

VANTAGE POINT

DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH KOREA

Vol. 36 No. **7**
JULY 2013

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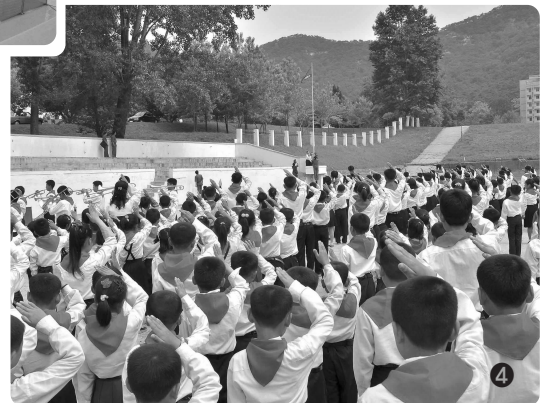
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COVER PHOTO : S. Korean President Park Geun-hye (left) shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping after holding a joint press conference that followed their summit talks in Beijing on June 27. They reached an agreement that a nuclear North Korea is unacceptable "under any circumstances" and ending its atomic program serves the national interests of the two countries. (Yonhap Photo)

Ceremonies for 7th Congress of N. Korean Children's Union (KCU)

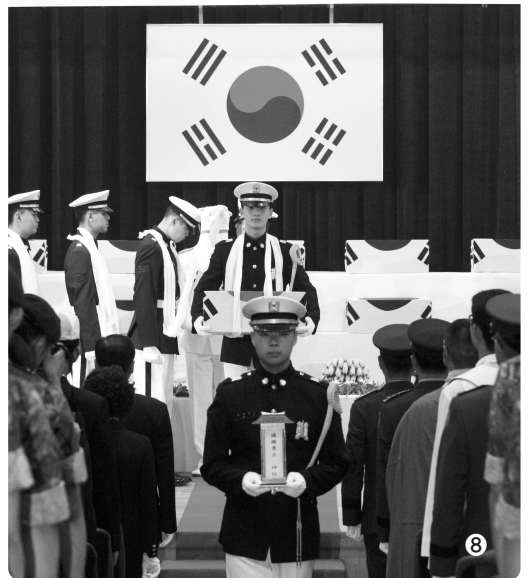


- ① A massive photo session is underway for the participants of the 7th Congress of the KCU in Pyongyang on June 6.
- ② The 7th Congress of KCU is held at the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang to celebrate the 67th anniversary of the union.
- ③ North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is aided by a young girl during the KCU's 7th Congress in Pyongyang.
- ④ North Korean children gather at a camping site near Pyongyang before the 67th anniversary of the KCU.

In Memory of the Outbreak of the Tragic 1950-53 Korean War



6·25 전사자 유해발굴
 2013. 6. 23(일) 주관 : 국방부 · 제2



A ceremony is held at a hotel in Seoul on June 26 welcoming U.N. war veterans' visit to South Korea. ⑤

Korean War veterans look around a special exhibition on the Korean War armistice held at a museum in Seoul on June 26. ⑥

A ceremony is being held in Washington, Maryland, on June 23 to unveil a monument in memory of U.S. Korean War veterans. ⑦

A joint funeral service is underway in Chuncheon on June 23 for the newly discovered remains of the S.Korean war dead. ⑧

S. KOREA-CHINA AGREEMENT FOR NUKE-FREE KOREAN PENINSULA

“We shared an understanding that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons cannot be tolerated under any circumstances,” President Park said.

■ By Lee Kwang-ho

Leaders of South Korea and China held a summit meeting in Beijing on June 27 and agreed to work together for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, saying that ending North Korea's nuclear arms program serves the two countries' common interest. They said North Korea's development of nuclear weapons poses a “grave threat” to peace and stability in the region and the world. South Korean President Park Geun-hye said after the summit talks that she reached an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping that a nuclear North Korea is unacceptable “under any circumstances.”

Future Vision for Ties

Following their meeting in the Chinese capital, a joint communique on a future vision for South Korea-China bilateral ties was issued. Park's four-day state visit started with the summit, the first opportunity for the new leaders of Seoul and Beijing to discuss their North Korea policies and other diplomatic and economic issues. The meeting was watched closely as to how much support Park would win from North Korea's most important ally in pressuring Pyongyang to give up its nuclear programs.

“We shared an understanding that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons cannot be tolerated under any circumstances and confirmed that realizing the denuclearization of North Korea and maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula conform to the

Top officials of South Korea and China meet in expanded summit talks between South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on June 27. (Yonhap Photo)



common interests of the two countries,” Park said during a joint news conference with Xi.

Xi said the two sides agreed to work together to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, but he stopped short of saying explicitly that North Korea should be disarmed. Instead, he put greater emphasis on calling for the resumption of the long-stalled six-party talks with the aim of ending Pyongyang’s nuclear ambitions. The six-party disarmament talks involve the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States. The on-again, off-again talks were launched in 2003 but produced no lasting results. The talks have been suspended since the last session in late 2008.

A joint communique, issued after the summit, said the two sides agreed that North Korea’s nuclear program poses a serious threat to regional and world peace, and they pledged to work closely together

to make the Korean Peninsula free of atomic weapons. The two sides also urged North Korea to abide by all of its denuclearization commitments and called for efforts to resume various forms of dialogue within the six-party framework and create conditions for the resumption of the multi-lateral dialogue forum, the communique said.

Beijing said it supports Park’s “Northeast Asia peace and cooperation initiative,” which calls for Asian nations to enhance cooperation, first on non-political issues before expanding the trust built through such cooperation to other areas.

In the communique, China expressed support for the Park administration’s efforts to have dialogue with North Korea to thaw the icy inter-Korean relations. It also said China welcomes Park’s trademark “Korean Peninsula trust policy” vision, a two-track approach of pressure and flexibility in

dealing with North Korea so as to foster trust and reduce tension between the two Cold War foes.

“The two sides agreed that the two Koreas are the principal concerned parties of the Korean Peninsula issues,” the statement said. “To resolve the issues, they must take initiative through talks between the two governments.” South Korea expressed hope that China would play a more constructive role to bring about change on the peninsula and China expressed its support for the improvement of inter-Korean relations based on dialogue and trust.

China’s support for inter-Korean dialogue came after talks between Seoul and Pyongyang were recently called off at the last minute. The two Koreas agreed to have a meeting in Seoul earlier in June, but the plan was scrapped at the 11th hour after they failed to agree on the ranks of the chief negotiators.

China’s Stance toward N. Korea

Park and Xi also agreed that all past pledges to end the North’s nuclear program, including U.N. Security Council resolutions and the Sept. 19, 2005 joint statement from the six-party talks, must be implemented fully. In the 2005 agreement reached at the six-party forum, the North promised to dismantle all its nuclear arms and return to the non-proliferation treaty.

The Seoul-Beijing summit came as China has been taking an unusually tough stance on Pyongyang after the belligerent regime pressed ahead with a long-range rocket launch in December, 2012 and its third

nuclear test in February in defiance of Beijing’s appeals.

As a key provider of economic aid and diplomatic protection for North Korea, China has long been considered the only country with any meaningful influence over Pyongyang, though it has been reluctant to use that leverage over concern that pushing the North too hard could hurt China’s national interests.

According to South Korean officials, it was the first time the two countries’ presidents stipulated in a joint statement that they are working together to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

Seoul’s Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said the joint communique is highly meaningful. “There was the part that (said the North’s) nuclear armament poses a threat to peace not only on the Korean Peninsula but also in Northeast Asia ... This is an indirect expression that (the North’s nuclear program) poses a threat to China as well,” he said.

Some analysts say that China could be shifting its policy focus on Pyongyang as the prospect of a nuclear North Korea has become a valid concern following February’s atomic test.

Since the nuclear test, China has backed a U.N. sanctions resolution against the North and has been carrying out the restrictions more vigorously than before. In March, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2094 to punish Pyongyang for its underground nuclear test on Feb. 12, calling for the international community to toughen sanctions on the socialist country and blacklisted 19 North-based firms and 12 figures.

Under the resolution, U.N. member states are required to put tighter restrictions on North Korea's financial activities and conduct thorough inspections of air and sea cargo headed to the country. Beijing even joined in separate American sanctions by suspending all transactions with the North's Foreign Trade Bank, which was accused of financing Pyongyang's nuclear programs.

In protest of the fresh international sanctions and the annual South Korea-U.S. military exercises, Pyongyang ratcheted up tensions with near-daily war threats and by withdrawing all of its workers from the inter-Korean industrial park in its border city of Kaesong in May.

Xi's Nascent Leadership

Observers say, however, China's recent toughened stance toward the North does not represent any fundamental change in policy. They say China still places top priority on keeping Pyongyang alive for instability in the neighboring nation could hurt its economic growth, trigger a massive influx of refugees and lead to the emergence of a unified Korean Peninsula under South Korean and U.S. control directly across its border.

Much of the Seoul-Beijing summit was also devoted to moving bilateral relations forward as well. After ending their cold war hostility, South Korea and China tied the diplomatic knot in 1992. Since then, the two Asian neighbors upgraded their relationship to a cooperative partnership, a comprehensive cooperative partnership and then a strategic cooperative partner-

ship over the past two decades.

Although the two countries have made strides in their economic and trade relations, their political and security relations have not moved forward to match their flourishing economic ties, due largely to disagreements over how to handle North Korea's nuclear programs and other provocations.

In addition to the North Korea issue, the two countries agreed to improve relations by promoting strategic communication on political and security issues. Among the plans for political exchanges, Seoul and Beijing agreed to create a new channel for dialogue on security issues between South Korea's presidential chief of national security and China's state councilor in charge of foreign affairs.

"This unprecedented joint communique offered the big picture for the development of the two countries' relationship," the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press release, adding that it included a "more comprehensive, specific and advanced vision on the bilateral ties and Korean Peninsula issues."

"Since diplomatic ties with China began, the relationship went through the first 10 years of a honeymoon and another 10 years of settling down," the ministry said. "For the next 20 years, it was necessary to set a new course for the two countries' relations by reflecting changed environments at home and abroad."

Over recent years, North Korea's nuclear aspirations have emerged as a thorny issue as the international community asks Beijing to use its power to persuade Pyongyang to end its atomic weapons pro-

gram. With stability being its top concern in the region, China has been calling for the resumption of the six-party talks.

China's commitment to the denuclearization of the peninsula reflects its concerns that a nuclear-armed North Korea would prompt the U.S., Japan and other rivals to boost their own military might and thus undermine its national interests. Moreover, Xi's nascent leadership is also grappling with a slew of domestic hurdles such as political reform, a cooling economy and growing public calls against its long-standing patronage of a rogue neighbor.

"China is not in a situation to abandon North Korea especially given its recent diplomatic offensive," said Yoo Ho-yeol, a North Korea studies professor at Korea University in Seoul. "During the South Korea-China summit, Xi would inevitably imprint the historic nature of the relationship with North Korea rather than unilaterally decry it."

Dialogue within Six-party Talks

Through past summits, South Korea tried to persuade China to issue a stronger message to the North regarding the nuclear crisis, but Beijing resisted. Although the wording in the joint communique did not include more explicit pressure from China on the North, it reflected Beijing's growing concern about the situation.

"The communique says that just South Korea, not China, expresses concerns on the continuing nuclear tests in North Korea. China just repeated its hitherto demands of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," said Chang Yong-seok, an ana-

lyst of the Institute of Peace and Unification Studies affiliated with Seoul National University.

"And then China urged neighboring countries to grapple with the North Korean problems through dialogue at the six-party talks. I cannot see any change in its stance toward Pyongyang. We have heard of this so many times."

China faces a strategic dilemma as South Korea and the U.S. remain steadfast despite North Korea's peace offensive, while its balky ally covertly continues to ramp up its nuclear capability, extending the standoff and imperiling regional stability. However, as tensions escalated on the peninsula this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping has been pressing the Kim Jong-un regime to cease provocations and drop its nuclear ambitions.

But the communique at the Beijing summit failed to carry significant measures to rid North Korea of its atomic devices or address the strategic instability that stems from them. It merely carried a pledge to "reinforce various forms of bilateral and multilateral dialogue within the six-party talks to realize the denuclearization of the peninsula."

At an earlier meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama in California, Xi reaffirmed that he would not accept the North as a nuclear state. Beijing joined Washington in March in imposing the U.N.'s toughest sanctions over the underground nuclear blast.

Obama and Xi Jinping agreed on June 8 to push for the denuclearization of North Korea. After the leaders wrapped up two days of meeting, White House National

Security Adviser Tom Donilon said the leaders found quite a bit of “alignment” on the North Korea issue.

“They agreed that North Korea has to denuclearize, that neither country will accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed state and that we would work together to deepen cooperation and dialogue to achieve denuclearization,” he told reporters, briefing the results of the Obama-Xi meeting in California.

It marked their first meeting since Xi became China’s president in March, and was intended to chart a vision for cooperation and partnership between the so-called G-2. North Korea was high on the agenda, and it was a relatively easy topic for the two leaders, who face a lot of thorny bilateral and global issues, including cybersecurity and human rights, to achieve consensus.

Two-pronged Offensive

Apparently caving in to pressure, Pyongyang proposed a high-level governmental meeting with Seoul in early June. The inter-Korean talks were scrapped, however, over the level of top representatives from each side.

Five days later, North Korea abruptly proposed dialogue with the United States on June 16 through a spokesman’s statement by the National Defense Commission (NDC), the top decision-making body chaired by leader Kim Jong-un. It asked for talks with senior U.S. officials so they could discuss various matters, from easing military tensions to changing the Armistice Agreement into a peace treaty to building

“a world without nuclear arms.”

Washington responded with demands that Pyongyang prove its sincerity by taking steps toward denuclearization. Cho Tae-yong, Seoul’s special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs and top nuclear negotiator, called for “stronger obligations” on the North before any restart of talks than those stipulated in its defunct agreement with the U.S. on Feb. 29, 2012. Under the so-called Leap Day Deal, Pyongyang agreed to put a moratorium on its nuclear enrichment program, stop atomic and missile tests, and let in IAEA inspectors in exchange for 240,000 tons of food aid.

North Korea, in contrast, codified its nuclear status last year. It said early this year that nuclear development was one of the top national priorities and, thus, no longer up for bargaining. While calling denuclearization a “precept” of its two late autocrats, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, the socialist state said it will not relinquish its atomic programs unless the U.S. withdraws its “hostile” policy toward it, including the dissolution of the U.N. Command in South Korea.

But North Korea is deploying a two-pronged diplomatic offensive for moderate negotiations coupled with a tough stance on its nuclear weapons program. North Korea’s top nuclear envoy Kim Kye-gwan recently reaffirmed the North is willing to participate in any forms of dialogue with related countries, but its top envoy to the United Nations remained tough in the country’s stance toward South Korea and the U.S. over the dismantlement of Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program.

A joint communique said the two sides agreed that North Korea's nuclear program poses a serious threat to regional and world peace, and they pledged to work closely together to make the Korean Peninsula free of atomic weapons.

In New York on June 21, North Korean Ambassador Sin Son-ho reaffirmed Pyongyang's offer of senior-level talks with Washington to defuse tension, discuss a peace mechanism to replace the 1953 armistice and resolve the nuclear weapons issue. But he reiterated Pyongyang's war threats coupled with a typical dialogue offer.

Sin's news conference came shortly after Kim Kye-gwan, a North Korean vice foreign minister in charge of nuclear bargaining, reiterated the regime's willingness to engage in "various dialogues, including the six-party talks," at a meeting in Beijing with Yang Jiechi, a Chinese State Councilor in charge of foreign affairs. Kim Kye-gwan held a "strategic dialogue" with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui on June 19 in Beijing. He reasserted that Pyongyang wants to resolve its nuclear issue through dialogue.

China quoted the regime's veteran negotiator Kim as saying Pyongyang was willing to engage in any form of dialogue to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully. It was the second such statement by North Korea. Choe Ryong-hae, a close confidant of the North's leader Kim Jong-un, made similar comments in May during a visit to Beijing in which he met President Xi Jinping. Choe, the director of the General Political Bureau of the (North) Korean People's

Army, expressed the regime's willingness to engage in dialogue.

