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**Orwell's  
Nightmare:  
Human Rights in  
North Korea**

*Edited by  
Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., Ph.D.*



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*An Asian Studies Center Symposium*

# **Orwell's Nightmare: Human Rights in North Korea**

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# Orwell's Nightmare: Human Rights in North Korea

## Dr. Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.

When our Board of Trustees and Richard Allen, former National Security Advisor to President Reagan, and I decided a decade ago to create an Asian Studies Center within The Heritage Foundation, we placed a high priority on fostering a strong and enduring friendship with the people of Korea. Now, in noting the remarkable and positive evolution of Korean-American relations during that decade, I am tempted to take some small credit for our foresight. But I am sure that Dick would join me, as would our honored guest Congressman Stephen Solarz, in agreeing that it has been the Korean people, particularly those in South Korea, who deserve most, if not all, of the credit, for the evolution of their society and of their political system during the last decade. Their desire for prosperity and freedom spurred not only an internal evolution that is eminently worthwhile, but also one of the strongest alliances between the United States and any Asian country. I am confident that eventually the Koreans' desire to reunite their divided nation will prevail.

The difficulty, of course, is a sizable obstacle to Korean reunification. It is called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or more specifically, the 44-year old hidebound Stalinist system in North Korea, led by its one and only leader, Kim Il-sung. The "Great Leader's" domain is one of the few remaining places where an analogy to Orwell's classic book *1984* still applies. Nevertheless, Kim's isolation has forced him to make some peace gestures. It is encouraging that the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has examined some North Korean nuclear facilities. His initial peek, however, has led to more questions that must be answered, especially regarding nuclear reprocessing. Yet there is a deeper question before us today: Can we trust a regime that so oppresses its own people? And, indeed, a more fundamental question: What is the true extent of that oppression?

I have not visited North Korea, so I will leave the answers to our panelists, to whom I extend a hearty welcome: Nick Eberstadt, of the American Enterprise Institute, who has visited North Korea; Richard Kagan, a noted analyst of human rights in North Korea; and our own visiting fellow, Daryl Plunk, who on several occasions, has had some choice words for Kim Il-sung.

Perhaps the most qualified expert here this morning is Congressman Stephen Solarz, whom I am pleased to welcome back to The Heritage Foundation. I think I am safe in assuming that he is the only one here today who actually has broken bread, or shared chopsticks, with Kim Il-sung, as recently as last December. I want to emphasize personally The Heritage Foundation's appreciation for Steve's strong leadership on Asian issues in our Congress. The latest example is his superb work highlighting North Korea's nuclear threat. But now at this time I want to turn the program over to my colleague Dick Allen, the Chairman of our Asian Studies Center. Dick has known and worked with Congressman Solarz during his time at the White House, and during his various tenures in the private sector. He is better qualified to give Steve a proper introduction.

## Richard V. Allen

Thank you very much, Dr. Feulner. It is true that the Asian Studies Center, now a decade old, chose very early on to focus policy makers' attention, and public attention as well, on burning issues involving United States interests in Asia. And it can properly be said that today, ten years after the founding of our Asian Studies Center, and after a considerable record of having ad-

dressed, assessed, and evaluated the main policy issues, that the initial decision to create such a center was a wise one.

United States policy toward Asia in the last dozen years has been extraordinarily successful. Today, our focus reflects perhaps somewhat of a new tack, a new direction in the hope that the public at large, and not only in the United States, but elsewhere in the world, will become seized with what has become a burning issue, that of North Korea.

North Korea represents, in the eyes of many U.S. policy makers, the most serious threat to our national security interests in the world. And it is certainly a burning issue from the perspective of the people of the Republic of Korea. The rough equivalent of the situation, we must constantly remind ourselves, would be to have Washington threatened by missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction—nuclear weapons—based somewhere around Baltimore. To live under this threat, and to prosper, has been a major challenge for the Korean people.

But today we must focus on what Hyun Hong-choo, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the United States, has referred to as “North Korea’s systemic internal problems.” In an April 23rd speech to the Korea Forum in Columbia University’s East Asian Institute in New York, Ambassador Hyun said, “We should consider more carefully the systemic problems within North Korea that are perpetuating the current tensions on the peninsula. Can we really expect the North to change its external policies, while its internal situation remains the same? After all, the East-West confrontation did not subside until the Soviet Union, and many of its traditional allies, experienced profound internal reform. We must address North Korea’s root problems, and one of its most serious is its human rights situation.”

Hyun then added, “I recently was asked whether this approach might not necessarily complicate our efforts to promote North Korean moderation. Focusing on human rights might amount to moving the goalpost farther away, it was suggested. I don’t think it would. Attempting to improve the human rights situation in North Korea should not be considered a *new* challenge, but rather a *key* challenge.” As he went on to point out, over time, the Helsinki Agreements, in fact, accelerated the process of the disintegration of the totalitarian systems of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And so, too, could a new and re-energized focus, on questions of human rights within North Korea, be an accelerator of the demise of that regime.

Our keynote speaker this morning is a personal friend of many years standing, and a friend of the Asian Studies Center. Congressman Solarz has been in the forefront of just causes, particularly the promotion of democracy and freedom, during his tenure in Congress, and especially during his tenure as Chairman of the subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Of course, we at The Heritage Foundation have taken the liberty of dissenting from some of Congressman Solarz’s views on various public policy issues. But the bipartisan spirit in the United States demonstrates that on issues of fundamental importance to the nation, people who are wide apart on various issues can and do come together. And that is what perhaps distinguishes the American political tradition in its best sense.

Congressman Solarz is a graduate of Brandeis University, earned his master’s degree from Columbia University, and was a professor at the City University of New York. He was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1968, and twice re-elected. In 1974, Mr. Solarz was elected to the United States Congress and has been re-elected eight times. Mr. Solarz left his own distinct blueprint on a number of key United States public policy issues, including some dealing with Cambodia, Korea, Israel, the Middle East, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. During the 1991 Gulf war, Congressman Solarz exercised enormous influence, bringing along with him many of his colleagues in bi-partisan support of a resolution that permitted American forces to win that conflict. President Bush publicly congratulated him for these efforts.

Congressman Solarz has been a leader in many respects, and I have had the opportunity to work with him on many issues, as Dr. Feulner pointed out. Most recently, I had the opportunity to interview him in depth on topics related to the security situation in North Korea, and then within 48 hours found myself testifying before Congressman Solarz on the broader objectives of United States foreign policy in the post-Cold War period.

On behalf of Dr. Feulner, the Asian Studies Center, and The Heritage Foundation, Congressman Solarz, we welcome you, and thank you for taking the time to be with us today.



## **Representative Stephen Solarz**

I want to thank Dick very much for that very kind introduction. When he first invited me to speak at this seminar on human rights in North Korea, I must confess to have been somewhat surprised by the nature of the subject matter which I was being asked to address. Frankly, talking about human rights in North Korea is a little bit like talking about floods in Saudi Arabia. The topic might be suitable for a conference on trends in Asian fiction, but I do not think there is much room for serious discussion—and certainly not debate—about the human rights situation in North Korea.

