



OSC Analysis: DPRK-Syria Bilateral Contacts, 2005-2007

FEA20080506659592 - OSC Feature - North Korea -- OSC Analysis 02 May 08

[KPNKLD, KPNKECO, KPNKNUC, KPNKMIL, KPNKST Corrected version: spelling, several minor corrections made.]

A review of available North Korean and Syrian print and online media in the period 2005-2007 has yielded the names of dozens of DPRK and Syrian officials involved in military, scientific, trade, and other aspects of bilateral relations. The media contain no clear references to collaboration regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD), although allegations have surfaced over the years in third-country media. Indeed, media reports from 2005 through 2007 include fewer references to bilateral military and scientific contacts than in preceding years. Nevertheless, reported contacts of a high-ranking official of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces (MPAF) with Syrian diplomats, the visit to Pyongyang of a senior Syrian security officer, and certain collaborative projects in economics and trade may have some undeclared military significance. This is the fourth such review of bilateral relations. Three previous reports on officials involved in bilateral relations from 1992 through 2004, as well as five photographic reports for the same period, are available at www.opensource.gov.

No Media Pointers to WMD

No obvious indications of covert military cooperation surfaced in the highly-censored media of North Korea or Syria in this period. The visit of Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) Chairman Choe Thae Bok (Ch'oe T'ae-pok) to Syria in October 2007, coming only weeks after the Israeli air strike of 6 September against an alleged Syrian nuclear reactor site, is a case in point. Third-country media speculated on a connection between the visit and the bombing, but DPRK media never went beyond simply denouncing Israel for violating Syrian airspace and dropping "bombs in the desert in the northeastern area before fleeing" (KCNA, 11 September 2007); Pyongyang central media made no comments on allegations connecting Choe's visit to the raid.

A review of television images showing DPRK officials accompanying Choe in one meeting showed a uniformed military official, suggesting that Choe may have brought an officer from Pyongyang to discuss matters relating to the stricken Syrian site. However, a review of photographs in Syrian media unearthed a 2005 photograph apparently showing the same officer at a reception of the DPRK Embassy in Damascus, suggesting that the man was simply the military attaché, Colonel Mun Yong Nam, not a member of Choe's visiting entourage. As a member of the embassy's country team, Colonel Mun's presence may have been normal for any high-level delegation visiting Damascus, rather than evidence that Choe had come to Syria on account of the Israeli air strike.

Fewer Military, S&T Contacts

Overall, DPRK and Syrian media coverage of bilateral affairs during 2005-2007 included fewer reports of contacts in such areas of interest as military affairs and science and technology than in years past. No military delegation on either side visited the other, unlike some past years. There were no reported visits of Syrian officials to the Korea Computer Center (KCC) or of Korean officials touring Syria's Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC), in

contrast to previous periods; both KCC and SSRC are alleged in third-country media of having military links.

Military, Security, Science, Economic Contacts of Interest

Nevertheless, the period 2005-2007 includes some contacts of interest in military and security affairs, science and technology, and economic cooperation.

- o Syrian Interior Vice Minister Ibrahim Musli led a ministry delegation to Pyongyang in December 2006 and signed a cooperation agreement there. DPRK media reported no details of his agenda but noted that People's Security Vice Minister Sin Il-nam hosted the visit and signed the agreement for the DPRK side. Sin, a career officer of the Korean People's Army, has also served as a Cabinet vice premier and chairman of the Capital Construction Committee, according to the ROK National Intelligence Service (www.nis.go.kr). He has reportedly been the "closest confidant" of Chang So'ng-t'aek, Kim Jong Il's brother-in-law (*Monthly Chosun*, 1 July 2004). While in Pyongyang, Musli toured sites frequented by foreign visitors, such as the captured USS Pueblo, but he also visited the College of Politics under the Ministry of People's Security. The unusual stop may point to Syrian security officers training in North Korea.
- o People's Armed Forces Vice Minister Kim Sang-ik attended receptions at the Syrian Embassy on 5 February and 18 April 2005 in honor of the respective birthdays of Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung. In July 2003, Vice Minister Kim had attended a Syrian Embassy reception marking the anniversary of North Korea's "victory" in the Korean war.
- o In May 2007, *Rodong Sinmun* published a KCNA article that reported the signing of an accord for scientific cooperation between the presidents of Kim Il Sung University and the University of Damascus. The Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) omitted to report any details of the agreement, or even the place and day of its signing. The report came one year after a Syrian newspaper reported the DPRK ambassador expressed to the Syrian minister for higher education a particular desire for cooperation between the two universities.

CHRONOLOGY

The entries below are summaries of events reported by the KCNA, often carried in the DPRK party organ Rodong Sinmun, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), and other DPRK and Syrian sources. Official titles and military ranks are those at the time of the report as they appeared in the source. All officials reported by name in the media are listed below:

Event: DPRK Ambassador Visits Damascus Exhibition

Date: 25-28 November 2007

Location: Damascus, Aleppo

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam went to an exhibition held 25-28 November at the Four Seasons Hotel in Damascus. The event took place with the participation or sponsorship of Syrian decorating firm Charismano Decoration.

Source: Charismano Decoration (<http://www.charismano.com/newsar.html>)

Event: DPRK Union Officials Tour Syria, Iran

Date: 12-27 November 2007

Location: Syria, Iran

People: General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea (GFTUK) Chairman Kim Pyo'ng-p'al left Pyongyang on 12 November at the head of a GFTUK delegation to visit Syria and Iran on 12 November. The delegation reportedly visited Syria to participate in the 25th conference of the Syrian General Federation of Trade Unions, which Syrian media report as having opened on 17 November. Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party (BASP) Assistant Secretary General Abdallah al-Ahmar held talks with the Korean delegation in Damascus on 19 November. Also reported attending were, with BASP National Command Foreign Relations Director Muhammad Yasminah and DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam. GFTUK Vice Chairman Kim Yo'ng-to, Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani, and Iranian Charge d'Affaires Hamid Reza

Sadeq were on hand at Pyongyang Station for the group's departure by train; Kim welcomed the delegation on its return to the station on 27 November.

