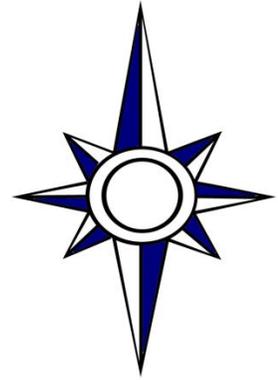


Comparative Connections

A Triannual E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations



South Korea-North Korea Relations: Sound and Fury

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The first third of 2014 was a peculiar time for inter-Korean relations. In the past, quite often months could go by when nothing much happened between the two Koreas. This was not like that. As this article and its accompanying chronology show, these four months were eventful, but also frustrating. Much was said and done, yet nothing lasting was achieved – except for a single round of family reunions, barely two months ago but already seeming remote in time. High-level talks were held and reached a three-point accord, but this too left no enduring trace.

Perhaps to yearn for progress is a delusion of the Enlightenment. Even to construct a coherent narrative from the last four months' events is a challenge. So we can but present the parts, and hope readers can fashion them into a whole. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* seems all too apt. Inter-Korean ties have become "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

That may seem a harsh judgment. Not for the first time in a lifetime of following North Korea especially, I hope to be wrong (and quite often have been). But as of now, inter-Korean ties appear to be going backward and are mired in recrimination, with the North depressingly plumbing new depths of foul sexist language and personal insult toward the president of the Republic of Korea (ROK), Park Geun-hye. This we shall discuss and reluctantly detail below.

While obviously there is not the remotest excuse for this, in my perhaps contentious view it is not random or uncaused, but reflects frustration in Pyongyang as to what Park really stands for or hopes to accomplish on the North-South front. As illustrated below, her signals in this area are more than a little mixed. But then Kim Jong Un for his part is even harder to read in terms of policy and strategy. So if the analyst fails to achieve clarity, this may be because his subjects are themselves unclear or even confused about their own ends and means alike.

One more introductory word. As ever I urge readers also to peruse the Chronology. Even in a lean, mean season like the present for North-South relations, there is far more going on than it is possible to discuss in the main article. If you don't find an event or topic here, it should be there. In case it isn't, please let the author or editors know. We do aim to be comprehensive.

A promising start

The first four months of 2014 in inter-Korean relations fall into two halves. The first appeared moderately promising. As illustrated in the chronology, in January the tenor of DPRK media comment – on the ROK government, and President Park in particular – softened somewhat, in line with Kim Jong Un's call in his New Year speech for an end to mutual mud-slinging. (As of

May this seems a hollow and hypocritical pledge, but we'll get to that.) One should not exaggerate the extent of the shift. Interested readers may care to revisit our [previous issue](#), where the relevant portion of Kim's speech was parsed at some length. The sentences seized on by some commentators as an olive branch look less so when read in their overall context.

Still, there was a [new tone](#) and it led to action. February saw two gains: the first reunions of separated families since Oct. 2010 and the first North-South high-level talks since May 2007. The family reunions, held as usual at the Hyundai-built but now mainly mothballed Mount Kumgang resort, near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on North Korea's southeastern coast, followed a pattern established during the "Sunshine era" (1998-2007) when reunions were held regularly. Each side's Red Cross selects 100 elderly applicants. The South does so by lottery from over 129,000 who originally applied, almost half (45 percent) of whom are now dead; how the North chooses its fortunate few is unknown. The other side then seeks out relatives of those 100. A full reunion thus comprises two back-to-back events, each lasting three days.

Familiar tears

In practice the full 100 never make it. Some drop out due to frailty, or if the other side cannot trace their relatives. So it was only 82 elderly South Koreans plus 56 younger family members (some as caregivers) who crossed the border on Feb. 20, to meet 180 close Northern relatives – husbands, wives; fathers, mothers; brothers, sisters; sons, daughters – whom they had not seen since the 1953 Armistice, which ended the Korean War, sealed the border. In closely controlled conditions, with an intrusive media presence broadcasting the familiar but ever heartbreaking [tears](#) of these brief encounters, those separated for over 60 years were allowed just 11 hours together over three days. And then they part, never to meet again nor even write, telephone, or email. From Feb. 23-25 it was the turn of 88 North Koreans to meet 357 Southern relatives – note the numerical mismatch: Seoul is twice as good at tracing people – on the same terms. It all seems wretchedly inadequate on many levels, but perhaps slightly better than nothing.

Family reunions are a familiar ritual, or were. High-level North-South talks are an altogether rarer event, last held in May 2007 in the final year of the late Roh Moo-hyun's presidency. None took place on his hardline successor Lee Myung-bak's watch (2008-13), though there were efforts behind the scenes. Under Park Geun-hye, Cabinet-level talks had been set for mid-June last year, but were called off in a row about protocol (for which for once I [faulted](#) Seoul).

Psst! Might we meet?

As last year the initiative came from the North, which sent a confidential message – always a better sign than Pyongyang's usual megaphone diplomacy – on Feb. 8 (a Saturday) proposing open-ended talks at a senior level. The South agreed with commendable alacrity, and kept all this under wraps until the very eve of the talks, set for Feb. 12. The timing was interesting, with US Secretary of State John Kerry due to arrive in Seoul one day later (Feb. 13).

Another good sign was that both sides were careful to avoid a repeat of last year's protocol snafu. Seoul might have taken umbrage at the North's request for its Southern counterpart to be not the Unification Minister (MOU), as was customary hitherto, but someone from the Blue

House (Cheongwadae, the presidential office). But the South agreed, and a rising star was suddenly thrust into the spotlight. Kim Kyou-hyun, promoted last year from deputy to first vice foreign minister, had only a week earlier (Feb. 3) moved to the Blue House as first deputy director of national security. Last December President Park beefed up the National Security Council (NSC), restoring its permanent Secretariat which Kim now heads.

Across the table at Panmunjom Kim [faced](#) a more experienced figure. As deputy head of the United Front Department (UFD), the section of the North's ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) that deals with South Korea, Won Tong Yon has been involved in inter-Korean negotiations for over 20 years – though never before as a delegation head. This looks like a concession to Seoul, or at least a *quid pro quo*. Last June the South wanted to talk to Won's boss, UFD chief Kim Yang Gon, rather than the usual rather opaquely titled figures that the North has tended to field (what is a "[cabinet councillor](#)" anyway?). Won may be only no 2 in the UFD, but for that matter Kim Kyou-hyun is not top gun either. So the protocol matched up, and each side knew they were dealing with someone who reports directly to their leader.

