

Video: Washington Threatens North-South Korea Dialogue. Demilitarization is a Prerequisite to Peace Negotiations

Interview with Michel Chossudovsky

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In-depth Report: [NORTH KOREA](#), [Nuclear War](#)

Well the 2018 Olympics are over. Much of the media took note of the two Koreas competing as a united team; meanwhile U.S. belligerence continued unabated as witnessed by Vice President Mike Pence's less-than-diplomatic gestures during the games.

There seem to have been significant diplomatic breakthroughs during this period between the two Koreas, with the north-south talks seeming to place South Korea at odds with both the U.S and Japan.

What are the prospects for peace on the Korean Peninsula in the face of these events?

Joining us to discuss this question is Professor Michel Chossudovsky, an award winning author, Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of Ottawa, founder and director of the Centre for Research on Globalization in Montreal and editor of Global Research.

He spoke at a meeting hosted at the Korean parliament (National Assembly) and also participated in events alongside other anti-war, labour, political voices including meetings with the youth movement and the candlelight movement.

Transcript- Michel Chossudovsky Interview, February 27, 2018

Michael Welch, Global Research (GR), Good Morning, Professor Chossudovsky

Michel Chossudovsky: Good morning. Indeed I spent a week in the Republic of Korea. The meeting at the Parliament building was more in fact a discussion group of non governmental organizations, politicians, academics... and a very fruitful discussion in which I presented a procedure which would lead to the so-called demilitarization of the Korean Peninsula, because at this stage, under the combined forces command (CFC) agreement between the United States and the Republic of Korea, all Republic of Korea troops and forces, including 600,000 forces plus reserves, will automatically go under the command of a general appointed by the Pentagon.

That is something which is embedded and which, in effect, prevents progress of the so-called inter-Korean dialogue between North and South. Because any kind of U.S. military

threat or aggression directed against North Korea would automatically harness the Republic of Korea armed forces. In other words, the preamble to any kind of meaningful peace negotiations would require the repeal of this agreement.

GR: when you were speaking with all of these other groups I imagine there was a solid understanding that the United States and their role in this is not so much to advance the prospects for the South Korean people as to maintain their own force presence there, maintain their own grip on the country.

MC: Well there's certainly an understanding of U.S. objectives to prevail in the Republic of Korea in terms of its occupation forces, 28,500 troops, its military cooperation agreements, and so on; but I must say that public opinion in South Korea is heavily divided, and it's only recently with the inter-Korean dialogue that there's a shift, because if you ask people in the street "Well, what do you think of the United States, well they'll say, well the United States are our allies, they're our friends, they're helping us and guaranteeing our security.

So there is evidently propaganda, both emanating from successive governments, as well as from the South Korean media, that ultimately North Korea is a threat to their security. And... but that perception is changing, and there are powerful voices within South Korea particularly within the government of President Moon, which understands that in fact the United States is intent on undermining the north-south dialogue.

In fact, Washington is even threatening South Korea with sanctions for having pursued dialogue with North Korean officials. And, of course, we saw what happened with Mike Pence. At the same time, and I think that's very important, is that coinciding with the Olympic Games and the announcement of the inter-Korean dialogue, Washington has come up with its so-called bloody nose option of attacking North Korea either with conventional or so-called low-yield tactical nuclear weapons, which inevitably would lead to escalation.

It's, you know, "bloody nose" is a military concept which ultimately is based on the understanding that a tactical nuclear weapon is harmless to civilians: you just get a bloody nose and there's minimal amount of collateral damage. But that is also what I call a bloody lie, rather than a bloody nose.

It's... these tactical nuclear weapons have an explosive capacity going between 1/3 and 12 times the Hiroshima bomb, and consequently the use of a tactical nuclear bomb are more usable as defined in the Nuclear Posture Review, which inevitably lead to warfare on a large scale.

