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NORTH KOREAN WORKERS' PARTY AND KIM JONG-UN

WPK'S ROLE FOR KIM JONG-UN POWER SUCCESSION

The WPK has a new place in N. Korea's power structure due to its role in the power succession and establishing the Kim Jong-un regime.

Ever since its delegates' conference in September last year, the North's ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) has come to the forefront of efforts to speed up the country's hereditary power transfer to Kim Jong-un, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's third son and heir apparent. As a natural consequence, the power structure in North Korea has been changing to revolve around the young crown prince and increase his already considerable authority over the ruling party and the military. These developments fundamentally differ from the previous situation, where the WPK's status was limited in form and content. Now, the WPK has a new place in North Korea's power structure due to its role in the power succession and establishing the regime of Kim Jong-un.

Demonstrating the WPK's Status

The reinforcement of the WPK's status has helped to establish Kim Jong-un as the successor-designate. According to North Korea watchers in Seoul, though just a year has passed since North Korea officially started the power transfer process, there has been some progress made because Kim Jong-un has positively used his position as vice chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC) to cement his power in the party's and the military. The leader-in-waiting was appointed to that post during the party's third conference on Sept. 28, 2010, when the country made its hereditary power succession plan public.

On the 66th anniversary of the founding of its ruling Workers' Party on Oct. 10 this year, North Korea concentrated on demonstrating the WPK's status and the justification for its ongoing hereditary power succession plan. However, the party had remarkably been limited since former North Korean leader Kim Il-sung died in July

1994. The WPK's core organizations, including the Political Bureau and Secretariat, were not working normally because they weren't filling vacancies created by the deaths of their members. In fact, there weren't any plenary sessions of the WPK after the 21st plenary session of the sixth-term WPK Central Committee held in December 1993. And also, under the banner of songun, or military-first, politics, North Korea focused more on the National Defense Commission (NDC) rather than the WPK in the ruling system.

But things have changed since September 2010 when North Korea held its third party conference, the first such conference in 44 years. At the conference, North Korea rearranged the party's organizations and carried out a generational change of its power elite. Accordingly, the focus of the North's ruling system has been transferred from the NDC, which took the leading role under the banner of songun politics, back to the party, as opined by Choi Jin-wook, senior fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

There are two main motivations behind the decision to reinforce the WPK's status with regards to North Korea's ruling system. One is that the country chose the party as the base to establish Kim Jong-un as his father's successor. The junior Kim has played his role as heir apparent so far with just the post of vice chairman of the party's CMC. The other reason for the shift is the need to form a new power group to support the post-Kim Jong-il regime. Most of North Korean figures who support Kim Jong-un were given key posts during last year's party conference.

In this respect, the party conference superficially was to announce the start of Kim Jong-un power succession process, but was essentially focused on forming a



Kim Jong-il (L) and his son and heir apparent Kim Jong-un are all smiles during their field guidance tour of a video company in Pyongyang on an undisclosed date in September. (KCNA-Yonhap Photo)

new power group within the North's ruling circle. Park Hyeong-joon, senior research fellow at Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul, said that the party conference was a self-congratulatory event and an occasion to formally introduce a new ruling political coalition to the domestic and external audiences. The new power coalition displaced the previous ruling group centered around the old military elites, which had led the country since 1995, he added.

According to Park, the new coalition is built upon four pillars. They include North Korean current leader Kim Jong-il; the country's leader-in-waiting Kim Jong-un; associated civilian cadres including Jang Song-thaek, who is known to be a political guardian for junior Kim; and the new military elites. Each pillar also has its own areas of responsibility and corresponding interests. Park stressed in a report published at the end of September 2011 that the new power coalition has been successfully consolidated in positions of power, the country's nuclear capabilities have been expanded, and the regime has also displayed its ability to threaten its neighbors through acts of belligerence.

Among the party organizations, the party's CMC has played a key role in establishing the father-to-son succession system. As recently as September 2010 when the party conference rearranged party organizations, the party's CMC was regarded as a non-standing office although it is the top military organization. But the status of the commission was elevated to a standing office at the party's conference, the largest party function since the sixth party congress in 1980.

Roles of the WPK Central Military Commission

Under the 2010 version of the party charter, North Korea elevated the status of the military commission and reinforced its role in a way to allow it to "organize and guide all projects regarding military affairs during the period between party congresses through party mechanisms." In other words, the new party charter guarantees the status of the commission as a standing institution in the same vein as the WPK Central Committee, which is entitled to "organize and guide all projects during the period between party congresses." For this reason, even the departments under the umbrella of the WPK Central Committee, including department of organization and guidance, are most likely under the influence of the commission as far as military affairs are concerned.

The party conference also normalized the function of the military commission, filling up all vacant seats and bringing the number of its members to 19. In August 2010, a month before the third conference, that number of the commission's members was just six. The new 19-member commission is a basic support group for

Kim Jong-un. They include: Ri Yong-ho, who is chief of the general staff of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) and another vice chairman of the party's CMC, and Jang Song-thaek, who is vice chairman of the NDC and a member of CMC. As a result, with successor-designate Kim Jong-un as its vice chairman and most members of the army's top brass as its members, the party's CMC might now be more influential than the NDC in the North Korean regime.

Accordingly, the North Korean military, which has been under the exclusive leadership of Supreme Commander Kim Jong-il, is falling under the control of Vice Chairman of the party's CMC Kim Jong-un, under senior Kim's approval and under the assistance of another Vice Chairman Ri Yong-ho. In this context, in the event of the unexpected death of Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un, through his position as vice chairman of the commission, will be able to wield effective military power and secure his succession to political power, according to Cheong Seong-chang, senior research fellow at the Sejong Institute in near Seoul, Korea. (Yonhap News).

N. Korea Stresses Justification of Hereditary Power Succession

On the first anniversary of the conference of representatives of the North's ruling Workers' Party, North Korea stressed the justification of its ongoing hereditary power succession from the country's leader Kim Jong-il to his son Kim Jong-un. Uriminzokkiri, an official North Korean website, emphasized on Sept. 28 the significance of succession and completion of the "Juche (self-reliance) revolutionary feat," referring to the political activities of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and his father, Kim Il-sung. One day earlier, the website carried an article that focused on the superiority of the family of the North Korean leader.

Earlier, the KCNA said on Sept. 26 that "It is a review of the past one year of struggle that the (North) Korean people are sure to win the victory of a great surge oriented toward 2012 as well as the final victory of the revolutionary cause of Juche (self-reliance) when they remain loyal to the party's leadership while carrying forward the traditions of Mt. Paektu closely united around Kim Jong-il." North Korea has reiterated "the traditions of Mt. Paektu," in order to justify the hereditary power succession since September last year when the conference was held. "The traditions of Mt. Paektu" describe the kinship between North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and his father, Kim Il-sung. (Yonhap News)

PARTY'S SUPPORT & GUARDIANS FOR KIM JONG-UN

At the party conference, the party's CMC was elevated to an organization responsible for the supreme standing body of the armed forces.

North Korea's political and military figures are basic support groups for the regime's heir apparent Kim Jong-un. Such guardian groups were given key posts during the conference of representatives of the North's ruling Workers' Party (WPK) and are now paving the way for the dynastic father-to-son succession.

The previously unknown Kim Jong-un emerged when he was made a four-star general and vice chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC) at the third WPK conference, confirming widespread speculation that the Swiss-educated youngest son was being groomed to take over for the 69-year-old leader, who suffered a stroke in the summer of 2008.

At the party conference, North Korea carried out a generational change of its power elites, with many younger officials in their 40s and 50s replacing older ones. In the reshuffle, Pyongyang removed veterans from North Korean founder Kim Il-sung's generation and replaced them with officials from Kim Jong-il's generation, although those leaders are still old and aging.

Generational Change of Power Elites

Also recent reports said the North has conducted major reshuffles of party officials in provincial chapters as well the central party. The reshuffles were conducted through harsh and drastic inspections and auditing by the headquarters of the WPK. A defectors group in Seoul said that a large number of party officials in the central and provincial chapters were either replaced or dismissed from April through June this year. And the lower-level officials at the party's municipal and county offices have been newly appointed on the occasion of the party's 66th founding anniversary on Oct. 10 this year.

Since Kim Jong-un was appointed as the party's CMC vice chairman, the commission has now become the country's supreme military guidance organization. Some academic scholars are of the opinion that the National Defense Commission (NDC) still maintains the top spot in the power structure of the socialist country since the death of its founder Kim Il-sung. Nevertheless, the military commission since his

death has remained the most important military organization in the party and exercised power over personnel of military cadres, commanding authority and major military policy decisions.

Following the WPK conference, Kim Jong-un is now considered to be almost at an equal leadership position as his father. Therefore, as Kim Jong-un was appointed successor to his father in January 2009, it can be assumed he has held absolute authority since that date, according to Cheong Seong-chang, a leading expert with the Sejong Institute near Seoul. Kim Jong-il was tapped in 1974 to succeed his father Kim Il-sung. His succession was made official at a 1980 party congress and he took the helm of the North's government upon his father's death in 1994.

In the conference last year, the party's CMC increased its authority and influence by amending the regulations of the party, thereby securing Kim Jong-un's dominance over military affairs. The CMC had traditionally wielded authority over armed forces command, high-ranking military personnel assignments, decisions on military policy, and the war industry, but was limited in its influence as an "emergency consultation organization," according to Cheong.

However, at the conference of the WPK, the party's CMC was elevated to an organization responsible for the supreme standing body of the armed forces to "organize and guide every task over all military affairs between party congresses." With the inclusion of the top brass of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) in the augmented CMC, Kim Jong-un has been granted the authority to directly control the North Korean armed forces.

Status and Role of the Party's CMC

Due to the sudden increase in its power, the party's CMC has taken over many of the roles on behalf of the NDC, and has contributed to the declining influence of the NDC. Also, the North Korean media since the conference have announced the vice chairman of the CMC before that of the NDC vice chairman, highlighting the supremacy of the CMC.

Following the WPK conference, the KPA has been slowly encouraged to accommodate the command system controlled by CMC Vice Chairman Kim Jong-un, who has now full support from Chief of the General Staff of the KPA Ri Yong-ho under the approval of his father Kim Jong-il. This is opposed to the previous system in which Kim Jong-il exercised absolute control over the armed forces through his position as the supreme commander of the KPA.

It is noteworthy that the number of CMC members was increased to 19 since the WPK conference, from only six before the conference. Moreover, the party consti-

tution revision in 2010 prescribed that the WPK's general secretary, a position now held by Kim Jong-il, becomes the chairman of the CMC. Kim Jong-il also holds the chairmanship of the National Defense Commission.

Other experts said that the party delegates' conference last year was a "self-congratulatory event" and an occasion to formally introduce a new ruling political coalition. This coalition displaced the previous ruling group centered around the old military elites, which had led the country since 1995. The new power coalition is built upon the four pillars of Kim Jong-il; Kim Jong-un; Jang Song-thaek and associated civilian cadres; and the new military elites.

With his trademark ruling ideology of *songun*, or military-first politics, Kim Jong-il rose to the position of general secretary of the WPK in 1997 and given the chairmanship of the NDC. The regime made a series of purges in the late 1990s to eliminate certain influential members of the party.

However, in 2005, the military-centered power coalition came under attack from within. Jang Song-thaek, who had been purged in 2004, reemerged as first vice chairman of the party's Central Committee in January 2006. Jang, the husband of Kim Kyong-hui, the younger sister of Kim Jong-il, advanced to vice director of the party's powerful Administration Department in December 2007. The elimination of the old military faction was completed by the end of June 2010 and Jang, a core member of the new power elite, was promoted to NDC vice chairman in a special session of the Supreme People's Assembly.

Reorganization of Power Structure

Despite some hardship confronting him, the leader-in-waiting is well on his way to power one year after he emerged on the world stage. Cheong Seong-chang of the Sejong Institute said, "He already has political power over ranking officers, the army and public organizations." He is believed to be purging the regime of older officials within military and public security agencies, replacing them with younger-generation figures close to him.

Cheong said Jong-un's overall policy direction seems to include possessing nuclear weapons, opening up to earn foreign currency and resisting internal reform. The new coalition has been successfully consolidated in positions of power, the country's nuclear capabilities have been expanded, and the regime has also displayed its ability to threaten its neighbors through acts of belligerence.

After Kim Jong-il returned to manage state affairs late in 2008 after suffering a stroke, the reorganization of the power structure resumed at an accelerated pace starting in early 2009. For two months from February to April of that year, a series

of measures were taken to adjust and reorganize the dominions controlled by the new and old military factions.

Key leaders of the new military faction advanced rapidly during this period. Ri Yong-ho, who had held an important post as the commander of the Pyongyang Defense Command since September 2003 was made chief of the KPA General Staff in February 2009 and promoted from three-star to four-star general. The Office 35 and the Operations Bureau of the WPK were combined with the Reconnaissance Bureau of the People's Armed Forces Ministry to create a new entity known as the General Reconnaissance Bureau, where general Kim Yong-chol was named its director.

Meanwhile the core leaders of the old military faction were effectively retired, although some military figures nominally retained or were promoted to military posts. Most of these retreating leaders had risen to important posts after the *songun*, or military-first system, was established in 1995. The old military clique had been gradually diminishing since 2005, so that by June 2010 most of the leading members of this group had exited from the political stage. In their place, a new power coalition starting in 2005 began to secure key positions.

By June 2010, the new power coalition of ruling elites announced plans to hold party conference in September to celebrate their domination of North Korean politics, according to Park Hyeong-joong, senior research fellow at Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

Thus the conference was intended as a kind of celebratory event and unifying rally for the purpose of formally proclaiming the emergence of a new coalition of power elites and expanding its array of forces. At the conference, various Central Party organs that had long lain dormant were restored, and several vacant cabinet positions were filled by senior cadres.

Starting June 20, 2010, use of the expression "the party's center" as a way to refer to Jong-un appeared on the WPK's propaganda materials. The expression was also widely used just after Kim Jong-il was nominated to succeed his father in February 1974.

Kim Jong-un's image as the next leader has mostly been boosted through the North's state media as well as a string of propaganda activities by the North's major organizations, including its 1.2 million-strong military. On June 30, 2010, *Rodong Sinmun* stressed in an editorial that, "All citizens should defend the central committee of the party led by Kim Jong-il to the death and be united around the party's center." Immediately after the party conference in September, North Korea started engaging in a set of positive propaganda activities aimed at promoting Jong-un as the socialist country's leader-in-waiting. (Yonhap News)

UPS AND DOWNS OF PARTY'S MAIN FIGURES

With the emergence of new power elites, support groups for Kim Jong-un hereditary power succession were everywhere in the country.

In North Korea, the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) is undeniably the top political organization with absolute authority and power governing all state affairs, including the military. Despite its totalitarian might, the ruling party underwent changes over some period, particularly since the death of North Korea's founder Kim Il-sung in 1994.

Kim Il-sung ruled the country under a philosophy of "juche," or self-reliance. Current leader Kim Jong-il took control of the country's supreme power in 1995 with his ruling theory of "songun," or military-first politics, though juche is still the backbone ideology of the country. The songun system, which was dominated by elite members of the military, was introduced in 1995 and fully consolidated as a ruling system in 1998.

