Monday, 15 February 2016
“Unpacking Media Myths: North Korea: Markets and Military Rule”
Professor Hazel Smith, University of Central Lancashire

Professor Smith will draw on material from her recently published book-North Korea: Markets and Military Rule (Cambridge University Press, 2015) to discuss the major socio-economic (but not political) transformation of North Korea since the famine of the mid-1990s that killed up to a million of the population and whose by-product was to generate a thoroughly marketised economy that is now deeply embedded in North Korean society. Professor Smith shows far from the unchanging, unknowable entity of media portrayals, that North Korea is analytically and empirically very knowable and explicable. Professor Smith shows also that the party, law and order, the military and the family are all now thoroughly marketised in day-to-day practice even as they maintain lip-service to the imperatives of military rule that continue to drive government and the state.

Dr. Robert M. Hathaway, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC called the book a “data-driven tour de force [that] convincingly demolishes the cartoonish image of North Korea held by most outsiders, including senior policymakers in the West” while Professor Yoon Young-Kwan, Seoul National University, and former Foreign Minister of Republic of Korea said that the book provides “A timely and insightful analysis of the post-Cold War transformation of the North Korean society. This book challenges the stereotypes of many outside observers of North Korean affairs and provides important policy implications.”

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