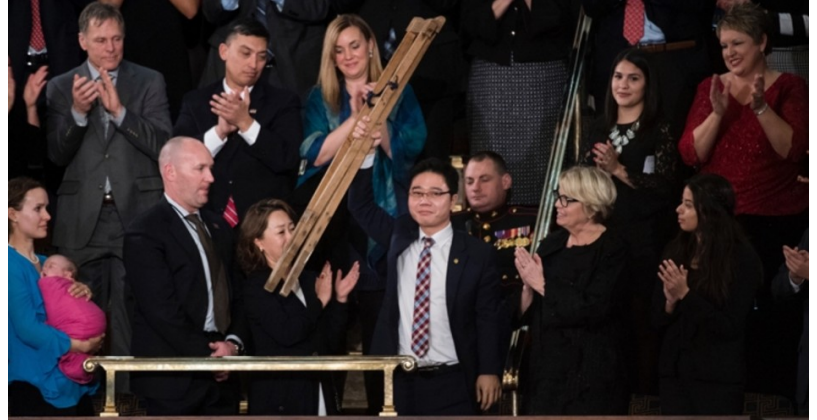




Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 2, 2018

## Trump Meets With North Korean Defectors From “Depraved” Regime

In a speech peppered with emotional and dramatic moments (including the introduction of the parents of children murdered by members of an immigrant gang), perhaps the most dramatic moment of the State of the Union message came when President Donald Trump introduced Ji Seong-ho (shown), in an effort to illustrate what Trump called the “depraved character of the North Korean regime.”



Ji waved his crutches that he had formerly used before he obtained artificial legs, in a vivid demonstration of the brutality of the North Korean communists.

Ji was one of seven dissidents to that regime who met with Trump today in the Oval Office in the White House. He lost a leg and an arm while scavenging for coal to stay warm in the repressive nation of North Korea, with his limbs severed by a train. The North Koreans then amputated what was left of the severed limbs, without using anesthesia. He was later tortured by the North Korean government because they regarded him as a rebel.

When the family attempted to escape, his father was caught and tortured to death. “Today he lives in Seoul (the capital city of South Korea), where he rescues other defectors, and broadcasts into North Korea what the regime fears the most — the truth,” Trump told Congress and the American public during the speech.

Other dissidents told their stories to Trump, all as examples of what the regime is capable of.

Another defector who met with Trump was Lee Hyeon-seo, who also escaped from the North Korean totalitarian dictatorship. She wrote a memoir on her experiences, *The Girl with Seven Names*. Lee claimed that torture and imprisonment is standard practice in North Korea, which uses public executions to discourage opposition to the dictatorship of Kim Jong-un.

“That’s why even today, many defectors carry poison with them in case they are caught in China [where many dissidents escape to, but China’s own communist dictators often send the defectors back to North Korea],” Lee told Trump, adding, “They would rather die than be repatriated in North Korea and suffer a horrible punishment for the rest of their lives.”

Because of this situation, Lee asked Trump to convince China not to send the North Koreans back. “Mr. President, please help us to stop the repatriation in China and give North Korean people the freedom that they deserve.”

Trump’s meeting with dissidents from North Korea is a sharp departure from the inaction of his predecessor, Barack Obama. Obama aides confirmed that Obama never met with defectors.

In sharp contrast with the Obama administration, Trump has been especially critical of the Kim regime, even making it personal. One of the more famous quips of Trump was to call Kim “rocket man” because of Kim’s continued boasting that he has rockets capable of hitting America. For his part, Kim, who is the



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grandson of the North Korean dictatorship's founder, Kim Il-sung, has hurled repeated insults at Trump. It is estimated that North Korea has a prison system holding as many as 120,000 dissidents. Some have classified the regime as the most totalitarian system on earth, with forced labor and forced abortions, according to the U.S. State Department.

Some see Trump's meeting with North Korean dissidents as a way to put pressure on the communist dictatorship to abandon its nuclear weapons development, complete with ballistic missiles, that Kim claims they are developing, with the capability to carry nuclear weapons into the heart of America.

The reluctance of such totalitarian powers to abandon their nuclear weapons programs — as is the case with North Korea — or the push by other regimes unfriendly to the United States — such as Iran — to develop nuclear missiles, is considered by many experts to be an unfortunate result of the overthrow and murder of Libyan strongman Muammar Ghaddafi. Ghaddafi, in an apparent effort to end his government's tensions with the United States, ended his efforts to stockpile weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Many believe that his demise illustrates that the United States is more assertive against countries without WMDs, and this has resulted in many dictatorial governments wanting to keep or develop nuclear weapons and other WMDs.

Whether Trump's meeting with North Korean defectors is just a sincere effort on his part to express sympathy with that regime's victims, or if it is a signal to the regime that they need to quit their nuclear weapons and missile program, or some combination thereof, he also just happened to speak to South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday to wish him well with the Winter Olympics, which are taking place in South Korea.

*Photo: AP Images*



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