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A NEW CHAPTER?

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Beijing and Pyongyang celebrate 70 years of diplomatic relations this year. Xi Jinping traveled to Pyongyang in June for a fifth summit with Kim Jong Un, the first visit to North Korea by China's top leader in 14 years. The meeting aimed to advance the bilateral friendship to a new phase of comprehensive development and drive regional coordination on the Korean Peninsula. In contrast, Xi's 40-minute meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Osaka seemed to marginalize Moon, subordinate the relationship with South Korea, and place Xi as an intermediary between North Korea and the rest of world. Pyongyang's missile tests, however, showed the limited effects of such diplomacy, even after surprise exchanges between US, North Korean, and South Korean leaders in Panmunjom on June 30. The current expansion of China-DPRK political, military, economic, and cultural exchanges also presents challenges to sanctions implementation and human rights promotion.

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Xi Jinping gets a grand welcome in Pyongyang

Xi Jinping sought to open a “new chapter” in China-DPRK relations after 70 years of diplomatic ties, as indicated in his front-page op-ed in North Korea’s party paper *Rodong Sinmum* on the eve of his visit. While the two leaders last met in Beijing this January, Xi’s visit on June 20-21 was the first visit to North Korea by China’s top leader since Hu Jintao made the trip in 2005, and the fifth such visit since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1949. Xi was [accompanied](#) by Director of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) General Office Ding Xuexiang, Director of the CCP Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, National Development and Reform Commission Minister He Lifeng, and Xi’s wife, Peng Liyuan. He received a grand welcome from Kim Jong Un upon arrival at Pyongyang International Airport, and a special salutation at the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun or Kim Il Sung Mausoleum, a monument no other Chinese leader has visited. Accompanied by first ladies Peng Liyuan and Ri Sol Ju, Xi and Kim [watched](#) North Korea’s signature Mass Games performance and paid respects to the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army at the Friendship Tower in Pyongyang. Themed on the bilateral friendship, the Mass Games show involved more than 50,000 participants and featured Chinese cultural performances including songs hand-picked by Kim Jong Un.



Figure 1 Xi Jinping meets Kim Jong Un in North Korea. Photo: Xinhuanet

According to the state media, the summit produced master plans for bilateral ties and regional peace. Xi [called](#) for a “political settlement to the Korean Peninsula issue” and continued exchanges with Kim to build “political mutual trust.” In addition to praising Pyongyang’s denuclearization efforts, Xi expressed China’s willingness to “offer assistance that can guarantee DPRK’s appropriate internal security.” While Kim vowed to “learn more from China’s experience in developing the economy,” he also noted that Pyongyang’s efforts to avoid the escalation of peninsula tensions “were not positively welcomed by relevant parties.” Chinese scholars like Yanbian University

Professor Zhao Lixin [envisioned](#) the comprehensive development of friendship with North Korea no longer “confined to the nuclear issue,” which he identified as a “multilateral dispute.” Zhao’s *Global Times* op-ed at the start of Xi’s visit instead prioritized China’s support for promoting “socialist development with North Korean characteristics” without intervening in Pyongyang’s policy choices.

Xi’s North Korea visit came four months after the second Trump-Kim summit in Hanoi ended with a failure to reach an agreement on denuclearization. It also occurred a week before Xi’s talks with US President Donald Trump at the [G20](#) in Osaka on June 29 and surprise exchanges among Trump, Kim, and Moon at Panmunjom a day later that made international headlines. In response to the Panmunjom meeting, China’s Foreign Ministry affirmed Beijing’s commitment to denuclearization and peace via dialogue, and emphasized the driving force of Xi’s Pyongyang visit for regional diplomacy on Korea.