Slim pickings

Given this, and the [hopes](#) raised, it is all the more disappointing how little was achieved. A marathon first day (10am till midnight) yielded no announced result, not even an agreement to reconvene. But meet again they did, after a day's recess, on Feb. 14. Valentine's Day hardly brought an outpouring of love, but only a minimalist three-point agreement short enough to reproduce in full. (This is the [South's](#) version; the [North's](#) is not materially different.)

1. South and North Korea will proceed the reunion (sic) of separated families as scheduled.
2. In order to enhance mutual understanding and trust, the two Koreas will desist from slander or defamation against each other.
3. South and North Korea will actively endeavor to discuss issues of mutual interest and improve inter-Korean relations, and will have a high-level meeting again on a convenient date for both sides.

Kim Kyou-hyun's [press briefing](#) spoke of a "long and frank dialogue," "candidly exchanged opinions," and "different stances ... on some issues." The meager outcome shows how little common ground could be found. Indeed, given that item #2 (no slander or defamation) has since been massively breached by the North, and there is zero sign of item #3 (meeting again), the sole accomplishment is that one round of family reunions did take place – meaning that this time the North refrained from cancelling this at the last minute, as it had in September.

In Kim's view, all this was "meaningful in that we took the first step forward to 'improving Inter-Korean relations on the basis of trust.'" (The quotes are his, or perhaps MOU's: they frame Park's keynote Trust-Building Process, which is also respectfully capitalized as here.) Kim added: "We hope and expect that today's outcome will be a starting point to building ongoing trust between the South and North Korean authorities through dialogue."

Some hope. As of early May everything has gone backward, and the question is why. Here our task becomes interpretative, and to a degree speculative. This writer has already ventured some thoughts [elsewhere](#), which like *Comparative Connections* are freely accessible; I shall strive to avoid repetition. Readers may care to refer to that article, and a companion [piece](#) contrasting past ROK leaders' very varied "*Nordpolitik*" as a backdrop to the present impasse.

No quid pro quo

By its own lights, North Korea made a major concession in letting family reunions go ahead, despite the broader atmosphere being even more unpropitious than last September – given that two regular annual joint US-ROK military exercises, *Key Resolve* and *Foal Eagle*, were set to and did commence on Feb. 24 while the reunions were ongoing. The South steadfastly rebuffed the North's repeated efforts to link the two, viewing this as a point of principle. One can see why it would take that stand. Harder to fathom is why, having forced Pyongyang to yield, Seoul did not then deem it politic to toss at least a crumb or two Kim Jong Un's way.

There are at least three issues on which that could have been done. One is regular tourism to Mount Kumgang, in limbo for almost six years now since a tourist was shot dead there in July 2008 and the South suspended tours because the North refused entry to its investigators. As we noted at the time, last year Seoul seemed ready to discuss this area. It is far from clear why Park changed her mind, and mixed signals persist. On March 7, MOU said that payments to the North arising from any resumed tourism would not be subject to UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions prohibiting bulk cash transfers – only to reverse its stand three days later.

No such risks apply in a second area, humanitarian aid. Here the Park administration's policy is as clear as mud. The ostensible position is that this is permitted, and a trickle does flow, but some Southern NGOs have been blocked. On March 13, a consortium of civic groups abruptly called off a planned ceremony launching a fund-raising campaign to send fertilizer to North Korea. Despite initial denials, pressure was surely applied. On March 19, Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae, the architect of Park's *Trustpolitik*, said the time is not ripe to supply fertilizer.

Yet the amount envisaged was a mere 20,000 tons, and MOU is still budgeting to send far larger amounts – in the "Sunshine era" Seoul used to supply 300,000 tons each year – in case inter-Korean ties improve. To step in and ban this private initiative sends the wrong signals. Then again, North Korea plays its own self-defeating silly games. When it belatedly admitted an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) on Feb. 22, the South at once offered to help. Time is of the essence, yet Pyongyang did not even reply but instead turned to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), whose bureaucratic wheels turn much more slowly.

The third area is trade. Here South Korea's stance is tortuous to say the least. Since May 2010, Seoul has nominally banned all investment and trade with the North in reprisal for the sinking of the corvette *Cheonan* (which Pyongyang continues to deny) in March that year. This was a peculiar "ban," for it allowed a large exception: the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC). One may be glad the KIC was saved, but there is no consistency in allowing this while forbidding anything else of the same kind. With North Korea now creating new special economic zones throughout its territory, and smaller ROK firms (SMEs) pressing for a second Kaesong so that

they too can benefit from DPRK labor – skilled, reliable and cheap – the time has surely come to review the May 24 measures, as the ban is known. China and Taiwan, notwithstanding the recent protests, are an illustration of how pragmatically permitting trade and investment can over time help soften political relations as well. Both Koreas could learn from this.

What makes no sense is to allow just one bizarre special case. As we noted last time, there is strange enthusiasm in Seoul for the convoluted idea of ROK firms taking a stake in a Russia-DPRK joint venture to improve rail and port links at Rajin in North Korea's northeast. This raises several questions. First, since when did the road from Seoul to Pyongyang run through Moscow? The two Koreas can make their own deals directly. Second, Rajin is as far as it gets from South Korea – which is why Southern SMEs already nixed invitations to invest there. Third, the true logistical benefits of Eurasian land links, an 'iron silk road' and other misty-eyed slogans *du jour* are less than obvious. Fourth, the three Southern companies potentially involved, who inspected Rajin in February, sound distinctly lukewarm. Yet for some reason this eccentric idea is to be exempt from the May 24 sanctions, while ROK entrepreneurs who just want to trade and invest normally in the DPRK – and some who already did so, but were bankrupted by the May 24 measures – are still forbidden to do so. Where is the logic in this?

A story reported by the *Hankyoreh* daily highlights the incongruity of the present state of play in inter-Korean business. ROK companies building factories at Kaesong are currently facing delays due to a shortage of sand. This is because Seoul forbid them to pay cash. Instead they must pay in kind, using ramen (noodles) or Choco Pie snacks. The latter delicacy is reportedly a quasi-currency in the DPRK, but this situation is self-defeating and absurd, especially since the same firms are allowed to bring in millions of dollars in cash each month to pay wages.

