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**CHINA-NORTH KOREA DOSSIER**

**No. 3**

*'A Completely New Blueprint':  
North Korea's Relations with China  
at the End of the Kim Jong-il Era*



Edited by Adam Cathcart and Michael Madden

Preface by Stephan Haggard

August 20, 2012

## Table of Interactions

<b>Episode No.</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Dates [2011]</b>
<b>Episode One</b>	PRC Vice Premier Li Keqiang in Pyongyang	October 23-25
<b>Episode Two</b>	Sea of Blood Opera in Changchun	October 25
<b>Episode Three</b>	Yu Gongmin in Pyongyang	October 26-27
<b>Episode Four</b>	Chinese Consul General in Chongjin Travels to Namyang	October 27
<b>Episode Five</b>	Kim Jong-il at the PRC Embassy in Pyongyang	October 31
<b>Episode Six</b>	Sea of Blood Opera in Beijing	November 9
<b>Episode Seven</b>	Ri Tae Chol in Beijing	November 11
<b>Episode Eight</b>	Li Jinai in Pyongyang	November 15-18
<b>Episode Nine</b>	Kim Il Song Socialist Youth League in Beijing and Nanjing	November 17
<b>Episode Ten</b>	Kim Jong-il to Taean Friendship Glass Factory in Nampo	November 24
<b>Episode Eleven</b>	Various Cultural Exchanges: Universities and Conservatories	November
<b>Episode Twelve</b>	Press Cooperation	October-November
<b>Episode Thirteen</b>	Kim Song-Gi in Beijing and Hong	November 24-28
<b>Episode Fourteen</b>	Chinese Tourists Killed Outside of Pyongyang	November 26
<b>Episode Fifteen</b>	Tian Baozhen in Pyongyang	December 1
<b>Episode Sixteen</b>	Sinuiju SEZ Law Passed	December 9
<b>Episode Seventeen</b>	Zhang Dejiang Meets Electronics Industrial Working Delegation	December 15-17
<b>Episode Eighteen</b>	Kim Jong-il at Kwangbok Supermarket	December 16

## Preface

by Stephan Haggard

Despite the headline-grabbing nature of North Korea's strained relationships with South Korea and the United States, there is little doubt that the DPRK's relationship with China will play a decisive role in the country's future development. The Sino-DPRK relationship is multifaceted, beginning with a rapidly deepening economic base. Not only has trade between the two countries exploded since the onset of the second nuclear crisis in 2002, but large bilateral deficits imply significant Chinese capital flows as well. China's economic stake in North Korea is becoming more direct.

The influence of cross-border exchange is not limited to the economic sphere alone. In addition to feeding retail markets in North Korea, the China-DPRK trade is also carrying information about the outside world. At the margin, these developments constrain the leadership, including with respect to claims made by its propaganda machinery.

The border is also the site of a quietly fraught diplomacy with respect to refugees. China has clearly cooperated with North Korea in turning refugees back to North Korea. But China has not been able to completely staunch the flow, and, in any case, labor movements appear to be playing a more significant role in the bilateral economic relationship. All parties—including the US and South Korea—are well aware of the “the hole in the fence” analogy to Eastern Europe: the way in which the de facto border opened between Hungary and Austria in 1989 ended up having much wider implications for the stability of the Eastern European regimes than anyone could have imagined.

These economic and social developments in Northeast Asia play out against a complicated political infrastructure, with China confronting many of the same dilemmas with respect to the North Korea as do the US and South Korea. Pressuring the country runs a variety of risks for Beijing, and the North Korean leadership knows it; weakness and vulnerability are a crucial source of North Korean leverage even if the leadership's self-conception—or at least its projected image—is altogether more inflated.

In addition, a complex politics within China reveals quite substantial differences with respect to how the PRC ought to approach North Korea. These attitudes range from disdain and even contempt to a dominant *realpolitik* that sees North Korea as a strategic asset against South Korean and American ambitions in Northeast Asia.

The events chronicled in this dossier provide insight into the bilateral relationship at a crucial moment prior to Kim Jong-il's death. The moment, however, is not crucial *because* of Kim Jong-il's death; even if Kim Jong-il was in ill health and the transition in full swing no one could have foreseen the timing of his sudden demise. Rather, the moment is of interest because of the intense diplomatic engagement

between the two countries against the backdrop of a complex dance over the future of the Six Party Talks. Although only one dimension of the Sino-DPRK relationship—and a surprisingly muted one in the public pronouncements reviewed here—there can be little doubt that the diplomacy chronicled in this dossier rotated in no small measure around the future course of those negotiations. The documents are in my view rightly read through this critical lens.

It is therefore worthwhile to review the larger strategic picture. After an election promise in 2008 to engage with enemies, the Obama administration faced the unpleasant surprise of North Korean missile and nuclear tests during its first six months in office. It is still unclear from the diplomatic record whether the Obama administration had already planned a more hard-headed diplomacy toward the North or whether it was pushed toward it by the tests. But the core line to emerge from the events of early 2009 was an unwillingness by the Obama administration to engage in “talks for talks’ sake” and a surprisingly aggressive pursuit of additional sanctions on North Korea. While late 2009 and early 2010 witnessed a brief thaw, this was subsequently reversed by the sinking of the *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeongpyeong Island, events that made any US diplomatic demarche toward North Korea impossible.

Beginning in mid-2011, however, diplomatic exchanges once again resumed as the United States sought to outline the conditions under which the Six Party Talks could restart. By this time, cynicism about the ability to actually denuclearize North Korea was running fairly deep not only in the policy community in Washington but in the administration itself. Nonetheless, it was believed that a freeze on nuclear activity—on tests, on production of more fissile material, and on proliferation activities—was better than nothing.

The chronic food problems in North Korea provided a natural quid pro quo, with the inevitable linkage between the two issues hidden beneath the humanitarian imperative. Only days before Kim Jong-il’s death, the components of the deal that were ultimately announced on February 29, 2012 were in place, and, while the specific means of how they did so remains unclear, China no doubt played a crucial role not only in mediating but in pressing this course of action.

What is striking throughout is the incredible indirection of the public relationship. The diplomacy described here is nested in complex rituals in which the hierarchy between China and the DPRK is almost inverted; the laying of wreaths, the illusion of an alliance, the bowing to statues, the subjection of the Chinese leadership to historically and ideologically-loaded cultural product designed to deliver subtle and not-so-subtle messages. Yet all of that is the price the Chinese pay in order to nudge North Korea onto a more productive diplomatic and economic track, not least of all for its own strategic concerns.

Promises of deepened economic cooperation constitute the carrot, but it is far from clear that this carrot takes the form of aid, whether in the form of food or other



subsidies; it is here that some of the hardest bargaining no doubt took place. We hear in these documents repeatedly the North Korean incantation about “economic cooperation,” a euphemism for aid. But China’s stance appears to be surprisingly laissez faire, indeed, much more so than South Korean policy during the oft-criticized high engagement period under Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun. Riches await, but they are not going to be paid out to the regime directly; rather, North Korea has to undertake the necessary steps to lure and retain investment and trade. Moreover, the DPRK will pay on commercial terms for what it gets. The entries in this dossier on the signing of the Sinuiju economic zone proposal attest clearly to that line. Put differently, the payout comes from following the Chinese model, not from feeding at the Chinese trough.

If the economic messages are at least decodable, the strategic discussions are much more opaque, and particularly those involving the high-level exchanges among military and security personnel. The Chinese repeatedly return to the theme of the need for “all parties”—including the North Koreans—to move forward toward a resumption of talks. But there are two things we don’t—and can’t—know. First, to what extent are the Chinese wielding pressure or threats simultaneous to their economic blandishments? And second, do the Chinese truly believe at this point that North Korea can be denuclearized? Have the Chinese—like many in the US—simply reached the conclusion that it is “better to be talking than not talking” given the implications for Chinese security of strains on the peninsula?

Given the hard-headed nature of Chinese diplomacy, it is likely that the economic message delivered to the DPRK is surprisingly tough. It is also likely that the Six Party Talks are seen less as a real exercise in denuclearization than an exercise in mitigating risk. The Chinese bet is that partial reforms and the incredible weight of proximity will ultimately move North Korea onto a path in which the nuclear issue is not so much finally resolved as that it becomes measurably less dangerous.

Finally, all of these Chinese goals, and the alternating modes of North Korean resistance and acquiescence to those goals, plays out against a succession that is in full swing. Although Kim Jong-un is present in at least two of the episodes covered in the dossier, Kim Jong-il is still very evidently the focus of Chinese attention. Indeed, given the leaderist nature of the North Korean system it is likely that the direct Chinese contacts with Kim Jong-il constitute precisely the key track driving the bilateral negotiations with the US; these talks had commenced in the summer of 2012 and continued through at least two subsequent meetings in October and December.

We all know the unhappy ending. As Adam Cathcart notes in his Introduction, the intense bilateral diplomacy between the DPRK and China grinds to a halt with the death of Kim Jong-il as all attention is focused on security—including along the border—and finalizing the transition. It is possible that this momentary shutdown of relations signals a partial rethink of the Chinese embrace. But it is more likely that

we will return in coming months to the type of diplomacy catalogued here as the new leadership faces the same external constraints as the old.

*San Diego, California*  
*May 11, 2012*

## Introduction

by Adam Cathcart and Michael Madden

This dossier, based upon open sources in English, Chinese, Korean (and in one case, Dutch), chronicles the matrix of meetings and contacts in the Chinese-North Korean relationship in the two months prior to the death of Kim Jong-il.<sup>1</sup>

Why engage in such an endeavor? At a time when most analysts are focused on the future, why look back at the last weeks of Kim Jong-il's reign?

We believe that this period is in need of investigation, in part, because the events set a baseline about what an active Sino-North Korean relationship looks like – and, from the Chinese perspective, desirably so. In the last eight weeks of Kim Jong-il's life, the Dear Leader presided over a full-scale range of economic initiatives geared toward China, met (and introduced his son to) the incoming PRC Premier, invited the Chinese Ambassador for dinner, and had discussions with a top People's Liberation Army general in the middle of a brewing controversy over border security. The “continuously good coordination [继续保持良好的配合]” for which Kim Jong-il praised himself with regard to China on October 31 was, at the end of his reign in 2011, more of a reality than it had ever been before during his time in power.

It now seems obvious that North Korea's relations with China have only slowly returned to “normal” after Kim Jong-il's death – and still have a long way to go before reaching the frenetic pace established in 2011. During the extended mourning period for Kim Jong-il – which really ran from mid-December until mid-April 2012 – the DPRK leadership effectively kept Chinese leaders and diplomats at arm's length. China received essentially no special treatment during the various funerary rites, and no high-level envoys were sent to China from the DPRK in the aftermath after Kim's death in spite of China's obvious desire for such a visit. Not only that, but North Korea engaged in a number of actions – most notoriously, a missile test unleashed not far from the PRC's Liaoning province – that have very clearly indicated to leaders in China that “the Kim Jong-un era” may not herald an improvement in regional tensions, much less an economic renaissance.

In March and April 2012, the state media controlled by the Chinese Communist Party responded to these actions with opprobrium for the DPRK's missile test, noticeable and remarkable increases in the visibility of the North Korean refugee issue, complaints about the persistence of the “military-first” policy, and open doubts about Kim Jong-Un's ability to govern. The fact that these critiques existed alongside with assertions that North Korea is making “slight changes” toward marketization, may initiate reforms along Chinese lines, and is a strategic asset worth the investment of both aid and Chinese security guarantees ought not to

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<sup>1</sup> For parallel developments in PRC-ROK relations, see Scott Snyder and See-won Byun, “China-Korea

mitigate the sharpness (in the Chinese context) of the critiques.

Apart from a few sentences with the Chinese Ambassador on his way out of an Unhasu Orchestra concert on March 8, North Korea's new leader Kim Jong-un personally failed to reach out to China in any tangible way during the mourning period. Only with some formal messages to and from Hu Jintao upon assuming the title of First Secretary of the Korean Workers' Party did Kim Jong-un begin public communiqués with Zhongnanhai. When one considers that the Chinese Foreign Ministry had publicly invited Kim Jong-un to come to Beijing as early as December 20, 2011 – and viewed against Kim Jong-il's public embrace in this dossier of regular high-level communication -- this lack of communication prior to the public embrace of China in late July 2012 is particularly noteworthy.

The appointments calendar of Liu Hongcai, the Chinese Ambassador in Pyongyang, is another excellent gauge for how chilled things became in the period following Kim Jong-il's death, relative to the preceding period. The ambassador participated in the funeral, but only after allegedly wrangling for a spot. In January 2012, the ambassador finally got some face time with a key North Korean leader, Yang Hyong Sop, and was wedged into a seat for an opera performance which had been planned well before Kim Jong-il's death and which was pointedly not attended by Kim Jong-un or Jang Song Taek.<sup>2</sup>

In February, the ambassador appeared only once, outside of Kim Jong-il's bier on February 16 to mouth approximately four minutes of slogans about Sino-North Korean brotherhood and elicit some nervous looks from his minder Kim Song-Gi. On March 8, he finally was seen with Kim Jong-un, who greeted him on the way out of a theater and on his way to receive another round of rhythmic applause worthy of a scene from the Soviet literature.<sup>3</sup> The Ambassador had no public events for the next month and was not a part of any public meetings with North Korean elites.

Economic concerns added further to Chinese concerns about North Korea's direction after Kim Jong-il's death. Construction on the Yalu River joint areas more or less ceased after Kim Jong-il's death, and, according to reports in the German press, and had not resumed as of April 9.<sup>4</sup> A cultural festival and trade fair in Dandong scheduled for June 2012 was quietly rescheduled for October, as physical construction on the Yalu River islands celebrated by Jang Song Taek with great fanfare in June 2011 showed no tangible progress prior to Jang's visit to Beijing on

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<sup>2</sup> Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un, and Jang Song Taek had all pointedly attended a premiere of the same opera with the Chinese Ambassador back on February 16, 2011, Kim Jong-il's birthday.

<sup>3</sup> On Stalinism and performative applause, see Jörg Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde: Stalins Herrschaft der Gewalt*, (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2012), introduction. In Pyongyang, the March 8 Unhasu Orchestra concert was, as it turns out, a highly significant affair: there, the world received its first signals that Kim Jong Un might be married and/or be a father. In a system of hereditary succession, this is a significant matter, and the Chinese Ambassador's attendance at the event suggests it may have been the beginning of North Korea's attempts to appear inclusive to Beijing, which was soon to be shocked – at least publicly – by the North Korean announcement of an impending missile test.

<sup>4</sup> Jonny Erling, "Revolutionslieder aus dem All," *Die Welt*, April 10, 2012, p. 6.

August 14, 2012, almost 9 months to the day that Kim Jong-il died. While the Chinese press published a welter of stories in 2012 attempting to shine up the economic prospects in North Korea – presumably not wanting to completely dampen the permanently-damp mood among Chinese companies and investors about moving in the North Korean market – the reality was rather grim.<sup>5</sup>

The final and most blatant example of a soured Sino-North Korean relationship in 2012 was the DPRK's holding of Chinese fishermen hostage for nearly two weeks in May. As Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt described in a recent overview of the bilateral relationship, this hostage episode constituted a rather severe threat to the status quo:

Netizens called on the government to cancel aid to North Korea, reigniting a public debate in China over close relations with Pyongyang that had reached a nadir in 2009, when the North conducted a nuclear test near the Chinese border. Chinese leaders were deeply concerned by this outburst of public anger, much of it aimed at Beijing for its failure to punish its unruly neighbor. But it was also evident that some of these frustrations were shared by China's policymakers. One Chinese analyst stated publicly that if Kim cared at all about relations with China, he would have simply shot someone over the kidnapping incident.<sup>6</sup>

The hostages limped back into Donggang port in Liaoning province, but China never received an apology, nor was anyone apparently shot.

If the Sino-North Korean relationship indeed spun “out of balance” in the first half-year of the Kim Jong-un era, it behooves us to understand what actual “balance” or “normality” looks like when it comes to this unique relationship. The dossier thus endeavors to establish a kind of baseline by which developments impacting the direction of North Korea's China policy can be judged.

Stated in more personal terms, the question of Kim Jong-un and his circle's receptivity to Chinese aid, influence, and interaction must be measured against the policies and directions laid down by Kim Jong-il during his 17-year rule. In other

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<sup>5</sup> Between April 15 and May 8, the climate for business can be argued to have improved somewhat. The Chinese Ambassador finally returned to the pages of KCNA, and a Chinese Chamber of Commerce was announced in Pyongyang at the Chinese Embassy on April 26.

<sup>6</sup> Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, “The Diminishing Returns of China's North Korea Policy,” *38 North*, August 16, 2012. The author's attribution of “deep concern” among the Chinese leadership about public anger toward North Korea might be responded to by citing the fact that such “public anger” is one of the CCP's few new diplomatic assets in dealing with the DPRK. Among the multiple examples that might be cited in support of this claim are the Chinese media reports on violence stemming from North Korea along the Chinese side of the Tumen and Yalu River valleys in 2010 and 2011, and the CCP's strategic release of public discourse over North Korean refugees that frames the issue more nationalistically in March 2012. In neither case was the reporting entirely a case of the central media having its hand forced.

words, the question of change in Sino-North Korean relations is not immune from the present question of change of any kind in the DPRK: one has to know first what Kim Jong-il was trying to do before one can make statements about “change or continuity” in North Korea.

Among the questions asked in the dossier:

- What roles were Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un respectively playing in the shaping of the DPRK’s relations with China prior to the death of the Dear Leader?
- Which North Korean individuals and institutions – apart from the Kim family – appeared to be most active in relations with China? What might these personalities and groups suggest about the future of the relationship?
- What tensions and areas of agreement appeared to be emerging in this period, and over what issues?
- What will the role of the generational changes be in both the DPRK and China, and what do they portend for the relationship?

Answering these questions with the October-December 2011 period as a baseline allows for rational analysis going forward.

Clearly the Chinese leaders are not intending to “swallow up” North Korea or turn it into a province, but, as demonstrated repeatedly the SinoNK Dossier No. 1 on the December succession, neither are they ready to turn away from their strategic investment in the DPRK.<sup>7</sup> Today, China seems to be both criticizing North Korea in public and private, often doing so in new ways, while acting fiercely protectively toward any foreign group that sees North Korea as the next Libya or Syria.

### **What the Dossier Tells Us About North Korean Politics**

High-level *bilateral visits were at a very high pace* in the final two months of Kim Jong-Il’s life. Given the highly centralized coordination of the DPRK’s foreign relations, this turn toward China could not but reflect Kim Jong-il’s personal will.

This period marked *a vigorous return to relations with China* for Kim Jong-il after a full visible absence from any meetings with the Chinese since his return via Russia on August 25-27.

