

The hereditary succession and mass replacement of officials from top to bottom

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North Korea launched the succession to Kim Jong Eun in earnest in January 2009. Among the major tasks involved in this process is the building of a new power structure made up of persons loyal to Kim Jong Eun. This effort began with a major reorganization of personnel in early 2009 and continued through the Party Delegates' Conference in September 2010, proceeding thereafter in incremental stages and affecting officials in all fields throughout the country.

We can identify four major aspects to the structures and processes being employed in building the Kim Jong Eun succession power structure. The first is the replacement and incapacitation of certain high-level elites who had played central roles in the military and the Central Party ever since the 'military-first political system' was first established in 1995. The second is the purge of high officials in economic and security-related central agencies. The third is the reorganization of provincial Party secretaries. Between the Supreme People's Assembly meeting of June 2010 and the Party Delegate's Conference the following September, most of the provincial Party secretaries were replaced. Most of these regional secretaries were given new positions in the Cabinet and the Central Party. The fourth element is a series of replacements and generation shifts

among lower-level cadres in both the center and the provinces.

Here we can detect three distinct characteristics. First, central and regional authorities in almost all areas have been replaced. Second, the four aspects of power reorganization mentioned above have generally proceeded in sequential order. From this we can infer that some sort of planning must have existed behind the power restructuring process. Third, the four aspects were not implemented independently but were closely interlinked. This is because of the unique characteristics of the North Korean power structure. The North Korean system makes each division's leading official a "little king" with his own personal guardian/protégé structure beneath him, based on personal abuse of government power. Within this structure each leading official plays a double role as the superior in the formal bureaucratic hierarchy and the "boss" (or "little king") in actual practice, and provides protection and special dispensations to the workers beneath him, who play the formal role of lower-ranked officials and act as "underlings" in practice. In this way the superior can expect their fidelity as vassals and establish a give-and-take relationship. Therefore the replacement of any leading official inevitably also leads to the replacement of those underlings who prospered in the patronage network beneath him, just like vines getting pulled up along with a sweet potato. This phenomenon also appears in the big picture of the power transition from Kim Jong Il to Kim Jong Eun. We can find the same phenomenon in the underlying structures as we move down the ranks.

Replacements in the Highest Levels of Elites

First let us examine the replacements and incapacitations that have occurred throughout the highest tier of elites, excluding Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Eun. This began in early 2009 and wrapped up just before the Supreme People's Assembly meeting in June 2010. During this period the leading officials in the military and Central Party, who had been in charge since the establishment of the 'military-first political system' in 1995, were rendered powerless by various means. Key examples include Jo Myong Rok, Kim Young Chun, Oh Guk Ryol and Kim Il Chol in the military, and Ri Jeh Gang and Ri Yong Chol in the Central Party.¹⁾

1) The following paper discusses this in more detail: Park Hyeong Jung, "Revisiting the 2010.9.28 Party Delegates' Conference: A Self-Celebration of the Rise of a New Power Coalition," KINU Online Series 11-25 (Seoul: KINU, 2011.9.21). Also, Hong Sung Nam died in March 2009. He had been prime minister (1998.9~2003.9) and chief party secretary of South Hamgyong Province (2003.9~2009.3).

Purges of High-Level Officials in the Areas of Economics and Internal Control

The next step was to eliminate high-level officials related to economics and internal control through a series of purges. The typical reasons for the dismissal of economic officials included the failure of the economy, corruption, and conflicts over the policy line. Officials involved in the internal control mechanisms were purged in order to give Kim Jong Eun control over the core security organizations, such as the State Security and People's Security Agencies. Most of these purges were concentrated in 2010 and early 2011. As a side effect of the replacement of leading officials, lower level officials in the patronage networks within those organizations were also removed. Thus the purge of a leading official in a given organization often affects the entire organization beneath him or her.

