

VANTAGE POINT
DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH KOREA

Vol. 36 No. **2**
FEBRUARY 2013

CONTENTS

PHOTO NEWS

Various Scenes of North Koreans Greeting the New Year 2
Rallies to Carry out the New Year's Address by Kim Jong-un 3

COVER STORY

U.N. SANCTIONS AND NORTH KOREA'S THREATS 4
China's first approval of a resolution to expand sanctions on North Korea appears to be an indication that highly significant progress has been made.

SOUTH KOREA'S POLICY REVIEW

DIRECTION OF N.K. POLICY BY SEOUL'S INCOMING GOVERNMENT 9
South Korea's President-elect Park Geun-hye repeatedly vows not to tolerate North Korea's nuclear weapons development.

OPINION

PYONGYANG'S S. KOREA POLICY & PROSPECTS OF INTER-KOREAN TIES 12
Pyongyang has been watching the responses from president-elect Park in regards to the escalated tension in the wake of the recent rocket issue.

LIMIT OF N.K.'S EFFORTS TO STABILIZE ITS REGIME 16
N. Korea may face a more serious crisis if and when it continues to hold fast to its nuclear weapons and fails to take market-oriented reform measures.

TIP ON NORTH KOREA

UNDERGROUND CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS IN N. KOREA 20
It is estimated that there are 200,000-400,000 Christians in N. Korea who risk harsh punishments and as many as 70,000 Christians suffering in prison camps.

TRANSFORMATION OF NORTH KOREA'S 'JANGMADANG' 23
North Korean residents reportedly procure 60 percent of their staple food such as corn and rice and 70 percent of daily necessities at the jangmadang.

INTERVIEW with ICNK

ICNK: SPEARHEAD OF N.KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION 26

DATA ON N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS

PUBLIC EXECUTION PROCESS AND RELATED CRIMINAL LAWS 29

NEWS FOCUS

NORTH KOREA'S POLICY GOALS & TASKS FOR 2013 32
North Korea Striving to Idolize Its Leader Kim Jong-un on His Birthday 36

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Internal Affairs / External Affairs / Inter-Korean Relations 38

STUDIES By Cheong Seong-chang, Ph.D.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PUSHING AHEAD WITH A POLICY FOR REFORMS AND AN OPENING-UP BY THE KIM JONG-UN REGIME 48

FOREIGN TIPS 58

PEOPLE & CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW 60

COVER PHOTO : The Chinese representative to the United Nations, Li Baodong (center), votes during a U.N. Security Council meeting at the U.N. headquarters in New York on Jan. 22 to condemn North Korea's long-range rocket launch on Dec. 12. (Xinhua-Yonhap Photo)

Various Scenes of North Koreans Greeting the New Year



- 1 A group of North Korean flags are displayed on the streets of Pyongyang.
- 2 North Korean citizens and military personnel pay tribute to the statues of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il on New Year's Day.
- 3 A ceremony for group running takes place at Kim Il-sung Square on the occasion of the first sports day this year.
- 4 N. Korean government employees participate in the first Friday workday this year to assist the country's economic development.

Rallies to Carry out the New Year's Address by Kim Jong-un



- 5 A propaganda poster for the construction of a thriving nation in 2013.
- 6 A mass rally is held in Pyongyang to implement the New Year's tasks.
- 7 Youth and students resolve to carry out the main tasks for the New Year during a mass rally.
- 8 Women workers gather at a Pyongyang square to support the New Year's address by Kim Jong-un.

U.N. SANCTIONS AND NORTH KOREA'S THREATS

China's first approval of a resolution to expand sanctions on North Korea appears to be an indication that highly significant progress has been made.

■ By Lee Kwang-ho

Tensions are heightened to a fever pitch on the Korean Peninsula as North Korea reiterated its nuclear threats in retaliation to the U.N. Security Council's latest resolution against the socialist country, punishing it with tightened sanctions for its December rocket launch. The 15-member United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Jan. 22 unanimously approved a new resolution that added more North Korean individuals and entities to a sanction's list and warned of "significant action" if it carries out more rocket launches or another nuclear test.

North Korea reacted swiftly to the U.N. punishment, warning that the regime would strengthen its defenses including its nuclear weapons program, inflaming concerns that Pyongyang may conduct another atomic test. North Korea took an even tougher stance on Jan. 24, when the North's powerful National Defense Commission threatened that its future rocket and nuclear tests may directly target the United States.

UNSC's New Resolution against North Korea

The U.N. council "demands that the DPRK (North Korea) not proceed with any further launches using ballistic missile technology," according to the resolution. North Korea's rocket launch is internationally considered to have been a test of banned intercontinental ballistic missile technology, although Pyongyang said it was for peaceful scientific purposes to put a satellite into orbit.

Already in place against North Korea is a wide web of bilateral and multilateral sanctions. After Pyongyang's nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009,

Representatives of members of the U.N. Security Council vote during a Security Council meeting in New York on Jan. 22 to condemn North Korea's long-range rocket launch on Dec. 12. (Xinhua-Yonhap Photo)



the council introduced two strongly worded resolutions, 1718 and 1874, respectively. This is the first time since 2006, however, that the council has introduced a resolution against North Korea for a rocket launch. For the two previous launches, the council issued non-binding presidential statements denouncing the acts.

After the latest sanctions were passed, U.S. ambassador Susan Rice said the resolution was a sign that North Korea will have “an increasingly steep price” to pay if it chooses to be confrontational with the international community. China’s U.N. envoy Li Baodong called for greater diplomatic efforts to halt North Korea’s weapons program, an issue which is a major concern to neighboring South Korea and Japan.

This time, China supported Resolution 2087 in a remarkable departure from the country’s past. As a result, North Korea faces much stronger sanctions from the international community than under previ-

ous Resolutions 1718 and 1874. The United States and China held weeks of top-level negotiations over the international response before the resolution was submitted to the council for a vote. The U.S. government had sought tough measures against Pyongyang, while China sought to shield its ally from sanctions.

Worries over another nuclear detonation are credible because in the past, rocket launches by the country were invariably followed by nuclear tests. The country launched a long-range rocket in July 2006 and tested its first nuclear device on Oct. 9. In April 2009, it sent up another rocket that was condemned by the international community, followed by its second nuke test on May 25.

The Security Council demanded the North to suspend “all activities related to its ballistic missile program” and resume a moratorium on missile launches. It also demanded that the North “abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear pro-

grams in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.” The council “expresses its determination to take significant action in the event of a further DPRK launch or nuclear test,” added the resolution.

The (North) Korean Committee for Space Technology, the government agency which organized the rocket launch, topped the list of new bodies sanctioned. The list also includes the Bank of East Land, which the resolution said had been used to transfer funds “in a manner that circumvents sanctions” and had dealt with banks in Iran that also face U.N. sanctions.

North Korea’s Harsh Response

(North) Korea Kumryong Trading Corporation, Tosong Technology Trading Corporation, (North) Korea Ryonha Machinery Joint Venture Corporation and Hong Kong-based Leader International were also added to the list. All were accused of procuring equipment to develop North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs or of exporting and dealing in arms.

The four individuals placed on the list were all involved in North Korea’s technology development or bank officials. The resolution deplored the North’s use of “bulk cash” to avoid sanctions. Also subject to the sanctions, which impose travel bans and asset freezes, are Paek Chang-ho, a senior official at the committee’s satellite control center, and three other officials involved in the launch activities, the resolution said.

The name of the North’s space committee emerged in North Korean media before the country’s two rocket launches in April

and December last year, with the organization as a whole reported to have been awarded a medal for its contributions to the successful rocket launch in December. “The Korean Committee for Space Technology orchestrated the DPRK’s launches on 13 April 2012 and 12 December 2012 via the satellite control center and Sohae launch area,” the U.N. resolution said.

“This resolution demonstrates to North Korea that there are unanimous and significant consequences for its flagrant violation” of previous resolutions, Rice told reporters. She said the new measures would “concretely help to impede the growth of North Korea’s WMD (weapons of mass destruction) program and reduce the threat of proliferation.” She said the U.S. wanted “credible negotiations” with Pyongyang but warned the resolution “makes clear that there will be an increasingly steep price to pay if North Korea again chooses confrontation with this council and the international community.”

Shortly after the sanctions were passed, North Korea’s foreign ministry said, “The country will take physical actions to strengthen self-defense military capabilities including nuclear deterrence,” adding that measures can be taken to completely eliminate the source of hostile action and that the North is fully committed to taking a firm stance.

“Due to the U.S.’s worsening policy of hostility toward North Korea, the six-party talks and the joint September 19 statement were rendered null and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was put to an end,” the North’s foreign ministry said.

“There will be no more discussion over denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in the future although there will be talks for securing peace and security in the peninsula,” according to the statement.

The ministry claimed “the UNSC resolution is a wanton violation of the inviolable sovereignty of the DPRK (North Korea),” and aims to ban the peaceful launching of satellite-carrying rockets into space. Pyongyang claimed the 15-nation Security Council is a marionette of the United States. The resolution is the fifth to be slapped on the North for its rocket and nuclear programs since May 1993.

China’s Approval

On Jan. 24, North Korea’s National Defense Commission again denounced the U.N. sanctions, saying its future rocket and nuclear tests may directly target the United States. “We do not hide that a variety of satellites and long-range rockets which will be launched by the DPRK one after another and a nuclear test of higher level which will be carried out by it in the upcoming all-out action, a new phase of the anti-U.S. struggle that has lasted century after century, will target against the U.S., the sworn enemy of the Korean people.” The North’s defense commission, the most powerful decision-making organization in the socialist country, said it defies all U.N. sanctions, calling them unlawful and illegitimate.

The North’s comments can be interpreted as a sign that Pyongyang may engage in another nuclear test that could trigger harsher responses from the international community. Pyongyang’s threat of “physi-

cal actions” will fuel speculation that Pyongyang is preparing to carry out what would be its third test of a nuclear device.

China’s ambassador Li said that despite his country’s support for the resolution, the Council had to be “prudent, measured, proportionate, and conducive to peace and stability.” He told reporters there had to be new efforts to start “the diplomatic track and avoid the escalation of tension.” China has been trying to revive the six-party talks on the North’s nuclear program. But North Korea showed displeasure with China’s approval of the U.N. sanctions..

China’s first approval in four years of a resolution to expand sanctions on the socialist country appears to be an indication that highly significant progress has been made. China had been reportedly in favor of a less powerful “presidential statement,” apparently conscious of the serious impact on its neighbor. But the council’s veto-wielding permanent member changed its position at the last moment in what appeared to be a carefully-calculated move to clarify its firm opposition to the North’s fresh atomic test.

Seoul diplomats said a vote from China, the North’s last-remaining key ally, in favor of sanctions against Pyongyang was a blow to the North Korean regime of Kim Jong-un. China has been traditionally reluctant to push North Korea too hard, apparently mindful of the serious impact it might have on the communist neighbor’s politics and economy.

China’s next President Xi Jinping expressed his opposition to North Korea developing nuclear weapons and any other weapons of mass destruction, a South

Korean special envoy said on Jan. 23. "It is China's consistent position that denuclearization and prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are essential conditions for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula," Xi was quoted by South Korean special envoy Kim Moo-sung as saying.

Kim said his delegation told Xi that South Korea's next government will continue humanitarian aid to the North while leaving open the window for dialogue and cooperation, though it will respond sternly to any North Korean provocations. Xi welcomed the position, Kim said. The four-member delegation traveled to Beijing in late January, holding meetings with top Chinese officials.

Possible Measures by N. Korea

The South Korean government immediately hailed the U.N. move. "The government welcomes the adoption of Resolution 2087 strengthening sanctions on North Korea for its long-range rocket launch in December 2012," Foreign Ministry spokesman Cho Tai-young said in a statement. He urged Pyongyang to abide by the resolution by halting all of its nuclear and missile programs. "North Korea will have to take note of (the U.N. council's) declaration that it will take significant action in case of additional provocations," Cho said. South Korea's Ministry of Unification expressed deep regret over Pyongyang's reaction.

Observers in Seoul said the "ball is now in Pyongyang's court" and depending on what action it takes, international relations

will be affected. "What is important is what actions are to be taken by the North," said Yun Duk-min, a professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy. Others speculated that in the aftermath of the U.N. resolution, talks on sanctions will be at the top of agendas for policymakers. They said if Pyongyang takes additional measures and provoke the outside world, it could effectively cause a reassessment of policies by the incoming Park Geun-hye government in South Korea and the Barack Obama administration.

Park, who takes office as the country's first female president on Feb. 25, has called for dialogue with the North, yet warned she will not tolerate additional provocations by the socialist country. The transition team of South Korea's incoming President Park on Jan. 23 urged North Korea not to conduct a nuclear test or take any other steps to aggravate tensions. She has pledged more engagement with North Korea than her predecessor, but made it clear that she won't reinstate major economic projects with the North unless Pyongyang abandons its missile and nuclear programs.

South Korean officials have warned that Pyongyang could conduct a nuclear test at any time. Moreover, Seoul and Washington may be moving to impose sanctions independent of the resolution calling for actions to be taken against North Korea's financial sector and maritime activities. Still, the key question remains whether it will be fully implemented, given China's practice of refusing to push its socialist neighbor too hard. (Yonhap News)

DIRECTION OF N.K. POLICY BY SEOUL'S INCOMING GOVERNMENT

South Korea's President-elect Park Geun-hye repeatedly vows not to tolerate North Korea's nuclear weapons development.

■ By Kim Tae-shik

The incoming government of South Korea's President-elect Park Geun-hye will likely take a firm stand against North Korea's nuclear weapons development, while leaving the door open for dialogue with North Korea and beginning the trust-building process.

Park has expressed her resolve to not tolerate North Korea's nuclear weapons development and to strengthen Seoul's security and national defense capabilities on a number of occasions. The basic direction of Park's North Korea policy is to forge trust between the two Koreas but it relies upon the condition that North Korea's provocative actions and nuclear development should be controlled.

Park made her points in recent meetings with diplomats from the United States, China, Britain and France. In her meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun on Jan. 10, Park made it clear that North Korea's nuclear weapons development cannot be tolerated, but she will leave the door open for dialogue and humanitarian aid to the communist nation, a spokesperson said.

Consistent and Clear Message

Park also stressed that South Korea, China and other members of the international community should send a "consistent and clear message" to North Korea so as to make Pyongyang become a responsible member of the community, spokeswoman Cho Yoon-sun said.

In her latest meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell on Jan. 16, Park reiterated that Pyongyang's nuclear development is intolerable and that South Korea will respond firmly to any

provocations by the communist nation. Still, Park said she will “leave open the window for dialogue, including humanitarian assistance,” according to Cho. The spokeswoman added that Park said she will closely consult with the U.S. on North Korea issues.

Park also sought closer cooperation on the North Korean issue in a series of meetings with ambassadors from European countries. She said on Jan. 14 she will work closely with Britain and France, especially in dealing with North Korea, as she met with the top envoys from the permanent member nations of the U.N. Security Council.

“The issue of North Korea is very important in having peace take root not only on the Korean Peninsula, but also in the entire Northeast Asian region,” Park said during a meeting with French Ambassador Jerome Pasquier in her office in downtown Seoul. “I hope (the two countries) will cooperate more closely at the Security Council to help North Korea make the right choice and change.”

Park stressed that it is difficult for a country to develop itself unless it works with the international community as a responsible member, and she hopes South Korea and France will cooperate closely to help Pyongyang move in that direction. Starting this year, South Korea has been serving a two-year term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. France is one of the five veto-holding permanent members, along with the United States, Britain, China and Russia.

In a separate meeting with British Ambassador Scott Wightman, Park said that South Korea and Britain have a lot to work on and discuss with each other in carrying out her campaign pledge to forge trust on the divided Korean Peninsula. Park made the remark after the British envoy said that his country has undertaken dialogue with North Korea through its embassy in Pyongyang about the standoff over its nuclear programs and its human rights conditions.

