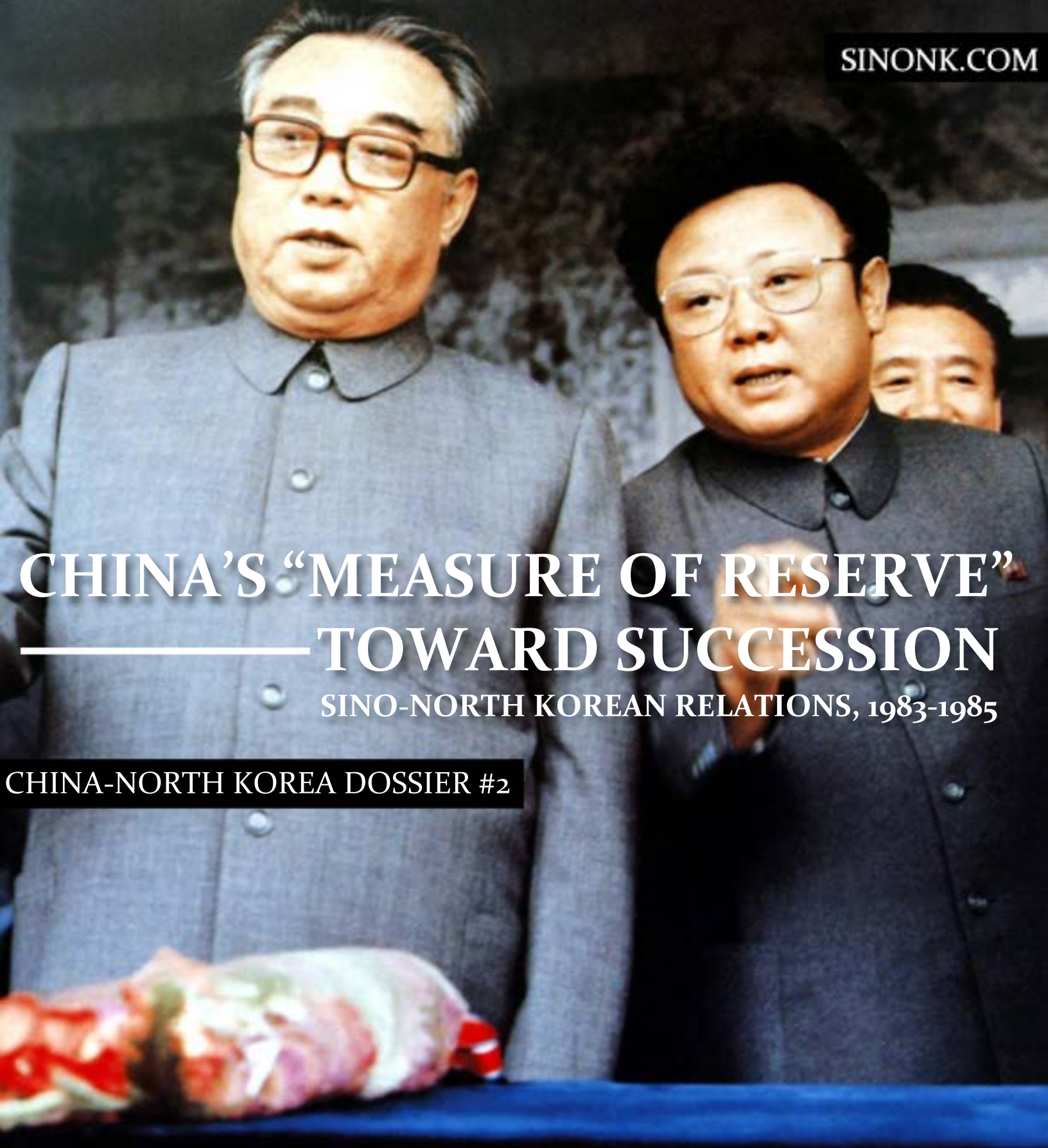

SINONK.COM

CHINA'S "MEASURE OF RESERVE" TOWARD SUCCESSION

SINO-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS, 1983-1985

CHINA-NORTH KOREA DOSSIER #2

ADAM CATHCART
and CHARLES KRAUS

SINONK.COM

CHINA-NORTH KOREA DOSSIER NO. 2

China's "Measure of Reserve" toward Succession: Sino-North Korean Relations, 1983-1985

Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus

February 2012

SINONK.COM
CHINA-NORTH KOREA DOSSIER NO. 2

China's "Measure of Reserve" toward Succession:
Sino-North Korean Relations, 1983-1985

Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus
February 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction

This dossier, based upon a cache of newly declassified American intelligence documents, allows for a deeper glimpse into the Sino-North Korean relationship during the early- and mid-1980s. This was a period when the DPRK leadership structure had itself coalesced around hereditary succession, and was still in the protracted process of picking up the requisite endorsements from its largest allies. As Kim Il-sung turned 70-years old in 1982, the septuagenarian ex-guerilla was focused, at least in part, on obtaining support for his heir apparent from North Korea's close allies and neighbors. The news of Kim Jong-il's succession initially received a tepid response and its difficulties were compounded by the transformations in the 1980s socialist world, especially in the Soviet Union (USSR) and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

A casual appraisal might have held that the somewhat frayed ties between the PRC and the DPRK would have been on the mend in the aftermath of China's Cultural Revolution, but Deng Xiaoping's program of economic reform and relatively rapid pivot toward opening to foreign investment only reinforced the divisions in Sino-North Korean relations. By the middle of the 1980s, Northeast Asia's two largest communist parties found themselves more at odds with each other than ever before, particularly on ideological questions. The heyday of the Chinese-North Korean alliance had long passed, and, in spite of declarations of generational fealty, the relationship faced an uncertain future.

The documents examined here, and the assumptions which they are based upon, bear a great deal of resemblance to contemporary thinking about Sino-North Korean relations. On the whole, continuities proliferate: even in 1985, western analysts were anticipating, or at the very least were predisposed to hope, that North Korea would embrace an economic model akin to China's "Opening and Reform" and transition to a market-style economy under the PRC's oversight. At the same time, however, American analysts recognized that North Korea viewed China as an unreliable ally. China's links to the outside world and especially to South Korea under the post-Maoist leadership had clearly softened the PRC's commitment to its old socialist ally in the northeast. Would China run to the defense of North Korea in the event of a new war on the peninsula? We often hear this same question asked today, but absolute answers, either historical or contemporary,

* Suggested citation: Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus, "China's 'Measure of Reserve' towards Succession: Sino-North Korean Relations, 1983-1985," *SinoNK.com China-North Korea Dossier* No. 2 (February 2012).

remain difficult to come by, and not just for reasons of intentional strategic ambiguity.

Enduring patterns of North Korean foreign relations are also seen in the documents presented here, and show the importance of considering the triangular relations between Russia, the PRC, and North Korea. Sung-Yoon Lee suggests, quite accurately in our view, that when the DPRK has big things in mind with its China policy, the rhythm and intensity of its interplay with Russia similarly speeds up.[1] This was certainly the case in the 1980s, just as it was the case in Kim Jong Il's final months. As the DPRK geared up for succession in the mid-1980s, North Korea was getting closer to Russia to balance apprehensions over China's increasingly "revisionist" ties to the United States. China and the U.S. had been sharing intelligence, developing military-to-military ties, and cooperating on a number of global issues; North Korea was still looking to China for a modicum of support, but Beijing's turn toward its ostensibly existential foe in Washington was both mystifying and aggravating to North Korean leaders.

A final note may be marginally interesting: among the readers of these American intelligence documents at the time of their production were future Ambassador to Korea and CIA veteran Donald Gregg, Stephen Bosworth (most recently a Special Envoy to Pyongyang, at that time Chairman of the Department of State's Policy Planning Council), Assistant Secretaries of Defense Richard Armitage and Richard Perle, as well as Paul Wolfowitz, then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

On Romanization

The documents spell Kim Jong-il as "Kim Chong-il," perhaps reflecting, as in the case of Kim Jong-Un, a lack of North Korean direction as to the romanization or spelling of the heir's name. Unless quoting a document directly, we employ "Kim Jong-il" throughout this Dossier, and bend to the North Korean usage by employing "Un" rather than "Eun" as the final particle of the new supreme leader's name.

Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus
Seattle and Washington, D.C.

[1] Sung-Yoon Lee, "Build It, and They Will Recompense: North Korea's Nuclear Strategy," review of Jonathan D. Pollack's *No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons and International Security* in *Asia Policy* 13 (January 2012), 180.

PART I
DOCUMENT INTRODUCTIONS AND SUMMARIES

Document No. 1
"Kim Chong-il's Visit to China," 29 July 1983.[2]

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 1, "Kim Chong-il's Visit to China"

Although Kim Jong-il had spent two years (1951-1953) in Jilin Province with his sister as an elite child refugee from the Korean War, he had not travelled to China as an adult before 1983. At the outset of his long campaign to succeed his father, in 1967, Kim Jong-il had spent a few days in the North Korean border city of Hyesan accelerating the construction of monuments to Kim Il-sung, and becoming upset at the Chinese, who he found both loud and arrogant, across the Yalu River.[3] Despite his initial reservations toward China, after 1980, when a Party Congress explicitly designated Kim Jong-il the successor to his father, a visit to the PRC necessarily spiraled to the top of Kim's priorities.[4]

Kim Jong-il travelled to China without his father on 2 June 1983; although he was greeted "informally" by CCP Premier Hu Yaobang [胡耀邦], he was still given a large public welcome at the Beijing Rail Station.

---

[2] "Kim Chong-il's Visit to China," 29 July 1983, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP85T00287R000401290001-7, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

[3] Kim Jong-il, "Let Us Develop Ryanggang Province into a Firm Base for Education in Revolutionary Traditions: A Talk to Senior Officials of Ryanggang Province and Anti-Japanese Revolutionary Fighters," 21 July 1968, *Kim Jong Il Selected Works: Volume 1, 1964-1969* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1992), 364-379. For Kim Il-Sung's recollection of his son's anger at the Chinese, see Memorandum of Conversation between Todor Zhivkov and Kim Il-Sung, 30 October 1973, in Christian F. Ostermann and James F. Person, eds., *The Rise and Fall of Détente on the Korean Peninsula, 1970-1974* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011), 251.

[4] Morgan E. Clippinger, "Kim Chong-Il in the North Korean Media: A Study of Semi-Esoteric Communication," *Asian Survey* Vol. 21, No. 3 (March 1981), 289-309; cited and elaborated on in Aidan Foster-Carter, "North Korea's Ventriloquist Media," *Asia Times Online*, November 16, 2011, < http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/MK16Dg02.html>. An earlier treatment is Young C. Kim, "North Korea in 1980: The Son Also Rises," *Asian Survey* 21, 1 (January 1981), 112-124.

Kim Jong-il is embraced by Hu Yaobang upon arrival in Beijing

Chinese written documentation on this visit is still scarce, and, when available, noticeably mum on any substantial details. In Deng Xiaoping's published *nianpu* (chronology), Chinese Communist Party historians chose only to reveal that on the "morning of 11 June [1983], Deng Xiaoping, along with Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Wang Zhen, Xi Zhongxun, Yang Shangkun, Hu Qili, and Ji Pengfei, went to greet the delegation of Kim Jong-il, Politburo Member and Party Secretariat of the Korean Workers' Party." Deng is then said to have gone into an extended and one-sided discussion "on the Chinese situation" (中国的情况 *Zhongguo de qingkuang*)—what Kim Jong-il said about North Korea, or even about China, is not revealed.[5]

Owing to China's reluctance to divulge more information on Kim's visit, this CIA document is particularly illuminating. At the outset, the document evinces remarkable similarities to Chinese attitudes today about the respective successions of Kim Jong-un and Kim Jong-il. While not getting into the specifics of the Cultural Revolution scars worn, in some cases proudly, by the Chinese leadership, the paper concludes that the CCP had "a distaste for personality cults." More to the point, they also harbored doubts about Kim Jong-il's long-term viability. The Beijing government in 1983, as the CIA report notes, "still maintains a measure of reserve toward the succession scheme."

The doubts harbored toward Kim Il-sung's chosen heir may have

[5] Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Deng Xiaoping nianpu, 1975-1997* (Chronology of Deng Xiaoping, 1975-1997), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2004), 912-913.

stemmed from the significant change in personnel following the demise of Mao Zedong [毛泽东] and Zhou Enlai [周恩来], although this possibility is not considered in the document. While the report notes that the Chinese Foreign Minister at the time of Kim's visit was Wu Xueqian [吴学谦], little else is said of Wu's background or his past conduct toward Korea.

