

REPORT ON FAMILY REUNIONS BETWEEN UNITED STATES CITIZENS AND THEIR RELATIVES IN NORTH KOREA

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (P.L. 110-181), Section 1265, requires the President to submit a report on family reunions between U.S. citizens and their relatives in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that includes:

(1) A description of the efforts, if any, of the U.S. government to facilitate family reunions between U.S. citizens and their relatives in North Korea, including the following:

(A) Discussing with North Korea family reunions between U.S. citizens and their relatives in North Korea.

(B) Planning, in the event of a normalization of relations between the United States and North Korea, for the appropriate role of the U.S. embassy in Pyongyang, North Korea, in facilitating family reunions between U.S. citizens and their relatives in North Korea.

(2) A description of additional efforts, if any, of the U.S. government to facilitate family reunions between U.S. citizens and their relatives in North Korea that the President considers to be desirable and feasible.

The division of the Korean Peninsula in 1950 resulted in the involuntary separation of millions of Korean families, including some who are now U.S. citizens. Since the historic June 13-14, 2000 summit between South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, there have been 16 rounds of inter-Korean family reunions. These family reunions have been open to citizens of the two Koreas only. While 84 Korean-Americans have taken part in North-South family reunions, they have only been able to do so indirectly as relatives of South Korean citizens.

The United States currently does not have diplomatic relations with North Korea (also known as the DPRK). Government-to-government facilitation of family reunions may become possible with the normalization of relations between

the countries. As part of the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the United States and North Korea agreed to begin bilateral talks aimed at moving toward full diplomatic relations. The United States has made clear that progress toward the normalization of U.S.-DPRK relations is contingent upon progress on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which is the agreed upon aim of the Six-Party Talks. At an appropriate time, normalization talks are expected to address the establishment of diplomatic relations, including the establishment of diplomatic missions (e.g., embassies, consulates, liaison offices). The role of any U.S. diplomatic mission in Pyongyang, including an appropriate role in facilitating family reunions, would be addressed at that time.

The United States fully supports South Korea's reunification efforts, but the role of the U.S. government is limited by current legal and diplomatic circumstances.