Key Prerequisites for Friendly Environment

In her meeting with EU Ambassador Tomasz Kozlowski on Jan. 15 Park also expressed hope for EU's cooperation in resolving the North Korean issue. “I hope to see the EU play a role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue and establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula,” she said, adding that the EU's experience at achieving integration could be applied to bring peace to the two Koreas as well as to the surrounding region.

In a meeting with the power transition committee's diplomacy, national defense and unification panel on Jan. 16, the unification ministry said that if there is improvement in relations and if headway is made on resolving the communist country's nuclear ambitions, Seoul can begin meaningful economic cooperation. Such cooperation could involve international participation, giving greater substance to partnerships and will benefit the North, the ministry in charge of conducting talks with Pyongyang and formulating inter-Korean policies said.

Park, who takes office on Feb. 25 as the country's first female president, has said building confidence on the Korean Peninsula is one of her top policy goals in bringing about peace

South Korea's incoming President Park Geun-hye shakes hands with the U.S. delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell (far right) during a meeting at Park's office in Seoul on Jan. 16. (Yonhap Photo)



and prosperity in the region along with ending Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. The ministry said that in order for cross-border improvements to be made, it called for both top-down and bottom-up approaches in official and unofficial negotiations.

The unification ministry, however, said that instead of demanding talks, it emphasized the need to create an environment for constructive dialogue to take place. It cited that "real" change in the North is one of the key prerequisites to building a friendly environment. Reflecting the need for a gradual improvement in ties based on mutual confidence, the ministry elaborated on the current ban on trade and exchange that has been in place on May 24, 2010 following the sinking of a South Korean naval vessel in the Yellow Sea in March 2010.

Ministry sources involved in the reporting process to the transition team said that some action must be taken on the ban that prohibits most exchanges with the North, but it pointed out the need for "responsible" action on the part of Pyongyang. It, moreover, left what actions should be taken in the future up to the new government.

The incumbent Lee Myung-bak administration and the president-elect have called on the North to apologize for the loss of South Korean lives and pledge not to engage in such activities in the future.

Related to the report made by the ministry, Yun Byung-se, a transition committee senior member, said everything in relation to the ban is being looked at from a broad perspective.

He said that the ministry's reporting was centered mostly on elaborating on the present conditions of South-North Korea relations that can be used as a foundation for the new administration's policies toward the North.

Besides such views, the transition team and the ministry examined the need to conduct policies in a consistent manner, along with efforts to move forward on reunions for families separated during the Korean War (1950-53) and efforts to provide humanitarian assistance. (Yonhap News)

PYONGYANG'S S. KOREA POLICY & PROSPECTS OF INTER-KOREAN TIES

Pyongyang has been watching the responses from president-elect Park in regards to the escalated tension in the wake of the recent rocket issue.

■ By Sung, Ki-Young *Research Professor, Yonsei Institute for North Korean Studies in Seoul, Korea*

From the beginning of 2013, quite a few positive signals were delivered from the North in anticipation of a restored relationship between the two Koreas. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un emphasized improved inter-Korean ties in a New Year's address released verbally for the first time since his grandfather's address 19 years ago. In this televised speech, Kim Jong-un proposed to dissolve confrontation between the two Koreas. Instead of making propaganda for the goal of attaining the military-first policy, Kim put the nation's foremost priority on the resolution of the North Korea's chronic economic problems.

The core message of Kim Jong-un's New Year's speech contrasts well with the previous years' New Year's Joint Editorial of North Korea. They showed a series of typical patterns by claiming the withdrawal of the U.S. troops (2012), the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (2011), and the construction of a peace regime on the Peninsula (2010) and so on. However, those traditional critical elements were not mentioned in the 2013 New Year's speech by the young leader.

In a similar vein, at the New Year's celebration musical concert presided by Kim Jong-un, Pyongyang explicitly expressed their high hopes for a better relationship with Seoul by displaying the photo of the Kim Dae-jung - Kim Jong-il summit talks in 2000 on the main screen of the stage. Bill Richardson, former New Mexico governor of the United States, additionally brought about an increased hope of Pyongyang's changed attitude towards the new government by reporting that the North Koreans were encouraged by president-elect Park Geun-hye's recent comments which implied improved inter-Korean relations.

Wait-and-See Approaches

However, it is still questionable that North Korea will demonstrate full confidence and trust in the Park Geun-hye initiative. Pyongyang continuously stresses action-based approaches when assessing the North Korean policies from South Korean presidential candidates. The *Choson Sinbo*, published by Japan's pro-North Korea General Association of Korean Residents, wrote, "Kim Jong-un's New

Year's warning message is intended to urge Park to make a bold policy shift, as she has insisted on the differentiation between herself and Lee Myung-bak". The North also imposes pressure on the new South Korean government to fully implement the June 15 and Oct. 4 joint declarations which Lee was not willing to observe. In sum, Pyongyang is taking a wait-and-see approach.

Another factor that makes the prospect of inter-Korean relations under the new leadership unstable is the new round of sanction programs adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in response to the launch of the Unha-3 rocket last December. The repetitive pattern of tit-for-tat surrounding Pyongyang's provocation is highly likely to lead to the third round of nuclear test in the Punggye-ri site, where the North is believed to be prepared for the detonation of a nuclear device, depending on the top leader's decision.

It is also worth noting that the North's past provocations were made in highly sensitive political moments. Pyongyang carried out the first nuclear test back in 2002 just before the South Korean presidential election, which imposed an annoying and burdensome task upon the then president-elect Roh Moo-hyun. Another provocation in the form of a long-range rocket launch, was attempted immediately before Obama's historical 'nuclear-free world' speech in Prague in his first year in office. The result was a tough response from Obama, departing from his election pledge of direct dialogue with Pyongyang. These episodes imply that the North tried to verify the willingness of engagement of the U.S. and the South by such methods,

particularly during the power transition periods of its counterparts.

On the other hand, *Choson Sinbo* emphasized that a dialogue channel to assure peace and stability – not denuclearization – on this region was still open, implicitly urging its Southern neighbor not to take 'additional sanctions' with Washington. Such a 'divide and tackle' strategy of nuclear development and inter-Korean relations implies that Pyongyang still believed they could achieve both economic gain and nuclear possession in this game by adopting the 'dual-track approach'.

Kim Jong-un's Leadership

The Kim Jong-un leadership has wished to exhibit confidence and power consolidation since its succession about a year ago through the defiant measures against heavy sanctions by the international community. Past experiences show that more pressure, generally speaking, is likely to lead to bringing a higher level of alert in the North Korean society without causing critical damage to the economic sources of the North's elite. This is a manifestation of the so-called 'rally around the flag effect' in a closed regime. Hence it remains to be seen whether and how much the UNSC sanctions will essentially prevent the provocative regime from carrying out the harsher defiant actions.

A rather interesting point is the response of China's next president Xi Jinping to the North's rocket launch and the subsequent belligerent remarks towards the regional players. In the meeting with South Korean presidential-elect Park's special envoy, Xi

Jinping expressed unequivocal opposition to the North's actions to develop nuclear power and any other means for mass destruction. It appears that he went a step forward in giving a warning sign to Pyongyang, despite the typical pattern of China's diplomatic rhetoric stressing 'calm and moderate posture of all the parties concerned' whenever they had previously seen the North's provocation. It is also believed that Jang Song-thaek's visit to China back in August 2012 demonstrated that the North still has many things to do to satisfy Chinese investors.

Moreover, given the North's ambitious plan recently unveiled to invite external investment in the Rason area and beyond, it will also be essential to capitalize the potential resources from its Southern neighbor.

In an attempt to make better use of the Southern resources by improving ties with the South, Pyongyang has been carefully watching the responses from president-elect Park in regards to the escalated tension in the wake of the recent rocket and nuclear issues.

Park's North Korea policy can be summed up in two words - 'trust' and 'alignment'. Through what she called 'the Korean Peninsula Trust Process', she proposed a step-by-step trust-building approach between the two Koreas before resuming substantial cooperation and reconciliation projects. To this end, she emphasized respect for all of the inter-Korean agreements ranging from the 'July 4 Joint Declaration in 1972' to the inter-Korean summit agreements made by Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun.

Such election pledges seemed to suggest she would depart from her predecessor's approach in which Lee was fairly reluctant to implement the inter-Korean summit agreements made by the two former progressive presidents. But a closer look at Park's pledges do not necessarily show that her government is fully ready to implement the existing agreements. Rather, it assumes that what she confirmed was to respect 'the spirit of peace and mutual respect' of the existing agreements, not the detailed provisions of them. In that sense, emphasizing trust in real politics is too volatile. Many observers are doubtful when and under which conditions Park's trust process can be kicked-off.

Balanced Alignment

Park also accentuated a balanced alignment between negotiation and deterrence; in other words, military security and economic exchanges, taking the current reality of inter-Korean relations into account. In the wake of the anticipated rounds of additional tests in the near future and the continued nuclear confrontation, the element of deterrence will undoubtedly be strengthened.

The short-term prospect of inter-Korean relations, therefore, will depend on Pyongyang's reactions to the UNSC sanctions. It is unavoidable for the two Koreas to be dominated by the nuclear dynamics on the Peninsula for the time being. In this case, it will not be easy to find a succinct time to restart inter-Korean exchanges when the relationship between the two countries is still thawing.

The short-term prospect of inter-Korean relations, therefore, will depend on Pyongyang's reactions to the UNSC sanctions. It is unavoidable for the two Koreas to be dominated by the nuclear dynamics on the Peninsula for the time being.

Nevertheless, it is too early to abandon hope for the improvement of relations between the South and the North. Economic cooperation and exchanges will be the most critical area between the two Koreas in building up improved relations and exchanges.

Kim Jong-un, since taking North Korean leadership this time last year, has been consistent in emphasizing the importance of the moribund regime's economic recovery by reviving the light-industry and agricultural sector.

Likewise, Park pointed out the inter-Korean trust can grow from the soil of continued exchanges and from joint projects across the border. For this purpose, she pledged to install liaison offices both in Seoul and Pyongyang to facilitate economic and social exchanges between the two countries.

The North Korean authority tended to refrain from directly condemning Park during her election campaigns in an attempt to express hope of mending stalled inter-Korean relations. It is believed that Pyongyang desires to build up a sincere, new partnership with Park. Park also echoed the North's less antagonistic voice by confirming she would pursue unconditional dialogues with North Korean coun-

terparts.

Moreover, Park is one of the very few South Korean politicians who has met with Kim Jong-il. Back in 2002, she had a meeting with the late leader as a board member of the Europe-Korean Foundation, and produced an agreement about inter-Korean family reunion events, among other issues. In the middle of the dialogue, Kim reportedly showed great interest in South Korean economic development strategy led by her father Park Chung-hee.

Given the past practice of North Korean authorities offering visitors of their top leader exceptional cordiality and privileged treatment, Park's record of reception by Kim will also provide North Korean negotiators with different attitudes from their treatment of outgoing President Lee.

In sum, the leadership of Kim Jong-un needs to fulfill a certain level of economic achievement if it will succeed in mending deadlocked inter-Korean relations. The new government in the South is also prepared to restart economic and socio-cultural exchange programs. But the imminent nuclear confrontation provides a rather cloudy picture, making it difficult to predict the short-term prospect of inter-Korean relations under the Kim Jong-un leadership. (Yonhap News)

LIMIT OF N.K.'S EFFORTS TO STABILIZE ITS REGIME

N. Korea may face a more serious crisis if and when it continues to hold fast to its nuclear weapons and fails to take market-oriented reform measures.

■ By Oh Gyeong-seob *Research Fellow at the Sejong Institute in Seongnam, south of Seoul, Korea*

North Korea's adverse environment in 2013, within and outside, will be a serious challenge to the North Korean regime. Internally, the regime is required to maintain the loyalty of its elite and settle the chronic economic crisis should it promote the authority of its young leader Kim Jong-un, who came to power just a year earlier. This year, the North Korean regime is likely to establish and implement internal and external policies aimed at promoting its stability while maintaining its keynote policies from 2012.

North Korea's most important task this year is to stabilize the Kim Jong-un regime and settle the chronic economic crisis. For this reason, the new North Korean regime will likely continue to maintain its strategy for stabilizing the regime that was adopted upon its inauguration at the turn of last year. The young leader, Kim Jong-un, has established a transitional ruling system as a way to supplement his poor political background and ruling capability.

The transitional system comprises Kim Kyong-hui and Jang Song-thaek who help the young leader maintain a firm grip on

the whole country while also influencing him across the board in their capacity as his guardians. The transitional system also includes the heads of security-related offices in the Party and the army, including Choe Ryong-hae, chief of the General Political Bureau of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA), an organization that is responsible for monitoring the ideological behavior of all servicemen and servicewomen.

Transitional Ruling system

The senior officers include Kim Won-hong, minister of state security; Ri Myong-su, minister of people's security; and Jo Kyong-chol, commander of the KPA Security Command. They assist the young leader to help promote his authority and maintain a firm grip on the country with a greater sense of power and responsibility. This transitional system will likely last one or two years until Kim Jong-un can stand on his own feet in his capacity as an authoritative ruler of the North.

The North Korean regime will likely

continue to give traditional physical incentives to the political elite as an effort to maintain their loyalty to the leader, while oppressing dissidents and opponents, a necessary method of rule in order for Kim to remain in control.

The incentives for the elite comprise of extraordinary food, clothing and shelter, plus cash and luxury goods. The regime also offers access to special medical services as well as the chance for the children of the elite to have social and economic security. These indirect incentives tacitly secure their illegal behavior aimed at accumulating wealth and utilizing their powerful positions.

The North's imports of luxury goods in 2012 increased as much as 70 percent over the preceding year when the senior Kim was in charge. The Kim Jong-un regime will likely continue to increase the import of luxury goods for their powerful elite and tacitly approve their unlawful accumulation of wealth.

The North Korean regime will undoubtedly continue to oppress dissidents, opponents and its own citizens who express dissatisfaction about the leadership. Some senior officials in key offices, whose loyalty was in doubt, have been already dismissed or demoted. As many as 32 such officials have been reportedly purged or dismissed since September 2010 when the young Kim was declared as successor-designate in the third conference of the Worker's Party of Korea (WPK). Among the ill-fated senior officials who were purged or dismissed are Ryu Kyong, former vice minister of state security; Ju Sang-song, former minister of people's security; and U Tong-chuk, who

had served as the first vice minister of state security. In the course of this development, Ri Yong-ho, former chief of the General Political Bureau, was also purged while two former ministers of people's armed forces, Kim Yong-chun and Kim Jong-gak, were replaced by other people.

The new North Korean regime has concentrated its efforts on the complete control of the army. It recovered the army's economic privilege, merging trading companies under the army's control into Taesong Trading Corp. under the umbrella of the WPK Central Committee, while tightening its control over the army at the same time. Choe Ryong-hae, head of the General Political Bureau, has played a leading role for that job.

Intensifying of Social Control

And for the first time in the North's history, the new North Korean regime has replaced six of nine commanders of army corps with others at one time, taken personnel actions regarding various other commanders of the army. The regime also demoted two vice marshals, Choe Ryong-hae and Hyon Yong-chol – who served as chief of the General Staff – to generals.

Moreover, the regime enforced not only the top brass of the army but all commanders on the front line to pledge their loyalty to the young leader, Kim Jong-un. The North Korean regime will likely take personnel actions affecting top- and middle-class officials in the security-related offices while continuing its efforts for the complete control of the army.

In addition, the North Korean regime

will most likely intensify social control in an effort to promote its authority and guarantee its survival. Social cracks and factors threatening the North's socialist system have continually increased in recent decades because of the chronic economic crisis and the ever-spreading market functions in the country. There came some laxity in social control in the North due to the collapse of its command economy combined with citizens' further independent and objective thinking, which was caused by an increase in information inflow into the isolated North.

