

American Enterprise Institute

Discussing the pro-North Korean movement in the USA: Presentation by Eberstadt and  
Peck

Introduction:

**Nicholas Eberstadt**, Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy, AEI

Guest Briefing:

**Lawrence Peck**

Q&A

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*Nick Eberstadt:*

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to AEI headquarters and welcome also to our online audience.

I think you're in for a treat today. This is one that I've been waiting for for a really long time.

And I'm very happy that we have, at long last, Lawrence Peck with us. Lawrence, I think, is the leading expert on the pro-North Korea movement in the United States, something that even specialists know much too little about.

And he's going to give us a briefing here today. I think, Lawrence, it would be best to do about a 45 minute briefing and then we can have 15 minutes for discussion and questions.

I'll use my prerogative as moderator to say a few words after Lawrence and to ask the first question and then please let me know.

We'll put, you know, we'll keep a list for questions. We'll gather them all from the room and from internet audience and Lawrence will have a chance to respond to that.

We'll be pretty strict about signing off officially after 60 minutes, but if the unruly mob demands more information from Lawrence, we can continue unofficially after that.

So Lawrence, welcome and the floor is yours.

*Lawrence Peck:*

Thank you very much. I in particular want to thank you, Nick, Dr. Eberstadt, for making this event possible - for inviting me here to speak in in DC. I very much appreciate that. I know it's something that I've wanted to do and you've wanted to make happen for quite a while.

I'd also like to thank the staff here at AEI who is making everything function and run so smoothly.

I'd like to dedicate this talk to the blessed memory of my parents and I will proceed now and get to the gist of my remarks.

I believe actually this is the first talk of its kind on this particular subject matter, the pro-North Korean movement in the United States, which is being given at a major American think tank.

I'm not aware of any previous events of this nature on this specific issue, which is also credit to the organizers.

As Dr. Eberstadt, as Nick kindly mentioned, I'm considered by many to be one of the leading experts on pro-North Korean activities in the US. Perhaps it's a little by default because there aren't too many others who for decades have been researching intensively the issue as I have.

Not only researching, but monitoring the groups and activists involved, exposing them to the best of my ability to public scrutiny and opposing them for a period of several decades.

I first learned of the existence of these forces, these pro-North Korean forces, when I was a student several decades ago, when I encountered some of them and I became progressively more interested in the topic as of that time.

I should point out something regarding a note regarding my sources of information. Some are firsthand experience and knowledge.

Others are reports that I receive from trusted individuals, confidants and other experts and others who have bits and pieces of information that are relevant.

A major source is online. I review the pro-North Korean forces' own social media and website content, as well as some of their offline appearances, events and speeches.

So I'm familiar with their own words and how they express themselves. I know it's a very little known subject. It's not even on the radar screen of even some Korea experts, not to mention other public policy officials and researchers on Korea in general. As Prince Hamlet said to Hermitage, I'm sorry as he said slip at the tongue, as he said to Horatio as he said to Horatio "there are more things dreamt of in your philosophy than exist in heaven and on Earth". And that's the case with this particular topic some people can't even imagine that it exists.

Unfortunately, there are also some folks, even experts in the field, people in academia, in media, who tend to downplay or dismiss this subject matter, in some cases are in denial as to it both in the ROK and here in the US simply because in many cases they haven't heard of it before, or they can't imagine that such a phenomenon would exist.

However, there is historical precedent because there was, as some of you know, if you've studied the historical record, there were pro-Soviet forces here in the US, especially in the heyday of the Stalinist era and the American Communist Movement in the 1930s and '40s. They operated many overtly pro-Soviet and pro-Communist front organizations and more recently, many of you may be aware because it's been in the news so much, of pro-Chinese Communist influence operations and front groups operating in the US.

I should note that much of the information that I obtain are from the sources I previously outlined only because there are so few studies or reports or articles of any kind from time to time there'll be a Korean

media report or a US media report sometimes involving my information or as a result of interviews with me.

But another problem is that much of the information about the various pro-North groups and activists being not much covered either by the US or the South Korean media comes from, as I alluded to, from their own pro-North websites and many of those are in the Korean language. So obviously people who aren't familiar with the Korean language don't have access to that kind of information and can't track the situation on a regular basis.

One caveat which I would like to explain up front is that as you may imagine, but which needs to be reinforced, it's only a very tiny minority of either the Korean-American community or the non-Korean American community who are supportive of the pro-North Korean movement who are members of pro-North Korean groups who are pro-North Korean activists, a very tiny group, but they seem to have influence and a voice outsized in comparison with their small numbers. Pro-North Korean forces actually do constitute, a point I would like to make, a movement per se.

They're not merely a conglomeration of isolated individuals who are acting on their own. There were actually and there have been spies for lack of a better term agents - people officially who have been convicted, charged, tried, one or the other, of working for the North here in the US, in Europe, France, for example, in Australia in various other countries, but interestingly and perhaps counter intuitively when we consider typical intelligence what they call trade craft or typical intelligence procedure in terms of recruiting foreign spies or agents, all of the individuals in the various countries which I just named who had been charged and or convicted of being agents of the North, spies working for the North, had been involved with the pro-North movement - were known to be sympathizers of the North before being recruited and before being charged and convicted. So it's not as if they're able to find random people and recruit them with financial incentives. Obviously the North Koreans don't have that many financial incentives at their beck and call so they have to rely on the ideological true believers.

I should also note that the movement, the Pro-North Korean movement, the groups form an interlocking network of organizations and activists, even with some overlap and not only as to members but even as to some of the main leaders of the various groups.

