

China-North Korea Relations after Kim Jong-Il

Hong Nack Kim
West Virginia University

Abstract

In the aftermath of Kim Jong-Il's death in December 2011, China clearly wanted a more cooperative new North Korean regime which would help stabilize the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The Kim Jong-Il regime had been a political liability and economic burden to China, as it defied the international community by perpetrating numerous provocations and crises. In order to avert a major conflict on the Korean Peninsula, Beijing had to bail out the Kim Jong-Il regime by defusing the crises created by North Korea's saber-rattling behavior and brinkmanship. Clearly, China did not want to repeat or endure a similar relationship with the new North Korean regime under Kim Jong-Un. This article seeks to examine China's policy toward the Kim Jong-Un regime from December 2011 to the present. In spite of initial optimism, Beijing has been disappointed by the Kim Jong-Un regime's defiant actions, such as the two ballistic missile tests in 2012 and the third nuclear test in February 2013. These developments inevitably raise serious doubts about China's ability to rein in the belligerent Kim Jong-Un regime. It is a major contention of this paper that it will be difficult for China to "tame" the Kim regime unless China is willing to reset its diplomatic priorities from seeking to prevent the collapse of Kim's regime to halting North Korea's provocations that may ignite a major conflict on the Korean Peninsula. The surest way to achieve this change will be through the effective utilization of economic sanctions to enhance the efficacy of the diplomatic measures on which it has relied too long and too single-mindedly.

Keywords: Kim Jong-Un, Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping, Pyongyang's nuclear test, The "Unha-3" rocket launch, The Rason SEZ, Jang Sung-Taek

I

The death of Kim Jong-Il on December 17, 2011, aroused much concern on the part of Chinese leaders, for Kim Jong-Il died without completing the process of transferring power to his young and

inexperienced son, Kim Jong-Un. Beijing wondered, like so many other capitals around the world, whether the new Kim regime would be able to consolidate its power or not.¹ Also, China was eager to learn about the economic, military and foreign policies of the new regime. Because of North Korea's important geopolitical position for the security of China, Beijing wanted stability and regime survival in North Korea under Kim Jong-Un.

In view of China's less than harmonious relationship with the Kim Jong-II regime (1994-2011), China clearly wanted a more cooperative new North Korean regime which would help stabilize the situation on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea under Kim Jong-II had been a political liability and economic burden to China, as the Kim Jong-II regime defied the international community by perpetrating numerous provocations and crises. Pyongyang carried out missile and nuclear weapons tests in 2006 and 2009 in violation of international agreements. Furthermore, Pyongyang sank a South Korean warship, *Cheonan*, in March 2010 and shelled South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, killing over 50 soldiers and civilians, in November. Such provocations not only heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula but also brought the two Koreas to the brink of war. In order to avert a major conflict on the peninsula that could embroil China in an unwanted war, Beijing had to bail out North Korea by defusing the crises created by North Korea's saber-rattling behavior and brinkmanship. Clearly, China did not want to repeat or endure a similar relationship with the new North Korean regime under Kim Jong-Un.

This article seeks to examine China's policy toward North Korea after Kim Jong-II's death on December 17, 2011. It emphasizes Beijing's strategy to stabilize North Korea in the post-Kim Jong-II era by inducing North Korea's new leadership to adopt economic reforms as well as a more moderate foreign policy that can improve relations with other countries in Northeast Asia. In spite of Beijing's initial optimism, the Kim Jong-Un regime's defiant actions, such as the two ballistic missile tests in April and December 2012 and the third nuclear test in February 2013, raise serious doubts about China's ability to rein in belligerent North Korea. It is a major contention of this paper that it will be difficult for China to "tame" the Kim regime unless China is willing to reset its diplomatic priorities from seeking to prevent the collapse of Kim's regime to halting North Korea's provocations. The likeliest way to achieve the desired result will be through the effective utilization of economic sanctions rather than relying strictly on the diplomatic

measures on which it has relied too long and too single-mindedly.

II

Political succession in North Korea became a matter of major concern to Chinese leaders when Kim Jong-Il suffered a major stroke in mid-August 2008. Kim's illness created serious political uncertainty in the North, as it occurred without the designation of a clear successor. To prevent possible political instability, Kim Jong-Il quickly decided to designate his youngest son, Jong-Un (then 26), as his successor in January 2009. From that time, Jong-Un was rapidly groomed as his father's heir apparent.

However, it was not until September 2010 that Kim Jong-Un was formally introduced to the world as his father's successor. At the Third Conference of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) on September 28, he was appointed to several key positions in the ruling Communist party, including becoming a vice chairman of the ruling party's Central Military Commission (CMC), the highest military authority headed by his father. Additionally, he became a member of the ruling party's Central Committee (CC).

In order to facilitate the hereditary succession of power by Kim Jong-Un, Kim Jong-Il took several trips to China between May 2010 and the summer of 2011. A major objective of Kim's China visits was to secure the blessing of the Chinese leadership for the proposed hereditary succession.² Despite the Chinese leaders' aversion to dynastic succession, the Hu Jintao leadership had acquiesced in the hereditary succession of Kim Jong-Un by the summer of 2011. Apparently, Beijing came to accept the peculiar reality of the Kim family dictatorship in North Korea, one built around the family's cult of personality. That reality allowed only a member of the "sacred" Kim family to succeed another in power.

Another factor which influenced the Chinese leadership's acquiescence in North Korea's hereditary succession was China's obsession with preserving the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. In order for China to continue its economic development and industrialization, it needed a peaceful international environment and system. In this respect, North Korea occupied a key geostrategic position, as China and North Korea share over 840 miles of common border. North Korea provided a valuable buffer zone between China and South Korea where over 28,000 U.S. troops remain stationed. If the

North Korean regime collapsed, or absorbed by South Korea, China would have to face a unified Korea controlled by the capitalist South and allied with the United States. Such a contingency would mean not only the loss of a valuable buffer zone but also a considerable burden on China's national defense, for as many as one-fifth (or 400,000) of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) may need to be deployed along the Sino-Korean border to ensure China's national security.³ Thus, it would be more cost-effective to keep North Korea as it is, rather than facing an uncertain future should North Korea collapse.

In the immediate aftermath of Kim Jong-Il's death, it became quite evident that China wanted a swift and smooth consolidation of power by Kim Jong-Un. On December 19, China's four major government and party organs jointly sent a message of deep condolences to the Central Committee of the North's ruling Korean Workers Party (KWP), expressing the hope that the North Korean people would "unite under the Korean Workers Party and continue to build a strong and prosperous socialist state under the leadership of Comrade Kim Jong-Un."⁴ Shortly thereafter, on December 30, when Kim Jong-Un assumed the position of the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA), Hu Jintao dispatched a congratulatory message to Jong-Un, expressing his firm belief that "the traditional friendly cooperation between China and North Korea is sure to constantly consolidate and strengthen."⁵ Beijing also indicated its willingness to invite Kim Joing-Un to China in the not too distant future.⁶

China's intention of developing close ties with North Korea was reiterated by its Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin in early January 2012.⁷ According to Liu, it was "the unwavering policy" of China to consolidate and develop relations of friendship and cooperation with North Korea. He also reaffirmed China's intention to continue to "provide support and assistance to North Korea" in order to protect the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula. In fact, shortly after Kim's death, Beijing was reported to have decided to provide 500,000 tons of food and 250,000 tons of crude oil to North Korea.⁸

By the spring of 2012, Kim Jong-Un had moved quickly to take over all key positions within the North Korean regime. On April 11, 2012, at the ruling party's conference, he was given the title of First Secretary of the Secretariat of the ruling KWP, the most powerful position within the ruling party. In addition, he succeeded his father as chairman of the Central Military Commission (KWP), while assuming the post of the

First Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC), the supreme governing body of North Korea. In short, he had become the official successor to his father.

