

Report



emu52

created 6 days ago

updated 4 days ago

Readiness

67⁹

Park Young-min likely (50-60%) staged his own abduction/disappearance, implicating Chinese gang Golden Dragon as perpetrators

KEY JUDGMENTS

The conclusion was reached because:

- no body was found, there was no blood at the scene, and only one person was seen leaving the apartment building.
- Items found near the crime scene - clothes, shoes, stockings, newspaper, wig (synthetic) hairs - are believed to represent the components of a dummy body.
- The attack was staged and timed so that it would be overseen and overheard by the window cleaner and Jay Jang, the owner of the takeaway restaurant.
- More likely than not (50-60%) Park was connected with Division 39, the arm of the North Korean government that raises funds for the regime through illegal means (drugs, cybercrime, etc).
- Park was further connected with Golden Dragon (see relationship diagram below), and was most likely (50-60%) involved in negotiating drug deals on behalf of Division 39.
- Problems arose due to delivery problems of agreed drugs.
- Park was being threatened as a consequence and needed to remove himself from danger.
- Existing AIS reports, although containing some reasoning flaws (see below) support this line of reasoning.

REASONING

We reached our overall conclusion by systematically reviewing the evidence and existing AIS reports to construct a number of viable hypotheses. These hypotheses were then subjected to a competitive analysis (ACH, see Appendix 1).

APPROACH

- Review of AIS reports (reasoning stress test) and a meta-analysis of those reports, assessing a range of reasoning flaws to help nail down key facts and most viable hypotheses, and construct an overall relationship diagram between the various actors in the problem scenario.
- The methodology used to determine the most likely scenario for Park's disappearance is an analysis of competing hypotheses.

THE EVIDENCE

Young-min Park was reported by two witnesses as having been attacked in his apartment. When the police arrived, he had disappeared. A check on his passport with South Korean NIS showed it was fake and that they believed him to be North Korean. The Australian Intelligence Service (AIS) became involved and are trying to ascertain why Park was attacked, and by whom. AIS would also like a report on Park's connection to North Korea's Division 39 and what he might have been doing for them in Australia. Further reviews are to be made on the four reports around this issue written by junior AIS analysts.

REVIEW OF AIS REPORTS

Details of our critical analysis of existing AIS reports used to develop our advice are at Appendix 2. It is important to consider that AIS Reports 2, 3 and 4 were written prior to the alleged abduction/ homicide of Park. There may be a perceived bias in linking the reports to the problem.

While there are some important reasoning flaws in individual reports, taken as a whole, we were able to extract some important points that contributed to our overall evidence base. In summary, the key problems we noted with these reports are:

AIS report 1 (looks into potential factors leading to Park's abduction/disappearance.)

- lack of consideration of viable alternative hypotheses
- failure to reference key facts relied on or state them as assumptions

We assessed this report as having mild-moderate reasoning flaws.

AIS report 2 (looks into drug trafficking by DPRK's Division 39 in Australia.)

- report makes some assumptions that historical movements of drugs will continue into the future without explanation of why this would be the case. This is particularly critical given the analyst also says that Australia's Sovereign Borders policy has successfully disrupted drug deliveries.

We assessed this report as having moderate reasoning flaws.

AIS report 3 (looks into activities of DPRK black market traders in Australia.)

- report does not substantiate claims regarding Song Han-yeon as being a DPRK spy, or her role in cultivating a cyber security firm, and in weapons sales.
- as with report 2, there are assumptions that historical activities will continue, regardless of changes in external circumstances, with regard to drug sales through Golden Dragon in Melbourne.

We assessed this report as having moderate reasoning flaws, largely based on failure to consider alternatives that would fit the known facts.

ALS report 4 (purports to review the "current strategic relationship between Australian and North Korea").

- the oldest of all the reports provided to us, predating by some months, the more specific reports and abduction event. Its title is misleading, as it canvasses only some very narrow aspects of strategic nation-state relationships - cyber attacks and nuclear weapons.