They're a highly motivated bunch, true believers as I mentioned, some quite fanatical and they are well organized as well as, people are surprised to learn, well-funded. And they have been growing in influence especially for when one considers from a base level they've made great strides in their influence, especially let's say over the past 5 and 10 years and particularly, a topic I'll get to later, relating to their lobbying activities here in DC. They enjoy valuable support, the pro-North activists and groups do, not only from the members of their respective organizations, but from some VIP individuals, some friends in high places whom they've been able to recruit to their cause, whom I refer to as *enablers* because some of these individuals are not themselves pro-North Korea, we don't consider them based on their record to be sympathizers of the North. Some of them have been critics of the North indeed, but for some reason they have been helpful to and provided assistance to the pro-North groups, have opened doors for them

on Capitol Hill whether it's a leader of the Mansfield Foundation or whether it's a former Secretary of Defense or whether it's the researchers at the Quincy Institute. There's also been the case of the previous South Korean government, the case of the Moon administration and of leaders and ordinary members of the Minju Party, the Democratic Party now in opposition in South Korea, because a number of them have in various ways been supportive of the pro-North movement, pro-North groups here in the US, either by meeting them on their visits to the US, or in the case of the government, the previous government, providing funding to them, sometimes indirectly, such as, for example, through the Korea Foundation when they would have funded a study prepared by pro-North activists to study, for example, opposing sanctions on the North and in support of a no preconditions peace agreement.

I'll go ahead and, forward some of my slides so you can see some of them. I'm just beginning, so it's right on time.

I'd like to mention that in applying the label pro-North Korea, I do so to those who in the first instance admit that they're pro-North and this applies to, of course, the true believers, the real fanatics.

I apply the term pro-North to those who are in some cases listed by the North Korean regime because from time to time they'll have some event or some project that they're involved in where they'll put out a list of invitees or something of that nature, people on whom they rely on who they trust.

I apply the label to those who are members of what can objectively reasonably be considered pro-North groups, supporters of those groups, people whose views by all manner of common sense can be called pro-North Korea because they deal in pro-North rhetoric employing such tactics as double standards, one-sided critiques, defending the North in terms specifically of its conflict with the US or the ROK.

I term as pro-North those who have friendly relations with the North Korean regime, who visit there on quote unquote "solidarity missions". And, perhaps most essentially, those who collaborate with North Korean intelligence agents. And by North Korean intelligence agents, I refer to officials based at the North Korean UN mission in New York. And at that mission, there are usually stationed one or two individuals from the North's United Front Department.

A lot of us have heard because of recent media reports about the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department, well, the North Korean Workers Party has an analogous branch of operations known likewise as the United Front Department and they are tasked with helping to establish, liaising with, providing control and guidance advice to, pro-North Korean activists and organizations in South Korea and overseas, including here in the US.

Of course, among the different typology involved, there are gradations and there's a spectrum of these pro-North Korean forces and groups.

Some are more extreme than others, some are less extreme depending on their particular views and personalities. In terms of types, the different types of North Korean, pro-North Korean groups and

organizations, their strategic facade, the focus and their tactics tend to differ and their messaging tends to differ because their target groups vary.

They have different target audiences. Therefore, necessitating different tactics and different messaging. On the one hand, you have what I term the hardcore openly pro-North Korean groups and these tend to be, not exclusively but tend to be, made up of some Korean-American fanatical supporters of the North, in some cases who have expressed outright loyalty to the North Korean regime and they tend to obviously target the Korean American community and therefore they function in the Korean language such as their websites.

Of course, there are also some non-Koreans in this openly pronounced category. They would be members of Marxist-Leninist Communist organizations or extreme extreme leftists who are open about their support of the North.

There are also what I term front organizations, front groups, and that goes back again to the historical record of the pro-Soviet front groups which were active in the US in the middle or early parts of the last century. And these are groups and individuals who are reticent to openly admit that they're pro-North because their whole *modus operandi*, which has been successful for them to a great degree, is to portray themselves, falsely, merely as advocates of peace and reunification in spite of the fact that their views and their ultimate goals are really quite similar to those in the hardcore openly pro-North groups.

And furthermore, they collaborate, the front groups and their leaders, and in some cases have overlapping memberships with the hardcore openly pro-North groups. They have the same campaigns, they go to the same meetings, they're really comrades, which results in a blurring of the distinctions, to some degree, of these two different categories which I have identified, the hardcore, openly, pro-North groups versus the front groups, there's been less of a hard and fast distinction there, especially in recent years.

You also have of course the useful idiots, the dupes who, for various reasons, go along with, fellow travelers, along with the pro-North Korean movement, they'll stand up for them, vouch for them, sometimes participate in their campaigns, even if some of them are not particularly well-disposed to every aspect of the North Korean regime or its policies or even, in some cases, who might venture some criticism of North Korea but nevertheless they're linked to the pro-North movement in the sense of being fellow travelers, to use the old phrase useful idiots in terms of their collaboration with and they're willing to – especially in the nature of VIPs and influential people - to lend their names and thus their respectability to these pro-North forces.

As I mentioned, the various types of groups do have indeed the same long-range goals to defend the North Korean regime and to weaken the US-ROK alliance.

And they do have in many cases, because it's a small group of a pool, a small group of individuals, overlapping memberships and close relations among the memberships and close relations among the leaders.

There are also some branches of pro-North groups in the ROK, in South Korea, which have units - branches here in the US and they're part of this network, but of course they're focused on also Korean domestic politics as well as the pro-North movement here.

Some of the groups, particularly those of the front group variety, tend to come into existence and in some cases then disappear when their usefulness, or when the specific topics which they were created to address, are no longer relevant or even disappear in some cases.

