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Cycles of History: China, North Korea and the End of the Korean War[1]

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In 1895, the Chinese scholar Kang Youwei was on his way to Beijing on a Chinese steamer when his ship was abruptly boarded and searched by a party of Japanese soldiers on the North China Sea. "I was enraged when the Japanese came and searched our ship," he later wrote. "If the court had listened to my advice earlier, we would not have to endure such humiliations."[2] But following China's defeat by Japan in the 1894-5 Sino-Japanese War, this was just the sort of humiliation that China was now forced to endure. That war had been fought over influence in Korea and it marked the end of Korea's tributary relationship with China. It was the beginning of China's decline and Japan's ascendancy in East Asian affairs. For the first time since the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1392, China would have little influence over the Korean peninsula.

Woodblock print by Mizuno To depicting the Battle of P'yŏngyang in Korea in the First Sino-Japanese War

China regained much of its influence over North Korea during the Korean War years (1950-53) when Mao decided to intervene in that conflict once UN forces crossed the 38th parallel north after landing at Inch'ŏn in September 1950, thus saving North Korea from certain defeat (Chinese forces did not leave the peninsula until 1958). Kim Il Sung's ability to play off the communist superpowers during the years of the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s largely guaranteed his independence once the war had ended.[3] This situation changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As Beijing and Moscow sharply cut their aid and shunned P'yŏngyang for better relations with Seoul, the North Korean economy went into precipitous decline.[4] Russia's abandonment of the "friendship price" system and its demand for hard currency for exports was a major factor in the collapse of the North Korean economy and starvation on a massive scale. Estimates of the number of deaths by famine between1995-1998 range from 600,000 to 1 million or roughly 3-5 percent of the population.[5] There have also been reported outbreaks of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis "spreading widely within the DPRK's chronically malnourished population."[6] A July 2010 Amnesty International Report has estimated that "five percent of the North Korean population, estimated at 23,720,000, is infected with TB, although the true figures may be much higher."[7] According to one informed estimate, 40 percent of factories stand idle and another 30 percent are operating well below capacity.[8]

Although predictions of North Korea's demise have been many, P'yŏngyang's isolation and economic deterioration have led to renewed speculation about recent events. Were the sinking of the Ch'ŏn'an, the South Korea corvette, in March 2010 and North Korea's shelling of Yŏnp'yŏng Island in November 2010 desperate attempts to force the United States and South Korea to restart the stalled multinational talks in the hope of extracting aid and concessions, as some observers have maintained?[9] Or was P'yŏngyang motivated less by the realities of the international arena than with its own impending economic collapse and the need to rally the people against a foreign threat in order to dampen political unrest?

"Ready to Crush Any Attack with a Single Blow!" (June 2010)[10]

One explanation that has so far not garnered much attention has been the state of Sino-North Korean relations. Faced with chronic famine and international isolation, with its very survival now dependent on China, is it possible that the real target of these provocations was North Korea's domestic audience aimed to nullify growing concerns over the country's ever increasing dependence on Beijing?

China's rise and growing influence in North Korea has been of concern for South Korea for some time. These concerns became clear in the summit between former South Korean President Roh Mu-hyun and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabiao on 10 September 2006 in Helsinki. They had come to attend the annual ASEM (Asia-European Meeting) forum in order to discuss bilateral issues.[11] Press reports of the meeting reveal that the two leaders spent a good part of their time discussing ancient history, specifically, the history of the Koguryŏ (Korean)/Gaogouli (Chinese) kingdom (AD 300-668). Koguryŏ was one of the three ancient kingdoms, along with Paekche and Silla, that existed between the third and seventh centuries AD and that together eventually formed Korea.[12] At the height of its power in the fifth century, Koguryŏ encompassed a vast area in what is today most of the Chinese Northeast region, Manchuria, and North Korea. During his meeting with the Chinese Premier, the South Korean president raised questions about recent reports made by Chinese archeologists and historians who claimed that since Koguryŏ's former territory now resides within the current borders of the Peoples Republic of China, its history should be considered part of "Chinese history."[13] The official press release of the meeting revealed that "President Roh had expressed his dissatisfaction with some conclusion of the Chinese archeological teams and the publication of a provincial research center dealing with events some two thousand years ago."[14]

President Roh's concern over China's historical treatment of Koguryŏ began in 2002 following China's launching of its ambitious Northeast Project. The ostensible aim of the Project was to "strengthen the association between China proper and the northeast region" that includes the three provinces in this region: Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning.[15] But as the South Korean public soon learned, the Chinese government and scholars associated with the Project appeared to be "conducting a systematic and comprehensive effort to distort the ancient history of Northeast Asia" by portraying Koguryŏ and the succeeding state of Parhae (Korean)/Bohai (Chinese) as Chinese, not Korean, kingdoms. In April 2004, South Korea formally protested the Chinese Foreign Ministry removal from its website of references to Koguryŏ as being part of Korea's Three Kingdom era and its portrayal as Chinese.[16] Beyond this bickering over history, however, the political ramifications of the dispute have been far-reaching. By claiming Koguryŏ as part of China's ancient past, South Koreans asserted the Chinese government was undermining the legitimacy and political authority of North Korea whose territory was once part of Koguryŏ.

Map of the Three Kingdoms (300 AD-700AD)

China's treatment of Koguryŏ has not been all that different from its treatment of other peoples and states that are now part of the People's Republic of China.[17] Knowing that the threat to the integrity of the Chinese nation has historically always come from internal challenges to its central authority, China has long sought to exercise control over its diverse ethnic population by promoting a common Chinese identity under the rubric of a "multi-ethnic nation" and conducting assimilationist policies.[18] The link made between Koguryŏ and Northeast provinces like Jilin, whose largest minority is ethnic Korean, has clearly been a way to increase the notion of a Chinese identity among ethnic minorities. According to Quan Zhezhu, the Deputy-Governor of Jilin Province, the Northeast Project was "undertaken to elevate the tradition of patriotism and to maintain unity and stability of [the] Chinese state, the integrity of territorial rights, stability of ethnic minority communities, and national solidarity.[19] In other words, the Project raises political as well as scholarly issues "linked to China's territorial rights and sovereignty."[20]

Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning Provinces and North Korea.