Sources: Korean Central Broadcasting Station (12 November 2007), *Rodong Sinmun* (13, 30 November 2007), SANA (18, 19 November 2007), Syrian Arab Television (17 November 2007)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Meets BASP Official

Date: 29 October 2007

Location: Damascus

People: DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam discussed bilateral issues with Sa'id Iliyah, member of the BASP regional leadership as well as chairman of the Korean-Syrian Friendship Association.

Source: http://www.baath-party.org/eng/2007/archives_details.asp?id=141

Event: Senior DPRK Official Tours Italy, Syria

Date: 13-25 October 2007

Location: Italy, Syria

People: SPA Chairman Choe Thae Bok led a DPRK delegation to Italy and Syria.

o The delegation, arriving in Damascus on 19 October, received a welcome at the airport from People's Assembly Deputy Speaker Radwan Habib, People's Assembly Committee for Arab and Foreign Affairs Chairman S ulayman Ha ddad, and DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam.

o On 20 October, Choe met Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar; also present were People's Assembly Deputy Speaker Radwan Habib, BASP National Leadership Foreign Relations Director Muhammad Yasminah, and DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam.

o In another meeting on 20 October, Choe and his delegation met BASP Assistant Regional Secretary Muhammad Sa'id Bukhaytan. The meeting was attended by Haytham al-Stayhi, a member of the BASP Regional Leadership and chief of the Bureau for Culture, Information and External Relations, and Sa'id Iliyah, a member of the National Leadership, chairman of the Organizing Regional Bureau, and Chairman of the Syrian-Korean Friendship Association.

o On 21 October, Choe paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Najji al-Itri. That same day, Choe had talks with his counterpart, Syrian People's Assembly Speaker Muhammad al-Abrash.

o On 22 October, their final day in Syria, Choe and his party met President Bashar al-Asad at the presidential palace; Syrian People's Assembly Speaker Muhammad al-Abrash, DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam also joined the meeting.

o Apart from his meetings in the capital, Choe also toured Quneitra in the Syrian Golan Heights at one point during his stay in Syria.

o Choe flew from Damascus on 22 October, returning to Pyongyang on 25 October. Standing Committee Secretary-General Ch'oe Yo'ng-rim, Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani, and Chinese Charge d'Affaires Xing Haiming were at the airport for the group's departure and return.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (14, 23-26 October 2007), SANA (19, 20, 21 October)

Event: Syrian BASP Official Visits

Date: 20-27 September 2007

Location: Pyongyang

People: Pyongyang received a delegation led by BASP Party Regional Leadership Organization Department Chief Sa'id Iliyah Dawud. WPK Central Committee Secretary Choe Thae Bok hosted a reception for the visitors on 21 September; Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani also attended. The next day, SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam met the delegation and the Syrian charge d'affaires at Mansudae Assembly Hall. The Syrian visitors also visited Mangyongdae, the Korean Revolution Museum, the Party Founding Museum, the Three-Revolution Exhibition, and the USS Pueblo. The visitors departed Pyongyang on 27 September. WPK Central Committee Department Deputy Director Pak Kyo'ng-so'n and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at the airport for the group's arrival and departure.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (21, 23, 25, 28 September 2007)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Hosts Reception

Date: 5 September 2007

Location: Damascus

People: DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam hosted a reception at his embassy to celebrate the anniversary of the DPRK's founding. Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmad Arnus, Minister of State for Administrative Development Yusuf Sulayman al-Ahmad, Minister of State for the People's Assembly Yusuf Suwayd; Yusuf Faysal, member of the Central Leadership, National Progressive Front; and Hunayn Nimr, first secretary of the Syrian Communist Party.

Source: SANA (6 September 2007)

Event: DPRK Government Economic Delegation Visits Iran, Syria

Date: 4-22 August 2007

Location: Tehran, Damascus

People: Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man led a government economic delegation on a tour of Iran and Syria.

o On 13 August, in Damascus, the delegation met Prime Minister Muhammad Naji al-Itri.

o On 15 August, Rim and Economy and Trade Minister Amir Hosni Lutfi signed the protocol of the fifth session of the joint economic committee for cooperation in trade, economy, and science and technology; resident DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam reportedly attended the signing ceremony.

o According to SANA, there was also an agreement between the DPRK Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce to establish a joint council of businessmen; Lutfi had called for a joint board of businessmen when Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man visited Damascus in August 2007 for a meeting of the joint economic committee. Lutfi also promised to study Korean proposals for investment projects in Syria.

o Foreign Trade Vice Minister Ri Myo'ng-san, as well as Syrian Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani and the resident Iranian charge d'affaires, were at the airport for the group's departure; only the Iranian charge d'affaires was named as greeting the group there on return.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (5, 15, 17, 22 August 2007), SANA (7, 15 August 2007)

Event: WPK Tour of Egypt, Syria, and Yemen

Date: 23 June-10 July 2007

Location: Damascus

People: Kim T'ae-chong, a deputy division chief of the WPK Central Committee, led a party delegation from Pyongyang on 23 June on a tour of Egypt, Syria, and Yemen.

o On 30 June, Kim held talks with Sa'id Iliyah, chairman of the regional organization bureau in the BASP Regional Leadership, to review bilateral relations; Das Izz al-Din, secretary of the Damascus country's party section, also talked of bilateral relations with the delegation.

o On 1 July, in Damascus, Kim held talks with BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar to discuss furthering cooperative party relations; BASP National Command Foreign Relations Director Muhammad Yasminah and DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam attended the meeting.

o On 1 July, Kim T'ae-chong also met Foreign Deputy Minister Faysal al-Miqdad, with the BASP's Muhammad Yasminah and Ambassador Kim attending

o At some point in the visit, DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and BASP National Command Foreign Relations Director Muhammad Yasminah signed an agreement for bilateral cooperation between the two ruling parties.

o Unidentified WPK functionaries, as well as the Egyptian ambassador and Syrian Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani, were at the airport for the delegation's departure and return.

