



## On Root of Escalated Tension in Korean Peninsula

Pyongyang, March 17 (KCNA) -- The following is the full text of a commentator's article "On root of the situation in the Korean Peninsula on the brink of burst" carried in Rodong Sinmun on Friday:

The situation in the Korean peninsula is inching closer to an uncontrollable and dangerous state.

The world is closely observing the tense confrontation among the nuclear powers on the brink of an outbreak of war with deep concern.

This grave situation is entirely attributable to the reckless and tyrannical moves of the U.S. and its followers to stifle the DPRK.

As well-known to the world, the DPRK has concentrated all its efforts on easing military tension and maintaining peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the region from the outset of this year, out of its single desire to achieve fresh development and progress in its economic construction and improvement of its people's living standards.

But the U.S.-led hostile forces are persistently resorting to dangerous hostile acts of violently encroaching upon the sovereignty and security interests of the DPRK this year, too, in the wake of last year, and their gravity and danger have reached an intolerable phase.

The U.S. secretary of Defense said on his junket to the puppet region in January that the U.S. would deploy more strategic assets such as fifth-generation stealth fighters and aircraft carriers, unhesitatingly revealing its intention to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK. Meanwhile, puppet traitor Yoon Suk Yeol, obsessed with confrontation with fellow countrymen, talked about the "establishment of a posture of readiness" and "punishment" at an underground air-raid shelter.

The warmongers, engrossed in bravado and blind bravery, announced that they would stage more than 20 rounds of joint military exercises in the first half of this year beyond the level of the past "Fool Eagle" joint military drills, and have staged madcap war exercises against the DPRK, including drills aiming at infiltration and joint striking at its strategic facilities and major core targets.

As talked about the permanent presence of extended deterrence, the U.S. introduced core air strategic weapons including B-1B nuclear strategic bombers, F-22, F-35B and other stealth fighters into the area of south Korean puppets in February to stage several combined air drills targeting the DPRK together with them in the sky above the West Sea of Korea.

In particular, the U.S. imperialists conducted a "drill for operating extended deterrence means", which made it a fait accompli to mount a preemptive nuclear attack on the DPRK, together with the puppets in their mainland in late February, claiming that they would constantly deploy nuclear strategic assets in the Korean peninsula in the future, too.

Such reckless military confrontation and hostile acts drove the situation in the Korean peninsula to the brink of explosion in March.

The U.S. continuously dispatched nuclear submarines, one of the major strategic assets of the U.S. navy, and Aegis destroyers, to the puppet region with the black-hearted intention to escalate military pressure on the DPRK.

On March 1, the U.S. and the puppet warmongers brought the latest missile pursuit craft of the U.S. navy, Howard Lorenzen, to the East Sea of Korea to conduct espionage activities with RC-135S and other reconnaissance assets. On March 3, they conducted a combined air drill in the sky over the West Sea of Korea for the fourth time this year with B-1B strategic bomber and the MQ-9 Reaper, an air combat drone ill-famed as an "assassin in the sky", and other strategic hardware.

Meanwhile, the puppet chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, together with his master, toured the special operation drill ground where the "beheading operation" of striking a surprise attack on the strategic bases of the DPRK was underway and inspected several military units of the puppets in the areas near the front to incite them to extreme confrontation hysteria, saying that "the enemy's provocation has already begun" and they will "mete out a punishment".

Despite the worsened military and political situation of the Korean peninsula and the region, the U.S. staged the fifth round of combined air drill by dispatching nuclear strategic bomber B-52 on March 6 and started the large-scale U.S.-south Korea joint military exercises Freedom Shield on March 13.

The reality clearly shows that the danger of a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula is shifting from a virtual phase to a practical one.

All the military drills staged by the U.S. in alliance with the puppets are a provocative north-targeted rehearsal and preliminary nuclear war to simulate a sweeping war against the DPRK, and herein lies their gravity.

As for the "Ssangryong" combined landing drill aimed at "occupation of Pyongyang" alone, they rehabilitated it five years after it was halted and openly trumpet that it will reach an all-time high in terms of its scale and scope.

The U.S. imperialists describe their war drills as "defensive" but that is a sophism making profound confusing of right and wrong.

The U.S. itself will not deny the fact that the nuclear strategic bomber B-52H, supersonic strategic bomber B-1B, nuclear carriers, nuclear attack submarines and F-

35 stealth fighters, which it brings to the Korean peninsula and its surrounding areas anytime this year as well as last year, are not for defense but the most offensive military hardware specializing in strategic strike missions.