Elite military officials exercise a great deal of power in the party and other state organizations but the old military clique had been gradually diminishing in stature since 2005. Then, by June 2010, most of the leading members of the old military group had exited from the political stage. In their place, a new power coalition began to array itself in key positions from 2005.

Existing Power Balance

After Kim Jong-il suffered a suspected stroke in August 2008, a series of measures were adopted in February 2009 which had a particularly dramatic effect in shifting the existing power balance between the old and the new. Additional members of the older clique were pushed out until June 2010, and then the new power coalition announced plans to hold the WPK delegates' conference in September 2010 to celebrate its domination over North Korean politics.

Since Kim Jong-un's political debut at the party conference, North Korea's second hereditary power succession plan has proceeded smoothly and systematically.

At the party conference last year, North Korea carried out a generational change of its power elite, with younger generations swiftly replacing older ones. In the reshuffle, Pyongyang removed veterans from North Korean founder Kim Il-sung's generation and replaced them with officials from Kim Jong-il's generation, although

those leaders are still old and aging. The North has been adding those in their 30s and 40s to mid-level positions in the military, the party and the Cabinet.

Noteworthy is that North Korea's influential party member, Hwang Jang-yop, defected to South Korea at the end of 1990s. The architect of North Korea's ruling *juche* philosophy was serving as a party secretary for international affairs and ranked 24th in the North's power hierarchy. Hwang was found deceased in a bathtub in his Seoul home on Oct. 10 last year, just as the North celebrated the rise of its next leader in Pyongyang by conducting one of its biggest military parades to mark the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party.

Since his defection, which sympathizers hailed as the beginning of the demise of the North Korean regime, Hwang had been a vigorous critic of leader Kim Jong-il. The leader reportedly ordered the killing and persecution of Hwang's family left in the North following the defection. Uriminzokkiri, the North's official Web site, called Hwang's death "a scourge from the skies," calling the late defector "a deserter who fled to the South and abandoned his family and our party and system to escape hard times."

Kim Jong-un's rise is the beginning of a new age. From 2009, the core leaders of the old military faction were effectively retired. With the exception of O Kuk-ryol, most of these retreating leaders had risen to important posts after the *songun*, or military-first, system began to be established. O Kuk-ryol, who had been director of the Operations Bureau since July 1989, was promoted to National Defense Commission (NDC) vice chairman in February 2009. That same month Kim Yong-chun, who had been chief of General Staff since October 1995, was promoted to minister of People's Armed Forces. But these two individuals surrendered their capacity or, in other words, each received an honorary discharge from power.

Beginning of New Age

Kim Il-chol did not even merit the consideration of such an honorable dismissal. He had been minister of the People's Armed Forces since September 2000 and suffered the indignity of being demoted to first-vice minister in February 2009. With these power restructuring moves, the real power of the North Korean military was transferred to Chief of General Staff Ri Yong-ho and General Political Bureau First-deputy Director Kim Jong-gak. Ri Yong-ho was named vice chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC), together with Kim Jong-un at the party conference.

Kim Jong-gak was named first-deputy director of the General Political Bureau in March 2007 and, considering that Director Jo Myong-rok's declining health forced

him to cease handling the Bureau's daily operations from 2007 onward, had already been managing the business of the Bureau in practice from 2007.

Vice marshal Jo Myong-rok, who was named director of the General Political Bureau in October 1995 and first-vice chairman of the NDC in September 1998, died of heart disease in November last year. Jo was one of the most powerful political and military figures in the socialist regime for decades. He is especially known for his visit to the U.S. in October 2000, during which he met with then-President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as the Cold War foes sought reconciliation.

In the first half of 2010, the remaining leaders of the old military faction disappeared from the government. In April, it was announced that Ri Yong-chol, first-vice director of the party's Organization and Guidance Department, had died of a heart attack. Ri had been appointed first-deputy director in 1994 and had managed military affairs for the WPK for 16 years. Ri Je-gang, who had been another first-vice director of the Organization and Guidance Department since July 2001, reportedly died in a car accident on June 2. Thus the downfall of the key leaders of the songun era was complete.

Experts say the WPK's conference last year was intended as a kind of celebratory event and unifying rally for the purpose of formally proclaiming the emergence of a new coalition of power elites and expanding its array of forces. At the conference, Kim Jong-un was given a position on the party's CMC as a vice chairman. Also various Central Party organs that had long lain dormant were restored, and several vacant cabinet positions were filled by senior cadres.

Emergence of New Power Elites

With the emergence of new power elites, support groups for Kim Jong-un were everywhere in the country. The most influential guardians are relatives of the Kim dynasty. Kim Kyong-hui, the younger sister of Kim Jong-il, was named to the party's Politburo. She has also been promoted to a four-star general. Her husband, Jang Song-thaek, who was earlier promoted to vice chairman of the NDC, was named an alternate member of the party's Politburo. The Kim-Jang couple should play a key role in facilitating Jong-un's power succession. Kim Kyong-hui's promotion to four-star general demonstrates Kim Jong-il's intent to protect his son within the military. The couple is expected to manage the party.

In 2011, noteworthy purges of key individuals continued. Ryu Kyong and Ju Sang-song were representative examples. In January, Ryu Kyong was purged on charges of leaking secret information during inter-Korean talks for a leadership

summit. Ryu's removal was probably closely connected with Kim Jong-un's takeover of the State Security Ministry. Not only Ryu himself but also various personnel closely associated with him were eliminated in a large-scale purge. In the process of taking control of the security ministry, Jong-un needed to free up some official posts to bestow on his loyal supporters.

North Korea watchers said the decision could be part of measures to appoint figures close to Kim Jong-un to influential posts ahead of the father-to-son power succession. Ju had served as police chief since 2004. In April this year, the North's Supreme People's Assembly named Ri Myong-su, a known strong supporter of the junior Kim, as minister of people's security.

Ju Sang-song's removal appears to have been instigated by Jong-un. Ju was appointed to the People's Security Agency in July 2004 and discharged on March 2011. He was originally promoted on the recommendations of Ri Je-gang and Ri Yong-chol. Later as Jang Song-thaek's powerful position rose, Ju aligned himself more closely with Jang. It is probable that Kim Jong-un ordered his dismissal in order to restrain the influence of Jang.

NDC Administration Department Director Ri Myong-su took his place as head of People's Security Ministry in April. In the past, Ri was one of the officials who most frequently accompanied Kim Jong-il on on-site inspection tours. In other words, one of Kim Jong-il's close confidants were picked as the new head of People's Security.

On the occasion of the party conference, Choe Ryong-hae, Kim Kyong-hui and Kim Kyong-ok, all of whom are civilians, were given the military ranks of general, along with Kim Jong-un, while some in the younger group including Ri Yong-ho and Kim Yong-chol were promoted to the military's top levels.

Choe Ryong-hae, a former provincial party secretary from North Hwanghae Province, rose quickly to join the North's inner circle. He was also appointed to the party's Politburo as an alternate member and to the party's CMC as a member.

Mun Kyong-dok's rise draws special attention. He was appointed as chief secretary of the WPK Pyongyang chapter. Through the reshuffle in September last year, he was given three key posts in the party all at once – alternative member of the party's Politburo, secretary of the party Secretariat and Central Committee member of the WPK. The 54-year-old is the youngest of the high-ranking party officials, many of whom are in their 70s and 80s. Other influential supporters are Kim Pyong-hae and Kim Kyong-ok. A close friend of Kim Jong-il, Kim Pyong-hae is currently a party politburo alternate member. Kim Kyong-ok, the first-vice director of the party Organization and Guidance Department, was also named a four-star general at the party conference last year. (Yonhap News)

INCREASING STATUS OF KIM JONG-UN

Kim Jong-il's brisk diplomatic activities mean that a considerable transfer of power over domestic politics to his son Jong-un was made.

For the past year since his political debut, North Korea has made substantial progress in building up a cult of personality surrounding Kim Jong-un. The young heir-apparent to his father, Kim Jong-il, has also consolidated his road to the throne through successor training in various fields. While frequently in the media spotlight, Kim Jong-un has boasted of his diplomatic skill, political statesmanship and he even exercises military commandership.

Although just a year has passed since North Korea's leader-in-waiting Kim Jong-un came to the political forefront, the heir apparent is believed to have gained significant amounts of political power at an alarming clip in light of his recent activities. By gaining control over the ruling Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK) and the military, he has achieved the status of the North's second in command to his father, according to North Korean watchers in Seoul.

Accordingly, the socialist country has virtually been under the co-rule of Kim Jong-il and his son Jong-un via its swift transfer of power. "For now, North Korea should be viewed as a regime jointly ruled by Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un. More images of the junior Kim rather than those of the senior Kim will be released by the North's media in the future," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor at Dongguk University in Seoul.

Images of Kim Jong-un Released by Media

Such assumptions have been confirmed by the North's media reports on the leader-in-waiting. North Korean media have positively reported junior Kim's activities since he made formally his debut in September 2010. In particular, in a bid to demonstrate the status of Kim Jong-un as heir apparent, the media have focused on reporting the joint activities of two Kims, including releasing their pictures together.

Noteworthy is that the North's official Korean Central TV Broadcasting Station released 145 pictures of the two Kims' inspection tours to the construction site of Huichon Power Station in Jagang Province bordering China in November 2010. The pictures included 58 of Kim Jong-il and 13 of the two Kims. In August this year when they visited the site again, the TV station released only 4 of the senior Kim

and 23 of the two Kims, putting emphasis on junior Kim.

Other reports on Jong-un's activities by the North's media showed that his political position has dramatically risen in recent months compared to one year earlier. According to the reports, the junior Kim attended a summit meeting between his father and Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone held in Pyongyang on Sept. 23. It was the first time since he was appointed as vice chairman of the WPK Central Military Commission (CMC) in September 2010.

Two days later, the (North) Korean Central News Agency released a commemorative photograph of the senior Kim, the junior Kim and the Laotian president taken during the summit. Along with his father Kim Jong-il, junior Kim reviewed a military parade of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards, the North's reserve division, held on Sept. 8 at Kimilsung Square in Pyongyang to celebrate the 63rd anniversary of the founding of North Korea.

The North's swift transfer of power has been blamed on the health problems of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, who suffered a stroke in August 2008, North Korean experts said. After going into a coma, the then 66-year-old North Korean leader might have felt the need to hand over power to his son as soon as possible, even though he was only in his twenties, they said.

According to watchers, the North Korean leader designated Jong-un as his successor in January 2009 and transferred his position as head of the State Security Agency, a secret police that controls the North's power elite, to the heir apparent in the first half of that year. Using the position, Jong-un established a system that all reports for his father should be made through him. Under this system, the junior Kim quickly gained control of the party and the military with the help of aides to his father including Jang Song-thaek, the husband of his father's sister.

Recent Brisk Activities

"Kim Jong-un was virtually raised to the North's second in command to his father after he was designated as the heir apparent in January 2009. His appointment as head of the State Security Agency helped him consolidate his status as No. 2 person in the country," said Cheong Seong-chang, a senior fellow at the Sejong Institute, a South Korean private think tank.

North Korean experts have also paid attention to a sharp rise in the number of Kim Jong-il's visits to foreign countries since 2010. They understand that the senior Kim transferred considerable power over domestic politics to the junior Kim. Kim Jong-il made ten trips to foreign countries since 1994 when he took power. Up until 2000, he did not visit foreign countries for fear that his overseas trips might cause a

power vacuum. Just six overseas trips were made from 2000 to 2006, but the number of his visits to foreign countries shot up after the nomination of his successor.

These changes in Kim's overseas activities indicated that there was a sharing of roles between Kim and his son, the experts said. The senior Kim is in charge of economy and diplomacy, while the heir apparent takes charge of domestic politics and the military, they said.

Given recent activities, Kim Jong-un has consolidated his status as a successor to Kim Jong-il at a faster pace than his father did. It took the senior Kim 12 years to be promoted to second in command to his father and former North Korean leader Kim Il-sung by grabbing the appellation of "Great Leader," in 1986. He was nominated as a successor in 1974. On the contrary, the junior Kim paved the way for taking power in just two years after he was designated as the country's heir apparent.

Sharing of Roles between Two Kims

In an effort to shore up the ongoing hereditary power succession, the ailing North Korean leader will gradually transfer his official positions in the party and the military to the heir apparent, North Korean watchers said. Now, Kim Jong-il holds at least five powerful positions in the party and the military such as general secretary of the WPK; chairman of the party's CMC; a member of the Presidium of the WPK Political Bureau; chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) and supreme commander of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA).

The transfer of some of Kim's positions to his son is expected to be made in 2012 when North Korea aims to become Kangsong Taeguk, which means a great country that is powerful ideologically, militarily and economically, according to the experts. Next year is also the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il-sung, the late father of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

"Kim Jong-un is forecast to be officially elected to be a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau and a secretary of the WPK Central Committee in charge of personnel matters by next year. And the position of the KPA supreme commander will also be transferred to him from his father next year," Cheong said. The Presidium of the Political Bureau is the highest organization of the WPK that decides on a policy.

However, Kim Jong-il is likely to hold key positions such as general secretary of the WPK; chairman of the party's CMC and chairman of the NDC as long as he lives. Though the pace of the transfer of power in the North depends on the health of Kim Jong-il, Joun-un has already progressed considerably on his journey to the corridors of power. (Yonhap News)

WPK'S 66TH ANNIVERSARY AND KIM JONG-UN'S STATUS

North Korea's media stressed the significance of power succession by Kim Jong-un on the WPK anniversary day.

Observing the first anniversary of Kim Jong-un's debut at the Sept. 28 Workers Party of (North) Korea (WPK) conference, North Korea stressed the justification of continuing its hereditary power succession. Kim Jong-un's rise has been reflected in the North's state-controlled media, in which his name now regularly appears directly below his father's among the officials who accompany the senior Kim on field guidance trips.

Against public expectation, this year the socialist country did not hold a national meeting to mark the party's 66th anniversary on Oct. 10. Instead, the North's media emphasized the "great achievements" of the North's founding president Kim Il-sung and his son and current leader Kim Jong-il. The ruling party's anniversary is one of North Korea's most-celebrated holidays, along with the birthdays of the late national founder Kim Il-sung, and current leader Kim Jong-il.

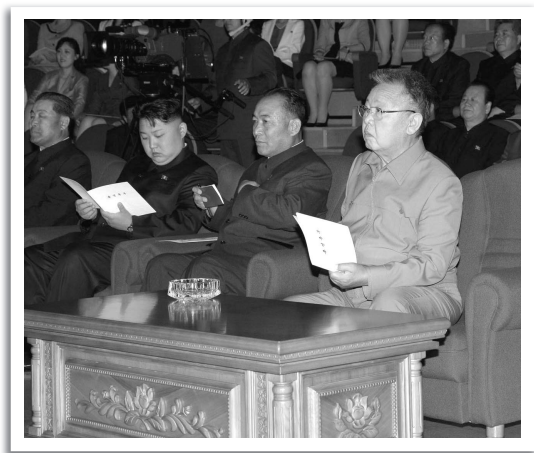
Usually the country holds a national meeting in Pyongyang on the eve of main national holidays, such as the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the official name for North Korea) on Sept. 9. This year, the country held a military parade on the 63rd anniversary of the nation's founding on Sept. 9, with both Kim Jong-il and his heir apparent Kim Jong-un attending.

