

North Korea Condemns Escalation of US-South Korean Nuclear Military Threats

Ri Tong Il, DPRK Deputy Ambassador to UN Denounces UN Security Council Silence on this Danger

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On August 25, 2014, Ri Tong Il, Deputy Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations held a press conference at the United Nations, announcing that on August 18 the DPRK had presented a letter to the UN Security Council stating:

"The United States-South Korea joint military exercises, including the 'Ulji Freedom Guardian,' are by no means annual or routine exercises of a 'defensive nature' but are real combat-like nuclear war games of aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

"The 'Ulji Freedom guardian' exercises, in particular, are the largest war games in the world. The military forces involved in its size and nature are enough to carry out a full all-out war with a purpose of occupying Pyongyang, capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, according to the war scenario drafted by the United States. This clearly shows the aggressive nature of the United States-South Korea joint military exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." These "exercises" involve Tomahawk missiles, B52s and the George Washington carrier.

"That is why the 'Ulji Freedom Guardian' exercises should be regarded as a cancer-like root, which gravely undermines peace and security on the Korean peninsula. Only when this cancer-like root is removed, peace and security, as well as the denuclearization of the whole Korean peninsula and the normalization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relationship will be ensured. I would like to remind you that I requested the Security Council on 21 July, 2014 (see S/2014/512) to urgently discuss the question of the United States-South Korea joint military exercises. However, the Security Council has so far ignored the request of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."*

At his previous press conference, Ambassador Ri described efforts by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to encourage friendly relations with South Korea by facilitating meetings between families in the DPRK who had relatives in South Korea, and this peace initiative agreed to by the governments of both DPRK and South Korea offered the promise and possibility of more substantial and profound agreements between "both" Koreas, first steps which might help eventually lead to reunification of the Korean peninsula. Ambassador Ri pointed out that at the very moment when the families of North and South were celebrating their reunion, the United States was holding hostile joint military

demonstrations with Korea's neighbors, including with the South Korean military, effectively sabotaging the healing of wounds and constructive possibilities opened up by the warm family reunions.

I asked Ambassador Ri why the United States would deliberately sabotage improved relations between North and South Korea, and he replied that the United States needs an enemy on the Korean peninsula in order to justify its huge military presence in that area, and stated that the U.S. wants to destroy the DPRK and "swallow the Korean peninsula" to use against the Big Power in that region. Although Ambassador Ri did not mention China explicitly, it was clear that the "big Power" to which he referred could only be China. China is already menaced by the joint military presence of the trilateral alliance of Japan, South Korea and the United States military forces in very large numbers.

On August 25, Ambassador Ri confirmed that neither the July 21, 2014 letter nor the August 18 letter to the Presidents of the Security Council (Ambassador Gasana, Rwanda, July Presidency; Ambassador Lyall Grant, UK, August Presidency) had received a reply. Although China had raised the matter, the Security Council declined to discuss it further.

In view of the multiple sets of crippling and impoverishing sanctions with which the Security Council is crushing the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it would be appropriate and reasonable to at least discuss these concerns which are provoking the DPRK to build a large defensive capacity, which is, in turn being used as a justification for the crippling sanctions. A reasonable course of action would be to arrange the de-escalation of the DPRK's military build-up in direct ratio to de-escalation of the punitive and coercive economic sanctions, which clearly appear to be engineered to bring about the collapse of the DPRK's socialist economy.

Annex I to the letter dated 18 August 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council states:

"The United States has staged a total or more than 18,000 war manoeuvres of various forms for aggression in south Korea for more than six decades since the 1950s, but it claims they have never posed any threat to the north. But it contends that even a single test-fire and drill of tactical guided-missiles for self-defence conducted by the Korean People's Army to cope with them should be called into question. This is the American-style standard and is brigandish logic."

"Joint military exercises staged in South Korea after the United States announced its new defense strategy are assuming a more aggressive nature, and their scale and frequency are steadily increasing, ranging from the largest-ever joint landing drill aimed to 'occupy Pyongyang' to a drill for 'breaking through the Military Demarcation Line' all of a sudden, a drill for 'restoring administrative units after occupying the north' and a special operation drill for destroying the headquarters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

I asked Ambassador Ri to comment on the recent near-collision (the weekend of August 23,

2014) between Chinese and U.S. jets near Hainan Island. According to the New York Times, quoting the Chinese Defense Ministry's spokesman Col. Yang Yujun, "The Chinese naval fighter flew up to identify two American planes - the P-8 Poseidon and P-3 Orion that were carrying out surveillance over the South China Sea about 137 miles east of Hainan Island." Colonel Yang said:

"It is large-scale, high-frequency close-proximity surveillance by the United States that endangers Chinese-US maritime and aviation safety, and that is the root cause behind any accidents."

As a follow-up question I asked Ambassador Ri if there was any connection between the provocative US surveillance jets so close to China's territory and the joint US-South Korea military "exercises" taking place simultaneously with that dangerous near-collision.

Ambassador Ri replied to my question:

"That is a strategic question. The United States Secretary of State is calling for regime change in the DPRK. Their goal is to eliminate the DPRK militarily in order to surround the big country - you know what I mean - in the area."

Annex 1 of the DPRK letter to the Security Council continues: "The danger of the tensions on the Korean peninsula at present, together with the United States threat to mount a preemptive nuclear strike being rapidly put into practice, lies in that it is disturbing global peace and security far beyond the regional scale."

"The joint military exercises being staged under the pretext of the 'threat' from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are strictly pursuant to the United States Strategy for world domination and to bring down the social system in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and with an eye to the Asian continent with the Korean peninsula as a bridgehead. This is a stark reality which no one can deny."

"The United States armed build-up in northeast Asia, including the Korean peninsula, and the world's largest war manoeuvres will spark off a new arms race and Cold War. The threat of one party is bound to trigger off retaliation from the other party, and a war is bound to break out in this course. This is a lesson that has been taught by history."

The U.S. military alliances with a newly militarized Japan, south Korea, and other countries of the area constitute a provocation and threat to China, as well as the DPRK. It is possible that the DPRK's warning is that of "the canary in the coal mine." The severity of this threat is implied in an important essay by Professor Amitai Etzioni, the famous sociologist and senior adviser to former President Jimmy Carter. Dr. Etzioni's article is entitled: "Who Authorized Preparations for War With China," recently published in the Yale Journal of International Affairs.

Ironically, Ambassador Ri Tong Il's analysis is almost identical to the thinking of Zbigniew Brzezinski in "The Grand Chessboard;" on page 54 he states:

“A ‘Greater China’ may be emerging, whatever the desires and calculations of its neighbors, and any effort to prevent that from happening could entail an intensifying conflict with China....To put it very directly, how large a Chinese sphere of influence, and where, should America be prepared to accept as part of a policy of successfully co-opting China into world affairs? What areas now outside of China’s political radius might have to be conceded to the realm of the reemerging Celestial Empire? In that context, the retention of the American presence in south Korea becomes especially important. Without it, it is difficult to envisage the American-Japanese defense arrangement continuing in its present form, for Japan would have to become militarily more self-sufficient. But any movement toward Korean reunification is likely to disturb the basis for the continued U.S. military presence in South Korea.

A reunified Korea may choose not to perpetuate American military protection: that, indeed could be the price exacted by China for throwing its decisive weight behind the reunification of the peninsula. In brief, US management of its relationship with China will inevitably have direct consequences for the stability of the American-Japanese-Korean triangular security relationship.”

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