So we discussed some of these concepts. The negotiations procedures between North and South are somewhat... I mean there are certain things on which the public is informed, what's going on. But, in fact, the intelligent agencies are also involved. The U.S. intelligence is in touch with their counterparts in the Republic of Korea, the so-called KCIA, and in turn the intelligence community in South Korea is in touch with North Korea.

So there's still a certain dialogue taking place both at the official level, but also what of course is occurring is unannounced contacts and discussions. But at the same time, I think we must understand that we are at a very dangerous crossroads... a foreign policy miscalculation on the part of the United States could lead to the unthinkable: a nuclear war which could eventually lead to a third world war, and mistakes are often what determines the course of world history.

The Statements of President Trump not only confirm his misunderstanding as to the consequences of a nuclear attack using the so-called mini nukes, but also the fact that he doesn't really have an understanding or commitment of any sort to human life, as I would say, because inevitably if this course of action were taken- and there are elements inside the Pentagon which are pushing for the so-called bloody nose solution- this would lead to tens of thousands of deaths in the first day of conflict.

Bear in mind that the Hiroshima bomb led to a hundred thousand deaths within the first 7 seconds. And we're dealing with weaponry today which is exceedingly more sophisticated than in 1945.

GR: Professor Chossudovsky, I wonder if you could talk a little bit about... I mean, the president, Moon jae-in, he seems to be really championing this denuclearization, and he seems to be much more at odds with, you would think, the U.S. strategic aims, and of course he's fully supportive of this north-south initiative.

Of course, that's coming after this impeachment. He came into power after the previous president had extended the CFC that you mentioned, this combined forces command, till 2025 I think it was, and so we have this new, this different kind of leader.

I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about his personal popularity and the whether there's any... the fact that he seems to be championing these sorts of initiatives of peace and North-South unity talks, if that is to his benefit or detriment as far as the public is concerned.

MC: He is an extremely careful diplomat. He has championed the issue of repeal of North Korea's nuclear weapons, but at the same time, he's having discussions with the north, and what is on the drawing board now is a summit to be held in Pyongyang at some future date - a meeting between the two leaders.

There are important implications going back and forth, and there is for the first time in several years, actual contact, and debate, and discussion, and concern. And also, I would say that the notion that there's only one Korean Nation - that is something which is gaining impetus in the Republic of Korea. And because there's only one Korean Nation, the issue of the combined forces command which puts South Korean Armed Forces under the command of the U.S. general - this is also a very important dimension. People realize that ultimately the Republic of Korea has to remain sovereign.

But I think that President Moon is a very smooth operator. He does not necessarily reveal everything. He is maintaining a dialogue with the United States, he is very much also taking into account that his government is divided: people in the military on the one hand and intelligence... there's a situation of conflict within the South Korean government, and he is attempting to reconcile conflicting allegiances, and the fact that the whole Korean decision-making apparatus is permeated with U.S. military advisors - so that is something to bear in mind.

GR: Now...sorry go ahead

MC: But the positive dimension is that diplomatic channels have been, in a sense, restored. There's dialogue, and as I mentioned earlier, the United States has visibly shown the fact that they are against the north-south dialogue. They're not supporting it, although Trump at

the beginning said, "Yes, I support it" – they're not supporting it, and in fact they're now threatening South Korea with economic sanctions, including trade, and the irony is now they're saying, well if you continue we'll withdraw General Motors from South Korea.

The irony is that General Motors was never in South Korea. General Motors took over at Daewoo, which was the third largest automobile company in South Korea, based on the fraudulent takeover agreement back in the early 2000s, and which had been imposed following the Asian crisis by the international monetary fund and the Wall Street creditors.

But again, some of these threats exerted particularly by Donald Trump border on ridicule. The South Koreans, in general, are very smart people. They don't necessarily engage in strong rhetoric, but they debate and discuss, very often behind closed doors.

