

## **Military Proliferation in the Kim Jong-un Era: The Impact on Human Rights in North Korea<sup>1</sup>**

Bruce E. Bechtol Jr. Ph.D.  
Angelo State University

### Abstract

North Korea has expanded and enhanced its proliferation efforts around the world since the end of the Cold War. Whether it is in the Middle East, Africa, or even someplace as far away as Cuba, North Korea continues to change its tactics, techniques, and procedures in order to bring in money for the regime and to support the elite, as well as the military and its programs. North Korea's proliferation program really consists of four key parts: 1) WMD and the platforms to carry them (ballistic missiles), 2) conventional weapons sales, 3) refurbishment of Soviet-era weapons for countries that still use them, and 4) technical and military assistance and advising. These programs have continued in the Kim Jong-un era, and have in some instances even expanded. North Korean proliferation presents an international security dilemma that policy makers should address in many nations – and take efforts to contain. The profits from North Korea's proliferation may be as high as in the billions of dollars, but they are not used to support the country's largely malnourished populace. This is – and has been for many years – a human rights issue.

Keywords: North Korea proliferation, North Korea human rights, North Korea – Iran, North Korea – Syria, North Korea weapons sales.

North Korea's active proliferation efforts have been a matter of debate almost since the very moment that the Cold War ended. In fact, some would have us believe that North Korea's proliferation efforts dropped off significantly with the end of the Cold War. For example, a scholar well known for his analysis of North Korea recently stated, "Opportunities for weapons sales have also clearly been on a downward slide since their heyday in the 1980s, and more recently as a result of the

combination of PSI and UN sanctions.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, just the opposite is true. North Korea’s sales of weapons, technology, and advising not only continued in the 1990s – it flourished and grew more robust. The number of countries the North Koreans proliferated to grew in the 1990s, and remains quite diverse today.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it is now proven that North Korea has proliferated nuclear technology to both Syria and Iran. Indeed, these actions by North Korea have increased in scope and focus because, since the end of the Cold War, they have become a basis for helping to maintain the real economy in North Korea.

It is important to understand that the diverse and widespread proliferation North Korea engages in constitutes a vital part of the country’s economy. But in order to clearly define how large this portion is and how it is maintained, one must first address North Korea’s tactics, techniques, and procedures; how they have changed over the years; and possible ways to deter, contain, or even stop Pyongyang’s proliferation. Thus, this is what I will do in the first section of this essay. I will then specifically address two key aspects of North Korea’s ongoing weapons development programs: nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. It is also important to note that I will be doing this in the context of the new Kim Jong-un era (since 2011). Therefore, the subject matter areas addressed above, and the other key issues I will address in this article, will be addressed in the contemporary context – a context that will show things remain in “all systems go” mode in the Kim Jong-un era when it comes to weapons development and proliferation.

Because there have been many who have questioned continued proliferation by North Korea – even today – I will address several specific case studies in this article. In this article, I will not cover every case of proliferation North Korea engages in – there is simply not enough room. But I will address what I consider to be the key examples of proliferation that North Korea has engaged in recently. These examples include North Korean proliferation to Iran, Syria, Cuba, Burma, and several nations in Africa. I have chosen these particular examples because North Korea’s proliferation to these nation-states has continued – and in some cases increased – during the Kim Jong-un era. I will conclude this essay by proposing what I consider to be realistic and pragmatic policy suggestions.

### **DPRK Proliferation Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures: Can They Be Stopped?**

The complexity that the DPRK uses in carrying out its ever-changing and well organized proliferation activities around the world is perhaps among the most important reasons that some analysts continue to assess that North Korea's military proliferation is much smaller and less sophisticated than is actually now the case. Much of this complexity is due to the rampant corruption that exists in North Korea.<sup>4</sup> North Korea faced a great dilemma in 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed. The small communist nation needed to do something to make up for at least some of the cash and resources that were lost when subsidies from the USSR were cut off in 1990. The answer? Turning to military proliferation for the profit of the Kim family and the regime. Thus a conscious effort was undertaken to step up proliferation efforts following the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> The goal of this section is to focus on the tactics, techniques, and procedures of North Korea's proliferation efforts during the Kim Jong-un regime, from December 2011 through the present.

A report by the UN issued in 2014 assessed that North Korea has essentially ignored or worked around UN sanctions. The report concluded that North Korea is using increasingly sophisticated methods to evade sanctions. The report also notes that North Korea is taking advantage of loose transshipment regulations, issuing false cargo declarations, falsifying shipping documents, and taking a variety of other actions meant to conceal proliferation activities. The report also made a key point regarding North Korea's proliferation efforts: it observed that the DPRK is active in "refurbishment efforts" to maintain older 1960s and 1970s vintage equipment in countries that still use it (like countries in the Middle East and Africa). To quote the report, "[The DPRK] is active in the refurbishment of arms produced in the former Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s such as jet fighters, surface-to-air missile systems, or anti-aircraft cannons, submarines, main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, howitzers, multiple rocket launchers, and mortars."<sup>6</sup> The 2014 UN report also stated that North Korea has no intention of dismantling its WMD programs.<sup>7</sup> Front companies also appear to be assisted by embassies in this effort, according to the UN report.<sup>8</sup> This leads to a key aspect of North Korea's proliferation. It essentially involves four efforts:

- WMD and the platforms to carry them (ballistic missiles);
- Conventional weapons sales;

- Refurbishment of Soviet-era weapons for countries that still use them; and
- Technical and military assistance and advising.

According to economist Cho Bong-hyun, since Kim Jong-un has taken over from his deceased father, the “informal economy” is thriving. Cho states that the informal economy of the DPRK is worth somewhere between \$1 billion and \$3 billion dollars.<sup>9</sup> This is actually a very conservative estimate. The informal economy includes proliferation (as discussed in this article) and illicit activities, such as drug manufacturing and importation, and counterfeiting of American \$100 bills and Western brands of cigarettes – but the largest portion of this probably comes from proliferation.