Source: BASP website (www.baath-party.org/eng/), *Rodong Sinmun* (24 June, 11 July 2007), SANA (1, 2 July 2007)

Event: Bilateral University Cooperation in Science, Technology

Date: Unknown

Location: Unknown

People: Kim Il Sung University President So'ng Cha-rip and Damascus University President Wail Muala signed an accord of amity and cooperation in science. The KCNA did not report the date and place of the signing, but the source date suggests the event may have taken place around mid-May 2007.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (16 May 2007)

Event: DPRK Agricultural Workers Union Delegation Visits Syria, Egypt

Date: 26 April - 10 May 2007

Location: Damascus

People: Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk led a union delegation on 26 April from Pyongyang on a tour of Syria and Egypt. On 2 May, Kang met BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar; Hammad al-Sa'ud, head of the Syrian Union of Peasants, and DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam attended the meeting. In Pyongyang, Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Vice Chairman Kil Sang-pong and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at their airport for the delegation's departure and return.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (27 April, 11 May 2007), (Syrian TV1, 3 May 2007)

Event: DPRK Receives Visit of Syrian Foreign Ministry Delegation

Date: 21-24 April 2007

Location: Pyongyang

People: On 21 April, Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmad Arnus, leading a delegation of the Syrian foreign ministry, flew into Pyongyang. On 23 April, SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam received the delegation at Mansudae Assembly Hall. The delegation visited Mangyongdae, the Tower of the Chuch'e Idea, Mansudae Art Studio, and the USS Pueblo while in Pyongyang before departing on 24 April. Unidentified "relevant" DPRK officials and Syrian charge d'affaires were at the airport for the group's arrival and departure.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (22, 24, 25 April 2007)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Participates in Aleppo Exhibition

Date: 19 March 2007

Location: Aleppo, Syria

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam joined Nahid S hawa, an executive with the Syrian decorating company Charismano Decoration; Aleppo Governor Tamir al-Hujjah; Aleppo Mayor Ma'an al-Shibli; and BASP Central Committee member Abdul Qadir al-Misri at an Aleppo exhibition of DPRK photographs and publications held in honor of the Day of the Sun. The corporate website omitted the date of the exhibition, but a KCNA article referring to Aleppo's governor speaking at such an event on 19 March suggests the two sources describe the same happening.

Source: Charismano Decoration (<http://www.charismano.com/newsar.html>), KCNA (28 March 2007)

Event: DPRK Receives Visit of Syrian Ministry of Interior (MOI) Delegation

Date: 12-16 December 2006

Location: Pyongyang

People: Interior Vice Minister Ibrahim Fayiz Musli arrived at the head of an MOI delegation on 12 December. On 14 December, People's Security Vice Minister Sin Il-nam led a Ministry of People's Security delegation in talks at Mansudae Assembly Hall with the Interior Ministry visitors. Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani reportedly attended the meeting. The two sides "exchanged opinions on a series of issues" regarding "exchange and cooperation between the security organs of the two countries." The two representatives then signed a mutual agreement for aid and cooperation. The group toured Mangyongdae; the Tower of the Juche Idea; the College of Politics, Ministry of People's Security; Grand People's Study Hall; and the USS Pueblo. The delegation departed on 16 December.

Unidentified "relevant" DPRK officials and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at the airport for the group's

arrival and departure.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (13, 15 December 2006)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Meets Syrian Trade Minister

Date: 30 November 2006

Location: Damascus

People: DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and Minister of Economy and Trade Amir Hosni Lutfi discussed in Damascus issues of bilateral cooperation raised in the fourth session of the joint committee on cooperation in trade and technology, held in May 2006 in Pyongyang, and previewed issues for the fifth session, slated to take place in Damascus in 2007.

Source: *Al-Thawra* (1 December 2006)

Event: DPRK Central Court Delegation Visits Syria

Date: 12-26 October 2006

Location: Damascus

People: Central Court First Deputy Chief Justice Yun Myo'ng-kuk led a Central Court delegation to Damascus. On 18 October, Yun and Syrian Justice Minister Muhammad al-Ghafri signed a bilateral treaty for judicial cooperation in civil and criminal cases and the exchange of expertise in various judicial matters. In Pyongyang, Central Court Deputy Chief Justice Ho' Hyo'n-kil and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at the airport for the group's departure; Central Court Deputy Chief Justice Tokko Il-pong and Charge d'Affaires Adib al-Hani met them at their airport on their return.

Sources: KCNA (21 October 2006), *Rodong Sinmun* (13, 28 October 2006), SANA (18 October 2006), *Tishrin* (18, 19 October 2006)

Event: Embassy Reception

Date: 18 July 2006

Location: Embassy of Syria

People: Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani held a reception to mark the 40th anniversary of bilateral relations. The named guests were Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun; DPRK-Syria Friendship Association Chairman Rim Kyong Man, the foreign trade minister; Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League Central Committee First Secretary Kim Kyo'ng-ho; Foreign Vice Minister Kung So'k-ung; and Education Vice Minister Cho'n Ku'k-man.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (19 July 2006)

Event: Syrian BASP Youth Vanguard Leader Visits

Date: 23-30 June 2006

Location: Pyongyang

People: Ahmad Abu Musa, chairman of the BASP Youth Vanguard, flew at the head of a delegation into Pyongyang on 23 June. WPK Central Committee Secretary Choe Thae Pok met the delegation on 28 June at Mansudae Assembly Hall; Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League (KISSYL) Central Committee Secretary Kil Ch'o'l-hyo'k attended the meeting. Kim Kyo'ng-ho and Ahmad Abu Musa signed on 26 (KCNA) or 27 (Al-Thawra) June at Mansudae Assembly Hall a bilateral accord of cooperation between their respective youth groups. While in Pyongyang, the delegation toured Kim Il Sung's family home at Mangyongdae, the Comrade Kim Il Sung Youth Movement and Achievements Education Room, the Tower of the Juche Idea, Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, and the Youth Construction Achievements Exhibition Hall. The delegation departed on 30 June. Kil Ch'o'l-hyo'k and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at the airport for the delegation's arrival and departure.

