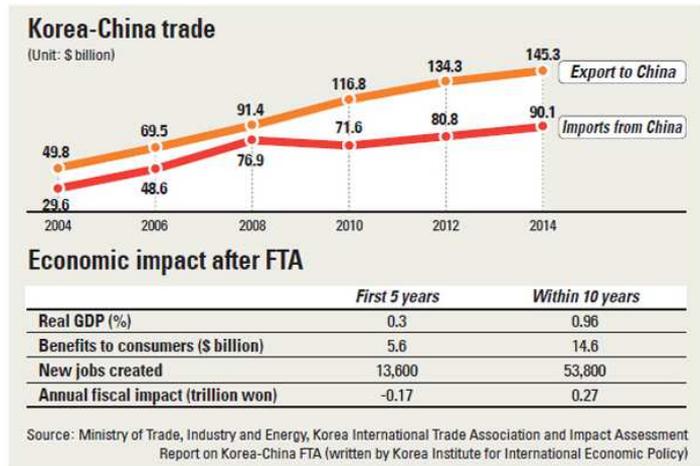
The new firm will be launched on Sept. 1 after gaining approval from shareholders in July.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150526000810>

'Ministers sign final draft of FTA with China'

Korean JoongAng Daily, 22.05.2015

After three years of research and negotiations, the final draft of the free trade agreement between Korea and China was signed on Monday in Seoul, providing tariff-free export opportunities to Korea worth \$73 billion as soon as it takes effect.



Trade ministers Yoon Sang-jick of Korea and Gao Hucheng of China signed English, Korean and Chinese versions of the agreement, which must be ratified by each country. After ratification by both nations, the FTA will go into effect in two months. The Korean Trade Ministry must submit a motion to ratify to the National Assembly this month. If lawmakers approve, the ratification process will move to the presidential cabinet council. China has to report the document to the National People's Congress for ratification.

Timeline

March 2005	Joint research starts.
December 2006	Joint research ends.
May 2012	Negotiations begin in Beijing.
April 2013	Fifth round negotiations, the first under President Park Geun-hye, in Harbin.
September	Seventh round of negotiations in Weipang.
Nov. 11, 2014	During presidential summit, negotiators reach final agreement after 14th session in Beijing.
February 2015	Trade ministers provisionally initial English version of FTA in Beijing.
June 1	Trade ministers sign final English, Korean and Chinese versions in Seoul.

What's next

Korea	China
Motion to ratify must be submitted to National Assembly this month. If approved, ratification goes to the presidential cabinet council.	Report FTA to the Chinese National People's Congress.

Source: Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy compiled by the JoongAng Ilbo

At the signing, the two ministers promised to press for ratification as soon as possible with the aim of having the agreement implemented by the end of the year. Under the agreement, any tariff reductions will be implemented by Jan. 1.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3004860>

4. Switzerland in the local press: Federal Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Didier Burkhalter in visit to Seoul

The Federal Councilor Mr. Didier Burkhalter came to Korea to participate in the 2015 OSCE-Asian Conference in Seoul the 1st of June. This year Switzerland is chairing the Asian Contact Group of the OSCE.

During the Conference, Mr. Didier Burkhalter met his counterparts the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Yun Byung-Se and the Foreign Minister of Thailand, Mr. Tanasak Patimapragorn. The Federal Councilor ended his visit by the Blue House where he met President Park Geun-hye.

'Swiss minister urges Korea to widen human rights role'

Korea Herald, 01.06.2015

Switzerland and Korea can contribute to peace and security around the world by abolishing the death penalty, phasing out nuclear power and pressing North Korea on human rights, the Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter told The Korea Herald in an email interview.

The minister said he aims to learn more about security issues in Korea and Asia at the conference that is now an established part of the cooperation framework on the changing global security environment. As the security cooperation between Asia and Europe deepens, encompassing a wide range of areas from military to economic, environmental and social areas, Seoul and Bern should lead the forefront of international efforts in promoting human rights and development, he said.