It appears that part of Kim’s desire to meet with the Chinese had to do with *preparations for nuclear negotiations and relations with the United States*. His visit with Li occurred as a series of meetings connected to the Six-Party Talks were held in Europe, Russia and China. Kim Jong-il’s final reported public appearance, before

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<sup>7</sup> Adam Cathcart, “China and the North Korean Succession,” China-North Korea Document Dossier No. 1, *SinoNK.com*, January 2012, [http://sinonk.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/sinonk\\_dossier\\_no\\_12.pdf](http://sinonk.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/sinonk_dossier_no_12.pdf).

his death on 17 December 2011, occurred at a department store (a joint venture between the DPRK and China) two days after officials of the US and DPRK governments concluded meetings in Beijing.

- At almost every turn, *Kim Jong-Il personally endorsed the policy of leaning towards China* in the DPRK's foreign policy. Following the momentum from 2010, which commemorated the DPRK-China relationship, Kim Jong-il continued to advance a general policy line oriented toward China and away from South Korea. The two countries increased technical and personnel cooperation on the DPRK-PRC border. The DPRK moved forward with several areas in has opened in the northeast and northwest to infrastructure and economic development. The countries also continued to expand security cooperation, both in military exchange and technology, as well as domestic law enforcement and border security.

- Kim Jong-il was pursuing DPRK relations with China quickly, but also cautiously. To internally justify an increased Chinese physical presence within the country and an uptick in civilian contacts and exchanges, *Kim restricted most development and construction activity to areas near the border, Rajin-So'nbong, Sinuiju and Hyesan, Ryanggang Province.* This pattern conforms to the 20-year old "mosquito net" policy of restricting Chinese or other foreign influence to specific geographic areas far away from Pyongyang.<sup>8</sup>

- The protean number of projects underway or under discussion with the Chinese at the time of Kim's death served regime strength in Pyongyang. *Having a slew of projects and initiatives promoted DPRK leadership stability:* policymakers and bureaucrats litigating jurisdiction or policy control are less likely to form a united front against the power center and the succeeding leadership is allowed to rise above internecine disputes. In maintaining policy initiatives with China, Russia and other countries at the time of his death, Kim Jong-il sought to leave his political heirs not simply ample material resources, but a number of options to pursue in state construction.

- Kim was also *using Russia as a strategic hedge against Chinese dominance* of the DPRK's foreign relationships. After maintaining some basic contacts and interactions, in 2011 the DPRK and Russia increased their public interactions and exchanges. A great deal of the DPRK-Russian Federation contact was a resumption of old issues or initiatives (i.e. DPRK sovereign debt to the former USSR in the former case, railway construction in North Hamgyo'ng and the inter-Korea gas pipeline in the latter) that had been mutually allowed to fall by the wayside.<sup>9</sup> On the

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<sup>8</sup> An excellent example would be the opening up of select North Hamgyong roads for Chinese tourists, even as the movements and communications of Chinese businessmen and university students in Pyongyang remain heavily curtailed.

<sup>9</sup> The DPRK central leadership has a Russian-minded constituency among old guard party and military elites which occasionally exercises its influence. Kim Jong-il's approaches to Russia are also linked to the third generation within his family; either Kim Jong Chol or Kim Jong-un studied Russian in Moscow. Similarly,

military front, according to some sources, the DPRK and Russian Federation have reached an impasse on DPRK military purchases from Russia. All of this may have facilitated the countries' interactions moving from security exchanges to economic development, but it also allows North Korea to hedge against overexposure to Chinese influence.

- *Kim Jong-un appears to have undertaken some changes in the personnel who lead relations with the Chinese*, at least publicly. DRPK Vice-Foreign Minister Kim Songgi, a key figure in relations with China during the last year of Kim Jong-il's life, appears to be one such casualty, not having been seen since February 16. *On the Chinese side, new players were brought in such as Tian Baozhen*; Tian's PRC Consulate in Chongjin appeared to become an intermediary actors in discussions over Rason and the laws governing SEZs.

- In the period examined in this dossier, *Kim Jong-un did not play a particularly visible role in contacts with the Chinese leaders*. In fact, in line with his position within the central leadership, Kim Jong-un maintained a low profile when Kim Jong-il met with senior Chinese officials. These senior interactions, however, presented an opportunity for Kim Jong-un to establish a rapport with Chinese interlocutors and learn his father's comportment when dealing with a key ally. It is impossible to know how much his apparent "distance" from Chinese leaders can be attributed to the desire to appear deferential to his father, or to a perceived sensitivity to internal criticisms that the North Korean regime is too beholden to Chinese interests.

In concluding the analysis, the paper opens up the idea of a normal Sino-North Korean relationship. The extent to which Kim Jong-un and his colleagues will continue along these lines remains a point that is open to question.

*Dandong, Liaoning, PRC  
August 20, 2012*

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Russia has provided an official to debrief and "tutor" Kim Jong-un about international politics, although it is not clear if the DPRK actively solicited this assistance or Russian officials (such as Mikhail Fradkov) volunteered it.



**EPISODE ONE**  
**Li Keqiang in Pyongyang,**  
**October 23-25, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart and Michael Madden<sup>10</sup>

Li Keqiang (李克强), 59, is the Vice-Premier of the PRC, and the probable successor to Wen Jiabao as Premier. Li is thus at the core of the “Sixth Generation” of CCP leadership, next to Xi Jinping, the presumptive next Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Politburo.

Li’s visit to Pyongyang was posed above all as a means of bringing the DPRK back into line with denuclearization, the key issue noted in the Vice-Premier’s subsequent sojourn to the Republic of Korea. Li has been burnishing his diplomatic credentials prior to his formal succession to Premier, and, moreover, such diplomacy is integral to the efforts by the Chinese state since 2002 to both appear and functionally act as a hub for inter-Korean efforts.<sup>11</sup>

Li was also in North Korea to add impetus to economic imperatives. The items were enumerated just before his arrival by Liu Hongcai (刘洪才), the Chinese Ambassador in Pyongyang. In particular, it appeared that China was looking for progress on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) between Sinuiju and Dandong. The Vice Premier brought with him a bevy of economic officials, an act which followed up on North Korean Premier Choe Yong Rim’s visit the previous month to the Shanghai-Nanjing area.

Finally, given that Kim Jong-un had yet to make any official or acknowledged trip to China, it also seems likely that Li Keqiang was there to presumably meet the young Kim for the first time and convey a better sense of the successor back to colleagues in Beijing.

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Two public statements by Chinese diplomats released just prior to the Li Keqiang visit provide an excellent outlook on what the Chinese government wanted to get out of the trip, at least publicly.

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<sup>10</sup> Some parts of this entry are adapted from “KJI Meets with Li Keqiang,” *North Korea Leadership Watch*, 27/10/2011.October, 27, 2011, <http://nkleadershipwatch.wordpress.com/2011/10/27/kji-meets-with-le-keqiang/>.

<sup>11</sup> For more on China’s “shuttle diplomacy,” see Michele Acuto, “Not Quite the Dragon: A ‘Chinese’ view on the Six Party Talks, 2002-08,” *The International History Review* 34, no. 1 (2012): 1-17, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07075332.2012.668334>.

The first emerged three days prior to the Vice-Premier's arrival in Pyongyang, made by China's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Zhang Zhijun (张志军), pictured below at the Davos Forum.<sup>12</sup>



The second major policy statement made by the PRC in anticipation of the bilateral visit was by the Chinese Ambassador in Pyongyang, Liu Hongcai. It is a relatively unusual step for the ambassador in Pyongyang to make such statements.

As might be expected, the English-language version of the document released by the Foreign Ministry differs significantly from the original Chinese. The following document represents a full English text based upon the Chinese original Chinese version. Phrases which do not occur in the English-language version of the document released by Xinhua are underlined for the convenience of readers, in part to show how much of China's North Korea discourse is "lost in translation."

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<sup>12</sup> Zhang's statement is a textbook effort to provide 50-50 balance in its support of both Koreas. The statement, however, was conspicuously lacking in anything beyond statements of "traditional friendship" for North Korea, and no mention whatsoever of the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Chinese entry into the Korean War on 25 October 1950, whose anniversary would coincide with Li's visit. Zhang Zhijun is known more or less as a pragmatist and has clearly favored expanding relations with the ROK. He would go along on the journey to Pyongyang and would participate in Li Keqiang's private meeting with Kim Jong-il. Zhang would also be the individual chosen to convey Chinese displeasure to the North Korean Ambassador in March 2012 when the missile launch was announced.

**DOCUMENT 1 | Xinhua, “China-DPRK Ties Entering New Era of Vigorous Development: Ambassador [English version] 驻朝鲜大使刘洪才：中朝关系步入蓬勃发展新时期,” Xinhua/Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), October 22, 2011.**

PYONGYANG, Oct. 22 (Xinhua) -- ~~The relationship between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is entering a new era of vigorous development and boasts a bright future,~~ Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK Liu Hongcai said in an interview given to Xinhua on Saturday, October 22, that Chinese Vice Minister Li Keqiang's visit to North Korea would advance the mutual political trust [政治互信] between China and the DRPK, deepen the economic ties and mutually beneficial and practical [互利务实] trade between the two states, and develop the friendly cooperation between the two states to a new high level.

At the request of DPRK Workers' Party and Government, Li Keqiang, member of the Central Political Bureau and Vice-Premier of the State Council, will make an official friendly visit to North Korea. In his interview with Xinhua, [Ambassador] Liu Hongcai stated:

China and North Korea are connected by mountains and rivers, and the friendship should be kept as uninterrupted as a great river. Established along with the founding of New China in 1949, the official relations of the two countries[两国就正式建交], for both sides, friendly cooperative relations have been unbroken, consolidated, and developed. Entering the new century, the leaders of the two countries have “stood high and looked far” [高瞻远瞩]. Following the past as a bridge to the future [继往开来], [the leaders] have established ~~Over recent years, under the sixteen-character guideline of “carrying forward traditions, embracing facing the future [面向未来], maintaining good-neighborliness and friendship toward neighbors, and strengthening cooperation, the development of relations between China and the DPRK has drawn a completely new blueprint [绘就了崭新蓝图].~~

In recent years, under the advancement in this direction, the political relations between the two states have been steadily consolidated, strategic communication [战略沟通] has made powerful strides, mutually beneficial economic cooperation has been steadily deepened<sup>13</sup>, and ~~promoted~~ cultural, education, scientific, sports and other exchanges have made daily leaps forward [日益活跃] .

He said both sides have been keeping close communication and coordination with regard to international and regional affairs and [that this coordinating] have made positive contributions to peace and stability on the Korean

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<sup>13</sup> Xinhua English called this “pragmatic economic and trade cooperation.”

Peninsula and in the region as well.

Liu Hongcai said: “This year was one of unbroken deepening and development for Sino-North Korean relations, and the relations between the two countries are an uninterrupted highlight [亮点不断].”

The first highlight is the frequent high-level exchanges [高层交往频繁]. ~~Besides DPRK top leader~~ After General Secretary Kim Jong-il made two visits to China last year, he also visited in May and August of this year, meeting with General Secretary Hu Jintao and other Chinese Communist Party and national leaders, deeply exchanging views [深入交换意见] over the shared interests and problems between the two countries, arriving at series of significant common understandings [达成一系列重要共识] which have guided [指明] the direction of the development of relations between the two countries. Senior officials from the two countries have also made a series of visits to the other side in 2011. Since the beginning of this year, Meng Jianzhu, Chen Zongxing, Li Yuanchao [孟建柱、陈宗兴、李源潮], Zhang Dejiang and other Chinese Communist Party and national leaders have successively [先后] visited North Korea, and from the North Korean side, Premier Choe Yong Rim, National People’s Congress Vice Chairman Yang Hyong-sop [杨亨燮] visited China. The two parties have pushed forward with strategic communication mechanisms [两党启动了战略沟通机制]. Together, both countries commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the “Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Aid” with great fanfare.

The second highlight is the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has shown great gigantic potential [巨大潜力], with bilateral trade and investment volume reaching new highs. The bilateral trade volume was 3.1 billion U.S. dollars in the first seven months of this year, registering a year-on-year increase of 87 percent; the momentum is absolutely strong [势头十分强劲]. Sino-Korean joint development and co-management of the "two economic zones" project was officially launched and has steadily been pushed forward [正式启动并稳步推进]. The new Yalu River Bridge and freeway project [公路大桥] officially started. The biggest privately-owned Sino-North Korean cooperation project, the Hyesan Youth Mine, was officially put into operation. On the bilateral frontier, mutual trade between cities, transportation and tourism, cross-border transport, and logistics cooperation have all made positive progress. North Korea has paid [tense unclear – Ed.] more attention to economic development and improving people's livelihood [改善民生] and its economic cooperation with the outside has continuously expanded, and especially is attracting more and more Chinese enterprises to do business and invest in North Korea.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This effusive summary of the very specific projects was encapsulated in the English version with these sentences: “Liu stressed that the DPRK’s increased emphasis on economic development and improving people’s living standard is broadening its foreign economic cooperation and attracting more Chinese enterprises to do business and invest in the country.”

The third leading area is that of [cultural] exchanges. Cooperation between the two sides in exchanges between both sides has strengthened even more than it had prior, and is actively growing. The number of visiting delegations from every level has made a big leap upwards, and cooperation in all leading fields has grown every day. The biggest [example of this trend] was the China Central Television which was broadcast on North Korean TV, an event which was warmly welcomed by the North Korean masses. Following on the North Korean version of the opera “Dream of the Red Chamber,” the North Korean Version of “The Butterfly Lovers” went on a tour to China lasting two and a half months. Bilateral sports, arts, journalism and other exchanges have increased every day. It was established that Chinese citizens could tour through North Korea to experiences the country’s beautiful scenery, and also experience for themselves the warm friendship of the Korean people. [...]

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On October 22, the day prior to Li Keqiang’s arrival, Chinese media announced that construction on the \$360 million high-speed railway project in eastern Jilin province, near the Korean border, had been halted due to a corruption investigation. While it would rank speculation to suggest that this crisis was manufactured to order, the timing could not have been better in terms of reminding the North Koreans of the largesse that China was spilling across the Northeastern frontier toward the end of linking up with the DPRK’s own anemic transportation network.<sup>15</sup>

This groundwork having been laid, Li Keqiang arrived in Pyongyang on October 23. He released a statement upon his arrival at the airport, placing emphasis foremost on living standards and prosperity, and secondarily on developments for regional peace and negotiations.

**DOCUMENT 2 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, “Li Keqiang Arrives in DPRK for Official Goodwill Visit,” Beijing, October 23, 2011**

<<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/wshd/t870499.htm>>

In a written statement released upon his arrival at the airport, Li said China and the DPRK are friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers, and that the traditional friendship between the two peoples dates back to ancient times. Under the care of the top leaders of both countries and thanks to concerted efforts of both sides, bilateral relations have been growing continuously and smoothly, he said. China ~~is ready~~ wants to work together with the DPRK [中方愿与朝方一道] to continue to deepen exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in

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<sup>15</sup> Yan Jie, “Authority probes alleged faulty rail bridges,” *China Daily*, October 23, 2011, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/22/content\\_13954800.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-10/22/content_13954800.htm). See also Wang Huazhong, “Railway officials dismissed for fraud,” *China Daily*, November 14, 2011, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-11/14/content\\_14087305.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-11/14/content_14087305.htm).

various fields so as to bring more benefits to the two peoples [造福两国人民], Li said.

*For some reason, the second part of the statement focusing on bringing the DPRK back to the negotiating table was not released until the next day, as a kind of preparation for Li's meeting with Kim Jong-il:*

China appreciates [赞赏] the positive efforts of the DPRK in improving [改善] North-South and U.S.-DPRK relations and in promoting the resumption of the Six-Party Talks and all forms of dialogue. China will continue playing a constructive role and is ready to work [与有关各方一道] with all the parties concerned to make positive contributions to pushing forward the denuclearization process on the Korean Peninsula and maintaining regional peace, stability and development, Li added. [...]<sup>16</sup>

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Kim Jong-il elected not to greet the Vice-Premier at the airport.<sup>17</sup> Li Keqiang was greeted on the airport tarmac by DPRK Vice Premier Kang Sok-ju, Korean Workers' Party (KWP) Secretary and International Department Director Kim Yong-il, CC KWP Secretary Mun Kyong-dok and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Song-gi (김송기/金成基).



In retrospect, Kim Song-gi's presence at Li's shoulder should not be surprising. the

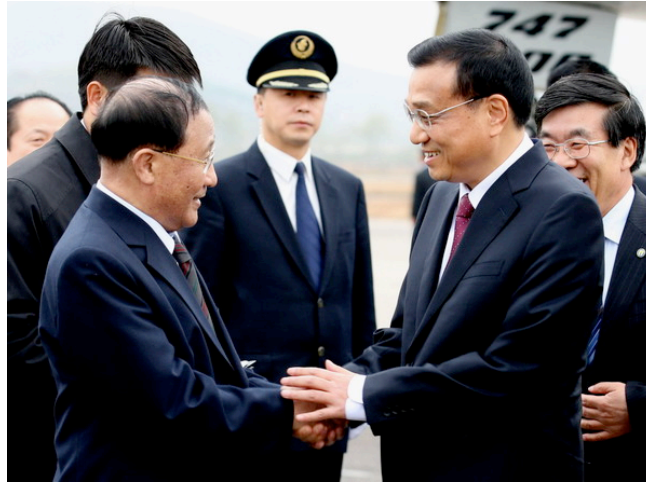
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<sup>16</sup> This paragraph was included in English press releases, but not Xinhua's Chinese version. See Ming Jinwei and Zhang Li, "Li Keqiang zai Pingrang jichang fabiao jianghua cheng ZhongChao guanxi fazhan lianghai" 明金维 and 张利, 李克强在平壤机场发表讲话 称中朝关系发展良好, *Huanqiu Shibao*, October 23, 2011, <http://world.huanqiu.com/roll/2011-10/2108626.html>. However, the paragraph text was released on October 24 by Xinhua: "Lian qi lai" fang Chao Han shi gongzhengzhe 'tequan', "连起来"访朝韩是公正者"特权" *Huanqiu Shibao*, October 24, 2011, [http://observe.chinaaiiss.com/html/201110/24/a42192\\_1.html](http://observe.chinaaiiss.com/html/201110/24/a42192_1.html).

<sup>17</sup> Kim Jong-il has twice greeted guests at the airport in big ceremonies: the first was South Korean President Kim Dae-jung in 2000, the second and final time was Wen Jiabao's visit to Pyongyang in October 2009.



North Korean diplomat virtually shadowed the Chinese Ambassador in the weeks after Kim Jong-il's death and plays a key role in the events described in this dossier as well as those described in SinoNK.com document dossier no. 1.



