

## Diplomats Meet in Korea

It appears that real diplomatic efforts might be starting to defuse the current situation in Korea. Yahoo! News is reporting a Reuters story ( [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101209/ap\\_on\\_re\\_as/as\\_koreas\\_clash](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101209/ap_on_re_as/as_koreas_clash) ) that outlines the efforts underway to calm Korea.

“Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo, Beijing's top foreign policy official, turned up in Pyongyang for "warm and friendly" talks with the North's leader Kim on Thursday, the [official Korean Central News Agency](#) reported.

The meeting — shown in photos with the two sharing smiles and handshakes — comes a day after the top American military officer slammed China for appearing unwilling to wade into the fray. Beijing has called for calm on both sides but has done little to rein in North Korea, despite being the only country that wields any significant influence over the regime.

China fought on North Korea's side during the Korean War, and has remained the nation's only major ally as well as its main supplier of economic aid and diplomatic support.

China's move was met by another promising one from the U.S., which has spent the past two weeks denouncing the shelling, vowing not to reward the North for bad behavior and reiterating its commitment to ally South Korea. New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson announced that he would travel to North Korea next week.

"If I can contribute to the easing of tension on the peninsula, the trip will be well worth it," the governor said in a statement Wednesday.”

Please read the entire article for more information.

**Analysis.** It appears that the PRC has finally figured out that we are serious that Kim is their problem and it is up to them to point Kim in the correct direction before Japan, South Korea and the United States will have anything to do with North Korea. However, this is strictly a photo op. The PRC has already proved that it is unwilling to do anything that will cause an increase in the number of refugees crossing the Yalu into Manchuria.

The invitation to Governor Richardson is, however, a step up from the North Koreans. It is an indication that the North really does want to talk to the United States. It will be interesting to see what he brings back from the North in the way of demands. North Korea may well be looking for a new “Agreed Framework” deal to help cement the succession of Kim Jong Un. This is a public gesture of intent. The United States and North Korea do talk through their respective United Nations delegations.

The Kabuki dance is just beginning.