Sources: *Al-Thawra* (28 June 2006), *Rodong Sinmun* (24, 29 June, 1 July 2006)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Meets Syrian Agriculture Minister

Date: 19 June 2006

Location: Damascus

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and Agriculture Minister Adil Safar discussed in a meeting aspects of bilateral cooperation in agriculture. Minister Safar reportedly agreed to technical training for Koreans in growing cotton.

Source: *Tishrin* (20 June 2006)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Meets Syrian Trade Minister

Date: 19 June 2006

Location: Damascus

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and Minister of Economy and Trade Amir Hosni Lutfi discussed implementation of items agreed by Dr. Lutfi in Pyongyang the previous month at the fourth session of the DPRK-Syria Joint Economic Committee. The two officials also discussed preparations for the fifth session slated to take place in Damascus in 2007.

Source: *Tishrin* (19 June 2006)

Event: Pyongyang Receives Syrian BASP Youth Leader

Date: 24-29 May 2006

Location: Pyongyang

People: Pyongyang welcomed a delegation of the Syrian Revolutionary Youth Union under Chairman Adnan Arbash. WPK Central Committee Secretary Choe Thae Bok met the delegation 26 May at Mansudae Assembly Hall. Arbash told his host there that he had visited Pyongyang in 1990 to participate in events marking the 45th anniversary of the WPK's founding and that he had posed for a commemorative photograph with President Kim Il Sung. Choe also heard of his determination to work for the development of relations between youth unions of the two countries. The delegation toured Pyongyang on 28 May, visiting the family home of Kim Il Sung, the Korean Revolution Museum, Monument of Party Founding, Arch of Triumph, and the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace. Youth League Central Committee Secretary Kim Kwan-ho and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at the airport for the delegation's arrival; unidentified "relevant" DPRK officials and the charge d'affaires returned to the airport for the delegation's departure.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (25, 27, 29, 30 May 2006).

Event: DPRK Ambassador Meets Syrian Higher Education Minister

Date: 16 May 2006

Location: Damascus

People: DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam met Minister of Higher Education Ghayath Barakat. The Syrian minister spoke of willingness of Syrian universities to establish scientific cooperation relations with DPRK counterparts and to continue activities within the framework of the bilateral program of cooperation. Kim expressed general satisfaction regarding cooperation in the field of higher education and a particular desire for cooperation between Kim Il Sung University and University of Damascus.

Source: *Tishrin* (16 May 2006)

Event: DPRK Receives Syrian Government Economic Delegation

Date: 12-15 May 2006

Location: Pyongyang

People: The DPRK government received visiting Minister of Economy and Trade Amir Hosni Lutfi, who arrived at the head of a government economic delegation, with a reception on 12 May. On 13 and 14 May, Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man led the DPRK side in talks with the visitors as the fourth session of the DPRK-Syria Joint Economic Committee. The two sides reviewed execution of items in economic and S&T cooperation agreed in the previous meeting and discussed issues involved in further strengthening such cooperation. On the second day of talks, mini

sters Rim and Lutfi signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of housing and other construction and another one on investment promotion and protection. The following day, the delegation met SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam at Mansudae Assembly Hall. While in Pyongyang, the group toured the Kimsungilia-Kimjongilia Exhibition Hall, the Tower of the Juche Idea, the Arch of Triumph, and the Monument to Party Founding before leaving on 15 May. In Pyongyang, Foreign Trade Vice Minister Ri Myo'ng-san and Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were identified among those at the airport for the group's arrival and departure.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (13, 15, 16 May 2006)

Event: Meeting between DPRK Ambassador and Syrian Information Minister

Date: 25 April 2006

Location: Damascus

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and Information Minister Muhsin Bilal discussed the strengthening of bilateral media cooperation through such means as exchanges of delegations and expertise.

Source: *Tishrin* (26 April 2006)

Event: Bilateral Friendship Gathering

Date: 20 April 2006

Location: Pyongyang

People: Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani and unidentified subordinates joined unidentified members of the Korea-Syria Friendship Association at the Korea-Syria Friendship Pyongyang Chunghwa Middle School to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Syria's independence. Unidentified instructors and students of the school participated in the gathering.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (21 April 2006)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Meets Syrian Transport Minister

Date: 20 March 2006

Location: Damascus

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam, speaking with Transport Minister Yarub Sulayman al-Badr on bilateral issues, referred to their meeting as a "good start" for bilateral cooperation in transport, particularly marine transport, touting North Korea's shipbuilding capabilities. Badr, for his part, reportedly expressed his willingness to pursue cooperation, particularly in shipbuilding.

Source: *(Al-Thawra)*, 21 March 2006)

Event: Bilateral Air Service Agreement Signed

Date: 20 February 2006

Location: Damascus

People: DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and Director General of Civil Aviation Fayiz Issa signed an air service agreement.

