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Top Headlines

Chosun Ilbo

Bullies Look as Ordinary as Our Kids

JoongAng Ilbo, Dong-a Ilbo, All TVs

Grand National Party Announces 11 Members of its Emergency Leadership Committee, Including 26-year-old Harvard Graduate

Hankyoreh Shinmun

ROK Plans to Cut Subsidies to Specialized High Schools with Low Employment Rates

Hankook Ilbo, Kyunghyang Shinmun, Seoul Shinmun

Lee, Hyun in North Korea to Mourn Kim's Death

Domestic Developments

- 1 Two ROK civilian mourning groups led by the widows of former President Kim Dae-jung and Hyundai Group Chairman Chung Mong-hun arrived in Pyongyang yesterday to pay their condolences on the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said that Kim Jong-un thanked the South Koreans after they expressed their condolences and sympathy. (All)
- 2 With the ROK, the U.S., China and Japan speeding up efforts to resume the Six-Party Talks, ROK nuclear envoy Lim Sung-nam is reportedly planning to visit the U.S. as early as this week to meet U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Glyn Davies. (Hankyoreh)

International News

- 1 American University Professor Sean Flynn told *Hankyoreh Shinmun* that U.S. copyright law does not reflect the KORUS FTA, which will put the ROK at a disadvantage. (Hankyoreh)
- 2 Japanese Prime Minister Noda and Chinese President Hu agreed during a December 26 meeting that maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula serves the common interests of all parties. (Hankook, Hankoyreh, Kyunghyang)
- 3 North Korea's *Rodong Sinmun* referred to Kim Jong-un as the head the Central Military

Commission of the Workers' Party on December 26, indicating that Kim Jong-il's son is on track to take full control of the country. (Hankook)

Media Analysis

North Korea

All ROK media covered yesterday's visit to Pyongyang by the widows of former President Kim Dae-jung and Hyundai Group Chairman Chung Mong-hun. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said that Kim Jong-un thanked the South Koreans after they expressed their condolences and sympathy.

Conservative *Chosun Ilbo* said in its inside-page story that Kim Jong-un sent ROK society two messages by receiving the ROK condolence delegations. First, by giving them honorable treatment, he indirectly asked for rice and dollars. Second, by criticizing the ROKG for its attitude toward South Koreans' condolence visits, he hopes to sow division within different elements of ROK society. One professor added that Kim Jong-un used his meeting with the ROK delegations as an opportunity to enhance his domestic position.

Chosun Ilbo senior journalist Kim Dae-jung opined: "North Korea experts, lawmakers and political groups are all talking about the early stabilization of the Kim Jong-un regime. ... The United States and China are also giving top priority to stability on the Korean Peninsula. ... Talk of stabilization of the Kim Jong-un regime may break the hearts of most North Korean residents, who hope that the death of Kim Jong-il will put an end to the Kim dynasty's hereditary power succession and long dictatorship. Swift moves by the ROK and its neighbors to cement Kim Jong-un's succession and stabilize the North Korean regime will deprive North Koreans of their long-awaited opportunity."

Left-leaning *Kyunghyang Shinmun* editorialized: "The Kim Jong-un regime seems to be taking root very quickly. ... The problem is that the situation in the North is not good enough that short-term stability for the Kim Jong-un regime can lead to medium- and long-term stability. Whatever country you may live in, economic conditions, namely people's livelihoods, are key to medium- and long-term stability. ... The path that the Kim Jong-un regime should take is obvious. The only possible option for the North is to restore its economy by breaking out of international isolation and adopting a policy of reform and opening up."

Right-of-center *JoongAng Ilbo* also carried a similar editorial titled "People Should Come First" in its Monday edition. The editorial said, "As its state-run media indicated in their New Year's editorials this and last year, North Korea cannot aspire to join the ranks of powerful and prosperous nations 'without improving ordinary citizens' living standards.' In this sense, North Korea's overemphasis on the importance of Kim Jong-il's 'military first' policy is contradictory."

JoongAng Ilbo said in its Saturday editorial: "The latest comments from the Presidential office suggest a dovish shift in North Korean policy in the wake of Kim's death. ... If the ROKG truly decided to reset inter-Korean relations, it would be better to send a positive message to the North. The United States has already promised to provide large-scale 'nutritional assistance' to the North. The ROK also needs to express its intention to supply a large amount of food aid."