To cite some examples there was an organization specifically dedicated to opposing the THAAD anti-missile system and that's been basically shelved and now there have been established new front organizations which focus on the topic of the hour which is one of the overall recent goals of the pro-North movement, which is to promote the idea of a no preconditions peace treaty between the US and North Korea.

So they have these shifting issues in addition to the shifting nomenclature of the fronts. The members of these groups usually get their message out by relying on word games, the parsing of words, sophistry, they use euphemisms to, to mask their true intentions and their true beliefs often, especially when addressing neutral or even hostile audiences or mainstream media. They use the old tactics of whataboutism, distraction, emotional appeals, they even in some cases appeal to certain individuals (certainly not pro-North) of the Realist School, the *realpolitik* experts and the policy individuals who they think they can somehow win over to their side on specific issues.

But again, there's a spectrum involved here, a gradation of different groups and individuals and their levels of commitment and activism on behalf of the North.

With regard to the activists, the individuals who are part of this movement, which is always a subject of fascination, there are some who are just happen to be supporters of the North per se, they admire the North Korean regime.

Some are just good old-fashioned communists of the Stalinist or Trotskyist and Neo-Trotskyist variety, some of the extreme left, the dupes whom I previously referred to. There are also some opportunists, especially individuals who feel that they can increase their own visibility or stature by tagging along with these groups, do so for reasons of ego or perhaps because they wanted to ingratiate themselves with their previous South Korean, Moon Jae-in administration. There are also, within the Korean community, those of the ultra and left nationalist variety, the *minjok* group as they would be referred to in Korean, pursuant to the strains of North Korean ultra nationalist ideology.

There are also some isolationists, some extreme isolationists who find that in some cases their views coincide with those of the pro-North activists. There are religious figures, believe it or not, adherents of liberation theology. There are actually quite a few clergy who are adherents of left wing such as liberation, ideological strands and therefore they are involved with these pro-North groups sometimes at a leadership level.

There are academics and others who are adherents of critical theory. Critical Race Theory being the one that's been in the news most recent years, but there's also a branch thereof known as Critical Asian Studies and the adherents of those critical studies are active in the pro-North movement.

There are also a number of racist and neo-Nazi types within the pro-North movement, conspiracy theorists, who are the type of people you wouldn't expect to be involved in a pro-North Korean movement yet on the pro-North Korean sites, particularly the ones that operate in the Korean language, you'll find the most, rabid examples of racism and anti-Semitism and various other forms of hatred.

There are some people who may be attracted or involved in the movement I should say, not so much attracted, due to blackmail. And by blackmail I mean not only those individuals who've been in the North and have been in compromising positions, and I stress the word *positions* in compromising positions, but Korean-Americans who may have family members in the North and therefore hope that by being involved with or sympathizing with the pro-North forces here it may number one enable them further access to their families or even preferential treatment, or conversely avoid punishment to their families in some cases.

And there are of course also various degrees of street radicals who are involved in the movement as you would find in any extremist movement, but there are also professional, professional individuals, academics, doctors, lawyers.

On the other side of the coin, as Karl Marx would put it, there are some lumpen elements involved in the movement, clergy as I referred to, but also some folks in the media.

Some people involved in business. And anti-military types, anti-US military types in particular, ranting about militarization and those kinds of issues and even a few ultra ultra-libertarian types and by that I don't mean by any stretch of the imagination mainstream libertarians, but I mean some real fringe far left and far-right elements within that particular movement.

As to their beliefs, some of them are supporters of the Juche ideology, the North's state ideology. Some of them are involved in the whole concept of third worldism, *tiermondisme*, and they view North Korea as one of the repressed nations of what they term the "global south", regardless of its geographical location.

Some of them, as I mentioned, are Marxist-Leninist or far leftists, particularly those in the Korean-American community far left nationalist, the *uriminzokkiri* type of people.



Some are motivated just by general garden variety anti-American hatred of the US. And they've been also involved in this movement because, they find a welcome home there, because almost without exception these pro-North activists are deeply hostile to their own country and to their fellow citizens as I will demonstrate a little bit later in some of the details.

There are those who adopt a kind of *pas d'ennemis a gauche*, no enemies on the left philosophy by which they fall into the same category as these people find common cause.

There are moral relativists. Some of them are supportive of the Chinese Communist Party and therefore because of the so-called "lips and teeth alliance" that was founded at the time of the Korean War between the Beijing and Pyongyang, they're therefore tied into the pro-North movement.

Some are historical revisionists, both of the Korean War and afterwards, some anti-anti-communist, they just can't stand the idea of any opposition to any form of communism.

As I mentioned, the critical theorists, particularly in academia, but there are also strangely, which you might not imagine because of the status of these groups within North Korea, there are feminist and some feminist leaders who've latched on to and become part of the movement and some LGBT individuals. There are some groups that actually have a large number of LGBT folks in them, which again is counterintuitive because of the fate that would await them if they were to be unfortunate enough to live in North Korea.

Some of these activists promote violence against fellow Americans, some cases against me personally in terms of threats. Thank goodness none that have materialized, but as I also mentioned, a number of them, particularly in the Korean language, are really viciously racist and anti-Semitic, even against fellow Koreans.

One key point which I'd like to stress is the ties which these individuals have to the North Korean regime, which is very important to understand because it differentiates these individuals from others who, pursuant to their God-given constitutional rights as Americans, certainly have the right to petition their representatives and to make their views known through various means, but these are individuals who in some cases may be skirting the law because they're not only tied to the North Korean regime in various means such as visiting there and expressing loyalty to the regime there, but who meet with, communicate with and have for years collaborated with on various projects the North Korean agents whom I referred to earlier from the North's United Front Department at the North's mission in the United Nations in New York or sometimes in Pyongyang itself prior to the 2017 travel ban, but also in third countries where they'll go to meet them whether it's in Southeast Asia or whether they visit Japan to meet with individuals there when they visit the headquarters of the pro-North Korean organization in Tokyo, the *Chosen Soren* as they say in Japanese or in Korean *Chongryon*, which is a kind of a second best alternative for them now. They seem to be flocking to *Chongryon* because they can no longer, since the travel ban, visit North Korea.