I should say, they are not, they don't have the same awareness that we do as to the dangers of a global nuclear conflict. They don't necessarily see the nuclear issue as something which could lead to open warfare affecting South Korea. And that has to do with the fact that this thing has been persistent over and over the years. For the last 67 years, North Korea has been threatened with a nuclear attack, there are war games every year, and the South Korean public does not take this issue as seriously as we do in seeing the escalation occurring, but none the less I think we are at a very dangerous Crossroads because there's been...let's say at the global level there has been a breakdown of diplomatic channels, particularly between Russia and the United States, and if we recall the circumstances of the Cuban Missile Crisis we can certainly say that this is a far more dangerous situation because at the time at least the leaders, both JFK as well as Nikita Khrushchev, were acutely aware of the dangers of a nuclear war.

And, I think, we are not in that kind of situation today the ideology is different, and somehow Donald Trump, well he's very much misinformed, but he thinks that nuclear weapons are harmless to civilians, and okay there may be some collateral damage but they can be used. And I think that that breakdown in diplomacy between east-west, U.S. and Russia, has a bearing on the north-south relationship here in Korea.

GR: Professor Chossudovsky, I know in the past we've discussed that there are, that the United States has motives that really are not so much concerned about the nuclear capacity of North Korea so much as the fact that a united Korea would be a major economic and industrial power house, as well as the fact that it borders both Russia and China.

So my understanding then, is that there would be no unification without some strings, like we gotta maintain a U.S. force presence. Based on what you're hearing from other people that you've been working with, and maybe anti-war human rights organizations in South Korea, is there any sense that a united Korea would allow for continued U.S. force presence, or would be looking at U.S. forces being evicted from the peninsula?

MC: Well certainly the United States, actually back in the year 2000 in the project for The New American Century, already intimated what would be a plan B. It would consist in actually stationing U.S. forces in North Korea. So the first objective is to hinder the process of unification, but if that is not possible, they would want for the United States to impose the terms of that reunification and station troops in North Korea. That won't happen. That won't happen.

I think the other dimension that you raised is the fact that, first of all, yes, a United Korean Nation would be a country of 80 million people with scientific, technological, economic, industrial, as well as military capabilities. And indeed, it would become, de facto, a regional power in Northeast Asia. That's certainly understandable.

On the other hand, it should be noted that, in effect, North Korea is considered by the United States as a buffer state because the real target of U.S. global warfare is ultimately Russia and China. It's not North Korea.

And what United States wants to do is to ensure its hegemony, its geopolitical hegemony, in Northeast Asia against China and Russia. I should mention that the position of China is somewhat ambiguous because China has sided with the U.S. in many regards despite their differences. I should also mention what's very important is that the THAAD missiles which are stationed on the Korean Peninsula are ultimately intended for China, not for the DPRK.

And then, you have this process of militarization of the Korean Peninsula. Ultimately, it is part of a broader agenda of encirclement of the People's Republic of China. The militarization of both the North and South China Sea, the militarization of the Korean peninsula, the stationing of U.S. facilities in different parts of Asia, and the militarization of the waterways. So that... and in fact, there's a double agenda.

There's an agenda directed against the Korean Nation on the one hand, but there's also the broader agenda against the great powers which are targeted by the United States, namely, Russia and China, and I would say probably more at this juncture more Russia than China, in view of the fact that concurrently, there's a process of militarization of Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, and the Balkans directed against the Russian Federation.

GR: Professor Chossudovsky, I'm thinking that Moon Jae-in's initiatives, his resistance to the THAAD missiles and so on, I'm wondering if he is in some sense not unlike a Salvador Allende or a Hugo Chavez: an inconvenient leader that could be replaced by someone more congenial to U.S. concerns. In your time there, did you see any opposition, anybody in the opposition that might be situated to replace Mr. Moon Jae-in, or is there any effort to undermine him?

