

Korean Reunification Getting Closer

The Daily NK is reporting on a speech by South Korean President Lee Myung Bak who believes reunification is getting closer. He called on South Korea to build its economy in preparation. (<http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?cataId=nk00100&num=7131>).

“Speaking at a meeting with approximately 150 Koreans residing in Malaysia yesterday President Lee said, “It is not far, I can feel reunification is close,” adding, “The North Korean people, who did not know the way the world was flowing due to the iron wall that surrounded them, now know how it is changing.”

“Now they have started figuring out that South Korea is affluent,” the President stated, proclaiming, “This is a change of significance that no one can stop. Reunification is getting closer.” ...

Yesterday’s comments appeared to build on the President’s post-Yeonpyeong speech, wherein he said “it is almost impossible to anticipate North Korea setting aside military adventurism and nuclear weapons of its own accord”, and imply that the Lee administration no longer expects anything good to come from the Kim Jong Il regime, but now sees hope of change through the people and will pay attention to changes there.

However, given that the South Korean President’s words represent a direct threat to the North Korean system, an angry response is inevitable.

President Lee also used his speech to maintain South Korea and the U.S.’ attempt to deter further North Korean attacks, saying, “I have informed North Korea that there will be a counter-attack if it occurs again,” and adding, “Since we have the people behind us, the ROK military has everything in a state of readiness. The ROK is equipped with great military power.”

He asserted, “Even though there were victims here, there was also something lost in North Korea. The people raged against it and applications to join the Marines have increased. Seeing as how we are united and a great many countries of the world unanimously support the ROK, I believe we must turn this misfortune to our advantage.” “

Please read the entire article for more information.

Analysis. This statement by President Lee might be considered to be a war warning. There is no way the Kim family goes peacefully into retirement. Like many other megalomaniacs before him, Kim will “burn the house down” before he will surrender power. He will go to his grave believing that the people of North Korea let him down instead of the other way around.

What has altered the situation critically between the two Koreas is the Lee government. The stance of the Lee government on not giving into the North's game playing to get economic support has surprised even the PRC. They cannot seem to figure out why President Lee is so intransigent in meeting with the North after the Cheonan sinking and this latest attack on YP Do. The game always worked before. Sink the Cheonan and demand that the Mt. Kumgang tours restart? Perhaps the PRC is ignoring the non-sequitor because it is faced with the total support of the Kim family country.

And therein lies the PRC's two greatest fears about Korea. They are either stuck with a long term

economic drain that some people would say that they can't afford and most would say they don't want to afford. Or, the PRC faces a massive movement of refugees into Manchuria. This will happen whether or not North Korea collapses or goes to war. The same is true on the North Korean border with Russia only to a much smaller scale.

Nor is there, I believe, any nonviolent fix to this situation short of South Korea allowing itself to be blackmailed into supporting the North. This President Lee will apparently not do. We wait for the next shoe to drop.