First let us examine the purges in the economic sector. In March 2009 Kim Yong Sam, who had been Railways Minister (1998.9~2008.10), was executed. He was charged with the crime of scrapping some 100 railroad cars whose parts had been looted by workers, and responsibility for the Ryongchon explosion.²⁾ Around September 2011 officials in the railways ministry began being replaced in the name of rooting out internal corruption.³⁾ In March 2010 Pak Nam Gi, the former vice minister (2005.9~2010) of the Central Party's Planning and Finance Department, was executed by firing squad for the failure of the currency reform. Subsequently in accordance with Kim Jong Il's "7-2 Policy" a major effort was launched to destroy all photos and publications mentioning Park Nam Gi and Kim Yong Sam.⁴⁾ Around June 2010 former Finance Minister (1998.9~2008.10) Moon Il Bong was reportedly shot.⁵⁾

Meanwhile Party Secretary Cheon Byeong Ho (85), who had managed the North Korean military economy for over 28 years, was replaced by Pak Do Chun. Late in 2010 it was reported that about 20 officials from the Department of Military Industry

2) Moon Sung Hui, "North Orders Deletion of Photos of Executed Officials like Pak Nam Gi" (in Korean), Radio Free Asia, July 13 2010; Paek Na Ri, "North Executes Former Railways Minister Kim Yong Sam... Connection to Ryongchon Station Explosion" (in Korean), Yonhap News, April 4 2011.

3) Choi Oh Nam, "Replacement of Railways Officials Begins in North" (in Korean), Open Radio for North Korea, Sept. 28, 2011.

4) Moon Sung Hui, *ibid.*

5) Paek Na Ri, "North Executes Former Railways Minister Kim Yong Sam... Former Finance Minister Moon Il Bong also Rumored Executed in Connection with Ryongchon Station Explosion" Yonhap News, April 4, 2011.

and the Second Economic Committee (in charge of arms production) had been purged on charges of embezzling some of the earnings from arms exports. Apparently the State Security Agency had uncovered the embezzling activities by these officials.⁶⁾ Cheon Byeong Ho had previously served as chairman of the Second Economic Committee (1982.3), Party Secretariat Secretary (1986.12), NDC member and chairman of the Party Military Industry Policy Review Department (1990.5), chairman of the Party Military Industry Policy Review Department (1994.3), and re-elected member of the NDC (1998.9). Cheon was dismissed from managing the Party Military Industry Bureau in September of 2010 but was appointed a member of the Party Political Bureau, director of the Cabinet Political Bureau, and Party secretary. In April 2011 he retired from the Supreme People's Assembly and the NDC, and was replaced in both places by Pak Do Chun. Cheon Byeong Ho was said to be nearly blind due to his advanced age. Pak Do Chun had been the Party secretary of Chagang Province (2005.6~2010.9) which is the seat of North Korea's military industry. At the Supreme People's Assembly meeting in April Ri Tae Nam was dismissed from his post as vice premier of the Cabinet after holding the office for less than one year, citing "health reasons." He had served in the past as Chief Secretary of South Hamgyong Province and chairman of the People's Committee (1996.1~2003.9), Party Secretary of South Pyongan Province (~2010.6), deputy premier of the Cabinet (2010.6~), and candidate member of the Party Political Bureau (2010.9~).

In June 2011 Hong Seok Hyeong was dismissed from his post as chairman of the Central Party Planning and Finance Department (2010.7~). Regarding Hong's dismissal, this much is known: on June 6th an expanded meeting of the Political Bureau was held at which members heard an explanation of the results of Chairman Kim Jong Il's trip to China and it was resolved that DPRK-China relations would grow even stronger with the next generation. Chairman Kim has made 7 visits to China since 2000, but this is the first time that the KWP held a meeting afterwards to discuss the results of the visit. At this meeting Hong Seok Hyeong was dismissed, reportedly for reasons of assignment reorganization. Hong had been Party secretary of North Hamgyong Province (2001.7~2010.9) and was promoted in September 2010 to Central Committee secretary, Party Political Bureau member, and Party Central Committee member. There are three theories about his dismissal. First, he may have been assigned blame for the lack of progress in DPRK-China economic cooperation.⁷⁾ Second, others speculate that Hong spoke up at the Political Bureau meeting