Beijing ties with Seoul subordinated to ties with Pyongyang

China’s relations with South Korea have remained relatively restrained since last year, especially when compared to China’s focus on reviving leadership ties with North Korea. Xi and Moon held a cordial meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Osaka, but Xi has not yet visited South Korea since Moon’s presidential inauguration in May 2017. Xi’s plans to visit Pyongyang had heightened speculation that he might also visit Seoul in conjunction with the G20, but instead highlighted his failure to do so. Despite Moon’s efforts to stabilize the South Korea-China relationship during his December 2017 visit to Beijing, the political relationship has not yet fully recovered from the controversy over THAAD and China’s economic retaliation.

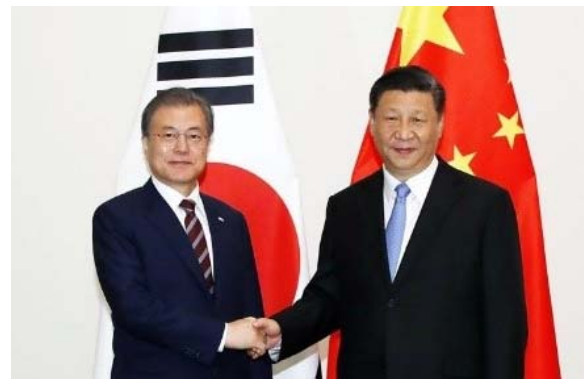


Figure 2 Xi Jinping meets Moon Jae-in on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Photo: Yonhap News

A meeting between South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo and Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue on June 1 yielded modest progress on “strategic communications” with an agreement to expand communications between the navies and air forces and

to develop clearer understandings on disaster relief and humanitarian assistance cooperation. These confidence-building measures are intended to reduce miscommunication or miscalculation and represent the first steps toward recovery of military relations following the THAAD dispute in 2016.



Figure 3 Jeong Kyeong-doo meets General Wei Fenghe on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Photo: Yonhap

The June 27 Moon-Xi meeting on the sidelines of the G20 underscored China's prioritization of the relationship with North Korea, and Moon's seeming marginalization following the failed Hanoi summit. [During the 40-minute meeting](#), Xi briefed Moon on his visit to Pyongyang a week earlier, affirming Kim Jong Un's commitment to denuclearization and economic development, his willingness to continue dialogue on denuclearization, and his willingness to pursue cooperation with South Korea, while Moon expressed hope for renewed US-North Korea talks. [Chinese reports](#) on the meeting emphasized China's willingness to cooperate with "sincerity, strive to achieve win-win cooperation, push ahead the development of bilateral ties, and make contributions to the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and the region." Moon and Xi also discussed bilateral trade relations, China's cooperation to restore sites important to Korea's independence movement, and the need to cooperate to enhance environmental protection, among other issues, as well as to "consult with each other through their nations' diplomatic channels regarding a future visit to Korea by President Xi."

The recovery of the China-South Korea relationship has also been hobbled by more aggressive Chinese intrusions into South Korean-claimed air and naval jurisdictions. Chinese vessels have reportedly attempted to normalize their presence on the South Korean side of the equidistant line between China and South Korea in the Yellow Sea. In addition, Chinese air patrols have more actively entered portions of the Korean Air Defense Identification Zones (KADIZ) adjacent to Chinese-controlled zones and in the East Sea/Sea of Japan between Japan and South Korea. The most notable of these incidents involved a July 22 joint China-Russia air

patrol that entered both the southern and eastern portions of the KADIZ. South Korean fighter jets scrambled and fired warning flares and shots in response to an accompanying Russian intelligence plane that entered South Korean-claimed air space adjacent to the contested Dokdo/Takeshima Island. This development marks an expansion of the geographic scope of China-Russia military cooperation and an effort by Russia and China to probe and was seen by many as an effort to exploit growing tensions between US allies Japan and South Korea.