We assessed this report as having moderate reasoning flaws.

HYPOTHESES - WHO ATTACKED PARK AND WHY.

From the above evidence we draw out the following three hypotheses and subject them to an analysis of competing hypothesis to reach our conclusion (Appendix 1).

Hypothesis 1 - attacked by Chinese Mafia – Golden Dragon Group

- Less likely according to ACH
- Park said he was being attacked by the Chinese in his phone call to Jay Jang. The attack could have been related to either heroin or gambling. However, no body was found in the immediate area.

Hypothesis 2 – attacked by North Korean agents - DPRK's Division 39

- Less likely according to ACH
- Park appears to be a North Korean agent. He left Sydney for Melbourne around the time of the murder of another ostensible North Korean agent.

Hypothesis 3 – Park faked attack himself to facilitate disappearance

- Most likely according to ACH
- Park may have wished to disappear for the same reason he ran from Sydney to Melbourne.

ADDITIONAL REASONING

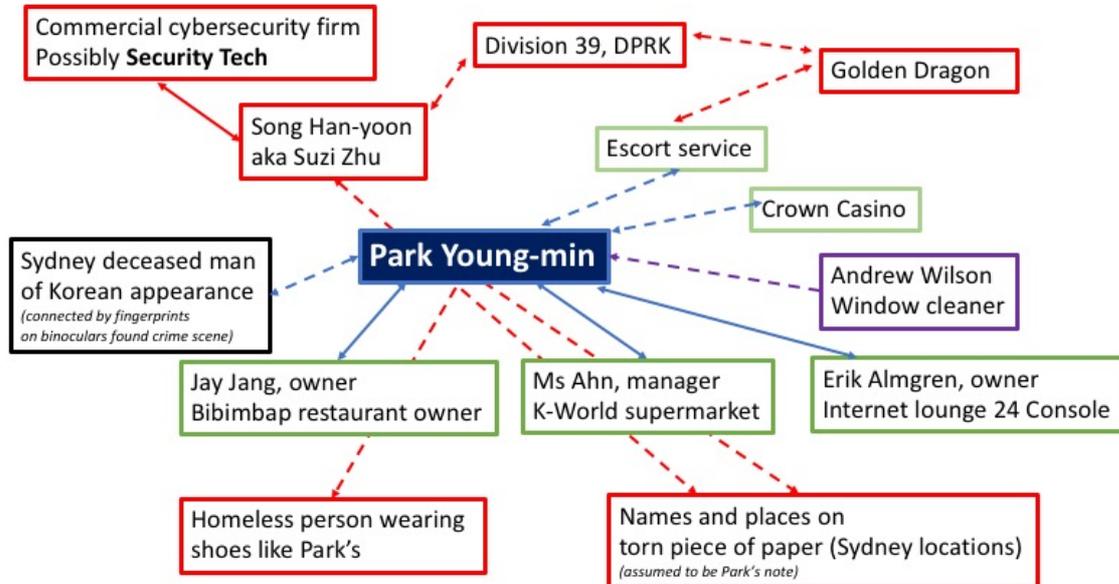
- The eye witness reported the figure on the couch was flicking between the channels, which could be done by the TV remote control being used out of sight of the eye witness and would divert attention to the TV. After Park attacked the dummy he must have accidentally taken the TV control with him, which was why it was at the bottom of the fire escape.
- Park must have gone through the opposite apartment and through the external window and down the fire escape.
- The scene was staged to make it appear the Golden Dragon were responsible, including the heroin dusted around, leaving very few facts inconsistent with this scenario.
- The broken syringe containing terodotoxin gives credence to how an attacker would have been able to subdue Park without bloodshed - in other words it was a useful decoy planted at the scene.
- Park may have wanted to disappear more thoroughly than he disappeared from Sydney

Assess Young-min Park's connection with North Korea's Division 39 and what he may have been doing for them in Australia.

