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BEYOND OFFICIAL NORTH KOREA:
A BRITISH DIPLOMAT'S OBSERVATIONS OF DAILY LIFE

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BUSH: Good afternoon. I think we should get started. My name is Richard Bush. I'm the director of the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies here at Brookings. And it's my great pleasure to welcome you to today's program, which is entitled, "Beyond Official North Korea: A British Diplomat's Observations of Daily Life."

The British diplomat in question is the Honorable John Everard, and he is speaking to us today in a dual capacity: first as the former ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and the author of this really fine book, *Only Beautiful, Please: A British Diplomat in North Korea*. We're very pleased to have this opportunity.

We would not have this opportunity without the Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford, APARC. And it is well represented here today in the person of David Straub, an old friend. Also speaking in a commentating role will be my colleague, Jonathan Pollack. We're also pleased to have my good friend Ambassador Bob King with us today.

So without further ado, let me ask you to welcome Ambassador Everard.

(Applause)

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Many thanks. We've got a screen coming down?

MR. BUSH: Yes.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: The combination of me, coffees, cookie, and technology is usually quite lethal, but we'll see if we can get through this somehow.

(Laughter) Hey, so far, so good.

Many thanks to everybody for coming today, taking time out of what I know are very busy schedules, and for interest in the book and in the presentation. I'm

going to talk for about 20 minutes. And I'm going to talk following the thread of the book in its first two parts. The book has four parts, as you'll see from the slide there. I talk about life in the DPRK, which was the core part of the book. I wrote the book largely because I wanted to share my experiences of actually what the DPRK is like inside with a wider community. I wanted to bring ground truth to various policy debates underway.

I wrote the second part because a lot of people ask me what it was like actually to be a foreigner in the DPRK. They recognized that I'd written about the DPRK not quite as seen from a Korean perspective, but just in general terms. But there was interest as to what it was like to live there, so I tried to share some thoughts on that.

The second and third part were suggestions of Stanford University, who pointed out that if I was actually working -- was actually publishing in a university, I ought to try something a bit more cerebral than just description. So I sucked my pencil for a while and came up with two further parts: one where I try to explain why I think the DPRK has turned out to be the way it is and the final part looking at the various approaches to the DPRK and how far they have been successful.

In this presentation I'm going to concentrate on the first two parts. I suspect that there may be more emphasis on the second two parts in the remarks by my colleagues on the rostrum here and in the questions and answers afterwards.

Some of you may have seen my presentation to The Korea Society a few days ago. It's on their website. It follows the same photographs, but it is actually quite a different presentation, so I wanted to reassure you that you will actually get your money's worth coming along today. (Laughter)

Let's start off. As I say, the photographs I'm showing here are full-color versions of the black-and-white photographs in the book. This photograph was taken near Tanchon up in the northeast of the DPRK. And I wanted to show it to anchor the

point that apart from all the policy issues surrounding it, the DPRK, even when it is not in the grips of a famine, is a grindingly poor country. These houses, well, you can see are ramshackled. They are poorly built. You can see that some of the roofs are in dire need of repair.

One thing that the photograph can't really show is that this was taken on a biting cold day. And the only way you can heat a house in the DPRK -- does that make it clear -- is by burning yontan, little briquettes of coal dust. And you'll see there is no smoke coming out of those chimneys. Whoever was sitting in those houses was really shivering.

This is we call them a bus queue in the UK. You call it a line for a bus or something in the U.S.? Anyway, one of those. The reason I wanted to show this photograph was to show you how organized it is. There's nobody marshaling that queue. There's nobody telling these people to stand in a neat line and to wait patiently for a bus that, this being Pyongyang, is going to take a very long time to arrive. They simply do so with patience and with usually quite good humor.

I wanted to show this because it illustrates, I think, another important fact about the DPRK: that through all the stresses that this country has undergone, and it has undergone a lot of them, it remains a highly organized and highly disciplined society, where there is respect for superiors and a kind of instinctive adhesion to social order. You do not jump queues. You do not do things that are not seemly.

Young love. This is the "ah" photo. (Laughter) And you can see an intimate moment, a young couple probably sharing sweet nothings, rather better dressed than they would be normally. They probably dressed up specially to impress each other, which is sweet of them.

When we look at the DPRK, we foreigners will tend to compare its

personal freedoms or lack of personal freedoms with those of other countries. In questions of marriage in particular, North Koreans will tend rather to compare their experience, the freedoms that they now enjoy, with those of previous generations. And it's not so long ago that a Korean girl would only meet her husband, her bridegroom, on the wedding day. And not long before that, she wasn't actually allowed to speak the entire wedding ceremony, so that words like, "No, not him," weren't going to escape her lips. (Laughter) Koreans talk to their parents, they talk to their grandparents. They know how things were. And they feel that compared to what there was, in terms of personal freedoms, they are actually better off. It's a different perspective, if you like.

These two are assistants in an orphanage, way up again in the poor northeast. They're both looking quite serious because North Koreans have an aversion against smiling for the camera. They always tend to put on these rather serious expressions, almost frowns. But the lady on the far end or the lady in the white cap in particular greeted us for all that day with a kind of permanent smile and just looked serious for a few moments for the camera and reverted to smiling the moment I had clicked the shutter.

This photo is just to show North Koreans who work in impossible conditions. They had dozens of children with almost nothing to give them, limited shelter, almost no equipment. They both told me quite cheerfully that they spent a lot of their days scrambling around trying to scrounge, beg, or make even something to make these children's lives a little less unhappy. They were completely dedicated. And I came across this time and time again in the DPRK, people whose dedication to their jobs, dedication to trying to make this a slightly better country was, frankly, quite humbling and put a lot of the attitudes that we have perhaps in the modern West to shame. This is a country where doing things for the common good is more than just a slogan.

Entertainment and fun. Perhaps not concepts one normally associates with North Korea, but when North Koreans have leisure time, and they tend to have rather less than we do in the West, they will almost always spend it collectively. For North Koreans, the Western idea of going off and doing something by yourself seems just odd. And here we have a game of chess. Now, chess in the West, chess in most countries tends to be a rather intellectual pursuit. In North Korea, it is a group pursuit. If you go into a park, open up a chessboard, and start playing, within moments you will be surrounded by people giving you advice, solicited and unsolicited. And this is still not a movie, but this man, at the back there with the hat, he was actually leaning forward to move the pieces to where he thought they ought to go. I mean, never mind a verbal counsel, just show them. And it was quite a noisy event, you know, lots of people shouting encouragement; far too busy concentrating all the fun on the chess match to worry about the odd stray foreigner wandering around with a camera. And this was taken in Hamhung where foreigners are fairly few and far between.

I once asked a young Korean lady of my acquaintance what she used to do in her leisure time, and she blushed slightly and said actually my friends and I use it to practice a dance routine. And I said, oh, really? The friends in question were sort of the other side of the room. And she said, yes, do you want to see it? So, you know, what do you say? I said, yes, show me your dance.

And they came along and they did a little kind of cha-cha for me. They had been practicing this in their spare time. It was really quite sweet. But again, collective leisure pursuits.