Ambassador Sin said North Korea is ready for any nuclear talks, but it will not abandon nuclear weapons as long as the U.S. nuclear threats go on. The ambassador said another military conflict is possible at any time as long as U.S. hostilities continue. Pyongyang often takes issue with what it calls U.S. hostile policy, apparently referring to economic sanctions and American troops stationed in South Korea.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye said Friday China's role is crucial to the success of her policy on North Korea, a day after she reached an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping to work closely together to end Pyongyang's nuclear program.

"In order for our North Korea policy to succeed, we need cooperation from the international community. In particular, China's role is very important," she said. During the summit, Park said, she had "in-depth" discussions with Xi on China's role in getting Pyongyang to make a change in the right direction.

Park also said she confirmed China sympathizes with her "trust process" vision. "I ask for your support to help China play a good role in inter-Korean relations," she said. (Yonhap News)

A DEFECTOR'S TALE: FROM PRISONER TO ACTIVIST

“If I can help improve the human rights situation in North Korea, I will continue to spread my knowledge on the matter,” Shin said.

■ By Park So-jung

Shin Dong-hyuk was 13 when he witnessed the execution of his mother and brother. He was born in Camp 14, a North Korean gulag where torture, betrayal and execution were everyday occurrences. He had turned them in for plotting an escape, knowing full well they would be killed. For the next 10 years until his miraculous escape, he would feel no guilt for his role in the deaths of his mother and brother.

Today, Shin lives in South Korea and travels around the world to tell his story. Despite struggling to accept what he had done to his family, he set out to become the voice for those left behind as the only known person to be born in a North Korean prison and make a successful escape. In June, Shin received the Moral Courage Award from UN Watch, an activist group that monitors the work of the United Nations.

“I stand here today and have received an award that is beyond my imagination,” Shin said in his acceptance speech at Geneva’s League of Nations hall on June 5. The 30-year-old faced a huge crowd of ambassadors, NGO workers and UN officials honoring the 20th anniversary of the watchdog group. “All of you here today, and all the people in the world who promote freedom and democracy are heroes to me. Because you exist, I am not afraid.”

The award was established to honor Shin for “bearing witness to atrocities and stirring the conscience of mankind to protect the fundamental human rights of the voiceless victims of North Korea,” UN Watch said. “No one would have blamed him for seeking a life of quiet and recuperation,” said UN Watch Executive Director Hillel Neuer in a press release. “Instead, Shin dedicates his life to speaking out for those



North Korean defector Shin Dong-hyuk shows off his award from the NGO UN Watch on June 5 at the League of Nations hall in Geneva. (Photo courtesy of UN Watch)

left behind.”

Shin’s story, chronicled in the *New York Times* best seller “Escape from Camp 14,” has wrung the hearts of many who have aided him in his quest for justice. In January, U.N. human rights chief Navi Pillay cited his story as she called for an international inquiry into “serious crimes” committed by North Korea.

“Their personal stories were extremely harrowing,” Pillay said of Shin and another North Korean defector she met in December. “The highly developed system of international human rights protection... seems to have completely bypassed (North Korea), where self-imposed isolation has allowed the government to mistreat its citizens to a degree that should be unthinkable in the 21st century.”

On the surface, Shin may seem like an average South Korean. He wears black horn-rimmed glasses and has an insatiable appetite for grilled meat. Tucked underneath his suit, however, are deep scars running the length of his back and rear, a reminder that he’s led an extraordinary life.

In Camp 14, located 50 kilometers north of Pyongyang, Shin’s parents were permitted to “breed” in reward for their hard work. He was a creation of the guards who taught him to betray his family and friends, a deed rewarded with more food and easier work. But when Shin told the guards of his mother and brother’s escape plan, they took him to an underground prison and tortured him over fire in an attempt to extract more information.

For Shin, watching his mother hanged and his brother shot to death was not a cause for despair, nor was he distraught over having his right middle finger chopped off as punishment for dropping a sewing machine. Only after meeting a worldly prisoner named Park Yong-chul did Shin develop a yearning for the outside world. Having grown up in a constant state of hunger, Shin was fascinated by the foods Park had encountered and began to fantasize about life beyond the electrified barbed wire.

In January 2005, Shin and Park made an attempt to flee during an assignment that put them unusually close to that same high-voltage wire. Though Park was electrocuted in the attempt, Shin crawled over his body, using it as a shield against the lethal fence.

Following his one-year stay in China, Shin landed in South Korea in 2006 and began his work as a senior ambassador at Liberty in North Korea (LiNK), a U.S.-based human rights

group. Though physically a free man, it took him more than four years following his escape to confess what he had done to his mother and brother. "I am evolving from being an animal," he told former journalist Blaine Harden in his biography. "But it is going very, very slowly."

According to the South Korean government, there are six political prison camps in North Korea that house an estimated 150,000 prisoners. They have lasted twice as long as the Soviet gulags and 12 times longer than the Nazi concentration camps. Yet, they have largely remained under the global radar until eyewitnesses began to reveal their grisly details in the 1990s.

There are two broad categories of political prison camps in North Korea. Camps 15 and 18 are re-education camps, where prisoners are released after being re-indoctrinated in the teachings of the ruling Kim family. The remaining four, including Camp 14, are "total control zones," where prisoners considered "irredeemable" are worked to death.

"They are taking the sort of political 'bad apples' out of society and making sure they don't contaminate other people with politically subversive views," said Sokeel Park, the Director of Research and Strategy at LiNK who worked with Shin until 2011. Those who are caught denouncing the regime are punished with lifetime internment in the camps or execution, along with their children and parents.

Park asserted that such collective punishment is "brutal but brutally effective." "In North Korea, if you are an individual martyr, then you're not just an individual martyr, you're risking your whole family to that level of punishment," he said. The state monopoly over political discussions has also made the emergence of dissenters impossible.

North Korea, however, has staunchly denied the existence of the camps. "There is no 'human rights issue' in this country, as everyone leads the most dignified and happy life," the state-run media KCNA said on March 6, 2009. More recently, Pyongyang accused Seoul of trying to abduct nine young North Koreans in an alleged "political ploy" to tarnish the North's image.

On May 27, the nine young defectors detained by Lao officials were forcibly sent back to North Korea, where they are feared to face torture, imprisonment and even execution. Following their repatriation, Shin called for quick solutions to ensure the safe passage of defectors to South Korea. "So far, China has blocked the Mongolian route, and the Bangkok route is now at risk of being closed," he said.

Shin said he wasn't sure if he should smile or cry after winning the award. "I feel strange because my dad, relatives and friends are still suffering in the camps," he said. "I hope this event will help raise awareness among the international community about the dire human rights conditions in North Korea."

This worldly but humble camp survivor, however, does not underestimate the gravity of the task he faces. "I am without money or power," Shin said. "But if I can help improve the human rights situation in North Korea, I will continue to spread my knowledge on the matter." (Yonhap News)

CONSISTENT POSITION IN TRUST BUILDING PROCESS

N. Korea should show sincerity and the dialogue should be carried out in a balanced way based on common sense and mutual respects, President Park said.

■ By Kim Tae-shik

South Korean president Park Geun-hye has consistently urged her socialist neighbor to come to the table for dialogue to discuss ways of building mutual trust since she was sworn in as the nation's first female president in February.

In a Memorial Day speech delivered at the National Cemetery in Seoul on June 6, Park again urged North Korea to accept her "trust building" policy initiative that could open a new era of peace and hope on the peninsula. Park said actively participating in laying the foundation for inter-Korean trust is the road the North must take in the future. She pointed out that peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula is the wish of all 70 million Koreans and that as president she will do her utmost to meet this goal.

She stressed that Pyongyang must realize that its goal of simultaneously pushing forward economic construction while also furthering its nuclear ambitions will only isolate the country from the rest of the world.

Cornerstone of Policy

The North Korean leadership has repeatedly called for building up the economy and its nuclear weapons capability as the country's central policy objective, and demonstrated this resolve by conducting a nuclear test in February in the face of international pressure. The test was the third for the country and came after it successfully launched a long-range rocket late last year.

"The North must accept that its provocations and threats are no

South Korean President Park Geun-hye speaks at a ceremony at the National Cemetery in Seoul on June 6 to mark the 58th Memorial Day. (Yonhap Photo)



longer effective (in bringing about concessions) and come to the realization that it has to make changes,” she said, adding that it is time the North becomes a responsible member of the international community.

Building of trust has been the cornerstone of Park’s policy drive to engage North Korea. Park, who took office on Feb. 25, promised in her inaugural address to push forward “trust building” policies that can lay the foundation for peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula.

“Through a trust-building process on the Korean Peninsula I intend to lay the groundwork for an era of harmonious unification where all Koreans can lead more prosperous and free lives and where their dreams can come true,” she said.

“North Korea must give up its policies that are fueling its isolation and backwardness and bravely accept the hand of reconciliation being offered by South Korea and the global community and strive for mutual prosperity,” Park said in the Memorial Day address. She added that it is her hope that Pyongyang will actively seek to open an era of happiness on the Korean Peninsula.

Park has been stressing the pursuit of her trust process through reasonable and normal dialogue saying that dialogue for the sake of dialogue is meaningless. Park said the number or times of dialogue means nothing if the dialogue cannot produce trust. “Such meetings would rather diminish the possibility of building trust,” she said.

North Korea later in the day made a surprise proposal for talks between high-level authorities from the two Koreas to which the South promptly responded, counter-proposing that the meeting be held in Seoul on June 12-13.

North Korea’s Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) announced a special statement around noon that called for official talks with South Korea to discuss issues such as the normalization of the suspended Kaesong Industrial Complex and Mount

Kumgang tours, asking Seoul to pick the time and venue.

The talks, which would have been the first high-level inter-Korean talks in six years, however, were cancelled at the last minute due to a disagreement over the levels of the chief delegates.

The disagreement surfaced after the two Koreas exchanged the lists of their five-member delegates at the inter-Korean truce village of Panmunjom inside the demilitarized zone that separates the rival states.

According to South Korean officials, North Korea immediately complained about what they believed was the low level of the chief South Korean negotiator and later called off the meeting.

“North Korea unilaterally informed us it would not be sending its delegates,” Kim Hyung-suk, a ministry spokesman, said during a press conference confirming that the meeting had been canceled. “After exchanging lists of five negotiators each planned to send, the North said the envisioned inter-government meeting could not be held if a minister-level official from the South didn’t attend the meeting.”

Seoul named Vice Unification Minister Kim Nam-sik as the chief negotiator, while the North proposed Kang Ji-yong, a director at the CPRK, the North’s arm in charge of cross-border affairs.

South Korea originally had proposed sending its unification minister, Ryoo Kihl-jae, as its chief delegate on the condition that the North would send Kim Yang-gon, the head of the United Front Department in the ruling Workers’ Party. Kim holds a similar rank to Ryoo.

Hope for Inter-Korean Talks

The North’s key official Kim Yang-gon, who has been in charge of South Korean affairs since 2007, is considered an influential figure with sizable authority in the North. Pyongyang considers Kim more important than a minister, while Seoul considers him of minister rank.

North Korea harshly criticized South Korea on June 13 for the aborted plans to hold high-level talks, indicating it would not seek dialogue for the time being. It accused the South of deliberately “creating an obstacle” to the resumption of high-level talks by taking issue with the rank of North Korea’s top delegate.

South Korea rebuffed the North’s blame as distorting facts and accused North Korea of wrongly holding it responsible for the last-minute cancellation of the high-level inter-Korean talks and urged the communist country to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible.

North Korea foisted off the blame on South Korea, arguing that Seoul reneged on its pledge to appoint a Cabinet-level minister to lead its delegation but instead named a vice minister as its chief negotiator.

“It is highly regrettable that the North side unilaterally disclosed the contents of the working-level talks and distorted facts,” a Unification Ministry official said.

The official, requesting anonymity, said it was North Korea who took issue with Seoul’s

selection of its chief delegate and backed away from the scheduled talks.

“The attitude of the North caused the talks to fall through,” the ministry said in a separate press statement.

Despite the rupture of high-level talks, South Korea is likely to wait for North Korea’s move without taking any additional measures. Government officials said Park has been calmly following the roller coaster of developments in prospects for restarting long-stalled dialogue with North Korea.

Park seems to be determined to stick to her principle that North Korea’s provocations are intolerable although she is urging dialogue with the socialist country.

She also maintains that North Korea should show sincerity and the (inter-Korean) dialogue should be carried out in a balanced way based on common sense and mutual respects.

South Korean officials said that the past high-level meetings were seriously unbalanced in the levels of chief delegates of the two sides, with the South sending Cabinet ministers to the talks and the North dispatching lower-ranked officials.

Balanced Way Based on Common Sense and Mutual Respects

Then pro-reconciliation administrations in Seoul took the practice for granted and did not raise the issue with Pyongyang in order to maintain dialogue prospects, but now is the time to fix the problem and get inter-Korean relations on the right path, officials said.

In a telephone talk with U.S. President Barack Obama on June 17, Park said that holding talks with North Korea for the sake of talks would only give the socialist nation more time to advance its nuclear programs, an official said.

“Holding talks for the sake of talks only earns North Korea time to make its nuclear weapons more sophisticated,” Park said during the 20-minute phone call initiated by Obama, according to the official.

On June 16, the North proposed what it calls “senior-level” talks with the U.S., saying it wants to have broad and in-depth discussions on defusing military tensions, replacing the armistice system with a peace mechanism and other issues of mutual concern. The U.S. said the North should first prove its seriousness about dialogue through actions.

North Korea watchers in Seoul said North Korea may continue to place blame on South Korea and engage in propaganda offensives in order to evade responsibility for the rupture of high-level talks while the South will not accept the North’s “unfounded” demand for a higher-level chief delegate. They predicted the two sides will need a substantial “cooling-off” period before making new contacts to reopen dialogue while they may try to resolve the standoff by adjusting the level of talks.

A unification ministry official said the government has no plan to make new proposals to North Korea for now, an indication that Seoul will wait for a change in Pyongyang’s attitude. He added that Seoul will make sure that its delegates to future talks with North Korea will match their counterparts from the socialist country in rank. (Yonhap News)

U.S.-CHINA AGREEMENT ON N. KOREA AS NON-NUCLEAR STATE

In the summit meeting, Obama and Xi agreed to three important points concerning the unresolved issue of a nuclear-armed North Korea.

■ By Choon Heum Choi, Ph.D., *Honorary Research Fellow, Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul, Korea*

The first summit meeting between U.S. President Barack Obama and China's President Xi Jinping was held in California in early June. The summit was business-like, rather than a state visit. During the summit, Xi focused on two important issues. One was how to establish a new type of great-power relationship with the United States, asserting that a relationship of this type between the two nations needs to be established.

The other issue was that of North Korea. Obama and Xi agreed to three important points concerning the unresolved issue of a nuclear-armed North Korea. First, they agreed to not accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed state. Second, they also concurred that Pyongyang should give up its nuclear program to ensure the peace of the Korean Peninsula. Third, they agreed to cooperate with each other to diplomatically solve the issue of a nuclear North Korea. During the summit, the Chinese foreign ministry emphasized that the North's nuclear issue can only be solved through bilateral and multilateral dialogue.

From a Chinese perspective, what is to be taken away from the first Obama-Xi summit? First, Xi, as China's top leader, openly stressed his rejection of Pyongyang's insistence on its status of being a nuclear-armed state. Second, that the denuclearization of North Korea is the first concern of China's strategic position toward the Korean Peninsula. And third, Xi remarked that the resumption of the six-party talks, which has been stalled since late 2008, should be materialized.

China's Growing Tougher Stance

On November 11, 2012, China's then Vice President Xi Jinping was elected to a five-year term as general secretary of the CCP at the 18th CCP Congress. Right after, General Secretary Xi began to review and set a new course for China's general foreign policy and found a stumbling block in Pyongyang. Even though China had warned North Korea to neither launch any long-range missiles nor conduct more nuclear tests, the North launched long-

range missiles twice and tested a third nuclear weapon.

