

Netizen Journalism  
The Emergence of New Forms of News that Can Improve the Policy Making Process

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I - Preface

In this paper I want to explore the new news that is emerging and how this new form of news is making it possible to improve the policy making process. This new news is part of the phenomenon I refer to as netizen journalism.

In exploring this question I will discuss a case study as an example to consider toward looking at the potential for both the present and future of journalism that this new phenomenon represents.

II - First some background

In October of 2006, I began covering the United Nations as a journalist for the English edition of the South Korean online newspaper, *OhmyNews International*. When *Ohmynews* ended its English edition in 2010, I became a correspondent covering the UN for an English language blog – <http://blogs.taz.de/netizenblog> at the web site of the German newspaper Die Tageszeitung. Both *OhmyNews International* and my blog at the taz.de web site are online publications.

With Michael Hauben, I am co-author of the book *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet* (Hauben & Hauben, 1997). The book was first published online in January 1994. Then, on May 1, 1997, the print edition of the book *Netizens* was published in English and in October, a Japanese translation was published. This was the first book to recognize that along with the development of the Internet, a new form of citizenship, called netizenship has emerged. This is a form of citizenship that has developed based on the broader forms of political participation and empowerment made possible by the Net.

I want to share a brief overview of the origin, use and impact of the netizen concept and its relation to what I call netizen journalism before presenting a case study about the impact netizen journalism has had on the UN Security Council's conflict resolution process.

III-Introduction

While now many people are interested in the impact of the Internet on society, pioneering research was done by my co-author Michael Hauben in the early 1990s when the Internet was first beginning to spread and to connect people around the world. In his research, Hauben recognized that there were people who appreciated the communication the Internet made possible and that these people worked to spread the Net and to do what they felt needed for it to help to create a better world. Taking the common network term, 'net.citizen' used online at the time, Hauben proposed that these people who worked to contribute to the Net and the bigger world it was part of were 'netizens.'

In an article he wrote on the impact of the Net on journalism, he recognized that many people online were frustrated with the mainstream media and that the netizens would be creating

a broader and more widespread media. As Hauben recognized in the early 1990s "the collective body of people assisted by (the Net)...has grown larger than any individual newspaper...." (Hauben, M., 1997b: 233). Predicting the important impact the Net and Netizens would have on the future of journalism and the media, Hauben (1997a: 3-4) wrote:

A new world of connections between people - either privately from individual to individual or publicly from individuals to the collective mass of many on the Net is possible. The old model of distribution of information from the central Network Broadcasting Company is being questioned and challenged. The top-down model of information being distributed by a few for mass-consumption is no longer the only news. Netnews brings the power of the reporter to the Netizen. People now have the ability to broadcast their observations or questions around the world and have other people respond. The computer networks form a new grassroots connection that allows the excluded sections of society to have a voice. This new medium is unprecedented. Previous grassroots media have existed for much smaller-sized selections of people. The model of the Net proves the old way does not have to be the only way of networking. The Net extends the idea of networking - of making connections with strangers that prove to be advantageous to one or both parties.

This broader collective of netizens and journalists empowered by the Net are participating in generating and transmitting the news toward creating a better society. This is a basis for developing a conception of netizen journalism.

I want to look at a news event about Korea and the UN in the context of this description of the news the Net makes possible and then consider the implication of this case study for the kind of journalism that I propose netizens and the Internet are making possible.

#### IV - Korea

First some background about South Korea and the Net and Netizen. In February of 2003, I was glancing at the front page summaries of the articles in an issue of the *Financial Times*. I saw a surprising headline for an article continued later in the issue. The article said that in 2002 netizens in South Korea had elected the President of the country, Roh Moo-hyun. He had just taken office on February 25, 2003. The new President promised that the Internet would be influential in the form of government he established. Also I learned that an online Korean newspaper called *OhmyNews* and South Korean netizens had been important making these developments possible. Colleagues encouraged me to get in contact with *OhmyNews* and to learn more about the netizens activities in South Korea and about *OhmyNews*.

