

DPRK NEW YEARS EDITORIAL LACKS NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

Through the annual New Year's Day Joint Editorial released on January 1, North Korea called for the full implementation of the October 4 North-South joint resolution, and on the domestic front, it stubbornly defended its system while calling for improvement of its citizens' quality of life.

This year's editorial differed from previous years, which mentioned inter-Korean relations only in basic, abstract forms, by reminding readers of the content of the October 4 agreement and calling for its thorough implementation, and concretely expressing its hopes that the agreement will move forward.

The joint editorial portrayed North Korea's anticipation regarding the October 4 agreement, and specifically, that "inter-Korean economic cooperation should be encouraged in such a way that it is promoted in a diverse way and on the principle of serving the common interests and prosperity," and "cooperation and exchanges between the north and south should be expanded and developed to make them substantially contribute to national reunification."

On the domestic front, the joint resolution proclaimed, "The entire Party, the whole country and all the people should launch a general offensive to build an economic power" in order to improve the livelihoods of the people and further the economy in this year of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. It also called on the people to "glorify this year of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK as a year of historical turn which will go down in the history of the country," and proclaimed that "it is our

Party's determination and will to raise our economy and military might consolidated in the tempest of the Songun revolution, and thus open wide in 2012 the gate to a great, prosperous and powerful country."

In particular, the editorial employed several new phrases, including, "the economy is the front of main efforts in the building of a great, prosperous and powerful nation," "and "people's living-first policy," while proclaiming that "we should make this year... a worthwhile and delightful year which sees a substantial change in improving the people's standard of living." According to the editorial, if the North is to see its dream of becoming a great and prosperous nation in the next five years, it must prioritize economic development and the improvement of standards of living.

By stating, "At present there is no more urgent and important task than solving the problem of food," it is obvious that even North Korean party officials are aware that a "great, prosperous and powerful nation" is not possible without economic development and better living standards. In order to improve the economy, the editorial calls for adhering to the following three principles:

- "The principle of technically modernizing the economy while preserving the specific features of our economic structure,"
- "The principle pf making people enjoy substantial benefit while ensuring the greatest possible profitability," and,
- "The principle of developing external economic relations while putting main stress on tapping all domestic resources and potentials."

However, economic development based on these principles does not represent realistic reform measures or a new vision, but rather economic management with the preservation of socialist, collective principles while developing technologically and furthering international economic exchange.

In addition, last year's joint editorial was exceptional in that it placed economic issues first, stressing their importance, while this year strengthening national defense again took first chair in the editorial, stating, "Strong defense capabilities are symbolic of the independent dignity of Songun Korea," and, "Our Party is consistent in its revolutionary stand to hold the idea of giving prominence to the military affairs as the basic strategy in building a great, prosperous and powerful nation."