In fact, China's decision to participate in U.N. sanctions enraged Pyongyang, and in turn, Pyongyang continued to defy China's warnings with a third nuclear test. Pyongyang said the test was an act of self-defense against "U.S. hostility" and threatened stronger steps if necessary. North Korea also argued the third nuclear test was aimed at responding to U.N. sanctions imposed on North Korea after its missile launch last December. Pyongyang has blasted the U.S. for leading the cause to enforce sanctions at the U.N. Security Council and threatened to take merciless retaliatory action if the U.S. moves to further tighten sanctions over the nuclear test.

In addition, Pyongyang indirectly blamed China for participating in the U.N. sanctions. And what does North Korea's statement mean by this? It means that North Korea will continue to develop its nuclear first-strike capabilities to deter a U.S. attack. Also, Pyongyang implied that China may not have any kind of legitimacy to prevent Pyongyang from going nuclear.

China judged this third nuclear test as very different from the previous tests. To China's calculation, the third test will certainly enhance Pyongyang's capability to attack South Korea, Japan, even potentially the U.S. military base on Guam with nuclear weapons in the near future, which would invite military sanctions against North Korea. Furthermore, China might have calculated that North Korea's third nuclear test will increasingly invite the U.S. military attack against North Korea and will increase strategic cooperation between

South Korea and the U.S. In addition, China judged that Pyongyang's third nuclear test might prompt South Korea and Japan to go nuclear.

Once Seoul and Tokyo decide to go nuclear, possession of nuclear weapons would be only a matter of time. China might greatly worry that its monopoly on nuclear prestige could rapidly decrease or vanish all together. Thereafter, China toughened its stance towards North Korea in order to prevent it from going nuclear, and consequently everyone else. In May 2013, Bank of China closed its accounts with North Korea's Trade Bank. The step took place after several Chinese banks at the China-North Korea border had taken similar steps. At the end of May, Xi made clear to visiting North Korean envoy Choe Ryong-hae that China supports the denuclearization of North Korea and its early return to the six-party talks. China's executing of the clauses of U.N. economic sanctions against Pyongyang has increased. As a result, the relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang has become strained, more strained than ever before.

After the U.S.-China Summit

Now we have the aforementioned two important agreements on the North Korean nuclear issue. Those two agreements are: to act together among Seoul-Washington-Tokyo, and not to recognize North Korea as a nuclear state between Washington and Beijing.

Right after the Obama-Xi summit, North Korea became busy offering dialogue to Seoul and Washington in order to demon-

strate its promise, which North Korea's special envoy Choe Ryong-hae remarked during his meeting with the Chinese president. Even though Pyongyang proposed dialogue meetings to both Seoul (which has not taken place) and Washington, the U.S. turned down Pyongyang's proposal for high-level talks. The U.S. insisted that North Korea must first demonstrate its sincerity for talks through actions on denuclearization. The U.S., as well as South Korea, is doubtful about Pyongyang's sincerity on its denuclearization efforts.

Whereas Pyongyang proposes dialogue free of conditions, Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo altogether responded to the proposal that the dialogue with Pyongyang on denuclearization, bilateral or multilateral, including six-party talks, should be pre-conditional.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement following the Seoul-Washington-Tokyo trilateral meeting in Washington that "We reaffirmed our commitment to the U.N. Security Council's resolution on the DPRK and the need for full and transparent implementation of those resolutions ... We agreed a path is open for the DPRK toward improved relations with the U.S., Japan, and the ROK if the DPRK takes meaningful steps on denuclearization ... We will judge the DPRK by its actions, not by its words ... We also agreed on the importance of improvement in inter-Korean relations and the resolution of the abduction issue."

Reconfirming that there will not be "talks for talks' sake" with Pyongyang, they argued that Pyongyang should demonstrate its desire by keeping to the February 29

Washington-Pyongyang Agreement (stopping nuclear activities at its main facility in Yongbyon, and imposing a moratorium on nuclear tests and long-range missile tests in exchange for 240,000 tons of food aid). The three countries added that their demands are for the halting of uranium enrichment activities and allowing an inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Right after Pyongyang's two unsuccessful and collapsed proposals for high-level talks with Seoul and Washington, and with the trilateral meeting in Washington, China reported that North Korea's vice foreign minister Kim Kye-gwan visited Beijing for "strategic dialogue" with his Chinese counterpart Zhang Yesui. In fact, Pyongyang is seeking for Beijing to play the role of moderator to deflate growing economic sanctions from the U.N. in offering dialogues with the concerned countries.

Cautious Optimism

Important and imminent questions have arisen: Will those two aforementioned agreements prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons? When will the six-party talks be convened?

At present, it is, however, still unclear what incentives China will offer North Korea in order for Pyongyang to participate in the six-party talks. Therefore, convening the six-party talks will not be probable. The six-party talks will be held in autumn this year due to China's continued participation in the U.N. economic sanctions, China's statement of non-recognition of Pyongyang as a nuclear state and

Why has Beijing begun to openly and frequently use the term, strategic dialogue. China really wants to solve the Pyongyang nuclear issue through strategic consultations with North Korea. China judges that it is high time for China to re-coordinate its stance of a sanction-tilted, dialogue-tilted posture since Pyongyang announced its willingness to have talks with member states of the six-party talks.

China's eagerness to have "strategic dialogue" with Pyongyang.

In the past, China's top leader demanded that China and North Korea have "strategic dialogue." During the last two summits with former Chinese President Hu Jintao, Kim Jong-il did not use the term "strategic dialogue." In response, China also seldom used the term openly with North Korean visitors.

Since North Korea's top leader Kim Jong-un's special envoy to China, Choe Ryong-hae, met Xi this spring, China has begun to openly use the term "strategic dialogue" when referring to talks with the North. On June 17, the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs characterized North Korea's first vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan's meeting with his Chinese counterpart Zhang Yesui in Beijing as a "strategic dialogue" even though China did not report any part of the strategic dialogue with Kim Kye-gwan. Why has Beijing begun to openly and frequently use the term?

China really wants to solve the Pyongyang nuclear issue through strategic consultations with North Korea. China judges that it is high time for China to re-

coordinate its stance of a sanction-tilted, dialogue-tilted posture since Pyongyang announced its willingness to have talks with member states of the six-party talks.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Xi will have their first summit on June 27. This summit will be one of trying to solve the North Korean nuclear issue. China regards Seoul's trust-building proposal toward Pyongyang as being reasonable. In the near future, there will be more dialogues, bilateral and multilateral, to negotiate the North Korean nuclear issue among the members of the six-party talks. For the moment, even though the result will not be satisfactory because of the North's resolute decision to keep its nuclear arms, cautious optimism will rise, ever slowly, over the notion of solving Pyongyang's nuclear issue among members of the six-party talks. (Yonhap News)

Armistice Monitoring Panels Express Hope for Inter-Korean Dialogue

“One day, I hope the Koreas be reunified, Koreans live together, and I hope good peace between North and South Korea,” Anders Grenstad said.

The planned high-level inter-Korean talks were called off at the last minute over seemingly minor protocol discord, but an international armistice-monitoring group saw recent attempts by the rival Koreas to resume talks as a good sign to ease tension on the divided peninsula.

On the South Korean side of Panmunjom, a neutral village inside the heavily armed Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates the two Koreas, the 10-member Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) meets every Tuesday to monitor whether the armistice agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War is being upheld.

On June 9, its members had a rare opportunity to watch - and monitor - with keen interest when officials of the two Koreas met at this border village and agreed to hold high-level talks in Seoul for the first time in six years.

However, the planned talks were called off at the last minute due to what appeared to be a minor protocol dispute: how high the grade of their respective chief delegates should be.

“One day, I hope the Koreas be reunified, Koreans live together, and I hope good peace between North and South Korea,” Navy R. Adm. Anders Grenstad, the head of the Swedish component of the NNSC, said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency on June 12.

When the Korean armistice accord was signed on July 27, 1953, a four-nation neutral supervisory body was formed, participated by Switzerland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

When Czechoslovakia was split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993, North Korea kicked it out along with Poland, apparently believing that they were no longer friendly to it. Switzerland and Sweden, on the other hand, still maintain small contingents as part of the NNSC that operates out of Panmunjom.

Grenstad said he was disappointed that the planned high-level meeting would not take place but that he won't give up hope for it to happen. “What we like to see is more dialogue between South and North Korea,” Grenstad said. “One day, I hope the Koreas be reunified, Koreans live together, and I hope good peace between

North and South Korea.”

On June 12, South Korean officials tried to contact the North through a Red Cross hotline reopened by North Korea in early June, but no one answered on the North Korean side.

Grenstad said South Korean President Park Geun-hye took the right path to resume dialogue with Pyongyang under her trust-building process.

Swiss Army Maj. Gen. Urs Gerber had something to say about North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, who attended a Swiss boarding school in his hometown before he assumed power after his father Kim Jong-il died in December 2011.

“It seems like he didn’t attend the right classes (when he was in Switzerland),” Gerber said, poking fun at the 20-something North Korean leader known to be a big fan of the NBA. “He must have spent too much time playing basketball,” he said.

Gerber said he personally hopes Kim’s experience in Switzerland, a neutral state which has not fought in a foreign war of any kind since 1815, could contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

NNSC officials said they continue to monitor troop levels in South Korea as well as joint military drills by South Korea and the U.S. to ensure they do not violate the armistice agreement. They admitted that their monitoring activities in North Korea are restricted.

Initially, a significant number of NNSC personnel kept track of equipment and troop movements in the two Koreas. While about 150 Swiss military monitors came to Korea in the months after the armistice, the number has been reduced greatly, they

said.

While experts see that their role no longer plays a critical role on the Korean Peninsula, Gerber says the panel needs to be kept in place for symbolic reasons as well as potential practical ones.

“It’s very often symbolic, but it gives clear indication that the outside world is involved as long as the NNSC is here. That’s a strong signal that armistice is still in force and valid,” Gerber said.

He was quick to note what has become a pattern in North Korea’s behavior: raising tensions and then an offer of dialogue to extract economic aid and other concessions. “What I learned here is that North Korea is extremely predictable in their unpredictability,” Gerber said.

Gerber said he wants to see the two rivals sign a peace treaty to replace the armistice agreement. The last thing for the two Koreas to do is any attempt to reunify through armed conflict, he said.

For that part, Pyongyang’s sinking of a South Korean navy ship and shelling of a border island in 2010 that killed 50 people clearly violated the spirit of the armistice agreement, Grenstad said.

He said the Pyongyang regime should abide by global regulations and attend international dialogues while trying to feed its people on its own.

“Before that, Korea needs a strong peace treaty,” Grenstad said. “T-1’s door is always open to KPA ((North) Korean People’s Army) for any dialogue to attend our meetings.” T-1 refers to the NNSC’s conference hall in Panmunjom. (Yonhap News)

STATUS OF CHILDREN UNDER KIM JONG-UN REGIME

In a move to publicize Kim Jong-un's image as a benevolent leader for young people, N. Korean media have given massive coverage of the KCU meeting.

■ By Kim Tae-shik

Since Kim Jong-un took the helm of his impoverished country following the death of his father Kim Jong-il in late 2011, North Korea has placed special emphasis on the youth and children in an apparent move to propagate the image of Kim Jong-un as a leader who likes to communicate with young people and to solidify the power base of the young leader who is believed to be in his late 20s.

North Korea held the seventh Congress of the Korean Children's Union (KCU) "with splendor" on June 6. It marked the 67th anniversary of the union's founding at the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang with the attendance of its top leader Kim Jong-un.

Congress of KCU

The seventh Congress, held seven years after the sixth meeting in 2006, seemed to induce North Korean children's loyalty to the young leader. It followed a massive children's event held a year ago in which tens of thousands of children pledged allegiance to Kim who was also at the meeting. Children aged between seven and 13 are eligible to join the KCU. Most of them actively start supporting the Kim Jong-un regime when they are in their teens or 20s.

"Kim Jong-un made sure that the event of celebrating the 66th anniversary of the KCU was held with splendor last year and had pictures taken with children," the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. He also took part in the joint national meeting of the KCU organizations.

"Marshal Kim Jong-un, the benevolent father of the Korean school-

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un applauds during the 7th Congress of the (North) Korean Children's Union (KCU) in Pyongyang on June 6. (KCNA-Yonhap Photo)



children, appeared at the tribune of honor of the congress hall. ... He congratulated the delegates on their enthusiastic cheers and warmly acknowledged all the participants in the congress," the KCNA said.

Kim Jong-un expressed expectations and beliefs that the delegates to the seventh Congress of the KCU would always take the lead in consolidating the KCU organizations to be strong pillars, responsible for the future of the great Paektusan nation, the North's official news agency said. Paektusan or Mt. Paektu is the highest mountain on the Korean Peninsula, and North Koreans refer to their country as the Paektusan nation.

Jon Yong-nam, the chairman of the Central Committee of the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League, said in a report the glorious course of the KCU has been associated with the deep-loving care of the Generalissimos (Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il), who provided deep and firm roots for the Juche-oriented children's movement and led the KCU step by step in line with the requirements of the developing revolution, the KCNA monitored in Seoul said.

"Jon referred to the great successes of the KCU after the sixth congress under the sagacious leadership and meticulous care of Generalissimo Kim Jong-il and Marshal Kim Jong-un," the KCNA wrote.

He called upon the KCU members "to cherish the honor and pride of being members of glorious Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's KCU, and firmly prepare themselves to be reliable successors of the Songun revolution faithful to Kim Jong-un, true to their pledges before the KCU flags." The delegates adopted a letter of pledge addressed to Kim.

Also attending the congress included top officials of the party, military and government like (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) Vice Marshal Choe Ryong-hae, a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA; Ri Yong-su, the department

director of the C.C., the WPK; Kim Sung-du, chairman on the Education Commission; officials of the youth league; and other officials concerned.

In an apparent move to publicize the event and Kim Jong-un's image as a benevolent leader for young people, North Korean media have given massive coverage of the congress from late April.

Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the WPK, widely covered the KCU Congress in its June 7 issue. The paper gave detailed coverage of the congress, with lengthy stories and photos on four pages, including the front page. The top of the front page was occupied by a photo of Kim applauding at the head table to underscore the top leader's attendance at the meeting while photos Kim took with young delegates were carried on top of the third and fourth page.

It was the first time in 19 years that North Korea's top leader took pictures with KCU delegates. Kim Il-sung, the grandfather of the current leader, sent a congratulatory message to the delegates of the fifth KCU Congress and took pictures with them.

Some North Korea watchers in Seoul say the young Kim hopes to bring about the people's nostalgia for Kim Il-sung by following the behaviors of the late founder in order to establish his image as a powerful leader like his grandfather.

While the news of the KCU Congress took the headlines, the special statement by the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of (North) Korea (CPRK), which proposed inter-Korean high-level talks, was printed in a small space on the sixth page.

On April 30, *Rodong Sinmun* and the KCNA reported that the Central Committee of the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League decided to convene the seventh Congress of the KCU early in June. "The congress will discuss the tasks to be carried out by the KCU to remain true to the idea and leadership of the dear respected Marshal Kim Jong-un as required by the new historic era of accomplishing the revolutionary cause of Juche," the KCNA said.

Kim Jong-un's 'Loving Care'

Rodong Sinmun also carried an article on April 29 saying that Kim loves children. The paper said Kim sent an autograph letter to a primary school student in Pyongyang to encourage him to study hard and build his mental and physical strength.

The Korea Central TV Broadcasting Station also reported the same day preparations for the KCU Congress were in full-swing.

Rodong Sinmun said in an editorial on June 6, "All the members of the KCU should grow up to be sons and daughters loyal to the dear respected Marshal Kim Jong-un and leading force of thriving Korea."

"The seventh congress will help consolidate the revolutionary nature of the KCU as a juvenile organization of the leader and strikingly demonstrate the infinite loyalty of the KCU members, who are determined to uphold the Generalissimos in high esteem just like sunflowers," the paper said.

The KCNA said on June 6 the delegates to the seventh Congress of the Korean Children's Union "were very happy to see the dear respected Marshal Kim Jong-un appearing in the hall of the congress."