To be clear: *pace* one [critic](#) (Stephan Haggard) whom I much respect, I am not saying Seoul should put everything on the table all at once. Yet last June the South did accept the North's proposal to discuss several issues simultaneously, but then backtracked. All I suggest is that Pyongyang might reasonably expect some *quid pro quo* for family reunions, so Park and her advisors should consider in which of the three areas above they could offer some concession. Aid may be the place to start, despite the FMD rebuff. Why not let NGOs send fertilizer?

No to trade and aid, but yes to unification

There is more. If North Korea is puzzled and may feel cheated by the South's refusal to move forward on any of the above three fronts – tourism, aid, trade/investment – that is nothing to the alarm bells in Pyongyang at Park Geun-hye's new emphasis on Korean reunification. We noted the beginning of this tendency in our last report, but in 2014 it has blossomed mightily.

Having caused a stir by calling unification a jackpot – “bonanza” is now the preferred official translation – Park has formally made this a policy goal of her administration, and is creating a new advisory committee (seemingly duplicating one that already exists), which she will chair, to prepare for this. On March 28, she gave a much-trailed [speech](#) in Dresden – significantly, a city located in the former East Germany – titled “An Initiative for Peaceful Unification on the Korean Peninsula.” This reached out to North Korea on several fronts, proposing *inter alia* medical aid for mothers and babies, joint ventures (farming, mining, infrastructure), and wide-ranging

people-to-people exchanges of a non-political nature. An eloquent document, this is well worth reading in full; useful [summaries](#) are also available.

Yet the Dresden speech must also be seen in context – several contexts, in fact. Park was not the first, second, or even third ROK president to come to Germany and make a speech about unification. Kim Dae-jung most famously in 2000, but also Lee Myung-bak (2011) and even (first up) Kim Young-sam in 1995, all had the same idea. But is it a good idea? This goes down well in Germany and to a Western audience, but how does it play in Pyongyang? North Korea's power elite have watched recent German history no less carefully than their Southern peers. This surely concentrates the mind, as Dr Johnson said about knowing you are going to be hanged. The comparison is apt. What conceivable comfort can the DPRK *nomenklatura* draw from German reunification, involving as it did the absorption of one state by the other?

Ruediger Frank, whose insights on North Korea are enriched by his own East German origins, is especially well placed to comment here. In a perceptive [article](#) bluntly entitled “Fire the Speech Writers,” he notes among much else that at no point did Park so much as mention, let alone value, the long history of GDR-DPRK cooperation. For her, Germany-Korea just means FRG-ROK: past, present, and future. This is victors' historiography: the defeated are erased.

Unlike East Germany, North Korea is not about to go quietly. More immediate reasons also explain why it rejected Park's Dresden speech out of hand. The frustrations described above are one factor. Another reason is that much of the 'new' interaction that Park calls for was already up and running a decade ago. Yet she never mentioned that, nor reflected on how or why inter-Korean relations have gone backwards. It may be a defect of democracy, at least in Korea, that each new administration purports to start afresh – sunshine, peace and prosperity, Vision 3000, trustpolitik, you name it – rather than building cumulatively on its predecessors.

Relatedly, Haggard [suggests](#) that Dresden should be seen as Park's attempt at a “reset.” If I am not convinced, and far more importantly nor is North Korea, it is because the Dresden speech is exceptional in actually reaching out to Pyongyang. So if the North rudely bites the proffered hand of friendship, a further reason is its awareness that except in Dresden, none of this new burst of unification-mongering in Seoul even pretends to posit the North as a partner. Instead South Koreans are doing it by and for themselves, and the government is warning its citizens to prepare for the unexpected – with strong implications of a German-type scenario. Small wonder then if the DPRK is suspicious: who can blame them?

Wash your mouth out with soap!

By contrast, blame and opprobrium are the only possible reaction to the appalling terms in which the North is expressing its anger. As when Lee Myung-bak was viciously cartooned as a rat being bloodily killed in a variety of ways, even by North Korean standards we see new depths of vileness being plumbed. The foul abuse recently hurled at the UN Commission of Inquiry's Judge Michael Kirby for his sexual orientation, and now President Obama for being black (worse, a “crossbreed with impure blood”), are so far beyond the pale as to be beyond belief.

Comparative Connections being a journal of record, as with the rat cartoons it is my deeply unpleasant duty to record the inter-Korean dimension here. As we have noted before, the “P” word has been hurled at Park in the past, but more sparingly: in [April 2012](#) before she was elected president, and again last [November](#). (North Korea being an equal-opportunity insulter, in [November 2012](#) KCNA also brandished it at former ROK President Kim Young-sam.)

But now it has used it four times in a week as of May 3, with all manner of ugly variations:

[April 27](#) *Challengers to DPRK Will Never Be Pardoned: CPRK Spokesman (on Obama’s visit; statement attributed to the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea [CPRK])*

... What Park did before Obama this time reminds one of an indiscreet girl who earnestly begs a gangster to beat someone or a capricious whore who asks her fancy man to do harm to other person while providing sex to him...

... She thus laid bare her despicable true colors as a wicked sycophant and traitor, a dirty comfort woman for the U.S. and despicable prostitute selling off the nation... Genes remain unchanged...

[April 29](#) *“Park Geun Hye Will Have to Pay Price for Treachery: Rodong Sinmun” (on Obama’s visit)*

This was nothing but a disgusting kiss between the boss of gangsters asking his political prostitute to serve him before going to a war and his partner flattering him.

[May 2](#) *A 1,000 word screed, “Park Geun Hye Censured as Root Cause of Disasters of Nation”:*

... Kowtowing to outside forces since she took office as “president” clearly proves that she is no more than a dirty political harlot and old prostitute without an equal ... steeped in sycophancy and treachery ... All Koreans are spitting on her as she is resorting to whorish and disgusting political prostitution only after leaving her soul or chastity violated at such old age of over 60 (sic).

[May 3](#) *Attributed to the National Peace Committee, a propos postponing OpCon transfer:*

What she did this time reminds one of a disgusting old prostitute raising even her skirt, not feeling any shame to bring a stranger into her bedroom. It is a shame and disgrace of the Korean nation that there is such a pro-U.S. indecent philistine and vile prostitute serving the U.S. as Park Geun Hye.