In an effort to prevent the inflow of capitalist culture, the North Korean authorities have intensified their crackdown on CDs and DVDs carrying South Korean dramas and tightened control over North Korean citizens living in the areas bordering China. And in a move to tighten its control over its citizens, North Korea has held meetings of Ministry of People's Security branch chiefs, judicial officials, plus prosecutors and judges, in series late last year. Most likely, the North Korean regime will continue to intensify its social control this year as well as monitor of citizens' ideological behavior in a move to prevent social cracks and remove factors threatening its socialist system.

Terminating the decades-old economic crisis is the most urgent task for the Kim Jong-un regime. Resolving the economic crisis is critical because an economic crisis in a country usually weakens the justification of its political regime and gives rise to factors threatening the regime, such as laxity in social control, the inflow of capitalist ideologies and culture and independent

thinking among citizens.

The North Korean regime attempted to introduce a new economic management system last year under the control of the Cabinet so North Korean citizens would not have to "tighten their belts again" but would instead be able to "enjoy the wealth and prosperity of socialism as much as they like." But the North's efforts have yet to pay off.

Political Justification

On the contrary, the situation facing the North Korean economy has worsened. For instance, the prices of rice, which serves as a prime indicator for people's living conditions, rose from 6,400 to 6,800 won per kg, and the foreign exchange rate from 7,800 won to 8,450 won per the U.S. dollar at the end of last year, up 200-300 percent from early last year.

With goals to turn the North into a Kangsong Taeguk, or a powerful and prosperous country, and improve the standard of living this year, the North Korean regime will encourage its citizens to exert their best efforts for normalizing production or operation in the prime economic sectors of power.

There is the possibility that the North will follow the so-called "June 28 reform measures" this year, which call for economic management under the initiative of the Cabinet and provide farmers and laborers with more incentives. With its partial reform measures, however, the new North Korean leadership may repeat the mistakes of its predecessors regarding the July 1, 2002 reform steps and the redenomination

of North's bank notes in November 2009. This may occur because the command economy will inevitably distort functions of the market if and when they introduce the market functions within the framework of its command economy without pushing ahead with a market-oriented reform, which would allow private ownership and free competition, as shown in the course of economic reforms in other socialist countries.

Possibilities are high this year that North Korea will actively push ahead with its closer economic cooperation with China and resume talks with South Korea in an effort to attract more investments in its special economic zones and ease its economic difficulties. Actually, the North has expanded economic cooperation with China, and its economic dependence on the neighboring ally continued to increase last year.

The North has earned foreign currency through the development of its underground natural resources such as coal and iron ore, jointly with China, and their exports mainly to the neighboring country. Chinese investment in the North has increased, following more active economic cooperation between the two countries. While the North leased the Rason port to China and launched the projects for the special zones on the islets of Hwanggumphyong and Wiwha, the two countries began joint projects to build a bridge over the Yalu River in December 2010, develop the Hwanggumphyong Islet in June 2011 and expand the roads linking Rason and Hunchun in June 2012. In other words, China has served as the North's financial

backer. This year, North Korea will likely expand the province of its economic cooperation with China and exert efforts to improve inter-Korean relations in a move to end its economic crisis.

To summarize, the adverse situation facing North Korea will likely worsen this year because the socialist country will settle its economic crisis within the framework of its command economy while continuing to develop nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. The North Korean regime will undoubtedly survive for some time to come – despite the adverse environment – because of the strong cohesive power of its political elite.

The North Korean regime may face a more serious crisis if and when it continues to hold fast to its nuclear weapons and fails to take market-oriented reform measures. In this case, its failure in settling the crisis will be followed by its weakening social control, an increase in the inflow of foreign information, a rise in dissent from its citizens and widening social cracks. Under these undesirable developments, possibilities are high that the North Korean regime will behave according to a political theory for survival prevalent in all dictatorial regimes. The Kim Jong-un regime will be at a crossroads this year to determine whether it will continue to function as a regime for a dictator or evolve into a regime for its citizens. (Yonhap News)

(The original Korean version of this article is carried in the January 2013 edition of *Current Issues and Policy*, a journal published by the Sejong Institute in South Korea.)

UNDERGROUND CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS IN N. KOREA

It is estimated that there are 200,000-400,000 Christians in N. Korea who risk harsh punishments and as many as 70,000 Christians suffering in prison camps.

South Koreans got a rare glimpse of underground churches in North Korea when earlier this year a local television network aired scenes of Christians secretly practicing their beliefs despite the socialist country's strict ban on all religion. TV Chosun, the television arm of the conservative daily *Chosun Ilbo* in Seoul, released the video clips shot in 2007. A local Christian missionary group named 'Seoul USA' supplied the video to the television network. It was the first time a video showing worship services in North Korea had been broadcast by a television network in the South.

The 65-minute video recorded in Chongjin, North Hamyong Province, shows two men and a woman, presumed to be related, conducting a worship service in a small room about 20 square meters. The three believers kneel down, read the Bible, sing hymns and offer prayers in hushed voices.

Video Showing Worship Services

According to Seoul USA, the video was not released until five years after it was recorded because all the people in the video are now believed to be dead. The mission initially did not release the video for fear it could lead to the persecution of the people in the video. Not long after the video was shot, the people in it were arrested and believed to have been imprisoned or executed, said Hyun Sook Foley, head of the organization.

Officially, North Korea says it guarantees the freedom of religion. The North Korean authorities operate a showcase church and a

Catholic cathedral in the capital city of Pyongyang. In reality, those engaged in North Korea missions say, believers suffer the harshest treatment because religion goes against the worship of its leaders, especially the founder Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il.

Pastor Kim Hee-tae, head of a mission for North Korea, said on a talk show on TV Chosun that about 20,000 North Koreans regularly attend secret worship services. Christians are subject to harsh persecution once they are arrested. The regime has said religion is tantamount to a cancer for revolution and doles out tough punishment. Having Christian beliefs automatically means one opposes the leadership of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.

Kim said in the past, North Korean Christians were sent to labor camps or executed. These days, he claimed, the regime no longer sends Christians to labor camps, but instead uses them as living targets to train special commandos, just as the Japanese colonial rulers used war prisoners as subjects for various experiments in the so-called Unit 731 in Manchuria.

The reason North Korean Christians face such harsh punishment is because they are the only force in the country that is resisting the communist system. North Korea regards Christians as impure elements that threaten stability, leading the regime to hunt, arrest and execute believers, the pastor said.

North Korea's persecution of Christians shows no sign of abating under the leadership of Kim Jong-un, a young man known to have a western education, an international religious organization said on Jan. 8. "North Korea is ranked No. 1 on the top 50 list of the worst persecutors of Christians for the 11th straight year," Open Doors said, publishing what it calls the 2013 World Watch List.

North Korea's Persecution of Christians

The group is an international Christian ministry that serves persecuted believers. It releases annual rankings of the 50 worst nations for Christians on the basis of information collected through "field operations" and also opinions by external experts. "In North Korea, the main persecution dynamics are Communist operation and dictatorial paranoia," it said.

The regime has long cultivated worship cults for late leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. "It's not getting better," Ron Boyd-MacMillan, chief strategy officer for Open Doors, said at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington. "The intense persecution has continued under new leader Kim Jong-un." Kim Jong-un took power in late 2011 following the death of his father Kim Jong-il.

It is estimated that there are 200,000-400,000 Christians in North Korea, Boyd-MacMillan said. As many as 70,000 Christians suffer in prison camps, he added.

Meanwhile, two North Korean Christians either died or were executed in the past two months, Jerry Dykstra, a spokesman for Open Doors, said on Jan 18. Dykstra told the Radio Free Asia (RFA) that the organizations confirmed from multiple sources in China and North Korea that two Christians had died, although he declined to reveal the exact regions where

the deaths occurred due to security reasons.

Quoting another Open Doors source, RFA reported that one of the two was shot dead by a North Korean guard near the border with China on his way to attend a Bible study in China. Another victim died of starvation and torture at a North Korean prison camp, it said. The latter studied the Bible for eight months in China and returned to North Korea, where he was discovered as a Christian and sent to the camp.

The number of underground churches has grown sharply in North Korea since the mid-1990s and that his group alone has had contact with about 267 underground churches each comprising three to four believers, according to Steve Kim, head of the 318 Partners Mission Foundation based in the United States. His group estimates there are currently more than 10,000 underground home churches in North Korea with anywhere from 100,000 to 400,000 believers.

Cornerstone Ministries International, another mission working with North Korean Christians, said a total of 15,657 Christians were executed in North Korea between 1953 and 2006. The figure breaks down to 10,987 between 1953 and 1972, 299 between 1972 and 1988, 741 between 1988 and 1995, and 3,720 between 1995 and 2006. The missionary estimates the number of Christian believers in North Korea at 300,000 with about 1,200 underground churches in operation.

The TV Chosun report also revealed the route through which Christian religious materials, including the Bible, are delivered to the hands of North Korean believers. Missionary materials are delivered via cross-border peddlers hired by South Korean or international missions. The peddlers based in China deliver South Korean drama videos downloaded on USB drives, drugs, Chinese currency and so forth.

Religious Materials Loaded onto USB Drives

Religious works like the Bible are loaded onto the USB drives along with some tips for North Koreans who may plan to defect. In return, video clips taken in North Korea are given to the peddlers to take back with them. The video clips taken in North Korea also include recordings of North Korean people's daily lives, like wedding ceremonies, in addition to the Christians' worship videos.

The popularity of South Korean dramas is so high in North Korea that it is easy to send missionary materials along with the drama videos to North Koreans, Pastor Kim Hee-tae said. Many foreign missionaries are working in North Korea's Rajin-Sonbong region, which allows foreigners to enter without entry visas. These foreign missionaries are contacting North Korean people via secret organizations in the country, he added.

As for the motivation behind releasing the video, he said the plight of Christians in North Korea is so urgent that international society should know about the reality in North Korea. If the international community joins the effort to press the North Korean authorities to stop persecution of Christianity, North Korea may adopt better policies, he hoped. (Yonhap News)

TRANSFORMATION OF NORTH KOREA'S 'JANGMADANG'

North Korean residents reportedly procure 60 percent of their staple food such as corn and rice and 70 percent of daily necessities at the jangmadang.

Much to the chagrin of the North Korean regime, community markets have always played a role in daily life for most average people. Known as “jangmadang,” these markets have been tolerated to varying degrees over the years, but are recently taking on new importance as the regime tries to jumpstart its moribund economy and provide basic necessities for its roughly 24 million people.

The jangmadang have grown into the general markets of the socialist country, reportedly playing a key role in distributing basic goods to the public since the North’s regime introduced new measures in July 2002 to facilitate more economic activity. Private economic activities, once heavily sanctioned, are vigorously conducted in the markets where people can haggle over prices. These markets usually take on one of two forms: a farmers’ market usually called “jangmadang” or a black market where the residents trade such staples as rice and corn that is not officially recognized by the North Korean authorities.

Important Role of Farmers’ Markets

Initially, the North Korean regime allowed the farmers’ markets to supply supplementary goods and necessities for farmers, workers and other ordinary people. In the past, the North regarded the farmers’ market as an interim system, a necessary procedure until the country could completely transform into a socialist state. Nevertheless, the farmers’ markets have continued to play an important role in the distribution of agricultural produce and various kinds of daily necessities, thus greatly affecting the livelihood of normal North Koreans.

Until the early 1990s, North Korea periodically alternated between strengthening and softening state control over the farmers' markets that it considered to be a supplementary element in maintaining national distribution networks led by state-run stores. The name for the markets, as well as their functions, has gradually evolved since the liberation and division of the Korean Peninsula.

The jangmadang became known to the outside in the 1990s when the country's economy rapidly deteriorated following the collapse of the Soviet Union and East European block and the subsequent severe famine period called "Arduous March" in the 1990s. During this period, the farmers' markets grew into places where almost all items were available, including grain and industrial products, which the regime had previously forbidden.

Coupled with the breakdown of the public distribution system in the wake of the famine, markets became the principal means of subsistence among North Koreans. Starving people turned to private markets to make up for shortages of food and basic necessities, and the regime, unable to adequately feed them, tolerated the spread of markets.

The critical momentum for the expansion of private markets came with the July 1, 2002 reform package that gave markets official status, while easing the country's heavily centralized policymaking process and introducing some market-oriented and competition elements. But restrictions on markets and private economic activities followed the reform measures years later, attempting to shut down the markets in a bid to reassert the primacy of the central distribution system.

Transactions at the Jangmadang

To address public grievances about shortages caused by market crackdowns, the regime sought to import more consumer goods from China, but this measure was short-lived due to fiscal restraints. As a result, people once again flocked to markets and trade was reactivated. In March 2003, the regime created general markets known as "jonghap sijang" and undertook economic and corporate reforms, bringing about significant changes in market economic activities by enterprises and individuals. The North Korean authorities thereafter built market buildings and leased stalls and booths there to public entities and individuals.

Since 2006, the regime began trying to reestablish state control over the sprawling markets. The Workers' Party issued a decree in October 2007 calling the markets a den of non-socialism that must be abolished. But in January 2009, the government relented and issued a notice that the permanent general markets would revert back to being farmers' markets.

In November 2009, North Korea conducted a currency reform to control inflation, crack down on black market money traders and recoup resources for economic advancement through its command economy. Following the currency reform, food and other daily necessities became scarcer, causing a surge in prices and making people worse off.

Then the regime focused on facilitating supply and distribution of merchandise through markets rather than tracing the origins of what was being sold. Thanks to the loose watch,

the general markets were able to trade a wide range of items ranging from agricultural goods, industrial products, electronic devices, furniture and medical supplies, among others.

But the revitalization of black market transactions did not stop at commodities and services. It has expanded to the financial sector.

Despite the tight regulations of the socialist regime, the farmers' markets have become commercial distribution networks and at the same time even function as black markets for finding daily needs, food and industrial goods. Even U.S. dollars and narcotics are traded in illegally. Unlike state-controlled prices, the transactions between sellers and buyers are made through real market prices. Quite naturally, the market prices are higher than the state prices because of supply shortages.

Initially, the commodity transactions at the jangmadang were limited to vegetables produced in the idle fields of individuals, but since the 1990s, a lot of other goods have begun to be traded. These commodities include homemade produces, imported foreign goods and even those items illegally swiped from state organizations. The trade of corn and rice increased rapidly from around 1995-1996 when the food rationing system was suspended due to the onset of the country's worst-ever famine.

Recent reports have it that the materials sold are becoming diverse, ranging from chicken, leaf tobacco and eggs to clothes, shoes, rice, kimchi and tofu. According to testimonies by North Korean defectors in Seoul, the marketplaces are packed with people and even the stalls are traded for high prices. This means that professional traders and wholesale brokers appear to have become fixtures in the markets.

Trade of Diverse Commercial Items

Another unconfirmed report said North Korean residents procure 60 percent of their staple food such as corn and rice and 70 percent of daily necessities at the jangmadang. Unauthorized goods and commodities usually flow into the markets through private business activities, border smuggling, and by Korean-Chinese peddlers. In many other cases, they come from the state or public organizations and factories through misappropriation or embezzlement. A majority of goods traded at the general markets are considered to have come from China, with North Korean defectors putting estimates at 70 to 80 percent.

Domestic offerings include mundane items such as clothes, soap and shoes as well as stationery items such as pencils, most of which come from households, according to their testimonies. Television sets, refrigerators, audio system and bicycles are popular commodities among consumers. The prices for such goods are often negotiated.

Analysts say average North Koreans' commercial activities will further flourish through the robust functioning of marketplaces. News reports also said the impoverished planned economy is on track to adopt an economic reform in which farmers would be allowed to keep around 30 percent of their harvest, instead of sending their entire yield to the state, as they previously have done. (Yonhap News)

ICNK: SPEARHEAD OF N.KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

■ By Nam Hyun-woo

“**W**hen it comes to the improvement of virtually inaccessible human rights conditions in North Korea, the most urgent and desperate task is to establish an international Commission of Inquiry (COI) in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). In order to achieve this, we are concentrating on our capability to call on the U.N. council to organize the COI at its upcoming session in March.”