Beaches. North Korea has the most beautiful beaches, perhaps not something that you would normally associate with the country, but they're there. This one is taken not very far from the port of Wansan. And a little up there, tucked away in

the trees at the back, there is a club where for a modest amount of money you can shower and drink coffee, that kind of stuff.

If the country ever does open up, it does have enormous tourist potential. And there are photographs in the book, which I haven't reproduced in these slides, also, of some of the beautiful scenery, the hiking possibilities that it would have to offer.

On high days and holy days, and this is a country of great rituals, it is traditional to have your photograph taken and, if at all possible, to have the photograph of your children taken. This, of course, requires props. And I couldn't resist a picture of this noble steed who has been rolled around the center of Pyongyang and the two people whose job it was to hoist children on top of it. Having your picture taken costs maybe a couple hundred won, not very much. And, of course, a camera is way beyond the means of most North Korean families, so a photograph of your child will be a treasured family possession. And families would spend ages getting the pose just right to make sure that they got their money's worth.

Apart from the human interest of this photograph, it also shows a kind of budding service economy. Now, somebody, to make this operation possible, has not only acquired a camera -- no mean feat in North Korea -- but they found a mobile horse. Now, I have no idea where this horse came from. Perhaps it was constructed by the family. Who knows? But in North Korean terms this is a significant capital investment. We are looking at budding micro enterprises.

North Koreans are taught to sing from a very early age. They are taught to sing mostly hymns of praise to their god kings, but they are taught to sing and they are taught to sing in public. This is a photograph of a village choir who came to sing to the foreigners when we visited their collective farm. They were actually rather good. And you can see just behind the man at the far end of the photo, there's an accordionist

playing away there.

They asked us to sing back. We sort of ducked the question.

I offer the thought that even if they are taught to sing just politically correct songs, teaching kids to sing and not to be ashamed to sing is intrinsically a good thing.

Another example of self-sacrifice, this is a pharmacist in a rural clinic. She asked to be photographed with the medicine cabinet behind her closed so that the camera didn't show how little there was in it. It wasn't completely empty, there were a few sort of odds and ends, but essentially she was running a kind of sub-shoestring operation and told me that she was forever having to tell people, people in real distress, that she simply had no medicine for them and instead offered a kind of agony on-service to help at least psychologically to cope with their problems. I love her face. I think, you know, it shows that she's been through a few things, but has kept smiling.

Grindingly poor. These are collective farm workers transplanting rice. Transplanting rice is a fairly horrible job. You are constantly standing up and then bending down and standing up again. It does very nasty things to your back. Also, notice that the people here are not wearing rubber boots. If you spend your day standing knee-deep in water without any kind of protection you expose yourself to all kinds of nasty waterborne parasites, and these are a big problem in collective farms. One of the first things that foreigners are asked for when they befriend a collective farm is rubber boots, and we gave away I don't know how many pairs. And we're very pleased to see when we visited the farm afterwards that they were in full and dedicated use.

It's a tough life and you can't actually see any of those faces, but you can see the lines on the faces of collective farm workers etched by years and years of real physical hardship. Grindingly poor, as I said in the first slide.

Transport, too. Kim Il-sung boasted that he would mechanize transport in the DPRK. And for a brief period there were a lot of tractors around, brought in, some from China, many from the MAZ plant in Minsk in what is now Belarus. But they have fallen into disuse. The spare parts are no longer available. And even if you can keep a tractor in basic working order, finding fuel for it is a major challenge. Apart from rubber boots, one other thing the foreigners are always asked for by collective farms is fuel for their tractors. We daren't give them any for fear that any fuel that we give is simply taken by the army the next day.

I remember once having this conversation with the committee of a collective farm who asked for fuel. And I said I'm sorry, but surely there's a risk that others will come and take it if I give it to you. Oh, no, they said, because our farm manager is the chair of the local party committee. No one's going to touch her.

And the interpreter sort of looked in horror and refused to translate that bit of Korean and just said, no, no, the army would never do anything so wicked. So I smiled knowingly and moved the conversation on.

Oxen, of course, have the great advantage that left to their own devices, they will produce more oxen and that they don't need the kind of maintenance that you have to leverage on tractors.

Notice the man behind riding a bicycle. A lot of them in the North Korea countryside, many of them imported from Japan at a time when relations between the countries were less chilly than they are now. The ferry between Japan and the DPRK used to bring in lots of secondhand Japanese bicycles, many of which are still doing sterling duty around the North Korean countryside.

The constant fear of war or at least the message that the country is liable to be invaded at any moment by the filthy American imperialists or their South Korean

puppets or both or, for that matter, other enemies unspecified. These are anti-tank defenses. They stand along a lot of the arterial roads in North Korea. And if there ever were an invasion, the army would put explosive charges just behind the bases there -- you can see that the bases are thinner than the main pillar -- blow them, and they are angled so that the concrete block would fall over the road and block it. Physical reminders of the supposed threat that hands over the DPRK all the time.

This photograph was shot in Central Pyongyang, another example of hunger. These men, I had to shoot it at a long distance; you can't see the detail. But fishing tackle, of course, is unknown. They have simply cut holes in the ice on the Taedong River and have found sticks, bits of string, and bent pins, and are trying to fish. In the DPRK, catching a fish is quite something. I mean, a fish is protein for your family or, depending on your circumstances, a useful item to sell at a market and for which you'll get quite a lot of money. And this, as I say, Central Pyongyang. We are not looking at the most destitute parts of the DPRK. Nevertheless, subsistence activities like this continue.

The next two photographs I wanted to show because they illustrate two worlds. I wanted to take a photograph in the city of Sinuiju, which borders China, borders the Chinese town of Dandong. My North Korean minders made clear that I was not going to be allowed to do this, so I contented myself with this photograph taken from fields in a collective farm just outside Sinuiju. And you can see the foreground completely bleak with just the electric pylons there and in the background, skyscrapers. All those skyscrapers are in Dandong, in China. And you have to ask yourself what people must think as they walk behind their ox, plowing their fields, and look across this thin strip of water to this parallel universe, where windows are illuminated at night, where there's plenty of electricity, soaring skyscrapers. In Dandong, you can look across and they did

a rather nice corniche where people will sit and drink coffee during the hot summer afternoons. And you can imagine, I think, the effect this has on North Koreans who for decades were told that theirs was the People's Paradise.

And even more striking, this photograph taken from Dandong itself, the Chinese side. That is the bridge across the river between Dandong and Sinuiju. And the international border runs right through the middle of the river. The Chinese have illuminated their half of the bridge and you can see it resplendent in all kinds of light. The North Korean half is in almost completely darkness. You can just pick out the pylons of the bridge disappearing into the gloom. And although, as you can see, there's a lot of light on the Chinese side of the river here, on the North Korean bank of the river there is just darkness. Again, I wasn't able to take the photograph the other way around from Sinuiju, but if you live anywhere near China and see this, what are you going to think?