There are also financial gains to be sought which have been achieved by some of the pro-North groups in terms of, for example, getting commissions for visa applications which they handle, according to Korean-American media reports, which they handle on behalf of the North Korean UN mission. They kind of do this processing of those who prior to 2017 wanted to visit the North and they gained some kind of commission from that and emotionally, psychologically, there's some benefit because some of the leading pro-North activists have actually received medals from the North Korean regime, the Kim Il Sung Medal or the Fatherland Liberation Medal of some of the hardcore pro-North activists, especially those that operate in the Korean language within the Korean-American community, who are awarded, for the work that they have done here, the propaganda work on behalf of the North.

There are also, this being DC, it's important to mention lobbying and influence activities which have in the past ten years and particularly in the past five years taken on a much more important role in terms of the overall activities of the pro-North movement going beyond their usual activities such as educational projects, particularly at the secondary university level, their various meetings and petition campaigns, their media outreach, and these lobbying and influence activities while operating in tandem with those other activities have really flourished in recent years because they have been meeting with various members of Congress from the House and Senate as well as with current and former government officials.

And from some of them they get welcome hearings, sympathetic hearings, because, as I said, they portray themselves in a very deceitful manner and the congressional staff who are involved in these meetings, frankly speaking, fail to do their due diligence and do not look into the fact that for example the person who's coming in who's addressed to them or introduced to them, I should say, as a peace activist is really a pro-North Korean fanatic who rants about destroying US imperialism, or the elderly Korean-American gentleman who's introduced as a clergyman who's a peace activist has a website which endorses violence against Americans and has a racist content and content fawnishly expressing loyalty to the North.

Many of those who have been targeted are those on the left wing of the Democratic Party, *mostly*, and therefore those are the people with whom they've been able to attract, the pro-North groups and activists, to some of their meetings and involve in some of their campaigns and to co-sponsor some of the legislation which they support.

Again, a key element in this are some of the VIPs, the friends in high places who have been assisting and lending their good names to these pro-North activists and help them gain publicity and protect them from criticism by defending them.

Furthermore, I should add that the pro-North forces have been active in opposing the North Korea human rights movement of groups and activists here like those from the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea and the North Korea Freedom Coalition.

They've been really pushing back both rhetorically and in their campaigns against any struggle to improve the human rights of the people of North Korea.

I should add, almost in conclusion, that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in their published works, especially Kim Il Sung, would address the issue of pro-North Korean forces overseas and even specifically within the US. He, in some of his meetings with reporters or meetings with Korean-American sympathizers, he would stress the importance of forming overseas networks and groups in the United States to pursue what he would call "peace and unification" but would actually be activism on behalf of and in support of the North, and he would encourage that in some of his statements which are of course taken as gospel by the supporters of the North here.

There's also this degree of control, to some extent and over some groups, which the North Korean regime exercises, which I will explain shortly, pursuant to the North's United Front strategy, which has been a strategy going back, of course, to the time of Lenin and reinforced by Stalin and Mao during various historical periods, which the North Korean regime also uses as a tactic to unite with any possibly supportive forces while trying to isolate any oppositional forces and thereby increase their power and influence.

I did refer to the United Front Department, those are the individuals who are responsible for and who provide advice to and meet with these groups, particularly those based in New York City who are allowed to travel within a certain radius of the UN but who will sometimes receive visitors or otherwise communicate with from these pro-North Korean organizations.

There are also the case, in terms of support for these pro-North groups, the pro-North movement in the US, of support they received from the ROK. I had mentioned that there are some ROK politicians from the current opposition party, from the Minju, the Democratic Party, who on their visits to the US shockingly, will meet with some of these pro-North groups and activists and who will, in some cases, invite them to Korea to participate even in government sponsored or affiliated seminars and conferences.

And as I did mention, there is some funding under the previous government, the Moon government, which went through, for example, in one case the Korea Foundation to fund a report authored by pro-North Korean activists which was then used to lobby Congress.

And finally I should note that a group which I do not characterize as pro-North Korean, but which is a left-wing group which has very close ties to the former Moon government and even former President Moon personally and to the Minju party and which even though it operates in the US as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, as many of the other pro-North groups do, this particular Korean-American group has been extremely active, in spite of its nonprofit status, in lobbying, which seems to be a skirting at a minimum of the US tax regulations, because it seems like 90% from their social media and their online presence reveals that what they're doing almost all the time with few exceptions is congressional lobbying and the name of this group the acronym is KAPAC and it's known in English as the Korean American Public Action Committee.

They don't call themselves a traditional fundraising PAC, public action committee, not political action committee.

And in Korean they're known as the *Miju Minju Chamyeo* Forum and they're headed by a fellow out in in Southern California who as I mentioned has close personal ties to left wing parties and forces in Korea and they have been, along with making common cause with some of the pro-North forces (because this group KAPAC tends to be almost like a front of the left in Korea rather than the North Korean regime, but they collaborate with in some instances of activities and they do have a few members and even an advisor who I would characterize as pro-North in spite of the fact that the movement itself is more geared towards domestic Korean politics), and they've been very active in promoting along with the pro-North groups the H.R. 1369 Bill proposed by Representative Sherman and co-sponsored by a couple of dozen other folks from the left wing of his party, whether it's Ilhan Omar or Rashida Tlaib or Barbara Lee or others of that ideological ilk. And along with the pro-North groups, that's really one of the main topics that they've been pushing now for no preconditions peace treaty with the North.