Having been there twice and having tried to follow the internal politics of the country as closely as one can, in what has been characterized appropriately as the “Hermit Kingdom,” I think it can fairly and safely be said that there are no human rights in North Korea. There is certainly no freedom of the press, no freedom of assembly, no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion. And while it is difficult to compile accurate statistics, it would appear that there is an extensive Korean Gulag north of the 38th parallel, in which there may be between 100,000 and 150,000 political prisoners languishing under incarceration because of their supposed hostility towards the regime.

Furthermore, the obsessive cult of personality in North Korea hardly contributes to the establishment of a democratic environment. I remember when I went there on my first visit I was struck by the fact that there was a picture of the “Great Leader,” Kim Il-sung, in literally every room I was in except one, which was the ward for premature babies at a new maternity hospital at Pyongyang. I suppose they must have felt that the preemies were not yet in a position to appreciate the visage of the “Great Leader.”

Consequently, I think it is fair to say that North Korea has to be considered among the worst, if it is not the worst, abuser of human rights of any country in the world today. And, I rather doubt there is going to be much of an improvement in North Korea until such time as a transition takes place. Even then, I think, a fundamental improvement will undoubtedly depend on a fundamental transformation in the character of the regime.

Dick indicated that you might be interested in some of my impressions of my meeting with President Kim, when I went to Pyongyang for the second time last December. I first went there in 1980, as some of you may know. I think that I can fairly say that I am the only person in history ever to fly from South Africa to North Korea, from Pretoria to Pyongyang. A change not only of time zones, but also political cultures. I’ll never forget when I went to North Korea on my first visit, I was the subject of an editorial in a newspaper owned by the Reverend Moon in New York City in which was said something along the following lines, “The world’s most terri-

ble communist tyrant, Kim Il-sung of North Korea, opened the door to his communist kingdom just a crack last week, and in slithered New York Congressman Stephen Solarz.”

My first visit can perhaps be attributed to my innate curiosity, my second perhaps to a growing sense of masochism. Actually, I went back largely motivated by my growing concerns about the apparent existence of a very substantial, well-advanced nuclear weapons program in North Korea. I wanted to see what, if anything, could be done to deal with this threat to the peace and stability not only of the region but also of the world.

Dick asked me to give you some reflections on what President Kim was like. In describing him I would have to say that I am reminded of Hannah Arendt’s book about the trial of Adolph Eichmann in Jerusalem, which she appropriately titled *The Banality of Evil*. There is a tendency to think that evil individuals must, in their interpersonal encounters, conduct themselves in a way that makes their evil palpable.

And yet, having had the dubious privilege of personally meeting some of the leading tyrants of our time, from Kim Il-sung to Fidel Castro to Hafez al-Assad to even Saddam Hussein, I can tell you that there was some truth to the observation that Hitler was kind to children and dogs. When you meet these people in a personal setting they can be quite polite.

Kim Il-sung, for example, was always smiling. He seems personally to have a rather warm persona. He is, of course, eighty years old, but I would not, based on the way he conducted himself in his meetings with me, assume that his demise is imminent. He certainly seemed to be mentally quite alert. He clearly commanded the allegiance and obedience of his associates. At one point, when he directed a question to the Foreign Minister Kim Yung-nam, the Foreign Minister immediately leapt to his feet, in order to, I suppose, demonstrate what he felt was the appropriate respect for his President.

In any case, most of our meeting was devoted to a discussion of the nuclear issue. I was told by President Kim that, of course, the North Koreans had no intention of making nuclear weapons, although we had fairly persuasive evidence that, in fact, they were trying to do so. He told me they had no reprocessing facility, yet Hans Blix, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, seems to just have visited it. They said they have never sold *Scud* missiles to another country, although we seem to have conclusive evidence that they have. He indicated that they have no chemical weapons, although they do. And he told me I could not meet with his son, the “Dear Leader” Kim Jong-il, whom I had expressed an interest in meeting, because, he said, he does not deal with foreign affairs, only with party affairs. Shortly thereafter, the younger Kim was promoted to be head of the Armed Forces.

So much for the reputation of the “Great Leader,” whose credibility on these issues must be taken with a grain of salt. Insofar as the nuclear weapons issue is concerned, after the visit of Mr. Blix, on the surface it would appear that some progress has been made. North Korea, after years of delay, has finally signed an agreement with the IAEA which would permit the IAEA to inspect its declared nuclear facilities.

But I do not believe it would be prudent for any of us to conclude that this indicates that the problem has been solved. In the case of North Korea, we need to paraphrase the advice we received from President Reagan, who, in respect to our dealings with the former Soviet Union, suggested that we should “trust and verify.” In the case of North Korea, we should distrust and verify.

I am, in particular, concerned by the fact that although we would appear to have some fairly convincing evidence that they have had an operational nuclear reactor for several years, the North Koreans claim the reactor never was operational. This suggests the very real possibility



that they may have some spent fuel that they have secreted away somewhere where the IAEA inspectors will not find it. We also note from history that North Korea has an established tendency toward the construction of massive underground facilities. They built tunnels underneath the 38th parallel, directed toward the South. During the Korean War, as I saw for myself on my recent visit to Pyongyang, when I visited their Museum of the Revolution, they had enormous munitions stacked underground. It does not take too much imagination to realize that quite conceivably they could have nuclear facilities underground.

This underscores, in my judgment, the absolute necessity, if we are going to have any confidence in the commitments of North Korea on the nuclear issue, that we insist on the right of the IAEA to conduct challenge inspections. Such challenge inspections would apply to locations in North Korea, not just the facilities North Korea has publicly declared, but any location in the country where there may be reason to believe prohibited nuclear activities are taking place.

It would also be a mistake to rely on the IAEA alone, in light of the IAEA's dismal performance in Iraq. It turned out that the Iraqis had several clandestine nuclear weapons programs of which the IAEA was utterly unaware, and that the Iraqis even managed to divert some materials from a facility that was under IAEA inspection without the IAEA knowing about it.

South Korea has now engaged in discussions with North Korea that provide for the establishment of mutual inspections in which the South would be able to inspect facilities it wanted to look at in the North, and the North would have a comparable right to inspect facilities it wanted to in the South. Personally, I think that an agreement on these bilateral inspections would be a welcome, and possibly even a necessary, supplement to IAEA inspections, particularly if we do not have any real confidence that North Korea is not secretly pursuing its efforts to obtain nuclear weapons.

The reason that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by North Korea would be so dangerous and destabilizing is that it would, first of all, significantly increase the possibility that nuclear weapons would proliferate on the Korean Peninsula. Secondly, it also would enhance the prospects for another conventional war in Korea. For nuclear weapons might give Kim Il-sung, or his successor, a feeling of confidence that if he launched a surprise conventional attack against the South that fell short of North Korea's political and strategic objectives, the North would then be able to dictate the terms of a cease-fire, as it could threaten to use nuclear weapons if its terms were not met. Thus, nuclear weapons would serve as a kind of fail-safe insurance policy.