The regime has started slowly to acknowledge that it has economic problems, but it still insists that it is ideologically strong. In practical terms, this means that even when things are tough economically, which is most of the time in North Korea, people will still put up slogans. These men are simply painting slogans on a board which they later hung on a nearby building. Often, though, you see the regime still constructing concrete towers to support slogans, concrete ramps with slogans written on them, at a time when it says it cannot afford and cannot supply concrete to build houses. You may have seen that it had to sharply curtail the number of new homes that it had promised the inhabitants of Pyongyang in the run-up to the centenary of Kim Il-sung's birth, a sad example of skewed priorities.

The enemy. This photograph was taken just behind Tongil Market in Pyongyang. If any of you visit Pyongyang, Tongil Market is a place you are very likely to be taken. It is open to foreigners, but few foreigners are encouraged to actually walk

through to the fairground right behind it for reasons that you can probably guess looking at the photograph.

This is a pop gun range. For 101, you can fire numerous corks at the American imperialists, who, you will notice, look remarkably like wolves with big, lolling tongues. And you will also notice that just for this day that the Korean Peoples Air Force has managed to find sufficient aviation fuel to launch a couple of aircraft who are doubtless about to swoop and wipe out the wolf-like invaders. A sad image, children at a very tender age being inculcated with these hatreds of the U.S.

For all that, I have to say that amongst the many North Koreans with whom I discussed America, I found much less dislike than you might expect. Americans in North Korea are usually referred to as simply "American imperialist bastards," (speaking Korean), which is something -- I can see a few ethnic Koreans who are wincing at the obscenity -- is something that no sort of polite South Korean would say, but it's used so often now in North Korea that it has lost almost all of its force. And I remember having a conversation with a friend who said that she used to work with the (speaking Korean), with the American imperialist bastards, during the time of the Agreed Framework, and actually thought they were really nice people. She thought they -- she hoped rather they'd come back. So the propaganda probably hasn't worked quite as efficiently as you might expect.

The one group that everybody does dislike very profoundly is the Chinese.

Foreigner life in Pyongyang. There are two big flower shows a year: one for Kim Il-sung and one for Kim Jong-il. And foreigners are invited to go around these flower shows; there are color photographs in the book to show more of what they look like, and to say what wonderful, wonderful things they are. Oh, one has to take

particular care in what you write in the visitor's book. Within the EU, we always used to have a kind of pre-flower show meeting -- (Laughter) -- to decide what the EU presidency was going to write because anything you write tends to be quoted on North Korean radio that evening to the discomfiture of the envoy who wrote it.

The flower shows are another stunning example of the ritual nature of the regime. This is, in many ways, it seems to me, a carryover from the rituals of the last Korean kings that you would have high days, holy days, traditional things to do, and expectations of great spectacle at certain times of the year. In many ways, Kim Il-sung, followed by Kim Jong-il, simply picked up the traditional and moved it forward.

One of the other manifestations of this is elections. Now, North Korean elections don't suffer from any of the nagging uncertainties of U.S. elections, like who's going to win. (Laughter) They are more a kind of excuse for a party. You will see that this wasn't a great day for weather; everybody's got their umbrellas up. But, nevertheless, the kiddies have come out, they're wearing their best national costume, and they're singing. And I don't think it got picked up on the camera, but there were drinks going around and things to nibble, another great political ritual to keep the masses happy.

Piety. This is an aspect of North Korean society that foreigners find very difficult to understand and I think particularly if you are brought up in the secular West. This man is sweeping the steps of the great statute of Kim Il-sung in Central Pyongyang. Nobody is making him do this. There's nobody else around. Just as an act of simple personal piety he has gone to the box of little brushes -- of which, also, there's a photograph in the book, taken one -- and is doing his bit to keep the steps of the Great Leader clean. Yes, a world view that I think is quite difficult to penetrate.

Just now I gave an example of the burgeoning micro markets, the people

who will charge you a little money to have your son or daughter photographed. This is another: bicycle repairmen, who were almost nonexistent when I first came to Pyongyang in February 2006. By the time I left in July 2008, they were everywhere. And they were really very good. For trivial sums of money they could repair almost any kind of ailment on a bicycle, even though some of the refinements of my modern Western bicycle left them rather confused.

An interesting parallel with China at an early stage of its opening. Those of you who knew China at the time might recall that one of the first things that happened under Deng's reforms was bicycle repairmen. Interestingly, in China, they were accompanied by mobile barbershops. People used to mount haircutting equipment on the back of a bicycle and pitch up at street corners, and for three yuan you could have a kind of Marine haircut. That hasn't happened in the DPRK for whatever reason.

One thing that has happened, which I couldn't photograph, was a multiplication of shoe repair shops. If you ever need your shoes repaired in the DPRK, there are dozens of people who, for just a few won, will do it for you. I'll speed up. I know I'm running over time.

The Kaesong industrial zone, much talked about. That is what one of the factories looks like. The interaction here between the two Koreas: these are North Korean workers supervised by South Korean managers, who sidestepped out of the photograph as soon as I took my camera out. Notice that it is bright, clean, that everybody is wearing proper hats and facemasks -- a universe away from the experience of ordinary North Korean factories.

One the thing the photograph can't show is that there was music being piped. It was quite gentle, folksy tunes, which the workers themselves had selected. I mean, they weren't going to select foreign music, that would have been dangerous, but I

think they were given a certain amount of choice as to what they were allowed to listen to.

There's a lot of debate about how much of the money that they earn that the Kaesong workers are allowed to keep. I talk about this a bit in the book. One of the big benefits, though, of working in the zone, even before Choco Pies came into being, was the access to the canteens that every worker got a good meal at lunchtime, which is either free or heavily subsidized, depending on where you worked, and which they must have regarded as one of the big plusses.

A traffic girl. Apropos of nothing very much, but I couldn't resist showing one. They have sadly now been replaced by soulless traffic lights, but they used to be one of the great Pyongyang sights. All wore pigtails, which it took me a while to work out are fake. They're actually attached to the back of their caps, they aren't real at all. (Laughter) And all of them really quite smiley. I got to know quite a lot of them as I whizzed around on my bicycle. And, you know, I waved at them and you could see them sort of trying to wave back without actually doing so in a way that might be misinterpreted as a traffic signal, which was a bit of a challenge for them. (Laughter)

The casino in the Rason zone, an example of the perils of investment in the DPRK. When I visited in 2008, it was almost completely empty. There were lots and lots of covered roulette tables and the staff was just waiting for something to do; very, very nicely cooked us a huge meal. I was told by Korean staff who accompanied me were the very first Koreans ever to sleep there.

This particular enterprise hit the rocks because a senior provincial official, Chinese official, gambled away large parts of his budget on the roulette tables and the Chinese responded by preventing any more Chinese from visiting the casino, which brought it to a halt. But similar tales of woe seem to afflict all kinds of other

investments in the DPRK.

The DPRK will tell you that Kim Il-sung almost singlehandedly threw the Japanese out of the Korean Peninsula. Every year the Russians lay a wreath at the Russian cemetery in Pyongyang just to make the point that it wasn't quite like that.