Ordinary Scale without National Meeting

According to media reports, the capital city of Pyongyang was in a festive mood for the party anniversary this year. Streets were decorated with WPK and national flags, red banners and placards reading "Celebration of October 10" and "Great Party, Motherly Party."

North Korean officials visited the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, where the embalmed body of the North's founder, Kim Il-sung, lies in state, according to the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Ordinary North Koreans laid baskets of flowers at statues of Kim Il-sung across the country while paying their respects. Dance performances by youth and students were held in the capital and other cities to celebrate the party's anniversary.

State-run newspapers praised the WPK editorially. *Rodong Sinmun*, the organ of



Kim Jong-il (R) and his son Kim Jong-un (L) are seated together as they enjoy a music concert held in Pyongyang on the occasion of the 66th founding anniversary of the WPK on Oct. 10. (KCNA-Yonhap Photo)

vice chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC)." On Sept. 26, the KCNA said, "It was of great significance in developing the WPK eternally as the party of Kim Il-sung and providing a definite guarantee for dynamically promoting the revolutionary cause of Juche (Kim Il-sung's doctrine of self-reliance) and the building of a thriving socialist nation. After the conference, public trust in the headquarters of the revolution has been deepened and the determination to unflinchingly build a powerful socialist nation has become steadfast among the Korean people."

On Sept. 27, the KCNA released a report saying that great changes had occurred in socialist construction for the past year, since the historic conference of the WPK. "The conference which was convened on September 28 shines as an important event that provided a landmark of an epochal turn in strengthening the party and accomplishing the revolutionary cause of Juche," it said.

Referring to the 2010 anniversary, the KCNA said, "The grand political festival celebrating the 65th anniversary of the WPK in October following the conference hardened the support and trust of the army and people in the party." Kim Jong-un was unveiled to the world as his father's successor on Oct. 10, 2010, at a massive military parade for the party anniversary, saluting troops by his father's side in an appearance captured live by international media.

In an apparent reference to the leader-in-waiting, the KCNA wrote of a "youth general mobilization meeting of songun" that took place in Pyongyang in February. "Five million young people responded to the call of the meeting for becoming

the ruling party, said the WPK blazed a new trail for the construction of the revolutionary party in the era of independence under the leadership of Kim Il-sung. "The WPK conference last year fully showed before the world that the WPK has secured a fundamental guarantee for the accomplishment of the ideas and cause of Kim Il-sung," the paper said.

Just days before the WPK anniversary, North Korea stressed the "historic significance of the WPK Conference last year, in which Kim Jong-un was named

youth heroes in the general charge to open a gate to a thriving nation,” it said.

The news agency then listed political, economic, social and cultural achievements that had been made since the party conference last year. The hot wind of a great surge swept all the construction sites for building an economic power true to the spirit of the historic conference, it said.

“Modern catering and commercial service centers mushroomed and deluxe apartment houses were built at the foot of Haebang Hill. Cultural centers for the people have undergone changes in their appearance. A grand construction drive is progressing apace on the occasion of the centenary of birth of President Kim Il-sung, to turn Pyongyang into a magnificent world-level city replete with the revolutionary view of its leader and a capital of a thriving nation in which people’s dreams have come true.

The KCNA reported on Sept. 26, “The (North) Korean people are sure to win the victory of a great surge oriented toward 2012 as well as the final victory of the revolutionary cause of Juche when they remain loyal to the party’s leadership while carrying forward the traditions of Mount. Paektu closely united around Kim Jong-il.”

Kim Jong-un’s Political Activities

North Korea has reiterated “the traditions of Mt. Paektu,” in order to justify the hereditary power succession since September of last year when the conference was held. “The traditions of Mt. Paektu” describe the kinship between North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and his father, Kim Il-sung.

Uriminzokkiri, an official North Korean Web site, stressed on Sept. 28 the significance of succession and completion of the “Juche revolutionary feat,” referring to the political activities of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and his father, Kim Il-sung. On June 27, the Web site carried an article that focused on the superiority of the family of the North Korean leader.

The site also, in a dissertation on June 27, described last year’s convention as “a historic opportunity that provided the basic conditions for guaranteeing consistency in the succession of the great juche revolution.” Uriminzokkiri also stressed the importance of the nation’s succession and listed the qualities required of a successor. “The issue of leadership succession is a vital matter related to a country’s future,” it said, adding that the process involved the inheritance of a leader’s principles, achievements and appearance. This was the first time that the North referred to the party conference as a political event designed to give credibility to the North’s power succession. (Yonhap News)

President Lee Reaffirms S. Korea's Principled Stance on N. Korea

“We are in full agreement that we must pursue dialogue with N. Korea. However, we must also maintain our principled approach,” Lee said.

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak reaffirmed his long-standing stance that Seoul will continue to press North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions under the firm alliance with the United States.

In a summit held in Washington on Oct. 13, President Lee and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed to turn their defense and security alliance into strategic partnership that encompasses economic field.

Lee made a five-day state visit to the United States beginning Oct. 11, where he succeeded in boosting the political and military alliance between Seoul and Washington through summit talks with Obama and a speech delivered to the U.S. Congress.

The two nations' security alliance and North Korea, along with the landmark South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, were key topics at the White House summit, held just one day after Congress gave its final approval to the long-pending pact.

Lee said the trade accord's passage has “opened up a new chapter” in the alliance. “For the last 60 years, we have maintained a strong political and military alliance. This alliance will strengthen and elevate that military and political alliance to a whole new level,” he said.

“I can never say it enough: The commitment of the United States to the defense and security of the Republic of Korea (ROK/ South Korea) will never waver,” Obama said during a joint press conference with Lee. During a welcoming ceremony earlier, Obama said the alliance is “unbreakable.”

The two presidents also agreed to strengthen collaboration in solving issues involving North Korea, including its development of nuclear weapons and its potential provocations against the South. The two leaders again pressed the socialist regime to give up its nuclear ambitions.

Calling the North a “direct threat,” Obama said Seoul and Washington are “entirely united” on how to deal with Pyongyang and have “succeeded in changing the equation with the North by showing that its provocations will be met not with rewards, but with even stronger sanctions and isolation.”

“So the choice is clear for North Korea: If Pyongyang continues to ignore its

international obligations, it will invite even more pressure and isolation. If the North abandons its quest for nuclear weapons and moves toward denuclearization, it will enjoy greater security and opportunities for its people. That's the choice that North Korea faces," he said.

Referring to the pro-democracy movement in the Middle East, Obama

said that North Koreans, who have long suffered under repressive policies, have the same desire as other people for freedom of speech and the right to decide their own destinies.

President Lee said that he and Obama have been and will remain "in complete agreement" on North Korea. "Our principled approach will remain steadfast. We agreed that North Korea's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons poses a serious threat to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and to the world. We will continue to work toward denuclearization of the peninsula," he said.

Lee also said the only way for North Korea to ensure happiness for its people is to denuclearize. Seoul and Washington have been in sync on North Korea issues, with the U.S. government fully backing South Korea's policies on the North that improvement in inter-Korean relations is a precondition for better ties between Washington and Pyongyang.

The U.S. has also stood firmly by Seoul at times of high tensions -- particularly in the wake of North Korea's two deadly attacks on the South last year -- enacting sanctions to punish the socialist nation and demanding Pyongyang give up its nuclear programs.

The two leaders addressed a joint news conference after the summit. Asked about the ambitious project of building a gas pipeline from Russia to South Korea through the North, Lee said progress is not imminent. "It's not something that will see immediate progress," he said. "It will take some time, and there will be progress in inter-Korean relations and nuclear issues during its course."

Lee also said the economic aspect of the project will be calculated as a priority,



South Korean President Lee Myung-bak shakes hands with U.S. President Barack Obama at the end of their joint news conference following the Seoul-Washington summit held at the White House on Oct. 13. (Yonhap Photo)

but the security aspect will also be taken into account. While admitting to an expectation of slow progress, Lee still promoted the project by saying that the deal would be economically beneficial for all three countries.

After the summit, Lee delivered an address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, where he hailed the upgrade of the 60-year military alliance between the two countries to a multifaceted partnership, urging the two countries to “go together” against common challenges.

In his 45-minute speech, Lee emphasized bolstered ties between the two countries, saying the alliance has contributed to mutual development. Lee stressed that the two countries should further deepen and widen the alliance to walk a path of peace and prosperity together.

Lee also gave thanks for the U.S. role in defending the South, citing Korean War veterans who are now members of Congress. “Our mutual defense keeps us strong,” Lee said. “And it keeps us safe. Ours is an alliance forged in blood. That is how we Koreans describe it.”

Lee underscored his commitment to a nuclear-free North Korea and to eventual unification. “I recognize the reality that Korea has been split in two. But I will never accept it as a permanent condition,” he said. “We are one people. In both Koreas, there are families who have not spoken to their loved ones for more than half a century. My hope is that these people and all 70 million Koreans will enjoy real happiness, real peace.”

Lee said that a unified Korea will be “a friend to all and a threat to none,” again stressing the need for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. “North Korea must give up their nuclear ambitions,” he said.

Lee also reiterated that Seoul and Washington stand united in dealing with the North. “We are in full agreement that we must also pursue dialogue with North Korea. However, we must also maintain our principled approach. A North Korea policy that is firmly rooted upon such principles is the key that will allow us to ultimately and fundamentally resolve the issue.”

Despite threats and provocations by the North, Lee has stuck to his long-standing policy that the communist nation must give up its nuclear programs before any large-scale aid and inter-Korean cooperation can resume.

Lee said the six-party talks to denuclearize the North were an effective way to achieve tangible progress. He said the North’s development will depend on “its willingness to end all provocations and make genuine peace.”

Lee’s address received an enthusiastic response, interrupted by applause 45 times, including five standing ovations. Following the speech, a long queue formed as lawmakers waited to meet Lee. (Yonhap News)

WILL SIX-PARTY TALKS ACHIEVE DENUCLEARIZATION?

The multilateral talks should first freeze and contain Pyongyang's nuclear programs and gradually move toward their dismantlement.

By Tong Kim

(Visiting Professor at the Graduate University of North Korean Studies, Visiting Research Professor at Korea University and Adjunct Professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS))

For the past 20 years, the United States and South Korea have employed various strategies, including diplomatic engagement, intentional neglect and coercive sanctions, to deal with the North Korean issue, but without a successful outcome thus far. The failure of these efforts has led to the emergence of a de facto nuclear North Korea that poses a direct threat to stability and peace on the Korean Peninsula and a challenge to the weakening relevance of the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), whose primary purpose was to prevent non-members of the big five nuclear club from obtaining nuclear weapons.

North Korea is a self-declared nuclear state that has conducted two nuclear tests and extracted enough plutonium for six to eight bombs, according to a widely accepted assessment. Since the breakdown of the six-party talks in 2009, the North has also continued to launch several ballistic missiles of short, medium and long range, some of which might serve as a delivery system for nuclear warheads in the future.

Increased Tension on Korean Peninsula

In addition, it recently demonstrated an active, fast-developing uranium enrichment program, which could eventually produce uranium bombs to add to Pyongyang's plutonium-based nuclear arsenal. Unchecked, it could be possible for North Korea to become an unwanted, full-fledged nuclear state, and it has no political or security incentives to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. Without the denuclearization of North Korea, the region will be unable to form a new peaceful security order that could change the current trend of an arms race.

Recently Washington and Seoul seem to have decided to do – or, at least, be seen as doing – something different to denuclearize North Korea. Almost three wasteful years of Washington's "strategic patience" and Seoul's "principled policy"

have only increased tension on the Korean Peninsula, while shunning the growing seriousness of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs in reaction to Pyongyang's bad behavior.

Contrary to wishful expectations, North Korea has neither changed nor collapsed despite all signs of cracking from starvation, domestic instability, aggressive pressure from international sanctions and the cutoff of aid from the South. At a time in which China's rise has cast profound implications for the region, the miscalculation, inertia and inaction on the part of the U.S. and South Korea have brought about two deadly incidents: the sinking of the South Korean Navy ship Cheonan in March 2010 and the shelling of the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong, located south of the disputed Northern Limit Line, in November 2010. Since the 1953 armistice, Korea had never been closer to the brink of war.

Although South Korea has dropped its conditions of requiring North Korea to take responsibility for the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong provocations and apologize in order to resume the six party talks, those conditions are still at the heart of impeding re-engagement with Pyongyang. The representatives of the two Koreas – Pyongyang's vice foreign minister Ri Yong-ho and Seoul's nuclear envoy Wi Sung-lac – met twice to discuss the resumption of the multilateral nuclear talks. Their first meeting took place in July at Bali, Indonesia, where the foreign ministers of both sides – Kim Sung-hwan and Pak Ui-chun – also greeted each other briefly. A second meeting took place in Beijing in September as a follow-up discussion. In the meantime, Washington also had a significant direct contact with Pyongyang. The U.S.'s North Korea Policy Representative Stephen Bosworth and the North's First-vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan met in New York at the end of July.

Preconditions from Washington and Pyongyang

Although these meetings did not produce any concrete agreement with respect to how to meet the South's preconditions to resume the six-party talks, the parties were able to explain their respective positions. The North Koreans were able to ascertain the scope and nature of the preconditions imposed by Washington and Seoul. There are a number of difficult and complicated issues to resolve through negotiation to achieve denuclearization.

The question for now is how to restart negotiations to resolve these issues toward denuclearization. Pyongyang had dropped its own preconditions – the lifting of multilateral and bilateral sanctions against the North and a peace treaty to end the technical state of war in Korea – which the North had demanded of the Obama administration since Ambassador Bosworth's visit to Pyongyang in

December 2009. The North is not ready to accept Washington's preconditions, which include suspension of all nuclear activities including the uranium enrichment program, inviting back IAEA inspectors, a moratorium on further missile and nuclear tests and improvement of inter-Korean relations. Pyongyang has no history of making concessions without reward, or at least the promise of reward – political or economic – to accommodate the demands from its counterparts.

Pyongyang insists upon an unconditional resumption of the talks to negotiate all issues of mutual concern related to the issue of denuclearization. In world politics, a party that imposes preconditions is seen as lacking a genuine interest in the talks. This is why Washington does not appreciate the term “preconditions” and instead calls them “pre-steps.” In this regard, North Korea has long been the party that would often attach preconditions to their participation in talks. If Pyongyang were to drop its preconditions – lifting of sanctions and a peace treaty – it would not mean that it was giving up these demands, but rather that it wants to bring them up once the six party talks resume as legitimate agenda items for the denuclearization process.

North Korea has made some positive statements of principles through channels at various levels. Pyongyang reiterated several times that its position on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has not changed and that the realization of a denuclearized Korean Peninsula remains the death wish of the late President Kim Il-sung. It said it was willing to return to the nuclear talks, which it had boycotted. The North has said it could bring back International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors upon resumption of the talks and it would sell unused uranium fuel rods to a third country.

Seoul's Offer of Grand Bargain

In August, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il told Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he “could temporarily put a hold on fissile material production and nuclear tests, if the six-party talks are resumed.” Kim did not mention the uranium enrichment program, which the North claims is a peaceful energy program, a claim unacceptable to the international community. On the other hand, this was a clear indication that Pyongyang would not accept the preconditions for the talks.