During 2013, the South Korean government was able to trace hundreds of North Korean accounts in several countries estimated to be worth up to \$5 billion dollars in total. The countries with the dummy accounts included China, Russia, Singapore, Switzerland, and Australia.<sup>10</sup> Of course, according to this report and others, the biggest “laundry and slush fund” accounts are in China. For example, in China, since the shut down of the infamous Banco Delta Asia account, North Korea has diversified and has dozens of accounts for laundering its money from proliferation and illicit activities at a variety of banks and bank branches across the Chinese mainland.<sup>11</sup> During May of 2013, the Bank of China announced it would close bank accounts held by North Korea’s key bank, Foreign Trade Bank. Some cited this as evidence that China was finally serious about cracking down on North Korea’s dirty money.<sup>12</sup> Some other banks in China have joined in this effort – but many banks in China continue to launder (legally or illegally) North Korea’s money from proliferation activities.<sup>13</sup>

The U.S. has recently urged other nations to cut North Korea’s financial links and to conduct investigations of questionable accounts. But so far the jury is still out. Former George W. Bush administration official David Asher has stated that financial sanctions – sanctions that would harken back to 2005, when Banco Delta Asia set off a snowball effect that truly hurt North Korea – are the key to taking truly useful actions that would curb Pyongyang’s rogue state activities.<sup>14</sup> According to “North Korea Watcher” Bradley Babson, the North Korean system of banks, foreign exchange enterprises, and trading companies has evolved in a fragmented way since the early 1990s (and the Soviet collapse). This system is now so complex that it is difficult at times for even the

North Korean government to control it. Of course, the natural outgrowth of this has been corruption – which was likely at least partly to blame for Kim’s key adviser, Jang Sung-taek, being executed. Jang was one of several key individuals who helped funnel the monies from overseas into slush funds and dummy bank accounts.<sup>15</sup> His execution shows that the Kim family intends to stay firmly in control of the continuing flow of billions of dollars that no nation and no agency has been able to stop.

### **North Korea’s Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Programs in the Kim Jong-un Era**

It is important to note the progress in North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs (the two North Korean military components that receive the most attention from the international community) because this is directly tied into Pyongyang’s proliferation to rogue states such as Iran and Syria. Thus, in this section, I will address the progress made in these two key programs in the Kim Jong-un era (from December 2011 to 2014). By understanding the statuses of the DPRK’s nuclear and missile programs in terms of capabilities and deployment, we can also put into context how the proliferation of WMD is such a key – and growing – part of North Korea’s proliferation efforts.

In 2013, the South Korean Ministry of Unification announced that there were 15 confirmed nuclear facilities or laboratories located at Yongbyon – with others located elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> By August of 2013, North Korea had reportedly doubled the size of its centrifuge facilities for creating highly enriched uranium (HEU) for nuclear weapons. This facility alone (and there are likely other facilities), now clearly gives North Korea the capability to produce more HEU for nuclear weapons, at a faster rate.<sup>17</sup> This disturbing information, combined with evidence that North Korea may be able to independently produce crucial components for centrifuges needed to produce HEU weapons, shows that North Korea continues to advance and modernize its nuclear weaponization program in the Kim Jong-un era.<sup>18</sup> Alarmingly, Iranians were also apparently present at North Korean nuclear tests – the last of which appeared to be the most successful.<sup>19</sup>

While North Korea continued to develop and expand its nuclear facilities and apparently its nuclear weaponization capabilities in the early stages of the Kim Jong-un era, Pyongyang’s missile programs and related proliferation efforts were anything but stagnant. One of the key developments in the North Korean ballistic missile program is a mobile

ICBM known in the West as the KN-08. Based on reports from think tanks that have analyzed this missile – a missile deemed capable of hitting parts of the United States when operational – progress appears to be proceeding fairly rapidly.<sup>20</sup> This is on top of the fact that North Korea successfully tested the Taepodong-2 – a missile considered capable of hitting Alaska and Hawaii at a minimum – through all three stages of its flight in 2012.<sup>21</sup> The Pacific Command commander, Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, stated during November of 2013 that the KN-08 is a “serious threat with the potential to hit the United States with a nuclear warhead.”<sup>22</sup>

To make the North Korean missile capability picture even more muddy (not that it has ever been clear), during the summer of 2013, it became clear that the transporter-erector-launchers the North Koreans are using for this new ICBM (KN-08) were purchased from a Chinese firm in direct violation of sanctions. The Chinese government of course denies that they knew these vehicles would be used for military purposes.<sup>23</sup>

These new missile developments (and nuclear weaponization developments) are of course directly related to the evidence that links North Korea to widespread and sophisticated proliferation during the Kim Jong-un era. Because North Korea has a wide variety of ballistic missiles with a variety of ranges, Pyongyang can sell its missiles to almost anyone who wants or needs them (depending on what the client wants). In fact, during the summer of 2013, a UK arms dealer acting as a representative for a Central Asian country was offered missiles with a range corresponding to the Musudan – a ballistic missile with a range of approximately 4,000 kilometers. The individual was also offered small arms and light weapons, GPS jammers, and MRL systems.<sup>24</sup> I will describe a wide swath of military proliferation actions North Korea has taken since 2011, but the bottom line is that many experts have now consigned themselves to the fact that North Korea continues to get around UN sanctions imposed in the wake of the country’s missile and long-range ballistic missile tests.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, reports in the South Korean press during fall 2013 revealed that the North Koreans have built underground silos in the far northern area of their nation. The missile silos are apparently for housing medium-range ballistic missiles – such as the aforementioned Musudan (or possibly even the Nodong). These underground silos were built close to China – making targeting and destruction of the sites difficult.<sup>26</sup>

## **North Korean Proliferation to Iran in the Kim Jong-un Era**

North Korea has had a long and lucrative relationship with Iran since the early 1980s. Since then, North Korea has shipped ballistic missiles (of nearly every kind produced by Pyongyang), military advisers, engineers, technicians, and trainers to Iran. North Korea has shipped nuclear technology, missile technology, conventional weapons, and numerous spare parts to Iran. But they have also shipped conventional weapons and spare parts to Iran's proxy force, Hezbollah. This has, as I said, been occurring for years. But the focus of this section of the article will be to reflect on what North Korea has proliferated to Iran during the Kim Jong-un era.

In February 2014, North Korea and Iran formally discussed an expansion of ties between the two countries. It was obvious from the public announcements following the meetings that Iran and North Korea would continue to maintain strong bilateral ties despite numerous cultural and political differences; in other words, it is all about the money and the weapons.<sup>27</sup> While the public act of working together has important symbolic importance, in reality, the two countries have continued their very close relationship in arms dealing (North Korea proliferates WMD and conventional weapons to Iran) during the Kim Jong-un era. This is perhaps North Korea's most important proliferation relationship – and most profitable – and it has a long and diverse history involving a variety of weapons systems.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, since Kim Jong-un took over the government following his father's death, there have been some very important developments in this relationship.