"With a beaming smile on his face, he acknowledged the enthusiastically cheering delegates and carefully attended to the speeches made by schoolchildren and KCU instructors at the congress. ... The congress hall was seized by his intense feelings of affection for schoolchildren."

The KCNA introduced the background and history of the KCU on June 8.

The (North) Korean Children's Union, which originated from the Children's Corps in the period of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, boasts of a brilliant history at each stage of the Korean revolution, the North's official news agency said.

"In the period of the Fatherland Liberation War (June 1950-July 1953), a number of KCU members bravely fought against the U.S. invaders with arms in hands. Among them were So Kang-ryom, Rim Hyong-sam and the members of the children's guard of the Anju Coal Mine," it said.

The KCNA added that "millions of KCU members, who greeted the 67th KCU anniversary, are now filled with determination to be intensely loyal to respected Marshal Kim Jong-un."

Kim also showed his "loving care" of the children by offering tours of amusement parks and other tourist attractions in Pyongyang, making sure that a birthday party is given for delegates and sending gifts to the participants in the KCU Congress.

The delegates "spent pleasant time" touring various parts of Pyongyang, the KCNA reported on June 8. They went to the Rungna Dolphinarium, Rungna People's Pleasure Park and the Central Zoo. They appreciated art and acrobatic performances given at the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace and the National Circus and enjoyed skating at the People's Open-air Ice Rink and Skate Park.

The KCNA said Jon, the chairman of the Central Committee of the Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League, said, "The dear respected Marshal Kim Jong-un showed such warm loving care as making sure that a birthday party is given for delegates, adding that it is the reflection of the profound and noble intention of Kim Jong-un to make the laughter and songs of happiness of the children are always heard."

Jon called on the delegates to fully prepare themselves as able revolutionary persons knowledgeable, virtuous and healthy, and pillars of Kim Il-sung's and Kim Jong-il's prospering Korea, true to the noble intention of Kim Jong-un.

The attendants pledged to prepare themselves as true juvenile revolutionaries and children's guards of the Workers' Party of Korea by studying hard and successfully leading an organizational life, holding aloft the slogan "Let us be always ready for the dear respected General Kim Jong-un!"

Prof. Kim Yong-hyun of Dongguk University in Seoul said the seventh KCU Congress is a move to expand the friendly image of Kim Jong-un as a leader who tries to communicate with children. (Yonhap News)

N. KOREA'S DIALOGUE OFFER WITH U.S. & SIX-PARTY TALKS

For North Korea's surprise offer of dialogue, Seoul and Washington have called on Pyongyang to prove its sincerity with its actions before resuming talks.

■ By Lee Kwang-ho

After months of provocations, North Korea has appeared to shift to dialogue in recent weeks. Obviously, the North's move is a turnaround from its long-term hostility toward South Korea and the United States. Before making a surprise offer of talks to the South earlier in June, North Korea issued months of warlike threats. After its efforts to hold high-level talks with South Korea fell through, the North issued another surprise offer to talk with the U.S. days later.

Seoul and Washington doubt the sincerity of the North giving up its nuclear program, but Beijing, the North's closest ally, is trying to shift the confrontational mood to a dialogue phase on the Korean Peninsula. But hope for talks between the U.S. and North Korea is still remote, as there is a big gap between the two sides. Pyongyang is now shifting its policy toward resuming the six-party talks that it had previously walked away from. Also, brisk diplomacy among the key partners is boosting the prospect for a resumption of a six-nation forum.

North Korea abruptly proposed dialogue with the United States through a spokesman statement by the National Defense Commission (NDC), the top decision-making body chaired by leader Kim Jong-un on June 16. It asked for talks with senior U.S. officials so they could discuss various matters, from easing military tensions to changing the Armistice Agreement into a peace treaty to building "a world without nuclear arms." North Korea asked the U.S. to decide when and where. The North is trying hard to show it is more than willing to have dialogue with the world.

Abrupt Offer of Dialogue

The NDC statement emphasized the U.S. is the culprit for the recently heightened tension around the Korean Peninsula. It also said the U.S. started the Korean War and systematically destroyed the Armistice Agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. The North is attempting to avoid responsibility for the recently heightened tension by distorting the facts about the

Sin Son-ho (center), North Korea's permanent representative to the United Nations, calls on a reporter for questions during a news conference on June 21 at the U.N. headquarters in New York. (AP-Yonhap Photo)



Korean War.

Pyongyang's overture comes five days after South and North Korea canceled their high-level talks that were planned for June 12-13, citing differences over the rank of chief delegates to represent each side.

Washington has repeatedly stressed that it is not interested in holding talks for the sake of talks, urging Pyongyang to first demonstrate through action that it is serious about dismantling its nuclear weapons programs. The socialist nation claims its nuclear programs are aimed at defending itself from what it calls hostile U.S. intentions.

In the NDC statement, however, it called the denuclearization of the peninsula a "precept" of North Korean founder Kim Il-sung and former leader Kim Jong-il, the grandfather and father of incumbent North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. "Our denuclearization is the denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula, including South Korea, and the most thorough denu-

clearization aimed at completely ending the United States' nuclear threats against us."

In protest of the fresh international sanctions and the annual South Korea-U.S. military exercises, Pyongyang ratcheted up tensions with near-daily war threats and by withdrawing all of its workers from the inter-Korean industrial park in its border city of Kaesong in May. On June 6, North Korea suddenly showed a conciliatory gesture to Seoul by proposing high-level official talks. But it soon took back its offer as it couldn't reach an agreement in choosing their chief delegates with Seoul.

The last high-level talks between Washington and Pyongyang took place in Beijing in February 2012 when North Korea's Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan and Glyn Davies, the U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, met to reach the so-called Leap Day deal.

The deal, under which Pyongyang agreed to put a moratorium on nuclear and

missile tests in return for 240,000 tons of nutritional assistance, was breached after the North fired a long-range rocket less than two months later – an incident that deepened mutual distrust. Washington and the international community saw the rocket launch as a disguised attempt to test its ballistic missiles for military purposes.

North Korea's surprise offer of dialogue with the U.S. was met with a frosty reaction by Seoul and Washington, both of which have called on Pyongyang to prove its sincerity with its actions before resuming talks.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye on June 17 expressed her misgivings about the North's intentions during her telephone conversation with U.S. President Barack Obama. "Having talks for the sake of talks only earns North Korea time to make its nuclear weapons more sophisticated," Park told Obama during the 20-minute call. Obama briefed Park on the outcome of his recent summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in California. Obama told Park that Xi expressed China's commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and promised not to recognize Pyongyang as a nuclear weapons state.

Typical Tactic

Experts said the North appeared to be using its typical tactic once again of seeking direct talks with the U.S. while sidelining the South, which they said would no longer work given the current strength of the alliance. "As Seoul is seriously preparing for the upcoming summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pyongyang might fear

they could be further isolated. With the criticism that it was the South that broke the inter-Korean talks, it appears to be sidelining Seoul," said Hong Hyun-ik, a research fellow at the Sejong Institute think tank. "By proposing talks, the North could also support China, which has sought to resume the multilateral talks on its denuclearization and show to its ally that it is fulfilling the promise to pursue dialogue."

North Korea is also saying its nuclear arms are for the purpose of defending itself against the nuclear threat from the U.S. As a result, the North says the U.S. should stop its nuclear threats first if it wants to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang decided to develop nuclear arms because it knew well that as a closed despotic country it is hard to survive. The North chose nuclear arms development as a way to avoid opening to the world. Furthermore, by forcing neighboring countries through nuclear threats to assuage it with economic assistance, the North attempts to revive its already bankrupt economy.

In this critical juncture, Kim Kye-gwan, North Korea's vice foreign minister and chief nuclear envoy, held a "strategic dialogue" with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui on June 19 in Beijing. North Korea's top nuclear envoy reasserted that Pyongyang wants to resolve its nuclear issue through dialogue. In the meeting, Kim said Pyongyang wants a peaceful resolution to the nuclear row through participation in various talks, including the six-nation forum.

China on June 19 said North Korea has expressed its willingness to rejoin the long-

stalled nuclear talks, but the United States, Japan and South Korea called for action instead of words. China, which has faced U.S. pressure to rein in North Korea, quoted the regime's veteran negotiator Kim as saying Pyongyang was willing to engage in any form of dialogue to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully.

It was the second such statement by North Korea. Choe Ryong-hae, a close confidant of the North's leader Kim Jong-un, made similar comments in May during a visit to Beijing in which he met President Xi. Choe, the director of the General Political Bureau of the (North) Korean People's Army, expressed the regime's willingness to engage in dialogue.

North Korea's Intentions

Observers noted Pyongyang, which proclaimed itself as a nuclear-armed state in its constitution last year, contradicted itself by putting the issue of a nuclear-free world on the agenda. Earlier this year, the North also adopted a policy of concurrently pursuing economic development and nuclear armament. The North's intentions behind the apparent shift in tactics remains unclear but should reflect Beijing's increasing pressure, Pyongyang's own need for economic assistance and its strategic calculations given the forthcoming South Korea-China summit, officials and analysts say.

Some South Korean analysts said Russia sees North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's offering of talks with the U.S. as a step toward resuming the long-stalled six-party talks. Alexander Lukashevich, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, told reporters

in Moscow on June 17 that the latest movement "may be a new dynamic that could help to unfreeze the six-party talks process." Lukashevich added that the gestures from North Korea "signal that conditions are ripening for delayed dialogues to move forward."

But South Korea's top nuclear envoy laid out tougher conditions on June 19 for any talks with North Korea, saying Pyongyang must meet "stronger requirements" than those it had agreed upon with the U.S. in February last year. Cho Tae-yong, Seoul's chief envoy to the stalled six-party talks made the remarks in Washington after holding a trilateral meeting with his American and Japanese counterparts – Glyn Davies and Shinsuke Sugiyama. On the way back, Cho visited Beijing for two days from June 20 to hold talks with Wu Dawei, China's special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs. They discussed issues, including how to resume the six-party talks, and confirmed that they would not acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear weapons state, diplomats said.

North Korean Ambassador to the U.N., Sin Son-ho, on June 21 reaffirmed Pyongyang's offer of senior-level talks with Washington to defuse tension, discuss a peace mechanism to replace the 1953 armistice and resolve the nuclear weapons issue. The event came shortly after North Korea's vice foreign minister Kim Kye-gwan reiterated the regime's willingness to engage in "various dialogues, including the six-party talks," at a meeting with Yang Jiechi, a Chinese State Councilor in charge of foreign affairs. (Yonhap News)

U.S. Lawmakers Renew Call for Putting N. Korea on Terror List

N.Korea continues to share equipment, technology, expertise, and knowledge with Iran and Syria in their pursuit of WMDs, ballistic missiles, they said.

A dozen conservative U.S. lawmakers said on June 12 they have sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry calling for the re-designation of North Korea as a state that sponsors terrorism.

They cited what they say is the cooperation by Pyongyang with Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations, a widespread allegation that has not yet been formally confirmed.

“North Korea is directly responsible for several international acts of terror, and it continues to maintain close ties with other State Sponsors of Terrorism (SST) listed regimes such as Iran and Syria,” read the letter delivered to Kerry in early June.

It was signed by Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Ted Poe (R-TX), Steve Chabot (R-OH), and nine other Republican members of the House.

North Korea “continues to share equipment, technology, expertise, and knowledge with Iran and Syria in their pursuit of WMDs, ballistic missiles, and nuclear capabilities,” they said. WMDs stands for weapons of mass destruction.

Among several reasons for their request, the lawmakers pointed out that Pyongyang carried out an artillery attack against a South Korean border island in 2010, killing two civilians and two marines.

The U.S. designated North Korea as a terrorism-sponsoring state after a mid-air bombing in 1987 by the communist nation’s agents of a Korean Air passenger jet. Washington removed Pyongyang from the list in 2008 after some progress in nuclear talks.

“Administration after administration, our approach to the North Korean regime has failed,” the lawmakers said in the letter. “This regime has actively opposed U.S. interests and undermined our national security, and it was a mistake to remove North Korea from the SST list.”

Earlier on May 30, the United States has left out North Korea from its annual State Sponsors of Terrorism (SST) list for a fifth straight year despite its recent war rhetoric and third nuclear test that have ratcheted up tension on the Korean Peninsula.

In its annual Country Reports on Terrorism, the U.S. State Department kept

four countries – Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria – on the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The designation results in a number of sanctions such as restrictions in U.S. foreign aid and a ban on defense exports and sales.

North Korea remained off the list because it was “not known to have sponsored any terrorist acts since the bombing of a Korean Airlines flight in 1987,” the report said.

Pyongyang, however, has yet to fulfill its commitment to re-open the investigation into 12 Japanese nationals who are thought to have been abducted by North Korean agents in the 1970s and 1980s, the report said.

North Korea was also re-certified as “not cooperating fully” with U.S. counterterrorism efforts in May. In addition, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an international organization that sets anti-money laundering standards, reiterated concerns about Pyongyang’s failure to address “significant deficiencies” in its anti-money laundering efforts.

However, in 2012 the U.S. government expressed concern about North Korea’s refusal to improve its regulatory system against money laundering and terrorism financing.

“The FATF, based in Paris, remained concerned about the DPRK’s (North Korea’s) failure to address the significant deficiencies in its regulatory regimes,” the State Department said in its annual report on terrorism on August 1, 2012.

The FATF is an inter-governmental organization designed to develop policies to combat money laundering and terrorism

financing.

The Country Reports on Terrorism 2011 revealed that Pyongyang “engaged the FATF to discuss its anti-money laundering and counterterrorist financing regulatory regimes.”

While the FATF welcomed the initial engagement, the report said, there were no further contacts.

It was among the fresh issues covered by the report on North Korea, with most of others similar to those in previous publications.

The report reiterated that North Korea is “not known to have sponsored any terrorist acts” since the bombing of a Korean Air flight in 1987 in which 115 people were killed.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Barack Obama said on June 21 that he will extend economic sanctions on North Korea for another year, citing “unusual and extraordinary threat” to national security.

In a Notice to Congress, Obama said he will continue the “national emergency” declared with respect to North Korea, stressing the continued “existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula.”

Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), the U.S. president annually updates the list of countries subject to economic sanctions based on security risks posed to the U.S. and its allies.

These sanctions were further expanded in 2010 and 2011 to include import restrictions under the Arms Export Control Act and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. (Yonhap News)

CURRENT SITUATIONS OF LABOR TRAINING CAMPS

Labor training camps were originally known as ‘education camps’ and operated as temporary institutions but they have evolved into permanent ones.

Labor Training Camps mainly house those convicted of theft or disruption of collective living and have capacities ranging from 500~2,500 people. There is reportedly one such facility for each city and country in the country. Labor training camps were originally known as “education camps” and operated as temporary institutions, but they have evolved into permanent “Labor Training Camps.”

These camps are operated by an inspector and security officer of the county People’s Security Bureau, two members of the county level WPK Three-Revolution Team, one member of the county level Youth League’s Committee on Deviant Youth, the commander of the Labor Training Camp, one guidance officer, and one rear guard worker.

The following are some descriptions of Labor Training Camps. The No. 55 Hamhung Labor Training Camp was formerly an educational camp but became a Labor Training Camp in 2000. The camp is composed of three sections. Section 1 is reportedly the main section, while Section 2 is for agriculture, and Section 3 is for mining. The camp is operated by a security officer of the County People’s Security Bureau, one training chief, and female staff member in charge of managing grain statistics.

Disciplinary Labor, Disciplinary Prison Labor

Aside from the Penal Code, other laws also include disciplinary labor as a form of “punishment.” Article 18 of the Law on Sentences and Implementation of Decisions specifies the primary reason for suspension of sentences as follows: “Any gravely ill person serving disciplinary labor, or a pregnant woman in the period three months before to seven months after delivery of a baby, may be released early on a suspended sentence.” Article 40 (3) of the Prosecutory Supervision Law

also specifies disciplinary labor.