Security issues linger over Korean Peninsula dialogue

Pyongyang's missile tests on July 25 and Aug. 6 displayed the limited effects of regional diplomacy on addressing security issues on the Peninsula. While North Korea's state media concluded that the five Xi-Kim summits have produced a consensus on key issues, as a *China Daily* contributor [indicated](#) on June 20, "it is unrealistic to expect that Xi can solve all the peninsula issues with a two-day visit." South Korean media outlet *Yonhap* [questioned](#) the geopolitical aims surrounding Xi's pledges to promote peace, dialogue, and denuclearization. According to the *New York Times*, the latest Xi-Kim meeting's [unspoken](#) agenda was to send a message to Trump that yielded more leverage in their respective disputes with Washington over trade and denuclearization.

As State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi reminded ROK and Japanese counterparts in Beijing on Aug. 21, China's [consistent](#) position on North Korea is to address through dialogue the concerns of all parties, including "the DPRK's legitimate concerns in security guarantee and sanctions relief." Chinese leaders continue to push for a "dual track" denuclearization and peace approach on the Peninsula. Wang Yi affirmed this preference at the East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bangkok on Aug. 2, where he noted remaining [difficulties](#) in advancing dialogue despite recent high-level diplomatic engagements on North Korea. Addressing regional defense leaders at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on June 2, State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe [reiterated](#) China's core positions on the Korean Peninsula: US-DPRK dialogue, the lifting of sanctions, and steps toward formally ending the Korean War. Xi raised the sanctions issue with Trump during bilateral talks on the G20 sidelines in Osaka on June 29, and China's Foreign Ministry called for the continuation of US-DPRK dialogue after Pyongyang's latest missile tests.

China and North Korea reconsolidate political and military ties

[Chinese](#) and [North Korean](#) official media celebrated the development of bilateral ties in their special coverage in July of the 58th anniversary of the signing of the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. PRC Vice Premier Hu Chunhua and DPRK

Ambassador to China Chi Jae-ryong at a July 11 banquet in Beijing exchanged support for both “traditional friendship” and “pragmatic cooperation.”

China-DPRK contacts this summer indicated a clear revival in bilateral exchanges. Wang Yang, chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference National Committee, and Kim Wan-su, chairman of the Central Committee of the DPRK Democratic Front for National Reunification, met in Beijing on June 28 and pledged to advance the bilateral political relationship. DPRK delegations of the Ministry of People’s Security and Workers’ Party of Korea International Department, led by Councilor Ri Song Chol and First Vice Department Director Kim Song Nam respectively, visited China in July. Director General of the PRC Foreign Ministry’s Information Department Lu Kang went to Pyongyang that same month, where they were received by the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department of Press and Information. According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, these [visits](#) were part of an exchange mechanism promoting regular diplomatic exchanges between the CCP and WPK’s Foreign Affairs Departments. During his July trip to China, North Korea’s Central Court President Kang Yun Sok also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with China’s Supreme People’s Court President Zhou Qiang on judicial cooperation, and met Guo Shengkun, chief of the CCP Commission for Political and Legal Affairs.

China and North Korea are also showing signs of more active bilateral military dialogue and possible cooperation following Xi’s first visit to Pyongyang. Minister of the People’s Armed Forces, Army Gen. No Kwang Chol, Army Col. Gen. Ri Tu Song, and other military officials attended Chinese Embassy celebrations of the 92nd founding anniversary of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army in July. Director of the Korean People’s Army Political Bureau Kim Su Gil and China’s Central Military Commission (CMC) Vice Chairman Zhang Youxia met in Beijing on Aug. 17, where both sides [recognized](#) the driving momentum of Xi’s June visit for bilateral military ties. Kim Su Gil also met PRC counterpart Miao Hua, director of the CMC Political Affairs Department, who attended the Xi-Kim summit along with Kim Su Gil, and head of the CCP International Liaison Department Song Tao. Marking a “[new historic chapter](#)” in bilateral relations, these exchanges occurred amid Pyongyang’s angry reactions to US-ROK military exercises.

