

## **Suspension of US-south Korea joint military exercises: Prerequisite for ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia**

*Mr. Jon Min Dok, Director, Institute for Disarmament and Peace, DPRK*

*March 14, 2016*

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the end of Cold War. The world has made a tremendous advance and the times have undergone dramatic changes. But, one place still remains unchanged and that is exactly the Korean peninsula.

Needless to say about removal of the structure of Cold War, the Korean peninsula finds itself caught in the state of armistice and both belligerents level their guns at each other for more than half a century.

Today, the Korean peninsula has already ranked the biggest and the most highly explosive powder magazine in the world and a fuse of a new world war.

### **1. Joint military war drills; Main cause of tension in the Korean peninsula**

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a peace-loving nation.

The DPRK, unlike the US, has neither invaded other nations with armed forces nor conducted any large-scale bilateral or multilateral joint military drills abroad against a third country.

However in the last 70 years since its occupation of south Korea, the US has staged annually all kinds of aggressive war drills in the south and its vicinity against the DPRK, several thousand miles away from the US, thus driving the situation in the Korean peninsula and the region to the brink of war.

### **The US-south Korea joint military drills hinder the inter-Korean relations and national reunification**

It is well known that the US is the very culprit which occupied south Korea under the guise of "liberator" following Japan's defeat in World War II thus dividing the homogeneous nation of Korea and its soil into the north

and the south.

From the early days of its illegal and unlawful occupation of south Korea by force and turning south Korea into its full colony until now, the US has been desperate and impudent in portraying itself as a “defender” of the world peace and security while slandering the DPRK as a “criminal” destroying peace and security in order to mislead the world option.

In the last 70 years, the US has been clinging to ceaseless military build-up, new war provocations and drills against the DPRK with the strategy of maintaining tension on the Korean peninsula to isolate and stifle the DPRK and to interrupt the improvement of inter-Korean relations.

Let us look back upon the facts how the US has persistently undermined peace and security and aggravated tension on the Korean peninsula with joint military exercises.

In 1945 when Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonial rule the US occupied south Korea and turned south Korea into its complete colony and instigated the Syngman Rhee puppet clique to stage war drills and military provocations against the north along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and in the end sparked the Korean War in 1950 with an ambition to halt the nation-wide struggle of the Korean people aspirant after a unified state and to put the north under its domination.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Armistice Agreement the political conference for peaceful settlement of the Korean peninsula was held in Geneva. However, the US broke off the conference by conducting Focus Lens, a joint military exercises with south Korea, in 1954 and later in the 1960's continued to aggravate the situation with Focus Retina and Eagle joint military exercises.

In the early 1970's, the July 4<sup>th</sup> North-South Joint Statement for reunifying Korea based on the three principles of independence, peace and great national unity was made public thanks to the active and generous initiatives of the DPRK. At the same time, tendency toward the independent peaceful reunification was growing highly in the peninsula. The US got nervous and awful about the developments in the peninsula and put pressure on Park Chung Hui, the then dictator in south Korea, to overturn the Joint Statement

and started Team Spirit and Ulji Focus Lens joint military exercises in 1976, thus driving the inter-Korean relations to a new confrontation.

When the Korean people's expectation and aspiration for national reunification grew fervent by the announcement of Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between the North and the South in 1992, the US restarted Team Spirit joint military exercises again in 1993 to turn the situation to another catastrophe.

Entering the 2000's, June 15 era was opened up between the north and the south and aspiration after reunification and anti-US sentiment grew higher and even call for transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) of the south Korean army was made in south Korea. To check these developments, the US again resorted to joint military exercises.

Last year, the US overlooked and encouraged tacitly the south Korean army's provocative incidents of "landmine explosion" and "shell fired by the north", which occurred during the Ulji Freedom Guardian military exercises, thus driving the situation of the peninsula to the brink of war again.

### **The nature of the joint military exercises: Aggressive nature**

The joint military exercises annually staged by the US and south Korea on the Korean peninsula are quite different from military exercises of other countries in view of both frequency and purpose.

The US-led RIMPAC naval joint military exercises, the world biggest one in the scale, is held every 2 years. In RIMPAC 2014, 23 countries, 47 vessels, 6 submarines and 200 aircrafts were involved, but the total number of troops was only 25,000.

In case of Cobra Gold, the biggest annual joint military exercises in Asia, less than 10,000 troops from 28 countries are participating in the drill and the duration is around 10 days.

The NATO-led Swift Response 15, the biggest one in Europe after Cold War, also involves only 5,000 troops from around 10 countries.

However, the US and south Korea hold annually more than 40 joint

military exercises such as Key Resolve, Foal Eagle, Ulji Freedom Guardian by mobilizing more than 500,000 US and south Korean troops and all means of war including nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, strategic bombers, nuclear-powered submarines and etc.

OPLAN 5027 which has been applied to the joint military exercises including Key Resolve and Foal Eagle is an operational plan for an all-out war that would involve 690,000 US troops, 160 vessels and 2,500 aircrafts in case of emergency in the Korean peninsula. The plan is offensive rather than defensive and is aimed at occupying the DPRK by preemptive strike.