6) Kang Chol Hwan and Ahn Yong Hyun, "Three Officials Executed... Purge Underway in Pyongyang" (in Korean), Chosun Ilbo, April 4, 2011.

recommending that North Korea should partially adopt the Chinese model for reform, for which he was accused of being a Chinese spy and purged.⁸⁾ Third, some theorize that he may in fact have done espionage for China. In early August North Korean authorities made up a “report” of espionage activities by Hong Seok Hyeong and Pak Nam Gi, which was distributed to officials at the vice-director level or above in all provincial bureaus of the State Security Agency.⁹⁾ According to this report, Hong passed confidential internal information to his son, who worked as a trader at Rajin-Sonbong and reportedly passed the information on to Chinese state security agents during his frequent business trips to China. Similar to the assassination of Agriculture Secretary Soh Gwan Hee in 1998 on charges of “spying for the American imperialists,” the purge of Hong Seok Hyeong as a “Chinese spy” in 2011 as DPRK-China economic cooperation is vastly expanding can be seen as a strong warning to others. As explained below, since Hong left North Hamgyong in September 2010 the province has become the target of large-scale ‘anti-socialist phenomena’ inspections.

In January 2011 Ryu Kyeong, who had been deputy director of the State Security Agency, was executed on charges of espionage. Thirty core SSA officials were also executed. The mass purge of Ryu Kyeong and his core associates appears to have been related to Kim Jong Eun’s effort to seize control of the SSA. In March Ju Sang Sung was dismissed from his post as director of the People’s Safety Agency (2004.7~). He was subsequently given a low-rank position as security director of Daedong County in South Pyongan Province and is reportedly still working there; the reason given for his dismissal was failure to manage the DPRK-China border and censure for an accident involving Kim Jong Il’s private train car.¹⁰⁾

Appointments of Provincial Party Secretaries to the Cabinet and Central Party

Next, let us examine the power restructuring moves in the provinces. At the Supreme People’s Assembly meeting in June 2010, three provincial Party secretaries

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- 7) Kim Mi Gyeong, “North’s Dismissal of Party Secretary Hong Suk Hyeong Means He Took Blame for Inadequate DPRK-China Economic Cooperation” (in Korean), Seoul Shinmun, June 7, 2011.
 - 8) Lee Yong Su, “5 Economic Officials Missing in North Korea since the 1990s... One Suicide, 2 Assassinated” (in Korean), Chosun Ilbo, Oct. 6th 2011.
 - 9) Park Sung Woo, “Planning and Finance Director Hong Suk Hyung a Chinese Spy?” (in Korean), Radio Free Asia, Oct. 10, 2011.
 - 10) Lee Hun Jin, “Beijing Source Says Former PSA Director Ju Sang Sung Was Demoted to County Security Chief” (in Korean), Donga Ilbo, April 11, 2011.

were appointed to posts as premier or vice-premier of the Cabinet. At the Party Delegates' Conference the following September, amid a widespread restoration of the organs of the Central Party, most of the provincial Party secretaries (including the aforementioned three) received new assignments as Party Central Committee secretaries, Political Bureau members or candidate members, Party Central Committee members or other important Central Party positions. For the most part the cadres assigned to replace them in their previous positions came from positions about one rank below that of a typical chief Party secretary. This signified a widespread reorganization of the power structure in the provinces.

First let us look at the three officials who were moved to Cabinet positions at the SPA meeting in June 2010.¹¹⁾ Choi Yong Rim, who had been Party Secretary of Pyongyang City (2009.8~2010.6), was made Cabinet premier in June 2010, and joined the Political Bureau Standing Committee the following September. Mun Gyeong Deok was assigned to replace him as Party Secretary of Pyongyang. Mun became a Central Party Secretary and a candidate member of the Party Political Bureau in September 2010. Ri Tae Nam, who had been Party secretary of South Pyongan Province (2003.9?~2010.6), became deputy Cabinet premier, and Hong In Beom was appointed to replace him. Kim Nak Hee, who had been Party secretary of South Hwanghae Province (2005.6~2010.6), also became a deputy Cabinet premier and a candidate member of the Party Political Bureau in September 2010. In his place Noh Bae Kwon was appointed Party secretary of South Hwanghae Province. Noh had previously served as North Hwanghae Party secretary and People's Committee chairman (1998.9~2006.4) and served as a vice director of the Central Committee from March 2007.