Note also the “comfort woman” tag, which is mind-boggling and wholly unprecedented.

This filth will stop in time, just as the rat cartoons did (they have also been removed from KCNA’s website). North Korea’s nastiest word will not be its last word, but the taste will linger. Right now it is hard to see how the two Koreas will go forward from here, but they will find a way sooner or later. It would be understandable if President Park wanted nothing more to do with a counterpart so foul-mouthed. But she has less than four years left to serve. At a time when other powers – Russia and even Japan – are moving to seek better relations with the DPRK, which also retains China’s grudging support, Park will need to brush off the insults and think afresh how to relaunch *Trustpolitik* to compete with these regional rivals.

Chronology of North Korea-South Korea Relations January – April 2014

Jan. 1, 2014: DPRK supreme leader Kim Jong Un’s second New Year speech attacks the South for internationalizing inter-Korean issues, yet also calls for an end to mud-slinging and offers to

[“join hands with anyone who opts to give priority to the nation and \[wants\] reunification regardless of his or her past.”](#)

Jan. 2, 2014: South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se urges “extra caution” in dealing with the North, in view of [“growing uncertainty and vicissitudes in North Korean politics.”](#)

Jan. 2, 2014: The Chinese news agency *Xinhua* says that [a high speed rail link to the North Korean border, under construction since 2010, will open in August 2015](#). This will cut the time of the 207 km journey from Shenyang to Dandong, across the Yalu River from Sinuiju in the DPRK, from 3.5 hours to just an hour. (For the inter-Korean connection, see Dec. 11.)

Jan. 6, 2014: In her first ever press conference since taking office last Feb. 25, South Korean President Park Geun-hye calls on North Korea to agree to hold the family reunions which it postponed in September at end-January, around the lunar new year holiday (*Seollal*) which this year falls on Jan. 31. [In questions she causes a stir by calling Korean reunification “a jackpot.”](#) (*daebak* in Korean). Although some fear the cost, she believes this “would be a chance for the economy to make a huge leap.”

Jan. 7, 2014: *Yonhap*, the ROK’s quasi-official news agency, says that since Kim Jong Un’s call for an end to mutual slander [DPRK media have softened their tone](#). So far this year they have not directly criticized President Park, who in December alone had suffered over 70 separate personal attacks from the North’s official *Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)*.

Jan. 8, 2014: *KCNA* [reports](#) that the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA, the North’s rubber-stamp parliament) “decided to hold an election of deputies to the 13th SPA on March 9, Juche 103 (2014), according to Article 90 of the Socialist Constitution of the DPRK.” This is on schedule: the 12th SPA was chosen in 2009. Kim Jong Un is not yet an SPA member, having not been unveiled to his people or the world until September 2010.

Jan. 9, 2014: The North’s Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) rejects the South’s proposal for reunions of separated families as untimely on various grounds, but holds open the possibility that at some point [“both sides can sit together in a good season.”](#)

Jan. 9, 2014: The USFK-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC) confirms that [the annual *Key Resolve* and *Foal Eagle* joint exercises will be held as usual](#), starting in late February. North Korea had cited these as one of the impediments to holding family reunions.

Jan. 10, 2014: Following Pyongyang’s rejection of its proposal, South Korea urges the North to [“show a sincere attitude toward our offer”](#) of renewed family reunions.

Jan. 12, 2014: Court officials in Seoul say that a 65-year old man, one of six South Koreans returned by the North in October, [had murdered his wife](#) (whose body was also returned) as he thought she was having an affair with a DPRK security official after they entered the North from China in 2011. The husband claimed she died in a botched suicide pact.

Jan. 13, 2014: ROK Ministry of Unification (MOU) says the new radio frequency identification (RFID) electronic tagging system [will be ready this week](#) and up and running later this month. This will allow Southern staff at the joint venture Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) to cross the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ, the de facto North-South border) at any time on permitted days, rather than being limited to strict time windows booked in advance as hitherto.

Jan. 13, 2014: [MOU](#) says that [1,516 North Koreans settled in the South last year](#); slightly up on 2012's figure of 1,502, but still down from 2006-11 when annual flows were in the 2,000-3,000 range. 76 percent were female. The cumulative total of arrivals now stands at 26,124.

Jan. 14, 2014: MOU says that it [used barely a quarter](#) (27 percent) of the Won 1.09 trillion (\$1.029 billion) earmarked in 2013 for its inter-Korean cooperation fund. Low as it is, this is the highest proportion disbursed for six years, i.e. since the end of the former "Sunshine Policy." Most of it (Won 177.7 billion out of Won 296.4 billion) went not to North Korea, but as compensation to Southern SMEs invested in Kaesong for the zone's five-month closure.

Jan. 17, 2014: National Defense Commission (NDC: the topmost DPRK executive body, above the Cabinet) [makes](#) three "principled crucial proposals", including no provocation or slander and no hostile military acts. The latter includes cancelling US-ROK war games.

Jan. 24, 2014: NDC [repeats](#) its offer, insisting it is sincere: "We've already been walking down the path on our own to completely cease provocations or slander of the other side."

Jan. 24, 2014: In a telephone message to the head of the South's Red Cross, North Korea [suggests](#) holding family reunions after the Lunar New Year holiday. Replying on Jan. 27, Seoul proposes reunions on Feb. 17-22 at Mount Kumgang, and talks on Jan. 29 to arrange these.

Jan. 27-28, 2014: *Rodong Sinmun*, daily paper of the North's ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) [says](#) on Jan. 28 that "north-south relations can never be improved by the efforts of [only] one side ... Now all Koreans wait for a good news that an epochal phase of improved north-south relations will be open." [Article](#) on Jan. 27 regrets that "the nation is killing time through mud-slinging and reckless military showdown which bring nothing good. The Korean nation really suffers big from division and wastes away precious time by escalating confrontation."

Jan. 28, 2014: Trials of the RFID entry system [begin](#) at the KIC. (See Jan. 13.)

Jan. 28, 2014: *Yonhap* [reports](#) that for the past fortnight North Korea has stopped sending its usual balloon-borne propaganda leaflets into the South.

Feb. 3, 2014: After a week's silence during which Seoul's suggested date for Red Cross talks on reunions has passed, Pyongyang responds and offers Feb. 5 or 6. They settle on the former.

