

Kim Jon Un Regime Will Not Last Long

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North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, is finally dead. The immediate focus of attention is whether his third son Jong Un, nominated as his successor, could establish his regime in a stable manner. I would predict that a Kim Jong Un regime will not last long. The reason Kim Jong Il nominated Jong Un as his successor was his fear that his past policies could come under fire after his death. Kim Jong Il was well aware that criticisms against his government were growing after his "military-first" policy led 15% of the North Korean people to starve to death. Therefore, Kim Jong Il gave the nomination to Jong Un who was expected to unconditionally inherit his policy.

Two anti-Jong Un groups

There are two anti-Jong Un groups in North Korea. The first comprises WPK and military officials who would like to take a Chinese-type reform and opening policy to defend the dictatorship in the northern half of the Korean Peninsula. "All WPK leaders except one favor a reform and opening policy, but they remain silent fearing that their offer to take such policy could lead themselves to be killed," said the late Hwang Jang Yop, the WPK's former international secretary, who defected to South Korea. North Korea could see a government change similar to the Chinese upheaval where the Great Cultural Revolution ended with the arrest of Gang of Four after the death of Mao Zedong.

The second anti-Jong Un group consists of market supporters who have taken advantage of their market-based business for their survival even under the suspension of the ration system since the mid-1990s. Through rumors, radio broadcasting, flyers and other propaganda tools, they have learned that South Korea is affluent. Videos of South Korean dramas sold in the black market have led them to yearn for the South.

If social controls ease, market supporters accounting for 80% of the North Korean people may launch movements to achieve business freedom,

dismantle co-op farms and improve their livelihood. There could be citizens' large-scale anti-government demonstrations, as seen in Libya and Russia. Massive North Korean citizens could try to enter South Korea by land. Citizens could search for and lynch National Security Department officials who killed their relatives. If South Korea takes a proactive approach on such developments, North Korea may have a big movement for a South-led "freedom reunification" of the Korean Peninsula.

Discuss a plan to rescue abductees

The United States and South Korea are making political, diplomatic and military preparations to cope with emergency in North Korea, while China is deploying troops on its border with North Korea and working on Pyongyang to establish a pro-Beijing government adopting a reform and opening policy. Chinese experts have recently claimed that China alone has the right to send troops to North Korea under a mutual defense treaty in the event of emergency in the North. In emergency, the United States and China may give top priority to securing nuclear weapons held by North Korea.

Given that Japan's top priority is a safe rescue of Japanese abductees in North Korea, Japan must consider the possibility of these abductees being harmed in emergency. In order to rescue the abductees, Japan should consider sending liaison officials accompanying U.S. and South Korean forces moving northward and dispatching transport aircraft of the Self-Defense Forces if necessary. The best scenario for Japan is that South Korea that has the military alliance with the United States and the treaty of basic relations with Japan would achieve a freedom reunification of the peninsula to prevent China from expanding its influences. For the immediate future, Japan should collect and analyze information on North Korea's internal developments and the Japanese abductees and hold strategic talks with the United States and South Korea.

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