

After Détente: The Korean Peninsula 1973-1976

A Critical Oral History Conference



For the 31 October-1 November 2011 Conference Organized By:



Organized with Generous Financial Support from:



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After Détente: The Korean Peninsula, 1973-1976

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Dear Conference Participant:

We are pleased to present you this “Briefing Book,” which is intended to facilitate and enrich the discussion at our upcoming conference on inter-Korean, U.S.-ROK, and DPRK-Communist bloc relations from 1973 to 1976, to be held at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. on October 31 and November 1, 2011. The volume consists of select U.S., South Korean, (East) German, Bulgarian, Romanian, Albanian, and Hungarian documents that we hope will refresh memories, provide context, and help anchor the conversation in the facts.

This collection, compiled by the North Korea International Documentation Project with the help of several participants, is by no means comprehensive, just as the conference will not be the final word on the events of 1973-1976. However, in selecting the materials, the editors sought to include some of the most important materials available and made a substantial effort to mine relevant official archives and presidential libraries. Our goal was to emphasize materials that are either newly available or previously unpublished but at the same time incorporate other records that offer important insights into the crises. The briefing book is organized chronologically and separated by year, starting with January 1973 and ending with December 1976.

In compiling these documents, the editors received much appreciated cooperation and assistance from scholars, archivists, and other colleagues from several countries, reflecting the multinational scope of this project. We are particularly grateful to Shin Jongdae for contributing documents from the South Korean diplomatic and Presidential archives; Eliza Gheorghe for both obtaining and translating documents from the Romanian National Archives; Bernd Schaefer for contributing documents from the Bundesarchiv in Germany; Balazs Szalontai for contributing documents from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry Archive; and Charles Kraus and Gregg Brazinsky for contributing documents from the Ford Library. We would also like to recognize the team of NKIDP interns and junior scholars who worked diligently to make sure the briefing book was ready for dissemination: Chuck Kraus, Ria Chae, Robert Lauler, Chaeryung Lee, Taylor Sutton, Debbie Kye, Caryn Fisher, Esther Im, and Yong Kwon. For their sage advice, we would also like to thank Ambassador Sun Jounyung, Charles Armstrong, and Gregg Brazinsky.

We are especially grateful to the Korea Foundation, whose support made this conference possible. Last but not least, we would like to thank Jane Harman, President and Director of the Woodrow Wilson Center and Dr. Michael Van Dusen, Deputy Director, for providing Center resources for this conference.

Christian F. Ostermann
James F. Person

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Chronology of Events

1972

- 6 April** U.S. President Nixon called upon the NSC Interdepartmental Group for East Asia to complete National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 154, a review of U.S. policy toward the Korean Peninsula.
- May** A delegation of scientists from the ROK led by Choe Hyeongseob visited France to conclude an agreement for the sale of nuclear reprocessing and fuel fabrication technology.
- 3 August** ROK President Park Chung Hee, seeking to rescue failing *chaebol* enterprises, announced the Emergency Decree for Stabilization and Growth of the Economy (경제안정과 성장에 관한 긴급명령).
- September** The Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) assembled “The Promotional Plan for the Aerospace Industry,” which focused on developing ballistic missiles
- October** The Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) began negotiations with the French Atomic Energy Commission for the transfer of reprocessing technology.
- 10 October** ROK President Park Chung Hee, seeking to augment presidential power and remove term limits, announced the implementation of the Yushin Constitution.
- 24 November** The ROK and the U.S. signed the “Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning the Civil Uses of Atomic Energy,” which took effect on 4 March 1973.
- 22 December** The Sixth Central Committee Plenum of the Fifth Party Congress of the Korean Workers’ Party (KWP) opened in Pyongyang. The Central Committee discussed the Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The Plenum concluded on 15 December.
- 25 December** The First Session of the Fifth DPRK Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) opened in Pyongyang. The Assembly passed the Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea into law. The Session concluded on 28 December.

