

North Could Face Air Strikes

JoongAng Ilbo is [reporting](#) on the confirmation hearings for Kim Kwan-jin to be the new Minister of Defense of South Korea.

“We would definitely use the Air Force to strike back,” Kim said in response to a question at the hearing. During the Yeonpyeong attack, the military deployed its F-15K fighter jets (Information on the F-15K is available [here](#).), but it did not conduct an air strike against the North’s artillery sites for fear of escalating the situation. The decision has been criticized by the public and lawmakers, and Defense Minister Kim Tae-young was forced to resign as a result. Kim said that the rules of engagement would be changed to strengthen South Korea’s right to self-defense.

“Rules of engagement are valid as guidelines to prevent accidental clashes from escalating,” said Kim. “However, when [a country is suddenly] attacked, that’s a matter of self-defense. The enemy must be punished thoroughly until the source of hostility is eliminated.” ... Answering questions from the National Assembly’s National Defense Committee, Kim underscored the possibility that North Korea could strike again, repeating a similar warning this week by the director of the National Intelligence Service. “Up until now, North Korea has made provocations in ways that were difficult to foresee, and the provocations are getting larger in scale as they occur. There is a possibility that they will attack [again] in an unexpected way,” Kim said. “Including the five western border islands, I believe our entire country is a possible target for provocations. Attacks can be focused in one area, or they can happen at once in different regions. Preparations will be made for all possibilities.” (Edited for space.)

Please read the entire article for more important information.

Analysis. As stated in the article, North Korea has increased the deployment of missile units to near the DMZ. They are also engaging in exercises that may be practices for more attacks. They could also be doing their preparations for the "end-of-half" live fire exercises before the Christmas break. Generally speaking, this is when the half year group that has completed its two years of service goes home and the units prepare to receive the new half year group in January. Whether or not the half year group is released or not, we will probably not know. However, keeping the half year group could be a sign of preparation for attack.

Also unknown is whether or not the Korean People's Army (KPA) uses the "second formation" system. In this system, unit staff sizes are doubled. If the unit is mobilized for war, the second officers in every post stay behind and act as the command cadre for a new unit formed from reservists as they report for duty. It is quick and efficient as the Germans found out in World War Two. With two-thirds of the KPA stationed within 50 kilometers of the DMZ to start with, that is a lot of people that can be assembled and sent south in very short order.

In addition Daily NK is [reporting](#) that North Korea has begun holding "Loyalty Resolve Gatherings" in the universities.

The Daily NK has confirmed that North Korea’s major universities have been hosting “loyalty resolve gatherings”, in which students vow to volunteer for military service as required by Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Eun, something which does not bode well for future provocations against the South. A Daily NK source inside North Korea reported today, “On

the 27th of last month, a loyalty resolve gathering was held by Chongjin Mine and Metal Engineering College primary committee of the Party and the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League for the entire student body and professors.” The source explained, “In the gathering, a resolution was adopted whereby ‘All members will rush to the front line under the leadership of the General (Kim Jong Il) and the Youth Captain (Kim Jong Eun) if a state of war with South Chosun and the U.S. imperialists is declared.’” The source added, “As far as I know, not only Chongjin Mine and Metal Engineering College but also other central universities in Pyongyang and other provinces have been holding loyalty resolve gatherings since November 26th.”

This could be a sign that North Korea is preparing its people for war or just another part of the propaganda and provocations program to get what it needs from South Korea, Japan and especially the United States. It may well be that the Kim family is betting that they can coerce the United States into direct talks aimed at concluding a peace treaty that will formally establish North Korea as a separate country. The United States position has always been that Korea should be reunified peacefully and by a vote of the Korean people for the government they want. The Kim family is aware they they would probably be voted "most likely to be hung" but not to govern a united Korea. So much for daddy's dream.

There have also been prior reports that the "Young Captain" is not playing well to the people who must follow him. Nor is there any guarantee that if the KPA rejected Kim 3, that the second level people could form a stable government short of a wartime command structure. Kim 2 is not in good health. That is why I believe this transition is being rushed compared to the transition from Kim 1 to Kim 2.