



**China-Korea Relations:
China's Red Line on the Korean Peninsula**

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South Korean President Park Geun-hye in her Jan. 6 news conference indicated that relations with China had reached an historic high point, but increasing North Korean belligerence poses a challenge to full implementation of the China-ROK Joint Statement forged with President Xi Jinping in June 2013. Tensions have escalated on the peninsula since late February as North Korea responded to annual US-ROK military exercises and President Obama's Asia visit in April with missile launches, exercises resulting in an exchange of artillery fire, and threats to conduct a "new form" of nuclear test in response to US "hostility." China criticized US actions as provoking Pyongyang and reinforcing US-led "rebalancing" against China. China and the ROK have continued to build on their cooperative strategic partnership. Xi and Park met on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in the Netherlands on March 23 and held telephone talks a month later. On April 10, PRC Premier Li Keqiang and ROK Prime Minister Jung Hong-won met on the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan, while Foreign Ministers Wang Yi and Yun Byung-se held periodic telephone talks on peninsula tensions.

In contrast, China-DPRK contacts have been limited to low-level visits and routine "friendship" exchanges. The highest level meeting in early 2014 occurred between Xi Jinping and North Korean President Kim Jong Nam on the sidelines of the Sochi Winter Olympics. China's diplomatic engagement with North Korea has been primarily driven by efforts to mediate the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. Within a week following the resumption of inter-Korean talks on Feb. 12, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin held consecutive meetings with North and South Korean counterparts. PRC Special Representative for Korean Peninsular Affairs Wu Dawei visited North Korea on March 17-21 and held bilateral consultations with South Korean and US counterparts in mid-April. Beijing's recent dialogue efforts followed US-ROK-Japan trilateral talks on April 7 in Washington, where the three allies reaffirmed the UN Security Council's "unanimous condemnation" of the DPRK's ballistic missile launches in violation of Resolutions 1718, 1894, 2087, and 2094.

High-level commitment to the China-ROK strategic partnership

The Xi Jinping and Park Geun-hye administrations have taken steps to implement their 2013 agreements and action plan despite an atmosphere of tension on the Korean Peninsula. China's Foreign Ministry on Jan. 7 showed a positive response to Park's New Year remarks on the status of the bilateral relationship, indicating that her June 2013 state visit to China "left Chinese a deep and good impression." On Feb. 20-23, lawmaker Chung Mong-joon of the ruling Saenuri Party, who is head of the China-ROK Inter-Parliamentary Council and chairman of Hyundai Heavy Industries, led a delegation of more than 40 National Assembly members to China, where he met

President Xi, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People Congress (NPC) Zhang Dejiang, and Vice Chairman and Secretary-General of the NPC Standing Committee Wang Chen. The South Korean delegation, which included ruling and opposition party members, was South Korea's biggest parliamentary delegation to visit China since normalization of relations in 1992. At a parliamentary session in Seoul on Feb. 10, ROK Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se raised the need to consider an intelligence-sharing agreement with China as a means to strengthen bilateral strategic trust. South Korea pushed for a similar agreement with Japan in 2012, an effort that broke down due to significant public opposition.

Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin's February visit to Seoul following four days of "diplomatic consultations" with DPRK officials in Pyongyang was perceived in South Korea as an indicator of strengthened Sino-South Korean coordination. Liu's visit included meeting ROK counterpart Lee Kyung-soo, Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae, who is also senior foreign affairs and security advisor to President Park Geun-hye. China and South Korea also reiterated their cooperation on nontraditional security issues during talks in Beijing between PRC State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun and ROK counterpart Lee Sung-han on Feb. 27. In a meeting in Beijing on April 3, Beijing Mayor Wang Anshun and Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon signed a bilateral agreement on tackling air pollution and agreed to establish a joint committee on economic and cultural exchanges between Beijing and Seoul. These developments suggest steady improvement in China-South Korea relations, building on the framework set during Park's June 2013 state visit to Beijing.