In a global context marked by a changing balance of power and a growing number of major players, the attempt to reach a consensus for the resolution of problems can often be a challenging undertaking. Countries like Switzerland, whose credibility enables them to build bridges between the various sides, can in many cases play a major role. They contribute to rendering possible multilateral solutions even in a multipolar world.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150601000907>

'S. Korean, Swiss FM's meet to discuss bilateral issues, NK nukes'

Yonhap News Agency, 01.06.2015

South Korea and Switzerland agreed Monday to continue cooperation on North Korea's nuclear ambitions and other global security issues, the Foreign Ministry said.



[Picture: <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/search1/2602000000.html?query=switzerland>]

They exchanged views on a range of issues, including bilateral ties, security conditions on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia, anti-terrorism, human rights and South Korea-OSCE cooperation.

"The two agreed to continue robust cooperation in the various sectors," the ministry said in a press release.

Yun also appreciated the role of Switzerland in monitoring the implementation of a truce that ended the 1950-53 Korean War as part of the four-nation Neutral

Nations Supervisory Commission. He also assessed close collaboration with Switzerland against North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

He said that Burkhalter also voiced support for President Park Geun-hye's policy of promoting peace in Northeast Asia, which calls for building trust through nonpolitical cooperation.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/search1/2603000000.html?cid=AEN20150601006800315>

5. Special Focus: The 2015 OSCE Asian Conference

The two-day session of the 2015 OSCE-Asian Conference started June 1 in Seoul. The conference brought together more than 100 officials and experts from the 57 member nations of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and its 11 partner states.

The opening session started with welcoming speeches from the Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Vuk Žugić and the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier. This was followed by messages from the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Yun Byung-se, from the Swiss Foreign Minister, Mr. Didier Burkhalter and from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Mr. Tanasak Patimapragorn.

During his speech, the Federal Councilor, Mr. Burkhalter, has particularly insisted on the importance to see the OSCE as a bridge between Europe and Asia. He also mentioned that the OSCE provides a permanent platform for dialogues and tools for a cooperative approach to security.

The two-day discussions covered the evolving threats to security in Europe and Asia, the cooperation on cyber security and disaster control, and the experience-sharing and new areas of cooperation for security in Asia.

As a side event, the meeting also included a session on South Korea's Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), which aims to expand ties in the region by first building trust through cooperation on soft issues, such as the environment and nuclear safety.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150527000890>



[Picture: <http://www.24heures.ch/suisse/burkhalter-plaide-cooperation-renforcee-asie/story/15621547>]

'Regional framework needed on N. Korean human rights: OSCE chief'

North Korea's abysmal human rights record could be addressed through a regional multilateral framework, the head of the world's largest intergovernmental security bloc said Monday.

North Korea's human rights situation has caused widespread concern especially since the U.N. Commission of Inquiry (COI) released a report in February 2014 accusing the communist country of "systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights."

Pyongyang has long been suspected of human rights abuses that include holding hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in concentration camps, committing torture and conducting public executions. The country has bristled at such criticism, calling it a U.S.-led attempt to topple its regime. Lamberto Zannier, secretary-general of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), told reporters that his organization believes that an improvement in human rights conditions in member nations can improve security and stability in the region.

"Dealing with human rights is not an interference in internal affairs, but in a way, a prerogative of all countries to look through a process that we call a process of peer review that involves the countries of the region at debates about the human rights situation in their countries and we have meetings where we do exactly that," said Zannier, who is in Seoul to attend an annual conference involving the OSCE's 57 member nations and their five Asian partner states, including South Korea.

He stressed that an important element in beginning discussions on human rights is a consensus among the parties involved, as was the case with the OSCE in its early stages.

"The issue that you might have in this region is to build a framework that gives you the tools to address human rights issues with each party in this framework, including with North Korea," he said.

North Korea's human rights record has increasingly been seen as a possible tool to pressure the country into returning to multilateral talks on its nuclear and missile programs.

The U.N., meanwhile, plans to open an office in Seoul later this month to monitor human rights violations in the North and raise public awareness of the issue.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/06/01/36/0301000000AEN20150601007200315F.html>