I'd like to, before getting to some of my informational slides, which I think you'll find fascinating, I'd like to note that according to what I've explained to you, regarding the nature of these groups, the society that they defend and this society that they vitriolically condemn, it reminds me of an adage from the Jewish Midrash, which goes as follows "Those who are kind to the cruel will end up being cruel to the kind". And I feel that perfectly encapsulates their being sympathetic to the North, but being viciously hostile to their own country, the US as well as to the Republic of Korea.

That being said, it constitutes my introductory remarks and I would now like to go to some photographs to further explicate some of the points which I made.

Here's a case study in the form of the group Women Cross DMZ / Korea Peace Now, Women Cross DMZ, it was a classic pro-North Korean front organization as I characterize it and it recently not too long ago a couple of years ago established a lobbying arm under its control called Korea Peace Now. So I usually refer to the groups as Women Cross DMZ / Korea Peace Now. And on the right side in the center you can see the leader and founder of that group and previous other pro-North front groups, previous ones that she had less success with but this current one which she's had much more success with her name is Christine Ahn and she's in the center there and as I said she's been involved with or an alumnus of many, such pro-North groups, having the most success in the current incarnation of Women Cross DMZ / Korea Peace Now.

This was in an event in Seoul, Korea hosted as you can see on the right side. The gentleman there, the Korean gentleman was the late mayor of Seoul, Mayor Park, who hosted a gala event at City Hall in Seoul for these groups when they had their 2015 cross border march across the DMZ after holding a number of propaganda events in Pyongyang at which the USA was described as a kingpin of international terrorism to the applause of the members. They then crossed the border and came into Seoul. On the left, of course, you see one of the VIP supporters who's been very active in the group and defending them against any and all criticism: the feminist icon Gloria Steinem. In the back actually directly behind Ms. Ahn

in the center you see an academic, Professor Suzy Kim of Rutgers who's been involved with attempts at historical revisionism in attempting to beautify some of the, even some of the old-fashioned Korean War era pro-North Korean front groups.

The reason I put up that photo is to juxtapose it with the photo on the left side, which shows one of the doors to the North Korean UN mission in New York.

In front of it, you see the flower cortege there, the flower ring, and on the label you'll see 6.15, that refers to a pro-North Korean organization one of those which actually has a branch in Pyongyang but is really most active in in Seoul in South Korea, Yug-il Shil-chun Ui-won-hoi, the 6.15 Implementation Committee, of course its name reflecting the June fifteenth agreement between North and South, but it is a pretty much an openly pro-North Korean group which has branches in cities throughout the US. And here in New York, this was the anniversary of the time of the death of Kim Jong Il and one of their representatives delivered to the North Korean mission, these flowers in condolence.

And the gentleman you see there, the bald man in the suit and tie, his name is Pak Chol, and he was at that time, this happened to be late 2011, he happened to be the United Front Department agent at the North's mission, the one who was responsible for liaising with, communicating with, assisting, advising, pro-North Korean forces, including Christine Ahn and her group, because it was with him whom Christine Ahn collaborated and communicated to organize her 2015 march. She had known him before then for many years she had first met him in North Korea on a tour with another pro-North Korean group and she had been in contact with him and then when he came to the US she was in contact with him to arrange that effort. As a matter of fact, in one email to her, which was perhaps accidentally or imprudently posted online, he even instructs her to focus her march on the need for peace agreement, which she then proceeded precisely to do.

And there you see an example of the influence operations which I had alluded to. Pak Chol now had a successor, Ri Ki-ho, who was his successor as a United Front agent in the mission who now has also left. But as I understand, he has not been succeeded by anyone because as you know during the pandemic North Korea sealed its borders so none of their diplomats, United Front Department or otherwise, were going back and forth. So as I understand at least until this moment, that position is perhaps now empty unless just last week they sent someone that I'm unaware of.

This is an example of an organization, Action One Korea, which started out, funded, established in Los Angeles with the large Korean diaspora community, as a front group. And they would claim that they're just for peace and unification and try and recruit a broad mainstream of Korean-American society but later morphed into an openly pro-North Korean, viciously anti-American group, the lady who you see circled there on the left is Chung Yeon-jin from Los Angeles, although she goes back and forth often she's I think based in Korea now and she has become more openly pro-North. She goes around Seoul and other cities of the ROK giving lectures about promoting hate - literally promoting hatred of America - and a pro-North Korean activist whom you see there at a meeting of pro-North leaders in Los Angeles.

The gentleman who you see with the outstretched arm next to her is one of, what the South Koreans refer to as, one of the representative, or most infamous, of the pro-North leaders, at least in the LA area, Mr. Roh Kil-nam, who passed away from COVID a couple of years ago.

He was the leader of the fanatically pro-North Korean *Minjok Tongshin* group and website.

And you see there he had been to North Korea I think a total of 75 or 76 times before he passed away and he was one of the true fanatical believers and you see him there with this with this lady, Ms. Chung from AOK.

But on the left side, and this shows the interaction with Korea also, there was an advertisement which in Korea announces a protest rally which was going to form a human chain encircling, and calling for the removal of, the main US base in South Korea at Pyeongtaek, pro-North Korean forces and other far left forces there were going to try that. Fortunately, I was able to warn some of the patriotic and pro-American forces of Korea of this event and they staged a counter rally which outnumbered by about 20 to one the pro-North Korean forces at that same location.

Chung Yeon-jin happened to be on a podcast and announced this event, on which Noam Chomsky was on the podcast, and Chomsky chimed in "Oh, wonderful, great event".