In the fall of 2013, it was revealed that Iranian technicians were secretly visiting North Korea to take part in the joint development of a new rocket booster for a long-range ballistic missile. Reportedly, several groups from the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG) had visited North Korea, as recently as in October 2013. SHIG is the group in Iran that is reportedly in charge of building Tehran's liquid-fueled ballistic missiles. The Iranians were, according to reports, working with the North Koreans on an 80-ton rocket booster that Pyongyang is developing. The booster may be intended to boost the range of the ICBM's North Korea is developing.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Iranian scientists and engineers have reportedly been in North Korea on and off since 1993, purchasing technology and WMD components, receiving training, and acquiring weapons.<sup>30</sup> In fact, according to reports in the United States,

Iran is financing much of the cost of North Korea's ICBM programs in exchange for technology and components. According to unnamed US officials, Iran has "attended virtually all intermediate- and long-range missile tests by North Korea." These officials remarked that "North Korean technology was determined to have helped Tehran complete its recent missile development programs, including the solid-fuel Sejil."<sup>31</sup>

Iran's development of WMD and the platforms that carry them has progressed in the Kim Jong-un era beyond just the missile realm. In fact, during 2013 some rather disturbing evidence was revealed about North Korea's assistance to Iran in a new nuclear weaponization program – which would give Iran a two-track nuclear weaponization program just like the one Pyongyang possesses. According to a variety of sources, North Korea is assisting Iran with development of a Plutonium nuclear reactor that could potentially produce fuel for nuclear weapons within two to five years. Meir Dagan, the former director of the Mossad in Israel, told reporters in South Korea that North Korea has "played a major role in the building of a Plutonium reactor in Iran."<sup>32</sup> With North Korea providing the technical expertise, scientific knowledge, and engineers and workers to assist Iran with its new Plutonium program, Pyongyang has now become an abettor of the key threat in the Middle East to the security and stability of Israel.<sup>33</sup> North Korea has already been assisting Iran with its highly enriched uranium program for many years – and Iranians were present at North Korea's last underground nuclear test.<sup>34</sup>

### **North Korea Proliferation to Syria in the Kim Jong-un Era**

North Korea has been proliferating chemical weapons, ballistic missiles, conventional arms, and advisers, trainers, engineers, and technicians for a variety of projects to Syria for many years. But in the 1990s these efforts really picked up steam. In fact, one of the principle "front men" for coordinating proliferation and support operations is Syria is the all-powerful Kim Kyok-sik, one of the key elite figures in North Korea. Kim was the deputy military attaché to Syria back in the early 1970s.<sup>35</sup> But North Korean proliferation – in the forms that I addressed earlier in this article – has been stepped up significantly during the Kim Jong-un era in light of a needy Syrian customer fighting a civil war. (North Korea has also supported Syria through proliferation and advisers in past conflicts.)<sup>36</sup> In this section, I will address this issue, and the fact that it is perhaps the most compelling proliferation dilemma regarding



North Korea since the death of Kim Jong-il.

The evidence supports an assessment that Kim Jong-un's era has ushered in a new period of proliferation to and support of the Syrian regime. In fact, Kim Jong-un himself reportedly discussed how North Korea could best increase support (as long as they were compensated) to Syria in a meeting on July 24, 2013 with a visiting Syrian government delegation. According to reports from 2013, the North Koreans have increased the number of advisers assisting Syria's defense ministry – particularly in facilities near the city of Aleppo, where they have supported engineering and construction to repair destroyed military infrastructure, assisted in operational planning, and even supervised combat artillery warfare.<sup>37</sup> According to a member of the non-government Syrian dissident group the *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights*, during the summer of 2013, there were 11 to 15 North Korean advisers serving in a variety of areas near Aleppo – including with combat units.<sup>38</sup> According to sources in the Lebanese press, there were "...confirmed reports that officers from North Korea are present with regular forces, and aiding them with logistics and operational plans in Aleppo."<sup>39</sup> In fact, according to Middle Eastern security officials, North Koreans and Iranians were working together in an operations room for the Syrian army, as it looked to a possible showdown with Western powers during the summer of 2013. The advisers from Iran and North Korea were reportedly working together to strengthen Syria's air defense systems and to help maintain the Syrian regime's missile arsenal.<sup>40</sup> Syria was of course using up many of its Scuds – and still is – by launching them at its own people.

During November 2013, still more evidence was revealed about North Korean proliferation and assistance to the Syrian military. According to several reports, North Korean pilots – about 15 of them – were flying combat helicopter sorties for the Syrian air force. This obviously augmented the support to Syrian ground forces discussed above. Reportedly, the North Korean pilots are likely to be flying either Mi-2's or Mi-8's for the Syrian air force. The pilots have actually been observed in the cockpits of Syrian military helicopters during air strikes against rebel positions in the Syrian civil war. This of course augments the many times that North Korean advisers have been spotted in combat artillery and ballistic missile (Scud) units.<sup>41</sup>

While advisers in key units are important, there is even more compelling data on North Korea's proliferation of weapons and advising.

According to the Israeli press, North Korea is helping Syria to rebuild its missile capability. This of course should not come as a surprise, since the Syrian army has fired many Scud missiles at rebel forces during their civil war. Ballistic missiles in any war would need to be replaced or repaired. According to reports, the North Koreans have provided (for a price, of course) the technology to convert chemical weapons into warheads for missiles (presumably Scuds). They are also helping the Syrians to repair damaged missiles. The North Koreans assisting the Syrians are said to be contracted by the *Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Center* (SSRC). The North Koreans are using the front company of “*Tangun General Corporation*” – and others. The North Koreans actually designed and built Syria’s chemical weapons and missile facilities. Pyongyang has reportedly bolstered missile cooperation with Syria through secret agreements signed in 2012. The money to pay the North Koreans is said to come from Iranian financing and Syrian “bartering” with agricultural goods. Other information that has emerged recently indicates that *Tangun Trading Corporation* is working with SSRC at a compound known as “Project 99.” At this compound, they are allegedly working on improving the range of Scud-D missiles, which currently have a range of about 435 miles. The need to produce large numbers of ballistic missiles is key, since the Syrian army is utilizing its Scuds to conduct operations against the rebel forces. That the North Koreans are refurbishing Syria’s existing missiles and helping to manufacture new ones also means that the Syrians and North Koreans can bypass sanctions targeting aircraft or maritime platforms.<sup>42</sup>

Of course, while North Korea has been assisting Syria with a variety of military programs being used to fight the rebels in the latter’s ongoing civil war, perhaps the most compelling program being supported is Syria’s chemical weapons. According to a variety of sources, North Korea is playing a vital role in Syria’s chemical weapons program – the program used against Syrian citizens. In addition to the sales of the chemical weapons systems, the construction of chemical weapons facilities, and the advisers actually helping Syrian troops in combat zones, North Korea reportedly is providing “after-sales” services to their Syrian customers.<sup>43</sup> In other words, the North Koreans are participating in the program from “cradle to grave.”