Kwon Eun-kyong, a manager at the secretariat of the International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK) stressed the importance of establishing the U.N COI, in a recent interview with *Vantage Point*. ICNK, formed in September 2011, is an alliance of international organizations and individual human rights activists, with the goal of establishing a U.N. COI to investigate North Korea’s crimes against humanity.

The human rights conditions in North Korea have been a matter of common concern in the international community recently. Even today, when people communicate with others freely thanks to the rise of the so-called “mobile revolution,” the citizens of North Korea are living in one of the most repressive and reclusive societies in the world. Especially for those 200,000 people in the vast gulag system for political prisoners, known as “Kwanliso,” free communication with the world and even their basic human dignity are a distant dream.

“In the gulag, prisoners are subjected to backbreaking labor, torture, sexual abuse and severe malnutrition. Men, women and children are forced to labor in dangerous working environments for up to 16 hours per day. They are given meager rations of corn gruel for food and



South Korea's Foreign Ministry's human rights envoy Kim Young-ho speaks about the need to establish a U.N. commission of inquiry into North Korea's human rights at a press conference in Seoul on Jan. 22. (Yonhap Photo)

often eat rats or pick through animal waste for survival,” Jared Genser, a long-time North Korean human rights activist and a legal adviser to ICNK said at a press conference held in Seoul on Jan. 22.

As various media reports and testimonies by North Korean escapees reveal such deplorable human rights conditions in North Korea, the global community has been striving to develop an effective way to tackle this issue. Despite political pressure including the UNHRC's annual resolutions denouncing the North's human rights violations, skepticism is palpable that such pressure has gained few tangible outcomes with the North not having budged an inch so far. Thus, the necessity of a dedicated coalition of NGOs and private activists focused on getting the U.N. to create a concrete commission to investigate crimes against humanity in the North has come to the fore, leading to the establishment of ICNK.

ICNK involves more than 40 international human rights organizations and grassroots activists including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and International Federation for Human Rights. Within a 15-month period, it now stands as an umbrella coalition of over 50 advocacy organizations and activists. Seven commissioners coordinate the member organizations to decide the working direction of the Seoul-based group down the road.

“On the North Korean soil, no one can denounce human rights abusers or make them to take responsibility. That's why, we believe, an international commission that can archive the human rights violation record, protect the victims and slap a punishable measure to the abusers is needed,” Kwon, one of the seven commissioners, explained.

In order to achieve its goal of establishing a COI on the North's human rights violations in the U.N., ICNK works in many ways to raise public understanding and awareness of the human rights situation in North Korea, including holding hearings with defectors and victims of human rights crimes in parliaments of U.N. member countries, she said. ICNK also holds exhibitions involving art, literature or performance to share the issue with the public.

ICNK is also organizing international campaigns in each member country focusing on

sending letters or petitions to the U.N. that urge the establishment of a COI. As well as sending messages directly to the leaders of North Korea, it also works to keep the public informed about the North's miserable human rights conditions by issuing reports.

It took only a year and half for ICNK to make a great contribution in arousing global opinion on the human rights situation in North Korea. Right after its foundation, the group and its members spearheaded a campaign aimed at the release of a South Korean family detained in the North for 25 years, Shin Sook-ja and her two daughters, and garnered international attention for the case.

Since April last year, ICNK also has been focusing on the release of two other North Korean defectors' family members believed to be held in the North's gulags. In an effort to secure the release of the camp-detained family members, ICNK petitioned the UNHRC on April 2 to secure the release through the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD), a U.N.-mandated body. ICNK made public in the Jan. 22 press conference of the opinion by the WGAD, confirming the North's arbitrary detention and urging the family members' immediate release. But North Korea dismissed the cases as "anti-DPRK (North Korea) political plots by the South Korean authorities," Kwon said in the conference.

"Defectors in South Korea have no place to seek help in their efforts to secure release of their family members detained in the North," Kang Chol-hwan, one of the defectors and whose younger sister and her son are detained in the notorious Yodok prison camp in South Hamgyong Province, said in the conference. The group also designated Jan. 8, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's birthday, as "ICNK International Day of Action," calling for international communities to participate in the campaign for the establishment of the COI at the U.N.

What bears a huge significance is that the North responded to the ICNK's petition to UNHRC and the WGAD officially confirmed the arbitrary detention of the defectors' family members. Kang's case marks the second of its kind since the WAGD confirmed Shin Sook-ja family's arbitrary detention. The ICNK's activities have apparently boosted the global advocacy group's efforts on the North Korean human rights issue, as the WGAD's call was followed immediately by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's comment calling for a "full-fledged international inquiry into serious crimes against humanity in North Korea."

"As related circumstances change, the agenda of establishing a COI on North Korea's crimes against human rights will likely be discussed in a detailed manner at the upcoming UNHRC in March," Kwon said. Supporting the ICNK's effort, EU and Japan, the members of UNHRC which spearheaded UNHRC's past North Korea resolutions, are allegedly considering a plan to add a new provision in next resolution.

ICNK legal adviser Genser pinpointed that there could be three outcomes on the back of the possible COI establishment. According to Genser, the establishment of the COI will likely put direct pressure on the U.N. system and its member countries, and will makes it harder for the North's long time defender, China and Russia. And the pressure will force North Korea to open up its human rights conditions to the U.N. inspection team or to improve the conditions. (Yonhap News)

PUBLIC EXECUTION PROCESS AND RELATED CRIMINAL LAWS

North Korea said it had publicly executed a violent criminal, Ju Su-man, in the North's east coast city of Hamhung in October 1992.

The most widely known and serious violation of the right to life in North Korea is public execution. Article 32 of the Court Sentence and Decision Implementation Law stipulates that death sentences shall be carried out by firing squad. Thus, public executions are usually carried out by firing squad, with normally nine shots fired.

Procedures of Public Execution

Regarding the procedures of public execution, the defectors have testified as follows: The Republic's flag is draped in the back-ground, and people from the Central Prosecutors' Office come down to the site. The director of Provincial Safety, the director of the Provincial Security Agency, a court official, and others also participate. The trial is conducted openly. A court official will read out criminal charges and then hand down the sentence. A defector testified that a court official would read out criminal charges and then pronounce that he was handing down the death sentence in accordance with such articles of the Penal Code of DPRK (North Korea).

During the review session for the second regular report submitted by North Korea to the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC), North Korea officially admitted to at least one case of public execution based on evidence presented. North Korea said it had publicly executed a violent criminal, Ju Su-man, in the North's east coast city of Hamhung in October, 1992, for having brutally murdered his grandparents, Ju Jong-un (84) and Choe Yon-ok (72). Even after admitting this case of public execution, North Korea maintained the position that the authorities had

done it to comply with the demands of the masses in the area.

Based on this logic, the North Korean delegation openly admitted to the practice of public execution during the Universal Periodic Review Session of the UNHRC on Dec. 7, 2009. During the session, a North Korean delegate said, “Capital punishments in principle are carried out behind the scenes. In exceptional cases, particularly in the case of extremely heinous crime, public executions are carried out occasionally in compliance with the demands of victims’ families who demand confirmation.” North Korea has officially admitted to the practice of public execution at an open international forum discussing human rights issues.

North Korean Criminal Laws

Crimes punishable by the death penalty are listed in the North’s Penal Code and Addendum to the Penal Code (General Crimes). The procedure for capital punishment is provided for in the Criminal Procedure Act and the Law on Sentences and Implementations of Decisions. The death penalty in particular is carried out after the judgment is finalized, and executions require the approval of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly. From a rule of law standpoint, it is important to determine whether North Korea carries out public executions only for crimes provided for by its Penal Code and in accordance with legal procedures. The documents shown below indicate that public executions are ordered for crimes stipulated in the Penal Code and the sentences are carried out in accordance with certain procedures.

In one example, the Pyongyang Court of Justice sentenced Ri Song-chol to death for the willful destruction of state property in accordance with Article 4 of the Addendum to the Penal Code, which stipulates severe acts of willful destruction or damaging of state property as a capital offense. On September 2010, the Supreme Court requested approval for the public execution of defendant Ri as sentenced and confirmed by the Pyongyang Court of Justice (Figure 1). Also the North Phyongan Province Court of Justice sentenced Kim Chun-nam to death applying Article 4 of the Addendum to the Penal Code. The Supreme Court requested approval for the public execution of defendant Kim as sentenced and confirmed by the North Phyongan Province Court of Justice (Figure 2).

Figure 1 and Figure 2 are the first evidence showing that North Korea adheres to the provisions of its criminal law in carrying out public executions, and their significance is not to be underestimated. However, the question remains whether all public executions are carried out according to the procedures laid out in Figure 1 and Figure 2. From the documents alone, it is unclear whether the Supreme Court requested approval after the death sentence was confirmed in the appeal, or whether the verdict was finalized without an appeal and the trial courts (the Pyongyang Court of Justice and the North Phyongan Province Court of Justice in these two cases) requested approval for the executions via the Supreme Court.

Furthermore, the institution to which the Supreme Court requested approval was not spec-

ified, leaving uncertainty as to whether this approval came from the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, as provided in the North Korean Criminal Procedure Act, or from some other body. As discussed above, and confirmed in the testimonies by North Korean defectors, public and private executions are carried out within long-term corrective labor camps, execution by summary trial are routine in the political prison camps, and arbitrary secret executions are carried out by State Security agents.

<Figure 1>

► Substance of Crime

Defendant Ri Song-chol (male, age 40, laborer in Hyongjesan District of Pyongyang) in conspiracy with joint defendant Kim Jong-gil (male, age 44, farm worker, Taedong County of Pyongyang) and two others, committed eight extremely severe acts of destruction of state property from 2006 to 2010 in stealing eight laboring cows (valued at 401,410 NKW) from Hyongjesan District and surrounding districts and slaughtering them in secret. In addition, they stole and illegally sold six laboring cows and one candidate cow (341,900 NKW), and also committed the crime of personal commercial activity.

► Opinion of the Supreme Court

We request approval for the public execution of defendant Ri Song-chol, who was sentenced to death by the Pyongyang court of Justice and whose sentence was affirmed as final.

<Figure 2>

► Substance of Crime

Defendant Kim Chun-nam (male, age 36, Yomju County laborer), alone and in conspiracy with others, committed 12 acts of cutting and destroying 1,100 meters of high voltage 3,300V power lines (4mm and 5mm copper wire, valued at 73,300 NKW) around Tongrim County in the period from 2008 to 2010. He then sold the stolen copper wire weighing 191.5 kilograms for 1,004,100 NKW, taking the proceeds for his personal use.

► Opinion of the Supreme Court

We requested approval for the public execution of defendant Kim Chun-nam, who was sentenced to death by the North Phyongan Province Court of Justice and whose sentence is affirmed as final.

(This is an excerpt from *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2012* published by the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul, Korea.)

NORTH KOREA'S POLICY GOALS & TASKS FOR 2013

In his verbal message, Kim Jong-un called for turning the country into an economic power and improving inter-Korean relations.

■ By Lee Kwang-ho

On the morning of Jan. 1 this year, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un delivered the state policy guidelines and main tasks for the coming year, in the form of a verbal message, which a leader of the country had not done in 19 years since his grandfather and North Korean founder Kim Il-sung spoke before he died in 1994. It has been a decades-old tradition for North Korea to issue a major policy statement on New Year's Day. Kim Jong-un's father, Kim Jong-il, had released New Year's messages as joint editorials by the nation's three main newspapers.

In this year's verbal message, the young North Korean leader called for turning the impoverished regime into an economic power and improving inter-Korean relations without mentioning the country's desire to develop nuclear weapons. He also refrained from denouncing the South's newly elected president and did not make mention of the United States as it had done on previous occasions.

Most of the speech emphasized the need to strengthen the ailing economy, calling it

the most important task in creating a strong, prosperous socialist nation. "We should prompt a decisive turnabout this year in developing into an economic power and improving the livelihoods of the people," Kim Jong-un said in the televised message.

Kim Jong-un's Verbal Message

The year 2013 marks the young leader's second year at the country's helm since his father Kim Jong-il died of a heart attack in December 2011, bequeathing to him the dynastic rule of the communist country. During the past year, Kim Jong-un grasped power of the Workers' Party, the military and the government and was awarded the title of military marshal.

Kim called for the reunification of the two Koreas, saying that respecting inter-Korean joint declarations is the basic premise for unification. The North Korean leader called for an end to confrontations with rival South Korea in what appeared to be an overture to the incoming South

Korean president. In the address, Kim urged the South Korean government to follow through on previous inter-Korean joint declarations.

Kim's speech was another sign that the young leader was trying to emulate his grandfather, who was considered a more charismatic leader and is still widely revered among North Koreans. Although Kim inherited the central policies of Kim Jong-il, outside analysts see him as trying to distance himself in a variety of ways from his father's ruling style. Kim Jong-il was more feared than respected among his people, and his rule was marked by a major famine and his nuclear ambitions.

Kim enumerated and detailed last year's achievements such as the country's equipment of modern military hardware capable of defeating any formidable enemy; the great strides taken to build a thriving socialist country to improve the people's living standards; the expansion of cultural facilities for the wellbeing of the citizenry; and the reinforcement of the superior socialist education system through the adoption of a universal 12-year compulsory education.

He defined 2013 as "a year of great creations and changes in which a radical turn-about will be effected in the building of a thriving socialist country on the road of the onward march in the new century of Kim Il-sung's and Kim Jong-il's Korea."



North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's New Year's address is carried in full on the front page of the North's main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, on Jan. 1. (Yonhap Photo)

The main tasks to be achieved this year for the socialist nation to thrive were presented in the order of the economy, politics, military, socio-culture, policy toward South Korea and external affairs. On the country's economic policy, Kim said that the most important task at present to build the North into a thriving socialist country is to first make it an economic giant.

Regarding the political field, Kim said, "We should invariably carry forward the

proud tradition of single-hearted unity, the tradition of adorning the red flag of the revolution only with victories.” On defense policy, Kim stressed the need to increase military might under the country’s military-first politics, reliably safeguard the security and sovereignty of the country and render services to assuring regional stability and global peace. “The defense industry sector should develop, in larger numbers, sophisticated military hardware of our own style that can contribute to implementing the party’s military strategy,” he said.

Concerning social and cultural aspects he said, “We should spur the building of a civilized socialist nation to usher in a new era of cultural efflorescence in the 21st century. Officials should strive with devotion, upholding the slogan ‘Everything for the people and everything by relying on them!’”

Stress on Inter-Korean Ties

Kim also made statement about external policies, saying, “By holding fast to the ideals of independence, peace and friendship, we will strive to develop relations of friendship and cooperation with the countries that are friendly to our country out of their respect for its sovereignty, and safeguard regional peace and stability and make the whole world independent.”

The most significant feature of Kim Jong-un’s speech was its marked departure of tone regarding South Korea. He said that to realize unification and terminate the division of the country it is important to ease confrontation between the North and the South. “The entire nation should vehe-

mently reject any moves for domination, intervention, aggression and war by outside forces, and never tolerate any acts hindering the country’s reunification,” he said.

Kim said, “A basic precondition to improving North-South Korean relations and advancing national reunification is to honor and implement North-South joint declarations.” He was referring to two inter-Korean agreements signed in 2000 and 2007 by the two previous administrations of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun under the Sunshine Policy of reconciliation and economic cooperation with North Korea. Both presidents held summit talks with late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang.

The young North Korean leader also vowed to strengthen his country’s military, calling for the development of more advanced weaponry. But he made no mention of relations with the North’s No. 1 enemy, the United States, or the international efforts to halt North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. He simply reiterated that his government was willing to expand and improve upon cooperative relationships with all countries friendly to the North.

Unlike previous new year assertions, this time North Korea did not make any comment on its usual demands for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea, the denuclearization of the whole Korean Peninsula, the end of hostile relations between North Korea and the U.S., and the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

Most of his speech placed an emphasis

on strengthening the ailing economy and improving the people's livelihoods. Kim stressed economic development, suggesting change in its economic system. "To bring it about, we should fundamentally improve the work ethic of our workers and our business style," he said.