But the Northeast Project clearly has more far-reaching implications: to create a singular national history and identity in the Northeast that could pave the way for the economic intervention and integration of North Korea. Indeed, it is not coincidental that China's concern with Koguryŏ's history began in earnest in 2004 when Premier Wen announced that the Chinese government would embark on an ambitious economic development program for North Korea. According to Chinese government sources, "Chinese investment in North Korea in 2006 topped $135 million" and bilateral trade reached "$1.69 billion, an increase of almost seven percent over the $1.58 billion in bilateral trade during 2005."[21] Another study indicated that "in 2008 China accounted for 73 percent of North Korea's record high foreign trade of $3.8 billion." Trade imbalance and North Korea's economic dependence also reached lopsided proportions with imports from China of "crude oil, petroleum and synthetic textiles" amounting to some $2 billion, while exports to China consisting mainly of coal and iron ore totaled just $750 million. China today provides "90 percent of North Korea's oil, 80 percent of consumer goods, and 45 percent of its food."[22]

Despite China's increasing involvement in North Korea, Chinese leaders realize that merely propping up the regime without fundamentally transforming its economy will not resolve China's main security dilemma in the region: maintaining stability and peace on the Korean peninsula. Hence, China's ambitious efforts to develop North Korea to prevent the implosion of its economy while also shielding the Kim Jong Il regime from internal collapse. This "grand bargain" is certainly distasteful to the North Korean regime, which is used to getting its own way, as for example in conducting a second nuclear test in May 2009. But when the Americans refused North Korean demands for direct talks and concessions and instead pushed for even more punitive UN sanctions, the isolated regime was forced to make amends with China. Kim's decision to snub former President Jimmy Carter, who had come to meet the North Korean leader in August 2010, in favor of a second visit to China less than four months later, demonstrated the regime's priority.

This does not mean that North Korea is satisfied with the new arrangements with China. "Despite their public rhetoric about the closeness of their ties," wrote one observer, "officials in both China and North Korea each tell even American officials how much they dislike the other. North Korean officials have on numerous occasions suggested to American officials that it would be in the interests of our two countries to have a strategic relationship -- to counter China."[23] North Korean officials privately voiced their wariness of Beijing to South Korean diplomats and worry about China's "increasing hold on precious minerals and mining rights in the DPRK [and] many oppose mineral concessions as a means to attract Chinese investments." According to one well-placed source, "Disputes with North Korean counterparts develop all the time…Investment disputes…also occur between competing investors in China." For example, "two Chinese companies, Shandong Guoda Gold Company, Ltd. and Zhejiang-based Wanxiang Group, are battling for access to Huishan Copper Mine, the biggest copper mine in the DPRK. Huishan, near the DPRK-China border, is rich in gold, silver, and other valuable metals as well." Chinese buy-ups have created opportunities for self-enrichment on the part of both Chinese and North Korean officials that has added to the culture of corruption in North Korea. "The children of high-ranking North Korean and Chinese officials hijack the most favorable investment and aid deals for their own enrichment. When the child of a high-ranking official hears of a Chinese aid proposal to North Korea, he will travel to North Korea to convince the relevant official to follow his instructions for implementing the aid project. He will then use his connections to request proposals from Chinese companies to develop the project, returning to North Korea to convince the relevant official to select the favored company. At each

step, money changes hands, and the well-connected Chinese go-between pockets a tidy sum."[24]

Nor does North Korea's increasing dependence on China mean that Beijing's leaders are able to exert complete control over their difficult neighbor. Beijing is willing to tolerate some of P'yŏngyang's antics that Chinese leaders know from historical experience are geared more toward North Korea's domestic audience than the international community, as long as it is able to sustain economic and political stability in the region. Thus, despite its displeasure with North Korea's second nuclear test in May 2009, Chinese Premier Wen signed an ambitious co-development project with Kim Jong Il the following October. The project, covering the Chinese cities of Changchun, Jilin and Tumen, encompasses an area of 73,000 square miles, but is landlocked by Russia. Kim Jong Il agreed to lease the sea port at Rajin, a gateway to the Pacific, as well as signing on to various economic development projects. In December 2010, for example, China's Shangdi Guanqun Investment Co. signed a letter of intent to invest $2 billion in the Rajin-Sonbong economic zone which represents one of the largest potential investments in North Korea.[25] There are already reports that North Korean workers have been dispatched to begin the project and plans are underway for the building of a new 50,000 kw hydroelectric power plant on the Tumen River.[26] North Korea and China have also recently signed an investment pact on building a highway and laying a railroad between Quanhae in Jilin and Rajin-Sonbong. And in an unprecedented move, Chinese troops were purportedly deployed to the special economic zone at Rajin-Sonbong in December 2010 to guard port facilities and Chinese residents there. Completion of the port and its transportation links will give China direct access to the Japan Sea. One account stated: "In the middle of the night around December 15 last year, about 50 Chinese armored vehicles and tanks cross the Duman (Tumen) River from Sanhe into the North Korean city of Hoeryŏng in North Hamgyŏng Province."[27] If true, this would be the first time since Chinese forces withdrew from North Korea in 1958 that foreign troops have been stationed in North Korean territory.

Changchun-Jilin- and Tumen River area

The pressing question that the North Korean regime now confronts in the face of a new reality of becoming a "fourth province of northeastern China" is how to sell it to the North Korean people. For a regime which has always touted *ch'uche* (self-reliance) as the core principle of its nationalist ideology, such dependence would likely trigger a mass legitimization crisis. It would be hard to justify North Korea's *chuch'e* philosophy of self-reliance and the regime's repeated denunciation of South Korean "flunkyism" while becoming an economic satellite of China. Hence, the continued efforts to demonstrate "independence" from China, even to the extent of creating international crises to galvanize domestic public support for the regime. This has become all the more urgent since Kim Jong Il is trying to coordinate a delicate and tricky "dynastic" succession. The regime's new heir apparent, Kim Jong Il's son Kim Jŏng-un, was introduced to the North Korean public in 2010. According to sources familiar with the North Korean situation, Kim Jong Il "has become obsessed with creating political stability to allow orderly succession."[28] Chinese leaders are aware of the delicate situation, which is why they will tolerate Kim's antics in the belief that he will not actually start a war.