Feb. 4, 2014: Kim Ki-mun, chairman of the (South) Korea Federation of Small and Medium-sized Businesses, [says](#) that KFSMB will seek to build a second complex like the KIC in the North. Rejecting Rason (Rajin-Sonbong) special zone in the DPRK's northeast as logistically unsuitable and short of electricity, Kim hopes for the southwestern port cities of Nampo or

Haeju; each less than two hours from the border “if a road is built.” He says ROK SMEs are “very satisfied” with the KIC, and some 2,000 are on a waiting list for any new such zone.

Feb. 5, 2014: ROK media scold Kim Jong Un and his entourage for not taking off their shoes on a visit to a Pyongyang nursery, as [pictured](#) in Feb. 4 *Rodong Sinmun*. Traditionally in Korea it is a serious breach of etiquette and gross bad manners to wear outdoor shoes indoors.

Feb. 5, 2014: Red Cross talks at Panmunjom [agree](#) to hold family reunions, last held in Oct. 2010, at the North’s Mount Kumgang resort on February 20-25. DPRK chief delegate Pak Yong Il calls this “a very important starting point for improving the North-South relations.” The South says that if the reunions go well, other issues can be discussed with the North.

Feb. 6, 2014: A day after agreeing to family reunions, Pyongyang threatens to cancel them. In a long [screed](#) which also lambastes ROK media over Kim Jong Un’s shoes, the NDC says “war exercises and racket for confrontation are incompatible with dialogue and reconciliation.” Seoul rejects this, and reconfirms that the annual joint US-ROK military drills will go ahead.

Feb. 6, 2014: In its annual policy report MOU [says](#) it will cooperate with North Korea on the Rajin-Khasan railway, and to try to build a peace park in the DMZ by 2016. President Park adds that “this year’s policy deals more with setting the groundwork framework for internal stability and setting straight various abnormal practices in the North-South relationship.” Also “we need a thorough defense posture to deal with any provocation by North Korea.”

Feb. 7, 2014: The two Koreas [agree](#) that the KIC will at last get internet access, by June. This will start with a connected business center. Later, all 100-odd factories will have the service.

Feb. 7, 2014: A 64-strong ROK team of Red Cross and Hyundai Asan workers drives across the eastern border to Mount Kumgang, where they will check the condition of facilities for family reunions. The Hyundai-built resort has been largely mothballed since 2008.

Feb. 7, 2014: President Park [urges](#) North Korea not to “leave a large wound in the hearts of the separated families again” by cancelling family reunions, which she hopes will help “move toward a new Korean Peninsula of peace and joint development.”

Feb. 8, 2014: North Korea unexpectedly and confidentially proposes open-ended high-level talks. The South swiftly agrees to meet on Feb. 12. All this is only [announced](#) on Feb. 11.

Feb. 9, 2014: MOU [announces](#) that an 18-strong team from three firms – steelmaker Posco, shipper Hyundai Merchant Marine and state-owned KoRail – will inspect the DPRK’s Rajin port on Feb. 11-13. No ROK officials will accompany them. Russian Railways has invited this consortium to invest in its cross-border rail and port development JV with North Korea.

Feb. 10, 2014: ROK Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae [tells](#) the National Assembly that the Rajin rail project is allowed as a “special case.” Seoul’s ban on investment and trade with the North, except at the Kaesong IC, will continue until Pyongyang takes meaningful steps and shows remorse for sinking the *Cheonan* in 2010 (for which the DPRK denies responsibility).

Feb. 11, 2014: The two Koreas exchange delegation lists for Feb. 12 high-level talks. The South's team is led not by Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae but Kim Kyou-hyun, the newly appointed secretary general of the ROK's revamped National Security Council (NSC). The North's chief delegate is Won Tong Yon, vice director of the WPK United Front Department and a veteran negotiator with the South since the 1990s. No agenda is tabled in advance.

Feb. 12, 2014: First high-level North-South talks for seven years are [held](#) at Panmunjom. Despite starting at 10:00 and continuing through midnight, no progress is made.

Feb. 12, 2014: Pyongyang calls for the start of military exercises to be postponed until after family reunions. Seoul again rejects any such linkage.

Feb. 14, 2014: Resumed high-level talks reach a 3-point [accord](#): to end slander, promote trust and meet again. Family reunions are confirmed, though Seoul gives no ground on war games.

Feb. 17, 2014: The UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) publishes its report on DPRK human rights violations. The ROK Foreign Ministry (MOFA) [hails](#) the COI's "proactive efforts" as raising the global community's awareness of this grave situation. The DPRK for its part "categorically and totally rejects" the report, labelling the COI a "[marionette](#)" of the US.

Feb. 17, 2014: Lee Seok-ki, a lawmaker of the South's far-left Unified Progressive Party (UPP), is [jailed](#) for 12 years for plotting a campaign of pro-North sabotage in the event of a crisis on the peninsula. Several associates are also sentenced. The UPP, itself facing a possible ban as an anti-state body, calls this "a medieval witch-hunt."

Feb. 18, 2014: MOU [clarifies](#) that Seoul's backing for the COI does not breach the Koreas' agreement not to slander each other, since human rights are about universal values.

Feb. 18, 2014: MOFA [launches](#) the Korean Peninsula Club, a consultative body comprising the 21 foreign diplomatic missions in Seoul which are also accredited to the DPRK. It is also contemplating a second body for the 24 states that have embassies in both Korean capitals.

Feb. 19, 2014: Eighty-two elderly South Koreans and 56 relatives [gather](#) at Sokcho for medical checks and briefings ahead of one-off reunions with their long-lost Northern kin.

Feb. 20, 2014: South Korea's Agriculture Ministry ([MAFRA](#)) says the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) [informed](#) it of an ongoing outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in North Korea. OIE itself was only just notified by Pyongyang, over a month after the event.

Feb. 20, 2014: Blue House [announces](#) that its preferred English translation for *daebak* is now "bonanza" rather than "jackpot." Secretary of State Kerry is credited with suggesting this.

Feb. 20, 2014: Back from Rajin (see Feb. 9), three ROK companies [strike](#) a cautious note. A spokesman stresses that their Feb. 11-13 site visit was merely "a visual inspection" and that "the consortium can conduct a detailed business feasibility study only after more inspections."