Unlike many of his past Foreign Minister predecessors, however, including Zhou Enlai, Huang Hua [黄华], and Qiao Guanhua [乔冠华], Wu had very little personal involvement with Korea during his long career. Hailing from Shanghai, Wu did not witness the guerrilla struggle in Manchuria, nor was he present in Yan'an during the Anti-Japanese War. When Chinese troops crossed the Yalu River in autumn 1950, Wu was cultivating his expertise in East European affairs, not Asia. Throughout his career, he did not develop any direct ties to the North Korean leadership—even with members who were purged at one point or another. As Foreign Minister, Wu was thus somewhat more predisposed to diversifying China's ties to the Korean Peninsula, and he presided over a period during which trade between the PRC and South Korea began to grow steadily.[6]

Wu had gone to Pyongyang on 20-25 May 1983 to clear the way for Kim's visit, but he also had to backpedal from North Korean anger about recent China's ties with South Korea.[7] North Korea's fears over the growing Seoul-Beijing axis are made clear throughout the report; Pyongyang even today has only very slowly come around to tolerating—if in fact that that is the appropriate word—China's need to discuss anything at all with Seoul, that increasingly lively trading partner. The disadvantages of possible PRC-ROK collusion more than outweighed any possible benefit for Kim Il-sung of being able to use Bejing as a go-between, something he was loathe to do so in any event.

---

[6] This is not to assert, however, that ascendance of Chinese leaders with direct personal and historical ties with the DPRK in earlier eras would have necessarily spared North Korea from exposure to the negative side of Chinese reforms. Chen Yun, who in the late 1940s visited Kim Il-sung in Pyongyang several times and in fact left his family in the city, was ascendant in the early 1980s and did not appear to be in any way predisposed to standing up for North Korea when it came to China's foreign relations. See Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus, "The Bonds of Brotherhood: Sino-North Korean Relations through Liberation and War, 1945-1953," chapter 2 (unpublished book manuscript).

[7] Jae Ho Chung, *Between Ally and Partner: Korea-China Relations and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 33-34. See also "Emerging Communist Trade Links with South Korea," 27 July 1979, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP81B00401R002300020005-3, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

Kim Jong-il with Hu Yaobang in 1983

More than anything else, North Korea really wanted China's "acknowledgment of Kim Jong-il's special status in North Korea" in 1983, and appeared to be miffed when such acknowledgement was not immediately forthcoming during Kim's visit. As the American report stated, the "Chinese leadership may also be chary about being associated too closely with the unfolding Kim Chong-il personality cult." At the same time, it seemed that the CCP was very interested in having personal, face-to-face assessments of the would-be leader. The trip, though, could hardly be taken as anything other than a means of showing Kim Jong-il's "enhanced role in foreign affairs."

The relatively young Kim Jong-il (he was 41 at the time) described his impressions of Hu Yaobang in October 1983 to two abducted South Korean film industry insiders, characterizing the Chinese leader as an exciting, if not completely idealistic, reformist force. Kim also seemed preoccupied with questions of cultural change in the opening of economies:

Hu Yaobang said: 'Now here, uh, Chairman Mao, Chairman Mao, when Mao Zedong was still around, the doors were tightly locked and thus [the Chinese] people saw nothing. When they see other people's things they say without consideration that the other people's good s are good while theirs are bad. In reality, their goods aren't so bad. They have to make efforts to improve theirs to do better than others, but instead of making efforts they continually claim that the other people's goods are good, which is a major problem. After opening up a little, what do they learn first, instead of Western technology? They learn to grow beards and [long] hair.

Ah, tell them to acquire technology but all they do is take in external things, thus they have nothing in them yet. The education system should generally be reformed.' That's what Hu Yaobang said to me.[8]

Hu Yaobang and his associate Zhao Ziyang [赵紫阳], both ascendant in 1983, would both be gone by the end of the decade, dead or, in the case of Zhao, politically dead and under house arrest. No evidence exists to suggest that, in the cataclysmic late 1980s, Kim Jong-il felt in any way vindicated by the fall of the Chinese reformers; if anything, North Korea seemed relieved in 1989 that the CCP pulled through. But the notion of the tutor succumbing to wild distress of China's potential chaos should not be forgotten here; one should not underestimate the North Korean sense of superiority when looking west, the ability to outlast even the Chinese—vindicated in the case when pure intractability wins out merely for its repetition and inflexibility. Ideas about Kim Jong-il as reformer always discuss his trips to China and what he saw there, but rarely do they mention that since the first generation left the scene, that the rotating cast of Chinese characters rarely has the true and sustained affection of the North Koreans, let alone allegiance or a desire to imitate. (And East German documents would indicate that North Korea had very little desire to imitate China as the eruptions of the late 1980s were piercing Chinese society.)[9]

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 1, "Kim Chong-il's Visit to China"

[8] Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 336; see also Martin, 323-326 for discussion of North Korean state media depictions of this trip.

[9] Undated conversation (probably 1987) between Ri Jong Su (Secretary of the DPRK Democratic Youth League) and Eberhard Aurich (First Secretary of the Freie Deutsche Jugend [FDJ/Free German Youth]), State and Party Mass Organization Archive (SAMPO), Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 24/FDJ 14482, p. 3, obtained by Adam Cathcart. Interestingly, the archives of the Free German Youth (and certainly those of the post-Korean War DPRK Democratic Youth League) also intersect with the career of Hu Yaobang, who in 1955 was the head of the PRC Democratic Youth League. See Eva Müller, "Studienjahre in China [Year of Study in China]," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Beziehungen der DDR und der VR China: Erinnerungen und Untersuchungen* [Studies of the History of the Relationship between the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of China], Joachim Krüger, ed., (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002), 55.

Document No. 2
"Memorandum of Conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung," 31 May 1984.[10]

Click here to the read the full-text of Document No.2, "Memorandum of Conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung"

In summer 2009, the authors were fortunate enough to have met Xue Chen, a forward-thinking researcher from the Shanghai Institute of International Studies. During lunch one afternoon, Xue, an expert on East Asian security, was offering his take on the second North Korean nuclear test when the conversation suddenly slid back by about two-decades. What was North Korea's view of Deng Xiaoping's decision to "open and reform," we asked. Xue said but one thing on this issue:

Deng Xiaoping is the most hated Chinese leader in North Korea.

Xue may be right, but Kim Il-sung and Deng Xiaoping were still self-described friends. When meeting other foreign leaders, Kim was able to present himself as an authoritative source the situation in China because of his personal relationship with Deng. As he told Erich Honecker in 1984, "I have been friends with Deng Xiaoping for a long time. As you know, he was exiled three times during the Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping paid me an unofficial visit for my 70th birthday in April 1982 to introduce Hu Yaobang to me as the new Secretary General of the Communist Party of China." Later in the conversation, Kim again pointed out that "I am [Deng's] friend" to highlight that he, unlike other leaders in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, could be a trusted source on developments in China.

[10] "Memorandum of Conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung," 31 May 1984, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, 2460. Obtained by Bernd Schaefer and translated by Grace Leonard for the North Korea International Documentation Project.

Kim Il-sung with Erich Honecker in June 1984

Kim thus became a courier between China and the USSR in the early 1980s, and often ran to Deng's defense when speaking with other leaders from the socialist bloc. Kim feared the worst for the future of the communist movement if Sino-Soviet relations did not improve, but he was confident that there were good opportunities for amends to be made. And while Kim emphasized it was the new coterie of leadership in China at that time, personified by Hu Yaobang, who sought a sea change in Sino-Soviet relations, he still insisted that the old guard, Deng himself, was also lobbying for an improved relationship with the Soviet Union:

Hu Yaobang has gathered a lot of new people around him….Hu Yaobang himself is still very healthy; he is smart, his theoretical knowledge is good, and he has also made a thorough study of Marxism. Deng Xiaoping works more from behind the scene, but he also believes that they have to develop relations with the Soviet Union. He is the only one of the old functionaries who is still there. I am his friend. In the past the Chinese castigated the Soviet Union as social imperialists. They don't do that any more.

But what about China's relationship with the U.S. and Japan? This was a sticking point. Kim was not sure what to expect out of U.S.-China relations, and could not decipher China's aims in cooperating with the same country which is said to have started the Korean War.[11] When the issue of Sino-American strategic cooperation was raised in Kim's conversation with Honecker, Kim reluctantly came to Deng's defense, but, more importantly, also

[11] *The US Imperialists Started the Korean War* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977).

questioned his friend's decision-making:

The only objective of these relations is to obtain developed technology and credit from Japan and the US. Deng Xiaoping is said to have stated in the US that the arms build-up in the US is good for peace. I don't know if that's so. This is the first time I have heard of Deng Xiaoping expressing a sentiment like this.

As Kim continued, he more or less criticized Deng's policies of reform and opening and developing relations with the west, even urging socialist countries to improve relations with China because reform and opening had left China vulnerable to outside exploitation and even colonialism. Beyond that, what if China was to abandon socialism? What would become of the North Korean security situation? As Honecker reported,

Kim Il Sung said that he believed that all socialist nations should work toward creating trust between the Soviet Union and China. No new mistrust must be permitted to arise. I have told our Soviet comrades that I believe that the goal of our Chinese comrades is to put Socialism in China in order. They don't want a conflict. I think it is important that China wants to open the gate to socialist nations in the interest of socialist modernization. We should not oppose that. Why should we leave the important Chinese market to the capitalists?

The old generation of leadership in China is dying out. We should show the new generation an opening. If we leave China to the capitalists, there is the risk that China will become a quasi-colony again. We should not close the door in China's face.

Because of our position—the length of our border with China, confrontation with the US and Japan—what we are most afraid of is that China will not stick with socialism. There are 1 billion people in China. We have to make sure that they follow the socialist path rather than some other path. We have to focus on drawing them toward us.

Ultimately the picture this particular document paints is that Kim Il-sung was at pains to accept the path his friend, Deng Xiaoping, was charting for China in 1984. While Kim occasionally defended Deng, he also laid out plainly the risks of China's evolving economic model. A series of events occurring between 1984 and 1992 undoubtedly had a significant influence upon Kim's views of China and Deng—the purging of Hu Yaobang, normalization with the Soviet Union, the Tiananmen Square incident, and the collapse of the Soviet Union—but even at the outset of China's opening and reform, Kim Il-sung had his doubts.

Click here to the read the full-text of Document No.2, "Memorandum of Conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung"

Document No. 3
"USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit," 10 October 1984.[12]

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 3, "USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit"

Unlike Mao Zedong—who preferred to conduct his business not far from his sleeping quarters—Kim Il-sung was partial to international travel. He made several key visits to Moscow and Beijing in the lead up to the Korean War, and, with a kind of characteristic restlessness continued the habit of moving beyond Korea's borders throughout his career. One of the more important international trips Kim made was in May and June of 1984, when he visited the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. According to Dae-Sook Suh, "it was a leisurely trip by train across Siberia from Chongjin to Moscow, leading an entourage of more than 250 government officials."[13]

A number of issues were on the table in Kim's Russia sojourn, but among the more significant from the standpoint of Pyongyang was a more explicit "green light" from Moscow as regards the succession of Kim Jong-il. In analyzing the events of 1982-1984, it appears clear that the USSR was remarkably slow to respond positively to Pyongyang's obvious attempts to gain Moscow's approval for the succession. Only in September 1984 did the Soviet Ambassador to Pyongyang meet Kim Jong-il, a full fourteen months after the younger Kim's trip to China. Using the marketing argot of the present-day, one might call it a "deliberate roll-out" and gathering of endorsements from the socialist camp by Kim Jong-il.

The Soviet Union's gradual acceptance of heir Kim Jong-il ("indirectly acknowledging [his] leadership status") was, at the time of the visit, not matched by other friendly gestures. In 1984,

---

[12] "USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit," 10 October 1984, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP8ST00287R001400960001-3, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

[13] Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 290.

the Soviets were still hesitant to deliver a new nuclear power reactor (which would have been paired with the indigenous 5-megawatt plant at Yongbyon), and other arms sales remained off the table. Perhaps of more interest was the North's attempt to balance between Moscow and Beijing. The Americans speculated about the Soviet role in possible North Korean reform, stating "the North might conceivably be encouraged to press its efforts, which China applauds, to open up to the West," but in fact rather what is seen is that the Kremlin was not only wary of the DPRK's ties to China, but feared that North Korea might also open up to the West. For the North Koreans, Russia was not simply a convenient and classic counterweight to Chinese pressure, it was a shield against political reforms.

Kim Il-Sung is greeted by Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang. Date unknown.

The CIA nevertheless speculated that North Korea might be partial to engage—economically and politically—China, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. One arrangement referenced was "tripartite talks" between North Korea, South Korea, and the U.S., talks which would have denied the Soviet Union an important stake in managing regional security. (We can infer a Russian preference for the continuation of six-party talks today, which gives Moscow a vote on par with other regional actors.)

In formulating foreign policy towards the Korean Peninsula in the mid-1980s, the Soviets had to keep abreast and even stay ahead of developments concerning North Korea's other foreign partners. North Korea clearly had bargaining chips in its relationship with Moscow, and whether the DPRK cashed in on these or not in 1985

is not clear, but the Soviet Union did soon agree to construct a nuclear power plant in the DPRK.[14]

This particular report is emblematic of the problems one generally finds in North Korean intelligence memorandums produced by American analysts. The authors were apparently without any direct contacts inside of North Korea, and the conclusions reached were derived only from close readings of state media reports in the Soviet Union and the DPRK. The limits of Kremlinology ("Pyongyangology"), though, have become clear in recent years, particularly as more and more documentation from North Korea's former communist allies has been released to the public.