But instigating crises in response to internal domestic turmoil will do little to mask the reality of China's growing influence over North Korean affairs. This is where Korean War memory plays a vital role in forging a new relationship between the two countries. In years past, the anniversary of Chinese intervention in the Korean War on 19 October 1950 had been worth just a few lines in the North Korean press, if it was mentioned at all.[29] In recent years, however, China's role in North Korea's Korean War commemorative culture has taken on a strikingly new and prominent role. In August 2010, North Korean officials announced that North Korea's mass games "Arirang," the iconic gymnastic and artistic performance that was scheduled to be performed as part of the commemorative celebrations, would feature two entirely new scenes: "One of them represents the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and Chinese armed units fighting together against the Japanese imperialists during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The other portrays the Chinese People's Volunteers joining the Korean army and people in the Korean War against the imperialist allied forces' invasion under the banner of resisting America and aiding Korea, safeguarding the home and defending the motherland." Performers "in Chinese clothes" danced with Chinese props including "several dozen meter-long dragons, pandas and lions."[30]

If the inclusion of Chinese props and dress was not striking enough for a country that has rarely acknowledged China's role in the conflict, a grand banquet to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the CPV's entrance into the Korean War was held on 24 October 2010. In his address to members of the visiting delegation of the CPV veterans, North Korean Vice President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly Yang Hyŏng-sŏp saluted "the CPV's brave men and our people and army [who fought] side by side, to carry forward the courageous spirit and collective heroism" and made "the Fatherland Liberation War a great victory, by gloriously defending Northeast Asia and world peace."[31] This event was followed by an official visit by North Korean and Chinese officials to the cemetery for the martyrs of the Chinese People's Volunteers where Mao Anying, Mao Zedong's son, is buried.[32]

Even then, China's role in the war is construed as being one of "reciprocal obligation" since North Korea had once aided the Chinese in their war against Japan. "The tradition of ties of friendship between the peoples of the DPRK and China, sealed in blood in the joint struggle against U.S. and Japanese imperialisms, the two formidable enemies, has steadily developed on the basis of particularly comradely trust and sense of revolutionary obligation of the leaders of the elder generation of the two countries" explained the *Nodong sinmun*, the North Korean party daily.[33] In short, by equating China's aid against American "imperialists" in the Korean War with the aid of Korean revolutionaries in fighting Japan in China during World War II, North Korean officials drew attention to *equality* of revolutionary comrades-in-arms based on the bonds of DPRK-China friendship "sealed in blood" rather than any indication of super-power "dependence." As stated in the *Nodong Sinmun*:

> The revolutionaries of the elder generation of the two countries provided the historic roots of the DPRK-China friendship and cultivated them to be strong in the joint anti-Japanese struggle. President Kim Il Sung rendered unstinted assistance to the Chinese people in their revolutionary struggle, while leading the great anti-Japanese war to liberate the country. The international obligation and friendship between the revolutionaries of the elder generation of the two countries forged in the days of the bloody anti-Japanese struggle have grown stronger and have been brought into fuller bloom than what used to be during the revolutionary civil war in China. The unbreakable nature and vitality of the blood-sealed ties and friendship between the two peoples that grew strong in the anti-Japanese battle sites and the revolutionary civil war in China were powerfully demonstrated in the period of the

Kim Jong Il, center, laid a wreath in front of the grave of Mao Anying, Mao Zedong's son who died in the war, 26 October 2010 (Korean Central News Agency).

Great Fatherland Liberation War of the Korean people fought to beat back the U.S. imperialist aggressors' armed invasion.

Linking North Korea's contribution to China's struggle with Japan to China's contribution in North Korea's war against the Americans, the "ties of friendship between the people of the two countries sealed in blood" are presented in terms of a familial bond of obligation and respect between younger and older generations:

> Kim Il Sung visited China to participate in the function for founding the People's Republic of China in Juche [*chuch'e*] 38 [1949) and had his first meeting with Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai. Since then, the leaders of the two countries made great efforts to boost the friendly relations between the DPRK and China…In the new century, General Secretary Kim Jong Il paid several visits to China and Chinese party and state leaders including Hu Jintao visited the DPRK, deepening the friendly feelings and comradely fraternity and boosting the DPRK-China friendly and cooperative relations…[34]

What is remarkable about this passage is not only the parallel that is drawn between Kim Il Sung's visits to Mao with Kim Jong Il's recent visit to Hu Jintao, but also the attempts made to characterize China's involvement in the Korean War as essentially a "payback" for North Korea's involvement in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). This "payback," moreover, specifically highlights Kim Il Sung's revolutionary struggle in Manchuria. Since Jilin, Heilongjiang and Liaoning provinces once comprised the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo, the regime's current "joint" cooperation with China to develop this area is presented as being *foreshadowed* by Kim Il Sung's "hard-fought revolutionary struggle" there. During his visit to Jilin Province in August 2010, Kim Jong Il directly linked China's Northeast development project with his father's revolutionary struggle in Manchuria:

> Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces are a witness to Korea-China friendship and a historical land dear to the Korean people as Comrade President Kim Il Sung waged a hard-fought revolutionary struggle against the Japanese imperialists together with Chinese comrades in this area, leaving indelible footsteps. He in his lifetime had often recollected this historical land and wanted to visit here again. Carrying his desire with us, we have come here today. Entering the northeastern area of China we have felt that this area, which had been trampled down ruthlessly by the Japanese imperialists, is now vibrant with life, enjoying a splendid development in political, economic, cultural and all other fields under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

The passage "now vibrant with life" is immediately followed by nostalgic reminiscences of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary past which seek, once again, to demonstrate the "unbreakable" bond of Sino-North Korean friendship forged between the older and younger generations of revolutionary leaders:

> From the moment we entered this area, where Comrade President Kim Il Sung, together with Chinese revolutionaries of elder generation, fought bloody battles against the Japanese imperialists, even eating and sleeping under the open sky, we have been wrapped in solemn feelings, thinking of traces of blood shed by revolutionary forerunners still gleaming on the crags of Jangbaek and in the stream of Amnok, and keenly felt the valuableness of Korea-China friendship. In his youth Comrade President Kim Il Sung fought a hard-fought struggle against the Japanese imperialists here in the northeastern area, breathing air and drinking water in China and, in those days, provided a brilliant history and excellent tradition of unbreakable Korea-China friendship together with Chinese revolutionaries of elder generation...[35]

On 10 October 2010, Zhou Yongkang (red tie), Kim Jong Il and his son Kim Jŏng-un (fifth from the right) watched the Korean Worker's Party's 65th anniversary celebrations.