During the second inter-Korean nuclear talks in Beijing, North Korean Vice Minister Ri Yong-ho was reported to have shown an interest in Seoul's offer of a “Grand Bargain,” designed for a package solution to the North Korean issues, which Pyongyang had rejected on its pronouncement in September 2009. However, Ri's interest in the package does not mean the North will accept such a package

deal as proposed by Seoul. Ri was probably instructed to find out what the package entailed, as Pyongyang wanted to be prepared to offer a counter-proposal if the resumption of the six-party talks could be included in the discussion of the Grand Bargain. Ri's exploration at the second North-South nuclear talks does not mean Pyongyang has shifted back to its initial interest in a package deal, either, which it tried to pursue in the early 1990s. Conversely, the North Koreans might think that bargaining away their selling points through a protracted piecemeal negotiation – selling away one item at a time for the right price – would be strategically more beneficial to them.

Given deep-rooted mutual distrust, long-held mutual hostility, as well as domestic constraints on both sides, it might be necessary to take a step-by-step approach that would enhance mutual understanding and restore the minimum level of confidence that had existed since 2000 under the administrations of Bill Clinton and Kim Dae-jung. For now, neither side is willing or can afford to make a bold move first toward a constructive comprehensive process. Recent history shows that it is difficult but possible to negotiate with the North Koreans for constructive agreements with them, but it is more difficult to implement such agreements. As long as war is excluded as a viable option and a North Korean collapse is not in sight for the near future, there is no alternative to dialogue and negotiation. This simple imperative explains Washington's recent policy shift from confrontation through pressure to an exploratory endeavor to re-engage North Korea through bilateral and multilateral talks.

Basic Premises of Denuclearization

Following the two nuclear contacts between Seoul and Pyongyang and the first U.S.-North Korea meeting in New York, it is expected that there would be another direct meeting between Washington and Pyongyang. Since the first meeting was held in New York, a second U.S.-North Korea meeting could be held in Pyongyang. However, Washington would not want to give the wrong message from the venue of such a meeting. Washington is reluctant to have a meeting in Pyongyang, unless it is assured that such a meeting would deliver what is politically acceptable to Washington and Seoul.

At the same time, neither Washington nor Pyongyang is pressured domestically or internationally by their allies to back down on their current positions, a requisite for the resumption of the six-party talks. Pyongyang for now does not seem to be in a hurry because its call for an unconditional resumption of talks is strongly supported by its major allies, China and Russia, and it puts Washington, backed by South Korea and Japan, in a defensive position. Through experience, the North has

learned the resumption of the nuclear talks would not bring instant economic benefits. The past two decades of unbearable economic struggle have not brought down the North Korean system.

The basic premises of denuclearization have not changed for both sides. North Korea still insists that the United States should end its hostile policy and guarantee Pyongyang's survival as a sovereign state, without interfering in its internal affairs. The North demands a normalized relationship and a peace treaty with the United States as part of a roadmap to denuclearization. Washington and Seoul will be ready to accommodate such North Korean demands only after or upon denuclearization. The denuclearization-first policy did not work, whether it was pursued by Seoul or Washington.

As stipulated by the Sept. 19 joint statement, the process should and can proceed according to the principle of simultaneous action described by "commitment for commitment" and "action for action." The joint statement did not define the sequencing of resolving the issues – including denuclearization, normalization, a peace regime and a regional security arrangement. No doubt, denuclearization is the essential goal of the six-party talks. However, it is impossible to achieve without addressing the related issues.

Priority Agenda Items of Six-party Talks

It is true that North Korea would never give up its nuclear weapons unless and until Washington and Seoul make a strategic decision to coexist with Pyongyang and create a new security environment in which the North Koreans would see little use for their nuclear weapons. If the six-party talks resume, they should go back to where they had left off in December 2008 after the Feb. 13 agreement from the previous year. When resumed, the six parties can immediately negotiate the "pre-steps" as their priority agenda items before moving to an updated North Korean declaration of all changes made to its nuclear programs. The multilateral talks – supported by bilateral talks between the participants and especially between the United States and North Korea – should first freeze and contain Pyongyang's nuclear programs and gradually move toward their dismantlement.

For the success of the six-party formula, which remains the best hope for denuclearization, inter-Korean relations must improve. Recently, there have been positive signs that the Seoul government is readjusting its hard-line policy to improve relations with the North. Dialogue is better than confrontation. Deterrent prevents war, but it is not a sufficient condition to prevent provocations. While engagement in dialogue is on, it is less likely there will be close calls to war. (Yonhap News)

EFFORTS TO REINFORCE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH CHINA

Premier Choe's trip to China reportedly accelerated the cozy relationship between the two countries in the economic and diplomatic sectors.

By Nam Kwang-sik

North Korea's Premier Choe Yong-rim, who has special responsibility for the country's economic management, made a five-day visit to China from Sept. 26 at the invitation of his counterpart Wen Jiabao. His second visit to China since November 2010 followed an agreement by the two countries last year to jointly develop special economic zones along their border. In addition, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in late August visited the northeastern part of China on his way home from Russia. Via the trip, Choe reaffirmed and heralded the North's stance on economic reform, opening up to China and six-party talks that the North says should be resumed without any preconditions.

The positions of those in Choe's entourage indicated that his trip focused on economic and diplomatic cooperation with the world's fastest-growing economy. Choe was accompanied mainly by economic officials including Ro Tu-chol, vice premier of the Cabinet; Ri Su-yong, chairman of the Committee of Joint Venture and Investment; Ri Ryong-nam, minister of foreign trade; Kim Sok-jun, minister of state construc-

tion control; Kim Pong-chol, minister of commerce; Jang Chol, president of the State Academy of Sciences; Ri Jong-chol, vice minister of metal industry; and Kim Song-gi, vice foreign minister.

In meetings with three key Chinese officials including President Hu Jintao, Choe stressed the North's intention to further expand economic cooperation and reaffirmed North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's stance on the six-party talks aimed at resolving the North's nuclear standoff with the United States. In a summit with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev held in Russia on Aug. 24, Kim Jong-il said that North Korea is ready to return to the six-way talks without any conditions.

Mutually Beneficial Cooperation

In a meeting with his counterpart Wen Jiabao on the first day of his visit to China on Sept. 26, Choe was quoted by Chinese news outlet Xinhua as saying that Pyongyang plans to deepen its cooperation with China on trade and infrastructure, and welcomes Chinese enterprises wanting to invest and operate in the North, pledging to offer convenience to that end. In response, Wen

“called on the two sides to speed up mutually beneficial cooperation in fields such as trade, investment, infrastructure, natural resources and agriculture,” Xinhua said. He also said “China supports the DPRK’s exploration of its own way of development in accordance with its domestic situation, and will continue to offer assistance within its capability.”

DPRK is short for Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the North’s official name.

Xinhua and the North’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) made no reference to details of the two countries’ economic cooperation pledged by the two premiers. However, the *China Daily*, a Chinese English-language newspaper, quoted Wen on Sept. 26 as saying “Economic cooperation (between China and North Korea) should be government-guided, enterprise-based and market-oriented.” In relation to Wen’s remarks, Wang Junsheng, a researcher with the Asia-Pacific studies office at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said China wants Pyongyang to understand and implement “Chinese-style economic reforms,” adding Beijing has long been



North Korea’s Premier Choe Yong-rim (C) visits a shopping center in Shanghai on Sept. 28 during his five-day trip to China from Sept. 26 at the invitation of his counterpart Wen Jiabao. (KCNA-Yonhap Photo)

eager to help its neighbor through cooperation in technology and management rather than direct assistance, according to the *China Daily*.

The “Chinese-style economic reforms” refer to the market-oriented reform that lifted millions of Chinese out of poverty and helped Beijing grow to become the world’s second-largest economy. Beijing has been trying to lure its ailing ally to embrace the reforms. The two deals signed last year between the two countries to develop special economic zones were part of China’s efforts to this end.

Last December, North Korea and China signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to jointly develop Hwanggumphyong Island on the estuary of the Amnok River, called the Yalu River in China. The allies also signed an

MOU last year for the joint development of Rason, a special city on the northeastern tip of North Korea. A large-scale groundbreaking ceremony was held on June 8 to mark the beginning of the development of Hwanggumphyong Island in the presence of some 1,000 North Korean and Chinese people. The ceremony came on the heels of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's weeklong trip to China in late May to study the neighboring country's spectacular economic development, his third trip to China in just over a year.

Meetings with China's Leaders

A detailed plan is expected to come out at the end of the year for the project to jointly develop Hwanggumphyong Island, the *China Daily* said on Sept. 27, quoting Dai Yulin, party secretary of the Chinese border city of Dandong, Liaoning Province. A joint China-North Korea management committee for the development of the island has been formalized, Dai said. The newspaper said that the latest development was announced as Choe met President Hu Jintao in Beijing on the second day of his five-day visit to China.

During a courtesy call by Choe on the Chinese president at the Great Hall of the People on Sept. 27, Hu said, "China will constantly further strengthen the economic and trade relations with the DPRK as its good neighbor, com-

rade and friend," the KCNA reported from Beijing. "The DPRK will in the future also make positive efforts with its Chinese comrades to comprehensively expand and develop the DPRK-China friendly and cooperative relations on a higher level and give a steady continuity to the baton of the DPRK-China friendship," Choe said.

In their hourlong meeting, Hu hoped the North would take an active stance on the resumption of the six-way talks. According to reports released on Sept. 27 by Xinhua, "China supports the positive efforts by the DPRK to ease tension on the (Korean) Peninsula and improve the external environment," Hu said, adding that China believes the DPRK will seize the current good opportunity and promote the improvement of the situation on the peninsula. The Chinese president also emphasized "the common interests of all sides to realize the denuclearization of the peninsula and safeguard peace and stability, which also meets the aspirations of the international community."

In response to Hu's remarks, Choe reaffirmed North Korean leader Kim's stance on the six-party talks, saying it is the North's consistent stance to seek a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and safeguard peace and stability. During his trips to Russia and China in late August, Kim said that the North is ready to resume the six-way talks without preconditions.

Ahead of the meeting with Hu, both

Choe and Wen called for the resumption of the talks, which have been suspended for four years since September 2007. Wen said China hopes that all sides can maintain contact and dialogue, improve relations and resume the talks soon. The talks involved South and North Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia. In response, Choe said Pyongyang has insisted on the denuclearization of the peninsula via dialogue and consultation and has proposed resumption of the talks without any preconditions. The North will maintain contact with Beijing on that issue, he added.

In mid September, the nuclear envoys of South and North Korea held their second meeting in Beijing in as many months, but failed to agree on terms to restart the nuclear talks. New hurdles for regional powers trying to reopen the six-nation talks were created last year by the sinking of a South Korean warship and a military attack on a South Korean island by North Korea, coupled with Pyongyang's revelation of a new uranium enrichment program.

While in Beijing, Choe also met on Sept. 27 with Jia Qinglin, who chairs the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Jia said China would like to work with North Korea to implement a consensus between the two countries' leaders, deepen cooperation in all fields and take bilateral relations to a new level, according to

Xinhua. The meetings between Choe and key Chinese officials were followed by Choe's travels to Shanghai and Jiangsu Province. On Sept. 28, Choe met with Mayor of Shanghai Han Zheng.

After holding talks with Han, the North Korean premier toured the Baosteel Group, which was ranked 212 on the 2011 Fortune Global 500, a list of the world's largest companies. He also toured Bailian Xijiao Goods Purchasing Center and the Chinese Pavilion of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo before leaving for neighboring Jiangsu Province.

Choe started his two-day trip to China's Jiangsu Province on Sept. 29. He made trips to Yurun Group, China Electronics Panda Crystal Technology Corp. and Yangzhou Smart Valley.

Given the North Korean and Chinese reports on Choe's five-day visit to China, his trip accelerated the cozy relationship between the two countries in the economic and diplomatic sectors, following strengthened relations between Moscow and Pyongyang thanks to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's visit to Russia in August. Regarding his trip to China, Choe expressed satisfaction over its success, adding that "the traditional friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries would steadily grow stronger by concerted efforts" in his message of thanks to Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao sent on Oct. 1. (Yonhap News)

Grandson of Kim Jong-il Grabs Attention for Supposed Internet Postings

Kim Han-sol studied until his eighth-grade year at the School of the Nations in Taipa of Macau, along with his 13-year-old sister.

The grandson of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il made headlines worldwide recently as he reportedly prepared to attend an international school in Bosnia, but more so for his suspected openness on the Internet.

On Sept. 29, South Korean media reported that Kim Han-sol, 17, the son of Kim Jong-il's eldest son Kim Jong-nam, was enrolling in the United World Colleges (UWC) in Mostar.

The media then tracked down a Facebook account suspected of belonging to the 17-year-old. The Facebook page of "HanSol Kim" contained several profile photos and messages exchanged between the page owner and his Facebook friends, including one correspondent suspected to be his father, Kim Jong-nam.

Han-sol's page began restricting access to his profile information and photos on Oct. 1, shortly after reports surfaced of his acceptance to the school.

The photographs reveal a young man who has embraced modern culture at least outwardly, as he is shown with bleached hair, wearing an earring and even a necklace with a cross. In one image he is shown at a party with a young woman who appears to be his girlfriend.

His look is thought to have been influenced by his extensive experience with foreign friends and culture outside the confines of North Korea.

The Facebook page includes an online survey for his friends on whether they prefer "communism or democracy," with a comment saying he prefers democracy himself.

In the party photo, the young man wears a fitted jacket, shirt and bow-tie and has his arm around the waist of a young woman in an evening dress. A message apparently left by the woman to the page owner under the photo reads, "I love you too, yeobo." In Korean, yeobo is a term of endearment mainly used between married couples.

One of the friends exchanging messages with HanSol went by the name of Kim Chol, but his Facebook page displayed photos of Kim Jong-nam.

Public access to that Facebook page was also blocked on Oct. 1. An Internet blog suspected to have been written by Kim Han-sol also closed public access, with the only information now available being that the blogger enjoys photography, travel, food, wine and spas, and likes the movies "Love Actually" and

“Remember the Titans.”

In 2007, a young man who was assumed to be Kim Han-sol apologized to his compatriots for their hunger in a 2007 YouTube posting seen by Yonhap News Agency on Oct. 3.

“Anthem North Korea,” a YouTube posting by a person nicknamed “gliango” in December 2007, drew more than 1,500 comments, which included about 10 written by “kimhs616,” a nickname believed to be used by Kim Han-sol.

“Well, let me set things clear for you,” kimhs616 wrote in English. “I’m a North Korean living in Macau, OK? and by the way, there is Internet in NK (North Korea), I’ve set up a satellite communication system there. Long live DPRK (North Korea),” he continued, using the abbreviation of the North’s official name.

“Actually I eat like an average person, I can’t eat even if I had good food, cuz (because) like I feel sorry for my ppl (people),” he said.

The writer went on to say, “I’m actually studying in Macau. I know my people are hungry, I’d do anything to help them.”

Meanwhile, Kim Han-sol has enrolled at the United World College’s branch in the southern Bosnian town of Mostar in mid-October after spending years in the Chinese territory of Macau.

Han-sol told school officials that he had a good impression of Bosnia, according to the school principal. The official said the school will treat the young North Korean like all other students.