- Park is travelling on a South Korean passport which South Korean intelligence agents say is fake. They have also said his biometrics match that of a man who visited the North Korean Embassy in Jakarta in 2015. The passport shows travel to the prefecture of Yanbian, China which is on China's extensive border with North Korea and contains a large number of Chinese Koreans.
- Park is connected to a Korean man found murdered in Sydney. The dead man is believed to have been North Korean. Both men's fingerprints were found on a pair of binoculars and police believe they probably had breakfast together several days before the unidentified man's death.
- Korean writing was found on the piece of paper in Park's kitchen that translated to "Training is also a battle!", which is a North Korean People's Army slogan.
- Park was ostensibly on holidays but in both Sydney and Melbourne is spent extensive amounts of time in internet cafes. This corresponds with the increased North Korean cyber-attacks on Australia.

RELATIONSHIPS

The following diagram plots what we know and what is possible to connect the various actors in this scenario.



KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- The information given by the South Korean National Intelligence Service (NIS) - that Park's passport is fake and biometric evidence shows he is North Korean - is considered factual.
- We have incorporated some real world observations (e.g. weather conditions associated with the finding of the dead Korean man in Sydney) to help our lines of reasoning.
- Evidence found in Park's apartment is directly linked to him (e.g. the torn paper, syringe) on the basis that furnished rental apartments are thoroughly cleaned between tenancies.

KEY UNKNOWNNS

- Why Park left Sydney.
 - The probability is high (80-95%) that it had something to do with the death of the man who was killed, who also appeared to be North Korean.
 - Park resumed his normal activities in Melbourne, as evidenced by the scrap of paper showing his interests in Sydney. So he initially felt safe in Melbourne.
 - When Song Han-yoon left Australia. Was it just after the North Korean man's death in Sydney? Attributing any other actions to her would be pure speculation.

ALTERNATIVES

- The origin of the attack on Park by the Golden Dragon hit was hard to dismiss, as it is highly likely (80+%) that they had the most to lose with a drug deal going wrong and might want to send a clear message to DPRK and Division 39 operatives remaining in Australia that they needed to tighten up their drug supply lines. We note this was the preferred hypothesis of AIS report 1, but we also note a number of reasoning flaws in that report as well.
- The main arguments against Golden Dragon include evidence of escape through the opposite apartment and via a sheltered fire escape and that no strangers were observed arriving to the building. It is feasible (but not likely) that Golden Dragon could have used the alternative route as both entry AND exit.
- We did not see a great deal of merit in the idea that Park was abducted by DPRK agents, as there is no evidence of Park having fallen foul of the regime, assuming he was a Division 39 operative or contact.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Analysis of competing hypotheses (ACH)

Hypothesis 1 (H1) - attacked by Chinese gang – Golden Dragon

Hypothesis 2 (H2) – attacked by North Korean agents - DPRK's Division 39

Hypothesis 3 (H3) – Park faked attack himself to facilitate disappearance

The main pieces of evidence are rated as consistent (C); inconsistent (I); or neutral (N) with respect to the relevant hypothesis. Additional ratings are available on request (only key items included in this report).