Next, there were some cases in which regional Party secretaries were appointed to the Central Committee via the Party Delegates' Conference of September 2010. Choi Yong Hae, chief Party secretary of North Hwanghae (2006.4~2010.9), was replaced by Pak Tae Duk. Subsequently Choi Yong Hae became a Party Central Committee secretary, a candidate member of the Party Political Bureau, a member of the Party Central Military Committee, and a 4-star general in the KPA. Kim Pyeong Hae, who had concurrently served as chief Party secretary and People's Committee chairman of North Pyongan (1997.9~2010.9), became a candidate member of the Party Political Bureau, secretary of the Party Central Committee, and head of the Party Cadres Department. Ri Man Geon was appointed his successor. Hong Seok Hyeong,

11) Information on the following personnel changes can be found on the MoU (www.unikorea.go.kr) website by following the links 통일북한정보>북한개요>주요인물.

chief Party secretary of North Hamgyong Province (2001.7~2010.7), became director of the Party Planning and Finance Committee in July 2010 and additionally became a Party Central Committee secretary and member of the Party Political Bureau in September 2010. Oh Su Yong was appointed to replace him as North Hamgyong's chief Party Secretary. As previously stated, Hong Seok Hyeong was dismissed as Central Committee secretary in June 2011. Hong Seong Nam (2003.9~2009.3)' successor as South Hamgyong's chief Party secretary was Tae Jong Su (2009.8~2010.6), who became director of the Party's General Affairs Department and subsequently was appointed Central Committee secretary and Political Bureau candidate member in September 2010. His successor was Kwak Bum Gi, who had been a deputy Cabinet premier since September 1998. Pak Do Chun, who had been chief Party secretary of Jagang Province (2005.6~2010.9), became a Central Committee secretary and Political Bureau candidate member and, in April 2011, became a full member of the NDC. His successor as Jagang Province's chief Party secretary was Ju Young Shik. Kim Hee Taek was appointed Party secretary of Yanggang Province in March 2009, and in September 2010 he became a Central Committee member. Kim Hee Taek had been 1st vice minister of the Party Economic Policy Review Committee (2001.1~) and 1st vice minister of the Party Central Committee (in charge of light industry) (2001.10~). He is known to be a close associate of Kim Kyeong Hee, the director of the Party's Light Industry Department (1997.7~). His predecessor Kim Kyeong Ho (2002.12~2009.3) was dismissed over the defection of Sol Jong Shik, 1st secretary of the Yanggang Province Youth League.¹²⁾

Additionally, in December 2009 Kang Yang Mo was appointed Party secretary of the city of Nampo in place of Hong Chun Sam. In February 2010, Paek Gye Ryong replaced Ri Cheol Bong as Kangwon Province's chief Party secretary and Lim Kyeong Man replaced Kim Hyeon Ju as chief Party secretary of the city of Rason.

Power Restructuring of Officials in City and Central Government Bureaus

One interesting result of the replacement of Party secretaries is the successive ripple effect it has had on the power structures in the associated provincial power structures. This phenomenon has emerged most conspicuously in North Pyongan, North Hamgyong, and Yanggang Provinces. The transfer of Secretary Kim Pyeong

12) Mun Seong Hui, "Confusion Caused by Dementia of Yanggang Province Party Secretary," Radio Free Asia, Oct. 26; Ri Seong Jin, "Disagreement between Public and Officials over Replacement of Yanggang Province Party Secretary," Daily NK, March 24, 2009.