Under the revised Penal Code of 2004, North Korea has established disciplinary prison labor as a new type of punishment. Disciplinary prison labor is also defined as a type of penalty under the current Penal Code. Disciplinary prison labor is a form of punishment wherein the convict is sent off to a location for work details. Sentences range from six months to two years. For the convict, two days of disciplinary prison labor are supposed to count as the equivalent of one day at a Correctional Center. Article 31 of North Korea's Penal Code revised in 2004 stipulates, "The citizen's fundamental rights are guaranteed throughout the period an inmate serves in disciplinary prison labor punishment."

Two types of inmates are detained in Labor Training Camps: ordinary criminals arrested for anti-socialist behavior and those sentenced to disciplinary prison labor. The latter category of inmates would get workloads that differed from those of ordinary inmates. In other words, the camp would separately manage those with pre-determined service periods. From these testimonies, it is clear that the Penal Code stipulates that those sentenced to serve disciplinary prison labor are to be detained in a Labor Training Camp. In short, two different types of inmates are detained in the Labor Training Camps, but those with prescribed service periods fall under separate management inside the camp.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Punishment Law outlines unpaid labor as one form of the punishments (Article 14). Unpaid labor is a punishment applied to those who have committed serious crimes related to their work. They serve these sentences by working at difficult and laborious jobs, though in some special cases they can stay in their current work units. Sentences range from one to six months (Article 16).

According to North Korean defectors' testimonies, unpaid labor as administrative punishment differs from disciplinary prison labor as a trials sentence in the following ways. While those sentenced to disciplinary prison labor work under surveillance, those laboring as administrative punishment work without any surveillance and serve their terms at their current workplaces without being paid. Both forms of labor share certain features; because terms are less than six months, those convicted tend to perform difficult and laborious jobs, and they are not paid for their work. However, the locations of punishments differ; administrative labor punishments are completed in workplaces, while disciplinary prison labor is done mainly in the Labor Training Camps.

Current Situation of Disciplinary Prison Labor

The punishments stipulated in the Penal Code are now imposed through trials - a significant development, as it could promote the protection of individual liberty and personal safety in North Korea.

Defector XXX was arrested in Yanji City in China, on April 2, 2005. He had to undergo investigation and interrogation by the Onsong Security Agency from April 13 to May 11. He was detained in the provincial collection center at Nongpo-dong, Ranam District, Chongjin City from May 11 to July 14. From July 15 to September 20, he was held in the Musan

County People's Security Agency Detention Facility. He was tried on September 8 at the Musan County Court, which sentenced him to one year of disciplinary prison labor. He was then imprisoned in Section 3 of the Jeungsan Correctional Center from September 22 to November 2, at which point he was released as his disciplinary prison labor term was over.

Although the term was for one year, for the local resident of Musan County, the calculation of the term was as follows: Each day at the Correctional Center was counted as the equivalent of two days of his disciplinary prison labor term, and counting of the term was said to start from the date of deportation. Consequently, he was released from the Jeungsan Correctional Center after serving only about 40 days at the center. At the end of his trial the Musan County Court judge said, "Serving in a Correctional Center is hard and painful. If anyone were to serve there long-term, he would almost certainly die or would be unable to support his family afterwards. So the idea was that we had better release the inmates as soon as possible so that they could contribute to the welfare of the Musan County residents in general."

Participating in the trial process were one judge, one defense attorney, four mature men who participated in the sentencing phase (of which one person testified he was from a committee), two indicted persons (of whom one was waiting for his turn), one guarantor, and two guards (one security agent and one sergeant). The judge and three of the four mature men left the courtroom for 2~3 minutes, and when they returned, the judge said, "The indicted person, XXX, is hereby sentenced to serve one year of disciplinary prison labor." Following this, the judge said he would count one day served in the Correctional Center as two days of service in an effort to help out the local residents of Musan.

However, detainment in Labor Training Camps without trial still continues as a general and routine practice. This practice persists even though a significant amount of time has passed since North Korea revised its Penal Code in 2004 requiring disciplinary prison labor to be imposed only through trials. Defector XXX testified that there is usually no trial for inmates sent off to Labor Training Camps because the penalty does not affect the status of one's citizenship card. Detailed records of one's service at Labor Training Camps are kept in the Safety Agency, but they do not appear on other documents that are necessary for normal activities. Defector XXX testified that she was sent off to a labor-training camp without a trial.

165 of the 245 articles contained in North Korea's Penal Code mention punishment by disciplinary prison labor. Those convicted of more serious crimes are sentenced to a term of correctional prison labor (at a normal Correctional Center). Without exception, the disciplinary prison labor penalty is not given for anti-state crimes. However, more than half of the crimes involving national defense will result in disciplinary prison labor. Disciplinary prison labor is the preferred sentence in almost all crimes involving economic and land management, environmental protection, labor administration and socialist culture. Most crimes involving disturbances of social order are also punishable by labor training, and such penalties are rendered for newly declared crimes. In fact, the 39 articles in the code relating to new crimes mandate punishments exclusively in terms of disciplinary prison labor.

<Internal Affairs>

North Korea Confirms Bird Flu Outbreak at Duck Farm

North Korea on May 20 confirmed a bird flu outbreak at a Pyongyang duck farm and said it has killed as many as 160,000 ducks to contain the virus.

Authorities who conducted examinations on May 7 found that ducks in the Tudan Duck Farm were infected with the H5N1 virus, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. "They briefed UN bodies concerned on this situation while taking steps to kill as many as 160,000 ducks in the farm and quarantine and disinfect it," the news agency said.

Veterinary epidemic control teams are monitoring poultry and movements of wild birds, and efforts are being made to raise the diagnosis capability and to increase preventive medicines, the KCNA report said.

The Paris-based World Organization for Animal Health had notified South Korea on May 14 of the bird flu cases in the North, but North Korea did not confirm the outbreak at the time.

The report said the State Emergency Anti-epidemic Committee was taking due measures, including checkups of humans in infected areas, testing and quarantine of poultry and restricting the movement of living fowls.

Earlier, North Korea has set up an emergency committee as part of a country-wide effort to cope with the bird flu threat. *Rodong Sinmun*, an organ of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), said on May 18 anti-bird flu measures have been implemented at all administrative levels of the government.

The daily said the Ministry of Public Health also published information outlining what measures ordinary people should take to prevent the avian influenza (AI) from spreading, and said authorities are checking the health of hundreds of people every day.

It then said that H7N9 strain of AI found in China can be fatal to people and pointed out that global efforts are underway to help contain the virus and future outbreaks.

Pyongyang, while reporting outbreaks in the neighboring country, has not once admitted an outbreak took place at a duck farm near the capital city. (Yonhap News)

N. Korean Leader Orders Concealment of Naval Vessels

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ordered the concealment of combat vessels during an inspection tour of a naval unit, state media reported on May 27.

The KCNA said the remark was made at the Navy's 291 unit after Kim discovered vessels berthed in exposed locations. The report did not say when the visit was made or the loca-

tion of the unit.

Kim, who holds the military rank of marshal in the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA), said North Korea's enemies are constantly trying to track the movement of military assets, so it is imperative that they are well concealed. He stressed concealment is a key part of maintaining fighting capability of the country's armed forces.

The remarks by the leader is a reference to extensive surveillance activities carried out on the North by Seoul and Washington. The allies use the information to gauge the threat level of the socialist country, with a spike in military activity possibly hinting that the North is planning some sort of action.

Kim also emphasized the importance of preparedness of the military and ordered all upper-echelon commands, including the Ministry of People's Armed Forces, to determine problems that can impede the military's fighting capabilities and make swift corrections.

The KCNA, meanwhile, said that Kim paid a visit to the Masik Pass Skiing Ground being built by the KPA and provided on-the-spot field guidance.

The news wire service said that the leader made clear that Pyongyang wants to make the ski course one of the best in the world and ordered all related organizations to offer all necessary assistance. The North wants to open the ski slope this winter.

Masik is a 768 meter pass located in Kangwon Province on the east coast and is not far from the Pyongyang-Wonsan motorway that links the capital to the port city. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Seeks to Ease State Grip on Distribution

North Korea is pushing to give greater autonomy to its distribution sector, a senior Pyongyang official said, in what is seen as another sign of the socialist country loosening its tight grip on the planned economy.

In an interview with a monthly magazine published by the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon), Oh Yong-min, a director of the North's Ministry of Commerce, said the ministry will overhaul the way wholesalers distribute consumer goods.

"Wholesalers will offer information on all goods – those manufactured under a government plan, surplus products and unplanned goods – and deliver them after receiving orders from unspecified retail networks," Oh said in the June edition of the magazine "Joguk (Fatherland)" obtained by Yonhap News Agency on June 2.

The ministry is drawing up a detailed plan to revolutionize the commerce and distribution network in order to meet the needs of the new century, the official said, adding that an order system should be implemented thoroughly in order to boost the efficiency of the distribution sector.

In a planned socialist economy, an order system refers to one where goods are produced and distributed based on the amount of orders from users.

The North's push is widely deemed a follow-up on the country's new economic management system, which was announced in late June last year.

"In line with the June measure, North Korea appears to be seeking a change of course by granting individuals greater authority in the distribution of goods," said Cho Bong-hyun, an analyst at the IBK Economic Research Institute.

The move to overhaul the distribution system also comes two months after North Korea reportedly gave greater leeway to managers of cooperative farms and factories in an effort to boost production. (Yonhap News)

Hyon Yong-chol Transferred to Commander of 5th Legion

Hyon Yong-chol, former chief of the General Staff of the KPA, was confirmed on June 3 to have been transferred to the commander of the 5th Legion which is in charge of the defense of the central frontline in Kangwon Province.

Hyon is spotted in a picture of *Rodong Sinmun* along with other North Korean military dignitaries who accompanied Kim Jong-un during his visit to the KPA post on Mt. Osong.

The paper mentioned Gen. Kim Kyok-sik, chief of the KPA General Staff; Col. Gen. Pak Jong-chon; and Lt. Gen. An Ji-yong as top North Korean generals who accompanied Kim but did not name Hyon.

Hyon Yong-chol with an insignia of three stars was the highest-rank officer among the military officers from the 5th Legion, making it possible to know that he was the commander of the unit.

A South Korean official also confirmed that the government thinks Hyon has been transferred to the 5th Legion commander.

Hyon, formerly a four-star general, seems to have been demoted to a colonel general (three-star general) when he was assigned to the 5th Legion in order to keep his rank in line with other legion commanders. Hyon was replaced by Kim Kyok-sik, a former minister of the armed forces. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Set to Start Development Project in Mt. Kumgang

North Korea is set to start a massive construction project near the scenic Mt. Kumgang area as part of the country's plan to develop the area as a "world-famous" tourist site, according to a North Korean magazine on June 11.

"North Korea will build tourist objects step by step in the special Mt. Kumgang tour zone," Oh Chung-hyuk, president of a North Korean developer of the mount resort area, was quoted as saying by the June issue of the monthly North Korean Kumsugangsan magazine.

"Extensive development will be carried out in the entire special area in the near future

and (the place) will be well prepared as an international tourist zone,” the president said in an interview story in the publicity magazine obtained by Yonhap News Agency.

Foreign and South Korean companies as well as individual investors are entitled to invest in the development project, the president said, adding that the North will legally guarantee investors’ rights, investment capital and income stemming from investing in the project.

The North has repeatedly publicized its plan to develop international tour programs in the scenic mountain area after the country’s joint tour program with the South was suspended over the shooting death of a South Korean female tourist in 2008.

In 2011, the country enacted a law on the special zone for international tours of Mt. Kumgang, which nullified a 50-year monopoly on cross-border tours to the mountain area, held by Hyundai Asan, the South Korea investor and operator of the joint tour program.

The law “shall contribute to turning Mt. Kumgang into a world-famous special tourist zone by properly setting up a system and order in the development of the special area,” according to the copy of the law.

The North has shown little progress in the country’s plan to lure in foreign investors and is believed to be making efforts again for the development of the mountain resort area.

The Mt. Kumgang development plan is also part of the country’s wider tourism project in which the country also designated the port city of Wonsan to be developed as an international tourist spot. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has recently vowed to finish the construction of a ski resort in the Masik mountain pass, or Masikryong, near the eastern coastal city of Wonsan within this year.

The report also came as South and North Korean officials are expected to discuss the long-debated topic of resuming the mountain tour program during their two-day government talks to be held from June 12 in Seoul. (Yonhap News)

North Korea to Begin Arirang Mass Game Performances in July

North Korea will start the famous Arirang mass game festival on July 22, celebrating its late leaders and the 60th anniversary of the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, which it sees as a victory, the country’s media reported on June 14.

North Korea mobilizes tens of thousands of people for the highly choreographed performances that are open to foreign visitors. The annual festival continues for weeks.

“The performance will give impressive depiction of the undying feats President Kim Il-sung performed in winning the victory in the war and the Songun (military-first) revolutionary leadership feats of leader Kim Jong-il,” KCNA said in a report.

The country’s ruling WPK declared in February that it will host a wide range of political events, including the Arirang festival, to celebrate its war victory.

The starting date of Arirang is five days from the anniversary of the signing of the armistice agreement on July 27, 1953. (Yonhap News)

<External Affairs>

N. Korea Denounces U.S. ICBM Test Plan as Military Provocation

North Korea on May 18 denounced a possible move by the United States to test fire an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) later in May, calling it a serious military provocation.

Rodong Sinmun, an organ of the WPK said in a article monitored in Seoul, the launch, if it takes place, will be an insult to the international community and a direct threat to Pyongyang.

The daily, which effectively reflects the views of the socialist country, said the ICBM test can only be seen as a prelude to a pre-emptive invasion of countries the U.S. wants to strike.

“The U.S. is trying foolishly to intimidate us with the ICBM launch,” the paper claimed, and pointed out that Washington is not the only country capable of launching long-range missiles.

It then said Pyongyang has the means to make U.S. ICBM’s useless and made clear that if its sovereignty is violated by just “0.001 millimeter,” the socialist country will take measures to “annihilate the heart of the attackers with unbelievably strong force.”

It did not say if it will use nuclear weapons, but the country has been threatening to hit both South Korea and the U.S. with nuclear weapons if it is provoked.

On Feb. 12 the country detonated its third nuclear device and launched a long range rocket last year that may have a range of over 10,000 kilometers.

The report comes as there have been some media reports that Washington may be moving to conduct a launch test with its Minuteman-3 missile next week from its Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Blasts U.S. Report on Its Religious Freedom

North Korea on May 22 upbraided an annual U.S. government report critical of the socialist country’s suppression of religious freedom, claiming that the report is designed to tarnish its image internationally.

The report refers to the 2012 International Religious Freedom Report which the U.S. State Department issued on May 20. The report put the North for the second time in a row on the department’s list of “countries of particular concern” for religious freedom.

“In North Korea, the government severely restricted religious freedom, including discouraging organized religious activities, except those controlled by officially recognized groups,” the report said.

There is no indication of any notable change in the situation even after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, reportedly in his late 20s and educated in Switzerland, took over power in December 2011, the report pointed out.

“Finding that the military way did not work on the DPRK (North Korea), the U.S. has resorted to such a base act of issuing the report to tarnish the image of the DPRK in the world,” the KCNA cited an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying.

“It’s shameless Washington urges Pyongyang to improve the human rights situation and livelihood, while threatening the existence of the Korean people by continuously introducing preemptive nuclear strike means into the Korean Peninsula,” the spokesman said. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Says No Plans to Give up Nuclear Capabilities

North Korea said on May 28 that it has no plans to unilaterally give up its nuclear capabilities in the face of ceaseless threats from the United States.

The stance announced in an article carried by *Rodong Sinmun*, an organ of the WPK said Washington needs to first end its belligerent attitude and claims that the North poses security risks.

“Under the condition of ceaseless nuclear threats by Washington, Pyongyang will not unilaterally abandon its war deterrence,” the paper monitored in Seoul said.

North Korea’s nuclear weapons are the ultimate defender of national interest and a trusted shield to defend peace, the media outlet said. The socialist country, despite international pressure, detonated its third nuclear device in February and launched two long-range rockets last year.