Clearly, Kim Jong-Un's assumption of power within such a short time was encouraging to the Chinese leadership. Again, Hu Jintao sent his congratulations to Kim on the latter's assumption of the top party and government positions in April, saying that strengthening ties with North Korea was a key priority of China.⁹ Kim Jong-Un responded by pledging to "develop the traditional DPRK-China friendship provided and cultivated by the leaders of elder generations of the two countries."¹⁰

By the summer of 2012, Kim Jong-Un had strengthened his grip on the North Korean military by assuming the title of Marshal of the Republic (DPRK), the highest military rank, and dismissing Vice Marshal Ri Yong-Ho from all positions, including Chief of General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA). Although the ruling party's Politburo removed Ri ostensibly because of "illness," he was actually squeezed out of power by Jang Sung-Taek (Kim's uncle and mentor) and his ally, Choe Ryong-Hae who became the powerful Director-General of the General Political Department of the KPA in April 2012. Both Jang and Choe wanted to curtail the power of the military in dealing with the economic affairs in order to strengthen the power of the ruling party and the government (i.e., the Cabinet) over the military. Li opposed such a change.

III

Following the emergence of the Kim Jong-Un government, China wanted to see the new regime reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula by improving relations with other major powers, particularly with the U.S., through the Six-Party talks on the denuclearization of North Korea. The initial statement of the National Defense Commission (NDC) on December 30, 2011, was not encouraging on prospects for solving the nuclear and other issues with the U.S. Instead, the NDC, the supreme governing body, declared that "the foolish politicians around the world" should not "expect any change from us." However, shortly thereafter the new Kim regime signaled its willingness to negotiate with the U.S. on the suspension of its nuclear program in exchange for food aid in January 2012.

North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs had become a source of major conflict with the U.S. in and after 1993-1994

and especially after the revelation of a clandestine nuclear weapons development based on uranium enrichment (HEU) in October 2002. The latter triggered the “second” nuclear crisis in Korea. In order to defuse the crisis, China agreed in the summer of 2003 to cooperate with the U.S. and other concerned parties to organize and host the Six-Party Talks, which included China, the U.S., North Korea, Japan, South Korea, and Russia. After several rounds of serious negotiations, these talks produced a major agreement on September 19, 2005 (the September 19 Joint Statement) in which Pyongyang agreed to abandon its nuclear program, rejoin the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), and allow International Atomic Energy (IAEA) inspectors to resume their work in return for economic assistance and a security guarantee by the U.S. and others plus normalized diplomatic relations between Pyongyang, Washington and Tokyo.

However, the September 19 Joint Statement was not fully implemented as a result of Pyongyang’s unwillingness to abide by the agreement. In October 2006, Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test in violation of the denuclearization agreement. Through intense negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington, another action plan on denuclearization was worked out and signed by North Korea and other powers at the Six-Party Talks in February 2007. It led to the release of over 18,000 pages of documents on North Korea’s nuclear programs in May 2008 and the implosion of the cooling tower at Yongbyon in the summer of 2008. Despite apparent progress, the Six-Party Talks stalled after December 2008, when North Korea refused to accept the U.S. demand that it sign a verifiable plan on the dismantlement of its nuclear program.

At the beginning of 2009, Pyongyang resumed the operation of its nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and conducted a second nuclear test in May. Furthermore, Pyongyang constructed a major uranium enrichment (HUE) facility by November 2010 in violation of numerous international agreements. Pyongyang had denied the existence of a uranium-based (HUE) nuclear weapons program since 2002.

In the spring of 2011, China was able to work out with the U.S. and its allies a three-step procedure for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. By then, North Korea also expressed its willingness to return to the multilateral forum for the removal of international sanctions and securing economic assistance from major powers. On the basis of the agreement, in July 2011, while Kim Jong-Il was still alive, North Korea agreed with

the U.S. to discuss confidence-building measures for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. Those measures included the suspension of sanctions as well as food aid to North Korea in return for a moratorium on missile and nuclear tests, plus uranium enrichment. However, there was no real progress at the first two rounds of talks in July and October 2011, and a third one had to be cancelled due to Kim Jong-Il's death in December.

Shortly after Kim Jong-Un's succession to power in January 2012, the North Korean Foreign Ministry indicated that Pyongyang was willing and ready to engage in further negotiations with the U.S.¹¹ However, it was not until February 23-24, 2012, that the third round of talks between Pyongyang and Washington took place in Beijing, producing quite positive results.

On February 29, North Korea announced that it would freeze the uranium enrichment at Yongbyon nuclear site, refrain from nuclear and long-range missile tests, and allow international inspectors to monitor activities at its main nuclear complex in Yongbyon,¹² while discussions with the U.S. continued. In return, the U.S. agreed to send 240,000 metric tons of food (or nutritional supplements) to North Korea. The aid was expected to be delivered in monthly shipments of 20,000 tons over a year. In addition, the U.S. State Department also announced Washington's willingness to "take steps to improve our bilateral relationship in the spirit of mutual respect for sovereignty and equality" and to allow cultural, educational and sports exchanges with North Korea.¹³

Such an agreement was clearly gratifying to China, for the improvement in Pyongyang-Washington relations would have a stabilizing effect on the Korean Peninsula. China was also encouraged by this "Leap Year" agreement as it could serve as a breakthrough for the resumption of the stalled Six-Party Talks. As Hong Lei, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, pointed out, China continued to believe that the "six-party talks are the most effective method" of realizing the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and preserving peace and stability on the peninsula.¹⁴ Beijing therefore welcomed the agreement.¹⁵

The optimistic mood generated by the February 29 agreement was dashed shortly thereafter in mid-March, when Pyongyang announced plans to launch a satellite into orbit, utilizing a powerful rocket called "Unha-3." Although Pyongyang attempted to assure the world that it was a peaceful scientific endeavor, the U.S. and other powers regarded it

as a disguised attempt to test a long-range ballistic missile in violation of international agreements. Pyongyang's announcement of the rocket launch plan was a shock and disappointment to the U.S., China, and other countries which were hoping for the revival of the Six-Party Talks.