Still, Kim emphasized that agriculture and light industries are still two main front lines for economic development and he will also boost livestock, fishery and fruit industries as well. It is notable that he emphasized improving the direction and management of the economy, although he did not mention it specifically, the ministry of Unification in Seoul in an analysis.

Main Front Lines

Kim said, "We should make innovations in coal mining and metallurgical industries in particular so as to revitalize the overall economy of the country. We should direct great efforts to bolstering up the sectors and units that have a direct bearing on the people's livelihoods and increasing production there, so as to give them more benefits in living."

"We should hold fast to the socialist economic system of our own style, steadily improve and perfect the methods of economic management on the principle of encouraging the working masses to fulfill their responsibility and role befitting the masters of production." But he revealed no details of any planned economic policy changes. He mentioned only a need to "improve economic leadership and management" and "spread useful experiences created in various work units."

Since July, reports from various media suggest the North Korean regime has begun offering economic incentives aimed at bolstering productivity at farms and factories. Some reports said the state was considering letting farmers keep at least 30 percent of their yield. Currently, it is believed, they are allowed to sell only a surplus beyond a government quota that is rarely met.

Praising the country's successful launch of a long-range rocket in December, Kim reiterated Pyongyang's position that it was solely to put a satellite into orbit and that the rest of the nation should look to its success for inspiration: "Let's begin the phase of developing into an economic giant with that spirit, the might that conquered space," Kim said.

The correlation between the launch and economic advancement, watchers say, suggests Pyongyang will continue to emphasize its technology sector as an engine for economic recovery. The international community suspects the Dec. 12 rocket launch was a cover for testing rocket technology used for launching long-range missiles.

Seoul's Unification Ministry in charge of inter-Korean relations said the North's address is largely consistent with the country's previous policy of defending its military-first stance and socialist systems as well as revering its two late leaders. The North's reference to its plan to continue to develop cutting-edge defense equipment denotes its willingness to further develop long-range missiles, the ministry said in a statement. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Striving to Idolize Its Leader Kim Jong-un on His Birthday

Kim Jong-un's birthday has not been declared a national holiday but there seems to be a move to gradually highlight it to the public.

Contrary to public expectations, North Korea marked new leader Kim Jong-un's birthday on Jan. 8 without much fanfare, but it has been working to sow the seeds of a personality cult for him.

Although the socialist country did not hold major celebrations, it has been promoting a good image of the young leader who is believed to be turning 29 or 30 years old.

Normal broadcasting hours in the North on Jan. 8 indicate that the country has not designated the birthday of the incumbent leader as a national holiday, even though he took power over a year ago.

Seoul's Unification Ministry officials believe no special adjustments have been made to the calendar to reflect Kim's birthday, in contrast to the birth anniversaries of North Korean founder Kim Il-sung and late leader Kim Jong-il, both of which are celebrated with great pomp.

Analysts take this as a sign that he is still building his personality cult among the people because a premature celebration

could cause grumbling among the populace.

Initial expectations were that the socialist country would keep up its festive mood until the young leader's birthday as it had just successfully launched a rocket in December last year. It was also the first birthday since he had completed the succession of power from his father officially through various political meetings in April last year.

Still, the quiet passing of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's birthday also raised curiosity over the regime's myth-making tactics for the young leader. The country's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) and other main news outlets remained mum about the leader's birthday, making no mention about the event.

The exact year of Kim's birth differs depending on the source. Seoul's spy agency maintains he was born in 1984, while others speculated his birth year is 1983.

This compares with the country's speedy move to celebrate the birthdays of Kim

Jong-il after the death of his father Kim Il-sung. The Feb. 16 birthday of Kim Jong-il, known as the Day of the Shining Star, was made a national holiday in 1982 while he was only an heir to North Korean founder Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994.

Analysts said the North may still be in the midst of the glorification process for the young leader who took the helm of the socialist country in a shorter period of time than his father.

The country also had a quiet passing of Kim's birthday last year, which came only a few weeks after his father's death.

"It's been only one year after the death of chairman Kim Jong-il, and the North would have felt the sense of burden due to uneasy economic conditions and (abstained) from designating it as a national holiday," Dongguk University professor Koh Yuhwan said. "The country may go ahead with the holiday designation after further power solidification."

As part of ongoing efforts to stress the leader's everyday activities, the KCNA reported on Jan. 7 that Kim provided candy and other confectionery gifts to children, without referring to his birthday.

But the personality cult for the leader is apparently being formed in the North's media. *Rodong Sinmun*, the organ of the Workers' Party, has praised the leader's painful deeds for the people during the "Arduous March" under trials in the 1990s.

The newspaper also said during the arduous march period, Kim Jong-un did not live and dress well, sharing the pains of the people who were suffering from hunger with "little sleep and meager rice balls." In North Korea, the term "little sleep and mea-

ger rice balls" was used for idolizing the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

The "Arduous March" period is remembered as the hardest time for North Koreans, when hundreds of thousands of people died from hunger caused by natural disasters and poor administration by the North Korean regime.

Meanwhile, the KCNA's new home page of its Web site unveiled on Jan. 5 highlighted the revolutionary activities of Kim Jong-un, but without the great works and speeches by Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, which were formerly featured.

Three days later on Jan. 8, the home page of the KCNA Web site introduced Kim Jong-un's hard works and instructions made last year.

An Internet site operated by the Kim Il-sung University in Pyongyang carried an essay on Kim Jong-un, describing him as a sublime person of high morality, ardent love for the fatherland and people, and complete scientific theory. It also said the new leader's father Kim Jong-il previously introduced his son Jong-un as the "genius of the geniuses" and the "general of Mount Paektu."

And also, Kim Jong-un sent a bunch of candy to every young child in the poverty-stricken country to celebrate his birthday, the North's state-run media reported on Jan. 7.

"At present Kim Jong-un's birthday has not been declared a national holiday like that of his father and grandfather, but there seems to be a move to gradually highlight it to the public," said Cho Bong-hyun, an analyst at the IBK Economic Research Institute. (Yonhap News)

<Internal Affairs>**N.K. Commemorates 1st Death Anniversary of Late Leader Kim Jong-il**

North Korea commemorated the first anniversary of late leader Kim Jong-il's death on Dec. 17, holding mass rallies, unveiling a renovated mausoleum for the deceased leader and holding various cultural events.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his top brass attended a mass memorial rally on the eve of the anniversary for the senior Kim while the country is jubilant over its successful launch of a long-range rocket on Dec. 12.

North Korea's state-run Korean Central Broadcasting Station, monitored in Seoul, broadcast live the commemoration ceremony held in late morning in a Pyongyang stadium.

Kim Jong-il died of a heart attack on a train outside Pyongyang while traveling for a field guidance. He ruled the socialist country for 17 years. Kim's third-son Jong-un took over power following the death.

"A national memorial service was held with solemnity here to mark the first anniversary of demise of leader Kim Jong-il," the country's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in an English dispatch.

During the 70-minute service, Kim Yong-nam, the president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, lauded the accomplishments of the late leader in his memorial address, according to the KCNA.

"He strengthened the Korean People's Army into the matchless revolutionary army of Mt. Paektu, led the unprecedented standoff with imperialism and the U.S. to one victory after another and made the DPRK (North Korea) a world-level military power and legitimate nuclear weapons state," the ceremonial head of the state was quoted as saying in the report.

"The ideology and leadership of comrade Kim Jong-un is that of comrade Kim Jong-il," he continued. "All party members, military soldiers and citizens should support him up with pure conscience and moral loyalty, safeguard him strongly, and cooperate with each other again and again."

On the very day of the first anniversary, the North unveiled a renovated mausoleum for the ruling Kim family. The reopening ceremony for Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, held from 9:00 a.m., was broadcast live by key television stations, including (North) Korean Central Broadcasting Station, monitored in Seoul.

The North's official KCNA said in an English dispatch that "an inaugural ceremony of the renovated Kumsusan Palace of the Sun is under way in a solemn atmosphere on Dec. 17."

Television images showed North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attending the ceremony at the mausoleum, where his father's embalmed body is laid, along with top military, party and government figures.

First lady Ri Sol-ju was with the leader when he paid tribute there. Clad in a black mourn-

ing dress, Ri appeared to be in the late stages of pregnancy as South Korean media have widely speculated, according to the television images. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Confirms Detainment of Korean-American

North Korea confirmed on Dec. 21 it was holding a U.S. citizen for a “crime” he has admitted committing against the socialist country while leading a tour group there.

“American citizen Pae Jun Ho who entered Rason City of the DPRK (North Korea) on Nov. 3 for the purpose of tour committed a crime against the DPRK. He was put into custody by a relevant institution,” the KCNA said in a report, monitored in Seoul.

The report said Pae has admitted his crime committed against the North, and legal actions were being taken against him in line with the country’s criminal code.

Earlier, a South Korean newspaper reported a Korean-American, identified as Kenneth Bae, was arrested by security authorities in North Korea in early November. Bae’s Korean name is believed to be Pae Jun Ho.

Bae, 44, entered the northeastern port city along with five other tourists for a five-day trip, according to the *Kookmin Ilbo* newspaper published in Seoul.

After his detention, Bae was transferred to Pyongyang for further investigation, the newspaper said, quoting an unidentified source.

In recent years, several U.S. citizens have been detained in North Korea, but all of them were released after negotiations.

The United States has no diplomatic relations with North Korea, and its interest in the isolated country has often been represented by the Swedish Embassy there.

Last year, Eddie Yong Su Jun, a Korean-American missionary, was released after facing indictment on charges of committing an unspecified crime against the regime.

In 2010, North Korea set free Robert Park, a Korean-American Christian activist who crossed into the country on Christmas Day 2009 to draw international attention to the North’s poor human rights record.

In 2009, former U.S. President Bill Clinton flew to Pyongyang to win the release of two American journalists caught during a reporting tour covering North Korean defectors. (Yonhap News)

North Korean Leader Calls for More Satellite, Rocket Launches

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has called for more satellites and rockets to be launched following the country’s apparent success in sending a satellite into orbit earlier December, the socialist nation’s state media said on Dec. 22.

Kim made the remarks on Dec. 21 at a banquet honoring the scientists, technicians and

others who contributed to the Dec. 12 launching of a long-range rocket that put the satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2 into orbit, the KCNA said in an English-language dispatch monitored in Seoul.

Seoul, Washington and other nations have condemned the lift-off as a violation of United Nations resolutions that ban the communist country from testing ballistic missile technology.

North Korea claims that the launch was for peaceful purposes and to put a scientific satellite into space.

In a speech at the banquet, the leader in his late 20s said the country should develop and launch more satellites, including communications satellites, and carrier rockets with bigger capacity “with the same spirit and stamina with which you successfully launched satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2,” according to the KCNA dispatch.

“The successful launch of the satellite, an aggregate of latest science and technology, is a great event specially recorded in the 5,000-year-long history of the Korean nation which was provided by the wise leadership of Kim Jong-il and the Workers’ Party of (North) Korea’s policy of attaching importance to science and technology.” (Yonhap News)

North Korea Creates ‘Kim Jong-il International Award’

North Korea has established an international award named after its late leader Kim Jong-il, the state media said on Dec. 24, seen as part of its efforts to strengthen the personality cult surrounding the former ruler who died of a heart attack about a year ago.

The North’s state-run KCNA said the “Kim Jong-il international award” was created in light of his birthday and to commemorate his inauguration as Supreme Commander of the (North) Korean People’s Army (KPA) 21 years ago.

The prize will be granted to political leaders, prestigious scholars and leading businessmen across the world, who have contributed to world peace, social and cultural developments, and struggles for national sovereignty, the KCNA said.

The state media said the world’s prominent figures have formed an award council in New Delhi, India, without elaborating.

The latest move comes after Pyongyang fired off a long-range rocket on Dec. 12, seen as marking the first anniversary of the former leader’s death and cementing the regime’s grip on power. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Disseminates World’s ‘Most Powerful State’ Image

Emboldened by the rocket launch earlier December, North Korea has been singing its own praises by calling itself “the world’s most powerful state,” observers said on Dec. 27 last year.

On Dec. 12, North Korea fired off a long-range rocket in North Phyongan Province, and immediately announced that its second version of satellite Kwangmyongsong-3 had successfully entered orbit. The outside world condemned the launch as a cover to test rocket technology used for long-range missiles.

Jubilant over the success, Pyongyang has been increasing propaganda campaigns with frequent use of the expression “the world’s most powerful state” in media reports.

First introduced in a thank-you letter the North’s leader Kim Jong-un sent earlier service personnel who built the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang where the embalmed body of late leader Kim Jong-il lies in state, the expression has since been spotted in the North’s media almost everyday, according to the observers.

In his speech during a banquet on Dec. 21 to celebrate the successful rocket launch, the North Korean leader said it is “the party’s firm determination to establish the most powerful country and the people’s paradise admired by the whole world.”

The Dec. 27 issue of the country’s official newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* used the expression three times, including in its editorial which says its leader’s thoughts and activities are all related to his firm willingness to make the North “the most powerful country admired by the whole world.” (Yonhap News)

N. Korean Leader Kim Jong-un Begins Official Activities in 2013

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un started his official activity of the new year by watching the performance of the Moranbong Band with his wife Ri Sol-ju, the KCNA reported on Jan. 1.

The KCNA said Kim shook hands with diplomatic envoys, representatives of international organizations and military attaches of foreign embassies in Pyongyang and their wives, offering congratulations and best wishes, and talked with them at the venue of the performance. The news agency did not reveal where the performance was held.

Kim, along with his wife, then visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang to pay respects to the late North Korean leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.

During the performance of the Moranbong Band and visit to the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, Kim was accompanied by top North Korean officials. They include Kim Yong-nam, the president of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA); Premier Choe Yong-rim; Choe Ryong-hae, the director of the People’s Army General Political Bureau; and Jang Song-thaek, the vice chairman of the National Defense Commission and the powerful uncle of Kim Jong-un.

Other attendees include Army Chief Hyon Yong-chol; Armed Forces Minister Kim Kyok-sik; secretaries of the ruling Workers’ Party Kim Ki-nam, Choe Thae-bok and Pak To-chun; and Yang Hyong-sop, the vice chairman of the SPA, as well as scientists, technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the successful launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.

Last year Kim visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun and an army unit on New Year's Day to show his resolution for the "Songun (military-first) politics." (Yonhap News)

N. Koreans Hold Rallies to Implement Leader Kim's New Year Address

About 100,000 North Koreans rallied in Pyongyang on Jan. 5, pledging to accomplish national missions and tasks put forward by leader Kim Jong-un in his New Year's address.

Following the capital's rally, similar meetings were held in major cities across the socialist country, where North Korean citizens vowed to implement instructions given in the leader's New Year speech made on Jan. 1.

Those who attended the rally at Pyongyang's main Kim Il-sung Square included the ruling elite such as No. 2 leader Kim Yong-nam and Premier Choe Yong-rim, the North's official Korean Central TV and Korean Central Broadcasting Station reported.

In a televised New Year's address on Jan. 1, Kim Jong-un called for improving the lives of its people and putting forward other missions. It marked the first verbal New Year's message by a North Korean leader in 19 years since his grandfather Kim Il-sung delivered one in 1994.

"The New Year's address by Comrade Kim Jong-un is the platform guidelines that brightened the course of the nation," said Mun Kyong-dok, a key official of the ruling Workers' Party, in a speech during the rally, according to the reports.

In his hearty response to the New Year's speech, Mun stressed the need for officials, party members and other people in Pyongyang to perform greater miracles and innovations this year, which marks the 65th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK (North Korea) and the 60th anniversary of the victorious Fatherland Liberation War (Korean War).

The report was followed by speeches. An Jong-su, minister of Light Industry, said that modernization of industrial light factories would be steadily pushed forward and raw material bases of local industrial factories would be consolidated. (Yonhap News)

<External Affairs>

N. Korea Blasts U.S. Intelligence Report on Pyongyang's Nuke Threat

North Korea on Dec. 25 blasted a recent report by the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) that cited growing concerns surrounding Pyongyang's nuclear proliferation.

