

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Inter-Korean Six Point Deal for Mutual Military Confidence

Woongjee Song*

1. Six Point Deal Reached

Tensions between the two Koreas rapidly escalating in August were barely halted as both North and South Korea reached to an agreement on August 25, 2015 after painstaking negotiations. The six points that were included in the agreement are as follows.

1. The two Koreas to hold talks in either Pyongyang or Seoul at an early date to improve their relations;
2. North Korea to express regret over a recent landmine explosion that injured two South Korean soldiers;
3. South Korea to stop loudspeaker broadcasts from noon August 25, unless there is unusual activity along the border;
4. North Korea to end its “semi-war state”;
5. Both North and South Korea to arrange separated family reunions on the occasion of the forthcoming Chuseok (Thanksgiving) holiday. In order to make reunions feasible, the two Koreas agreed to host the Red Cross meeting in September; and
6. North and South Korea to foster non-governmental exchanges in various fields.¹

The agreement was finalized through three-days-long marathon talks between Kim Kwan-jin, the Chief National Security Adviser to President Park Geun-hye’s administration and Hwang Pyong-so, the Director of the General Political Bureau of the North Korean Army, who is known to be the second most influential military

* Tufts University/Seoul National University. The author may be contacted at: woongji.song@gmail.com

¹ Jin-kyu Kang, *Two Koreas reach deal to avoid military confrontation*, KOREA JOONGANG DAILY, Aug. 25, 2015, available at <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3008350> (last visited on Nov. 6, 2015).

figure in North Korea.²

2. Landmine Incident and Its Escalation

The conflict that almost led to a military cross-fire was instigated as two South Korean soldiers patrolling the Demilitarized Zone (“DMZ”) were badly wounded on August 4 by landmines. On August 10, the South Korean government claimed that the landmines were North Korean-made ‘wooden box’ landmines.³ Following the governmental statement, South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff vowed that “North Korea would pay a harsh price proportionate for the provocation it made.”⁴ On the other hand, North Korea denied the claim and argued that it was a fabricated, yet carefully-calculated provocation by the South Korea having the intention to start a war.⁵

The South Korean military retaliated against the North by reviving the loudspeaker propaganda campaign along the border. The loudspeaker propagation started in 1962 and lasted for 42 years until the two sides agreed to stop the practice on June 16, 2004. According to a news report, the maximum volume of the loudspeakers could deliver sounds as far as 24km at night and 10km during daytime.⁶ The loudspeaker broadcasted programs consisted of four subsections including promotion of liberal democracy, advertisement of South Korea’s development, restoration of unity, and exposure of the other side of the North Korean society. The broadcasts lasted for eight hours every day.⁷

In response, the North, considering the use of the loudspeakers an “act of war,”

² Sang-hun Choe, *Koreas Agree on Deal to Defuse Tensions*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 25, 2015, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/25/world/asia/south-korea-vows-not-to-back-down-in-military-standoff-with-north.html> (last visited on Nov. 6, 2015).

³ Ha-won Jung, *S. Korea Blames North for Mine Blasts, Vows ‘Harsh’ Response*, Aug. 10, 2015, YAHOO NEWS, available at <http://news.yahoo.com/korea-blames-north-mine-blast-threatens-harsh-response-014418416.html> (last visited on Nov. 6, 2015).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ See, e.g., *Intended Provocation to Start a Nuclear War* [핵전쟁 불집을 터뜨리기 위한 의도적 도발] <available only in Korean>, RODONG SHINMUN, Aug. 21, 2015; See also *Statement from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Baseless Fabrication by the South* [조선민주주의인민공화국 외무성 성명 - 무근거한 거짓이며 날조이다] <available only in Korean>, RODONG SHINMUN, Aug. 22, 2015.

⁶ Hyun-soo Choi, *Loudspeaker Broadcasting to Stop after 15 Days* [대북심리전 위력 보여준 ‘확성기 방송’ 15일만에 중단] <available only in Korean>, KOOKMIN ILBO DAILY, Aug. 25, 2015, available at <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0009784942&code=61111611&cp=nv> (last visited on Nov. 7, 2015).

⁷ *Id.*