Hae, who had been active as secretary and chief secretary of the Party in North Pyongan for over 20 years, to a position in the Central Party resulted in a massive purge of major officials in the North Pyongan Province Party structure. The departure of Hong Seok Hyeong after nearly 10 years of service as the Party chief secretary of North Hamgyong was followed by continuous ‘anti-socialist phenomena’ investigations for nearly a full year. A similar phenomenon occurred in Yanggang Province, where Kim Kyeong Ho was replaced after 9 years of service as a Party secretary. While Ri Tae Nam (South Pyongan) and Hong Seok Hyeong (North Hamgyong) were both promoted from their regional positions to high-level posts in the Central Party, they were promptly purged soon after. Thus we can infer that the nominal promotion of provincial Party secretaries does not necessarily signify the acquisition of greater actual power. Among central government bureaus, the Ministry of Trade has particularly been a target of investigations and replacements.

Since September 2010 ‘anti-socialist phenomena’ investigations have been ongoing throughout North Hamgyong and Yanggang Provinces. This effort continues at the time of this writing (November 2011). These investigations and concurrent crack downs are being carried out in three directions. First is the struggle to prevent defections; second is the struggle against illegal drug use; third is the investigation and replacement of mid-level officials. A rough overview of the developments of the last year is as follows. First, in early 2011 the regime was highly uneasy about news of the Jasmine Revolution in the Middle East spreading internally through North Korea. Second, a General Military Security Bureau (military police) and General Escort Command (for Kim Jong Il) were introduced, bypassing the State Security Agency and the Party. Third, even as various joint inspections have been underway, corruption within the investigation teams themselves has emerged as a serious problem. Fourth, ‘anti-socialist phenomena’ inspections have particularly focused on the border areas in North Hamgyong and Yanggang, and in September this expanded to North Pyongan. Fifth, the General Escort Command (for Kim Jong Il) and the General Military Security Bureau have been directly involved in inspections of border security posts, customs offices, and security agencies in the border areas. Sixth, the families of defectors are being deported to the interior of the country. Seventh, CCTV cameras are being set up in border areas and preparations have been made to renew personal identification cards. In these processes, the objective is not only to crack down on defections, drugs and the diffusion of South Korean culture, but also to investigate ‘corruption’ of provincial Party and government agencies, prosecutors’ offices, and customs agencies. The major objective appears to be maintaining discipline among officials and rooting out cracks in the system in order to justify personnel replacements.

In addition, in early September 2011 there was a focused purge of key officials in the North Pyongan and Shinuiju Party structures as well as an investigation of North Pyongan organizations in general.¹³⁾ The purges affected three high-ranked officials in the provincial Party structure of North Pyongan, including a secretary of propaganda and the director of the provincial Organization Department. The Organization Department director is a key official in charge of handling most of the concerns and daily business of the provincial Party chief secretary. In Shinuiju some 30 officials were dismissed or demoted on charges of corruption including the City People's Committee chairman, a chief of the city People's Safety Agency and a criminal investigation department head. This purge appears to be an attack on the forces supporting former Secretary Kim Pyeong Hae by newly-appointed Provincial Party Secretary Ri Man Geon, who took office after the September 2010 Party Delegates' Conference, with support from Kim Jong Eun. For 10 years Kim Pyeong Hae had served as a secretary of the provincial Party Organization Department (1989.9~1997.9), and he became the province's chief Party secretary in September 1997. In September 2010 he was promoted to candidate member of the Party Political Bureau, member of the Party Central Committee, and head of the Party Cadres Department. Then in early October there was a mass investigation of Shinuiju customs officials.¹⁴⁾ Shinuiju customs had begun its own self-investigation in early September. As this investigation was in progress investigators came down from the center and a wide-scale investigation was restarted. As a result most of the customs officials, including the director, were replaced. A further investigation of the whole of North Pyongan Province continued through mid-October. This investigation was conducted by some 60 inspectors from North Hamgyong Province, and on October 28th was reviewed and discussed at a general meeting of officials and traders in the province. As a result five people related to the shellfish and marine products industry in Seoncheon County, North Pyongan Province were shot: the manager and vice-manager of the local sea food gathering branch, a shellfish boat captain, a secretary of the office for food administration, and the manager of the Woonjong-ri cooperative farm. A chief prosecutor committed suicide, and North Pyongan Party Secretary Ri Man Geon's personal secretary was also dismissed along with some 10 core officials from Seoncheon County, including the head of the local State Security office.