The explicit linkage made between Kim Il Sung's past exploits in Manchuria with North China's future developmental "exploits" in Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces also provide clues to P'yŏngyang's thinking about the delicate succession issue. With Kim Il Sung's popularity still intact, it makes sense for the regime to bring the Great Leader back to life in the person of his grandson, Kim Jŏng-un. Such a reincarnation myth would contribute to a smooth succession since the Great Leader's untimely death in 1994 has largely absolved him of responsibility for North Korea's disastrous predicament. This "reincarnation" drama has been meticulously planned with North Korean propaganda skillfully using its media to play up the uncanny resemblance between the Great Leader and his grandson. When official photos of Kim Jong-un were first released to the public in October 2010, some North Korea watchers even suggested that the 27-year old Kim Jŏng-un may have undergone plastic surgery to look more like his grandfather.[36] Also telling was the decision to introduce the heir apparent at the 65th anniversary of the North Korean Workers Party on 10 October 2010. On the reviewing stand with Kim Jong-un and his father was Zhou Yongkang, China's new point man in North Korea who is helping to oversee the Northeast Project.[37]

Not surprisingly, South Koreans have become increasingly alarmed by all this talk of Sino-North Korean relations "forged in blood."

This portrait of a young man was photographed by a Canadian tourist in 2010 and bears a striking resemblance to Kim Jong-un in a setting and layout that is similar to depictions of the young Kim Il Sung. Many North Korea experts believe that the portrait marks the first glimpse of how the North Korean regime plans to "sell" the heir apparent to the public.[38]

They remain deeply suspicious of Chinese influence in North Korea and are wary about China's "strategic plot to colonize North Korea economically" Relations between the two countries were made even more tense after North Korea's sinking of the Ch'ŏn'an in March 2010. South Korea had initially believed that China, as its largest trade partner, would endorse its position in its quest to seek international justice for the attack. When China wielded its veto power as a UN Security Council member to force a watered down statement that did not identify North Korean culpability, Seoul responded angrily. Relations between the two countries are currently at their lowest since they established diplomatic ties in 1992.[41] In retaliation for North Korean provocations, the Lee administration cut off all aid to North Korea including food aid. But, by adopting a hard-line stance toward the Kim Jong Il regime, South Korea has essentially surrendered its economic leverage over North Korea to China. Some South Korean lawmakers are nervous, "I'm worried that North Korea is getting too close and familiar to China in a bid to push third-generation succession," said Representative Ahn Sang-soo, chairman of the ruling Grand National Party. "Would we be able to stop North Korea, if it decides to be under the control of China?"[42] P'yŏngyang's recent provocations have further constrained Seoul for it is now difficult for the Lee administration to go back to a more flexible policy, much less reestablish ties with P'yŏngyang.

Japan might have been a source of potential support for North Korea to reduce its reliance on China had Kim Jong Il played his cards right. A century ago Japan had battled China and then Russia over influence in Korea. However, after Prime Minister Koizumi's bold visit to P'yŏngyang in 2002, which was to lay the groundwork for diplomatic normalization, relations between the two countries collapsed over the issue of North Korean kidnapping of Japanese citizens during the 1970s. Once a major trading partner, Japan has banned all commerce with the DPRK.[43] As for Russia, Kim Jong Il has tried to draw its former close ally into competition with Beijing. But Russia has proved to be a poor counterweight to China since North Korea's debt to the former Soviet Union, exceeding US $8 billion dollars, has complicated the relations between the two countries.[44] Russia's only major investment in North Korea in recent years has been to modernize the cross-border railway to North Korea's port of Rajin.

Thus it appears that it will be up to China to drag North Korea into the 21st century and finally end the Korean War.[45] North Korean leaders know this, which is why they have begun to accommodate China's presence in Kim Il Sung's revolutionary past. Hence the recent rhetoric about the Korean War, Kim's Manchurian exploits, and the two countries' bilateral friendship "forged in blood." This does not mean, however, that North Korea will cease making trouble for China. Since the stability and legitimacy of the regime still rests firmly upon the myth of Kim Il Sung, his anti-imperialist exploits and the principle of *chuch'e*, China knows that it must allow the regime to assert a degree of independence if North Korea is to avoid collapse. Just how much "independence" China will tolerate from its recalcitrant neighbor is anyone's guess. Needing both to preserve his rule and build a "strong and prosperous nation," Kim Jong Il is faced with resolving the perplexing contradictions of becoming China's satellite while at the same time preserving the *chuch'e* principle so crucial to the legitimacy of the regime during a delicate succession process.

Over one hundred years has passed since China was forced to leave the Korean peninsula after its humiliating defeat in the 1894-5 Sino-Japanese War. A century later, a revitalized China has returned to the Korean peninsula to reclaim its once dominant position in Asia. China's rise has many implications for the region, but one of them certainly is the role that it can play in ending the war on the Korean peninsula.

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Notes

[1] Many thanks to Mark Selden, Mark Caprio and Jiyul Kim for their close readings of this essay and for their many valuable suggestions.

[2] This is the opening scene of Jonathan Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980* (New York, 1982), p. 29.

[3] Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet – DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism*, 1953-1964 (Washington, D.C., 2005); Bernd Schaefer, "North Korean Adventurism and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972," *CWIHP, Working Paper #44*; Segei Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-67* (Stanford, CA,2009).

[4] One of the peculiarities of the North Korean economic system has been its history as an aid recipient. After the Korean War, the DPRK was able to secure massive amounts of foreign aid mostly underwritten by the Soviet Union. Between 1954-1956 an average of 77.6 percent of imports were financed in this way, compared to just 19.5 percent obtained through normal trade channels. During the first Three Year Plan (1954-1956), North Korea was able to obtain grants from Moscow in the amount of one billion rubles (U.S. $250 million) in free financial and material aid. Economic assistance from other socialist states also accounted for much of the DPRK's recovery. From 1953-1960, aid in the form of gifts from these "sister" regimes accounted for the financing of over 50 big local enterprises. Western estimates over the same period indicate that the Soviet Union and China together provided 42.3 percent

This article is part of a series commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War.

