

## North Korea and the October War: Relations with Egypt and Syria

Satoru Miyamoto

Professor, Faculty of Political Science and Economics, Seigakuin University

Satoshi Ikeuchi

Professor, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, The University of Tokyo

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### A. Articles

#### 1. Introduction

During the “Arab Spring” that shook Arab countries from about 2010 to 2012, anti-government protests, riots, and the overthrow of regimes created a sense of crisis in North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea: DPRK). This was probably not because the “Arab Spring” would spill over into North Korea but because of the fear that regimes in Arab countries would be overthrown and friendly relations with those countries would collapse. North Korea's greatest fear was the collapse of its friendly relations with Egypt, which has the largest population of any Arab country.

Due to anti-government protests and persecution by opposition forces, Hosni Mubarak, who had held the Egyptian presidency since 1981, announced his resignation through his Vice President, Omar Suleiman, on February 11, 2011. Therefore, on the following day, February 12, North Korea published a long article, “Leader KIM Jong-il's Courage is Korea's National Strength (김정일령도자의 담력은 조선의 국력이다)” written by a person said to be Egyptian, in *Rodong Sinmun*, the organ of the ruling party of North Korea, the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK).<sup>1</sup> He explained the history of friendly relations between North Korea and Egypt. We believe that North Korea was afraid that the collapse of the Mubarak administration would damage the friendly relations between North Korea and Egypt. Mubarak was such a good friend of KIM Il-sung and North Korea. It is believed that Egypt did not establish diplomatic relations with South Korea until KIM Il-sung's death in 1994 because of Mubarak's special feelings for KIM Il-sung.

It was not only Mubarak's downfall that was painful for North Korea. On February 10, 2011, the

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<sup>1</sup> Yahya=Zechariah Hairura, “Leader Kim Jong-Il's Gustiness is Korea's National Strength (김정일령도자의 담력은 조선의 국력이다),” *Rodong Sinmun*, February 12, 2011 (Korean).

day before Mubarak's resignation was announced, Saad El-Shazly, former Egyptian military chief of staff and a hero in Arab society, took his last breath. Although the relationship between Mubarak and Shazly was acrimonious, both shared a special feeling for KIM Il-sung and North Korea. North Korea lost two of its best North Korean sympathizers in Egypt in February 2011. What is the connection between Mubarak, Shazly, and North Korea? It is the reinforcement of North Korean air force units in the October War, which broke out in October 1973.

This war, known as the Yom Kippur War on the Israeli side and the October War on the Arab side, began when Arab countries such as Egypt and Syria launched a preemptive attack on Israel, the first war in which Israel felt a sense of defeat.

North Korean air force units participated in the October War after the Vietnam War. Unlike in the case of the Vietnam War, KIM Il-sung publicly announced the involvement of North Korean air force units in the October War to the outside world even before his death. When President Mubarak visited North Korea on April 4, 1983, KIM Il-sung said at a welcoming banquet, "During the war in October 1973 our airmen fought shoulder to shoulder with the Egyptian brothers on the same front."<sup>2</sup> In the Korean edition of the *Works of Kim Il Sung*, Volume 40, published in April 1994, before his death, KIM Il-sung said in an interview with an Egyptian newspaper, "During the war in October 1973 our airmen fought shoulder to shoulder with the Egyptian brothers on the same front."<sup>3</sup>

However, Shazly, who commanded Egyptian forces as chief of staff during the October War, spoke of North Korean air force pilots in his memoirs published in English in 1980. Therefore, it is likely that the participation of North Korean air force units in the October War was known to some for some time.<sup>4</sup>

There are two versions of his memoir, one in English and the other in Arabic, published in 1979. The English version is an abridged translation of the Arabic version, with much of North Korea removed. The Arabic version was banned in Egypt and unavailable for a long time. The Arabic version has been reprinted as a result of the Arab Spring, and the North Korea section is now

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<sup>2</sup> *Rodong Simmun*, April 5, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> KIM, Il-sung, "Answers to The Questions Raised by The Editor-In-Chief of the Egyptian Newspaper Al Massa, October 16, 1986 (에급신문 알마싸 책임주필이 제기한 질문에 대한 대담 1986년 10월 16일)," *Kim Il Sung Works*, Vol.40, (Pyongyang: The Worker's Party of Korea Publishing House, 1994), p.195 (Korean). English version is; KIM, Il-sung, "Answers to The Questions Raised by The Editor-In-Chief of the Egyptian Newspaper Al Massa, October 16, 1986," *Kim Il Sung Works*, Vol.40, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1995), p.180.

<sup>4</sup> Saad El Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, 2003 revised edition, (San Francisco: American Mideast Research, 1980 and 2003), pp. 83-84.

knowable in more detail.<sup>5</sup>

Shazly's memoir is the most detailed material available on the involvement of North Korean Air Force pilots in the October War. However, other documents published by North Korea, such as *The Complete Works of Kim Il Sung, Comrade KIM Il-sung, the Great Leader of Great Work of Independence* and the aforementioned "Leader KIM Jong-il's Courage is Korea's National Strength" also describe the status of North Korea's participation in the war.

This participation in the October War was the second instance, after the Vietnam War, in which North Korean air force pilots experienced actual combat overseas. Unlike the Vietnam War, however, this was not in support of the socialist countries or to increase the solidarity of the Eastern bloc. Egypt is neither a socialist state nor an Eastern Bloc country. North Korea entered the October War for another reason, not as a socialist state.

Why did North Korea send its air force to Egypt? How did supporting Egypt and fighting Israel bear fruit for geographically distant North Korea? This paper will discuss why North Korea deployed its air force to Egypt and other countries and what results it brought to North Korea based on newly obtained Egyptian and North Korean materials.

North Korea's participation in the October War has been discussed in many newspaper articles and parts of books. KANG In-duk, the Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies in South Korea, was the first to publish the results of his research on North Korea's participation in the October War.<sup>6</sup> However, most of the studies only discussed the status of North Korea's involvement in the October War. Few clarified the process of North Korea's participation in the war and discussed the policies of North Korea and Egypt. Satoru Miyamoto is the first to discuss North Korea's involvement in the October War, citing Shazly's memoirs in English. He states North Korea aimed to gain Third World support from the United Nations.<sup>7</sup> Balázs Szalontai, discussing Egypt-North Korea relations in the 1970s, argued that North Korea, despite its involvement in the October War, did not achieve as much as it had hoped during the Anwar Sadat administration, which sought reconciliation and established diplomatic relations with Israel.<sup>8</sup> It is true that the reconciliation between Egypt and Israel, including the Camp David Accords of 1978 and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, may have put North Korea in a difficult position

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<sup>5</sup> See "B. Materials".

<sup>6</sup> KANG In Duk (강인덕) (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of North Korea (북한전서)*, Vol.1, (Seoul: The Institute for East Asian Studies, 1974), p.348 (Korean).

<sup>7</sup> Satoru Miyamoto, "DPRK Troop Dispatches and Military Support in the Middle East: Change from Military Support to Arms Trade in the 1970s," *East Asia*, Vol. 27, No. 4, (August 2010), pp.345-359.

<sup>8</sup> Balázs Szalontai, "Courting the 'Traitor to the Arab Cause': Egyptian-North Korean Relations in the Sadat Era, 1970-1981," *S/N Korean Humanities*, Vol.5, Issue 1 (March 2019), pp.103-136.

in its relations with other Arab countries. However, the North Korean government no longer raised the issue with the Mubarak administration, which succeeded Sadat's administration.

Also, in Israel, Alon Levkowitz discusses North Korea's involvement in the October War in the context of North Korea's involvement in the Middle East. Still, he does not discuss the North Korean side's objectives. He also discusses North Korea's deployment of air force units to Syria in the Six-Day War.<sup>9</sup> However, we have found no documentation from North Korea or Syria that indicates this, so we will not discuss it in this paper. The Six-Day War broke out in June 1967, and since North Korea had sent an air force unit to Vietnam at that time, it is unlikely that North Korea could have afforded to send an air force unit to Syria.