The aggressive nature of the US-south Korea joint military exercises is also apparent in setting their targets like examination of feasibility of operations like “removal of the leadership”, “occupying Pyongyang”, “regime change”, “preemptive nuclear strike”, “decapitation raids” which can never be found in other countries’ joint military drills.

It cannot be overlooked that the US is inviting military forces of the countries which took part in the Korean War like Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Denmark and Japan in the joint military exercises.

## **2. The nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula: It was caused by the US-south Korea nuclear war provocations**

The nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula was originated from the ceaseless and increasing nuclear war provocations by the US and south Korea.

Anyone who is not well aware of the reason, the background of the DPRK’s possession of nuclear weapons and the whole process of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should clearly look at the reality and have a correct understanding.

### **The criminal history of the US: Continued US nuclear threat against the Korean people**

The Korean people have been exposed to the US nuclear threat since

1950.

It has already been revealed that the US first introduced its nuclear weapon to south Korea in mid-August 1950, just after the outbreak of the Korean War.

On November 30, 1950, the then US President Truman threatened openly to use atomic bombs in the Korean War front and instructed the US Strategic Air Force to be on standby to dispatch the strategic bombers at any moment to the Far East to drop atomic bombs.

The US nuclear threat forced bitter separation among tens of thousands of families and relatives of the Korean people in the north and the south.

The US nuclear threat against the DPRK further increased after the Korean War.

In July 1957 the US declared the start of arming the US troops in south Korea with nuclear weapons. On January 29, 1958 the US made public that it had introduced nuclear weapons in south Korea.

By the mid-1980's, the US brought in more than 1,720 nuclear weapons including "Honest John" tactical nuclear missile, 280mm-calibre atomic gun, "B-61" nuclear bomb, nuclear landmine and turned south Korea into the biggest nuclear warehouse and an outpost in the Far East to invade the DPRK.

All of the US three nuclear striking means have been mobilized without exception in all its notorious joint war drills including Team Spirit, RSOI (Reception Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration), Ulji Focus Lens, Key Resolve, Foal Eagle and Ulji Freedom Guardian.

The special danger to be noted is that the US adopted the preemptive nuclear strike against the DPRK as its policy, long before the DPRK's possession of nuclear weapons.

On January 30, 2002, the Bush administration in its Union Address designated the DPRK as the "axis of evil" and in March 2002 announced its Nuclear Posture Review on which the DPRK was listed as the target of preemptive nuclear strike.

In the US-south Korea Security Consultative Meeting in 2009, the US raised the level of nuclear umbrella in favor of south Korea. In other words,

south Korea which had been in the level of “limited state of declaration” was upgraded to the level of more detailed "tailored deterrence strategy", known as a strategy for a preemptive attack just as the same case when the US territory is attacked, thus paving a way to bring in more nuclear weapons at any time to south Korea.

In its Quadrennial Defense Review Report in early March 2014, the US Defense Department defined the DPRK as the direct threat to the US and bellicose country and claimed that would win decisive victory through armed forces.

In his memoirs, Leon Panetta, the former US Defense Secretary, revealed the fact that during his trip to Seoul in October 2011 he had conveyed the message from the US administration that it would use nuclear weapons if necessary.

At the end of 1991, though the US announced the withdrawal of its nuclear weapons from south Korea, it is nothing but a deceptive move. The US still stick to its NCND policy and continue to deceive and mock the Korean people and the world peace-loving people demanding for its verification of withdrawal of nuclear weapons.

### **The Key Resolve, Foal Eagle 16: The unprecedented and the largest preemptive nuclear offensive in history**

The first exercises in which the US and south Korea introduced the "tailored deterrence strategy" and tested its effectiveness is the Ulji Freedom Guardian joint military exercises in 2014.

The Key Resolve and Foal Eagle 16 which the US and south Korea started on March 7, this year is the unprecedented and the largest scale joint war drills surpassing all the previous drills and will last for nearly 2 months.

Mobilized in the exercises are huge armed forces including 17,000 American soldiers, 300,000 south Korean soldiers and some follower states armies, and nuclear war means and equipment, two times larger in its size compared to the previous drills, including John C. Stennis, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, one of the typical strategic assets carrying 100 aircrafts and

even AWACS, North Carolina, a nuclear-powered submarine, B-52 and B-2 strategic bombers, F-22 Raptor stealth bombers, F-15K and KF-16 etc.

The US and south Korea even threw off the deceptive mask of "annual and defensive" nature of the drills and are staging the exercises by the way of fighting an actual war, practicing the "Decapitation Raids Operation" aimed at removal of the DPRK leadership and bringing down its social system pursuant to the extremely adventurous OPLAN 5015.

OPLAN 5015, applied for the first time this year, is integrating both OPLAN 5027 and OPLAN 5029. It is aimed at a preemptive strike against the DPRK's nuclear and missile bases within 30 minutes after detecting the signs of missile launch. Therefore, it is more dangerous and aggressive than the previous operational plans.

It is quite reasonable that foreign media like *Global Times* of China and *Pravda* of Russia commented that the toothed wheels of war have already begun to move on the Korean peninsula.