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- Nan Kim with an introduction by John McGlynn, *Factsheet: West Sea Crisis in Korea.*

of the DPRK's annual foreign aid. Annual Soviet and Chinese contributions during 1953-56 accounted for 25.4 percent of the DPRK's total revenue, while the remainder of the Eastern bloc contributed 9.2 percent. Soviet grants alone provided for 30 to 100 percent of national output in the industrial sectors of metallurgy, chemicals, building materials and light industry. Furthermore, an astonishing 80 percent of the goods imported by the DPRK in 1954-1960 "were charged to free aid and credits." [See Erik Van Ree, "The Limits of Juche: North Korea's Dependence on Soviet Industrial Aid, 1953-76," *The Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1989); George Ginsburg, "Soviet Development Grants and Aid to North Korea, 1945-1980, *Asia Pacific Community*, Vol. 18, no. 4 (1982); Joseph Sang-hoon Chung, "Seven year Plan (1961-70): Economic Performance and Reforms," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, no. 6 (June 1972); Karoly Fendler, "Economic Assistance From Socialist Countries to North Korea in the postwar Years: 1953-1963," in Han S. Park, *North Korea: Ideology, Politics, Economy*, ed. (Athens, Georgia, 1996). In the years following the Sino-Soviet rift during the 1960s, the DPRK continued to receive aid from Beijing and Moscow simultaneously. This aid played a decisive role in Kim's reconstruction plans but it failed to establish a strong foundation to build North Korea's economy. When the Hungarian Ambassador to North Korea, Jozsef Kovacs, asked Vasily Petrovich Moskovsky, the newly appointed Soviet Ambassador, why the Soviet Union acquiesced to Kim's behavior, he was told that the Soviets were forced to accommodate Kim Il Sung's "idiosyncrasies" due to the Soviet Union's antagonistic relationship with China. "In the policy of the KWP and the DPRK one usually observes a vacillation between the Soviet Union and China," he told Kovacs. "If we do not strive to improve Soviet-Korean relations, these will obviously become weaker, and at the same time, the Chinese connection will get stronger, we will make that possible for them, we will even push them directly toward China." (See Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, p. 190.) After the collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korea lost its most important source of aid. Although some of the lost revenue was made up during the lush sunshine years of the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Mu Hyŏn administrations, inter-Korean business projects aimed at developing economic engagement across the divided peninsula did not lead to the kind of casual and spontaneous contact between ordinary North and South Koreans as had been hoped, nor did any fundamental change of the North Korean economy. South Korea's two large scale projects of economic engagement, the Diamond Mountain (Kŭmgang) tour program and the Kaesŏng Industrial Park, were physically isolated from the rest of North Korea and much doubt has been cast about their transformative effects on the North Korean economy. These projects have so far had little or no effect on liberalizing North Korean economic or political stance. It is also unlikely that South Korean companies ever made any profits from these projects. Instead, they appear to be more akin to state subventions for businesses agreeing to undertake projects that have little prospect of future gains. For example, Hyundai Corporation promised North Korea US $942 million for the Kŭmgang Mountain tourism venture but it took government funds to fulfill that promise. (See Nicholas Eberstadt, *The North Korean Economy: Between Crisis and Catastrophe,* Washington D.C., 2007); Haggard and Noland, "North Korea's External Economic Relations," Peterson Institute for International Economics, (Feb 2001). Also Haggard and Noland, "Sanctioning North Korea: The Political Economy of Denuclearization and Proliferation," Working Paper Series, Peterson Institute for International Economics (July 2009). North Korea's history of aid-maximizing may also have an addition disadvantage according to Eberstadt: "North Korea's dealings with the outside world betray a lingering *confusion* about the differences between business-based transactions and charitable bequests." Eberstadt, *The End of North Korea*, (Washington, D.C.1999), p. 101.

[5] Given the secrecy of the North Korean regime, it is not surprising that estimates of the number of deaths by famine vary enormously. North Korean officials put the estimate of deaths between 1995 and 1998 at 220,000, but interviews with party defectors indicate that those number are greatly deflated, suggesting that internal estimates range from 1 to 1.2 million. The South Korean NGO Good Friends Center for Peace, Human Rights, and Refugees puts that number as high as 3.5 million famine-related deaths or 16 percent of the population ("Human Rights in North Korea and the Food Crisis," March 2004 [link]. A Johns Hopkins School of Public Health team working from 771 refugee interviews sought to determine the mortality rate of North Hamgyŏng Province, which was believed to be the most affected province. The study concluded that nearly 12 percent of the province's population had died of starvation. Extrapolating from these numbers for the whole country (which the Johns Hopkins team did not do) would yield an estimate of more than 2.6 million deaths, which is certainly too high given that not all provinces were affected as traumatically as North Hamgyŏng (see Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Hunger and Human Rights: The Politics of Famine in North Korea," p. 18). Accessing the mortality rate of the North Korean famine is also complicated by North Korea's Public Distribution System (PDS). North Korea has an extensive ration system where food is distributed on a gram-per-day per-person basis according to occupation. Implicit in this system of entitlement is also a political stratification system since class background was an important determinant of socio-political hierarchy. At the bottom of the three-tiered system was the so-called "hostile" class. These included families who had been rich peasants or whose family hailed from South Korea or Japan. The second tier, the so-called "wavering" class, was from families of middle peasants, traders or owners of small businesses. The upper tier, the "core" class, was composed of people whose families had traditionally been workers, soldiers or party members. Only members of the "core" class, which constituted roughly 15 percent of the population, are able to live in P'yŏngyang, considered a privilege. By contrast, members of the "hostile" class were relocated to remote regions of the country beginning in the late 1950s, especially to the northeast, where most of North Korea's mines and heavy industries are located (Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid and Reform* (New York, 2007) pp. 53-54). This stratified classification system had important implications for