I subsequently learned that both South Korea and China are places where the role of netizens is important in building more democratic structures for society. I began to pay attention to both of these netizen developments. South Korea, for example, has been advanced in grassroots efforts to create examples of netizen forms for a more participatory decision making processes. I wrote several research papers documenting the achievements and activities of Korean netizens (Hauben, R., 2005; 2006a; 2007a)

#### V - Reporting on the UN

By October 2006 the second 5 year term for Kofi Annan as the Secretary General of the United Nations was soon to end. One of the main contenders to become the 8th Secretary General of the UN was the Foreign Minister of South Korea, Ban Ki-moon. By 2006, I was writing regularly as a featured columnist for *OhmyNews International*, the English language edition of *OhmyNews*. On October 9, 2006, Ban Ki-moon won the Security Council nomination. This nomination was to be approved by the General Assembly on October 13. I thought this would be a historic event for South Korea. I asked the Editor of *OhmyNews International* (OMNI) if I could cover the UN for it. He agreed and I was able to get my credential in time to go to the General Assembly meeting when the General Assembly voted to accept the Security Council's nomination of Ban Ki-moon.

I was surprised that some of the speeches welcoming Ban Ki-moon as the Secretary General elect were meaningful speeches referring to actual problems at the UN such as the need for reform of the Security Council. A significant focus of the comments to the new Secretary General from member states emphasized the importance of communication at the UN. That it was critical for the incoming Secretary General to listen to all states and to hear their views. Witnessing the vote for a new Secretary General who was from South Korea, I wondered if the Internet would be able to have any impact on the new Secretary General and on what happened at the United Nations, since the Internet had been able to make it possible for netizens in South Korea to impact politics.

The very next day, on October 14, the Security Council took up to condemn the recent nuclear test by North Korea. This had been North Korea's first nuclear test. The Security Council imposed sanctions on North Korea, not giving the North Korean Ambassador to the UN, Pak Gil Yon a chance to respond until after the sanctions had been voted on. When the North Korean Ambassador responded, he referred among other issues, to financial sanctions that the US had imposed on North Korea. No one in the Security Council asked him what he was referring to or how this affected the issues the Security Council had just acted on (Hauben, R., 2007c)

It impressed me that just as a new Secretary General from South Korea was being chosen at the UN, at the same time sanctions were being imposed on North Korea. The Security Council acted against North Korea before hearing its views on the issue they were considering. This was in sharp contrast to the emphasis member nations put on the importance of hearing the views of all members when they welcomed Ban Ki moon to the United Nations in the meeting just one day earlier in the General Assembly.

The article I wrote for *OhmyNews International* described this situation. It explained:

The urgent problem facing the UN at this juncture in history is not whether North Korea has developed and tested a nuclear device. It is the breakdown reflected by the lack of participation and investigation by the international community into how a crisis will be handled once it develops, and whether the concerns and problems of those involved in the crisis will be considered as part of the process of seeking a solution. It is how the UN functions when tensions reach a point where serious attention is needed to help to understand and solve a problem. (Hauben, R., 2006b)

## VI - The Phenomenon of Netizen Journalism

In the research I have been doing and the experiences I have had exploring the potential of what I call netizen journalism, several questions have been raised:

What is this new form of news and what are its characteristics?

Is this something different from traditional journalism?

Is there some significant new aspect represented by netizen journalism?

Traditionally, the press can function as a watchdog for society by exposing the use and abuse of power. Or, the press can act to support the abuse of political power. If netizen journalism can provide a more accurate understanding of conflicts, it can help make more likely the peaceful resolution of these conflicts.

## VII-The Cheonan-Some Background

The Cheonan conflict which was brought to the UN in 2010 provides an important example of how netizen journalism has helped to make a significant contribution to a peaceful resolution of a conflict by the Security Council. The Cheonan incident concerns a South Korean naval ship, a Navy Corvette, which broke in two and sank on March 26, 2010. Forty-six of the crew members died in the tragedy. At the time the Cheonan was involved in US/South Korea naval exercises in an area in the West Sea/Yellow Sea between North Korea and China. The sinking of the Cheonan and the South Korean government's investigation have been the subject of much discussion on the Internet.