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 3, "USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit"

Document No. 4
"Improving Soviet-North Korean Relations: A New Phase in the Moscow-Beijing-P'yongyang Triangle," 21 June 1985.[15]

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 4, "Improving Soviet-North Korean Relations: A New Phase in the Moscow-Beijing-P'yongyang Triangle"

By 1985, North Korea's foreign relations between China and the USSR began to tip decisively in Moscow's favor. North Korea's media attention to the first anniversary of Kim Il-sung's trip to Moscow brings into high relief the type of reciprocal language and attention to detail in the KCNA. The absence of similar language for the anniversaries of Kim's trips to China indicated a certain lack of pleasure with China in Pyongyang in 1985. That Kim Il-sung showed up at a party at the Russian embassy in Pyongyang on the one-year anniversary of his visit to Moscow added insult to injury for the Chinese side, which was trying very hard to keep North Korea in the loop even as ties grew with the US and the ROK.

---

[14] Balazs Szalontai and Sergey Radchenko, "North Korea's Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper* No. 53 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2006).

[15] "Improving Soviet-North Korean Relations: A New Phase in the Moscow-Beijing-P'yongyang Triangle," 21 June 1985, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP8ST010S8R000S07680001-0, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

The CIA, however, may have misread signals coming from both Moscow and Pyongyang. Sensing that North Korea was becoming further adrift from China, the CIA rashly concluded that "Moscow is trying to exploit North Korea's sense of isolation in the region." The CIA speculated that the Soviet Union's end goal was the establishment of some sort of permanent military presence in North Korea or, at the very least, "access to North Korean facilities." This would have been a huge Soviet advance on a scale unseen since Red Army troops had fought their way into the peninsula in August 1945.

CIA analysts probably overstated this Soviet aim in Korea, however, and it is highly doubtful that the USSR would have made such an audacious request. Any proposal for a foreign military base in the DPRK would have been fiercely rejected by the North Koreans as a violation of sovereignty, just as the Chinese had pushed back against Nikita Khrushchev's proposal for a "joint-flotilla" in 1957 and 1958. While the Soviets were eager to counter the Chinese throughout Asia, we should not underestimate North Korea's ability to extract aid concessions for what amounts to little in return. In 1985, the Soviet Union delivered a number of MiG-23 aircraft to the DPRK and, while the CIA was then unaware, had also agreed to jointly construct a nuclear power reactor in North Korea. The North Koreans, though, did not need to offer or even consider lending a military base to the Soviet Union in exchange for these gifts.

China's bottom-line, of course, would have been the establishment of a Soviet military presence in North Korea. While it is unknown to what extent China seriously considered this a possibility, the PRC could not risk "another Vietnam" along its border and it

therefore took steps to undermine Soviet influence in the DPRK. In an effort to exclude the Soviet Union, China appears to have been a supporter of the tripartite talks between the U.S., North Korea, and South Korea.

Still, the Chinese and the North Koreans were fundamentally at odds over economic and foreign policies in 1985. While China was cautiously eying Kim Jong-il as successor, Beijing pursued a slow but determined approach to cultivating relations with South Korea over the long-term. There is truly a remarkable consistency here in Chinese strategy toward North Korea, and the Pyongyang regime, then as now, was unafraid to show its pique in various ways and recalcitrance. The CIA, then, was correct to assert that the tilt towards Moscow represented a "turning point in Soviet-North Korean relations and possibly in North Korean foreign policy in general."

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 4, "Improving Soviet-North Korean Relations: A New Phase in the Moscow-Beijing-P'yongyang Triangle"

Document No. 5
"North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing," 25 July 1985.[16]

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 5, "North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing"

The final document, "North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing," analyzes Sino-North Korean relations within the context of U.S.-China rapprochement and strategic cooperation in the 1970s and early 1980s, as well as China's growing trade relationship with South Korea during the same period. The analysis confirms North Korea's extreme discomfort with the expanding strategic relationship between Washington and Peking. Not only was this discomfort linked to changes in the PRC's socialist order, it was tied very much to the country's security and to the fact that the North felt a waning defense commitment from the PRC. The importance of this theme is highlighted by the analysis. Noting the origins of the problem in the turn toward the U.S. in late 1971, the analyst writes: "North Korean concerns about China's ties with the United States have

[16] "North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing," 25 July 1985, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP85T01058R000201760001-0, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

been a central problem in its relations with Beijing." As the analyst noted, "The growing United States-China relationship produced little real benefit for Pyongyang and no aid whatsoever for its leading foreign policy goal – a dialogue with the United States and the removal of U.S. forces – on the Korean peninsula."

This line of argument, emphasizing growing doubts on the Chinese partner, is substantiated by the DPRK's efforts to enter into a dialogue with South Korea during the early 1970s and to even establish a direct line communication with the United States.[17] While the Supreme People's Assembly sent a letter directly to the U.S. Senate in March 1974, the DPRK also relied on the Romanians, Egyptians, and Chinese to act as intermediaries; however, the notion of the North Koreans seeing that they purely needed Chinese mediation to work with the U.S. should not be inferred overly much[18]

Pyongyang's declining confidence in the PRC was met by a rekindling of ties between North Korea and the Soviet Union. Moscow, according to the CIA, had engaged Pyongyang not simply with arms sales, but also via its approval to Kim Il-sung's heir apparent, Kim Jong-il. While the Chinese were softening on the anti-imperialist defense front in the mid-1980s, Pyongyang supported the Soviet Union's "assertiveness toward the United States and the West." North Korea's political institutions, it should be noted, do not come across in these reports as possessing of a practically genetic predisposition toward Russian modes of governance. To the contrary, the analyst asserts that "North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union have rarely been close." Most interestingly, the scenario of actual Soviet meddling in the Pyongyang court is considered if only to be discarded: The analyst knows his history, reminding readers that there has been no "Moscow faction" in Korean court politics since Kim Jong-il purged everyone suspected of leaning that way in the 1950s.[19]

---

[17] Christian F. Ostermann and James F. Person, eds., *The Rise and Fall of Détente on the Korean Peninsula, 1970-1974* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011).

[18] See Christian F. Ostermann and James F. Person, eds., *The Korean Peninsula After Détente, 1973-1976: A Critical Oral History*, forthcoming.

[19] Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005); James F. Person, "'We Need Help from the Outside': The North Korean Opposition Movement of 1956," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper* No. 52 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2006); for assertions that the negative example of 1956 has been raised by Workers' Party leaders as a threat to those who might lack proper enthusiasm for Kim Jong Un, see Lee Seok Yeong, "Purges to

The paper's analysis of North Korea's approach toward China has some merit today. As a framework for understanding Sino-North Korean relations, the idea of a "two-tiered" approach favored by Pyongyang toward China seems to bear itself out: on the one hand, North Korea held Chinese advances, principles, and suggested direction at bay in a quasi-hostile fashion, but did selectively absorb what they wanted to and thought they could use from the relationship, in what the analyst calls "signs of tactical flexibility."

At the same time, the North Korean preference—if not necessarily the *need*—for situations of tension between China and the US, for instance over the Taiwan issue, is made quite clear in the document. The growing military-to-military relationship between Beijing and Washington made Pyongyang very nervous in the early 1980s and it would quite surprising if anything other still prevails does today.

And Chinese pragmatism is also on display in full: Beijing, the analyst writes "could continue to work both sides of the street." Not only that, but the Chinese seemed able and willing even at this early date to try to reap gains from the US from the relationship with North Korea. China claims regularly that it is restraining North Korea, that it acts as a barrier against aggressive behavior. The analyst, however, looks more at actions than words, and the arms action indicates otherwise.

Click here to read the full-text of Document No. 5,
"North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing"

Come Under Kim Jong Eun?," *Daily NK,*
<http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk01500&num=8723>.

PART II
CONCLUSION

Kim Jong-un has yet to make a public trip to China, and his opportunity to take such a trip as a would-be successor is now passed. In Beijing, one source of ours asserted that Kim Jong-un had met with him as a kind of audition for Chinese leaders and experts on the successor's alleged trip to China in June 2009, but this has never been confirmed. The Kim Jong-un documentary released on January 8, 2012, while engaged in some necessary revisions and augmentations of the last two years of on-site guidance activities, in no way associated the third-generation leader with China or Chinese leaders, nor did it show him accompanying his father to Beijing. It was not until October 2010 that the Chinese even knew how to properly render Kim Jong-un's name in *hanja*, or Chinese characters, a rather significant oversight that gave lie to assertions of deep cooperation on the communications front.

This is not to suggest that China or Russia were not briefed on Kim Jong-un's succession at all prior to December 2011. Kim Jong-il visited China four-times in the two-years prior to his death, while also spending several days in the Russian Federation in August 2011. While it is unknown to what extent talk of succession dominated these visits, Kim's back-and-forth diplomacy mimicked his father's frequent international traveling in the early and mid-1980s. It would be almost incomprehensible that Kim would have avoided speaking of the DPRK's future leadership with his allies in the PRC and Russia, "briefing" (to whatever extent) Hu Jintao and Dmitry Medvedev on his son Kim Jong-un. This dossier also calls to mind the role of personal, face-to-face assessments like Embassy visits in the Sino-North Korean relationship. More recently, PRC Ambassador Liu Hongcai [刘洪才] has been a key person in sizing up Kim Jong-un both before and after December 2011.

In the final analysis, it appears clear that North Korea's succession schemes are by no means contingent on Chinese and Russian approval. In the 1980s, the DPRK may have been feeling out Beijing and Moscow's views of Kim Jong-il, but the son's rise to power occurred even in the face of initial skepticism from China and Russia. In the case of Kim Jong-un, foreign affairs were probably also peripheral to the overall succession process, particularly given the shortened timeframe in which he was groomed. Aid may increasingly tie Pyongyang to the PRC, but core decisions on leadership in the DPRK remain outside of the scope of Sino-North Korean relations, much as they have since

1956. North Korea's allies can voice their reservations, but they cannot derail succession in the DPRK.

PART III
FURTHER READINGS

Dürkopf, Colin and Min-Il Yeo. "Ein Nordkorea nach Kim Jong Il – Politische und gessschaftliche Perspektiven vor dem erwarteten Machtwechsel" (A North Korea after Kim Jong Il: Political and Societal Perspectives before the Anticipated Power Change)." *KAS Auslands informationen*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Berlin, No. 8, Vol. 11 (2011): 73-105.

Green, Chris. "Russia and North Korea's Uneasy Relationship." *Daily NK*. 27 August 2009. < http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk00100&num=5347>.

Hwang Jang Yop. "First Words with Kim Jong Il: Hwang Jang Yop's Memoirs— 27." Translated by Christopher Green. *Daily NK*. 11 May 2011. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk02400&num=6349>.

Kelly, Robert E. "China is Feeling Its New Strength – and It will Structure Korean Unification." *Asian Security & US Foreign Relations Blog*. 21 September 2009. < http://asiansecurityblog.wordpress.com/2009/09/21/china-is-feeling-its-new-strength-and-it-will-structure-korean-unification/>.

Kim, Ilpyong J. "China in North Korean Foreign Policy." In *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era,* edited by Samuel S. Kim, 94-115. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Kim, Samuel S. "North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War World." In *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War World,* edited by Lyman R. Rechter, 1-62. New York: Nova Science, 2009.

Kim, Suk Hi, Terence Roehrig and Bernhard Seliger, eds. *The Survival of North Korea: Essays on Strategy, Economics and International Relations*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2011.

Kleine-Ahlbrandt, Stephanie and Andrew Small. "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy: Is Beijing Parting with Pariahs?" *Foreign Affairs* (Jan.-Feb. 2008): 38-56.

Maretzki, Hans. *Kim-ismus in Nordkorea: Analyze des letzten DDR_Botschafters in Pjöngjang* [Kimism in North Korea: An Analysis of the Last East German Ambassador in Pyongyang] (Boeblingen: Anite Tykve Verlag, 1991).

Park, Kyung-Ae. *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2010.

Poirier, Marie-Claude. "Régime Sultanique : Le Cas de la Corée du Nord. [Sultanic Regime : The Case of North Korea.] « Baccalaureate thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Winter 2008.

Snyder, Scott. *China's Rise and the Two Koreas: Politics, Economics, Security.* Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009.

Tak Jin, Kim Gang Il, Pak Hong Je, *Great Leader Kim Jong Il (II).* Tokyo: Sorinsha, 1986.

You, Ji. "Dealing with the 'North Korean Dilemma': China's Strategic Choices." *RSIS Working Paper* No. 229. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, 21 June 2011.

Zhao, Huji. "China-North Korea Relations in Post-Cold War Era: Review and Prospect." In *Changes in North Korea and Policy Responses of the International Community toward North Korea*, edited by Myung-Chol Cho and Jiyeon Kim, 75-95. Seoul: Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, 2009.

