

**SPECIAL REPORT:**

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# N. KOREA'S ARTILLERY ATTACK AND ITS AFTERMATH

## N. KOREA'S BOMBARDMENT AND S. KOREA'S RESPONSE

**N.K.'s artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island is a reminder that the Korean War never really ended even though the fighting began 60 years ago.**

Usually a peaceful fishing village, Yeonpyeong Island suddenly turned into an inferno during a daytime bombardment by a North Korean artillery attack on Nov. 23. It took less than an hour for the remote island off the west coast of the Korean Peninsula to become a wasteland. In the following days, the island with a population of some 1,700 was transformed into a ghost town after most of its residents fled.

Although the South Korean military said it reacted promptly, many South Koreans expressed concerns about the South's military readiness and security loop-holes. In one of the worst attacks on South Korea since the 1950-53 Korean War, North Korea fired around 170 artillery shells onto the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong and its surrounding waters, killing two South Korean marines and two civilians while injuring 18 others. The attack also set on fire scores of civilian houses and forests.

### **North Korea's Artillery Attack**

The South Korean military reacted 13 minutes after the North's sudden firing began. It returned fire and lobbed more than 80 shells toward North Korean artillery positions on the west coast and sent fighter jets to the island. Troops across the nation were placed on maximum alert. The exchange of fire lasted about two hours, but damage in the North remains unconfirmed.

Officials in Seoul have heavily denounced the North's artillery attack as a violation of the armistice between the two Koreas, the U.N. Charter and other peace agreements. The North's attack promptly drew international condemnation. The

South's navy had been conducting an annual military drill near the island since Nov. 22, which North Korea protested against as early as the morning of Nov. 23.

The North's attack killed two South Korean marines who were stationed at

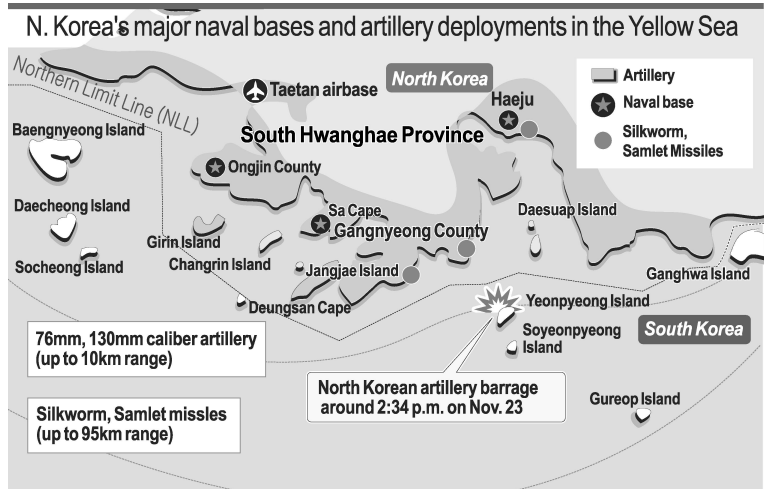
a military installation on the border island. Another 15 marines were wounded, five of them seriously, while at least three civilians were also injured. The day after the attack, two civilians were found dead at a construction site on a marine base on the island. The deceased were contracted to build a residential building at the base.

The clash came amid rising tensions on the peninsula following North Korea's claim in November that it is running a highly sophisticated uranium enrichment plant and building a light-water reactor, which would greatly bolster its nuclear stockpile and arms development. The attack was the North's most serious provocation since it allegedly torpedoed a South Korean warship in March, killing 46 sailors.

The North's artillery shells started falling on the island, about 80 kilometers northwest of the port of Incheon, and its surrounding waters around 2:34 p.m. The South responded by firing around 80 shells toward the North. The North fired shells from bases in Kaemori and Mudo, 12 to 13 kilometers from Yeonpyeong. The North is said to have deployed about 1,000 artillery pieces on islands near the Northern Limit Line (NLL). Most are reportedly hidden in mountain caves and tunnels.

The South Korean military was immediately placed on its highest non-wartime alert, vowing a "stern" response against any further provocations. After the attacks began, Seoul dispatched F-16 fighter jets to the area, and South Korean government officials were called to an emergency meeting with President Lee Myung-bak at an underground bunker beneath the presidential compound.

The North Korean army is believed to have about eight 27-kilometer-range 130-millimeter howitzers and eight 76 cannons with a range of 12 kilometers. The South Korean military responded to the attack with advanced K-9 self-propelled



howitzers. The K-9 carries a 155mm/.52 caliber gun with a maximum firing range of 40 kilometers.

A military official said the number of North Korean casualties were not been confirmed, but the damage to the North would be serious, considering the K-9's capability. The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) confirmed that more than a dozen buildings on Yeonpyeong Island were damaged by North Korean shells. Witnesses said fires spread quickly, and residents were evacuated to shelters, schools and safe houses.

The JCS estimated that some 100 shells landed on and near Yeonpyeong Island, which lies about 3 kilometers south of the Yellow Sea border. JCS officials said the South's military sent a telephone message at 5:55 p.m. to North Korea to demand the shelling be stopped. In swift reaction to the North's shelling, Seoul was on heightened alert, studying ways to punish the North while shutting down all cross-border exchanges.

## **President Lee's Tough Comments**

Hours after the news of the bombing broke, Hong Sang-pyo, South Korea's senior secretary for public affairs at the presidential office Cheong Wa Dae, said in a televised statement that the attack was a "clear military provocation" on the South. "North Korea will have to bear full responsibility" for the deadly attack, he said, warning that the South will "resolutely retaliate" if the North makes any further provocations.

Later in the evening, President Lee ordered the military to punish North Korea for its artillery attacks "through action," not just words, saying it is important to stop the socialist regime from contemplating additional provocations. "The provocation this time can be regarded as an invasion of South Korean territory. In particular, indiscriminate attacks on civilians are a grave matter," Lee said during a visit to the headquarters of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in central Seoul.

Lee's tough comments came after a series of emergency meetings with senior presidential aides and security-related ministers at the underground bunker of the presidential compound Cheong Wa Dae. Participants included Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan, Unification Minister Hyun In-taek, then-Defense Minister Kim Tae-young, Home Affairs Minister Maeng Hyung-kyu and Won Sei-hoon, chief of the state spy agency.

South Korean and U.S. troops stationed in the South upgraded their surveillance alert against North Korea to Watchcon-2 from Watchcon-3 as of 3:45 p.m., about an hour after the North's firing. Watchcon, divided into five levels, intensifies the

degree and frequency of intelligence gathering and analysis each time it is raised. Watchcon-2 would mean there are indications of a vital threat. In war, the level is raised to Watchcon-1. The South's military has also raised its non-wartime security alert to its highest level, known as "Jindokgae Hana," for islands near the Yellow Sea border, JCS officials said.

Yeonpyeong was in a state of chaos after the attack, with homes and forests ablaze in fire. When the North's artillery fire started on the populated island, terrified residents evacuated their homes and hid in shelters under the instruction of town officials. Explosions caused power outages that affected hundreds of homes and crippled the island's telecommunications systems.

### **Yeonpyeong Island in Chaos**

The city of Incheon, which governs Yeonpyeong, issued an emergency evacuation order at 4 p.m., moving some 1,700 residents to safe locations. Hundreds of Yeonpyeong residents scrambled to escape to Incheon, the nearest city on mainland Korea, using ferries and fishing boats.

"The attack wreaked havoc on my village. The island was clouded by dark plumes of smoke," said a Yeonpyeong resident who was evacuated to Incheon. He said a lot of people were taken aback by the sounds of the explosions.

Video clips recorded by tourists on Yeonpyeong at the time of the attack showed thick columns of black smoke rising from the island and burning houses. Screams and chaotic shouts were heard on the video footage.

The bombs also destroyed, nearly 70 percent of forests and fields on the rural island, the disaster control office at Incheon said. Some 20 fire trucks and more than 80 firefighters were deployed to the island to contain fires. After the attack, more than 400 residents, including elderly people and children, were transported by maritime guard vessels to Incheon for safety.

Emergency food and water were being transported to the island, and marines and communication engineers were deployed to help rebuild destroyed facilities. On Nov. 24, the Coast Guard estimated that half of the island's 1,756 residents chose to evacuate to Incheon, but the number of evacuees rose quickly. As of Nov. 26, about 98 percent of Yeonpyeong residents had left the island.

According to information from the city of Incheon, other border islands were quickly being drained of residents. Up to 400 residents of Baengnyeong Island, which was also given evacuation orders during the Nov. 23 attack, left the island for the mainland. Roughly 120 islanders left the islands of Daecheong and Socheong since the attack. (Yonhap News)

## SOUTH KOREA-U.S. COUNTERMEASURES

**N. Korea's artillery shelling may have been driven by political calculations to help secure an ongoing internal power succession.**

Hours after its artillery attack on South Korea, North Korea's Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army (KPA) accused the South of initiating fire and threatened "merciless military attacks" if South Korea violates its waters. In a statement, the North's top military command accused the South, saying, "Should the South Korean puppet group dare intrude into the territorial waters of the (North) even 0.001 millimeter, the revolutionary armed forces of the (North) will unhesitatingly continue taking merciless military counteractions against it."

On Nov. 24, the North's foreign ministry reiterated its claim that South Korea initiated exchange of artillery shells. "The enemies, despite our repeated warnings, eventually committed extremely reckless military provocations of firing artillery shells into our maritime territory near Yeonpyeong Island beginning at 1 p.m. on Nov. 23," an unnamed spokesman for the North's foreign ministry said.

On Nov. 25, North Korea's military had threatened waves of attacks on South Korea, blaming the U.S. as well as South Korea for the artillery clash on Yeonpyeong Island. "The (North) Korean People's Army will deal without hesitation the second and third strong physical retaliatory blow" if provoked by South Korean forces, a North Korean military delegate said in a statement.

### **Pyongyang's Statements**

Threatening "a shower of dreadful fire," North Korea said on Nov. 26 that it would wipe out its enemies if its sovereignty is violated, warning that the Korean Peninsula is inching to the "brink of war." The warnings were made by the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea and released by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

On Nov. 28, North Korea said the Korean Peninsula is in a state of "ultra-emergency," as South Korea and the United States began massive naval drills south of the Yellow Sea border. In a statement carried by the KCNA, the National Peace Committee of Korea, a propaganda organization of the North, denounced the joint exercise as an attempt to trigger a war against the communist nation.

South Korean military officials denied that they provoked the North and that they were conducting a drill called the Hoguk exercise, which the North called a precursor to an invasion.

Sharp military tensions on the Korean Peninsula culminated when South Korea and the U.S. forces kicked off large-scale joint naval drills on Nov. 28 in an overt show of strength against North Korea, which simultaneously upped the ante by firing artillery inside its territory.

The four-day joint exercises involved the 97,000-ton aircraft carrier USS George Washington and a number of U.S. warships, including the 9,600-ton USS Cowpens, the USS Lassen, the USS Stethem and the USS Fitzgerald.

North Korea said on Nov. 29 that it is never afraid of war and vowed to “grub up” the base of its aggressors if attacked, condemning massive South Korean-U.S. naval exercises that were underway. “It would be a miscalculation if the U.S. and the South Korean warlike forces attempt to astound and pressure us by deploying a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier,” Pyongyang’s main *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper said in a commentary carried by the KCNA.

North Korea has expressed regret over the civilian deaths in the Yeonpyeong shelling, but justified the attack as a “self-defensive measure” against a South Korean military exercise near the island, the usual logic its regime has used as an excuse for past shellings into the waters across the Yellow Sea border.

On the inter-Korean exchange front, South Korea decided to ban its nationals from entering the socialist state for either business or any other purpose, and it also indefinitely postponed their scheduled Red Cross talks that had initially been set for Nov. 25.

## **President Lee’s Statement**

While the joint exercises were underway, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak on Nov. 29 condemned North Korea’s deadly shelling as an “inhumane crime” and pledged strong retaliation against Pyongyang for any future provocations. Delivering a televised speech to the nation, Lee also offered a rare public apology for the government’s much-criticized response to the rain of North Korean artillery shells.

Shortly after Lee ended his seven-minute speech, North Korea renewed its threats against the South Korea-U.S. joint naval drills, referring to them as “yet another grave military provocation” that would lead to an “all-out war.”

President Lee said he feels responsible for the deaths of two South Korean marines and two civilians and enormous property damage from the North’s artillery assault. After being criticized for being too feeble in response to the North’s

artillery strike, South Korea's armed forces began to beef up military strength on five islands near the Yellow Sea border, including Yeonpyeong.

Criticism over the military's reaction to the attacks prompted the resignation of South Korean Defense Minister Kim Tae-young and a wave of anti-Pyongyang protests.

After addressing the nation, Lee visited the South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command in central Seoul to be updated on the allies' large-scale joint naval drills that were underway and ended on Dec. 1.

South Korea deployed a 7,600-ton guided-missile Aegis destroyer, the Sejong the Great, along with two 4,500-ton destroyers, frigates and anti-submarine aircraft, according to officials. Also taking part in the drills were eight F-16C Fighting Falcons, four A-10C Thunderbolt IIs, four F-15Ks and four KF-16s.

For the naval drills, the U.S. also brought in the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, called Joint STARS, to closely monitor the North's military activities. The deployment of the Joint STARS system, which proved its performance in the Gulf War, was approved by U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates at the request of South Korea, according to military sources.

Despite the naval show of force in the Yellow Sea, North Korea showed no signs of backing down by deploying its surface-to-air missiles and readying multiple launch rocket systems near the sea border.

## **Opinions from Experts**

Just hours after the naval drills began on Nov. 28, residents remaining on the South Korean island were ordered to evacuate after sounds of several rounds of artillery fire were heard from the North. The evacuation order was lifted about 40 minutes later.

On Nov. 29, a flotilla of South Korean and U.S. warships fired artillery, and their aircraft intercepted mock enemy planes in the Yellow Sea during the second day of what military officials called "high-intensity" joint naval drills. The next day, South Korean and U.S. warships intercepted mock ships, a key part of their third day of high-profile naval maneuvers in response to North Korea's fatal attack.

Analysts said North Korea's recent artillery shelling may have been driven by extreme political calculations in part to secure an ongoing internal power succession and to pressure Seoul and Washington to change their North Korea policies.

The North's attack on the South's Yeonpyeong Island was the first inter-Korean clash since North Korean leader Kim Jong-il unveiled his youngest son and heir apparent Kim Jong-un, as a four-star military general in September. North Korean



officials describe the 27-year-old as successor to his 68-year-old father.

“Kim Jong-un wants to show that he is tough, thus winning support in the military,” Andrei Lankov, a North Korea expert at Seoul’s Kookmin University, said in an e-mail interview with Yonhap News Agency.

“The display of such belligerent behavior suggests that the junior Kim may be flexing his muscles as a way of raising capital within the North Korean political elite, and particularly the military,” IHS Global Insight Asia analyst Sarah McDowall said in a release.

Kim Tae-young, Seoul’s then-defense minister, echoed the view, saying that it is the government’s judgement that the North carried out the attack to “consolidate the succession process in the country by showing off the leadership of Kim Jong-un.” “We judged that after revealing the new uranium enrichment facility on Nov. 12, North Korea made the artillery attack to give Kim Jong-un the status of a strong leader,” Kim said during a parliament session on Nov. 24.

## **Motives of N.K. Provocations**

Other experts and observers see the move as a reaction of frustration over the country’s unsuccessful effort to forge a permanent peace treaty with Washington and Seoul’s unrelenting stance against the North’s hope to resume a lucrative inter-Korean tour program.

“The North understands that the U.S. is willing to move if they make an issue out of the NLL. After revealing their uranium enrichment facility, I think this is more groundwork to force Washington to the negotiation (for the peace treaty),” said Kim Young-soo, a professor of political science at Sogang University.