1973

- 12 January** During the New Year Press Conference, ROK President Park Chung-hee announced the Heavy and Chemical Industrialization (HCI) Program (중화학공업화 선언) to promote national defense and economic development.
- February** ROK President Park Chung Hee approved the “Basic Plan for Developing Ballistic Missiles.”
- 22 February** ROK Foreign Minister Kim Yong-shik called upon U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers to discuss U.S. policy vis-à-vis the DPRK
- 27 February** The ROK held parliamentary elections for the National Assembly. The Democratic Republican Party (DRP) defeated the New Democratic Party (NDP) and wins 73 of the 146 seats.
- March** ROK President Park Chung Hee established the Defense Industry Bureau inside of the Ministry of National Defense to coordinate the development of the ROK’s defense industries.
- April** The ROK Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced the Long-Term Plan for the Promotion of the Automobile Industry (장기자동차공업진흥계획).
- The Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) negotiated a deal with Canada for the construction of heavy-water reactor, CANDU, which enabled the ROK to acquire spent fuel for the production of plutonium.
- 5 April** The Second Session of the Fifth DPRK SPA opened in Pyongyang. The Assembly discussed peaceful unification without foreign interference, compulsory education, and the national budgets for 1972 and 1973. The Session concluded on 10 April.
- 6 April** The Korean Workers’ Party Central Committee made public a "Letter to the U.S. Congress," which called for the removal of U.S. troops from the ROK, the dismantling of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), the halting of military aid and weapons to the ROK, and the discontinuation of 'war games' between the U.S. and the ROK.
- 15 April** Kim Hyeong-uk former Director of the KCIA, began his self-imposed exile in the United States. Kim would later testify before

- the U.S. House of Representatives during the “Koreagate” scandal.
- 19 April** The Ninth Session of the Soviet-Korean Intergovernmental Consultative Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Issues began in Moscow and concluded on 23 April with the signing of a protocol agreement.
- 28 April** Under orders from ROK President Park Chung Hee, Kang Changseong brought charges of subversion against Park’s former ally, Yoon Pil-yong, Commander of the Capital Garrison Command (CGC), and eleven other officers of the Hanahoe group.
- 15 June** The Interagency Steering Group on Korean Force Modernization completed the “Reexamination of the Korean Force Modernization Plan.” On the same day, the U.S. Senior Review Group (SRG) Meeting discussed NSSM 154 (“U.S. Policy toward Korea”) and the Korean Force Modernization Program.
- 23 June** ROK President Park Chung Hee announced the Seven-Point Declaration for Peace and Unification (6·23 평화통일외교정책 선언). On the same day, DPRK President Kim Il Sung announced his own Five-Point Policy for National Reunification (조국통일 5 대강령).
- 30 June** The United Nations (UN) granted the DPRK permanent observer status.
- July** Fifteen overseas nuclear scientists return to the ROK to join KAERI.
- 10 July** Sixth Annual ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM; 한미국방안보협의회) began in Seoul and concluded on 11 July.
- 18 July** U.S. President Nixon approved interim guidance for United States’ policy toward the Korean Peninsula.
- 21 July** Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and Chairman of the National United Front of Kampuchea, arrived in the DPRK for his seventh visit. He remained in the DPRK until 12 August.
- 25 July** U.S. Presidential Cabinet completed National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 227, a review of the “Korean Force Modernization Plan.”

- 27 July** President Nixon issued his directives for military assistance to South Korea based on the conclusions of NSDM 227.
- August** The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began an investigation of illegal KCIA activities in the United States. The Department of State also lodged complaints with the Korean Embassy, leading to the withdrawal of the KCIA Station Chief from the United States.
- 1 August** Marien N’gouabi, President of the People’s Republic of Congo, arrived in Pyongyang and met with DPRK President Kim Il Sung. He departed on 3 August.
- 8 August** The KCIA abducted ROK opposition leader Kim Dae-jung in Tokyo, Japan. He was released on 13 August.
- The Second Session of the Polish-Korean Intergovernmental Scientific and Technical Subcommittee opened in Pyongyang and concluded on 13 August.
- 24 August** U.S. Ambassador Habib informed ROK President Park Chung Hee of the United States’ intent to contact the DPRK through the U.S. Liaison Office (USLO) in Beijing.
- 28 August** The DPRK cancelled a scheduled meeting of the North-South Dialogue through the Red Cross, citing Kim Dae-jung’s kidnapping as a pretext for the cancellation.
- September** The ROK and the U.S. signed an agreement to transfer war materiel from departing U.S. troops to the ROK armed forces.
- 4 September** The Seventh Central Committee Plenum of the Fifth Party Congress of the KWP opened in Pyongyang. The Central Committee discussed the Three Revolutions of Ideology, Technology, and Culture, problems among local party institutions and factory and industrial workers, and the Tae-an Work System. The Plenum concluded on 17 September.
- 18 September** Chile severed its diplomatic relations with the DPRK.
- 23 October** A DPRK gunboat and torpedo boat crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL). By the end of 1973, DPRK vessels had crossed the NLL on forty-three different occasions.
- 28 October** Todor Zhivkov, Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party, arrived in Pyongyang with a Party and government delegation. On

