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Executive Summary

Evaluation of the latest revisions to the Rules of the Workers' Party of Korea and changes in North Korea's domestic and foreign policy

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*This article is written based on the author's personal opinions
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Executive Summary

- The full text of the Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea that was revised at the 8th convention of the Worker's Party this January was recently obtained; it sparked controversy in South Korean society
 - This brief intends to show North Korea's internal policies and attitude toward South Korea by analyzing the revision and the controversy
- Revitalization of the General Secretary system and the establishment of the first secretary of the party Central Committee
 - At the 8th party convention, North Korea decided to revitalize its secretariat system and return the general secretary system
 - It can be analyzed that Kim Jong-un's authority was undermined with too many chairmen at all levels of the party elected at the 7th party convention.
 - As North Korea reintroduced the general secretary and the secretariat system, and appointed Kim Jong-un the 'Workers' Party of Korea General Secretary,' the title of the heads of the party changed from 'chairman' to 'chief secretary'-clearly distinguished from the title of Kim Jong-un.
 - The revised Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea allow the party Central Committee to elect the party Central Committee first secretary, a "representative for the General Secretary."
 - According to North Korea's dictionary, a 'representative' means "a person who exercises one's authority and duties on behalf of someone"
 - The 'party Central Committee first secretary' will represent the general secretary and have almost the same amount of authority and military power as Kim Jong-un.
 - It can be analyzed that North Korea established the new position in order to support the security of the regime in case of emergency and the succession of power of four generations of the Baekdu bloodline
- A shift from the 'individual rule to a 'party-centered rule'?
- The revised Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea deleted direct mentions of Kim Il-sung,

Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un. 'Kim Il-sung-Kim Jong-ilism' is described as the party's supreme platform, yet is virtually abstracted. Therefore, the party's central government (Kim Jong-un) is the sole leader in the system.

- It is an exaggeration to say that North Korea is shifting from an 'individual rule' to a 'party-centered rule.'
- In the revised Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea, the basic political style of the Worker's Party of Korea changed from Kim Jong-il's 'military-first politics' to Kim Jong-un's 'people-first politics.'

■ Analysis of the revision

- The revised Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea enhanced the power of the members of the Presidium by giving them the authority to discuss and decide on important political, economic, and military issues
- The members of the Presidium can moderate meetings, once given the authority by the General Secretary; therefore, they are given the right to make policy and personnel decisions in case of emergency.
- The revision further enhanced the status of the Party Central Military Commission and lowered the status of the General Political Bureau of the Korean People's Army. This matches the direction of Xi Jinping's China
- Requirements for convening the Party Central Military Commission were simplified in case of emergency

■ Assessing the deleted line of North Korea's 'National Liberation and Democratic Revolution'

- In the past, the Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea indicated that North Korea will comply with 'National Liberation and Democratic Revolution' of the Kim Il-sung era and support the South Korean Revolution if South Korea ousts the U.S. military. The revised rules finally removed this unrealistic and impossible clause.
- North Korea proposed a strategy of suppressing military threats with its 'strong national defense power' to accelerate peaceful reunification
- North Korea abandoned the Revolution Theory of South Korea of the Cold War, yet did not abandon the idea of reunification

■ Conclusion

- The revised Rules of the Worker's Party of Korea ensured the safety of the regime in case of emergency by creating a first secretary position to serve as Kim Jong Un's "representative," giving members of the Presidium the authority to make policy decisions, and simplifying the conditions for convening the Party Central Military Commission.
- North Korea will focus on strengthening its defense capabilities despite its abandonment of the South Korean Revolution. Therefore, the South Korean government must improve inter-Korean relations in the long term by establishing strategic headquarters that can respond to North Korea's advanced nuclear and missile capabilities and resolving the North Korean nuclear issue through 4-party or 6-party talks.

※ Translator's note: This is a third party's unofficial translation of the original paper that was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.