Park's "two-track approach" to DPRK denuclearization

China's Foreign Ministry consistently made public calls for restraint on the Korean Peninsula from mid-January as Pyongyang stepped up its opposition to US-ROK annual military exercises held from February through April. The DPRK National Defense Commission (NDC) on Jan. 16 threatened a "nuclear disaster" on the peninsula while urging Seoul to take practical steps to end "all hostile military acts." Seoul responded by calling for "real action" toward denuclearization. However, Beijing responded positively to the resumption of high-level inter-Korean talks and the resulting agreement to hold family reunions at Mount Kumgang. Beijing also welcomed Park Geun-hye's "trust-building" initiatives and her March 28 Dresden proposal, which seeks to regularize family reunions and expand humanitarian aid, expand economic cooperation, and promote inter-Korean integration.

President Park seeks stronger cooperation from both China and the United States in pursuit of Park's "principled and effective two-track approach" of pressure and dialogue. On the one hand, the ROK Foreign Ministry has developed plans to deepen alliance cooperation with the US while upgrading the comprehensive strategic partnership with China. On the other, the ROK's Defense Ministry released plans to implement a new "Tailored Deterrence Strategy" in military exercises with the US in February-April and August this year, which also combines diplomatic and military tools to address potential nuclear threats from the North. During talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry on Feb. 14 in Beijing, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi affirmed China's pledge to play a constructive role for regional stability, but also stated that China would "never" allow instability on the Korean Peninsula.

China's "red line" on the Korean Peninsula

North Korea's series of missile launches from Feb. 21 defied both Chinese calls for stability and Seoul's diplomatic outreach to the North. On the sidelines of China's annual parliamentary session on March 8, Foreign Minister Wang Yi reiterated China's "red line," stating that "we will not allow war or instability on the Korean peninsula," and detailed China's position on the peninsula situation. First, "only with denuclearization can the Korean Peninsula have genuine and lasting peace." Second, parties must address the lack of mutual trust between North Korea and the US in particular, the key source of "sustained tensions on the peninsula and several disruptions to the Six-Party Talks." Third, dialogue is "the only right way forward;" specifically, the Six-Party Talks is "the only dialogue mechanism acceptable to all the parties."

South Korea's quest for cooperation with China on a strategy that emphasizes both pressure and dialogue, however, remains challenged on both fronts. First, as China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on April 15, "China is opposed to any move that may result in tensions in the region, whether they be joint drills or the threat of conducting nuclear tests." Beijing has voiced its own concerns over US-ROK joint military exercises, perceived as not only a source of DPRK insecurity, but also part of US efforts to reassert its regional influence against China's rise.

Second, Chinese dialogue efforts remain focused on revitalizing diplomacy through the six-party framework, which South Korea and the US will not restart without firm commitments backed by actions from Pyongyang toward denuclearization. Following the renewal of US-Japan-ROK consultations among ambassadors to the Six-Party Talks, PRC envoy Wu Dawei pursued bilateral consultations with ROK envoy Hwang Joon-kook on April 11 and with US counterpart Glyn Davies from April 14. However, Chinese diplomacy has thus far proven unable to bridge the gap between Washington and Pyongyang sufficiently to resume Six-Party Talks.

Strained political and economic ties between China and North Korea

China-DPRK diplomatic exchanges reflect continued strain in the bilateral relationship. Contacts have remained limited to low-level visits, with routine "friendship" activities peaking around the Lunar New Year, Spring Festival, and Kim Jong Il's birthday in February. Perhaps the most notable signal of Beijing's displeasure with Pyongyang has been the low visibility of party-to-party interactions via the Chinese Communist Party's International Liaison Department as the PRC Foreign Ministry has taken the public lead in interactions with North Korea. The PRC Foreign Ministry on Feb. 12 confirmed a visit to Pyongyang by its Asia department chief for "internal" work at the PRC Embassy in North Korea as well as meetings with DPRK counterparts on bilateral and regional issues. Beijing also stressed that Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin's talks in Pyongyang on Feb. 17-20 were part of "routine communication" between the two foreign ministries. According to Chinese and North Korean sources, Liu met DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun, Vice Foreign Ministers Kim Hyong Chun and Ri Yong Ho, Vice Director of the WPK International Department Kim Song Nam, and Vice President of the State Economic Development Commission Ri Chol Sok. During his five-day visit to North Korea on March 17-21, PRC nuclear envoy Wu Dawei also paid a courtesy call on Vice President of the DPRK Supreme People Assembly Presidium Kim Yong Dae on March 20.