## 2. Request from Egypt

During the Vietnam War, KIM Il-sung stopped using the term “Eastern bloc (Socialist camp) solidarity” after his speech on September 7, 1968.<sup>10</sup> In 1972, KIM Il-sung began to seek to improve the standing of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the UN, and he began to interact not only with socialist states but also with Third World countries. Although North and South Korea were not yet full members of the UN, North Korea sought to improve its status in the UN by joining the UN as an observer to counter South Korea, which was already an observer member of the UN.<sup>11</sup> North Korea wanted the support of Egypt, a prominent leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, which includes many Third World countries.

At the time, Egypt was preparing for war against Israel with the support of the Soviet Union. Israel had occupied Egypt in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War that broke out in June 1967. This war is also a war of revenge. It was promoted by Sadat, who assumed the presidency on September 28, 1970.

However, on July 18, 1972, President Sadat announced that the Egyptian government had demanded the withdrawal of the Soviet military advisory mission and that the withdrawal had already begun.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Shazly, as Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, was left to prepare

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<sup>9</sup> Alon Levkowitz, *North Korea and the Middle East*, (Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, January 2017), p.13.

<sup>10</sup> KIM, Il-sung, “The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the Banner of Freedom and Independence for Ourt People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism (조선민주주의인민공화국은 우리 인민의 자유와 독립의 기치이며 사회주의, 공산주의의 건설의 강력한 무기이다.),” *Rodong Sinmun*, September 8, 1968 (Korean).

<sup>11</sup> Satoru Miyamoto, “North Korea's Foreign Policy: A Non-Isolated Country with Expanding Relations,” Inoguchi Takashi ed., *The SAGE Handbook of Asian Foreign Policy*, (London, California, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publishing, 2019), pp. 644-647.

<sup>12</sup> “Egypt Tells Soviets to Withdraw Military Advisers and Experts, ‘New Stage’ in Relations,” *New York*

for war with Israel in the face of dwindling support from the Soviet Union. One of the major problems was the air defense capabilities of the Egyptian military. According to Shazly, by the end of 1972, the Egyptian military's air defense capability after the Soviet Military Advisory Corps left was such that surface-to-air missile battalions could supplement the Soviet Military Advisory Corps' capabilities. However, a shortage of pilots remained a problem after the Soviets pulled out about 100 pilots who were operating 75 MIG-21 fighters.<sup>13</sup>

Around that time, a North Korean government delegation led by Vice-President KANG Ryang-uk visited Egypt from March 1 to 7, 1973. The purpose of the visit was to ask Egypt to support North Korea at the UN.<sup>14</sup> On March 6, Shazly traveled with the delegation to the Suez front. On this occasion, Shazly approached General Zang Zung (Zang Zong in the English version), Vice-Minister of Defense (Vice-Minister of War in the English version), who was a member of the North Korean delegation. "Do you think it would be possible for North Korea to provide us with some MIG-21 pilots? It would be a win-win situation for both sides. For our side, your participation in air defense would solve our problem of pilot shortage. For the North Korean side, the pilots will gain practical knowledge of warfare. The Israelis will use the same planes and the same tactics as your supposed enemies."<sup>15</sup>

Shazly's proposal catalyzed North Korea's air force units to enter the October War. Who is "Zang Zung"? Such a Korean name is unthinkable. This is because there is no "Z" sound in the Korean language. However, it is clear that "Vice Minister of Defense" is equivalent to "Vice Minister of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces" in North Korea. Moreover, only one Vice Minister of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces was part of the North Korean government delegation led by KANG Ryang-uk, who was in Egypt on March 6. It was JANG Jong-hwan(장정환, 張正桓), a lieutenant general in the Korean People's Army (KPA).<sup>16</sup>

### 3. The career of JANG Jong-hwan

JANG Jong-hwan was born on January 25, 1923, and died on July 23, 1982. Although he is not well known abroad, he is one of the heroes of North Korea. Although he did not have an anti-

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*Times*, July 19, 1972.

<sup>13</sup> See "2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text" in "B. Materials".

<sup>14</sup> For the activities of the delegates during their visit to Egypt see the articles in *Rodong Sinmun* from March 4 to 9, 1973. A joint communiqué issued by North Korea and Egypt on March 6 reaffirmed North Korea's stand on the reunification of Korea and stated that Egypt had submitted a request to the UN to discuss the Korean peninsula issue.

<sup>15</sup> See "2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text" in "B. Materials".

<sup>16</sup> Satoru Miyamoto rendered JANG Jong-hwan as CHANG Jung Hwan in an earlier paper (Miyamoto, "DPRK Troop Dispatches," p.349), which was borrowed from the English rendering of a person with the same name in South Korea, and this paper follows the North Korean English rendering.

Japanese guerrilla background, it is said that he was in Manchukuo when the Soviet Red Army invaded Manchukuo on August 9, 1945, and returned to his homeland on August 12, 1945.<sup>17</sup> He then worked as a teacher in North Korea. From July 1950, he worked in the Education Department of the Chongjin City People's Committee, a local administrative organization. From 1952, he was an instructor of the North Hamgyong Provincial Committee of the WPK, an instructor of the Central Committee of the WPK, and Director of the Foreign Ministry Bureau. His military career began in April 1961 when he became a senior member of the KPA of the Military Armistice Commission. He then served as Deputy Director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA from August 1964, was appointed ambassador of the DPRK to Cuba in June 1966, and returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as director of the bureau in 1971. He then served as Vice Minister of the Ministry of National Defense and Vice Minister of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces (renamed from the Ministry of National Defense). During this period, he visited Egypt. He was also a lieutenant general in the KPA.

He was Vice Chairman of the North Hamgyong Provincial Administrative Committee from July 1977 to the end of his life. He was a deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly from March 1961 to February 1974 and an alternate member of the Central Committee of the WPK from February 1974 to 1977. He was buried at the Patriotic Martyrs' Cemetery after his death.<sup>18</sup>

He had a varied career, but since his death, he has been treated as a military officer in North Korea. About JANG Jong-hwan, there is a video biography, “He Gave Me the Courage and Bravery of Baekdu (백두의 담력과 배짱을 안겨주시어),” and a historical novel in which he appears, *Destiny*(운명).<sup>19</sup>

JANG Jong-hwan served in local administrative organizations, the WPK, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the KPA. Such a career move between military and bureaucratic positions is not particularly unusual in North Korea. Even during the Korean War, NAM Il, a Chief of the General Staff of the KPA, was a former Minister of Education, and PAK Hon-yong, the Director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA, was also Minister of Foreign Affairs. Neither had previously served as an officer in the KPA.

Even in the KIM Jong-un era, JANG Song-thack, Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission and member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the WPK, wore a

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<sup>17</sup> JONG Ki-jong, *Destiny* (운명), (Pyongyang: Literary Art Publishing House, 2012), pp. 1-8 (Korean).

<sup>18</sup> Encyclopedia Press(백과사전출판사) eds., *The Great Korean Encyclopedia* (조선대백과사전), Vol.16 (Pyongyang: Encyclopedia Press, 2000), p.481.

<sup>19</sup> JONG Ki-jong, *Destiny*.

military uniform and rank at an official function. CHOE Ryong-hae, former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League and former chief secretary of the North Hwanghae Provincial Committee of the WPK, was appointed the Director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA. HWANG Pyong-so, the former First Deputy Director of the Organizational Guidance Department of the Central Committee of the WPK, became Director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA. Career moves between military and bureaucratic positions have long been common in North Korea.

Shazly asked JANG Jong-hwan to send air force pilots. Shazly was born on April 1, 1922, making him one year older than JANG Jong-hwan. This conversation between the two men, who are almost the same age, was the beginning of a plan to send North Korean Air Force pilots to Egypt. However, they had to overcome several difficulties to make it happen.

JANG Jong-hwan asked Shazly how many pilots he needed. Shazly replied, "I don't expect you to fill all the holes left by the Soviets. It would be enough to send one squadron. If we need to send another unit in the future, we will discuss it later."<sup>20</sup>

Since it was a company, it was smaller than the regiment used in the Vietnam War. Still, they needed a political decision to make it happen. First of all, Shazly needed the approval of President Sadat, and JANG Jong-hwan needed the approval of President KIM Il-sung. The two men promised each other that they would make every effort to persuade the Supreme Leader to allow a political decision to be made. Therefore, JANG Jong-hwan returned to North Korea to obtain KIM Il-sung's approval.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4. Shazly's Visit to North Korea

It was not difficult for Shazly to convince Ahmad Ismail Ali, the defense minister. Ali sought President Sadat's approval, which was granted within a few days. The problem was JANG Jong-hwan's persuasion of KIM Il-sung. JANG Jong-hwan returned to Egypt two weeks later and told Shazly that he had obtained KIM Il-sung's approval. He then added a condition. He demanded that Shazly make an official visit to North Korea and meet the pilots in person.<sup>22</sup> The details of JANG Jong-hwan's return visit to Egypt are unknown because it was not reported in North Korea then.