Opinions/Editorials

North Koreans' Hopes Are Collapsing

(*Chosun Ilbo*, December 27, 2011, Page 30)

By Senior Journalist Kim Dae-jung

North Korea experts, lawmakers and political groups seem too anxious about the possibility of facing instability in North Korea. All these groups seem to be talking about is the early stabilization of the Kim Jong-un regime. Ruling and opposition politicians are calling for stability. In his New Year address, President Lee Myung-bak reportedly will also convey his hope for the North Korean regime's stability following Kim Jong-il's death. It seems that the stability of the Kim Jong-un regime is our grave concern.

The United States and China also are giving top priority to stability on the Korean Peninsula. In particular, China has lent

weight to Kim Jong-il's succession system when all members of the political bureau visited a mourning place for Kim Jong-il in Beijing. China's attitude may be understandable in that it is North Korea's ally. But even the United States is making remarks that emphasize the stability on the Korean Peninsula following Kim's death. The United States and China are moving in sync, at least in this aspect.

There are some reasons for these countries to champion the stability of the Kim Jong-un regime. One reason that they cite is the need to defuse tension and maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula. This is based on the groundless scenario that if the North's succession system faces chaos, a power struggle, or if political instability lingers for a long time, this could provoke hardliners in North Korea into armed attack against the ROK. These countries also seem to believe that North Korea's political instability could serve as a good opportunity for ROK hardliners, who might benefit from such instability.

However, we should reflect on how North Koreans will think of our call for stability. Talk of stabilization of the Kim Jong-un regime may break the hearts of most North Korean residents, who hope that the death of Kim Jong-il will put an end to the Kim dynasty's hereditary power succession and long dictatorship. Swift moves by the ROK and its neighbors to cement Kim Jong-un's succession and stabilize the North Korean regime will deprive North Koreans of their long-awaited opportunity.

Democratic forces in North Korea, including intellectuals, students and market forces, are purportedly being created in North Korea despite strict monitoring and suppression. These forces may consider neighboring countries' support for Kim Jong-un to be a betrayal, perhaps as serious as the regime's suppression. Even if these forces intellectually may understand support of pro-North Korean forces in the ROK for the North's dynastic succession and the 29 year old leader's dictatorship, they would not accept ROK democratic elements, ROKG officials and some civilian organizations which are talking about the stability of the Kim Jong-un regime. Ironically, the ROK's traditional elements of democracy are supporting North Korea's hereditary dictatorship and anti-democracy.

It seems that through this call for stability, by showing that the ROK is favorable toward the post-Kim Jong-il regime and is not taking an opportunistic approach toward the North, we hope to encourage the Kim Jong-un regime to be conciliatory in inter-Korean relations. It seems, however, that the ROK's benevolent gestures are not bearing fruit, as the North is threatening to adjust inter-Korean relations in consideration of the ROK's condolences attitude. In addition, there are no indications that Kim Jong-un has a strategic and forward-looking mindset. Some scholars argue that it is in the national interest for the ROK to show flexibility on condolences and lead inter-Korean relations to its favor. However, the ROK's national interest would be served better by aiming at securing not only the safety of 50 million ROK people but also the human rights, freedom and life of 25 million North Koreans.

What we desperately need now is to wait and see. We do not need to make predictions or demands. It would be disgusting to flatter North Korea, frankly speaking. While watching what direction the North Korean regime will take, we should fully prepare for a variety of scenarios. It is not too late to make our demands after watching the Kim Jong-un regime's policy toward the ROK, through both its economic stance and its foreign policy, and then verifying those policies' feasibility. Even if there is a change in North Korea, we should not be reflexively pessimistic. We would have to pay for any breakthrough in inter-Korean relations at this critical time. We cannot bring a change to North Korea without the courage to make investments and endure sacrifices. We should believe resolutely that a change in the North Korean regime will lead to the stability and security on the Korean Peninsula in the long term.

We should not hinder the North's voluntary movement towards change nor should we block North Koreans' struggle for freedom by talking about stability. We should not accept calls for stability blindly, which may be disguised as calls for peace.