Here is another case study of two of the main pro-North groups in the US which target the Korean American community. I previously referred to the 6.15 committee which has branches in various US cities. The KANCC is the abbreviation for, again, one of the most well-known, because it's one of the most fanatical, pro-North groups in the US, Korean-American National Coordinating Council, *Jae-mi Chun-guk Yeon-hap Hoi*, they have their office in New York, have a website (primarily their means of communication). Their leaders happen to be based out in LA. It's one of those groups closely tied to the North Korean regime and to the North Korean mission including its intelligence agents based there.

This photo actually is a photo of members of both groups taken at Mount Baekdu, the so-called holy site of the North Korean revolution tied to the Kim Dynasty cult of personality and they were there a few years ago, invited by the North obviously, with a banner which reads in Korean, which expresses their loyalty to the North Korean regime and which translates as expressing their intention to fully implement the final instructions of the great leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-Il.

And there you see actually in almost about the middle of the of the banner there with a white cap, dark sunglasses, a black jacket and a white t-shirt, a pastor, ordained Methodist clergyman, Yoon Kil-Song, who for many years was the leader of KANCC out in Southern California. He was recently purged because some rival pro-North Korean groups, actually the rival group of the previous slide, the gentleman whom I showed you, complained that this gentleman was involved in some sexual antics with young pro-North Korean activists from another group, which I'll mention. But the interesting point, and I mentioned that not to be salacious, but when the rival group of KANCC complained, they complained to the North Korean UN mission and to the United Front Department individual there which clearly indicates to any

reasonable person the level of control which the North Korea regime exercises over some of these, particularly the hardcore openly pro-North groups such as KANCC, and 6.15, and *Minjok Tongshin*. And so this fellow was unceremoniously purged and they replaced him with another pro-North Korean fanatic and that was the story of that.

That was the group actually, KANCC, which derives some commissions, or used to, from Korean-Americans who wanted to travel to the North by processing the visas on behalf of the UN mission.

Nodutdol, which means “stepping stone” in Korean is a pro-North Korean youth group. They're based in New York and they used to run semi-annual solidarity missions, their term, solidarity visits to North Korea. As you can see that's from their social media, highly praising the North Korean regime. It is a youth group, primarily of Korean-Americans, which also maintains close ties to the North Korean regime and especially in the form of the North Korean mission in New York. This is the group that I mentioned that has a large number of members who are LGBT individuals who apparently don't realize the attitude that the North Korean government would officially hold towards them regardless of how they're welcomed by the North Korean regime.

Here is an aspect of the, non-Korean, Marxist-Leninist involvement in the movement. On the right side, you can see there the non-Korean person is Brian Becker, who is one of the top comrades, one of the top American communist leaders. He heads up the Party for Socialism and Liberation, a Marxist-Leninist group of the Trotskyist of variety, although some would call them almost neo-Stalinist because of their support for Stalin style regimes across the world, and you see I put in parentheses there “ANSWER”, that's their fully controlled front group, ANSWER, which you may be familiar with if you see any of the demonstrations here in Washington or other cities with their trademark yellow with black lettering signs, whether it's at a pro-North or a pro-Cuba or an anti-military or an anti-Israel demonstration, you'll see ANSWER.

On the left side, and that was in Seoul, by the way, him protesting there, on the left side you'll see a picture again of Becker on the left, and the Korean-American actually on his right is Jang Min-ho, Michael Jang, who is a Korean-American who was convicted of being part of a North Korean spy ring in South Korea several years ago. It was the *Il-Shim-Hoe*, the one heart North Korean spy network, which he was involved with.

He apparently would connect with North Korean agents with China and also allegedly some training in North Korea, a Korean-American from California who was working in Korea and was apparently recruited, and he did his jail time in the ROK and then was deported back to the US where he became involved in the pro-North movement here and of course is a part of the pro-North movement involved with some of the Marxist-Leninist groups. By the way, his wife, when he was involved in his espionage activities, his wife, in Seoul with him, his wife is serving as a secretary to a high-ranking US officer at the military base than at Yongsan.

Here you see the link with politics in the ROK, the South Korean political situation. On the right, you see members of Women Cross DMZ / Korea Peace Now. You can see Christine Ahn wearing the dress with the high heel shoes at the center there and right next to her with the folded hands with the white paper in front of him is Moon Chung-in, one of the top foreign policy advisors to former President Moon and an ideological confrère of Moon and his Democratic Party who was visiting the US to assist groups like Women Cross DMZ and other pro-North forces in lobbying for what they call an end to the Korean War, a no preconditions bill of concessions peace agreement with the North, and he was making common cause with that particular group.

On the left side, you see there President Moon. This was actually just before the election of 2017 when he was still campaigning, and at that time actually, I was told by a *Wall Street Journal* correspondent, that he declined an invitation with the *Wall Street Journal* at that particular time, yet he did give a sit-down exclusive to this gentleman who you see the non-Korean there with him, an American self-admitted Marxist and member of pro-North Korean front groups, Tim Shorrock, who writes for the radical *The Nation* magazine and yet it's kind of an indication of Moon's ideological orientation that he was able to, he was willing to give an interview to this very fringe character who has characterized the ROK as being a fascist state.

On the human rights issue, here we have a case study of the work which the pro-North movement engages in against human rights for the people of North Korea. On the right side, you'll see an advertisement from the group Nodutdol, which I referred to earlier, and this was held as an emergency event when the UN came out under Judge Kirby with its Commission of Inquiry Report on North Korea condemning the North's crimes against humanity, Nodutdol decided to have an emergency meeting opposing the report and to teach its members and to instruct sympathizers how to argue against the Commission of Inquiry Report and a number of pro-North activists online endorsed and expressed their support for that event.