Shazly left Egypt for Pyongyang on April 2, 1973. He stopped in Shanghai and arrived in

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<sup>20</sup> See "2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text" in "B. Materials".

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Pyongyang on April 6. Shazly's visit to Pyongyang was widely reported in North Korea then. Shazly received a warm welcome and held meetings and talks with top military and government leaders, which were reported in the media.<sup>23</sup> North Korea probably wanted to advertise its closeness to Egypt, a major Middle Eastern and Third World power. The fact that the chief of general staff of Egypt, the largest military power in the Arab world, visited North Korea should have been a great appeal to the Third World. However, the deployment of North Korean pilots to Egypt was not reported. This was still classified.

Shazly visited the Worker-Peasant Red Guards, a reserve force in North Korea, and toured numerous military facilities. North Korea has put many of its military facilities underground as part of its policy of "fortifying the country."<sup>24</sup> Only a limited number of foreigners have visited these underground military facilities, and Shazly was one of them. Shazly was quite impressed. No wonder. In terms of national power, Egypt far surpasses North Korea in both population and economic power. However, North Korea's military facilities were so developed that the Egyptian military chief of staff marveled at them. Shazly told KIM Il-sung that North Korea would be the only country left in the world in the event of a nuclear war.<sup>25</sup> While he may have been flattered, there is no doubt that Shazly was amazed at the development of the underground airport and the underground weapons factories he saw.

Shazly, who met with the North Korean Air Force pilots, was pleased with their abilities, with over 2,000 hours of flying experience, and promised to pay them a salary of one Egyptian pound, the same amount as an Egyptian military pilot.

He also promised that the North Korean pilots would be assigned to the most rear missions and would not fight inside Israel or in Israeli-occupied territories. In addition, Shazly requested that KIM Il-sung send specialists to build an underground facility. KIM Il-sung agreed. On April 15, Shazly left for home. It was the most difficult trip of his life.<sup>26</sup>

### 5. Deployment of Troops to Egypt

Of the air force pilots and underground specialists requested by Shazly, the underground

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<sup>23</sup> For what Shazly did during his visit to the DPRK, see the articles in *Rodong Sinmun* from April 7 to 16, 1973.

<sup>24</sup> Satoru Miyamoto, "The Purpose of the Defense Policy in North Korea: The Background to the Making of the Military Line of the Workers Party of Korea (朝鮮民主主義人民共和国における国防政策の目的—朝鮮労働党の軍事路線の成立経緯)," *Journal of International Security*, Vol.40, No.1 (June 2012) pp. 1-18 (Japanese).

<sup>25</sup> See "2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text" in "B. Materials".

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



specialists arrived in Egypt first. They arrived in Egypt on May 1, 1973, for eight days of induction training at the newly established “Underground Facilities Section” of Shazly's Egyptian Army Corps of Engineers. After the North Korean underground specialists returned home, Shazly formed a working group to design an underground airport. However, this was also a cover to make the Israelis believe that war was still far off. Shazly believed that it would take five years to build the underground airport. The October War would begin five months later, in October. The working group was still working on the design when the October War began. Mubarak, the air force commander, initially complained about the working group because he had not been informed of the situation. Still, later, Shazly told him about the situation, and the two laughed about it.<sup>27</sup> It is likely that there was still some degree of friendship between the two at that time.

On May 28, KIM Il-sung met with the pilots to be deployed. Here, KIM Il-sung told the pilots something different about the original purpose of the mission. KIM Il-sung said that the Egyptian president's request for the mission “seems to be partly to strengthen the immediate military routine, but more to learn air force tactics from our pilots.” This is different from the exchange between Shazly and JANG Jong-hwan. However, KIM Il-sung mentioned that he might be involved in combat if war broke out, so he likely deployed his pilots, knowing they would be engaged in battle. Perhaps he said this to ease the tension. KIM Il-sung had given strict orders to the pilots to keep the mission undetected by the Israelis.<sup>28</sup> But it would soon be discovered.

North Korean pilots began arriving in Egypt in early June. In July, the formation of the squadron to which they belonged was completed. This squadron was too small for Egypt. According to Shazly, it consisted of 30 pilots (20 in the English version), eight flight controllers, five interpreters, three administrative men, a doctor, and a cook. Considering that the Soviets pulled up about 100 pilots, it is unsurprising that Egypt felt the unit was too small, as Shazly characterized it as “probably the smallest international military reinforcement in history.”<sup>29</sup>

Israel detected this move, and on August 15, the Israeli military announced via radio broadcast that it had detected the presence of North Korean pilots in Egypt.<sup>30</sup> On August 18, North Korea's Ministry of People's Armed Forces issued a spokesman's statement refuting the Israeli military's announcement and denying the presence of the North Koreans.<sup>31</sup> At the time, Shazly was also

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> KIM Il-Sung, “Talks with the pilots to be dispatched to Egypt, May 28, 1973 (에gypt에 파견되는 비행사들과 한 담화 1973년 5월 28일),” *The Complete Works of Kim Il Sung*, Vol. 51, (Pyongyang: The Worker's Party of Korea Publishing House, 2003), pp.471-477 (Korean).

<sup>29</sup> See “2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text” in “B. Materials”. For the English version, see Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>30</sup> “Israeli Forces Say North Koreans Pilot Some Egyptian Jets,” *The New York Times*, August 16, 1973.

<sup>31</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, August 21, 1973.

asked by Ashraf Ghorbal, assistant to the Egyptian president for media affairs, whether this information was accurate.<sup>32</sup> The fact that North Korean pilots were stationed in Egypt was a secret even within the Egyptian government.

However, the North Korean pilots were not isolated. They were under the command of Mubarak, the air force commander, and about 3,000 Egyptians worked at the base to which the North Korean pilots belonged. Egyptians handled radar, air defense, ground security, and administrative matters. The North Korean pilots, however, were self-reliant. They secured their own housing and tried to do everything themselves. Whether it was training, studying, or physical exercise, they had no leisure time. Not one of them had any clerical problems. Shazly recalls, "The relationship between North Korea and Egypt was the best one could hope for."<sup>33</sup>

#### **6. Outbreak of the October War**

North Korea's accession to the World Health Organization (WHO) on May 17, 1973, qualified it to establish an Observer Delegation at the UN Headquarters in New York and the UN Secretariat in Geneva, and it took the first step towards participation in the UN General Assembly. On September 5, the North Korean Observer Delegation was opened. On September 21, it was decided that the issue of the Korean peninsula would be discussed at the 28th session of the UN General Assembly, which began on September 18. It was also decided on October 1 to invite North Korean observers to the UN General Assembly. North Korea has finally found a position where it can compete with South Korea at the UN. The extent to which North Korea has won over third-world countries such as Egypt to its side could be seen at the UN.

The October War broke out shortly thereafter, when a coalition of Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked Israeli forces on October 6. Israel was defeated in the early stages of the war but eventually began to fight back. After Israel launched a counterattack, KIM Il-sung took action in support of the Arab states. On October 17, KIM Il-sung met with the Egyptian and Syrian ambassadors in Pyongyang to inform them that the North Korean government had decided to send aid, including military assistance, to Egypt and Syria.<sup>34</sup> On October 18, KIM Il-sung sent a message to the heads of state of 16 Arab countries and the secretary general of the Arab League expressing support for the Arab nations. Among them was Saudi Arabia, which has no diplomatic relations with the DPRK.<sup>35</sup> It is believed that KIM Il-sung even wanted to promote goodwill and

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<sup>32</sup> See "2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text" in "B. Materials".

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, October 18, 1973.

