

Summary

This issue of # 시각 pulls together several high profile issues in or related to South Korea: espionage, suicide, political parties, and repatriation, among other things. The strange case of Yu U-song (유우성), for starters, has made waves in the South Korean media in the last couple of weeks. Yu is former Chinese resident in North Korea who disguised himself as a North Korean refugee in order to get into South Korea, subsequently working for the Seoul city government. Yu was later accused of spying for North Korea and is currently in court. This somewhat unique case has given sufficient cause for the left-leaning daily, the *Hankyoreh*, to implicate the NIS and the conservative press.

On a more sobering topic: suicide. It is something that South Korea is genuinely concerned about, and has long been searching for answers to why it comfortably tops the list of OECD suicide hotspots. However, those answers seem as far away as they ever were, and a recent group suicide in Gangnam seems tragically unlikely to bring progress. One finds far less concern about the failure of left wing political factions in the country to consolidate around a traditional party format in the 27 years since democratization; if the reaction to Ahn Cheol-soo's sudden decision to ditch “new politics” in favor of union with the old is anything to go by, there never will be. There is, however, plenty of concern for the hundreds of North Koreans facing deportation to South Korea from Canada.

Peter Ward, 워드 피터 @rpcward89 Mar 11

Chosun - NIS chief NIS incompetence/malice/fanaticism has either defamed an innocent or let a spy off the hook: <http://chosun.com/tw/...> #시각

The *Chosun Ilbo* has accused the NIS director of either being incompetent, or excessively zealous in his anti-communism. A lack of respect for the law, and a lack of interest in errors that have occurred at the NIS, as well as a lack of proper oversight have been cited as possible reasons for the scandal now engulfing the agency regarding the forgery of the immigration records of a man accused of spying.

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Hakyoreh chastises conservative media for pro-NIS bias in their reporting on the case of alleged NK spy: <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/...> #시각

The *Hankyoreh* has chastised the main conservative dailies (*Chosun*, *Dong-a*, and *Joongang*) for their lack of critical reporting regarding the case of Yu U-song. Among other things, they cite the fact that these conservative dailies failed to report that Yu's younger sister gave false evidence as the result of threats from the NIS. Additionally, the three large conservative dailies are accused of lending excessive credence to NIS claims, while deriding/ignoring contrary views.

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Hangyoreh casts doubt on prosecutor's ability to investigate alleged NIS abuse of power: <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/...> #시각

The *Hankyoreh* (in Korean) are doubtful whether the NIS can be properly investigated because of special laws which allow them to not disclose potentially incriminating documents and personnel in the name of national security. The possibility that the agency will be held to account for what has happened is, according to left-leaning daily, therefore doubtful.

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Yonhap reports that prosecutors have seized docs from NIS about faking of evidence against supposed NK spy: [http://app.yonhapnews.co.kr/Yna/Basic/SNS/ ... #시각](http://app.yonhapnews.co.kr/Yna/Basic/SNS/...#시각)

Yonhap reports that prosecutors has searched the offices of the NIS and seized documents, as well as interviewing suspects in connection with claims that the agency, using a man by the name of Kim, had incriminating documents faked to use against accused spy Yu U-song.

Christopher Green @Dest_Pyongyang Mar 6

“@kbsnewstweet: 자살예방협회는 최근 송파구 '세 모녀 자살사건'이 보도된 이후 인터넷에 '동반자살'을 검색하는 양이 2배 이상 늘었다며 언론에 보도 자제를 요청했습니다. <http://bit.ly/1jTvcdR>” #시각

KBS News, citing the Korean Association for Suicide Prevention, reports that the number of Internet searches for the phrase “group suicide” has doubled in recent weeks. The report comes in the aftermath of a case in which a woman in her 60s and her two 30-something daughters [committed suicide](#) in a downstairs room in the relatively affluent Songpa-gu region of Seoul. It was debt that allegedly drove the group to kill themselves; debt incurred in the act of treating the diseases of both the elder woman’s husband and the elder daughter, although these financial hardships would have been assuaged under existing social programs if only they had applied. The case inevitably touched a nerve in South Korea, where suicide may not be driving people to death “in droves,” as [this report](#) asserts with a disturbing flourish, but is a serious issue having an impact on mass consciousness.