APPENDIX
SELECTED SENIOR EXCHANGES BETWEEN CHINA AND KOREA, 1982-1985

WHO	WHERE	WHEN
Deng Xiaoping [邓小平] and Hu Yaobang [胡耀邦]	North Korea (Pyongyang)	26-30 April 1982
Mme.Ho Chong-Suk [许贞淑]	China (Beijing, Xi'an, Guilin, Shanghai)	11-20 May 1982
Geng Biao [耿飚]	North Korea (Pyongyang, Mangyongdae, Kaesong, Kangwon Province)	14-22 June 1982
Kim Il-Sung [金日成]	China (Beijing, Chengdu, Xi'an)	15-24 September 1982
Hwang Jang-Yop [黄长烨]	China (Beijing)	23 November 1982
So Yun-Sok [徐允锡]	China	21 April - 3 May 1983
Wu Xueqian [吴学谦]	North Korea (Pyongyang, Wonsan)	20-25 May 1983
Kim Jong-il [金正日]	China (Beijing, Qingdao, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Shanghai)	2-12 June 1983
Kim Il-Sung [金日成]	China (Dalian)	22-25 September 1983
Yang Hyong-sop [杨亨燮]	China (Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou)	5-14 July 1983
Hong Xuezhi	North Korea	25 July-4 August

[洪学智]	(Pyongyang, Mangyongdae, Panmunjom, Kaesong)	1983
Peng Zhen [彭真] and Hu Qili [胡启立]	North Korea (Pyongyang, Wonsan, Mangyongdae)	7-15 September 1983
Kim Yong-Nam [金永南]	China (Beijing, Kunming, Guangzhou, Shenzhen)	7-14 February 1984
Hu Yaobang [胡耀邦]	North Korea (Pyongyang, Wonsan, Hamhung, Chongjin)	4-11 May 1984
Kim Il-Sung [金日成]	China (Tumen), Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia	May-June 1984
Kang Song-San [姜成山]	China (Beijing, Beidaihe, Shanghai)	5-9 August 1984
Kim Chae-Suk [金在淑]	China (Beijing)	5-12 October 1984
Kim Il-Sung [金日成]	China (Beijing)	26-28 November 1984
Kong Chin-Tae [孔镇泰]	China (Beijing)	13-17 January 1985
Hu Yaobang [胡耀邦]	North Korea (Sinuiju)	4-6 May 1985
Li Peng [李鹏]	North Korea (Pyongyang, Mangyongdae)	24-27 October 1985
Kim Il-Sung [金日成]	China (Beijing)	25-27 November 1985
Kim Yong-Nam [金永南]	China (Beijing)	31 December 1985

Authors

Adam Cathcart is assistant professor of history at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington and editor-in-chief of SinoNK.com. Charles Kraus, managing editor of SinoNK.com, is a research assistant at the North Korea International Documentation Project in Washington, D.C. Having published several peer-reviewed articles on the subject, Cathcart and Kraus are together completing a book manuscript about Sino-North Korean relations and borderlands from 1945-1953.

Call for Contributors

Analysts and advanced graduate students looking to contribute to SinoNK.com on a regular basis should consult the call for applications at http://sinonk.com/positions-available/.

SinoNK.com also welcomes occasional guest submissions from established experts. Those interested in submitting material to SinoNK.com on an ad hoc basis should contact Adam Cathcart directly at cathcaaj@plu.edu.

Acknowledgements

Members of the Department of History and the China Institute at King's College, University of London, are thanked for their role in stirring questions about the role of memory and people-to-people relations in Sino-North Korean diplomacy. Mel Goodman, former CIA analyst and the author of Document No. 4, is thanked for his correspondence about the work. Thanks are also due to the staff at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, and to colleagues at the Cold War International History Project/North Korea International Documentation Project in Washington, D.C.

DOCUMENTS

The documents analyzed in this Dossier are attached following this page. Readers interested in downloading individual copies of the documents should refer to the following links.

Document No. 1
"Kim Chong-il's Visit to China," 29 July 1983, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP85T00287R000401290001-7, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

Document No. 2
"Memorandum of Conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung," 31 May 1984, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, 2460. Obtained by Bernd Schaefer and translated by Grace Leonard for the North Korea International Documentation Project.

Document No. 3
"USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit," 10 October 1984, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP8ST00287R001400960001-3, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

Document No. 4
"Improving Soviet-North Korean Relations: A New Phase in the Moscow-Beijing-P'yongyang Triangle," 21 June 1985, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP8ST010S8R000S07680001-0, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

Document No. 5
"North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing," 25 July 1985, CIA Records Search Tool Document No. CIA-RDP85T01058R000201760001-0, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Obtained for SinoNK.com by Charles Kraus.

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 July 1983

Kim Chong-il's Visit to China [redacted] 25X1

Summary

Both P'yongyang and Beijing appear to have largely achieved their objectives with the early June visit to China of Kim Il-song's son and heir apparent--Kim Chong-il. The visit provided the most explicit Chinese endorsement yet of Kim Chong-il's special status in North Korea. P'yongyang's media treatment has exploited the visit to burnish the younger Kim's image at home and has emphasized that close Sino-North Korean solidarity is assured "generation after generation." The Chinese, who are uncertain over Kim Chong-il's longer term prospects and have a distaste for personality cults, probably saw the visit as another in a series of gestures toward P'yongyang necessary mainly to preempt any Soviet inroads in the North. The Chinese also may believe that they now can afford some flexibility in their approach to Seoul. Beijing had delayed acknowledging Kim Chong-il and still maintains a measure of reserve toward the succession scheme by referring to Kim as "one of the principal leaders" of the North--a formulation less sweeping than the honorifics used by P'yongyang. [redacted] 25X1

Visit Confirmed

Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party Hu Yaobang on 7 July belatedly confirmed widespread speculation that Kim Chong-il had made an unpublicized visit to China in early June.

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] *Korea Branch, Northeast Asia Division, with contributions by* [redacted] *Foreign Policy Branch, China Division, Office of East Asian Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Korea Branch,* [redacted] 25X1 25X1 25X1

EA M #83-10134

[redacted] 25X1

CONFIDENTIAL

Beijing and P'yongyang have characterized the visit as "unofficial," but both sides have noted that Kim came at Hu's personal invitation and that he had "very cordial and warm exchanges" with Chinese leaders. The invitation most likely was conveyed by Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian when he visited North Korea 20-25 May. [redacted] 25X1

The Foreign Minister's trip may have been prompted by North Korean protests over Beijing's unprecedented direct negotiations with Seoul following the hijacking of a Chinese airliner to South Korea on 5 May. Beijing denies any connection between the hijacking and Wu's visit, but the steady stream of party, economic, and cultural delegations that have shuttled between China and North Korea in recent weeks is clearly intended to underscore Sino-North Korean friendship. [redacted] 25X1

The desire to placate P'yongyang may also have influenced the timing of the Chinese invitation to the younger Kim. It is also possible, however, that the trip was agreed upon as early as Kim Il-song's visit to China last September. [redacted] 25X1

According to North Korean reports, Kim met with Hu, Deng Xiaoping, President Li Xiannian, Premier Zhao Ziyang, and other top officials. However, neither Beijing nor P'yongyang has provided many details of Kim Chong-il's itinerary or his meetings with Chinese leaders. Kim appears to have arrived in Beijing by train on 2 June and to have toured east-central China with stops in Nanjing (5 June), Hangzhou, and Shanghai (8 June). Kim reportedly returned to P'yongyang from Beijing on the 12th. In our view, the chief purpose of the trip was for Kim to meet a wide range of Chinese leaders and to acquaint him with Deng's economic reforms. We doubt that either side viewed the visit as an opportunity for definitive talks on pending bilateral issues. [redacted] 25X1

P'yongyang Pleased With Results

The visit clearly went a long way toward satisfying P'yongyang's desire for Chinese acknowledgment of Kim Chong-il's special status in North Korea. The initial Xinhua report that carried Hu Yaobang's reference to the visit also quoted visiting North Korean assembly chairman Yang Hyong-sop as conveying Kim's "great satisfaction" with the trip. Yang observed that Kim had briefed a plenary session of the Korean Workers Party Central Committee--presumably the Seventh Plenum 15-17 June--concerning the visit. [redacted] 25X1

In our view, the North Koreans were particularly pleased

that Kim was invited as the personal guest of Hu Yaobang--which P'yongyang is likely to view as symbolizing Beijing's desire for close ties between the next generation of Chinese and North Korean leaders. For example, P'yongyang's handling of the visit has emphasized the solidarity of Sino-North Korean friendship "generation after generation." The visit probably diminished whatever concerns may have existed in P'yongyang that China's hesitancy to acknowledge Kim Chong-il's status might encourage domestic opposition to the succession scenario. [ ] 25X1

The visit also marked an enhanced role for Kim Chong-il in North Korean foreign affairs. To date, Kim Chong-il has only rarely been reported as meeting with foreign delegations, and never in a prominent role. Since late May, however, foreign media reporting on Kim Chong-il appears to have increased. Laotian, Cuban, East German, and Yugoslav media--in addition to Chinese--have all carried reports on Kim Chong-il's writings and his emerging position in North Korea. We believe that P'yongyang may be laying the groundwork for Kim to have more contact with foreign delegations now that an inaugural trip to China is behind him. [ ] 25X1

There has been press speculation--for example in Tokyo--that Kim Chong-il is now in charge of party and state operations in North Korea and that his father provides overall guidance but has little involvement in day-to-day affairs. We believe a large and increasing share of administrative responsibilities has been taken over by Kim Chong-il, but rumors of Kim Il-song's semi-retirement are almost certainly exaggerated. [ ] 25X1

Chinese Exercise Caution

Beijing's handling of the visit appears to have been guided by its desire to placate P'yongyang but to avoid full endorsement of the North Korean succession plan. [ ] 25X1

The North Korean succession poses a dilemma for the Chinese:

-- For strategic reasons, Beijing believes it must actively cultivate continuing close relations with P'yongyang to prevent the emergence of another pro-Soviet state on China's borders.

-- Nevertheless, they probably want to avoid becoming too closely identified with Kim Chong-il in case the succession gets off track.

-- The Chinese leadership may also be chary of too close an

association with the unfolding Kim Chong-il personality cult. 25X1

Chinese observers no doubt have recognized the steady increase in Kim's personal authority since his elevation to party secretary in October 1980 and the apparent absence of effective opposition to the succession plan. Beijing apparently decided as early as last year to begin recognizing Kim's special status. China's belated televising of Deng and Hu greeting Kim Chong-il during their "secret visit" to P'yongyang last spring was the first clear Chinese acknowledgment of the younger Kim. The hijacking incident may have accelerated this process. 25X1

The Chinese treatment of Kim's visit maintained a measure of reserve, however. For example, Hu's unusual invitation to Kim as his "personal guest" constituted recognition of Kim's important role in the North Korean Workers Party but enabled the Chinese to avoid the ceremonial trappings normally associated with visits by high North Korean officials. The Chinese media also failed to report remarks by North Korean officials that the visit would help ensure Sino-North Korean friendship "forever through generations." 25X1

As is usually the case in Sino-North Korean dealings, the treatment given the visit by Beijing's Korean language broadcasts to Korea was more elaborate and less reserved. Nevertheless, the Chinese avoided using North Korean honorifics that clearly place Kim second only to his father. 25X1

The trip almost certainly gave the Chinese leadership its best opportunity to date to assess the younger Kim's personality, attitudes, and intellect. Chinese leaders are probably fairly confident that Kim Il-song would not allow Moscow to gain a predominant influence over North Korean policies in exchange for economic or military assistance. But the Chinese may still view Kim Chong-il with some uncertainty. 25X1

The Chinese also may believe that Kim's visit has gained them some leeway to broaden contacts with the South Koreans, aimed at least in part at ensuring strict treatment by Seoul of the Chinese hijackers now on trial. For example, last week Beijing agreed for the first time to permit a South Korean official to visit China. The decision to admit the official--who is participating in a UN agricultural training program--apparently reflects new flexibility in Beijing's policy toward South Korea, at least within the framework of international organizations. 25X1

SUBJECT: Kim Chong-il's Visit to China [redacted] 25X1

Distribution:
2 - DDI
1 - Dave Lambertson, State/EA/Korea
1 - Donald Anderson, State/EA/China
1 - William McPherson, State/INR/EAP
1 - Jack Sontag, State/INR/China
1 - [redacted] DIA/DIO 25X1
1 - Wallace Knowles, DOD/ISA/EAPR
1 - D/PDB (7F30)
1 - NIO/EA
1 - SOVA/CS/C
1 - OEA/NA/Korea Branch
1 - OEA/NA Division
1 - OEA/CH/For Branch
1 - OEA/CH Division
1 - OEA/Southeast Asia
1 - D/OEA
1 - C/Production/OEA
1 - C/PES (Boatner) (7F24)
1 - OCR/ISG (1H19)
1 - DDI [redacted] 25X1
1 - DDI
1 - DDI
1 - ExDir
1 - OCO/IMD/CB (7G07)
1 - C/DDO/EA
1 - DDO/EA [redacted] 25X1
1 - DDO/EA

DDI/OEA/NA/K [redacted] (22 July 83) 25X1

"Memorandum of Conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung," 31 May 1984, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, 2460. Obtained by Bernd Schaefer and translated by Grace Leonard for the North Korea International Documentation Project.

Memorandum
[stamp:] Personal Classified Information
Central Committee 02 310
on the meeting between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung on
31 May 1984

E. Honecker used the meeting to address some issues that could not be addressed in greater detail during the official talks on 30 May 1984 due to time constraints.

He stated that the GDR is currently preoccupied with its 35th anniversary. The Party, which has 2.2 million members, is making thorough preparations for the 35th anniversary. The centerpiece is the ideological work, which has led to intense talks with practically every citizen of the GDR.

