North Korea Leader Dies

This past weekend Kim Jong Il, known in his country as "dear leader" and strict ruler of communist North Korea, died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-nine. One of his sons appears to be in place to succeed him.

CNN

> *Kim Jong Il had led North Korea since 1994, when his father — the nation's founder, Kim Il Sung — died at age 82. During his 17 years in power, the country suffered a devastating famine even as it built up its million-strong army, expanded its arsenal of ballistic missiles and became the world's eighth declared nuclear power.*
>
> *The news of his death spurred South Korea, which remains technically at war with the North more than five decades after their 1950-53 conflict, to put its military on high alert. But across one of the world's most heavily fortified borders, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak told his citizens "to go about their lives" in the meantime.*

First American Death in Japan Disaster

The first American known to have died from the recent natural disasters in Japan has been identified. Taylor Anderson, a 24-year-old teacher from Richmond, Virginia, is mourned by family back home.

> *"She was last seen after the powerful earthquake struck Japan*

> *on March 11, riding her bike away from the school where she taught after helping to get her students home. . . . 'It is with deep regret that we inform you that earlier this morning we received a call from the U.S. Embassy in Japan that they had found our beloved Taylor's body,' the Anderson family wrote in a statement. 'We would like to thank all those (whose) prayers and support have carried us through this crisis. Please continue to pray for all who remain missing and for the people of Japan.'"*

Devastating tsunamis triggered by a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, in northern Japan on March 11, caused great destruction, as did the earthquake itself. In addition, a nuclear power plant was disabled and leaking radiation.

China Talks With India

Broad minded communication could help heal old wounds as leaders of the two most-populous countries in the world met in December, 2010.

> *(**People Forum**) Premier Wen arrived [in India] with some 400 Chinese business leaders in fields ranging from banking to real estate. . . . [China and India] cooperate in many areas and make great efforts to promote the peace and development in Asia. As India's top trading partner, China expects bilateral trade to rise to $60 billion this year, up from $51.8 billion in 2008, Hu Zhengyue, assistant foreign minister, said . . .*

Chinese Leader Surprised by Jet Test

During the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, appeared surprised to learn that the Chinese military had just conducted a test of their new stealth fighter.

> *(NY Times, Jan 11, 2011) Staging the test flight of the long-secret **J-20** while Mr. Gates was in Beijing amounted to an unusually bold show of force by China. But the demonstration also raised questions about the degree of civilian control of the Chinese military, as President Hu Jintao and other civilian leaders gave their American visitors the impression that they were unaware that the test had been conducted only hours before they received Mr. Gates . . .*

The new Chinese jet may be similar to the U.S. F-22 Raptor.

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Long Beach, California, licensed child care

North Korea Attacks An Island

(Wall Street Journal) On Thursday, some residents returned to assess the damage on the battered island, which lies about 10 kilometers south of the North Korean coast and is also home to

a South Korean marine base. Most of the 1,200 civilian inhabitants had been evacuated the day before. The North’s barrage Tuesday—a rare blow falling on civilian targets—delivered a serious jolt to South Koreans, many of whom had come to discount the possibility of serious violence after living for decades with belligerent rhetoric from the North.