Obama Doctrine Put to Test

(Hankook Ilbo, December 26, 2011, Page 35)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Tae-gyu

The United States, Japan and India held their first trilateral meeting last week, which was, unfortunately, eclipsed by the

death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. Officials from the three countries discussed issues of common interest in Washington on December 19 (local time.) The importance the United States attached to this meeting is evident from the attendees, which include U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell; Assistant Secretary of State for Central and South Asian Affairs Robert Blake; Peter Lavoy, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs; and Derek Chollet, Principal Deputy Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff.

Even though details have not been disclosed, it seems clear that the three countries discussed China at the meeting. Think tanks from all three countries have called for such a meeting since 2006, citing conflicts with China over diplomatic, military and economic issues. This meeting is taking place at a time when China is taking an aggressive stance in East Asia and the United States is seeking to manage the Asia-Pacific region.

Countries involved are engaging in complicated diplomacy in response to China's rise and threat. Last month, Australia agreed to provide a base for U.S. Marines and made a strategic choice to export its natural uranium to India. Australia is now seeking a trilateral meeting with the United States and Japan. India, which is competing with China in the economic, defense and diplomatic spheres, has advanced its "Look East Policy" since last year, focusing its diplomacy on Asia. Apart from the meeting in Washington, India is staging military exercises with the United States and Japan off its southwestern Malabar Coast. Japan is further strengthening its strategic relations with Australia and India, proclaiming its role as the fulcrum of East Asia. Through these complicated moves, the countries are focusing their efforts on countering or closing in on a hegemonic China.

For the United States, this meeting is a continuation of the Obama Doctrine. The core of the Obama Doctrine is that the United States will play a leading role in the Pacific region in the future. Before the September 11 terrorist bombing, the United States' major concern was the rise of China. The United States may have needed the China threat for the Obama doctrine to gain traction, at a time when its decade-long war on terror is drawing to a close. According to diplomatic sources, at this meeting, the United States urged Japan to play a bigger role in East Asia. The United States is calling on Japan and India to share their burden in response to China's threat. This move by the United States is aimed at trying to offset a decline in its influence stemming from cuts to its defense budget. [Up to this point,] India and Japan have had a free ride in terms of regional security.

However, Kim Jong-il's death challenges an Obama Doctrine that excludes China. The United States, which had no idea that Kim had died, must realize that it would be difficult to advance its strategy in Asia without [cooperation from] China. Without China's cooperation, the United States would face a similar situation regarding sanctions on Iran and the Afghanistan issue. This is why we cannot rule out the possibility that the United States, with no leverage over North Korea, may move more actively to manage the North than it did before Kim's death. In the post-Kim Jong-il era, our task is to realize that we should pay attention to more than just North Korea.

Change in NK Policy Needed

(Dong-a Ilbo, December 26, 2011, Page 35)

North Korea has illustrated that it will continue its "military first" policy, which is the policy responsible for North Korea's nuclear armament and its aggression against the ROK. The *Rodong Sinmun*, the official newspaper of the North's ruling Workers' Party, said Saturday, "We will complete the grand task of the 'military first' revolution by honorably calling Compatriot Kim Jong-un our supreme commander and military general." This [pledge to continue the 'military first' policy] came a week after Kim Jong-il's death. This suggests that the junior Kim, who assumed the vice chairmanship of the party's Central Military Committee upon receiving the rank of full general last year, likely soon will assume the post of supreme commander. Kim Jong-il also started ruling North Korea as supreme commander in 1994 following the death of his father and the country's founder, Kim Il-sung.

Jang Song-taek, Kim Jong-il's brother-in-law and key patron, was seen wearing a military uniform with a full general's badge for the first time Saturday while accompanying Kim Jong-un to pay respects to the late Kim Jong-il. Kim Kyong-hui, Jang's wife and Kim Jong-il's younger sister, became a full general last year. Therefore, the powerful military couple, who are aunt and uncle to the new ruler, appears to be protecting the 29-year-old supreme commander.

The trio has never served in the military but were hurriedly granted full general titles in order for North Korea to implement its military first policy. Relying on this policy, Kim Jong-il conducted military aggression against the ROK and sought to strengthen his military credentials through the development of nuclear weapons and missiles. If Kim Jong-un inherits this policy from his late father, a change in Pyongyang cannot be expected.