Affirmations of China-DPRK friendship were further reinforced by North Korean support for Beijing’s position on Hong Kong, where pro-democracy protests escalated from June. China’s Foreign Ministry [praised](#) *Rodong Sinmun* for extending such support in its July 30 article calling the Hong Kong issue China’s internal affair. A DPRK Foreign Ministry representative in a *Korean Central News Agency* interview on Aug. 11 again expressed Pyongyang’s opposition to any external intervention in Hong Kong. A *Rodong Sinmun* commentary on Aug. 13 reasserted North Korea’s

support for Beijing’s “one country, two systems” principle, while the *Minju Joson*, the daily of North Korea’s Cabinet, [accused](#) Washington of using the Hong Kong protests to pressure Beijing amid trade tensions.

China-DPRK economic and cultural relations

China led several Northeast Asian initiatives in August promoting North Korea’s regional economic integration. Jilin [hosted](#) the 12th China-Northeast Asia Expo and the 10th High-level Forum on Northeast Asia Cooperation in Changchun on Aug. 23, which were attended by PRC Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua, Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen, Chairman of South Korea’s North Korea Economic Cooperation Commission Kwon Goo Hoon, Vice Minister of Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Seki Yoshihiro, and Jilin Party Secretary Bayin Chaolu. North Korea’s Minister for External Economic Affairs Kim Yong Jae, who attended the forum on China’s Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing last April, affirmed Pyongyang’s active promotion of trade and investment with foreign partners. The Greater Tumen Initiative also held its 19th meeting in Changchun, where Chinese, South Korea, Russian, and Mongolian representatives urged North Korea to rejoin the regional development initiative, which it left in 2009. In a *China Daily* [commentary](#) in August, Tai Hwan Lee, president of ROK-China Think Net, argued that the lifting of UN sanctions on North Korea could facilitate China-ROK cooperation on regional infrastructure projects, including Moon’s proposed East Asia railway community linking Korea, China, and Russia.

Trade data shows that high-level regional diplomacy on North Korea has been accompanied by a sharp recovery in China-DPRK economic ties. According to the Korea International Trade Association, bilateral trade grew by 15% in January-June 2019 compared to the same period last year. North Korean exports to China grew by 14%, while imports from China increased by 15.5%, producing a \$1.04 billion trade deficit in the first half of 2019. Despite UN sanctions on North Korea, Chinese Customs data showed that Beijing provided about \$1 million in rice and \$55 million in fertilizer to the North in May-October last year, following the first Xi-Kim summit in March 2018. Chinese reports to the UN Sanctions Committee put China’s total supply of refined oil products to North Korea at 5,730 tons in January-May 2019, slightly lower than figures during the same period last year, and about a quarter of the amount of Russia’s refined oil supplies to the North. UN Security Council Resolution 2397 from 2017 restricts the annual amount of refined oil supplies to North Korea to 60-65,000 tons.

Not included in China’s official trade data are extensive illicit ship-to-ship transfers of oil to North Korea conducted in international waters. Some of these transactions involve Chinese ships. The UN Panel of Experts has received reports from the United States and other countries that have comprehensively documented such transfers, estimating that North Korea may have

severely violated UN sanctions limiting the supply of oil to North Korea to less than 500,000 tons. The report alleges that due to over 70 illegal ship-to-ship transfers observed during the first four months of 2019, sanctions limits were likely breached within the first four months of 2019. If shipments were at full capacity, North Korean illicit imports of petroleum may have already doubled the annual cap within this time period. But Chinese and Russian governments have argued that the information necessary to make such a judgment is premature and inconclusive. The Panel of Experts report also estimates that North Korea has raised up to \$2 billion in support for its weapons of mass destruction programs through cyber theft, much of which has been conducted from China and other countries that provide access and serve as a base for North Korean hackers.