Within hours of that announcement, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun summoned North Korean ambassador Ji Jae-Ryong to express Beijing's displeasure and worries over the matter and called for restraint. Zhang told his government's belief that "it is the common obligation, and in common interest of all parties concerned, to maintain the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and northeast Asia."¹⁶

In an attempt to convey China's opposition to the planned rocket launch, Wu Dawei, China's envoy to the Six Party Talks, met with his North Korean counterpart, Ri Yong-Ho on March 20, to persuade Pyongyang to scrap the rocket test in order to safeguard peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Ri's response was negative, saying that "[the] satellite launch is, in every aspect, a part of North Korea's rights for a peaceful space development [program]," and other countries should not apply "a double standard or inappropriately interfere with our rights."¹⁷

Pyongyang's negative response to the China's request for the cancellation of the rocket launch obviously disappointed China. On March 25, while attending the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, Hu Jintao informed his feelings to U.S. President Barack Obama that China was sharing the "frustration" of the U.S. over the North Korean plan to launch the rocket. The Chinese delegation at the meeting also indicated that it wanted to work with other nations to convey to Pyongyang "the very grave concerns that the international community" has about "this provocative act."¹⁸

In a related move, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi expressed China's growing frustration and displeasure with Pyongyang's planned missile launch at a trilateral foreign ministers' meeting with Japan and South Korea in Ningbo, China in early April. Yang told reporters that China was "troubled" by North Korea's planned rocket launch¹⁹ and would continue to press Pyongyang to abandon the plan.²⁰ Meanwhile, Japan vowed to shoot down the rocket if it strayed into its territory.²¹ Although China tried hard to dissuade Pyongyang from the rocket launch, it did not succeed.²²

The Kim Jong-Un regime's refusal to give in to international pressure, including Beijing's, on the rocket launch, can be ascribed to

several reasons. First, it was apparently decided by Kim Jong-Il before his death as part of the important commemoration of the centennial of Kim Il-Sung's birthday (April 15, 1912). Second, Pyongyang also planned to mark the beginning of a new era of "kangsong daeguk" (Powerful and Prosperous Nation) under its new leader, Kim Jong-Un. Third, the launch was also designed to improve North Korea's long-range ballistic missile technology, which had failed in orbiting a satellite in previous tests in 1998 and 2009. Fourth, under the influence of the hardliners, Pyongyang maintained that the planned rocket launch was not violating existing international agreements, including the Leap Year agreement, despite the U.S. warning to the contrary.

In an attempt to demonstrate its peaceful intentions, North Korea invited representatives of the international media to view the event. Amidst much fanfare and many expectations, North Korea launched the "Unha-3" rocket on April 13. It proved a dismal failure as it exploded in mid-air barely 90 seconds after launching and fell into the Yellow Sea. North Korea officially acknowledged the failure of the rocket test four hours after the fiasco.

The failure of the missile test was a major blow to the prestige and reputation of the new regime which had boasted to its citizens and the international community about the rocket launch for nearly a month. In reaction to the test, the U.S. terminated 240,000 tons of nutrition, charging that Pyongyang had violated the February 29 agreement. Furthermore, the U.S. also took the case to the U. N. Security Council (UNSC) for further sanctions against North Korea, pointing out that the launch violated resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009) of the UNSC, banning North Korea from engaging in such activities. The U.S. and its allies wanted to adopt a strong resolution not only condemning North Korea's missile test but also imposing severe sanctions on North Korea. However, China opposed such a move, and, as a compromise, the Security Council agreed to adopt a presidential statement instead of a formal resolution.

In this presidential statement, adopted unanimously by the UNSC on April 16, the Security Council condemned North Korea's actions for violating the U. N. resolutions and urged Pyongyang to refrain from similar activities in the future. In supporting this statement, China wanted to demonstrate its displeasure as well as disapproval of the North's provocation. Undaunted by the U. N. condemnation, Pyongyang declared it would continue its missile research and development

program. Moreover, North Korea declared its readiness to retaliate against the international condemnation of its rocket launch, implying the likelihood of another nuclear test by the North.²³

IV

In the spring of 2012, there were clear indications that the Kim Jong-Un regime would not abandon its nuclear weapons development program. In his first public speech on April 15, Kim assured North Koreans that the “military-first” politics would continue under his rule.²⁴ He went on to say that “[w]e must strengthen our military in every possible way and accomplish the goal of building a powerful and prosperous socialist state.”²⁵ That remark appeared to reinforce the widespread view that Kim would keep the nuclear weapons program as well as the “military-first” policy.

In addition, the announcement of the revised North Korean constitution also strengthened the suspicion that the Kim Jong-Un regime was retaining the “nuclear strategy” of its predecessor. According to the text of its revised constitution, adopted in April 2012, North Korea was a full-fledged “nuclear armed state,” and the acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability was one of the greatest achievements of Kim Jong-II.²⁶ These developments were clearly ominous signs to Pyongyang’s neighbors, including China, which were seeking the reduction of tensions on the Korean Peninsula though the resumption of the Six-Party Talks on denuclearization.

Meanwhile, there was also growing speculation that North Korea might conduct another nuclear test as it had in 2006 and 2009.²⁷ Such speculation persisted after the dismal failure of the launching of the “Unha-3” in mid-April, for many observers believed that the North would resort to additional nuclear test in order to compensate for the loss of prestige it had suffered from the failure. In addition, citing satellite photos showing new tunnels being dug at a site in Punggyeri in North Hamgyeong Province, a South Korean intelligence source warned in April that the North was secretly preparing for the third nuclear test at the same site where it had conducted previous two nuclear tests.²⁸

These developments aroused much greater concern in Beijing than had the rocket launch in April, as a nuclear test would clearly be a more serious provocation than the long-range missile test. It was apparent that another nuclear provocation would not only heighten tensions on the Korean Peninsula, but also make it virtually impossible to resume the

Six-Party Talks. In view of the serious nature of the provocation, Beijing decided to step up its efforts for blocking Pyongyang's new nuclear test.

Against this background, China's Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping made it clear that China opposed another nuclear test. According to Cheng, China did not want "destabilization on the Korean Peninsula," and would work to ensure stability in the region through multilateral talks. Cheng also stated that both China and Russia were in agreement on an early resumption of the Six Party Talks.²⁹ In a related move, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi also urged "all parties involved to exert more effort for resuming the Six-Party Talks."³⁰

Meanwhile, in an attempt to convey China's strong opposition to any further nuclear test by Pyongyang, China demanded North Korea's pledge to avoid a third nuclear test as a condition for Kim Jong-Un's visit to Pyongyang shortly after the failure of the North's rocket launch in April. Citing multiple sources, the *Tokyo Shimbun*, an influential Japanese daily, reported that China made the request to Kim Young-II, secretary in charge of the international affairs department of the ruling KWP, during his visit to Beijing from April 20-24.³¹ Kim rejected the Chinese demand while assuring Beijing that Pyongyang would inform China of future nuclear test plans far in advance.³² However, China refused to accept Kim's evasive answer. As a result, there was no deal on young Kim's state visit to China in the spring of 2012.