Even though Kim Jong-un is poised to succeed his father as ruler based on the military first policy, the ROKG seems to be highly negligent and indifferent, causing fears among the people. The government issued a statement Tuesday saying, "We hope that North Korea regains stability soon so that the ROK and North Korea can cooperate to assure peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula." In his meeting with the leaders of the ruling and main opposition parties Thursday, President Lee Myung-bak said, "These measures were taken to demonstrate that the ROK does not perceive North Korea as the enemy," adding, "if North Korean society stabilizes, we can handle inter-Korean relations flexibly as necessary." Why is Seoul so impatient? If the ROK only emphasizes flexibility despite the fact that it can hardly predict if and how the North will change, Seoul could end up trapping itself. This could be interpreted in the ROK and abroad as a sign that President Lee, fatigued by lasting tension amid Seoul's pledge to stick to its principles, is effectively surrendering to Pyongyang despite no signs that the North's attacks on the ROK naval corvette *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong Island will be handled anytime soon.

The ROK also has not given its people confidence that it can accurately assess the situation in North Korea. Though the government had remained uninformed of Kim Jong-il's death for 51 hours and 30 minutes, President Lee said, "The ROK's intelligence capacity is not too weak to cause concern." He seemed to be trying to protect the chief of the National Intelligence Service when he said, "our government learned of Kim's death through Pyongyang's announcement, but all other countries were unaware of the news as well." Sudden changes in the North are an extremely important matter to the ROK. As chief executive, President Lee should not be downplaying that Korea was caught unaware just because other nations missed the news as well, trying to self-justify the intelligence failure.

Through the Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland, North Korea said Sunday, "Whoever attempts to block any South Korean people from all walks of life from visiting our country to pay their respects (to Kim Jong-il) will be defined as criminals guilty of grave crimes who defame our supreme dignity. We will never forgive them." Pyongyang obviously remains unchanged, and Seoul cannot afford to let down its guard negligently.

People Should Come First

(JoongAng Ilbo, December 26, 2011, Page 34)

New North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's taking of power is ostensibly going smoothly. The state's *Rodong Shinmun* began to call him "our supreme commander" in a Saturday editorial one week after his father Kim Jong-il's sudden death, hinting that Kim Jong-un will soon be promoted to the highest post in the North. The newspaper has also praised the young son for his "having sternly defeated imperialist reactionaries."

These movements are in sharp contrast to Pyongyang's timid response to Kim Il-sung's death in 1994 when Kim Jong-il chose to govern the country through the memory of his father for three years after his death. This means Pyongyang was well prepared for a peaceful power succession since Kim Jong-il suffered a heart attack in 2008, raising the possibility that Kim Jong-un's new regime will settle down soon, particularly given that the international community wants it to be stabilized as soon as possible.

But wishes can hardly guarantee the stability of the new regime. As its state-run media indicated in their New Year's editorials this and last year, North Korea cannot aspire to join the ranks of powerful and prosperous nations "without improving ordinary citizens' living standards."

In this sense, North Korea's overemphasis on the importance of Kim Jong-il's 'military first' policy is contradictory. Despite its urgent need to fill the power vacuum left by Kim Jong-il's death, and its leaders' conviction that they can avoid the fate of the collapsed communist regimes in East Europe with its "military first" policy, Pyongyang must understand that it can not enhance people's lives when its resources are monopolized by the defense sector.

In a New Year's address this past January, Pyongyang again stressed the urgent need to develop light industry as evidenced by the title, "Let's make a decisive turning point in our striving for improving people's livelihoods and construct a powerful nation by facilitating development of light industry." The North's economic plight can be illustrated by the fact that the regime, in its 2009 New Year's address, used the words "military first" 32 times, which decreased to 15 in 2010 and to 14 this year.

The new regime must return to the spirit of the New Year's address if it really wants to stabilize the country. No doubt the ROK can help ease their economic pain. We hope Pyongyang will demonstrate a maturity toward our president's willingness to improve ties, rather than attempting to shake down the ROK.

Be Flexible with the North

(JoongAng Ilbo, December 24, 2011, Page 30)

In a meeting with new heads of the ruling and principal opposition parties, President Lee Myung-bak said the ROK government does not want to appear hostile to North Korea in this transition period, following the unexpected death of long-time leader Kim Jong-il. The government granted a select number of civilians the opportunity to visit Pyongyang to attend Kim's funeral, as well as send out condolence letters. Lee told the Grand National Party's leader Park Geun-hye and Democratic Unity Party head Won Hye-young that Seoul plans to be flexible in handling North Korean affairs.