Evidence	Weight	H1	H2	H3
Eye witness report Adam Wilson (window cleaner)	high	C	C	C
Witness report, Jay Jang (restaurant owner)	high	C	N	C
Syringe containing tetrodotoxin	high	C	C	C
Heroin	medium	C	C	N
South Korean passport (denied by ROK)	high	N	C	C
Park's mobile phone on floor, including photos taken in Sydney.	high	C	C	C
Call to escort service linked to Golden Dragon	medium	C	N	C
Broken furniture and dishes	high	C	C	C
2 strands of synthetic hair	high	C	C	C
Note in Korean on kitchen bench: "Training is also a battle!"	high	C	I	C
Paper scrap found under fridge, resulting in the following findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sansheng 2 Muller La 8339 16 (a Korean restaurant in Sydney) Suzi 0403 ... (possibly Suzi Zhu, aka Song Han-yoon) My Delight 1131 Bota... (an Indonesian restaurant in Sydney) July Gami... (July Gaming Cafe, in Sydney) 	medium	N	N	C
Door to apartment opposite Park's broken into.	high	I	I	C
The external window onto Temple Court Place had been left open.	high	I	I	C
Broken remote to Park's TV at foot of stairs.	high	I	I	C
CCTV footage of Park arriving home at 0130 staggering and uncoordinated.	medium	N	N	N
CCTV footage showed no other unexplained entries.	medium	I	I	C
Video footage in Mitre lane at 1144 showing a man in a black hoodie carrying a small black backpack. Other footage shows him heading towards the river.	medium	C	C	C
Park's body not found	high	N	N	C
Bin near buildings fire escape contained 4 pairs of torn black tights with traces of heroin and Korean newspaper pages.	medium	I/N	I/N	C
Black backpack found in bin in Harper Lane containing a shirt and pants similar to what Park was wearing during alleged assault.	medium	N	N	C
Shoes matching Park's found on homeless man in area.	medium	N	N	C
North Korean drug traffickers sell illicit drugs to the Melbourne based Golden Dragon group	medium	C	C	C
North Korean importation of drugs into Australia has been disrupted.	low	C	C	C
Cyber-attacks on Australia have been carried out by North Korea.	medium	N	N	C

Total number of consistent findings		12	10	22
Total number of inconsistent findings		4	6	0

Appendix 2: Critical analysis of AIS reports 1-4

- Timing
- Cross-references
- Further references to other resources/activities
- Stylistic consistency or differences between the reports (including the level of cohesion and coherence between them).

For simplicity, we use the DPRK terminology in what follows (although the reports used this and North Korea interchangeably)

Reporting timelines (note that reports 2-4 predate the abduction/attack event)

20 August 2019	<p>AIS report 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some broad and relatively vague background about DPRK and limited connection to the Park abduction, with one exception. • There is a reference to Song Han-yoon and her contact with an employee at Security Tech, which is likely to be the name of the commercial cybersecurity firm that Song approached, as outlined in AIS report 3 (see below).
24 October 2019	<p>AIS report 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to our understanding of DPRK drug trafficking and the role of Division (Office) 39 in illicit drug trade • This report also notes that covert recordings of the Melbourne-based Golden Dragon Chinese crime group showed conversations about a “drug deal with the North Koreans that had gone bad”. • This report references two other AIS reports - about sea-based drug shipments - that we do not have access to but which presumably pre-date this one): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ AIS report NK4645, regarding a trawler traveling from Indonesia, crewed by North Koreans. ◦ AIS report NK7112, regarding a capsized yacht, with North Korean crew, off the coast of WA.
1 December 2019	<p>AIS report 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purports to cover DPRK assets active in Australia, but focuses on quite a bit of historical activity. • Raises important questions about the role of Song Han-yoon and Division 39. • Appears to confirm links between DPRK and drug trafficking via organised crime groups such as Golden Dragon. • This report references another AIS report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ AIS report OC9873 (which is likely a report on organised crime in Australia, based on the code used for the file reference.) <p>Although not specified, reports 2 and 3 are connected by reference to an “ongoing investigation” which includes the reference to a covert recording of Golden Dragon members detailed in AIS report 2.</p>
5-10 December 2019	<p>Attack on Park in Melbourne apartment and police investigation</p>
10 December 2019	<p>AIS report 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarises the more detailed police reports, digs into Park’s background, travel and associations in Sydney before moving to Melbourne. • Speculates and hypothesises Park’s connections with the killing of a man of Korean appearance in Sydney on 30 August. • This report references AIS report 2 from above in order to develop one of two main hypotheses as to who attacked Park—Golden Dragon. • Report places highest likelihood on Golden Dragon as being responsible for the attack on Park.