Feb. 20-25, 2014: Reunions of separated families, the first such since 2010, are held without a hitch at Mount Kumgang after much clearing of heavy snow.

Feb. 21, 2014: Meeting China's Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin, who unusually has just come directly to Seoul after four days in Pyongyang, ROK Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se [calls](#) on Beijing to persuade the DPRK to take concrete steps toward denuclearization.

Feb. 21, 2014: North Korea fires four ballistic missiles with an approximate range of 150 km. Another four *Scuds* are fired on Feb. 27, this time with a 220 km range. Two 50-km rockets follow on March 3, and seven more of unknown range on March 4.

Feb. 22, 2014: KCNA belatedly [confirms](#) an FMD outbreak, the DPRK's first since 2011, on a pig farm near Pyongyang. Since this began on Jan. 8 some 3,260 pigs have been "butchered, causing lots of economic damage." However, "the disease continues spreading due to the shortages of FMD vaccines, diagnostic means and disinfection medicines."

Feb. 23, 2014: Seoul's Korea International Trade Association (KITA) [says](#) that last year North-South trade fell by 42 per cent from \$1.98 to \$1.15 billion, its lowest level for 8 years, due to the 5 month closure of the KI, which is now the only inter-Korean trade that Seoul permits. China-DPRK trade by contrast rose 10.4 percent to a record \$6.54 billion.

Feb. 24, 2014: At a rare lunch with ROK journalists covering the family reunions, DPRK officials and reporters [say](#) the North will compete in all events at this year's Asian Games, to be held in the South's Incheon city in September.

Feb. 24, 2014: MOU [says](#) Seoul has offered to help Pyongyang contain its FMD outbreak, also proposing wider talks on humanitarian aid. North Korea makes no reply, now or later.

Feb. 24, 2014: The annual US-ROK *Key Resolve* and *Foal Eagle* drills kick off as [scheduled](#).

Feb. 25, 2014: MND [says](#) that last night a KPA patrol boat crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL, the de facto west coast sea border) west of Baengnyong Island. It stayed for three hours in Southern waters, only returning North after ten warnings from ROK military broadcasts.

Feb. 25, 2014: On the first anniversary of her inauguration, President Park [says](#) she will set up a "preparatory committee for unification" as part of a wider economic revitalization plan.

Feb. 26, 2014: *Radio Free Asia* [reports](#) that on Feb. 24 North Korea asked the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for help in containing its FMD outbreak. Pyongyang remains silent, however, on Seoul's swift offer of assistance in that area.

Feb. 27, 2014: Kim Jong-uk, a South Korean missionary arrested in the North on Oct. 8, [tells](#) a press conference in Pyongyang he was sent by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) to create a dissident underground church network that would eventually topple the Kim regime, and asks for

mercy. The NIS denies any knowledge of him. The same day Seoul calls for his release, but the North refuses. (See also April 15, below.)

Feb. 28, 2014: MND [calls](#) North Korea's firing of four *Scud* missiles (its first *Scud* test since 2009) into the East Sea the previous day "a kind of provocation." For their part, Pyongyang media proclaim daily that joint US-ROK war games are a provocation.

Feb. 28, 2014: Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se [says](#) South Korea will step up efforts to gain the international community's cooperation in its push to reunify Korea, and predicts that "the coming four years will mark a watershed in building peace on the Korean Peninsula."

March 4, 2014: President Park [tells](#) her government to start talks with North Korea on letting separated families exchange letters and hold video reunions. She also calls for reunions for at least 6,000 such persons annually, since "many families do not have time to wait any longer."

March 5, 2014: South Korea's Red Cross [proposes](#) talks on March 12 about holding regular family reunions. Next day the North rejects this, saying the atmosphere is not right.

March 5, 2014: ROK Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae [says](#) the DPRK's Rason zone may be open to South Korean goods by next year "if things go smoothly." He calls this "a small but meaningful outcome." Ryoo adds that if North-South relations improve, humanitarian aid is also possible: "However, we are not in that stage yet."

March 6, 2014: US-ROK *Key Resolve* command post exercise concludes.

March 6, 2014: At a passing-out parade for new military graduates at the Gyeryongdae tri-services headquarters south of Seoul, President Park [reiterates](#) that "the decisive obstacle to economic cooperation between the South and the North is North Korea's nuclear program."

March 7, 2014: MOU [clarifies](#) that any resumption of regular tourism to Mount Kumgang would not be subject to UNSC sanctions which ban couriering bulk cash into North Korea. However on March 10 it seemingly [reverses](#) its view.

March 9, 2014: North Korea holds its parliamentary election. On March 11, the Central Election Committee [claims](#), as usual, that 99.97 percent of registered electors have voted (i.e. everyone except those unable to because they are overseas or out at sea); and that fully 100 percent have cast their ballot for the single approved candidate in each of 687 constituencies.

March 9, 2014: MOU [reports](#) that by end-2013 production at the Kaesong complex had almost recovered to pre-shutdown levels. Output in Dec. 2013 was worth \$35.29 million, compared to \$36.42 million a year earlier. [*Yonhap* actually says 352.9 and 364.2 million, but this is an obvious decimal point error.] Inter-Korean trade this January reached \$168.87 million, 94 percent of Jan. 2013's figure. DPRK employees at end-2013 numbered 52,000, compared to 53,000 in March. All 123 ROK firms except one are working normally.

March 9, 2014: MOU spokesman Kim Eui-do [says](#): “We are not considering aid [to North Korea], either through the government or international organizations.”

March 11, 2014: North Korea [warns](#) that persistent Southern “slander” – by ministers, media, and defectors (“human scum”) who send leaflets by balloon – will jeopardize future relations. Seoul says the government is not being slanderous, and it cannot control others’ free speech.

March 11, 2014: Hyundai Research Institute (HRI), think-tank of the eponymous business group, [claims](#) that if the two Koreas reunite within the next year, by 2050 Korea will have the eighth largest economy in the world with per capita income larger than Japan’s, thanks to new growth engines and an enlarged domestic market.

March 13, 2014: A joint panel on dispute arbitration at the Kaesong complex [holds](#) its first meeting. MOU calls this a positive step, though it is unclear what exactly it accomplished.

March 13, 2014: The (South) Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation (KCRC), a coalition of NGOs, abruptly [cancels](#) the grand launch ceremony for its planned campaign to send a million 20-kg bags of fertilizer to North Korea. Official pressure is suspected.