North Korea does not recognize the NLL, arguing it was unilaterally drawn by the U.S.-led United Nations forces at the conclusion of the 1950-53 Korean War that ended in a truce. It demands that a new border be drawn further south.

Others say the attack may have been carried out independently by a hardline faction within the North Korean military and that it may be a byproduct of a power conflict during a tumultuous power succession.

“It could have been caused by mismanagement of power within the North Korean regime. During times of a transfer of power, some factions may go so far as to prove their loyalty,” said Cho Myung-chul, an analyst at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy.

“We can’t rule out the possibility that such a faction may have used the South Korean military’s exercise as an excuse to carry out the provocation (to prove its loyalty),” he added. (Yonhap News)

## INTERNATIONAL REACTION AND DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

**S. Korea, the U.S., Japan have demanded N.K. demonstrate its denuclearization commitment through action and improve relations with Seoul.**

The international community was quick to respond to North Korea's provocation of bombing Yeonpyeong Island, with Washington and other traditional allies of Seoul strongly condemning the self-claimed move by Pyongyang. But China, supposedly considering its special ties with the North, initially appeared to distance itself from the incident, but soon emphasized the need for constraint and calmness among parties concerned.

Within hours following the attack, Robert Gibbs, White House spokesman, said in a statement that the U.S. "strongly condemns this attack and calls on North Korea to halt its belligerent action and to fully abide by the terms of the Armistice Agreement."

Later that day, U.S. President Barack Obama condemned North Korea, emphasizing that Washington was "rallying the international community to put pressure on North Korea." He later talked with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak over the phone and "agreed to hold combined military exercises and enhanced training in the days ahead.

President Lee also consulted with Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan on the matter. Kan told Lee that Japan supports South Korea and will ask China to play an active role in preventing Pyongyang from taking any more provocative actions.

### **Condemnation from International Community**

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for "immediate restraint" and said any differences between the two Koreas "should be resolved by peaceful means and dialogue." Ban is "deeply concerned by the escalation of tension on the Korean Peninsula caused by today's artillery attack (by the North)."

Condemnation of the North's action also came from Australia, several European nations, Russia, Taiwan and the NATO alliance. "Such unprovoked attacks will only lead to further tensions on the Korean Peninsula," British Foreign Secretary William Hague said, while Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned of "colossal danger" from the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

As the tension heightened, China suggested an emergency meeting in early

December among chief delegates of the stalled six-nation talks on the North's nuclear dismantlement, hoping to defuse military tensions.

China's call came five days after North Korea fired a barrage of artillery rounds toward Yeonpyeong Island. Beijing is Pyongyang's only remaining major ally and seen as holding the diplomatic and economic reins to push the North to denuclearize within the framework of the six-nation talks.

Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo, who advises top Chinese officials on foreign policies, traveled to Seoul on Nov. 27. In a meeting with President Lee the next day, Dai pledged to "work to prevent a worsening of the situation and proposed an emergency meeting among six-party talks. But President Lee told Dai that Seoul was not interested in the early resumption of the six-party talks as it is more urgent to deal with Pyongyang's belligerence.

Seoul and Washington have said they won't rejoin the six-party talks unless Pyongyang shows a commitment with specific actions for denuclearization. On Nov. 30, China urged again the countries involved in the North Korean denuclearization talks to reconsider its proposal to hold an emergency meeting to discuss ways of defusing mounting tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Russia, another party in the multilateral nuclear talks, has joined China in calling for the emergency meeting of chief nuclear envoys.

In Washington, South Korea, the U.S. and Japan on Dec. 6 reconfirmed their pledge to not engage in dialogue with North Korea unless Pyongyang stops provocations and shows its commitment to denuclearization. They also urged China to use its influence on North Korea. The firm stance by the three countries came at a rare trilateral meeting of their foreign ministers in Washington, held to coordinate a reaction to Pyongyang's military provocations.

## **China's Call for Talks among Six Countries**

"North Korea first needs to take concrete steps to demonstrate a change of behavior," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told reporters after the trilateral meeting with her South Korean and Japanese counterparts Kim Sung-hwan and Seiji Maehara.

In a phone call with U.S. President Obama on Dec. 5, Chinese President Hu Jintao called for a "cool and rational" response and "dialogue" among relevant parties, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement. Hu was repeating Beijing's position that the parties concerned should remain calm and show restraint and convene an emergency meeting of chief envoys to the six-party talks to deal with the heightening tensions.

A six-party deal calls for North Korea's nuclear dismantlement in return for massive economic aid, diplomatic recognition by Washington and Tokyo, and the establishment of a peace regime to replace the fragile armistice that ended the three-year Korean War in 1953. The nuclear talks were deadlocked over U.N. sanctions imposed on the North after Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests in early 2009.

In a show of deterrence against North Korea, South Korea and the U.S. conducted joint military drills in the Yellow Sea from Nov. 28 to Dec. 1 with the participation of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, USS George Washington. China has raised objections to South Korean-U.S. joint naval exercises in waters off China since the sinking in March of the South Korean warship Cheonan, which was blamed on North Korea, while conducting its own naval drills in nearby waters as an apparent response.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council has begun discussing the North's revelation of the uranium project, as the program is in violation of the U.N. Security resolutions, which ban the North from making, developing and proliferating nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

North Korea in November revealed a uranium enrichment program at its nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang, arousing concerns that it will serve as another way of making nuclear bombs. North Korea already has a plutonium-based nuclear weapons program. Pyongyang says it intends to produce low-grade uranium to fuel a light-water reactor for electricity.

## **Moves of the U.S. and China**

The International Criminal Court said it has begun probing the North's shelling and the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan, which killed 46 sailors in the Yellow Sea in March. Pyongyang denies involvement.

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, meanwhile, flew into Seoul on Dec. 7, where he said that the U.S. wants China to play a "very important" role in trying to rein in North Korea. He said the U.S. is supportive of South Korea invoking the right of self-defense that allows its own military to launch precision-guided air strikes on North Korean targets, should the latter attack South Korean territory and people again.

Emphasizing that his visit to Seoul demonstrated the strong U.S. alliance with South Korea, Mullen said South Korea and the U.S. will draw up a new operational plan to respond to North Korea's low-intensity provocation near land and sea borders. Mullen made the remarks during a joint press conference with his South Korean counterpart Gen. Han Min-koo after their high-profile meeting.

Meanwhile, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il met with a top Chinese official on Dec. 9 on an apparent mission to help defuse heightened tensions. Beijing's Xinhua News agency said the two sides "reached consensus on bilateral relations and the situation on the Korean Peninsula after candid and in-depth talks." It did not elaborate. North Korea's Korean Central News Agency provided no details of their discussions either.

In mid-December, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg flew to Beijing to lead a high-level U.S. delegation to call on China to play a greater role in reining the belligerent regime in Pyongyang. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and Washington's six-party talks envoy Sung Kim were on the delegation. The two later visited Japan and South Korea, respectively, after the Chinese trip.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson also visited North Korea around the same time with the U.S. delegation to China on a private mission. Richardson successfully negotiated the release of two American citizens held in North Korea since the 1990s. He also toured the reclusive communist state in 2007 to resume operations to excavate the remains of U.S. soldiers killed in the 1950-53 Korean War.

South Korea's chief nuclear envoy Wi Sung-lac visited Russia in mid-December, where he met with his Russian counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin, to talk about the North's shelling of South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island and revelations that Pyongyang has a facility to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons.

North Korea's Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun also visited Russia in mid-December. Moscow has called for dialogue to resolve tensions, a stance that China has advocated with an offer to host an emergency meeting of the six-party talks in early December to discuss the heightened tensions.

Experts say that, despite Seoul's reluctance to restart the six-party talks, other participating countries will continuously try to resolve the troublesome Korean Peninsula issues through diplomatic ways of dialogue and negotiations.

But the frozen inter-Korean relations are unlikely to thaw anytime soon. Recently, President Lee said that an unstoppable change is taking place among the North Korean people, and the time has come for South Korea to prepare for unification, an indication of a harsher policy toward Pyongyang.

North Korea watchers said that Lee has decided not to treat the North Korean leadership as a dialogue partner and his remarks are a de facto declaration of his desire for a regime change in Pyongyang. A ruling circle official also said Lee is contemplating a major change in his North Korea policy. "He is mulling over changing the focus of the inter-Korean relationship from dialogue to security," he said. (Yonhap News)

# REVELATION OF URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT

**N. Korea's revelation of a uranium enrichment plant startled the world, as it is mastering a way of creating nuclear weapons beyond using plutonium.**

By Lee Kwang-ho

A new wave of shock rattled the world when North Korea recently admitted to operating a uranium enrichment plant equipped with thousands of centrifuges. The claim came as tension increased to the highest level in years on the Korean Peninsula after the socialist state shelled a South Korean island on Nov. 23 and killed two marines and two civilians.

Officially announcing on Nov. 30 that it was operating uranium enrichment facilities, North Korea said the facilities were being used only for peaceful purposes. The *Rodong Sinmun*, the paper of the North's ruling Workers' Party, said "the construction of a light-water reactor is actively underway," referring to a nuclear facility that uses low-enriched uranium to produce energy. It said, "To resolve energy needs, the nuclear energy development project for peace purposes will be pushed harder."

The revelation was the North's first official acknowledgment of the secretive facilities since Siegfried Hecker, a professor at Stanford University, said in a report on Nov. 20 that he witnessed the uranium enrichment facility during

his trip to North Korea earlier in November. The revelation was one of the most sensational claims by the reclusive regime after a North Korean official admitted to a clandestine uranium program in 2002.

Hecker also said in a Nov. 22 report of his visit to North Korea's main nuclear complex in Yongbyon that he saw a uranium enrichment facility with 2,000 centrifuges along with a small-size experimental light-water reactor. Hecker's revelations startled the world, heralding the possibility that the North is mastering a way of creating nuclear weapons beyond using plutonium.

## Hecker's Revelations

The development prompted the U.S. special envoy on North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, to set off on a hastily arranged three-nation tour. In Seoul on Nov. 21, he discussed with South Korean officials the next steps in dealing with "another in a series of provocative moves" by Pyongyang. He also toured Japan and China for similar consultations.

Low-enriched uranium is used as fuel for a reactor to generate electricity.

Highly enriched uranium, like plutonium, can be used to create nuclear weapons. Centrifuges, according to Hecker, were operated from an “ultra-modern control room” and can also be used to produce highly enriched uranium, an additional means of nuclear arms development for North Korea, which tested two plutonium-based bombs in 2006 and 2009.

Uranium-based bombs pose a greater threat to non-proliferation efforts because their development process can be easily hidden while they are easier to transport, according to experts. However, there has been no third party to confirm North Korea’s facility since the North expelled international nuclear inspectors in April 2009.

Hecker said he was told by North Korean officials that the facilities are for meeting its chronic electricity shortage, not for producing nuclear weapons, a claim repeated by the North’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

“The nuclear energy development project will be used for peaceful purposes in the future,” the KCNA said.

In a forum held on Nov. 24 in Washington, Hecker, who has visited the North seven times over the past two decades, said he was also shown a 100-megawatt experimental light-water reactor “in the early stages of construction.”

Light-water reactors are seen as less prone to nuclear weapons proliferation, as they produce uranium enriched at low levels. However, they can also be

used for making nuclear warheads if enriched highly, just like the plutonium Pyongyang has extracted from its Yongbyon facilities.

South Korea and the United States struggled to restore confidence in their hard stance against North Korea after the communist country unveiled its most advanced nuclear facility. Nevertheless, the allied countries have yet to find any effective way of resolving Pyongyang’s new uranium program.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates dismissed North Korea’s claim that it has built uranium enrichment facilities to fuel light-water reactors for power generation, expressing concerns over the North’s bolstered nuclear arsenal coupled with long-range missiles. “I believe they have nuclear weapons,” he said on Nov. 21. “They’re clearly developing longer-range missiles.”

## **Response from the U.S.**

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the North’s move to bolster its nuclear arsenal “has to do with a succession plan for his son,” referring to ailing North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, who is about to transfer power to his third and youngest son, Kim Jong-un.

Mullen denounced the North for violating a six-party deal for its nuclear dismantlement signed in 2005 in exchange for hefty economic aid, diplomatic recognition and the establishment of a

peace treaty to replace the fragile armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. Later on, Mullen called for China's cooperation in seeking North Korea's denuclearization.

U.S. envoy Bosworth, meanwhile, said the series of nuclear activities unveiled by Pyongyang are "unacceptable." "We do not contemplate resuming negotiations while active programs are underway or while there is a possibility that North Koreans would test another nuclear device or test a missile," Bosworth said during his recent trip to Tokyo.

Defending the U.S. goal of pressuring the North into taking dismantlement steps before reopening the six-party talks, stalled since late 2008, Bosworth said he "would not accept that our policy toward North Korea is a failure."

South Korea also expressed its "grave concern" over the North's latest nuclear revelations. South Korean officials have called on the North to allow international nuclear monitors back on its soil and to move ahead with denuclearization steps agreed upon in a six-nation deal before the six-party talks can resume.

Seoul's nuclear envoy Wi Sung-lac flew to Beijing and met with his Chinese counterpart Wu Dawei on Nov. 25 and "shared opinions on how to deal with" the claims that the North is running a highly sophisticated uranium enrichment plant and building a light-water atomic reactor.

The United Nations Security Council is studying how to respond to the revelations. After a U.N. Security Council meeting on Nov. 29 to monitor how existing sanctions against North Korea are being implemented, Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., said the North's construction of a uranium enrichment plant runs counter to U.N. resolutions passed against the North after its nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. Rice said the U.S. expects the U.N. "to intensify its important ongoing efforts to tighten sanctions enforcement."

### **Plutonium-producing Facilities**

Until the year 2008, North Korea's plutonium-producing facilities in Yongbyon had been under the process of dismantlement in accordance with a six-party deal that was supposed to provide the North with massive economic aid, diplomatic recognition and a peace treaty to replace the Korean War armistice.

But the nuclear talks have been stalled over U.N. sanctions for the North's nuclear and missile tests early in 2009 and the sinking of a South Korean warship last March, blamed on Pyongyang. The North has, however, signaled its willingness to rejoin the talks in recent months, apparently in a bid to draw concessions that could prop up its failing economy.

Washington and Seoul have stood firm in their opposition to the resump-



tion of the talks, urging the North to first show through action its commitment to denuclearize and account for the March sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan, which killed 46 sailors.

The construction of two 1,000-megawatt light-water reactors had been in progress in North Korea under a 1994 bilateral nuclear deal between Pyongyang and Washington. The construction was suspended in 2002 when Washington accused Pyongyang of running a secret uranium program as another way of building nuclear warheads rather than using plutonium, which was frozen under the Geneva Framework Agreement in exchange for energy and other forms of economic aid and diplomatic recognition.

North Korea said in 2009 that it has “entered the final stage” of enriching uranium to fuel light-water reactors. Pyongyang has reported to the International Atomic Energy Agency that it has extracted 36 kilograms of plutonium, but some experts say its entire stockpile could have been underreported. The 36 kilograms translate to up to 18 warheads if the North has acquired the technology to make a warhead with two kilograms, or nine warheads if it requires four kilograms, as widely estimated.

The development of a highly sophisticated enrichment facility, if confirmed, could cast doubts on the policy of South Korea and the U.S., which sought

to shut off any flow of supplies related to weapons of mass destruction into the North. Furthermore, North Korea’s revelation of a modern uranium enrichment plant will likely push neighboring countries to readjust their policies toward the regime, analysts said, citing the ineffectiveness of international sanctions imposed to pressure Pyongyang into giving up its nuclear arms programs.