- 30 October, DPRK President Kim Il Sung held an extensive conversation with Zhivkov.
- 16 November** ROK President Park Chung Hee met with U.S. Secretary of Henry Kissinger at the Blue House in Seoul.
- 30 November** The Tenth Session of the Soviet-Korean Intergovernmental Consultative Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Issues opened in Pyongyang and concluded with the signing of a protocol agreement.
- 1 December** The DPRK rejected the NLL and claimed ownership of the Northwest Islands (NWI) at the 346th meeting of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC).
- 3 December** Following the kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung, ROK President Park Chung-hee dismissed Lee Hurak as the Director of the KCIA.
- 4 December** Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) formulated the United States' response to DPRK violations of the NLL.
- The ROK Economic Planning Boards implemented the "Price Stabilization Measure to Counter the Oil Crisis" (유류 파동에 대처하기 위한 물가 안정 대책)
- 11 December** Three DPRK torpedo boats attempted to intimidate United Nations Command (UNC) vessels escorting a routine supply ship to Baengnyeong Island near the NLL. DPRK vessels continued to intrude upon the NWI over the next several days.
- 14 December** The National Investment Fund (NIF) (국민투자기금법) is passed into law by the ROK National Assembly.
- 24 December** The UNC accused the DPRK of violating the Armistice Agreement at the 347th MAC.
- The Law for Promoting the Development of Industrial Complexes (산업기지 개발촉진법) is passed by the ROK National Assembly.
- 31 December** U.S. President Nixon ordered the completion of NSSM 190, a review of U.S. and ROK diplomatic initiatives related to the security of the Korean Peninsula.

1974

- 8 January** ROK President Park Chung Hee announced Presidential Emergency Decrees Nos. 1 and 2 (대통령긴급조치제 1 호, 대통령긴급조치제 2 호), which prohibited criticism of the government and created a special military committee to try individuals accused of violating Presidential Emergency Decrees.
- 14 January** The ROK Economic Planning Boards implemented the “Presidential Emergency Measure to Stabilize the People’s Livelihood” (국민생활 안정을 위한 대통령긴급조치).
- 18 January** ROK President Park Chung Hee proposed a non-aggression pact with the DPRK. The DPRK rejected the pact on 28 January.
- 19 January** Ham Byeongchun departed South Korea to take up his post as ROK Ambassador in Washington, D.C.
- 5 February** The ROK Economic Planning Boards implemented “A Comprehensive Measure to Stabilize Prices” (종합 물가 안정 대책).
- 11 February** The Eighth Central Committee Plenum of the Fifth Party Congress of the KWP opened in Pyongyang. The Central Committee discussed socialist construction, the abolition of the tax system, and reducing the prices of industrial goods. The Plenum concluded on 13 February.
- 15 February** DPRK naval vessels attacked two ROK fishing boats north of the NLL, sinking one of them.
- 25 February** ROK President Park Chung Hee approved the Yulgok Program (율곡 사업), an eight-year national defense plan (1974-1981).
- 4 March** DPRK President Kim Il Sung hosted Houari Boumediene, the President of Algeria, in Pyongyang.
- 20 March** The Third Session of the Fifth DPRK SPA opened in Pyongyang. The delegates in attendance passed a law to abolish the tax system. The Session concluded on 25 March.
- U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger reassured ROK Foreign Minister Kim Dongjo that the U.S. will not withdrawal troops from South Korea.