No one will believe that the constant deployment of the U.S. nuclear strategic assets in the Korean peninsula and such things as landing and infiltration drill, surprise landing and assault drill staged by special units under war scenarios aimed at "end of regime", "decapitation" and "occupation of Pyongyang" are for "defense".

Now the hostile forces are viciously scheming to isolate and suffocate the DPRK through unethical and illegal sanctions, while pulling it up over the non-existent "human rights issue" and resorting to their dangerous military adventures.

The U.S. and its vassal forces are faking up and spreading all rumors of "threat" to "demonize" the DPRK in the UN and other international arenas and contemptibly moving to prevent even one of things urgently needed for the daily life of our people from being entered our country by labeling them as "luxurious articles" groundlessly.

Being unable to isolate the DPRK anymore internationally with the nuclear issue, the U.S. is mobilizing vassal forces that are no more than rabble, for the smear campaign against the DPRK in the international arena.

The negative impact caused by the anti-DPRK moves of the U.S. and other hostile forces is not confined to the Korean Peninsula only.

Now the U.S. is working hard to turn the military balance in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia in favor of the U.S.-led alliance system while zealously egging the puppets and Japan on to dangerous arms buildup under the signboard of implementing the "Indo-Pacific strategy" aimed at maintaining the regional military strategic hegemony.

Getting absorbed in establishing a new military bloc such as the "Asian version of NATO" in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. seeks to build "integrated deterrent force" comprising of military forces of AUKUS and other vassal states and thus realize its hegemonic purpose by forming an encircling net against regional big powers and steadily isolating and weakening them.

The puppets' development and introduction of "high-power ballistic missile", launching of military spy satellites and attempt to possess nuclear submarine and Japan's moves to introduce Tomahawk cruise missile for securing the "capability for attacking the enemy's base" and develop hypersonic missile show that the arms buildup of the U.S. and its vassal forces is going beyond the intolerable red line.

Today the Korean Peninsula is turning into the world's largest magazine and war drill theatre due to the frantic military expansion moves of the U.S. and its vassal forces.

It is a well-known fact that the regional security has been endangered and the foundation of international peace and security shaken due to the scheme for hegemony of the U.S. inciting division and confrontation and hampering stability and development.

All things have a wherefore.

As the international community estimates correctly, the situation in the Korean Peninsula has reached the present situation due to the U.S., which has steadily escalated its pressure and military threat to the DPRK, refusing to respond to the positive steps taken by our state.

This year alone, we made clear several times that the cause of sustained vicious cycle of tension in the Korean Peninsula is the frequent combined drills of the U.S. and the puppets, who have aggravated the regional situation with all sorts of threatening rhetoric expressions after repeatedly setting the unrealistic and very dangerous target such as "end of regime" of a sovereign state. And we strongly demanded a immediate stop to the military hostile acts of hurting the peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and the region.

Nevertheless, the U.S. has driven the situation of the Korean peninsula and the region to an intolerable red line, repeatedly ignoring the just demand of the DPRK and the international community.

In order to cope with the grave developments in which threat to the sovereignty and security of the state has reached an intolerable phase, our Party and government can not but take decisive and resolute steps to thoroughly contain the military threats from the hostile forces and defend peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and the region.

Our nuclear forces are not for advertisement.

They can be used anytime, if necessary, to discharge the sacred mission of defending the country, and they should be preemptively used anytime according to the strategic plan, if a conflict with possibility of dangerous escalation occurs.

The recent ICBM Hwasongpho-17 launching drill is clear evidence of it.

We will continue to contain with the overwhelming force the reckless military provocations of the U.S. and its vassal forces.

Clearly stipulated in the law of the DPRK on the policy of nuclear armed forces are the principles and conditions of using nuclear weapons under various circumstances to cope with any military threat and attack from outside to our state.

If anyone tries to encroach upon the sovereignty and security of the DPRK, its nuclear armed forces will discharge its crucial mission.

There is no vouch that if the dangerous military provocations of the U.S. and south Korea are continuously overlooked as now, a fierce physical conflict will not occur in the Korean Peninsula where huge forces of both sides stand in acute confrontation with each other.

In case such conflict occurs in reality, the U.S. security, to say nothing of the regional stability, will face an uncontrollable, catastrophic phase.

The U.S. should stop at once the reckless military provocations and war drills against the DPRK. -0-

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