Politicians and scholars alike have stressed the importance of China’s role in changing the behavior of North Korea. China has been reluctant to put pressure on the North, fearing it may destabilize the region. But Beijing is seen as holding the diplomatic and economic reins to push the North to denuclearize within the framework of six-nation talks.

### **Establishing Peace Mechanism**

As Adm. Mullen pointed out, the North’s revelation could be related to the power succession plan from Kim Jong-il to his youngest son Jong-un. But experts say the North is struggling to survive the harsh international sanctions on its provocations and is responding by bolstering its nuclear weapons program. The North’s desire for dialogue with the U.S. has been frustrated. Moreover, inter-Korean relations have remained frozen for years since the advent of the Lee Myung-bak administration, which took a tough stance against the North.

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said the North's demands must also be reviewed. Pyongyang calls for the normalization of bilateral ties with the U.S. and has often cited it as a precondition for giving up its nuclear arsenal, Yang said. "If denuclearization is important, then we should also think about what the North wants," he said. "Rather than arguing about who makes the first move, the six-party nations should lay all of their cards on the table and have frank discussions."

Since the Korean War ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty, North Korea has continuously demanded the U.S. sign a peace agreement to terminate the enmity between the two Cold War enemies.

South Korea and the U.S. admit there's a need to establish a peace mechanism on the tension-ridden peninsula, though the allies have urged the North to first eliminate its nuclear program in a "complete and verifiable way." North Korea's position is that it has already resolved the peace regime issue with South Korea through the 1992 Basic Agreement and that a peace treaty should be signed with the U.S.

But South Korean officials said North Korea's repeated calls for a peace treaty on the peninsula seem aimed at buying time for nuclear weapons development in order to be recognized as a nuclear state like Pakistan and India. In addition, Seoul is opposed to any discussion

on a peace treaty that involves only North Korea and the U.S., saying it requires four-way consultations that include South Korea and China, which also took part in the Korean War.

The four nations and the other two participants in the Beijing-based nuclear talks – Japan and Russia – created a working group forum to discuss the peace regime issue within the context of the six-party talks, though it has remained dormant amid Pyongyang's refusal to return to the multilateral negotiations, apparently in favor of bilateral dialogue with Washington.

Hecker said a senior North Korean official told him that the joint communique signed in 2000 between Pyongyang and Washington is a good starting point to resolve troubled issues on the Korean Peninsula. The security guarantees for North Korea are included in the joint communique, the fruit of efforts by the Clinton administration to reach out to the North in its final months in office.

The two countries agreed in the communique to take measures to fundamentally improve their relations based on the "changed environment on the peninsula" following the landmark first summit between leaders of the two Koreas earlier in the year. Then-U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and North Korean Marshal Jo Myong-rok exchanged visits to each other's capitals to produce the document. (Yonhap News)

## 2010 NORTH KOREA REVIEW: ISSUES AND TRAITS

**North Korea has shown signs of strengthening control within and aggression toward outside forces throughout 2010.**

By Kim Jin-moo

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The situation on the Korean Peninsula and inter-Korean relations have come to a pivotal point in 2010. With North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's health reportedly showing signs of ailment, the regime appears to be in the process of handing over power to Kim's third son, Kim Jong-un. According to the latest information in and out of North Korea, the heir apparent appears to be increasingly involved in a wide range of state affairs. Throughout 2010, North Korea has shown signs of strengthening control within and aggression toward outside forces, thus opening itself to interpretation of an ongoing power succession. The North's recent attack of the South's navy warship Cheonan and the deadly artillery shelling of the border island of Yeonpeyong, as well as other military provocations can also be interpreted as parts of its South Korea-related policy in a time of a power transition.

### **N. Korea's Strategic Environment in 2010**

The most important variable in North Korea's strategic environment in 2010 is the health of leader Kim Jong-il. Kim is reportedly ailing rapidly after having suffered a stroke in the summer of 2008 and some reports suggest that Kim may live up to three more years. The death or any abnormality in the health of the absolute dictator Kim Jong-il in the North could seriously destabilize the regime. The health of Kim is becoming the source of many shifts in the inside and outside development regarding the North.

Moreover, North Korea's socioeconomic conditions are continuing their downward trajectory. Since 2006, the country's economic woes have worsened, recording negative growth and the situation has become more bleak from the severe floods and monsoons of 2010. Amid the ongoing dire situation, ordinary people in the North are increasingly relying on the small markets to sustain their livelihoods

and the notion of materialism is expanding. An unofficial society that the regime doesn't control continues to grow.

Meanwhile, political sentiment within North Korea toward Seoul also isn't favorable to the communist nation. The North holds the view that it has been wronged, seeing itself as the victim of South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's North Korean policies. It defines Seoul's North Korean policies as anti-North Korea, hostile and aggressive, and a threat to Pyongyang, while upping the level of inter-Korean tension through the deadly attacks on the Cheonan warship and Yeonpyeong Island.

The recently strengthened alliance between the U.S. and South Korea is also a key element in regards to such Seoul-related sentiment from the North. The Lee Myung-bak government has adopted the "Joint Vision for the Alliance of ROK-USA" with the Barack Obama administration, while agreeing to fend off North Korea's nuclear threats by expanding its increased deterrence power. Moreover, the two sides agreed to delay the transfer of wartime control of South Korean troops from the previously set 2012 to 2015 after the Cheonan incident, while continuing to hold high-profile joint military exercises to pressure the North.

On the North's foreign affairs policy, the Obama administration at the moment maintains its "strategic patience" as the underlying philosophy of its North Korean policy. Washington has bolstered its sanctions against the North's provocative moves while opening up the door for the North to return to the six-party talks. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of its two nuclear tests, the Cheonan incident and other military provocations, the North has seen increased pressure from sanctions from the international community rallying largely behind the U.S. Most notable of them are the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874 following the two atomic tests. After the Cheonan incident, Washington further pressed Pyongyang through its executive orders. The effects of the string of sanctions most likely has dealt a serious blow to the Kim Jong-il regime, as it targets the North's overseas revenues through means such as trades of weapons, drug and counterfeit bills.

### **All-out Efforts to Establish a Succession Platform**

The North Korea of 2010 faces an unfavorable strategic front from both within and outside the country. Under such circumstances, Pyongyang cannot but fight tooth and nail for sustenance of the regime. To secure its regime, North Korea sought to cut off threats from overseas and at the same time stabilize its internal politics. The most significant event in North Korean politics in 2010 was the official debut of Kim Jong-un. Kim Jong-il, since facing health problems, appears to be focusing his efforts in establishing a stabilized power transfer platform as soon as

possible. Kim Jong-il in January of 2009 decided that his third son would succeed him and at the conference of the ruling Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK) named the heir apparent as a vice chairman of the party's Central Military Commission, effectively promulgating the power transfer and speeding up the power transfer process. This may reflect the fact that the father's health is deteriorating further and possibly underlining the sense of urgency of the succession issue for the regime itself.

Kim Jong-un, as vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, has effectively become the No. 2 person after the chairman, Kim Jong-il, within the North Korean power structure and has found himself in a place capable of molding key policies. With Kim Jong-un's frequent public outings with his father, it is possible that the son is involved in major policy decisions under the premise that the current leader's health is in trouble. Therefore it should be noted that the Kim Jong-un platform is not a power in waiting, but a key power in the current state administration. Meanwhile, the recovery of the WPK's dented status in significance is also a noteworthy political development in 2010. For the past 15 years, the WPK's role and status had become virtually irrelevant due to the country's emphasis on the Songun, or military-first politics.

Meanwhile, North Korea, to promote inter/external stability, has also put emphasis on establishing a socialism-oriented, controlled economic system. The economy in the doldrums, the notion of a market economy budding and the spreading of an anti-socialistic view throughout the people are all potential threats to the stability of the regime. Most recently, the country's food shortage has become a serious problem following the aftermath of the failed currency reform in late 2009 and severe floods in the summer of 2010. In an attempt to simmer down the public outcry against the failed currency reform, Pyongyang executed Pak Nam-gi, a top finance official who reportedly orchestrated the currency reform. Authorities are also known to have tried tightening their grip on public security by stoking a sense of public fear through crackdowns.

## **Seeking the Status of a Nuclear State**

North Korea also sought to win international recognition as a nuclear state in an effort to secure the regime's survival. North Korea itself virtually has self-imposed the title on itself after its second nuclear test in 2009. With the abnormalities of his health raising the uncertainty of the regime, Kim appears to have carried out the test to block off outside threats and win the loyalty of the power elites and people's support for the successful grounding of a three-generation father-to-son

power transfer. Also, while it appears to be out of grasp in practical terms, its nuclear arms appears to be serving as a key tool for the country's proclaimed goal of becoming a "strong and prosperous nation" by 2012. With discussions of resuming the six-party talks having resurfaced after Kim Jong-il's visit to China in August of last year, the U.S. insists a fundamental change of attitude by the North as a precondition to restart the nuclear talks, while Pyongyang, as its condition for returning to the six-party talks, is demanding its recognition as a nuclear state, holding nuclear disarmament talks, a discussion of a permanent peace treaty and the lifting of imposed sanctions.

North Korea has most recently further raised its ante by revealing its uranium enrichment facility. North Korea is also strengthening its security alliance with China. With the security landscape surrounding the Korean Peninsula having become fragile after the Cheonan incident, Kim Jong-il visited China in the following May and August, boasting the allies' special relationship. The unprecedented move was most likely an effort to counter the international efforts to further rein in the North over the Cheonan incident by further aligning with Beijing. On the other hand, China probably also felt the need to strengthen its ties with North Korea in light of the latest unpredictable developments in the peninsula, its somewhat awkward relationship with the U.S. and to rekindle the stalled six party talks. Such areas of mutual interest have brought the two countries closer than ever. North Korea has meanwhile raised its confrontational militant position toward the South. But Pyongyang has also at times shown a softer side toward Seoul to draw aid. At the moment, the North is raising cross-border tensions to unprecedented levels with its Cheonan and Yeonpyeong provocations. It is understood that the North is playing a highly calculated gamble to bring about a change in their currently disadvantageous situation.

### **Forecast for 2011**

Also, Pyongyang appears to be stimulating Beijing to strengthen its relations so that China engages itself to work for regional stability, while creating a mood toward an outbreak of war so that the international community feels the need to lift sanctions in order to prevent conflict and create an atmosphere of engagement toward Pyongyang. It's safe to assume that the recent Yeonpyeong shelling has proved that regional instability caused by North Korea can shake not only Northeast Asian but the global economy. While the North's likely calculated provocation backfired, inviting efforts once more toward tightening sanctions, North Korea is most likely to continue with its strategic belligerence.

To predict the future of North Korean politics, the most key variable to observe is the ongoing establishment of the Kim Jong-un succession platform, which is deeply tied to the health of Kim Jong-il. At the moment, the power transfer process is expected to consist of the heir's grooming as the next in line and further strengthening his political power base. And considering Kim Jong-il's health, the son is expected to play a much bigger role in future state policies. Decisions made solely by Jong-un may increase, depending on the condition of his father.

Meanwhile, the following elements must also be watched carefully to understand the future of the North's internal and external policies. First, since Kim Jong-il's illness surfaced, the regime, more than ever, is showing desperate signs of trying to hold on to power. There appears to be a wide-spread recognition that the regime is very fragile due to a decline of Kim Jong-il's political clout, a change in the power structure and an unfinished power succession. The second variable is the fact that we saw a conservative personnel shuffle during last year's WPK conference, which gave key posts to the major players of the current Kim Jong-il administration.

The third variable is the fact that North Korea faces two major tasks – that of a dwindling economy and its nuclear program – and also that it faces a dilemma regarding its regime. To maintain its regime, the North will tighten internal control while putting on a hard-line face toward the international community. But that will ultimately exacerbate its dire economic woes and bring about further pressure to give up its nuclear program, thus increasing the risk of the regime's collapse. On the other hand, seeking an internal reform or abandoning its nukes will also reduce the likelihood of the regime's sustenance.

The fourth element is the fact that Kim Jong-un's key task is to accumulate political authority and seize control of state affairs, and to achieve this, he will have to prove his worthiness through tangible results from both inside and outside the country. The recent disclosing of its uranium enrichment facility, the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong incidents appear to be moves to invite loyalty from the military to Kim Jong-un and expand his power base.

The aforementioned variables will not likely change much during the course of power succession in 2011. This is because the regime's dilemma will continue while further establishing the power transfer process while Kim Jong-un tries to maintain a powerful one-man dictatorship. In the end, he will most likely maintain his father's internal and external policies. Amid woes that a transition could cause insecurity of the North Korean regime, the Kim Jong-il-Kim Jong-un government will most likely continue with the current nuclear policy and saber-rattling, further spiking military tensions on the Korean Peninsula. (Yonhap News)

## Why Does Pyongyang Repeatedly Make Aggressive Provocations?

*To gain a clearer understanding of North Korea's recent provocations, namely the revelation of its uranium enrichment program and the artillery shelling on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, we have compiled what experts and analysts of the international community told the media regarding the North's aggressive actions. We hope that these materials will help you to understand North Korea's intentions and the political situation on the Korean Peninsula. ( -Ed.)*

In regard to North Korea's intentions on the recent provocations, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in a report written on Nov. 24 by *Politico*, "I don't know the answer to any question on North Korea that begins with the word 'why.'" But in an interview with ABC, Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), linked the North's provocations with the leadership transition it is currently undertaking in an attempt to strengthen the status of the North's heir apparent, Kim Jong-un, as a credible military dictator. Bonnie Glaser, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, claimed that North Korea is applying the strategy to demand recognition as a legitimate nuclear power, saying that North Korea learned to some extent that bad behavior gets them attention and may even get other countries to give them assistance.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula puts enormous pressure on China, benefactor and international mentor to North Korea, to exert its influence over the North's behavior. U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra (R-Mich.), the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, told *Politico*, "The only leverage on North Korea in the short and medium term is for Russia and China to finally recognize that a nuclear North Korea that is proliferating and acting the way it is, is a threat to their own national interest." Mullen noted in an interview that "the one country that has influence in Pyongyang is China." But former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton said China is "schizophrenic" when it comes to North Korea, and needs to be educated on the dangers posed by North Korea.

On the Obama administration's policy of strategic patience with North Korea, observers said that the policy is having little impact on the regime, which is focused on the transition of power from Kim Jong-il to his third son, Jong-un. They



even claim that Pyongyang's provocative moves are clearly designed to force the U.S. back to the negotiating table. According to a report in *The Hill* on Nov. 24, Glaser said the best option for Obama is to put pressure on China, while saying Obama makes bad and worse choices when it comes to North Korea. Opposed to Glaser's suggestion, other experts such as Bruce Bennett, senior defense analyst of the Rand Corporation, suggest more unconventional methods on how Obama should handle North Korea. Bennett claims that the artillery attacks verified how vulnerable North Korea is and that Obama should send vessels that deliver food should the regime collapse. Bennett said in *The Hill*, "Such steps would enrage Kim Jong-il but it would prepare the U.S. and the region for a regime change without providing any benefit to North Korea for its actions."

For North Korea's recent activities, Victor Cha, senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said during a PBS News Hour interview on Nov. 23, "North Korean activities over the past year to year-and-a half have followed a very steady train of provocations: in April of 2009, a ballistic missile test; in May, a nuclear test; the sinking of the Cheonan in March 2010, and now artillery shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. And these are, I think, at a degree much higher than previous provocations we have seen from the North, I mean, really, for 50 years. So, I think there is a potential for things to get worse before they get better." On the other hand, Sung-Yoon Lee, adjunct professor at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts University, said, "In the grand scheme of North Korean strategy, we have seen this pattern over the past several decades. North Korea has a very potent formula, that is, to provoke and then make a mini-concession and return to the negotiating table to reap concessions, economic compensation, and political compensation. That's been an effective policy for North Korea, unfortunately."