The daily, which effectively reflects the views of the WPK and its leadership, then said that it is the United States that had triggered a global nuclear arms race and contributed to the spread of atomic weapons, not North Korea.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal must be the first to be viewed as a destabilizing force in the region, *Rodong Sinmun* said.

The position comes just days after Pyongyang’s special envoy visited Beijing and said the socialist country will return to the stalled six-party talks that were set up to deal with the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Choe Ryong-hae, the General Political Bureau of North Korea’s People’s Army, while in the Chinese capital promised to engage in dialogue with all “interested parties.” The Chinese official, on the other hand, made clear to Choe that China’s real goal is denuclearization.

The envoy, however, did not respond to calls by Chinese leaders, including its President Xi Jinping, for a nuclear-free peninsula.

The paper’s view was echoed by Radio Pyongyang, which argued it was Washington that fueled tensions by permitting the sale of advanced drones to South Korea.

The broadcaster said actions taken by the U.S. justified the North's efforts to strengthen its country's status as a nuclear power and to expand its deterrence capabilities.

The latest report comes as the National Defense Commission said Saturday that it is because of Pyongyang's calls to simultaneously build up its nuclear arms and its economy that it was able to deter U.S. aggression.

The goal of attaining economic growth and nuclear capabilities was announced by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un earlier in the year. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Calls for Replacing Korean War Armistice with Peace Treaty

North Korea on May 29 called for replacing an armistice signed at the end of the Korean War with a formal peace treaty in order to enhance stability on the Korean Peninsula.

In an article carried by *Rodong Sinmun*, an organ of the WPK, the socialist country claimed efforts to hold onto the cease-fire pact that halted the three-year conflict in July 1953 can only be viewed as an attempt to start another war of invasion.

"There is a pressing need to replace the Armistice Agreement, which is a relic of the war, with a permanent peace regime," the daily monitored in Seoul said.

An armistice does not guarantee "complete peace" and Washington's move to hold onto the cease-fire agreement reflects its desire to stifle the DPRK (North Korea) by force, it said.

"If the peace regime was created in the past, the current standoff over denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would not have become a problem in the first place," said the paper, which effectively reflects the view of the WPK and its leadership.

The country has come under attack from the international community for detonating its third nuclear device earlier this year.

Rodong Sinmun said that the joint South Korea-U.S. Key Resolve and Foal Eagle exercises that took place in March and April represent a gross violation of the armistice and argued that Pyongyang's decision to unilaterally nullify the cease-fire pact was in direct response to these provocations.

The Supreme Command of the KPA announced it was scrapping the armistice on March 5.

The media outlet said it is unnatural for a cease-fire pact to be maintained for 60 years and if a ruinous situation were to develop on the Korean Peninsula, the blame for such a development will rest solely on the shoulders of the United States that resisted all moves to sign a peace treaty. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Stresses Importance of Pyongyang-Beijing Friendship

North Korea unfolded aggressive propaganda for two days in a row to stress the importance of the North Korea-China friendship as it capitalized on the 30th anniversary of

the late leader Kim Jong-il's first visit to China.

Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the WPK said in an editorial on June 2 that Kim Jong-il's visit to China, his first foreign tour, marked a historic event of great significance in boosting the North Korea-China friendship down through generations and the 30 year-long history.

Kim visited China from June 1-13, 1983 as the heir of then leader Kim Il-sung.

The editorial said it was the earnest behests of Presidents Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il to boost the North Korea-China friendship generation after generation and that current leader Kim Jong-un is paying deep attention to developing the North Korea-China friendship, true to the noble intention of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.

The paper mentioned that Kim Jong-un sent his special envoy to China recently who conveyed a personal letter to Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

The editorial concluded that the WPK and the North Korean people will in the future make positive efforts to boost the bonds of the North Korea-China friendship, too, which stood the test of history, as desired by Kim Jong-il.

On the same day, the (North) Korean Central TV Broadcasting Station also aired a program featuring Kim Jong-il's China visit and stressed that Kim's China visit was a historic event to show the firm determination of the parties and peoples of the two countries to consolidate traditional friendship.

One day before, *Rodong Sinmun* also carried a similar article, saying Kim Jong-il left an immortal record in China as he was aware of the significance and importance of the North Korea-China friendship better than anyone else.

North Korea watchers in Seoul say the North Korean media's emphasis on the Pyongyang-Beijing friendship is aimed at restoring the traditional friendship between the countries which have recently shown some signs of fracturing and letting Pyongyang's intention to maintain the traditionally friendly ties in the Kim Jong-un era be known. (Yonhap News)

North Korean Leader Calls for Stronger Relations with China

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for building stronger relations with China as he sent a happy birthday message to Chinese President Xi Jinping, state media said on June 15.

"It is the unshakable will of our party and people to further consolidate and develop generation after generation the traditional DPRK (North Korea)-China friendship, which stood all tests of history, from a long-term and strategic viewpoint despite the complicated international situation," Kim said in the message.

"I am convinced that the invincible vitality of the DPRK-China friendship, a common treasure of the peoples of the two countries, will be more strikingly demonstrated in the future thanks to the common efforts of both sides," the message said, according to the North's official KCNA.

In recent months, however, China has apparently been taking a tougher approach to Pyongyang, especially after the North's long-range rocket launch in December and its third nuclear test in February. (Yonhap News)

<Inter-Korean Relations>

N. Korea Proposes Joint Event to Mark 2000 Declaration Anniversary

North Korea has proposed holding a joint event with South Korea to mark the 2000 signing of a landmark inter-Korean declaration, a civic organization here said on May 23.

June 15 is the 13th anniversary of the signing of the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration between liberal-minded late South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. The landmark declaration laid out a reconciliatory mode for the Korean Peninsula, pledging the two countries to jointly promote reunification and other economic and cultural cooperation.

The organization said North Korea's body in charge of pushing for the implementation of the five-point reconciliatory agreement sent the proposal by fax.

The North proposed Mount Kumgang or the city of Kaesong as likely venues for the joint ceremony, saying "The only way to recover North-South relations and open the gate for autonomous reunification lie in the (efforts) to implement the joint declaration," according to the South Korean group.

The South Korean civic group, at a meeting later in the day, decided that holding a ceremony in Kaesong would be more adequate given the temporarily closed inter-Korean industrial site there that South Korea is trying to reopen, company officials said.

The Kaesong Industrial Complex in the North's border city of Kaesong remains shut down since early April when the North withdrew all of its workers in protest against Seoul's joint military exercises with Washington.

Seoul-Pyongyang relations have been strained ever since the North's third nuclear test in February, which prompted the U.N. Security Council to pass a punitive sanctions resolution against the socialist state.

"One of the reasons behind the North's proposal for Kaesong as a site of the event may be its hope to resume the Kaesong Industrial Complex," an official at the South's civil group said.

An official at the Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said the government will make a decision on the proposal after considering the overall conditions of inter-Korean relations.

The Koreas had annually held joint events marking the agreement before suspending them in 2009 under the hard-line stance of former South Korean President Lee Myung-bak.

The North has consistently demanded that the South abide by the reconciliatory agreement while restrained inter-Korean relations led to the suspension of their trade and other exchange. (Yonhap News)

South Korea again Asks North Korea to Repay Food Loans

South Korea again called on North Korea on May 24 to repay millions of dollars in loans provided in the form of food since 2000, the Unification Ministry said.

The impoverished North missed the June 7, 2012 deadline to repay South Korea US\$5.83 million in the first installment of the \$724 million food loan extended to the North in rice and corn. The latest call is the South's fifth demand made on the North to repay its debt.

Seoul's state-run Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) sent a message on May 23 to Pyongyang's Foreign Trade Bank, calling for the repayment, Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Hyung-suk said in a briefing.

The South Korean bank also sent another message the same day, notifying the North of its forthcoming June 7th deadline to repay the second installment of \$5.78 million, the spokesman said.

"North Korea should faithfully abide by what they previously agreed to with the South," Kim said, calling for the repayment of food loans.

Amid a conciliatory mode under the liberal-minded late President Kim Dae-jung, Seoul started to provide food loans to the famine-ridden country, providing a total of 2.4 million tons of rice and 200,000 tons of corn from 2000-2007.

Under the deal, the North is required to pay back a total of \$875.32 million by 2037. (Yonhap News)

President Park Calls for Freedom for North Korean People

South Korean President Park Geun-hye said on June 10 the people in North Korea should be allowed to enjoy freedom and prosperity just like their compatriots across the heavily armed border, as she marked the anniversary of a 1987 pro-democracy movement.

Park made the remark in a message commemorating the nationwide uprising that forced the then military-backed government to introduce a direct presidential election after successive authoritarian governments. South Korea has since become a full-fledged democracy.

"From now on, we have to realize a more mature democracy and spread its values further," Park said in the message read by her home affairs minister Yoo Jeong-bok in a ceremony. "What is more pressing than anything else, we have to close the schisms in our society and make national unity blossom."

Park pledged to do her best to ensure no one is discriminated against because of their

regional and academic backgrounds and to push for her “economic democratization” initiative without wavering. The campaign calls mainly for uprooting unfair business practices by big companies.

“Compatriots in North Korea should also enjoy freedom and prosperity together with us,” Park said. “I will do my best to open up an era of happiness on the Korean Peninsula by laying the groundwork for peaceful unification in a step-by-step manner.”

Park also said South Korea will take the lead in making the world a happier place to live by taking active role in resolving such global issues as terrorism, poverty and nuclear safety, and spreading the values of freedom and human rights beyond the Korean Peninsula. (Yonhap News)

S. Korea Invites N. Korea to 2014 Incheon Asian Games

South Korea has invited North Korea to attend next year’s Asian Games to be held in the western port city of Incheon, a senior government official said on June 18.

“We asked North Korea to participate in the 2014 Incheon Asian Games some two months ago via the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA),” Park Jong-gil, the second vice minister of culture, sports and tourism, told reporters.

“We also conveyed our hope via other channels for inviting not only its athletes but supporters,” he said. “The North has yet to make any response, but I expect to hear good news from Pyongyang soon.”

Inter-Korean relations remain soured after an agreement to hold their first high-level talks in six years unraveled on June 11 due to a dispute over the level of chief delegates that were to attend the meeting.

Earlier in June, Incheon Mayor Song Young-gil made an official request to OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah and Prince Ali Bin Al-Hussein of Jordan, FIFA’s vice president, for their cooperation in inviting the socialist North to the upcoming sporting event in his city, just west of Seoul.

The 2014 Asian Games, the 17th of its kind, is scheduled to take place in Incheon for 16 days from Sept. 19, with 437 events in 36 sports.

Incheon was awarded the right in 2007 defeating Delhi, India, to become the third city in South Korea to host the Asian Games after Seoul (1986) and Busan (2002).

Pyongyang competed in the 2002 Busan Games, dispatching 184 athletes and more than 100 supporters. It marked the first time that the North took part in an international competition held in the South since the armistice that halted the Korean War (1950-53).

North Korea did not apply to participate in the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games to be held for eight days in Incheon from June 29, 2013, becoming one of three countries out of 45 OCA members choosing not to take part, along with East Timor and Afghanistan. (Yonhap News)

NORTH KOREAN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA UNDER THE KIM JONG-UN REGIME

This study will consider whether or not there is a possibility of change in North Korean policy towards China under the Kim Jong-un regime, and if so, in which direction the change will move forward. As seen in section 2, at the end of the late Kim Jong-il regime, relations between North Korea and China were promoted by enhancing multilateral strategic cooperation in all areas of political, economic, and diplomatic sectors. Unlike late Kim Jong-il in his succession process, Kim Jong-un has taken office with strong support from China.

For this reason, it is noteworthy that whether or not the new regime brings changes in its policy towards China, future North Korea-China relations are expected to be complexly influenced by such diverse variables as the North Korean leadership, political and economic stability, and North Korean policies toward international society. In the following, the possibility of changes in leadership is examined first to analyze the North Korean policy towards China under the Kim Jong-un regime, and then the aspects of domestic politics, the economy, and foreign affairs.

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1. The Tendency of the Leadership and the Possibility of Change

North Korea has operated under a monolithic system behind its leader. Therefore, sounding out the tendencies of the leader, the tendencies of the party leadership, and the potential for

change provide a valuable measure in predicting the North Korean future policies either at home or abroad, including China. Above all, Kim Jong-un's disposition reveals differences in many respects from that of late Kim Jong-il. The late Kim took an elite course at home in stages, and engaged in propaganda and agitation fields after graduating from college while preparing to equip himself with the qualities necessary to succeed Kim Il-sung and follow his ideology. By contrast, the young Kim has taken on an international mindset through studying overseas at a young age before entering Kim Il-sung Military University to take military studies and train himself to inherit Kim Jong-il's Songun (military-first) politics. It is known that his study-abroad experience has deeply affected him in forming his disposition.

First, last April, Kim Jong-un seemed to be more straightforward than his late father Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-un gave an order to "bring in practical economic measures to apply regardless of their origins, China, Russia, or Japan," urging the party's high-level officials to contemplate introducing elements of capitalism in order to boost economic development (Yonhap News April 16, 2012). These reflect his open-minded character. Second, compared to his father, the young Kim is judged to be a fairly practical person. His statement on practical economic measures reminds of Deng Xiaoping's black or white cat remark, i.e. that it doesn't matter if the cat is black or white as long as it catches rats. Along with this, the new regime has authorized nationwide cellular phone use to its people. This case also shows his pragmatic tendency because it was a thing unimagin-

able under the former regime.¹⁾ In a country maintaining a one-party dictatorship, information monopoly and communication minimization are compulsory in securing the internal political stability. Sharing information and freedom of communication can be a foundation to form a civil society. Underneath the national permission of mobile phone uses are two-fold backgrounds: the necessities of funding for the government (NK Chosun Feb. 7, 2012) and the North Korea-China economic cooperation. North Korea and China are proceeding with talks for the joint development and management of the Rason trade district, Hwanggumpyong island, and Wihwa island by operating a joint committee. As a result, the Rason Economic Trade Zone Law and the Hwanggumpyong and Wihwado Economic Zone Law, which were enacted and amended in December 2011, have adopted a variety of needs of China, but they failed to arrive at a consensus for the communication part, including use of the internet and mobile phones within the districts.²⁾ Under these circumstances, permitting the use of mobile phones nationwide, including in the special economic zones, is assessed as a practical measure putting more emphasis on economic development between the two interests, stability of the domestic system versus securing national financial and economic cooperation with China.

Next are the party organizations to check the tendency of the North Korean leadership. The Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK) largely consists of the Central Committee and Central Military Commission, and the Central Committee is divided into the Politburo and the

Secretariat. In the third meeting of the party conference for reorganizing the party structure, two particulars received attention. First, members of the organizations increased with a wide range. Compared to the numbers before the reshuffle, the members of the Politburo increased from 9 to 32, the Secretariat, from 5 to 11, and the Central Military Commission, greatly increased, from 6 to 19, including most elders and the heavyweight group in the Kim Jong-il era. It was based on concern that a sudden shift in generations could cause political unrest and the intention to reinforce the weak leadership by incorporating influential people from all walks of life. Second, budding forces who accompanied Kim Jong Il in his visit to China in May and August of 2010 have been appointed to key posts in the party. For Pyongyang City Party Secretary, for example, 53-year-old Mun Kyong-dok was appointed as secretary of the party Politburo candidate members and the Secretariat as the youngest person for the post at the time. Mun is known for emphasizing economic development and practical interests. When he met Zhou Yongkang, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee in Beijing at the end of October 2010, he is reported as having said, "I was impressed after I saw in person the outcome of the Chinese people's achievements in developing the country. I am serious in learning from the Chinese experiences to put all my best efforts into building a powerful and prosperous nation." In short, the reorganization of the party in 2010 included the elders of the nation en masse to stabilize the succession, but many newly growing figures strongly pursuing

practical interests also took positions.

In recent years, North Korea shuffled the party leadership, carrying out replacement of the power elite through the 4th party conference and dismissal of Ri Yong-ho from chief of the general staff. Given that a large-scale change in personnel could lead to political unrest by fostering division among the power elite, the regime has seemed to refrain from conducting a massive shake-up of the party organization and personnel. However, if the elders prove unable to conduct state affairs due to old age, disease, or death, Kim Jong-un's style of restructuring has a high potential of being carried out.

