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II. Republic of Korea

1. Summit Meeting Peculiar

Chosun Ilbo ("DEAR ROH, ON THE WAY TO PYONGYANG", Seoul, 2007/10/01 23:00:00 GMT+0) wrote in an editorial that they regard this summit meeting as very peculiar, pointing to the fact that

President Roh Moo-hyun has only a few more months left in office, and further has an approval rate of only 20%, which means that the pressure on him would be incredibly heavy. Roh remarked on October 1 that he would put "the peace settlement on Korean Peninsula" as the top priority in the meeting. But the problem is that it is difficult to pursue "real peace", not "fake peace" which can be abused as no more than a means to hide the intention of invasion. Even so, Roh kept on trying to avoid mentioning the issue of nuclear weapons to Kim Jong-il. What Roh needs to be aware of is what the DPRK is doing currently. They not only still claim that they are one of the countries possessing nuclear weapons, but also deploy a strong military force which is a great threat to the ROK along the border. Roh should rethink about the true meaning of "real peace" and must urge Kim to disable the nuclear program, which is the key for the peace of Korean Peninsula, and the only way that can lead to the survival and economic revival of the DPRK.

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2. High Expectations for Summit Meeting

Hankyoreh ("EXPECTATIONS FOR ROH AND KIM", Seoul, 2007/10/01 06:50:00 GMT+0) argued that even though the inter-Korean relationship seemed to be getting better through various exchanges and economic cooperation since 2000, it still hasn't met the expectations of the world. Under such circumstances, how should the two leaders solve the tasks left to them through the meeting? It was appropriate for President Roh to put the peace settlement on Korean Peninsula as the top priority of this meeting. Along with the declaration of peace on the peninsula, Roh also should achieve the regularization of high-level talks to deal with relaxation of tension in border areas such as the West Sea and DMZ, building trust on military problems, etc. Obviously, one of the most crucial purposes is to solve the nuclear problem. On the other hand, economic cooperation should go a step forward. By designating new economic special zones in cities other than Gaesong and improving conditions in Gaesong, the two Koreas should work together not only for economic profit, but also to strengthen the idea of "Inter-Korean economic unity." It is also time to approach the problems surrounding separated families, military captives, and prisoners in a different manner. Right now is the moment when the neighboring powers such as the U.S. PRC, Japan, and Russia show great concern regarding the inter-Korean relationship, which means that both Koreas should put much effort to rebuild the peace and security in the area. Especially for Kim Jong-il, right now is the time for the DPRK to show that they are also one of the faithful members of global society.

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3. Different Summit Atmosphere

Dong-A Ilbo (Dong Jong-min, "DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERE IN 2000 AND 2007", Seoul, 2007/10/02 03:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the atmosphere of the ROK people about this summit meeting is quite different from the one in the year 2000. Compared to then when the whole country was excited, the ROK people are now very calm and even cold. Experts analyze that the changed attitude is due to several affairs such as fighting in the West Sea, the DPRK's missile launches, and its nuclear test, which threatened the peace on the peninsula. Along with these, consistent excessive one-way support in the economic field toward the DPRK while there still is a lot of controversy also played a role to discredit the meeting.

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4. Summit Could Be Opportunity or Crisis

Dong-A Ilbo ("SUMMIT, OPPORTUNITY OR CRISIS?", Seoul, 2007/10/02 03:00:00 GMT+0) said that the summit talks could either be an opportunity or a crisis for both ROK President Roh Moo-hyun and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. For Roh, it is likely to be the very last chance to fulfill the responsibility of national security within his term. Even though the current atmosphere of inter-Korean relationship is quite different from that of seven years ago, when former president Kim Dae-jung visited the DPRK, Roh should try his best to overcome the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula which arose during his tenure. It is also important for Kim to attain incentives from the international community for the survival of his nation by denuclearizing the country.

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5. Six-Party Delay Burdens Summit

OhmyNews (Lee Byung-sun, "DECLARING SIX-PARTY TALKS TREATY DELAYED", Seoul, 2007/10/02 15:45:00 GMT+0) reported that it is likely to take longer than originally planned to announce the denuclearization agreement negotiated in the six-party talks. According to the reports, even though the parties were known to be getting the approval of their governments and planned to announce the deal on October 2, unfortunately there isn't any news yet. One ROK government official said that they were expecting the announcement to be released before noon, but since some countries have a hard time dealing with the procedure, it hardly seems that the declaration could be done today. One of the "some countries" mentioned by the official is likely to be the U.S., which has not yet decided on whether or not to remove the DPRK from the terrorist-support nations list within this year. Thus contrary to ROK expectations, the summit starting on Tuesday is going to go on without any actions confirmed on the denuclearization, which could be burdensome for ROK president Roh Moo-hyun.

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