



DPRK NEW YEAR'S JOINT EDITORIAL EMPHASIZES LIGHT INDUSTRY FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE

In North Korea's 2011 New Year's Joint Editorial, the main theme was again the development of light industry in order to improve the lives of the people, just as last year, and emphasis was placed on Party leadership, self-reliance, and the principles of socialist economic management. Under the slogan, "Let's bring about a decisive turn in the improvement of the people's standard of living and the building of a great, prosperous and powerful country by accelerating the development of light industry once again this year," light industry and quality of life improvements were again highlighted as part of the advance toward the 2012 goal of opening the doors to a Strong and Prosperous Country, but this issue was only lightly touched upon.

On the other hand, considerable space was allotted to the section on inter-Korean relations. Inter-Korean dialog and cooperation were emphasized, and the editorial positively evaluated its efforts toward unification, stating that "Last year our nation's movement for the country's reunification made dynamic progress even in the face of the vicious challenges of the separatist forces inside and outside." In 2010, the Joint Editorial was more pessimistic, calling South-North relations "aggravated" by vicious maneuvers of "splittist forces." This year, the editorial called for "all Koreans in the north, south and abroad join efforts and bring a new phase of independent reunification!" Under this slogan, Pyongyang appeared to take a very positive stance, citing the need to ease tensions between the two Koreas, to remove the danger of war and safeguard peace, and to proactively promote dialogue and cooperation.

Under the banner of 'national prosperity', the article emphasized creating an atmosphere of



dialog and cooperation between the two Koreas, and highlighted the need to diffuse the situation that the Lee Myung-bak government drove “to the brink of war.” Despite the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong Island incidents, the North maintained a consistent effort to reopen Keumgang Mountain tourist resort and other steps to repair inter-Korean relations. For North Korea, a tense military atmosphere between the two Koreas is not helpful in its bid to successfully reach its goal of a Strong and Prosperous Country by 2012 by building an economically strong state. Pyongyang also needs to manage relations with Seoul in order to improve relations with the United States and others.

The editorial calls for bringing about “a decisive turn in the improvement of the people’s standard of living and the building of a great, prosperous and powerful country,” and launching “an all-out, vigorous offensive for a breakthrough to realize the wish of the President to build a prosperous country, and thus greet the centenary of his birth as the greatest holiday of Kim Il Sung’s nation and a great event of humankind,” setting 2012 as the goal for opening the doors to a Strong and Prosperous Country. The editorial emphasized that “this year’s general offensive is a continuation of the grand onward march for improving the people’s standard of living, and its new, higher stage,” and is Party policy that “the improvement of the people’s standard of living should be regarded as the most important issue, the highest goal of its struggle, and carried through to the end.”

In the 2010 New Year’s Joint Editorial, Party policy was described as it’s “steadfast determination and resolve to have our people, who have weathered difficult hardships following the party, enjoy being blessed with socialism to their hearts’ content by having the achievements of the great upswing actually be allotted to the people, and to blossom into reality, without fail, the sublime intent and desires of the fatherly leader, who dedicated his entire life to the people.”



This year, “light industry is the major front in the general offensive,” while “light industry and agriculture [were] the main fronts of the struggle” in 2010.

Regarding light industry, the editorial emphasized, “The sector of light industry should pay first and foremost attention to making the factories and enterprise . . . keep their production running at a high level,” and that they “should focus on the production of primary consumer goods and other necessities widely used in life, and expand and augment the overall production of other consumer goods.”

The economic section mentioned coal, electricity, iron and steel, as well as transportation as four vanguard industries, emphasized improvements in light and chemical industry, and said that “the agricultural front is the lifeline for solving the problem of people’s living.” The editorial also states, “Breaking through the cutting edge that all sectors should surpass in the shortest time the scientific and technical standards the world has reached,” on the basis of self-reliance and the principles of socialist economic management. The section would lead one to believe that North Korea needs Chinese-style reforms in order to develop its economy, yet it bases these campaigns on self-reliance and the socialist principles of “strict discipline . . . in planning, finance and labour administration.”

This year, North Korea’s New Year’s Joint Editorial continues to push for light industrial development in order to improve the lives of the people and open the doors to a Strong and Prosperous Country in 2012. However, now, after hammering out public financing during last year’s Party conference, the Party is reaffirming that development will be on the basis of “our-style” of reform.