Initially, the South Korean government and the US government said there was no indication that North Korea was involved. Then at a press conference on May 20, 2010, the South Korean government claimed that a torpedo fired by a North Korean submarine exploded in the water near the Cheonan, causing a pressure wave that was responsible for the sinking. Many criticisms of this scenario have been raised.

First, there was no direct evidence of any North Korean submarine in the vicinity of the Cheonan. Nor was there any evidence that a torpedo was actually fired causing a pressure wave phenomenon. Hence the South Korean government had no actual case that could be presented in a court of law to support its claims. In fact, if this claim of a pressure wave were true, even those involved in the investigation of the incident acknowledge that "North Korea would be the first to have succeeded at using this kind of a bubble jet torpedo action in actual fighting." (Lee, Y., 2010)

## VIII - The Cheonan Press Conference and the Local Election

A press conference was held by the South Korean government on May 20, to announce that North Korea was responsible for the sinking of the Cheonan. May 20, it turns out, was also the start of the local and regional election period. Many South Koreans were suspicious that the accusation was a ploy to help the ruling party candidates win in the elections. The widespread suspicions about the government's motives led to the ruling party's losing many of the local election contests. These election results demonstrated the deep distrust among the South Korean population of the motives behind the South Korean government's accusations about North Korea's responsibility for the sinking of the Cheonan.

In their article, "Blogging as 'Recoding': A Case Study of the Discursive War over the Sinking of the Cheonan", Kim, Jeong, Khang and Kim (2011), document that in the period

between the day of the accident, March 26, 2010 and June 16, 2010 there were more than 120,000 posts by netizens about the sinking of the Cheonan. Though they reduced these to a sample set of 354, they found that the majority of the posts were critical of the Korean government's claims about the sinking of the Cheonan. Many netizens were critical of the investigation that the South Korean government conducted and sought to challenge the conclusions.

Significantly, netizens demonstrated how they were able to have an impact on the framing of the Cheonan story. They also were to have an impact on how the issue was to be treated at the UN Security Council.

## IX-The Cheonan and Netizen Journalism

While there was a substantial response to the Korean government's claims among Korean netizens, the issue also spread internationally. Netizens who live in different countries and speak different languages took up to critique the claims of the South Korean government about the cause of the sinking of the Cheonan. This netizen activity appears to have acted as a catalyst affecting the actions of the UN Security Council in its treatment of the Cheonan dispute.

Among the responses were substantial analyses by non-governmental organizations like Spark, PSPD, Peaceboat and others, which were posted on the Internet, either in English and or in Korean or in both languages. Some of these online posts were in the form of letters that were also sent to the members of the UN Security Council (Hauben, R., 2010a; 2010c).<sup>1</sup> At the time, I saw discussions and critiques of the Korean government's claims at American, Japanese and Chinese web sites, in addition to conversation and postings about the Cheonan on South Korean web sites.

One such critique included a three part analysis by the South Korean NGO People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD).<sup>2</sup> This analysis raised a number of questions and problems with the South Korean government's case. The PSPD document was posted widely on the Internet and also sent to the President of the United Nations Security Council for distribution to those Security Council members interested and to the South Korean Mission to the UN.

While there were many blog comments about the Cheonan incident in Korean, there were also some bloggers writing in English who became active in critiquing the South Korean investigation and the role of the US in the conflict. One blogger, Scott Creighton who uses the pen name Willy Loman, or American Everyman, wrote a post (Creighton, 2010a) titled "The Sinking of the Cheonan: We are being lied to." The South Korean government had claimed that a diagram it had displayed at the press conference on May 20 was from a North Korean weapons sales brochure which offered a torpedo similar to the torpedo part it claimed to have found near where the ship sank. The torpedo was identified as the CHT-02D. In a post he titled "A Perfect Match?", Creighton showed how there was a discrepancy between the diagram displayed by the South Korean government in the press conference, and the part of the torpedo it had on display in the glass case below the diagram (<http://willyloman.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/not-a-perfect-match-updated2.jpg>). He demonstrated that the diagram did not match the part of the torpedo on display. He pointed out several discrepancies between the two. For example, one of the components of the torpedo shown was in the propeller section, but in the diagram, the component appeared in the shaft section. There were many comments in response to this post, including some from netizens in South Korea. Also the mainstream conservative media in South

Korea carried accounts of this blogger's critique. Three weeks later, at a news conference, a South Korean government official acknowledged that the diagram presented by the South Korean government was not of the same torpedo as the part displayed in the glass case. Instead the diagram displayed was of the PT97W torpedo, not the CHT-02D torpedo as claimed.