March 14, 2014: Blue House Senior Secretary Ju Chul-ki [says](#) President Park will personally chair her proposed unification preparatory committee, which will meet quarterly. Its 50-odd members will be drawn from government, civilian experts, and the private sector.

March 14, 2014: DPRK Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) demands an apology for remarks on March 11 by the head of a think-tank affiliated to the ROK’s National Intelligence Service (NIS). Yoo Seong-ok [reportedly](#) told lawmakers that Kim Jong Un is instituting a reign of terror, described the Northern leader as “[stepping] harder on the gas pedal of a car with no brakes,” and suggested that a coup, uprising and collapse were all possible.

March 16, 2014: ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff [report](#) that the KPA fired 25 short-range rockets in a day into the East Sea: its largest volley yet of several recently (see Feb. 21).

March 16, 2014: *Yonhap* [cites](#) an unspecified official as saying North Korea is demanding a 10 percent hike in basic pay for its 53,000 workers at Kaesong. The usual annual raise is 5 percent. He adds that this is unacceptable, since the KIC was shut for five months in 2013. On March 21 MOU says that KIC firms will hold wage talks in July, the normal time for this.

March 16, 2014: The South’s Hyundai Research Institute (HRI) [claims](#) that North Korean per capita income rose 4.8 per cent last year, thanks to better harvests and increased facilities investment. At an estimated \$834, the North’s figure is still dwarfed by the South’s \$23,838.

March 17, 2014: An unnamed ROK diplomat [says](#) Seoul will seek China’s support for a UN resolution on DPRK human rights violations. On March 19 President Park [urges](#) Beijing not to veto the resolution.

March 17, 2014: MOU spokesman Kim Eui-do [says](#) anyone thinking of sending fertilizer to North Korea should consult the authorities. He confirms that government has no such plans. During the “Sunshine era” (1999-2007) Seoul sent 2.55 million tons of fertilizer to Pyongyang.

March 19, 2014: ROK Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae [confirms](#) Seoul’s official view that “the timing isn’t ripe to send fertilizer to the North.” He adds that economic cooperation with Pyongyang will be limited unless the North’s nuclear issue is first addressed.

March 23, 2014: Military source [tells](#) *Yonhap* that North Korea is enhancing its infiltration capabilities by developing a new high-speed, wave piercing Very Slender Vessel (VSV) that can move special forces at over 100 kmph. This is seen as a threat to front-line islands.

March 24, 2014: MOU White Paper [says](#) that Seoul “plans to make consistent efforts to ensure that the tours to Mount Kumgang will be resumed by dispelling public concerns.”

March 24, 2014: MOU [says](#) Seoul will not lift the May 24 [2010] measures, which ban trade with and investment in North Korea except the KIC in reprisal for the sinking of the *Cheonan*, unless Pyongyang “takes responsible measures” such as admitting responsibility.

March 25, 2014: MOU [says](#) the South’s state-owned Export-Import Bank has asked North Korea to pay \$8.6 million: the first repayment on an \$80 million loan made in 2007 for raw materials to produce clothing, footwear, and soap. This fell due on March 24. Pyongyang has also never repaid loans for past food aid, nor replied to Seoul’s messages on the subject.

March 25, 2014: At Paju near the DMZ, Northern defectors and conservative activists [launch](#) 20 balloons carrying 600,000 leaflets into North Korea.

March 26, 2014: On fourth anniversary of the sinking of the ROKN corvette *Cheonan*, North Korea [test-fires](#) two medium-range *Rodong* ballistic missiles. They fly some 650 km over the East Sea. Seoul condemns this as a provocative violation of UNSC resolutions.

March 26, 2014: North’s inaptly named Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) [threatens](#) “merciless sledgehammer blows” on the South over anti-regime leaflets sent into the North by balloon. The South’s Defense Ministry (MND) clarifies that this as ever was a private action by activists, and insists that the government has not floated leaflets since the two Koreas agreed in 2004 to end cross-border propaganda activities.

March 26, 2014: South Korea [intensifies](#) quarantine efforts in border provinces after the North belatedly reports a second FMD outbreak at a pig farm, two months after the event.

March 27, 2014: The largest ever [Ssangyong](#) – the third US-ROK military exercise this year, and the peninsula’s biggest joint amphibious landing drill – begins. It [concludes](#) April 5.

March 27, 2014: ROK Navy [arrests](#) three DPRK fishermen whose boat had crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL) near Baenghyeong Island despite warning shots. It releases them six

hours later. Next day the trio holds a televised press conference, claiming that they were “assaulted with iron bats and pressured to defect to the South.”

March 28, 2014: In a major speech at Dresden Germany, President Park [offers](#) a range of proposals to North Korea including aid, people exchanges and joint economic projects. The North angrily rejects this outright, questioning Park’s motives and abusing her personally.

March 28, 2014: *Yonhap* [reports](#) that some 30 members of women’s groups in both Koreas met in Shenyang, China to discuss the ‘comfort women’ issue. The last such joint meeting was held in Seoul in 2007.

March 31, 2014: Four hours after sending a rare fax notifying the ROK’s Second Navy Fleet Command (on the west coast) of an upcoming exercise affecting border waters, KPA artillery [fire](#) some 500 shells in seven areas near the), of which 100 fall south of the line. The South responds with a 300-shell howitzer barrage, all of which land in Northern waters. MND calls the North’s shelling a premeditated provocation.

April 2, 2014: Seoul media [report](#) that a second unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) crash-landed on Baengnyong Island in the West/Yellow Sea on March 31. The first, found near Paju north of Seoul near the DMZ on March 24, had flown over and photographed the Blue House (the presidential residence and office). Both drones are suspected to have come from North Korea. ROK media [criticize](#) the authorities for lack of vigilance in face of this new security threat.

April 3, 2014: MOU [says](#) that on April 5, Arbor Day, 70 ROK officials will plant some 7,000 retusa fringe trees around the Kaesong IC.

April 4, 2014: MND [announces](#) the successful test of a new ballistic missile with a range of 310 miles (thus able to strike most of North Korea) and a 1-ton payload on March 23. On April 7 the North’s Academy of National Defense Science [calls](#) this a “grave provocation.”