In an article carried by the North's state-run KCNA, North Korea claimed allegations and concerns raised by the NIC were nothing more than sophistry and lies.

It said Washington is using a nonexistent threat to justify the deployment of its own nuclear arsenal and its so-called nuclear umbrella policy.

The NIC, which supports the director of national intelligence, released a 2030 Global Trend report on Dec. 10 that cited North Korea and Iran as key countries that can pose challenges to anti-nuclear proliferation efforts in the future.

The article said that North Korea, like other nuclear armed countries, has maintained a firm stance to guard against proliferation and has actively taken steps in this direction. The KCNA also said that Washington conducts nuclear attack exercises with South Korea every year and has played an integral role in helping Israel acquire nuclear weapons.

The media outlet said because of such a track record, it is the United States that has fueled nuclear proliferation. (Yonhap News)

N. K. Presses Next S. Korean Gov't to Define Stance toward Pyongyang

North Korea called for South Korea on Jan. 2 to change its hostile policy toward the socialist country, saying that inter-Korean relations are at a crossroads as they were five years ago.

The North's powerful National Defense Commission (NDC) took issue with a recent series of remarks or statements issued by top South Korean leaders calling for tighter security against the North's belligerence.

"The South Korean government must choose between confrontation and peace," the North's commission said in a statement, carried by the KCNA.

The North's statement directed its anger at the sitting South Korean government of President Lee Myung-bak but its focus is obviously on the incoming president, Park Geun-hye, who takes office on Feb. 25 for a single five-year term.

After a decade of liberal rule during which inter-Korean relations significantly warmed, South Korea rolled back to a policy of confrontation in 2008 when conservatives regained power.

In his New Year's address, the sitting South Korean president again vowed to defend the disputed inter-Korean maritime border in the Yellow Sea, an issue that has constantly strained cross-border relations.

The western sea border, commonly called Northern Limit Line (NLL), was unilaterally drawn by the U.S.-led United Nations Command at the end of the Korean War (1950-1953). North Korea has never recognized it and is now demanding it to be drawn further south.

The sea border has been the scene of two bloody naval clashes between the two Koreas, resulting in dozens of casualties in both sides.

The North's statement said South Korea must make a "responsible choice" about its future course of policy toward Pyongyang. "It is our unwavering stance that the stalemate should be completely put to an end," it said.

South Korea and North Korea remain divided by the world's most heavily armed border. They are still technically at war, with no peace treaty signed since the Korean War.

About 28,500 U.S. soldiers are currently stationed in South Korea as a deterrence against the North.

In his New Year's address on Jan. 1, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for resolving tension with the South. (Yonhap News)

North Korea Renews Hope for Better Ties with South Korea

North Korea expressed hope for better ties with South Korea on Jan. 3, just days after leader Kim Jong-un called for an end to confrontation on the divided Korean Peninsula.

The North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, a semi-official organization overseeing inter-Korean relations, said reconciliation, unity and unification between the two Koreas is a general trend that they cannot go against.

"We will keep an eye on South Korean authorities' future attitude," the committee said in a statement carried by the KCNA.

In his first verbal New Year message, Kim called for an end to confrontation between the two Koreas, noting "the past records of inter-Korean relations show that confrontation between fellow countrymen leads to nothing but war."

Kim took over the socialist country in December 2011 when his father, longtime leader Kim Jong-il died abruptly of a heart attack.

The statement is widely seen as the North expressing its desire to improve ties with South Korea's incoming government.

President-elect Park Geun-hye, who will take office on Feb. 25, said she will take steps to open dialogue with the socialist country and seek a course to ease tension and promote cooperation with the North.

Park visited Pyongyang in 2002 and held talks with Kim's late father, Kim Jong-il.

However, the North's statement condemned South Korea for its recent military drill and what it calls anti-Pyongyang rhetoric by South Korean officials. (Yonhap News)

N. Korean Newspaper Claims U.S. Threat to World Peace

North Korea's state-run newspaper claimed on Jan. 4 that efforts by the United States to start a war on the Korean Peninsula is a threat to peace throughout the world.

The *Rodong Sinmun*, an organ of the ruling Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), said Washington will use the invasion of North Korea as a springboard for its broader plan to conquer the world.

The article titled “The fight for Asian and global peace” argued that to ensure the world is not put at risk, the threat of war must be removed once and for all from the Korean Peninsula.

The claim marks the first time that the socialist country’s media outlet attacked the United States in the new year, and can be seen as a detailed elaboration of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un’s New Year message.

Kim said in the message broadcast early Jan. 1 that the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia remain hotbeds of tension. He then warned against plots by imperialistic powers to engage in a war of conquest.

Rodong Sinmun added that the U.S.’s plan to launch a second Korean War can be seen in the concentration of offensive forces in South Korea as well as in Okinawa, Japan; Hawaii, U.S. and other places around the Pacific region.

It, moreover, said U.S. presence in South Korea is the root source of all tension and the cause for the division of the Korean Peninsula, indirectly reiterating Pyongyang’s long-held demands for the withdrawal of all American troops.

North Korea has consistently called for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea as a precondition to establishing a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. (Yonhap News)

N. Korea Renews Call for Dissolution of United Nations Command

North Korea’s foreign ministry on Jan. 14 called again for a peace treaty to replace the cease-fire armistice that halted the Korean War (1950-1953) and the dissolution of the United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea.

In a “diplomatic note” reported by the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the ministry pointed out that an unstable truce has remained in place for 60 years after the armistice was signed.

It argued that the reason why the United States has persistently ignored calls by Pyongyang to replace the cease-fire pact with a permanent peace treaty is because it wants to hold onto the armistice regime and the UNC. It said the multinational forces command led by a U.S. general is a relic of the Cold War.

The UNC was set up by a U.N. Security Council Resolution in July 1953 that called for a unified command structure to repel the North’s invasion of the South a month earlier. During the three year war, 16 countries sent troops to help Seoul, with others providing humanitarian assistance. The command structure has remained in place after the cease-fire although it has been augmented by the South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command.

North Korea observers in Seoul said Pyongyang’s attack on the military command is part of its “peace offensive” that can help the country gain the upper hand and set the agenda in future talks with Washington. In the past Pyongyang has used diplomatic notes to make

known its version of the truth in the foreign affair sphere.

North Korea's foreign ministry also said the immediate breakup of the UNC will be a critical test of determining whether or not the United States wants to maintain its belligerent policies toward the North. It can show if Washington is interested in expanding peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia or wants to revive the confrontational stance of the Cold War era, the media outlet citing the ministry said. (Yonhap News)

AP Vice President Visits North Korea: KCNA

An Associated Press delegation, led by its vice president, John Daniszewski, arrived in North Korea on Jan. 14, the North's news agency said.

The KCNA said in a brief report, monitored in Seoul, that the American news agency group arrived in Pyongyang by plane. It gave no other details, including the purpose of the trip and itinerary.

AP became the first western media outlet to open a bureau in Pyongyang in January 2012, and the visit may be timed to mark its first anniversary. AP opened its Pyongyang office in the KCNA building on Jan. 16.

Together with its television affiliate, APTN, which opened an office in North Korea in 2006, AP now can send news articles, photos and video images from the socialist country. (Yonhap News)

<Inter-Korean Relations>

S. Korea to Maintain Analog TV Signals for Programs Sent to N. Korea

South Korea will maintain an analog TV signal system for broadcasts sent to North Korea so residents there can continue to view programs made by local stations, a government official said on Dec. 25.

A government official, who did not want to be identified, said a meeting of related agencies was held recently, with participants agreeing to maintain an analog system for TV transmissions across the border.

North Koreans are banned from seeing South Korean TV, but defectors have claimed that the proliferation of foreign-made television sets and lack of any effective means to check on the private lives of people have allowed some to gain access to the South's programming.

The decision comes as Seoul has switched to a digital broadcasting regime to reflect advances in media technology. The North, however, has not been able to make similar

changes.

The official said concerns were raised that if Seoul halted analog transmissions altogether, people in the North would no longer be able to see programs from the South. (Yonhap News)

N.K. Calls for Private Cooperation in New Year's Greeting to Aid Groups

North Korea called for close private sector cooperation with the South in the country's New Year's greetings sent to private aid groups in Seoul, local groups said on Jan. 7.

The Korea NGO Council for Cooperation with North Korea (KNCCNK), an association of more than 50 South Korean private aid groups, said they received the faxed greeting from the North at the beginning of the year.

"Private cooperation projects between the South and North are an important mission to achieve reconciliation and unity of (Korean) people as well as for increasing national prosperity," read the message sent by the North's National Reconciliation Council, North Korea's organization for promoting friendship with the South.

"When all the (Korean) people join forces, the national wish of unification will be advanced, and we strongly believe the KNCCNK will always lead the undertaking," the message also read.

In a separate New Year's greeting sent to the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation, a South Korean meeting to promote unification of the Korean Peninsula, the North Korean council expressed its hope for the South Korean group's increased role in bringing forth unification.

Another North Korean committee tasked with implementing the unification-promoting June 15 declaration, forged in 2000 between late South Korean president Kim Dae-jung and his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong-il, has also sent its greeting, according to sources.

One official at a private aid group said "the North has sent such New Year's greetings every year and (this year's) has no special content except the overall positive message that outlined its wish for better relations."

The greetings came as the North is believed to be scrambling to improve its ties with South ahead of president-elect Park Geun-hye's official inauguration in February.

Inter-governmental exchange between the South and the North almost came to a halt under the current Lee Myung-bak administration following the North's sinking of South Korean navy vessel Cheonan in March 2010. This provocation coupled with the shelling of an island in the Yellow Sea later that year helped solidify the incumbent administration's hard-line policy toward the North.

Experts have said Park is expected to come up with ways to ease tensions and improve inter-Korean ties although she may largely follow Lee's conservative stance. (Yonhap News)

AN EXAMINATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PUSHING AHEAD WITH A POLICY FOR REFORMS AND AN OPENING-UP BY THE KIM JONG-UN REGIME

I. Introduction

One year has passed since the inauguration of a new North Korean regime led by Kim Jong-un, who is in his late 20s, upon his assumption of the office of the supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA) in late December 2011. The young leader has done a lot of unusual things in the socialist North. But the North has yet to send an evident, concrete signal of whether or not it will adopt a policy for reforms and an opening-up.

Economic difficulties in the North will likely continue for a long period to come and there will be limitations for the two Koreas in their efforts for improving their relations, if and when Kim Jong-un, like his father Kim Jong-il, holds fast to an isolationist ideology, plus nominal reforms and an opening-up. In sharp contrast, the North has the opportunity to improve its stagnant economy and a more practical turn in the inter-Korean ties, if and when he will show an unswerving will for substantial reforms and an opening-up, as done by Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and push ahead with a policy aimed at actively innovating the inefficient North Korean economic system and open up the North to the global community.

In his remarks made on April 6, 2012, however, the new, young North Korean leader has defined the doctrines of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il as the guiding ideologies for the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), the North Korean version of the

By Cheong Seong-chang
*Senior Research Fellow
at the Sejong Institute
in Seongnam, immediately
south of Seoul, Korea*

Communist Party. And in his speech made during a military parade held on April 15, 2012 to mark the centenary of the birth of his grandfather and founding leader Kim Il-sung, he made clear his intention to inherit his father's military-first policies, saying, "The military-first principle is our autonomy, dignity and life, and the country will continue to uphold the military-first politics."

For this reason, North Korea watchers in Seoul are skeptical that the Kim Jong-un regime will implement substantial economic reforms. Then there came the rumors that North Korea had notified its farms and enterprises on June 28, 2012 of some reform measures that call for giving a freer hand to them for their efficient management and providing them with more incentives, among other things. But many North Korea watchers in Seoul are skeptical of their successful implementation.

This essay is aimed at examining the possibility of Kim Jong-un regime's launching of programs for substantial reforms and an opening-up while reviewing its moves in that direction, if at all, under the consideration of the aforementioned developments and based on Kim Jong-un's speeches and other first-hand North Korean data, plus media reports in South Korea and elsewhere.

II. Kim Jong-un's Instruction on the Examination of Foreign Programs for Reforms And an Opening-up

As well-known, North Korea took a negative position on reforms and an opening-

up during the Kim Jong-il era. Kim has said: "We shouldn't be dragged by campaigns for reforms and an opening-up trumpeted by imperialists. Reforms and an opening-up will ruin the country. We should not allow reforms and an opening-up under any circumstances. Our country is a great, powerful and prosperous one based on self-reliant rehabilitation." Because of these remarks made by their leader, any North Korean senior official could hardly expose their positive posture toward reforms and an opening-up.

While taking policy measures for reforms and an opening-up at the turn of the 21st century, measures similar to ones taken by China in its early stage of reforms and an opening-up in the late 1970s, North Korea made public steps for improving its economic management on July 1, 2002 and designated Kaesong city and the Mt. Kumgang area as special zones. But it continued to maintain a position against the terms, "reforms and an opening-up." Returning to Seoul from Pyongyang after a summit with the North Korean leader in October 2007, President Roh Moo-hyun mentioned the North's negative position on reforms and an opening-up while having a luncheon with South Korean officials and others who accompanied him during his visit to the North.

Noteworthy, however, is that Yang Hyong-sop, a member of the Politburo of the WPK Central Committee, told the Associated Press in January last year that "The new leader was focused on a 'knowledge-based' economy and looking at economic reforms enacted by other nations, including China." His statement indicates that the current North Korean leadership is

positive on economic reforms.

The North Korea Strategic Information Service Center (NKSISC), a nonprofit private organization in Seoul aimed at collecting and supplying first-hand North Korean data, said that Kim Jong-il has prepared for Chinese-style reform policy measures for a period until his death in December 2011, in consultation with the successor-designate, Kim Jong-un. The Organization-Guidance Department of the WPK Central Committee, along with various other offices, including the State Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry, has reportedly provided reform programs since August 2011 until his death. And based on these programs prepared until Dec. 14, 2011, North Korea was scheduled to begin in April 2012 to entrust the management of a specific section in all of its plants and enterprises under a lease formula, under the condition that the section should provide the state with a certain portion of net income from their operations. But the North had to shelve the programs because of Kim's abrupt death on Dec. 17, 2011, according to the center.

Mainichi Shimbun, one of the most influential daily newspapers in Japan, on April 16, 2012 reported that Kim Jong-un, who rules North Korea mainly in his capacity as first secretary of the WPK Central Committee, had instructed the North Korean authorities concerned to discuss measures for economic reforms, including the introduction of a capitalist economic management formula, based on his remarks on Jan. 28, 2012. The Japanese newspaper also quoted a WPK official as having said: "Comrade Kim Jong-un has recently instructed WPK officials concerned to

bring in any economic management formula from China, Russia and Japan if they can be useful practically for the benefits of our country." This statement has something to do with reforms and an opening-up in common with the aforementioned remarks of Yang Hyong-sop.

There is also the view that the office of secretaries for Kim Jong-un began in early February 2012 to draw a road map for fully implementing reform programs and an opening-up by 2019.¹⁾ The NKSISC also argues that well before the death of his father, the young Kim has instructed the office for his secretaries to compile its studies on Chinese-style reforms and an opening-up, which started well before his father's death. Quoting North Korean sources, it also maintains that the young North Korean leader has an unswerving will to make substantial reforms and an opening-up as soon as possible and that North Korean senior officials concerned have continued their studies on reform programs in China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) to date, under his instructions.

There is also the report that under his special instructions, North Korea has organized a task force under the umbrella of the Cabinet, led by Vice Premier Ro T Chol and responsible for the provision of a better economic management formula.²⁾ Ro is the North Korean official who signed an agreement on economic and technological cooperation between North Korea and China during Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi's visit to the North in October 2005 and visited China in December that year to initial an agreement with China for the joint

development of oil fields on the sea. He accompanied Kim Jong-il in November 2010 and Premier Choe Yong-rim in September 2011 during their visits to China. He has served as chairman of the State Planning Commission since April 2009, indicating that he is entitled to play a leading role for implementing the North's reform programs, if any.