Source: *KCNA* (24 February 2006)

Event: Friendship Meeting Marks Syrian Anniversary

Date: 14 November 2005

Location: Korea-Syria Friendship Pyongyang Silk Mill

People: Unidentified members of the Korea-Syria Friendship Association, mill workers, Syrian Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani, and other Syrian Embassy officials gathered to mark the 35th anniversary of the Syrian Corrective Movement.

Source: *KCNA* (15 November 2005)

Event: Syrian Charge d'Affaires Holds Evening Reception

Date: 13 October 2005

Location: Embassy of Syria

People: Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani held a reception to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the WPK's founding. WPK Central Committee Secretary Choe Thae Bok, Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man, Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries Acting Chair Mun Chae-ch'o'l, and Kim Hyo'ng-chun were identified among the Korean guests.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (14 October 2005)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Hosts Reception

Date: 9 October 2005

Location: DPRK Embassy, Damascus

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam hosted a reception at the embassy for the 60th anniversary of the WPK's founding. Named guests were Yusuf Faysal, secretary-general of the Communist Party Yusuf Faysal; Shaaban Azzouz, president of the GFTU; Khalil Mashadiya, secretary, BASP Party Branch in Damascus; and Das Izz al-Din, secretary, BASP Party Branch, Damascus Countryside.

Source: SANA (10 October 2005)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Hosts Reception

Date: 8 September 2005

Location: DPRK Embassy, Damascus

People: DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam held a reception in celebration of National Day. Named guests were Yusuf Faysal, secretary-general of the Communist Party Yusuf Faysal; Minister of State Yusuf Sulayman al-Ahmad; Information Minister Mahdi Dakhllallah; Khalil Mashadiya, secretary, BASP Party Branch in Damascus. The president of the GFTU and secretary-general of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, as well as some unidentified members of the People's Assembly also reportedly attended.

Source: SANA (9 September 2005)

Event: DPRK Ambassador Visits Syrian Party Leader

Date: 24 August 2005

Location: Damascus

People: Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam paid a courtesy call on Socialist Unionist Party Secretary-General Fayiz Ismai'l.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (29 August 2005)

Event: Syrian Peasants Union Executive Visits

Date: 20-27 August 2005

Location: Pyongyang

People: Faysal al-Masalima, an executive member of Syria's General Union of Peasants, led a union delegation to Pyongyang. While in country, he toured Mangyongdae, the site of Kim Il Sung's family home; the Arch of Triumph; the Tower of the Juche Idea; the Monument to Party Founding; and the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum before departing on 27 August. An unidentified "executive member" of a delegation of the General Union of Syrian Peasants, presumably Faysal al-Masalima, presented on 24 August a gift for Kim Jong Il to "an official concerned." Unidentified "relevant officials" and the Syrian Embassy's charge d'affaires met the delegation at the airport on arrival and departure.

Source: KCNA (25 August 2005), *Rodong Sinmun* (21, 25, 28 August 2005)

Event: Preparatory Committee Formed

Date: 31 July 2005

Location: Syria

People: Unionist Socialist Party Deputy Secretary-General Adnan Ismai'l was elected chairman of a Syrian preparatory committee for the celebration of the 60th anniversaries of the WPK and of Korea's liberation.

Source: KCNA (4 August 2005)

Event: DPRK Foreign Vice Minister Visit to Syria En Route to Qatar Meeting

Date: 31 May - June 2005

Location: Egypt, Syria, Qatar

People: Foreign Vice Minister Ch'oe Su-ho'n led a foreign ministry delegation on 31 May to visit Egypt, Syria, "and so on" prior to attending in June the Second South Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Qatar. While his return date was not observed, KCNA reported him attending an ambassador's presentation of credentials in Pyongyang on 30 June.

Source: KCNA (1, 30 June 2005)

Event: Transport Ministry Delegation Visits Syria

Date: 7-13 May 2005

Location: Damascus

People: Land and Marine Transport Ministry Kim Yong Il led a delegation to Syria on 7 May. While there, the Syrian Transport Minister Makram Obayyid thanked "Korean experts for contributing to the completion of the Panorama Hall of Victory in the October Liberation War." Other than the hall, the DPRK delegation visited the "Latakia Maritime School," possibly another name for the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) at Latakia's Tishrin University Latakia, as well as Latakia's harbor and a number of unidentified places. On 11 May, Land and Marine Transport Minister Kim Yong Il and Syrian Transport Minister Makram Obayyid signed a bilateral marine transport agreement, reportedly the first time for Pyongyang to sign such an agreement with a partner from the Middle East. Land and Marine Transport Ministry Chief of Staff Ra Tong-hu'i and Syrian Charge d' Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani were at the airport for the delegation's departure.

Source: KCNA (9, 15 May 2005), *The Pyongyang Times* (28 May 2005), Yonhap (12 May 2005)

Event: Syrian Charge d'Affaires Hosts Evening Reception

Date: 18 April 2005

Location: Embassy of Syria, Pyongyang

People: Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani held an evening reception to mark the Day of the Sun festival and the 12th anniversary of Kim Jong Il's assumption of the position of chairman of the National Defense Commission. The DPRK officials named as invited to the event were WPK Central Committee Secretary Choe Thae Bok, Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man, Land and Marine Transport Minister Kim Yong Il, and Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries Acting Chair Mun Chae-ch'o'l. Reported attending simply as "relevant officials" were People's Armed Forces Vice Minister Kim Sang-ik, Foreign Vice Minister Kung So'k-ung, and Diplomatic Corps Bureau Director Kim Tang-su.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (19 April 2005)

Event: Friendship Gathering

Date: 12 April 2005

Location: Kim Cho'ng-suk Nursery

People: Members of the nursery hosted Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani and embassy members.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (13 April 2005)

