

Policy Forum 07-001: Hopes of Economic Build-Up Spread Following DPRK Nuclear Test

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Article by The Institute for Far Eastern Studies

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I. Introduction

This report, published by the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University, notes, "It is being stressed that the amount of effort concentrated on making North Korea a nuclear power will now be focused on improving the lives of its citizens, and efforts previously reserved for strengthening military might will now be used not only to improve the military but also to prepare the framework for an economically powerful country."

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Nautilus Institute. Readers should note that Nautilus seeks a diversity of views and opinions on contentious topics in order to identify common ground.

II. Article by The Institute for Far Eastern Studies

- Hopes of Economic Build-Up Spread Following DPRK Nuclear Test
by The Institute for Far Eastern Studies

Following the nuclear test carried out on October 9, 2006, North Korean authorities are holding nothing back in their efforts to instill in the citizens of the North the idea that "with a strong military comes economic development."

Previously, North Korea has propagandized that "the path to economic build-up in the military-first era is military build-up and economic construction, and successfully resolving at the highest level all issues of citizens' livelihood," but following the nuclear test, authorities are further stressing, "military build-up = economic build-up."

On December 11, the Choson Daily, a publication of the Japanese-based pro-Pyongyang group Chongryon, carried a report stating that while new public sentiment and political environment was being created in North Korea, powerful defensive strength is a prerequisite for peaceful economic development, and now hope and optimism for the future of citizen's lives is spreading.

It is being stressed that the amount of effort concentrated on making North Korea a nuclear power will now be focused on improving the lives of its citizens, and efforts previously reserved for strengthening military might will now be used not only to improve the military but also to prepare the framework for an economically powerful country.

The Choson Daily also ran an article on December 5, stating, "After carrying out a nuclear test, an environment and set of conditions providing an opportunity for pursuing domestic economic recovery has finally been created," and, "there are still many difficulties and shortages, but possessing a powerful defensive strength solidifies people's belief in the large-scale, overall peaceful economic construction."

This propaganda appears to be an attempt by the authorities to prevent unrest and instability that could ensue due to the deepening economic crisis in the wake of UN Security Council sanctions and the sudden halt in Chinese, South Korean, and international aid. By stressing ideas such as "military build-up = economic build-up," authorities are trying to put to rest citizens' dissatisfaction with policies that emphasize strengthening the military (at the expense of economic development) and to express their hope and optimism for the economy's future based on these policies.

III. Nautilus invites your responses

The Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network invites your responses to this essay. Please send responses to: napsnet-reply@nautilus.org . Responses will be considered for redistribution to the network only if they include the author's name, affiliation, and explicit consent.

Produced by The Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development
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