<sup>35</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, October 19, 1973. The 16 countries are: the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria and the Arab Republic of Yemen (now the Republic of Yemen), the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the

friendship between the DPRK and the Arab countries by publicizing military assistance to Egypt and Syria. In this message, Kim Il Sung also avoided mentioning the deployment of troops to Egypt to promote friendly unity between the two countries.

However, on the same day, October 18, the United States government announced that Israeli and North Korean air force units had engaged in combat, and the participation of North Korean air force units in the war became internationally known.<sup>36</sup> According to North Korean announcements, the North Korean Air Force shot down four Israeli Air Force F-4 fighter jets in the first battle.<sup>37</sup> According to Shazly, North Korean pilots had engaged the Israeli Air Force two or three times before the October War broke out.<sup>38</sup> Although probably at the skirmish level, North Korean pilots had experience with the Israeli Air Force before the war.

As the war progressed, North Korea decided to send pilots to Syria as well as Egypt. This was in response to a request from the Syrian government. The Political Committee of the Central Committee of the WPK decided to send the pilots to strengthen the goodwill and friendship with Syria. During a meeting with the pilots to be sent to Syria on October 23, KIM Il-sung ordered them to keep the information about their deployment secret until they fought against Israel, as he had done with the Egyptian deployment.<sup>39</sup> As in Egypt, the mission was classified. In addition, large amounts of supplies were to be shipped to Syria.<sup>40</sup>

North Korean pilots were indeed deployed to Syria. However, it should have been after the ceasefire. On October 22, 1973, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the current situation, and Egypt accepted the resolution on October 23, followed by Syria on October 24. Although the fighting has not entirely ceased, the October War has been put to rest by the ceasefire. On November 7, KIM Il-sung sent a congratulatory telegram

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Republic of Iraq, the Democratic People's Republic of Yemen (now the Republic of Yemen), the Democratic Republic of Sudan (now the Republic of Sudan), the Libyan Arab Republic (now the State of Libya), Kuwait, the Republic of Lebanon, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Tunisia, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Bahrain (now the Kingdom of Bahrain), and the State of Qatar.

<sup>36</sup> "Jets Flown by North Koreans Are Reported in Clash with Israelis Over Mideast," *The New York Times*, October 19, 1973.

<sup>37</sup> Yahya=Zechariah Hairura, "Leader Kim Jong-Il's Gustiness is Korea's National Strength,".

<sup>38</sup> See "2. Translation of the Original Arabic Text" in "B. Materials".

<sup>39</sup> KIM Il-sung, "Talks with pilots to be dispatched to Syria, October 23, 1973 (수리아에 파견되는 비행사들과 한 담화 1973년 10월 23일)," *The Complete Works of Kim Il Sung*, Vol. 53 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 2004), pp. 88-93 (Korean).

<sup>40</sup> KIM Hyok-mo and Ri Kwang-sam, *Comrade KIM Il-sung, the Great Leader of Great Work of Independence* (자주위업의 위대한 수령 김일성동지), Vol. 8 (Pyongyang: Social Science Press, 2011), p. 249 (Korean).

to the pilots in Egypt, congratulating them all well.<sup>41</sup> We guess that there were no casualties among the North Korean pilots.

### 7. The Fruits of War

The fruits of the participation of North Korean air force units in the October War were obtained at the UN General Assembly. From November 14, 1973, the issue of the Korean peninsula was discussed in the First Committee of the 28th session of the UN General Assembly with the participation of DPRK observers. Socialist countries, Middle Eastern and African countries, and others supported the DPRK.<sup>42</sup> The representatives of Egypt and Syria also strongly supported the position of the DPRK.<sup>43</sup> As a result, on November 21, the First Committee decided without a vote to dissolve the UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) at the request of the DPRK.<sup>44</sup> The DPRK has had some success in its first year of UN diplomacy. Egyptian and Syrian support for the DPRK at the UN continued. The DPRK's application for membership in the Non-Aligned Movement was approved on August 25, 1975, while the ROK's application was rejected.<sup>45</sup> Egypt and Syria also supported the DPRK and did not support the ROK. This was a landmark in North Korean diplomacy.

North Korea valued its friendship with Egypt and Syria and built munitions factories in Egypt and Syria even after the October War.<sup>46</sup> Egypt and Syria also cherished their friendship with North Korea. In 1995, the ROK Defense Ministry announced that Egypt had supplied North Korea with Soviet-made Scud-B ballistic missiles (known as R-17E in the USSR) in return for North Korea deploying its pilots to Egypt.<sup>47</sup> Since 1995 was the year that South Korea established diplomatic

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<sup>41</sup> KIM Il-sung, "To Friends and Fighters in the Air Corps: letter sent to thepilots who went to Egypt, November 7, 1973 (비행대전투원동무들에게 애급에 가 있는 비행사들에게 보낸 서한 1973년 11월 7일)," *The Complete Works of Kim Il Sung*, Vol. 53, (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 2004), p.212 (Korean).

<sup>42</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, November 16, 1973.

<sup>43</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, November 23-24, 1973.

<sup>44</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, November 22, 1973.

<sup>45</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, August 27, 1975

<sup>46</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, January 22, 1975; *Rodong Sinmun*, January 25, 1975; KIM Hyok-mo and Ri Kwang-sam, *Comrade KIM Il-sung, the Great Leader of Great Work of Independence*, p.250.

<sup>47</sup> In the *Defense White Paper* published by the ROK Ministry of National Defense, it was stated until the 1994 edition that the Soviet Union had handed over "ballistic missiles" to North Korea, but from the 1995 edition it began to state that Egypt had handed them over (Policy Planning Division eds., *Defense White Paper 1995-1996* [국방백서 1995-1996] Seoul: Ministry of National Defense in Korea, p.63). However, it seems that the ROK Ministry of National Defense was aware that it was Egypt that first transferred ballistic missiles to North Korea long before that, as it was introduced in a paper published in 1989 by LEE Tae Ho of the Defense Intelligence Staff in the ROK Armed Forces (LEE Tae-ho, (1989) "Perspectives and trends in North Korea's development of ballistic missiles, particularly Scud-B and Worm [북한의 유도탄 개발 추세와 전망: Scud-B 와 Worm 을 중심으로]," *Defense and Technology*, No.127, (September 1989), p.7).

relations with Egypt, it is believed that Egypt provided some information. It is assumed that North Korea's development of ballistic missiles began with these ballistic missiles.<sup>48</sup> However, it is difficult to think that North Korea used air force pilots to transfer ballistic missiles from the beginning. According to Shazly, North Korean Air Force units arrived in Egypt in June 1973, but the first Soviet missile brigade arrived in Egypt with the R-17E more than a month later, in late July.<sup>49</sup> When North Korea decided to deploy, Egypt had no ballistic missiles.

The establishment of the North Korean missile unit is believed to have occurred shortly after the deployment to Egypt, as there are records of KIM Il-sung's visit in August 1974 to the 639th Military Unit, later known as the Command of the Strategic Rocket Force of the KPA, later known as the Command of the Strategic Force of the KPA, which controlled long-range ballistic missiles.<sup>50</sup> It is not known when Egypt handed over the missiles to North Korea. It is believed that some agreement was reached between July 1973, when the R-17E was introduced to Egypt, and August 1974, when KIM Il-sung visited the 639th Military Unit. The missiles were then presumably handed over from Egypt to North Korea. This is where North Korea's ballistic missile development began. The 639th Military Unit was not publicly announced as the Command of the Strategic Rocket Force until some 40 years later.<sup>51</sup>

According to KIM Il-sung, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad (father of current President Bashar al-Assad) visited North Korea from September 28 to October 3, 1974, and promised to dispatch reinforcements if war broke out again on the Korean peninsula.<sup>52</sup> The Bashar al-Assad administration also maintains friendly relations with North Korea. There must have been much military cooperation between Syria and North Korea, but its full extent is unclear. The "Arab Spring," however, has plunged Syria into a state of civil war, and the Assad administration is weaker than before. Nevertheless, North Korea has continued to support the Assad administration without joining other forces inside Syria, such as the Islamic State (IS), the Free Syrian Army, the Al-Nusra Front, and the Kurdish Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG). North Korea is believed to be protecting the Assad administration by dispatching troops. On November 14, 2013, North Korea's Foreign Ministry announced that it had never sent military supplies or air force pilots to Syria.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> "Fact Sheet: North Korea Missile Test Activity," *The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, (November 14, 2023), <https://armscontrolcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/North-Korean-Missile-Test-Activity-Fact-Sheet-Feb-5-Edit.pdf> (Accessed on May 11, 2024).