The Random Access Club in Pyongyang, again a vital part of foreigner life. The Random Access Club you can only join if you are a foreigner resident in Pyongyang. It is, therefore, the most exclusive club in the world. (Laughter) And as you can see, it's a bit empty. When I first came to Pyongyang, you used to have to queue on Friday nights to get a drink. Then all the NGOs, bar six, were thrown out. And on Friday nights, even on Friday nights, you could get a drink without any trouble at all. In fact, very often, you would find yourself the only person in the rack apart from a couple visiting foreign journalists, who, of course, would zoom on you the moment you walked through the door. The walls used to be festooned with all kinds of DPRK memorabilia, which, sadly, were taken down and taken home as the various NGOs packed up shop and left.

And finally, just before we get too enthusiastic about the People's Paradise, the *USS Pueblo* is still sitting there in Pyongyang. For 10 euros you will be shown around by a smiley lady NCO, who will tell you all about the confessions that the U.S. crew made, but not about the methods used to induce them to make these confessions. I wanted to end on that slide just to make the point that this is a human society, real people doing real things, with ordinary lives, in many ways similar to lives elsewhere, but this is a brutal and horrible regime.

Thank you, everybody. (Applause)

MR. BUSH: Thank you, Ambassador Everard, for a fascinating presentation. Once we get people miked up, we will turn to David Straub, who is a retired Foreign Service officer and is currently at APARC. David.

MR. STRAUB: Thank you very much, Richard. It's a great honor and pleasure to be here. I'd like to thank you, Richard, very much for having us, and Jonathan, and on behalf of the Stanford Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center and my boss there, Professor Gi-Wook Shin. I only want to say a few words because I want to hear even more from John Everard. So maybe in terms of putting the book in context I could give you some good news and some bad news and then, finally, some very good news.

The good news is that over the past few years, certainly over the past decade, there has been a relative explosion of information about North Korea coming available: books and other writings by people such as John; Westerners who've worked in North Korea at diplomatic missions; there's Americans who've worked for the KEDO Project; we've had diplomats from the former Soviet Bloc who've written about their experiences; visitors, travelers to North Korea; then we've had the North Koreans themselves increasingly talking; refugees, defectors, books by them, books about them. North Korea itself is saying a lot more. Of course, that has to be interpreted very carefully, but they have many, many websites. There are many, many websites now where you can -- that collect these statements and you can analyze them and them.

There are books about life in North Korea. There are books and other works about the nuclear project, art in North Korea, film in North Korea. It is really stunning. When I left the State Department six years ago, I was very worried that there would not be enough information for me to continue to productively follow North Korea, and I found that, on the contrary, there is so much information, the real task is sorting through it.

And, of course, a lot of this is related to the IT revolution at Stanford. You know, I'm right in the center of this with all of these brilliant people working on the

web. And we have now websites and networks of people thanks to the IT revolution who are dedicated to particular aspects of North Korea, such as the art, nuclear issues, missile issues, leadership issues in North Korea, the North Korean economy. These are all available in real time to all of us, and not only to us, but people throughout the world. So it's really remarkable.

In fact, I watched a presentation at Stanford a couple of weeks ago by some colleagues of mine who are technical experts. And simply by taking North Korean statements and photograph and video, and combining it with Google Earth, they were able to track precisely where Kim Jong-un has been visiting. And they even saw a photograph when he visited their new missile command center. He was looking at something on a screen and they determined that he was looking at Google Earth showing that center. (Laughter)

Furthermore, these gentlemen were able, again, using only open source information, to determine where the next North Korean nuclear tests will occur: the south portal of the mountain where the two previous tests were taken. They have very precisely located it. And I'm not a technical person by any means, but it certainly sounded persuasive. So this is really stunning and it's very, very important for all of us interested in Korean affairs.

And it's not just one way. Thanks to the IT revolution there is increasing information from the outside world getting into North Korea. This has been documented, most recently by a U.S. Government-commissioned survey, but by a number of other surveys and observers. It's still at a low level, but the pace is continuing to increase from thumb drives, CDs, DVDs, radio broadcasts. So at some point, there will be a tipping point. It may take a long time, but I think this increase in information available in both directions is the most solid foundation we have for hope for a positive change in North

Korea. Now, that's the good news.

The bad news is that along with this explosion in information about North Korea, a good deal of it remains not good information. It is -- most of what we read about North Korea is stereotyped, duplicative, not based on direct observation. Much of it is speculative. Some of it is even misinformation and we have to be very careful about that.

But the very good news is that John Everard's book suffers none of these defects. (Laughter) John's book is original. It's based on his extensive period living in the country, direct observation. And John, unlike most people who comment on North Korea, is very clear about what he was able to observe and what he could not observe, what he was able to know with some degree of confidence and what he could not know.

And if anything, he uses English understatement. In fact, he observed an incredible amount. I was stunned in reading his book by energetic he was, how observant, and also by how empathetic he was. For 30 years I've had people come to me, especially when I was in the State Department, saying, David, you don't understand, the North Koreans are human beings, too. (Laughter) Well, I always assumed they were. And John does, too, and he sees them as you and I. And by doing that and doing that naturally, he's able to understand them and get a lot of insights into the country and provide those to us. But, at the same time, he's very clear that simply because North Koreans are human beings just like you and I does not mean that their government and some of the things that it does is okay.

So unlike a lot of observers and writers on North Korea who have axes to grind, it's very clear that John doesn't have an axe to grind. He's a very objective and a very reliable observer, and that's one of the most important things as we look for good information on North Korea.

So that's all I wanted to say. I think it's a wonderful book. Trust me, if you read it, I'm almost certain that you will like it. It's very charmingly written and parts of it are quite funny. So please, take a look at it. Thank you.

MR. BUSH: Thank you, David. Your final comments allow me to tell you that the book is on sale outside. Turn to your left when you go out the door and someone will be only happy to separate you from a little less than \$20.

Jonathan Pollack.

MR. POLLACK: Than you, Richard. And let me both affirm much of what David has said and to join in the well-deserved praise for a remarkable volume, and it truly is remarkable.

Ambassador Everard lived in North Korea for two and a half years, in the twilight of the Kim Jong-il era. I dare say it's interesting, John, that it's been four years since you've been gone from North Korea, and I suspect if you were ever able to return there, you would see an accentuation of many of the inherent, dare I say, contradictions that exist in the society being manifest that much more.

But this is a book that takes North Korea from beyond the cartoon. As he notes, and there's a very telling quote in his book, that this is a real country. It may be a country that we take great offense at much of what it does, much of what it says, but it's a real country with real people, with a certain kind of authenticity of its own. And I think the evidence that he compiles here is indisputable. North Korea, including someone like myself, it will never seem quite the same to those of us who want to understand this most unusual and improbable of societies.

I'm not going to spoil where the title comes from -- for that you have to read the book -- but it is in a very, very evocative moment. And I was wondering where he got the title and you'll have to find it. I'm not even going to tell you what page it's on.

(Laughter)

One thing that strikes me is the sharp dichotomies in several respects that I think analytically would be a useful perspective. First, between Pyongyang and the rest of North Korea. Pyongyang is a city of a little over 2 million, I believe. Clearly, it is a city of privilege in a number of respects. It's a city of those who have passed relevant loyalty tests. To the degree that there are any bright lights in North Korea, such as they are, they will be found there.