the famine as it was precisely these parts of the country which experienced the severest deprivations (Bradley Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* (New York, 2004), p. 557-573; Amnesty International, "Starved of Rights: Human Rights and the Food Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea)," 17 Jan 2004, p. 9). Although international aid began to flow into the country in 1996, these efforts were hampered by North Korean officials who barred aid workers from monitoring where the aid was going. One of the most frustrating constraints for international aid workers was the denial of access to those parts of the country that needed the most help. *Good Friends*, a South Korean organization involved in the aid program, estimated that as much as "50 percent of Korean aid went to non-deserving groups, including the military." A survey in 2005 of 1,000 North Korean refugees showed that only "63 percent of the respondents reported even knowing about the existence of foreign humanitarian assistance." (Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Hunger and Human Rights: The Politics of Famine in North Korea," *U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea*, 2005, p. 17). In 1998, most of the non-governmental international aid groups such as Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF), Oxfam, Action Contra la Faim (ACF), and CARE, withdrew from North Korea, citing "inadequate access." (Amnesty International, "Starved of Rights: Human Rights and the Food Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea)," 17 Jan 2004, p. 18; Stephen Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Famine in North Korea* (Columbia University Press, 2007); Andrew S. Natsios, *The Great North Korean Famine: Famine, Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C., 2001). For an informative look at North Korea's penal system that expanded greatly as a result of the regime's response to the famine and the profound economic and social changes that ensued see David Hawk, "The Hidden Gulag: Exposing North Korea's Prison Camps: Prisoners' Testimonies and Satellite Photographs," *U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea*, 2003, and Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Economic Crime and Punishment in North Korea," *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, March 2010; Stephan Haggard, "Repression and Punishment in North Korea: Survey Evidence of Prison Camp Experiences," East-West Center and Peterson Institute for International Economics, October 5, 2009.

[6] "US embassy cables: Situation in North Korea is 'Chaotic,'" 29 January 2010, Guardian.co.uk 29 November 2010, link.

[7] See "The Crumbling State of Health Care in North Korea," *Amnesty International*, July 2010, p. 14, link.

[8] World Food Program, "Emergency Operation Democratic People's Republic of Korea," p. 2. North Korea's economic plight has no doubt been exacerbated by decades of U.S.-led sanctions, but what is striking about North Korean trade is its limited success in merchandizing products in markets which had no standing sanctions against its trade. Although Washington's apparatus of sanctions has indeed "denied North Korea access to the largest single market in the world," the American market, as Eberstadt points out, "accounts for only a modest fraction of the total imports by industrialized countries." In fact, "nearly four-fifths of the international purchases of merchandise by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) groups come from countries other than the U.S." The total imports of these countries in 1997 exceeded $2.7 trillion and none of these countries maintained economic sanctions against North Korea at that time or earlier. Yet, North Korea failed to make any significant inroads into these markets [Nicholas Eberstadt, *The End of North Korea* (Washington D.C., 1999), p. 107-8]. This performance cannot be explained away only in terms of U.S.'s hostile policies towards North Korea. Nor can it account for the refusal of the North Korean regime to embrace broad economic reforms during the generous sunshine years (1998-2008) or its decision to clamp down on emerging markets in 2005. Rather, North Korea's plight must in large part be understood as a consequence of the distinctive nature of P'yŏngyang's "aid–maximizing" economic strategy and closed economic system discussed in note 4. Such a system may also explain North Korea's failure to repay its debts. North Korea's economic relations with Western countries were severely damaged when it defaulted on almost $1 billion in commercial loans in the 1970s. As a result, North Korea has effectively been excluded from international capital markets and its ability to borrow internationally is "limited to relatively low volumes of short-term credits." (Haggard and Noland, "North Korea's External Economic Relations," *Peterson Institute for International Economics* August 2007, p. 15.) While many countries have fallen behind their repayment schedule, what is unique in P'yŏngyang's case is that it has made no effort to make good on any portions of these debts. Such an attitude is consistent with its previous non-repayment of loans that were extended to it by Soviet-bloc countries, the Soviet Union and China. As one Soviet source noted, "the DPRK was quite willing to reschedule its debts—but never to repay them." Emblematic of this opportunistic view of economic relations and its "aid-maximizing" strategy is an essentially *political* view of international trade, which is how North Korea managed its economic relationships with the Soviet Union and China throughout the Cold War years. (Eberstadt, *The North Korean Economy*, p. 185-7). One needs only to contrast the specter of the DPRK economic collapse with Vietnam-style growth. Like North Korea, Vietnam was also a victim of the Cold War. And like North Korea, the United States also imposed trade embargoes against Vietnam. These remained intact until 1992, when the U.S. finally allowed commercial sales to Vietnam for humanitarian needs. Nevertheless, Vietnam began to push for export-orientation when its Soviet subsidies abruptly ended in 1991, the same period in which North Korea's export performance worsened. While Vietnam has successfully adjusted to the new global market economy, North Korea did not.

[9] Debates have raged within South Korea and elsewhere, including on *Japan Focus*, over whether the North was responsible for the sinking of the Ch'ŏn'an. The Joint Civilian-Military Investigative Group (JIG), composed of experts from South Korea, the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, and Sweden, concluded in May 2010 that "the ROK's 'Cheonan' was sunk as a result of an external underwater explosion caused by a torpedo made in North Korea (Joint Civilian-Military Investigative Group, "Investigation Result on the Sinking of ROKS 'Cheonan,' Republic of Korea, Ministry of National Defense," 20 May 2010.) In September 2010, the final results of the investigation were released in a 312- page document that provided the exact details of how the ship was sunk. (For the complete 312-page final report on the sinking of the Ch'ŏn'an released by the JIG, see "Joint Investigation Report on the Attack on the ROK Ship Cheonan," Republic of Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 14 September 2010, link. Details of the investigation were also discussed in Kim Deok-hyun, "S. Korea Releases Full Report on Ship Sinking, Reaffirming N. Korea's Responsibility," *Yonhap*, 13 September 2010. Bechtol provides the latest and the most complete account of events leading up to the sinking, and North Korean culpability. See Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr., "The Implications of the Cheonan Sinking: A Security Studies Perspective," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, 19.2 (December 2010). Despite the exhaustive evidence presented in the final report, skeptics have challenged the validity and accuracy of the JIG findings. The two most outspoken critics are the physicist Seunghun Lee of the University of Virginia and the political scientist J.J. Suh of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Based on the preliminary report, they claim that it failed "to produce conclusive, or at least convincing beyond reasonable doubt, evidence of outside explosion." (Seunghun Lee and J. J. Suh, "Rush To Judgment: Inconsistencies in South Korea's Cheonan Report,"). Lee and Suh's doubt on the integrity of the investigation is questionable. The final report clearly demonstrates how a "bubble' jet torpedo" could have split the vessel in two, sinking it in minutes. They also note that even if a causal link could be established between the Ch'ŏn'an's sinking and the North Korean torpedo, the critical evidence touted by the report of the *han'gul* writing (*1bŏn*) that remained visible on the torpedo cannot be the basis for establishing North Korean culpability since it could just as easily have been written by a South Korean. But this assumes that the international team conspired with South Korean investigators to create false evidence. There is no proof of such deception. Many other outside observers were convinced by the evidence presented in both the initial and final reports, including members of the UN Security Council who stated that "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been responsible for the sinking." [link]. *Japan Focus* articles that question North Korean agency such as those by Seunghun Lee and J. J. Suh, Tanaka Sakai, and Mark Caprio remain in the realm of conjecture and speculation. (Tanaka Sakai, "Who Sank the South Korean Warship Cheonan? A New State in the US-Korean War and US-China Relations"; Mark Caprio, "Plausible Denial? Reviewing the Evidence of DPRK Culpability for the Cheonan Warship Incident"). We may never know for sure whether North Korea was ultimately responsible. However, to give credence to North Korea's denials about its involvement in the incident is to overlook the long history of similar North Korean provocations and denials. The earliest and most prominent examples were the 1968 Blue House Raid to assassinate Park (which failed) and the capture of the USS Pueblo, the two