<sup>49</sup> Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp. 133-135.

<sup>50</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, March 14, 2002.

<sup>51</sup> *Rodong Sinmun*, March 3, 2012.

<sup>52</sup> KIM Il-sung, "Talks with Syrian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party Delegation, November 2, 1975," *The Complete Works of Kim Il Sung*, Vol. 58, (Pyongyang: The Worker's Party of Korea Publishing House, 2005), p.191.

<sup>53</sup> *Korean Central News Agency*, November 14, 2013.

However, the Russian state-run TASS news agency reported on March 23, 2016, that North Korea had deployed two military units to Syria, named *Chalma-1* and *Chalma-7*.<sup>54</sup> *Chalma* is probably more accurately *Cheolma* or *Cholma*, which means ‘iron horse’ in Korean, another name for ‘tank’ in North Korea. Therefore, it can be assumed that *Chalma-1* and *Chalma-7* are tank units.

The Assad administration also continues to support North Korea. Syria has not established diplomatic relations with the US, South Korea, or Israel, all of which are enemies of North Korea. Furthermore, it opposes sanctions against North Korea and has not provided sanctions status reports since October 14, 2006, as required of the UN member states under the UN Security Council resolution sanctioning North Korea. In addition, Syria has consistently voted against the resolution on the human rights situation in North Korea in the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN General Assembly since December 2005.

Syria also voted against the resolution on the situation of human rights in North Korea adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 17, 2015, which was the last vote on the resolution on the situation of human rights in North Korea.<sup>55</sup> The resolution on the situation of human rights in the DPRK has not been voted on since then due to the adoption of a consensus system. Syria's opposition to the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK may be due in part to the Assad administration's questionable human rights record in Syria. Still, it also shows that the Assad administration's support for North Korea goes back generations and continues to this day.

#### **8. Relations between North Korea and Egypt after the war.**

Friendly relations between Egypt and North Korea continued until the fall of the Mubarak administration, as first noted. However, Shazly, who asked North Korea to deploy air force pilots, and Mubarak, who led the North Korean air force pilots, fell out after the war. Shazly, the first to give Israel a sense of defeat, would have been a national hero had he remained in place, but he clashed with President Sadat throughout the war. After the war, he was dismissed as chief of staff and left Egypt in December 1973 to become ambassador to the United Kingdom, followed by ambassador to Portugal. It was Mubarak, an air force commander, who became a national hero as a result of the October War. After the war, he was awarded the “Order of the Sinai Star” and appointed as the Vice President of Egypt on April 16, 1975.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> TASS news agency, March 23, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> United Nations, *United Nations General Assembly Seventieth session 80th plenary meeting Official Records A/70/PV.80*, (New York: United Nations General Assembly, December 17, 2015), p.24.

<sup>56</sup> See “1. Explanatory” in “B. Materials”.

Shazly opposed President Sadat, and Mubarak who followed him, but the fate of the three men was also affected by the times. President Sadat sought reconciliation with Israel. From September 5-17, 1978, the leaders of Egypt, the US, and Israel met and signed the so-called Camp David Accords, which included the beginning of negotiations for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. On March 26, 1979, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty was signed, making Egypt the first Arab country to recognize Israel as a state. This was met with considerable domestic opposition as well as opposition from other Arab states, and President Sadat was assassinated during a parade marking the anniversary of the victory in the October War on October 6, 1981.

Shazly openly criticized President Sadat for signing the Camp David Accords. This forced him into exile in Algeria and London. And for his criticism of President Sadat, he published his memoirs, *The October War*, in 1979, in which he revealed details about the deployment of North Korean pilots to Egypt. He was sentenced to three years in absentia for revealing military secrets. His memoir, *The October War*, was banned, and only a few excerpts are known from the English edition. Upon his return to Egypt in 1992, Shazly was imprisoned and forced to live in seclusion for the rest of his life after serving his sentence. Shazly retired from political life.<sup>57</sup>

On the contrary, Mubarak became president of Egypt on October 14, 1981, following Sadat's assassination. Mubarak followed Sadat's legacy and maintained relations with the US and Israel. Shazly and Mubarak, who fought together in the October War, took very different paths.

However, while Mubarak continued Sadat's pro-US line, he refused to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea, a US ally. He had long made clear his support for North Korea. Mubarak visited North Korea as Vice President from January 10-13, 1980, and as President from April 4-5, 1983, and May 13-14, 1990.<sup>58</sup> Mubarak received a warm welcome in North Korea, where he met with KIM Il-sung and deepened friendly relations.

When Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Egypt's foreign minister since 1977 and UN secretary-general since 1992, tried to establish diplomatic relations between Egypt and South Korea, Mubarak continued to thwart him. Mubarak continued to cultivate his friendship with KIM Il-sung.<sup>59</sup> However, after KIM Il-sung's death in 1994, Sulciman, then the chief of Egypt's General Intelligence Service, made a secret visit to South Korea and met with President KIM Young-sam. He strongly

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<sup>57</sup> See "1. Explanatory" in "B. Materials".

<sup>58</sup> In South Korea, there are reports that Mubarak also visited North Korea in 1985. However, this has not been reported in North Korea. Yoon Dong-young Yoon, "President Mubarak May Play Mediating Role in North-South Korea Relations (무바라크대통령 남북관계 중재역할 가능성)," *Yonhap News Agency*, April 3, 1999, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1718/implementation-reports> (Accessed April 29, 2002) (Korean).

<sup>59</sup> See "1. Explanatory" in "B. Materials".

encouraged Mubarak to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea, and Egypt established diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1995. This is the same Suleiman who became Vice President at the end of Mubarak's administration and announced Mubarak's resignation.<sup>60</sup>

However, it appears that Mubarak did not abandon North Korea but instead tried to mediate between North and South Korea. The defection of CHANG Sung-gil, the North Korean ambassador to Egypt, to the US on August 26, 1997, had no impact.<sup>61</sup> Mubarak visited South Korea on April 9-11, 1999, but did not change his stance in seeking reconciliation between North and South Korea.<sup>62</sup>

On October 14, 2006, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1718, which required all UN member states to report to the UNSC Sanctions Committee on the status of sanctions within 30 days of the adoption of the resolution. The Mubarak administration did not report. Nor did it report under Resolution 1874, adopted on June 13, 2009, which also required implementation reports within 45 days. Egypt did not report until June 29, 2012, the day before Mubarak fell and Mohamed Morsi came to power.<sup>63</sup> Incidentally, the Morsi administration should have been undesirable to North Korea since it broke diplomatic relations with the Assad administration in Syria, which has maintained friendly relations with North Korea.

However, this Morsi administration also fell in a coup on July 3 without reporting on Resolution 2094, which was adopted on March 7, 2013. The subsequent Egyptian administration has reiterated its defense of North Korea. Furthermore, diplomatic relations with Syria were also restored. In the resolution on the human rights situation in North Korea adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 19, 2014, Egypt, like Syria, voted against it.<sup>64</sup> Egypt also voted against the resolution on the human rights situation in North Korea adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 17, 2015, which was the last vote on the resolution on the human rights situation in North Korea.<sup>65</sup> Egypt has voted against the resolution since its inception in December

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<sup>60</sup> “Suleiman is the ‘secret envoy’ for the diplomatic relations of Korea-Egypt (슬레이만은 한-이집트 수교 ‘비밀 특사’),” *JoongAng Ilbo*, February 12, 2011 (Korean).

<sup>61</sup> “Defecting Envoy from North Korea to Get U.S. Asylum,” *The New York Times*, August 27, 1997.

<sup>62</sup> “Egypt Promises to Deliver Message of Reconciliation to North Korea (대북 화해 메시지 이집트, 전달 약속),” *Chosun Ilbo*, April 10, 1999 (Korean).

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Security Council, “Implementation Reports,” the United Nations Security Council, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1718/implementation-reports> (Accessed on April 29, 2024).