## **North Korea's Intention and Aims**

If the North's provocations are not aimed at getting negotiations back on the table, then what is North Korea up to? Professor Victor Cha paid attention to North Korea's internal issues, saying, "There is a leadership transition that is in process. We don't know if it is at the end of the leadership transition or at the beginning. We do know if it's an accelerated process, because the North Korean leader is quite ill." He also added, "In North Korea, when you have a new leader – it's only their third leader – you have to build a myth and an ideology around this leader based on the strength of the state. And, in that sense, I think a lot of these provocations, and in particular the last one, could be seen not as tit-for-tat for South Korean exercises or negotiating ploys. It's part of establishing the new mythology around this

young potential leader for the country.”

David C. Kang, director of the University of Southern California (USC) Korean Studies Institute, also stressed internal factors of North Korea and factors related to South Korea in an interview on Nov. 23 with USC. Kang said, “This most recent incident most likely was a result of a combination of factors. More generally, it is believed that the North Korean military in particular is taking a more aggressive stance towards South Korea in order to bolster domestic legitimacy for the newly anointed successor to current leader Kim Jong-il, his son Jong-un ... Thus, allowing him to be seen as the mastermind behind a number of provocative moves towards the South is one way in which he can attempt to earn legitimacy with the powerful North Korean military. More specifically, the NLL is a constant potential source of skirmishes between the two sides and this could be a result of yet one more burst of North Korean anger at South Korean moves.”

Another widely asserted theory among experts on why North Korea has been taking such drastic and aggressive measures is that it’s going back to its usual method to try to receive food and benefits from other countries by coercion. Narushige Michishita, a security expert in Tokyo, adds more to this theory by saying in *The Economist* on Nov. 25, “The North’s pattern of provocation suggests that it is holding out for a peace treaty to replace the old Armistice.” The U.S. State Department, however, seems firm in that it won’t “buy into this reaction-reward cycle that North Korea seeks to perpetuate.” According to *Newsweek* on Nov. 25, some experts like Former U.S. negotiator and Korea expert Dr. C. Kenneth Quinones stated that Kim Jong-il’s songun, or military-first, politics reached a point where the military has become so powerful that they are now starting to make their own policy decisions without the top leader’s approval and that “Kim Jong-il is no longer in a position to make the final policy decisions.”

## **China’s Role on Pyongyang’s Provocations**

In a report of *Foreign Policy* on Nov. 24, Michael Green pointed out two reasons why the North’s recent provocations are more dangerous than previous provocations. First, when one considers the fragility of the regime due to Kim Jong-il’s deteriorating health and his heir apparent Kim Jong-un’s lack of legitimacy, “it is not clear whether the younger ‘Great General’ or the aging ‘Dear Leader’ will be able to pull back from escalation as easily as they have in the past.” Second, based on the support North Korea has shown for reactor constructions in Syria and Burma, the new uranium enrichment would allow North Korea to produce a bomb annually for itself and pass the information to other nations.

In spite of the entire world looking towards China to appease the inter-Korean crisis sparked by recent provocations on the North's behalf, China has its own reasons for refusing to intervene against North Korea. The fear of being inundated by a flood of refugees, should the North Korean regime collapse, is the fuel that drives their unwillingness to criticize the North. In a report posted on Nov. 30 on his Twitter account, Leon T. Hadar, journalist and foreign affairs analyst, said that the U.S. must take measures that motivate China to take action against North Korea, instead of strengthening military armament and deploying more warships to South Korea, in order to achieve peace and stability throughout the Korean Peninsula. This can be accomplished by allowing "Seoul and Tokyo to take all the necessary steps to protect their security – including the nuclear military option" while working with Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing to draw an outline for "military disarmament of North Korea as part of a packaged deal involving economic assistance to the North."

In an interview with Yonhap News Agency on Dec. 2, Richard Bush, senior fellow and director for the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, explained how North Korea's provocations played a significant role concerning China. He stated, "These provocations educate China about the nature of North Korean policy today and that it is becoming more and more of a liability for China." He also stressed that a U.N. referral regarding the North's latest artillery shelling on Yeonpyeong will "expose how much of a liability Pyongyang has become to Beijing" and will pressure China to rethink their vested political and economic interests in North Korea. "Going to the Security Council ... puts (China) on the defensive. It forces them to defend North Korea. That's not a comfortable position for China to be in. So, the more China has to defend North Korea, the more they may see the value of change."

## **Purpose of the North's Nuclear Program**

Former U.S. special envoy Robert Carlin, who toured the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon on Nov. 12 with another former U.S. special envoy, Jack Pritchard, said in an extended briefing that North Korea was sending a clear message by showing off its new sophisticated uranium enrichment site: North Korea plans to keep its nuclear weapons for a long time and "we better get used to it." Carlin added that it was "ironic" that Pyongyang had constructed a light-water reactor, given that the international community had been working for years to build such a plant in North Korea under the auspices of the now-defunct Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. Expecting North Korea's ally, China, to apply pressure on the North seemed unlikely to Carlin. (Yonhap News)

# A YEAR AFTER N.K.'S CURRENCY REFORM: STATUS QUO AND REALITY

**A top financial official was reportedly executed in Pyongyang, paying the ultimate penalty for the catastrophic currency reform.**

By Tony Chang

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A year has past since North Korea carried out an abrupt reform of its currency system, but the attempt to clamp down on its small but wiggling market system has proven to be a disaster for the economy, which had already been on the near verge of collapse from international sanctions.

In 2002, North Korea introduced marketplaces in a bid to improve its dilapidated economy. But the reform was rolled back in recent years amid soaring prices and no signs of economic recovery.

With its economy plunging further into a hole, North Korea, without warning, carried out a fundamental currency revaluation on Nov. 30, 2009 in a bid to curb inflation and reportedly ensure a smooth power transition from North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to his third and youngest son Kim Jong-un.

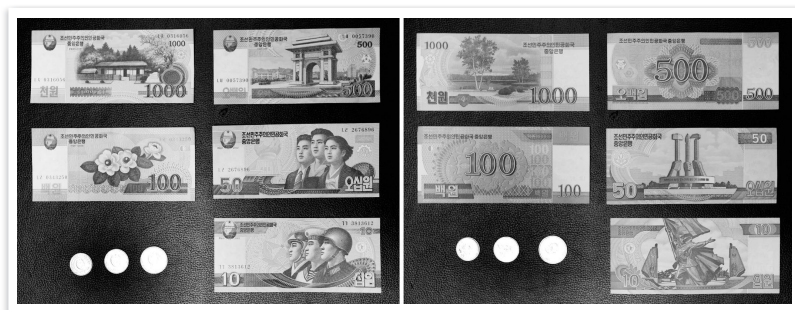
According to Pyongyang's media, the redenomination of its currency, which knocked two zeros off its banknotes, was aimed at curbing inflation, while analysts said the regime was trying to emasculate a growing merchant class and reassert control over market activities.

"We believe the government's ability will strengthen, and the role of the market, which has functioned as a supplement, will gradually weaken," Jo Song-hyon of the North's central bank was quoted as saying in an interview with the Tokyo-based *Choson Sinbo* in December 2009.

## **N.K.'s Evaluation on Currency Reform**

Considering the closed and secretive nature of North Korea, an objective and independent assessment of how the reform affected its market is difficult to achieve. The North's media in early 2010 claimed that the currency reform was a success.

On Jan. 23, 2010, Kim Chol-jun, chief economist of North Korea's Academy of Social Sciences, said the revaluation helped "implement socialist economic princi-



ples better and create a monetary base that can bring about a leap in the standard of living for people.”

Kim said his socialist country secured a monetary base that would underpin efforts to raise living standards when it carried out the currency reform in November 2009.

But just a month later, a report surfaced that Pak Nam-gi, the chief of the planning and finance department of the ruling Workers’ Party who oversaw the currency reform, was blamed for sharp inflation and social chaos that followed the reform and was fired from his post.

In March, multiple sources privy to North Korea’s internal affairs, told Yonhap News Agency that Pak was reportedly executed at a shooting range in Pyongyang, paying the ultimate penalty for the catastrophic currency reform.

“All the blame has been poured on Pak after the currency reform failure exacerbated public sentiment and had a bad effect” on leader Kim Jong-il’s plan to hand power over to his third son Jong-un, one source said on condition of anonymity.

Later in June of 2010, apparently taking responsibility for the botched reform, Premier Kim Yong-il was replaced by Choe Yong-rim.

Some experts say Kim Jong-un, son and heir of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, was in fact to blame for pushing for the reform. The Open Radio for North Korea in Seoul, citing an “internal source” in North Korea, reported that the move was suggested by a team under Kim Jong-un and the senior Kim approved it.

The radio said Kim Jong-un’s team judged that North Korea’s economic measure in 2002 was not proper to be applied for the “Kim Jong-un era” and asserted that the heir apparent forced the measure to collect cash circulated in the private sector. In the year after North Korea abruptly reformed its currency system, prices of daily commodities in the country have skyrocketed, according to a Seoul-based Internet news outlet specializing in North Korean affairs.

The dire consequences of the North trying to rein in its own version of a market

economy can be seen most clearly in the price trajectory of rice in the past year. In its recent report on the aftermath of North Korea's currency reform of 2009, Daily NK, a Seoul-based Internet news outlet specializing in North Korean affairs, said the price of a kilogram of rice in Pyongyang stood at 900 North Korean won in late November of 2010.

Before the devaluation was carried out, the price of a kilogram of rice in November of 2009 was about 2,200 won. In accordance with the reevaluation, the price at that time would translate to 22 won as of November 2010. The price of a kilogram of rice, a benchmark in commodity prices, in effect, has skyrocketed 44-fold in one year.

## **Sharp Inflation and Social Chaos**

Rice prices spiked to 1,300 won in March of last year and later stabilized as low as 400 won two months later, but severe flood damage during the summer of 2010 appears to have bumped up the price to near the 1,000-won level since August.

In August of 2010, the Seoul government noted the sharp price increases and said it can be attributed to the failed currency reform and the appreciation of the Chinese yuan. Because North Korea imports many of its products from China, the rise of the yuan's value can affect the purchasing power of North Korea.

The failed currency reform and a deteriorating economy, coupled with the large human and material losses from 2010 monsoon floods, apparently led the North to rely more on China, its main benefactor, with Kim Jong-il having traveled to the ally twice in 2010 alone.

To observers, Kim's trip in August to the Chinese northeastern area that shares the border with North Korea was seen as an indication that there has been progress in economic cooperation talks between the two countries.

The economic jumble, which reportedly had dented the North's real economy hard, also had a repercussive effect on the socialist regime's political landscape, according to Seoul officials, most notably shown in the U.S. State Department's diplomatic cables exposed by WikiLeaks last year.

"Kim Sung-hwan (South Korea's foreign minister) asserted there were credible reports of unrest in the North; according to ROK (South Korea) intelligence sources, DPRK (North Korea) police recently found a bomb on a passenger train en route from Pyongyang to Beijing," said a cable written by Kathleen Stephens, U.S. ambassador to South Korea.

"The situation inside North Korea, he added, appeared increasingly unstable. The North's currency replacement had created strong resentment throughout DPRK

society, Kim said.”

With the North having paid, and most likely still paying, a painful price for arbitrarily hampering its currency and market, many experts in the South say they do not expect another coercive move on the side of the state in trying to manipulate the real economy.

“By going through the currency reform, not only ordinary North Koreans, but the leaders also came to realize that the North Korean economy cannot function without markets,” said Kim Byung-yeon, a professor of economics at Seoul National University. “They must have realized that not even a strong brake such as the currency reform can stop the markets.”

## **Current Situation**

Lim Eul-chool, an associate professor at Kyungnam University’s Institute for Far East Studies in Seoul, saw the current situation as the North’s authorities having unreluctantly restored the laissez-faire nature in the markets.

“(The government) tried to shut down the markets, but the current situation is that (the authorities) reopened the markets due to the people’s protest,” Lim said, noting that the country must rely on the markets as the government itself is emasculate from being able to provide the basic necessities to the people.

Another South Korean expert on the North’s economy, who wished to remain anonymous, forecast that Pyongyang won’t be able to carry out any policies that will negatively affect public sentiment, at least not until the power succession from Kim Jong-il to Kim Jong-un, still in its infant stage, finds stability.

Meanwhile, other experts say the regime itself will try to restore its lost authority by aligning more closely with its major donor China and attempt to provide some basic social welfare for the people.

“With the North Korea-China economic relation strengthened, the North’s economic reliance on China is ever growing. The goods traded between the two countries in the past used to be focused on foods, clothing and basic necessity goods, but now have become more diversified and now include raw materials and even electronics,” another expert on North Korea’s economy said, requesting to be unnamed.

Lim Soo-ho, a senior researcher at the Samsung Economic Research Institute, saw the possibility of Beijing, with its increased influence on North Korea, demanding a fundamental transformation in Pyongyang’s economic policies. “Under such circumstances, there is the possibility that China would make such demands as pre-conditions for future investments in North Korea,” he said. (Yonhap News)

## N. Korea Shows Sensitive Reaction to S. Korean Firing Exercise

**The South Korean military said the Dec. 20 exercise was a legitimate defensive drill, which it has carried out regularly since 1974.**

While the world was closely watching the tense situation on the Korean Peninsula, South Korea conducted a live-fire drill in waters off Yeonpyeong Island on Dec. 20 for about an hour and half. The island in the West Sea was the scene of North Korea's deadly artillery shelling in late November.

Through the exercise, the South Korean military was placed on its highest level of alert against any possible artillery attack from North Korea as the communist country had repeatedly threatened to strike back with "deadlier" firepower if South Korea went ahead with the planned live-fire drill.

Despite Pyongyang's malicious threats, the drill ended with no apparent retaliation from the North. The North's artillery remained silent throughout the drill, which began at 2:30 p.m. after repeated delays due to sea fog earlier in the day.

The South Korean military said the Dec. 20 exercise was a legitimate defensive drill, which it has regularly carried out since 1974. "This drill is one that we have been conducting for a long time and it is a regular, just form of defense," said foreign ministry spokesman Kim Young-sun. "We believe this is within our sovereign rights."

Seoul's defense ministry said the exercise was a continuation of the live-fire drills suspended after the North's Nov. 23 artillery attack on the island that killed four South Koreans, including two civilians. In the previous drill, the military had planned to fire some 3,000 to 4,000 shells with 11 types of guns but was forced to halt when North Korea started firing at the island. This time, some 1,500 rounds were fired during the exercise, officials said.

During the firing, the North Korean military strengthened its vigilance and maintained its readiness stance, according to South Korean military sources. The North's military opened covers for its coastal artillery guns and forward deployed some artillery batteries.

The Defense Ministry in Seoul said the troops on Yeonpyeong utilized all the firepower they had, including K-9 howitzers, 105-millimeter towed field guns, Vulcan guns and 81-millimeter and 60-millimeter mortar guns.

It emphasized that during the exercise, its artillery shells drop about 10 kilometers south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL) and are not meant to provoke the communist state.

North Korea has repeatedly claimed that it has territorial rights over waters



around five South Korean islands, including Yeonpyeong, and that the South Korean live-fire drills pose a violation of its territory. In reality, South Korea has effectively controlled the waters south of the NLL, which was drawn up by the U.N. Command after the armistice of the Korean War in 1953.

South Korean military forces put F-15K fighter jets on standby in mid-air, and the Navy sent 10 ships to the waters around the island, including the 7,600-ton Aegis-class destroyer King Sejong the Great. About 20 U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea also participated in the drill with communications, control and medical aid. Nine members of the United Nations and its Military Armistice Commission observed the drill.