He said that, as Kim Il Sung could see for himself, the Party is bound to the masses, and there is a good trusting relationship between the Party and the masses. The alliance policy is very important, that is, cooperation with allied Parties, the role of organizations of the masses such as the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions, with 9 million members, the Free German Youth, with 2.3 million members, and the whole range of other organizations of the masses.

He said that the election results of 6 May 1984 could be considered the best in the history of the GDR, both in terms of the election itself and in terms of voter turnout, and attests to the successful policies of the Party and government in carrying out the resolutions of the X Party Congress.

He stated that the Socialist competition in honor of the 35th Anniversary of the GDR is very important. The workers have established as their goal for this to increase productivity by one percent above what is planned. Given the results thus far it can be expected that they will surpass this goal in the competition. Thus net industrial production in the first 5 months of 1984 increased by 7.9 percent. Productivity in the field of industrial ministries increased by 7 percent during the same period. This demonstrates the excellent initiative of the citizens of [line cut off].

He stated that the fact that 6 million citizens received new apartments between 1971 and 1983 alone was very positive for consolidating trust between the Party and the masses. Now the goal is to improve the residential conditions of an additional 4.3 million citizens between 1984 and 1990. Then the issue of apartments in the GDR as a social problem would be resolved in 1990. In addition, there are a number of other measures in the realm of social policy, e.g., the recent resolutions on improving material conditions for families with more than 3 children and the third increase in minimum pensions since 1971.

E. Honecker detailed the activities of organizations of the masses such as the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions, the Free German Youth, the Association of Gardeners and Animal Breeders, the reinvigorated Association for Mutual Farmers Assistance, the scientific institutes of the GDR, the academies and schools of higher education, the development of the general polytechnical school, the activities of artists unions, and much more.

All of this, he said, is going on in our country under conditions that are open to the world, as he had already expressed in 1977, that is, under the immediate observation of the Western adversary's electronic media. Naturally there are a few people who listen to these broadcasters and their daily lies, but it should not be overlooked that the vast majority of citizens of the GDR, one could even say, the people, stand fast and unalterably with the Party and government, with their republic.

E. Honecker then asked Kim Il Sung his assessment of the situation in China and of the current leadership of the Communist Party of China based on his own experience. For the USSR and also for the GDR and other socialist countries that do not have Party relations with China, China is a country about whose future course there are still many unresolved questions, for instance, as a result of the Reagan visit.

Kim Il Sung responded as follows. When Hu Yaobang visited our country in May, I also told him about my upcoming trip to the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries. He welcomed it. I had not known Hu Yaobang before this. On the other hand, I have been friends with Deng Xiaoping for a long time. As you know, he was exiled three times during the Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping paid me an unofficial visit for my 70th birthday in April 1982 to introduce Hu Yaobang to me as the new Secretary General of the Communist Party of China. He made a good impression on me from the beginning.

Hu Yaobang told me that he wants to improve governmental relations with the Soviet Union. He asked me to convey this to the leadership of the Soviet Union. Hu Yaobang assured me many times during our lengthy discussion that China is truly interested in improving relations with the Soviet Union. He confirmed this to me again this year. The leadership of the Communist Party of China is of one mind on this issue. He asked me to convey my thoughts on this to our Soviet comrades.

During his visit to the DPRK, he received news that Comrade Arkhipov's planned visit to the People's Republic of China would be pushed back. Comrade Hu Yaobang told me that he had very much been looking forward to this visit. Our Chinese comrades also think highly of Comrade Arkhipov. He used to be an economic advisor in China. Comrade Hu Yaobang said that he very much regretted that Comrade Arkhipov's trip would be pushed back.

I told Comrade Chernenko about this during my meetings with him. I told our Soviet comrades my thoughts both in a personal meeting with Comrade Chernenko and in official negotiations — that the Chinese really want to improve relations with the Soviet Union. The Chinese do not want war. Overcoming the consequences of the Cultural Revolution in the economy and in the standard of living of the population requires a lot of time and effort. All resources must be

devoted to this. The Chinese are not developing relations with the US and Japan with the goal of working against another country.

Given the complex world situation, I hope that the Soviet Union and China work things out. I believe that the development of relations with the US is not targeted against the Soviet Union. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai already told me that when they established relations with the US. They told us every time they met with Japan and the US. The only objective of these relations is to obtain developed technology and credit from Japan and the US. Deng Xiaoping is said to have stated in the US that the arms build-up in the US is good for peace. I don't know if that's so. This is the first time I have heard of Deng Xiaoping expressing a sentiment like that.

It is a fact that the Chinese have improved governmental relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The number of delegations exchanged has grown, as well. All of this can help to reduce the mistrust between the Soviet Union and China. Naturally, I was not able to tell Comrade Chernenko that I think it is a mistake to push back Comrade Arkhipov's visit to China. I just told him that the Chinese regret it. The Presidium of the Central Committee of the Com-munist Party of China has 5 members. Two of them—Wu Xueqian and Li Xiannian— used to be friends with Comrade Arkhipov. Today they are both powerful. Comrade Arkhipov could build trust in meetings with these two men.

Hu Yaobang told me the following: We sent the Deputy Prime Minister to Comrade Andropov's funeral. During the welcoming meeting, his escort told him that he could meet with anyone he wanted. As is customary with East Asians, he said that he would accommodate himself to whatever his host had arranged. Our Soviet comrades did not understand this correctly. There were meetings with just anyone. Only the Foreign Minister attended Brezhnev's burial. They were sending a message to the Soviet Union by sending the deputy prime minister. But this was not understood.

Kim Il Sung said that he believed that all socialist nations should work toward creating trust between the Soviet Union and China. No new mistrust must be permitted to arise. I have told our Soviet comrades that I believe that the goal of our Chinese comrades is to put Socialism in China in order. They don't want a conflict. I think it is important that China wants to open the gate to socialist nations in the interest of socialist modernization. We should not oppose that. Why should we leave the important Chinese market to the capitalists?

The old generation of leadership in China is dying out. We should show the new generation an opening. If we leave China to the capitalists, there is the risk that China will become a quasi-colony again. We should not close the door in China's face.

Because of our position—the length of our border with China, confrontation with the US and Japan—what we are most afraid of is that China will not stick with socialism. There are 1 billion people in China. We have to make sure that they follow the socialist path rather than some other path. We have to focus on drawing them toward us. In the past there were major anti-Soviet campaigns in China. This is not the case anymore. During the Cultural Revolution there were major propaganda actions against us on the Yalu. There were provocations in North Korea at the time of the Chinese/Soviet conflicts on the Ussuri in 1969. While I was recuperating in the

country, I received a call from our Minister of State Security that Chinese troops were crossing the Tumen [River] onto our territory. I gave the order not to shoot, but to let them come ahead so that we could take them on our territory, if necessary. We sent a group of soldiers there. Then the Chinese withdrew. The Chinese have castigated the Soviet Union and even us as revisionists. It lasted about 5 years in our case, and we had to keep our peace because of our situation. We had to be patient.

China has new leadership now. They don't want any conflict with the Soviet Union. They want peaceful co-existence with the US, Japan, India, and even the Soviet Union. There are still no Party relations between the Soviet Union and China. We should all try to use our governmental relations to create an atmosphere that promotes the restoration of Party relations, even between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China. I ask that you, Comrade Honecker, recommend to our Soviet comrades that they send Comrade Arkhipov to China and furthermore that they begin exchanging delegations. I am convinced that China would never put herself on the side of the US against the Soviet Union. All socialist countries should develop economic ties to China, and should even invest in China. The Chinese wanted to speak to Comrade Arkhipov about opportunities to cooperate in modernizing the numerous plants built by the Soviet Union. I told Hu Yaobang that I would ask the Soviet Union about building a nuclear power plant. Hu Yaobang welcomed this, because it would be better than purchasing one from a capitalist country.

Regarding the incidents on the Chinese/Vietnamese border that you mentioned, which you do not approve of, which you regret, I have only the Chinese press accounts to go by. I know nothing of what actually happened. I consider it very regrettable, because these incidents help neither the Vietnamese nor the Chinese. They do damage to our common tasks, above all bringing the Chinese closer to us. All socialist countries should urge the two great powers to hold out their hands to one another.

Hu Yaobang has gathered a lot of new people around him. Hu Qili, who in the past was with the World Federation of Democratic Youth—he knows many people from the past, including you, Comrade Honecker. The current Foreign Minister was also involved in the youth organization in the past. There are many other people around Hu Yaobang who used to work in the youth organization. Hu Yaobang himself is still very healthy; he is smart, his theoretical knowledge is good, and he has also made a thorough study of Marxism. Deng Xiaoping works more from behind the scene, but he also believes that they have to develop relations with the Soviet Union. He is the only one of the old functionaries who is still there. I am his friend. In the past the Chinese castigated the Soviet Union as social imperialists. They don't do that any more.

I met Comrade Chernenko for the first time [line cut off]

... I knew him well. He has been to Korea three times. He sent me a personal letter immediately after he was elected. I promised him that I would come to the Soviet Union quickly so that I could travel to the GDR immediately afterwards. But that had to be postponed due to Comrade Andropov's illness. Since I have just gotten to known Comrade Chernenko, I did not know how far I could go with him during our talks. I ask you, Comrade Honecker, to discuss all of these issues with him when you meet. How good it would be for all of us if the Soviet Union and

China would reconcile. Japanese journalists have frequently asked my opinion on Sino-Soviet relations. I always said that they are both socialist countries and they therefore belong together. Both the Soviet Union and China are our comrades-in-arms.

To E. Honecker's inquiry about the nature of the group of Koreans living in Japan, Kim Il Sung stated that this was a group formed by the DPRK. We support relations between this group and socialist countries, including the GDR.

Hu Yaobang, Kim Il Sung continued, had me briefed in great detail on his trip to Japan. I support normalization of relations between China and Japan. There are those in Japan who aspire to reviving militarism and the alliance with the US. But Japan in general can have no interest in re-militarization for economic reasons. All of Japan's mass organizations oppose militarization. Much depends on which people are in power. I asked Hu Yaobang about his talks with Nakasone. He told me that Nakasone said that Japan will not become cannon fodder for the Americans. It can't dissociate itself from the US, but does not want to become a lackey of the US. We should all think about that. For the future it could be important whether Nakasone remains prime minister or whether Abe becomes prime minister. In China the Chinese have been courting Abe because they think he would be the better choice. We have to work with the Japanese in a way that ensures that militarism does not recur. I sometimes make harsh statements against Japanese militarism, but we have to work with them anyway. Above all we oppose the US/Japan/South Korea trilateral military alliance. The Japanese have promised the Chinese $2 billion in credit. This is good for the Chinese economy.

I would like to address the socialist market, but today we have no more time.

ROUTING			
TO:	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1			
2			
3			
4			

	ACTION		DIRECT REPLY		PREPARE REPLY
	APPROVAL		DISPATCH		RECOMMENDATION
	COMMENT		FILE		RETURN
	CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION		SIGNATURE

REMARKS:

SECRET

(Security Classification)

25X1

25X1

CONTROL NO.

COPY 21 OF 100

25X1

25X1

Access to this document will be restricted to those approved for the following specific activities:

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

25X1

SECRET

(Security Classification)

25X1

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

10 October 1984

USSR-NORTH KOREA: COURTSHIP WILTS FOLLOWING THE KIM VISIT

Summary

North Korean leader Kim Il-song's visit to Moscow in late May failed to give a new impetus to Moscow's two-year long courtship of P'yongyang, and subsequently Soviet interest in wooing the North appears to have diminished. The Soviets apparently remain unconvinced that P'yongyang's warmer atmospherics reflect a willingness by the North to moderate substantially its pro-Beijing stance on international issues of concern to the Kremlin. Soviet preoccupation with internal politicking may also have helped erode its political initiative, or the post-Andropov leadership may have deliberately relegated North Korea to a back burner position while it focuses attention and resources on relations with the US and Western Europe. [redacted]

25X1

Meanwhile, the Soviets must find disquieting P'yongyang's moves to improve relations with the West even as it expresses interest in closer ties to Moscow. P'yongyang may be testing the limits of Moscow's willingness to strengthen ties, particularly with a new North Korean economic plan and a political succession in the offing. [redacted]

25X1

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] of the Third World Activities Division, Office of Soviet Analysis. It has been coordinated with the Office of East Asia Analysis. Questions and comments are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief, Third World Activities, SOVA [redacted]

25X1

25X1

SOV M 84-10172CX

[redacted]

Copy 21 of 100

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

[redacted] 25X1

The Kim Visit

Both the Soviets and the North Koreans probably anticipated that the May-June visit of Kim Il-song to the USSR and Eastern Europe would be a high point in Moscow's two-year courtship of North Korea. Prior to the visit, the Soviets upgraded the level of delegations to North Korean anniversary celebrations, endorsed the North Korean position on sensitive international issues such as the IPU meetings in Seoul and the Rangoon bombings, moved incrementally towards acknowledgement of a Kim Chong-il succession, and possibly provided the North with Scud surface-to-surface missiles.*

Moscow probably expected some firm indication during the visit that P'yongyang had decided to moderate its pro-Beijing tilt. The visit did provide a forum for wide-ranging bilateral discussions, but apparently no agreements were signed. Moscow failed to endorse either P'yongyang's proposal for tripartite talks between Washington, Seoul and P'yongyang or Kim's succession arrangements, and Kim did not follow Soviet leader Chernenko in sharply criticizing US, Japanese and Chinese policies in Asia. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

We have no evidence to suggest that Moscow agreed to major new arms transfers or an increase in military assistance either during or after the visit. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

[redacted]

The Aftermath

Following the visit, Moscow's courtship appears to have stalled, at least temporarily.