In a post titled "Thanks to Valuable Input" describing the significance of having documented one of the fallacies in the South Korean government's case, Creighton (2010b) writes:

(I)n the end, thanks to valuable input from dozens of concerned people all across the world.... Over 100,000 viewers read that article and it was republished on dozens of sites all across the world (even translated). A South Korean MSM outlet even posted our diagram depicting the glaring discrepancies between the evidence and the drawing of the CHT-02D torpedo, which a high-ranking military official could only refute by stating he had 40 years military experience and to his knowledge, I had none. But what I had, what we had, was literally thousands of people all across the world, scientists, military members, and just concerned investigative bloggers who were committed to the truth and who took the time to contribute to what we were doing here.

"40 years military experience' took a beating from 'we the people WorldWide' and that is the way it is supposed to be."

This is just one of a number of serious questions and challenges that were raised about the South Korean government's scenario of the sinking of the Cheonan.

Other influential events which helped to challenge the South Korean government's claims were a press conference in Japan held on July 9 by two academic scientists. The two scientists presented results of experiments they did which challenged the results of experiments the South Korean government used to support its case. These two scientists also wrote to the Security Council with their findings.<sup>3</sup>

Another significant challenge to the South Korean government report was the finding of a Russian team of four sent to South Korea to look at the data from the investigation and to do an independent evaluation of it. The team of naval experts visited South Korea from May 30 to June 7. The Russian team did not accept the South Korean government's claim that a pressure wave from a torpedo caused the Cheonan to sink.<sup>4</sup> Acquiring a leaked copy of the Russian Team's report, the *Hankyoreh* newspaper in South Korea reported that the Russian investigators determined that the ship had come in contact with the ocean floor and a propeller and shaft became entangled in a fishing net. Also the investigators thought it likely that an old underwater mine had exploded near the Cheonan adding to the factors that led to the ship sinking.

Such efforts along with online posts and discussions by many netizens provided a catalyst for the actions of the UN Security Council concerning the Cheonan incident.

When the UN Security Council took up the Cheonan issue in June, I learned that some of the members of the Council knew of the critiques of the South Korean government investigation which blamed North Korea for sinking the ship.

X - The Cheonan and the UN Security Council

After doing poorly in the local and regional elections in South Korea, the South Korean government brought the dispute over the sinking of the Cheonan to the United Nations Security Council in June 2010. A Presidential Statement was agreed to a month later, in July (Hauben, R., 2010b).

An account of what happened in the Security Council during this process is described in an important article that has appeared in several different Spanish language publications (Guerrero, 2010) The article describes the experience of the Mexican Ambassador to the UN, Claude Heller in his position as president of the Security Council for the month of June 2010. (The presidency rotates each month to a different Security Council member.)

In a letter to the Security Council dated June 4, South Korea asked the Council to take up the Cheonan dispute (United Nations Security Council, 2010a). Park Im-kook, then the South Korean Ambassador to the UN, requested that the Security Council consider the matter of the Cheonan and respond in an appropriate manner. The letter described the investigation into the sinking of the Cheonan carried out by South Korean government and military officials. In the letter South Korea accused North Korea of sinking the South Korean ship. How would the Mexican Ambassador as President of the Security Council during the month of June handle this dispute? This was a serious issue facing Ambassador Heller as he began his presidency in June 2010.

Ambassador Heller adopted what he referred to as a “balanced” approach to treat both governments on the Korean peninsula in a fair and objective manner. He held bilateral meetings with each member of the Security Council which led to support for a process of informal presentations by both of the Koreas to the members of the Security Council. He arranged for the South Korean Ambassador to make an informal presentation to the members of the Security Council. Ambassador Heller also invited the North Korean Ambassador to make a separate informal presentation to the members of the Security Council. Sin Son Ho was then the UN Ambassador from North Korea.