Recently, some judged the expectations that Kim Jong-un would adopt different policies from those of the Kim Jong-il era are decreasing, given the situation that had developed. Though the new leadership showing a different propensity has emerged, a big change of policy in the near future would seem difficult in North Korea. As noted above, this is because North Korea's current domestic and foreign policies are being carried out in accordance with the October 8 Yuhun of late Kim Jong-il. What have been confirmed as the teachings so far are the major policies of the late Kim Jong-il era, mainly supporting Kim Jong-un, maintaining the Songun politics, and building a powerful and prosperous socialist country (*Rodong Sinmun* Dec. 22, 2011). By convention of emphasizing filial piety throughout a family line, Kim Jong-un's own government will only be established at the end of 2014 or early 2015 when the three-year mourning period is finished, as Kim Jong-il did the same to follow the teachings of his late father, Kim

Il-sung, when he died. In circumstances within which the Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un co-regime is maintained, the stability and normalization of the political and economic system and launching a blueprint for Kim Jong-un's own government in the future would be the critical task.

Therefore, it is unlikely to see North Korea move for massive change at the moment. It is because all the domestic and foreign policies that the North is carrying out in the current situation must be kept within the scope that the system's stability and the teachings of the late leader are guaranteed. More problematic is that, considering the particularity of the socialist political system, which is policy continuity, the regime is more likely to adhere to the current policy even after the period of teachings of the late leader elapses. After all, it is estimated that overcoming the constraints in the political structure of the North Korean socialist system may be difficult even if the new North Korean leadership has open and pragmatic tendencies.

2. North Korean Policy towards China in the Political Sector: Securing Sovereignty against China by Maintaining Internal Political Stability

Since the Kim Jong-il regime's dependence on China was a desperate measure for successful succession, the North's move for ensuring its sovereignty is expected to accelerate. Indeed, signing the agreement, "strengthening the strategic communication including internal affairs," proposed by the former Chinese President Hu Jintao and

agreed with by the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in May 2010, made the North uncomfortable. It was inferred from the fact that Korean Central News Agency did not mention the agreement in its May 8 news, which reported the accomplishment of Kim Jong-il's visit to China.

The subtle rivalry between the Kim Jong-un regime and the Chinese government has been witnessed in many cases. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed concern over North Korea's launch of Kwangmyongsong-3 (Yonhap News March 17, 2012), but the Kim Jong-un regime launched the missile anyway and also clashed with its ally over the participation of Chinese personnel in the event of the Day of the Sun, North Korea's celebration of Kim Il-sung's birthday. China, as a means of pressure, slowed the speed of economic cooperation, including the development of Rason, Hwanggumpyeong and Wihwado zones. North Korea tried to recover its sovereignty and initiative in North Korea-China relations, while China tried to maintain and reinforce its influence on the North. The two countries showed signs of a war of nerves in the first half of 2012.

In view of the succession case, North Korea's recovery of independence from China can be achieved when the domestic political and economic stability is founded. The flame of Hamnam, the effort of building an economy such as with the so-called June 28 policy, are the products of such endeavors to stabilize and consolidate the system. However, though Kim Jong-un has emerged as the highest leader, seizing power over the party, the government, and the military, factors of anxiety regarding

hereditary succession of power have yet to be quelled; the possibility of public alienation from the government exists due to the serious economic problems. Thus, the instability of the North Korean regime can work to deepen the dependency on China and poses a high probability of becoming a stumbling block to securing North Korea's sovereignty. Moreover, if North Korea's domestic situation becomes unstable, it can be a factor aggravating China-North Korea relations. If political unrest in the North Korean regime occurs, North Korea is likely to carry out an armed provocation and conduct nuclear or missile tests in order to impute internal threats as external ones, forcing China to stand at a crossroads once again. In short, in the political sector, the key North Korean policy towards China in the Kim Jong-un era is to recover sovereignty; therefore, the regime is expected to throw its effort into consolidating power by securing political and economic stability.

3. North Korean Policy towards China in the Economic Sector: Limited Economic Improvement, Accelerating Mutually Beneficial Economic Cooperation, and Dispersing Dependency

The most interesting North Korean policy in the Kim Jong-un era is its policy in the domestic and foreign economic sector. Kim Jong-un has already imprinted people's minds with an image of economic leader by enforcing the 150-day battle and

the 100-day battle,³⁾ and the 100,000-unit housing scheme in Pyongyang. In connection with this, there are controversies over whether or not the June 28 economic management system (hereafter, the June 28 policy) announced by the regime last June is a signal of North Korea's reform and an open-door policy and, if so, whether the regime will follow the Chinese reform model. The following discusses the economic policy of the Kim Jong-un era by classifying it under domestic policy and the policy towards China, and then the policy towards China by dividing it into three facets: aid, trade, and investment.

1) Domestic Economic Policy

In the military parade held on April 15, 2012 to commemorate Kim Il-sung's 100th birthday, Kim Jong-un presented economic reconstruction as pending tasks and said, "it is our party's firm determination to ensure that the people would not tighten their belts again, but freely enjoy the prosperity of socialism" (*Rodong Sinmun* April 16, 2012). This is evidence that Kim Jong-un is aware of the fact that a serious economic crisis can lead to the collapse of the North Korean regime.

The Kim Jong-un regime's economic policy drew attention when the June 28 policy was announced to cater to the emerging need of solving the economic problems as a first priority. The contents of the June 28 policy known so far are as follows: In the business sector, the state no longer assigns each production unit a production plan including a target production, but allows the unit to determine the production and sale for itself; and in the agri-

cultural sector, the government takes 70 percent of the yield while farmers have the right to dispose the rest 30 percent, enlarging decisions at the disposal of companies and individuals (Yonhap News Aug. 9, 2012).

Under the circumstances that the original document, "About Establishing a New Economic Management System of Our Own Style," has not been released, it is difficult to determine the exact meaning of Kim Jong-un's new economic policy. Yet, it is impracticable to broadly interpret the policy as "the Chinese style" or to discuss it as an aspect of reform and opening up. The currency reform carried out in 2009 has clearly exposed the gap between the economic system and the economic reality. In other words, due to the currency reform, which was intended to root out the market elements, the economic system has regressed to the level of the previous planned economy system before the July 1 economic improvement measures. However, in economic reality, market elements have deeply rooted the market in accordance with the inertia effect of a market economy. The June 28 policy, therefore, could fairly be understood as the policy that partly allows a market economic system that is made to fit into the North's economic reality.

Moreover, North Korea has been pursuing a 10-year macroscopic program for economic development since it proclaimed the 10-year strategic plan for national economic development on January 15, 2011. For this reason, the possibility of the June 28 policy containing such proactive contents as reform and opening up is assessed to be low. Judging from the fact that for-

mer prime minister Pak Pong-ju has returned to a post, being promoted to the manager of the party's light industrial unit under the Kim Jong-un regime, the content of the June 28 policy is expected to be at the level of complementing the July 1 economic improvement measures. The function of the measures, therefore, can validly be understood as allowing limited market elements for solving problems inherent in the planned economic system.

After all, the North Korean regime under Kim Jong-un seems to conduct sundry institutional experiments to overcome severe economic hardship, but the room for maneuver in economic reform is limited as long as Kim Jong-un continues the Kim Jong-il regime's policies. In the current state of North Korea, where economic policy ranks below stability of the regime, adopting reform and opening up that may shake the foundation of the system will be difficult. Partial adaptation of the Chinese reform-and-opening-up model may be possible, but a literal following of the Chinese steps of reform and opening up is hard to expect. This is the case because the differences between the two regimes under Deng Xiaoping and Kim Jong-un are too big in such factors as land area, population, and international and industrial environment.

2) Economic Cooperation with China

In the economic sector, North Korea is predicted to maintain the current close relationship with China in economic cooperation without a significant change. As described below, the chance of recovery in a short period of time in the external eco-

conomic environment looks slim in the Kim era. Accordingly, China's status for North Korea as a supporter of the system and partner in economic cooperation will remain.

First of all, in terms of China's aid and assistance to North Korea, the proportion of Chinese aid in economic cooperation with the North will be gradually reduced. This is because the Chinese government cannot ignore its international status though North Korea would obviously want to have massive aid from China. After the two North Korean nuclear tests in 2006 and in 2009, the General Administration of Customs of China decided not to open the statistics of its aid to North Korea in order to avoid criticism from the international community. This is based on the idea that aid effectively can be made through other routes by expanding trade volume and activating investment. In short, a minimum of economic aid for the survival of the North Korean regime will be continuously made with gradually reduced proportion, and such a phenomenon is consistent with the Chinese government's policy aiming to maintain a normal relationship between the two countries.

Second, trade between North Korea and China is likely to expand in scale, but the North is expected to push for increased trade with Russia and South Korea to mitigate trade dependency on China. Underneath such a speculation are practical reasons based on that the fact that serious trade dependence on China can provide China a pretext of political influence on North Korea and that the increased trade between the two countries does not help improve the North's industrial struc-

ture. The North Korea-China trade has steadily increased since 2000, mostly resulting from the growing imports by North Korea from China. To keep the balance of trade, North Korea began to increase export of mineral resources to China. Such signs significantly appeared after the May 24 measures. Such trade with China, however, will result in deepening the outflow of North Korean underground resources to China in the long term rather than helping North Korea's economic construction. Late leader Kim Il-sung worried that the country would only be left with empty caves if it relied heavily on the export of underground resources. The late Kim Jong-il, and now Kim Jong-un, also judged the outflow of underground resources an antipatriotic action caught up in short-term visual profits (*Rodong Sinmun* May 9, 2012). In the end, North Korea's deepened trade dependence on China would not positively work on the North's reconstruction of domestic economy in the long term.

Third, the economic cooperation between the two coterminous countries in the investment sector is expected to greatly expand. The economic development projects that the two are currently promoting in the Rason, Hwanggumpyong and Wihwado districts are the ones that they both have a stake in and can equally share economic benefits of. Through these, North Korea can gain such benefits as the improvement of infrastructure conditions, the procurement of people's daily necessities, and the acquisition of foreign currencies. And China can secure a bridgehead that connects its three northeastern provinces and the Pacific Rim by obtaining

the use of Rason Port and Cheongjin Port. Furthermore, as the development project in these three northeastern provinces has promoted a state-level business, the development plans in the districts have a green light, for they are expected to invite the Chinese government's substantial financial investment. On September 16, 2010, China's Ministry of Commerce mentioned North Korea as an investment destination in its release of the Communication for Foreign Direct Investment Statistics in 2009. According to the press release, North Korea was evaluated to have a high value for investment with geographical conditions and cheap labor, while having a low stability of investment because of such factors as poor infrastructure, lack of institutional-based law, and political instability. It implies that the Chinese government perceives, if it can appropriately manage the stability of the North Korean regime and North Korea builds infrastructure and arranges the legal system, that the value of investment in North Korea can be increased. The Chinese government recently fully invested in various transportation infrastructures in North Korea, including the New Yalu River Bridge construction, the Wonjong-ri Bridge repair, and the highway between Wonjong-ri and Rason. It also backed up enacting and revising the Rason Economic Trade District Law and the Hwanggumpyong and Wihwado Economic Zone Law by dispatching its experts to provide technical support to the North. The big factors of such actions for Chinese government can be analyzed as strategic necessities for raising North Korea's worth as an investment destination by securing the stability of investment in

North Korea rather than providing unilateral economic support to the North.

As noted above, major developments are predicted for North Korea- China cooperation in terms of scale, particularly in the trade and investment sectors. However, since increased dependence on China can be a hindrance in securing its sovereignty, North Korea is predicted to try to disperse its economic dependence on China while promoting economic cooperation with its other two neighbors, Russia and South Korea. Last July, North Korea and Russia reached an agreement on strengthening mutual exchanges, and expanding economic exchange by signing a border treaty, and in September, they signed an agreement that waives 90 percent of North Korean debts to the former Soviet Union and utilizes the remaining debt in the businesses between the two countries in the fields of education, health, and energy.

4. North Korean Policy towards China: Sustaining Bandwagoning and Soft-Balancing

In the Kim Jong-un era, the guardianship of China in the foreign and security sector will significantly come into play. North Korea will strengthen its bandwagoning on China on the one hand, and maintain its practice of walking-a-tightrope diplomacy in an effort to improve relations with the United States and Russia. Such prediction is based on the recognition that expecting dramatic change in North Korea's foreign relations in the short term is difficult.

From the end of 2012 to early 2013, the

countries closely involved with the Korean Peninsula have replaced their governments. The governments of Russia and North Korea first changed and the United States, China, and South Korea followed. Under the new administrations of these various countries, many variables, including the power composition impinging upon the Korean Peninsula, the U.S.-China cooperation to solve the North Korean problems, and the two Koreas' policies towards the peninsula, will have a direct or indirect impact on North Korean policy toward China under the young Kim's leadership. If the international environment develops in favor of North Korea, the Kim Jong-un regime will be able to respond flexibly in diplomatic matters and strengthen its independent position. In contrast, if the current pressure and blockade to the North lasts, North Korea's bandwagoning on China will be accentuated. Of the previously mentioned variables, what can have a decisive impact on North Korea's external environment are the United States and China. The perspectives of the two countries on the North Korean issue and how they respond to North Korea will decide the external environment, and North Korea's policy for China will have a higher possibility of being changed accordingly.

First for China, no big change in policy toward North Korea is expected. In its policy toward North Korea, China has three strategic goals: maintaining the stability of the North Korean regime, enhancing its international standing through expanded influence on North Korea, and using North Korea as a bargaining chip in solving its conflict with Taiwan. Generally, it is evaluated that former Prime Minister Hu Jintao's

policy towards North Korea achieved the desired results. The academic and political worlds in China expect that the existing Chinese North Korean policy will be sustained in the newly elected leadership.⁴⁾ In the Kim Jong-un regime, China will promote relations with the United States with priority, and maintain relations with neighboring countries, South Korea, Japan, and Russia for reciprocal benefits, while keeping the North Korean regime's stability and sustenance.

In the United States, Democratic Party's President Barack Obama has been re-elected for a second term, and he is expected to maintain the Pivot to Asia, or rebalancing, policy. The fact that he chose Myanmar as his first official visit after the presidential election can be understood in this context. The Obama administration in the first term stuck to the soft-line policy towards North Korea on the basis of its principle of resolving the North Korean issue through engagement and dialogue. However, it has turned to a hardline stance as the government's policy towards the country was discredited when North Korea ventured the test-fire of the Kwangmyongsong-3 after the February 29 agreement with the United States.

The need for U.S.-China cooperation and policies of Russia and South Korea towards North Korea will affect the international environment that the North Korean government faces. That said, as long as the United States and China both agree on the denuclearization of North Korea, then unless North Korea gives up on nuclear development, North Korea's foreign environment cannot be greatly improved. Then, will Kim Jong-un abandon nuclear

development, the symbol of the Songun politics by abnegating the will of Kim Jong-il? Unfortunately, the chance looks highly unlikely. Has not North Korea experienced enough that the benefits it would have by developing nuclear programs outweigh those by giving them up? Therefore voluntary nuclear abandonment is hard to expect from the Kim Jong-un regime even after the reign of his late father's instructions are over.

Similarly, as the chance that the North Korean foreign environment will develop unfavorably is high, North Korea's bandwagoning on China is likely to be sustained. That being the case, the North will try to reduce the excessive influence of China in the diplomatic sector, and actively use Russia to maintain the balance of power and influence on the Korean Peninsula. Russia and North Korea have actively cooperated in the military sector. In August 2011, the Russian East Military District commander visited Pyongyang for talks with the North Korean military about the issue of military cooperation, including the joint training of Russia-North Korea Navy search, mutual visits of naval vessels, and cooperation between the armies of the two nations. On December 19, 2011, North Korea allowed a Chinese navy fleet to enter Wonsan Port, and invited the Russian commander of Far East Siberia area in an effort toward military cooperation with China and Russia. These are analyzed as meaning that North Korea wants to hold the Chinese influence in check through military cooperation with Russia while reinforcing the North Korea-China-Russia military ties to strengthen its regime stability.