So much of the rest of North Korea, and I've gone to North Korea twice myself, but I only went from the airport to Pyongyang and so this is as good as it gets in the North, but the rest of it is bleak beyond belief, reflecting, of course, what this society, what this country has gone through. In this respect, I think the distinction, in addition to the difference between Pyongyang and the rest of Korea, rest of North Korea, would be pre-famine and post-famine North Korea.

Again, this is a very, very damaged society, no doubt, but the impact of the famine and, of course, prior to that the loss of Soviet support in particular, has transformed it in all kinds of way. Much of the fledgling seedlings or plants of stuff going on, whether it's bicycle repairmen or whatever else, or that charming picture with the would-be horse, really reflects what has had to happen as people have seen the evaporation of the public distribution system and the need in some sense to take their own personal circumstances, their own personal fate in their own hands.

And, again, I think that this preoccupies people centrally in North Korea. The state is not providing except for those who are already very privileged. So that, therefore, necessity of taking care of yourself, if you will, in an economic way, in a survival mode, really defines so much of what we can observe from afar related to North Korea. Now, whether or not this ultimately comes to a point where the stress lines in the

system reach breakable moments, I don't know. We really can't say. This is a state that has defied the laws of gravity for a very, very long time. And my own sense of what John describes suggests to me that notwithstanding the widespread predictions that the fate is at hand, it's about to go under, my suspicion is we're going to be dealing with the DPRK for a long time to come.

Now, what John, therefore, has managed to do is to pierce, not penetrate fully, but to pierce the protective armor that surrounds the system because he lived there, he saw it. You know, John, there's a famous American baseball player, Yogi Berra, who allegedly once said you can observe a lot just by watching. (Laughter) And I think your book attests to that. You listened, you observed, you did it diligently, you did it discretely. The fact that you could allude in this book to "my North Korean friends and you meant that literally, and yet not wanting to put these people in a situation where their personal wellbeing is endangered really says a lot.

So what can we say? We can say that this is an enormously tradition-bound society; very conservative; very hierarchical; very bureaucratic in all kinds of ways that, on the one hand, wouldn't surprise people or shouldn't, but, on the other hand, that sense of bureaucratic competition also comes to the fore.

Interestingly, John makes a very important distinction, which I had never really thought of before between what he would call the inner elite of the system, the true power that surrounds the throne, and the outer elite, professional classes that are, I think, the wellsprings of much of the system. These are people who persist, go about their work diligently for very little compensation so far as we can tell. So far as we can determine they seem loyal to this rather perverse system, but it tells us something about how Koreans think and act. And unless and until that kind of a linkage is broken, the system may persist.

I won't go into what John notes about how the DPRK was almost, if you will, an historical accident with a kind of deformed birth, as he puts it. A lot of us who have ventured into this realm know that well. But it leaves this legacy of this internal world in terms of the images created by the regime that are still seemingly operative until maybe they are no longer operative.

But the last point I'd like to make, and really the point of entry, I think, into a discussion, is that what I am left with is a real -- it's not a tension out of the book, but what John has been able to learn underscores the fundamental dilemma -- and that includes, I think, everyone in this audience who would wish to see a better life somehow for the people of North Korea to whom John dedicates his book -- that anyone who believes that and wants to see it, runs up against the fundamental dilemma that in order to advance that objective requires, dare I say, engagement with the system at some level. Now, I understand there is much that gets in surreptitiously into the North: DVDs, balloons from the South, and so forth. But it seems to me that there is no substitute for being there in some sense, an ability to interact with real Koreans, if you will. And how can that be done without having to run the gauntlet of the system that still oversees this misbegotten country?

How do we achieve through any such access advancement of the kinds of goals that I think we could all aspire to? That's an unresolved question. It occupies policymakers centrally. But where I'd like to leave is to quote from the book because John pulls no punches. And this is relevant, frankly, to much of the chatter that goes on in this city.

"I have realized while writing this book that there is an industry of DPRK watchers, many of whom have never set foot in the country, who make a living traveling from conference to conference to exchange the same ideas with the same people. It

sometimes seems to me that the passion with which some of them defend their positions is in inverse relation to their knowledge of the DPRK. I have made no secret in this book either of my affection for the people of North Korea or for my recognition of the horrors of the regime and the threat it poses to the international community. This means that almost all pundits will want to disagree with me to a greater or lesser extent. Such is life.”

I'll only disappoint John to say I don't disagree with this book at all. It's a marvelous read. It's witty. It's insightful. You'll learn a lot and go read it, by all means. Thank you, John.

MR. BUSH: Thank you, Jonathan. Thank you, David. Thank you, John.

We are now going to open it up to you for your questions and comments. We have about a half an hour. There are mics available, I think. And so when I call on you, please wait for the mic, identify yourself. Please specify to whom your question is directed. And I see Chris Nelson with the first question, so it's right up here in front.

The mic is coming. Over here, please.

MR. NELSON: Thank you so much. Chris Nelson, The Nelson Report. Thanks for a really great slideshow. I wish you'd had two more hours to show them.

I wanted to pick up on the very final point that Jonathan made because it is the question we ask ourselves all the time, but let me ask it in this way. As you know, there's a serious debate about food aid. Did we “make a mistake” by agreeing to the North Korean linkage with strategic issues? What is your reaction when you hear people say, you know, any aid you put into North Korea just sort of continues the regime? Therefore, the greater humanity in the long run is not to give aid. We can all see the contradictions. But I'd be fascinated how you answer that question.

And then a typical Asian two-parter, I've become great friends with Andrei Lankov over the last few years because, as you know, Andrei talks all the time

about the need to really work with as many North Korean people as you can in order to develop the cadre, so if and when things change you've got people understanding what you're talking about. And I think that's really related to the question of do we aid them and do we interact, so let me try to throw both of those at you. And thank you again for a really great talk.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Okay.

MR. BUSH: Go ahead.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Yeah, okay, thanks for those questions, Chris. Let me answer the second question first because that gives me a bit more time to think about the first one. (Laughter)

Should we interact? Yes, absolutely. I think North Korea is going through one of its periodic crises and people are disoriented. In many ways, North Korea is like Europe at the beginning of the Enlightenment, that traditional religious certainties are being questioned and facts are coming to the fore that are making people reassess what they believe. And this is really quite distressing for a lot of North Koreans. It also means that right now that they will be particularly receptive to talking about new ways of doing things.

That said there is a fundamental mismatch between what we can expect as a result of this kind of an engagement and the problems that the DPRK presents; that engagement with the DPRK over the long term might well alleviate at least a lot of the challenges that the DPRK poses. The problem is we don't have the long term. We are dealing with a nuclear-armed and neurotic state now. And trying to solve a problem that could go critical any day, any week, any month with a process that is going to take several years, perhaps very many years to bear fruit, is not an adequate response.

To take your first question, there is no good answer, Chris. The problem

is we don't have the long term. We are dealing with a nuclear-armed and neurotic state now. And trying to solve a problem that could go critical any day, any week, any month with a process that is going to take several years, perhaps very many years to bear fruit, is not an adequate response.