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

-- Soviet media coverage and messages for the anniversaries of the USSR-North Korea defense treaty and Korea's liberation in July and August were comparable to Soviet treatment of these events before the courtship began. Moscow's coolness was especially notable in view of the warmth of North Korean messages to Moscow on both occasions.

-- The amount of attention Moscow devoted to the North's mid-September National Day celebrations this year was no greater than the pre-courtship coverage of 1982. The level of Soviet representation at celebrations held in North Korea's Moscow embassy remained basically the same as before and was substantially lower than the delegation dispatched by the Chinese to the North's embassy festivities in Beijing.

-- Since late last spring, the Soviets took no major step to recognize the Kim Chong-il succession, which progressed after the elder Kim's return, until Moscow's ambassador reportedly requested a meeting with the younger Kim in late September. The Soviets meanwhile continue to use toasts and greetings by their East European allies, during anniversary celebrations in both P'yongyang and East European captials, as a way of indirectly acknowledging Kim Chong-il's leadership status as they have since 1983. [redacted] 25X1

Neither the USSR nor its allies have made significant new economic offerings to the North in the aftermath of the Kim visit.

-- The Soviets have not been forthcoming on the North's request for reactors for its atomic energy program, claiming that no assistance can even be considered before 1990.

[redacted] 25X1

We do not believe that the annual Soviet-North Korean economic and S&T talks held in Moscow in September produced major new economic projects, although there probably was some agreement to expand existing projects such as Siberian forestry joint ventures and to provide more training for North Korean scientific and technical cadres. A TASS release replayed in Pravda described the agenda for the routine session chiefly in terms of economic issues that

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

25X1

predated Kim's visit and labeled the atmosphere "friendly and businesslike"--a formulation Moscow often uses to suggest disagreement over key issues. 25X1
25X1

P'yongyang meanwhile continues to send signals to the Soviets that it remains interested in closer ties. North Korea showcased its interest in its media treatment of both the defense treaty and liberation day anniversaries. North Korean motivations and timing appear to us to be very much tied to its economic planning cycle. 25X1
25X1

25X1

Moreover, the Soviets must find disquieting current North Korean moves to improve relations with the West, notably Japan and the US. In the first instance, the North's recent efforts--its conciliatory steps towards the South, its expressions of interest in US and South Korean proposals for reducing tensions--seem designed to reinvigorate the tripartite talks proposal. P'yongyang's preoccupation with its economic problems as it moves towards a new development plan explain the recent promulgation of a new law on joint ventures and gestures towards Tokyo. In both instances, however, the North probably also perceives steps to improve relations with the West as a way of putting some pressure on Moscow to be more forthcoming with offers of assistance and recognition of the succession.

Soviet Motives

Soviet stalling tactics in dealing with P'yongyang since May suggest a decision to await tangible movement in the North's policies before making further commitments. Soviet offers of substantial material assistance are probably contingent on some demonstrable sign that P'yongyang is prepared, for example, to actively back Moscow on Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea, to fully endorse the Soviet line on Afghanistan, or to invite Moscow to play a role in arranging talks on the future of the peninsula. 25X1

Neither Kim's endorsement of some Soviet international positions in his late March TASS interview, nor his extremely guarded responses to General Secretary Chernenko's welcoming speech at the state banquet in May, nor the

25X1

4

25X1
25X1

[redacted] 25X1

noticeably warmer messages from P'yongyang during various summer-fall anniversary celebrations apparently satisfy Soviet demands. The North Koreans believe that Moscow remains piqued by P'yongyang's proposal for tripartite talks--which does not recognize a Soviet voice in deciding the peninsula's future--and the Soviets almost certainly were displeased when Kim again endorsed the Democratic Kampuchean forces during the Yugoslav leg of his Soviet-East European tour. [redacted] 25X1

A more general disarray within the Soviet leadership, arising as a consequence of Chernenko's ill health, his inability to consolidate his power, and the current maneuvering for the next succession, may also play an important but secondary role in the wilting of the courtship. The courtship blossomed most visibly during Andropov's brief tenure in office. The absence of significant Soviet moves since his death may mean that the current leaders have moved North Korea to a back burner position while they focus their attention and resources on policy toward the US and Western Europe. [redacted] 25X1

Implications

[redacted] 25X1

If the lull in the courtship represents a deliberate tactic on Moscow's part, the Soviets probably will continue to stall on substantial new offerings of economic or military assistance while awaiting signs of a North Korean political shift. We believe such a dramatic shift is unlikely so long as P'yongyang is willing only to restore some balance to its relationship with its two Communist neighbors rather than to tilt definitively towards Moscow. Should the Soviets continue to withhold major new economic or military assistance into 1985--as P'yongyang attempts to pin down major project assistance for its next development plan--the North might conceivably be encouraged to press its efforts, which China applauds, to open up to the West. [redacted] 25X1

A sustained North Korean effort to improve its relations with South Korea, Japan, and the US, however, might encourage the Soviets to resume their wooing with material offerings. The Soviets remain sensitive to signs that they might become "odd man out" in settlements affecting the future of Asia. Under such circumstances they might, for example, use the promised delivery of F-16s to the South in 1986 as a pretext for at least token deliveries of

[redacted] 25X1

5

[redacted] 25X1

25X1

[redacted] 25X1

advanced weapons systems to the North as a way of building some political influence. [redacted] 25X1

Alternatively, to the extent that the courtship has wilted because of Soviet leadership uncertainties, North Korean moves by themselves are not likely to get the ball rolling. A resumption of Moscow's courtship is not likely until the Soviet succession stabilizes and a new leadership focuses on North Korea as an important element in Soviet Asian policy or Sino-Soviet relations. [redacted] 25X1

Meanwhile, Moscow's delay in publicly backing the Kim Chong-il succession, at a time when the transfer of power is progressing, may already have generated a lingering resentment within the North Korean leadership that will limit Soviet political influence in P'yongyang for the foreseeable future. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1
25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

Internal Distribution

Copy
1 - DCI
2 - DDCI
3 - SA/DCI
4 - ED/DCI
5 - Executive Registry
6 - DDI
7 - Senior Review Panel
8-12 - OCPAS/IMD/CB
13 - Vice Chairman, NIC
14 - NIO/USSR
15 - NIO/EA
16 - PDB Staff
17 - C/DDO/SE
18 - C/DDO/EA
19 - C/DDO/EA [redacted] 25X1
20 - C/DDO/SE

[redacted] 25X1

38 - D/OEA
39 - C/OEA/CH
40 - C/OEA/NA
41 - C/OEA/NA/K
42 - C/OEA/CH/FOR
43-44 - D/SOVA
45 - C/SOVA/PA
46 - C/SOVA/TF
47 - C/SOVA/SF
48 - C/SOVA/EA
49 - C/SOVA/DI
50 - C/SOVA/SE
51 - C/SOVA/TW
52 - C/SOVA/TW/A
53 - C/SOVA/TW/T

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

Internal Distribution (Continued)

54 - C/SOVA/TW/M
55 - SOVA/TW/A [redacted] 25X1
56 - SOVA/TW/A
57 - SOVA/TW/A/Typescript file
DDI/SOVA/TWA/A [redacted] (10 Oct 84) 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

NSA

Copy: 58 - [redacted] 25X1
T532/CDB
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

NSC

59 - Admiral John M. Poindexter
Military Assistant, National Security Affairs
White House

60 - Mr. Donald Gregg, Assistant to the
Vice President for National Security Affairs
White House

61 - Ambassador Jack Matlock
Senior Staff Member, USSR-Eastern Europe
Room 368, Old EOB

62 - Gaston Sigur
Senior Staff Member, Asia
Room 302, Old EOB

63 - Colonel Tyrus Cobb
Staff Member
Room 373, EOB

64 - David Laux
Staff Member, Asia
Room 302, EOB

State Department

65 - The Honorable Michael H. Armacost
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Room 7240

66 - Richard Burt, Assistant Secretary
Bureau of European Affairs
Room 6226, New State

67 - Stephen Bosworth
Chairman, Policy Planning Council
Room 7311

68 - Jeremy Azrael
Policy Planning Member, S/P
Office of Director of Political and Military
Affairs, Room 7317

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

External Distribution (Continued)

State Department

Copy: 69 - Robert Dean, Deputy Director
Bureau of Political and Military Affairs
Room 7428

70 - Darryl N. Johnson, Special Assistant
Office of Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Room 7240

71 Phillip S. Kaplan
Staff Director, SP
Room 7316

72 - Robie M. Palmer
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
European and Canadian Affairs
Room 6219

73 - Philip H. Stoddard, Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Current Analysis, INR/CA
Room 6535

74 - William Brown
Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia/Pacific
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Room 6205

75 - Thomas W. Simons, Jr.
Director, Office of Soviet Union Affairs
Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs
Room 4217

76 - Donald M. Anderson, Director
Office of Chinese Affairs
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Room 4318

77 - Donald Keyser
China Desk Officer
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Room 5247

78 - Alexander Vershbow
USSR Desk Officer
Office of Soviet Union Affairs
Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs
Room 4225

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

External Distribution (Continued)

State Department

Copy: 79 - Mark Pratt, Director
Taiwan Coordination Staff
Room 4312

80 - Director
Office of Regional Affairs
Bureau of East Asian and Pacfic Affairs
Room 4310

81 - William Sherman
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Room 4310

82 - Harriet Isom
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Room 4310

83 - Hugh Montgomery
Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Room 6531

84 - William D. Howells
Director, Office of Politico-Military Analysis, INR
Room 6638

85 - Robert H. Baraz
Director, Office of Analysis for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, INR
Room 4758

86 - John J. Taylor, Director
Office of Analysis for East Asia and Pacific, INR
Room 8840

87 - Jay Kalner
ACDA/SP
Room 4485

Department of Defense

88 - Admiral Arthur S. Moreau, Jr.
JCS
Room 2E782, Pentagon

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

External Distribution (Continued)

Defense Department

Copy: 89 - The Honorable Richard L, Armitage
Assistant Secretary of Defense
International Security Affairs
Room 4E808, Pentagon

90 - The Honorable Richard Perle
Assistant Secretary of Defense (International
Security Affairs
Room 4E838, Pentagon

91 - Deputy Assistant Secretary
Major General Edward Tixier
Room 4D675, Pentagon

92 - Admiral Daniel J. Murphy, USN (Ret)
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Room 2E812, Pentagon

93 - Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Noel C. Koch
OSD/ISA
Room 4E813, Pentagon

94 - General Richard G. Stillwell, USA, Ret
Deputy Under Secretary for Policy
Room 2E812, Pentagon

95 - Wynfred Joshua, DIA
DIO, European and Soviet Political Affairs
Room 2C238, Pentagon

96 - Jay Sloan
DIO, East Asia and Pacific Affairs
Room 2C238, Pentagon

97 - Captain Robert G. Anderson
JCS/PPD/FESA
Room 2D973, Pentagon

98 - Major General William Odom
HDQA (DAMI-7A)
Department of the Army
Room 2E464, Pentagon

[redacted] 25X1

25X1

SUBJECT: USSR-North Korea: Courtship Wilts Following the Kim Visit

External Distribution (Continued)

Department of Defense

Copy: 99 - LTCOL Joseph Cher
OJCS J-5 (Korea)
Pentagon

101 - Linda Wetzel
Policy Assistant for USSR-EE Affairs
OASD/ISP/EUR-NATO/Regional Policy
Room 1D469, Pentagon

25X1

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/01/07 : CIA-RDP85T01058R000507680001-0

25X1

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

21 June 1985

"IMPROVING SOVIET-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS: A New Phase in the Moscow-Beijing-P'yongyang Triangle"

Summary

Recent Soviet actions toward North Korea appear to be part of a larger effort to improve the USSR's strategic position in Northeast Asia. Both Moscow and P'yongyang have misgivings over the "strategic dialogue" between the US and the PRC. China's willingness to deal more openly with South Korea presumably also has evoked concern in P'yongyang, and Moscow is trying to exploit North Korea's sense of isolation in the region. The Soviet delivery of advanced fighter aircraft may be an effort to buy into future political discussions on the peninsula and to counter closer ties between the US, China, Japan, and South Korea. The Soviets could link future deliveries to access to North Korean air and naval facilities as well as Soviet-North Korean cooperation in the Third World. [redacted] 25X1

China's reaction to improved Soviet-North Korean relations has been circumspect so far, but would be more pronounced if the Soviets gain access to North Korean facilities. A continuing Soviet presence in the North would affect the military balance and link the peninsula more directly to the larger US-Soviet confrontation in the region.

This memorandum was prepared by Mel Goodman of the Office of Soviet Analysis. It was coordinated with the Office of East Asian Analysis. Information as of 21 June 1985 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries may be addressed to Mel Goodman, SOVA, [redacted] 25X1

SOVA-M-85-10114CX

[redacted] 25X1

Copy 10 of 49

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

25X1

Recent improvements in Soviet-North Korean relations could change the strategic environment in Northeast Asia and have implications for the security calculations of key states in the region. Since late last year, the Soviets have

25X1

- Delivered six MIG-23 fighter aircraft to North Korea

25X1

- Agreed to send a naval squadron to North Korea for ceremonies marking the 40th anniversary of liberation from Japan.