- 25 March** DPRK Foreign Minister Heo Dam proposed a peace agreement between the DPRK and the U.S.
- 29 March** U.S. President Nixon announced NSDM 251, "Termination of the U.N. Command in Korea."
- April** The ROK Ministry of Commerce and Industry began construction of an industrial complex in Changwon for the manufacture of military weapons.
- 3 April** Students from Seoul National University, Sungkyunkwan University, and Ewha Womans University staged large-scale protests against the Yushin Constitution. In response, ROK President Park Chung-hee announced Presidential Emergency Decrees Nos. 3 and 4 (대통령긴급조치제 3 호, 대통령긴급조치제 4 호).
- 6 April** Romanian Foreign Minister George Macovescu notified the U.S. of a DPRK proposal for a peace agreement.
- 12 April** Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and Chairman of the National United Front of Kampuchea, and Madam Princess Monique Sihanouk arrived in Pyongyang for the eighth time and met with DPRK President Kim Il Sung.
- 28 June** DPRK vessels sank an ROK maritime police patrol boat in the East Sea near the NLL, killing 26 members of the crew.
- 17 July** Eleventh Session of the Soviet-Korean Intergovernmental Consultative Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Issues opened in Moscow and concluded on 22 July with the signing of a protocol agreement.
- 30 July** U.S. Congressmen Donald M. Fraser and Robert N.C. Nix held congressional hearings on human rights in the ROK.
- 13 May** Leopold Sedar Senghor, President of the Republic of Senegal, arrived in Pyongyang for a state-visit and stayed until 15 May.
- 9 August** DPRK President Kim Il Sung held extensive talks with Japanese Representative Tokuma Utsunomiya in Pyongyang.
- Following Richard Nixon's resignation, Gerald Ford is sworn in as President of the United States.

- 15 August** Mun Segwang attempted to assassinate ROK President Park Chung Hee at the National Theater and murdered First Lady Yuk Yeongsu.
- 19 August** U.S. Ambassador to the ROK Philip Habib stepped down from his post to become Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.
- 21 August** Pak Jonggyu resigned as Chief of the ROK's Presidential Security Service (PSS) in the wake of First Lady Yuk Yeongsu's assassination.
- 23 August** ROK President Park Chung Hee removed Presidential Emergency Decrees No. 1 and No. 4, but protests continued.
- 25 August** Nation-wide rallies erupted in ten major cities, involving 1.5 million people.
- 27 August** U.S. President Ford discussed the DPRK peace proposal with Vasile Pungan of Romania.
- 30 August** President Park Chung Hee warned the Japanese Government through Ambassador Ushiroku Taro that Japan must take responsibility for the death of his wife.
- 1 September** Richard L. Sneider became U.S. Ambassador to the ROK.
- 7 September** Gnassingbé Eyadéma, President and Head of State of the Republic of Togo, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung.
- 21 September** Moktar Ould Daddah, President and Head of State of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung. He departed on 22 September.
- 23 September** Seventh Annual ROK-US SCM opened in Honolulu and concluded on 24 September.
- 25 October** New Soviet Ambassador Gleb Alexandrovich Kriulin to the DPRK is sworn in at a ceremony in Pyongyang.
- 30 October** ROK Ministry of Education closed down 44 universities in response to continuing student protests.
- 15 November** ROK patrol units discovered the first DPRK tunnels near Gorangpo along the DMZ.

- 18 November** Salem Rubai Ali, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Yemen, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung. He departed on 21 November.
- 22 November** ROK President Park Chung Hee held conversations with U.S. President Ford at the Blue House in Seoul. Ford left Seoul the following day.
- 27 November** The Fourth Session of the Fifth DPRK SPA opened in Pyongyang. The delegates in attendance reviewed Kim Il Sung's "Theses on Socialist Agrarian Problems of Our Country." The Session concluded on 30 November.
- 2 December** Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and Chairman of the National United Front of Kampuchea, arrived in Pyongyang for his ninth visit to the DPRK. He departed on 6 December.
- 4 December** ROK President Park Chung Hee appointed Kim Jaegyu as Director of the KCIA.
- 11 December** The U.S. Embassy in Seoul reported to the Secretary of State the ROK's possible desire to develop nuclear weapons for the first time.
- 17 December** U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution 3333, "Question on Korea."
- 20 December** Canadian Ministry of Energy approved the sale of a nuclear reactor to the ROK.
- 25 December** Seventy-one leading dissidents from various fields launched the National Congress for the Restoration of Democracy (NCRD) in the ROK.

1975

- 9 January** U.S. Presidential Cabinet completed NSDM 282, "The Korean Force Modernization Plan."
- 28 January** Twelfth Session of the Soviet-Korean Intergovernmental Consultative Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Issues opened in Pyongyang and concluded with the signing of a protocol agreement.