In 2013, a UN panel found that there was a variety of evidence pointing to North Korea's proliferation of chemical weapons and related materials to Syria.<sup>44</sup> According to reports from UN-backed inspectors who have been destroying chemical weapons in Syria, the items being destroyed included rockets and artillery shells filled with chemical agents.<sup>45</sup> And thus we see a clear pattern: North Korea has supplied chemical weapons to Syria (along with training) for many years. As civil war broke out, North Korea deployed military advisers to both artillery units and ballistic missile units. Advisers were present at missile and chemical weapons fabrication facilities already, but their numbers were likely increased because of the ongoing civil war. These specialists then helped the Syrians to couple the chemical weapons to the artillery and missile platforms that launched them against the Syrian rebels. North Koreans likely assisted in the launching of these chemical weapons against rebels. To make matters worse, according to a defecting Syrian army officer, "a large part" of Syria's chemical weapons were removed from storage at Mount Qassioun in Syria, possibly during the fall of 2012. The weapons were then transferred via civilian vehicles driven by Hezbollah troops to locations in the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon.<sup>46</sup> If this officer's report is true, it means that Hezbollah is now in possession of large quantities of deadly, North Korean-manufactured chemical weapons.

### **North Korean Proliferation to Burma in the Kim Jong-un Era: Still an Issue?**

North Korea's relationship with Burma has had many people scratching their heads for many years – myself included. In 1983, North Korea detonated a bomb in Rangoon that killed several members of then-President Chun's cabinet.<sup>47</sup> Despite this event, a budding relationship grew between the two nations during the 1990s and the Kim Jong-il era. North Korea sold a variety of conventional weapons to Burma and helped the then-pariah state to build underground tunnels for a variety of military purposes. There is even evidence that Pyongyang was helping the Rangoon government to build a nuclear weapons program.<sup>48</sup> Like many other analysts, I was simply stunned several years ago when the evidence pointed to these aspects of Burma's relationship with Pyongyang – including acquiring a nuclear weaponization program. The ultimate question is, of course, "why?" This question has never been answered.

Things have most definitely changed in Burma. The formerly highly isolated government has now taken significant steps toward democracy, has addressed human rights issues with its own people (although we shall see how far this goes), and has told American diplomats that the government has severed its military and proliferation ties with North Korea. And yet the evidence continues to indicate that Burma's military relationship with North Korea – and its nuclear weapons development program being built with North Korean assistance – continues.<sup>49</sup>

Despite calls for caution, the Obama administration has moved toward a closer relationship with Rangoon, and eased many sanctions that were formerly in place. But the evidence continues to show that Burma has not abandoned its dream of a nuclear weaponization program or its relationship with North Korea. It appears that Pyongyang and Rangoon have decided to be more discreet about their relationship – something the North Koreans are very good at. During July 2013, the Obama administration sanctioned Burmese Lieutenant General Thein Htay, who is in charge of Burma's Directorate of Defense Industries. The general leads a missile research and development facility in Burma. The administration's action prohibited U.S. citizens from conducting transactions with the Burmese general and froze any assets he may have had in the United States. Oddly, the Obama administration specifically did not target the government of Burma, which the spokesman for the White House said has, "continued to take positive steps in severing its military ties with North Korea."<sup>50</sup> This is strange, in my view, since such a statement assumes that the Burmese general (and presumably others) is "acting on his own without the knowledge of the government," which would be very unusual for a man developing missiles and nuclear weapons. Thus, the questions regarding North Korea's (perhaps) ongoing proliferation to Burma continue.

### **The Strange Case of North Korean Proliferation to Cuba**

During July 2013, Panamanian authorities in the Panama Canal seized a North Korean cargo ship transiting from Cuba that had declared it was carrying sugar. Reportedly, Panamanian authorities were tipped off by the American government, which had been monitoring the ship's activities. The Panamanian authorities detained the crew and its captain – who originally violently resisted their efforts to search the ship. Cuba almost immediately declared that the ship was carrying "obsolete" military parts and systems bound to North Korea for repair and return.

The Cuban government also told Panama that the ship was carrying a sugar donation to the North Koreans. The initial search of the ship uncovered, under tons of sugar, anti-aircraft missile systems, several types of ammunition, and two MiG-21s with spare parts and engines.<sup>51</sup>

After a complete search of the North Korean cargo ship, it became obvious that the “repair and return” mission was probably only part of what was going on. A total of 25 shipping containers and six vehicles were found beneath approximately 200,000 bags of sugar. The shipment (in addition to the MiGs and anti-aircraft systems) was revealed to include a wide variety of small arms and ammunition, conventional artillery ammunition, anti-tank guns, howitzer artillery systems, batteries, night vision goggles, rocket propelled grenades, and other items. Much of the gear was still in its original packing cases. Thus, it appears the mission of the cargo ship was two-fold. The North Koreans were probably going to repair some of the systems, and were likely purchasing others. The Panamanian government contacted the UN to bring international inspectors in, fined the North Korean government, and continued to temporarily detain the North Korean crew. The cargo and mission of the ship were clearly a violation of UN sanctions on North Korea.<sup>52</sup>

The capture of a North Korean cargo ship and Cuba’s admission that it was secretly having its weapons refurbished by the North Koreans revealed still more evidence about a thriving practice the North Koreans have of repairing aging Soviet-era equipment for the many countries that still use it. This was clearly at least partially the case with the ship carrying weapons through the Panama Canal. This most recent deal was apparently brokered by Kim family insider Kim Kyok-sik on a trip he made to Cuba. Eventually, North Korea paid the fine and the ship was returned – along with the entire crew. According to recent reports, another very similar cargo ship made the same trip from North Korea to Cuba, and then returned through the Panama Canal. In fact, according to maritime tracking records, five North Korean ships have gone through the Panama Canal since 2008 – suggesting that this is a fairly routine proliferation venue.<sup>53</sup>

### **North Korean Proliferation to African Nations in the Kim Jong-un Era**

It should be obvious from the events that occurred vis-à-vis Cuba during 2013 that North Korea’s thriving industry of supplying spare

parts, maintenance, and training for countries that continue to use Soviet-era weaponry is alive and well. In fact, according to Jeffrey Lewis of the Monterey Institute for International Studies, the North Korean “refurbishment” story clears up the mystery of who was upgrading and maintaining Cuba’s military equipment – since Russia is apparently not doing it. In addition, the fact that North Korea will often take barter instead of hard currency for its services (and has operated this way for many years) makes the North Koreans a very attractive government to deal with.<sup>54</sup> But North Korea also markets its goods and services – which are badly needed – to another key area of the world that has proven to be quite lucrative for Pyongyang since the end of the Cold War: Africa.