The exercise proceeded after the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) failed to reach an agreement on adopting a statement on defusing tensions on the Korean Peninsula during an emergency session, which was held in New York on Dec. 20, Korean time. China, a veto-wielding UNSC member, reportedly refused to include a phrase in the statement condemning the North for the artillery attack.

In a statement issued two and a half hours after the exercise, North Korea's official news service said the drill wasn't worth reacting to. "We felt it was not worth reacting one by one to military provocations," the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the Supreme Command of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) as saying.

The KPA said, "Their military provocation was a product of their cunning scenario to deliberately lead the military counteraction of the DPRK (North Korea) to driving the situation on the Korean Peninsula to the brink of a war and thus save the U.S. Asia policy and strategy toward the DPRK from bankruptcy." It said, "The revolutionary armed forces of the DPRK did not feel any need to retaliate against every despicable military provocation like one taking revenge after facing a blow."

North Korea had persistently denounced the South's military exercise. On Dec. 17, North Korea warned that it would strike back with "deadlier" firepower if South Korea went ahead with its planned live-fire drill. Adding to tension, North Korea's official Web site, Uriminzokkiri, warned on Dec. 17 that another war with South Korea would involve nuclear arms and would spread beyond the peninsula.

A day after the drill, South Korea lit up a giant Christmas tree on top of a border hill near North Korea amid concern that Pyongyang might attempt to strike down the glowing structure that it denounces as psychological warfare against the isolated nation.

About 100,000 colorful lightbulbs were lit on a tree-shaped, 30-meter-high steel tower at Aegibong peak on the western border in a ceremony organized by the Seoul-based Yoido Full Gospel Church and attended by about 400 people. (Yonhap News)

## <Internal Affairs>

### **N. Korean Leader Visits Concert, Food Factory Amid Military Tension**

Despite heightened military tension stemming from the North Korea's deadly artillery attack on the South, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il has continued on with his routine public field guidances, with some experts in Seoul viewing the appearances as a calculated show of unwavering leadership in times of turmoil.

Hours after launching a deadly artillery attack on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Nov. 23 reported that Kim and his apparent successor Kim Jong-un together toured a soy sauce factory and a medical school in Pyongyang.

The KCNA did not carry any comment that would indicate the 68-year-old leader ordered the attack that killed two South Korean marines and two civilians and injured 18 others.

The KCNA reports come amid growing curiosity over their whereabouts as military tension between the Koreas boils to a level unseen for years. North Korea has attacked the South Korean Navy three times since 1999, but never launched an attack that appeared to indiscriminately target both soldiers and civilians.

The KCNA on Nov. 25 also reported that the two Kims traveled to the newly built hard glass shop at the Taean Friendship Glass Factory and the Kangso Mineral Water Processing Factory.

A day later, the news agency reported that the senior Kim, together with senior officials but not his heir apparent, visited newly built apartment houses and the reconstructed Pyongyang University of Dance.

On Nov. 28, the day when South Korea and the U.S. began their massive joint military drill off the Yellow Sea, the two Kims were reported by the KCNA to have watched a performance given by the North's State Symphony Orchestra.

The most recent whereabouts of Kim Jong-il were reported on Nov. 30, when the KCNA reported that the senior Kim, together with top officials, provided field guidance to a branch factory of the Ryongsong Machine Complex.

The relatively energetic rate of public activities of the leadership during tense times, at least according to North Korea's past media reports, is unprecedented.

In November 2009, when the two Koreas navies clashed in the Yellow Sea, Kim's activities were kept in the dark for 10 days. In June 2002, when another deadly naval clash broke out, the whereabouts of the leader was not reported for a week.

Some experts in Seoul see the North's media engaging in psychological warfare

with the South and the U.S. by intentionally putting a brighter spotlight on the leader during the latest security crisis.

“It seems as though the North is trying to gain an upper hand in terms of the psychological tug-of-war by boasting that its leader’s composure is intact,” said Jeung Young-tai, director of the Center for North Korean Studies at the Korea Institute for National Unification. (Yonhap News)

## **N. Korea Creates New Ministry for Boosting Resources Development**

**N**orth Korea recently formed a new government body dedicated to the country’s resources development, according to North Korean media.

The KCNA on Dec. 2 said the State Guidance Bureau of Resource Development was reorganized into the Ministry of State Resource Development according to a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly promulgated on Dec. 1.

North Korea’s increasing emphasis on resources development was forecast when leader Kim Jong-il visited a coal mine in Jagang Province, just days after he wrapped up his trip to three northern provinces of China, signaling potential bilateral cooperation in the area of resources development.

The establishment of the new ministry appears to be aimed at boosting resources development and exports amid increased international sanctions on the country.

“Chinese investments aimed at modernizing North Korea’s infrastructures on resources development is in high gear,” said Cho Bong-hyun, a North Korea analyst with the Seoul-based IBK bank, interpreting the move as the North’s intent to spur underground resources development. (Yonhap News)

## **Kim Jong-il and Jong-un Inspect Food Factories**

**N**orth Korean leader Kim Jong-il, accompanied by his son and heir apparent Jong-un, inspected food factories, a media report said on Dec. 11, amid heightened tensions following the North’s deadly artillery attack on South Korea.

The KCNA said Kim and his son inspected flour-processing and foodstuff factories in Pyongyang and also a restaurant. It gave no other details, including when the visit was made.

During the visit, Kim “highly appreciated its workers’ spirit of devoted service for people as they are devoting their wisdom and enthusiasm to improving the people’s diet,” the KCNA report said.

North Korea's shelling on South Korea's Yeonpyeong island near the Yellow Sea border on Nov. 23 left two marines and two civilians dead. It was the North's first military attack on a civilian area in South Korea since the Korean War ended in 1953.

The North's bombardment spiked tensions on the Korean Peninsula to one of their highest levels in decades with the South vowing tougher consequences against any future attacks from the North.

Two days earlier, the North's leader met with Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo in Pyongyang. It remains uncertain whether they discussed the island attack.

Analysts believe that the artillery attack was aimed at grabbing international attention as Pyongyang seeks to resume international talks on its nuclear ambitions in exchange for much-needed aid. Also, it may partly aim to increase military credentials for the young and untested next leader-in-waiting.

Jong-un, believed to be in his late 20s, made his public debut in September after being made a four-star army general and given important ruling party posts. (Yonhap News)

## **Former North Korean Premier Seen at Kim Jong-il's Public Outing**

North Korea's former Premier Pak Pong-ju, who reportedly returned to power with the ruling party in mid-2010, was recently seen accompanying the country's leader on a field guidance trip.

The (North) Korean Central Broadcasting Station on Dec. 11 aired footage of Pak, first-deputy director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), accompanying Kim Jong-il on his recent visit to a socks factory in Pyongyang.

Pak, a long-time industry technocrat and pragmatist, was named premier of the North's Cabinet in September 2003. He spearheaded the North's so-called July 1, 2002 economic measure toward a market economy, which aimed to give more autonomy to state firms and gradually reduce state rationing of food and daily necessities.

But his strong initiative triggered a backlash from the party and the military that resulted in his dismissal. Pak was suspended from duty in June 2006 on charges of fund apprehension and was fired in April the following year. Kim Yong-il, then land and marine transport minister, replaced him.

The 70-year old returned to power with the WPK in August of 2010, having been named the "first-deputy director of the WPK Central Committee." He is believed to

be working in the party's division responsible for the nation's light industries.

Pak's appearance in public with Kim was the first since his return to power with the ruling party. The KCNA on Dec. 10 reported on the same event but did not include Pak's name on the list of officials that accompanied the leader.

"Pak's accompanying of Kim may have been due to the leader encouraging the former prime minister, a symbol of pragmatism, to produce results in the light industry, which has great relevance with people's daily lives, ahead of the nation's goal of becoming a great and prosperous nation by 2012," said Cho Bong-hyun, a North Korea analyst with the Seoul-based IBK bank. (Yonhap News)

## <External Affairs>

### **North Korea Lists Japanese Atrocities During Colonial Rule**

North Korea's media recently condemned Japan's colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula and war atrocities as "hideous state-sponsored crimes" in light of the 105th anniversary of Japan enforcing Korea to sign a treaty of annexation.

The KCNA, taking note of the Nov. 17 anniversary of the "Ulsa Protection Treaty," issued a lengthy statement on Nov. 16. which pointed out and blasted what it saw as Japan's most significant war crimes.

In 1905, Japan and then-unified Korea signed the treaty through which the latter was deprived of the right of diplomacy. Five years later, the peninsula was formally annexed to Japan. Liberation came in 1945 as World War II ended with Japan's defeat.

"The biggest crime committed by the Japanese imperialists during their military occupation of Korea is that they cruelly killed Koreans ... they perpetrated such thrice-cursed crimes against humanity as massacring Koreans," the statement said.

The news agency also pointed out that Japan's ultimate aim of their rule over Korea was to "assimilate Koreans as Japanese" and to "eliminate the history of Korea and its cultural tradition and national character."

On economy, the KCNA accused Japan of promulgating their "Forest Survey Act" and expropriating millions of hectares of forest in Korea under the name of "state forest" and handing over the rest to Japanese landowners.

The statement ended with a warning that North Korea was "fully determined to

force Japan to pay for all its crimes” and that Tokyo should make complete reparation to the Korean nation for its crimes. (Yonhap News)

## **N. Korea Slams U.N. Resolution on Its Human Rights Violations**

**N**orth Korea on Nov. 20 rejected the latest U.N. resolution denouncing human rights conditions in the socialist country, calling the move a U.S.-led “political plot” to topple its regime.

The U.N. General Assembly has adopted such a resolution on North Korea every year since 2005. Pyongyang has bristled at any talk of its human rights conditions.

“The ‘resolution’ is a product of the political plot of the hostile forces who have nothing to do with the protection and improvement of human rights,” a spokesman for the North’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement carried by the nation’s official Korean Central News Agency.

“The hostile forces led by the U.S. hatch this plot every year to bring down the DPRK’s system,” the unidentified spokesman added. DPRK stands for the country’s official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

In its resolution adopted on Nov. 18, the U.N. General Assembly said it “expresses its very serious concern at the presence of continuing reports of systematic, widespread and grave violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in” North Korea.

South Korea co-sponsored the resolution drafted by the European Union and Japan.

North Korea has long been labeled one of the worst human rights violators in the world. The communist regime of leader Kim Jong-il does not tolerate dissent, holds hundreds of thousands of people in political prison camps across the nation and keeps tight control of outside information flowing into the country.

The North compared the U.S. and other Western nations that sponsored the resolution to a “thief crying ‘Stop the thief!’” accusing them of racial discrimination, maltreatment of immigrants and abuse of prisoners. (Yonhap News)

## **N. Korea Accuses S. Korea of Destroying Chances of Family Reunions**

**N**orth Korea accused South Korea on Nov. 24 of “ruining” further chances of reuniting families separated by the Korean War six decades ago, a day after the divided countries traded artillery fire that killed at least four South Koreans.

The statement from the North Korean Red Cross also came after its South Korean counterpart indefinitely postponed their talks scheduled for Nov. 25. The North had demanded in the previous round that the South provide 500,000 tons of rice and 300,000 tons of fertilizer in return for an agreement to allow regular reunions.

“As the South’s Red Cross has declared the indefinite postponement of talks, we no longer seek to resolve humanitarian issues,” the North’s Red Cross said in a statement released through the KCNA.

“The South’s Red Cross should bear the entire responsibility for ruining humanitarian programs, including family reunions,” it said.

On Nov. 23, South Korea is indefinitely postponing Red Cross talks with North Korea, hours after the North killed two South Korean marines in an artillery attack.

“We decided it would be inappropriate to hold Red Cross talks under current circumstances in which the North has fired artillery shells on Yeonpyeong Island,” said an official at the Unification Ministry in Seoul.

The two sides were slated to hold the talks in the South Korean border town of Munsan on Nov. 25 to discuss ways to regularize the reunions. The sides had held their first reunion event in a year from late October to early November in the North.

Earlier, North Korea offered on Nov. 18 to resolve its months-long hold on South Korea’s assets at their joint mountain resort in the socialist state when the sides meet for Red Cross talks.

The offer, made in a message to South Korea, came only a day after Seoul urged Pyongyang to withdraw its freeze and seizure in April of South Korean facilities at the Mount Kumgang resort.

South Korea suspended its tours to the scenic mountain just north of the heavily armed border after a Seoul tourist allegedly trespassed into a barred zone and was shot dead in 2008.

North Korea, which had earned millions of U.S. dollars through the inter-Korean tourism project, argues it has taken sufficient measures to shed light on the shooting and bolster security. The South has dismissed the measures as far short of satisfactory.

In anger, the cash-strapped North has seized or frozen South Korean assets at Mount Kumgang, including a government-owned family reunion center, shops and a golf range.

“The North proposed that government officials join the Nov. 25 Red Cross talks to discuss resuming Mount Kumgang tours and that the matter of real estate and seizure also be discussed and resolved,” the Unification Ministry said on Nov. 18 in a statement. (Yonhap News)

## **North Korea Rejects Talks with U.N. Command on Artillery Attack**

North Korea rejected a proposal by the U.S.-led U.N. Command (UNC) to hold general-level military talks on the North's deadly artillery attack on an inhabited South Korean island, officials said on Nov. 25.

The UNC, which supervises the armistice that ended the Korean War in 1953, proposed holding the talks with North Korea on Nov. 24, a day after North Korea shelled Yeonpyeong Island, killing two marines and two civilians.

"North Korea rejected the proposal by the UNC because it appeared to see no practical benefit in the talks," said an official at the South's defense ministry.

Officials at the UNC were not immediately available for comment.

The UNC said it will investigate the North's artillery attack as part of its responsibility to maintain the truce and will determine any violations.

The UNC is headed by the top U.S. commander in South Korea, where some 28,500 American troops are stationed to deter North Korean aggression. North Korea on Nov. 27 blamed the United States for prompting its artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island, claiming the U.S. brought on the confrontation between the divided Koreas to use it as an excuse to increase its military presence in the region.

"No sooner had the Yeonpyeong incident occurred than the U.S. announced that it would stage joint naval exercises with the South Korean puppet forces with nuclear-powered carrier George Washington involved in the West Sea of Korea as if it had been waiting for it to happen before immediately sending the carrier to the sea," the KCNA said in a commentary.

The accusation came shortly after Seoul and Washington announced plans for a joint naval exercise in Korea's Yellow Sea following the attack. The five-day exercise began on Nov. 28, involving dozens of South Korean and U.S. warships, including the United States' nuclear-power aircraft carrier USS George Washington. (Yonhap News)

## **Ranking N. Korean Returns Home Wrapping up Five-day Visit to China**

Choe Thae-bok, chairman of the North's Supreme People's Assembly, returned home after wrapping up a five-day visit to China, the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said on Dec. 4.

During the stay in China, Choe held talks with Wu Bangguo, China's top legislator and the country's second-ranking official, amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, according to the Chinese government.



Top legislators from North Korea and China met on Dec. 1 afternoon, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement posted on its Web site.

The statement, however, did not clarify whether the two high-ranking officials spoke about North Korea's artillery attack on South Korea on Nov. 23 or its newly disclosed uranium enrichment plant that could easily produce material for nuclear warheads.

Choe landed in China on Nov. 30 for a five-day visit in response to an invitation from Wu. Choe, known to be one of the key political figures in North Korea, visited China in September for talks with top Chinese officials after North Korea's biggest Workers' Party convention since 1980. During the convention, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il named his third son, Kim Jong-un, as his successor.

The current visit comes a week after North Korea's deadly shelling on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island near the inter-Korean border. The attack killed two marines and as many civilians, drawing international condemnation and angering South Koreans. It was the first North Korean attack targeting civilians since the 1950-53 Korean War.

