

Kim Jong-un Makes Over 61 Onsite Inspection Visits

Since Kim Jong-un's first election as the vice-chairman of the Korean Workers' Party Central Military Commission (CMC) on September 28, 2010, Kim Jong-un was reported to have made 33 accompanied onsite inspections with Kim Jong-il and a total of 61 visits at industrial sites.

Out of the 61 total visits, Kim Jong-un inspected the following industries: power/electricity (5 times); metal (3 times), machinery (12 times); agricultural (4 times); light (5 times); food (14 times); and industrial (4 times). Construction sites of Huichon Power Stations were visited four times while the Huichon Ryonha General Machinery Plant and the Kanggye General Tractor Plant were also visited multiple times.

Kim Jong-un's "economic learning" began while accompanying his late father Kim Jong-il on onsite inspections. Even when Kim Jong-il was alive, Kim Jong-un was most likely to have made preliminary visits to these industrial sites for a closer assessment as a part of his duty as the vice-chairman of the CMC.

The significance of the recent visits mainly lie with inspections to the Huichon Power Stations (located in Jagang Province) equipped with 300,000 kW of power generation capacity. Huichon Power Station was an important national strategic project which was often emphasized by Kim Jong-il, "The construction of the power plant must be completed before the centennial birthday of the Great Leader (Kim Il-sung) with great efforts from the entire party, military and the people."

The electricity produced at the Huichon Power Station is likely to be distributed primarily in the Pyongyang area around the two national holidays, the Day of the Shining Star (Kim Jong-il's birthday) and the Day of the Sun (Kim Il-sung's birthday). Currently, power line constructions are still underway in Pyongyang.

At Huichon, constructions of additional terraced power plants are under planning using the currents from the Yangtze and Cheongcheo Rivers. The electricity produced from these plants is likely to be distributed to the industrial areas in Jagang Province, which is central to the machinery and national defense industries.

Important policy implications can be found from Kim Jong-un's past accompaniment to the Huichon Ryonha General Machinery Plant with Kim Jong-il. This plant is currently emphasized as Kim Jong-un's accomplishment and revered as, "the industrial revolution of the new era," and a "site of CNC (Computer Numerical Control) breakthrough." In addition, Kim Jong-un's economic leadership is acclaimed for placing prominence on the state-of-the-art technology and "knowledge-based economy."

Kim Jong-il visited the Huichon Ryonha General Machinery Plant on October 28, 2011 with Kim Jong-un and inspected the CNC assembly line, CNC processing plant, and CNC machineries. He stressed, "Modernization must be promoted in all sectors and levels founded on the state-of-the-art technology. The achievements in the CNC technology should serve as the stepping stone to move forward toward a higher level of science and technology."

Similarly on October 27, 2011, Kim Jong-il visited the Yangtze River Machinery Plant with

the younger Kim and stressed, “Powerful economic nation that we are seeking is knowledge-based economy which is only possible when CNC technology and automation is realized that can create material wealth through little resources, efforts, and energy.”

The “knowledge-based economy” will likely become the trademark of Kim Jong-un and esteemed as following the “teachings of Kim Jong-il.” Kim Jong-un’s recent industrial site visits were concentrated on the cutting edge production facilities equipped with modernized and automated production processes.