In a meeting with a group of senior North Korean officials held shortly after a ceremony to mark the 70th birthday of late leader Kim Jong-il on Feb. 16, 2012, the young Kim has reportedly said he would turn the North into a country within seven years where there is no need for its citizens to envy others. Possibilities are slim that he can fulfill his commitment. But the North will likely get out of a chronic famine within seven years if and when it pushes actively ahead with reforms and an opening-up, arming itself with an unswerving will, like China in the late 1970s under Deng Xiaoping, and then neighboring countries will cooperate actively with the North.

But the North had to shelve its programs for reforms and an opening-up, whose implementation was scheduled for April 2012, because of its immediate mission of inaugurating a new regime led by Kim Jong-un by April 2012, honoring the young Kim as first secretary of the WPK Central Committee and first chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) and taking other personnel actions. The programs are mentioned in the guidelines for the June 28, 2012 reform measures internally told only to farms, plants and enterprises in the North late that month. They were never made public outside the farm-

ing and industrial units. This essay will review the measures, after analyzing developments regarding the question of the chronic famine and other agricultural issues, plus the transfer of the rights for many projects for earning foreign currency held by the army to the Cabinet.

III. Kim Jong-un's Perception of Chronic Famine in North Korea And the Question of Partly Decollectivizing Farms

While he was in his teens, Kim Jong-un was awoken already to the fact that his country's economic level falls much behind that of most western countries. That Kim was reportedly shocked by the extremely poor economic situation facing the North he witnessed while making on-spot inspections after he became North Korean leader at the turn of last year upon his father's death.

In an interview with Radio Free Asia (RFA) in late May last year, a North Korean resident in South Hamgyong Province, who was identified only by his last name, Kwak, said, "Rising are most North Koreans' expectations for General Kim Jong-un," adding that widespread among North Korean citizens are the sayings that he differs from his father in the formula for on-spot guidance, people's favorable response to his behavior and high expectations for his policies in the future. During his on-spot guidance, for instance, the senior Kim has always followed the fixed schedule, but the junior Kim has often deviated from schedule. That flexible behavior of the young leader resulted in his finding of a

group of soldiers, who suffer from malnutrition and are housed in a separate facility, during his visit to an army unit, Kwak said. The new young leader also witnessed a family sitting round a dining table with their dishes only covered with some grains of maize mixed with a soup made of dried radish leaves, according to the North Korean. He also said that during an initial period after the young Kim became the “supreme” commander of the KPA in late 2011, many North Korean citizens were cynical of his leadership, saying that the leader, who is young and was brought up under comfortable living conditions, can hardly understand the troublesome situation facing poor people. But more than a few people are turning favorable toward him these days, saying that he is somewhat extraordinary despite his young age because he has studied abroad, the North Korean added.

There are many reports in Seoul that the North Korean leading circles had seriously discussed the question of reforming the agricultural sector, an issue essential to solving the problem of famine. The NKSISC said the office of secretaries for Kim Jong-un has dealt with measures for reforming the ownership and management of cultivated land in a way to provide farmers with limited land ownership and the right to use their farm products at their will. The *Dong-A Ilbo*, one of the most influential newspapers in Seoul, also made a similar report on June 26, 2012, saying that a North Korean task force preparing for measures to improve the North’s economic management viewed the private ownership of cultivated land as a core factor in the agricultural reforms aimed at

promoting farmers’ voluntary spirit.

Reportedly, Kim Jong-un said in a meeting with a group of elite officials held in mid-June 2012: “Food grain is more important than bullets today.” This statement of the young North Korean leader indicates that he is serious about the poor food situation in his country and that his perception of the issue is much different from his father and former leader Kim Jong-il, who valued bullets more than food in the mid-1990s when millions of North Korean citizens reportedly starved to death. The young Kim expressed his unswerving will to solve the food problem in a lengthy speech delivered during a gala function, including a military parade, held in Pyongyang on April 15, 2012 to mark the centenary of the birth of his grandfather and the North’s founding leader Kim Il-sung. He said, “It is our party’s resolute determination to let our people who are the best in the world ? our people who have overcome all obstacles and ordeals to uphold the party faithfully ? not tighten their belts again and enjoy the wealth and prosperity of socialism as much as they like.”

As long as its reforms in the farming sector are concerned, possibilities are high that North Korea will partly decollectivize its farms, in a way similar to that taken by China in its early reform stage, although it is uncertain whether or not the North will eventually dismantle the collective system of its farms and allow farmers to own cultivated land. In an interview with the RFA upon his return from a visit to North Korea in early June last year, a Chinese businessman with an ethnic Korean background, identified by only his last name Park, said the North Korean authorities concerned

have examined a plan to break down each of the cooperative farms into smaller units for their effective management but shelved it because of some internal views against it. Probably, the North has shelved the plan after President Lee Myung-bak, in a lecture at the Institute for Unification Education in Seoul, advised the North Korean leadership to take active reform measures for its farming sector.³⁾

North Korean leadership's serious concerns about reforms for the farming sector is evidenced by the visit to model farms in the Vietnamese Province of Thai Binh in June last year by a WPK delegation led by Kim Yong-il, the secretary of the WPK Central Committee in charge of international affairs.⁴⁾

IV. The Transfer of Rights for Most Foreign Currency Earning Projects Held by the Army to the Cabinet and a More Expansive Role of the Cabinet

Successful economic reforms in North Korea require the transfer of the rights for most foreign currency earning projects held by the army to the Cabinet because the share of the army-related economic sector in the whole North Korean economy is enormous. But the North can hardly take that measure without extraordinary political determination because that step could cause the army to protest.

Reportedly in April last year, North Korea began to take measures for transferring the rights for most foreign currency projects held by the army, except exports

of weapons, to the Cabinet, naming the Cabinet the "economic headquarters."⁵⁾ The North Korean leadership reportedly made a decision on that matter after it was enraged at the corruption in the army. According to the North Korean reports, Kim Jong-un said in a meeting with senior officials of the WPK Central Committee on April 6, 2012, "We must establish discipline and order in a way to concentrate all economic problems in the Cabinet and solve them under its command should we make a revolutionary turn in improving the standard of people's living and turning the country into an economic power. And the Cabinet, as the headquarters in charge of the national economy, is required to establish goals and strategies for the economic development in a scientific, practical way and push ahead with the projects to control, guide and manage the whole economic arena. All sectors and units need to solve their economic problems in consultation of the Cabinet and abide by all decisions and instructions of the Cabinet aimed at fulfilling the economic policies of the party, under any circumstances." A more active role played by the Cabinet is evidenced by Premier Choe Yong-rim's frequent on-spot guidance tours in recent months.

In its newsletter on May 16, 2012, Good Friends, an international non-profit private organization committed to active implementation of peace and human rights, said the young North Korean leader, in meetings with senior WPK officials, told them time and again that WPK officials should not use their power given by the party to interfere with economic affairs and taking care of their personal interest, adding that

they and economic officials are required to carry out their own jobs, respectively. Commenting on Kim Jong-un's instruction, a senior officer at the WPK Central Committee, has reportedly said, "That instruction is aimed at keeping WPK officials, most of them are ignorant of economic affairs, from economic issues, preventing them from hampering economic development and rooting out their personal corruption." It, however, is unimaginable that the WPK's control of the economic sector will stop. Instead, Kim's instruction has undoubtedly enhanced the authority of economic officials more than ever.⁶⁾

Reportedly, Kim Jong-un also said on May 14 last year that army troops are entrusted only with the job to fight well against the enemy in a war with guns and bullets provided by the state. Under these environments, the June 28, 2012 reform measures were set up, while the share of the army-related economic sector in the whole North Korean economy shrank and the province of the economy under the Cabinet's control was expanded. And there came the decision on July 15, 2012 to relieve Ri Yong-ho from "all his posts in the DPRK," including his membership in the five-man Politburo Presidium. The DPRK, the official name of the North, stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since the fourth conference of party representatives held in September 2010 to declare Kim Jong-un as the successor-designate, Ri has served as a mentor to the young Kim, in his capacity as vice chairman of the Party Central Military Commission, chief of the General Political Bureau of the KPA and member of the Politburo Presidium. The stern action

against him reportedly followed his protest against the policy measure to transfer the rights for most foreign currency earning projects held by the army to the Cabinet.

V. Trial Implementation of the June 28, 2012 Reform Measures and North Korean Citizens' Response

The Daily NK, a Seoul-based online newspaper focusing on issues relating to North Korea, reported on July 10, 2012 that in late June 2012 the North Korean authorities concerned notified farms and industrial concerns of the June 28, 2012 reform measures under the heading, "About the Establishment of a New Economic Management System of Our Own Style." According to the report, the measures call for state's advanced provision of cooperate farms and state-run plants with production costs calculated on a basis of market prices, among other things. Farms and plants are obliged to repay the money given by the state, plus a certain portion of their net income from sales of their products. The measures also call for a reduction in the number of working squads in farms each from 10-25 to 4-6 and the provision of them with a certain area of cultivated land and production costs. Drawing the attention of North Korea watchers in Seoul and elsewhere is the flexible pricing system, which reflects price movements on the market. All organizations are to entrust farmers with the job to cultivate their idle land. The state introduced its advanced provision of advanced production costs, called the "state investment," to farms and

plants, in an effort to end the vicious circle of the short supply of funds, raw materials and equipment, a decrease in production and income, and people's weakening desire to work, according to the report. But the North Korean government can hardly supply production costs to all enterprises. For this reason, there is no option for the government but to choose exemplary plants and enterprises and apply the reform measures to them.

Reportedly, the North plans to select three counties in the northernmost province of Ryanggang for a trial project, which calls on the state to provide farmers with all products produced in excess of the production quota. Sources in Hyesan, the capital of the Ryanggang Province, during telephone talks with the NK Daily, said in July 2012 that the North Korean government has already chosen the counties in the provinces – Taehongdan, Kimhyongjik and Kimjongsuk – as model ones and notified cooperative farms there of its decision to supply them with new seeds, fertilizers and weeders, and provide their farmers with 30 percent of the food grain they produce. And the farmers will be allowed to use all of their products in excess of the production quota at their will, they added.

North Korea has reportedly held lecture meetings for workers' organizations, plants, enterprises and residents organizations on a "new economic management system." In relation with this development, RFA quoted North Korean sources as having said that without the type of their products and their production plan fixed by the state, North Korean plants and enterprises are allowed to make decisions on the quantity of the products they produce, their prices and

their sales method, virtually giving up the command economy that's essential to the North's socialist regime. The sources were also quoted as having said that the North Korean government has dismantled the food ration system officially called the Public Distribution System for its citizens, except for officials at the state offices, plus workers in the education and medical sectors. This report, however, seems to be hasty because the North has undoubtedly not given up its command economy and the rationing system, although it may go in that direction.

Before taking reform measures in the agricultural sector, North Korea has reportedly instructed farms to prohibit farmers from having a side job that allows them to help raise their living costs. Farmers are skeptical about the government's promise to provide them with a sufficient livelihood, when they are forced to only work on their farms, saying, "How can we lead our daily lives when the government bans us from having a second job without providing us food grain?" The widespread North Korean citizens's distrust of their government's commitment to the fresh economic reform programs seems to be originated in their furious feelings about the abrupt shelving in 2005 of the July 1, 2002 measures for improving the economic management and the unsuccessful redenomination of North Korean bank notes in late November 2009.

Many North Korea watchers in Seoul and elsewhere have expected the North's legislation to comprehensively implement economic reforms in the sixth session of the 12th-term Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), scheduled for Sept. 25 last year. The

North, however, betrayed their expectations when the session of the rubber-stamp parliament in the North ended only with the enactment of a law regarding a 12-year mandatory educational system and the supplementary election of members of its Presidium. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that the North did not enact laws for the July 1, 2002 reform measures. The measures were made under a Cabinet decree, which came about nine months after related remarks by Kim Jong-il on Oct. 3 of the preceding year.

North Korea shelved the new economic reform measures, including holding a briefing session for them, when the trial reform programs encountered various unexpected problems. But the North continued to implement the trial programs in some selected economic units, with new production goals set up by the units themselves in consideration of the changing economic situation and the evaluation of their performance by the authorities concerned. For this reason, the new, young North Korean leader has reportedly said, "Any failure does not matter. There won't be any problem if we make changes in our policy, whenever our people express their unsatisfactory feelings about it." Under this flexible position, the North has reportedly expanded gradually the area of its trial reform programs for the farming sector since it applied them to farms in the northernmost provinces of Jagang and North Hamgyong.

Reportedly at the turn of October last year, the North eventually abolished the rationing system for workers at state-run enterprises and introduced a market-oriented economic management system there.

Reliable Chinese sources recently said the North began to pay substantial monthly wages amounting to 200-300 yuan (equivalent to 36,000-54,000 North Korean won) to workers in a few state-run enterprises, suspending the rationing system for them. The North is examining the measure to increase monthly salaries for the workers up to 800 yuan (144,000 won) this year after evaluating the results of the trial programs and expanding the province of trial programs, the sources added.

APTN, a global video news agency under the umbrella of the Associated Press, aired an interview with the manager of the Taekam Cooperative Farm, Chong Myongchol, near Pyongyang on Oct. 17, 2012. According to him, North Korean farmers had to give to the state all things they produced in 2011, except seeds, animal feed and food grain. But last year, he continued, they paid for the cultivated land, water, farming materials and equipment to the state, and they could keep the surplus for their own use. This report has undoubtedly shown the fact that North Korea is applying trial reform programs to some farms, if not all the farms in the country.

VI. Conclusion

Developments so far in North Korea indicate that the trial reform programs in the North, which cover the farming and manufacturing sectors, have touched off internal confusion, rather than had positive results. For the success of the reforms, the Kim Jong-un regime needs to meet the following requirements. First, the North Korean leadership needs to push ahead

with the reform programs step by step and more actively, in a way to make the North Korean citizens optimistic about the reforms. It has to clarify its goal to turn the collective farming to family-based farming and free farmers from their unrest about any policy behavior that abandons new changes, seen often in the past.

Second, the North Korean leadership needs to provide a new theory backing up active reforms and an opening-up, and make a comprehensive amendment to the North's guiding ideologies oriented with isolationism. It also needs to revise the constitution that's full of articles against reforms and an opening-up, and convince its citizens and the international community of its will for substantial reforms and an opening-up.

Third, the North Korean leadership needs to improve the North's relations with South Korea, the United States and Japan, and ease military tensions on the Korean Peninsula. In particular, significant is the improvement of inter-Korean relations because that will undoubtedly lead to active cooperation between the two Koreas, which is essential to saving the moribund North Korean economy and promoting the development of the North's economy.

Possibilities are high that the success of the Kim Jong-un regime in its programs for economic reforms and an opening-up will boost the influence of practical senior officials in the leading circles. This development will help form a stable atmosphere on the Korean Peninsula and environments conducive to peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. Chances for a peaceful Korean reunification will be remote as far as the

military hardliners are influential in the North Korean ruling circles. And South Korea needs to do their job for the success of the North's reform measures, if any; promote inter-Korean economic cooperation; and reduce the ever-deepening North's economic dependence upon China.

(This is an excerpt from the Korean version of the essay carried in Vol. 18, No. 4 (Winter of 2012) of *National Strategy*, a journal published by The Sejong Institute.)

Notes :

- 1) The office of secretaries for Kim Jong-il turned into that for his successor Kim Jong-un, upon senior Kim's death in mid-December 2011.
- 2) In a closed-door briefing meeting for the Information Committee of the South Korean National Assembly on July 26, 2012, the National Intelligence Service has reportedly said North Korea had formed a task force for a new economic management formula, under the instructions of the new, young North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un.
- 3) The (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), July 26, 2012.
- 4) Yang Un-chul, "The Possibility of North's Employment of the Vietnamese Doi Moi Policy: On a Viewpoint of a System Change," *Journal of International Trade and Industry Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (November 2012).
- 5) In a briefing meeting for the Information Committee of the South Korean National Assembly on July 26, 2012, the National Intelligence Service of the South said a task force has carried out the reform projects under instructions of the new North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un.
- 6) Prof. Zhu Feng of the Center for International and Strategic Studies at Peking University has said North Korea's measure concentrating economic power into the government is similar to the step taken by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in his initial campaign in 1979 for reforms and an opening-up.