<sup>64</sup> United Nations, *United Nations General Assembly Sixty-ninth session 73rd plenary meeting Official Records A/69/PV.73*, pp.22-23.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations, *United Nations General Assembly Seventieth session 80th plenary meeting Official Records A/70/PV.80*, (New York: United Nations General Assembly, December 17, 2015), p.24.



2005, continuing the policy of the Mubarak administration.<sup>66</sup>

However, in October 2015, Egypt scored a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2016-2017. Egypt submitted six implementation reports to the UNSC Sanctions Committee during these two years.

With the inauguration of President Donald Trump in the US on January 20, 2017, and the adoption of a series of UNSC sanctions resolutions against North Korea, Egypt's attitude towards North Korea changed.

According to the report of the UN Panel of Experts on February 27, 2017, Egypt intercepted the Jie Shun, a vessel commanded by a North Korean captain that was en route from North Korea towards the Suez Canal on August 11, 2016. A search revealed a cargo containing 30,000 PG 7 rocket-propelled grenades and related subcomponents in wooden crates concealed under about 2,300 tonnes of limonite (iron ore). The 132-ton arms cargo consisted of 79 crates containing 24,384 disassembled PG 7 rocket-propelled grenades and materials for an additional 4,616 rocket-propelled grenades, all manufactured in North Korea.<sup>67</sup>

In talks with South Korean Minister of Defense SONG Young-moo, Egyptian Defense Minister Sedki Sobhy stressed that his country had already severed all military ties with North Korea on September 11, 2017.<sup>68</sup>

However, since 2018, when the US-North Korea summit began, Egypt has begun to return to its previous stance on North Korea. Implementation reports are no longer submitted to the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee. Of course, relations have not yet returned to the level of friendship that existed between North Korea and Egypt during the Mubarak administration. KIM Jong-un sends New Year's cards to heads of state every New Year, but he has not sent one to the Egyptian president since 2019. However, he sends the Syrian president a New Year's card every year. It can be said that Syria maintains the same friendly relations with North Korea as before.

Since the October War, the situation in the Middle East has undergone a profound transformation.

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<sup>66</sup> Department of Public Information "General Assembly Addresses Human Rights Situations in Five Countries, As It Adopts 60 Draft Texts Recommended by Its Third Committee," *General Assembly GA/10437*, (December 16, 2005), <https://press.un.org/en/2005/ga10437.doc.htm> (Accessed on April 29, 2024).

<sup>67</sup> Panel of Experts Established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1874 (2009), "Report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1874 (2009)," (New York: United Nations, February 27, 2017), pp. 28-29.

<sup>68</sup> "S. Korea, Egypt vow ties on N. Korea, defense industry," *Yonhap News*, September 11, 2017, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20170911011900315> (Accessed on April 29, 2024).

Egypt has established diplomatic relations with Israel, while a change of regime in Egypt temporarily closed diplomatic relations with Syria. However, it is possible to say that Egypt and Syria have tried to maintain friendly relations with North Korea. The deployment of North Korean pilots to Egypt and Syria during the October War laid the foundation for Egypt's and Syria's continued support for North Korea.

#### **Conclusion**

North Korea, Egypt, and Syria are friendly countries. This is mainly because North Korea sent reinforcements to the October War. North Korea sent reinforcements to the October War because it wanted to deepen exchanges with Third World countries to improve its standing in the UN and win the cooperation of the Non-Aligned Movement. Egypt was the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement because it was the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Egypt and Syria sought the assistance of North Korean air force pilots to combat Israel. The alignment of interests between North Korea, Egypt, and Syria facilitated this collaboration.

North Korea was indeed able to achieve this result. It won the support of Egypt, Syria, and many other Third World countries at the UN General Assembly, outflanked South Korea, and joined the Non-Aligned Movement. North Korea, which had experienced international isolation due to the loss of the Eastern Bloc, was reborn as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Friendly relations between North Korea and Egypt were probably at their peak during the Mubarak administration. However, this was mainly due to personal exchanges. In Egypt, Mubarak, an air force commander during the October War, valued his interactions with KIM Il-sung and did not establish diplomatic relations with South Korea during KIM Il-sung's lifetime. In Syria, the Assad administration, generation after generation, has not established diplomatic relations with South Korea while continuing to interact with the supreme leader of North Korea.

However, diplomatic relations based on personal exchanges can break down when regimes change. In the case of Syria, as the Assad administration remains in power, they continue to have friendly relations with North Korea, where KIM Il-sung and his descendants reign as supreme leaders. North Korea continues to defend the Assad administration in the Syrian civil war by sending troops. If war breaks out on the Korean peninsula, Syria has promised to send troops to defend North Korea.

In Egypt, the situation is more complicated because of the regime change. In addition, Egypt is in a difficult position in international relations because it has established diplomatic relations with

South Korea, the US, and Israel, all of which are enemies of North Korea. However, this was not a problem during Mubarak's presidency, who valued personal exchanges with KIM Il-sung. When the Mubarak administration collapsed, Shazly died with it, and North Korea lost a strong supporter in Egypt. Under the next Morsi administration, relations with North Korea cooled as Egypt began submitting reports to the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee on the implementation of sanctions against North Korea. However, when the Morsi administration collapsed, the Egyptian military, on which Mubarak had based his administration, regained power and tried to restore relations with North Korea to some extent. However, they have not returned to the friendly relations of the Mubarak administration.

The friendship between North Korea and Egypt is not as good as it used to be. Nevertheless, it can be said that Egypt and Syria have supported North Korea since the October War. What North Korea's participation in the October War brought to it was friendly relations with Egypt and Syria and personal exchanges between the leaders who supported them. As long as this continues, Egypt and Syria will continue to support North Korea, and North Korea will continue to support Egypt and Syria.

## **B. Materials<sup>69</sup>**

### **1. Explanatory**

Anti-government protests in Egypt began on January 25, 2011, and after 18 days of mass demonstrations, President Mubarak was forced to resign on February 11. The decisive event was the military's move the day before. The military, without the president as commander-in-chief, independently convened the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), issued Military Order No. 1 to facilitate the transition of the regime, and on the following day, February 11, forced the president to resign, who had still refused to resign in a speech on the evening of February 10.

As if to coincide with that February 10, when the military leaders, long depoliticized, stepped to the political front, a general ended a tumultuous life. He is Lieutenant General Saad el-Shazly (Sa'd al-Din al-Shadhily).<sup>70</sup> Born in 1922, Shazly was a military officer in the Egyptian army. As

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<sup>69</sup> The original text of this chapter can be found in the following article: IKEUCHI, Satoshi and Satoru Miyamoto, "The Origin of North Korea's Ballistic Missile Development: From the Memoirs of Egyptian Army General Staff Saad el-Shazly (北朝鮮の弾道ミサイル開発の起源 : シャーズィリー・エジプト軍参謀総長の回顧録から)," *The Monthly Journal Toa (East Asia)*, No. 553 (July 2013), pp.78-86 (Japanese).

<sup>70</sup> Shazly's name has been transcribed from Arabic as "Sa'd al-Din al-Shadhily," with "Sa'd al-Din" as the

Chief of the General Staff (April 1971-December 1973), he led the initial good fighting during the October War, including the crossing of the Suez Canal. He would have been a national hero had he remained in office, but he clashed with President Sadat during and immediately after the war and was ousted. In December of that year, Shazly was left as ambassador to the UK, then to Portugal, and he entered into a decisive confrontation with President Sadat by openly opposing the 1978 Camp David Accords, leading to his exile in Algeria, then London.

In 1979, Shazly was convicted in absentia of “leaking military secrets” for publishing his memoirs, *The October War*, and sentenced to three years in prison. His magnum opus, a memoir entitled *The October War*, was banned in Egypt and prevented from being published in Arab countries, with only a modest circulation through unnamed institutions in the UK and the US. Among scholars, it is known only in an abridged English version, *The Crossing of the Suez*.<sup>71</sup>

It seems dramatic, even fateful, that Shazly died the day before the fall of the Mubarak administration and the formation of the military's SCAF. It is precisely because the revolutions of the “Arab Spring” made it possible for Shazly's honor to be restored and reevaluated with the fall of President Mubarak, who had faithfully followed Sadat's peace line.

