



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 5, 2015

North Korea Praises Knife Attack on U.S. Ambassador to South Korea

U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert was attacked by a knife-wielding political fanatic at a breakfast forum in Seoul on March 5, and required two hours of surgery during which 80 stitches were used to close wounds in his face.

The attacker, who was apprehended, was identified as Kim Ki-jong, a member of a group of Korean nationalists opposed to the U.S. military presence South Korea.



The breakfast event at which Lippert was attacked was hosted by the Korea Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation, which has promoted better relations between the two Koreas. Kim is a member of the council, but there is no evidence that the group sympathized with his violent behavior.

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After the attack, North Korea's state-controlled media said that Kim's "knife slashes of justice" were "a deserved punishment on war maniac U.S." and were a reflection of anti-U.S. protests staged in the South against U.S.-South Korean joint military drills.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that Kim told police that the group of which he is a part cut and burned a U.S. flag on the embassy grounds in Seoul in 1985. The AP identified Kim as the head of the Woorimadang activist group, which staged a protest against the joint drills last week in front of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

The *Christian Science Monitor* reported that the protest group organized anti-U.S. protests in Seoul more than 10 years ago, when families from North and South began reconciliation meetings. The group advocates the removal of U.S. forces from the South and the unification of the Korean peninsula under the communist government in Pyongyang headed by Kim Jong-un, the heir to a three-generation political dynasty.

"South and North Korea should be reunified," Kim Ki-jong shouted as he attacked Lippert.

The AP reported that Kim told police at Seoul's Jongno police station that he attacked Lippert to protest the joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises that started on March 2. He asserted that the drills have harmed efforts for reconciliation between the two Koreas.

Kim has a history of violent protests. In 2010, he threw a piece of concrete at the Japanese ambassador, to protest Japan's claim to the Takeshima islands (which the Koreans call Dokdo) that are occupied by South Korea. He hit the ambassador's secretary, instead, and was given a three-year suspended sentence.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye quickly issued a statement condemning the attack: "This incident is not only a physical attack on the U.S. ambassador, but an attack on the South Korea-U.S. alliance and it can never be tolerated."



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Secretary of State John Kerry, who was in Saudi Arabia meeting with Middle Eastern leaders, said the attack would not influence U.S. policy. “The United States of America will never be intimidated or deterred by threats or by anybody who harms any American diplomats,” said Kerry.

The U.S.-South Korean joint exercises that were a primary motivating factor for Kim’s attack began on March 2 and will run through April 24. The annual drills, code named Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, are annual command post and field training exercises involving hundreds of thousands of troops. Prior to commencing them each year, the United Nations Command informs the North Korean People’s Army that the two nations will be conducting the exercise. The UN Command also assures the Korean People’s Army at general officer-level talks that these exercises are purely defensive in nature and have no connection to ongoing or current events.

The United States maintains a force of over 28,000 military personnel in South Korea, which serve as part of the Korean-American Combined Forces command in support of the United Nations Command (Korea).

U.S. forces were first sent to Korea as part of the United Nations Command in 1950, in response to the massive invasion of the South by communist troops from North Korea. U.S. troops under General Douglas MacArthur had liberated almost all of the Korean peninsula when a massive wave of Chinese troops swooped across the Yalu River into North Korea and drove the numerically smaller U.S. forces back into the South.

MacArthur’s statements objecting to the restrictions that prevented him from achieving victory led to him being fired by President Truman. He would later make his famous statement: “In war, there is no substitute for victory.”

The Chinese Communist General Lin Piao provided startling insight into the handicaps under which MacArthur struggled when he later said:

I would never have made the attack and risked my men and military reputation if I had not been assured that Washington would restrain General MacArthur from taking adequate retaliatory measures against my lines of supply and communication.

In his article for *The New American* entitled “Korea: Looking Back — and Looking Ahead,” John F. McManus, president of The John Birch Society, provided an explanation for why Lin Piao was so assured that the U.S. government would restrain MacArthur and prevent him from achieving total victory:

The United Nations gave [Lin Piao that assurance] after dictating how America would conduct the war. And who sent U.S. forces into a war without the Constitution’s requirement for a declaration of war? President Truman and his Secretary of State Dean Acheson did. From day one of the conflict, they placed our military under the command of the United Nations. Over 30,000 died, 130,000 suffered wounds, and the 8,000 missing were never returned. Since then, every member of the U.S. military serving in Korea has served under overall UN command. Not one was ever accorded the right to refuse such an arrangement.

As we have seen, the permanent positioning of thousands of U.S. troops in South Korea and these annual joint exercises are all subject to UN command.

That fanatic who attacked our ambassador opposed the U.S. troop presence there for reasons that are probably irrelevant to our own interests. Whether he is a South Korean nationalist or a North Korean sympathizer, the man obviously has no love for the United States.



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U.S. interests have never been served by sending our troops abroad to fight under UN Command or to enforce a UN resolution without a declaration of war. The end result of such operations, from Korea, to Vietnam, to Iraq, to Afghanistan, has always been countless loss of U.S. lives and no permanent resolution of the conflict. Sixty-five years after sending our first troops to Korea, the communists still control the North and threaten the South.

Communism is a heinous evil, and free nations threatened by its expansionist intentions deserve our support. But such support can be provided in ways that do not involve placing our troops under the control of the United Nations. One way is to sell — not give, but sell — advanced weapons systems to our trusted allies such as South Korea, the Republic of China on Taiwan, and Japan. If these industrialized free nations wish to form an alliance against Communist China and North Korea, they are free to do so and capable of defending themselves. However, it is neither wise nor constitutional for the United States to defend interests other than its own.

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