There are so many countries in Africa that North Korea provides goods and services to that, in the interest of space, I cannot list all of the activities here. I will instead focus on the proliferation activities (not all of them, but just the key activities) that have occurred since the beginning of the Kim Jong-un era. African countries that North Korea continues to sell military weapons, refurbishment, and training to in the Kim Jong-un era include, but are not limited to, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Congo (Brazzaville), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe, Uganda, and even Egypt.<sup>55</sup> I will go through some key examples of this proliferation as we progress through the rest of this essay.

During the summer of 2013, North Korean Vice Minister Ri Song Chol of the Ministry of Peoples Security visited Uganda and signed yet another memorandum of understanding with that African nation regarding contracted North Korean support for its police forces, its maritime security forces, and perhaps even its secretive security units.<sup>56</sup> Yet another African nation that North Korea continues to do business with is Eritrea. This is fitting with the North Korean *modus operandi* of dealing with isolated countries that find it hard to do business with most nation-states that follow international norms – a factor that North Korea of course considers to be to its advantage.<sup>57</sup> At least some of the arms that North Korea has sold to Eritrea have likely ended up in the hands of the terrorist group al-Shabaab.<sup>58</sup>

Ironically, North Korea – for many years – has apparently been supplying arms, maintenance, and training to *both* Eritrea and Ethiopia, two nations that have been at war off and on almost constantly for many years. In Ethiopia, North Korea has long been an arms supplier, trained Ethiopian troops, and even participated in some combat operations. According to a variety of sources, the United States even looked the

other way in 2007, as Ethiopia's army took on military shipments from the North Koreans in order to conduct an offensive into Somalia.<sup>59</sup> The provision of arms, maintenance, and training continues today, amid reports that that North Korea is now helping Ethiopia develop its munitions factories.<sup>60</sup> Farther south, North Korea is said to be trading arms imports and training for uranium mining rights in Zimbabwe and the DRC. North Korea is said to be providing such small arms as the "Type 58" assault rifle. The leadership of the DRC is reportedly helping to smuggle the uranium out of Africa for North Korea (probably in exchange for arms). The arms deal with Zimbabwe, which is ongoing, reportedly includes a multi-million dollar cash deal in addition to granting of mining rights.<sup>61</sup>

Moving back north in Africa, even as a "cultural cooperation" agreement was being signed between North Korea and Egypt in 2013, press sources published information that was said to have been leaked from American intelligence officials – evidence suggesting the North Koreans have been helping the Egyptians to upgrade the capabilities of their ballistic missiles (Scuds).<sup>62</sup> The Egyptians actually were the first ones to give the North Koreans a Scud missile – back in the late 1970s (probably for a price). Of course, the North Koreans then used it to produce several different kinds of ballistic missiles, and then assisted the Egyptians in being able to produce them on their own soil. So, literally, the North Koreans got a ballistic missile from the Egyptians, used it as the basis for much of their missile program, and then turned around and proliferated these missiles – for a price – to the Egyptians. The military relationship – and economic relationship – continues today.<sup>63</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully, it is obvious from this essay that North Korea has made a concerted effort under the Kim Jong-un government to maintain the high level of military proliferation around the world that existed under Kim Jong-il. In fact, we have seen the level of proliferation even go to a higher level in places like Syria over the past two years (roughly since the beginning of 2012).<sup>64</sup> But what does this have to do with human rights in North Korea? The high level of proliferation North Korea has maintained during the Kim Jong-il era has made a great deal of money for the government in Pyongyang. The question is, how much? Larry Nicksch, a retired Congressional Research Service analyst and adjunct Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) fellow, estimated in

2011 that North Korea earns “between \$1.5 billion and \$2.0 billion annually from its multi-faceted collaboration with Iran (including support for the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas).”<sup>65</sup> Iran is certainly North Korea’s biggest customer – and has been for many years (and these efforts may have increased more since 2011 because of North Korea’s support to Hezbollah).<sup>66</sup> And yet, as this essay has shown, North Korea has many customers, literally around the world. And some of this has even increased over the past 2-5 years (Syria is an excellent example).

Thus, we are led back to the difficult issue of just how much North Korea is making in profits off of all these efforts. The answer appears to be in the billions of dollars. While some may opine that this is an overestimate, the complexity and largesse of these proliferation operations suggest otherwise. That leads us to the next issue – in fact *the* issue – of why this is a human rights concern. Is Pyongyang a government under numerous sanctions struggling to use proliferation to help take care of its people? The answer is no. These billions of dollars are instead used to take care of the North Korean elite; develop WMD programs, including ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons; and maintain the country’s military.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the United States, South Korea, and the world must intensify efforts to contain North Korea’s proliferation, because all the DPRK’s proliferation does is maintain a rogue government in power at the expense of millions of malnourished and oppressed people.

## Notes:

---

<sup>1</sup>The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Angelo State University

<sup>2</sup> See Stephan Haggard, “North Korea Witness to Transformation,” *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, May 30, 2013, available at: <http://blogs.piie.com/nk/?p=10485>.

<sup>3</sup> See Eben Harrell, “Pyongyang’s Proliferation,” *Time*, December 20, 2011, available at: <http://nation.time.com/2011/12/20/pyongyangs-proliferation/>.

<sup>4</sup> See Oliver Hotham, “North Korea is Among Most Corrupt Nations on Earth, Says NGO,” *NK News*, December 4, 2013, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2013/12/north-korea-is-among-most-corrupt-nations-on-earth-says-ngo/>.

<sup>5</sup> For more on the difficulties that the DPRK had with survival and foreign relations following the demise of the Soviet Union, see: Samuel Kim, *North*



---

*Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War World* (Carlisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), available at:  
<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub772.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Leo Byrne, "North Korea Uses 'Multiple and Tiered' Techniques to Evade Sanctions," *NK News*, March 11, 2014, available at:  
<http://www.nknews.org/2014/03/north-korea-uses-multiple-and-tiered-techniques-to-evade-sanctions/>.

<sup>7</sup> Kim Hee-jin, "Pyongyang Keep Exporting Arms, Says UN Panel," *Joongang Ilbo*, March 12, 2014, available at:  
<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2986218>.

<sup>8</sup> James Pearson, "Front Companies, Embassies Mask North Korean Weapons Trade: UN," *Reuters*, March 11, 2014, available at:  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/11/us-korea-korea-un-idUSBREA2A08020140311>.

<sup>9</sup> "North Korea's Informal Economy Thrives," *Chosun Ilbo*, November 16, 2013, available at:  
[http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/11/16/2013111600456.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/11/16/2013111600456.html).

<sup>10</sup> "S Korea's Report on Secret DPRK Accounts Unlikely to Win US Support," *China Times*, March 26, 2013, available at:  
<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20130326000003&cid=1501>.