### **3. Suspension of the joint war drills: Touchstone for judging stand for peace**

Peace and security on the Korean peninsula is of great importance to the Korean nation since it is directly related to the existence of the Korean nation and its reunification.

Therefore, the DPRK has advanced broad and rational proposals aimed at removal of the danger of war, easing tension and providing a peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula and has made sincere efforts to their realization.

#### **Proposal for suspension of joint military exercises by the US and moratorium on nuclear test by the DPRK**

The suspension of joint military exercises is the precondition for safeguarding the peace on the Korean peninsula.

It is a long time since the Military Armistice Commission and the Neutral

Nations Supervisory Commission controlling and supervising the Armistice Agreement of the Korean War disappeared on the Korean peninsula.

The Korean People's Army has already declared that the Armistice Agreement had been completely abolished by the US.

It is inevitable that the cease-fire out of control will surely switch to a hot war at any moment.

Emergency created in August last year clearly showed that even a trifling, incidental conflict between the north and the south may create a touch-and-go war situation and the current armistice devoid of power can no longer prevent a conflict and the danger of war.

The DPRK has no intention at all to interfere in the US war games if they are really defensive and pose no threat to the DPRK and are conducted on the US territory or in the middle of Pacific Ocean.

However, the DPRK cannot remain a passive onlooker at the fact that the US, the biggest nuclear weapon state in the world and the belligerent that is still at war with the DPRK, is conducting an aggressive and large-scale war exercises at the threshold of the DPRK by mobilizing all kinds of state-of-the-art strategic assets.

If the US has no intention to invade or attack the DPRK, there is no need to stage the military war drills for such a long period with huge armed forces and preemptive striking means, more than enough to fight a full-scale war.

Therefore, in January 2015, the DPRK advanced a proposal for the US suspension of joint military exercises in south Korea and its vicinity and the DPRK's moratorium on the nuclear test and reiterated that proposal again in January this year.

As a lot of people commented, had the Obama administration recognized the failure of its policy of "strategic patience" earlier and paid a little attention to the DPRK's continued demand for the suspension of military exercises, they would not have been so astounded by the DPRK's successful H-bomb test in last January.

Last January in his article on US newspaper *Huffington Post* Mr. William Perry, the former US Secretary of Defense, criticized the Obama



administration for its excessive engagement in the Middle East and other regions and neglect of the situation on the Korean peninsula and stressed that it is high time for the US to end the 60-year-long DPRK-US confrontation deeply rooted in the Korean War and take a concentrated, sustained and rational action to address the issue of the Korean peninsula.

Many experts from the US and other countries and even the western media like *The Guardian* (UK), *The New York Times* also stated that the Obama administration's policy for strategic patience made worse the pus of the Korean peninsula issue and called for an end of the long-standing Korean War by conclusion of the peace agreement.

If the US is sincerely interested in the dialogue with the DPRK and the peace of the Korean peninsula, it should show its readiness to suspend joint military exercises.

### **The DPRK's nuclear deterrent: Shield of justice and peace**

The DPRK possessed nuclear deterrent legitimately to safeguard the sovereignty of the country and the right to existence of the nation from the ever-increasing US nuclear threat against the DPRK.

Originally the DPRK's possession of nuclear weapons was not at all its intention.

The DPRK's possession of nuclear weapons was totally an inevitable choice of self-defense to counter the increased hostile policy and nuclear threat of the US, the world's biggest nuclear weapons state and the only user of nuclear weapons, which designated the dignified DPRK as the "axis of evil" and as the target of preemptive nuclear strike with huge nuclear war equipment.

It is a ridiculous sophistry and nobody will be convinced that the DPRK's self-defensive nuclear weapons pose threat to others while the nuclear weapons of the US, the biggest nuclear weapon state and the only nuclear criminal, pose no threat to other states.

The DPRK considers that keeping the balance of force by bolstering the nuclear forces is the only way to effectively deter the US persistent nuclear

threat and war provocations and to defend the sovereignty and the right to existence of the nation.

If the DPRK had not responded in a super high-handed way with nuclear deterrent to the US nuclear war rackets, the Korean peninsula would have already fallen into the sea of fire a long time ago and security in Northeast Asia and the world would have been jeopardized.

The Korean People's Army has already converted its mode of military counteraction into a preemptive offensive one in every aspect to cope with the US extremely dangerous nuclear threat.

In case of outbreak of a war on the Korean peninsula, it will neither be confined to the peninsula nor to a conventional war.

Worse still, there is no guarantee that the DPRK-US life-and-death confrontation would not be expanded to the world thermonuclear war.

Anyone who is desirous of peace and security of the world should clearly identify who loves peace and who pursues war in the Korean peninsula.

The DPRK's cause advancing under the banner of Songun is just and its victory is definite.

As long as the US persists in its moves to stifle the DPRK's socialist system, the DPRK will continue to adhere to the Songun politics and the line of promoting the two fronts simultaneously and firmly defend the sovereignty of the nation and the peace of the world, no matter how the structure of relations with the surrounding countries may change.