China's firm opposition to Pyongyang's further provocations on the Korean Peninsula was reiterated in mid-May by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, following summit talks with South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak and Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko. The three leaders agreed not to tolerate further nuclear tests or other provocations by North Korea. After the summit, Wen told reporters that the most urgent task "is to prevent further escalation of tension on the Korean peninsula," adding that the situation "is very tense" because of North Korea's apparent intention to conduct a third nuclear test.³³

Meanwhile, Chinese displeasure with North Korea was mounting in the aftermath of the seizure of three Chinese fishing boats with 28 crew members by North Korean authorities in mid-May 2012. Many of the crew were allegedly beaten and humiliated in captivity by the North Korean authorities for nearly two weeks.³⁴ As a condition for the release of these Chinese fishermen, accused of intruding into North Korea's territorial waters, Pyongyang demanded the payment of fines totaling 1.2 million yuan (or about \$180,000).³⁵ In the wake of the media's

sensational report of the incident, many indignant Chinese questioned why China had to tolerate such an outrageous act by North Korea.³⁶ The incident not only strained Sino-North Korean relations but also aroused anti-Pyongyang feelings among the Chinese.³⁷

Against this background, the *Global Times* (or *Huanqiu Shibao*), one of China's leading newspapers affiliated with the official party organ, the *Renmin Ribao* (the *People's Daily*), stated in its editorial on June 2 that China should express clear objection to North Korea's claim of being a nuclear power. Noting that North Korea had proclaimed itself a "nuclear-armed state" in its revised constitution, the *Global Times* raised concerns that Pyongyang's move could ultimately trigger a chain reaction of nuclear armament in Northeast Asia as it would lead Japan, South Korea and Taiwan to take similar steps. This editorial was China's first major criticism of Pyongyang's claim to be a nuclear power.

On June 9, Pyongyang announced through its foreign ministry that it had no plans "at present" to conduct a nuclear test.³⁸ In an attempt to save its face, Pyongyang charged that "South Korea is trying to rattle the nerves of North Korea to push the nation into a nuclear test." The spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry blamed Seoul for spreading rumors which strained Pyongyang's relations with other countries in the hope of pressuring North Korea.³⁹ Undoubtedly, this was Pyongyang's most clear-cut statement of denial on the suspected plan for nuclear test after the rocket launching in April.

Apparently, North Korea decided to scrap any plans for a third nuclear test largely because of China's pressure. North Korea could not ignore or defy the Chinese demands twice in a row, for China has long provided vitally important economic assistance. If Pyongyang ignored Beijing's request on a nuclear test in addition to defying its demands on the rocket launch, it was likely that Beijing would retaliate against Pyongyang, instead of merely bearing the humiliation. In addition, several important joint economic development projects for the proposed special economic zones (SEZs) were then in the final stage of negotiations between Beijing and Pyongyang. Under the circumstances, North Korea could not afford to antagonize Beijing by defying the Chinese demands again.

North Korea's June 9 announcement gratified Beijing, for China's "face" was saved, at least temporarily. At the same time, Pyongyang's decision to scrap the nuclear test improved Kim Jong-Un's image among Chinese leaders as a more cooperative North Korean leader than his

father or grandfather. For example, in his meeting with a group of retired South Korean generals in Beijing on June 19, Chinese Defense Minister Liang Kwanglie told the South Koreans that Kim Jong-Un “is likelier to listen to China’s advice than (his grandfather) Kim Il-Sung or (his father) Kim Jong-Il.”⁴⁰ Liang also claimed that the young Kim was more focused on “economics.”

On the other hand, China’s strong armed tactics displeased North Korea as did Beijing’s unwillingness to acknowledge Pyongyang as a nuclear power. On the eve of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Phnom Penh, North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Ui-Chun “raised his voice” at Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jieche, demanding that Yang clarify China’s position toward the *Global Times* editorial of June 2, 2012. Specifically, he asked if the Chinese government agreed with the editorial and its criticism of North Korea. According to the Yonhap News Agency, “[t]he meeting almost turned into a venue for quarrel.”⁴¹

V

In order to understand the growing concern as well as the influence of China on North Korea, it is necessary to look into North Korea’s increasing economic dependency on Beijing. North Korea is a poor country whose GDP remained virtually unchanged from 1990 to 2010 (estimated GDP: \$28 billion in 2010). North Korea’s perennial economic stagnation and difficulties have been a major concern to China in the post-Cold War era.

In an attempt to revitalize North Korea’s stagnant economy, China urged Pyongyang to introduce comprehensive economic reforms based on the Chinese model introduced by Deng Xiaoping. Pyongyang, however, did not embrace Deng’s economic reforms. Instead, it retained essentially the Stalinist model of “command economy,” while priding itself on the “juchae” ideology and emphasizing self-sufficiency, central planning and the total nationalization of industries and collectivization of agriculture. North Korea’s economy had suffered further under the “military first” politics and policy introduced by Kim Jong-Il in 1998, which called for the allocation of the lion’s share (i.e., over 30%) of North Korean GDP to building up the military with an emphasis on the development of missile and nuclear weapons programs.

As North Korea’s economy stagnated further, China, with its huge economy and financial resources, has been the lifeline that has kept

North Korea economically alive. China provided 90 percent of crude oil, over 80 percent of consumer goods and 45 percent of food supplements to North Korea in 2011.⁴² According to Gordon Chang, Chinese aid to North Korea nearly quadrupled, from \$400 million in 2004 to \$1.5 billion in 2009. By 2011, more than “half of China’s foreign aid” was going to North Korea.⁴³

Pyongyang has been able to survive in the face of international sanctions imposed by the U. N. Security Council and individual sanctions by the U.S. and its allies largely because of China’s willingness to help North Korea by ignoring international sanctions. China has sold numerous luxury goods (e.g., automobiles, cognacs, etc.), despite the ban imposed by the U.N. Security Council, by taking advantage of the loose definition of “luxury goods: as stipulated in the U. N. resolutions. China is also suspected of tolerating the trafficking of other contrabands across the Sino-Korean border. Many believe that such defiant actions by China have made the international sanctions ineffective against North Korea.⁴⁴

North Korea has also become heavily dependent on China in the area of trade. The suspension of trade with North Korea by the two erstwhile large trade partners, Japan (2006) and South Korea (2010), pushed Pyongyang to depend more on China for its imports and exports. China’s share of North Korea’s total trade volume increased from 32.7 percent in 2007 to about 70 percent by 2010.⁴⁵ In 2011, China’s share increased to over 89 percent.⁴⁶ The total volume of the two-way trade increased from \$2.7 billion in 2009 to \$3.46 billion in 2010. By 2011, it rose over \$5.63 billion (excluding its trade with South Korea); and \$6.03 billion in 2012.⁴⁷ North Korea has incurred a trade deficit of approximately \$1 billion annually with China since 2009.⁴⁸ Most of North Korea’s exports to China are minerals and natural resources for China’s machinery, fuel, and food supplements such as meat products, plus grains and other products.

After Kim Jong-Il’s death, China urged the Kim Jong-Un regime to adopt economic reforms on the basis of the Chinese model. Beijing viewed Kim Jong-Un as being more flexible and amenable to economic reforms than his father, based on Jong-Un’s youth and European education. However, except making some reform-oriented statements, the new Kim regime has not yet adopted the full-fledged economic reform recommended by China.

In his first public speech of April 15, 2012, Kim Jong-Un declared that “It is the party’s steadfast determination to ensure that the people will never have to tighten their belt again. And make sure they enjoy the riches and affluence of socialism to their heart’s content.”⁴⁹ He went on to urge North Koreans to build the nation economically so as to realize the establishment of “kangsong daeguk” (Powerful and Prosperous Nation). Furthermore, on June 28, Kim issued new guidelines on economic policy.⁵⁰ Among other things, they were to allow more independent power to the managers of economic enterprises and the sale of the products at closer to market rates and prices. In addition, they called for reducing the size of agricultural work teams from 15 – 20 households to four to six and increasing the share of the crops to be kept by the peasants to 30 percent of the total. Reportedly, these measures would be experimented initially on a limited scale at selected localities. If successful, they would be introduced throughout the country. However, there has been no follow up actions or measures to implement these guidelines.