<sup>11</sup> Ahn Sung-kyo, "North Money Laundering Dong in Guangdong," *Joongang Ilbo*, June 8, 2013, available at:  
<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2972627>.

<sup>12</sup> Yang Jung-a, "Banks Put a Big Fly in NK Ointment," *Daily NK*, May 9, 2013, available at:  
<https://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk00400&num=10560>.

<sup>13</sup> "More Chinese Lenders Join Restrictions Against N. Korean Bank: Source," *Yonhap*, May 10, 2013, available at:  
<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/05/10/14/0401000000AEN20130510007800315F.HTML>.

<sup>14</sup> "Financial Sanctions Key to Denuking N. Korea: Former U.S. Official," *Yonhap*, September 26, 2013, available at:  
<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/interview/2013/09/25/70/0800000000AEN20130925009000315F.html>.

<sup>15</sup> For more analysis on the affect that recent internal politics in North Korea have had on their proliferation activities, see Bradley O. Babsen, "The Demise

---

of Jang Song Thaek and the Future of North Korea's Financial System," 38 *North*, February 24, 2014, available at: <http://38north.org/2014/02/bbabson022414/>.

<sup>16</sup> "N. Korea's Nuclear Facilities Located Mostly in Yongbyon: Gov't," *Yonhap*, October 14, 2013, available at: <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2013/10/14/18/0200000000AEN20131014008600315F.html>.

<sup>17</sup> See Rick Gladstone and Gerry Mullany, "Study Suggests North Korea is Doubling Area Devoted to Uranium Enrichment," *New York Times*, August 7, 2013, available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/08/world/asia/north-korea-uranium-enrichment.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/08/world/asia/north-korea-uranium-enrichment.html?_r=0).

<sup>18</sup> Choe Sang-hun, "North Korea Learning to Make Crucial Nuclear Parts, Study Finds," *New York Times*, September 25, 2013, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/world/asia/north-korea-learning-to-make-crucial-nuclear-parts-study-finds.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>19</sup> David Albright, "Prepared Testimony of David Albright, President, Institute for Science and International Security," Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, April 11, 2013, available at: <http://missilethreat.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/HHRG-113-FA13-Wstate-AlbrightD-20130411.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> "Report: North Korea's ICBM Prototypes Getting 'Scary Good'," *Voice of America*, November 6, 2013, available at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/report-nkoreas-icbm-prototypes-getting-scary-good/1783651.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Rachel Oswald, "North Korea is Making Progress on an ICBM," *Global Security Newswire*, November 5, 2013, available at: <http://www.defenseone.com/threats/2013/11/north-korea-making-progress-icbm/73280/>.

<sup>22</sup> Bill Gertz, "Inside the Ring: North Korean Missiles Deemed a Serious Threat to the U.S.," *Washington Times*, November 6, 2013, available at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/nov/6/inside-the-ring-north-korean-missiles-deemed-a-ser/?page=all>.

<sup>23</sup> "N. Korea 'deliberately breached' Chinese Contract Over Missile Vehicles: UN Report," *Yonhap*, June 26, 2013, available at: <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2013/06/26/50/0200000000AEN20130626005000315F.HTML>.

---

<sup>24</sup> Chad O'Carroll, "North Korea Tried to Sell 3,500 KM Range Missiles – Arms Trader," *NK News*, June 25, 2013, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2013/06/north-korea-tried-to-sell-3500km-range-missiles-arms-trader/>.

<sup>25</sup> Soon-ho Lee, "Are Efforts to Stop North Korean Missile Trade Futile?" *The Diplomat*, July 27, 2013, available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2013/07/are-efforts-to-stop-north-korean-missile-trade-futile/>.

<sup>26</sup> Jeong Yong-soo, "North Digs Silos for Missiles in Mt. Paektu Area," *JoongAng Ilbo*, October 10, 2013, available at: <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2978649>.

<sup>27</sup> For more on the talks between Iran and North Korea in February 2014, see: "Iran, North Korea Discuss Expansion of Ties," *FARS News Agency*, February 24, 2014, available at: <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13921205001438>.

<sup>28</sup> For some excellent reading on the long history of the North Korea – Iran proliferation relationship, see: Alon Levkowitz, "Iran and North Korea Military Cooperation: A Partnership Within the Axis of Evil," *The Alliance Center for Iranian Studies*, Review Number 10, February 26, 2007, available at: <http://humanities.tau.ac.il/iranian/en/previous-reviews/10-iran-pulse-en/117-10>.

<sup>29</sup> Bill Gertz, "Iran, North Korea Secretly Developing New Long-Range Rocket Booster for ICBM's," *Washington Free Beacon*, November 26, 2013, available at: <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/iran-north-korea-secretly-developing-new-long-range-rocket-booster-for-icbms/>.

<sup>30</sup> "Kerry Duped as North Korea and Iran Develop New ICBM," *Investor's Business Daily*, November 29, 2013, available at: <http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/112913-681106-iran-north-korea-developing-new-rocket-booster.htm?ven=rss&p=full>.

<sup>31</sup> "U.S. Intel: Iran Financing North Korean ICBM's in Exchange for Technology, Components," *World Tribune*, December 4, 2013, available at: <http://www.worldtribune.com/2013/12/04/u-s-intel-iran-financing-north-korean-icbms-in-exchange-for-technology-components/>.

<sup>32</sup> Jang Yong-seung and Ahn Jeong-hoon, "Meir Dagan: N. Korea is Already Nuclear Power," *MK Business News*, October 16, 2013, available at: <http://news.mk.co.kr/english/newsRead.php?rss=Y&sc=30800011&year=2013&no=986632>.

<sup>33</sup> For more analysis on North Korea's support to Iran's plutonium program, see: Ephraim Asculai, "The Plutonium Track: Implications for the Completion of

---

Iran's Heavy Water Reactor at Arak," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, Discussion Meeting, September 11, 2013, available at: <https://www.iiss.org/en/events/events/archive/2013-5126/september-03c7/the-plutonium-track-766d>; and Jay Solomon, "Iran Seen Trying New Path to a Bomb," *Wall Street Journal*, August 5, 2013, available at: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323997004578644140963633244> .

<sup>34</sup> "Iranian Nuke Chief was in N. Korea for Atomic Test," *The Times of Israel*, February 17, 2013, available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-nuke-chief-was-in-n-korea-for-atomic-test/>.

<sup>35</sup> "With KPA Assets in Syria and Rumors of Moscow Trip, Gen. Kim Kyok Sik Remains PY Man of the Hour," *North Korean Leadership Watch*, June 4, 2013, available at: <http://nkleadershipwatch.wordpress.com/2013/06/04/with-kpa-assets-in-syria-and-rumors-of-moscow-trip-gen-kim-kyok-sik-remains-py-man-of-the-hour/>.