It would also, of course, probably end whatever hopes we might have to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. I have no doubt that, if it acquires nuclear weapons or material, North Korea would seek to solve its foreign exchange crisis by offering a variety of options to such potential purchasers of nuclear materials as Muammar Qadhafi, Saddam Hussein, or Hassemi Rafsanjani, in which at different prices they would be offered off-the-shelf weapons, or perhaps the plutonium with which to construct nuclear weapons. And once they have this nuclear technology, it will be very, very difficult, if not impossible, to stop them from exporting it.

So I think the nuclear issue does pose enormous problems, and it has to be dealt with. What should we do? In addition to the dialogue which is now underway between the North and the South, I think we have to make it very clear to North Korea, as I believe the Administration has done, that any hopes they have to improve their relations with the United States depend on the satisfactory resolution of this nuclear question.

I think our policy should be a judicious combination of carrots and sticks. Carrots, in the sense that we should hold open the possibility of normalization of diplomatic relations, and possibly even a lifting of the embargo, if this nuclear problem can be satisfactorily resolved. We should also make sure that Japan continues to insist, as it has thus far, on a satisfactory resolution of the

nuclear problem as a condition for Japanese investment in North Korea and more expansive trade and diplomatic recognition as well. But we also need some sticks, and at the top of the list, I believe, should be a declared determination to go to the Security Council to seek mandatory sanctions against North Korea in the event that this problem is not satisfactorily resolved in the near future.

Now we are approaching a moment of truth. The IAEA inspectors will be going there. We will soon know whether they are given unlimited access to sites they want to investigate, and we will have the benefit of whatever conclusions they may reach.

I do believe that at the present time this is probably the single most significant threat and challenge we face in Asia. It is going to take not only continued resolve but also perhaps nerves of steel to resolve it satisfactorily. I believe it is essential as we move toward what I hope will be a resolution of the problem that we rule out no options whatsoever, including military ones. I am not advocating the use of force, but I think it would be a serious mistake to give the leadership in Pyongyang the feeling that force would not be used under any circumstances whatsoever in order to prevent them from joining the nuclear club. So, with such a policy of carrots and sticks, I think the prospects of getting a solution to this problem would be significantly enhanced.



### **Seth Cropsey**

I also would like to thank Congressman Solarz for a very interesting and instructive talk this morning. With us today to talk about human rights in North Korea is Dr. Richard Kagan, who is going to outline the current challenges to human rights in North Korea. He is a professor of history and Chairman of the Social Science Division at Hamline University in Minnesota, and received his doctorate degree in Asian history from the University of Pennsylvania. He is also, rather notably, a co-author of the 1990 study for a human rights group, Asia Watch, "Human Rights in the People's Democratic Republic of Korea," which is a seminal study, and in addition to that, extremely important. Nick Eberstadt, an old friend of mine, will examine economic conditions in North Korea. Nick is a visiting scholar with the American Enterprise Institute from Harvard University. He has recently published a remarkable study on the population of North Korea. And he visited North Korea himself two years ago. After that, our friend Daryl Plunk, adjunct scholar here, will examine some implications for American policy that had been raised by the other panelists in their remarks. As an analyst at The Heritage Foundation and as Vice President of the Richard V. Allen Company, Daryl has been published widely, and for a long time, on Korean and American relations. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in South Korea in the late seventies. I welcome all of our panelists here today.

### **Dr. Richard Kagan**

I should start by noting that I have never been to North Korea. My wife thinks that I probably could go there, but she is not too sure they would let me come back. I have no plans at the moment for going.

Congressman Solarz's introductory comments aptly noted the problems of researching human rights in North Korea. A large part of the problem stems from the fact that many people believe that there is not really a human rights issue to study in North Korea. This is despite the fact that the North Koreans have signed with the United Nations many protocols and have made treaty commitments on the issue of human rights. Not holding them up to their own standards amounts to letting them off the hook. Also, judging their record on commitments made in the human

rights area will give us an idea of how they live up to commitments they have made in other areas, such as on the nuclear issue.

Researching human rights issues in North Korea is made more difficult by fears of retaliation. We sent the proofs of our book for Asia Watch to the Ambassador to the United Nations from North Korea. He wrote back that we must not publish this; and if we do, we will have to be responsible for the consequences. He sent us two letters along those lines, and called us several times, to insist that we not publish this “trash.”

Another obstacle to research is that there are very few North Korean defectors. There have been about 1,000 defectors from North Korea over the last thirty years or so. We should compare this with over 800,000 East Germans who fled to West Germany from the 1960s up to the 1980s. We have very few people that we can talk to, and many of them rightfully are frightened that if their name is mentioned, their family may be harmed.

But there is also a very curious political ambivalence. There are many scholars and businessmen who have worked in North Korea, primarily from Scandinavian countries, who praise North Korea's self-sufficiency. Some of these observers are sympathetic to its anti-imperialism, and of its role in the Korean War. It is seen by many as either a heroic model, or a model of a different type of socialism that deserves to exist.

These people are very unwilling to criticize North Korea owing to their ideological and personal views. An example is a Peruvian writer who was asked why he wrote a laudatory book about the DPRK. He answered, “They have done incredible things in the economy, it is the only Third World country where everyone has good health, good education, and good housing.” When he was asked what he really thought about North Korea, this gentleman replied, “It is the saddest, most miserable country I've ever been in my whole life. As a poet, it strikes bleakness into my heart.” And yet here is a man who wrote a very laudatory book about Kim Il-sung of North Korea.

Many in South Korea that I contacted while doing research for the book were unwilling to paint the picture of the North too darkly. Their general feeling was that these are our brothers; if we are too negative, we will never unify. Reunification is key. We can work out all these problems later. But if we create too much prejudice we will keep ourselves from reuniting.

Finally, difficulties are posed by the technical definition of human rights. There are many different definitions, some include being against capital punishment, others do not. What we did—and I should add that this book was done with two other people: one a Korean researcher, who was a lawyer; and one a human rights lawyer at the University of Minnesota—was to take the United Nations declaration of human rights, chapter by chapter, and compare it to North Korea's criminal code, the Constitution, and other laws that we were able to obtain. And then we compared each to specific issues, specific experiences. We could not, of course, go in there and do full-scale Gallup polls or interviews. We did interview a large number of people who traveled and worked in North Korea, diplomats, defectors, spies, and others, and brought together a composite.

Today I want to discuss several human rights issues. The first set of issues are common concerns. The second set of issues are more controversial, in that I examine education, health, women, and maternity. I want to touch on the latter issues for two reasons: one, almost anyone has been taught until recently that education, health, and the condition of women have been very good in North Korea. The result of my study shows that this is absolutely inaccurate and untrue.