On the contrary, there is evidence that the SCAF, which seized real power under the slogan “the army and the people join hands,” gave a major boost to Shazly's restoration to power. According to political sociologist Hazem Kandil, who published a groundbreaking work on the relationship between politics, the military, and the security apparatus in modern Egyptian history, “Shazly lived through the January 2011 revolt, but died one night before the military forced the president to step down. A few weeks after, his so-far-banned memoirs were published in Egypt and quickly made it to the top of the best-seller chart - a symbolic gesture from the military to its cherished commander.”<sup>72</sup>

The military needed to project an image of its legitimacy and popular support to remain in power after the fall of the military-based Mubarak administration. Shazly, the architect of the October War “victory” in which Egyptians take great pride and who opposed both the Sadat and Mubarak administrations, was an unparalleled asset to SCAF.

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first name and “Shadhily” as the last name. In English, however, the person himself seems to have transcribed the name as Saad el-Shzaly, and the name is often abbreviated to “Din” and called “Saad”. In this paper we will use the person's English rendering, Saad el-Shzaly.

<sup>71</sup> General Saad el-Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez: The October War (1973)*, (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1980).

<sup>72</sup> Hazem Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt*, (London, New York: Verso, 2012), p.136.

In the Egyptian political context, the fact that Shazly's memoirs were republished and widely distributed after the fall of the Mubarak administration is significant in itself, but what is interesting from a Japanese and Far East Asian perspective is that the Arabic version, which was previously difficult to obtain, contains various statements that were omitted or deleted from the English translation. The Arabic version, which has been difficult to obtain in the past, contains various descriptions that were omitted or deleted from the English translation, and these descriptions reveal part of the truth about the military and political relationship between Egypt and Far East Asia. This includes a section on North Korean military aid to Egypt. In this chapter, we will translate this section and add commentary. The translation can be found on pages 118-123 of the new edition of *The October War*, in the section entitled "North Korean Pilots in Egypt."<sup>73</sup>

Regarding military cooperation between Egypt and North Korea, two types of North Korean assistance are described here. The first is the provision of North Korean military pilots. In 1972, when Egypt expelled the Soviet military advisory group, the Egyptian military, which had entrusted up to 30% of its MIG-21 fleet to Soviet pilots, fell on hard times. At that time, the Egyptian military requested pilots from North Korea to make up for the shortage.<sup>74</sup> It is known among experts that North Korean pilots were part of the Egyptian Air Force's operations immediately before and during the October War of 1973. The Egyptian government has neither officially confirmed nor denied this. However, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Egypt's former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Secretary-General of the UN from 1992-96, admitted as much in his memoir, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga*, as follows:

"During the 1973 October War between Egypt and Israel, Kim Il Sung had sent to Egypt a squadron of MiG fighter aircraft with North Korean pilots. They had patrolled Egyptian airspace throughout the war. Hosni Mubarak was the general in command of the Egyptian Air Force at that time. As a result of this support for Egypt by the DPRK, President Mubarak would never agree to establish full diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea (ROK). As for myself, over many years I had constructed a network of personal ties to North Korean officials through contacts at various conferences of the third-world and nonaligned countries. At the same time, the Korean government in Seoul was well aware that I was persistently arguing in Cairo for the establishment of Egypt-ROK relations in view of the fact that nearly half the world's nations had diplomatic ties

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<sup>73</sup> Al-Fariq Sa'd al-Din al-Shadhily, *Harb al- Uktubar: Mudhakkirat*, (Cairo: R'u ya li-Nashrwa al-Tawzi', 2011). This edition is referred to as a "new edition". However, since the preface to the 1998 4th edition by Shazly is still included, it is assumed that the 1998 edition was published in a different format and with changes, such as the addition of secondary headings.

<sup>74</sup> Only a summary of this fact is given in the English version, Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, pp. 60-61. The Arabic version, which will be translated in the next section, describes the circumstances in more detail.

to both Koreas. My efforts were repeatedly doomed as soon as Mubarak realized that I was making progress. He would never disappoint the DPRK. So there were several good reasons for my decision to go to Pyongyang: I had access on both sides of the Korean peninsula; I was the UN secretary-general; and a General Assembly resolution legitimized a UN role in the current crisis. Nonetheless, the US maintained its pressure to prevent me from going.<sup>75</sup>

The deployment of North Korean pilots during the October War is significant as the “origin” of the very close military ties between Egypt and North Korea from the Sadat to Mubarak administrations. As Boutros-Ghali notes, Egypt did not establish diplomatic relations with South Korea for a long time. On one hand, it has been allied with the US; on another, it has maintained diplomatic relations only with North Korea on the Korean peninsula, refusing to establish formal relations with South Korea. It can be assumed that Mubarak, the air force commander during the October War, was indebted to KIM Il-sung for his support. It was not until April 1995, after the death of KIM Il-sung in July of the previous year, that Egypt finally decided to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea.

It will be interesting to see if Shazly's memoirs can confirm the fact that Scud B(R-17E) missiles were provided to North Korea by Egypt in return for North Korean assistance to Egypt during the October War and that this was the basis for North Korea's missile development. However, the memoir covers the period up to December 1973 and does not mention the quid pro quo provision. It is unclear from the memoirs whether the quid pro quo was discussed before the October War and simply not mentioned here or whether it was discussed after Shazly's ouster. Whether Mubarak, as commander of the air force, then further deepened relations with North Korea and took the initiative to provide Scud missiles himself or whether there were other channels on the Egyptian side, we should wait carefully for new documents and reports to emerge in a period of change in Egypt.

The second area of North Korean military assistance concerns the construction of underground facilities. This is an issue that has received little attention, as it is not included at all in the English summary. The technical assistance for constructing the underground facility should receive further attention in the context of North Korea's impact on the broader Middle East and the consequences of that impact on international politics. The difficulty in dealing with the issue of Iran's nuclear program is that many of the alleged facilities are underground. Shazly describes with surprise that the construction of underground facilities is North Korea's strongest suit. If North Korea's technology in this regard were being provided to Egypt and other countries in the Middle East,

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<sup>75</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga*, (New York: Random House, 1999), p.126. This passage is a description in connection with Boutros-Ghali's visit to Pyongyang on December 24, 1993.

North Korea would be deeply involved in the international issues surrounding the Middle East today, literally at the center of them. The fact that such efforts were made to Egypt as early as 1973 does not rule out the possibility that similar technology grants were made to other countries in the Middle East, and further investigation is awaited.

### 9. Translation of the Original Arabic Text

“North Korean Pilots in Egypt,” *October War*, new edition, pp. 118-123.

In March 1973 the Vice President of the DPRK paid an official visit to Egypt.<sup>76</sup> Lieutenant General JANG Jong-hwan, vice-minister of the People's Armed Forces, accompanied the group and requested an inspection of the front line in Suez.<sup>77</sup> On March 6, I went to the front with JANG. On the way, we discussed and exchanged views on various military issues. I told him that Egypt was having trouble training pilots and could not operate our MIG-21s, especially after the Soviets withdrew about 100 pilots who were operating 75 of them. Then, seizing the opportunity, I said to him, “Do you think it would be possible for North Korea to provide us with some MIG-21 pilots? It would be a win-win situation for both sides. For our side, your participation in air defense would solve our problem of pilot shortage. For the North Korean side, the pilots will gain practical knowledge of warfare. The Israelis will use the same planes and the same tactics as your supposed enemies.”

He asked me how many pilots I needed, and I said, “I don't expect you to fill all the holes left by the Soviets. It would be enough to send one squadron. If we need to send another unit in the future, we will discuss it later.” Although we were discussing the issue as military officers, we both knew that it would require a political decision on both sides. We promised each other that we would make every effort to convince the political side to make the necessary decision.

It was easy to convince the Minister of Defense. But the minister told us that he would first seek the president's permission. A few days later, President Sadat agreed to the idea. I awaited the North Korean response. About two weeks after the North Korean envoy's visit, General JANG Jong-hwan visited Egypt again and informed me that North Korean President KIM Il-sung had agreed to the plan. However, before sending the pilots to Egypt, he demanded that I make an official visit to North Korea to see the pilots in person. On April 2, 1973, I set out on a visit to Pyongyang,

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<sup>76</sup> According to North Korean records, the Vice President of the DPRK is KANG Ryang-uk.