China-DPRK trade reports, however, remained stable despite the December 2013 purge of Jang Song Thaek, which many predicted would lead to a decline in bilateral trade. The Institute for Far Eastern Studies reported that China-DPRK trade increased by 16 percent in January compared to the previous year, and by a further 16 percent to \$546 million in February. The Korea International Trade Association (KITA) reported a dramatic 46 percent drop in month-to-month trade between January and February, stimulating speculation in the South Korean media of problems in PRC-DPRK trade relations. However, one must be cautious in attributing significance to monthly shifts in the trade balance since there is an annual decline in recorded trade during the winter.

The current status of Chinese investment in North Korea remains unclear. South Korean media reports suggest limited Chinese investment activity in the cross-border special economic zones with North Korea. Furthermore, in an April 19 interview with Hong-Kong-based *Phoenix TV*, Kim Chun Il, a division chief at Rason port's foreign business bureau, even claimed that North Korea has never formally given China the exclusive rights to use the two piers at Rason.

Chinese and North Korean official sources suggest that economic exchanges have continued to expand at the local level. Hunchun Vice Mayor Han Changfa in Jilin province confirmed the launching of a Hunchun-Rason cross-border electric power transmission project on Jan. 7. On Jan. 14, Liaoning officials reported the near-completion of the China-DPRK Yalu River Bridge, a joint project that began at the end of 2010. Chon Tong Chol, director of the Rason Special City Tourism Bureau, held talks with the Jilin Provincial Tourism Bureau Director Zhao Xiaojun in Changchun on Feb. 25. In addition, the DPRK State General Bureau of Tourism conducted a 10-day tour in China in March for personnel training at Chinese tourism institutes in Beijing and Shanghai. China and North Korea opened a new train route from Ji'an to North Korea on April 13, making Ji'an the second Chinese city after Dandong with passenger rail service to the North.

Dandong Sanyi Business Advisory Service Agency and DPRK Yanggakdo Trade Corporation on Feb. 12 launched a joint project for Chinese cross-border business study in North Korea, while the DPRK State Academy of Sciences sent experts on a 12-day study tour at the Solar Energy Research Institute of Yunnan Normal University Feb. 19-March 2. According to local Chinese sources, Bureau Director Kye Song Nam of the DPRK National Committee for Economic Development led a delegation to China Liaoning International Cooperation Group for negotiations on a fish farming project on Feb. 21. Such developments suggest continued interest in expanding trade and investment ties at the local level. According to *KCNA* and local Chinese sources, Vice Department Director of the WPK Central Committee Ri Ho Son led a 16-member delegation of WPK to Shenzhen, Xian, Tianjin, and Beijing on March 27-April 10.

China-ROK FTA talks

The Xi Jinping and Park Geun-hye administrations remain committed to completing negotiations for the China-ROK Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This was the main subject of talks between Premier Li Keqiang and Prime Minister Jung Hong-won on the sidelines of the Boao Forum in Hainan on April 10. The 9th and 10th rounds of China-ROK FTA talks were held in Xian on Jan. 6-10 and in Ilsan on March 17-21, led by PRC Assistant Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen and ROK Commerce Minister Woo Tae-hee. However, the latest round of negotiations

concluded with both sides confirming “differences” on goods liberalization. While South Korea continues to seek the early removal of tariffs on manufacturing products, China seeks to expand the liberalization of farm goods. The ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy’s press release in March stated that “discussions could not progress significantly as their differences remain tightly locked.”