On Monday, October 24, Li was met for a photo opportunity and short discussion with SPA President Kim Yong-nam, followed by more substantive talks with DPRK Premier Choe Yong-rim.<sup>18</sup>

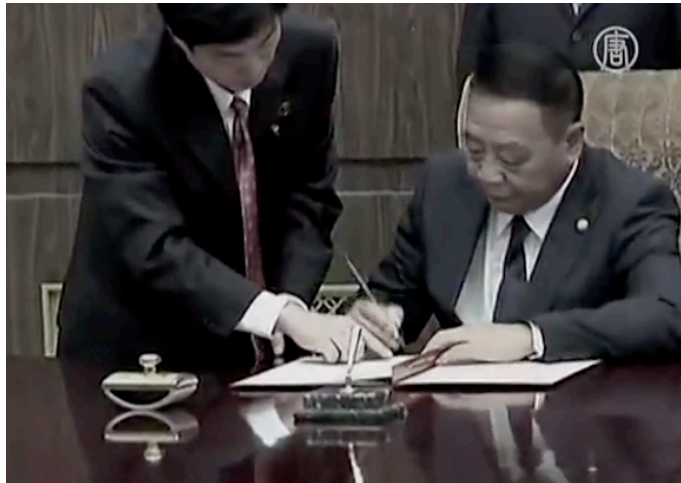


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<sup>18</sup> KCNA TV, “Kim Young Nam Meets Chinese Vice-Premier Li Keqiang,” via KCNA Uploader, YouTube, January 14, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbyTAYw34V8> and KCNA TV, “Chinese Regime and North Korea talks to Improve Regional Ties,” via KCNA Uploader, YouTube, October 25, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiIURB5v1C4>. See also “Kim Yong Nam Meets with Chinese Vice-Premier,” *Korean Central News Agency*, October 24, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news24/20111024-22ce.html>.

Choe had only recently returned himself from a trip to Shanghai and Nanjing touting economic cooperation and the Chinese arrived in Pyongyang ready to make headway in this area. Among the delegation was Chen Yuan, managing director of the China Development Bank, Liu Tienan, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Committee, and Chen Jian, vice-minister of Commerce. Present on the North Korean side, though left unmentioned in any press releases, was Kim Song-nam, an old associate of Kim Il-song and a leading figure in North Korean commercial ties.

The meeting concluded with agreements being signed in the economic area, but the content of the agreements was not specified and no details were given via the press of either country. It is probable that, given Choe's key position in promoting the minerals industry and subsequent North Korean press coverage of Li Keqiang, that the question of mining was taken up at the meeting.<sup>19</sup>



Meetings with Choe certainly dealt with economic questions, but they likely had very little to do with succession. Both of Li Keqiang's interlocutors at the meeting, Choe Yong-rim and Kim Yong-nam, are distinctly old guard; both men are in their 80s and associates of Kim Il-song. While, in comparison to the ideologue Kim Ki-nam, they have done much less heavy lifting in propagating the growth of Kim Jong-un's prestige, their endorsement or assent is important to Kim Jong-un, and this is one of the reasons Choe replaced his predecessor in June 2010.

Continuing on his tour through the old guard, Li greeted Yang Hwang-sop as part of a visit to a standard stop on the itinerary for Chinese leaders in Pyongyang, the Friendship Tower. Li was photographed placing a wreath and signing the guest

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<sup>19</sup> "China Gives Priority to Mining Industry in Economic Growth," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 12, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news12/20111112-24ee.html>.



book, acts of symbolism which were not entirely insignificant: the new generation of Chinese leaders has no actual connection to the Korean War and, as Xi Jinping showed in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary crescendo in 2010, it is important for them to show their commitment to the legacy of the Korean War – and China’s gains thereby. This is an alignment of a sort with a conservative strand in Chinese foreign policy in which the North Koreans can find some comfort.



Chinese economic officials and Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun, who appears to have arrived separately, were among the attendees at this event.<sup>20</sup>

While Yang Hwang-sop and Li Keqiang might not have done much more than exchange pleasantries at the tower, the senior North Korean is an important figure who has since been the only top leader to publicly – and explicitly – promote Kim Jong-un’s image as a possible reformer.<sup>21</sup>

After meeting Yang, Li Keqiang then rode up Ryongrim Hill to Kim Il-sung University, where he visited a Chinese language class and the e-library. If the

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<sup>20</sup> “Wreaths Laid at Friendship Tower,” *Korean Central News Agency*, October 24, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news24/20111024-23ee.html>. Among the dense list of attendees at this event were: “Zhang Zhijun, executive vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, [attended]....Also on hand were Yang Hyong Sop, member of the Political Bureau of the C.C., the Workers' Party of Korea and vice-president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Choe Chang Sik, minister of Public Health who doubles as chairman of the C.C., the DPRK-China Friendship Association, Kim Song Nam, vice department director of the C.C., the WPK, Kim Chol, vice-minister of the People's Armed Forces, Kim Po Gyong, vice-minister of People's Security, Kim Song-gi, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Ku Pon Thae, vice-minister of Foreign Trade, Kim Jin Bom, vice-chairman of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and officials concerned....Wreaths in the name of the Chinese embassy here and the Central Committee of the Association of Chinese Residents in Korea were also placed.... Chinese guests staying in the DPRK, Chinese students and Chinese residents in the DPRK [also attended].”

<sup>21</sup> “Top official dismisses concerns about Kim Jong-un,” *Associated Press*, January 17, 2012, [http://bostonherald.com/news/international/asia\\_pacific/view/20120117top\\_official\\_dismisses\\_concerns\\_about\\_kim\\_jong\\_un](http://bostonherald.com/news/international/asia_pacific/view/20120117top_official_dismisses_concerns_about_kim_jong_un)

Friendship Tower indicated attentiveness to the traditional elements in Sino-North Korean relations, the university visit was about the future.

Ambassador Liu had attended a “graduation ceremony” for about 800 North Korean students from the Pyongyang Confucius Institute a few months prior, and Li Keqiang accordingly visited a Chinese-language class at the university.



Li Keqiang was primarily accompanied at the institution by Song Ja-rip, president of Kim Il-sung University and chairman of the government’s Higher Education Commission.<sup>22</sup>

The Chinese Foreign Ministry had been very attentive to the building of human capital and technological training among the presumptive class of next generation North Korean elites, and this visit allowed Li to indicate that North Korea had not been exempted from the general trend of pushing China’s “soft power” abroad.<sup>23</sup> (As if to drive the point home, on his last day in North Korea, Chinese television showed Li handing out stuffed pandas to North Korean child-performers.)

The combination of high-tech education along with Chinese-language promotion is precisely the image the CCP would like to convey within North Korea and as a growing part of how Chinese power’s expansion is depicted: not at all aggressive, simply modern.

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<sup>22</sup> “Chinese Vice-Premier Visits E-Library of Kim Il Sung University,” *Korean Central News Agency*, October 24, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news24/20111024-24ee.html>.

<sup>23</sup> For general works on Chinese “soft power” discourse, see Ingrid d’Hooghe, “The Rise of China’s Public Diplomacy.” Netherlands Institute of International Relations, *Clingindael* 12 (2007); Sheng Ding, *The Dragon’s Hidden Wings: How China Rises with Its Soft Power* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

However, the bilateral endorsement of Chinese-language education in the DPRK has a long and somewhat tortuous history, and stands at the tip of an ongoing cultural debate about Sinification in North Korea.<sup>24</sup> In any event, a Kim Il Sung University delegation would go to Beijing a week later.<sup>25</sup>



On the eve of Li's meeting with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, the *Global Times*, the nationalistic foreign-affairs periodical under the arm of *People's Daily*, published its vision for North Korea, involving denuclearization and the clearing of a path for reform and opening up of the economy for more foreign investment. Specifically noted was the fact that China and North Korea were "getting along well with cooperative projects, such as the two economic zones, a copper mine and a new bridge across the Yalu River." Economic cooperation appearing as justification for continuing the relationship along the current lines, there was not so much as an elliptical mention of the role of the next generation of leadership in the *Global Times*, much less the pending problems of succession.

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<sup>24</sup> Kim Il Sung said in his memoirs, "Why should we speak Chinese in our own country?" and limited Chinese language education to a handful of diplomats and the population of what was about 40,000 overseas Chinese at the time. See Adam Cathcart and Charles Kraus, unpublished book chapter. On current work of the Confucius Institute in Pyongyang, see Adam Cathcart, "Lux Sinica: China's 'Civilizing Influence' in North Korea," *Korean Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Summer), 43-44.

<sup>25</sup> "Educationist Delegation Leaves for China," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 1, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news01/20111101-46ee.html>; see also "Kim Il-sung Univ. Delegation Leaves for China," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 3, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news03/20111103-29ee.html>.

A few days later KCNA published a summary of the above article, noting its wide distribution in China. While the North Korean version lavishes some detail on the piece, conspicuously left out are any of Liu Jieyi's mentions of economic cooperation (i.e., SEZs, the copper mine, and the Yalu River bridge) or the push for nuclear negotiations. However, KCNA noted China's support for the North Korean drive to "develop economy and improve the standard of people's living [and] the cause of building a prosperous and powerful country."<sup>26</sup>

On Tuesday, October 25, Li Keqiang finally got some face time with the DPRK's supreme leader, but not before first making an obligatory visit to the leader's dead father at Kumusan Memorial Palace.

Fresh from a recent spate of KPA field inspections and on-the-spot guidance visits, Kim Jong-il (김정일/金正日) met with Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang and a delegation of senior PRC officials, hosting them at a banquet. Along with Kim Jong-il, other members of the DPRK central leadership who dined with Li included Jang Song-taek, Kim Jong-un, Ri Yong-ho, Kang Sok-ju and Kim Yang-gon.

The meeting and dinner was an opportunity for Kim Jong-un to interact with a fellow leader-in-waiting, while, if the successor were given an opportunity to speak, Li and his delegation could get a sense of Kim Jong-un's intentions and his policy direction.

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<sup>26</sup> "Chinese Media on Development of China-DPRK Relations," *Korean Central News Agency*, October 30, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news30/20111030-01ee.html>.



Kim Jong Il shakes hands with Chinese Vice Premier Le Keqiang (Photo: Xinhua/KCNA)

While the North Koreans later asserted that they had formally made Kim Jong-un (김정은/金正恩) their leader earlier in October, during the portions of the Li-Kim meetings released, there was precious little indication of Kim Jong-un's emergence in the symbolism of this particular event, where the young successor acts essentially as just another high-level leader.

More than a statement about succession, the meeting and dinner was most likely a forum for Kim Jong-il to air his grievances with the South Korean leadership and Li served as a willing intermediary between the north and south. Finally, with ongoing development projects within the country, having direct personal access to Kim Jong-il and his immediate entourage (including Jang Song-taek) gave Li a forum to communicate achievements or new projects and complain about inactivity, bribe solicitations or other knotty problems affecting Chinese development activity.





At the risk of overreading the available evidence, in terms of Kim Jong-un's behavior and status at this meeting, a number of points bear noting:

- No official photo was released of Kim Jong-un's handshake with Li Keqiang, although a photo was taken.
- Kim Jong-un doesn't speak Chinese and is reliant on an interpreter.
- Li Keqiang, having "greeted" Kim Il Song's embalmed body that morning, greets the DPRK leadership in the following order: Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un, General Ri Yong Ho.
- Li Keqiang then had a small-scale private meeting with Kim Jong-il in an adjoining room in which neither Kim Jong-un nor General Ri participated.
- Kim Jong-un sat at dinner next to the Chinese Ambassador, whom he had already met; unlike his father, he appeared to make no toasts.

- While Kim Jong-un did not participate in the more hands-on session with Premiere Choe Yong Rim and Li Keqiang two days prior, nor were there, to our knowledge, high-level PRC security officials along on the trip to meet with Kim Jong-un on the subject of border security, although the successor had supposedly been tasked with this as well.

Consider these data points, disconnected though they surely are, with regard to the question of who was really running the show before Kim Jong-il died, and how much power Kim Jong-un really holds today.

At the very least, from the perspective of what we might call “optics,” Kim Jong-un’s evident exclusion from the meeting with Li Keqiang as well as the failure to release a photo of him greeting the Chinese leader with a serious power handshake indicate that one or both of the parties did not think that it would be wise to place him too close to center stage.

Further consider the fact that, as Li Keqiang was arriving in Pyongyang, news emerged that Kim Jong-un was having new titles layered upon his monumental personage, including that of “General.” After Kim Jong-il died, members of the Workers’ Party were told not to worry, because the young man had been running the state since approximately late October, precisely the moment at which the Chinese Vice Premier arrived in Pyongyang.<sup>27</sup>

Regardless of what he was told or could gather about Kim Jong-un’s status, Li Keqiang was seen off at the airport by essentially the same delegation of North Korean leaders that had seen him off. Getting on his immense aircraft, Li Keqiang proceeded onward to Seoul.

The KCNA statement which emerged from the meeting quoted Li Keqiang’s Chinese “16-character formula” for Sino-North Korean relations, interpreted by KCNA as “inheriting the tradition, facing up to the future, building good-neighborly friendship and strengthening cooperation.”<sup>28</sup>

*Rodong Sinmun* published an article “dedicated to the anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers' entry into the Korean front” which said the Sino-North Korean relationship was “coming into full bloom with each passing day thanks to the deep care and energetic activities of the top leaders of the two countries,” citing Kim Jong-il’s multiple visits to China, which were not simply historical, but collectively

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<sup>27</sup> For more detailed discussion, see Adam Cathcart, “Stable Transition or Fumbling Majesty? When Kim Jong-un Met the Chinese Vice Premier,” SinoNK.com, May 14, 2012, <http://sinonk.com/2012/05/14/stable-transition-or-fumbling-majesty-when-kim-jong-un-met-the-chinese-vp/>

<sup>28</sup> “Sino-DPRK Friendship, Treasure Common to Two Peoples: Li Keqiang,” *Korean Central News Agency*, October 25, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news25/20111025-37ee.html>.

signified “an important event of epochal significance in developing the DPRK-China friendly relations more vigorously and in depth.” Before concluding with some kind words about the martyrs of the Chinese army, the editorialists threw Beijing a bone by stating that “China is now making a turning-point in social progress and prosperity.”<sup>29</sup>

Then KCNA released a statement on foreign relations which focused vitrol on Japan and the US as the main enemies of diplomatic progress. Notably, there was no mention of South Korea, where Li Keqiang was continuing his visit.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “Rodong Sinmun on Steadily Developing DPRK-China Friendship,” *Korean Central News Agency*, October 25, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news25/20111025-07ee.html>.

<sup>30</sup> “Rodong Sinmun on DPRK’s Consistent Foreign Policy,” *Korean Central News Agency*, October 26, 2011. Original document link missing, access here: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/northkorea/message/622>.



**EPISODE TWO**  
**Sea of Blood Opera Troupe in Changchun,**  
**October 25, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart



As Li Keqiang's departed for Seoul, an act of North Korean cultural reciprocity immediately followed: a three-month, 30-performance tour of a dozen cities of the PRC by North Korea's top opera troupe, the P'ibada (Sea of Blood) ensemble, a group closely associated with Kim Jong-il's rise to power.

Much more than simply heightened Sino-North Korean cultural exchange, the opera troupe was used at three strategic moments in the period covered in this dossier as a means of providing a pretext for high-level interactions. Even in death, the North Korean leader was orchestrating bilateral ties; while the group's performances continued in China during the national mourning period, the opera troupe's return to Pyongyang on January 5 was the pretext for the return of the Chinese Ambassador's interactions with high-level North Korean, if not the successor himself.

On 21 October, the opera troupe departed for China with its production *Butterfly Lovers*, otherwise known as *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai*, a Chinese opera performed with North Korean characteristics. After a few days of rehearsals in Changchun, the center of Jilin province, the ensemble there gave the Chinese premiere of its production on October 25, as Li Keqiang left Pyongyang for Seoul.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Paragraph adapted from Michael Madden, "KJI Meets with Li Keqiang," *NK Leadership Watch*, 27 October 2011.

This extended instance of musical diplomacy from the DPRK into the PRC has hardly been the norm since China established an increasingly thriving series of cultural exchanges with South Korea after 1992.<sup>32</sup> The opera troupe's movement thus represented at least temporary triumph of the accelerated pattern of cultural exchanges advocated by Premier Wen Jiabao in his visit to Pyongyang in October 2009.<sup>33</sup> From a North Korean standpoint, it may also have been taken as yet more refractory evidence of China's support for the succession of Kim Jong-il's chosen son.<sup>34</sup> Much more likely is that in North Korea, the group's tour was as a means of cementing further images of the exportable genius of Kim Jong-il, who was known to take high interest in musical matters and this opera in particular.<sup>35</sup>

The opera served as the virtual centerpiece of state media discussion of Sino-North Korean cultural friendship from both sides for the next two months. Local Xinhua bureaus were clearly told to lavish many praises, and KCNA also followed the tour quite closely, with a detailed story being published about it nearly every week. Virtually no original Western reporting was done on the tour, so it is impossible to confirm if, as suspected, most of the tickets were distributed through state-owned work units or *danwei*, and officials made up most of the audience. One group of Chinese media officials who had visited the DPRK for five days at the beginning of October stuck with the script by commenting that the opera led them to be "deeply moved by the profound friendship between China and the DPRK sealed with blood."<sup>36</sup> For an alliance whose main cultural reference point has been the Korean War, the appearance of a more Confucian link was a clear attempt to update ties.

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<sup>32</sup> On the impact of the South Korea-PRC recognition on PRC-DPRK relations, see Jae Ho Chang, *Between Ally and Partner: China-South Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). For more history of musical diplomacy and DPRK during Korean War and the present, see Adam Cathcart, "The Sea of Blood Opera Show: A History of North Korea's Musical Diplomacy," *The Atlantic*, March 19, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-sea-of-blood-opera-show-a-history-of-north-koreas-musical-diplomacy/254697/>.

<sup>33</sup> However rarely considered is the notion of North Korean "soft power," it seems clear that the DPRK regime seems to have recognized at least to a limited extent that, while relations with the Chinese state are prime, the notion of "Chinese public opinion" cannot be entirely dismissed out of hand, and that it may pay dividends to offer to China an alternative vision of the DPRK as a country where things other than military rallies take place.

<sup>34</sup> On the plotline and its interaction between opera exchanges and court succession politics in Pyongyang and Beijing, see Sunny Lee, "Opera on Tour of China Hints that Kim Jong-il's Son Will Inherit Power," *The National*, May 12, 2010, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/asia-pacific/opera-on-tour-of-china-hints-that-kim-jong-ils-son-will-inherit-power>

<sup>35</sup> Adam Cathcart, "North Korean Hip Hop? Reflections on Musical Diplomacy and the DPRK," *Acta Koreana* 12, no. 2 (December): 1-19.