events taking place within a week of each other. Even bolder was an attempt by some 120 NK commandos who landed on the east coast of South Korea in October 1968 in an attempt to organize local farmers and fishermen to spark a revolution. The peninsula nearly erupted into another war following the murder of two U.S. soldiers in the Joint Security Area (JSA) in the 1976 Axe Murder incident. In October 1983, North Korea attempted to assassinate then President Chun Doo Hwan and his cabinet members in Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar) (Four members of his cabinet, two senior presidential advisers and the ambassador to Myanmar were killed in the explosion. P'yŏngyang denied complicity in the affair, but these denials were unconvincing in light of the physical evidence and the confession of one of the North Korean officers involved in the incident. Myanmar subsequently broke diplomatic relations with North Korea and expelled all its diplomats). In September 1986, a North Korean bomb in the Kimp'o International Airport killed five and wounded thirty people. One year later, on 29 November 1987, two North Korean agents planted a bomb on Korean Air Flight 858, bound for Seoul from Abu Dhabi. It exploded in mid-flight killing all 115 people aboard.

[10] This poster of a North Korean soldier smashing an ROK Navy ship was taken by a Chinese businessman visiting P'yŏngyang in June 2010. Whether or not this was an older poster that was simply re-circulated or was the same class of ship as the Ch'ŏn'an, the message is strikingly clear. As the businessman put it: "It is hard to understand how high ranking officials can adamantly deny North Korea's responsibility for the sinking of the Ch'ŏn'an while propaganda posters showing a ship being broken in half by a fist are in circulation." (quoted in Bechtol, "Implications of the Cheonan Sinking," p. 26; For analysis of the poster, see Moon Gwang-lip, "Poster in Pyongyang Recalls the Cheonan," *JoongAng Ilbo*, 15 July 2010; Choe Sang-hun, "North Korean Poster Depicts a Ship Suffering an Eerily Evocative Attack," New York Times, 16 July 2010.

[11] Andre Lankov, "The Legacy of Long-Gone States: China, Korea and the Koguryo Wars," *Japan Focus*, 28 Sep 2006, p. 1.

[12] Archeological evidence suggests that state formation on the Korean peninsula occurred around 300 AD. This means that the three kingdoms were established after the Chinese Han Lelang period (108 BC-313 AD) when a Han Commandery occupied the northwestern part of the Korean peninsula and introduced the most important "traits of civilization" such as intensive wet rice agriculture, iron technology and writing to Korea. These "traits of civilization" spread to other parts of the peninsula to create the basis for the emergence of new Korean states that comprised Koguryŏ, Pakche and Silla. Sarah Milledge Nelson, *The Archeology of Korea* (Cambridge, 1993); Gina Barnes, *State Formation in Korea: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. (New York, 2001); Hyung Il Pai, "Lelang and the interaction sphere: An alternative approach to Korean state formation," *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 8.1, pp. 64-75.

[13] Yonson Ahn, "Competing Nationalisms: The mobilisation of history and archeology in the Korea-China wars over Koguryo/Gaogouli."

[14] Lankov, p. 2.

[15] Lankov,p. 2.

[16] Ahn, p. 5.

[17] Lankov, p. 5.

[18] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, "The Politics of Identity: History, Nationalism and the Prospect for Peace in Post-Cold War Asia," U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, April 2007, pp. 21-22.

[19] Quoted in Yoon Hwy-tak, "China's Northeast Project: Defensive or Offensive," *East Asian Review*, Vol. 16 (Winter 2004), pp. 109-110.

[20] Yoon, p. 110.

[21] Bonnie Glaser, Scott Snyder and John S. Park, "Keeping an Eye on an Unruly Neighbor: Chinese Views of Economic Reform and Stability in North Korea," 3 Jan 2008, p. 10.

[22] Scott Snyder, "Pyŏngyang Tests Beijing's Patience," *Comparative Connections*, July 2009, p.5. China's investment in North Korea and the Northeast Project is one of several major economic initiatives that China is currently undertaking. In 2009, President Hu Jintao introduced another major initiative aimed to integrate mainland Southeast Asia with China. As Geoff Wade has shown in his brilliant and detailed study of China's investment in this region, known as the "Bridgehead Strategy," China's Yunnan Province will become the bridgehead of international transportation routes and foreign trade production bases into Southeast Asia. Most investments in the area are going into hydroelectricity development but there are also efforts underway for mining industry trade. According to Wade, "Yunnan foreign trade in the first three quarters of 2010, much of it with these bordering states, reached U.S. $10 billion, up over 90 percent on the 2009 figure." (p. 3). A related project on the Guangxi side is also underway. Known as the "One Axis, Two Wings" project, China aims to create a 3,500-kilometer economic corridor extending from Nanning down through Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Malay peninsula (p. 3). President Hu has also announced that over the next three to five years, China plans to provide loans totaling $15 billion to ASEAN countries for infrastructural regional development. In addition to these projects, bilateral trade with Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand are being vigorously pursued. During the first half of 2010, for example, China overtook the United States and Japan to become the biggest export market for Thailand. China is also investing heavily in Vietnam. Guangxi enterprise recently signed "50 economic and trade cooperation projects worth over U.S. 1.8 billion with their Vietnamese counterparts" and trade there is booming" (p. 9). Similarly impressive bilateral trade is occurring between Laos and China and Cambodia and China (Geoff Wade, "ASEAN Divides").