25X1

25X1

the MIG deliveries may be the first round of a series of Soviet deliveries that will total 35 to 40 MIG-23 Floggers over the next year or two. Such deliveries would provide P'yongyang with a Flogger regiment in place as the United States begins deliveries of F-16s to South Korea in February 1986.

25X1

25X1

The Soviets in recent years have been cautious about what they have provided to North Korea, holding back since 1973 on items such as modern aircraft and air defense systems that they have supplied to other countries. On the other hand, Moscow has kept its hand in by supplying communications and intelligence collection equipment, air surveillance radars, and the manufacturing technology for somewhat dated tanks, antitank and surface-to-air missiles, and fire control radars.

25X1

25X1

25X1

The delivery of 40 MIG-23s will aid P'yongyang in countering the South's growing qualitative edge in air power. Combined with domestic production of less-capable fighters--probably F-7s--which is expected to begin soon in North Korea, the delivery will allow the North to keep pace with planned gains in the South through the acquisition of F-16s and the continued coproduction of F-5Es.* [redacted] 25X1

The Korean Perspective

P'yongyang used Kim's visit to the USSR and Eastern Europe last year to signal interest in improving relations with the USSR. A greater community of views on foreign policy issues was evident during Kim's trip than had been evident in Soviet-Korean relations since the 1960s. The Koreans pointed to a "full consensus on all the problems discussed," and North Korean positions on Mongolia and Kampuchea tilted toward the Soviet view in the wake of Kim's visit. The visit followed Chinese party leader Hu Yaobang's trip to North Korea, which was marked by signs of strain in Sino-Korean relations. P'yongyang's recent treatment of the anniversaries of its defense treaties with Moscow and Beijing also indicated an improvement in relations with the USSR and a cooling with China. Most recently, North Korea gave unusually high-level attention to the first anniversary of Kim's visit to the USSR, including Kim's attendance at an unusual anniversary banquet at the Soviet Embassy in P'yongyang. (Such an event did not follow Kim's trips to the PRC in 1975 or 1982.) [redacted] 25X1

In retrospect, Kim's trip to Moscow appears to have been a turning point in Soviet-North Korean relations and possibly in North Korean foreign policy in general. The North Korean leader seems to have found the Gorbachev regime a more reliable ally--particularly with regards to the U.S. This was especially important to P'yongyang as it watched its other major ally--China--pursue improved relations with the U.S. and even nod in the direction of South Korea. The North Koreans' sense of growing isolation as China went its own way would have been compounded by the US reassertion of security ties to South Korea and moves to beef up US military forces in the region. That Kim Il-song is feeling more confident as relations with Moscow improve is suggested by

* North Korea will likely receive the MIG-23ML (Flogger G), which is a generation behind both the capabilities and performance of the F-16, which is more maneuverable aircraft and has a superior target tracking capability.

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

P'yongyang's more active foreign policy--including the initiation of a direct dialogue with Seoul and renewed efforts to engage the US in direct talks.

The Soviet Perspective

Since 1969, the Soviets made no serious attempts to improve relations with P'yongyang. The Soviets recognized that the North Korean tilt in the direction of Beijing had historic and cultural roots and therefore would be difficult to counter. At the same time, Moscow believed that any North Korean move in the direction of the USSR could only be tactical and opportunistic. During the late 1960s, when Moscow had made a decision to improve relations with the United States, the Soviet leadership was particularly leery about being identified with Kim's adventurism against Washington and, as a result, gave no support to P'yongyang in the wake of the Pueblo seizure in 1968 or the downing of the EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft in 1969. (The Soviets, moreover, condemned the North Koreans in 1976, when they murdered two U.S. army officers at Panmunjon).

Since Brezhnev's death in 1982, however, the Soviets clearly have been testing the waters and looking for counters to closer ties between the US, China, Japan, and South Korea in order to correct their own isolation in the region. The adverse Asian reaction to the KAL shootdown in September 1983 led the Soviets to woo the North Koreans. In the following month, for example, Moscow absolved P'yongyang of any blame for its attack on the South Korean political leadership in Burma in 1983 and renewed an invitation to Kim Il-song to visit Moscow at some unspecified time. Soviet accounts of the subsequent talks between premiers and foreign ministers of the two sides emphasized that their mutual interest in strengthening "international security" had created a "reliable basis for their mutual cooperation." Last year's Soviet treatment of the USSR-North Korean defense treaty also was warmer than usual and focused on the theme of Soviet economic assistance to P'yongyang.

The Soviet willingness to provide MIG-23 fighter aircraft to P'yongyang also signals that Moscow is determined not to be frozen out of broader political discussions of the Korean question and that the Korean peninsula may become less isolated from the larger strategic confrontation between the US and the USSR in East Asia. The Soviets are countering Japan's willingness to accept F-16s at Misawa as well as the general augmentation of the US military position in the region. The Flogger deliveries also indicate that Moscow has dropped previous reservations about the risk of both military technology being transferred from North Korea to China and P'yongyang's possible military adventurism against the South.

Moscow may attempt to use the current deliveries of Floggers as well as the possible future delivery of anti-tank guided missiles and surface-to-air

missiles to persuade P'yongyang to allow Soviet access to North Korean air and naval facilities on either the Yellow Sea or the Sea of Japan. At the present time, however, we do not believe that P'yongyang will allow any foreign basing rights. 25X1

China's Perspective

North Korea's differences with China are rooted in Beijing's fundamental policy of economic modernization and its opening to the West. As China's stake in good relations with the US, Japan and even South Korea grows, it becomes a less reliable ally in the eyes of the North. The Chinese do not want to see North Korea drift into a Soviet orbit, but they are unprepared to reverse course in order to satisfy the North. 25X1

In an effort to change P'yongyang's view, Beijing has energized its diplomacy. The Chinese are:

-- Encouraging direct contacts between the North and South, and between the North and the US, to reduce tensions on the peninsula.

-- Showing the North the merits of opening to the outside world and reforming its economy.

-- Cultivating Northern leaders through stepped up exchanges of visitors. 25X1

25X1

Implications

The recent improvement in Soviet-North Korean geopolitical and military relations is merely the latest in a series of steps that have enhanced Moscow's strategic position in Northeast Asia. Over the past several years, the Soviets have increased their force posture in Asia without drawing down forces deployed in other military theaters, established an independent theater command for the region, built up their forces in the Northern Territories and enhanced their power projection capabilities at Cam Ranh Bay, and--as a result--signaled a determination not to yield to Chinese and Japanese territorial grievances against the USSR. The Soviets are now in a stronger

25X1

25X1

position to challenge the forward deployment of US military power in the region, particularly the introduction of the Tomahawk cruise missile and the increased number of U.S. fighter aircraft. 25X1

Any increase in the Soviet-American strategic competition in the region could have a spillover effect in Beijing and Tokyo where there is interest in limiting superpower tensions in Northeast Asia. Both China and Japan have become increasingly concerned with Soviet naval, air, and ground force deployments in the region--particularly the increase in SS-20 missiles and Backfire bombers--but both states also must contend with key political factions that question the acceptable extent of military cooperation with the United States as a counter to the USSR. Conversely, the Soviets presumably realize that a possible Sino-Japanese response to the closer military ties between the USSR and North Korea could be an enhanced strategic dialogue between the US, China, and Japan as well as a possible worsening in both Sino-Soviet and Japanese-Soviet relations. 25X1

The greatest risk that would accompany any serious strengthening of Soviet-North Korean military ties would be a worsening of North-South Korean relations, which have been precarious in the best of times. The Soviets may calculate--as we do--that the weapons they are delivering will not upset the military balance on the peninsula. But we cannot be certain where improved military relations will stop, and the provisions of more advanced military systems ultimately could contribute to destabilization--particularly over the next few years when both North and South Korea are expected to experience leadership successions. 25X1

Outside of the peninsula, we cannot rule out the possibility of greater coordination of activities in the third world in cases where such actions both promote North Korean interests and run minimal risks of casting P'yongyang in the light of a Soviet client. Seeking to be named the host of the 1986 Nonaligned summit, North Korea will be particularly concerned over the near-term to protect its independent image. Unlike many Third World countries, moreover, the North Koreans provide very competent assistance. P'yongyang often has been willing to get involved in situations where the Soviets have been somewhat more cautious; for example, North Korea is currently the major supplier of military equipment to Iran whereas the USSR is trying to limit such aid. 25X1

Chinese officials generally have attempted to appear calm about increased North Korean dealings with the USSR, in part because Beijing has a weak basis for complaint when it is itself improving ties to the Soviets. Nonetheless, the pattern of Chinese official visits, including General Secretary Hu Yaobang's visit North Korea last spring, just before Kim's visit to the USSR, suggests high level concern. 25X1

25X1

25X1

We doubt that the current degree of military cooperation between the DPRK and the USSR will lead to any distinct shift in Chinese policy. Beijing is likely to continue to press the US and Japan to initiate contacts with the North, especially in the form of US-North-South tripartite talks. The Chinese will also promote the North-South Korean bilateral economic and political talks in an effort to reduce tensions on the peninsula. China could also attempt to encourage the view that the US is to blame for improved North Korean-Soviet ties, arguing that US plans to transfer F-16s and other military technologies to South Korea is upsetting the balance of power on the peninsula. 25X1

Beijing will increase its own efforts to court P'yongyang, work still harder to cultivate the Northern leadership, especially Kim's designated successor, Kim Chong-il. We expect more Chinese-initiated high level discussions and greater efforts by the Chinese to persuade North Korea of the merits of China's modernization model, with all it implies for opening to the West and playing down tensions. China may also try to build some leverage in P'yongyang by interceding again with the US on issues such as reducing the annual Team Spirit exercises. 25X1

We believe the Chinese will continue their slow expansion of ties with the South Koreans, occasionally defering to the North's objections, but in the long run pursuing increased trade with Seoul. The Chinese are unlikely to accede to North Korean requests for high profile demonstrations of solidarity--such as boycotting the Seoul Olympics--that cut against these broader Chinese interests. 25X1

The Longer Term

In time, it is possible that military cooperation between the USSR and the DPRK could include regular Soviet access to North Korean air and naval facilities. If so, Beijing's reaction is likely to be pronounced. The Chinese will be pulled in two directions. On the one hand, they will probably press the United States to offer P'yongyang some concession to slow the rapprochement with Moscow, and to warn the Soviets directly against further moves. In this process, Beijing may want to reduce the visibility of its military contacts with the US to assuage P'yongyang. On the other hand, fearing another loss along its borders comparable to Vietnam's drift toward the Soviets, the Chinese could escalate their rhetoric toward the North and threaten sanctions in the limited areas where China has economic and other kinds of influence with P'yongyang. 25X1

25X1

25X1

176 file

25X1

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

25 July 1985

North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing [redacted] 25X1

Summary

We believe the recent changes in North Korea's behavior toward the Soviet Union and China--and in part, its new flexibility toward the South--reflect a basic reassessment of its strategic options, rather than simply tactical adjustments in foreign policy. The North's acquisition of Soviet MIG 23s in the last few months is obvious evidence of the benefits from P'yongyang's shift toward Moscow [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] In our view, P'yongyang's failure to extract any real benefit from the 13-year relationship between Washington and Beijing leads the list of its motivations for downgrading the primacy previously accorded China in this triangle. At the same time, the development of a more assertive, militarily powerful, and ideologically compatible Soviet 25X1

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of East Asian Analysis. Information available as of 23 July 1985 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Northeast Asia Division, OEA, on [redacted] 25X1 25X1

EA M 85-10144

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

posture in Asia in the 1980s has changed the North's balance sheet in favor of closer collaboration with Moscow. We believe North Korea will attempt to remain actively involved with the Chinese, particularly in seeking economic and technical assistance. But we expect P'yongyang to continue to invest more heavily in cooperation with Moscow, rather than with Beijing.

If these judgments about North Korea are correct, they connote:

-- A North Korea that will continue to appeal to Moscow by modifying its longstanding independence on ideological and East-West issues because it recognizes that only the Soviet Union can meet its most important needs in the 1980s and 1990s.

-- A "two-tiered" North Korean relationship with China, with P'yongyang trying to foster correct ties with Beijing and perhaps to experiment with a Chinese-style opening to Western trade and investment, but keeping China at arm's length on strategic and other political issues.

-- And, a North Korea that is positioned to engage the Soviets actively in its own version of quadrilateral diplomacy on the peninsula.

A closer North Korean-Soviet relationship neither simplifies nor advances US and South Korean interests. Rather, it further limits China's influence on the North as a collaborator with US policy and opens the door to a greater Soviet role in the Korean question. Even so, P'yongyang's shift toward Moscow is not immutable. A variety of developments, including changes in US-Soviet relations, China's foreign policy or Kim Il-song's succession plans could again bring P'yongyang to alter its course.