First, the death penalty. The penal code has 47 provisions for a death penalty. The penal code says that you only have to show that the offense was committed, you do not have to give any

other testimony or evidence. Second, almost all criminal acts in Korea are considered political. Almost all criminal acts are considered as treason, particularly as criminal acts against the socialist system, the economic system. You can be executed due to an armed uprising, a seizure of state property, undermining state industry, and even the bizarre "violation of traffic regulations." The terminology seems to imply, or is related to, interfering with the trains and keeping them from running on time. North Korea's socialist economy is based on forced labor and a command economy; no deviations are allowed. You can also get capital punishment for homicide and for absence without leave from the army, if you are away for more than six hours, or if you fail to report on time for duty.

We lack good estimates on how many people have been executed. In the late fifties, we know of 9,000 who were listed as executed for one crime or another. I want to say that rape is not mentioned. It seems that rape is only really a crime punishable by death or even imprisonment if you come from the non-elite classes; if you are in the elite classes, rape is not much of a crime. There are also mass trials and public executions in North Korea, very similar to the ones that occurred in China. In China they are called "meetings of ten thousand people." We have accounts of these very emotional trials and public executions in North Korea as well.

Regarding torture, the laws of North Korea contain no sanction against the use of torture or inhumane treatment, despite the fact that Pyongyang signed United Nations prohibitions on torture. There are many reports of torture. Japanese sources have reported that many prisoners are given a food ration of only 100 grams a day. They say that on such a diet, you would not live for more than a year or so at most.

There are seven types of prisons in North Korea. You heard Congressman Solarz say there are 100,000 to 150,000 prisoners. There are more than that. It all depends, of course, on how you count them. Available statistics prompt me to guesstimate that there are 300,000 to 400,000 prisoners. We do not really have any names or lists, of course. In the seven types of prisons there are rehabilitation camps for minor offenders. In every city or county there are at least one or two of these camps, or more. There are about 200 or so people per camp. There are labor camps, in which among others, the children of political criminals, or the whole family suffers. When someone is convicted or put in jail, the wife can visit her husband only if she is going there to get a divorce; otherwise she cannot visit him. If she does not divorce him then she and her children are both sent away to camp, sometimes with the husband, sometimes not.

Many of these labor camps contain 500 to 2,500 people. There are also juvenile delinquent camps as well. There is a minimum of one in each of North Korea's nine provinces. There seem to be three in Pyongyang. There are also twelve maximum security prisons that we have known of up until a few years ago, and these are estimated to contain 100,000 to 150,000. Four more of these opened while Kim Jong-il was gaining more power. It seems that each prison is being filled with 5,000 to 8,000 people, whom he is apparently purging out of his government.

There are also relocation centers where people have been moved for social, economic, political, cultural reasons. We are told that there are about 70,000 of these people that have been moved during the eighties. There are also sanitariums in which mainly religious leaders are placed. And finally, one should add, there is a very small though important number of detained and abducted foreigners. Three young Japanese couples were abducted in 1978. Supposedly the men were killed and the women were used to teach Korean women Japanese language, customs, and culture. A South Korean was abducted in Sweden. A few years ago a Korean-American named Jung-en Suk, a 22-year-old Korean soldier in Germany, was abducted as well. We have reports from Swedish and other European agencies of Lebanese women being kidnapped in Japan. Japanese fishermen are kidnapped at times or held. The greatest number, of course, are the 6,375

Japanese wives of returning Japanese-Koreans. According to original statements, they would be allowed to return to Japan, but that has not been the case.

Korea is divided basically into three classes, and within those three classes, there is a total of about 64 categories. The three classes are very similar to the E Dynasty classification for the population. The first class is the Elite, which includes Kim Il-sung's family, and then about two million Elite workers. These are the top officials in the government who are loyal to Kim Il-sung, although they are not always exempt from being jailed. There are about 15 million in the Wavering class, who have very limited rights to education, travel, health, maternity, and other benefits. And, finally, about 3 million comprise the Suspect People, who have no rights, and are the workers, the drones, one might even say slave laborers.

These classes receive different treatment under the law and receive different education and rations. If you are a member of the Elite class, it does not mean you are living that well, by the way. We had three professors from Kim Il-sung University in North Korea visit us in St. Paul. They came to the Shila Restaurant, which is one of our finest Korean restaurants. And one of them had no idea what the meat menu was, even though it was in Korean. One actually licked his noodle bowl. He said it was the first time he had noodles in about three years. They literally showed the signs of starvation. They became very self-conscious after they had blurted this out and then looked at each other, pulled back, and put on their polite faces again.

We can see that these classes get different treatment in hospitals; if you have a blue card or a red card, you get different types of medical care. If you are in the same class but in a different classification you can get different treatment. We see this particularly in the Pyongyang juvenile delinquent center where five or six kids committed the same crime, but they came from different classifications and were each punished differently.

Maternity care and the health of women are major issues. Congressman Solarz went to the famous hospital that is shown to all VIPs. This hospital is primarily a showcase; many of the patients and doctors are actors and actresses, including the children. You see them not only there, but you see them later on agricultural farms, you see them in industry, you see them marching—you see the same people. We talked to some of the actresses ourselves. Very few people are allowed to use this hospital. Some of its medical equipment is highly technical, from Sweden, West Germany, East Germany, and other countries. But in checking with Swedish sources, I discovered the companies do not send any of their manuals for adjusting the medical equipment. There are no storage areas for a lot of the film and other X-ray tapes. Also, there are no proper electrical outlets. A friend of mine who went to North Korea recently took a picture of one of these machines and then got behind it and showed that it was not even plugged in. It is one of my favorite pictures. The real hospital for the Elite is a secret, private hospital for Kim Il-sung and those around him, which has never been publicly exposed.

While doing research for the Asia Watch book we asked many questions about health and we tried to ask some about nutrition. We found out from one study that women begin to menstruate anytime from about 18 years to 21 years. What this suggests is very low nutrition. Also, there is tremendous bleeding associated with childbirth, showing that the women do not have enough iron. In addition, their low nutrition is resulting in very low birth rates. Women also have high rates of TB, ulcers, tension, which also add to the low birth rate.

Pyongyang is held up as a model city, but it is not. That would imply that it was a city to be used throughout North Korea as a model for how to build cities. It is basically an arbitrary private city of Kim Il-sung's own creation. It is an expression of his own ego, his own cult views, his fetish against dirt, his fetish for cleanliness. Truck traffic is not allowed during the day, all cars

and trucks must be washed before they come through the city gates. All marketing goes on at night. And the residents are checked frequently to see if they are dirty or if they have lice.

Only the Elite live in Pyongyang. Anyone who does not look youthful or strong is taken out, except for a few Elite members or agents. This is part of a fetish for youth, part of an Asian anarchist tradition. They weed out the old and the infirm on a regular basis. This is one of the reasons why you see basically all the same type of people in Pyongyang. No private bicycles are allowed. The roadways are controlled and secured. The buildings are not marked—you do not know what a government building is with no marking on it, no address, no name. It is all anonymous, it is all private. If you go into one office building room and want to go across the aisle to another passageway or room, you will be blocked by police. You are told as a worker just how you go to work and how you come back, and what hours. There is no just wandering around, no independent travel. Also there are no independent conversations; you do not just go over to somebody's place and chat. Women complain about this a great deal; they can't talk about their children, about their feelings, about anything at all. This is a quotation from a woman: "No one ever visits other homes for talks or the like, cause he or she is exhausted after work, and moreover, there is never any time to do so."