Choe and Wu exchanged views on bilateral relations and other issues of common interest "in a cordial and friendly atmosphere," the China's online statement said. "The unswerving strategic policy of the Chinese government and the Chinese party is to continuously consolidate and develop friendly and cooperative relations with North Korea," Wu was quoted as saying on the statement. (Yonhap News)

## **N. Korean FM Defends Pyongyang's Decision to Bolster Nuclear Arsenal**

The current tensions on the Korean Peninsula prove that North Korea made the right decision to bolster its nuclear arsenal, Pyongyang's top diplomat said, accusing South Korea and the U.S. of seeking confrontation with the communist nation.

Minister Pak Ui-chun made the remark in an interview with Russia's Interfax news agency on Dec. 10 ahead of his planned trip to Moscow set for Dec. 12-15. The visit comes amid a flurry of diplomacy to deal with high tensions over North Korea's artillery attack on a South Korean island.

The North's Nov. 23 shelling on the South's bordering Yeonpyeong Island killed four people, including two civilians.

"Recently the situation on the Korean Peninsula has been in quite a dangerous stage, while inter-Korean relations are worse than ever," Pak said in the interview. "The main reason behind this escalation is the United States' hostile policy in rela-

tion to the DPRK (North Korea) and the policy of confrontation with the North being pursued by the current ruling forces of South Korea.”

Unless Seoul and Washington drop “their hostile and confrontational policy” toward the North, Pak said, it will be impossible to reduce tensions on the divided peninsula.

“We once again saw the rightness of our choice in favor of the Songun policy and the comprehensive strengthening of our self-defense potential based on nuclear deterrence forces,” he said. Songun refers to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il’s “military-first” policy of putting priority on building stronger armed forces.

Despite high tensions, the North supports resuming the six-party nuclear talks, Pak said, accusing Washington of opposing dialogue and ignoring its proposal of a peace treaty.

South Korea and the U.S. say that the North should first improve relations with Seoul and demonstrate its denuclearization commitment through action so as to create the right atmosphere for resuming the nuclear talks involving the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the U.S.

The nuclear talks have been stalled since the last session in December 2008. (Yonhap News)

## **N. Korea Ridicules U.S. for Being Ensnared in WikiLeaks Saga**

**N**orth Korea belittled the United States on Dec. 13 for troubles caused by diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks and accused American diplomats of spying across the world, while it remained silent on revelations involving Pyongyang itself.

The report carried in the North’s *Rodong Sinmun*, the ruling party’s daily, appeared to underscore the interest the communist country has in the cables that have revealed fresh but unpolished details about U.S. diplomatic activities around the world.

The paper cited several examples where the cables showed U.S. diplomats gathering sensitive and private information on their counterparts in leading nations. The *Rodong Sinmun* also accused the U.S. of conspiring to overthrow regimes opposing its influence.

“At a glance, the revealing of U.S. secret diplomatic documents by WikiLeaks may seem to be something that is not right,” the paper said. “But the reason the U.S. is going wild is that it has committed many sins.”

The U.S. remains North Korea’s main foe. Pyongyang claims it has developed

nuclear arms to deter a U.S. invasion, while the two countries remain technically at war after the U.S. fought on the South Korean side during the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in a truce.

The U.S. diplomatic cables included reports containing sensitive details about the North Korean regime, including one where leader Kim Jong-il is described as a “chain smoker.” Other cables quoted a senior South Korean official as forecasting the communist regime will collapse in a few years and a top North Korean diplomat as expressing doubts over the alliance between his country and China. (Yonhap News)

## **N. Korea Skips Mention of Russia’s Criticism on Artillery Attack**

North Korea indicated on Dec. 14 that there were more disagreements than agreements in talks between its foreign minister and his Russian counterpart on the latest situations on the Korean Peninsula, including its shelling of South Korea.

Reporting on the results of the meeting in Moscow on Dec. 13 between North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun and his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, the KCNA deliberately left out Moscow’s criticism of the North’s deadly artillery attack on the South Korean border island of Yeonpyeong on Nov. 23.

Couching obvious disagreements in the ambiguity of diplomatic terminology, the KCNA also did not report on “deep concerns” voiced by Russia in the Moscow meeting over the North’s self-revealed uranium-enrichment program. In November, the North showed a visiting U.S. scholar a part of its uranium enrichment facilities.

The North claims the uranium enrichment program is for peaceful energy development but outside experts believe that it would give the country a new source of fission material to make atomic bombs, in addition to its widely known plutonium-based nuclear weapons program.

According to Russia’s foreign ministry, its minister, in fact, took a critical stand of North Korea in the Moscow meeting and expressed “deep concerns” over the artillery attack and the uranium program.

However, the North’s news agency said, “The Russian side gave a profound understanding of the DPRK’s (North Korea’s) stand toward the grave situation recently prevailed on the Korean Peninsula and expressed deep apprehension over the facts that the Yonphyong (Yeonpyeong) Island incident occurred due to South Korea’s provocation and the U.S.” (Yonhap News)

## **S. Korea Considers Reinstating ‘Main Enemy’ Tag for N. Korea**

South Korea’s defense ministry said on Dec. 3 it is considering redefining North Korea as the country’s “main enemy” in its defense paper amid heightened tensions and public outrage following the North’s deadly artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island.

“We are currently reviewing whether to use the term of ‘main enemy’ in describing North Korea in the 2010 Defense White Paper in relation to the current situation,” ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said, adding that the biennial defense paper will be published later this month.

The North’s artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island close to the tense Yellow Sea border on Nov. 23 killed two marines and two civilians, marking the first attack on a South Korean civilian area since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Public criticism has been mounting as the military and the intelligence agency had not taken due measures even after the National Intelligence Service detected in August signs of a possible North Korean attack on one of the five islands in the Yellow Sea.

The military also came under fire because its counter-strike to the North’s attack was considered too feeble, prompting President Lee Myung-bak to replace his defense chief.

Earlier in the day, then-Defense Minister-nominee Kim Kwan-jin, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also hinted that the ministry may reinstate the “main enemy” term for North Korea.

“It is clear that the North Korean military and its leader are our main enemies,” the nominee said at his confirmation hearing. “I will review whether the term should be included in the Defense White Paper.”

South Korea first used the label “main enemy” for North Korea in its 1995 white paper after North Korea threatened to turn Seoul into a “sea of fire” a year earlier.

Seoul toned down the expression in 2004, opting instead to define the North as a “direct military threat” or “existing military threat” in an apparent bid not to antagonize Pyongyang amid thawing ties. (Yonhap News)

## **Human Rights Panel Recommends Resuming Anti-Pyongyang Propaganda**

South Korea’s state human rights agency approved a recommendation for the government to resume anti-North Korea propaganda as tension was running high after the North’s shelling on a South Korean island.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)'s plenary committee in a meeting on Dec. 6 adopted the recommendation in a 6-2 vote, saying the government needs to show the people of the reclusive North the real outside world "through all means possible."

The recommendation urges the government to resume broadcasts through loudspeakers at the border with North Korea and to encourage the sending of leaflets into the North denouncing its leader and regime.

"I cannot overlook the realities of North Koreans' lives," NHRC chairman Hyun Byung-chul said. "We have to deal with human rights in North Korea and provide North Koreans with information so that they can think and judge."

The move came as tensions spiked on the Korean Peninsula from the North's deadly Nov. 23 artillery strike on a South Korean border island, killing four people, including two civilians.

The recommendation, proposed by six of nine commissioners, was passed in a second attempt after an earlier one was left undecided since June. Opponents at the time had argued against fueling already high cross-border tensions from the sinking of a South Korean warship in March blamed on the North. They also said it was beyond the NHRC's role to take a position on anti-Pyongyang propaganda.

Liberal members of the plenary committee on Dec. 6 still questioned the efficacy of the commission's latest decision.

The NHRC also called for the passing of a North Korean human rights bill, which is pending at the National Assembly, citing the North's military provocations, according to officials.

Loudspeakers are designed so that the broadcasts can be heard as far as 24 kilometers into North Korea at night and 10km during the day. Pyongyang has consistently warned that it will shoot down the loudspeakers if the broadcasts resume.

Seoul had stopped the propaganda broadcasts in 2004 in an agreement with Pyongyang when their ties were thawing.

Protesting the rights panel's move, a civic group filed a petition with the NHRC later on Dec. 7 claiming restricted access to North Korean media inversely infringes upon rights of South Koreans. South Korea's National Security Law prohibits possession or distribution of materials sympathetic to the communist North.

"All publications operated by North Korea are available only to organizations and people who have been approved by the government, while ordinary citizens have no other option than limited information selected or processed by the government," the Human Rights Solidarity for New Society said in the petition. "This infringes upon people's right to know and access information in violation of the international standard for human rights." (Yonhap News)

# CHINA'S STRATEGY FOR HANDLING NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

## I. Introduction

South Korea, along with the surrounding four powers, has exerted various efforts to settle the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons development program, but their efforts have yet to pay off. In recent years, they have been trapped in a situation struggling to find a solution to the problem. Moreover, there seemed to be a return to the Cold War era, as the U.S.-South Korea camp and the China-North Korea one butted heads in dealing with the North's alleged torpedoing and sinking of a South Korean warship, the Cheonan, in the Yellow Sea in March. In 2010, China emerged as the second-largest economic power after the U.S. The Asian nation first turned into an economic power after overcoming the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and establishing a firm base to expand monetarily. And it then became an economic superpower after a sustained rapid economic growth through pump-priming measures while the U.S. economy was trapped in a slump during a global financial crisis touched off by the bankruptcy in 2008 of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., a global financial services firm, which had participated in investment banking, equity and fixed-income sales, research and trading, investment management, private equity and private banking. While pushing up its status to an economic superpower despite the two financial crises, China has enjoyed its ever growing influence in the international community.

The ever growing economic power of China is naturally drawing global attention regarding the way how it will affect the development of the Korean Peninsula, in partic-

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ular, in relations with the international community's move to find a solution to North Korea's nuclear question. The global community is putting a close eye on the Chinese role for settling North's nuclear issue at a time when the reclusive country on the northern half of the Korea Peninsula invited American nuclear experts and showed them its facilities to enrich uranium, and shelled the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong in the Yellow Sea. Amid the mounting tensions between the two Koreas because of the North's provocative behavior, China's politico-economic influence on the North is ever growing.

Under these circumstances, this essay will review the Chinese position on the North's nuclear question and its strategy for dealing with the issue, and will foresee developments of the nuclear issue for years to come.

## **II. China's Position on the North's Nuclear Weapons Development Program**

### **1. Its Perception of the North's Nuclear Program's Background**

China seems to view North Korea's nuclear development program from two angles. One of them regards the North's national security. China is in the position that the lasting hostile policy of the U.S. toward the North has served as the North's motive for launching a nuclear development program. U.S. troops have been stationed continually in South Korea although the three-year Korean War came

to halt in July 1953 under a truce agreement and U.S. strategic nuclear weapons had been deployed in the South from 1958-1992. In other words, China feels that North Korea began to develop nuclear weapons at a time when there was military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula even after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought an end to the Cold War. It also views that the U.S. has incited the North to develop nuclear weapons and reinforce its arsenal through its hawkish policy against the North as seen in former U.S. President George W. Bush's branding of the North, along with Iran and Iraq, as part of an "axis of evil" in his State of the Union Address in January 2002. In other words, China views that the North's intent to develop and possess nuclear weapons is based on its strategic decision aimed at terminating U.S. hostile policy against it through a non-aggression treaty between the U.S. and the country under unfavorable international environments, let alone its move for winning a U.S. guarantee of its security and sovereignty through its nuclear card.

The other angle of the Chinese view concerns the North's domestic politics and social control. The North Korean economy has been devastated in recent years because of economic sanctions imposed by the international community and frequent natural disasters such as floods and draughts. Undoubtedly, the North Korean leadership has felt the need to take proper measures for economic reforms, but it has worried about social unrest triggered by the reforms to result in loose social control. While officially

inaugurating the Kim Jong-il regime in 1998, four years after the death of its founding leader Kim Il-sung, the North abolished the office of state president under a constitutional amendment and reinforced the function of the office of the chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC). It has pushed ahead with “military-first politics” while test-firing missiles and conducting nuclear tests, in a move to cement its leadership. Because of rumors about leader Kim Jong-il’s bad health in 2008, the North drew the attention of the international community in relations with its plot for another hereditary leadership succession and the stability of its system. The North retained Kim as NDC chairman in the first session of the 12th-term Supreme People’s Assembly held in April 2009 and conducted the second nuclear test the next month, undoubtedly aimed at promoting its citizens’ support to the leadership and their unity around the leader.

## 2. Two different Chinese Stances on the North’s Nuclear Program

There are two different Chinese positions on North Korea’s nuclear weapons development program, which are in conflict with each other. One of them is to oppose the North’s efforts to develop nuclear weapons regardless of its motives – whether they are aimed at countering U.S. hostile policy toward the North or promoting the unity of its citizens. This stand is held by the Chinese government, scholars at government-run research institutes and the state-controlled media. There are three factors behind this

position.

First, those with this posture approach the North’s nuclear issue in a manner oriented with Chinese interest. They start from the assumption that the North’s nuclear program can threaten peace and stability in Northeast Asia and kill the Chinese chance to emerge as a world power through economic achievements made thanks to reforms and an opening-up for the past 30 years and a sustained rapid economic growth in the future. In particular, they think that a North Korea armed with nuclear weapons can be a threat to China because of its close location to China. They do not rule out the possibility that the North will attack China with nuclear weapons in case the U.S. makes an assault on nuclear facilities in the North, if China does not help defend the country.

Second, they worry about the possibility that the North’s nuclear weapons development program will bring about a chain reaction and touch off an arms race in Northeast Asia. The North’s possession of nuclear weapons can provide an excuse for Japan to develop nukes, and that the Japanese move could lead to a similar program in South Korea and Taiwan, according to their view.

Third, they view that the North’s nuclear program can serve as a factor escalating global diplomatic pressure on China. The Chinese feel this way because they have been North Korea’s ally since their blood-oriented ties were established during the Korean War in the early 1950s and have been providing the North with considerable economic assistance. For this reason, many countries, including the



U.S., want China to demonstrate its political and economic influence over the North, and hold the North's unruly behavior in check. But China also has to deal with the possibility that its influence over North Korea will wane if and when the North is armed with nuclear weapons.

The other one of the conflicting Chinese positions on North's nuclear weapons development program starts with the view that China needs to deal with the North's program properly in full consideration of its traditional friendly ties with the country. This view is held mainly by professors at higher educational institutions.<sup>1)</sup>

In particular, these intellectuals are in the posture that China should not be lured by western countries' strategies toward the North. They maintain that North Korea began to develop nuclear weapons because of U.S. pressure on the country. In other words, the North has inevitably decided to develop nuclear weapons in a move to take care of its national security. For this reason, they assert, a North Korea armed with nuclear weapons cannot be a threat to China as long as China maintains its traditional friendly relations with the country. Even if those scholars may blame superficially North Korea for its nuclear weapons development program, they actually argue that China needs to develop closer relations with the North through economic assistance to the country and should not join western countries' campaign to isolate the North and impose sanctions on it. They opine that North Korea can be a threat to Chinese security even if it does not develop nuclear weapons, should

relationships between the two countries turn sour.

Prof. Zhang Hongliang at the Central University of Nationalities in China holds a similar view. He argues that countries bordering China such as Russia, India and Pakistan are armed with nuclear weapons, and Japan and South Korea are under the U.S. nuclear umbrella although they have no nukes, adding that under these circumstances, it is not necessarily bad for China to have a traditionally friendly neighbor armed with nuclear weapons. A research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Zuo Dapei maintains that an arms race touched off by the North's nuclear weapons development program, if any, isn't necessarily a development unfavorable for China. China can improve its industrial competitiveness in the international market if it transfers its technologies in the munitions industry advanced in an arms race to the private sector at a time when it needs to restructure its industries troubled by their overlapping investments in production facilities for low value-added commodities. In sharp contrast, he thinks the U.S. economy can be trapped in a deeper slump if and when it gets involved in an arms race because of the global financial crisis and its snowballing fiscal deficit.