(This is an excerpt from a paper titled, "The Prospects on North Korean Policy towards China in the Kim Jong-un Regime," carried in the *Journal of Peace and Unification* (Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 2013) published by the Ewha Institute of Unification Studies under Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea.)

Notes :

- 1) According to the report of Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF, Reporters Without Borders (RWB)), on January 25, 2012, North Korea was assessed as a country that abuses press freedom, ranking 178th out of 179 countries in RSF's global press freedom index. The number of mobile subscribers is one million out of its population of 24 million, but they are allowed only for domestic uses and subject to strong control by the government. Anyone caught in an overseas call will be charged one million won (about US\$ 1,100) in addition to the imposition of a seven-day confinement.
- 2) As a result, concerning communication within the districts, only freedom of communication by mail, telephone, and fax was stipulated in the two laws, i.e. Article 75 of the Rason Economic Trade Zone Law and Article 57 of the Hwanggumpyong and Wihwa Economic Zone Law.
- 3) The 150-day battle was the all-out mobilization of a production increase campaign beginning on April 20, 2009 and ending on September 16, 2009. The 100-day battle was additionally enforced to make up for the shortcomings of the 150-day battle.
- 4) On June 20, 2012, in a seminar hosted by the Sejong Institute on the subject of "North-South Korean Relationship, the Korean Peninsula Unification Policy, and Political Trends in North Korea," it was predicted that the next Chinese leadership "will maintain its existing North Korean policy without a major change."

N. Korea Thought to Have 200 Mobile Missile Launchers: Report

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ May 17, 2013>

— North Korea could have as many as 200 mobile missile launchers, a report showed on May 17, nearly double the number previously estimated by Seoul authorities.

— According to the report submitted to the U.S. Congress by the Pentagon, North Korea appears to have accumulated up to 200 so-called transporter erector launchers (TEL), including up to 100 for short-range Scud missiles, 50 for medium-range Rodong missiles and 50 for long-range Musudan missiles, the South's state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses said.

— South Korea's military and intelligence authorities previously estimated that the communist country appeared to possess a maximum of 94 mobile launchers.

— It is the first time that South Korea or the U.S. has made public the number of North Korean TELs in an official document.

UNFPA Provides US\$500,000 in Medical Aid to N. Korean Mothers

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ May 22, 2013>

— A United Nations organization supporting child birth has provided US\$500,000 worth of medical aid to North Korean mothers and children, a report said on May 22.

— The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) shipped drugs and medical equipment for mothers with newborn babies in the North last month, the report by the Washington-based Radio Free Asia said.

— The goods were sent to about 300 health facilities in the country and the UNFPA tapped into the U.N.'s Central Emergency Response Fund in order to provide the assistance, it said.

— With a budget of \$10 million, the UNFPA has been leading a five-year project to help pregnant North Korean women and conduct a census in the communist country since 2011.

North Korea May Deploy New Multiple Rocket Launchers This Year

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ May 23, 2013>

— North Korea may be able to deploy its new multiple rocket launchers within this year after test-firing short range missiles over the weekend, a senior Seoul official said on May 23.

— North Korea fired six rounds of short-range rockets from its east coast for three days from Saturday, putting a damper on hopes for inter-Korean talks to ease tensions after months of bellicose rhetoric from Pyongyang.

— With analysis currently underway, the transporter-erector-launchers (TEL) for the multiple rocket launchers were identified as having four launch tubes, an intelligence official said, asking for anonymity.

N. Koreans in Pyongyang Seen Wearing Badge of Young Leader

<Yonhap from BEIJING/ June 3, 2013>

— Some North Koreans living in the capital Pyongyang have been sighted wearing a

badge bearing the image of Kim Jong-un in a sign that the young leader is rapidly consolidating power, sources in China said on June 3.

— Multiple sources in Beijing who have access to North Korea said the new badges appeared in Pyongyang for the first time last month, although there are indications that they were handed out to internal security forces late last year.

— All North Koreans except pre-teens are required to wear lapel pins bearing the images of their two late leaders, Kim Il-sung and his son, Kim Jong-il, at all times. Now, a new pin bearing the image of the current leader is added to them.

— Kim Jong-un, the grandson of the North's founder Kim Il-sung, inherited power after his father Kim Jong-il died in 2011. The leader, believed to be around 30, has steadily solidified his control over the country.

Large Number of N. Korean Children Suffering from Stunted Growth

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ June 6, 2013>

— Roughly one in three North Korean children are suffering from stunted growth caused by malnutrition, a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) showed on June 6.

— The organization under the United Nations said in its 2013 food and agriculture report that the North's figures for slower-than-normal-growth stood at 32.4 percent, which was higher than the average for other Asian countries, excluding Japan. Numbers for the whole of Asia stood at 26.8 percent.

— The latest findings showed stunted growth numbers for North Korean children being roughly on par with the Philippines, Myanmar and Indonesia, although much higher than China, with reported figures of just 9.4 percent.

North Korean Set up Paper Company in Tax Haven

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ June 6, 2013>

— A North Korean ran a shell company in a tax haven region, an independent South Korean online news outlet said on June 6 in its latest revelation of a list that included three paper companies believed to be linked with Pyongyang.

— It is the first time that the Korea Center for Investigative Journalism (KCIJ) in Seoul has released the name of a North Korean.

— Mun Kwang-nam was registered as one of two directors of Larivader Solutions Inc. set up in the British Virgin Islands on Nov. 19, 2004, the KCIJ said on its website.

— Mun's address was registered as "2 Kin Mal Dong, Mao Lang Bong District Pyong Yang Republic of Korea," the non-profit news organization said, citing its analysis of documents obtained from Commonwealth Trust Ltd., which helps people establish paper companies in safe havens.

PEOPLE

Kim Jong-un (김정은) : Supreme Commander of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA), First Secretary of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), First Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC)

- May 16 visits the February 20 Factory of the KPA, a comprehensive foodstuff processing base capable of producing varieties of foodstuff including soy, bean paste, seasoning, and butter.
- 18 provides field guidance to the Ryongmun Liquor Factory.
- 19 visits Pyongyang Mt. Myohyang Children's Camp situated at the foot of Mt. Myohyang in North Phyongan Province together with his wife Ri Sol-ju.
- 20 inspects the KPA Unit 405 and has a photo session with service personnel of the unit.
- 25 provides field guidance to the combined foodstuff-processing factory under the KPA Unit 534.
- 25 provides field guidance to a supply base on the east coast under KPA Unit 639.
- 25 provides field guidance to the Masik Pass Skiing Ground now under construction by the KPA.
- 27 provides field guidance to the August 25 Fishery Station under the KPA Unit 313.
- 30 provides field guidance to the Songdowon International Children's Camp in Wonsan, Kangwon Province.
- June 1 provides field guidance to the Majon Bathing Resort in South Hamgyong Province on the east coast.
- 1 provides field guidance to the Songchongang Net-weaving Factory and the Plastic Tube Shop newly built by the 1521 Enterprise of the KPA.
- 2 inspects KPA Unit 507 and KPA posts defending Mt. Osong.
- 4 provides field guidance to the Kosan Fruit Farm in Kangwon Province.
- 7 provides field guidance to the Pyongyang Essential Foodstuff Factory, which has been facelifted.
- 9 sends gifts to the participants of the 7th Congress of the (North) Korean Children's Union (KCU).
- 10 visits the Pyongyang International Football School and Rungna People's Sports Park.
- 10 orders to confer the military rank of general upon Choe Pu-il, the minister of People's Security.
- 13 provides field guidance to various sectors of Changsong County and North Phyongan Province.
- 14 provides field guidance to the Taegwan Glass Factory in Changsong County, North Phyongan Province.

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

- May 16 meets with Isao Iijima, special counselor in charge of crisis management for the Japanese Cabinet at the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.

- May 23 meets with a delegation from Vientiane, Laos led by Soukanh Mahalath, secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall.
- June 7 goes round the construction site of the Masik Pass Skiing Ground.

Pak Pong-ju (박봉주) : Premier

- May 17 makes a field survey of the Chollima Steel Complex and the Posan Iron Works in South Phyongan Province.
- 20 visits the Hwanghae Iron and Steel Complex to review its operation.
- 23 makes a field survey of the construction of Breeding Station No. 621 of the KPA, which received field guidance from Kim Jong-un.
- 27 makes a field survey of the Musan Mining Complex, the nation's leading iron ore producer.
- 29 makes a field survey of the Kim Chaek Iron and Steel Complex and the Chongjin Steel Works.
- June 2 makes a field survey of the second phase of construction of the Huichon Power Station (power station in tiers on the River Chongchon).
- 6 makes a field survey of the Mirim Riding Club, the construction of which is now under way by the KPA.
- 9 makes a field survey of key factories and enterprises in the Hamhung area.
- 12 makes field surveys of the Toksong Mine and the Kumya Youth Coal Mine in South Hamgyong Province.
- 13 makes a field survey of the Yanggakdo Football Stadium, which is under remodeling work.

Choe Ryong-hae (최룡해) : Director of the General political Bureau of the KPA

- May 22 visits China as a special envoy of Kim Jong-un. Choe meets with Wang Jiarui, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.
- 24 meets with Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPC and president of the People's Republic of China, on a visit to China as a special envoy of Kim Jong-un at the Great Hall of the People.

CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW

(Local Events)

- May 16 The 39th National School children's Sports Contest for Jongil Peace Prize opens with some 9,000 school students and children from each province participating. The event was held in Pyongyang, Phyongsong and Hamhung cities.

- May 18 A departure ceremony of tour boat Royale Star for the first batch of Rason-Mt. Kumgang international tour makers takes place at Rajin Port.
- 19 The 50th National Games of Juvenile Sports Schools opens with due ceremony in Hamhung, South Hamgyong Province. The games will be held in Pyongyang, Hamhung, Phyongsong, Sariwon, Nampho and other places.
- 19 The (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) says North Korean table-tennis players Kim Hyok-bong and Kim Jong won gold medals at the 52nd ITTF World Championships (individual events) in Paris.
- 21 The KCNA says the first batch of Rason-Mt. Kumgang international tourist group arrives at the Kosong port by the ship "Royale Star" on May 20.
- 23 An event takes place at the Taedong River Diplomatic Club in Pyongyang to observe World Malaria Day.
- 28 Female athlete Pak Kum-hyang wins a gold medal in the 3,000 meter women's hurdle race at the 2013 Chinese Taipei Track and Field Tournament.
- 29 A ceremony takes place to mark the completion of the updating of the production processes of the Phyongsong Synthetic Leather Factory in South Phyongan with Premier Pak Pong-ju in attendance.
- 30 An event is held at the Taedong River Diplomatic Club in Pyongyang to mark the World No-Tobacco Day.
- 30 A press conference takes place at Kim Il-sung Stadium with table tennis players Kim Hyok-bong and Kim Jong who won gold medals in mixed doubles at the 52nd ITTF World Championships (individual events).
- 31 The Cabinet hosts a reception in honor of Kim Hyok-bong and Kim Jong, gold medalists at the 52nd ITTF World Championships (individual events), and their coach at Okryu Restaurant in Pyongyang.
- 31 The Pyongyang International Football School opens with due ceremony.
- June 1 A joint friendship meeting is held at the Mangyongdae Amusement Park in Pyongyang to mark the 63rd anniversary of International Children's Day.
- 3 Delegates of the KCU from across the country arrive in Pyongyang to take part in the 7th Congress of the KCU.
- 3 The Sports Contest for Pochonbo Torch Prize opens to celebrate the anniversary of the victory in the historic Pochonbo battle commanded by former President Kim Il-sung.
- 3 The Sports Contest for Pochonbo Torch Prize opens to celebrate the anniversary of the victory in the historic Pochonbo battle commanded by former President Kim Il-sung.
- 4 School children camp across the country to mark the 67th anniversary of the KCU.
- 4 The KCNA says archaeologists of Kim Il-sung University in Pyongyang have recently discovered cultural relics dating back to the Paleolithic Age in a cave in Kumok-ri, Sungho County, North Hwanghae Province.
- 5 The KCNA says a decree on the law on economic development zones was promulgated by the SPA Presidium on May 29. The law has seven chapters (62 articles) and additional rules (two articles).
- 5 The delegates to the 7th Congress of the KCU visit Mangyongdae, the birthplace of

former President Kim Il-sung.

- June 6 The 7th Congress of the KCU is held at the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang with the attendance of Kim Jong-un.
- 7 A performance of the national art festival of school children was given at the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace to commemorate the 67th anniversary of the KCU.
- 7 The 50th National Games of Juvenile Sports Schools are closed with due ceremony in Hungnam City.
- 13 An event to mark World Blood Donor Day takes place at the Blood Transfusion Center of the Ministry of Public Health.
- 14 The KCNA says the grand gymnastic and artistic performance "Arirang," winner of the Kim Il-sung Prize, will be given in Pyongyang to mark the 60th anniversary of the victory of the Korean people in the great Fatherland Liberation War and the 65th anniversary of the DPRK (North Korea).

(Foreign Events)

- May 16 An international workshop on organic agriculture takes at the Pyongyang Centre for Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries.
- 17 Isao Iijima, special counselor in charge of crisis management for the Japanese Cabinet, flies back home after a four-day visit to North Korea.
- 18 The delegation of the Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports headed by Vice Minister Son Kwang-ho leaves Pyongyang to take part in the assembly of the International Weightlifting Federation to be held in Russia and the fifth international conference of ministers of Physical Culture and Sports slated to take place in Germany.
- 19 *Rodong Sinmun* claims the United States has sought, first of all, to violate the sovereignty of the (North) Korean people and their rights to existence and development through a series of joint military maneuvers.
- 22 Foreign ministry spokesman claims the United States is malignantly slandering the DPRK by calling it a "state of special concern" in an annual report on international religious freedom released by the State Department.
- 23 *Rodong Sinmun* says the United States should face reality and find a way to coexist with a nuclear-armed DPRK (North Korea).
- 25 The spokesman for the Policy Department of the National Defense Commission (NDC) says, "Park Geun-hye, puppet president of South Korea, openly revealed her sinister intention to stand in confrontation with the DPRK again."
- 28 The spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) denounces South Korea's rejection of the North Korean offer for a joint event to mark June 15.
- June 4 *Minju Joson* urges the U.S. to withdraw troops from Okinawa, Japan, claiming that the U.S. forces are the chieftain of all the misfortune and sufferings in the Northeast Asian region including the Korean Peninsula.
- 6 North Korea proposes talks between authorities of the two Koreas for the normaliza-

- tion of the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the resumption of tours at Mt. Kumgang in a special statement by the spokesman for the North's CPRK.
- June 6 North Korea proposes working-level inter-Korean talks be held in Kaesong on June 9 in preparation for the ministerial dialogue offered by Seoul.
- 8 *Rodong Sinmun* says the June 15 joint declaration and the October 4 declaration serve as a key to solving the issue of the inter-Korean relations.
- 10 The KCNA says working-level contact for the talks between authorities of North and South Korea was made at Panmunjom on June 9 and 10.
- 12 North Korea's armed forces and power bodies, ministries and national institutions send wreaths to the Indonesian embassy in Pyongyang expressing condolences over the death of Taufiq Kiemas, former speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia.
- 13 The CPRK slams South Korean authorities for the cancellation of the North-South talks.
- 14 *Minju Joson*, newspaper of the Cabinet, slams South Korean authorities for the cancellation of talks between the North and the South.
- 15 A spokesman for the North Side Committee for Implementing the June 15 Joint Declaration claims in a statement the "confidence-building process" touted by South Korean authorities is "not a policy aimed to sincerely settle inter-Korean relations but is nothing but rhetoric to mislead public opinion."

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Subscription rates (mailing cost included) : US\$70.00 for one year, US\$7.00 per copy

VOL. 36 NO. 7 Copyrights © 2013 by **YONHAP NEWS AGENCY**

Publication Registration No : Culture RA-08259

Printed by The Korea Herald Company, Seoul, Korea