Housewives should be especially remembered as the ones who are suffering the most in North Korea. Anything they might say about their children will be held against them or their children or their husband. In interviews we had with people who lived in apartment buildings, we asked questions like: Do you know the birth date of any of your neighbors? Do you know where your neighbors have come from? Do you ever sit down and talk with them? Have you ever been in their rooms? The answers are usually no, no, no, no, no. It is a very quick interview.

Until very recently a single road lane in Pyongyang was reserved for Kim Il-sung's car. There is one subway car that is reserved for him. Despite this being a "model city," there is also a slum area there. An Egyptian journalist and others have commented on shanty areas where the Wavering class lives. They are basically the servants who dust the streets, take out the snow, who are maids and other menials. And they live in areas which are set away from Pyongyang. Pyongyang is established basically with monuments that are very lavish. One of the most lavish monuments is on the cover of our book. Kim Il-sung's picture is here and the little people here underneath.

The plight of women, to sum up, is that the state has robbed them of their gender and motherly identity. The songs they and their children are supposed to sing are basically how they give their identity to Kim Il-sung. "I'll throw myself into the bosom of the chieftain if I were to be born and re-born a hundred times...ensconced in the bosom of the father chieftain this daughter is overwhelmed with his love." They want mothers to look at Kim Il-sung's family as their family. This is particularly true of orphans, who are brought up almost as family janissaries who only give their loyalties to Kim Il-sung in North Korea.

It is also important to discuss the issues of culture, knowledge, and education. The radios are hard-wired, you cannot get independent radio channels. Being caught with a radio, even if you're a member of the Elite, is reason to send you off to a detention center or labor camp, immediately. Kim Il-sung has literally cities of people devoted to propaganda; their whole job is to send out propaganda on Kim Il-sung. You are supposed to refer to him in everything you write, in almost every sentence, and every paragraph, and at least on every page, to state that Kim Il-sung's idea gave you this idea. Their media are filled with a tremendous amount of lies about the rest of the world. Perhaps the most dominant lie of the moment is that everybody in South Korea has AIDS. People are afraid to shake hands with each other because they will catch AIDS. I have witnessed this great fear with defectors and others that have come from North Korea.

Is change possible? I would note that the mere effort of airing the human rights issue in North Korea can help accelerate the demise of that regime. I think one of the great negative consequences of believing that there are no human rights violations in North Korea is that those people are abandoned to further isolation. There are no human rights as we know them in North Korea. It is up to us to expose this and to make people in North Korea feel welcome into the universal community of law and human relations.

### **Nicholas Eberstadt**

Professor Kagan's fascinating remarks, and his excellent study, have stimulated me to begin my presentation with a digression. My purpose is not to disagree with his findings, but perhaps instead to qualify his description of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through an experience of my own in that country. For if one reads the available literature about North Korea, and happens to have an American sensibility, a question immediately comes to mind: How can a place like this continue to function? How could it last 45 minutes, much less 45 years?

Exactly two years ago today I was visiting Pyongyang, the guest of a North Korean research institute. My hosts were very anxious to get me to visit a resort area, Mount Myohyang, a few hours away from the capital. They and I both knew the purpose of the proposed journey: Mt. Myohyang is the site of a huge museum of international gifts to Kim Il-sung. The structure is said to cover 250,000 square feet. It seems that coordinators get special points for having visitors make the pilgrimage to this spot.

Now I was not uninterested in this museum: I had seen some almost surreal pictures of it in North Korean publications. But I was on an academic visit to the DPRK, time was running short, and I had not yet obtained the information that I had come for. I was resisting their out-of-town itinerary, and I fastened on the schedule they had devised. We were supposed to go to bed at 10 p.m. in Pyongyang, to be awakened for a 1 a.m. train, then awakened again at 5 a.m. when the train reached the station, then awakened once more later in the morning at our new hotel near the gift museum.

The point of the routine, of course, was to prevent us from seeing anything by train while we were travelling. I asked if there were not any trains to Mt. Myohyang during daylight hours. My hosts affected exasperation. They told me that they wished all train schedules in their country could be set for the convenience of foreign tourists, but the world does not work like that: it is the only train and you will be on it.

Well, I thought I would let that pass. The next morning I got up early and went down to the Pyongyang train station, which was a few blocks from my hotel. I went up to the information counter, and in my broken Korean asked when the next train departed for Mt. Myohyang. The cheerful attendant told me it left at 6 p.m. "Are you sure?" I asked. "Oh yes, sir," she replied. I asked her to write it down for me, and she did. At our morning meeting, a daily session in which we discussed the plans for the rest of the day, I told my hosts that if we had to go to Mt. Myohyang, I would like to take the six o'clock train; it was much more convenient and I'd also be able to see a lot more of the countryside. The long and the short of it was that the trip to Mt. Myohyang was scrapped.

I tell this story only to emphasize a single point. If North Korea is a monolithic society, it is a monolith with cracks—cracks large enough for an easily identifiable Westerner like myself to slip through. My little conversation in the train station clearly was not part of the program; in fact, it served to thwart my hosts from what was clearly their objective. Ask yourselves whether a very conspicuous foreigner could have a similar experience in Stalin's Moscow in 1947. In all likelihood, some helpful volunteer would have emerged from a crowd to translate for me, or the frightened woman behind the information counter would have sent me back to the hotel to in-

quire there about schedules. North Korea may be a police state, but it is also a state inhabited by human beings, and the actual operation of that police state is constrained by this obvious, but limiting, fact.

Now, on to my presentation. I was asked to talk about economic and social rights in the DPRK, but I must confess that I am wary about the very notion of “economic rights.” This seems to me to be a problematic, indeed a mischievous, concept. It may be used to suggest that there are material preconditions, or substitutes, for liberty. From this false premise can be drawn everything from the unending demands for “development assistance” in the so-called North-South dialogue to the programmatic Leninist assault against liberal societies on the grounds that they lack “substantive right,” and thus legitimacy.

What I would like to talk about instead is something slightly different: North Korea’s economic and social conditions, and prospects for the future.

I should start with a question: what do we know, and how do we know it? I won’t repeat any of the ground that Professor Kagan has already covered. I should emphasize, though, that reliable facts and figures on North Korea are extremely scarce—even for those in Pyongyang who are supposed to collect and process them. I had a chance to meet some of the DPRK’s official statisticians while I was there. They were quite open: they apologetically referred to their own data as “rubber statistics.” They said this phrase was well known and often used in their circles. And, of course, under a government like North Korea’s, the more politically important a number is considered, the greater will be the pressure to “adjust” it favorably. I was given permission to work with population data. To the government, these seemed arcane—almost completely irrelevant and unimportant from a political standpoint. As a consequence, they appear to have been left almost completely “unadjusted.” These figures turn out to be very important in helping us glimpse this very closed society. I will rely heavily on these figures in my presentation.