April 6, 2014: MND [reports](#) a third mystery drone, up a mountain on the east coast. A local resident found it last October but only reported it now. Discarding the Canon camera, which was wet, he removed the memory chip, erased it and reused it. A new [order](#) that all unmanned aircraft of whatever size must be registered provokes protests from model plane hobbyists.

April 6, 2014: At Panmunjom South Korea [hands over](#) two bodies and three Northern sailors, rescued when a DPRK-crewed Mongolian-flagged cargo ship sank off Yeosu on the ROK’s southern coast on April 4. The ship was carrying 6,500 tons of steel from Chongjin to China. A further body is handed over on April 14 after the North confirms the man’s identity.

April 7, 2014: Hwang Joon-kook, named on April 3 as new ROK envoy to the Six-Party Talks, [meets](#) his US and Japanese counterparts in Washington to discuss how to handle the DPRK.

April 7, 2014: Despite President Park’s call in her Dresden speech for inter-Korean economic cooperation, Seoul [reaffirms](#) its ban on investment and trade with Pyongyang.

April 8, 2014: MOU [reports](#) that 360 Northern defectors reached South Korea in the first quarter of 2014, a similar figure to the same period in 2012 and 2013. A total of 1,516 came in 2013, slightly up from 1,502 in 2012. The cumulative total of defectors is now 26,124.

April 8, 2014: MOFA [says](#) Seoul will “positively consider” hosting a UN office on North Korea's human rights violations, if formally asked. MOFA denies local media reports that it has rejected any such idea as inimical to inter-Korean relations.

April 9, 2014: KCNA [reports](#) an outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza (AI, bird flu) in Pyongyang since March 21. Though tens of thousands of poultry “have either fallen dead or been culled ... the disease shows ... continues to spread.” South Korea has also had its first AI since 2011, with 10 million chickens culled.

April 9, 2014: North's SPA meets as scheduled, for a single day as usual. There are no developments directly bearing on or affecting ties with South Korea.

April 11, 2014: ROK Unification Minister Ryoo [tells](#) the National Assembly that the South “is willing to lift” sanctions on the North if the latter takes some action. He does not say what.

April 12, 2014: North's NDC [calls](#) Park Geun-hye's Dresden Declaration “a nonsensical statement made by an anti-reunification element who deceived the public with hypocrisy and deception as she offered no solution” and “irrelevant and indifferent to the improvement and development of inter-Korean relations.” Despite this, MOU [says](#) on April 14 that the South will push ahead with this plan, including “internal preparations.”

April 14, 2014: DPRK NDC [denies](#) that drones found in ROK are from the North, calling this “a replica of the *Cheonan* warship sinking case.” NDC offers to send a joint investigation team.

April 15, 2014: Seoul dismisses the North's call for a joint UAV probe, calling it a “mean psychological tactic.” China's *Xinhua* is among those carrying that [quote](#). The Blue House [adds](#): “In no case would a suspect be allowed to investigate evidence of his own crime.”

April 15, 2014: A propos detained missionary Kim Jong-uk, MOU says: “It is regrettable for the North not to meet our demand [to] grant him access to an attorney and his family, and release and repatriate him.” (See also Feb. 27.)

April 16, 2014: State-run Export-Import Bank of Korea (Eximbank), which operates the South's inter-Korean cooperation fund, [announces](#) a new research center to study, and hopefully revive, North-South economic cooperation.

April 16, 2014: MOU [says](#) a task force has inspected three sites near the border in preparing for President Park's vaunted “peace park” inside the DMZ. 40.2 billion won (\$38.4 million) is budgeted for this year.

April 18, 2014: The US-ROK *Foal Eagle* combat field training joint exercise [concludes](#).

April 21, 2014: Choi Yeon-hye, CEO of state-owned Korea Railroad Corp (KoRail), leaves for a meeting in Pyongyang of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD). OSJD mostly covers ex-communist countries, but the ROK gained associate membership in March. Choi tells reporters in Beijing en route that she will seek full membership. The same day she and her party [board](#) a Pyongyang-bound train in Beijing. This is thought to be the first time that senior ROK officials have entered the DPRK by rail.

April 23, 2014: A week after the *Sewol* ferry tragedy, North Korea finally [offers](#) condolences in a telephone message from its Red Cross chief Kang Su Rin to his Southern counterpart Yoo Jung-keun. This is outweighed by other Northern media reports which, like most in the South too, view this disaster as showing up a range of flaws in South Korean procedures or society.

April 24, 2014: Seoul [allows](#) the charity Medical Aid for Children to ship cold remedies and other medications worth 75 million won (\$227,000) to a children's hospital in Pyongyang. This brings total aid by ROK NGOs so far this year to 2 billion won.

April 25, 2014: Hours before President Obama arrives in Seoul, two North Korean patrol boats [intrude](#) a mile south of the NLL. They retreat after verbal warnings and warning shots. The ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) says the intruders may have been monitoring numerous DPRK and Chinese fishing boats in these waters, as it is the peak crab season.

April 27, 2014: DPRK media use unprecedentedly abusive language against President Park, calling her a "prostitute" and "comfort woman." On April 28 MOU [condemns](#) the North's "vulgar expletives" as immoral.

April 28, 2014: KoRail's head Choi Yeon-hye [returns](#) from the OSJD meeting in Pyongyang. No details or outcomes of her week-long sojourn in North Korea have yet been disclosed.

April 29, 2014: *Rodong Sinmun* [warns](#) the South that to seek unification without concessions in its political system would lead to war, which would "reduce South Korea to ashes and return it to the "stone age."

April 29, 2014: The KPA stages a live-fire drill in the West Sea. Again it pre-notifies South Korea, which does not fire back as none of the North's 50-odd shells fall south of the NLL.

May 2, 2014: *KCNA* again [insults](#) President Park: "All Koreans are spitting on her as she is resorting to whorish and disgusting political prostitution only after leaving her soul or chastity violated at such old age of over 60." It also refers to "her American master reminiscent of a wicked black monkey". (Even more blatant and disgusting [racism](#) against President Obama appears at length in another *KCNA* article, published in [Korean](#) only.)

May 6, 2014: *KCNA* issues a [commentary](#) headlined: "Park Geun Hye Is Wholly to Blame for Sinking of Ferry." *Inter alia* this calls her "a depraved old lady who has neither human ethics nor conscience and the worst traitor and sycophant."