Illegal fishing is another issue that may impede the conclusion of FTA talks. Seoul is seeking to include a provision in the FTA that would prevent illegal fishing, a major source of diplomatic tensions that has involved 69 South Korean deaths or injuries since January 2003 according to the ROK Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries. In addition, in an interview with *Yonhap* on March 5, ROK Trade Minister Yoon Sang-jick stressed the need to diversify South Korea’s export markets given concerns over the potential impact of China’s slowing economic growth. South Korea’s record-high share of exports to China in 2013 has raised similar concerns among KITA officials over South Korea’s heavy export dependence on China. As South Korea’s biggest export market, China accounted for over 26 percent (\$141 billion) of South Korea’s total exports in 2013, more than double the volume of ROK exports to the United States.

Tensions with Japan and China-ROK cooperation

Political and security tensions with Japan have also been a subject of China-ROK bilateral cooperation. But while China has enthusiastically embraced opportunities to join with South Korea in criticism of Japan, South Korea finds it necessary to show restraint given the stresses that such cooperation places on the US-ROK alliance and US expectations that its allies South Korea and Japan will remain aligned with each other. Both Chinese and ROK leaders condemned Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in December, which also drew heavy criticism from PRC, ROK, and DPRK representatives at a UN Security Council debate on Jan. 29. Following South Korean plans to apply to register records with UNESCO on Japan’s comfort women, the PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Jan. 16 affirmed China’s willingness to work with South Korea on “similar experiences and common concerns on Japan-related historical issues.” The PRC responded fulsomely to President Park’s request for China to establish a memorial to South Korean independence fighter Ahn Chung-gun in Harbin at the site where Ahn assassinated Japanese Governor General Ito Hirobumi, providing not just a memorial plaque in honor of Ahn, but also a small museum. Too much China-South Korean coordination on history issues, however, runs the risk of drawing negative responses not only in Tokyo, but also in Washington. On the other hand, South Korea’s Ambassador to the US Ahn Hoyoung expressed satisfaction with South Korea’s handling of China’s unilateral declaration of its Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) following President Obama’s visit to Seoul in early May, claiming that South Korea’s declaration of its own zone was met with a positive response from all of its neighbors. Other outcomes of China-ROK cooperation since the Xi-Park summit include South Korea’s March 28 return of the remains of Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War and the ongoing construction of a memorial stone at the former barracks of the Korean Liberalization Army in Xian.

China and South Korea continue to move forward in their trilateral cooperation initiatives with Japan in trade and nontraditional security. The three parties held their fourth round of trilateral FTA talks in Seoul on March 4-7, and participated in the fourth round of ASEAN-led Regional

Cooperative Economic Partnership (RCEP) talks hosted by China in April. Furthermore, since Japan's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks from July 2013 and South Korea's indication of TPP interest in November 2013, Beijing has expressed its own support of the US-led TPP. According to some Chinese analysts, however, limited prospects for a China-ROK-Japanese FTA are shifting China's focus toward its bilateral FTA with South Korea.

History and territorial issues have disrupted the annual China-ROK-Japan trilateral summit since 2012. The Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat instead held a lower-level International Forum for Trilateral Cooperation on April 15, where South Korea's Senior Presidential Foreign Affairs Secretary Ju Chul-ki called for expanding cooperation on "softer" issues such as energy and the environment and people-to-people exchanges. Tokyo hosted the second China-ROK-Japan Trilateral Table Top Exercise on disaster management on March 6-7, and PRC Vice Environment Minister Li Ganjie and ROK and Japanese Environment Ministers Yoon Seong-kyu and Ishihara Nobuteru signed a Joint Communiqué on Environmental Cooperation at the 16th trilateral Environment Ministers Meeting in Daegu on April 28-29.

Conclusion: will the fourth nuclear test be the end of the "(red) line"?