To take your first question, there is no good answer, Chris. I mean, firstly, there's a humanitarian imperative here. I think most of us feel instinctively and deeply that when you see children suffering the appalling rates of wasting and stunting that have been chronicled with the grim precision of starvation by the international agencies; we want to go and do something and to alleviate the suffering. This is an entirely reasonable human response.

How far we are thereby continuing their suffering into the long term I think depends on the extent to which the regime either by direct diversion or by substitution will then take food that the international community gives the needy in North Korea and provide it to its army. And how far this happens seems to vary a great deal, from time to time and from place to place. We shouldn't assume that there's a straightforward kind of, you know, ton-for-ton equivalence between giving food to North Korea and a corresponding ton of rice or whatever appearing in an army barracks. But there is no doubt that the regime does exploit the generosity of the international community to keep part of its military going. You know, there is no good answer to this.

As a footnote, one thing that has always intrigued me in North Korea is that although there have been widespread reports of and concern at a diversion of food, I never came across parallel reports of diversion of medicine; that although the World Health Organization keeps large chunks of the DPRK's struggling health infrastructure working, they never once told me that they had problems of medicine or other medical supplies being diverted. Curious.

MR. BUSH: Right there. And please keep your questions brief so we have time for more.

MR. AMATRUDA: Will Amatruda. Could you compare and contrast the perception of North Korea by Western self-proclaimed experts, the people who go to conferences and talk to each other, and may or may not have ever been in North Korea, and the perception within South Korea, most of who have also never set foot there unless they were born there? And is there anything comparable to the rose-colored view that some people in the West in the 1930s and '40s had of the Stalinist regime?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Okay, if I start talking about perception in North Korea by North Korea watchers in this audience, I'm going to get stoned. (Laughter) So I'm going to move the conversation on to the safer second point about how it all looks from South Korea.

Just because of whom I am and what I've done, every time I go to South Korea, and I go there, you know, once in a while, I get people coming up and talking to me about their perceptions. And I get this curious mixture. Firstly, an emotional response. These are fellow Koreans and a deep wish to see their country reunited and the horror that's been denied it for so long. A fascination with the different way of life that they live there and, at the same time, a deep mistrust of what North Koreans have done.

I think that one of the curious side effects of the Sunshine Policy has been to, in many circles in South Korea, to erode support for the North. The people saw enormous amounts of money going in. There were hundreds of thousands of tons of rice aid, fertilizer, all paid for by long-suffering and hard-working South Koreans. And in the end, what came out? Not even the promised summit in Seoul, which was supposed to be one of the cornerstones as first announced. And I think the whole process left quite a bitter taste.

Is there a parallel with those who saw Stalin through rose-colored spectacles? I mean, I'm sure we've all been following recent remarks by certain South Korean parliamentarians. It does seem to me that there are those in South Korea who are reluctant to face the full horror of the North, yes.

MR. BUSH: Back in the back there.

MR. THIELMANN: Greg Thielmann, Arms Control Association. On April 13th of this year, the North Koreans failed in an attempt to launch a satellite. This was not unusual in that they've failed four times launching this kind of rocket, but it was unusual the degree of public information that they had about the launch. My question is how would the North Korean population receive this information and receive the information about a failed launch? And what does this imply about the next time they try a launch and whether or not they can go back to the previous system of pretending that satellites were launched when they actually were not?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: That's a fascinating question. The DPRK regime has already demonstrated its economic incompetence to its population. The November 2009 monetary reform was a particular shock. People saw their savings evaporate. And colleagues in Pyongyang tell me that at that time that people who had previously been completely loyal to the regime and would never have spoken a word against it were starting to say that actually these guys aren't everything they make themselves out to be. But there was a feeling then that at least it could do the proper regime rituals properly.

The failed satellite launch shows it can't even do that. This was supposed to be the centerpiece of the centenary celebrations. You know, in North Korea it's a really big event. And what happens? It goes splat. This will have played very badly right across the country.

Why were they so transparent? I think they've dug themselves in to a hole. They were so confident that this was going to be a great success that they invited the foreign media in, which meant that they could not pretend that it had worked, so they were stuck.

Are they going to go back next time they try stuff like a launch to the secrecy of previous attempts? I think they will think very hard before doing a satellite launch with quite so many foreigners around watching what is going on.

You may remember that they have had similar unfortunate experiences with other forms of transparency, that the one time that a football match, an international football match, was shown live in the DPRK -- Jonathan is nodding in recognition of this -- was after a rather good showing by the North Korean team against, who was it, (inaudible), but which encouraged the regime to show the next match live and the North Korean team were completely slaughtered, which is the last time, I think, that they ever showed a football match live as well. Transparency can be dangerous.

MR. BUSH: Yes, Bill Breer, up here.

MR. BREER: I'm Bill Breer, retired Foreign Service officer. I wonder if you had any opportunity to observe the readiness of their military and their competence in any way at all. It's kind of a far-out question, but I have a sneaking suspicion or wishful hope that it's kind of *Potemkin*.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: I don't think it's *Potemkin*, but nor do I think that they are anything like as ferocious a fighting force as they'd like us to believe. You'll be astonished to know that I was never invited to observe military exercises, so I can't, you know, tell you how they performed actually, you know, in simulated fighting. It's well known that the military suffers from all kinds of shortages, everything fuel through food to pretty much anything else.

I was held once at a military checkpoint where I accidentally cycled out of Pyongyang and tried to cycle back in. The soldiers stopped me and took me through to the commanding officer's office to sit while they worked out what to do with me. And all the time I was there soldiers were coming in and out with their weapons because the weapons safe for the unit was actually in the commander's office. So I got to see, well, most of the unit and none of them had socks, which leads me to think, you know, if these people had ever been pushed into action, you know, they'd have had very chafed feet at a very early stage, never mind weapons.

There's a constant problem, too, of corruption in the military, you know, reports that officers will steal the food from their soldiers to buy whisky, which probably doesn't do an awful lot for moral.

I say all this; remember that people were conducting the same kind of analysis on the Red Army in 1939. And a lot of Western analysts had convinced themselves that it would just crumble under the German onslaught. When it actually came to the crunch that's not quite what happened, so I think we need to treat these analyses with some care.

MR. POLLACK: John, I think you did mention in your book that if anything prevailed among some of the military personnel that you saw was boredom.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Boredom, that's right, yes. And also, it's important to remember that most North Korean soldiers are just North Korean lads doing their military service. And they're actually quite friendly and smiley. Quite unlike, you know, the Chinese used to man checkpoints and the bad old days (inaudible) revolution. I tell the story in the book, over time when I was -- I started out to a checkpoint and the squaddie in charge sort of seized this foreigner appearing on a bicycle. You could see his eyes growing wider and wider as I approached. So finally he steps up, flags me

down, and says, you know, (speaking Korean), I'm so sorry, I cannot let you pass. I've got orders. And then so overcome with the enormity of having stopped a foreigner, he said, but do come and have a cup of tea anyway. (Laughter)

So I did. He had got a little battered tin mug and he had a kind of sort of little stove thing and I actually sat and drank a cup of tea with me.

MR. BUSH: Back here.