On the left side, you see one of the signs from a demonstration, you can see just barely it was sponsored by KANCC and by the Pan Korean Alliance for Reunification, which is the English name of the South Korean-based group, *Bomminryon*, which has branches in some cities across the US and as you can see their rhetoric there "stop using North Korean human rights as a weapon for another war on the Korean peninsula".

Here also again you have the campaign against human rights. On the left again is Christine Ahn several, many years ago testifying in Seoul to a human rights commission there which at that time under a left wing administration was doing the bidding of its left wing leaders, the human rights commission, and she was testifying there against, at that time, the passage the debates surrounding the US North Korea Human Rights Act and she was saying it's just a tool of the American conservatives and the right-wing Christians and it'll do no good and it should be opposed at all costs. She also later opposed the South Korean, the ROK's, North Korea Human Rights Act.



And on the right side, turning to academia again for a moment, you have a Japanese-based website which often features the work of pro-North Korean activists in the US and this was a piece by a Critical Asian Studies Critical Race Theory academic at UC Santa Cruz named Christine Hong who is one of the more fanatical members of the pro-North movement, involved with a lot of the groups that Christine Ahn was involved with. And here she wrote an article specifically, and quite vituperatively, denouncing, attacking, slandering the North Korea human rights movement in the US. North Korea human rights groups, leaders of the North Korea human rights groups leaders of the North Korea human rights movement and the US, defectors slandering them with all kinds of insults. She actually, Christine Hong, who you don't see there, but she actually is so fanatic she actually complained to the State Department that they should never use the word "Gulag" in reference to North Korea's political concentration camps because it's something that that she thinks portrays the North in a negative light obviously.

This is just the final slide regarding the anti-human rights activities of the pro-North Korean movement in the US, the euphemisms which they employ, the blame shifting the moral equivalency, arguments which they use to counter human rights related arguments and activities.

How we should counter the pro North movement and indeed how I and others have been countering them. My main tactic has been exposure under the theory that sunlight is the best disinfectant to let the general public, the media, political academic circles know the true, become familiar with, the true activities and more importantly the true views and motivations of these groups so that they won't be duped or deceived by them and to provide reliable information about them, and finally to encourage North Korea experts and media reporters who cover Korea not to dismiss or downplay or even deny this phenomenon which does indeed exist.

And that marks the end of my prepared remarks and presentation and now I would certainly like to open it up to any and all questions which you may have.

*Nick Eberstadt:*

Lawrence, thank you very much for that comprehensive overview. As discussant, I'm going to make three points and then start off the questions and then we can have other questions of course.

Point number one, Lawrence's work follows in the, I think, hallowed footsteps of the work of the late Herbert Romerstein on Soviet influence operations in the United States. And the commonality of the Soviet influence operations, Mao's CCP influence operations and these from the DPRK is the notion that even a rather weak government or government in waiting can gain influence effectively if it can alter the power of hostile states or alter the policy of hostile states from within using domestic policies in those adversary countries.

Point number two, Stalin, Mao, the Kim Dynasty are all pretty awful if you look at them with a clear eye. Each of those regimes authored state made famine, ran gulags, had suffocating cults of personality, tremendous human rights violations, were very aggressive in their, or hostile in their, policies towards Western or free countries.

The difference, though, between DPRK and Mao's China, the Soviet Union is a difference in Ideology. Soviet ideology claimed a universalist view: A world revolution that would liberate proletariat everywhere.

Even Mao had this "three worlds" concept which was for liberation everywhere. The Kim family regime has a very narrowly focused ethnic fixation. The Minjok, as you said, this about the destiny of the Korean Minjok, nationality or race. It's a kind of a, well national socialism has already been taken as a term by a different government, so let's not call it national socialism. Let's call it racial socialism. Racial socialism is really hard to merchandise outside of the Minjok. So how is the - how are the pro-North Korean activists doing this?

And that gets us, I think, to our third point, which Lawrence indicated, which is a sort of a different aspect of the United Front.

It's taking up common cause with what you might see as the legion of super villains in modern politics today with Iran, with activists for the CCP, with Palestine liberation, with anti-Israel, with Jew haters, you know, like, Code Pink.

With different types of anti-American activists, and different sorts of unregistered foreign agents, and now we see with the Kremlin - and with the Kremlin and the Kremlin's friends.

So all of North Korea's, Pyongyang's, previously pure independent policy things have gone by the wayside and I think this may help to explain the increasing resonance for the pro-North Korean movement in the United States.

I wanted to use my prerogative to ask you the first question and then we'll have other questions, I hope.

So why this fixation with peace? Why this fixation with a peace treaty with the US, with ending the Korean War, declaring the war over. Why is this so important to pro North Korean activists?

Can you explain that to us, please?

*Lawrence Peck:*

Yes. Well, I would say that they don't really have a fixation with peace per se, they have a fixation with peace according to the requirements and the overall strategy of the North Korean regime which means in

the long term the neutralization and eventual Finlandization, if not communization of the Republic of Korea.

So that's their version of the noble concept we would refer to as peace, but in terms of their activities, promoting so strenuously, especially in recent couple of years, the idea of what they term an end to the Korean War, no preconditions peace agreement.