<sup>36</sup> See "N. Korean Army Chief Fingering in Syria Connection," *Chosun Ilbo*, June 11, 2013, available at: [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/06/11/2013061101459.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/06/11/2013061101459.html).

<sup>37</sup> Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," *38 North*, November 25, 2013, available at: <http://38north.org/2013/11/amansourov112513/>.

<sup>38</sup> "N. Korean Officers 'Helping Syrian Gov't Forces,'" *Chosun Ilbo*, June 5, 2013, available at: [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/06/05/2013060501134.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/06/05/2013060501134.html).

<sup>39</sup> Olivia Alabaster, "North Korea Boosting Ground Support to Regime," *The Daily Star*, June 8, 2013, available at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jun-08/219763-north-korea-boosting-ground-support-to-regime.ashx#axzz2ySminqFx>.

<sup>40</sup> Aaron Klein, "Iran, N. Korea Run Operations Room in Syria," *World Net Daily*, August 27, 2013, available at: <http://www.wnd.com/2013/08/iran-n-korea-run-operations-room-in-syria/>.

<sup>41</sup> For more analysis on North Korean advisers supporting Syrian air force units, as well as artillery and missile units, see: Oliver Hotham, "Activist: Assad Has Hired N. Korean Pilots for Air Strikes," *NK News*, October 29, 2013, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2013/10/activist-assad-has-hired-n-korean-pilots-for-air-strikes/>; Jonathan Spyer, "Behind the Lines: Assad's North Korean Connection," *Jerusalem Post*, November 2, 2013, available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Features/Front-Lines/Behind-The-Lines-Assads-North->

---

Korean-connection-330303; and “North Korean Pilots ‘Helping Syrian Gov’t in Raids on Rebels,” *Chosun Ilbo*, November 11, 2013, available at: [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/11/11/2013111101689.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/11/11/2013111101689.html).

<sup>42</sup> For more analysis on North Korea’s support to Syria’s ballistic missile programs, see: Nate Thayer, “North Korea and Syrian Chemical and Missile Programs,” *NK News*, June 19, 2013, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2013/06/north-korea-and-syrian-chemical-and-missile-programs/>; Aaron Klein, “N. Korea Rebuilding Damaged Syrian Missiles,” *World News Daily*, June 18, 2013, available at: <http://www.wnd.com/2013/06/n-korea-rebuilding-damaged-syrian-missiles/>; and Oliver Hotham, “N. Korea Assisting Syria in Improving Missile Capabilities: Report,” *NK News*, January 30, 2014, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2014/01/n-korea-assisting-syria-in-improving-missile-capabilities-report/>.

<sup>43</sup> Vasudevan Sridharan, “North Korea Assisting Syrian Regime with Chemical Weapons,” *International Business Times*, June 17, 2013, available at: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/north-korea-syria-chemical-weapons-assad-pyongyang-479554>.

<sup>44</sup> “Reports: Cash-Strapped N. Korea ‘stepped up’ Chemical Weapons Shipments to Syria,” *World Tribune*, August 26, 2013, available at: <http://www.worldtribune.com/2013/08/26/reports-cash-strapped-n-korea-stepped-up-chemical-weapons-shipments-to-syria/>.

<sup>45</sup> See John McCreary, “Nightwatch 20131007,” *Night Watch*, October 7, 2013, available at: [http://www.kforcegov.com/NightWatch/NightWatch\\_13000212.aspx](http://www.kforcegov.com/NightWatch/NightWatch_13000212.aspx).

<sup>46</sup> Yuri Yanover, “Defecting Syrian Officer: Chemical Weapons Already Transferred to Hezbollah,” *Jewish Press*, December 9, 2012, available at: <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/defecting-syrian-officer-chemical-weapons-have-already-been-transferred-to-hezbollah/2012/12/09/>.

<sup>47</sup> Tim Shorrock, “Rangoon Bomb Shatters Korean Cabinet,” *Multinational Monitor*, Vol. 4, No. 11, November, 1983, available at: <http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1983/11/shorrock.html>.

<sup>48</sup> For more on North Korea’s relationship with Burma – including the weapons trade between the two countries – during the Kim Jong-il era, see: Catherine Boye, Melissa Hanham, and Robert Shaw, “North Korea and Myanmar: A Match for Nuclear Proliferation?” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September 27, 2010, available at: <http://thebulletin.org/north-korea-and-myanmar-match-nuclear-proliferation>.

---

<sup>49</sup> For background on the Burma-North Korea military relationship and the many questions that remain about whether it has actually been severed or not, see: Bertil Lintner, “Is the Burma-North Korea Relationship a Thing of the Past?” *NK News*, September 23, 2013, available at: <https://www.nknews.org/2013/09/is-the-burma-north-korea-relationship-a-thing-of-the-past/>.

<sup>50</sup> See Paige Gance, “Obama Administration Sanctions Myanmar General for Dealings with North Korea,” *Reuters*, July 2, 2013, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/02/us-usa-sanctions-idUSBRE9610QF20130702>.

<sup>51</sup> See Peter Orsi and Michael Weissenstein, “Experts: Cuba Arms Shipment Explanation Troubling,” *Associated Press*, July 17, 2013, available at: <http://news.yahoo.com/experts-cuba-arms-shipment-explanation-troubling-145139016.html>; Arnulfo Franco, “Panama Finds Undeclared Munitions Aboard North Korea-Bound Ship from Cuba,” *Associated Press*, August 2, 2013, available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/08/02/panama-finds-undeclared-munitions-aboard-n-korea-bound-ship-from-cuba/>; and Dave Graham and Mohammad Zargham, “North Korean Ship was Carrying Sugar Donation, Cuba Told Panama,” *Reuters*, July 19, 2013, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/20/us-panama-northkorea-idUSBRE9611A020130720>.

<sup>52</sup> See Hugh Griffiths and Roope Siirtola, “Full Disclosure: Contents of North Korean Smuggling Ship Revealed,” *38 North*, August 27, 2013, available at: <http://38north.org/2013/08/hgriffiths082713/>; Juan Zamorano, “Panama Finds Munitions Aboard N. Korea-Bound Ship,” *Associated Press*, August 2, 2013, available at: [http://www.salon.com/2013/08/02/panama\\_finds\\_munitions\\_aboard\\_n\\_korea\\_bound\\_ship/](http://www.salon.com/2013/08/02/panama_finds_munitions_aboard_n_korea_bound_ship/); “Panama: North Korea Ship to Cuba ‘Broke Arms Embargo,’” *BBC*, August 29, 2013, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-23873277>; “Panama Canal Authority Fines Detained North Korea Ship Smuggling Cuban Arms,” *Reuters*, September 26, 2013, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/27/us-panama-northkorea-ship-idUSBRE98Q01720130927>; and “Highlights From Cuban Weapons Proliferation Hearing,” *Capitol Hill Cubans*, September 27, 2013, available at: <http://www.capitolhillcubans.com/2013/09/must-read-highlights-from-cuban-weapons.html>.

