

**NORTH KOREA IN TRANSITION:
BACK TO THE PAST OR MOVING TO
THE FUTURE?**

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Executive Summary

1. On 28 September 2010, the Korean Workers Party (KWP) held a meeting of Party Representatives, the first of its kind in 44 years.
2. Kim Jong-un, Kim Jong-il's third and youngest son, made a rare appearance at the meeting and was appointed as the first vice chairman of the Party's Central Military Commission (CMC), after having been awarded the rank of four-star general a day earlier. He was also made a member of the Central Committee of the KWP.
3. At the same time, Kim Kyong-hui, Kim Jong-il's only sister, was also awarded the rank of four-star general and was installed in the Political Bureau of the KWP at the meeting.
4. To bolster Kim Jong-un's No. 2 position in military affairs, the CMC was reorganized with only two vice chairmen and 16 ordinary members.
5. Jo Myong-rok, a veteran leader of the Korean People's Army (KPA) who had been the first vice chairman of the National Defense Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) since February 2009, is absent from the CMC. Instead, he was "promoted" to the Political Bureau Standing Committee of the KWP.
6. Also absent from the CMC are Ri Yong-mu and O Kuk-ryol, vice chairmen of the National Defense Commission. The former is the nephew of Kim Il-sung's first wife and Kim Jong-il's cousin and the latter is supposed to be a core player in the military. Ri was made a member of the Political Bureau, while O was only made an ordinary member of the Central Committee of the KWP.
7. Defense Minister Kim Yong-chun made it to the Political Bureau as a full member but managed to get into the CMC only as an ordinary member, along

with U Dong-chuk and Jang Song-thaek (Kim Jong-il's brother-in-law) who are both alternate Political Bureau members.

8. The only shining star outside Kim's family is Ri Yong-ho, the chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA).
9. He was promoted to the rank of vice marshal on 27 September 2010 and was installed in the Political Bureau Standing Committee of the KWP and appointed second vice chairman of the CMC the following day.
10. Kim Jong-un has made a number of public appearances along with his father ever since. The younger Kim looks exactly like his grandfather, including his hairstyle and gestures. But the question is whether he is going to lead North Korea back to the past or to a new future.