Meanwhile, both China and North Korea have been working closely for the development of special economic zones (SEZs) in North Korea, as they regard SEZs as the most effective initial strategy for economic development in North Korea. They see a number of mutual economic benefits and advantages from the projects. First, like the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC), run and operated by South Korean companies which have hired some 53,000 North Korean workers, the proposed SECs can become the source of hard currency for the cash-strapped North Korea. In the case of KIC, North Korea is earning \$90 million per year.⁵¹ In addition, the SEZs can attract investment from numerous foreign companies that can help stimulate economic development in North Korea as they did in China under Deng Xiaoping.

China has its own vested interest in developing these SEZs for its own economic needs and requirements. The development project at Rason (named after the two towns of Rajin and Sonbong) is an integral part of China’s economic development plan for its three Northeastern Provinces. In order to connect these provinces with the all-weather port at Rason, China is willing to build necessary infrastructure, including roads and a railway connecting Jilin and Rason on the Sino-Korean border region. It is expected that the container port in the Rason SEZ will substantially reduce the cost of shipping for products from China’s Northeastern Provinces to southern China. In addition, it will provide an

important seaport for exporting products to South Korea, Japan, and beyond.

In addition to the Rason SEZ, Beijing and Pyongyang have agreed to establish another SEZ comprising two Korean river islands, Hwanggumpyong and Wihwado, located in the estuary of the Yalu (Amnok) River near the Sino-Korean border on the west. It will reportedly become the center for finance, technology, tourism and garment manufacturing,⁵² while the Rason SEZ will become the hub for logistics and manufacturing.⁵³ It will focus on the development of raw materials, equipment, high tech products, light industry, and the service sector. To be sure, it will take years before the Rason and other SEZs can fully develop along the Chinese model (e.g., Shenzhen) or the KIC in Kaesong. Nevertheless, North Korea will benefit from these SEZs, once they are built, for they will bring in direct foreign investment as well as develop important infrastructure in the Sino-North Korean border region. Additionally, they will help increase the North's revenues as Pyongyang will collect rents, taxes, and fees from foreign companies operating in these SEZs.

In an attempt to streamline economic cooperation between North Korea and China, Jang Sung-Taek visited China to promote bilateral cooperation in Rason, Hwanggumpyong and Wihwado in mid-August 2012. He exchanged views with key Chinese officials, including President Hu Jin-tao and Premier Wen Jiabao. Wen stressed that the two governments should create favorable conditions for investment by strengthening and improving laws and regulations for the SEZs, encourage relevant local governments and regions to participate actively and give a greater role for the market mechanism to play in the SEZs.⁵⁴ In a related move, Jang Sung-Taek and Chinese Minister of Commerce Chen De-ming agreed on key elements of cooperation, such as the adoption of a market economy in the zones, the introduction of government-led projects, and encouragement to private enterprises to invest.⁵⁵ However, Jang was reportedly unsuccessful in securing a large amount of "soft" loans (i.e., \$1 billion) from China.

In the aftermath of Jang's visit to China, Sino-North Korean economic cooperation has gained momentum. According to *Donga Ilbo*, a major Chinese company, the Yatai Group, decided to build a cement production company in Rason on August 16, 2012. The next day, a major Chinese state-owned company, the Ludi Group, announced it would invest in Rason's construction of basic facilities including a

electric power grid. In addition, several major corporations (e.g., Jiaotong Group) announced their intentions to move their business operations into Rason. Already, in February 2012, China had acquired the right to construct and use four piers at the Rason port for 50 years.⁵⁶ According to the Yonhap News Agency, China intends to invest about \$3 billion to develop electric power plant, airport, railway line and other projects in Rason.⁵⁷

In addition to Rajin, North Korea agreed to open another seaport, Chongjin, to China. On September 1, the Yenbian Haihua Group in Jilin Province signed a contract to form a joint venture with a North Korean company to manage port facilities in Chongjin. According to the contract, China and North Korea will jointly manage the use of two piers at the port for 30 years.⁵⁸ Approval for using the Chongjin port facilities is another sign of Pyongyang's willingness to deepen its business ties with China.⁵⁹

It is still too early to tell whether Jang's visit to China will lead to the revitalization of economic cooperation between Beijing and Pyongyang. Evidently, Chinese companies remain cautious about investing in North Korea, fearing serious risks to their investments in a country with poor infrastructure, inadequate laws, a suspect legal framework and political uncertainties. Many Chinese companies have maintained that investment in North Korea can be viable only if the North Korean government guarantees or provides other safety mechanisms to protect their investments. Such sentiments became stronger in the aftermath of the revelation of the Xiyang Group's "nightmarish" experience in North Korea from 2007 to 2012. According to the Xiyang Group, its assets in North Korea (approximately \$40 million) were "forcibly taken over by North Korea," while its employees were deported to China without much warning in March 2012, after being accused of contractual violations.⁶⁰ The Chinese firm has reportedly sought compensation from North Korea for the confiscated assets, without much success to date. The revelations of the Xiyang Group's painful experience have seriously damaged North Korea's reputation as a business partner.⁶¹

In addition to the SEZs, China has also been actively involved in developing mineral and natural resources in North Korea. As China's industrialization requires an expanding supply of various natural resources, especially minerals, China is actively engaged in acquiring the right to extract mineral resources in North Korea. That country is rich in mineral resources (e.g., copper, gold, zinc, iron ore, anthracite, etc), the

total value of which could be worth over \$6 trillion.⁶² China has been active in leasing the exclusive rights to develop a number of these mineral resources. According to a South Korean source, about 70 percent of China's investments in North Korea are concentrated in the exploration of mineral resources.⁶³ North Korea has been willing to let Chinese firms either lease the rights to develop Korean mines or to purchase mineral products in North Korea.⁶⁴ According to sources, China has already "preempted nearly half of North Korea's mineral resources worth \$6 trillion."⁶⁵

VI

Following Jang Sung-Taek's highly publicized visit to China in mid-August 2012, Beijing-Pyongyang relations seemed to have improved. A few high-ranking officials from both sides visited the other's capital from the summer to the fall of 2012. Although North Korean officials indicated the desirability of arranging for Kim Jong-Un's visit to China, there was no official Chinese response to Pyongyang's inquiry. Apparently such a visit had to wait until after the scheduled change in the top leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the fall. On November 14, Xi Jinping was officially installed as the new General Secretary of the ruling CCP to succeed the outgoing Hu Jintao. Toward the end of November, Xi dispatched a high-level delegation headed by Li Jianguo (a CCP Politburo member) to Pyongyang to discuss issues of mutual concern.