<sup>36</sup> On the DPRK's unique method of channeling foreign reception to its performances, see Jimin Lee, "Upstaging Dystopia: Adam Johnson and Suk-Young Kim on North Korea's Performance Culture," SinoNK.com, May 8, 2012, <http://sinonk.com/2012/05/08/upstaging-dystopia-adam-johnson-and-suk-young-kim/>

Among the officials in attendance at the opera's opening night in Changchun was the newly appointed DPRK Consul in Shenyang, Kim Kwang-hun. It is unclear how much coordination the Consulate in Shenyang had with setting up the venues or tour. In the past, the DPRK Consul General had been known for reaping in huge sums of money, not setting up artistic performances other than those occurring in the various North Korean restaurants around Northeast China.<sup>37</sup>

The tour, it should be noted, did not go to the heartland of North Korean defections, the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, where the CCP was creating a huge ethnic-Korean opera dance extravaganza of its own and has been sensitive to the import of North Korean culture since the 1960s.

The opera troupe included a full orchestra, making it a unique moment for Chinese audiences accustomed to karaoke-style big stage shows. They would later arrive in Beijing to aid in the further cementing of ties with Chinese leaders, both CCP leaders and the People's Liberation Army.

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<sup>37</sup> Stephan Haggard, "Wikileaks 1," *Witness to Transformation* [website], Peterson Institute for International Economics, February 28, 2011, <http://www.piie.com/blogs/nk/?p=436>

**EPISODE THREE**  
**Yu Gongmin in Pyongyang,**  
**October 26-27, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart, Matthew Bates, and Nicolas Levi

The October 25 meeting with Kim Jong-il had been primarily geared toward nuclear diplomacy, but economic messages were also significant in the Chinese Vice-Premier's visit to the North Korean capital. Momentum toward greater economic connectivity and the promise of profits for both sides appeared to be growing.<sup>38</sup> Thus the arrival of a key player in China's energy sector the very day after Li Keqiang departed Pyongyang would appear to have been an indication of the rapid speed with which things were developing.

The North Korean leadership rolled out the red carpet for Yun Gongmin (云公民 / 윤공민) the General Manager of Huadian (华电) power company in China.<sup>39</sup> Curiously, the visit was covered – and repeatedly so – by the North Korean media, while the Chinese side kept it conspicuously quiet.<sup>40</sup> The fact that the Chinese did not publicize the visit at all could have any number of origins, but it is worth recalling that mainland media have been urged, generally speaking, to promote any minor sign of North Korean opening up economically.

Yun has ties to the CCP central leadership; he is also an expert on hydropower and coal mining very concerned that concern with carbon credits and global warming is going to hamper Chinese power industry. Yun has very concertedly been following through on a 2010 "go global" strategy and earlier in 2011 shared a dais with Hu Jintao in Moscow where they signed agreements with Russia for more cross-border cooperation.

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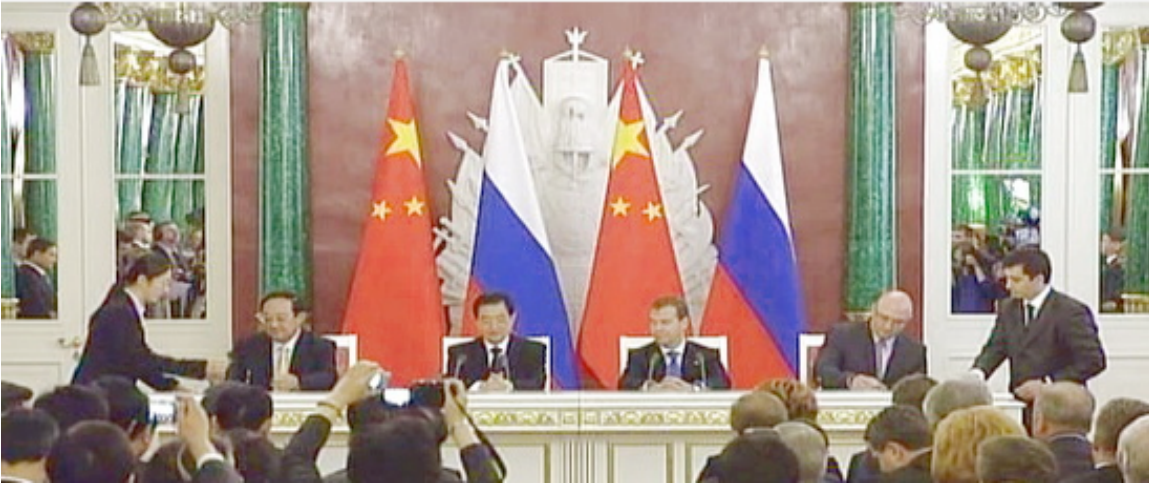
<sup>38</sup> Regarding the very serious difficulties encountered by the PRC in attracting companies to the DRPK and the pessimism of the previous Chinese ambassador toward the prospect, see Drew Thompson, *Silent Partners: Chinese Joint Ventures in North Korea* (Washington, D.C.: US-Korea Institute at SAIS, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> KCNA mistakenly (and repeatedly) called Hetian (an apparent corruption from the hangul, 화진) . Yun Gongmin is not chairman of "Hetian Company" as KCNA wrote, but in fact President of Huadian (华电) power company in China.

<sup>40</sup> The only evidence in Chinese of Yun's visit appears to be a single devoted blogger who picked up a 27 second item about it from Korean Central broadcasting.

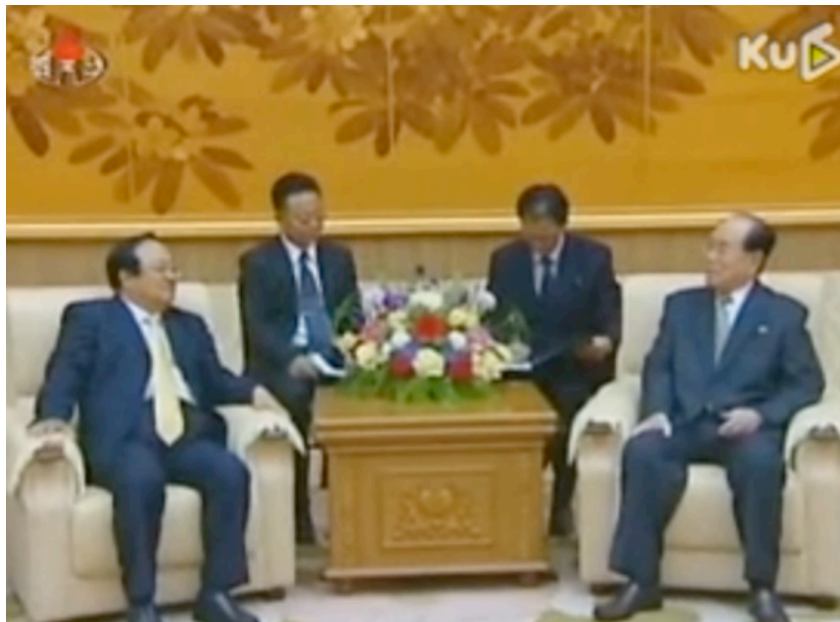
**President Hu Jintao attended the signing ceremony of Huadian-Teninskaya  
CCPP Project**

<http://www.chd.com.cn> 2011/6/21 18:14 Mu Yuna



Huadian is known to be involved in no specific projects in the DPRK at present.

Yun was accordingly met with no small ceremony. This could be because of the promise of more cooperation, or because North Korea wanted to appear accommodating to China in the aftermath of the visit. Kim Yong-nam (김영남), the all-purpose senior figure in Pyongyang, met Yun and a delegation of eight Chinese colleagues at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.



Yun, having conveyed a gift to the absent Kim Jong-il, met the next day with DPRK Premier Choe Yong-rim (최영림) and a number of high-powered North Koreans in the energy sector, including some younger players. As KCNA noted: “Present there were Minister of Electric Power Industry Ho Thae (호택), Minister of Coal Industry Kim Hyong Sik (김형식), General Manager of the Yonggwang Development General Company Sin Nam Chol (신남철) and officials concerned.”<sup>41</sup> As might be expected, the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang sent a delegate as well, though it was not the Ambassador: Wang Zhilin, councilor of commerce and trade of the Chinese embassy was a go-between for Yun with the various North Korean ministers.

The presence of one particular individual at the meeting with Yun Gongmin indicates very high-level attention to the Chinese visit: Ri Su-yong (리수용), who among other things was responsible for managing funds of Kim Jong-il in Europe and acted as a parent for Kim Jong-un.

Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un did not receive Yun, having just had face time with more powerful Chinese leaders. Instead, the father-son duo were preparing for a trip to Jagang province, the rugged border province with China and center for arms production where the Dear Leader had last made an on-site inspection on April 2011. They would return to Pyongyang for more meetings with the Chinese on October 31.

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<sup>41</sup> KCNA, Choe Yong Rim Meets General Manager of Chinese Group Company, October 27, 2011 <<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news27/20111027-31ee.html>>.

**EPISODE FOUR**  
**Consul-General in Chongjin Sweeps Tombs in North Hamgyong**  
**October 27, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart

As northeastern Korea becomes more of a gathering site for Chinese-funded projects in Rason, the PRC's consulate in the moribund industrial city of Chongjin is a site that bears watching.<sup>42</sup> The Consulate still does not have its own website and it is unknown how large the staff is. Equally unknown what extent, if at all, the Consulate is a site of liaison with North Korea regarding border security in what remains one of North Korea's biggest corridors for refugee exodus. What is known, however, is that consulate is tasked with working with the Overseas Chinese population in North Hamgyong.

Following administrative protocols, the consular staff in Chongjin appeared to stay away from Pyongyang during Li Keqiang's visit, but they did make a concurrent and relatively larger nod to China's commemorations of the Korean War. Those commemorations in 2010 had been fairly huge, and clearly used as a means of re-consolidating the relationship with North Korea after the destabilizations of the prior year.

The following document describes how local government organizations used the anniversary of the Chinese intervention in the Korean War in both Onsong county and Namyang, the small North Korean city directly across from China's Tumen City, to strengthen cross-border contacts. Such contacts would prove beneficial to the eventual opening-up of a cross-border market in Namyang for Chinese traders in the late spring of 2012. The trend toward "localization" of the Sino-North Korean relationship in recent years continues, even as national narratives are celebrated.

**DOCUMENT 1 | PRC Counsel-General in Chongjin Dong Minjie Visits Namyang to Sweep the Tombs of Chinese People's Volunteers**

**「董敏杰总领事赴稳城南阳祭扫中国人民志愿军烈士墓」 Website of the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang, October 27, 2011, <http://kp.china-embassy.org/chn/zxxx/t871064.htm>**

On the 61st anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers' entry of Korea to participate in the war, the Chinese Consulate in Chongjin led a delegation to Onsong county (稳城郡 / 온성군) in North Hamgyong Province to the Park for the Contributions of the CPV in Namyang. Dong Minjie (董敏杰) was accompanied by

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<sup>42</sup>Barbara Demick, *Nothing to Envy* (New York: Random House, 2010). See also Joe Litt, "On Chongjin and a Note on Sources," *Political Cartel*, January 28, 2012, <http://politicalcartel.org/2012/01/28/on-chongjin-and-a-note-on-sources/>



Xu Zhenglin (许正彬), the head of Jilin Province's Yanbian Prefecture Foreign Affairs Office, and Xu Yinglu (许英录), head of Tumen City's Foreign Affairs Office. In Onsung, the group was accompanied by head of Human Affairs of the provincial People's Committee, Baek Chun-gi (白春吉) and other North Korean comrades. The Overseas Chinese association of North Hamgyong Province also sent a wreath. Comrades from both countries paid respects, expressing their highest gratitude and reverence to the martyrs, deeply moved by the martyr's having protecting world peace and making an eternal sacrifice.

On the same day, the People's Committee of Onsung county held a meeting to commemorate the 61st anniversary of the entry of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) into the war. Consul-General Dong Meijie and Baek Chunji (who is also the vice-chair of the county People's Committee) both made statements, representing their deep and total appreciation for the CPV's contributions to world peace and justice and to the great friendship sealed in blood of the peoples of the two countries. The speeches expressed their important common understanding with the highest leaders of both countries that the unbroken and stable development of the traditional friendship between China and Korea would take a step forward in the two border regions through friendly communication and cooperation, and pledged to work hard toward that end.

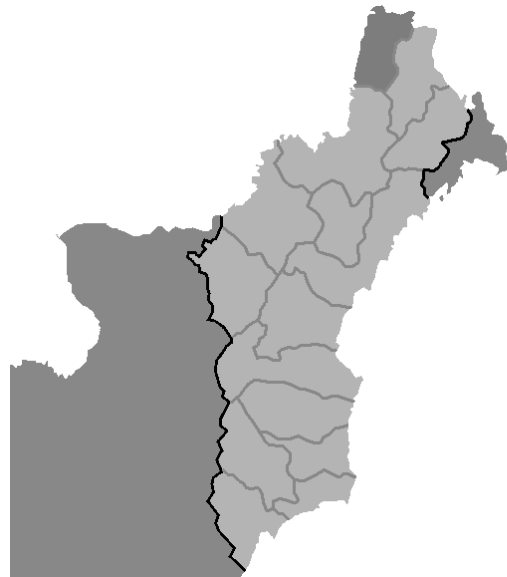


Figure 1: Onsung County, North Hamgyong Province, DPRK



**EPISODE FIVE**  
**Kim Jong-il at PRC Embassy, Pyongyang**  
**October 31, 2011**

by Michael Madden and Adam Cathcart<sup>43</sup>

On 31 October (Monday), the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il hosted PRC Ambassador to the DPRK, Liu Hongcai, and personnel from the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang. The visit, which occurred less than a week after the departure of the PRC's Vice-Premier from Pyongyang, might have been convened in order for the Chinese representative to relay news first-hand to Kim of how Li Keqiang's visit to Seoul had gone.

The invitation also occurred while the Chinese finalized preparations for the launch of the Shenzhou 8 space vehicle, a topic about which the North Koreans have documented no small amount of interest.<sup>44</sup> Topics of conversation also likely included discussion of personnel changes at PRC diplomatic missions in the DPRK and at DPRK diplomatic missions in the PRC.

In between his meeting with Li Keqiang and the dinner with the Chinese Ambassador, Kim Jong-il had been to Jagang province for on-site inspections.

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<sup>43</sup> Adapted from Michael Madden, "KJU Meets Chinese Ambassador," *North Korea Leadership Watch*, November 2, 2011, <http://nkleadershipwatch.wordpress.com/2011/11/02/Kim-Jong-il-meets-chinese-ambassador-2/>

<sup>44</sup> On the imperatives and tensions between China and North Korea with regard to space program, see "Space Is Common Wealth: KCNA White Paper," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 29, 2011, <http://nknewswatch.com/?p=98>; Scott Bruce, "Space is a Common Wealth: North Korea, China, and the Peaceful Development of Outer Space," *SinoNK.com*, February 8, 2012, <http://sinonk.com/2012/02/08/space-is-a-common-wealth-north-korea-china-and-the-peaceful-development-of-outer-space/>; and Scott Bruce, "KCNA Increases Coverage of Satellite Launches," *North Korea News Watch*, August 22, 2011, <http://nknewswatch.com/?p=98>.



Kim Jong-il hosted a dinner reception for Liu and the embassy staff members who accompanied him. According to KCNA, Kim Jong-il was joined at the reception by a substantial cross-section of the Pyongyang political-military elite. Kim Jong-il's family members -- Kim Kyong-hui, Kim Jong-un, and Jang Song-taek – were joined by representatives from the Korean People's Army, including included KPA General Staff VMar Ri Yong-ho, KPA Generals Pak Jae-gyong, Kim Kyong-ok, Kim Won-hong and Hyon Chol-hae and senior officials of the DPRK's intelligence community. Along with CC KWP Secretary and NDC Member, Pak To-chun, senior Party functionaries invited included CC KWP Secretary and United Front Department Director Kim Yang-gon, and CC KWP Secretary and International Department Director Kim Yong-il.<sup>45</sup>

According to news accounts of the event, after sending greetings to Kim Jong-il from both Hu Jintao and Li Keqiang, Ambassador Liu gave a nod to “the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Sino- DPRK treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance.” Having evoked the treaty, Ambassador Liu, as reported by KCNA, “noted that General Secretary Kim Jong-il visited China in May and August, performing immortal feats in consolidating and developing the traditional Sino-DPRK friendship.”

Liu went on to recapitulate the year's successful undertakings, listing off – and with KCNA following suit – the previous visits:

Li Yuanchao, member of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the C.C., the CPC who is head of its Organization Department, Zhang Dejiang, member of the Political Bureau of the C.C., the CPC and vice-

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<sup>45</sup> KCNA, "Kim Jong-il Meets Chinese Ambassador to DPRK." *Korean News*, 31 Oct. 2011  
<<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201110/news31/20111031-31ee.html>>.

premier of the State Council of China, Meng Jianzhu, State councilor and minister of Public Security of China, and other senior officials of the Chinese party and government visited the DPRK in this meaningful year, he said, adding: They were received by Kim Jong-il and had in-depth discussions and **reached effective agreements** with Korean comrades on the important issues arising in boosting the friendly and cooperative relations between the two parties and countries in different fields including politics, economy and culture.<sup>46</sup>

In keeping with the KCNA's custom, Xinhua materials made sure to identify Kim Jong-un as second on the list of DPRK leaders listed, along with his formal title of Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission of the Korean Workers' Party [朝鲜劳动党中央军事委员会副委员长金正恩].

While the English-language Xinhua summary of the meeting was rather succinct, the Chinese-language summary was slightly more effusive ("From beginning to end, the event was very festive, advancing through the atmosphere of friendship//活动始终在热情、友好的气氛中进行").

Most importantly, Kim Jong-il's statement at the dinner, not carried in the English-language Xinhua summary, was as follows:

Kim Jong-il stressed that he highly valued the achievements of the developed Sino-North Korean relationship. He said "The communication and cooperation between leaders has been extremely close, and the mutual understanding and trust has continuously risen. With regard to international and regional problems, the two sides have continued to maintain extremely good coordination. Not long ago, Chinese Communist Party Central Political Bureau member and National Vice-Premier Li Keqiang came to North Korea on a friendly visit, resulting in high achievements with consolidating and developing North Korean-Chinese friendly cooperative relations."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. See also Xinhua, "DPRK Top Leader Meets Chinese Ambassador to Pyongyang," 1 Nov. 2011, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-11/01/c\\_131222611.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-11/01/c_131222611.htm).

<sup>47</sup>“朝鲜最高领导人金正日会见驻朝鲜大使刘洪才驻朝鲜使馆， [North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong-il Meets with Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK Liu Hongcai and Chinese Embassy]“ 2011/11/01, <<http://kp.china-embassy.org/chn/zxxx/t872694.htm>> The original to the translated text above is: “金正日高度评价中朝关系发展取得的成果。他说，当前，两国在各个领域沟通与合作密切，相互理解与信任不断增强。在国际和地区问题上，双方将继续保持良好的配合。不久前中共中央政治局常委、国务院副总理李克强对朝鲜进行正式友好访问，为巩固与发展朝中友好合作关系作出积极贡献。”

The meeting and dinner with Liu ended a particularly busy October for Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-il's meeting with Liu also took place the same day DPRK Senior (First) Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kim Kye Gwan, was scheduled to meet with Wu Dawei, the Chinese representative to the Six Party Talks, in Beijing. In keeping with the pattern, Lim Sung-nam, the newly appointed South Korean envoy to the Six-Party Talks, was slated to meet Wu on Tuesday (1 November).