Has to do with the fact that by their own admission and Christine Ahn actually has admitted that, not in front of a mainstream or media audiences to whom she claims that these measures will reduce tensions and promote peace in the world and on the Korean Peninsula, but rather she has stated in a talk with some of her comrades online that her goal is quote "to free", to "liberate" was the word she used, "to liberate Korea from the yoke of US imperialism" that was the quote. And with specific respect to the so-called end of the Korean War strategy, which they're pursuing, Ahn, and of course speaking for many other pro-North Korean activists, certainly, has admitted explicitly that her goal in promoting, for example, the H.R. 1369, and more broadly speaking end to the Korean War is to use that as only a first step towards an eventual, what she calls a "transformation" of the US-Korea alliance, which effectively means termination because she sees such an agreement or such an end to the war by her own terminology, by her own words, her own admission as leading inexorably to the withdrawal of US forces from the ROK, indeed from the entire Asia Pacific region, including even Ahn claims she wants them to be removed from Hawaii itself. So they admit when speaking among themselves that they pursue some of these legislative and diplomatic measures as a means of promoting certain goals which are not in the interest of the ROK or the USA.

*Nick Eberstadt:*

Thank you, Lawrence. I want to see if we have any questions here. If so, I'd like to gather a couple of them together and then let Lawrence respond to them at that point after his responses I will declare an official end to our session and we'll cease the recording. If there seems to be a demand for continuing our discussion, I won't get in the way of that, but it'll be exofficial. So who has

*Participant 1:*

I'm going to leave. So I'll pass the question and then you'll tell me that the answer.

These things require money. Can you give us a little bit more detail about where the sources of funding that I mean? It doesn't require a huge amount of money through stop rate, but it does require some money. And paying a lot of money in this case. It's important for being able to, take the case of if they're

doing lobbying, for example, for a foreign government, that's a violation of federal law. So having the money trail strikes me as being pretty important.

*Lawrence Peck:*

I can give you a quick answer I can see because you're leaving I can just give a quick one and then address the other questions in line, but I want to catch you before you left so you could get it here from the horse's mouth.

And that is that they are well funded and they receive funding from left wing radical foundations, some of their big money, some of them the individuals who are involved in the movement have experience in grant writing so that they have various sugar daddies and sugar mamas so to speak. I know that in one case there was a Brazilian-Korean heiress who was married to an extremely wealthy American gentleman who had passed away and she contributed some money to them.

Also Warren Buffett's youngest son had an organization, a foundation called the Novo Foundation, very left wing organization, which granted \$2 million to a group of pro-North groups of the feminist variety including Women Cross DMZ. In addition to that they also I think receive a smaller amount correspondingly of funding from some pro North Korean charities, specifically charities which have been set up, the foundations, by pro-North Korean individuals. So that's basically those are the two branches from which they derive funding.

Thank you.

*Participant 2:*

Well, thank you very much and, Lawrence and your work has always been a very useful in our work on the Hill as well.

You alluded to cooperation among, with various left wing groups and also some that were pro CCP.

I was wondering if you could elaborate on that (Chinese Communist Party) and also on government ties, various front organizations, particularly the Communist Party United Front work organization if there's a collaboration with North Korean front organizations and also with other regimes such as Iran as well.

Thank you.

*Lawrence Peck:*

Thank you. That really goes to if I understand your question, correctly, the current buzzword for such kind of ties being “intersectionality” or what the communists used to refer to as “proletarian or revolutionary internationalism” in the old days of the USSR.

And that is something which they all in the pro North movement and in the allied movements deeply believe in and are deeply involved in.

So for example the pro-North groups will make common cause with, will invite to their events and participate in the events of other groups which are, for example, supportive of the Chinese Communist Party, which are supportive of the Communist New People's Army gorillas in the Philippines, which for example the group Nodutdol, which I mentioned to you, they send delegations to the Philippines to meet with supporters of the communist rebels there just like Nodutdol would send members to the Middle East to meet with supporters of anti-Israel and pro-terrorist organizations in the Middle East and they would issue statements. Groups from Women Cross DMZ to KANCC, whatever it was, in solidarity with these various other, whether they be Marxist-Leninist or pro-terrorist or just extreme left movements, they see themselves as part of the same anti-US, anti-imperialist, in some cases anti-Zionist cause.

They go to each other's events as I said they co-sponsor projects together, and in terms specifically, because I know you're interested in Chinese Communist Party affairs and influence operations, I should note that a few years, quite a few years ago, whether it was 10 or 15 or 20, you didn't hear much about China from the pro-North Korean forces at all. They were almost exclusively focused on the Korean Peninsula and related issues, but just recently over the past five years, most particularly over the past two or three years, they've kind of shifted in that regard and are now, many of the groups, both the hardcore groups and even the front groups. Excuse me, surprisingly, have come out more openly in defense of China's policies, particularly vis-a-vis the US and denouncing US so-called aggression against China and pressure against China and provocations against China in their statements.

And of course there was recently, over the past year, and again over the past couple of months, there has been the media attention to that kind of intersectionality involving the CCP and the pro-North groups because you had a number of media outlets reporting, most recently the *New York Times*, about the funding connection between individuals associated with the Code Pink organization, one of the co-founders of that and her husband who was linked up apparently with a Chinese propaganda network and funding some of the elements of that network within the US and even with other countries such as India. And it just so happens that some of the organizations which were identified as benefiting from the largesse of that sugar daddy for Code Pink and for the movement as a whole were organizations which were also involved with the pro-North movement.

As an example, there was a group among the lists that Mr. Singham, the husband of Jodie Evans, the co-founder of Code Pink was funding was known as the People's Forum based in New York and they have a

large meeting hall, meeting space, there and I noticed through my research that pro-North Korean groups both the Korea Peace Now / Women Cross DMZ and Nodutdol had taken advantage - had held meetings at this meeting hall of this group, the People's Forum, which again has been was being funded by that pro-CCP network.

And I was thinking, well, that might be considered a contribution in kind, stemming from the Chinese money flowing through the contribution in kind to these pro-North groups.

*Nick Eberstadt:*

Lawrence, thank you very much. I'm going to bring the official part of our meeting to a close now.