<sup>53</sup> See “Seizure Reveals Cold War Arms Trade,” *The Independent*, April 12, 2014, available at: <http://www.independent.ie/world-news/seizure-reveals-cold-war-arms-trade-29429975.html>; “A Look at North Korea’s Aggressive Weapons Trading Around the World After Cuban Ship Intercepted,” *Associated*

---

*Press*, July 17, 2013, available at: <http://www.news.com.au/world/a-look-at-north-koreas-aggressive-weapons-trading-around-the-world-after-cuban-ship-intercepted/story-fndir2ev-1226681036051>; Tim Johnson, "Cuban Weapons Aboard N. Korean Ship Part of 'Major Deal,' Panama Says," *Miami Herald*, October 11, 2013, available at: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/10/10/3681804/cuban-weapons-aboard-n-korean.html>; "North Korean Ship Seized with Cuban Weapons Returns to Cuba," *BBC*, February 15, 2014, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-26210187>; "Panama Says it Will Release all 35 Detained N. Korean Sailors if Pyongyang Pays Fine," *Arirang News*, December 5, 2013, available at: [http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News\\_View.asp?nSeq=153935](http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nSeq=153935); and "Two More Containers with Weaponry Found in Seized N. Korean Ship," *Arirang News*, July 18, 2013, available at: [http://www.arirang.co.kr/news/News\\_View.asp?nseq=149352](http://www.arirang.co.kr/news/News_View.asp?nseq=149352).

<sup>54</sup> Scott Monje, "Chong Chon Gang and North Korea's Arms-Refurbishing Trade," *Foreign Policy*, July 24, 2013, available at: <http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2013/07/24/chong-chon-gang-and-north-koreas-arms-refurbishing-trade/>.

<sup>55</sup> For examples of North Korea's widespread proliferation of conventional weapons on the African continent, see: Hugh Griffiths and Lawrence Dermody, "17 July 2013: Shadow trade: how North Korea's barter trade violates United Nations sanctions," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, July 18, 2013, available at: <http://www.sipri.org/media/expert-comments/shadow-trade-how-north-koreas-barter-trade-violates-united-nations-sanctions>.

<sup>56</sup> See Chad O'Carroll, "Exclusive: North Korean Minister Inspects Ugandan Police Force," *NK News*, June 14, 2013, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2013/06/exclusive-north-korean-minister-inspects-ugandan-police-force/>; "North Korea Visit Not Linked to Arms Supply: Uganda," *Bangkok Post*, June 15, 2013, available at: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/355179/north-korea-visit-not-linked-to-arms-supply-uganda>; and Andrew Bagala, "Uganda to Learn From North Korea – Kayihura," *Uganda Monitor*, June 13, 2013, available at: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Uganda-to-learn-from-North-Korea---Kayihura/-/688334/1881202/-/hhwsy3z/-/index.html>.

<sup>57</sup> See Chan Kyong-park, "Sanctions-Busting N. Korea Runs Barter Trade: Analysts," *AFP*, July 18, 2013, available at: <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130718/DEFREG03/307180010/Sanctions-Busting-N-Korea-Runs-Barter-Trade-Analysts>.

<sup>58</sup> See James Pearson, "Front Companies, Embassies Mask North Korean Weapons Trade: U.N.," *Reuters*, March 12, 2014, available at:

---

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/12/us-korea-north-un-idUSBREA2A1X920140312>.

<sup>59</sup> “North Korea Sells Arms to Ethiopia with U.S. OK: NYT,” *Reuters*, April 7, 2007, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/04/07/us-korea-ethiopia-arms-idUSN0728288520070407>; and Michael R. Gordon and Mark Mazzetti, “Ethiopia Bought Arms from North Korea with U.S. Assent,” *New York Times*, April 8, 2007, available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/08/world/americas/08iht-arms.4.5191534.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/08/world/americas/08iht-arms.4.5191534.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

<sup>60</sup> “Ethiopia is the North Korea of Africa,” *From Where I Sit: Voice of an Eritrean Woman*, November 2, 2013, available at: <http://stefamariam.com/2013/11/02/ethiopia-is-the-north-korea-of-africa/>.

<sup>61</sup> Itai Mushekwe, “Zimbabwe in ‘Arms for Uranium’ Pact with North Korea,” *Nehanda Radio*, September 19, 2013, available at: <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/09/19/zimbabwe-in-arms-for-uranium-pact-with-north-korea/>.

<sup>62</sup> Oliver Hotham, “Amid Missile Deal Rumor, N. Korea & Egypt Sign Cultural Cooperation Plan,” *NK News*, November 19, 2013, available at: <http://www.nknews.org/2013/11/amid-missile-deal-rumor-n-korea-egypt-sign-cultural-cooperation-plan/>.

<sup>63</sup> Donald Kirk, “North Korea and Egypt: Friends with Benefits,” *Global Post*, February 8, 2011, available at: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/south-korea/110207/north-korea-egypt-kim-jong-il-naguib-sawaris>.

<sup>64</sup> For an excellent example of North Korean military support to Syria that did not exist three years ago, see: “Humanitarian Situation Worsens in Syria,” **Asharq Al-Awsat**, *June 3, 2013, available at:* <http://www.majalla.com/eng/2013/06/article55242012>.

<sup>65</sup> See Claudia Rossett, “The Pyongyang-Tehran Proliferation Playbook,” *Forbes*, April 10, 2013, available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/claudiarosett/2013/04/10/the-pyongyang-tehran-proliferation-playbook/>.

<sup>66</sup> For an example of North Korean proliferation to Iran, see: Vladimir Sazhin, “Iran-North Korea: Cooperation in Nuclear Missiles?” *Voice of Russia*, December 5, 2012, available at: [http://voiceofrussia.com/2012\\_12\\_05/Iran-North-Korea-cooperation-in-nuclear-missiles/](http://voiceofrussia.com/2012_12_05/Iran-North-Korea-cooperation-in-nuclear-missiles/).

<sup>67</sup> For an example of analyses that show that much of North Korea’s revenue is likely being used to develop WMD programs, see: Joshua Pollack, “North Korea’s Nuclear Exports: On What Terms?” *38 North*, October 14, 2010,



---

available at: [http://38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/38North\\_SR9\\_Pollack2.pdf](http://38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/38North_SR9_Pollack2.pdf).