Debate continues over humanitarian aid, which may not be subject to UNSC sanctions restricting the supply of materials supporting North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. South Korea's Unification Ministry questioned Japanese media reports in late August claiming that China plans to send significant food aid to North Korea after Pyongyang refused to accept South Korean rice via the World Food Program in protest against US-ROK military exercises. A visit to China in May by North Korea's Red Cross Society raised speculation over North Korea's quest for Chinese aid. As [reported](#) by the World Food Program and Food and Agriculture Organization earlier that month, North Korea's crop output in 2018 reached the lowest levels in a decade, placing an estimated 40% (10 million) of the population in need of food.

A second issue drawing renewed attention is the expansion of Chinese tourism to North Korea, which lies outside UNSC restrictions. After Xi's visit to Pyongyang, North Korea's Air Koryo resumed Pyongyang-Dalian flights from July 19 and Pyongyang-Jinan flights from Aug. 13, expanding the number of flight connections to five, including those between Pyongyang and Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenyang. China's *Global Times* [reported](#) in June that 80% of the 100,000 annual foreign visitors in North Korea are Chinese, whose numbers reached record high levels last year according to South Korea's Korea Development Institute. Especially in [border regions](#), many cross the Yalu River from Dandong by bus or train, while others enjoy the visa-free, short-distance travel routes from Hunchun to Pyongyang, Rason, and Mount Kumgang. Ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifications, Beijing-based Koryo Tours in July began promoting a tour package to Pyongyang for an inter-Korean match scheduled for October. In another indication of improving cultural ties, Pyongyang University of Science and Technology opened North Korea's first Chinese language test center in May, allowing North Koreans to take the HSK proficiency test in their home country.

Current indications of improving economic and cultural relations, however, mask a continuing problem of human

sex trafficking targeting DPRK defectors. A London-based civic group [reported](#) in May that about 60% of female defectors are believed to be trapped in China's multimillion-dollar sex trade, while the *South China Morning Post* in June shed light on an "[underground railroad](#)" linking an informal network of brokers, charities, and middlemen.

The limits of trilateral Japan-China-South Korea cooperation

After a three-year pause in contacts, China and South Korea's trilateral foreign ministers' talks with Japan on Aug. 21 marked 20 years of three-way cooperation. The [scope of such cooperation](#) potentially extends to a wide range of regional issues, including ASEAN, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and Greater Mekong cooperation. The meeting raised propositions for developing a China-Japan-ROK "Plus One" mechanism, but frictions among the three parties including Korea-Japan tensions, Beijing's opposition to US missile deployment, and history issues pose a challenge to such proposals.

Most notably, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was placed in the role of mediator between his Japanese and South Korean counterparts, urging both to work together trilaterally while taking overt jabs at the United States. Wang reaffirmed Chinese opposition to US deployment of land-based missiles in Asia and stressed that "having a cold war mentality will cause us to go backward in history, and seeking confrontation will result in a double loss."

Conclusion: China-Korea interdependence and US-China rivalry

Eyes are set on Beijing's Oct. 1 National Day celebrations and military parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of the People Republic of China's founding. The event will provide an opportunity to bring both Korean leaders, whose reliance on Chinese support is growing on a range of issues, to Beijing. Xi-Kim talks in Pyongyang sought to pave the path toward comprehensively developing the China-DPRK relationship after years of stagnation since Kim assumed power in 2011. Seoul's trade spat with Tokyo makes economic cooperation with China increasingly important in the aftermath of the THAAD dispute, in addition to continued coordination on peninsula denuclearization and unification.

Cooperation with China also contains risks for both Korean leaders, however. Kim Jong Un seeks to use North Korea's nuclear development to play the role of strategic pivot between two great powers, taking advantage of rising China-US rivalry to enhance North Korean independence, thwart US pressure, exploit the opening provided by the Kim-Trump relationship, and extort material benefits from each side. Moon seeks better relations with China as the way to secure peace and

denuclearization. But, China's desired price includes a weakening or even possible dissolution of the US-ROK alliance. At the same time, Xi appears to have usurped Moon's role as intermediary between North Korea and the world. Moreover, South Korea remains susceptible to economic and political fallout from rising China-US rivalry. Both Koreas will have to take careful account of China's interests and influence and manage their relationships with Beijing without allowing China to become an obstacle to the achievement of their respective security strategies.