MR. FITZGERALD: Yes, Dave Fitzgerald; retired Foreign Service. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about the value that the UK government sees in your presence or a diplomatic representation in Pyongyang. There's been periodic discussions here about whether the U.S. should follow that course. I understand the Australians at one point had somebody there, and I think they've withdrawn that embassy. Is there an argument in the UK for or against a presence there? Was there a great deal of political opposition to having a presence there? Could you comment on that?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Sure. The UK set up its embassy in Pyongyang at a very different time from now. The decision was taken in the glow of the Sunshine Policy, summits, smiling photos of Kim Jong-il shaking the hands of various South Korean dignitaries, and the feeling that the North Koreans might actually be coming out of their shell and be prepared to engage with the wider outside world. And so we set up. The Swedes, of course, had been there for a long time. The Germans set up later that year. The Italians put up a cooperation bureau. You know, there was a great sort of spate of recognitions and embassies opened in Pyongyang.

At the time, frankly, there was debate within London. Yes, of course there was. And a lot of people, particularly in view of the amount of money this was going to cost, said that this was a mistake, that we would be far better strengthening

embassies elsewhere. But, in the end, it was decided to go ahead and do this.

Is there a debate now? Well, the British embassy has just gained another member of staff, you know, we've expanded, largely, I think, from moral and security reasons that, you know, if you had too many people on holiday or somebody's sick, you'll get down dangerously close to critical mass, which, you know, the embassy can't really function effectively. But even in the current strengthening financial circumstances, money's been found to fund another slot there.

Broadening your question slightly, I'm pretty sure that most European countries went through a parallel process. Some countries released statements at the time they opened embassies, all talking about the importance of engaging with the DPRK. We didn't actually do so, but, I mean, that essentially is the reason we opened and the reason we're still there.

Should America open? I think having a U.S. embassy in Pyongyang would have a tremendous effect on the country. For a start, you guys have got a lot more money than we have and you could probably set up a much larger operation, with a lot more bang locally. At the same time, I recognize that one of the great DPRK ambitions is to have Americans in Pyongyang as proper tribute-bearers, you know, recognizing the superiority of the People's Paradise, and the hesitation that this attitude tends to engender, both in the White House and in the State Department, so I'm not necessarily expecting a grand opening any time soon.

MR. BUSH: Right here.

MR. LEE: Nathan Lee, Korea Economic Institute. So we hear reports about South Korean dramas and DVDs, the transistor radios that are dropped in becoming more available to North Koreans. In your experience and your observation are these limited to only the border regions and Pyongyang or is this phenomenon at all in

the rural parts of North Korea?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: I left the DPRK four years ago, and at that stage I saw clear evidence of this in Pyongyang and I didn't get close to the border regions to see myself, but there was clear reporting coming out that there was a lot going on there. I didn't see any evidence in provincial cities, let alone the countryside, but that was four years ago, and I would hazard a guess that the phenomenon has since spread.

Four years ago, I came across people trading DVDs openly on street corners in Pyongyang and, you know, there's no attempt at hiding this even with a foreigner approaching. It was clearly a decided part of North Korean life. And North Koreans would tell me that they would watch these things at home, always nervous that there might be a power cut in the middle of, you know, your favorite scene because the police would wait for a power cut and then go and raid flats, go and raid apartments, knowing that people would have DVDs, incriminating DVDs stuck in the machines and unable to get them out. At which point, you know, the policeman was in a position to extort quite a large bribe.

They had considerable influence amongst the people I knew. I had a set of *Desperate Housewives*, which I gave to different North Koreans. And I remember giving them to a young lady, who said thank you very much. And I had to see her next day. Panda-eyed, she sat up all night just watching the entire series from beginning to end. (Laughter) Loved it. And a young man watched them, also. I'm not quite sure he devoured them in one session. But I remember when he gave me the set back, he said *Desperate Housewives*, do you know, I think my wife might be one of them. (Laughter) Clearly hadn't occurred to him before.

MR. BUSH: Right here. To your left.

MR. SULLIVAN: Hi. Thank you. Kevin Sullivan from The Rendon

Group. My question stems from seeing a lot of the young people here, a surprising amount, it seems like pretty energized. And it's not really a political nitpicking question either. It's more looking at the humanitarian concerns that are quite apparent and the end goal of ending a regime.

What can young people do to address the most basic needs of North Koreans? We've talked a lot about information inflows, access to information, which would energize the masses, but if they don't have socks, how far can you go without socks? Or if you have parasites because of the lack of boots, you can't really go far either. Whether that means not directly overthrowing the regime, but even starting up your own micro service, it's not very pleasant to start a bicycle repair shop if you have a foot fungus or something like that.

So what can young people do? What avenues for young people are there to get those basic, very basic, supplies to North Koreans? And the possibility that more information comes in, more opportunities open up, what avenues to work from there? That's it.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: You're talking about young people in this country or --

MR. SULLIVAN: In this country, in this room.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: In this room, okay.

MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: A lot of NGOs, despite all the odds, manage to keep operating in North Korea. They are always looking for support, money, volunteers, whatever. Check their websites. There are plenty of opportunities to support young North Korean -- to support North Koreans in that way.

I thought your question was, when you first started speaking, about

young North Koreans. And I was going to say that the people that I knew, the last thing they wanted was the regime to change. I mean, if the regime changed, they lost everything. These were people who had done well out of the system and whose great terror was not an invasion by the Americans. It was being strung up from lampposts by their own people.

I remember, I once had a book written by a South Korean defector, in Korean naturally enough, which I lent to a friend of mine, who gave it back to me absolutely riveted, you know, had spent -- read the whole thing in a couple of days and said I'll give it back to you in a proper brown bag. Don't you ever let anybody else read this book. Promise me you will never let another Korean read this book. They'll overthrow us all and kill me.

MR. SULLIVAN: But even basic things, like services.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Your basic things like?

MR. BUSH: Services.

MR. SULLIVAN: Services, like creating your own photo outfit (inaudible), would people be interested in doing that?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Sure, but they'll get shot.

MR. BUSH: My Brookings colleague, Marvin Kalb, up here.

MR. KALB: Mr. Ambassador, thank you. My question concerns the North Korean view of the United States. Can you give us a sense of what it is now? Do they see it as a permanent enemy, always linked to South Korea, a country that can actually help them? What is your sense of that?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: It's a very complex set of conflicting views. I mean, North Korea we talk about as a Stalinist state. It's not. The closest equivalent is National Socialism with a very strong racial component. Koreans know that they are the

best people in the world. Americans are, therefore, inferior because Americans are not Korean. Nevertheless, perversely, Americans have become the superpower and the DPRK, through a detail of history, has not yet. (Laughter)

This inculcates a kind of fascination with the United States. You know, you've got these people who are physically ugly, they have big noses, they eat horrible food, who are, nevertheless, massively successful and how did they do it? And how are they going to help us to become successful, one?

Two, that because they're a superpower they ought to be treating the DPRK with respect because we're the DPRK and we're the best, like I said. How do we get them to behave this way? That's kind of a macro level, if you like.