Footage by FTV showed Han-sol wearing a black short sleeve T-shirt, black horn-rimmed glasses and a necklace at his school’s dormitory on Oct. 12. He told the Bosnian public television station that he is happy and he likes the school.

Until recently, Kim Han-sol was known to have attended school in Macau, where Kim Jong-nam has lived since being passed over as successor to Kim Jong-il. He studied until his eighth-grade year at the School of the Nations in Taipa of Macau, along with his 13-year-old sister, named Sol-hee, the source said. (Yonhap News)



Kim Han-sol, the 17-year-old grandson of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, goes about his new life at an international school in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Oct. 17. (Yonhap Photo)

1st Anniversary of Hwang Jang-yop's Death Commemorated in Seoul

Hwang drafted a plan on how to set up the organization as part of efforts to prepare for the potential unification with North Korea.

On the first anniversary of the death of Hwang Jang-yop, the highest-ranking North Korean defector, a humble memorial service was held in Seoul on Oct. 10 with some 300 people, mostly from the conservative circles, attending.

The first anniversary drew special attention as his defection to South Korea in 1997 was a signal of the demise of the impoverished North and the most powerful blow to the North Korean dictatorship. Hwang had been a main critic of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, and a symbol of hope for the unification of divided Korea.

The 87-year-old passed away last year from what appeared to be heart failure. The most virulent critic of Pyongyang was found naked and deceased in a bathtub at his home in Seoul October last year just as the socialist dynasty celebrated the rise of its next leader Kim Jong-un, the son of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

In a separate event, a group of North Korean defectors visited the national cemetery in Daejeon on the same day where Hwang is buried and paid homage to the deceased defector.

Hwang, the key architecture of North Korea's guiding "juche" philosophy of self-reliance, defected to South Korea, when South Korea was under the administration of Kim Young-sam.

Since his high-profile defection that sympathizers hailed as the beginning of the demise of the impoverished North, he had been a main critic of leader Kim Jong-il, drawing a series of death threats and assassination attempts.

On the very first anniversary of his death, several dozens of North Korean defectors floated tens of thousands of anti-Pyongyang leaflets from the South Korean side of the heavily fortified border with North Korea on Oct. 10

Members of the Fighters for Free North Korea gathered together on the Imjin Pavillion in Paju, Gyeonggi Province in commemoration of the first anniversary of Hwang's death.

With 10 large vinyl balloons, they floated a portrait of Hwang, 200,000 anti-North Korea propaganda leaflets, a thousand 1,000 won notes, 200 books on South Korean economic development and 100 radios over the Demilitarized Military Zone into North Korea.

On Oct. 8 North Korea reproached the civic group for intentionally trying to pro-

voke it, but the balloon floating event passed without any mishaps.

The civic group said that despite North Korean threats, they will continue their activities to strive for the freedom of North Korean citizens.

For years, the defectors and other South Korean activists have frequently sent leaflets condemning North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and calling for an uprising against him.

The latest campaign came as North Korea celebrated its 66th anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party.

Just a day before, North Korea threatened to launch "direct fire" against South Korea over its propaganda leaflets, calling their release "an undisguised war action."

"I will keep sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets to help promote democracy and human rights of North Koreans," Park Sang-hak, the civic group's head, said after sending some 200,000 leaflets.

South Korean conservative group leaders have said that Hwang's defection was the most powerful blow to the North Korean dictatorship. They said often that Hwang's presence in South Korea was "the symbol and hope of our determination to reunify" the two Koreas, which remain divided by a heavily armed border after the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce,

Hwang, who once served as dean of the North's top Kimilsung University, at which a young Kim Jong-il studied, deplored his ideas being tainted by the Kim dynasty and used to justify its hereditary power succession and suppressive rule.

Kim Jong-il reportedly ordered the killing and persecution of Hwang's family left in the North following the defection. Uriminzokkiri, the North's official Web site, called Hwang's death "a scourge from the skies," calling the late defector "a deserter who fled to the South and abandoned his family and our party and system to escape hard times."

Following his study on Marxism-Leninism in Moscow, Hwang was appointed as dean of Kimilsung University in 1954. His career culminated when he assumed the highest parliamentary post in 1972.

Hwang traveled to the United States in 2003 for the first time, testifying to the totalitarian nature of the leadership in Pyongyang. His last trip to Washington came in March of last year, during which he mocked Kim Jong-un as "that little bastard."

Meanwhile, Hwang's adopted daughter said on Oct. 6 that his father had sought to create North Korea's interim government before he died last year.

Hwang drafted a plan on how to set up the organization as part of efforts to prepare for the potential unification with North Korea, Kim Suk-hyang said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency. (Yonhap News)

<Internal Affairs>

North Korea Names Kim Sok-jun as Construction Minister

North Korea named Kim Sok-jun as its minister in charge of land development and construction affairs, replacing Pae Tal-jun.

The replacement was learned of when the North's state radio, the (North) Korean Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS), reported on Sept. 26 that Kim Sok-jun, in his capacity as state construction minister, accompanied the North's premier during his recent visit to China.

Kim appears to have replaced Pae Tal-jun, who held the post previously.

Little is known about Kim except that he served as the head of the North's semi-official Mount Paektu Architectural Research Institute last year.

Kim's predecessor Pae has not been seen in public since the KCBS reported that he attended a ceremony to mark the completion of a project to expand a road in South Hamgyong Province on June 17.

The ministry, which is similar to South Korea's Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, oversees the North's land development and construction affairs.

Experts say the replacement may be aimed at reprimanding the former minister for slow progress in the construction of 100,000 new houses in Pyongyang ahead of 2012, the North Korea-set target year for building a strong and prosperous state, or be part of a generational change ahead of the power succession of Kim Jong-un, the third and youngest son of leader Kim Jong-il. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Sets up Tourism Offices in China, Malaysia and Germany

North Korea said on Sept. 27 it has opened tourism offices in China, Malaysia and Germany in an apparent bid to earn much-needed hard currency by attracting foreign tourists.

The North also plans to set up tourism offices in other countries, said Hong In-chol, a director of the State General Bureau of Tourism, according to the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"We will diversify the tourist program with cultural, sports, bicycle, golf and treatment tourism and improve all services," the KCNA quoted Hong as saying. His comment came as the socialist country celebrated the World Tourism Day on Sept. 27.

The KCNA said in a separate dispatch that the first batch of Chinese tourists arrived in North Korea via the air route linking Pyongyang and China's northeast city of Harbin.

The North has also recently launched a tourism program for Chinese by opening air routes with the Chinese economic powerhouse of Shanghai and the ancient city of Xian.

The move comes amid a dispute between South and North Korea over assets at a scenic mountain resort in the North.

North has recently expelled South Korean workers from Mount Kumgang and legally disposed of all South Korean assets there in anger over the suspension of the inter-Korean joint tour program.

South Korea halted the tour program at the resort, a key symbol of reconciliation on the divided Korean Peninsula, following the 2008 shooting death of a tourist by a North Korean soldier near the resort.

South Korea has asked foreign countries not to invest or engage in tourism activities at the mountain resort as part of its moves to protect its property rights there.

The North recently made a trial run of a cruise from its northeastern port city of Rajin to Mount Kumgang on its east coast in a move to revitalize the resort by attracting Chinese and other foreign tourists. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Receives Final Shipments of Food Aid from Russia

North Korea received on Oct. 4 final shipments of a round of food aid from Russia via the World Food Program (WFP), the North's official media said.

"The delivery of the Russian government's food aid to the DPRK (North Korea) through the World Food Program (WFP) has been completed," said the KCNA.

The ceremony to deliver food was held at the Pyongyang Flour-Processing Factory, with the participation of Kim Ji-sok, vice minister of Food Procurement and Administration, and Oleg Belaventsev, director of the Agency for Support and Coordination of Russian Participation in International Humanitarian Operations of the Russian Ministry of Extraordinary Situation, according to the KCNA.

Russia decided to provide 50,000 tons of food in aid to North Korea at the meeting between North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held in Bali, Indonesia on July 22.

The first batch of Russian food aid to North Korea arrived on Aug. 19 at North Korea's eastern port city of Hungnam. (Yonhap News)

Inter-Korean Joint University Holds International Symposium

Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, the first university founded jointly by South and North Korea, held an international symposium for two days from Oct. 5.

The event brought together scientists from different countries including China, the U.S., Canada, Britain, Italy, Brazil and the Netherlands and overseas Koreans, the KCNA said on Oct. 6.

“The symposium was divided into four panel discussions such as IT and life science, business administration and environment science,” the KCNA said.

The inter-Korean university opened in Pyongyang in October 2010, nine years after the project to build the university was launched in 2001.

The university aims to promote reconciliation and prosperity among the Korean people, separated since the 1950-53 Korean War, and “help North Korea develop the necessary economic and intellectual infrastructure to function as a member of the international community,” according to the KCNA. (Yonhap News)

N.K. Cabinet Discusses Ways of Achieving 2011 Economic Goal

North Korea recently discussed ways of fulfilling this year's economic targets, and was briefed on the economic performance for the third-quarter of this year, the North's media reported Oct. 15.

In an extended plenary session presided over by Premier Choe Yong-rim, the North's Cabinet addressed measures to increase the country's production of coal, electricity, metal and railways freight traffic, the KCNA said, quoting *Minju Joson*, a state-run newspaper.

The meeting also discussed preparations for the third goods exhibition at Pyongyang Department Store No. 1, flood damage restoration and Pyongyang remodeling, it said.

A briefing on performance for the July-September period presented at the meeting, said the production of cotton yarn rose 9 percent in that period compared from the first quarter, and the production of paper increased 65 percent during the same period.

The second exhibition at Pyongyang Department Store No. 1, which displayed 3.5 million items of about 1,400 types, was also discussed in the briefing on third-quarter economic performance. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Estimates 1st Nuclear Test as Historic Event

On the fifth anniversary of the first-ever nuclear test, North Korea said on Oct. 9 it was a historical event to deal a heavy blow to imperialists who attempted to stifle its regime.

North Korea conducted its first-ever nuclear test in Oct. 9, 2006, in Kilju County, a northeast coastal area of North Hamgyong Province.

In a talk show of the (North) Korean Central Broadcasting Station to mark the fifth anniversary of the nuclear test, the entire cast said the success of the nuclear test inspired national pride in the North's scientists.

Over the past five years since the nuclear test, North Korea has made huge strides in the scientific area, they said.

Earlier on Oct. 8, the KCNA hinted at the North's intention to expand its nuclear development, saying the peaceful development and use of nuclear energy is a legitimate right of an independent country. (Yonhap News)

<External Affairs>

N. Korea, Russia to Set up Working Group on Pipeline Project

North Korean and Russian energy officials have agreed to set up a joint working group to build a gas pipeline that will link the two Koreas and Russia, a Russian energy firm said on Sept. 15.

Gazprom chief Alexei Miller and North Korea's Oil Industry Minister Kim Hui-Yong signed a memorandum following a Sept. 15 meeting to create a joint working group for implementing the project and developing other promising areas of cooperation, Russian energy giant Gazprom said in a statement.

The statement said the two sides discussed practical aspects related to the project and an agreement on the project was reached by the leaders of North Korea and Russia during their meeting in Ulan Ude in August.

Kim Hui-yong made his week-long visit to Russia starting Sept. 13, according to the KCNA. But the news agency did not provide any details on the agreement.

Meanwhile, the South's Korea Gas Corp. President Choo Kang-soo, who headed to Russia on Sept. 14, was expected to have talks with the Gazprom CEO, but no statement has been released about the meeting results.

A source said an anticipated trilateral meeting among the energy officials fell through. "Since there are agendas to be discussed between Russia and South Korea and Russia and North Korea, a trilateral meeting is likely to take place some time after the results of the bilateral meetings are realized," said the local source.

The ambitious project to build a transnational pipeline shipping Siberian natural gas to South Korea via the North has gained momentum after North Korean leader Kim Jong-il discussed the project with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev during his trip to Russia in August. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea's Joint Venture with China Rolls out Buses, Trucks

A joint venture between North Korea and China began to roll out buses and trucks from a car plant, North Korea's official Web site said on Sept. 16.

Pyongunjonsong Corp. went into trial production of the vehicles in its plant at an undisclosed location, the North's government-run Web site Naenara said.

It also said 19-seat minibuses and 50-seaters as well as trucks that range from 0.5 tons to 15 tons would go through performance tests before reaching customers, the Web site said, without elaborating on their prices.

Separately, North Korea has set up Pyeonghwa Motors Corp., a joint venture with a South Korean automaker. The company said it sold 1,450 sport utility vehicles, sedans and minibuses assembled at its plant in Nampho, near the capital Pyongyang, last year.

North Korea's state-run companies are the main customers of Pyeonghwa's cars priced at between US\$15,000 and \$17,000, according to a Pyeonghwa official in Seoul. He asked not to be identified as he was not authorized to speak to the media. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Reiterates Unconditional Resumption of Six-way Talks

North Korean media repeated on Sept. 20 a call for the unconditional resumption of six-way talks aimed at scrapping the country's nuclear weapons program, quoting foreign media reports.

The KCNA reported a news story from China's *People's Daily* on the six-way talks, which was published one day earlier under the title, "With No Precondition' Is Main Precondition."

The news agency quoted the daily as saying: "The September 19 joint statement

adopted at the fourth six-party talks six years ago is a document containing the most practical contents among the documents produced by the talks.”

Qu Xing, president of the China Institute of International Studies, was also quoted by KCNA as saying that North Korea is fully ready for the resumption of the six-party talks for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The North’s news outlet also cited part of a speech delivered by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi at an international symposium held on Sept. 19 in Beijing to mark the sixth anniversary of the September 19 joint statement.

The Chinese foreign minister said, “If the parties concerned respect each other, negotiate in a candid way, reach mutual understanding and make concessions, firmly maintaining the spirit of the statement, the six-party talks will continue to be held and yield fruits.”

On Sept. 19, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho stressed the importance of resuming the six-party talks during a visit to Beijing, saying attaching pre-conditions ahead of dialogue hurts each other’s trust and belief. (Yonhap News)

Laotian President Makes Three-day Visit to North Korea

Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone wrapped up a three-day official visit to North Korea on Sept. 23 after a meeting with leader Kim Jong-il, the North’s media reported.

The North’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the two leaders met in the North’s capital Pyongyang but gave no other details.

The Laotian president arrived in Pyongyang on Sept. 21 on what the North earlier called an “official goodwill visit.”

In a separate report, the KCNA said Sayasone was seen off at the airport by a number of North Korean officials, including the country’s titular head of state Kim Yong-nam.

Pyongyang and Vientiane established diplomatic ties in 1974. Laos also established formal diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1974, but severed them a year later. Both restored ties in 1995. (Yonhap News)

N. Korean, Russian Vice Foreign Ministers Hold Talks in Pyongyang

The talks between North Korea’s First-vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan and his Russian counterpart Andrey Denisov was held in Pyongyang on Sept. 29,

the North's news media said.

The KCNA said that the talks were held in Pyongyang, but did not elaborate on the agenda or the venue of the talks.

North Korea watchers in Seoul guessed that they discussed resuming the six-party talks and increasing economic cooperation between the two countries.