The Chinese media was glad to relay Kim's apparent respect for Chinese leaders and willingness to express thanks to China. The following *China Daily* article expresses the overall sentiment and direction of Chinese press coverage rather well: China's attention to North Korea is reciprocated and rewarded, and the DPRK leadership takes seriously the call for a great deal of high-level meetings and attention to the PRC.

The document also shows an interesting view by scholar Zhang Liangui, who, like other Chinese North Korea watchers, would be quite critical of the DPRK in the next spring. Zhang specifically calibrates the Chinese Ambassador's activities in the DPRK as a significant barometer of the warmth of the relationship. When such meetings and niceties do not occur, the logic goes, one has to question the North Korean commitment to China.

**DOCUMENT 1 | Li Xiaokun, "DPRK Leader Kim Hails Ties with Beijing." *China Daily*. 2 Nov. 2011.** <[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-11/02/content\\_14018933.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-11/02/content_14018933.htm)>.

[...]According to the press release, a number of top leaders of the DPRK joined Kim at the dinner, including Kim Jong-un, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), and Ri Yong-ho, member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the WPK.

Liu Jianguo, a specialist on Northeast Asia studies at Tsinghua University, said, based on the guest list, "Kim took almost all the main leaders in the DPRK to the dinner." "The move reflects the consensus reached in the DPRK leadership on the high importance they attach to China. *Also we can see they're quite satisfied with Li's visit and the work of the ambassador,*" Liu said [emphasis added]. The DPRK thanked China for its positive attitude on continuing and developing bilateral relations, highlighted by Li's visit, Liu said.

Zhang Liangui, a professor at the Research Institute for International Strategic Studies, which is affiliated with the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, said Kim has a tradition of showing hospitality to Chinese ambassadors to the DPRK, and even visited the Chinese embassy to celebrate the Lantern Festival. Zhang noted the event was also possibly linked to Kim Kye-gwan's China tour. The Foreign Ministry said on its website that Kim met Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun and China's top envoy for Korean Peninsula

affairs Wu Dawei, without providing details.

“It’s highly likely that Kim Kye-gwan notified Beijing about his talks with Stephen Bosworth,” Zhang said. Kim said after the talks with Bosworth that “big progress” had been made and the two sides had agreed to meet again. Kim and top Chinese diplomats may also have discussed the resumption of the Six-Party Talks, Zhang said.

**EPISODE SIX**  
**Li Changchun and Li Jinai attend North Korean Opera in Beijing**  
**November 9, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart

The combination of the People's Liberation Army and performing arts within the Sino-North Korean relationship was seen in high relief on November 9, when PLA General Li Jinai, who would soon travel to Pyongyang himself, entered the picture and attended a North Korean opera at the Shiji Theater in Beijing. Li Changchun and Li Yuanchao (favorites of the North Korean media) also attended, thus following up on attention to the Sino-DPRK relationship from what amounted to nearly every member of the Standing Committee of the CCP Politburo.

Li Changchun stated fairly obviously, that "cultural exchange holds an important position in the development of Sino-Korean friendly relations and plays a big role in deepening the friendly feelings between the two peoples."<sup>48</sup> The troupe was led by Kwon Hyok-bong, vice department director of the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee, who had been seen at the shoulder of Kim Jong-un giving a speech at the banquet for Li Keqiang in Pyongyang some two weeks prior.

**DOCUMENT 1 | KCNA, "Opera "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai" Staged for Guests of Honor in Beijing," November 10, 2011**

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news10/20111110-45ee.html>

Beijing, November 9 (KCNA) -- Opera "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai" was staged for guests of honor at Shiji Theatre in Beijing on Wednesday.

Invited to see the opera were Li Changchun, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; Liu Yandong, member of the Political Bureau of the C.C., the CPC and State councilor; Li Yuanchao, member of the Political Bureau and head of the Organization Department; Li Jinai, director of the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army; Cai Wu, minister of Culture; and other cadres of party, state and the army. [...]

Li Changchun asked to convey sincere thanks to leader Kim Jong-il for sending the troupe. Noting that music, words of songs, stage backgrounds, acting of the performers, etc. are excellent, he went on: The audience could hardly resist tears when watching the last scene of the opera. The main woman character of the opera is very good at singing. Dancing is peculiar in concept and marvelous in depiction.

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<sup>48</sup> "Senior Chinese Official Meets Korean Artistes," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 10, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news10/20111110-44ee.html>



Liu Yandong said she was attracted by the story of the opera and fascinated by the truthful acting of the performers and music in good harmony. Li Yuanchao said the performance was spectacular and successful and showed its high artistry. It reflected the feelings of friendship between the peoples of the two countries, he added.

Cai Wu said: It is the first time that a foreign art troupe drew a lot of cadres of the party, state and army of China. I believe that the performance of opera "Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai" would contribute to developing Sino-Korean friendship.

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Cai Wu, China's Minister of Culture, intimates that the audience is almost entirely officials in Beijing. It is not known, however, if Peng Liyuan, the wife of Xi Jinping and a PLA singer, attended. Of importance in the KCNA dispatch is that the troupe is properly depicted as the instrument of the will of Kim Jong-il; this is not a civil society event like the New York Philharmonic in Pyongyang, but rather from the North Korean point of view the extension of Kim Jong-il's will and Chinese acknowledgement of his creative genius.



**EPISODE SEVEN**  
**Ri Tae Chol in Beijing**  
**November 8-12, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart and Brian Gleason

In terms of praise and prominence levied by state propaganda, the Korean People's Interior Forces (KPIF) had been, concurrent to Kim Jong-un's rise, on the ascent as an organization with proximity and importance to the leadership.

From November 8 to November 12, 2011, a delegation from the Korean People's Interior Forces went to China, led by Ri Tae Chol, first deputy minister of the Ministry of People's Security of the DPRK.

Because the interplay between events occurring on the border and among security forces remains somewhat unclear, this "episode" remains ripe for further analysis. What follows are a handful of significant clues about what transpired on the public front, followed by a short summary of the broader action on the refugee issue.

Ri's high-level meetings began on November 9 with a colloquy with the ascendant Chinese Minister of Public Security, Meng Jianzhu.

**DOCUMENT 1 | "Chinese Minister of Public Security Meets with KPIF Delegation," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 10, 2011**  
<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news10/20111110-46ee.html>

Beijing, November 9 (KCNA) -- Meng Jianzhu, state councillor and minister of Public Security of China, met and had a talk with the delegation of the Korean People's Internal Security Forces led by Col. Gen. Ri Thae Chol at the building of the Ministry of Public Security here Wednesday.

Meng Jianzhu recalled that leader Kim Jong-il personally received and hosted a dinner for him in February this year when he visited the DPRK.

The peoples of the two countries are close comrades, friends and brothers and sisters, he said, adding that the China-DPRK friendly relations are incomparable relationship.

He expressed the will to contribute to further developing the cooperative relations between the security organs of the two countries.

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It seems obvious that the defector issue was high on the agenda here, given what came next.





A second high point of the journey was the meeting (seen above) between KPIF commander Col. Gen. Ri Tae Chol, Commander of the Korean People's Interior (Internal Security) Forces, with PLA General Li Jinai, member of Central Military Commission and director of the General Political Department of the PLA, on November 11.

Here, the Chinese official previewed the message that would underscore his subsequent visit to the DPRK, sounding notes of cooperation. This appeared to be music to the ears of KCNA, which released two dispatches about the discussions.

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**Document 2 | KCNA, "Li Jinai Stresses Need to Boost China-DPRK Cooperation," November 12, 2011 <**

**<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news12/20111112-35ee.html>>.**

Pyongyang, November 12 (KCNA) -- Li Jinai, director of the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Friday underscored the need for China and the DPRK to boost bilateral exchange and cooperation and thus contribute to development of ties between the two countries and armies.

He said this at a friendly talk with the delegation of the Korean People's Internal Security Forces led by Col. Gen. Ri Thae Chol in Beijing. Li at the talk noted that the traditional China-DPRK friendly relations have steadily developed under the deep care of the top leaders of the two countries.

**DOCUMENT 3 | Luo Zheng, "Li Jinai Meets with DPRK Military Delegation." *The China Times*, November 14, 2011.**

<<http://www.thechinatimes.com/online/2011/11/1876.html>>.

Li Jinai, member of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and director of the General Political Department (GPD) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), met with the military delegation headed by Ri Tae Chol, commander of the Interior Force and the first deputy minister of the Ministry of People's Security of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in Beijing on the morning of November 11, 2011.

Li Jinai said that the traditional friendly bilateral relations between China and the DPRK have enjoyed constant consolidation and development for years through joint efforts of both countries under the great concerns of the leaders of the two countries. In the new historical period, the Chinese side is willing to work together with the DPRK side to further strengthen communication and coordination, and deepen exchanges and cooperation, so as to make due contributions to further developing the relations between the two countries and the two militaries, and maintaining regional and world peace, stability and prosperity.

Li Jinai spoke highly of the exchanges and cooperation between the Chinese People's Armed Police Force (APF) and the Interior Force of the DPRK.

Ri Tae Chol said that the two militaries of the DPRK and China have been helping and supporting each other for a long time, and have established and developed friendly relationship between the two countries. The Interior Force of the DPRK hopes to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the Chinese APF, so as to make positive efforts to develop comprehensive relations between the two countries.

Wang Jianping, commander of the Chinese APF, and Ji Jae Ryong, ambassador of the DPRK to China, attended the meeting.

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**DOCUMENT 4 | Hao Di, "DPRK defectors in limbo," *Global Times*, November 13, 2011, <<http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/683659/DPRK-defectors-in-limbo.aspx>>**

Chinese authorities have not confirmed if a group of 19 North Korean defectors arrested in Northeast China would be sent to South Korea, according to a press official with the foreign ministry.

"We have not been told to change our regular practice regarding this case," the official told the Global Times Sunday, on condition of anonymity.

China will make a rare move of allowing 19 North Korean defectors to leave for South Korea as early as this month, the Yonhap News Agency quoted a diplomatic source as saying in a report on Friday.

This exception comes for diplomatic considerations, as public arrest of defectors is turning into an international issue. The source, who requested anonymity, mentioned Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang's recent visit to Seoul has also had an impact on the case.

Liu Ming, a researcher with the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times China would consider factors including family background, time in China and personal intentions when making policy for North Korean defectors.

"More North Koreans will cross the border into the country if China allows them to arrive in South Korea," Liu said. "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will then strengthen border force, which will bring in tension between the two countries."

A total of 20 defectors, including two South Korean nationals, were arrested in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, in September, according to the Yonhap report.

One of the two South Koreans returned home last month, while the other was detained on charges of violating local laws and will be released and head back to South Korea after posting bail. Another 18 North Koreans were taken into custody in the city of Tumen, Jilin Province. They will take a flight from Tumen or the neighboring Yanji to South Korea around November 20, the report said. Chinese authorities have decided to issue the defectors travel certificates, the report said.

A number of North Koreans have defected from their country and crossed the border to Northeast China's Jilin and Liaoning provinces before fleeing to a third country such as South Korea.

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Immediately after this meeting, a signal appeared that not all was well in the relationship with China:

**DOCUMENT 5 | KCNA, "Rodong Sinmun Calls for Intensified Struggle for Sovereignty," November 13, 2011**  
<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news13/20111113-04ee.html>

Pyongyang, November 13 (KCNA) -- Sovereignty is the inviolable right of all

countries and nations to independently live and act, says Rodong Sinmun Sunday in a bylined article.

It is, in essence, the rights of each country and nation to adopt their line and policy in keeping with their own people's interests and their specific conditions and independently solve any problem by the efforts of their own people, the article says, and goes on:

Exercise of sovereignty can be realized only through struggle. What is most important here is to intensify the struggle against imperialism. [...] It is also necessary to develop self-supporting national economy.

Independence of each country and nation can be realized only when it is based on the self-supporting national economy. **If not, any country will have to read other's face whenever it adopts a policy and curry with other in its foreign activities** (*emphasis added*).

It is particularly important to bolster self-reliant defense capability.

Self-defense is a sovereign right of each country and nation. Strong national defenses help keep independence, but if a nation is weak in defense capability, it would fall prey and slave to the aggression forces.

Without strong self-reliant military power is it not possible to win in the struggle against imperialism nor defend country and nation nor protect security of people. This is the stark reality at present.

The DPRK will invariably pursue the Songun politics, the independent politics and strive to establish sound international relations and achieve world peace and victory in the cause of global independence.

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The internal and external environment for the refugee issue was in the process of changing, or showing possibilities of change. On November 10, *Yonhap* reported that China would allow a group of 19 North Korean refugees to leave for South Korea, in a surprising reversal of its normal repatriation policy. An anonymous source cited within the article said that "last month's visit to South Korea by Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang may have had an impact in the case of the 19." However, the details of this purported divergence from repatriation protocol are uncertain, and the status of those 19 refugees remains unknown. Three days later, the *Global Times* reported that the Chinese authorities had not confirmed if the group of 19 North Korean defectors arrested in Northeast China would be sent to South Korea. A press official with the foreign ministry stated: "We have not been told to change our regular practice regarding this case."

The status of those 19 North Koreans remains unclear, but even if China's policy had not changed, North Korea still faced a host of other problems in November. Food prices were soaring, and according to a November 10 Bank of Korea report, the North Korean economy was apparently shrinking. To add insult to injury, on November 21 the human rights panel of the United Nations General Assembly approved a draft resolution that would have the Assembly urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to "immediately end all violations of human rights and give voice to victims."<sup>49</sup> The KCNA offered several vitriolic responses, but the damage had been done.

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<sup>49</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "Third Committee Approves Draft Resolutions on Human Rights Situations in Iran, North Korea, and Myanmar," November 21, 2011  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/gashc4032.doc.htm>

**EPISODE EIGHT**  
**Li Jinai and PLA Delegation in Pyongyang,**  
**November 15-18, 2011**

by Nicolas Levi and Adam Cathcart

Two days after the serious public rupture on the defectors issue, on 15 November 2011, Gen. Li Jinai, member of the Central Military Commission and director of the People's Liberation Army [PLA] General Political Department, flew to Pyongyang for a three-day visit at the head of a senior PLA delegation.

Judging from the surrounding events in Northern Asia and overall tone of the Chinese press, Li's visit was strictly symbolic but reinforced the cooperation in military affairs between North Korea and China. Concurrently, China was demonstrating its power also in the region maintaining its powerful position over rival claims on the resource-rich waters of the South China Sea. This kind of diplomacy was in part an endeavor to show China as a central point between the world and North Korea and realign its priorities toward regional hegemony. No pressure would be put on the nuclear issue – indeed, no statements at all were made about it – and the intent largely seemed to be, publicly at least, to display a united PRC-DPRK front to the world.

Li's visit to the DPRK was the second by a senior Chinese official in less than a month. The meeting was also Kim Jong-il's third reported interaction with a Chinese official in less than a month, following his meeting with the PRC Vice Premier on 24 October and a reception for the Chinese Ambassador and diplomatic staff on 31 October.

Prior to Kim Jong-il's death, China and North Korea maintained regular high-levels contacts at the military level. During the venue of Li Jinai, Chinese military authorities announced that they want to bolster military cooperation. It seems to be however more symbolic than concrete. Why? Because no concrete measures were announced and proposed. It has just been said that on behalf the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Li Jinai wanted to extend exchanges between both armies.

Li Jinai (李继耐), 60, the head of the PLA delegation, is not only the current director of the political department of China's People's Liberation Army but also a weapons expert.

It has to be mentioned that prior to this visit to Pyongyang Li Jinai had taken a particularly prominent role in China's relations with Asian countries. His experience in missile deployments may also have been considered valuable for the North Korean leadership. Therefore he was sent to North Korea.

During his visit Li was in interaction not only with Kim Jong-il but also with Kim Jong Gak (김정각), the first vice-director of the General Political Bureau of the Korean People's Army who was, at the time of the visit, the de facto director of the GPB of the KPA (the current director of this department is Choe Ryong Hae). Kim Jong-gak is also a rising star of the hardliners of the KPA.

Topics of conversation between Li Jinai, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-gak also probably included discussions about personnel changes at the General Political Bureau of the Korean People's Army because the current leader of this institution is the aforementioned Choe Ryong-hae (최룡해), a politician rather than a military-man whose military career seems highly connected to his relations with the powerful Jang Song-taek (장성택).

A few weeks prior to the arrival of Li Keqiang, the Vice-Premier of the PRC, had come to Pyongyang to discuss economic issues and a return to the nuclear negotiating table. However, statements resulting from Li's visit were full of references to the traditional friendship without really mentioning the Korean War whose anniversary was a few weeks earlier. Perhaps it might be said that Li's visit was thought by the PLA to have been prelude to the real cooperation.

### **November 15**

Li Jinai arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday (15 November). During his time in the DPRK, Li and his large PLA delegation followed a standard itinerary.<sup>50</sup> Li proceeded to publish a speech highlighting continuity among generations amid overall strong relations which were "striving for stability."<sup>51</sup>

Talks were then held during which "both sides exchanged views on the matter of boosting the traditional relations of friendship and cooperation between the two armies and matters of mutual concern."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Among the delegation was, in the words of KCNA, "Lieut. Gen. Ding Jiye, deputy director of the CPLA General Logistics Department, Lieut. Gen. Chen Xiaogong, deputy commander of the Air Force, Lieut. Gen. Wang Dengping, political commissar of the North Sea Fleet of the Navy, Lieut. Gen. Zhao Zongqi, chief of the Staff of the Jinan Military Area, Major General Kan Likui, vice-director of the Operation Department of the General Staff of the CPLA, Major General Ci Guowei, deputy director of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ministry of National Defense, Major General Li Fengshan, deputy secretary-general of the General Office of the General Political Department of the CPLA, and other general officers and officers." See "Chinese Military Delegation Arrives," *Korea Central News Agency*, November 15, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news15/20111115-05ee.html>

<sup>51</sup> "Head of CPLA Delegation's Arrival Speech," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 15, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news15/20111115-41ee.html>

<sup>52</sup> "Talks between Military Delegations of DPRK, China Held," *Korean Central News Agency*, November 15, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news15/20111115-06ee.html>



Afterwards, a banquet was held, where the speeches – including one by Kim Jong-gak -- very much dwelled on traditional themes and, not surprisingly, the era of Kim Il Song and Mao Zedong.<sup>53</sup> The evocations of Mao were not limited to the speech; the next day at a performance for the Chinese, the North Korean musicians performed a song from a new DPRK television series about Mao Anying, the son of Mao Zedong who was killed in an American air raid on North Korean soil in November 1950.<sup>54</sup>

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## November 16

In preparation of their eventual meeting with Kim Jong-il, the PLA delegation met with NDC Vice Chairman and Minister of the People's Armed Forces, Kim Yong-jun. Given the MPAF's mission, it is also likely that Li discussed non-munitions foreign trade or other economic activity between companies under the KPA and PLA.

