

'The Interview' Raises Tension between US, North Korea

- 1) Millions of Internet users have paid almost six dollars each to watch an online movie called *"The Interview."* The film has deeply angered North Korea. It also has led many Americans to debate what actions to take when facing threats to free expression.
- 2) The controversial film is a product of Sony Pictures of Burbank, California. In the movie, two American journalists get a chance to meet with North Korean President Kim Jong Un. The Central Intelligence Agency asks the two to kill Mr. Kim, and they agree.
- 3) The Americans join forces with a woman officer in the Korean People's Army and shoot down the president's helicopter. This takes place just as he is preparing to launch nuclear missiles.
- 4) Some people criticize the film for plotting the violent death of a government leader. Others have said the film's storyline and situations are not at all serious. They say they are meant only to be funny. Still others praise *"The Interview"* because it shows the freedom of expression that American moviemakers enjoy.
- 5) The North Korean government was not pleased when it learned about the film. The government began to object publicly last June, months before *"The Interview"* was to open in theaters. North Korea called the movie "an act of war." It threatened what it called "merciless" reaction.
- 6) In November, Sony Pictures suffered a major cyberattack. A group calling itself "Guardians of Peace" claimed responsibility for stealing all kinds of material from Sony's computers. Movies were released online before their planned openings in theaters. The company lost millions of dollars.
- 7) The attackers also made public medical records of Sony employees and e-mails insulting movie stars. Altogether, the cyberattack has been a financial and public relations disaster for the moviemaker.
- 8) The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation worked to solve the mystery of the attack. It blamed North Korean hackers. But North Korea denied any involvement.
- 9) An intelligence group called Norse also investigated. It says at least one former Sony Pictures employee was responsible. The employee reportedly was angry after being dismissed by Sony. Both the company and the federal agency continue to say they have found the true attacker.
- 10) Whoever was responsible, on Dec. 16th Sony cancelled the planned release of *"The Interview."* It said most major theaters were refusing to show the film during the winter holiday season. The theaters noted threats made to their customers. Some said they would not show the movie at any time.
- 11) But a number of filmmakers, actors and politicians objected to the cancellation. Pressure built for Sony Pictures to release the movie. Many people wanted the company to show that threats could not suppress free expression.
- 12) President Barack Obama also offered his opinion on the issue. He said he sympathized with Sony's position. But he said the cancellation could have the effect of interfering with freedom of expression.
- 13) On December 23rd, Sony officials announced a limited release of the film. They said chosen movie theaters in the United States would show the movie on Christmas Day. Mr. Obama has not said if he watched the movie. But he praised its release.
- 14) In North Korea, it would be hard for many people to see *"The Interview"* even if they wanted to. The Internet is highly restricted in the country. Many people could not pay to watch the film. And expert observers say those North Koreans who do watch it probably would be deeply offended and confused.

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 controversial:議論の的になる object:反対する merciless:無慈悲な medical record:カルテ insult:侮辱する
 dismiss:解雇する suppress:鎮圧する sympathize with:同情する interfere:干渉する offend:感情を害する
 ☆Ice breaker for active discussion☆

- 1) Have you seen "The Interview"? If not, would you like to watch it?
- 2) What do you think is the meaning of "freedom of expression".
Do you think there should be a limit to freedom of expression?
- 3) Do you think the cyberattack on Sony Pictures was done by North Korea?
- 4) What adverse effects can the cyberattack bring to Sony Pictures?
- 5) What do you think is the sentiment of the majority of North Koreans about their country and government?
- 6) At the end of the movie, North Korea became a democratic country.
Do you think this is possible to happen?
- 7) Define the meaning and use each of the vocabulary words in a sentence:
controversial, merciless, insult, suppress, sympathize, interfere, offend,
theater, interview and hacking.

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