The move comes two months after Kim and his delegation met Stephen Bosworth, Washington's point man on Pyongyang, in New York in July, stemming a 17-month hiatus, as part of efforts to revive the six-party negotiations on the socialist nation's nuclear weapons program.

The Russian official, who visited Pyongyang two days ago, made a tribute at the Liberation Tower and watched Arirang, a gymnastics and artistic performance, on the second day of his visit, according to the KCNA. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Rejects Preconditions for Resuming Nuclear Talks

North Korea's state media on Oct. 4 rejected preconditions for resuming long-stalled talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs.

"The U.S. is creating the wrong impression that there are things which the (North) has to do first for the resumption of the talks," the KCNA said in a commentary.

"The U.S. talk about preconditions is little short of artifice to shift the blame for the failure to resume the six-party talks on North Korea," the news agency added.

North Korea often announces its policy decisions through its state media.

The development represents a deep divide among the parties and indicated that the talks appear unlikely to be resumed anytime soon.

In September, the nuclear envoys of South and North Korea held their second meeting in Beijing in as many months to try to lay the groundwork for the resumption of the nuclear talks, although no significant progress was made.

The North quit the nuclear talks in 2009, but it has since repeatedly expressed its desire to return to the negotiating table without any preconditions.

The talks, which involve the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia, were last held in Beijing in late 2008.

Still, Seoul and Washington insist, among other things, that Pyongyang halt its uranium enrichment program and allow U.N. inspectors back into the country before resuming the talks. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Warns of Merciless Punishment against S. Korea

North Korea warned on Oct. 5 of a “merciless punishment” against South Korea for its psychological warfare that Pyongyang claims is aimed at toppling the current regime.

North Korea’ state media accused South Korea of airing anti-North Korean television and radio broadcasts via the frequency currently being used by the North for its own broadcasts.

“It served a strong warning that in case such a campaign goes on, its bases would not escape a merciless punishment by the army” of North Korea, the KCNA said in a commentary, without elaborating.

Earlier on Oct. 1, North Korea denounced South Korean authorities for televising anti-North Korea propaganda since mid-August.

The KCNA quoted a unidentified spokesperson for the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications as saying that South Korean ministries, including the Defense Ministry, Unification Ministry and spy agency, have been beaming anti-North Korean propaganda broadcasts to the western part of the country via the same frequency bandwidth as the North’s television channel since mid-August.

North Korea has made similar military threats against the South over anti-Pyongyang leaflets in recent months.

South Korean activists and North Korean defectors frequently send leaflets condemning North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and calling for an uprising against Kim. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Warns of Physical Action against S. Korean ‘War Moves’

North Korea warned on Oct. 9 it could take physical action against South Korea in response to the South’s “ceaseless provocative war moves.”

The KCNA, said the Korean Peninsula was at “the crossroads of dialogue or confrontation and peace or war.” It accused South Korea of intruding into North Korean waters in the Yellow Sea and of sending anti-North Korea propaganda leaflets across the border.

“In September alone, more than 80 warships of the South Korean navy intruded into the waters of the North side in the sea, while anti-communist right-wing conservative organizations scattered a lot of leaflets and undesirable USBs and pamphlets into areas of the north side (of the border),” the KCNA said in an English-language dispatch.

The report also said the head of the North Korean delegation to the inter-Korean general-level military talks sent a warning to Seoul on Oct. 8.

“The North side reminds the South side once again that the army and people of the DPRK (North Korea) are compelled to make a physical retaliation against the South side’s ceaseless provocative war moves as already clarified before the world and keeping themselves fully ready for it,” the KCNA said.

The latest warning came only three days after Pyongyang threatened to mete out “merciless punishment” to South Korea for psychological warfare that Pyongyang believes is aimed at toppling its current regime.

The North on Oct. 5 accused the South of airing anti-North Korean television and radio broadcasts via a frequency currently being used by the North for its own broadcasts. (Yonhap News)

North Korea, Russia Conduct Test Run of Cross-border Railway

North Korea and Russia held a test run of their renovated cross-border railway on Oct. 13, in a move that could help make a key North Korean port a regional transportation hub.

The track once again links Russia's Far Eastern border town of Khasan to North Korea's northeastern port city of Rajin after three years of renovation, mostly financed by Russia.

Hundreds of North Korean and Russian officials attended the ceremony in a North Korean border railway station in what could be the beginning of a long-held vision to make North Korea's Rajin port a regional hub for Europe-bound freight shipments.

North Korea’s Vice Railways Minister Ju Jae-dok said at the ceremony that the freight transport will contribute to economic exchange not only between North Korea and Russia but also between Northeast Asia and Europe, according to the KCNA.

“Rajin port will be a new center that will attract cargo from the Asia Pacific region,” said Valery Reshetnikov, senior vice president of Russian Railways that was involved in the railway renovation.

Russia eventually hopes to link the 54-kilometer-long railway line with the Trans-Siberian Railway to transport Asian cargo to Europe, an option that could significantly reduce shipping time and costs.

As part of the project, Russia is scheduled to complete the building of a container terminal at the Rajin port by next year.

The North designated Rason, which includes the Rajin port, as a special economic zone in 1991 and has since striven to develop it into a regional logistics hub close to both China and Russia. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Urges S. Korea to Stop Internet Broadcasts on Unification

North Korea on Oct. 14 called on South Korea to halt its Internet broadcast service on inter-Korean affairs, condemning Seoul's move as a grave provocation.

The North's Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland also accused Seoul's Unification Ministry of trying to tarnish the image of North Korea.

The comments by the committee, which handles inter-Korean affairs, were carried by the KCNA.

The angry reaction came two weeks after the South's ministry, which is in charge of relations with North Korea, launched the weekly television broadcasts and one-hour daily online radio broadcasts to try to raise public awareness on potential unification with North Korea.

The North has recently issued a series of military threats against South Korea over anti-Pyongyang leaflets that Pyongyang claims are aimed at toppling the socialist regime.

For years, North Korean defectors and other South Korean activists have frequently sent leaflets calling for an uprising against North Korean leader Kim Jong-il over the border by balloon.

The North's latest rhetoric came hours after U.S. President Barack Obama said North Koreans have the same desire as people in the Middle East for freedom of speech and the right to decide their own destiny.

Popular uprisings across the Arab world ousted longtime autocratic leaders earlier this year.

"Although the path from dictatorship to democracy is always uncertain and fraught with danger, what we've seen also is that human spirit eventually will defeat repressive governments," Obama said in a news conference with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak after their summit talks in Washington on Oct. 13. (Yonhap News)

Religious Leaders from Koreas Agree to Meet to Ease Tension

Religious leaders of South and North Korea met in Pyongyang in late September and agreed to meet regularly in a bid to help ease cross-border tensions, the North's media said on Sept. 22.

The development comes as South Korea, in an apparent shift in its policy, seeks to open new channels of dialogue with its socialist neighbor. Inter-Korean contact has nearly been suspended for the past several years.

In a joint statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), religious leaders from the two Koreas said they "will regularly hold meetings to boost dialogue and cooperation between themselves and actively conduct a movement to achieve the unity of believers and reunification."

They also agreed to "make positive efforts to defuse antagonism and distrust, tension and confrontation between compatriots, remove the danger of war and ensure durable peace," the KCNA said in a report, monitored in Seoul.

A group of seven South Korean religious leaders representing Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists and other indigenous religions flew to North Korea by way of China on Sept. 21, saying they will try to promote peace on the divided Korean Peninsula.

The North's KCNA reported that the meeting took place in Pyongyang for national reconciliation, unity and peaceful reunification.

Present at the meeting from North Korea were Jang Jae-on, chairman of the Religious Believers Council of Korea; Kang Yong-sop, chairman of the Central Committee of the Christian Federation of Korea; Sim Sang-jin, chairman of the Central Committee of the Buddhist Federation of Korea; Kang Chol-won, vice chairman of the Central Guidance Committee of the Chondoist Association of Korea; and members of other religious organizations.

Also attending from South Korea were members of the delegation of South Korea's seven religious orders led by Kim Hee-jung, representative chairman of the South Korean Religionists Council for Peace and head of the Gwangju Archdiocese of the Catholic Church, the KCNA reported.

The religious leaders from both Koreas noted the meeting would mark a meaningful occasion in demonstrating internally and externally the strong will of the believers in the North and South to tide over difficulties in the way of national reunification, promote national concord and bring about a new phase of peace and independent reunification, according to the KCNA report.

They called upon believers in the North and South to advance, holding higher the banner of "By the Korean nation itself," convinced that the implementation of the June 15 joint declaration would lead to the reunification and peace of the country.

“We realized that relations between the two Koreas should be improved for mutual prosperity. We also learned that the North side has the same understanding,” a catholic archbishop said.

Believers from the North and South made public a joint statement for national reconciliation, unity and peaceful reunification at the meeting.

The statement stressed the need to solve all problems between the North and South in conformity with the will and interests common to the nation, saying “The Religious Believers Council of Korea in the north and the south Korean Religionists Council for Peace will regularly hold meetings to boost dialogue and cooperation between themselves and actively conduct a movement to achieve the unity of believers and reunification.”

In Pyongyang, the South Korean religious leaders met the North’s ceremonial head of state, Kim Yong-nam, as well as their counterparts in the country, the KCNA report said.

After returning from Pyongyang on Sept. 24, the South Korean religious leaders expressed hope for improved relations between the divided Koreas.

“Through this visit, we realized that relations between the two Koreas should be improved for mutual prosperity. We also learned that the North side has the same understanding,” Catholic Archbishop Kim Hee-joong, the leader of the delegation, said after arriving at South Korea’s Incheon International Airport.

Until recently, no South Koreans were allowed to visit North Korea. Inter-Korean ties dipped to their lowest level in decades following two deadly North Korean provocations last year that killed a total of 50 South Koreans.

Since September, however, South Korea has permitted some civilian leaders to visit the North for religious and cultural exchanges. Earlier, South Korean orchestra conductor Chung Myung-whun visited the North for discussions on musical exchanges.

Seoul’s Unification Minister Yu Woo-ik, who was named to the post in late August, has said that he will explore ways to exert “flexibility” in dealing with the North.

Earlier, the nuclear envoys of the two Koreas held a second round of talks in Beijing to discuss terms for reopening the stalled six-nation negotiations on the North’s nuclear weapons programs, but little progress was reported. (Yonhap News)

THE STATUS AND ROLE OF THE WPK CENTRAL MILITARY COMMISSION IN THE KIM JONG-IL ERA

I. The Process of North Korea's Establishment of the Military Commission

In late 1962 the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (hereafter called the Party) established a Military Commission under the umbrella of its Central Committee. That measure was taken in the fifth plenary session of the fourth-term Party Central Committee in December of that year, undoubtedly under the judgment of the North Korean leadership that there was a need for the North to push ahead with a plan to reinforce its military power. Earlier in the meeting, the participants had adopted a policy for the construction of defense power in parallel with economic construction. In its second conference of representatives in October 1966, the Party decided on a four-point military plan, which called for the training of all servicemen and servicewomen to elite level, the modernization of the entire army, the armament of all North Korean citizens and the fortification of all North Korean territory.¹⁾ Most likely, the Military Commission should have backed up its military policy with action plans.

North Korea has rarely made public any documents regarding the activities of the Military Commission because most were and are naturally classified as secret. But some works of Kim Il-sung, the founding father of the North Korean socialist regime, reveal the powerful status of the commission. In a speech delivered to a meeting of battalion commanders in charge of military affairs, battalion commanders in charge of political affairs and leaders of chapters of the Socialist Working Youth League in battalions of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) on Oct. 27, 1969, Kim said: "Not the national defense minister, but only the Military

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Commission of the Party Central Committee or the Supreme Commander of the KPA is entitled to issue orders for such significant military affairs as regarding the movement of a large military unit.”²⁾ Kim’s remarks indicate that the Military Commission was given the same authority as the Supreme Commander, such as the authority to command the army.

Kim also said in his speech: “The commander of a military unit is required to get the approval of the Party chapter in the unit before he or she takes any disciplinary action against a serviceman or servicewoman who violates rules, or is idle. And if the troublesome serviceman or servicewoman is a senior officer in an important post, the commander should inform the Military Commission and the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee of his or her behavior and get their approval should the commander wish to punish him or her...”³⁾ Kim’s remarks indicated that the Military Commission had the authority to examine and rule on any disciplinary action against senior officers of the army and that the Military Commission was entrusted with the same authority as the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee, or was even superior to the Secretariat as regards disciplinary actions against high-ranking officers of the army. This implied that the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee in the North was patterned after the Central Military Commission under the umbrella of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

But it was not until the fifth Party congress in November 1970 that North Korea wrote the authorities and functions of the Military Commission into the Party charter. In other words, the role of the commission was mentioned in the Party charter for the

first time, belatedly, eight years after the inauguration of the commission, when the Party congress revised the Party constitution. This development indicates that the Party was not necessarily operated in line with the Party charter and that the Party charter was exploited as a means to justify a change in the system and the operation formula of the Party *ex post facto*. For this reason, North Korea watchers in Seoul and elsewhere will mostly likely reach a conclusion completely divorced from reality or practical developments if and when they attempt to understand the status and authority of the Military Commission of the North, if depending only on the Party charter under the assumption that the Party charter has binding power similar to South Korea’s constitution.

The 1970 version of the Party charter stipulated that the plenary session of the Party Central Committee shall “elect” members of the Military Commission. But that regulation changed at the sixth Party congress in October 1980 to entrust the plenary session of the Party Central Committee with the authority to “organize” the commission. This change implied that the Party leader, then Kim Il-sung, was given the authority to choose members of the Military Commission solely on his own, while members of the commission had been chosen at the conclusion of discussion in the ruling circles.

As for the authority of the Military Commission, the 1970 version of the Party charter stipulated that the commission shall “discuss and decide the ways to implement the Party’s military policy, organize all programs for developing the logistics industry and reinforcing the military power of the KPA and other armed forces, and guide the military power of our country.”⁴⁾ But the 1980 version of the Party charter stipulated

that the commission should “discuss and decide the measures to implement the Party’s military policy, organize and guide projects aimed at reinforcing the military power of all armed forces, including the KPA, and command all armed forces of our country.” It is not easy even for North Korea watchers to find differences between these two visions of the Party charter. Evident, however, is the point that the North has continued to entrust the Military Commission with the authority to provide action programs for its military policy and to “guide” its logistics industry and the armed forces.

