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Mystery in Madrid:

Who Raided the North Korean Embassy – and Why?

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Of course it was just a *coincidence* that the first organized attack on a North Korean facility by internal rebels (supposedly) took place days before the scheduled North Korean-US summit in Hanoi. Ten masked men stole computers, interrogated North Korean officials, and drove off in a number of luxury cars. [Credit was taken by a group that calls itself Chollima.](#)

Despite constantly being told by the Western media that this is a totally unknown group, to anyone who knows the least bit about Korean history, this is laughable. In the mid-1950s, China's "Great Leap Forward" was in progress, and Chollima was the Korean equivalent. It means "speed" of an unusual sort, and the symbolism was based on a mythological winged horse that could supposedly gallop at one thousand li (over a mile) a minute.

Since the North had limited physical resources, the idea was to overcome this by sheer ideological zeal. In short, Chollima was never some secret movement in opposition to the regime, but was instead a state-sponsored phenomenon from start to finish. "Chollima" is what they call their state soccer team.

So who are they, really, and what do they hope to accomplish?

There are two principal suspects as long well as a few minor ones. First, there are the declared enemies of the turn toward détente with Pyongyang – the neoconservative opponents of Trump and his worldwide push for peace, who managed to slither into the administration, principally National Security Advisor John Bolton. But wait ...

Why would the Boltonites risk exposing themselves to a scandal of international proportions? [The involvement of the CIA is rumored](#), but there's no evidence of that.

A more likely candidate is elements of the North Korean army. Any display of weakness, notably coming from the top, undermines Kim Jong-un's new "economy first" party line: the military has enjoyed extraordinary privileges since the days of Kim Il Sung. If the new party line takes effect, this special treatment suddenly comes to an end. Secondly, the new policy of détente with the US is the exact opposite of the old view: one doesn't uphold it over such a long period without any dissent once it's abandoned. Kim Jong-un wants to turn Pyongyang into Singapore – or, more likely, Las Vegas. The generals want to keep it looking like Airstrip One.

As unlikely as this seems, another suspect with a plausible motive is China.

While both countries are ostensibly communist, they could not be more different. China is capitalist in everything but name. As for the North – it is that incredible heretofore unknown creature: a “communist” theocracy. The mythology surrounding the ordinary events of the Kim family’s life have been turned into fantastic legends: the family is a pantheon. They are not merely admired, they are worshipped.

China’s role in all this is perhaps the most interesting.

If you look at the history of the Sino-Korean relationship, what you see is virtually uninterrupted rivalry. It’s a history of conflict that precedes the inter-communist one by hundreds of years. It was the Russians who “liberated” the peninsula from the Japanese and placed Kim Il Sung in power. However, it wasn’t as simple as that: the Sino-Soviet split complicated matters to the nth degree.

The Workers Party – the official name of the Korean party – was divided into four factions:

The pro-nativists, consisting of the guerrillas who fought in Manchuria against the Japanese. These were led by Kim Il Sung.

The pro-Russians: these cadres had been trained in Moscow and were indoctrinated Stalinists.

The pro-Chinese camp, which had trained with the Communist Party of China.

The cadres of the Communist Party of South Korea, separated from the rest by time and distance, developed in a more “liberal” direction.

One by one the various factions were eliminated until only the Kim faction was still around. Yet there were periodic eruptions, especially from the pro-China camp, which was never completely purged. Kim’s uncle, executed last year in a particularly brutal manner, was accused of using Beijing’s economic heft to his factional advantage. The assassination of Kim’s half brother in broad daylight right there in the streets of Macau – where he had been given asylum by the Chinese – was yet another incident in the low key guerrilla war been the two. The northern border with China is more porous than our southern border with the Mexicans, and the Chinese got him.

The last thing the Chinese want to see is a prosperous North Korea allied with the United States – which is precisely what Kim Jong-un is aiming for.

If indeed this is the scenario, then the Chinese understand what nobody in the West gets – that Kim is abandoning communism and trying to become the leader of a normal country. Beijing will never allow this, unless it occurs under Chinese auspices.

President Trump has set in motion a number of forces that are transforming the region – and, perhaps, changing the world. While the petty power-mongers of Washington, DC, fight over scraps like dogs in the street, the President is out to make history – and build a better world.