MC: I don't think that he's playing a role that is in any way comparable to Salvador Allende or Hugo Chavez. He is part of the main, well it's now the government party. It's a two party system like in the United States. You have the conservatives on the one hand, of which the outgoing president was impeached, and then you have the Democratic Party. He was the candidate of his party. And there's a whole party apparatus behind him which in a sense, it retains a certain element of stability with regard to U.S.-Republic of Korea relations.

President Moon hasn't freed the political prisoners which were imprisoned by the former president. He's very cautious in his statements, and I think he's a very astute diplomat and politician. He's not a major progressive figure compared to Allende or Hugo Chavez. He's not questioning the legitimacy. let's say. of the Korean capitalist establishment the so-called chaebols, the conglomerates which are pro-american and still very much dominant as far as political influence is concerned.

GR: I was wondering if you could comment on the role of Japan in this whole situation, because I know that Japan has been very closely aligned with the United States and they've been as intense of their condemnation of the North Koreans as the U.S.... Shinzo Abe. How

have you seen Japan's involvement, their interference in this north-south initiative, if any?

MC: Well, Prime Minister Abe has played pretty much the same role as Mike Pence in terms of appearing at the opening ceremonies, and then ultimately refusing to shake hands with the North Korean officials, and Mike Pence and Abe have had one-on-one discussions.

I think there are several elements behind this. One is that Korea is a former Japanese colony, and they are expressing that sort of disdain for their former colony, and on the other hand, of course, the government of Prime Minister Abe is very firmly aligned with the United States with regard to defense and military engagements in the region, not to mention their own Joint Defense agreements, their military cooperation in Jeju Island, which is a South Korean Island just south of the peninsula.

I think that the Japanese government views the north-south inter-Korean dialogue as a threat to their own hegemonic role in North East Asia. The fact that Japan is a former Imperial power, but it's still there exercising a role as a regional level and it is a firm ally of the United States. What is occurring is a geopolitical shift which in some regards is characterized by the possible reunification of the two Koreas but also an expanded role of China and Russia in the region.

If you look at the map, you essentially see four or five countries. Of course Japan, the Republic of Korea, the DPRK North Korea, China, and Russia, and the distances between these four or five powers, depending on how you count, is very limited, where, you know, you go from Seoul to North Korea it's 50 something kilometers to the border. Vladivostok is about 100 km to the North Korean border. China has borders with North Korea and it's virtually within 100 to 200 km from the South Korean peninsula.

So that's the background. I think it's a very tense situation. The reunification of Korea would not only weaken the United States and east Asia, it would also weaken Japan. There's no question about that.

And then, we have to address the bilateral relationship between the United States and Japan, which is the former colonial power which is played a historical role in Korea, and bear in mind that all what is unfolding now is a whole series of military cooperation agreements, including in the European Union where the command structures, the national command structures are being put in the hands of the United States or NATO. There's a big debate in Italy at this moment because the Italian government, in advance of the elections, has actually signed an agreement with NATO which puts the entire Italian forces under the command of NATO, which essentially means, under the command of the United States.

And so the situation I described with regard to South Korea's links to the United States, and the fact that ROK forces are under U.S. command, it's happening in other countries, and all the member states of NATO, in fact, most of them now, are virtually de-facto obeying orders which come from the Pentagon via NATO. That leads to a situation where the individual nation-states are not even in a position to veto a war which is led by the United States but uses the military forces of U.S. allies to do the dirty work, so to speak.

So it's a very, very dangerous situation, and what is unfolding in North Korea could potentially lead to a third world war, although at this particular juncture I would think that if these tactical nuclear weapons were to be tested, they would be first tested in the Middle East in the context of U.S. threats directed against now both Lebanon and Iran, with of

course, Israel playing a key role in that project.

GR: Well Professor Chossudovsky, I want to thank you very much for your insights into the situation, and I look forward to speaking to you again when you get back to Canada. Thanks again for your analysis. I've been speaking with Professor Michel Chossudovsky, the award-winning author, Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa, and founder and director of the Centre for Research on Globalization.

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