



## **DPRK FOCUSES ON CNC IN 2011: KIM JONG UN'S BIRTHDAY PASSES QUIETLY**

On January 7, the Korean Workers' Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun ran an article introducing the Huichon Ryonha Machine Complex, which manufactures Computer Numerical Control (CNC) systems. The article appeared just before Kim Jong Un's birthday, and the CNC system appears to be attributed to the youngest son of Kim Jong Il.

The newspaper introduced the machine complex by calling for advancements in the coming year, stating that the CNC system manufacturer "saved our country" and that it was the envy of everyone, catching eyes around the world. The article also proclaimed that "the fatherland" was "growing younger and stronger" with the implementation of vanguard-technology CNC, and that equipment filling a space the size of seven soccer stadiums was set to further the push for industrialization. The reference to 'growing younger and stronger' is thought to refer to Kim Jong Un.

In particular, the article stated that North Korea "is not a country that only answers the hardline talk of aggressors with a more hardline response," and that the North "is not a country that answers the nuclear cudgel of the aggressors as a satellite-launching country or a nuclear country by name alone." Rather, "the citizens living on this land will answer with vanguard technological breakthroughs" in the face of the economic and technologically dominant aggressors.



North Korea's satellite launch and nuclear programs were credited to Kim Jong Il in both domestic and international propaganda. The article emphasizing 'vanguard technological breakthroughs' is part of a campaign in which the succession system and Kim Jong Un's reputation are being built on economic and technological development. Increasing propaganda touting CNC technology, in particular, is reflective of the realization of Kim Jong Un's leadership role.

On one hand, there were no special ceremonies on January 8, the first birthday of Kim Jong Un's to pass since his official emergence into DPRK politics. In fact, according to the Daily NK, Kim Jong Un's birthday is not acknowledged in the official calendars issued by Pyongyang at the end of last year.

Last year, North Korea recognized Kim Jong Un's birthday as a special holiday, with laborers and farm workers all having a day off. Within the Party, the day is known as "the people's holiday," and there were internal celebrations attended by Party members. A source within North Korea explained to Daily NK, "with no official promulgation of a successor, it doesn't make sense to make the Young General's birthday a holiday."

While it's clear that Kim Jong Un will move up through the ranks to take his father's leadership position, he has to first be officially established within the Party before his birthday can be celebrated on a national level. Furthermore, since the currency reform measures at the end of November, 2009, prices skyrocketed and the lives of the people grew more difficult. With the current atmosphere within North Korea, it would not benefit Kim Jong Un to be cast into the spotlight by politicizing his birthday.



In addition, North Korean authorities have been emphasizing the ‘battle’ for light industrial development and the improvement of the lives of the people through the New Year’s Joint Resolution and other articles in state-run newspapers and media, while the people of North Korea have been gathering in groups to have the joint resolution explained and the key points emphasized. In this situation, it appears authorities decided that public celebration of Kim Jong Un’s birthday would be distracting.