In response to the invitation from the President of the Security Council, the North Korean Ambassador to the UN sent a letter dated June 8 to the Security Council, which denied the allegation that his country was to blame (United Nations Security Council, 2010b). His letter urged the Security Council not to be the victim of deceptive claims, as had happened with Iraq in 2003. It asked the Security Council to support his government’s call to be able to examine the evidence and to be involved in a new and more independent investigation of the sinking of the Cheonan.

In its June 8 letter to the Security Council, North Korea referred to the widespread international sentiment questioning the conclusions of the South Korean government’s investigation. The North Korean Ambassador to the UN wrote: “It would be very useful to remind ourselves of the ever-increasing international doubts and criticisms, going beyond the internal boundary of south Korea, over the ‘investigation result’ from the very moment of its release....”

What Ambassador Heller called “interactive informal meetings” were held on June 14 with the South Koreans and the North Koreans in separate sessions attended by the Security Council members, who had time to ask questions and then to discuss the presentations. At a media stakeout on June 14, after the day’s presentations ended, Ambassador Heller said that it was important to have received the detailed presentation by South Korea and also to know and learn the arguments of North Korea.<sup>5</sup> He commented that “it was very important that North

Korea approached the Security Council.” In response to a question about his view on the issues presented, he replied, “I am not a judge. I think we will go on with the consultations to deal in a proper manner on the issue.” Ambassador Heller also explained that, “the Security Council issued a call to the parties to refrain from any act that could escalate tensions in the region, and makes an appeal to preserve peace and stability in the region.”

Though at the time, it was rare for the North Korean Ambassador to the UN to hold press briefings, the North Korean UN delegation scheduled a press conference for Tuesday, June 15, the day following the interactive informal meeting. During the press conference, the North Korean Ambassador presented his government’s refutation of the allegations made by South Korea.<sup>6</sup> Also he explained North Korea’s request to be able to send an investigation team to the site where the sinking of the Cheonan occurred. South Korea had denied the request. During its press conference, the North Korean Ambassador said that there was widespread condemnation of the South Korean government’s investigation in both South Korea and around the world. The press conference held on June 15 was a lively event. Many of the journalists who attended were impressed and requested that there be future press conferences with the North Korean Ambassador.

During his presidency of the Security Council in the month of June, Ambassador Heller held meetings with the UN ambassadors from each of the two Koreas and then with Security Council members about the Cheonan issue. On the last day of his presidency, on June 30, he was asked by the media what was happening about the Cheonan dispute. Ambassador Heller responded that the issue of contention was over the evaluation of the South Korean government’s investigation. Ambassador Heller described how he introduced what he refers to as “an innovation” into the Security Council process. As the month of June ended, the issue was not yet resolved, but the “innovation” set a basis to build on the progress that was achieved during the month of his presidency.

The “innovation” Ambassador Heller referred to, was a summary he made of the positions of each of the two Koreas on the issue, taking care to present each objectively. Heller explained that this summary was not an official document, so it did not have to be approved by the other members of the Council. This summary provided the basis for further negotiations. He believed that it had a positive impact on the process of consideration in the Council, making possible the agreement that was later to be expressed in the Presidential statement on the Cheonan that was issued by the Security Council on July 9 (United Nations Security Council, 2010c). His goal, Ambassador explained, was to “at all times be as objective as possible” so as to avoid increasing the conflict on the Korean peninsula. Such a goal was consistent with the Security Council’s obligation under the UN Charter.

In the Security Council’s Presidential Statement (PRST) on the Cheonan, what stands out is that the statement follows the pattern of presenting the views of each of the two Koreas and urging that the dispute be settled in a peaceful manner (United Nations Security Council, 2010c). In the PRST, the members of the Security Council did not blame North Korea. Instead they refer to the South Korean investigation and its conclusion, expressing their “deep concern” about the “findings” of the investigation. The PRST explains that “The Security Council takes note of the responses from other relevant parties, including the DPRK, which has stated that it had nothing to do with the incident.” With the exception of North Korea, it is not indicated who “the other relevant parties” are. It does suggest, however, that it is likely there are some Security Council members, not just Russia and China, who did not agree with the conclusions of the South Korean



investigation.