However, on December 1, Pyongyang's abrupt announcement of its plan to launch another rocket ("Unha-3") in mid-December surprised Beijing and dashed any hope for Kim Jong-Un's early state visit to China. Apparently, Pyongyang did not inform China of its planned rocket launch during Li's visit to Pyongyang. On December 12, Pyongyang surprised many by successfully launching the "Unha-3" to orbit a communication satellite. Despite Pyongyang's insistence that the rocket launch was a peaceful scientific experiment, the international community saw it as a ballistic missile test. It was also apparent that the test was designed to boost the prestige of the Kim Jong-Un regime which had suffered enormous humiliation after its April test-launch failed.

The U. N. Security Council (UNSC) met in an emergency session immediately after Pyongyang's launch to discuss effective ways to cope with North Korea's defiant action. It condemned the launch, but no immediate action was taken, except for announcing that it would

consider “an appropriate action” against North Korea later.⁶⁶ The U.S. and others wanted a tough new resolution from the UNSC to condemn North Korea, whereas China was reluctant to impose any additional sanctions against North Korea, insisting that the response “should be prudent, appropriate and conducive to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.”⁶⁷ However, China eventually agreed to support the U.S.-drafted resolution which condemned North Korea’s latest provocation and called for tightening the existing sanctions. Russia also agreed to support the U.S. proposal.⁶⁸

On January 22, 2013, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a new resolution 2087, condemning Pyongyang for its latest rocket launch. The Council also warned Pyongyang by declaring “its determination to take significant action in the event of another launch or nuclear test.”⁶⁹ In addition, it called for tightening existing sanctions on North Korea by adding four organizations, including Pyongyang’s space agency, and six additional individuals to the existing blacklist. China’s support for the U.S.-drafted resolution was regarded as a significant blow to Pyongyang. China’s action clearly reflected Beijing’s desire to send a strong signal to Pyongyang not to conduct another nuclear test.⁷⁰

North Korea reacted swiftly and angrily to the UNSC resolution, saying that Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program was no longer negotiable and would not participate in any international multilateral talks on denuclearization in the future.⁷¹ In addition, it threatened to “take measures to boost and strengthen our defensive military power including nuclear deterrence.”⁷² The North’s official party paper, *Rodong Sinmun*, declared that the Security Council’s latest resolution “leaves North Korea with no option” but a nuclear test. On January 24, the North’s National Defense Commission declared defiantly that it was prepared to conduct another such test and further develop its long-range missiles. Pyongyang also expressed its bitterness and frustration over China and Russia’s endorsement of the U.S.-sponsored UNSC resolution 2087, accusing Beijing and Moscow (without naming them) of abandoning basic principles “under the influence of U.S. arbitrary and high-handed practices” and “failing to come to their senses.”⁷³ In a related move, Kim Jong-Un told top military and security leaders that he decided to take “substantial and high-profile important state measures” to retaliate against the U.S.-led U.N. sanctions on North Korea.⁷⁴ Pyongyang did not specify what those measures might be, but it indicated strongly Pyongyang’s decision on the third nuclear test.

North Korea's threat to conduct another nuclear test aroused concern among major powers, including China. Another nuclear test by North Korea would pose a serious challenge to the Xi Jinping leadership which had assumed power with the intention to maintain a peaceful international environment in East Asia to further China's economic development and peaceful rise. To defuse the imminent crisis, Beijing began to toughen its stance toward North Korea by threatening to reduce economic aid to Pyongyang if it went ahead with another nuclear test or rocket launch. For example, an editorial in the *Global Times*, a CCP-owned newspaper affiliated with the *People's Daily*, warned bluntly that North Korea should stop provoking the U.N. Furthermore, it said "if North Korea engages in further nuclear tests, China will not hesitate to reduce its assistance to North Korea."⁷⁵

In an attempt to express China's displeasure as well as concern over Pyongyang's plan to conduct a new nuclear test, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying summoned North Korean Ambassador to China Ji Jae-ryong and his deputy to his office to lodge a protest toward the end of January 2013. Meanwhile, China's new leader Xi Jinping expressed his "opposition" to North Korea's nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs to a special South Korean delegation dispatched by the President-elect Park Geun-hye on January 23. Xi told the South Korean delegation in no uncertain terms that Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program was "intolerable."⁷⁶

Against this background, the *Global Times* issued another editorial on February 6, in which it declared that if North Korea "insists on a third nuclear test despite attempts to dissuade it, it must pay a heavy price." If it happens, it declared that the economic "assistance from China should be reduced." In addition, if Pyongyang "gets tough with China, China should strike back hard, even at the cost of deteriorating bilateral relations." It concluded by saying that "Pyongyang is important to China, but not important enough to make China give up diplomatic principles." It reiterated China's position that "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is necessary" and the North Korean nuclear issue should be solved by relevant parties through "negotiations."⁷⁷

Despite such Chinese warnings, on February 12, North Korea conducted its third nuclear test in defiance of the U.N. resolutions banning such activity. Pyongyang's defiant action triggered immediate condemnation by the international community, including the U.S. and China. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi summoned North Korean

ambassador to China Ji Jae-ryong to lodge a protest. Yang told Ji that China was “strongly dissatisfied with” and “firmly opposed to” North Korea’s nuclear test. At the same time, Yang reaffirmed China’s position to “support the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula” and to work to actualize it through the Six-Party talks.⁷⁸ The Chinese Foreign Ministry also issued a statement in which it “firmly” opposed the North’s nuclear weapons test.⁷⁹ In addition, it “strongly urged the DPRK [North Korea] to honor its commitment to denuclearization and refrain from any move that may further worsen the situation.”⁸⁰

Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council met in an emergency session on February 12 and condemned North Korea’s third nuclear test as “a grave violation” of relevant resolutions of the UNSC. In view of the “gravity of this violation,” the Security Council declared that it “will begin to work immediately on appropriate measures” to cope with the situation.⁸¹ On March 7, the U. N. Security Council adopted a tough new resolution (No. 2094), tightening sanctions against North Korea, including banking, trade and travel. In addition, it also mandated member nations to “inspect all cargo within or transiting their territory that has originated in North Korea, or that is destined for that country,” if there are “reasonable grounds” to believe the cargo might contravene the existing sanctions. Also, the resolution called for the freezing of the assets of three North Korean officials and two organizations involved in arms dealing or the development of nuclear weapons.⁸² It was drafted through close cooperation between Washington and Beijing and adopted unanimously by the Security Council.