The Lee administration has been insisting on an apology from Pyongyang for its attack against an ROK naval ship and Yeonpyeong Island. But a senior official at the Blue House said the government could change its position depending on how North Korea responds to the international demand for denuclearization. The latest comments from the Presidential office suggest a dovish shift in North Korean policy in the wake of Kim's death.

When North Korea's founder Kim Il-sung died suddenly in 1994, the government had been vehemently opposed to an expression of condolence or visiting Pyongyang to attend the funeral. The Pyongyang regime took the action personally and held a grudge against Seoul for many years. Even as tens of thousands starved to death, North Korea refused any help from the Kim Young-sam government. Inter-Korean relations only revived when President Kim Dae-jung took office. This different reaction to Kim Jong-il's death implies that the Seoul government does not want to see ties with Pyongyang worsen.

It remains unclear what changes the untested young heir will bring to the foreign and inter-Korean front. Even so, Seoul does not want to waste any potential chance for positive change with new leadership in Pyongyang; thus it is demonstrating flexibility and performing a reconciliatory gesture. "We want to reset inter-Korean relations with the occasion of Kim's death," a senior Blue House official said.

If the ROKG has decided to reset inter-Korean relations, it would be better to send a positive message to the North. The United States has already promised to provide large-scale nutritional assistance to the North. The ROK also needs to express its intention to supply a large amount of food aid. The political community should also get on board with the government's position and wait patiently for a definite direction. In the special meeting on inter-Korean relations at the National Assembly, lawmakers were engrossed in the intelligence failure concerning how Kim died. It is meaningless to raise conspiracy theories and questions over a country when it is mourning its state leader. The government must be discreet at sensitive times like these.

Kim Jong-un Regime Should Set out Vision for Reform and Opening

(Kyunghyang Shinmun, December 27, 2011, Page 35)

The Kim Jong-un regime seems to be taking root very quickly. North Korea's official media sources are treating the new regime as an established fact, referring to Kim, the Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party, as "supreme commander" and "leader of the Workers' Party Central Commission."

Observers are predicting he will soon be named the party's general secretary and supreme commander of the People's

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Army, while some are even saying he's already been named to these positions.

This is much quicker than most experts had predicted, these experts expected North Korea would be run based on the teachings of Kim Jong-un's predecessors for some time before he officially inherited power.

Whether the early stability of the Kim Jong-un regime will contribute to the stability of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia is a matter of interest in the days ahead.

Kim's early stability appears to come thanks to constant efforts made by Kim Jong-il to prepare for Kim Jong-un's succession since his father's stroke in 2008.

Kim Jong-un's father faithfully laid the groundwork from the time before his son officially was nominated as successor in January. By restoring Kim's uncle, National Defense Commission vice chairman Jang Song-taek, and naming Ri Yong-ho chief of general staff of the Korean People's Army, Kim Jong-il sketched out the contours of his son's regime after his demise.

The internal and external situation North Korea faces can also be counted as a major factor in the early stability, making the environment on where North Korea's power elites could think of nothing else [beyond Kim Jong-un].

The problem with this is that the situation in the North is not good enough that short-term stability for the Kim Jong-un regime can lead to medium - and long-term stability.

Whatever country you may live in, economic conditions, namely people's livelihoods, are key to medium - and long-term stability. It is a universal law of all nations that no matter how stable a country may be politically, its stability suffers if the economy is in trouble and the people are in poverty.

Even North Korea, which has suffered from economic difficulties since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in the 1990s, cannot be an exception.

The path that the Kim Jong-un regime should take is obvious. The only possible option for the North is to restore its economy by breaking out of international isolation and adopting a policy of reform and opening up. North Korea did take steps like the "economic improvement measures" of July 1, 2002, and the late November 2009 currency reform, but these produced only negative results.

This is because North Korea has pursued only North Korean-style reforms without openness. North Korea must realize that reforms and opening up have to go together.

Help from the international community is necessary, too, for North Korea's reforms and openness. For this to happen, forward-thinking measures are required, something akin to a determination on North Korean policy toward the ROK and the nuclear issue.

The world is looking out for the so-called "New Year's Joint Editorial" that North Korea will be releasing this weekend.

We look forward to Kim, as the leader of a new regime, showing a clear determination and vision for reforms and openness through this editorial.

Signature: TOKOLA

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