Additionally, DPRK Choe Yong-rim im had been at the Musan Mining Complex on November 13-14, adjacent to the North Korean border with China and a lucrative spot for minerals trade.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> KCNA, "CPLA Delegation Feted," November 15, 2011

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news15/20111115-09ee.html>

<sup>54</sup> The North Koreans can clearly see the value of Mao Anying as a relatively safe symbol of the relationship, and included an arrangement of a song about him in a July 30 concert by the Moranbong Band in Pyongyang. The DPRK had gone so far as to pave the parking lot at Anying's tomb in August of 2011, and Wen Jiabao visited the tomb in a high-profile appearance in October 2009. See also CPLA Delegation Enjoys Performance, *Korean Central News Agency*, November 16, 2011

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news16/20111116-38ee.html>

<sup>55</sup> See KCNA, "DPRK Premier Reviews Work in Musan Mining Complex," November 16, 2011,

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news16/20111116-41ee.html>.



## November 17

On 17 November DPRK media reported that Li and the PLA delegation toured Kim Il-sung Political University and visited the Taedonggang Fruit Farm and its food processing factory. The same day they traveled to North Pyongan Province and visited the International Friendship Exhibition House, where, as KCNA colorfully described it, the Chinese visitors “made bows in boundless reverence to the wax replica of President Kim Il Sung who made undying contributions to the development of friendship among countries and the human cause of independence.”<sup>56</sup>

On the evening of 17 November Li and the PLA delegation arrived at Kim Jong-il’s residential complex near Hyangsan.

Kim Jong-il held a meeting and hosted a reception for Li Jinai, director of the Chinese PLA’s General Political Department, and a senior delegation of PLA officers on 17 November at which the two sides “said they would strengthen military exchanges and cooperation.”



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<sup>56</sup> “Chinese Military Delegation Visits Int’l Friendship Exhibition House,” *Korean Central News Agency*, November 17, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news17/20111117-31ee.html>



Kim Jong Il toasts with Li Jinai, member of the PRC's Central Military Commission and director of the PLA's General Political Department, during a dinner reception (Photo: KCNA)

The PLA delegation presented a series of gifts to Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un. The meeting and reception was another occasion for Kim Jong-un to publicly interact with senior Chinese officials. There has not been any conclusive account as to how long Li's meeting with Kim Jong-il was. If a visiting delegation had brought lucrative or interesting gifts, or if KJI was pleased with the conversation, the meeting could extend to over an hour. However, the late DPRK leader must have been pleased by the media message from Li's visit was that the two countries "would strengthen military exchanges and cooperations."

The “exchanges and cooperations” most likely include increased contact and cooperation on aviation and maritime safety procedures and exercises (i.e. maritime safety, SAR), goodwill activities (i.e. athletic and cultural activities, goodwill missions such as the PLA Navy visit to Wonsan in August) and exchanges and visits between the countries by senior operations training/education and logistics officers.

Li also most likely provided or committed assistance in energy resources, as well as component parts and other technologies for basic maintenance or modification of the KPA’s naval, air or vehicle fleet. Within weeks after Li’s visit Kim Jong-il began a brisk round of inspections of KPA units. During some of these inspections he observed and directed a series of military aviation exercises. While not completely unusual when examined over a five- or ten-year period, the air exercises occurred in sufficient time between the PLA delegation’s visit and departure and the processing and delivery of fuel.<sup>57</sup>

Kim Jong-il’s meeting with Li Jinai and the PLA delegation presented other opportunities for both the DPRK and Chinese sides. Given that DPRK media later retroactively publicized Kim Jong-un’s appointment as KPA Supreme Commander as having occurred on 8 October 2011, the November 17 meeting may have provided a forum for Kim Jong-il to inform the Chinese, through the PLA, of his “behest.” Going into the meeting, Kim Jong-il kept very light counsel, based on his reported public appearances prior to the meeting. One week before meeting Li Jinai, a rumor that Kim Jong-il died circulated in South Korea among market traders. The rumor roused Kim Jong-il to inspect a fish farm, accompanied only by Jang Song Taek and Han Kwang Sang. The Kim Jong-il-Li meeting brought some policy or strategic advancement. At his first reported appearance following the meeting, Kim gathered a number of principals of the DPRK’s national security community.

The meeting was also an opportunity for the PLA to assess any circumstances or incidents in the DPRK leadership. Through its contacts and interactions within the country, PLA intelligence has used previous senior DPRK-PRC meetings for a temperature check in Pyongyang.

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**DOCUMENT 1 | KCNA, "Kim Jong-il Receives High-ranking Military Delegation of CPLA." *Korean Central News Agency*, 17 Nov. 2011.**

<<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news17/20111117-45ee.html>>.

The traditional Sino-DPRK friendship forged and cultivated by the leaders of the elder generation of the two countries have entered a new stage of development under the deep care of Hu Jintao and Kim Jong-il, he said.

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<sup>57</sup> See also “Chinese Official Calls for Promoting Modernization of Military Equipment,” *Korean Central News Agency*, December 14, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201112/news14/20111214-34ee.html>.

In recent years there was a brisk exchange of high-ranking delegations between the two countries and important agreements were reached on developing the friendly and cooperative relations and bilateral exchange and cooperation in various fields including politics, economy and military affairs have registered steady and abundant achievements, he noted.

It is the steadfast policy of the party, government and army of China to put into practice the common understandings reached between the leaders of the two countries and boost the friendly and cooperative relations between the peoples of the two countries, between the armies, in particular, he added.

Kim Jong-il warmly welcomed the visit of the high-ranking military delegation of the CPLA to the DPRK and asked Li Jinai to pass his warm regards to the members of the collective leadership of the CPC including Hu Jintao and the fraternal army and people of China.

The armies of the two countries have played a positive role in developing the DPRK-China friendly relations in the past, he expressed the belief that there would be no change in the sense of revolutionary obligation and class principle between the armies and peoples of the two countries no matter how the situation may change in the future. Li Jinai presented Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un with the gifts prepared by him with his best wishes.

**DOCUMENT 2 | Xinhua, “China, DPRK vow to strengthen military cooperation,” *Global Times* November 18, 2011 <  
<http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/680608/Interview-Chinese-vice-premiers-visit-to-boost-friendship-cooperation-with-DPRK-senior-Chinese-official.aspx>>**

China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have said they would strengthen military exchanges and cooperation. The two sides vowed to do so during an official goodwill visit from Nov. 15 to 18 to the DPRK by a senior Chinese military delegation led by Director of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Li Jinai.

During a meeting with Li, top DPRK leader Kim Jong-il said the military relationship is an important part of the ties between the two countries. He said he hoped the two militaries would continue to improve their ties so as to help consolidate and develop the China-DPRK friendship.

Li said the Chinese military, in accordance with the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, is willing to work with the DPRK in the new historic era to enhance understanding and mutual trust and strengthen practical exchanges. This would promote the all-round development of China-DPRK relations, which are neighborly and friendly, he said.

Li also met with some senior DPRK military officers. During the meetings, Li expounded China's views on the current international and regional situations.

The Chinese official reiterated the Chinese government's principles and stand on issues related to the Korean Peninsula, and expressed China's willingness to make joint efforts with the DPRK to maintain regional peace and stability.

Li's visit was at the invitation of the DPRK's Armed Forces Department.



**EPISODE NINE**  
**Kim Il Song Socialist Youth League in Beijing and Nanjing,**  
**November 17-22, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart



While Li and the PLA delegation were in Pyongyang, Chinese Vice President (and the next ostensible Chinese head of state) Xi Jinping met a 100-member delegation of the Kim Il Sung Youth League, who had arrived in Beijing earlier in the day. There was very little elaboration on this story in the Chinese press, but the North Korean media covered the trip fairly heavily, with an unusual story about how the delegation was longing to be back in Korea. While this was an opportunity for a photo opportunity a key leader in the next generation of PRC executives, there were no mentions at all of Kim Jong-un in the boilerplate language about taking the Sino-North Korean relationship to the next generation.<sup>58</sup>

The head of the North Korean delegation, Ri Yong Chol pictured above with Xi Jinping, would be sacked the following spring.

In the aftermath of the Xi meeting with the North Korean delegation, student exchanges continued apace. A group teachers and students from Jilin's Yuwen High School, the alma mater of Kim Il Song, shortly thereafter went to visit Changdok

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<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, "Xi Jinping Meets with DPRK Youth Delegation," 2011/11/17 <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t879869.htm>>

KCNA, "Chinese Vice-President Hopes for More Brisk Exchange between Chinese, Korean Youths," November 19, 2011, <<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news19/20111119-35ee.html>>

School in the DPRK and members of the delegation of Jilin Yuwen High School of China at Changdok School.<sup>59</sup>

In Nanjing, Luo Mei, a relative higher-up in the youth league bureaucracy, attended meetings with DPRK counterparts. In addition to showing the broadening of China-DPRK linkages beyond the Pyongyang-Beijing axis, the presence of Luo Mei indicates an effort to return to the socialist internationalist tradition of youth exchanges, known rather well by the former head of the Communist Youth League in China, the current General Secretary of the CCP, Hu Jintao.

One final note on the interesting activities of the Kim Il Song Socialist Youth League in Nanjing: The KCNA report on their ideological orthodoxy while in the city – pining after Kim Jong-il and thinking only of his “footsteps” – is of particular interest in that it indicates to the home audience that far from having a corrupting or Westernizing influence, the sojourns of North Korean elite youth to China only strengthens their allegiance to the DPRK monolithic system.

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**DOCUMENT 1 | KCNA, “Members of Korean Youth Friendship Delegation Meet in China,” November 20, 2011**

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news20/20111120-25ee.html>

Pyongyang, November 20 (KCNA) -- Members of the Korean youth friendship delegation on a visit to China held the meeting "Night yearning for leader Kim Jong-il" at the lodging place on Saturday.

Ri Kwang Chol, first secretary of the North Hwanghae Provincial youth league committee, Mun Kang Sun, worker of the Pyongyang Textile Mill, and Choe Myong Jin, researcher of the Fermentation Institute of the Branch Academy of Sciences of Light Industry, spoke at the meeting.

They said they always yearn for Kim Jong-il who deeply loves youth. They stressed that tour of different places of Beijing and Nanjing associated with his footprints reminded them of the great efforts he has devoted to the prosperity of the country and development of the DPRK-China friendship.

They expressed their will to fully demonstrate the spirit of Songun youth vanguard in the general offensive for building a prosperous nation true to the leadership of Kim Jong-il. The participants ardently sang the immortal classic "Where Are You, Dear General" with yearning for him.

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<sup>59</sup> “Friendly Meeting Held between DPRK and Chinese Schools,” *Korean Central News Agency*, November 22, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news22/20111122-28ee.html>

**EPISODE TEN**  
**Kim Jong-il to Taean Friendship Glass Factory in Nampo**  
**November 24, 2011**

by Luke Herman

On November 24, Kim Jong-il again turned his attention to China by visiting the Taean Glass Factory.<sup>60</sup>

The Taean Friendship Glass Factory is a joint venture between the DPRK and China, built with grant-in-aid from the Chinese government. Located in Nampho (coordinates 38°49'19"N 125°31'17"E), the project was begun in July 2004 and completed sometime around October 2005 (when Kim Jong-il made an on-the-spot guidance to the site.) According to the North Korean magazine *Naenara*, the factory “turns out diverse kinds of plate glass, its major products, and special glass needed in different sectors of the national economy including building materials, medicine, foodstuff and chemistry, which are made from silica sand, feldspar, dolomite and other natural resources rich in the DPRK.”

Li Dunqiu in 2006 wrote that back when the factory was being constructed the Chinese side was frustrated with the low efficiency and poor quality of the civilian workers. After a military factory took over the project it was completed satisfactorily.<sup>61</sup> Hu Jintao, along with a number of high ranking Chinese officials, made a visit with Kim Jong-il near the end of October 2005.

The project was frequently mentioned in KCNA after construction began until around August 2006 (69 times) but has only been mentioned six times since then.<sup>62</sup> Kim Jong-il visited the site on two separate occasions, once, as previously mentioned, upon completion of the project and a second time in November 2010. On this visit he was accompanied by heavyweights of the DPRK regime, most notably Kim Jong-un, Kim Kyong Hui and Jang Song Thaek. Interestingly, while a Xinhua write-up of the event made sure to note that the factory had been built with assistance from China, the KCNA article only mentions that the factory is “symbolic of the DPRK-China friendship.”

Since then, the factory has only been mentioned three times in KCNA. The most relevant was a visit by Premier Choe Yong Rim to the Nampho Glassware Branch of

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<sup>60</sup> KCNA, “Kim Jong-il Gives Field Guidance to Mineral Water Processing Factory,” November 24, 2011, <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2010/201011/news24/20101124-18ee.html>

<sup>61</sup> Li Dunqiu, "DPRK's Reform and Sino-DPRK Economic Cooperation," *Nautilus Institute*, August 23, 2006, <http://www.nautilus.org/publications/essays/napsnet/forum/security/0670Li.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Just a few months later, in October 2006, North Korea performed its first nuclear test, leading China to support UN sanctions. Whether the lack of mentions and these events are related is unknown.



the factory on November 20<sup>th</sup> of last year.<sup>63</sup> In December 2011, Curtis Melvin of North Korea Economy Watch posted photos of plaques commemorating the visit of Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un, making the factory a (not entirely unusual) dual site of Kim personality construction and North Korean-Chinese friendship.



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<sup>63</sup> The link for this news story is only available on the .kp version of KCNA, so there is no unique link. See <http://www.nkeconwatch.com/2011/12/13/kim-jong-un-memorial/>

**EPISODE ELEVEN**  
**Various Cultural Exchanges:**  
**Universities and Conservatories,**  
**November 2011**

by Adam Cathcart

In its engagement with North Korea, China has often proclaimed an emphasis on education and high tech. Yet, even in the early years of the DPRK, the North Koreans made steady efforts to diversify educational dependence upon their huge Chinese and Soviet partners by spreading exchange students around the Eastern Bloc, including East Germany. In the past few years, North Koreans have set up exchange programs such that the small but growing market for foreign education in the DPRK is not a wholly China-dominated field, but it is one where the Chinese are eager to set themselves up as a foremost educational destination more broadly in the region.

In the period under examination, one delegation from Kimchaek University of Technology and the school's President, Hong So-hon, went to China on November 24, and returned to Pyongyang on November 30.<sup>64</sup> While the Kimchaek group was in China, KCNA reported that a "delegation of the North Korean State Academy of Sciences led by its Vice President Ri Song-uk" returned home after visiting China. However, of the areas targeted for emphasis by the Li Keqiang visit, educational exchange seemed in some ways to be moving the most slowly, the North Korean news media reported virtually nothing about the topic, while the Chinese media allowed for some relatively strange reports to emerge from Chinese students at Kim Il Sung University.

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In the field of North Korea's cultural exchanges with China, Western classical music has not heretofore played a particularly prominent role. North Korea has however engaged in quite some work in this area with Western countries – most recently, France, Germany, and Poland. However, China's rise has correspondingly begun to overshadow even South Korea's propensity to produce prize-winning musicians, and thus, along with the recent warming trend, it seems perhaps inevitable that Chinese would start to learn more about the North Korean conservatory system with the hopes of setting up more durable exchange programs.<sup>65</sup>

Recently, some information has emerged that Ri Sol-ju, the wife of Kim Jong-un, studied singing in China in previous years, and the Moranbong Band travelled to Beijing in August 2012. On November 23, the PRC Ambassador and his wife, who

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<sup>64</sup> <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news24/20111124-29ee.html>

<sup>65</sup> According to the author's interviews with alumni in Beijing, very few North Korean musicians were exchange students at the China Conservatory in the 1980s.

has been more active in Pyongyang than her predecessor, visited the Kim Won Gyun Conservatory in Pyongyang, listening to some North Korean violinists.<sup>66</sup>



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<sup>66</sup> Embassy of the PRC in North Korea, “Ambassador Liu Hongcai, his wife, and Embassy staff inspect Kim Won Gyun Conservatory in Pyongyang, (刘洪才大使夫妇率馆员参观金元均平壤音乐大学)”November 23, 2011, <http://kp.china-embassy.org/chn/zxxx/t880279.htm>.

**EPISODE TWELVE**  
**Press Cooperation**  
**October-November 2011**

by Steven Denney and Adam Cathcart

As the official mouthpieces of the two nations' central political parties, the *People's Daily* (Renmin Ribao), in China, and the *Rodong Sinmun* (Worker's Daily), in North Korea, respectively, represent two key institutions of highly centralized states, conveying to the citizens of each country and the world as a whole the official party line. In 2011, the relationship between the *People's Daily* and the *Rodong Sinmun* was expanding, and can thus be seen as a microcosm of Sino-North Korean relations at the state level. On October 20, 2011, officials from both Xinhua and KCNA signed an agreement in Beijing to accelerate cooperation.

KCNA has increasingly been using the Chinese press to voice praise for North Korea, not always accurately paraphrasing, quoting, or getting basic things right, but as this practice has continued, it appears not to be a point of contention between the two sides.<sup>67</sup>

Much more immediately, just prior to the Li Keqiang visit to Pyongyang, the efforts to coordinate PRC-DPRK information strategies sped up. "KCNA Director General Kim Pyong Ho," described Michael Madden at the time, "had departed Beijing after meetings with Liu Yunshan, head of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the CCP." Their meetings in Beijing had likely focused not just on ongoing general cooperation, but also on themes for the bilateral meetings – which ended without the publication of a joint statement that would have been carried by both KCNA and Xinhua.<sup>68</sup>

From November 20-26, a delegation of *Rodong Sinmun*, by led Deputy Editor Choe Kap-song, as well as the Korea National Peace Committee,<sup>69</sup> led by Vice Chairman Kim Jin-bom, visited China, meeting with different Chinese officials during their

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<sup>67</sup> One good example would be *Guangming Ribao* articles cited in KCNA which were said to included Chinese validation of, in the same sentence, Juche along with WPK drive "to improve the people's standard of living by attaching importance to the economic growth while steadily pressing ahead with the defense and army building." KCNA, "Chinese Newspaper on Travelogue of DPRK," November 5, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news05/20111105-02ee.html>

<sup>68</sup> Xinhua, "Senior CPC official encourages cooperation between Chinese, DPRK's state news agencies," October 20, 2011, <[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-10/20/c\\_131202998.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-10/20/c_131202998.htm)>

<sup>69</sup> The Korea National Peace Committee (조선평화옹호전국민족위원회) is another mouthpiece of the Communist government in North Korea. The Korea National Peace Committee often releases the bombastic and threatening public statements that have come to represent North Korean press releases. For a recent example, see "Planned 'Nuclear Security 'Summit' in Seoul Failed [*sic*]," February 22, 2012 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2012/201202/news22/20120222-30ee.html>

visits. The Rodong Sinmun delegation again met with Liu Yushan (Head of the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee) to discuss the sharing of information and personnel between the two countries.<sup>70</sup>

Concurrently, the Korean National Peace Committee delegation went to Beijing, where they met with officials relatively low in the PRC power hierarchy, including the President of the People's Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPD), Liu Jingqin, and He Luli, the former Vice-Chairwoman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and "Honorable President of the CPAPD." Again indicating at least surface interest in DPRK ruling circles about Chinese economic reforms, the North Korean delegation moved on from Beijing to visit Guangzhou and Shenzhen, where they could have, but pointedly did not, report on the visit of Vice Foreign Minister Kim Song-gi to the area.