Event: DPRK Youth Delegation Visits Syria

Date: 12-22 March 2005

Location: Syria

People: KISSYL First Secretary Kim Kyo'ng-ho visited Syria at head of a youth league delegation. In Damascus, the

group met BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar on 17 March and discussed enhancing cooperation between youth organizations of both sides. DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and BASP National Leadership director for external relations Muhammad Yasminah were present. In Pyongyang, KISSYL Central Committee Secretary Kil Ch'o'l-hyo'k and Syrian Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani bade the delegates farewell and welcomed them on their return at the airport.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (13 March, 23 March 2005), SANA (17 March 2005),

Event: Friendship Gathering

Date: 7 March 2005

Location: Sariwo'n, North Hwanghae Province

People: North Hwanghae Province People's Committee Vice Chairman Rim Ch'ang-wo'n, members of the Korea-Syria Friendship Association, and instructors and students of the Sariwo'n Art School welcomed Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani and members of the Syrian Embassy on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of Syria's March 8 Revolution. Participants in the event toured the school.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (8 March 2005)

Event: Evening Reception Marks DPRK Leader's Birthday

Date: 2 February 2005

Location: Embassy of Syria

People: Charge d'Affaires Muhammad Adib al-Hani hosted a reception at his embassy to mark the birthday of Kim Jong Il. The identified guests were Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun, Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man, Education Minister Kim Yong Jin, WPK Central Committee Department Deputy Director Pak Kyo'ng-so'n, People's Armed Forces Vice Minister Kim Sang-ik, Foreign Vice Minister Ch'oe Su-ho'n, and Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries Vice Chair Cho'n Hyo'n-ch'an.

Source: *Rodong Sinmun* (4 February 2005)

Event: Birthday Celebration Preparatory Committee Formed

Date: 27 January 2005

Location: Syria

People: Walid Hamdun, member of the BASP Regional Leadership, played the role of chairman in inaugurating the Syrian preparatory committee for the Kim Jong Il birthday festivities in February. Abdallah Abu-Rish, chairman of the Control Committee of the party, was elected Vice Chairman of the committee.

Source: KCNA (3 February 2005)

Photographic Record of Bilateral Relations, 2005-2007



Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits next to Nahid Shawa, director general of the Syrian decorating company Charismano Decoration, and two unidentified women at a decoration exhibition held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Damascus, 25-28 November 2007

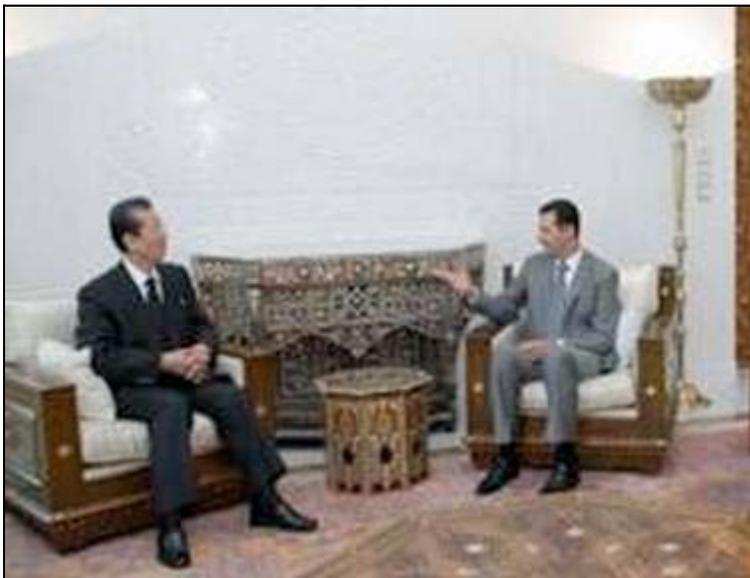
(<http://www.charismano.com/newsar.html>).



General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea (GFTUK) Chairman Kim Pyo'ng-p'al meets BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar on 19 November 2007 (*Tishrin*, 19 November 2007). Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam and BASP National Command Foreign Relations Director Muhammad Yasminah, neither shown in the photograph, reportedly attended the meeting.



GFTUK Chairman Kim Pyo'ng-p'al meets BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar. DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits at far left (SANA, 19 November 2007). BASP National Command Foreign Relations Director Muhammad Yasminah Muhammad Yasminah, who reportedly attended the meeting, may be the official sitting to Al-Ahmar's left.



Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) Chairman Choe Thae Bok meets Syrian President Al-Asad on 22 October 2007 during a visit to Syria (www.sana.org, now www.sana.sy, accessed 23 October 2007).

SPA Chairman Choe and President Asad meet on 22 October (www.sana.org, now www.sana.sy, accessed 23 October 2007). The Korean official on President Asad's left may be a senior member of the DPRK Embassy in Damascus or a WPK official responsible for international affairs. Given that media have not identified him, despite his central position in meetings, he may simply be an interpreter. In the photographs found in this report, for example, he



appears in Damascus seated next to Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam in the 19 November 2007 meeting of GFTUK Chairman Kim Pyo'ng-p'al meets BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar and in the meeting of 2 May 2007

between Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk and BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar.



Ch'oe T-ae-pok meets Prime Minister Muhammad Naji al-Itri (www.sana.org, now www.sanay.sy, accessed 23 October 2007). DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits to the note taker's right.



An unidentified official, possibly People's Assembly Deputy Speaker Radwan Habib, sits next to Choe Thae Bok (Syrian TV1, 19 October 2007).



DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam (right) sits next to an unidentified DPRK official (Syrian TV1, 19 October 2007).



SPA Chairman Choe Thae Bok speaks with an unidentified Syrian official, possibly Sulayman Haddad, the chairman of the Arab and Foreign Affairs Committee of the People's Assembly (Syrian TV1, 19 October).