At micro level, I mentioned just now that, you know, North Koreans I knew who'd been in contact with Americans actually liked Americans and reckoned that basically you're decent human beings and that, you know, they'd quite welcome a lot more Americans around. And every now and then, when there is talk or -- or was talk, rather, of an American embassy opening, my North Korean contacts got very excited. And, you know, the chattering class of Pyongyang -- and there are chattering classes. You know, these people talk among themselves all the time, excessively; would keep coming to me saying are they coming, are they coming? And, you know, really would have loved to see that.

The one thing that no North Korean ever worried me about was an American invasion. They occasionally had a go at me about the supposed American atrocities during the Korean War, which, of course, they're all taught about. But I don't think anybody really took seriously the supposed military threat. This was just propaganda meant to keep peasants in the collective farms under control. Nobody in the outer elite really believed it.

MR. KALB: But South Korea going north?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Do you know they never really discussed that. I mean, I think the basic DPRK position is that South Korea is just an American puppet. South Korea will not act. It has no independent power of thought other than what it is told to do by the United States. Therefore, South Korea is not independently going to invade. If there is an invasion, it'll be American-led or there won't be.

MR. BUSH: Jonathan, it was two fingers.

MR. POLLACK: Yes, it's related to a different superpower. You said something in your talk and I believe in your book that the most intense hatred is toward the Chinese. And you said that that's the most widely held. Now, how would you compare, for example, hatred towards Japan to hatred towards China? And in that context, is the hatred induced more by the dependence on China, given that absent Chinese support the country would be in an even more perilous state? How would you explain it?

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Yes. There are various reasons why North Koreans don't like the Chinese, part of it, perversely, is the dependency. They know that they are dependent on China and they resent this. I mean, it's a bit hard on the Chinese. You know, they've just given them, what, half a million tons of rice? The DPRK never says thank you, but just takes them and sort of snarls like it was all wrong.

The senior levels, the way the (speaking Korean) in the words of the East Germans sort of put Kim Il-sung in a box and told him to shut up during the war having sort of virtually lost it and requiring Chinese assistance didn't go down that well at all. But there's more to it than that.

There is a basic racial antipathy. North Koreans do not like Chinese in any form or description. They think they smell funny. They think they're rude and they

think the food they eat is even worse than American food. (Laughter)

And I remember, one of the things you can do for relaxation in Pyongyang is to have a traditional Korean massage. And there are various sort of, you know, places around town where you can go for this. And I got talking to a masseuse once and she said, oh, yes, I quite often get foreign friends come in for a massage. I get, you know, you Brits and the Germans come and the Russians, but I'd never massage a Chinese. They just smell so awful, she said. So that was it.

And on top of that, there is the behavior of Chinese businessmen in the DPRK. Now, we've all been watching the development of economic relations between China and the DPRK and watching the trade stats rise, I'm sure. But there's a reality on the ground that you have to take into account. It means that lots of China's businessmen then go to the DPRK to open up factories and to seek business deals.

Now, I spent many, many years in China. I've got a lot of Chinese friends and there are a lot of Chinese I really like. The ones who end up in the DPRK you would not want to go to dinner with. These are seriously rough diamonds. You know, real frontiers people who treat the Koreans like dirt. And, you know, the Koreans are in no position to turn around and tell these people to leave. They need their money. They need the jobs they provide. But the way they're treated and the way the Koreans are treated in particular in Chinese-run factories goes right around the grapevine -- the chattering class again; the bush telegraph in North Korea is astonishingly efficient -- and engenders real resentment. You know, why should we Koreans in our own country be treated by the Chinese like this?

Footnote: I showed a slide of the Kaesong industrial zone. The bush telegraph knew all about that as well. I remember talking to a friend in Pyongyang who had never been to Kaesong, let alone to the zone, after I'd been there. And the friend

said, you know, I'm told that the factories are like this, and she, in a few sentences, she gave me an accurate description of what those factories look like, roughly how much people earned, and also about the food. And I said, yes, you know, that's right. How do you know? Oh, she said, you know, just people tell me. The bush telegraph was sufficiently accurate that for somebody with no particular connection with Kaesong, that they nevertheless knew all about what was going on inside the zone, which I think, impressed me.

MR. BUSH: Did you a have a question?

AMBASSADOR SASSER: Jonathan asked my question.

MR. BUSH: Oh, okay, that's fine.

AMBASSADOR SASSER: Good answer. I might just ask --

MR. BUSH: This is Ambassador Jim Sasser. Take a mic, Jim.

AMBASSADOR SASSER: I might just ask the Chinese support that goes to North Korea, are the North Koreans people aware of the extent of that support? I'm sure the elites are, but does it get down to the people in the street or the people in the countryside?

And how much influence do you think the Chinese government actually might have on the North Korean government and the North Korean elite? The Chinese claim not to have much, but I don't know that I buy that.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: How much do people know about the aid? Relatively little. When you talk to North Koreans about the aid coming in, they know about WFP aid, not least because it comes in in big sacks, saying World Food Programme. I mean, you don't have to be bright to work it out.

They also know about South Korean aid for the same reason, the sacks just say (speaking Korean). They're big, you know, four handles across. And, I mean,

North Korea is short of sacks, like everything else, and they get recycled. And I remember once seeing a kind of canopy over a balcony in Pyongyang, where people had just cut up the (speaking Korean), you know, the Republic of Korea sacks with the slogans still on them and sewed them together over the top of the balcony. They never seemed to worry about it. It was a very clear message that this was food aid that had come in from the Republic of Korea.

The Chinese don't do anything like that. You just don't see aid marked People's Republic of China or any other source. I don't know why that is. I suspect it may be because they simply deliver in bulk rather than individual sacks or something, and hand it across to North Koreans who, in all likelihood, just put it straight on the first available military truck and take it to feed the army, so that the populace never sees it anyway.

How much influence do the Chinese have over North Korea? I think that when the Chinese try to tell Americans that they have a lot less influence than most Americans think, they're telling the truth. They have access. Sometimes they have good access. From time to time, they can get in at the top. And the Chinese ambassador when I was there met Kim Jong-il relatively often.

But access, as American diplomats will tell you, is not the same as influence. And you being able to talk to people is very different from being able to change their minds. And I don't see a lot of evidence that China has been able to move North Korean positions in key areas except with China is prepared to get nasty. And I think that reports that we see that it was Kim Jong-IL, wasn't it, that --

SPEAKER: Went to Beijing.

AMBASSADOR EVERARD: Went to Beijing, exactly, met Hu Jintao and Hu Jintao read the riot act at him. He says third nuclear test means Chinese

reassessment, fundamental reassessment of our relations with the DPRK, including the aid projects. That kind of message gets home.

But what that means is that the Chinese, in military terms, if you like, they've got kind of small arms. They can engage, they can chatter, they can try to talk these people around. And they have got the diplomatic equivalent of nuclear weapons. They can threaten Armageddon. But they haven't actually got very much in between, and it puts them in a really quite difficult position.

AMBASSADOR SASSER: Thank you.

MR. BUSH: The book is *Only Beautiful, Please*. Copies are available outside. Please join me in expressing our gratitude to the author. (Applause)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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