Despite personal commitments of Chinese and South Korean leaders to advancing their strategic cooperative partnership, the recent escalation of North Korean military provocations places a premium on addressing one of the most sensitive and potentially divisive issues in the relationship. Despite common goals of DPRK denuclearization and regional stability, Seoul's two-track strategy of pressure and dialogue appear in conflict with a Chinese "red line" that opposes not only DPRK aggression but also South Korea's military alliance with the US. These differences are manifestations of the deeper challenge for the two sides regarding how to peacefully achieve Korean reunification while providing China with assurances that any shift in political arrangements on the peninsula will not disadvantage China's national interests.

To address these issues, China and South Korea have begun to explore and develop common security interests, which in the past have lagged far behind development of their economic relationship. According to a *China Daily* editorial in January 2014: "Long gone are the Cold War days when China was inclined to engage with the DPRK and estrange itself from the ROK.... At a time when there is no quick fix to the peninsula issue and the DPRK's nuclear program, the deepening China-ROK ties carry significant weight in promoting peace and stability on the peninsula." This statement suggests that China has begun to recognize that South Korea will likely play the dominant political role on the Korean Peninsula. At her joint press conference with President Obama on April 25, President Park laid down a clear marker for both North Korean and Chinese future behavior in the context of a possible fourth North Korean nuclear test when she stated another test "is going to change fundamentally the security landscape and . . . that all our efforts to resolve the nuclear issue through the Six-Party Talks is going to be completely dissolved." Park then acknowledged the "strong role to be played by China" and that she "looks forward to China's leading role in making sure that the threat is not going to be translated into action." As one considers the likely international response to a fourth North Korean nuclear test, President Park has placed the ball firmly in Beijing's court.

Chronology of China-Korea Relations

January – April 2014

Jan. 7, 2014: Hunchun Vice Mayor Han Changfa announces the launch of the Hunchun-Rason cross-border electric power transmission project.

Jan. 6, 2014: ROK President Park Geun-hye at a national news conference hails the current status of China-ROK relations.

Jan. 6-10, 2014: Ninth round of China-ROK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks are held in Xian, Shaanxi.

Jan. 7, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson positively assesses President Park's Jan. 6 statements on bilateral ties.

Jan. 7, 2014: ROK Defense Ministry spokesperson reports to *Xinhua* ROK efforts to return by April 2014 the remains of Chinese People's Volunteer soldiers killed in the Korean War.

Jan. 16, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson calls for restraint on the Korean nuclear issue amid tensions over US-ROK plans for annual joint military exercises in February.

Jan. 16, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses China's willingness to work with South Korea on history issues related to Japan.

Jan. 16, 2014: Kim Ki Sok, chairman of the DPRK State Commission for Economic Development, Huang Shizai, president of the Great China International Group, and Yang Zuoyuan, economic and commercial councilor of the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang, participate in an opening ceremony for an East Pyongyang shopping center.

Jan. 17, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson calls for inter-Korean reconciliation.

Jan. 19, 2014: Ahn Jung-geun memorial hall opens in Harbin. South Korea's Foreign Ministry expresses support.

Jan. 20, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson justifies the establishment of the Ahn Jung-geun memorial in response to Japanese opposition.

Jan. 22, 2014: PRC Ambassador Liu Hongcai holds a meeting at the Taedonggang Diplomatic Club to mark Spring Festival. Kim Chin Bom, KCCRFC and KCFA vice chairman, and Ri Sun Chol, vice minister of culture attend.

Jan. 22, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson upholds China's commemoration of Korean "anti-Japanese activist" Ahn Jung-geun in response to Japanese criticism.

Jan. 23, 2014: 2014 Lunar New Year China-DPRK friendship meeting is held in Sunan District, Pyongyang, attended by Ambassador Liu, KCCRFC Vice Chairman Kim, and Vice Chairman of Pyongyang City People's Committee Hong Kwang Ung.

Jan. 27, 2014: Ambassador Liu hosts a meeting with officials of the DPRK Foreign Ministry on the occasion of the New Year, attended by Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hyon Chun.

