

Sang Kwon Park meets North Korean Officials about restarting manufacturing at the Kaesong Industrial Complex

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Sang Kwon Park, CEO of Pyeonghwa Motors (far right), shakes hands with North Korean leader Jong Un Kim July 30, 2013 in Pyongyang. At left is Yang Gon Kim, Director of the United Front Department. Provided by the South Korean Unification Ministry. Courtesy of JoongAng Ilbo.

Mr. Sang Kwon Park, former head of Peace Motors Corporation (Pyeonghwa Motors), recently visited top North Korean officials regarding the restart of manufacturing at the Kaesong Industrial Complex as well as a possible peace park in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and reported positive signals from the North Korean leadership, according to news reports. The industrial park temporarily closed manufacturing operations on April 8, 2013 due to high regional tensions.

Mr. Park also was greeted by North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, on July 30th as a leading overseas Korean. Park recounted that “As soon as he grabbed my hands, he told me, ‘I appreciate your long relations with us since the era of the General [Jong Il Kim]’” Park said. “Then he added, ‘Let’s move forward with the unification of the country.’”

President Geun Hye Park, president of South Korea, had proposed to build an International Peace Park inside the DMZ in a speech at a joint session of the U.S. Congress during her trip to Washington on May 8, 2013.

Yang Gon Kim, director of North Korea’s United Front Department and the person in charge of dealing with the South, was quoted by the Hankyoreh News, a daily, as saying, “If things go well with the Kaesong Complex, things will also go well with the DMZ park [referred to by South Korean President Geun Hye Park].”



Sang Kwon Park talks (far right) with Yang Geon Kim, (center). Park visited the North for meetings in late July. (courtesy of Pyeonghwa Motors Corp.)

After a visit to Pyongyang July 24th to Aug. 4th, Mr. Sang Kwon Park held a press conference on Aug. 9th at the Republic of Korea Ministry of Unification during which he told reporters what Kim had said during their meeting.

“When it comes down to it, the Kaesong Industrial Complex is in the DMZ, too. It is only if we actively work to make things go well at Kaesong that we can decide whether or not to make the park in the DMZ. At the moment, the Kaesong Complex is not operating, so what use is there to talk about the DMZ Park?”

If things go well with the Kaesong Complex, things will also go well with the DMZ Park,” Kim Yang-gon said, according to Park, as reported by Hankyoreh News. The industrial park is approximately six miles north of the DMZ.

Park said that he spent two and a half hours meeting with Kim during his trip.

The idea of the Peace Park had been proposed in 2000 by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), at the United Nations headquarters on August 18, 2000. “I hope the entire demilitarized zone along the 155-mile military demarcation line that crosses the Korean Peninsula can be turned into a peace zone under UN jurisdiction. I believe the United Nations will take the lead in this effort and build exhibition halls, museums, educational sites, and peace parks in this zone in order to teach visitors important lessons regarding peace.” Rev. Moon said.

FFWPU is also planning to hold a Prayer and Rally for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea by Korean residents in Japan to mark the one year anniversary of Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s Seonghwa (Ascension). The event will be on August 24, 2013. About 500 people including 300 Korean residents in Japan will gather at the Imjingak, a Korean War Memorial park that is close to the border with North Korea, to pray for the reunification of the peninsula. There will be performances and flying balloons that express hope for unification of Korea and the establishment of the DMZ World Peace Park. This event will be hosted by the Federation for Peace and Unification and the National Federation for North and South Korea Movement.