- 11 February** The Tenth Central Committee Plenum of the Fifth Party Congress of the KWP opened in Pyongyang. The Central Committee discussed the Three Revolutions. The Plenum concluded on 17 February.
- 17 February** General Electric (GE) Nuclear Survey Team began a visit to the ROK to discuss nuclear cooperation.
- 26 February** An ROK destroyer sank a DPRK fishing boat and the DPRK responds by deploying its entire fleet to the Ongjin Peninsula and flying 85 sorties of MiG fighters near Baengnyeong Island.
- 17 March** During the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Conference in Havana, Cuba, country members voted to recommend allowing the DPRK to enter the organization.
- 19 March** ROK patrol units discovered more DPRK tunnels in Cheolwon along the DMZ.
- 24 March** A DPRK fighter jet crossed into ROK airspace over the West Sea.
- 27 March** Ranking U.S. officials Richard L. Sneider, Brent Scowcroft, and W.R. Smyser, held a meeting to discuss recent developments on the Korean Peninsula.
- April** KAERI concluded two interim contracts with French companies CERCA and Saint-Gobain Technique Nouvelle for nuclear fuel fabrication and spent-fuel reprocessing.
- 8 April** The Fifth Session of the Fifth DPRK SPA opened in Pyongyang. The delegates in attendance discussed the national budgets for 1974 and 1975 as well as compulsory education laws. The Session concluded on 10 April.
- 8 April** In response to further student protests, ROK President Park Chung-hee announced Presidential Emergency Decree No. 7 (대통령긴급조치제 7 호) and sent troops to Korea University.
- 9 April** Eight members of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) were executed in the ROK.
- 14 April** The US began to withdraw from Korea its Sergeant Missile Unit, which was capable of handling nuclear weapons.
- 18 April** DPRK President Kim Il Sung arrived in Beijing, China, for a state visit and stayed until 26 April. During this visit, Kim Il Sung asked

for Chinese support for an invasion of South Korea, but his request was turned down.

- 23 April** Under pressure from the U.S., the ROK ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), having signed it on 1 July 1968.
- 30 April** Saigon fell to North Vietnamese forces and the last of U.S. officials evacuated from South Vietnam, officially marking the end of the U.S.-led Vietnam War.
- The ROK Ministry of Commerce and Industry promulgated the Law on General Trading Companies (종합무역상사제도) to support the export-business activities of *chaebol* enterprises.
- 8 May** U.S. President Ford met with Jeong Il-gwon [Chung Il-kwon], Speaker of the ROK National Assembly, at the White House in Washington, D.C.
- 10 May** ROK media launched a nation-wide campaign for contributions to a national defense fund and 1.4 million people participated in a rally sponsored by the National Conference for National Security with Total Strength.
- 13 May** ROK President Park Chung Hee announced Presidential Emergency Decree No. 9 (대통령긴급조치제 9 호), “Preservation of National Security and Public Order,” in response to developments in Indochina as well as Kim Il Sung’s visit to China.
- 21 May** Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and Chairman of the National United Front of Kampuchea, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung
- 22 May** DPRK President Kim Il Sung arrived in Romania for a state visit and stayed until 26 May.
- 26 May** DPRK President Kim Il Sung arrived in Algeria for a state visit and stayed until 2 June. Kim receives an honorary doctorate from Algiers University.
- 27 May** U.S. Presidential Cabinet completed NSSM 226, “Review of U.S. Policy toward the Korean Peninsula.”
- 30 May** DPRK President Kim Il Sung arrived in Mauritania for a state visit and stayed until 1 June.

- 2 June** DPRK President Kim Il Sung arrived in Bulgaria and stayed until 5 June.
- 5 June** DPRK President Kim Il Sung arrived in Yugoslavia and stayed until 9 June.
- 12 June** In an interview with the Washington Post, ROK President Park Chung-hee declared that “although Korea has the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, we do not develop them presently.”
- 15 July** DPRK President Kim Il Sung held extensive talks with Japanese Representative Tokuma Utsunomiya in Pyongyang.
- 16 July** ROK President Park Chung Hee introduced a defense tax in order to increase the defense budget from 4 to 5 percent of GNP
- 2 August** U.S. President Ford and Nicolae Ceaușescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, met to discuss North Korea.
- 26 August** The DPRK gained admittance to the NAM at the Lima, Peru, Conference.
- Eighth Annual ROK-US SCM opened in Seoul and concluded on 27 August.
- 27 August** ROK President Park Chung Hee met with James R. Schlesinger, Richard L. Sneider, and other U.S. officials at the Blue House in Seoul to discuss the ROK nuclear program.
- 9 October** U.S. Presidential Cabinet completed NSDM 309, “Decisions on ROK Air Defense Requirements.”
- 17 October** Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and Chairman of the National United Front of Kampuchea, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung.
- 4 November** U.S. representatives “unconditionally” opposed France’s export of a reprocessing plant to Korea at the International Economic Cooperation Organization on Korea (IECOK) meeting in London.
- 18 November** U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolutions 3390A and 3390B, “Question on Korea.”
- 19 November** The Eleventh Central Committee Plenum of the Fifth Party Congress of the KWP opened in Pyongyang. The Central

