

## Granite Countertops, Tombstone

Summit holds promise of peace By Le Tian Updated: 2007-10-02 07:34 The meeting of the two Korean leaders in Pyongyang today for the second inter-Korean summit augurs well for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and should give the progressing Six-Party Talks added momentum, Chinese observers said yesterday. President Roh Moo-hyun of the Republic of Korea (ROK) will cross the military demarcation line on foot before driving to Pyongyang for a meeting with his opposite number, Democratic People's Republic Of Korea (DPRK) leader Kim Jong-il, which will run into Thursday. The meeting has been a long time in the making. Seven years ago Roh's predecessor Kim Dae-jung met with Kim Jong-il as the two posed for an historic handshake in the DPRK capital and promised to work together to defuse bilateral tensions. The DPRK leader promised to consider holding a reciprocal meeting in Seoul but later backpedaled and the follow-up summit threatened never to happen. With bilateral relations now in a relative state of prosperity and the Six-Party Talks firmly back on track, this week's summit should intensify inter-Korean cooperation and finalize a peace regime on the peninsula at an early date, Shen Jiru, a researcher of Asia-Pacific studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said. "Meantime, as parties in direct confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, the alleviation of their relations will help catalyze the Six-Party Talks process to pave the way for the development of Northeast Asia and even a new peace framework for the region," Shen noted. The latest session of the multi-pronged talks, which also involve the US, Russia, Japan and China, on the Korean nuclear issue entered a two-day recess on Sunday. Negotiators took a break after reaching a tentative agreement on a roadmap for the DPRK to declare and disable its nuclear programs in line with a February 13 agreement in exchange for 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil, or the equivalent in economic aid. Roh said yesterday that peace on the peninsula is the top agenda of his meeting with Kim. "Without any confidence in peace, (the inter-Korean cooperation) on co-prosperity and unification would be meaningless. Furthermore, regional circumstances surrounding the peninsula, including the Six-Party Talks on the settlement of the nuclear issue, have entered a wholly different phase," Roh said at a ceremony marking the 59th Armed Forces Day in Seoul. The bilateral summit is hoped to serve as a platform for discussions of ways to enhance mutual military confidence, a Korean Peninsula peace treaty and inter-Korean disarmament, Roh said. The two Koreas remain technically in a state of war as the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a ceasefire rather than a peace treaty. Shen said the two leaders would probably try to find a way of finally putting this issue to bed. "They might work out a peace declaration for the Korean Peninsula to show the world their willingness to make peace," Ren added. Roh is expected to watch with Kim the mass games performance within the Arirang Festival during his Pyongyang visit. "The sight of the two Korean leaders sitting side by side at one stadium to watch the Arirang Festival performance would send a message of peace around the world," ROK officials said. Also on the table for discussion is inter-Korean economic cooperation and the establishment of economic development zones. "We can't expect much more than that from the summit and we will have to wait and see," said Ren. Agencies contributed to the story

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