

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Al Jazeera

Kim Jong-un named N Korea 'supreme commander'

Successor and youngest son of late leader Kim Jong-il is formally appointed head of the communist nation's military.

12/31/2011



North Korea's new leader Kim Jong-un salutes as he and his uncle accompany the hearse carrying his father [Reuters]

North Korea has announced the appointment of Kim Jong-un, the anointed successor and youngest son of Kim Jong-il, as supreme commander of its 1.2 million-strong military, two days after official mourning for the late leader ended.

The North's state news agency KCNA said on Saturday the official appointment was made at a

meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party on Friday.

KCNA said the Political Bureau members "courteously proclaimed the dear comrade Kim Jong-un, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea, assumed the supreme commandship of the Korean People's Army", according to a will made by Kim Jong-il on October 8. It did not elaborate on the details of the will.

Since Kim Jong-il's death on December 17, state media have dubbed Kim Jong-un "supreme commander".

"Kim Jong-il was made supreme commander in 1991 some three years before his father's death," Al Jazeera's Harry Fawcett, reporting from Seoul, said. "But the difference is that he had control of North Korea [already]."

Some Korea-watchers say it may take Kim Jong-un months to assume the two other official titles which were attained by his father in 1997, a full three years into his reign: General Secretary of the Party and Chairman of the National Defence Commission.

But the announcement of the politburo's decision not only meant formal approval of his control of one of the world's most powerful armed forces, but also indicated the consolidation of his power could be much faster than expected - perhaps a sign of Kim Jong-un's relative lack of a power base.

Third-generation Kim

Footage aired recently by state TV showed Kim Jong-un, who is believed to be in his 20s, flanked or followed by the North's top military officers and a coterie of leaders during a series of mourning ceremonies for his father.

The pictures appeared to signal a smooth transfer of power to Kim Jong-un, the third generation of his family to rule the unpredictable and reclusive communist state since shortly after World War Two.

"Faced with the sudden death of his father, Kim Jong-un and his supporters, who appear to be less prepared and insecure, may think they do not have much time in solidifying the young Kim's position," Professor Koh Yu-hwan, an expert on the North's leadership from Seoul's Dongguk University, told the Reuters news agency.

"The approval [of his supreme leadership of the military] should be one of the fastest ways to allow him the sovereign ruler position," Koh said.

This ties in with the North's "military-first" policies on which Kim Jong-il relied heavily.

Kim Jong-un was named a four-star general and given the vice-chairmanship of the ruling party's Central Military Commission by his father in 2010.

Political entourage

Many analysts also expect the inexperienced new leader, who had only been groomed for rule since 2009, to lead with the aid of a close circle around him that includes his uncle and key power-broker, Jang Song-thaek, at least in the early stages of the power transition.

Jang, husband of Kim Jong-il's younger sister, Kim Kyong-hui, stood behind his nephew in Wednesday's mass funeral parade, escorting the hearse carrying Kim's body.

Despite Pyongyang's determination to project an unbroken line from Kim Jong-un's predecessors, which began with his grandfather, Kim il-sung, there have been questions among outsiders about his capacity to lead the country.

North Korea, whose military is pursuing a nuclear arms programme, is technically still at war with the South and is suffering from chronic food shortages.

Labelling its opponents "foolish", North Korea warned Seoul on Friday it would stick to its hardline policies and said Pyongyang would never engage with the current government of South Korea.