## **Economic Conditions**

Even within the “distorted world of Soviet-type economies,” to borrow Jan Winiński’s phrase, North Korea’s economic structure looks extraordinarily distorted. There really has not been much work in the West on the North Korean economy, but one of the best studies to date was published a few years ago in Japan. Fujio Goto attempted to estimate North Korea’s gross domestic product for the late 1950s. (Due to the statistical blackout in force since the early 1960s, that was the most recent period for which he could attempt such work.) Though his study contained a number of important assumptions, Goto ingeniously, and I think quite expertly, came up with estimates of the composition of the North Korean product by final demand. By his reckoning, personal consumption accounted for an extraordinarily low share of North Korean GDP in the late 1950s: less than 35 percent of GDP on what economists call an “adjusted factor cost basis.” Just to put that figure in perspective: it would have been over twenty points lower than corresponding estimates for the Soviet Union for the same period.

Information on the North Korean economy over the past generation is scanty, to say the least. Nevertheless, what information we have suggests that the share of personal consumption in the North Korean economy may be smaller today than it was in the late 1950s. There is considerable uncertainty about the actual level of wages in the DPRK today: most of the figures we hear about are from showpiece factories or cooperatives. But even if we take what may prove to be a high figure as our presumed average, wages and salaries today would account for no more than 15 percent to 20 percent of the DPRK’s national output. Even for a socialist economy, this would be an amazingly—almost unbelievably—low ratio. It would indicate that the motion of the North Ko-



rean economy has been almost completely separated from the articulated preferences of the individuals who live under it.

How does the population subsist if money is largely an irrelevant commodity? We know there is an underground economy in North Korea, largely based on barter, but the size of this sector is impossible to determine at this time. But it is equally clear that the state's role in determining any given family's living standard is enormous. Even as Pyongyang has been delimiting the role of consumer choice and purchasing power, it has been increasingly resorting to the direct provision of goods and services to the population at large. Basic foodstuffs, housing, and even clothing are among the items that are made available in rationed quantities at nominal charge, or offered annually as "gifts" from the regime. By Pyongyang's reckoning, over half of the goods and services consumed annually by households come through the so-called social consumption channel. Though this point probably need not be emphasized, that is a far higher proportion than in other Marxist-Leninist economies in the late 1980s. Indeed, even before the era of *glasnost*, Soviet and Eastern European analysts regularly expressed their amazement and dismay over the structure of the North Korean economy. Steeped though they were in the culture of the Leninist war economy, the transformations wrought upon the economy of the DPRK struck many of them as little short of astonishing.

## Social Conditions

I want to talk a moment or two about social conditions in the DPRK. Here some of the new numbers from my recent study can be informative.

**Family Planning.** Let us talk about family planning for a minute. North Korea's birth rate plummeted between the late 1960s and the early 1980s; in fact, by our estimates, the "total fertility rate"—the average number of children per woman over the childbearing years—dropped by about half between 1970 and 1976.

In the early 1970s China's birth rate also plummeted. We now know there was an unannounced but far-reaching anti-natal population control campaign in China at the time. Has there been a similar effort in North Korea? If one asks North Korean defectors, the answer is an equally strong and consistent "yes." Some years back I talked to a representative of a pro-DPRK group of ethnic Koreans in Japan about this matter. He was quite familiar with conditions in North Korea. He told me that there was indeed a long-standing anti-natal population policy in the North, that a "two-child norm" was being implemented, and that a "one-child only" option was being encouraged.

China's population policy, of course, has been associated with widespread abuse of human beings and their liberties. We have virtually no information about the particulars of North Korea's population policy. It is shrouded in mystery: it has, to my knowledge, never even been mentioned in the North Korean press. (The closest thing one can find are some offhand remarks by Kim Il-sung to the effect that it would be desirable if the population's growth rate were a little slower.) How, and why, would one have a long-standing population campaign that did not utilize the government's highly developed propaganda and "communication" organs? Moreover, the motivations behind such a campaign would not be entirely obvious. Unlike China, North Korea is said to be a labor-scarce economy: if so, why further limit the future labor force?

**Health.** Professor Kagan has already talked a bit about the health service system in North Korea. The numbers I used in my study speak to some extent to the system's results. I must confess that these numbers surprised us. After making appropriate adjustments, taking account of inconsistencies and so forth, it looks as if levels of life expectancy at birth in North and South Korea have been more or less the same from the early 1960s through the late 1980s. Despite the

radical differences in their health systems, and in their patterns of economic performance over the past generation, life expectancy outcomes in the two Koreas over the past generation look all but indistinguishable.

How does one explain this? One partial answer may be that death rates provide an incomplete (albeit terribly important) indication of a population's health conditions. We know of poor societies where life spans are quite long, but where nutrition is poor and illness is endemic: Sri Lanka is one that comes to mind immediately. It also seems to be the case that health levels in South Korea today are unusually low, considering the country's economic performance. Despite their huge differences in productivity, for example, life expectancies for adult males today are about the same in South Korea and Bangladesh.

**Employment.** It is a commonplace that North Korea's mobilization of its population is far reaching and extraordinarily thorough. We have attempted in our study to reconstruct labor force participation rates for North Korea's adult population. Our results indicate a level of mobilization fully twenty points higher than South Korea's. Even by the demanding standards of Leninist regimes, North Korea's labor force participation rates look high—considerably higher than those of the U.S.S.R., and far higher than those of Eastern Europe. These estimates, moreover, entirely exclude North Korea's enormous and highly mobilized military force.

**The Military.** It is now possible to estimate the size of the North Korean military from official North Korean figures. One can do so thanks to a quirk in the presentation of their population numbers. Up through 1970, figures are given for total male population; thereafter, the totals are for civilian male population. If you reconstruct the total male population, and subtract the civilian male population, you are left with a non-civilian male total—call them “missing males.”

In the very early 1970s, a path breaking study on North Korea described the place as “perhaps the most militarized society on earth.” At the time, it was thought that the Korean People's Army (KPA), North Korea's military, had about 400,000 persons in it. By the late 1980s, North Korea's “missing male” contingent was over three times larger than that. Our estimates indicated that this non-civilian male group could not be smaller than 1.25 million persons by 1987; it might even have been somewhat larger.

Evidently, North Korea has not only engaged in a monumental buildup over the past two decades, but has entered into something like hyper-militarization. If we take this “missing male” contingent as a good proxy for military manpower—and I think we can—the ratio of soldiers to national population in North Korea would be higher than in Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the Desert Storm operation. As best we can make out, the ratio of soldiers to total population in North Korea today would be about the same as it was in the United States in 1943—a time, remember, when we were mobilized for total war.

**Political Prisoners.** Like all Communist regimes, North Korea maintains a system of camps for those who have committed “political crimes.” It is said that these camps today contain as many as 150,000 people. That figure is widely accepted by Western specialists on North Korea, and by international human rights circles, but I have no way of checking it.