CHRONOLOGY OF CHINA-KOREA RELATIONS

MAY – SEPTEMBER 2019

May 2, 2019: Finance ministers and central bank chiefs from China, South Korea, and Japan attend the 19th Trilateral Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting in Nadi, Fiji.

May 2, 2019: Chief of South Korea's National Council on Climate and Air Quality Ban Ki-moon calls for closer cooperation with China on improving air quality in both countries.

May 3, 2019: South Korean President Moon Jae-in grants credentials to newly-appointed ambassadors, including ROK Ambassador to China Jang Ha-sung.

May 3, 2019: South Korea's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport announces that it has granted low-cost carriers rights to increase the number of flights to China.

May 6-8, 2019: ROK National Assembly Speaker Moon Hee-sang leads a parliamentary delegation to China, where he meets CCP Political Bureau member Yang Jiechi, chief of the NPC Standing Committee Li Zhanshu, and Vice President Wang Qishan.

May 7, 2019: Gan Lin, vice minister of China's State Administration for Market Regulation, and Ji Chul-ho, vice chairman of South Korea's Fair Trade Commission, meet on the sidelines of the China competition policy forum in Hainan Province.

May 14, 2019: Delegation of North Korea's Red Cross Society, led by Executive Vice Chairman Paek Yong Ho, leaves Pyongyang for China.

May 15, 2019: Hyundai Transys Inc. announces that it has signed an MOU with BYD Co. Ltd, China's largest electronic vehicle maker, in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

May 21, 2019: Seoul and Beijing municipal officials have a closed-door meeting on reducing fine dust particles on the sidelines of the 2019 Seoul International Forum on Air Quality Improvement.

May 23, 2019: Kim Sang-jo, head of South Korea's Fair Trade Commission, and Gan Lin, vice minister of China's State Administration for Market Regulation, sign an MOU in Seoul on antitrust cooperation.

May 23, 2019: Delegation of the DPRK's Institute of International Studies headed by President O Yong Ran leaves Pyongyang for China.

May 26-June 1, 2019: Wuxi Deputy Mayor Wang Jinjian and a Jiangsu provincial delegation visit South Korea and Japan to deepen trade and economic cooperation.

May 28, 2019: Delegation of the DPRK's General Administration of Civil Aviation led by General Director Rim Kwang Ung leaves Pyongyang for China.

May 30, 2019: Huawei Technologies Co. opens its first 5G lab in Seoul to expand its presence in the South Korean market.

May 31, 2019: Several Chinese TV series are scheduled to compete in the 14th Seoul International Drama Awards in August, following a two-year absence in protest against THAAD.

June 01, 2019: ROK Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo and PRC Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe meet on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

June 4-5, 2019: Ban Ki-moon visits China for general meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development and celebrations of 2019 World Environment Day in Hangzhou. Ban meets China's Minister of Ecology and Environment Li Ganjie and Zhejiang Provincial Party Secretary Che Jun.

June 7, 2019: South Korea's Presidential Office, Cheong Wa Dae, says Huawei's 5G poses no immediate threat to national security.

June 7, 2019: Beijing-based tour agency Koryo Tours launches a stamp design competition for Pyongyang's annual Mangyongdae Prize International Marathon to celebrate the April 15 birthday of DPRK founder Kim Il Sung.

June 10, 2019: Guangzhou and Gwangju representatives at a meeting in Seoul share experiences of 23 years of sister-city friendship and cooperation.

June 14, 2019: South Korean politicians, students, and netizens support anti-extradition bill protests in Hong Kong, according to a *South China Morning Post* [report](#).

June 18, 2019: ROK Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and Korea Tourism Organization data shows that Chinese tourists were the national group that spent the most in South Korea in the first quarter of 2019, followed by Taiwanese and Americans.