Jan. 28, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses support for inter-Korean reconciliation.

Jan. 29, 2014: PRC, ROK, and DPRK representatives at a UN Security Council debate criticize Japanese Prime Minister Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine.

Feb. 1, 2014: Kim Jong Un sends New Year cards to President Xi and other Chinese officials.

Feb. 7, 2014: *Korean Central News Agency* reports that President Xi and President of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong Nam meet on sidelines of the Sochi Winter Olympics.

Feb. 8, 2014: Chinese and ROK experts at a Shanghai Normal University and Sung Kyun Kwan University forum agree to strengthen cooperation on protecting "comfort women" documents.

Feb. 11, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses concern over US-ROK military drills scheduled for February-April.

Feb. 12, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry confirms a visit to Pyongyang by the chief of the ministry's Asia Department.

Feb. 12, 2014: Dandong Sanyi Business Advisory Service Agency and DPRK Yanggakdo Trade Corporation launch a joint project for Chinese business study in North Korea.

Feb. 12, 2014: China Southern Airlines announces plans to launch a direct air route between Xinjiang and Seoul, the first international route linking Xinjiang with Northeast Asia.

Feb. 12, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses support for the start of the first high-level inter-Korean talks in seven years.

Feb. 13, 2014: DPRK Embassy in Beijing hosts a reception celebrating Kim Jong Il's birthday, attended by Wang Jiarui, head of the CPC International Liaison Department, Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin, and Chairman of the China-Korea Friendship Association Wu Donghe.

Feb. 14, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses support for an inter-Korean three-point agreement reached at high-level talks.

Feb. 14, 2014: PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi tells visiting US Secretary of State John Kerry in Beijing that China will never allow instability on the Korean Peninsula.

Feb. 16, 2014: China Chamber of International Commerce and the DPRK Chinese Chamber of Commerce hold an economic and trade forum in Dandong.

Feb. 17-20, 2014: PRC Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin visits North Korea for consultations with officials from the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Workers' Party of Korea, DPRK Economic Development Commission, and other departments.

Feb. 17, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson defends China's position on human rights in response to a report by UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea.

Feb. 20, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson supports inter-Korean family reunions.

Feb. 20, 2014: DPRK Ambassador Ji Jae Ryong and PRC Vice Minister of Culture Ding Wei attend a reception hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Culture on the 55th anniversary of the conclusion of China-DPRK agreements on cultural cooperation.

Feb. 20-22, 2014: PRC Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin visits South Korea, where he meets ROK counterpart Lee Kyung-soo, Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, and Unification Minister Ryoo Kihl-jae, who is also senior foreign affairs and security advisor to President Park.

Feb. 20-23, 2014: Chung Mong-joon, head of the ROK-China Inter-Parliamentary Council, leads a delegation of more than 40 ROK National Assembly members to China, where he meets President Xi Jinping, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People Congress (NPC), and Wang Chen, vice chairman and secretary general of the NPC Standing Committee.

Feb. 21, 2014: Bureau Director Kye Song-nam of the DPRK National Committee for Economic Development leads an economic and trade delegation to China Liaoning International Cooperation Group for negotiations on a fish farming project.

Feb. 25, 2014: Jilin Provincial Tourism Bureau Director Zhao Xiaojun and Chon Tong-chol, director of the DPRK Rason Special City Tourism Bureau, hold talks in Changchun.

Feb. 27, 2014: Guo Shengkun, PRC state councilor and minister of public security, and ROK counterpart Lee Sung-han hold talks in Beijing.

Feb. 27, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson hopes for inter-Korean reconciliation.

Feb. 28, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson calls for easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula in response to North Korea's reported missile launches on Feb. 27.

March 3, 2014: Direct postal service from Hunchun to Rason begins.

March 3, 2014: ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Kyung-soo meets PRC Ambassador Qui Guohong and expresses Seoul's condemnation of terrorist attacks in Kunming.