13) Pak Joon Hyeong, "30 Officials Purged in North Pyongan - Kim Jong Eun's Joint Production," Daily NK, October 4, 2011; Pak Joon Hyeong, "Kim Jong Eun Using Even Regional Sentiment? 5 Executed in North Pyongan," Daily NK, Nov. 2, 2011.

14) Kim Jun Ho, "Mass Replacement of Officials in Shinuiju," Radio Free Asia, Oct. 4, 2011.

In early-to-mid September of 2011 a joint investigative group formed by the Escort Command (for Kim Jong Il) and the National Defense Commission conducted a thorough investigation of the Ministry of Trade.¹⁵⁾ The investigation looked closely at the details of wages and expenses of overseas trade workers and searched for any signs of impropriety. The objective was to assess the degree to which individuals were involved in siphoning assets and how much had been paid off to upper-level Party officials. Seven officials at the bureau chief level were dismissed, and various personnel in the hierarchy beneath them were arrested. Some workers at overseas bureaus may have returned voluntarily, but many individuals who had failed to complete their assignments over the past 1~2 years received summons to return, having been deemed “persons who have made no contribution to the state and are lacking in loyalty.” Even a vice minister and a councilor of the Trade Ministry, who had gone to China to seek a solution to the food problem, were suddenly arrested.¹⁶⁾ These officials had been unable to produce any significant results, and so the Central Party ordered their arrest and opened an investigation on charges of negligence and failure to complete assigned tasks. About 90% of officials at the Ministry of Trade have reportedly been replaced. The widespread replacement of trade officials has caused severe setbacks for North Korea’s trade with China, and this has disrupted the internal distribution of consumer goods, contributing to price inflation. The current minister of trade is Ri Yong Nam (2008.3~).

A Generation Shift among Lower-Level Officials

Looking at the direction of replacements and the generation shift of lower-level officials, we can make the following observations. At the Provincial Party Secretaries’ Conference held in late November 2010, it was decided that the status of many elderly (over 60) or disabled Party members would be changed to “honorary Party membership.” Approximately one million members over 60 were changed to honorary Party members and their places were taken by young members in their 20s and 30s.¹⁷⁾ Beginning in 2010 and continuing until June 2011, young Party members were deployed en masse to city and county bureaus of the State Security and People’s Safety Agencies throughout North Korea.¹⁸⁾ In North and South Pyongan, it is being

15) Good Friends, “Officials of the Ministry of Trade Are All Being Replaced?” North Korea Today, No. 420, Sept. 14, 2011.

16) Good Friends, “Ministry of Foreign Trade, Vice Minister and Councilor Arrested,” North Korea Today, No. 420, Sept. 14, 2011.

17) Jung Yong Su, “Kim Jong Eun exchanges 1 Million Party Members with ‘Young Blood,’” Joongang Ilbo, March 11, 2011.

18) Lee Bum Gi and Lee Seok Young, “North Korean Security Agencies Refilled with Officials in