One last trope deserves attention: Han Chol-ho, KCNA's Vice Director of "Publication Guidance Bureau," was back in China on November 17. While the scanty content of the press releases made it hard to gauge if these were working meetings, moves to set up more specific cooperation a la North Korea's arrangements with AP, or simply paid junkets for North Korean propagandists to pick up Chinese goods, there was a specific result. On November 29, North Korea announced that it would start a Chinese-language service.<sup>71</sup>

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## **Document 1**

### **CNTV, Senior CPC official meets DPRK's Rodong Sinmun delegation, November 24, 2011**

<http://english.cntv.cn/20111125/102234.shtml>

BEIJING, Nov. 24 (Xinhua) -- Liu Yunshan, the head of the publicity department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, met on Thursday with a delegation from Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Worker's Party of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

During the meeting, Liu said the CPC and the Chinese government value their friendship with the DPRK and are committed to developing friendly relations with the DPRK.

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<sup>70</sup> KCNA, November 28, 2011

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/calendar/2011/11/11-28/2011-1128-023.html>

<sup>71</sup> KCNA, "KCNA to Shortly Start Chinese Service," November 29, 2011

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news29/20111129-14ee.html>

China is willing to work with the DPRK to enhance bilateral strategic communication, expand mutually beneficial cooperation and safeguard the peace, stability and development of the Korean Peninsula, as well as northeast Asia, said Liu, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

The People's Daily and Rodong Sinmun, as the mouthpieces of the communist parties of both nations, have maintained long-term exchanges and cooperation, Liu said. He called on the two newspapers to increase exchanges of information and personnel in order to promote mutual understanding and boost bilateral relations between China and the DPRK.

Choe Kap Song, deputy editor-in-chief of Rodong Sinmun and leader of the delegation, said it is the steadfast policy of the DPRK's ruling party and government to inherit and develop China-DPRK relations.

He said the newspaper will continue to make efforts to deepen mutual understanding and promote bilateral relations. The Rodong Sinmun delegation is visiting China at the invitation of the People's Daily newspaper.



**EPISODE THIRTEEN**  
**Kim Song-Gi in Beijing and Hong Kong**  
**November 24-28, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart and Matthew Bates



On November 24, Vice-Minister Kim Song-gi's stature within the relationship appeared to be confirmed when he led a North Korean delegation of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in meetings with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in Beijing. Apart from his congratulation of the Korean people on building a thriving nation, the Chinese Foreign Minister said very little publicly that was of note.<sup>72</sup>

Kim Song-gi's whereabouts for November 26-27 were undocumented by Chinese or North Korean media; presumably he was based out of the embassy in Beijing or taking his time to head south.

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<sup>72</sup> KCNA, "Chinese FM Congratulates Korean People on Successful Drive to Open Gate to Thriving Nation," November 25, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news25/20111125-34ee.html>



On November 28, Kim Song-Gi turned up in Hong Kong, where he met with the DPRK's representatives in that "Special City" in the DPRK. The full text of the Hong Kong government's press release about the event follows:

**DOCUMENT 1 | "Special Envoy Lv Xinhua Meets with DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Song-Gi [吕新华特派员会见朝鲜副外相金成基]," Hong Kong City Government Website, November 28, 2011,**  
<http://www.fmcofrc.gov.hk/chn/gygs/tpy/hdyjh/t882301.htm>

On November 28, Special Envoy Lv Xinhua went to a meeting with DPRK Vice-Foreign Minister Kim Song-gi [金成基] on his visit to Hong Kong; special envoy Li Yuanming [Yi Yon-myon], and DPRK's Counsel General in Hong Kong [金益晟] and others also attended.

Vice Minister Kim asked Lv for an introduction to the situation internally and in Macao; stating that under the attention of the leaders of both countries, the two country's traditional friendship had made great strides in the year past, the high-level exchanges completely close, and economic cooperation development made rapid progress. As part of China, Hong Kong's return 14 years ago had preserved a prosperous transition [繁荣稳定]....

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Kim Song-gi's appearance in Hong Kong and the summary of the meeting seem to indicate, along with the push just the following week for clarity about the Sinuiju SEZ law, that the North Koreans were making an effort – or had been pushed – to gain or provide greater levels of clarity about how to make the SEZ venture work, and that Hong Kong model was of some utility. Kim Song-gi would participate in meetings about Rason later in early December in Pyongyang.

The delegation returned to Pyongyang on December 1, but Kim Song-Gi would within three days again be meeting with PRC diplomats with a hand in Rason. However, while Kim Song-gi was shuttling around the mainland and the Guangdong coast, in North Korea itself a different and potentially disturbing narrative was unfolding.

**EPISODE FOURTEEN**  
**Chinese Tourists Killed Outside of Pyongyang,**  
**November 26, 2011**

by Adam Cathcart and Sabine van Ameijden

Tourism has been an increasingly present element in the Chinese strategy for prying North Korea open and, in the period covered in this dossier, the KCNA was reciprocating with bullish stories about a number of Chinese touristic ventures in the DPRK in October and November in 2011, including a “trial Harbin-Mt. Kumgang tourist group by a chartered flight” which toured Mt. Kumgang. Indicating that the venture was not private capital but paid for with public funds in China, the group was headed by Chen Xibin, a member of what KCNA called “the Standing Committee of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress of China.” KCNA noted the desire of individuals to “come back next year with their family members.”<sup>73</sup> In the space of a couple of months, Mount Chilbo was also opened to Chinese tourists. Quoting “an official of the State General Bureau of Tourism, Jong Il Hyon,” KCNA cited the figure as five groups totaling 550 visitors since October 8, arriving by train.<sup>74</sup>

However, an accident would threaten this trend.

**DOCUMENT 1 | Adam Cathcart, “Death of Chinese Tourists in North Korea, Leaves More Questions than Answers,”** *Daily NK*, December 19, 2011, <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk03600&num=8544>.

[...] On November 26, [a] rupture occurred when two busses carrying delegations of Chinese tourists and businessmen crashed successively on a road outside of Pyongyang, resulting in the deaths of seven Chinese nationals and three North Koreans.

Fearing harm to sensitive bilateral ties, authorities in Beijing suppressed elaboration on the incident in the Chinese news media.

According to reports published by the PRC embassy in Pyongyang, the two busloads of Chinese were 60 km outside of Pyongyang when “rain which had frozen on the road” caused the first bus, containing seventeen Chinese businessmen, to plunge off of a bridge, and the second bus to lose control and flip over. The Chinese Embassy

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<sup>73</sup> KCNA, “Chinese Tourists Tour Mt. Kumgang, Nov. 7” <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201111/news07/20111107-40ee.html>

<sup>74</sup> KCNA, “Mt. Chilbo Attracts Many Tourists,” December 1, 2011 <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201112/news01/20111201-29ee.html>

noted that “many local cars also had an accident at the same spot,” a somewhat incongruous explanation given the lack of automobile traffic in North Korea.

A few online Chinese discussion sites like Sohu.com gave vent to complaints of corruption, alleging that the delegation of seventeen Chinese businessmen involved in the crash had had its expenses paid out of public funds. The major Chinese media outlets uniformly reproduced the Embassy’s terse original press release, an indication that further reporting, investigation, or elaboration on the incident was expressly forbidden in Beijing.

The Chinese Embassy provided no photographs or video of the crash site, but a short television clip released on Chinese central television contained a brief statement by an Embassy spokesman, and the Embassy’s release of the information immediately on its website were indicators of at least a limited Chinese autonomy, or willingness to advocate for its own citizens, within North Korea.

The Sina Weibo news microblog item on the incident garnered more than 480 comments from Chinese netizens. One user from Liaoning province complained that the North Koreans would probably offer another 1000 RMB per victim, as they did, to much mainland scorn, after the shooting last June 4 of Chinese citizens near Dandong. Others commentators were incredulous at the notion that heavy vehicle traffic had helped to cause the accident, and speculated, without being censored, that the incident was some kind of murder.

The only overt North Korean response to the incident was the DPRK’s stated desire, quoted in the press release from the Chinese Embassy, to continue to “promote Sino-North Korean friendship, using all our powers to do good work in solving this issue.” Two weeks later, the North Korean government gave an “Order of DPRK Friendship 2<sup>nd</sup> Class” award to Sun Yafeng, the Chinese military attaché in the PRC Embassy, for his unspecified acts of military-military cooperation.

A final press release from the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang sought to put a positive spin on events by orienting even further away from any possible comparison of recent events to the death of a South Korean tourist at Mount Kumgang in 2009. The article described how two of the Chinese victims of the bus crashes, recuperating in the Pyongyang Friendship Hospital, tearfully asked Ambassador Liu Hongcai to convey their offerings of cigarettes and hard liquor to the graves of the Chinese volunteers outside of Pyongyang.<sup>75</sup>

If confirmation of the fact was needed, it seemed clear that the Korean War remains the answer to virtually any propaganda problem encountered in the Sino-North

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<sup>75</sup> Embassy of People’s Republic of China in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, “在朝鲜遭遇交通事故的 34 名人员平安返回中国,” November 29, 2011, <<http://kp.china-embassy.org/chn/zxxx/t882257.htm>>.

Korean alliance. In China, the foreign affairs tabloid *Huanqiu Shibao* returned to childish stories about theme parks in Pyongyang, while Defense Ministry-related periodicals were reduced to publishing tearful and nostalgic accounts of Korean War veterans who had travelled to North Korea this past autumn.

Five days after the crash, Tian Baozhu, China's Consul-General to Chongjin, a Korea hand who had studied at Kim Il Sung University, and an important player in the Rason trade zone, arrived in Pyongyang, and the PRC Vice-Foreign Minister returned home from Pyongyang after four days. The relationship was back to normal. In the meantime, the details of the bus incident seem destined to remain submerged under the icy roads outside Pyonyang.

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Information about the accident was difficult to come by other than from the Chinese Embassy itself, which reported the deaths almost instantaneously. However, an account by one of the foreign survivors gives more context about how seriously the Chinese took it – the Ambassador at the accident site – and how the North Koreans seemed completely at sea.

**DOCUMENT 2 | Lies de Smit, “North Korea, Hen hao :),” 6 December 2011,**  
<<http://liesdesmit.waarbenjij.nu/>>

[Document located, translated, and annotated by Sabine van Ameijden]

*Lies de Smit travelled with two other Dutch nationals, Vincent and Chris. She seems to have been studying in Shanghai and now to have returned home (the Netherlands). They travelled from Shanghai to Shenyang and from there took the train to Dandong. In Dandong they transferred to another train which took them to Pyonyang. They must have stayed at the Yanggakdo hotel, recognizable from her descriptions of the location on an island, number of floors and the presence of a revolving restaurant. After returning from Pyonyang to Dandong, they travelled to Harbin and after this returned to Shenyang. Here follows a translation of relevant parts of her story, translated from Dutch:*

After a lot of hassle it was finally arranged, we are going to North Korea! The Dutch brigade (me, Vincent and Chris) had booked a nice trip to Shenyang [from Shanghai] and from there we would take the train to the border city Dandong. [...] The next day we woke up early in order to take the train to Dandong. It was the greatest train ride ever; they had this wonderful “travel” music that you would only hear in the dullest old movie. After a very long train ride we arrived in Dandong, where Jacky (our tour organizer) was awaiting us. At night we quickly went to a hotpot restaurant and took a look at the North Korean border, because tomorrow was the day. Friday, the day of departure, and the phones were properly handed to Jacky, because of course these were not allowed into the country, and then with all the other Chinese on the train to cross the border. After 10 minutes we already passed the bridge and we had

to wait in an extremely cold train. Where they checked all our luggage. [...]

After a long journey (the train stopped at times due to power shortage) we actually arrived in Pyongyang, it was dark, and due to the power shortage in North Korea, it also was dark at the station. The only source of light were the flashlights of a few people at the station, but it was really a matter of blind faith in the guide. Next we went by bus to the Hotel. It was built on an island in the middle of the river, to make sure the tourists would not be able to just wander off. The hotel had 43 floors with 1001 rooms and on top there was a so-called revolving restaurant.

After exploring the hotel this was the result: -A KTV bar which was prohibited -A small casino -A small Spa -An enormous collection of photos and texts which were supposed to point out how amazing life in North Korea is.

The next day we had to get up early again, because we were going to some important mountain. After a nice breakfast we left at 7.30, first we visited a monument of "friendship", where we saw the first propaganda posters. After this we quickly returned to the bus because we were moving on. However, after one and a half hours something happened that was not intended.

Due to the cold weather there was a layer of ice on the road, especially on the bridge which we were about to cross. But this was not very visible, so the bus skidded on the 25 metres high bridge. We hit the side of the guardrail, skidded a bit further and we tilted on the median. We were all thrown to the left side and I was buried under my two travel buddies. I broke the window's glass with my back and after catching our breath we wanted to get out of the bus as soon as possible.

Shortly after we saw everyone climbing out of the bus, some more covered in blood than the others, but everyone was still walking, as soon we noticed that [survival] was not that self-evident. We also saw that the guardrail next to our bus was wrecked; it appeared that a bus had gone through the guardrail and crashed down. Later when we returned to China the news appeared that 10 people had died in this crash.

Meanwhile we were completely in shock in the cold waiting for officials who could take us to the hospital. After at least an hour of having to stand on top of the bridge in the freezing cold, a car came and [a person] said that there was a house 100 meters further down where we could warm ourselves up until another bus arrived to pick us up.

The bus brought us to a local hospital; this was the scariest bus ride ever as the road was still frozen and we still had the memory of the accident fresh in our minds. In the hospital first aid was delivered and after a few hours we were in another bus, unfortunately we had to cross the same bridge, passing our just-overturned bus, consequently this was a tense moment.

After two hours of travelling, we arrived at the hospital in Pyongyang. This was a

better hospital, but it still felt as if I was part of the images in my history book during the world war. [The authorities] actually wanted to have the entire group stay in the hospital, but to spend the night in a North Korean hospital did not appear to us as such a good plan (i.e., bad heating, no hot water, etc.).

After having waited a while (it was already 8 hours after the accident) some North Korean (who would be our guide for the next two days) arrived to guide us to the bus and a restaurant. After this we quickly continued to the hotel, where he asked us what we wanted to do tomorrow: go sightseeing in Pyongyang with the Chinese or to the DMZ. From here on it was evident that the North Koreans felt they had to repair some damage.

The next day we went to our choice: the DMZ. Because no one else, apart from the three of us, went, we got a private driver and two guides to accompany us, and together with a minivan we hit the road again. The driver was obviously told what we had gone through, as he checked the rear view mirror every five minutes and on bridges he drove notably slowly. Also, a van that was driving in front of us had been arranged so that definitely nothing could go wrong. [...] After we went into a little stamp store, our guide told us that 10 people from our bus were in the hospital and that of those a few were going home by plane; also, many apologies were offered for the accident of the previous day.

[...] With our little van we drove to the station, where at the platform we were surprised to find the Chinese ambassador. He had stopped by to offer his apologies, and this of course had to be done in front of the camera of CCTV (the biggest media channel in China). The translation was quite funny, it went from Chinese to Korean and then to English directed to us, and the other way around again. Also the managing director of the tourism company in North Korea came by to offer his apologies for the accident and wished us a safe journey back.

We had a good lunch in our sleeping train in the direction of the border city, where we quickly had to leave the train and were transferred to a bus [...] Usually you leave or depart North Korea by train or by plane, but because we were a special case we were crossing the border by bus, with police escort! When almost having arrived in China, we were placed on the front row of the bus and then we saw some photographers and a bunch of officials who were waiting for us. Gradually, through these circumstances, we started to realize that the situation was more serious than we had initially thought it to be. After an official greeting of an army official and a nice flower bouquet (on behalf of the Chinese government) we quickly went along with Jacky, who was also awaiting us there.

In the afternoon we quickly stopped by the hospital to have some x-rays taken of my back (x-rays from China/North Korea, that is one hell of a souvenir!), my hands were checked for glass and Chris had his head checked. In the evening we went out for dinner with Jacky who said the company offered us 1000 (out of the 4200) RMB, considering with had an accident. We refused this offer as we had spent the majority

of our time in hospitals and we asked to discuss it again tomorrow. [...] The next day we got to see the manager, the most incapable person I have ever met. After pretending to meet us halfway and a bunch of weird reasons (we give you 500 more, 3000 because you are students!) he eventually gave in and we got the entire price refunded. From this money we immediately booked the sleeping train to Harbin and within 4 hours we were already on our way to the north. Jacky thought that our train would arrive around 9 in the morning, this appeared not to be the case, unfortunately we arrived at 3 at night at a very cold station -15 where we were not appropriately dressed for. Initially the driver could not find the hostel, but after a few phone calls we eventually arrived in front of the door. [...]



**EPISODE 15**  
**Tian Baozhen, PRC Consul-General in Chongjin, in Pyongyang**  
**December 4, 2011**

by Matthew Bates



The new Counsel General of the Chinese Consulate in Chongjin city, Tian Baozhen, visited Pyongyang in early December, and a reception was given for him by Ambassador Liu Hongcai at which prominent North Korean partners attended, like Kim Song-gi (pictured above, at right). The Embassy in Pyongyang is almost 300 miles southwest of Chongjin, and the primary role of the Chongjin Consulate and his consulate would appear to be to be a facilitator and mediator of Chinese investment and trade including particularly the economic development plan of China's northeastern provinces enabling trade with the DPRK, and through its ports with Japan, Russia and the wider world.

China's desire for expanded economic cooperation with the DPRK is exemplified by the introductory description of Tian's speech as expressing that "comrades everywhere will work together to strengthen friendly association and trade cooperation in the two countries' border areas, as well as to do their utmost to

promote the PRC and DPRK's friendly collaborative relationship in all aspects of development.”

By contrast, the remarks at the dinner by DPRK Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Kim Song-Gi focus on friendship in itself, as if a pre-condition for economic cooperation.

