South China Morning Post

J ust seven years after taking the helm of the Bennett kingdom, Kim Jong-un, with his father’s death already in the ascendant, has put in place a process that could transform the North Korean economic landscape. After all, the late Kim Jong-il was widely seen as a man who knew how to keep the levers of power in his control, even as he faced challenges from within.

Although no final decision has yet been made public, the decision to lift the near-total state of emergency, or “lockdown,” that has been in place since 2009 appears to have been made by the ruling Workers’ Party and the military, which are the two pillars of the Kim Jong-il dynasty. Meanwhile, the country has entered a period of “normalization” that will last at least until the end of the year, possibly longer.

The move comes as North Korea is facing a severe economic crisis, with the country’s economic output falling by as much as 4.5% in the second quarter of this year. The government has been forced to cut back on its military spending, and it is now relying on foreign aid to keep the country afloat.

The decision to lift the lockdown is likely to be seen as a sign of confidence in the Kim Jong-un regime, and a sign that the country is ready to move forward with economic reforms. However, it is also likely to raise concerns about the country’s ability to feed its population, and its ability to attract foreign investment.

In short, the decision to lift the lockdown is a sign of hope for North Korea, but it is also a reminder of the challenges that lie ahead. The country will need to work hard to rebuild its economy, and to attract foreign investment. It will also need to work hard to build trust with its neighbors, and to improve its human rights record.

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