Two unidentified DPRK officials accompanying SPA Chairman Choe Thae Bok appear on Syrian television (Syrian TV1, 19 October 2007). The uniformed officer appears to be Colonel Mun Yong Nam, military attaché at the DPRK Embassy. He resembles the unidentified military officer seen in a SANA photograph below standing next to Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam at a DPRK Embassy reception on 9 September 2005. Kim is likely standing next to his military attaché, for there was no visiting DPRK delegation reported in Damascus that day. As a diplomatic list of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry (http://www.mfa.gov.jo/em_bassy_details.php?id=345) lists

Colonel Mun Yong Nam as the DPRK military attaché in Damascus since February 2005, it seems that the officer in both cases is Colonel Mun.



SPA Chairman Choe Thae Bok talks with BASP Assistant Secretary General Abdallah al-Ahmar (Syrian TV1, 20 October).



Choe Thae Bok (center), at a meeting with the Syrian prime minister, sits with DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam on his right. The unidentified official on his left is seen taking notes in photographs of other bilateral meetings (Syrian TV1, 21 October 2007).



SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam poses with BASP Regional Leadership Organization Department Chief Sa'id Iliyah Dawud on his right at Mansudae Assembly Hall on 22 September (*Rodong Sinmun*, 23 September 2007). Charge d'Affaires Adib al-Hani stands on Kim's right.



BASP Regional Leader Sa'id Iliyah Dawud, center, poses with two fellow travelers after arriving in Pyongyang on 20 September last year (*Rodong Sinmun*, 21 September 2007). Charge d'Affaires Adib al-Hani stands on Dawud's left.



Rim Kyong Man and Amir Hosni Lutfi sign on 15 August 2007 in Damascus a protocol of the 5th session of the DPRK-Syria Joint Economic Committee (photograph: SANA, 15 August 2007).



Foreign trade ministers Rim Kyong Man and Amir Hosni Lutfi meet (SANA, 12 August 2007). Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits at the right of the photograph.



Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man meets Prime Minister Muhammad Naji al-Itri on 13 August 2007 (*Tishrin*, 14 August 2007). Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits to the right of the DPRK note taker. Apparently the same man, wearing white sneakers, as the one in the above photograph, he presumably speaks Arabic and may work either at the DPRK Embassy in Damascus or at the Foreign Ministry in Pyongyang.



Kim T'ae-chong, deputy director of the Foreign Relations Department in the WPK Central Committee, talks with Sa'id Iliyah, member of the BASP regional leadership as well as chairman of the Korean-Syrian Friendship Association on 1 July 2007 (*Tishrin*). DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits to Kim's right.



Kim T'ae-chong meets BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar on 1 July 2007 (SANA, 2 July 2007).



DPRK Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk appears in a television report on his meeting of 2 May 2007 with BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar (Syrian Arab Television TV1, 2 May 2007).



BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar during his meeting of 2 May 2007 with Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk (above) (Syrian Arab Television Network TV1, 2 May 2007)



Two Syrian participants appear on the televised report on meeting of 2 May 2007 between DPRK Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk and BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar (Syrian Arab Television TV1, 2 May 2007). The official in Arab headdress, seated on the right side of Assistant Secretary General Al-Ahmar, may be General Union of Peasants Director Hammad al-Sa'ud, whom the television report identified as attending the meeting.



DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam (right) sits next to an unidentified DPRK official at the meeting of 2 May 2007 between Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk and BASP Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar (Syrian Arab Television TV1, 2 May 2007).



An unidentified DPRK official takes notes during the meeting of Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk and BASP Assistant Secretary-Genera Abdallah al-Ahmar (Syrian Arab Television TV1, 2 May 2007). The note taker also appeared at the side of Choe Thae Bok during the latter's meetings with President al-Asad and senior Syrian officials in October 2007.



Syrian television shows unidentified Syrian officials attending the meeting of 2 May 2007 between Agricultural Workers Union Central Committee Chairman Kang Ch'ang-uk and BASP Assistant Secretary-Genera Abdallah al-Ahmar (Syrian Arab Television TV1, 2 May 2007).



SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam, center, poses with Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmad Arnus, standing to Kim's left (*Rodong Sinmun*, 24 April 2007). Charge d'Affaires Adib al-Hani stands at Kim's right.



Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmad Arnus, second from right, poses with his delegation at Mangyongdae, 23 April 2007 (*Rodong Sinmun*, 24 April 2007). Charge d'Affaires al-Hani stands at Arnus's left.

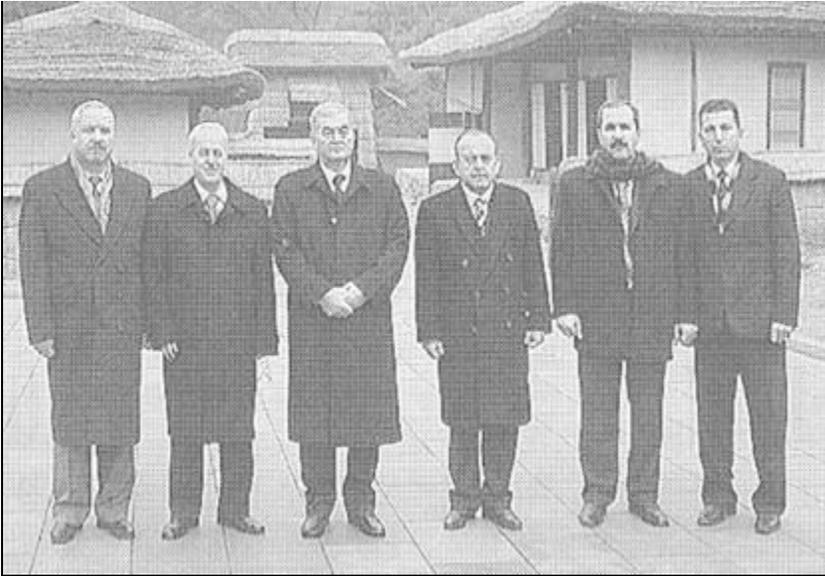


Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam participates in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for an exhibition of DPRK photographs and publications arranged by Charismano Decoration. The photograph is undated but likely shows the event reportedly held in Aleppo on 19 March 2007 to mark the Day of the Sun (KCNA, 28 March 2007). Nahid Shawa, the company's director general, stands on the left side of the scene. Cutting the ribbon is Aleppo Governor Tamir al-Hujjah. To the governor's left is Abdul Qadir al-Misri, a member of the BASP Central Committee. In the background, to the governor's right, stands Aleppo Mayor Ma'an al-Shibli (<http://www.charismano.com/newsar.ht>

[ml](#)).