North Korea watchers need to depend on Kim Il-sung’s writings or the testimony of North Korean refugees if they want to know the real aspect and role of the Military Commission, because articles of the Party charter on the commission are of a general, abstract nature. As mentioned, the Military Commission has the authority to issue orders regarding the movement of large military units, to examine applications by commanders of military units to take disciplinary actions against their senior officers and to approve the same. Measures regarding the command and management of large military units are also decided in meetings of the commission. This was revealed by Kim Il-sung when he presented concrete methods and took steps to improve the command and management of military units in an expanded meeting of the Military Commission in January 1977, in an expanded 20th plenary meeting of the sixth-term Party committee of the KPA in December 1979, and in meetings of the commission in June 1982 and in February 1990, as shown in a North Korean book published in 1998 under the heading, “The Imperishable Revolutionary Achievements of Great

Leader, Comrade Kim Il-sung, No. 9: The Construction of Juche-style Revolutionary Armed Forces.”⁵⁾

Noteworthy is that the Military Commission was so highly authoritative already in the 1970s that Kim Il-sung mentioned the commission, along with the Administration Council which was transformed into the Cabinet, the Supreme Commander of the KPA and even the Party Central Committee. In a speech delivered at a meeting to mark an end to lectures for sergeant majors of the North Korean army on Oct. 25, 1979, Kim said: “First of all, in the name of the Party Central Committee, the government of the republic (referring to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, official name of the North), the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, and myself (probably referring to his office as Supreme Commander of the army), I extend my whole-hearted thanks to all sergeants of the KPA and the People’s Security Guard, who in their capacity as the eldest brothers of noncommissioned officers are in charge of the daily management of companies and devoted themselves to the cause of reinforcing companies of the army and the guard.”⁶⁾

In a meeting of “earnest” officers of the Socialist Working Youth League on Oct. 28, 1979, Kim said: “First of all, in the name of the Party Central Committee, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee and myself, I extend my whole-hearted congratulatory words to officials of various army chapters of the League of Socialist Working Youth and its members attending this function.”⁷⁾

Noteworthy here is that Kim mentioned the Military Commission in parallel with the Party Central Committee, although it was officially under the umbrella of the commit-

tee. This implies that the commission was furnished with a status virtually independent from the Party Central Committee already in the late 1970s, although the 1980 version of the Party charter referred to the commission as one of the offices under the umbrella of the Party Central Committee. In a last portion of his speech, Kim allowed an equal authority to both the commission and the Supreme Commander when he called on all organizations and members of the youth league to devote themselves to the cause of abiding faithfully by the orders of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee and the Supreme Commander and carrying out their revolutionary missions under unity behind the Party Central Committee.⁸⁾ He had made similar remarks in a speech delivered on Oct. 27, 1969.

II. The Role of the Military Commission Played in the Process of North Korea's Establishment of the System for Hereditary Succession of Kim Jong-il's Leadership

Noteworthy particularly in the role of the Military Commission is that this military institution greatly contributed to promoting Kim Jong-il's influence in the North Korean army after he was designated in a secret session of the Party Central Committee as successor to his father Kim Il-sung in 1974. According to the book on Kim Il-sung's achievements regarding the "Construction of Juche-style Revolutionary Armed Forces," the senior Kim convened a meeting of the Military Commission in February 1979 when the "fuss of imperialists and their agents

were more vicious than ever and presented the fundamental mission to furnish all servicemen in the KPA with revolutionary spirit and to make them unite firmly behind Comrade Kim Jong-il and to be resolved to struggle for the Party and the "suryong" (absolute leader, referring to Kim Il-sung), even at the cost of their lives."⁹⁾ In other words, Kim called for the North Korean army's loyalty to his successor-designate son, Kim Jong-il, in a message to the Military Commission a year before the junior Kim was elected a member of the commission at the sixth Party congress in 1980.

Well before the Party congress formalized Kim Jong-il's status as successor-designate, Kim Jong-il was more influential in the army than members of the Military Commission because Kim Il-sung had taken various measures since the mid 1970s to back up his son's status through the General Political Bureau of the army and the Military Commission. The junior Kim took the most powerful office of the secretary of the Party Central Committee in charge of organization years before the Party congress. Undoubtedly, the younger Kim took the second highest seat not only in the KPA but in the whole North Korean hierarchy in the Party congress when he became a member of the five-man Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, in addition to being a member of the Military Commission.

The meeting of the Military Commission in June 1982 served as a significant occasion of promoting not only Kim Jong-il's political leadership in the army but his control of the army through military administration. According to the book on Kim Il-sung's achievements regarding the "Construction of Juche-style Revolutionary Armed Forces," this meeting had a transitional significance

in the course of North's establishment of the system for "beloved leader, comrade Kim Jong-il's sole command of the KPA." In the meeting, it states, Kim Il-sung said, "the secretary of the Party Central Committee in charge of organization (referring to Kim Jong-il), who guides the army through the Party mechanism, should directly guide the army through the military chain of command," adding that it is natural for the leader of a country to directly guide the army. The book also said that the senior Kim had taken various measures necessary for concentrating all military projects under the junior Kim and establishing the "revolutionary project order" essential to carrying out the projects only according to his conclusion. He also established an office in the Party Central Committee in an effort to help the junior Kim control and guide the army, and established new regulations regarding the order in a way to carry out all projects only under Kim Jong-il's leadership, plus the command system in the army for the junior Kim, it added. These developments implied that Kim Jong-il was given the authority to virtually command the North Korean army through the Military Commission, a full nine years before he was named supreme commander of the army in 1991.

Under the measures passed by Kim Il-sung at the 1982 meeting of the commission, the book states, the North established a new system for realizing Kim Jong-il's military administrative leadership over the entire armed forces, including the KPA. The book also says that a system was established firmly under which "key commanders in the KPA can report directly to the dear general" (referring to the junior Kim) and a system for the "dear leader, comrade Kim Jong-il's, command of the whole army."¹⁰

The book implies that it is improper for North Korea watchers in Seoul or elsewhere to discuss Kim Jong-il's control of the KPA only in consideration of his offices of supreme commander and chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) while disregarding the role of the Military Commission.

The Military Commission under the umbrella of the Party Central Committee was transformed into the Party Central Military Commission (PCMC) in 1982 when Kim Jong-il began to command and guide the KPA not only through Party mechanisms but through military administration. The transformation was revealed in an article on a rally of artillerymen carried in *Rodong Sinmun*, an organ of the Party, on Nov. 14 of that year. The article introduced Kim Jong-il as a member of the PCMC as well as a member of the Presidium of the Politburo of the Party Central Committee and secretary of the Party Central Committee.¹¹ The article indicates that the PCMC was not one of the offices under the umbrella of the Party Central Committee, but an independent institution of the Party, whose status was equal to the Party Central Committee.

With the establishment of the exclusive system for Kim Jong-il's command of the army in the mid-1980s, the junior Kim became virtually more influential in the army than Kim Il-sung. Hwang Jang-yop, who defected to South Korea in 1997 while visiting China in his capacity as secretary of the Party Central Committee in charge of international affairs and died last year, said that North Korea from 1974 to 1985 could be viewed as the common regime of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, and North Korea thereafter until the death of the senior Kim in 1994 as the common regime of Kim Jong-il and Kim Il-sung.¹²

The day after he handed over his office of supreme commander to the junior Kim on Dec. 24, 1991, Kim Il-sung said in a meeting of political officers in companies of the KPA: "From now on I will serve only as an adviser (to Kim Jong-il) in my capacity as chairman of the PCMC."¹³ His remarks brought back memories of the quasi-retirement of the Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, who held the office of chairman of the Central Military Commission under the umbrella of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China until his complete withdrawal from the scene. This development indicated that Kim Il-sung was still influential in the army in his capacity as chairman of the PCMC, which guaranteed his exclusive authority to command the KPA, although he handed over the office of supreme commander to the junior Kim.

III. The Status and Role of the Party Central Military Commission before the Third Conference of Party Representatives

As recently as September 2010, when North Korea held a third conference of Party representatives, the PCMC has been of the nature of a non-standing office although it is the top military organization. But the status of the commission was elevated to a standing office at the Party conference, the largest Party function since the sixth Party congress in 1980, which formalized the status of Kim Jong-un, third and youngest son of Kim Jong-il, as successor to the current North Korean leader. The Party conference elected the young Kim in his late 20s as vice

chairman of the commission, in an apparent move to help him control the North Korean army.

A sweeping majority of South Korean scholars specializing in North Korean affairs have considered that the NDC replaced the PCMC as the top military office shortly after the death of former North Korean leader Kim Il-sung in July 1994. But an analysis of various North Korean documents, plus testimony of North Korean elite refugees, indicates that the PCMC has remained in charge of personnel actions for senior officers, command of the KPA and military policies throughout the Kim Jong-il era.

In a meeting of the PCMC in October 1994, Ri Pong-won, deputy head of the General Political Bureau of the KPA in charge of organization, reportedly made a presentation against Kim Myong-guk, chief of the Operation Bureau in the General Staff of the KPA, indicating that the commission had the authority for personnel actions of senior army officers.¹⁴ Ri's attempt ended in failure and he, along with officers close to him, were reportedly purged on Oct. 10, 1995, the founding anniversary of the Party. Then, on Feb. 11, 2009, Kim Jong-il appointed Ri Yong-ho as chief of the General Staff of the KPA in his capacity as chairman of the PCMC, while naming Kim Yong-chun minister of the people's armed forces in his capacity as chairman of the NDC.¹⁵

An analysis of North Korean documents, classified and unclassified, indicates that the PCMC has been responsible for decisions on important military affairs such as large-scale military exercises, the munitions industry and war preparations. Instructions on war preparations have been delivered to military units in the name of the PCMC. Key military orders have also been issued by the PCMC,

and not the NDC. This North Korean system is similar to the Chinese one as far as the PCMC is concerned.

As mentioned, the PCMC has continued to play an important role in the military arena of the North, but its activities have been under a veil of secrecy because they have been classified as secret. For instance, the PCMC, jointly with the Party Central Committee, issued a statement in October 1997 declaring Kim Jong-il as the general secretary of the Party Central Committee, in violation of the 1980 version of the Party charter which ruled that only the Party Central Committee was entitled to elect the general secretary of the Party, which is the top office of the Party. The PCMC, also jointly with the Party Central Committee, posted slogans in the years marking the 50th and 55th founding anniversary of the North Korean socialist regime and marking the 65th founding anniversary of the Party aimed at mobilizing the entire Party, state offices, military and North Korean citizens for the cause of attaining economic and other tasks. Undoubtedly, the military commission has played a pivotal role in creating slogans regarding military affairs, among other things.

The PCMC, along with other key institutions of the North Korean regime, has participated in making important policies while also announcing "important" letters of congratulations. The North Korean state-controlled media has placed the military commission just below the Party Central Committee, among the key institutions, in articles on important functions. Before the constitutional revision in September 1998 for the formal inauguration of the Kim Jong-il regime, the media listed key institutions in the North as follows: the Party Central Committee, the PCMC, the NDC, the Central

People's Committee and the Administration Council.¹⁶ However, the list changed after the constitutional amendment as follows: the Party Central Committee, the PCMC, the NDC, the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and the Cabinet. That second ranking of the military commission has remained to date despite another constitutional revision in April 2009.

IV. Turning the Party Central Military Commission into a Standing Institution

Shortly after the sixth Party congress in 1980, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee comprised 19 of the army top brass, including North Korean leader Kim Il-sung, who chaired the commission in his capacity as marshal. But that number steadily decreased, in particular after Kim's death, because the North did not fill the vacant seats left behind as members died or retired. The decreasing number of its members has served as a factor for many North Korea watchers in Seoul to underestimate the status and role of the commission. Membership decreased to 14 at the end of 1994 and went as low as six in August 2010, a month before the third conference of Party representatives. The Party conference reinforced the PCMC, filling all the vacant seats and returning it to 19 members.

The Party conference also revised the Party charter in such a way as to justify Party practices under changed circumstances after the 1980 Party congress. These changes were not based on the Party charter, but were to formalize and institute the power base for successor-designate Kim Jong-un. In the 1980 version of the Party

charter, there were no articles backing up the status and role of the PCMC, which became independent of the Party Central Committee in 1982, although the military commission has since participated overtly in policy-making on important issues, along with other key institutions such as the Party Central Committee and the NDC. Under the 2010 version of the Party charter, the general secretary of the Party is to serve as chairman of the PCMC.

The revised Party charter elevated the status of the military commission and reinforced its role in a way to allow it to “organize and guide all projects regarding military affairs during the period between Party congresses, through Party mechanisms.” In other words, the new Party charter guaranteed the status of the commission as a standing institution like the Party Central Committee, which is entitled to “organize and guide all projects during the period between Party congresses.” For this reason, even the departments under the umbrella of the Party Central Committee, which are in charge of organization and guidance, propaganda and agitation, senior officials, munitions industry and reserve forces, are most likely under the influence of the commission as far as military affairs are concerned.

The PCMC had virtually served as a consultative body before the Party conference revised the Party charter in a way to elevate its status as a standing supreme military guidance organization with successor-designate Kim Jong-un as its vice chairman. The military commission has probably since been more powerful and influential than the NDC. Before the Party conference, the state-controlled North Korean media, when covering Kim’s public activities, had not mentioned membership in the military commission held by the senior officials accompany-

ing North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, but only their membership in the NDC. After the Party conference, however, the North Korean media not only mentioned officials’ membership in the military commission but put the names of the PCMC’s vice chairmen before those of the NDC’s vice chairmen.

Covering Kim’s trip to inspect the comprehensive war game of military unit No. 567 on April 13, 2010, the (North) Korean Central News Agency said: The North Korean leader was accompanied by “Vice Marshal Kim Yong-chun, who is vice chairman of the NDC of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and minister of people’s armed forces, concurrently; Ri Yong-mu and O Kuk-ryol, both vice chairmen of the NDC; Gen. Ri Yong-ho, chief of the General Staff of the KPA; Gen. Kim Jong-gak, NDC member and deputy chief of the General Political Bureau of the KPA, concurrently; Vice Marshal Kim Il-chol, NDC member,” and others. Both Kim Yong-chun and Kim Il-chol were members of the PCMC, but the KCNA did not even mention their membership in the commission.

Superficially, the new PCMC organized by the Party conference in 2010 is similar to the Military Commission elected in the Party congress in 1980, with 19 members in both commissions. But the PCMC is independent of the Party Central Committee while the Military Commission is under the umbrella of the Party Central. The latter is also a non-standing consultative body, while the former is a standing top military guidance institution with successor-designate Kim Jong-un serving virtually as its first vice chairman, although the young Kim is one of two vice chairmen of the commission.

The new PCMC is organized in a way to be more efficient in control and command of the army than the NDC because all the

key figures of the army top brass are members of the military commission, unlike the NDC. They are Ri Yong-ho, chief of the General Staff of the army; Kim Myong-guk, chief of the Operation Bureau of the army; Kim Kyong-ok, first deputy chief of the Organization-Guidance Department of the Party Central Committee in charge of military affairs; Kim Won-hong, deputy chief of the General Political Bureau of the army in charge of organization; Jong Myong-do, navy commander; Ri Pyong-chol, air force commander; Choe Pu-il, deputy chief of the General Staff of the army; Yun Chong-rin, chief of the military unit in charge of the security of North Korean leader and his family members; and Kim Yong-chol, chief of the Reconnaissance Bureau of the army. Jo Myong-rok, who had been first vice chairman of the NDC; O Kuk-ryol and Ri Yong-mu, both who served as vice chairmen of the NDC; and Ju Sang-song, minister of people's security and an NDC member, concurrently, failed to win membership in the new military commission. Moreover, Kim Yong-chun, minister of the people's armed forces and deputy chairman of the NDC, concurrently; and Jang Song-thaek, brother-in-law of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and the serving head of the Administration Department of the Party Central Committee, won membership in the commission, but not as vice chairmen. This indicates that the NDC, as a state organization, has no practical power as far as the chain of command in the army is concerned because in an orthodox communist state, the Party equals the army as seen in the former Soviet Union and China.

