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Korean Peninsula

Before building peaceful workers' state in the Korean Peninsula

- IV Online magazine - 2017 - IV512 - September 2017 -

Publication date: Sunday 17 September 2017

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On August 17, the Moon Jae-in administration in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) marked its first 100 days in office. One hundred days earlier, President Moon Jae-in came into office with a landslide victory. But he has many problems of political policy, especially towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). North Korea is not impressed by his approach.

President Moon Jae-in argues for peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through sanctions and inter-Korean dialogue. He is for establishment of permanent peace in the Korean Peninsula. He is in favour of conclusion of the end-war agreement of Korean War, and the restoration of diplomatic ties between North Korea and the United States by stopping North Korea's nuclear development.

On the other hand, North Korea has trodden a path of self-independent based on Juche ideology. [\[see \]](#) For North Korea, there is no merit in the approach of the Moon Jae-in administration.

After the interruption of inter-Korean relations, North Korea tried to find a way to secure their political system between the major powers. North Korea still has a military alliance with China. But their military alliance with former Soviet Union was renounced.

Nuclear development was a way to secure their political system. So they carried out five nuclear tests and carried out missile tests to improve their nuclear technology. From 1993, North Korea has test fired more than 60 ballistic missiles. The greatest number of ballistic missiles were fired in 2016 – there were 17 tests. And this year, a total of 13 ballistic missiles were fired as of the end of August.

The numbers of missiles fired annually shows that sanctions against North Korea cannot stop nuclear and missile development. On the contrary, sanctions applied to North Korea have built up a vicious cycle of tension on the Korean Peninsula. The "Strategic patience" approach of the Barack Obama administration had improved the viability of North Korea with an 8-year interruption of inter-Korean relations from the Lee Myung-bak administration [\[2\]](#) until Park Geun-hye's administration [\[3\]](#).

And this year, success of North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test [\[4\]](#) brought about further changes. After this success, the United States has no choice but to get involved.

But for North Korea, there is no current merit in dialogue with South Korea and the United States. So even if dialogue is established, the situation will not improve. Accurate analysis of current Korean Peninsula situation is required for us.

The United States policy towards North Korea

The United States has created and led international policy towards North Korea. Barack Obama's administration did not feel militarily threatened by North Korea as North Korean missiles did not have the ability to attack the United States' mainland. But the situation of East Asia changed after July this year. The Trump administration said that

"strategic patience with the North Korean regime has failed" and is pushing China. The Trump administration is applying economic pressure on China [5] with compulsion of oppression and dialogue against North Korea.

But the Trump administration has proposed no clear policy on nuclear capability. On the other hand, North Korea made a miniaturized nuclear bomb. And North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the ICBM test completed his country's strategic weapons capability.

Becoming a certain level of nuclear weapon state means that North Korea has crossed the "red line" set by President Trump. President Moon Jae-in made key remarks during a press conference marking his first 100 days in office that "red line" means completion of development of ICBM which can be weaponized with nuclear warheads.

Denuclearization of North Korea is impossible for President Trump who rejected the ending of US-ROK joint military exercises which was proposed by China and Russia. Also President Trump is faced with the need to prevent ICBM-class missiles flying to the United States mainland.

Improper US-South Korea relations

Unilateral and unequal US-South Korea relations have prevented the Moon Jae-in Administration from taking proper measures to stabilize the situation on Korean Peninsula. After the US-ROK summit meeting held on July 1, the Moon Jae-in administration put forward an initiative to solve the problems of Korean Peninsula. And on August 15, President Moon Jae-in made a congratulatory address in the ceremony celebrating National Liberation Day of Korea: "The issue of Korean Peninsula must be solved led by our initiative".

But the Moon Jae-in administration is unable to act over the crisis in Korean Peninsula because the wartime operational control by the United States prevents them taking the initiative. The correction of inappropriate US-South Korea relations is required. South Korea must assert their independent position toward the United States through real actions: elimination of THAAD [6] which is arranged on the pretext of ICBM test by North Korea, ending US-ROK joint military exercises, solving pollution problems in US military bases, correction of US-ROK Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) [7], and the end of delays to wartime operational control (OPCON) transfer [8].

Double standards from United Nations Security Council

In 2016, the Permanent Representative of North Korea sent the following letter to UN Secretary General: "The UNSC does not have any authority to question the nuclear test and ballistic rocket launches of the DPRK which were conducted to tackle the nuclear blackmail and the rackets of sanctions of the United States and nor is there any single article in the UN Charter or international laws which stipulate that nuclear tests and ballistic rocket launches constitute a threat to international peace and security. [9]"

One factor that makes the situation more complicated is an act of double standard of United Nations Security Council towards nuclear power states. The unfair structure of the United Nations has accelerated North Korea's nuclear development for their political-system security. Before condemning North Korea's nuclear development, leading countries in the United Nations Security Council should abandon their own nuclear weapons

Restoration of the right to self-determination

The right of self-determination is an issue that cannot be avoided when discussing the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Moon Jae-in Administration and past US administrations want to avoid this. Since its foundation in 1948, North Korea insisted on national reunification through self-determination. They do not want reunification of the peninsula to be dependent on external forces because their country was divided as a result of the violation of the right to self-determination by Japanese imperialism, American imperialism and the actions of the Soviet Union. This right which had been infringed was not restored even after the end of the Cold War. Before discussing unification, the working class of North Korea and South Korea should restore the right of self-determination first.

Next step to build workers' state

As I said earlier, there were many problems in previous international policy toward North Korea. Detente on the Korean Peninsula should be made by the working class as a political entity, one from which the right of self-determination was taken away by external forces: Japanese imperialism, American imperialism, and Soviet hegemonism. The unilateral and unequal relations between the US- and South Korea should be corrected. The mobilized power of the working class of East Asia is required for a conclusion of a peace agreement. International working class solidarity is required for denuclearization in East Asia and to avoid a war crisis. The working class of South and North Korea need the complete right of self-determination again and go to the next step: dialogue to build their workers' state without bureaucracy, imperialism, and hegemonism.

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[1] Rodong Sinmun, journal of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers Party, commentary on August 18, 2017)

[2] Lee Myung-bak served as President of South Korea from 2008 to 2013

[3] Park Geun-hye served as President of South Korea from 2013-2017

[4] Korean Central Television "special critical coverage" at 15:30 of July 4, 2017 (06:30 July 4, 2017 GMT)

[5] Super 301 article mentioned by President Trump to China's President Xi Jinping in telephone conference of August 11.

[6] See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Termi...>

[7] See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statu...>

[8] Wartime operational control (OPCON) should have been transferred from ROK-US Combined Forces Command to South Korea on December 1 2015. But in the US-Korea Security Council of October 23, 2014, OPCON transfer was postponed again to 2020. And relocation of US military bases in South Korea to the mainland of the United States was also delayed

[9] Korean Central News Agency December 6, 2016 "DPRK Permanent

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Representative to UN Sends Letter to UN Secretary General