Analyzing the Presidential Statement, the Korean newspaper Hankyoreh noted that the statement “allows for a double interpretation and does not blame or place consequences on North Korea.”(Lee, J., 2010) Such a possibility of a “double interpretation” allows for different interpretations.

The Security Council action on the Cheonan incident took place in a situation where there had been a wide ranging international critique, especially in the online media, about the problems of the South Korean investigation, and of the South Korean government’s failure to make public any substantial documentation of its investigation, along with its practice of harassing critics of the South Korean government claims. The Security Council action included hearing the positions of the different parties to the conflict. The result of such efforts is something that is unusual in the process of recent Security Council activity. The Security Council process in the Cheonan incident provided for an impartial analysis of the problem and an effort to hear from those with an interest in the issue.

The effort in the Security Council was described by the Mexican Ambassador, as upholding the principles of impartiality and respectful treatment of all members toward resolving a conflict between nations in a peaceful manner. It represents an important example of the Security Council acting in conformity with its obligations as set out in the UN Charter.

In the July 9 Presidential Statement, the Security Council urged that the parties to the dispute over the sinking of the Cheonan find a means to peacefully settle the dispute. The statement says:

The Security Council calls for full adherence to the Korean Armistice Agreement and encourages the settlement of outstanding issues on the Korean peninsula by peaceful means to resume direct dialogue and negotiation through appropriate channels as early as possible, with a view to avoiding conflicts and averting escalation.

The mainstream US media for the most part, chose to ignore the many critiques which have appeared. These critiques of the South Korean government’s investigation of the Cheonan sinking have appeared mainly on the Internet, not only in Korean, but also in English, in Japanese, and in other languages. An article in the Los Angeles Times on July 23 noted the fact, however, that the media in the US had ignored the critique of the South Korean government investigation that was being discussed online and spread around the world (Demick & Glionna, 2010).

In this case, the netizen community in South Korea and internationally were able to provide an effective challenge to what they believed to be the misrepresentations by the South Korean government on the Cheonan incident.

In his article “Social Sciences and the Social Development Process in Africa,” Charly Gabriel Mbock (2001) proposes that there is a need for netizens in different countries to work together across national borders to solve the problems of our times. Perhaps the response of netizens to the problems raised by the investigation of the Cheonan incident is but a prelude to the realization of this potential.

## XII - Conclusion

Much of the research about journalism is concerned with the elements of creating and spreading a narrative, with concepts like “framing”, “agenda setting” and “news diffusion” providing a means to analyze and understand the processes that are components of the news process. For example, if the framing of a news story relies on officials of the government or of powerful corporations, the story is likely to be significantly different from where the framing focuses on the perspective of the victim of some abuse by government or corporate entities. Similarly, students or workers are likely to have a different perspective of a conflict from that of an investment banker or real estate tycoon. The broad range of online posts about the Cheonan incident provided a diversity of information and views that enriches the news environment. (Touri, 2009: 177)

In South Korea, there is ready access to posting on the Internet and responding to others views. (Im, et al., 2011: 606-607). In the Cheonan incident, netizens were active offering their critiques of the summary report the government released. (Kim, 2011: 101) A blogger with a background in reading blueprints made his views known about the illegitimacy of the claims by the South Korean government that the part of the torpedo they produced and the diagram they presented to demonstrate the torpedo’s North Korean origins were from the same torpedo. (Creighton, 2010a)

With academic scientists evaluating the South Korean government's scientific claims and finding them faulty, (Lee & Suh, 2010; Cyranoski, 2010) with NGO’s studying the investigation claims and writing analyses which they then send to the UN Security Council members by email, these are the signs that there is an important process at play.

