

# **Fukushima Conference : International Symposium**

## **Nuclear Weapons Abolish and Plutonium Accumulation by Japan**

**LEE Youngah,**

(Activist of Center for Peace and Disarmament, PSPD)

Hello, everyone. This is Youngah from South Korea. I am an activist of Center for Peace and Disarmament of People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy(PSPD). Thank you for giving me a chance to speak in the International Symposium.

### **Dark road of peace on the Korean Peninsula**

As you all know, tensions between North and South Korea have been escalating. On June 9, North Korea cut off and shut down all lines of official dialogue with South Korea including at a liaison office near the border, a military communication hotline, and a line between North Korea's ruling party and South Korea's presidential office because of anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border. Then, on June 16, DPRK blew up an inter-Korean liaison office, which was the symbol of the April 27 Panmunjom Declaration. The North Korean army announced it was drawing up its military plans, but the Central Military Commission made a decision to suspend it.

The current situation is very embarrassing to recall the touching moment when the two leaders of inter-Korea crossed the Military Demarcation Line together and the soldiers of the two Koreas shook hands in the DMZ two years ago.

This is because the agreements between the inter-Korea Summit and between the DPRK and US have not been properly followed or advanced. In 2018, the two Koreas agreed to cease all hostile acts against each other and build trust in the <Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjom Declaration in the Military Domain>. However, ROK and the U.S. are continuing the joint military exercises just on a smaller scale which pressures the DPRK with overwhelming military capabilities. DPRK is standing against them by military exercises such as short-range missile launches.

Even though the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has urged in public for the sanctions against the DPRK and other countries to be lifted or stopped under the situation of COVID-19 pandemic, Washington's policy of "maximum pressure" and sanctions toward DPRK is kept in place. As long as the force against force structure endures, it would be difficult to expect a development to the peace process on the Korean peninsula.

The ROK government should no longer just put blames on the "international constraints" and other situations . As Seoul had announced it would steer the wheel of the peace on the peninsula, it should put active efforts to dismantle current status. However, the ROK government's policies have either been inertially followed or retreated.

Even after the Panmunjom Declaration in which both states agreed on phased disarmament, the military expenditure of ROK increased by about 5.68 million \$, exceeding 40.6 billion \$ for the first time in 2020. This is a sum that outstrips the GDP of DPRK. Persuading the DPRK to give up the nuclear weapons and missiles while investing this much into conventional weapons would result in vain.

Also, sanctions against DPRK are preventing inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation. Projects such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex and Mt. Geumgang tours have yet to resume. The Inter-Korea exchange and cooperation projects agreed upon by the leaders of the Koreas have not been carried out due to sanctions, especially the U.S. government. The ROK government has not lifted its own sanctions that began after the Cheonan sinking, and is also reluctant to persuade the international community to stop the sanctions.

Merely waiting for policy change of the DPRK without a clear and active change of stance to break the current deadlock such as disarmament or stopping military actions, mutual security and sanction relief may consequently lead to a closure of the gates on the peace regime of the Korean peninsula and denuclearization that was opened by the Panmunjom Declaration. Inter-Korean dialogue should resume as soon as possible. To do so, it is urgent for ROK and the U.S to take preemptive action to show trust in DPRK.

Above all, whether the ROK-U.S. joint military exercises scheduled for August will be the important factor in future inter-Korean relations and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. It is important to remember that dialogue and military action are incompatible, and that there is no progress in relations without the withdrawal of hostile policy. The ROK government needs

to remember that the peace process on the Korean Peninsula in 2018 began with the decision to postpone the joint military drills. Furthermore, the suspension of the joint military drills was that President Trump has promised Chairman Kim Jong-un twice. Also, it goes against the purpose of the inter-Korean military agreement.

Last July 1, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution expressing its support for the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, which he issued in March to help unite efforts to fight COVID-19 in the most vulnerable countries. The governments of ROK and U.S. should decide to stop joint military exercise at all costs in order to implement the resolution.

The bilateral relationship between the government of ROK and Japan have been at their worst due to the Japanese government's adversarial economic measures against the ROK in July last year in response to the ROK Supreme Court ruling admitting the claims of victims of forced labor during the Japanese colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

The current Japanese government's repeated attempts to revise Article 9 - the peace clause of the Japanese Constitution - are perceived within Northeast Asia as an ominous expression of Japanese militarism, and a rejection of dialogue as a means to resolve disputes.

I would like to introduce the "Korea-Japan peace network of religious groups / civil society" that was meaningfully pursued by the religious groups and civil societies of both countries. They discussed the launch of a platform amidst the worst relationship status between the two countries. The platform aims for Article 9 of Japan Constitution, the construction of peace community, Nuclear Free Northeast Asia, non-governmental interchange and peace education for future generation. The platform launched last July 2 . I think this would take on an essential role in forming civic discussions and cooperation to install peace between Japan and Korea hereafter.

### **Lets now end the 70 years of Korean War**

The year 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. The unstable armistice of the past 70 years has not only brought great pain to the people of our divided peninsula, it has also threatened peace in Northeast Asia and the wider world. The horrendous war left millions of casualties and separated countless families. The whole country was destroyed. Since then, anxiety, hatred, and military tension have dominated the

lives of the people on the Korean Peninsula. Despite the end of the Cold War, the Korean Peninsula remains caught in the instability of the armistice. The peninsula remains a battlefield for international military hegemony, and has propelled an international nuclear arms race and proliferation.

Korean civil society and religious groups have been preparing for the "Peace Campaign to end the Korean War" with a desperate heart and desperation for peace on the Korean Peninsula since last February. We launched this campaign on July 27th. This campaign will continue until 2023, the 70th anniversary of the armistice agreement. Our goal is ending the Korean War. We will collect signatures and endorsements of the 'Korea Peace Appeal' far and wide and deliver them to governments involved in the Korean War. These include the ROK, DPRK, U.S, China, and the United Nations. We will exert pressure and lobby for peace in the name of the people of the Korean Peninsula and peace-loving people around the world so that the related countries are brought to implement measures necessary to establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

We appeal to peace-loving people around the world to join this call. Separated families must be able to meet each other as soon as possible. Our tax and resources should be used for people's safety, happiness and sustainable environment rather than preparing for war. Let's build, together, a future of cooperation and peaceful coexistence on the Korean Peninsula and for the world.