June 19, 2019: Sixth China-Russia Expo concludes in Harbin, where North Korean artists display their work at an art exhibition on the sidelines.

June 19, 2019: ROK Vice Foreign Minister Lee Tae-ho and representative from other ministries meet a Chinese delegation led by PRC Assistant Commerce Minister Li Chenggang for the 23rd Joint Economic Committee session in Seoul.

June 19, 2019: Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping publishes article on China-DPRK ties in the DPRK's mainstream media.

June 20-21, 2019: Xi visits North Korea and meets Kim Jong-un.

June 21, 2019: South Korea, China, and Japan open a joint photo exhibition at the Seoul Metro Art Center featuring 20 years of trilateral cooperation.

June 24-26, 2019: China-Japan-ROK Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum is held in Yantai, Shandong province.

June 26, 2019: Conference held in Changchun to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of friendly relations between Jilin province and Gangwon-do in South Korea, where Jilin's Deputy Party Secretary Jing Junhai and Gangwon-do Governor Choi Moon-soon deliver speeches.

June 27, 2019: Presidents Xi and Moon meet in Osaka on the sidelines of the G20 Summit.

June 28, 2019: DPRK Ambassador to China Ji Jae Ryong presents a floral basket from the Workers' Party of Korea to deputy head of the CCP International Liaison Department Wang Yajun to mark the 98th founding anniversary of the CCP.

June 28, 2019: China's top political advisor Wang Yang and Kim Wan Su, chairman of the Central Committee of the Democratic Front for National Reunification of the DPRK, meet in Beijing.

July 1, 2019: PRC Foreign Ministry expresses China's support for the meetings among US, ROK, and DPRK leaders in Panmunjom.

July 4, 2019: 2019 Korea Smart City Inside China event is held in Xian, where the ROK Ministry of Science and Information and Communications Technology promotes South Korea's presence in China's smart city market.

July 8, 2019: South Korea's Foreign Ministry announces a train tour across China by 100 South Koreans to mark the centennial anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai on April 11, 1919.

July 8, 2019: Opening ceremony of China (Guangxi)-South Korea Friendly Exchange Week is held in Nanning.

July 9, 2019: A friendship delegation of North Korea's Ministry of People's Security headed by Councilor Ri Song Chol departs North Korea to visit China.

July 11, 2019: Vice President of the China Public Diplomacy Association Hu Zhengyue [assesses](#) China-Japan-ROK cooperation in *China Daily*.

July 11, 2019: PRC Foreign Ministry [confirms](#) arrival in Beijing of a delegation of the WPK International Department led by First Vice Department Director Kim Song Nam, and departure to Pyongyang of a Chinese delegation led by Lu Kang, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Information Department.

July 11, 2019: *Rodong Sinmun* highlights China-DPRK relations on the occasion of the 58th anniversary of the signing of the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.

July 11, 2019: PRC Vice Premier Hu Chunhua and DPRK Ambassador to China Chi Jae Ryong address a banquet in Beijing celebrating the 58th anniversary of the signing of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.

July 16, 2019: Zhou Qiang, chief justice and president of China's Supreme People's Court, and DPRK Central Court President Kang Yun-sok [meet](#) in Beijing and sign an MOU on judicial cooperation in Beijing.

July 16, 2019: Guo Shengkun, CPC Political Bureau member and head of the CPC Commission for Political and Legal Affairs, meets DPRK Central Court President Kang Yun Sok in Beijing.

July 23, 2019: Air Koryo resumes flights between Pyongyang and Dalian.

July 20, 2019: Beijing-based Koryo Tours begins sales of a tour package to Pyongyang for a World Cup qualification soccer match between South and North Korea.

July 22, 2019: China's Ministry of Commerce announces anti-dumping measures on imported stainless steel products from the European Union, Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia.

