

## World Affairs

# Peace in Korean Peninsula – Hurdles in the way

**North** Korean President Kim Jong-un's initiative, popularly came to be called as Olympic diplomacy, was a big success. At least temporarily, it changed the atmosphere of tension and set in motion series of moves for dialogue in the Korean peninsula. These moves roused the feelings and yearnings for peace and oneness strong among the people in both parts of Korea. They also have pushed US into a defensive and compelled it to agree for a dialogue with North Korea.

The North Korean President Kim Jong-un and the South Korean President Moon Jae-in met in an inter Korean Summit in a most cordial atmosphere. Mr. Kim wrote in the Guest House Book, "A new history starts now. An age of peace starts from the starting point of history". Both walked into South Korea holding hands. In a private talk, Mr. Kim told to Mr. Moon that he came to the Summit to end the history of conflict. They watched a musical performance, held hands as they watched a montage of photos from their Summit set to a Korean pop song that included the words "*BE A FAMILY AGAIN*".

The Joint Declaration released by them promised to fully implement all existing agreements and declarations; establish a joint liaison office; encourage more active co-operation, exchanges, visits and contacts; jointly participate in international sports events; endeavour to swiftly resolve the humanitarian issues; completely cease all hostilities in every domain including land, sea and air; to transform the Demilitarised zone into a peace zone; practical scheme to transform the current Northern Limit Line in the West Sea into a maritime zone; hold frequent defence ministerial and working level meetings in a bid to solve military issues immediately; strictly adhere to a non-aggression pact that precludes the use of force against each other; carry out disarmament in a phased manner; pursue trilateral meetings involving the US or quadric-lateral meetings involving the US and China with a view to declaring an end to the war and pursue the goal of reeling, through complete denuclearisation, a nuclear-free Peninsula. Thus the Joint Declaration reflects the genuine urges and aspirations of the people on both sides to put an end to the conflict once forever and usher on the road of peace, unity and all round progress.

Left to themselves, the leaders of both countries are capable of pursuing the dialogue process meaningfully. They can expect overwhelming support from their people if they culminate the talks with ending the conflict. But the subservient relationship of South Korean ruling classes with US; 28500-strength US military base in South Korea and massive and sophisticated weapon systems installed by US in and around Korea place the South Korean leaders in an extremely weak and uncertain position to act with initiative and independently. The leaders of North Korea too are aware of this reality. They also know that peace and security in the Korean peninsula cannot be visualised or sustained without freeing it from the US politics of intervention and domination. So, they are serious about having a dialogue with US.

North Korea's peace offensive and the kind of favourable response it received in the Korean peninsula as well as the world have left the US with no alternative but to welcome the dialogue process and agree to sit with the North Korean leader for talks. June 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 is decided for the talks.

But the US leaders began to reveal their bad intentions even before the commencement of US – North Korea talks. Mr. Trump and his senior Officials have circulated the view that a tough US policy towards North Korea, along with its pressure on China drove North Korea to the negotiating table. North Korea rightly saw in it a "dangerous attempt on the part of US to ruin a budding detente after North and South leaders Summit." and a "deliberate attempt provoke the DPRK (North Korea) at a time when the situation was moving towards peace and reconciliation."

North Korea has declared that it is for "a complete denuclearisation, a nuclear – free Korean peninsula". It expressed the wish that the concerned parties must take "phased and synchronised" measures to realise denuclearisation and lasting peace in the Korean peninsula.

But the US leaders have a basically different approach. The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that North Korea must take "irreversible steps towards shutting its nuclear weapons programme in any deal with US President Donald Trump." "Again, the US National Security Advisor John Bolton said, "we have very much in mind the Libyan model from 2003, 2004." These state-ments infuriated North Korea. On May 16<sup>th</sup> 2018, it made clear that "If the US is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral abandonment, we are no longer interested in such dialogue and cannot but reconsider our proceeding to the DPRK-US

Summit.” It also called Bolton’s talk about “Libyan model” as “absurd”. and said that “our country is neither Libya nor Iraq which have met a miserable fate.”

In the meanwhile, US and South Korea held air combat drills called Max Thunder. It vitiated the atmosphere of dialogue and forced North Korea to call off the talks with South Korea.

Thus the US is playing a game of spoiler. In the view of US, the denuclearisation or a nuclear-free Korean peninsula only mean North Korea must abandon nuclear weapons and submit itself to the verification of US whether North Korea is true to its words. North Korea’s reasonable demand that US must “synchronise” its measures to remove all its nuclear and other weapon systems from the Korean peninsula is not at all acceptable to US. It thinks that removing or not removing any of its weapons from an area is its own affair. As a big power, deadly set to impose its domination over the world, it has a right as well as need to have a monopoly over the weapons in the world. It is a custodian of world peace and security. It can dictate small country like Korea what type of weapons it can or cannot have and it can supervise the behaviour of small countries. Thus it is nothing but imperialist politics of domination. US is in a bigger game for domination over Asia and Asia-Pacific region and its military presence, interference and activities in the Korean peninsula had become an important part of this game. So the struggle of Korean people for a nuclear free Korean peninsula assumes a political significance and concern of the people of entire region.

US politics of interference and domination are a main threat to peace and cause of division, tensions and conflicts in the Korean peninsula. We must demand the withdrawal of US military base, dismantlement of its weapon systems, including the nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula and Asia-Pacific region. We must condemn all attempts by the US to scuttle the dialogue process between North and South Korea to solve their problems and achieve unity and lasting peace. We must intensify the struggle for world peace, a nuclear-free world through a comprehensive, total ban on production, stock-piling and use of nuclear and all types of Weapons of Mass Destruction starting with big powers.

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