If the figure is correct, it certainly speaks to the severity of police state policies in North Korea today. But once again, it is important to draw a distinction between the nature of the North Korean regime as it now operates and that of Stalin's Russia. In the 1940s, many millions of persons were incarcerated in the Soviet Gulag at any given time: their total easily accounted for 3 percent to 5 percent of the entire Soviet population at the time. By contrast, if the figure for North Korea is accurate, that 150,000 would comprise rather less than 1 percent of the country's total population.

The distinction speaks not to Pyongyang's benevolence, but rather to its practicality. Kim Il-sung exercises a totalitarian mastery over his society, and relies upon terror to do so—but he evidently implements terror more efficiently.

Such efficiency or practicality is also underscored by the fate of cadres at the highest reaches of the regime. The Chief of the KPA General Staff, for example, is currently a man named Choe Kwang. He has had an unusual career. In the late 1960s he was accused of having conspired against Kim Il-sung. He was tried for treason, and disappeared. Some years later, he resurfaced in a civilian post. He resumed his rise, and he is now perhaps in the most important post in North Korea's most important institution.

I submit that a career like that would have been absolutely impossible in Stalin's Russia. To be tried for treason against "the Leader" in Stalin's Russia was to face certain penalties rather more severe than career disruption. Yet in North Korea, Choe Kwang has not only survived, but evidently prospered. Despite the fury and savageness in its official rhetoric, this regime is apparently able to put the disfavored "on ice": to shelve them in case they should prove useful later on. This is not mercy, but rather cold calculation, and it may help us understand the performance of the North Korean state over these past four decades. The Communist states of the Warsaw Pact, remember, are now only history, but the DPRK endures.

### **Prospects For The Future**

Yet however successful North Korea may consider itself to have been in the period since partition, the regime's future is bleak. Conditions have been getting steadily worse over the past few years in both the international political and the domestic economic arenas, and it is hard to imagine how the current government would be able to turn things around.

Even North Korea's own highly politicized economic figures admit to a downturn in the economy since 1989. To my knowledge, this is the first downturn that has been acknowledged in the forty years since the Korean War. Official figures say the drop in national income per capita was 2 percent to 3 percent; one can only guess what the true drop was.

From an economic standpoint, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has been a catastrophe for North Korea. In the late 1980s, the Warsaw Pact countries accounted for well over half of North Korea's foreign trade: they bought essentially uncompetitive North Korean products, and supplied the DPRK with things that kept its industrial infrastructure functioning. They also provided the DPRK with concessional aid. These arrangements have come to an end, and there is no immediate replacement for them.

For many years there was talk in South Korea, much of it political or motivated by wishful thinking, about hunger in the North: harvest failures, starvation, and the like. Still, there is talk today about food shortages and privation in North Korea, but reports are coming from so many different sources that it does not seem plausible to me to ascribe them all to some tightly organized South Korean conspiracy. There are simply too many reporters and delegations from too many countries describing conditions in too many different parts of North Korea.

Even though harvests are apparently faltering and the economy is apparently stumbling badly, expenditures on showpiece projects continue to be massive. Pyongyang's ongoing face-lift continues; officials state they spent \$4 billion alone on preparations for the 1989 Youth Festival (their answer to the Seoul Olympics). Even more is said to have been spent on the West Sea Lock Gate near Nampo, a project which supposedly will aid in land reclamation. Add to such ventures the vast military burden that must be financed, and one gets a sense of what the North Korean economy is facing.

In the past, North Korea has pursued what economists call an “extensive” policy: mobilizing more labor and more capital to get more growth. Today, there really is nothing left to mobilize. It is hard to see how labor force participation rates could get much higher. Mobilizing more capital would mean cutting consumption or military spending, but the former has already been squeezed, and the latter seems to be inviolate.

The regime might find an escape from its dilemma by embarking on genuine economic liberalization—radical liberalization. To date, there has been talk—careful talk, to be sure—about economic reform by a variety of North Korean officials. Some Western analysts see North Korea on the verge of a partial or even a major economic reform. I have my doubts.

Noises about economic reform have been emanating from official circles in North Korea for more than a decade. But to date the talk has been just that—talk. Even the boldest steps that have actually been taken over the past ten years (the Joint Venture Law, for example) barely qualify as half-measures.

Despite the all but certain ruin that will eventually result from Pyongyang’s present economic course, there is reason to expect its continuation (with essentially minor emendations). The current leadership in Pyongyang views economic liberalization as a matter of incalculable political risk. And from Pyongyang’s vantage point, such an assessment is hardly irrational. Eastern Europe’s “reform socialism,” after all, was followed by the “revolutions of 1989.” The Soviet Union embraced *perestroika*, and now it is no longer the Soviet Union; now it is just a jumble of non-Communist republics. China may offer Pyongyang its most attractive model—something like tactical economic reform under strict political control—but even this freedom led to the Tiananmen incident in the capital. In the Korean context—that divided Peninsula, with the vibrant and dynamic society to the South always pulling the North toward its gravitational field—mass demonstrations against the regime in Pyongyang would have incalculable consequences. Such a prospect appears to be utterly unacceptable to North Korea’s leadership, and they seem eager to avoid doing anything that might risk it.

In short, Kim Il-sung and his circle seem to have accepted the prospect of long-term economic decline of their kingdom as the price for continuing to exercise their control over it. Political and economic change may await his successors, but it is not clear that those forces can remain under the control of his legacies.

## Daryl Plunk

It is a great pleasure to sit on this panel with two colleagues who have done some fascinating and ground breaking research into the situation north of the DMZ. I would like to conclude our panel discussion by giving my broad brush impressions of the environment, on and around the Korean Peninsula, and also by saying a few things about U.S. policy.

Clearly Pyongyang’s international environment has changed dramatically in the past few years. We all understand that, simply put, it has very few friends and allies left. Nearly all the former communist states now recognize the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea and many of them are clamoring for economic exchanges and/or assistance from Seoul. While the DPRK pays significant lip service to the North, Beijing as well is quietly nurturing trade, cultural, and unofficial political relations with Seoul. There is a multi-billion dollar trade partnership between South Korea and China. Sooner or later, I think, China will eventually be moved to seal official ties with Seoul. Over the past few years, even trade between North and South Korea has become a regular feature, with two-way annual trade approaching the \$200 million mark. Stung by its worsening economy, the strains mentioned by Nick, and the loss of financial concessions from the Soviet Union, it appears that the North is trying to attract some trade and investment. The

leadership is even considering a free trade zone along its border with China and Russia. Pyongyang suffered a stunning defeat last year when it was forced to back off from its long-held objection to Korean membership in the United Nations, and today both North and South are full-fledged members of that body.

Under increasing world pressure and no doubt in an effort to repair its extremely tarnished international image, the North opened high-level dialogue with South Korea in late 1990. Progress has been slow and the painstaking talks have, for the most part, simply produced a proliferation of negotiation bureaucracy. Joint committees meet and split hairs about various issues related to political, military, and economic relations between the two sides. Still in recent weeks we have seen progress, or at least the signs of progress, on the horizon. For only the second time since the Peninsula was divided, the two sides will exchange two groups of separated relatives on August 15, the anniversary of liberation from Japanese colonial rule.