What had formerly been a process with static components is being transformed into a process where the components are now dynamic and changing. (Im et al: 608-609)

Traditionally the news event is framed by the journalist and his or her editor. That narrative is then spread by the news channels of that media. The narrative was traditionally static. When the Internet and the netizens are part of the news process, this is no longer the case.(Zhou and Moy, 2007:82-83; Im et al.: 608-609) And the growing power and capability of communication processes and of how the news is reported and disseminated (diffused) has an effect on how policy is created and how it is implemented. (Gilboa, 202: 736-7,743; Touri, 2009: 174)

Those responsible for making policy can be influenced by the news, by distortions spread as the news or by a more accurate framing of the news which the net and netizens at times can make possible.

If it is clear that there are conflicting narratives at the roots of a conflict, the effort to determine the accurate narrative can help lead to a resolution or at least a calming of the conflict.

The widespread discussion of diverse views of the Cheonan conflict helped to support the effort by Ambassador Heller to realize that he wasn’t to act as a judge, but he would try to determine an understanding of the conflict, of the issues that were in contention. The widespread public discussion in this situation helped to clarify the issues and what was in contention, and hence led to a policy at the Security Council of hearing all sides of the issue, much as the member states of the UN had urged Ban Ki-moon to do when he was being welcomed to the UN.

In this case study of the Cheonan incident, my earlier question of whether it was possible for South Korean netizens to have an impact on what happened at the UN was answered in the

affirmative. And the South Korean netizens were supported by other netizens from around the world. This is an important example of the UN, of the Security Council, functioning in a way to help to calm a conflict. And the widespread public discussion online of the conflict was, I argue, a helpful support for this process.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>About letters to UN Security Council, records at the UN show that the practice of sending such correspondence to the Security Council dates back to 1946. This is the date when the symbol S/NC/ was introduced as the symbol for “Communications received from private individuals and non-governmental bodies relating to matters of which the Security Council is seized.” The Security Council has the practice of periodically publishing a list of the documents it receives, the name and organization of the sender, and the date they are received. The Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council states that the list is to be circulated to all representatives on the Security Council. A copy of any communication on the list is to be given to any nation on the Security Council that requests it. There are over 450 such lists indicated in the UN records. As each list can contain several or a large number of documents the Security Council has received, the number of such documents is likely to be in the thousands. Under Rule 39 of the Council procedures, the Security Council may invite any person it deems competent for the purpose to supply it with information on a given subject. Thus the two procedures in the Security Council’s provisional rules give it the basis to find assistance on issues it is considering from others outside the Council and to consider the contribution as part of its deliberation

<sup>2</sup> PSPD Report that was Sent to Security Council was posted online in three parts:

<http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/584228>

<http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/584287>

<http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/584296>

<sup>3</sup> ) The press conference was held on July 9 at the Tokyo Foreign Correspondents Club. The program was titled “Lee and Suh: Inconsistencies in the Cheonan Report”.

<http://www.fccj.or.jp/node/5810>. See also, (Cyranoski, 2010), (Lee, S., & Suh, J. J. 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The Russian team proposed a different theory for how the Cheonan sank. They had observed that the ship’s propeller had become entangled in a fishing net and subsequently that a possible cause of the sinking could have been that the ship had hit the antennae of a mine which then exploded. “Russian Navy Team’s Analysis of the Cheonan Incident”, (*Hankyoreh*, 2010b). The Russian Experts document is titled “Data from the Russian Naval Expert Group’s Investigation into the Cause of the South Korean Naval Vessel Cheonan’s Sinking.” See also “Russia’s Cheonan Investigation Suspects that Sinking Cheonan Ship was Caused by a Mine,” (*Hankyoreh*, 2010a).

<sup>5</sup> ) Media Stakeout: Informal comments to the Media by the President of the Security Council and the Permanent Representative of Mexico, H.E. Mr. Claude Heller on the Cheonan incident (the sinking of the ship from the Republic of Korea) and on Kyrgyzstan. [Webcast: Archived Video - 5 minutes] <http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/stakeout/2010/so100614pm3.rm>

<sup>6</sup> Video of North Korean Ambassador Press Conference

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/pressconference/2010/pc100615am.rm>