Standing, from left to right, at what appears to be a 19 March 2007 exhibition of DPRK photographs and publications (KCNA, 28 March 2007), are Aleppo Mayor Ma'an al-Shibli; BASP Central Committee member Abdul Qadir al-Misri; Charismano Decoration's Nahid Shawa; Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam; and Aleppo Governor Tamir al-Hujjah (<http://www.charismano.com/newsar.ht> [ml](#)).



Deputy Minister of Interior Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Fayiz Musli, third from left, visits Mangyongdae with his ministry delegation (*Rodong Sinmun*, 15 December 2006).



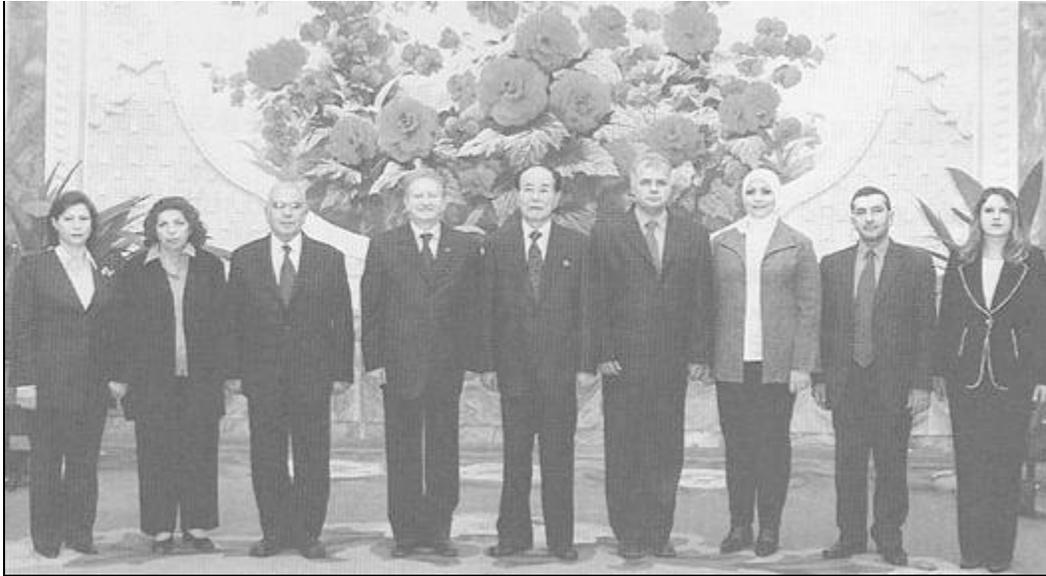
DPRK Central Court First Deputy Chief Justice Yun Myo'ng-kuk and Syrian Justice Minister Muhammad al-Ghafri sign on 18 October 2006 a bilateral treaty of judicial cooperation in civil and criminal cases (*Tishrin*, 19 October 2006). DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits at Yun's right.



BASP Youth Vanguard Chairman Ahmad Abu Musa flew into Pyongyang with a delegation of his organization on 23 June 2006 (*Rodong Sinmun*, 24 June 2006).



Revolutionary Youth Union Chairman Adnan Arbash (center) on arrival at the airport with a union delegation (*Rodong Sinmun*, 25 May 2006).



SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam meets Minister of Economy and Trade Amir Hosni Lutfi, standing on Kim's right, and his delegation on 15 May 2006. The unidentified woman on the far left did not appear in the photograph below that shows the delegation at the airport on arrival (*Rodong Sinmun*,

16 May 2006). Charge d'Affaires Adib al-Hani stands at Lutfi's right.



Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man, far left, sits with two other DPRK officials in a meeting of SPA Presidium President Kim Yong Nam and Minister of Economy and Trade Amir Hosni Lutfi (Korean Central Television, 15 May 2006).



Minister of Economy and Trade Amir Hosni Lutfi, center, poses on 12 May 2006 with members of his government economic delegation on arrival in Pyongyang (*Rodong Sinmun*, 13 May 2006). Charge d'Affaires Adib al-Hani stands at Lutfi's left.



DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam speaks with Information Minister Muhsin Bilal (*Tishrin*, 26 April 2006).

DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam (second from left) poses with guests at reception of 8 September 2005 (SANA, 9 September 2005). The uniformed officer is presumably Colonel Mun Yong Nam, the military attaché. The three unidentified Arab men in the photograph may be Yusuf Faysal, secretary-general of the Communist Party Yusuf Faysal; Minister of State Yusuf Sulayman al-Ahmad; Information Minister Mahdi Dakhllallah; and Khalil Mashadiya, secretary, BASP Party Branch in Damascus. The three were the only Syrian guests identified by name in the SANA article.





Faysal al-Masalima, an executive member of Syria's General Union of Peasants, tours Pyongyang, in front of the Arch of Triumph (*Rodong Sinmun*, 25 August 2005).



Land and Marine Transport Minister Kim Yong Il and Syrian Transport Minister Makram Obayyid sign a marine transport agreement in Damascus (KCNA, 15 May 2005, *The Pyongyang Times*, 28 May 2005). DPRK Ambassador Kim Pyo'ng-nam sits at Kim's left.

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