North Korea’s Foreign Ministry decried the new sanctions as part of the U. S.-led “war of aggression,” vowing that the North would respond with strong counter measures. Pyongyang’s saber-rattling rhetoric included the threat of a preemptive nuclear strike against the U. S. and South Korea, the nullification of the 1953 armistice agreement that ended the Korean War, the abrogation of a 1991 non-aggression pact between South and North Korea, and the withdrawal of its representatives from the liaison office that monitor the demilitarized zone⁸³

North Korea’s defiant action has posed a major challenge to the Xi Jinping leadership which has opposed North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. Although it is difficult to ascertain the scope and nature of China’s retaliatory actions, according to the *Global Times*, since Pyongyang’s nuclear test “damaged China’s interests,” it is “necessary for China to give Pyongyang a certain punishment.”⁸⁴ It went on to say,

“Beijing should punish Pyongyang,” but “at no point should China turn North Korea into its enemy.” Furthermore, “[t]he reduction in China’s assistance to North Korea shouldn’t be more prominent than the sanctions by the U.S.” and its allies. It added: “this should be the bottom line for China” in participating in international sanctions against North Korea.⁸⁵

In the wake of Pyongyang’s third nuclear test, a number of Chinese Communist officials and opinion leaders expressed their views more bluntly. In a column published in the *Financial Times*, Deng Yuwen, a deputy editor of *Study Times* (*Xueshi Jibao*), the journal of the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party, openly advocated that China “give up” on North Korea on the grounds that Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program will drag China into an unwanted war with the U.S. Furthermore, Deng wondered why China should maintain relations with a regime that “will face failure sooner or later?” In addition, once Pyongyang acquires nuclear capability, it cannot be ruled out that the Kim regime “will engage in nuclear blackmail against China.” For these reasons, China should abandon North Korea” and “press for” the reunification of Korea. “The next best thing” would be, according to Deng, “to use China’s influence to cultivate a pro-Beijing government in North Korea.”⁸⁶

Growing signs of China’s exasperation with North Korea were indicated also by the delegates to the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in their discussion at a side session on March 7. According to Qiu Yuanping, deputy director of the CCP’s Central Foreign Affairs Office, these delegates discussed whether China should “keep or dump” North Korea; and, furthermore, whether China should “fight or talk” with North Korea.⁸⁷ However, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi made it clear that Beijing will not abandon North Korea, despite Beijing’s support for tougher U. N. sanctions. Yang reiterated China’s longstanding position that dialogue, not sanctions, is the best way to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program.⁸⁸ In view of Pyongyang’s professed position that it is already a nuclear power which has no interest in denuclearization, it is doubtful that Yang’s dialogue-based approach to Pyongyang will succeed in preventing Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program.

Meanwhile, Pyongyang has reportedly notified Beijing of its intentions to carry out a few additional nuclear and missile tests in 2013.⁸⁹ Furthermore, North Korea has escalated its belligerent rhetoric

and saber-rattling behavior by threatening to attack the U.S., South Korea and Japan with ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. It remains to be seen how China, under the Xi Jinping's leadership, will cope with North Korea's defiant actions which threaten to destabilize the situation on the Korean Peninsula as well as to undermine peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

VII

From the foregoing analysis, a few conclusions can be drawn. First, in the aftermath of Kim Jong-Il's death, China was eager to help the Kim Jong-Un regime consolidate its power in order to stabilize the political situation in North Korea. China did not want to see North Korea collapse, for that could mean the loss of a valuable buffer between China and capitalist South Korea. In a sense, the priority of China's North Korea policy was the preservation of the North Korean regime.

Second, it is also quite evident that China has become increasingly uneasy about the Kim Jong-Un regime as it continues to create more crises by perpetrating provocative actions that have not only heightened tensions but also increased the danger of war on the Korean Peninsula. China does not want to be embroiled in an unwanted war with the U.S. because of North Korea's reckless provocations. This is why Beijing attempted to prevent Pyongyang's rocket and nuclear tests. When Beijing succeeded in dissuading Pyongyang from conducting more nuclear weapons tests in the spring of 2012, China regarded Kim Jong-Un as a more reasonable leader, one "more likely to listen to China" than his predecessor. However, such an assessment now seems quite premature given Beijing's failure to restrain Kim's regime from conducting a third nuclear test.

Third, China supports the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, for it does not want Pyongyang's acquisition of a nuclear capability to trigger a nuclear arms race involving Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. China does not want any of these non-nuclear powers, especially Japan, to become a nuclear-armed state. This is why China wants to resolve North Korea's nuclear issue on the basis of the September 19 Joint Statement through the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. However, like its predecessor, the Kim Jong-Un regime has declared its determination not only to renege on its commitment to denuclearization but also to become a full-fledged nuclear power. In defiance of China's warnings, the Kim Jong-Un regime conducted the long-range rocket tests twice in

2012 and a third nuclear test in February 2013. Pyongyang's provocative actions clearly constitute not only a major challenge to China but an insult to the Xi Jinping leadership which replaced the Hu Jintao government in November 2012. Unlike Hu who succeeded in preventing Pyongyang's attempt to conduct a nuclear test in 2012 even though it too failed in preventing a rocket launch, the Xi leadership has failed to prevent both the rocket launch (December 2012) and the third nuclear test by Pyongyang in February 2013.

Fourth, in the wake of North Korea's third nuclear test, there have been wide-spread criticisms of Pyongyang among Chinese opinion leaders as well as demands for Beijing to reassess China's existing relationship with North Korea. Many Chinese want Beijing to punish Pyongyang's provocations by stopping economic aid to North Korea. They do not think it will help either China's international image or national interests to coddle the rogue regime in Pyongyang. To prevent Pyongyang's belligerent behavior, they want China to cooperate fully with the international community to impose sanctions on North Korea. Since China has far greater influence and leverage than any other country in restraining North Korea, many believe that China should restrain North Korea from perpetrating further provocations by utilizing its economic leverage against Pyongyang. Since the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula will impact China's political and security interests more adversely than the collapse of the Kim regime, it is important for Beijing to rein in North Korea before Pyongyang triggers a major conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Will China be able to "tame" the Kim Jong-Un regime by utilizing its power and leverage over North Korea? Even though the responses from Pyongyang are not encouraging so far, it remains to be seen if China under the Xi Jinping leadership will be able to rein in North Korea.

Notes:

¹ "China Exerts Influence Nurtured over Decades," *New York Times*, December 20, 2012.

² Rajaram Panda, "Assessing China-North Korea Relations in the wake of Kim's China Visit," *IDSIA Issue Brief* (New Delhi: Institute for Defense Studies), June 1, 2011, p. 8.

³ Kenei Shu, "Chugoku wa kitachosen o kaerareruka," *Sekai*, May 2012, p. 50

⁴ Shu, *op.cit.*, p.43.

⁵ *The Times.co.uk* December 31, 2011.

⁶ Shu, *op.cit.*, p .47.

⁷ Xinhua News Agency, “Continuously developing ties with DPRK unwavering policy of China: diplomat,” Xinhua General News Service, January 8, 2012.

⁸ Shu, *op.cit.*, p. 50. See also Alexander Zhebin, “DPRK: What Course?” *Far Eastern Affairs* (Moscow, Russia), No. 2, 2012., p. 24; and Jane Perlez, “North Korea Tests the Patience of Its Closest Ally,” *New York Times*, June 24, 2012.

⁹ “North Korea and China reaffirm ties after rocket test . . .,” *The Telegraphs.co.uk*, April 24, 2012. (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/Inacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true &rand-135762441...1/8/2013>) Retrieved January 8, 2013.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *New York Times*, January 12, 2012.

¹² Xinhua News Agency, “News Analysis: DPRK’s suspension of nuclear activities raises hopes for six-party talks,” Xinhua General News Service, February 29, 2012.

¹³ *New York Times*, February 29, 2012.

¹⁴ Xinhua News Agency, “China hopes for early resumption of six-party talks – Foreign Ministry,” BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political, supplied by the BBC World Service (cited hereafter BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political), February 22, 2012.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, See also, *Financial Times*, March 2, 2012.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, March 26, 2012.