<sup>77</sup> The original Arabic text refers to General Zang Zung, Vice Minister of Defense, but the North Korean record refers to Lieutenant General JANG Jong-hwan, Vice Minister of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces. The translations below as “JANG” and “JANG Jong-hwan” are “Zang” or “Zang Zung” in the original Arabic text.

the capital of North Korea.

Since there were no direct flights to Pyongyang, my itinerary was via Shanghai, China. The Chinese government invited us for three days before we arrived in Pyongyang on April 6. Despite my unofficial status, the Chinese side extended a warm welcome to me and the accompanying delegation. The Chinese Chief of Staff hosted a banquet for me, during which we exchanged views on military and political issues.<sup>78</sup> The Chinese also arranged a number of sightseeing tours. I visited the Great Wall of China, the northernmost point of the Great Wall of China. I also visited the Great Wall of China at its northernmost point, as well as a number of shelters that would resist any nuclear attack. I also visited Beijing's new subway system and many museums. The simplicity, self-reliance, and self-sacrifice impressed upon me by the Chinese people and their political leadership during my brief visit will forever remain in my life's memory. This memory will never be erased from my mind.

In Pyongyang, we received an enthusiastic welcome. Everywhere we went—from military installations to factories and other facilities set up in mountain caves—we were greeted by thousands of people singing songs and waving flags. My excitement was heightened by the enthusiastic welcome, which was followed by a succession of performances. During one of my visits, I attended a fire drill conducted by one of the units of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards, which was tasked with air defense.<sup>79</sup> The unit was made up entirely of young girls, and because of their short stature, I assumed that they were no older than 15. However, I was informed that they were 18 or older. The results of the training were excellent. When it was my turn to review, I said, “Thank you for showing us your excellent marksmanship. I'll show you how much I appreciate it by giving you this beret.” I took off the scarlet beret I had worn throughout the visit, which only paratroopers were allowed to wear, and gave it to the commander of that unit.

I could say many things about North Korea and KIM Il-sung. It is safe to say that what has been accomplished in that country in the last two decades is incredible. Not only has he managed to rebuild his country from the ashes of civil war, but he has also made it possible for the country to become self-sufficient in all things. North Korea can now produce most of its military and civilian needs, from tanks and artillery to tractors, machinery, and more. While China, with its vast natural resources and huge population, was able to develop independently without the assistance of

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<sup>78</sup> Since the position of Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army of China was vacant at that time, it is believed that one of the acting military officers met with him.

<sup>79</sup> In the original it is “al-haras al-watani (the National Guard).” It seems to be an understanding of the “Worker-Peasant Red Guards” of North Korea, a reserve force composed of companies, farms, and universities, as a paramilitary organization (National Guard, Republican Guard, etc.) under the direct control of the king or president, established in parallel with the national army, which is common in Arab countries.



outside developed countries (Note: China began introducing Western technology in 1978. This was done with the intention of accelerating the pace of development. The US and its Western allies praised and supported this direction. The intention was to create a threatening element on the eastern border of the Soviet Union), North Korea, with a population of only 15 million, is an unprecedented example of a small country developing without outside assistance. The Korean people are completely organized as if they were a huge military camp.

At 7:00 in the morning, I saw the school children carrying hoes as tall as they were and shovels for digging holes. They are singing songs on their way to the work sites. Every citizen, young and old, is required to perform a certain number of hours of unpaid physical work for the benefit of the state. Similarly, the paving and repair of roads and the construction of underground and other evacuation facilities for public use are carried out according to a planned work schedule that organizes this enormous human effort. The North Koreans took advantage of the mountainous terrain and abundant manpower to build tunnels to protect themselves from the atomic bomb and even to relocate factories and airports. I saw several factories hidden in the mountains and airfields with nothing on the surface but the runway.

The whole complex is hidden in the mountainside. It is truly a dazzling and amazing undertaking. When I met President KIM Il-sung, I said to him, "Your Excellency. I am afraid that if there is a nuclear war, the whole world will collapse, and North Korea will be left behind."

The President laughed and said, "Listen to me, Lieutenant General. I know very well that the Americans are no match for us in air combat. So, the only thing left for us to do is to dig tunnels and let the air raids pass us by. After that, we will flood their airspace with artillery and machine gun fire." (Note: I personally disagree with this view. While this method would have a positive effect on air defense, spreading a large number of such weapons throughout the land of the Republic will certainly cause tremendous restrictions on other aircraft as well. Such fire should be called sabotage.)

I met with a group of pilots who were going to be deployed to Egypt. The pilots had a lot of experience and many of them had over 2,000 hours of flying experience. We agreed to pay them a salary of one Egyptian pound. This was the same as the salary of an Egyptian pilot. I promised President KIM Il-sung that I would personally take care of the pilots in their free time. I also assured him that we would not fight together inside Israel or on Israeli-occupied land and that their duties would be limited to air defense in the rear area. I also asked the President of the DPRK to send specialists to the underground facilities so that we can take advantage of their knowledge and expertise, and we reached an agreement on this. I left for Egypt on April 15. This was my

visit to the most difficult place to reach.

As soon as I got back to Cairo, I organized a group of engineers. The purpose was to form the nucleus of a new division within the Corps of Engineers. It was called the "Underground Facilities Division." On May 1, a group of specialists on North Korean underground facilities arrived in Egypt. They stayed in Egypt for eight days for on-the-job training with a group of Egyptian engineers. When the delegation paid a courtesy call on me before returning his country, the head of the delegation said, "The head of the Egyptian technical delegation has excellent theoretical knowledge of underground facilities, but he needs practical knowledge." The training and guidance provided by the North Korean experts on underground facilities was very useful.

Soon after the North Korean experts returned their country, I organized a working group. Their task was to design an airport hidden under a mountain. I met with this group every week or two to discuss their progress, and when the October War broke out in 1973, they were still designing and working out the details. We were making remarkable progress in this task. I wanted to meet with this group regularly. There were two reasons. The first was my interest in the task. The second reason was a kind of camouflage, to make it appear that war was not yet imminent. I could not imagine that the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces would spend even a small amount of time planning an airport that would take five years to build when war was imminent.

One of the members of the working group was an officer from the Operations Section of the Air Command. Less than two weeks before the operation, Major General Hosni Mubarak saw the officer busy gathering information and making design proposals for the underground airport and scolded him, "You have more important things to do than this." The officer replied, "Lieutenant General Shazly ordered me to do this." Hosni Mubarak was surprised and said, "Next time I will ask the chief of staff if what you said is true." When Hosni Mubarak and I met two days later, we told this story and laughed together.

In early June 1973, North Korean pilots began to arrive. In July, the formation of their squadron was completed. Then, on August 15, an Israeli radio broadcast reported that there were North Korean pilots in Egypt. Dr. Ashraf Gulbar, the assistant to the president for media affairs, called me and asked if this information was true. I told him that the information was true, but that it was up to politics to decide whether to report it or not, especially since we had to consult with other foreign countries before making it public. Now, five years have passed since this happened, the North Koreans have returned home, and the support they gave us during the war is now part of history. I have determined to tell this story in its entirety so that the Egyptian people will know all about those who were with them during their ordeal. The US, Israel and the Soviet Union know

about North Korean support. The pilots used the Korean language over the radio to communicate with their colleagues and ground control during their daily training. Any foreign intelligence service could record these conversations. Why hide the truth from the Egyptian people and the Arab people when everything important is known?

The support force sent by North Korea to Egypt was the smallest support force sent by a single country to a friendly country in the history of warfare. This support force consisted of 30 pilots, eight flight controllers, five interpreters, three administrative men, a doctor and a cook. They were joined by 3,000 Egyptians at the base who provided radar, air defense, ground patrol and all administrative matters for this squadron. I had visited the base many times to make sure there were no problems, and each time I went, I found that everything was going according to plan. The relationship between North Korea and Egypt was the best one could hope for. The North Korean soldiers were strange. The pilots were autonomous in every way. They had their own housing, they were on their own in everything. No one had any leisure time, either on training missions or in study or physical training. Not a single one of them had an office problem.

There were two or three battles between North Korean pilots and Israeli pilots before the October War and many more during the war.

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