In the meantime, North Korea seems to have judged that the new U.S. administration led by President Barack Obama is pursuing its predecessor's North Korea policy because the U.S. has yet to clarify its position toward the North while revealing its intent on Iran and Cuba. While serving as a member of the Foreign

Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate, Obama, in a message to both the North and South Korean governments in February 2008, said that he has no illusion about North Korea and that if elected as U.S. president, he will push firmly and continually with denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, adding that the Bush administration's uneasy approach to the North Korean nuclear weapons development program has resulted in an increase in the number of nuclear weapons possessed by the North.

### 3. A Change in China's Position on North Korea's Nuclear Question

A change in China's foreign policy was accompanied by a turn of its approach to North Korea's nuclear issue. Until as recently as the period when Chinese leader Jiang Zemin was in charge, even after China established diplomatic relations with South Korea, China has remained on the sidelines as far as the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons development program was concerned, considering that question simply as an issue pending between the North and the U.S. To mention the matter in detail, in the course of negotiations between the two countries for the conclusion of the Agreed Framework in 1994, China was not involved directly in the North's nuclear issue while expressing rhetorically its hope for a peaceful settlement of the issue through dialogue. For this reason, China did not participate in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), whose principal activity is to provide the

North with a light-water reactor project in return for the North's freezing of its nuclear activities.

Moreover, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji said in 1999 that China has nothing to do with North Korea's behavior whether or not it develops missiles and nuclear weapons because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a sovereign state. In his meeting with President George W. Bush in Washington D.C. in October 2002 when the second nuclear crisis emerged on the Korean Peninsula, Chinese President Jiang said that China does not know about North's plan for its nuclear weapons development program, while asking for frequent talks and active cooperation between the U.S. and China on the matter. He also repeated China's years-old stand for pushing ahead with denuclearization on and promoting peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula. After a meeting with the Chinese leader in November that year, former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said that the Chinese government is not only unaware of the serious nature of North Korea's nuclear program but is not awoken to the ill effects of the North's behavior on China's state interests, adding that China is psychologically unprepared for taking intensive sanctions against the North.<sup>2)</sup>

David M. Lampton, George and Sadie Hyman Professor of China Studies at Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of the Johns Hopkins University, also has said that he was given the impression that President Jiang views the U.S. needs to settle North Korea's nuclear issue with direct talks because tensions between the two countries were

touched off by the U.S.<sup>3)</sup>

A change in China's posture on the North's nuclear weapons development program, however, surfaced in January 2003. In telephone talks with President Bush shortly after North Korea declared its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), President Jiang said that China does not approve the North's actions and it insists on the realization of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. He also said China views that the international campaign for the denuclearization accords with common interest of the international community and that talks are the most effective ways and means to give a solution to the North's nuclear question. It was the first time China made a public position against the North's withdrawal from the NPT. Shortly thereafter, Hu Jintao said in his capacity as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party that China can hardly tolerate the presence of nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. In a press meeting then, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan also mentioned three principles in its policy on the Korean Peninsula: first, the promotion of peace and stability on the peninsula; second, a solution to disputes caused by diplomatic and political means; and third, the realization of the denuclearization of the peninsula.

Despite the change in its policy on North Korea's nuclear weapons development program, however, China has continued to assert direct talks between the U.S. and the North for a solution to the North's nuclear question. In February

2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell discussed the North's nuclear issue with China's leaders, including Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. In a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan in March that year, Powell delivered Bush's message that China should take responsibility in settling issues in Northeast Asia. The next day Chinese Deputy Premier Qian Qishen visited North Korea and proposed three-way talks involving the U.S., the North and China, while asserting that the only option to solve the North's nuclear question is for regional countries, including China, to participate in multilateral talks.

In a press conference in March 2003, meanwhile, the Chinese foreign minister made public for the first time that the Chinese will play a mediator's role in solving the North's nuclear question, saying that China will maintain an active, open attitude if it is conducive to easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, promoting stability throughout the peninsula and giving a peaceful solution to the North's nuclear problem. This change in Chinese attitude might have originated in a sense of crisis that the U.S. may attack North Korea, probably influenced by the U.S. launch of an attack on Iraq in March 2003. After a terrorist attack on the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001, hardliners gained strength in the U.S. administration while President Bush branded the North as part of an "axis of evil." The U.S. assigned its troops to the Persian Gulf in October 2002 while proposing for a resolution of the U.N. Security Council to disarm Iraq, followed by the U.S. attack on the Middle Eastern nation. Witnessing a series of

these developments, China might have turned active in moves for settling North's nuclear issue, fearing for a U.S. attack on North Korea.

In April 2003, delegates from North Korea, the U.S. and China gathered in Beijing for three-way talks, which turned into the six-way talks held in August that year with the additional participation of South Korea, Japan and Russia, which continued until December 2008. The six-party talks have remained in the doldrums since North Korea on April 14, 2009 said that it "will never again take part in such (six-way) talks and will not be bound by any agreement reached at the talks," in response to the U.N. Security Council's adoption of a presidential statement the preceding day condemning the North for the launch of a long-range rocket on April 5 and stating the council's intention to expand sanctions against the North.

As aforementioned, in an initial stage of an international move to find a solution to the North's nuclear question, China has maintained an onlooker's position on the issue on reasons that the U.S. triggered that issue, but later it changed its stance in a way to behave as a mediator, under the judgement that its role will help promote stability of the Korean peninsula and its own economic development. These developments regarding China's behavior are most likely in close relation with the Chinese policy for "peace and development" pursued by Deng Xiaoping, that for "cooperation" by Jiang Zemin, and that for a "balanced world" by Hu Jingao.

### **III. China's Strategy to Deal with North Korea's Nuclear Problem**

#### **1. A Peaceful Solution to the Question through Dialogue**

Undoubtedly, Chinese state interest in the Korean Peninsula is closely tied to the peninsula's stability and denuclearization. For this reason, China has been opposed to any behavior hampering stability there, in particular, the behavior aimed at settling North's nuclear issue by force. Mentioning the torpedoing and sinking in March 2010 of a South Korean warship, the Cheonan, while visiting South Korea that May, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that China has constantly insisted on peace in and stability of the Korean Peninsula, and exerted efforts along those lines, while blaming any behavior against those goals. He also said that all parties concerned should behave with composure in a self-restraint manner to prevent the deterioration of the situation facing the peninsula and are required to jointly exert efforts to avoid conflict, and maintain peace and stability, which is hard to achieve.<sup>4)</sup>

Presumably, there are largely three motives for the Chinese position to assert peace in and stability of the Korean Peninsula, plus the denuclearization of the peninsula, and give a solution to the North's nuclear question through dialogue. First of all, China needs to eliminate factors to serve as stumbling blocks to its economic development. Any military attack on North Korea can trigger a full-fledged war on the Korean Peninsula

and bring about unrest in the region, thus challenging the Chinese state policy putting top priority on its economic development. Moreover, if a war breaks out on the Korean Peninsula, China will be faced with an awkward situation where it is required to decide whether or not it will join in line with the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between China and North Korea concluded in 1961. Article 2 of the treaty reads: "In the event of one of the Contracting Parties being subjected to the armed attack by any state or several states jointly and thus being involved in a state of war, the other Contracting Party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal."

Second, it needs to stave off social unrest caused by the large-scale inflow of North Korean refugees into China. Third, China is not sure about whether or not the North Korean regime can enjoy stability after it is armed with nuclear weapons, since North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons could touch off the proliferation of nuclear weapons and an arms race in Northeast Asia.

## 2. China's Demonstration of Its Influence over North Korea through a Face-saving Campaign and Economic Assistance

China has helped North Korea save face while providing it with economic assistance in an effort to lure it to the negotiation table. The North has been constantly eager for direct talks with the U.S., while the U.S. has been lukewarm toward talks between the two countries.

Through the Chinese mediation the three-way talks involving North Korea, the U.S. and China were held in Beijing in April 2003, providing the North with a chance to have direct dialogue with the U.S. and making the U.S. active in direct talks with the North. In the ensuing six-way talks, negotiations have proceeded effectively, with talks between the U.S. and the North held on the sidelines.

As for the recent torpedoing and sinking of a South Korean warship in the Yellow Sea, China has been cautious in making accusations against the possible culprit though an international investigation said North Korea was to blame. In a meeting with President Lee Myung-bak in May 2010, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has reportedly said that China, as a responsible state, values the investigation as well as each country's response to it and that China will decide its position on the matter, based on an objective judgment. China, however, has yet to clarify its stand on the issue, undoubtedly in a move to help the North save face.

China has been also active in economic assistance to North Korea in recent years. Earlier in October 2002, China arrested Yang Bin, a Chinese-Dutch businessman, who had been named to govern the Shinuiju Special Administrative Region in North Korea on suspicion of tax evasion only to turn relationships between the two countries sour. A year later, Wu Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress, visited North Korea and promised to give \$150 million in economic assistance to the country. China has maintained close economic coopera-

tion with the North while giving assistance to the country until as recently as 2009, despite the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874 adopted in June 2006, which calls on U.N. member countries not to provide the North with grants, financial support and loans, and not to make contracts with the country. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited North Korea in October 2009 and promised to help the North build a new bridge over the Yalu River and won the right for China to use the North Korean port of Rajin. And two months later Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie also visited the North only to promote the development of closer, more friendly relations between the two countries.

### 3. Accidental or Explicit Warnings

China has given warnings to North Korea under two formulas: a warning disguised as an accidental one, and an explicit one. The “accidental” one was seen when China suspended its supply of crude oil to the North for three days on reasons of “technical trouble” when North Korea test-fired short-range missiles into the East Sea in March 2003. The “explicit” one came when China criticized North Korea in a firm tone after the North made its first nuclear test in October 2006, while casting an aye vote to the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718 calling for intensive economic and diplomatic sanctions against the North. In response to the North’s second nuclear test in May 2009, China also agreed with the tougher U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874 calling for financial and other economic sanc-

tions against the North, plus an embargo on exports of war supplies to the North and searching North Korean cargo ships. This Chinese behavior showed that China is not a country that provides the North with unconditional economic assistance, or serves as an all-time supporter to the country even if it triggers a troublesome development in Northeast Asia. China has held that posture in September 2003 when it replaced its security guards in the area bordering the North with 150,000 servicemen of its army. Undoubtedly, this Chinese policy action was aimed at 1) giving up its mediator’s role when the North is inactive in the six-way talks, 2) blocking the inflow of North Korean refugees and 3) putting the brakes on North Korea’s scheme to lure the U.S. into bombing Chinese territory if and when the North transports its nuclear weapons to the areas bordering China.

While North Korean leader Kim Jong-il visited China in May 2010, Chinese President Hu Jintao made a five-point proposal to Kim on deepening China-DPRK ties, which include “maintaining high-level contacts, reinforcing strategic coordination, deepening economic and trade cooperation, increasing personnel exchanges and strengthening coordination in international and regional affairs.”<sup>5)</sup> Probably, Hu’s proposal serves as an indirect warning to North Korea not to create an uncomfortable atmosphere on the Korean Peninsula and North East Asia with such provocations as torpedoing and sinking the Cheonan.

## IV. Prospects

North Korea's nuclear weapons development program has brought about a confrontation between the U.S. and China at a time China turned into an economic power on the occasion of the global financial crisis. Both the U.S. and China agree on the need for North Korea's denuclearization, but they differ from each other in the way how to attain the objective. In other words, the U.S. is in a position to employ all means, including military ones, for dismantling North's nuclear program, while China wants to solve the nuclear question only through talks and political means. This delicate difference in their positions may serve as a stumbling block to a solution to the North's nuclear question. And this difference may also serve as a chance for the North to buy time for making progress in its nuclear weapons development program.

So far China has approached the North's nuclear issue largely to attain two objectives. One of them is to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula and maintain stability there. The other is to denuclearize the peninsula. These factors of peace, stability and denuclearization could serve as variables affecting China's ambition to become an economic superpower in years to come. For this reason, China has constantly insisted on a peaceful solution to North's nuclear problem through dialogue, under the judgement that the six-way talks are the optimum option for settling the question of dismantling the North's nuclear program and nukes it has already developed.<sup>6)</sup>

Because of this stance, China has continued to date to exert efforts for luring the countries concerned back into the six-way talks. China has had a bad temper in its relations with the U.S. because of America's pressure on it for the "intentional undervaluation" of its currency, the U.S. contract with Taiwan for arms exports made in early 2010 and President Obama's meeting with exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama at the White House in February 2010. In an effort to improve the troublesome relations between China and the U.S., Chinese leader Hu Jintao participated in the Nuclear Security Summit hosted by President Obama in Washington D.C. in April 2010, despite Hu's earlier intentions not to attend. And China cast an aye vote in June that year to the U.S. Security Resolution 1929 aimed at banning Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, despite an earlier expectation that it would oppose the resolution because China is an importer of crude oil from Iran, even though Russia announced in March its agreement to the resolution.<sup>7)</sup> China has maintained that its participation in international sanctions against Iran is to clarify its fundamental position to support the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. But that Chinese action was probably to lure the U.S. back to the six-way talks.

As the frame of international sanctions against Iran is taking shape, China has resumed its efforts in recent months to draw North Korea and the U.S. back to the six-way talks. Wu Dawei, Chinese chief delegate to the six-way talks, reportedly visited North Korea in August 2010 to consult with the North's officials

concerned on the resumption of the multilateral talks.<sup>8)</sup> Regarding this Chinese move, Philip J. Crowley, who serves as spokesman for the U.S. State Department in his capacity as assistant secretary in charge of the Bureau of Public Affairs, on Aug. 19 said, "There are specific things that North Korea can do to demonstrate a seriousness of purpose and to create an environment where future talks could be productive. ... As we come up towards the U.N. General Assembly, we'll have the opportunity to consult directly with many of our partners in this effort." Because of these developments, possibilities might be high that the six-way talks will resume sooner or later, to find a breakthrough in the troublesome developments on the Korean Peninsula in recent years.

At issue is the way how to settle the question of denuclearizing North Korea. But international efforts to solve the problem of the North's denuclearization can remain continually in the doldrums because of the North's inactive behavior if the countries concerned focus their efforts only on denuclearization. In the course of these developments, possibilities are high that the North will make progress in developing its nuclear capability and become a nuclear power. Under this situation, they can face a new challenge on the Korean Peninsula regarding North Korea's status as a nuclear power, beyond the question of denuclearization. For instance, the international community can give top priority to their efforts for preventing the North's proliferation of nuclear weapons while accepting North Korea as a nuclear state like India and Pakistan.

As aforementioned, China is placing policy priority on promoting peace and stability, plus denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. But possibilities are high that it will choose peace and stability, rather than denuclearization, if and when it is forced to select one of them. This is because possibilities are low that China will push ahead with the denuclearization of North Korea by means of even calling a halt to its economic assistance to the North and agreeing to military attacks on the North. China seems to have judged that it is better for its economic development to maintain its traditional friendly ties with North Korea even if the North is armed with nuclear weapons, rather than to have a neighboring enemy armed with nukes.