July 23-24, 2019: ROK Vice Foreign Minister Lee Tae-ho and PRC counterpart Luo Zhaohui lead talks in Beijing on the demarcation of maritime boundaries.

July 23, 2019: Chinese and Russian warplanes participating in a joint military exercise enter the Korea Air Defense Identification Zone according to the ROK Defense Ministry.

July 23, 2019: US Justice Department announces that four Chinese and a Chinese company were charged with assisting DPRK entities involved in weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

July 24, 2019: South Korea's Consulate General in Hong Kong issues a travel advisory to South Korean nationals traveling to Hong Kong amid pro-democracy protests.

July 24, 2019: PRC Ministry of National Defense denies the violation of international regulations on airspace during the joint patrol exercises with Russian counterparts on July 23.

July 25, 2019: China's Foreign Ministry says China hopes for the resumption of US-DPRK talks after Pyongyang fires two unidentified projectiles into the sea.

July 30, 2019: PRC Foreign Ministry praises *Rodong Sinmun* for reasserting Beijing's position on Hong Kong.

August 1, 2019: ROK Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha and PRC State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi meet in Bangkok on the sidelines of annual ASEAN meetings.

Aug. 1, 2019: South Korea's National Assembly adopts a resolution condemning an airspace incursion by Russian and Chinese warplanes, and Japan's territorial claim to Dokdo/Takeshima.

Aug. 2, 2019: China's Foreign Ministry expresses support for dialogue between Japan and South Korea.

Aug. 7, 2019: PRC Foreign Ministry calls for dialogue on the Korean Peninsula after North Korea launches two projectiles on Aug. 6.

Aug. 7, 2019: *South China Morning Post* [reports](#) US investigations into financial transactions involving Chinese banks that allegedly funded North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Aug. 11, 2019: DPRK Foreign Ministry representative in a *Korean Central News Agency* article expresses North Korea's support for China's handling of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

Aug. 13, 2019: *Rodong Sinmun* commentary expresses North Korea's support for China's "one country, two systems" principle.

Aug. 16, 2019: Kim Su Gil, director of the Korean People's Army General Political Bureau, arrives in Beijing for meetings with Chinese officials including Zhang Youxia, CMC vice chairman; Miao Hua, director of the CMC Political Affairs Department, and Song Tao, head of the CPC International Liaison Department.

Aug. 20-22, 2019: ROK Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha visits Beijing to meet PRC counterpart Wang Yi and Premier Li Keqiang, and hold the 9th China-Japan-ROK meeting of foreign ministers, the first such meeting since August 2016.

Aug. 22, 2019: The 19th Greater Tumen Initiative meeting in Changchun renews calls on North Korea to rejoin the regional development initiative.

Aug. 23, 2019: Tenth High-level Forum on Northeast Asia Cooperation, 12th China-Northeast Asia Expo, and 1st China-Japan-ROK Entrepreneur Summit open in Changchun, Jilin province. Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua, Jilin Party Secretary Bayin Chaolu, Chairman of South Korea's North Economic Cooperation Commission Kwon Goo-hoon, and Vice Minister of the PRC Commerce Ministry Wang Shouwen deliver speeches.

Aug. 26-28, 2019: Fourteen South Korean lawmakers from ruling and opposition parties attend the sixth China-ROK meeting of next-generation political leaders in Beijing sponsored by the Korea-China Leaders Society and the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs.

Aug. 28, 2019: *Minju Joson*, the daily of the DPRK's Cabinet, publishes an article claiming Washington is using Hong Kong protests to strengthen its position in trade disputes with China.

Aug. 30, 2019: Culture ministers at the 11th China-Japan-ROK Cultural Ministers' Meeting hosted by Incheon Metropolitan City sign an agreement outlining a 10-year vision for trilateral cultural cooperation, and designate China's Yangzhou, South Korea's Suncheon, and Japan's Kitakyushu as Culture Cities of East Asia 2020.

Chronology compilation and research assistance provided by Chenglong Lin, San Francisco State University