Committee discussed the People's Economic Plan for 1976. The Plenum concluded on 21 November.

- 4 December** U.S. President Ford met with PRC Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping in Beijing, China.
- 16 December** Vice Minister of the ROK Ministry of Science and Technology Lee Changseok and Director of KAERI Yoon Yonggu called on U.S. Ambassador Sneider to discuss the cancellation of the ROK's nuclear reprocessing deal with France.
- 18 December** Kim Jongpil ends his term in office as ROK Prime Minister and is succeeded by Choe Gyuha.

1976

- 8 January** Zhou Enlai, Premier of the People's Republic of China, died in Beijing.
- 22 January** Under mounting pressure from the U.S., ROK President Park Chung Hee agreed to cancel the nuclear reprocessing deal with France.
- 1 March** Dissident *Jaeya* activists issued the Declaration of National Democratic Salvation (민주 구국선언) at Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul.
- 2 April** Citing human rights concerns, U.S. Congressmen Donald M. Fraser and 118 other congressmen asked President Ford to reconsider military aid to the ROK.
- 27 April** The Sixth Session of the Fifth DPRK SPA opened in Pyongyang. The delegates in attendance discussed the national budgets for 1975 and 1976, the nursery system for children, and organizational problems. The Session concluded on 29 April.
- 14 May** Moussa Traoré, Chairman of the Military Committee of National Liberation, Head of State, and Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Mali, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung.
- 18 May** Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs official Leif Leifland arrived in North Korea to discuss Korea at the U.N. and the future of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC).

- 20 May** U.S. Congressman Donald M. Fraser submitted a report to the House of Representatives on the illegal activities of the KCIA in the United States.
- 21 May** Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung
- 26 May** Ninth Annual ROK-US SCM opened in Honolulu and concluded on 27 May.
- 1 June** PRC Ambassador to the DPRK Li Yunchuan (李云川) left his post after six-years. He was replaced by Lü Zhixian (吕志先) in September.
- 4 June** Didier Ratsiraka, President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK Premier Kim Il Sung.
- 8 June** Thirteenth Session of the Soviet-Korean Intergovernmental Consultative Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Issues began in Moscow and concluded on 11 June.
- 15 June** U.S. and ROK representatives held discussions and reached an agreement on nuclear cooperation in Washington, D.C.
- 10 July** Mathieu Kérékou, President of the People's Republic of Benin, arrived in Pyongyang for meetings with DPRK President Kim Il Sung
- 1 August** Large DPRK delegation attended the Fifth Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- 18 August** DPRK troops attacked and killed two U.S. Army Officers in what became known as the "Axe Murder Incident" (판문점 도끼 살인; 만행 사건).
- 19 August** 379th meeting of the MAC convened to discuss "Axe Murder Incident."
- 21 August** U.S. forces executed Operation Paul Bunyan to cut down the tree in the Joint Security Area (JSA) of the DMZ.
- 25 August** 380th meeting of the MAC convened to discuss "Axe Murder Incident."

- 28 August** 381st meeting of the MAC convened to discuss “Axe Murder Incident.”
- 30 August** The DPRK disconnected a military hot line with the ROK.
- 6 September** The DPRK and the United States reached an agreement on patrolling the JSA.
- 9 September** Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, died in Beijing.
- 11 October** The Twelfth Central Committee Plenum of the Fifth Party Congress of the KWP opened in Pyongyang. The Central Committee discussed agricultural production for 1976 and the Five-Point Policy for Nature Remaking. The Plenum concluded on 14 October.
- 13 October** DPRK diplomats in Copenhagen are caught smuggling drugs by Danish police and are promptly expelled from the country. The DPRK smuggling scandal continued to spread to other Scandinavian countries.
- 26 October** *The Washington Post* published an exposé of “Koreagate” on its front page.

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