On the occasion of the Party conference, most aged veterans in their late 70s and 80s, including Marshal Ri Ul-sol (89) and Vice Marshal Ri Ha-il (84), withdrew from the

scene and most key posts in the North Korean regime were taken by senior officials in their 60s, with the exception of Kim Yong-chun, the people's armed forces minister (74), and Ju Kyu-chang, chief of the Machine Department of the Party Central Committee (82). While Kim Jong-un took the office of a vice chairman of the PCMC while still in his 20s, the generational shift was more noticeable in the commission than in the Politburo or the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee.

As for the authority given to the PCMC, the Party charter as revised at the Party conference stipulates: The commission "shall discuss and decide measures to implement the Party's military line and policies, and guide all programs for national defense, including those aimed at reinforcing revolutionary armed forces and developing the munitions industry through Party mechanisms." This passage indicates that the military commission will also have the power to interfere with "projects for national defense," an arena which had previously been dealt with exclusively by the NDC.

There came an abnormal development in the North Korean hierarchy about one month after the Party conference. In a meeting between an NDC delegation of the North and a high-level military delegation from China on Oct. 26, 2010, Ri Yong-ho, a vice chairman of the PCMC who has no position in the NDC, acted as the chief North Korean delegate. Undoubtedly, this development indicates that the PCMC, which is virtually led by the young successor-designate, is so powerful as to represent the NDC, if necessary.

While reinforcing the functions of the PCMC, however, the 2010 Party conference revised the Party charter in a way to remove the authority of the commission to

“command the army of our republic,” which had been in the 1980 version of the Party charter, giving birth to a view by some North Korea watchers that the commission had been excluded from the chain of command of the KPA. Undoubtedly, however, successor-designate Kim Jong-un is commanding the KPA in his capacity as vice chairman of the commission. This is shown by North Korean information for educating servicemen about the “greatness of respected general Kim Jong-un,” which has been distributed to all the North’s military units and which emphasized the establishment of the system for Kim’s command of the North Korean army, and the fact that the most powerful senior officers became members of the commission at the Party conference.

Of note is that the information on Kim Jong-un’s “great leadership” mentions that the Party Central Committee took various measures shortly after his father, Kim Jong-il, was designated successor to Kim Il-sung in 1974. These measures were aimed at helping Kim Jong-il gain control of the army. Calling on senior officers’ faithful loyalty to the young Kim’s leadership, that data said: “In PCMC meetings held on March 27, 2008 and on Feb. 11, 2009, the beloved general presented mandatory tasks regarding the question of revolutionizing army officers and accelerating the preparations of war, of improving the command and management of military units, of tightening discipline in the army and of reinforcing army companies.” This indicates that Kim Jong-il had taken some measures in the meetings aimed at helping his son gain complete control of the army. Also noteworthy is that the General Political Bureau of the KPA was given the authority to “carry out projects with the same authority as departments under the umbrella of the Party Central

Committee” at a time when the status of PCMC was elevated to a standing guidance organization. This development probably indicates that the General Political Bureau conducts political projects in the army in its capacity as an office under the direct of the Party Central Committee, in the same way as the General Political Department in China, which plays a pivotal role in political affairs of the army as an institute under the direct control of the Central Military Commission under the umbrellas of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

V. Conclusion

North Korea’s dual chain of command in the army, under which the Party controls the army through the PCMC on one hand and the Supreme Command of the KPA on the other, is in close parallel to the Stalinist dictatorship of the former Soviet Union, which established an absolute one-man dictatorial leadership derailing from collective leadership. Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il have pursued both their firm exclusive personal control of the army through the office of the supreme commander and efficient management of the army through the collective leadership of the PCMC. As a result, the North Korean army has turned into the army of the Party and the suryong, or of the suryong and his successor, while the People’s Liberation Army in China remains the army of the Communist Party of China.

The PCMC in North Korea seems to have been patterned after the Central Military Commission under the umbrella of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Encouraged by a students’ uprising in South Korea in April 1960, which top-

pled the government led by President Rhee Syng-man, North Korea began to pursue a policy for the forceful reunification of the two Koreas under its initiative. To attain that goal, there is a need for the North to back up its programs to reinforce its military power. In other words, that policy gave birth to the Military Commission under the umbrellas of the Party Central Committee and the commission has since played a key role in establishing the chain of command in army and military policies. Since the late 1970s, the commission played a pivotal role in backing up Kim Jong-il's leadership in the army while he was still successor-designate, taking various measures to that effect, and eventually contributed to cementing the hereditary power succession of the North.

Not a few North Korea watchers in Seoul have considered that the PCMC turned into a nominal institution after the death of Kim Il-sung in July 1994. But an examination of North Korean documents reveals that the commission has continued to participate in making decisions on political affairs and key military policies. Many NDC members, however, had taken seats reserved for VIPs at important functions in the North — rather than PCMC members — at a time when the North failed to fill up the seats on the commission left empty when members died or retired, and while its other members were getting older. The North ended this trend in September 2010 when a conference of Party representatives formed a new PCMC with 19 members and elevated its status to a standing institution. With successor-designate Kim Jong-un as its vice chairman and most members of the army top brass as members, the PCMC might now be more influential in the North Korean regime than the NDC.

The frequency of Kim Jong-il's inspection visits to military units has decreased steadily

since he was suspected to have suffered a stroke in August 2008, and today successor-designate Kim Jong-un is guiding the North Korean army in his capacity as vice chairman of the much reinforced PCMC. As a result, the North Korean army, which has been under the exclusive leadership of Supreme Commander Kim Jong-il, is now falling under the control of the junior Kim, with the senior Kim's approval and under the assistance of another vice chairman of the commission, Ri Yong-ho. For this reason, the possibilities are high that Kim Jong-un will succeed to power smoothly, relying on military power, even if Kim Jong-il dies in the near future.

(This is an excerpt from a paper published by the Sejong Institute in September 2011 under the heading, "A Study of Comparison between the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea and the Central Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.")

Notes:

- 1) *Great Leader, Comrade Kim Il-sung's Imperishable Revolutionary Achievements*, No. 9: *Construction of Juche-style Revolutionary Armed Forces* (Pyongyang, The Publishing House of Workers' Party of Korea, 1998), p. 341; Lee Dae-geun, *What Is the Reason Why the North Korean Army Does Not Stage a Coup?* (Seoul, Hanul, 2003), p. 63.
- 2) Kim Il-sung, "About Some Political, Military Tasks for the People's Army under the Political Situation Today (His Conclusion Delivered in a Meeting of Battalion Leaders in Charge of Military Affairs and Political Affairs, and a Meeting

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N.K. Says Peaceful Nuclear Development Is Its Legitimate Right

The peaceful use and development of nuclear energy is within the legitimate rights of an independent state, which no one can restrict, the said on Oct. 8. Referring to the examples of peaceful use and development of nuclear energy in such countries as Russia, China, India, Brazil and Malaysia, the news outlet said “the peaceful development of nuclear energy will further be expanded in the world.” (Yonhap News)

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)

- Sept. 23 meets with Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone on a visit to North Korea.
- 27 sends a condolence message to the bereaved family of Park Yong-gil, a South Korean pro-unification activist, over her death from illness.
- Oct. 3 makes inspection tours on the Tanchon Magnesia Factory, the Ryongjon Fruit Farm and the construction site of Tanchon Port in South Hamgyong Province.
- 7 receives a message of greeting from Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad on the 66th anniversary of the founding of the WPK.
- 7 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il visited the Phyongsong Synthetic Leather Factory and the updated Rakrang Disabled Soldiers' Essential Plastic Goods Factory.
- 9 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il visited the Central Tree Nursery and the newly built Solar Equipment Center.
- 11 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il watched an October Concert entitled, "We Will Travel One Road Forever," given by the Unhasu Orchestra on the occasion of the 66th anniversary of the WPK.
- 11 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il visited the technically-updated Tudan Duck Farm in Pyongyang.
- 12 attends a banquet to mark the 66th anniversary of the WPK hosted by the Central Committee and Central Military Commission of the WPK, along with his son Kim Jong-un.
- 14 The KCNA says Kim Jong-il, along with his son Kim Jong-un, visited the newly built Taedong River Pig Farm, Taedong River Net-weaving Factory and Taedong River Terrapin Farm.
- 15 visits the Taehung Youth Hero Mine and the Ryongyang Mine in South Hamgyong Province, along with his younger sister Kim Kyong-hui, member of the Political Bureau, and her husband Jang Song-thaek, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the WPK.

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

- Sept. 15 meets with a delegation of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle led by its General Chairwoman Megawati Soekarnoputri.
- 19 meets with Peter Hughes, British ambassador to North Korea, who paid a

- farewell call on him, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.
- Sept. 22 holds talks with Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone at Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.
- Oct. 3 meets with the Communist party of China delegation headed by Guo Shengkun, secretary of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Regional Committee of China.
- 13 receives credentials from Karen Suzanne Wolstenholme, ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to North Korea.
- 14 meets with a delegation of the Lao Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism led by Minister Bosengkham Vongdara.

Choe Yong-rim (최영림) : Premier

- Sept. 20 visits the Taedong River TV Set Factory and the renovation site of Songyo Ceramics Factory in Pyongyang.
- 26-30 visits China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. During his visit to China, he has talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao, and Jia Qinglin, who chairs the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and visits Shanghai and Jiangsu Province.
- Oct. 5 inspects greenhouses under construction at the Pyongyang Vegetable Science Institute and the Pyongyang Floriculture Institute.

Choe Thae-bok (최태복) : Chairman of the SPA

- Sept. 15 meets with Peter Hughes, outgoing British ambassador to North Korea, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.
- 22 meets with Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone in Pyongyang.

CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW

(Local Events)

- Sept. 16 An educational symposium on the work of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il called "Kimchaek University of Technology Is Nation's Powerful Seat for Training Scientific and Technological Personnel," takes place in Pyongyang to mark the 10th anniversary of Kim's visit to the university.
- 16 The KCNA says the Chongjin Chemical Fibre Mill in North Hamgyong Province has successfully updated the rayon production process.
- 17 The KCNA says the construction of apartment buildings is in full swing in the Mansudae area in the North Korean capital city of Pyongyang.
- 20 The 6th National Martial Art Championship for September 10 Prize closes at

- the Taekwondo Hall for a five-day run.
- Sept. 20 An international symposium in commemoration of Kimilsung University's 65th anniversary opens at the university in Pyongyang.
- 21 A national exhibition of consumer goods opens in Pyongyang.
- 22 A film show is held at Taedongmun Cinema on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the opening of diplomatic relations between North Korea and the Netherlands.
- 23 The 42nd sports contest of artists is held at Kimilsung Stadium.
- 24 A South Korean delegation of seven religious orders leaves Pyongyang, ending its four-day visit to North Korea.
- Oct. 4 A festival for peaceful reunification takes place in Kaesong to observe the 4th anniversary of the October 4 Declaration.
- 4 A ceremony is held at the Pyongyang Flour-Processing Factory to mark the delivery of the Russian government's food aid to North Korea via the World Food Programme (WFP).
- 6 The first international symposium of Pyongyang University of Science and Technology closes in Pyongyang after a two-day run.
- 10 High-ranking officials including senior party and state officials visit the Kumsusan Memorial Palace to pay homage to former leader Kim Il-sung on the 66th anniversary of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea.
- 11 The KCNA says the North's capital city of Pyongyang is undergoing a facelifting to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of former leader Kim Il-sung.
- 12 The KCNA says a seminar took place at the Grand People's Study House in Pyongyang with the approach of Global Handwashing Day 2011, which falls on October 15.
- 12 The KCNA says a banquet was held to mark the 66th anniversary of the WPK hosted by the Central Committee and Central Military Commission of the WPK, with Kim Jong-il and his son Jong-un in attendance.
- 15 The KCNA says the Korean Film Studio produced a new feature film, "There Is Nothing Unsettled."

(Foreign Events)

- Sept. 15 A Russian delegation of the Maritime Territorial Branch of the United Russia Party led by Vladimir Novikov, member of its Regional Political Council and mayor of Artyom City, leaves Pyongyang.
- 20 A delegation of the North Korean Ministry of Oil Industry headed by its Minister Kim Hui-yong returns home, ending its visit to Russia that started on Sept. 13.
- 20 Chanel Stevens, executive member of the Southwest region in England of

- the British Labor Party, arrives in Pyongyang.
- Sept. 21 The nuclear envoys of South and North Korea meet in Beijing but fail to agree on terms for re-starting stalled six-party talks on the North's nuclear programs.
- 22 A delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Vice Minister Kung Sok-ung flies back home after visiting European countries.
- 22 A delegation led by Ri Yong-sok, deputy director of the Secretariat of the Cabinet, leaves Pyongyang to visit the Amur Region of Russia.
- 23 A delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands led by Paul Alex Menkveld, ambassador of the Netherlands to North Korea, leaves Pyongyang, ending its two-day visit to North Korea.
- 23 Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone leaves Pyongyang, winding up his three-day visit to North Korea.
- 29 First-vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan has a talk with Andrey Denisov, first-deputy foreign minister of Russia, in Pyongyang.
- 29 A North Korean delegation led by Ri Yong-sok, vice director of the Secretariat of the Cabinet, returns home after its visit to the Amur Region of Russia.
- 29 Kim Yong-il, alternate member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee of the WPK, meets with the Communist Party of China (CPC) delegation.
- 30 A delegation of the North Korean Bureau of Diplomatic Corps Affairs led by General Director Mun Song-mo comes back home ending its visit to Mongolia.
- 30 First-deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Andrey Denisov leaves Pyongyang, wrapping up his visit to North Korea.
- Oct. 3 The Communist Party of China (CPC) delegation headed by Guo Shengkun, secretary of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Regional Committee of China leaves Pyongyang, ending its five-day visit to North Korea.
- 3 A delegation of the Russian Ministry of Extraordinary Situation led by Oleg Belaventsev, director of the Agency for Support and Coordination of Russian Participation in International Humanitarian Operations arrives in Pyongyang.
- 4 The KCNA says North Korea rejects preconditions for resuming the six-party talks, adding it has so far made sincere efforts for resuming the talks.
- 6 A delegation of the Russian Ministry of Extraordinary Situations led by Oleg Belaventsev, director of the Agency for Support and Coordination of Russian Participation in International Humanitarian Operations, leaves Pyongyang, wrapping up its four-day visit to North Korea.
- 8 Chinese tourists led by Li Zhongwen, standing vice secretary of the Tumen City Committee of the Communist Party of China, arrives at Namyang Station

- in Onsong County, North Hamgyong Province, to participate in the ceremony for opening to traffic a tourist train for Mt. Chilbo.
- Oct. 13 A North Korean Foreign Ministry delegation headed by Vice Minister Kim Hyong-jun leaves Pyongyang to visit some Latin American countries.
- 13 A ceremony of running a trial train between the sections of Rajin and Khasan takes place outside the North Korea-Russia Friendship Pavilion in the area of Tumangang Station in Rason City, North Hamgyong Province.
- 15 A delegation of the Lao Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism led by Minister Bosengkham Vongdara wrapping up its two-day visit to North Korea.
- 15 Delegations of Germany, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Taipei of China arrive in Pyongyang to attend the 7th Pyongyang Autumn International Trade Fair.
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