[23] Choe Sang-hun, "South Korea Risks Driving North into China's Bosom," *The New York Times*, 29 Apr 2010.

[24] "US Embassy Cables: Kim Jong–il's Power Weakens after Stroke," 11 Jan 2010, *The Guardian*, 30 Nov 2010, link.

[25] "Company's $billion Pledge Would Mark One of the Largest Deals With Neighbor; Pact Was Signed After Yeongpyeong Shelling," *Wall Street Journal* January 19, 2011.

[26] "China's Industrial Expansion near North Korea stirs fears. *Korea Times*, 7 Aug 2010; "Kim Jong Il's China visit was about economy," *Korea Times*, 6 Sep 2010. The ambitious plan that emerged in 1991 aims to convert an area from the Chinese town of Yanji to the Sea of Japan and from Ch'ŏnjin in North Korea to Vladivostok in Russia into a $30 billion trade and transport complex. The goal is to create a free economic zone in Northeast Asia over the next 20 years involving China, the two Koreas, Russia, and Japan. While the development projects poses great potential economic benefits, implementing it has been very complicated due to political issues and the fact that the area in question will require border countries to relinquish some of its land if the overall

project is to succeed. Mark J. Valencia, "Tumen River Project," *East Asian Executive Reports*, Vol. 14, no. 2; Joseph Manguno, "A New Regional Trade Bloc in Northeast Asia?" The China Business Review, 20 (March/April 1993).

[27] *Choson Ilbo* Jan 17, 2011.

[28] "U.S Embassy Cables: Reading The Runes on North Korea," 27 Apr 2009, *The Guardian*, 29 Nov 2010, link.

[29] Tessa Morris Suzuki pointed out in her excellent essay on the North Korean Victorious Fatherland War Museum, for example, that the conflict is portrayed as a battle between the U.S. and North Korea, with almost no reference made to the involvement of any other countries in the war. "The emphasis throughout is on US imperialism and aggression, and the war, in short, is narrated as a resounding victory of the DPRK over the United States" (p. 11). Tessa Morris Suzuki, "Remembering the Unfinished Conflict: Museums and the Contested Memory of the Korean War," *Japan Focus*, 27 Jul 2009. However, as Brian Myers has pointed out, this does not mean that China's contribution to the war has been completely ignored. Chinese visitors, for example, are taken to specific exhibits that do acknowledge their country's enormous sacrifice in the war, but these exhibits are off-limits to North Korean locals who "are taken on another route where they see and hear no mention of it." (Brian Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why it Matters*, (New York, 2010), p. 130.

[30] "Arirang Has a New Scene Reflecting DPRK-China Friendship," 22 Oct 2010, *Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK (KCNA)*, link.

[31] "DPRK Arranges Banquet to Mark Entry of CPV into Korean Front," *KCNA*, 24 Oct 2010, link.

[32] "Floral Tribute Paid to Mao Anying and Fallen Fighters of the CPV," *KCNA*, 24 Oct 2010. One interesting (and rather hilarious) side-note regarding Korean War Memory: During the White House state banquet hosted on 19 January 2010 in honor of President Hu Jintao, the Chinese pianist Lang Lang played "My Mother Land" which was a very popular song during the Korean War. The song encouraged the Chinese to fight the American invaders. Thanks to my colleague Qiusha Ma for pointing this out. Link.

[33] *Nodong Sinmun*, 24 Oct 2010.

[34] *Nodong Sinmun*, 24 Oct 2010.

[35] "Speech of Kim Jong Il at Banquet," 30 Aug 2010, *KCNA*.

[36] *Dong-A-Ilbo*, 13 Oct 2010; *The Telegraph*, 5 Oct 2010.

[37] *Dong-A-Ilbo*, 11 Oct 2010; Aidan Foster-Carter, "North Korea: Embracing the Dragon," *Asia Times*, 28 Oct 2010.

[38] Percy Troop, a Canadian tourist, photographed the painting on 27 Oct 2010 at the Rajin Art Gallery. According to Ruediger Frank, the building in the picture appears to be the Catholic church on the bank of the Songhua River in Jilin City. He suggests that the painting is linked to the increasingly frequent allusions to Kim Il Sung's youth in Northeast China in what is clearly a campaign to emphasize traditional Sino-North Korean closeness. "So the painting might actually be part of the new policy of emphasizing the two countries joint revolutionary past," (p. 3). On the other hand, he is not entirely convinced that this is, in fact, a painting of Kim Jŏng-un. Rather, it appears to be a portrait of a young Kim Il Sung in Northeast China. (Ruediger Frank, "Harbinger or Hoax: The First Painting of Kim Jung Un?" *Foreign Policy*, 9 Dec 2010.) Other North Korea experts, however, are convinced that the portrait is indeed the first glimpse of the new leader Kim Jŏng-un (Mark McKinnon "North Korea's Kim Jong-un: Portrait of a Leader in the Making," *The Globe and Mail*, 4 Dec 2010).

[39] Choe, "South Korea Risks Driving North into China's Bosom," *NYT*, 29 Apr 2010.

[40] China and Russia offered lukewarm support for a formal UN Security Council statement blaming North Korea based on the findings of the Joint Investigation Group (JIG) investigation in July 2010. Seoul had invited China and Russia to send investigative teams to evaluate the incident but the Chinese declined. Russia, however, conducted its own investigation but announced in August 2010 that it would not make public the results of its probe. The reason for this appears to have been political. Russia has a stake in North Korea, a 12 mile border with a rail link across the Tumen River. Some have argued that the Russians held back the report to avoid embarrassing South Korea as it purportedly challenged the JIG findings. But one can also argue the opposite: to avoid embarrassing North Korea as it agreed with the JIG report. We may never know the truth, but what we do know is that the Russian position is one of hedging, not explicitly blaming the North while implying other causes of the sinking. See also Bechtol, "The Implications of the Cheonan Sinking," p. 28.

[41] *KT*, 9 Sep 2010.

[42] *KT*, 2 Nov 2010.

[43] Aidan Foster-Carter, "How North Korea was lost to China," *Asia Times*, 16 Sep 2010, p. 4.

[44] Aidan Foster-Carter, "China Help With North Korea? Fuggedaboutit!" *Foreign Policy*, 26 Nov 2010, p. 4.

[45] Foster Carter, "How North Korea war lost to China," p. 3.