¹⁹ *Korea Herald*, April 8, 2012.

²⁰ *Korea Times*, April 8, 2012.

²¹ “Japan braces for North Korean missile launch; Japan has threatened to shoot down the rocket if it passes over Japanese airspace...”*Christian Science Monitor*, April 10, 2012.

²² *Korea Herald*, June 3, 2012.

²³ *The Herald (Glasgow)*, April 19, 2012. See also, *The Nation* (Thailand), April 19, 2012.

²⁴ “Puk Kim Jong-Un damhwa naeyong eurobon tongchi kusang,” *Hankook Ilbo*, April 19, 2012.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ “Kita Chosen kenpo ni ‘kaku hoyukoku’ meiki,” *Sankei News*, May 30, 2012. See also Akihiko Kaise, “N. Korea proclaims itself as a nuclear power in new Constitution,” *Asahi.com*, May 31, 2012. (*ht International Journal of Korean Studies* • Vol. XVII, No. 1, 154. http://ajw.asahi.com/article_asia/Korean-peninsula/AJ20120531006). Retrieved May 31, 2012; and “Declaration of Nuclear Armed State in Constitution,” *Vintage Point* (Seoul: Yonhap News Agency), Vol. 35, No. 7, July 2012, pp. 4-9, esp. 4-5.

²⁷ *Korea Herald*, April 4, 2012.

²⁸ *Korea Times*, April 8, 2012.

²⁹ “Beijing speaks against N. Korea’s possible nuclear test,” *Itar-Tass* (Moscow), April 28, 2012.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Tokyo Shimbun*, July 15, 2012.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ “China, Japan, S. Korea warn North: No more nuclear tests,” *Straits Times* (Singapore), May 14, 2012.

³⁴ Alexa Olesen, “China, North Korea ties hit rough weather,” *The Associated Press*, May 24, 2012. See also, Perlez, *op. cit.*

³⁵ “China’s Wen urges North Korea to let the market help revamp economy...” *Reuters.com*, August 17, 2012.

³⁶ “Cherish NK ties but ensure sailors’ safety,” *Global Times*, May 18, 2012.

³⁷ Jane Perlez, “North Korea Tests the Patience of Its Close Ally,” *New York Times*, June 25, 2012.

³⁸ *Korea Times*, June 11, 2012, 20.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Yonhap News Agency, “South Korean ex-generals say Beijing opposes ‘provocations’ by North,” *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political*, July 2, 2012.

⁴¹ Yonhap News Agency, “North Korean foreign minister bawls at Chinese counterpart,” BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political, August 6, 2012.

⁴² Shu, *op.cit.*, p.47.

⁴³ Chang, *op.cit.*, pp.47-48.

⁴⁴ Stangarone and Hamisevicz, *op.cit.*, p.181.

⁴⁵ Troy Stangarone and Nicholas Hamisevicz, “The Prospects for Economic Reform in North Korea after Kim Jong-Il and the China Factor,” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2011, p.179.

⁴⁶ Song Jung-a, “N Korea trade soars on Chinese demand,” *Financial Times*, June 1, 2012. If inter-Korean trade generated almost exclusively via operation at the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) is included, which was \$1.7 billion in 2011, North Korea’s trade dependency on China was slightly over 70 percent in 2011. See Scott A. Snyder, “North Korea’s Growing Trade Dependency on China: Mixed Strategic Implications,” Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., June 15, 2012.

⁴⁷ SanSankei News.com, February 5, 2013. (retrieved <http://www.sankei.jp.msn.com/world/news/130205/kor13030516290002-n1.htm>).

⁴⁸ Jin Moo Kim, “North Korea’s Reliance on China and China’s Influence on North Korea,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 23, No.2, June 2011, p. 262.

⁴⁹ *Time World*, April 19, 2012.

⁵⁰ Eul-Chool Yim, “Sijang kyongjae yoso hwakdae...seongkong han kieupka naolsdo,” *Tongil Hankook*, September 2012, pp. 22-23. See also, Lee Kwang-ho, “Possibility of N. Korea’s Economic Reform Measures,” *Vantage Point: Developments in North Korea*, Vol. 35, No. 11, November 2012, pp. 4-9.

⁵¹ “Buk kaesong kongdan paesawe hamyon 30 man myong babjul kkeonkyo..minran kago haeya,” *Chosun.com*, April 1, 2013. (Retrieved: news.chosun.com/site/data/html-dir/2013/04/01/2013040101363.html).

⁵² *North Korean Economy Watch*, October 14, 2012.

⁵³ “China and North Korea push development of trade zones,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 2012.

⁵⁴ Xinhua News Agency, “China, DPRK vow to develop economic zones,” Xinhua General News Service, August 17, 2012.

⁵⁵ Yonhap News Agency, “Jang’s China Visit Likely to Boost Bilateral Economic Cooperation, Investment,” *North Korea Newsletter*, August 23, 2012.

-
- ⁵⁶ DongA Ilbo, September 11, 2012.
- ⁵⁷ Zhebin, *op.cit.*, p., 24. See also, Yohap News Agency, *North Korea Newsletter*, No. 195, February 2, 2012.
- ⁵⁸ “China inks second port deal with North Korea,” *Global Times*, September 12, 2012.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ Feng Shu, “Dealing with comrades,” *Global Times*, August 29, 2012.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶² *Ibid.* See also, Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Weekly* August 26, 2012.
- ⁶³ Feng Shu, *loc.cit.*
- ⁶⁴ Chang, *op.cit.*, p.33.
- ⁶⁵ Scott Thomas Bruce, “North Korea’ Six Trillion Dollar Question,” *The Diplomat*, August 30, 2012. <http://thediplomat.com/2012/08/30/north-korea-six-mtrillion-dollar-qu...>Retrieved 10/16/2012.
- ⁶⁶ *Korea Times*, December 18, 2012.
- ⁶⁷ *Straits Times*, (Singapore), December 13, 2012.
- ⁶⁸ *Washington Post*, January 22, 2013.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, January 23, 2013.
- ⁷⁰ *Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 2013.
- ⁷¹ *International Herald Tribune*, January 24, 2013.
- ⁷² *Washington Post*, January 23, 2013.
- ⁷³ “US and China come together over defiant North Korea...”*The Telegraph.co.uk*, January 25, 2013. (Retrieved 1/28/2013 from <http://www.lexisnexis.com/Inacui/frame.doreload EntirePage=true&rand=135941377>). See also, *New York Times*, January 28, 2013.
- ⁷⁴ *New York Times*, January 28, 2013.
- ⁷⁵ *Global Times*, January 26, 2013.
- ⁷⁶ *Korea Times*, January 23, 2013.
- ⁷⁷ *Global Times*, February 6, 2013.

⁷⁸ Xinhua News Agency, “Chinese Foreign Minister summons North Korean envoy over nuclear test,” BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political, February 12, 2013.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Global Times*, February 13, 2013.

⁸² *Financial Times*, March 8, 2013.

⁸³ *Washington Post*, March 8, 2013.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Deng Yuwen, “China should abandon North Korea,” *Financial Times*, February 27, 2013.

⁸⁷ *New York Times*, March 10, 2013.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Hankook Ilbo*, February 16, 2013. See also, *Global Times*, February 16, 2013.