March 4, 2014: DPRK Premier Pak Pong Ju sends a message of sympathy to PRC Premier Li Keqiang on the terrorist incident in Kunming.

March 4-7, 2014: China, South Korea, and Japan hold their fourth round of FTA talks in Seoul.

March 5, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses concern over North Korea's reported missile launches.

March 6, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses concern over Chinese civil aviation safety after North Korea's reported rocket launch.

March 6-7, 2014: Second China-ROK-Japan Trilateral Table Top Exercise on disaster management is held in Tokyo.

March 8, 2014: PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi at a press conference for China's annual parliamentary session expresses China's opposition to war or instability on the Korean Peninsula and calls for early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

March 10-20, 2014: Delegation of the DPRK State General Bureau of Tourism led by Vice Director-General Cho Song Kol visits China for personnel training at Chinese tourism institutes in Beijing and Shanghai.

March 11, 2014: PRC, DPRK, and Russian directors of tourism departments in the Tumen River Area hold a conference in Hunchun.

March 15-17, 2014: Delegation of the DPRK International Exhibition Cooperation meets Dandong City Vice Mayor Pan Shuang and the Dandong City Council for the Promotion of International Trade to discuss the PRC-DPRK Expo.

March 17, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson calls for stability on Korean Peninsula.

March 17-21, 2014: PRC Special Representative for Korean Peninsular Affairs Wu Dawei visits North Korea. Wu pays a courtesy call on Kim Yong Dae, vice president of the DPRK Supreme People Assembly Presidium, on March 20.

March 17-21, 2014: Tenth round of China-ROK FTA talks is held in Ilsan, South Korea.

March 23, 2014: Presidents Xi and Park hold talks on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in the Netherlands.

March 24, 2014: President Xi calls for the resumption of Six-Party Talks at a meeting with President Obama on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in the Netherlands.

March 27-April 10: Ri Ho-son, vice department director of the WPK Central Committee, leads a delegation of WPK economic officials to major Chinese cities.

March 28, 2014: Remains of 437 Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War are returned from South Korea to China.

April 3, 2014: Beijing Mayor Wang Anshun and Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon meet in Beijing.

April 3, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson expresses support for inter-Korean reconciliation in response to ROK President Park Geun-hye's proposals toward unification.

April 8, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson calls for "caution" on the Korean Peninsula after US, ROK, and Japanese nuclear envoys hold trilateral talks in Washington on April 7.

April 10, 2014: PRC and ROK Foreign Ministers Wang Yi and Yun Byung-se hold telephone talks on Korean Peninsula tensions.

April 10, 2014: PRC Premier Li Keqiang meets ROK Prime Minister Jung Hong-won on the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan.

April 11, 2014: PRC nuclear envoy Wu Dawei meets ROK counterpart Hwang Joon-kook.

April 13, 2014: A train route opens from Jian, Jilin to North Korea.

April 15, 2014: China-ROK-Japan International Forum for the Trilateral Cooperation 2014 is held in Seoul.

April 15, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson pledges that China will play a "positive role" on the Korean Peninsula.

April 17, 2014: PRC President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang send condolence messages to ROK counterparts over the fatal ferry accident.

April 22, 2014: China-ROK-Japan Northeast Asia Trilateral Forum, sponsored by *Xinhua*, *JoongAng Ilbo*, and *Nikkei*, opens in Jiangsu province, China.

April 23, 2014: Presidents Xi and Park hold telephone talks.

April 25, 2014: President Park at a joint press conference with President Obama emphasizes China's role in addressing the DPRK nuclear issue.

April 28-29, 2014: PRC Vice Environment Minister Li Ganjie, and ROK and Japanese Environment Ministers Yoon Seong-kyu and Ishihara Nobuteru hold 16th trilateral Environment Ministers Meeting in Daegu, Korea.

April 29, 2014: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson calls for easing tensions on the peninsula in response to DPRK military drills.