Then, of course, there is the nuclear issue to which Congressman Solarz referred. Clearly feeling the heat of coordinated U.S.-ROK moves late last year to confirm there are no nuclear weapons stored in South Korea, Pyongyang has been forced to adjust, or perhaps even move toward abandoning, its efforts to build nuclear bombs. The North has finally allowed the IAEA to begin inspections and has pledged to allow for mutual inter-Korean inspections as well. The verdict is still out on the North's true intentions though. Therein lies the central challenge for U.S. policy makers, at least for the foreseeable future. More about that in a moment.

Finally, Pyongyang is calling loudly for improved relations with its main adversaries, particularly the United States and Japan. In an effort to soften that ground, the North recently has allowed an unprecedented number of foreign visitors into its lair, and Nick was one of them. (I have never been to North Korea, by the way, except to visit the DMZ. I guess the invitation to The Heritage Foundation has been lost in the mail. Perhaps it will get here eventually.) Journalists, businessmen, academics, and others have been visiting the North with increasing frequency. Incidentally, these public relations efforts by the North have had some dubious results. Extensive American media coverage was focused on the "Great Leader's" eightieth birthday in April, as well as on the demise of some 700 snapping turtles whose blood was presented to Kim Il-sung as some sort of health food concoction. I do not think the North Koreans realized that this was not a particularly favorable story to promote.

So, like it or not, the North has been forced to make some changes in its external relations with Seoul, Tokyo, Washington, and the rest of the world, and that is a significant development. I think we could conclude that perhaps there have been more changes in the past few years than we have seen in a long time on the Korean Peninsula.

Does this bode well for internal change in the DPRK? I think that at least for now the answer appears to be no. Recent events in other communist nations, as Nick has just mentioned, highlighted the importance of information, communication, and the media. For years the vast majority of East Germans, for instance, were able to receive West German television, making them acutely aware of the fruits of democracy and capitalism. This is not the case in North Korea. It appears that the average North Korean has little access to information about the outside world, and only a few privileged government officials and businessmen are allowed to travel abroad. The small number of North Korean university students who once studied abroad have been recalled. So truth, that important catalyst of reform, is in very short supply in the North. Now I would agree that there is some degree of popular opposition to the Kim dynasty's rule, but it appears that the threat from the malcontents is adequately contained by Kim's state police apparatus.

Even in its external relationship, containment is a key strategy of the North. Under pressure from world events, the North has tried to minimize potential damage by adjusting its policies in areas that can be strictly contained or controlled by the regime. Congressman Solarz has referred to this behavior by the North as the "illusion of cooperation." Expanded trade with the South and the rest of the world is a goal of the North, for instance. Yet the regime can easily explain away that activity to its citizens. I have heard that "Made in the ROK" labels have been replaced with "Made in China" labels, for example. The Tumen River free trade zone discussions are ongoing, and perhaps that concept will become a reality. But it could be shrouded in secrecy up along the extreme northeastern border of the country. Foreigners are allowed into North Korea, but prohibited from wandering freely or having unsupervised contact with citizens. The average man on the street in Pyongyang was told that the foreigners who came to the city to participate in Kim's birthday gala were there because the entire world was celebrating the event. On the North-South dialogue front, the Kim regime obviously has a monopoly on communicating official news about those talks to its people. Regarding military matters, for instance, the North Korean government is taking credit for easing the military threat from the United States by extracting from Washington and from Seoul non-nuclear pledges and a promise to postpone our Team Spirit military exercises. This is the kind of spin the North Koreans put on the North-South dialogue. So one can make the case that despite some significant changes in the North's policies, these adjustments have been made in areas that are insulated from direct public scrutiny. Prospects for substantial openings of the North's society seem doubtful. Lifting the lid on the free exchange of people or information crossing the border would quickly reveal to the North Koreans that they have been deceived and that they do not live in a "paradise on earth," as it is called by the government.

Still, a leadership change is in progress in the North. No one can predict its outcome. Transition to a post-Kim era may not be a stable process. Internal change will come eventually, I believe, but the problem is it could take years or it could begin tomorrow. In any case, I agree with Congressman Solarz when he says that reunification of Korea will not be achieved until there is a change in North Korea, whether evolutionary or revolutionary. In the meantime a concerted united front among the ROK, Japan, and the U.S. must and should be maintained. Just as the demise of Communism and Seoul's success in forging relations with former socialist states have forced the North to change some of its policies, so, too, has the parallel cooperation and coordination among Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington. The U.S. should continue what Congressman Solarz called the carrot and stick approach regarding North Korean policy. The nuclear threat from North Korea correctly remains an essential concern of the Administration. Chung Yung finally has allowed for initial inspections to begin, but the results are not reassuring. It is clear that the North has now produced an unknown amount of enriched nuclear fuel, and we have yet to ascertain whether there are significant quantities stored away somewhere or whether there are ongoing reprocessing activities hidden from view in some of the underground caverns that Congressman Solarz referred to.

Until this matter is fully resolved, the U.S. should refrain from substantially upgrading economic or political ties with North Korea. It keeps the lines of communication open, however, to avoid any miscalculation by the North Koreans of U.S. intentions. The Bush Administration wisely has maintained regular diplomatic contacts in neutral settings with ranking DPRK officials. Now that it is free from focusing on potential superpower confrontation related to the Korean Peninsula, it is also time for the U.S. and other nations to focus more directly on human rights abuses in the North. We know now that our constant harping on human rights has made a difference in some areas of the world. The Helsinki Accords, of course, obviously had an impact on the Eastern Bloc. On the other side of the fence, there have been changes in places like South Africa, the Philippines, and elsewhere. Consider South Korea, where until recently human rights

was a key concern of the U.S. government. I was struck today by an article in the *Washington Post* which proclaims that after decades of authoritarianism, “South Korea has turned itself into a democracy where no one but the voter can determine who will be elected president.” Well, I think it is North Korea’s turn to feel the heat. U.S. government officials should be more vocal in their support for reform and openness in the North. The nuclear issue has virtually monopolized the attention of our policy makers, and it is time to expand that focus a bit.

In addition to official government efforts, private sector exchanges are very important. It may soon be time to consider easing or even ending restrictions placed upon doing business in North Korea, depending on the outcome of the nuclear issue. As more and more journalists, academics, and businessmen visit the North, the lid will gradually be loosened. Forums such as this one are important as well in raising consciousness among Americans, their government representatives, and the media. Institutes and think tanks that once focused considerable attention on the ROK’s authoritarian past should consider looking into the plight of the people north of the DMZ.

I will conclude by quoting Ambassador Hyun Hong-choo, who recently had some interesting things to say about human rights in North Korea. He pointed out that it is a “root problem,” not a peripheral one. Can we expect, he asked, for the North to substantially change its external policies while its internal system remains the same? He concluded that we cannot expect this, and I agree with him.

