

## **KIM JONG IL INSPECTS TROOPS**

Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defense Commission of North Korea, has recently performed frequent inspections of North Korean troops.

A compilation of North Korean press reports released through the first week of June reveals that Kim inspected troops as many as twelve times in the last month. This month he has already visited army, navy, and air force divisions a total of five times.

This year, the number of military inspections performed by Kim has increased each month: one in January, three in February, and eight in both March and April. It is clear that Kim's public activity is focused on military assessments: troop inspections constitute 37 (or 68 percent) of the 54 public events held this year. The increase is noticeable even when compared to the previous year, in which he performed three inspections in January, nine in both April and May, and one in June.

In essence, Kim Jong Il's frequent inspections represent an effort to impress upon the military its duty as the ultimate guardian of the North Korean government and people, against the backdrop of intensifying American pressure for regime change and collapse of the current system.

In light of increasing American pressure and the expansion of inter-Korean relations, the inspections can also be interpreted as an active expression of confidence in and reliance on a defense-minded military. In addition, the inspections are meant to demonstrate Kim's dedication to the military, not only to the troops themselves but also to North Korean society as a whole.