For this reason, there is the need for countries concerned to seek a new way to settle the issue of dismantling North Korea's nuclear capabilities. Possibilities are high that a similar development seen in the past will recur. There is a need for countries concerned to eliminate factors behind the failure of the six-way talks as maintained by Qiu Zhenhai, a commentator of Phoenix Satellite TV in Hong Kong. The countries concerned, which have called for North Korea's denuclearization, have focused their efforts on the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons development program, disregarding the objective of the program: to provide the North with a guarantee of its security.<sup>9)</sup> In other words, he opined, China has exerted various efforts to solve the problem through the six-way talks but has failed to produce substantial results because the North was awakened only to the point



that China has a common goal with the U.S.: the denuclearization of the North. Prof. Shi Yuanhua at Fudan University in Shanghai has viewed that the replacement of the truce agreement with a peace treaty on the Korean Peninsula can be an objective that China can pursue for the security of Southeast Asia.<sup>10</sup> It might be no less desirable for the countries concerned to be more interested in how to collectively guarantee the North's security than to simply stress the justification of the North's denuclearization.

In the meantime, the more North Korea depends on China politically and economically, the more effective Chinese strategies will be in dealing with the North. But as long as China's policy priority on peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula remains unchanged, there is no way for China to overcome its fundamental limitation in realizing the North's denuclearization. And the more North Korea will depend on China, the more the inter-Korean relations will be strained. And this situation will serve as a stumbling block to the unification of the two Koreas. For this reason, there is the need for South Korea to exert efforts for paving the way for the unification, along with efforts for giving a solution to the North's nuclear question. In a "Vision Forum on the Korean Peninsula: in Search of a New Paradigm" held in Seoul in March 2010 under the sponsorship of the South Korean Unification Ministry, Yuan Jian, vice president of the China Institute of International Studies, said, "More important than a vision of the unification is the unification process. Important is the ability to deal with any development on the

Korean Peninsula, including a sudden change in the North, and on a long-term basis also important is the ability to manage the unification-related affairs, plus the diplomatic capability. In the course of achieving their unification, the two Germanys have never suspended negotiations between them."<sup>11</sup> Her remarks might be a meaningful message to all Koreans whether they live in the northern half or in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula.

*(This essay is an excerpt from the paper carried in the autumn 2010 edition of "The Korean Economy" published by the Export-Import Bank of Korea, also known as the Korea Eximbank, in Seoul, Korea.)*

#### Notes:

- 1) This view was expressed in a forum on "China's Countering of North Korea's Nuclear Test," held in Beijing on June 6, 2009 under the sponsorship of the Center for International Communications Studies at Tsinghua University, with the participation of professors from Beijing University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Beijing Foreign Studies University and the Central University of Nationalities.
- 2) IRChina, Sept. 2, 2004.
- 3) *Ibid.*
- 4) *The People's Daily*, May 29, 2010.
- 5) The Xinhua News Agency, May 7, 2010.
- 6) *The Global Times*, Feb. 26, 2010.
- 7) The top five crude exporters to China in 2007 were Saudi Arabia, Angola, Iran, Russia and Oman.
- 8) The Yonhap News Agency, Aug. 20, 2010.
- 9) paper.wenweipo.com. Feb. 20, 2010.
- 10) *The Global Times*, Feb. 26, 2010.
- 11) *The JoongAng Sunday*, May 18, 2010.

### **U.S. Lists N.K. Among 8 Worst Countries in Religious Freedom**

<Yonhap from WASHINGTON/ November 17, 2010>

— The United States on Nov. 17 listed North Korea as among the eight worst offenders of religious freedom, saying the socialist state severely restricts religious activity except for that supervised by the government.

— The 2010 Report on International Religious Freedom put the North on the list of “Countries of Particular Concern” for the 10th consecutive year. The seven others are China, Iran, Eritrea, Myanmar, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan.

— “Although the constitution provides for freedom of religious belief, genuine religious freedom does not exist, and there was no change in the extremely poor level of respect for religious freedom during the reporting period,” the report said.

### **U.N. Envoy on N. Korean Human Rights Calls for Resumption of Aid, Dialogue**

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ November 26, 2010>

— The U.N. envoy on North Korean human rights urged the international community on Nov. 26 to once again engage with the socialist nation by sending aid to its impoverished people and holding dialogue with the government.

— The comments by U.N. Special Rapporteur Marzuki Darusman came just days after South Korea put on hold shipments of rice and cement over the North’s shelling of Yeonpyeong Island near the tense Yellow Sea border.

— “It’s logical that any manifestation of acts of violence would have immediate consequences in terms of disruption of normal flows of processes and aid,” Darusman told reporters at a briefing that summarized his first visit to Seoul since taking office in June.

### **Cheong Wa Dae Denies Reports of Considering North Korean Regime Change**

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ November 30, 2010>

— South Korea’s presidential office Cheong Wa Dae on Nov. 30 refuted a news report that it would revise its North Korea policy to consider a regime change in the communist neighbor.

— “Our government has not considered North Korea’s regime change or made it a policy,” Cheong Wa Dae spokeswoman Kim Hee-jung told reporters. President Lee Myung-bak has not mentioned the issue, she added.

— The *Munhwa Ilbo*, a Seoul-based evening newspaper, carried a front-page article saying that South Korea has “put a variety of options, including a regime change, on the table.” It quoted an unnamed senior Cheong Wa Dae official as warning that North Korea will “come to an end if it insists on its current path and does not abandon its nuclear program and militaristic brinkmanship.”

### **S. Korea Dismisses N. Korea's Alleged Underwater Nuclear Facilities**

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ December 3, 2010>

— South Korea on Dec. 3 dismissed North Korea's alleged underwater nuclear facilities as "hard to believe," doubting that the socialist nation has such advanced technologies.

— A U.S. diplomatic cable, divulged by the online whistleblower WikiLeaks, quoted a Shanghai expert in September 2008 as mentioning "secret underwater nuclear facilities located on North Korea's coast" while talking about the six-party talks on Pyongyang's nuclear programs. Further details on the alleged facilities were not available.

— "Considering the level of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, it's hard to believe," a foreign ministry official said on condition of anonymity, referring to the North's main nuclear complex, north of Pyongyang.

### **Over 1,200 North Koreans Jailed for Watching S. Korean Films: Report**

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ December 6, 2010>

— More than 1,200 North Koreans are jailed for secretly watching films produced by South Korea as the socialist regime fights to block the inflow of culture from the outside world, an organization of North Korean defectors said on Dec. 6.

— Citing a source from a prison in the North's northwestern city of Kaecheon, the North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity (NKIS) in Seoul said scores of more people are being jailed every day for watching South Korean movies and dramas.

— The people suffer harsher punishment than other prisoners for the sake of fixing their "rotten spirit" for a jail term of 2-5 years, it added.

### **S. Korean Pop Culture Widespread in N. Korea: Defector Group**

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ December 10, 2010>

— South Korea's pop culture and fashion trends have increasingly gained popularity in North Korea, with a growing inflow of pirated DVDs and TV dramas smuggled from China, a Seoul-based defector group said on Dec. 10.

— The People for Successful Corean Reunification said the Korean "Hallyu" wave, a reference to the surging popularity of South Korean pop culture, has even hit a large population of the reclusive and tightly controlled communist state.

— "People living in coastal areas in South Hwanghae Province can easily watch South Korean broadcasting, and some residents said they even watched the live coverage of the inaugural address of President Lee Myung-bak," a 38-year-old defector, who fled from the North last year, said in video shown during a seminar.

## PEOPLE

**Kim Jong-il** (김정일): General Secretary of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC); Supreme Commander of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA)

- Nov. 17 The (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reports that Kim Jong-il inspected various industrial establishments in Changsong County, North Pyongan Province.
- 20 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il and his heir apparent son Jong-un gave a pep talk to the activists of the (North) Korean People's Internal Security Forces.
- 22 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un inspected the Ryongyon Seaside Fish Farm and the Ryongjong Fish Breeding Ground.
- 22 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un gave field guidance to the Ryongho Duck Farm.
- 23 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un gave field guidance to a newly built Soy Sauce Shop at the Royongsong Foodstuff Factory and the Pyongyang Medical College of Kim Il-sung University.
- 24 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un provided field guidance to a newly built hard glass shop at the Taean Friendship Glass Factory and the Kangso Mineral Water Processing Factory.
- 25 Kim Jong-il sends a wreath to the grave of Mao Anying in Hoechang County, South Phyongan Province, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of his death in battle.
- 25 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il gave on-the-spot guidance to newly built apartment houses and the reconstructed Pyongyang University of Dance.
- 28 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un watched a performance given by the State Symphony Orchestra.
- 30 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il provided field guidance to a branch factory of the Ryongsong Machine Complex.
- Dec. 1 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il provided field guidance to light industrial factories in Hamhung and the Hamhung University of Hydraulic Engineering.
- 1 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il supplied a refrigeration high-speed centrifugal separator, an asepsis operation stand and a revolving vaporizer to the Wonsan University of Agriculture.
- 2 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il inspected the Tanchon Magnesia Factory, the Tanchon Mining Machine Plant and the construction site of Tanchon Port.
- 3 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il provided field guidance to the Musan

Mining Complex and the Musan Foodstuff Factory. In a separate report, the KCNA says Kim traveled throughout Hoeryong City in North Hamgyong Province, where he visited the statue of Kim Jong-suk, Kim Jong-il's mother, to pay tribute to her.

- Dec. 5 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il watched a performance given by the North Hamgyong Provincial Art Troupe.
- 6 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il gave field guidance to the Kimchaek Iron and Steel Complex and the Ranam Coal Mining Machine Complex.
- 9 Kim receives Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo, who visited Pyongyang on an apparent mission to help defuse heightened tensions over the North's deadly artillery attack on a South Korean island in November. According to North Korean and Chinese media reports, the two sides reached a consensus on bilateral relations and the situation on the Korean Peninsula after in-depth talks.
- 11 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un inspected the Pyongyang Flour-Processing Factory, the Sonhung Foodstuff Factory and the Hyangmanru Popular Restaurant.
- 12 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il watched a performance given by the KPA.
- 15 The KCNA reports that Kim Jong-il inspected the Taedong River Eel Breeding Farm.

**Kim Yong-nam** (김영남): President of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) Presidium

- Nov. 24 meets with a Chinese government public health delegation, led by Minister of Public Health Chen Zhu, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- Dec. 15 receives credentials from Dutch Ambassador to the DPRK Paul Alex Menkveld at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.

**Choe Thae-bok**: Chairman of the SPA

- Nov. 22 receives Thomas Lutze, vice chairman of the German-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Group, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.
- Nov. 30-Dec. 4 makes a visit to China.

**Pak Ui-chun**: Foreign Minister

- Nov. 23 receives an European Union delegation led by Philippe Beke, department director of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 25 meets with Sarveshwar Puri, representative of the World Health Organization, who paid a farewell call on him.
- Dec. 12-15 makes a visit to Moscow. According to the KCNA, Pak on Dec. 13 held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow.

**CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW**

**(Local Events)**

- Nov. 18 *Rodong Sinmun*, a paper for the WPK, in a signed article accuses the U.S. of allegedly “creating the danger of war” through increased military spendings and exercises.
- 18 The North’s office of the inter-Korean Pan-national Alliance for Korea’s Reunification holds an event to mark the 20th anniversary of its formation.
- 24 Vice Premier Kang Nung-su meets with the production team of Chinese TV drama “Mao Anying,” headed by Zou Xiaoti, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 25 The KCNA reports that Kim Chang-il was appointed as North Korea’s ambassador to Vietnam, citing a decree of the SPA Presidium.
- 27 The KCNA reports that Kim Hyok-chol was appointed as North Korea’s ambassador to Ethiopia, citing a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly.
- Dec. 1 North Korea observes the World AIDS Day by holding an event at the People’s Palace of Culture in Pyongyang.
- 1 The KCNA reports that Kim Su-jo, director at the Phibada Opera Troupe, passed away at the age of 79 but did not say when or how he died. Kim was the executive producer of the mass gymnastics extravaganza Arirang and other top musicals and arts performances.
- 2 A ceremony is held to mark the completion of the construction of the Knitting Yarn Shop of the Sinuiju Textile Mill.
- 3 The diplomatic corps in North Korea visits the construction site of the Huichon Power Station.
- 9 The newly updated Pyongyang Flour-Processing Factory begins operation.
- 14 The KCNA reports that fossil whale bones dating back to some 10,000 years ago have been discovered on the lower Songchon River in Hamhung City, South Hamgyong Province.

**(Foreign Events)**

- Nov. 16 A government cultural delegation headed by Kim Jin-bom, vice chairman of the North’s Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, departs for Indonesia.
- 17 Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun sends a message of greetings to Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman, on its 40th national day.
- 18 North Korea and Romania sign an agreement to cooperate in the areas of culture, education, science and sports.

- Nov. 18 The North's General Guidance Bureau for the Development of Scenic Spots again urges Seoul's unification ministry to agree on the North's proposal to hold talks on resuming an inter-Korean tour program to the Mount Kumgang resort in the North.
- 19 A spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of (North) Korea in a statement denounces South Korean authorities for their "anti-DPRK (North Korea) outbursts" regarding the Cheonan case.
- 19 A delegation of the North's Ministry of Land and Environmental Conservation, headed by Minister Kim Chang-ryong, leaves for Russia to participate in an international meeting on tiger conservation.
- 20 An economic delegation headed by Ri Myong-san, vice minister of foreign trade, departs for Vietnam.
- 20 A spokesman at the foreign ministry snubs the recent human rights resolution adopted by the U.N. General Assembly as a "political plot" of the West and being virtually irrelevant to the improvement of human rights.
- 20 The North Korean women's football team beats its South Korean rivals 3-1 at the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, and advance to the finals.
- 22 The Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of (North) Korea alleges the South of "desperately preventing" non-governmental groups of the divided nations from making cross-border contact.
- 23 North Korea and China ink an agreement in Pyongyang for economic and technical cooperation. Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Ku Pon-thae of the North and Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Hemin sign the deal.
- 23 North Korea fires a barrage of artillery rounds onto the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong near the Yellow Sea border, killing two marines and two civilians and setting on fire scores of civilian houses and forests in one of the worst attacks on the South since the 1950-53 Korean War.
- 23 Vice Premier Kang Sok-ju meets and holds talks with the Chinese government economic and trade delegation headed by Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Hemin, which paid a courtesy call to him.
- 24 North Korea and China ink an agreement on cooperation in public health and medical science at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- 26 The North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea releases a statement warning the South and the United States to refrain from a "rash act" regarding upcoming joint military drills in the Yellow Sea.
- 27 A delegation headed by Jon Yong-jin, vice chairman of the (North) Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and chairman of the DPRK-Vietnam Friendship Association, departs for Vietnam.
- 28 The National Peace Committee of (North) Korea in a statement slams the U.S.-South Korea joint military exercise in the Yellow Sea, saying it is putting the Korean Peninsula in a state of "ultra-emergency."

- 30 A delegation of the Supreme People's Assembly led by its Chairman Choe Thae-bok leaves Pyongyang to visit China and Mongolia.
- Dec. 4 A North Korean delegation headed by Jon Kil-su, minister of railways, leaves for Beijing to take part in the 7th World High-speed Railway Conference.
- 5 The KCNA in a statement warns South Korea and the U.S. of their increased joint military activity around the Korean Peninsula in light of the North's deadly attack on the South's Yeonpyeong Island.
- 6 A delegation of the Democratic Women's Union of (North) Korea headed by Chae Chun-hui, vice chairwoman of its Central Committee, leaves for Mozambique to participate in a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Women's International Democratic Federation to be held there.
- 8 The WPK and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) signed an agreement on cooperation and exchange in Vientiane on Dec. 6.
- 9 A delegation of students headed by Ri Yong-chol, first-secretary of the Central Committee of the Kimilsung Socialist Youth League, leaves for South Africa to participate in the World Festival of Youth and Students.
- 9 A delegation of the WPK headed by party secretary Kim Yong-il, on a visit to Vietnam, meets with senior officials of the Communist Party of Vietnam.
- 11 The KCNA reports that Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Chiet received the WPK delegation led by Kim Yong-il. (Yonhap News)
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