Christopher Green @Dest_Pyongyang Mar 2

Satisfaction all round, then. Nothing more to discuss...? #시각 [조선일보]中 마오쩌둥 "요동 지방은 원래 조선 땅"... 北 지도부 "우리는 현재 국경선에 만족" <http://bit.ly/1kBPk3N>

This concerns a story carried by the online *Chosun Ilbo* and citing [the work](#) of a researcher with the Sejong Institute, Dr. Lee Jeong Seok. According to Dr. Lee, in 1964, Mao Zedong is said to have asked a North Korean delegation to Beijing led by Choi Yong Geon, then the head of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly, whether they were happy with the existing border demarcation between North Korea and China, since, Mao pointed out, an area roughly corresponding to southeast Liaoning Province had once been part of the greater nation of Chosun. The North Korean side declared absolute satisfaction at the current border. Whether the report helps or hinders either of the two Koreas’ historical claims to Manchuria is a matter of interpretation; certainly, it is unclear what Mao would have done had he received a negative response. Either way, he swiftly buttressed the exchange by allegedly telling the delegation that North Korea must treat the northeast of China as their legitimate rear area. The story is symbolic of an ongoing conflict, played out in rhetorical media form, over the history of Manchuria, which is [now being addressed](#) in some style by Leiden University in The Netherlands.

Christopher Green @Dest_Pyongyang Mar 2

The still birth of "new" #시각: [조선일보]김한길·안철수, "신당 창당으로 통합 추진...2017 정권교체 실현" <http://bit.ly/OPnxTp>

No sooner had the head of the New Political Vision Party, Ahn Cheol-soo, declared the need for a brand new form of politics to deal with the ludicrously low popularity of progressive politicians in contemporary South Korea than he had agreed to join with the party he previously had in his sights, the Democratic Party (민주당) led by Kim Han-gil. The goal, the two announced at a press conference on this date, is to win in this June's local elections and then challenge to replace the entire government in 2017. Ahn's political volte-face may prove to be ill judged, given that he is generally credited with being able to draw votes away from the ruling Saenuri Party that the Democratic Party could never hope to win, but this may not become clear for some time. Either way, visit the "[New Politics](#)" website or simply follow the official [Twitter feed](#) to see what happens next. As Sino-NK has written about, this kind of behavior is indicative of [the lack of party consolidation](#) in democratic South Korea, particularly on the left.

Steven Denney @StevenDenney86 Mar 15

"SK's next big economic leap: innovation" It's popular, key to post-dev. success, but is it structurally possible? <http://ow.ly/uCGrY> #시각

This article in the Canadian *Globe and Mail* tells what post-developmental state South Korean economic planners want to hear: South Korea is making inroads into the "creative economy" *a la* entrepreneurial creativity. The story is about fashion startup cum-successful beauty products seller and producer, Memebox. The story will resonate well with Canadians, who are just as, if not more, gun-ho about the rise of the "[creative class](#)" and the promise of the "creative economy" to deliver the global economy from its current woes as is [the Park Guen-hye administration](#). The key difference might be that Canada's GDP is not dominated by less than a dozen super-conglomerates, [unlike Korea's](#).

Steven Denney @StevenDenney86 Mar 13

N. Korean defectors who once settled in S. Korea face deportation from Canada. <http://ow.ly/uzHNO> #시각

Yonhap reports that "more than 600 North Korean defectors, who initially settled in South Korea, are on the verge of being deported from Canada." These defectors are being refused asylum because they had previously been given safe haven and legal status in South Korea. And, as [The Star reports](#), "In Canada, that South Korean acceptance negates a refugee claim." *The Star* also reports that the number of North Koreans living in Toronto may be somewhere between 400-900, according to human rights organizations and church volunteers. HanVoice, the largest non-profit human rights organization in Canada devoted to helping North Korean refugees is one Toronto-based organization that is [seeking a legal remedy](#) to the issue in addition to its general advocacy work.

Steven Denney (@StevenDenney86 Mar 5

Echoes of Pyongyang? Talking to UPP members will certainly make it seem that way. <http://ow.ly/uglkg> #시각

In this *Guardian* article, Justin McCurry reports on the verdict rendered by a Suwon district court that found MP Lee Seok-ki guilty of sedition for plotting to overthrow the South Korean government in the event of a North Korean attack. The judge, Kim Jeong-un (re: irony), “said Lee’s plot constituted a ‘substantial and apparent’ threat to South Korea.” The judge also accepted that “the Revolutionary Organisation was the main force behind this subversive scheme, and that [Lee] was in charge of running it.” The ruling is a significant blow to the credibility of the United Progressive Party (UPP; 통합진보당), of which Lee was a member, and could arguably hurt the popularity of the progressive opposition as a whole. Park Geun-hye has called for the constitutional court [to disband the UPP](#). McCurry’s piece is also noteworthy for its biased reporting; it cites mainly from disgruntled UPP members and sympathetic parties.

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