N. Korea's Economic Reliance on China Increases in 2011: Data

<Yonhap from SEJONG, South Korea/ Dec. 27, 2012>

— North Korea's trading with China topped 70 percent of its total exports and imports last year, a report said on Dec. 27, indicating that the North's reliance on its closest ally is increasing amid its isolation from the world.

— According to the report by Statistics Korea in the South, the North's bilateral trading with China came to US\$5.63 billion last year, accounting for 70.1 percent of its total trading with foreign countries.

— The ratio is higher than 56.9 percent estimated in 2010 and marked the first time that it has exceeded the 70 percent level since the South Korean statistics agency compiled related data in 2000.

Weight Loss by N. Korea's First Lady Fuels Speculation of Child Birth

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ Jan. 3, 2013>

— An apparent loss of weight by Ri Sol-ju, the wife of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, fueled speculation in Seoul on Jan. 3 that she may have given birth.

— A government source, who declined to be identified, said images on the Korean Central TV Broadcasting Station showed a slimmer Ri watching a live New Year's performance with her husband and other high-ranking dignitaries.

— He claimed local experts who saw the footage of the first lady speculated that, judging by the weight loss, she may have given birth recently.

N. Korea Linking Mineral Resources Development with Infrastructure Building

<Yonhap from SHENYANG, China/ Jan. 7, 2013>

— North Korea is moving to give mineral resources development rights to Chinese companies in return for pledges to upgrade its backward infrastructure, sources said on Jan. 7.

— Sources with ties to North Korea and Chinese businesses, said Pyongyang would give resources development rights to Chinese investors if they are willing to build social infrastructure such as roads and hotels.

— Such moves come as the impoverished North that does not have not many manufactured goods to sell abroad wants to use its relatively abundant anthracite coal, iron ore and gold reserves as economic bargaining tools.

North Korea to Open Museum Near Angkor Wat in Cambodia

<Yonhap from SEOUL/ Jan. 8, 2013>

— North Korea spent US\$10 million to build a museum near the Angkor Wat temple in Cambodia, and the museum will begin its operations in April, a news report said on Jan. 8.

— Washington-based Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that the museum is located near the entrance of the Angkor Archaeological Park in northern Cambodia, the place of the largest Hindu temple complex in the world.

— The overseas construction unit of the state-run Mansudae Art Studio, the North's group of artists, is building the museum with the \$10 million investment from the North Korean regime, according to the RFA report.

N. Korea's Religious Freedom 'Worst' Yet under New Leader, Survey Shows

<Yonhap from WASHINGTON/ Jan. 8, 2013>

— North Korea's persecution of Christians shows no sign of abating under the leadership of Kim Jong-un, a young man known to have a western education, a religious group here said on Jan. 8.

— "North Korea is ranked No. 1 on the top 50 list of the worst persecutors of Christians for the 11th straight year," Open Doors said, publishing what it calls the 2013 World Watch List. The group is an international Christian ministry that serves persecuted believers.

— It releases annual rankings of the 50 blacklisted nations on the basis of the analysis of information collected through "field operations" and also opinions by external experts. "In North Korea, the main persecution dynamics are Communist operation and dictatorial paranoia," it said.

China Sends Economic Officials to N. Korea to Develop Joint Economic Zones

<Yonhap from BEIJING/ SHENYANG, China/ Jan. 9, 2013>

— China has dispatched a large group of economic officials to North Korea in a bid to find ways to boost joint North Korea-China economic zones, which reportedly remain largely inactive due to a lack of investment, sources said on Jan. 9.

— The sources well versed in North Korea-China relations said that China sent about 70 commerce officials from Jilin Province to the North several months ago as part of the country's efforts to invigorate the joint economic zones in the North Korean city of Rajin and the islands of Hwanggumphyong and Wihwa.

— "The dispatched officials discussed (with the North) a possible management system for the special economic zones and legal guidelines as well as ways to lure foreign investment," a source in China said.

Obama Signs Bill on North Korean Children into Law

<Yonhap from WASHINGTON/ Jan. 14, 2013>

— President Barack Obama on Jan. 14 signed a bill on protecting "stateless children" from North Korea, putting it into effect, according to a congressional source.

— The Senate passed the bill on Dec. 28, followed by a unanimous approval from the House of Representatives on Jan. 1.

— The bill, dubbed the "North Korean Child Welfare Act of 2012," points out that hundreds of thousands of North Korean children suffer from malnutrition in the communist nation. It also says many North Korean children become orphaned or stateless in neighboring nations, mainly China, after their parents flee the impoverished communist nation.

PEOPLE

Kim Jong-un (김정은): Supreme Commander of the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA), First Secretary of the Workers' Party of (North) Korea (WPK), First Chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC)

- Dec. 21 congratulates scientists, technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the lift-off of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2 in a banquet hosted by the WPK for them.
- 24 visits the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun to pay tribute to the great Generalissimos Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.
- 28 receives a New Year's card from Xi Jinping, the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.
- 30 has a photo session with scientists, technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.
- Jan. 1 delivers a New Year's address, while setting forth tasks for building an economic power and improving people's living standards.
 - 1 visits the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang to pay respects to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il on the occasion of the start to 2013.

Kim Yong-nam (김영남): President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA)

- Dec. 16 delivers an address in a mass memorial rally to mark the first anniversary of demise of late leader Kim Jong-il.
- 28 visits the hotel of scientists, technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the successful launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.
- Jan. 4 sends a message of greeting to Thein Sein, president of Myanmar, on the occasion of the country's 65th anniversary of independence.

Choe Yong-rim (최영림): Premier of the Cabinet

- Dec. 27 visits the lodgings of scientists, technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the successful launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.
- 30 inspects Pyongyang Maternity Hospital.
- Jan. 4 makes a field survey of the Pukchang Thermal-power Complex to encourage electricity producers.

Jang Song-thaek (장성택): Chairman of the State Physical Culture and Sports Guidance Commission

- Dec. 30 accompanies North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as Kim has a photo session with scientists and technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.
- Jan. 1 accompanies Kim Jong-un as Kim visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun to pay respects to Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.

Pak Ui-chun (박의춘): Foreign Minister

- Jan. 8 sends a congratulatory message to Le Luong Minh of Vietnam upon his appointment as secretary-general of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- 15 meets with Claudia Von Roehl, a representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Pyongyang, who paid a farewell call on him.

CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW**(Local Events)**

- Dec. 16 A national memorial service takes place in Pyongyang to mark the first anniversary of demise of leader Kim Jong-il with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in attendance.
- 17 An inaugural ceremony of the renovated Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang is held, with Kim Jong-un and his wife Ri Sol-ju in attendance.
- 18 The State Stamp Bureau issues a new stamp to mark the 95th birth anniversary of Kim Jong-suk, Kim Jong-il's mother, slated for Dec. 24.
- 18 A reception is given at the People's Palace of Culture to comfort families of overseas Koreans and foreigners related to revolutionary activities of President Kim Il-sung and leader Kim Jong-il under the care of Kim Jong-un.
- 18 Army-people rallies takes place in South Phyongan, North Hwanghae and North Hamgyong Provinces and Nampho City to hail the successful launch of the second version of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.
- 19 More army-people rallies take place in South Hwanghae, Kangwon and Ryanggang Provinces and Rason City to hail the launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2.
- 20 Officials of the party, armed forces and power organs as well as from other areas visit the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang to pay tribute to the late leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.
- 21 Statues of President Kim Il-sung and leader Kim Jong-il are erected on Tonghung Hill in Hamhung City, South Hamgyong Province.
- 22 The State Stamp Bureau issues a new kind of stamp to mark the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of the DPRK Socialist Constitution, slated for Dec. 27.
- 25 A meeting of workers and members of trade unions is held at the Central Hall of Workers in Pyongyang to celebrate the first anniversary of Kim Jong-un's assumption of supreme commandership of the KPA.
- 26 A national meeting takes place at the People's Palace of Culture in Pyongyang to mark the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of the "Socialist Constitution of the DPRK."
- 28 Youth and students and members of the women's union hold meetings separately at the Central Youth Hall and the Women's Hall in Pyongyang to mark the first anniversary of Kim Jong-un's assumption of supreme commandership of the KPA.
- 28 Director of the General Political Bureau of the KPA Choe Ryong-hae makes a field sur-

- vey of the construction of the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum.
- Dec. 29 A national meeting takes place at the April 25 House of Culture to mark the first anniversary of Kim Jong-un's assumption of supreme commandship of the KPA.
- 30 North Korean papers dedicate editorials to the first anniversary of Kim Jong-un's assumption of supreme commandship of the KPA.
- 30 The WPK Central Committee hosts a grand banquet for the scientists, technicians, workers and officials who greatly contributed to the launch of Kwangmyongsong 3-2 at the Mokran House in Pyongyang.
- 31 The State Stamp Bureau issues a new kind of stamp (a sheet) to hail the launch of satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2 in the country.
- Jan. 1 The New Year's performance, "Following the Party to the End," is given by the Moranbong Band in Pyongyang with the attendance of Kim Jong-un.
- 1 The SPA Presidium and the Cabinet host a banquet at the People's Palace of Culture on the occasion of New Year's Day.
- 3 The North's National Symphony Orchestra gives a concert at the Moranbong Theater for scientists, technicians, workers and officials who contributed to the successful launch of a satellite.
- 4 An Order of Kim Jong-il is awarded to the (North) Korean Committee of Space Technology (KCST) for its success in launching satellite Kwangmyongsong 3-2 in a ceremony.
- 4 A meeting of the service personnel of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces is held at the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang to vow to thoroughly implement the tasks set forth in the New Year Address made by Kim Jong-un.
- 5 A mass rally takes place at Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang to carry out the tasks set forth in the historic New Year Address made by Kim Jong-un.
- 5 Service personnel of the Ministry of People's Security hold a meeting to carry out the tasks Supreme Commander Kim Jong-un set forth in his New Year Address.
- 5 Mass rallies take place in South and North Phyongan, Jagang, South and North Hwanghae, Kangwon, South and North Hamgyong provinces to carry out the tasks set forth by Kim Jong-un in his New Year Address.
- 7 Mass rallies take place in Ryanggang Province, Nampho City and Rason City to carry out the tasks set forth in the historic New Year Address made by Kim Jong-un.
- 8 Workers, members of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea (GFTUK), agricultural workers and members of the Union of Agricultural Workers of Korea (UAWK) vow to thoroughly implement the tasks set forth by Kim Jong-un in his New Year Address.
- 9 A meeting for the members of the youth shock brigade for northern railroads is held in Manpho City, Jagang Province, to implement the tasks set forth by Kim Jong-un in his New Year Address.
- 10 The KCNA says all the people in the DPRK have turned out in an effort to build an economic giant with firm confidence and courage, after receiving the New Year address of supreme leader Kim Jong-un.

- 15 The KCNA says the 17th Kimjongilia Festival will take place in Pyongyang in February on the occasion of the birth anniversary of leader Kim Jong-il.

(Foreign Events)

- Dec. 16 A delegation of the Federation of Korean National Economic Workers in Shenyang, China, headed by Chairman Ri Song-guk arrives in Pyongyang to participate in the memorial service marking the first anniversary of the demise of Kim Jong-il.
- 19 The KCNA denounces South Korea's ruling Saenuri Party for becoming more blatant in its moves to escalate the confrontation with compatriots in the North.
- 20 The KCNA says fresh sanctions (regarding the North's recent launch of a long-range rocket) may spark off an unpredictable response from the DPRK (North Korea).
- 20 Le Quang Ba, the Vietnamese ambassador to the DPRK, and Le Duy Long, the military attache of the embassy, host a reception at the Taedong River Diplomatic Corps Club in Pyongyang to mark the Army Day of Vietnam.
- 20 The military attaches corps in Pyongyang visit the Revolutionary Museum of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of Kim Jong-il's assumption of the supreme commandership of the KPA.
- 21 The KCNA says American citizen Pae Jun-ho who entered Rason City of the DPRK on Nov. 3 for the purpose of a tour committed a crime against the DPRK, and he was put into custody by a relevant institution.
- 21 A delegation of the DPRK-Russia Joint Fisheries Committee headed by Vice Minister of Fisheries Kang Yong-chol departs Pyongyang to take part in the 26th meeting of the committee to be held in Russia.
- 21 A film show is held for the military attaches corps in Pyongyang on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of leader Kim Jong-il's assumption of the supreme commandership of the KPA.
- 23 *Minju Joson*, organ of the Cabinet, denounces a South Korean plan to keep the lamp atop Aegibong in Gimpo City turned on from Dec. 22, 2012 to Jan. 2, 2013 as "another psychological warfare against the DPRK which can never be tolerated."
- 24 The KCNA says The International Kim Jong-il Prize was instituted reflecting the unanimous desire and aspiration of progressive humankind to glorify the immortal feats and noble revolutionary life of leader Kim Jong-il.
- 25 The KCNA says the annual meeting of the "2012 China International News Forum" held in China chose Kim Jong-un as one of the 10 foreign dignitaries of 2012.
- 26 Liu Hongcai, the Chinese ambassador to the DPRK, gives a reception at his embassy for officials of the DPRK Foreign Ministry on the occasion of the New Year 2013.
- 31 The KCNA denounces South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's visit to army units in front-line areas on Dec. 27 as his last ditch efforts "to retrieve the failed policy of confrontation by making the next regime carry forward the moves for a war."
- Jan. 2 The National Defense Commission (NDC) claims in a statement that the South Korean government should choose either confrontation or peace.
- 6 *Minju Joson* says the North-South relations stand at the crossroads of dialogue and

- confrontation, peace and war, and the improvement of inter-Korean relations hinges on decisions made by South Korean authorities.
- Jan. 7 A delegation of Google Corp. of the United States, including Bill Richardson, former governor of New Mexico State, and Google Chairman Eric Schmidt, arrives in Pyongyang by air.
- 7 A Chinese government delegation headed by Li Jinzao, vice minister of Commerce of China, arrives in Pyongyang to attend the seventh meeting of the inter-governmental committee for cooperation between the DPRK (North Korea) and China.
- 9 An agreement on economic and technological cooperation between the governments of the DPRK and China is signed in Pyongyang.
- 11 Spokesmen for the NDC and the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of (North) Korea issue statements to rap the South Korean government “for frantically kicking up anti-DPRK confrontation and war moves from the outset of the year.”
- 14 The Foreign Ministry releases a memorandum that called for the United States to immediately dismantle the U.N. Command, which it said is a subsidiary organ of the United States.
- 14 John Daniszewski, the vice president of the Associated Press of the United States, arrives in Pyongyang by air.

Publisher : Park Jung-chan

Managing Editor : Kim Jin-hyung

Editor : Kwak Seung-ji

Staff Writers : Lee Kwang-ho, Kim Tae-shik

Copyreaders : Adam Lipper, Elaine Ayo, Darryl Coote, Jenna Davis

Contributor : Nam Hyun-woo

Subscription inquiries and address changes should be mailed to : The Editor, **VANTAGE POINT**

YONHAP NEWS AGENCY, Center One Bldg. 67 Suha-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul, 100-210, Korea

P.O. Box Kwanghwamoon 1039, Korea Tel : 82-2-398-3519 Fax : 82-2-398-3463

Internet Address : <http://www.yna.co.kr>

E-mail Address : vpnk@yna.co.kr

Subscription rates (mailing cost included) : US\$70.00 for one year, US\$7.00 per copy

VOL. 36 NO. 2 Copyrights © 2013 by **YONHAP NEWS AGENCY**

Publication Registration No : Culture RA-08259

Printed by The Korea Herald Company, Seoul, Korea