China: The North Korean Perspective

Since US-China rapprochement in 1971-1972, North Korean concerns about China's ties with the United States have been a central problem in its relationship with Beijing. The record demonstrates that the Chinese have been solicitous of P'yongyang at each major turn in US-China relations. China has regularly dispatched high level leaders to provide Kim Il-song with

authoritative readings and assurances regarding Chinese intentions and expectations for their US relationship. We can only surmise about the substance of these sessions, and of intervening contacts. But the evidence in the North Korean media over the years, and the obvious fact that the United States has remained P'yongyang's principal adversary, together suggest that the North has closely scrutinized, sharply questioned, and skeptically viewed each shift in US-China relations.

In our view, North Korean anxieties about the US-China tie are deepseated and a key factor in P'yongyang's behavior. We believe concern about US-China rapprochement led P'yongyang to take the initiative in the North-South dialogue in 1971, in part to protect its freedom of action on the peninsula from subversion by the major powers. Moreover, despite P'yongyang's historically cool relations with Moscow, the North's policies and statements demonstrate that the anti-Soviet dimension of China's cooperation with the US--especially its acceptance of a US posture in Asia that included US military forces in South Korea--have consistently troubled Kim Il-song.

We do not know how hard or how often Kim and others expressed their concerns and complaints to Beijing. But we believe the North Koreans may have pushed for, and perhaps the Chinese promised, more than Beijing could ever deliver from its US relationship. For the North, the late 1970s produced a worrisome evolution in the US-China tie, including the development of cooperation in strategy, diplomacy, trade, investment, and a security relationship that entailed arms transfers as well as technology for Beijing. But the growing US-China relationship produced little real benefit for P'yongyang and no aid whatsoever for its leading foreign policy goal--a dialogue with the United States and the removal of US forces--on the Korean peninsula.

In fact, P'yongyang could tally up further disappointments. China's support for the North's standdown on major military exercises and its lower key diplomacy toward Seoul and Washington after the Carter Administration's 1977 announcement of planned US ground force withdrawals brought no gains for P'yongyang. Instead, Washington not only reversed the withdrawal decision, but subsequent US publicity of China's "support" for the presence of US forces in the South (a position that Chinese statements in private to US and Japanese officials had implied for some time) undoubtedly deepened P'yongyang's misgivings about the US-China relationship.

P'yongyang at first almost certainly looked pessimistically at the policies of the Reagan Administration. Given the rapid downturn in US-China relations in 1981, however, we believe the North may have taken some comfort in the contention between Washington and Beijing that began almost immediately over the

Taiwan arms issue. Most obviously, the Taiwan problem put a sharp brake on aspects of US-China relations that gave P'yongyang trouble. We have no evidence on this score, nor do we know whether the North believed the Taiwan arms problem would seriously effect the long-term US-China relationship. But it is logical to assume the North Koreans welcomed China's 1981 decision to impose a highly publicized freeze on Beijing's "strategic relationship" with Washington and to shelve military-related contacts. And, in our view, P'yongyang also almost certainly was troubled in August 1982 when the United States and China resumed a more broad gauge relationship following the Taiwan arms communique.

Moreover, we consider it likely that the North saw a parallel between the issue of China's reunification with Taiwan and Korean reunification, and that it viewed China's 1982 compromise on Taiwan as a harbinger of potential Chinese duplicity on the Korean question. Again, we have no information that the North Korean leadership assessed the development in these terms. But, P'yongyang had clearly, if intermittantly, suggested a parallel between Taiwan and its own reunification goal during the arms sale controversy. Against that backdrop, Beijing's compromise with Washington--the common actor in both situations--could well have carried a decidedly negative message about China's potential willingness to sell out P'yongyang's goals for the peninsula.

Suspicions about Chinese dealings behind P'yongyang's back, in any event, were already evident in P'yongyang in the early 1980s as a result of China's evolving economic ties with South Korea. In addition to reinforcing North Korean misgivings about Chinese support, the growth in Sino-South Korean trade since the late 1970s undoubtedly has led P'yongyang to question how far Beijing would go toward a de facto public linkage with Seoul. In fact, Chinese comments last year, implying that Beijing would move farther after Washington took steps toward the North, highlight China's interest in closer economic ties with South Korea. Beijing could continue to work both sides of the street--maintaining a tie to the North, while controlling the growth of its economic link to Seoul. But a Chinese judgment that the North has taken a permanent shift toward Moscow also could lead Beijing to conclude that it has little to gain in Pyongyang, and considerable economic benefit to lose, from curbing its relationship with Seoul.

In short, we believe that the North Korean experience with China in the 1970s and 1980s has impelled P'yongyang's policy shift toward Moscow. We also believe, however, that P'yongyang reassessed the Soviet role in Asia at that time. Its judgments about Moscow's capabilities and potential in the region, in our view, brought the North to reevaluate the need for some accommodation with the Soviet Union.

The View Toward Moscow

North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union have rarely been close, and P'yongyang would be unlikely to expect that merely warming the political atmosphere would bring rapid or dramatic changes. In fact, impediments to significant new departures have long existed for both sides. Moscow's distaste for Kim Il-song's independence and its concern that another Korean war could bring a US-Soviet conflict continue to underpin a basically conservative Soviet policy on the peninsula.

Nonetheless, unlike the 1970s, when Pyongyang saw China embarked on its opening to the United States, and the Soviet Union still pursuing the politics of detente, the last five years have brought considerable--and from the North's vantage point, welcome--change.

In the last decade, three developments have been particularly important to P'yongyang.

-- First, P'yongyang has welcomed Moscow's policy of assertiveness toward the United States and the West. The parallel Soviet and North Korean characterizations of the dangers posed by the US military presence in Northeast Asia and by the budding "US-Japan-South Korea alliance" exemplify their community of views. North Korea's unhappiness with the Soviet role in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan also has mellowed. And, in light of [redacted] new aircraft transfers, the Soviets offer P'yongyang a reassuring source of support compared to Beijing with its worrisome tie to the United States. 25X1 25X1

-- Second, Moscow has made clear that its large, thoroughly modernized military force will be a fixture in East Asia, with its mobile intermediate range nuclear forces, its growing naval force in the Pacific, its presence in Japan's Northern Territories, and its military outpost in Southeast Asia. This Soviet military strength obviously has its downside for P'yongyang, since it works to reinforce the US willingness to maintain its own commitment to the region, including US forces in South Korea. But, on balance, Moscow's readiness to aggressively assert itself in the Asian strategic environment stands in marked contrast to P'yongyang's perception of Sino-US and Sino-South Korean accomodation.

-- And, in North Korea itself, the quicker pace of Kim Il-song's family succession, and the effort to revive the ailing economy, have caused the value of

[redacted] 25X1

better relations with the Soviet Union to appreciate significantly. Soviet acknowledgement of Kim's son as his successor helps lower some of the future risks from would-be challengers who could consider looking for Moscow's backing. So does an established link to the Soviets that more clearly ties Moscow to P'yongyang via a flow of military, economic and technological support.

In sum, we believe that the movement by P'yongyang and Moscow toward closer ties evident since 1984 will persist into the late 1980s.

What Does It Mean?

The North's reevaluation of its Chinese and Soviet relationships and the shift toward Moscow have significant consequences for its foreign policy tactics as well as goals.

-- It points to a more active North Korean diplomacy. Whether Beijing will ultimately judge that a full-scale competition with the Soviets for the North's favor is worth the effort is open to question. But events of the last year clearly suggest that P'yongyang can still enlist Chinese good offices with the United States at the same time it is markedly warming the atmosphere with Moscow. However belated the North's adoption of a more flexible and an active triangular diplomacy, P'yongyang's simultaneous engagement with its two allies amounts to a major departure from its low cost, "straddle-the-fence" policy behavior.

-- The North's acquisition of MIG-23s calls into serious question Chinese professions about their role, including any "restraint" of North Korea if tensions escalate, on the peninsula. P'yongyang already is receiving Soviet political support; its improved military relationship with Moscow, as well as its reciprocal backing for Soviet positions on Indochina, East-West and other issues, should make the North more confident about continued Soviet aid. We have no evidence to suggest that P'yongyang expects--or that Moscow is willing to give--backing for more bellicose behavior. But it is prudent to assume that the improvements in Soviet-North Korean relations make Moscow, rather than Beijing, the most likely source of that aid--as well as the source of any presumed restraint via its denial.

-- P'yongyang's exploitation of both its Chinese and Soviet relationships points to the possibility of other innovations in North Korean policy. As a case in point, the North has pursued and expanded the current

dialogue with the South despite events such as Team Spirit and the student demonstrations that would have derailed the talks in years past. Their behavior suggests that such tactical flexibility may be increasingly evident in P'yongyang.

-- Finally, the North's improved ties with the Soviets represent, in effect, a new "two-tiered" format for its relations with Moscow and Beijing. Essentially, P'yongyang is seeking a relationship with Beijing cordial enough to maintain access to China in economic and, particularly with an eye to the United States, political terms. But it has also chosen to identify more openly with Moscow to gain the military hardware, technology, and economic support that neither Beijing nor a go-it-alone approach can provide in the competition with Seoul in the 1980s. In return, the North is willing to pay the public price--by backing Soviet goals--and the private tariff--in the form of intelligence and other military cooperation--that Moscow wants and P'yongyang heretofore has not provided. The net result suggests that the MIG-23 transfer is only the first point on an upward trend line of cooperation, rather than an overdue fulfillment of a longstanding North Korean demand.

The Alternatives: What Could Cause Another Change?

Our lack of knowledge about P'yongyang's decisionmaking and the extent of any contention surrounding its policy choices make it hard to estimate specifically what could turn recent events around. In our view, there are several factors that could have that effect.

-- A shift in Soviet-US relations to a detente-like format, including the kind of tacit cooperation on Korea evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Even today, the North probably does not expect Moscow to accord it a high priority in Soviet foreign policy. As with its concerns about the US-China relationship, P'yongyang's latent mistrust of its ally would probably cause movement away from the Soviets if Korean issues again appeared vulnerable to US-Soviet collusion.

-- A sharp escalation in the Sino-Soviet rivalry. The amelioration in Sino-Soviet tensions itself has given the North a signal and running room to maneuver. If Moscow and Beijing again turned up the heat, the North would come under greater pressure from both. In that case, P'yongyang could stand away from the fight by once more clearly advertising its independence.

-- A leadership change in China that brought an end to military relationship and cooled the atmosphere with the United States. History, a shared culture and a record of postwar cooperation all are still a natural impetus behind a North Korean policy more aligned with China than with the Soviet Union. If Beijing's perspective accorded more with the North's view of the United States, the Chinese would be positioned again to give the Soviets a run for their money in P'yongyang.

-- Soviet meddling in Kim Il-song's succession plans. Kim Il-song conducted a far-reaching purge in the 1950s and 1960s to root out real and perceived pro-Soviet sympathizers. Any inkling on his part that Moscow was seeking inside influence would be likely to bring a dramatic reaction.

-- A succession that went on the rocks. In our view, the recent changes in P'yongyang's ties with Moscow, as part of Kim's effort to smooth the way for his son, are potentially vulnerable to attack from internal challengers for power if Kim Chong-Il stumbles. If the succession comes thoroughly unstuck, the consequences would unsettle an array of North Korean policies, including the North's approach to talks with the South.

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: North Korea: A New Posture Between Moscow and Beijing

DISTRIBUTION:
1 - Mr. Michael Armacost, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
1 - Mr. Paul Wolfowitz, State/EAP
1 - Mr. Richard Armitage, DOD/ISA
1 - Mr. Donald Gregg, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
1 - Mr. William Sherman, State/EAP
1 - Mr. James Kelley, DOD/ISA
1 - Mr. James Lilley, State/EAP
1 - Mr. Peter Rodman, Chairman, Policy Planning Staff, State
1 - Dr. Gaston Sigur, NSC
1 - Mr. Richard Childress, NSC
1 - Ms. Harriet Isom, State/EAP/K
1 - Ms. Rozanne Ridgeway, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs
1 - Mr. Jay Taylor, State/INR/EAP
1 - Como James Cossey, DOD/ISA
1 - Cdr. James Auer, DOD/ISA/EAP
1 - [redacted] 25X1
1 - Lt. Col. Joe Cher, DOD/OJCS/J-5/Korea
1 - [redacted] 25X1
1 - [redacted]
1 - NIO/EA (7E-62)
1 - C/PPS/DO (DO1)
1 - OGI/IIC/PI
1 - OEA/NEA/Korea Branch
1 - OEA/NEA/Japan Branch
1 - OEA/NEA/STI Branch
1 - OEA/NEA Division
1 - OEA/China Division
1 - OEA/SEA Division
1 - D/OEA (4F18)
1 - C/Research/ OEA
1 - FBIS Analysis Group
1 - DDI
1 - PDB Staff (7F-30)
5 - CPAS/IMC/CG (7G07)
1 - CPAS/ILS (7F50)
1 - C/PES (7F-24)
1 - NIC/AG (7E47)
1 - OCR/ISG (1H-19)
1 - DDO/EA Division (5D00)
1 - DDO/EA [redacted] (5C-19) 25X1
1 - DDO/EA [redacted] (5C-19)
3 - [redacted] 25X1
1 - [redacted]
1 - [redacted]
1 - Author

DDI/OEA/NEA/[redacted] (25 July 1985) 25X1

[redacted] 25X1