**DOCUMENT 1 | Ambassador Liu holds reception for Counsel General Tian Baozhen, Embassy of the PRC in Pyongyang, December 3, 2011.** [translated from the Chinese Embassy's press release by Matthew Bates]

On 1st December, Ambassador Liu Hongcai held a reception to support the recent arrival of Tian Baozhen as Counsel General at the Chinese consulate stationed in Chongjin.

In attendance were DPRK Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Seonggi, Consulate Office Deputy Manager Li Hao-Rong(李浩荣), Protocol Office Deputy Manager Cui Ge-Tie<sup>76</sup>, People's Security Department Counsellor and Foreign Affairs Department Head Li Song-Zhe, Pyongyang People's Committee Foreign Affairs Department Head Kim Jong-Jin and other related invited departmental representatives.

(Ambassador Liu Hongcai's Speech)

In his speech, Ambassador Liu welcomed Tian Baozhen to the DPRK, indicating that the Chinese government Department Counsellor and Foreign Affairs Department Head Li Song-Zhe, Pyongyang People's Committee Foreign Affairs Department Head Kim Jong-Jin and ation, and strengthening the work of Consulate in Chongjin,.

He saw that the relationship between the two countries is developing with a good momentum, the Chongjin Counsellor and with personnel in Chinaong-Zhe, Pyongyang and provinces, traveling back and forth often, trade cooperation increasing day by day, and that in particular the Chinese-Korean jointly developed, jointly managed Rason economic zone already had already begun with unbreakably solid progress, and was entering a new phase.

Ambassador Liu noted Counsellor General Tian Baozhen's long-term work of engagement with the Korean peninsula, his ample experience, and his many (North) Korean comrades who are old acquaintances and old friends. Liu was convinced Tian could not bear people's expectations, that being in a new post with his work well begun, he would be able to open a new Xintiandi (*a reference to the big Shanghai shopping district - Ed.*) in the neighbourhood. But he hoped that in every way, each North Korean department -- centrally, regionally and in particular in the Chongjin Consulate area -- including the city party committee and people's

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<sup>76</sup> Or, if this person is in fact Korean, the name being Choe Guk-chol/Hyok-Chol; there is some ambiguity as to which of the individuals present are Chinese and which are Korean.

committee would be just as attentive and supportive as ever towards Counsellor General Tian Baozhen and the Chongjin Consulate's work.

(Tian Baozhen's Speech)

Counsellor General Tian Baozhen's speech reviewed his long association with Korean comrades, positively evaluated the DPRK's recent economic development and success in improving people's livelihoods. He indicated that the future will not disappoint the two countries' expectations and that each of North Korea's departments and comrades everywhere will work together to strengthen friendly association and trade cooperation in the two countries' border areas, as well as to do their utmost to promote the PRC and DPRK's friendly collaborative relationship in all aspects of development.

As Deputy Minister Kim Song-gi had already indicated in his speech, Counsel General Tian Baozhen has already studied and worked in Korea for over ten years and already contributed quite a lot to Sino-Korean friendship. In this way, he has closeness with North Korea, familiarity with circumstances, and proficiency in the language of old friends, and so it is with deep happiness that comes to the DPRK to assume this office. This appointment reflects the Chinese party and government's resolute determination to continuously strengthen the friendly relations between China and North Korea. Counsellor General Tian Baozhen requested that the DPRK Foreign Ministry and each of its related departments actively support of the work of himself and the Chinese Consulate in Chongjin, and hoped that having assumed his post, Korean-Chinese friendly, cooperative relations would develop showing even more devotion, and that their diplomatic careers would again show new achievements.

(Kim Song-gi's Speech)

The Deputy Minister noted that at this reception, friends new and old were able to meet together in one place, to chat freely and amicably, to warmly welcome Counsellor General Tian Bao-zhen to Korea, and together to discuss the future prospects for the development of friendly PRC-DPRK relations.

**EPISODE SIXTEEN**  
**Sinuiju SEZ Law Passed,**  
**December 9, 2011**

by Matthew Bates

On 3rd December, 2011, the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly new law passed relating to the governing the Hwanggumpyeong and Wihwa Islets Economic Zones, and further amendments to the Rason Economic and Trade Zone.

These new laws eventually became available in Korean and English on the new version of the KCNA website, <http://www.kcna.kp> and can be accessed using the new website's search function. (The previous amendment of the Rason law in December 2010 has been made available by Choson Exchange.)<sup>77</sup>

Whilst it is often held that North Korea's dependence upon China for energy, food and other basics gives the PRC special leverage over the DPRK, the relative insignificance of its economic agreements compared to the potential magnitude of security risks mean that China is normally unwilling to exploit North Korean dependence coercively to try to enforce economic agreements.

A more comprehensive review of the new SEZ laws is forthcoming, but here I would like to focus on how far the new laws have addressed specifically known Chinese concerns about the viability and reliability of the two SEZs; firstly as expressed by two DPRK experts at the Central Party Schools of Beijing and Dandong respectively, Zhang Liangui and Tang Longwen; and secondly as reported of Chinese officials in direct response to the new laws according to a report in South Korea's *Korea Herald*.

Both Zhang Liangui and Tang Longwen consider the South Korean experience at the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Mount Kumgang Tourist Region highly relevant to China, with Zhang (professor of international strategic research at Beijing's central party school, where as a graduate of Kim Il-Sung University he is regarded as one of China's top experts on the DPRK) telling the *FT* that "North Korea's past experience of working with other countries has left it with a serious credibility problem and this will stop a lot of foreign investment from even considering these new zones." Similarly, Tang Longwen, Associate Professor at Dandong Party School, has expressed concern about the reliability of the DPRK's legal system, saying people's greatest worry is that it will just "open and close its doors as it pleases."

Perhaps aware of Chinese concerns about the excessive influence of forces from within the central state, references to "the State" appear 4 times and 3 times in the 2011 Rason and Hwanggumphyong laws respectively, as opposed to 12 times in the

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<sup>77</sup> <http://chosonexchange.org/?p=1472>

Rason 2010 law, and what was the third sentence of the Rason law – “The Sovereignty of the DPRK shall be exercised in the Zone” – has been removed.

However, where there is ambiguity in the laws - and there is some - a new appendix states that the right to interpretation resides with the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly which is Chairman of which is Kim Yong-Nam, DPRK *de facto* head of state.

Regarding dispute resolution procedures, the two preexisting options were consultation between the parties and arbitration, and to this a third option, mediation, has been added. However, mediation is to be by the management committee or the institution concerned, and therefore not a completely independent third party. As for arbitration, the new laws published provide that the arbitration agency may be either North Korean or international, but the international option has been changed from ‘may be referred to an arbitration agency in a third country’ to ‘a foreign international arbitration institution *established in the Zone* (my italics)’ demanding significant further expenditure for what would be if anything a less independent arbitration. Overall the dispute resolution procedures appear less reassuring to Chinese investors than before, and one would expect them to require this to be changed as a precondition for investment.

Tang also expressed concern about the hazard involved in so much investment in infrastructure in the Hwanggumphyong/Wihwa Zone being the responsibility of the Chinese side, and there is nothing in the new laws to refute this, albeit that they retain some form of preferential treatment for developer enterprises.

In January, the [Korea Herald](#) reported that the PRC government had responded to the new SEZ laws by asserting problems regarding taxation, accounting, investment security, freedom of management, and transfer of funds. The new SEZ laws state they are as approved by the Supreme People’s Assembly on 3 December, but as they were only published in March it was unclear whether they incorporated the Chinese recommendations, and insofar as the Supreme People’s Assembly is believed to be only a ceremonial body convened only once or twice a year to rubber stamp legislation already decided, it seems conceivable that the laws may have been modified retrospectively.

To review the new laws released in terms of the areas reported as contentious by the Korea Herald:

### Taxation

Income tax rates remain the same as the 2010 Rason law at 14% of net profit, with 10% of net profit for top priority sectors (which also remain the same: infrastructure construction, state of the art science and technology and production internationally competitive goods).

Whereas the 2010 Rason SEZ law offered infrastructure development projects with a total investment value of more than €30 million full exemption from enterprise income tax for 4 years from the first profit-producing year and reduction up to 50 per cent for the following 3 years” (albeit that the conditions for “up to” 50 per cent in the following 3 years were uncertain), the 2011 laws of both Zones state that “Tax shall not be levied on the property of the developer enterprise and the infrastructure and public establishments that he/she operates” which seems much more ambiguous as to the type of tax in question. It would appear to offer exemption only from property tax, even though property tax has not been mentioned elsewhere in any of the three laws under consideration. Only income tax has been mentioned (at a standard rate of 14%), but it seems impossible that the developers of infrastructure would be exempt from this indefinitely, particularly given that income tax in top priority sectors continues to be given as 10 percent of net profit.

### Accounting

The new laws refer the applicable basis of accounting:

*Enterprises in the Zone may apply internationally accepted accounting standards to their accounting and settlement of accounts.*

China follows the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) which are followed in most of the world (although not the US or South Korea), and it therefore appears unlikely that they would object to this passage as it stands (although it is conceivable that they would prefer IFRSs to be named specifically).

Importantly, it states that the IFRSs may be applied *in the settlement of accounts* which would appear to refer to the net profit for tax purposes (although in many countries including the UK, profit tax purposes is not the same as profit under IFRS, so it is possible, given the SPA right of interpretation, that the Chinese side would have requested for this to be made specific).

### Investment security

*The property (재산), legitimate income and invested rights of investors in the Zone shall be protected by the law.*

This is basically the same as the 2010 Rason law other than that the more tangible “property” (재산) has replaced the potentially more ambiguous “invested capital” (투자한 자본).

Then two new statements are intended to specifically address concerns about expropriation:

*The State shall not nationalize or expropriate the property of the investors.*

but:

*Where an investor's property is, for unavoidable reasons, to be expropriated or used temporarily for public interest, notification thereof shall be made before going through prescribed legal procedures, and sufficient and effective compensation for its value shall be made without any discrimination.*

Regarding the latter, could these conditions possibly be inserted by the Chinese to ensure there is some protocol which would give some advance warning of the threat of expropriation, and some basis upon which to reclaim lost earnings from the DPRK? It seems highly unlikely, particularly as the clause is not only for the law for the bordering islands but also for the far more distant Rason zone, in addition to which Chinese opinion would appear cynical of the DPRK's ability to provide effective compensation.

Much more likely would seem to be that those drafting the law on the North Korean side whilst aware of the Chinese concern about expropriation, would feel the need to insert something for the contingency that expropriation might take place, and would be less aware of, and in any case might ignore the cynicism which may exist regarding "effective compensation."

#### Transfer of Funds

*Such income as profits, interests, dividend, rentals, service charges and proceeds from property sale that are legitimately earned in the Zone may be repatriated outside the territory of the DPRK without any restrictions.*

*Investors may take out of the Zone without any restrictions the property that they had brought therein and the property that had been legitimately acquired therein.*

The latter clause is more favourable than its 2010 Rason equivalent, which only applied "when the duration of operation terminates" and only to "assets which have been brought into the zone from abroad." Other than the question of what is "legitimate" (bearing in mind the SPA Presidium right to interpretation), it is hard to see what the Chinese side might object to in either clause as they stand. However, given that it states elsewhere that "the settlement currency in the Zone shall be Korean won or other designated currency" and that the exchange rate for Korean won is to be determined by the foreign exchange control institution of the Zone, the Chinese may challenge the idea that there are no restrictions on transfer of funds.



**EPISODE SEVENTEEN**  
**Zhang Dejiang Meets Electronics Industrial Working Delegation,**  
**December 15-17, 2011**

by Matthew Bates

On December 15, Han Kwang Bok, the DPRK's Minister of Electronics Industry and a Vice-Premier, went to China for a three-day trip with a delegation.<sup>78</sup>

Electronics is believed to have been identified by the DPRK as a strategic industry following Kim Il Sung's visit to Europe in 1984, and was formally identified in the first and second three-year plans of 1988-1991 and 1991-1994 (which included targets such as production of high-pressure-resistance semiconductors and 64-bit computers). However, arms control sanctions such as the Wassenaar Arrangement, and various US and UN laws have restricted imports and exports due to in view of the dual use potential of much technology, and the sector has never become internationally competitive.

In addition to the prospects for the DPRK, electronics also has labour-intensive processes such as assembly which China may see as having potential for outsourcing to one of the Special Economic Zones. Even though arms control sanctions have been an issue for importing technology into the Kaesong Industrial Complex, China is not a participant in the Wassenaar Arrangement, there is no US military presence ensuring orthodox enforcement on China's border with the North, and China may be relatively autonomous in its interpretation of arms control agreements.

Thus, the meeting between the DPRK Minister of Electronics Industry and the PRC Political Bureau member may reflect a DPRK desire to form a relationship develop specific technical expertise whilst the PRC keen to link this to broader economic and political issues.

Regarding the KCNA's coverage in the article below, it is noteworthy that the entire Korean Central News Agency is one long indirect quotation of Zhang's words and description of his activities, with his Korean counterpart as Vice-Premier Han Kwang Bok merely noted as having been present, and this is entirely characteristic of KCNA's recent coverage of Zhang Dejiang.

Despite having been named a member of the Politburo in 2002, and his long links with North Korea, prior to November 2010 Zhang seems only to have been named in KCNA one article when as secretary of the Guangdong provincial committee of the

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<sup>78</sup> KCNA, "Electronics Industrial Working Delegation Leaves for China," December 15, 2011.

CPC he hosted Kim Jong-il's visit to Guangzhou in 2006.<sup>79</sup> Since November 2010, particularly since he led an official friendship delegation to the DPRK in July 2011, there have been 26 articles featuring of Zhang, many just reporting his comments on what often are ostensibly purely Chinese domestic issues, such employment for graduates, scientific innovation, water transportation, railway security, defence modernization and coal mine safety.

The prime coverage given to Zhang during the last year of Kim Il Jong's life suggests that Zhang may have been identified as a strategically valuable figure particularly sympathetic to the DPRK within the Politburo, and that the KCNA may have been instructed to accord him prestige and do what it can to indicate to the Chinese leadership that he may have influence on the DPRK.

**DOCUMENT 1 | KCNA, "Vice-Premier of China on Inheriting Sino-DPRK Friendship," December 16, 2011**

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201112/news16/20111216-36ee.html>

Pyongyang, December 16 (KCNA) -- The Sino-DPRK friendship should be inherited in the future, too, as it is a valuable asset provided and left by leaders of elder generations of the two countries, said Zhang Dejiang, vice-premier of the State Council of China, on Thursday.

In a talk with Han Kwang Bok, vice-premier and minister of Electronics Industry of the DPRK who is visiting China at the head of a DPRK electronics industrial working delegation, at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, Zhang said that China and the DPRK are friendly neighbors sharing the same mountain and rivers.

He, member of the Political Bureau of the C.C., Communist Party of China, said that several visits to China paid by General Secretary Kim Jong-il and the recent brisk exchange of high-level delegations between the two countries have made great contributions to boosting the bilateral friendly relations.

We are rejoiced over many achievements made by the Korean people in the efforts to build a thriving nation under the correct leadership of Kim Jong-il, he added.

Zhang gave a reception in honor of the DPRK delegation that day.

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<sup>79</sup> Analysis used the nk-news.net search engine of English languages KCNA articles. While this probably will not cover all the articles published in by the KCNA and other government news publications in Korean, the basic trend appears reliable.  
<http://www.nk-news.net/results.php?searchString=zhang+dejiang&booleanType=phrase&dateSort=newest&currentPage=1&newSearch=yes&submitButtonName=Search+KCNA> Accessed 14 March 2012.

**EPISODE EIGHTEEN**  
**Kim Jong-il at Kwangbok Supermarket<sup>80</sup>**  
**December 15, 2011**

by Michael Madden

On 15 December 2011, DPRK media reported that Kim Jong-il conducted field guidance at the Kwangbok Area Supermarket. At the time of his visit employees were finalizing preparations for the store's official opening. As part of a series of agreements the DPRK and China agreed to renovate and operate the shop as a joint venture, selling a mixture of Chinese and Korean consumer goods.

Kim Jong-il's visit fit into a series of public appearances in 2011 that emphasized the party's commitment to the production and sale of consumer goods. Given the rationale behind some of his public appearances, there may have been technical or logistical reasons which postponed opening the shop. His presence (as well as that of other leadership) would allow for a first-hand assessment of any problems and facilitate the opening bureaucratic channels, access to vehicles, goods or construction materials. On the same day his appearance was reported DPRK press and radio reported various statistics and achievements made in economic development, including mining and housing construction.



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<sup>80</sup> Adapted from <http://nkledershipwatch.wordpress.com/2012/01/07/kwangbok-supermarket-opens/>.

The Kwangbok Department Store was completed and opened in 1991 on the eastern end of Kwangbok Street in Pyongyang's Mangyo'ngdae District. It was the main shopping complex servicing residents of the Kwangbok Street Apartments, a series of 30-40 story residential complexes inhabited by employees of the country's press, media, arts and military organizations. Construction of Kwangbok Street and its residences, service and entertainment facilities was managed by Chang So'ng-t'aek. "Kwangbok", meaning "restoration", refers to the practice of "extensive magnanimous politics" practiced by Kim Jong-il, examples of which include the Chuch'e Tower, the KWP Foundation Monument (both in east Pyongyang), the Yukyo'ng Hotel and the Grand People's Study House.

Despite his reported entourage, Kim Jong-il was also accompanied by Jon Il Chun, deputy director of the KWP Finance & Accounting Department and chief functionary of Office #39, as well as Ri Chol, the former DPRK Ambassador to Switzerland and the UN Mission at Geneva who served as Chairman of the Joint Venture and Investment Committee. During 2010-2011, Jon and Ri assumed key roles in external economic activities and the earning of foreign exchange, after personnel attrition in the party's economic departments in early 2010. Jon was one of the VIP's who stood on the dais when Kwangbok Supermarket had its grand opening on 5 January 2012.

Kim Jong-il's inspection of the Kwangbok Area Supermarket was his last reported public appearance before he died of a massive heart attack on the morning of 17 December 2011. It was the third appearance Kim Jong-il made during the final week of his life. After returning from South Hamgyo'ng Province the previous weekend, Kim Jong-il, joined by his son and successor Kim Jong-un, had inspected a military unit subordinate to the Pyongyang Defense Command where he directed its live fire exercises. On the day his visit to the Kwangbok shop was reported, he was also reported to have visited the Hana Music Information Center.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See also KCNA, "Kim Jong-il Provides Field Guidance to Kwangbok Area Supermarket," December 15, 2011.

<http://kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201112/news15/20111215-45ee.html>

KCNA, "Rodong Sinmun Calls for Full Play to Advantage of Socialist Economic Management System," December 15, 2011.

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2011/201112/news15/20111215-06ee.html>

KCNA, "Kwangbok Area Supermarket Opens," January 5, 2012

<http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2012/201201/news05/20120105-33ee.html>

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