reported that younger officials have rapidly taken over central roles in the SSA and PSA bureaus. In the case of the SSA, each office has about 2~3 officials who are in their late 20s or early 30s, and in the PSA roughly 5~6 out of every 10 officials are in their 30s. In Yanggang the SSA and PSA bureaus and prosecution offices are almost completely filled with personnel in their early-to-mid 30s, and in more and more of the city and county SSA bureaus it is possible to find officials in their early-to-mid 30s holding positions up to the vice-director level. Meanwhile, on May 18th 2011 a directive was issued for recommendations of young cadres for promotion at all levels of the Party organization.¹⁹⁾ Furthermore, young officials in their 20s and 30s have begun emerging in the city and county Party Organization departments. There have also been specific orders to promote Party officials from the military. In relation to the provincial, city and county representatives' elections held on July 24th, a directive²⁰⁾ was issued for an approximately 10% increase in the number of candidates to be chosen from among factory and business managers who had shown distinction in production planning and improving the material lives of workers. Meanwhile, regional SSA bureaus have fallen prey to purges. In Seoncheon County of North Pyongan Province there was also a widespread purge of officials connected to the SSA, and some executions by firing squad have reportedly occurred within SSA barracks to target corruption.²¹⁾ In Yanggang Province in late October several high-level SSA officials were purged. Meanwhile a generational transition has been occurring within the military as well.²²⁾ Under the patronage of Kim Jong Il and with help from Chief of General Staff Ri Young Ho and General Political Bureau 1st Vice Director Kim Jeong Gak, Kim Jong Eun has begun exercising real authority over the military, including issuing directives on strategy and restructuring the military organization. It is said that he has replaced front line troop commanders with military officers in their 30s and 40s who have a strong allegiance to him in order to build up a base of support within the military.

As a result of these developments, various law enforcement workers and officials in the regional Party organizations as well as the Central Party have been replaced on

their 30s: Preparing the Kim Jong Eun Regime," Daily NK, June 20th, 2011.

19) Lee Jun Woon, "Mass Promotion of North Korean Officials in their 20s and 30s: Preparing for the Kim Jong Eun Era," Open Radio for North Korea, July 8, 2010.

20) Choi Ho Yeon, "Objective of July Elections of Province, City, and County Reps Confirmed," North Korea Strategic Information Service Center, July 4, 2011.

21) Kang Mi Jin, "Arrest and Investigation Yanggang SSA Counter-Intelligence Vice Director," Daily NK, Oct. 31, 2011.

22) Kim Eun Ji, "Kim Jong Eun Wielding Power in Military and Security Organizations: Textbook on Kim Jong Eun Being Published," Voice of America, Sept. 21, 2011.

a massive scale, and generous political rewards are being handed out to these individuals.²³⁾ They are receiving all kinds of compensation in addition to the basics of food and daily necessities; as an example, recently new cars were distributed to many officials. The Central Party distributed 6 cars for each county – one each for the chief Party secretary, the local People’s Assembly chairman, the director of People’s Safety, the head of the prosecutor’s office, the director of security, and the local SSA director.

Conclusion

As we have seen, as the Kim Jong Eun succession system has been built up since January 2009, major personnel have been replaced on a wide scale throughout the upper, middle and lower levels. The first phase of this began in early 2009 and continued up to the Supreme People’s Assembly meeting in June 2010. This targeted high officials in the military and the Party who had played core roles in ‘the military–first political system’ since 1995. Most of these officials were elderly and could naturally be considered targets for replacement, but considering the timing and method of their replacement there is sufficient grounds to suspect that this was a planned maneuver. The 2nd phase was a purge of officials from the central economic and security organizations. This phase continued from early 2010 to mid 2011. The interesting point here is that the constant purges of economic officials may not have been due to responsibility for economic problems but rather to the need to reorganize economic privileges for the Kim Jong Eun succession. The third phase, starting around September 2010, was a mass exchange of chief Party secretaries of provinces and major cities. Most of these secretaries were promoted to higher–level positions in the Central Party. Their successors were relatively less prominent individuals than their predecessors had been. While most of these provincial Party secretaries were appointed to nominally higher positions in the Central Party, it is questionable whether their power and status actually increased. In the fourth phase, as the newly appointed provincial Party secretaries took office, their predecessors’ power structures were dissolved. This played out most prominently in North Hamgyong, Yanggang, and North Pyongan. Finally, since the Party Delegates’ Conference of September 2010, a generation shift has occurred as mid and low–level officials in the central and regional Party organizations have been replaced en masse by younger officials in their 30s and 40s. This has led to lightning promotions of certain groups and the accompanying downfall of their oppositions.

23) Good Friends, “New Cars for Newly Appointed Officials, While People Survive on Grass Porridge,” North Korea Today, No. 424, Oct. 12, 2011.