



Commentary: Complications on Korean Peninsula call for return to Six-Party Talks

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March 4, 2017

BEIJING, March 6 (Xinhua) -- The latest developments on the Korean Peninsula have further complicated the situation in Northeast Asia, and highlighted an imperative need for all the concerned parties to return to peaceful negotiations within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

On Monday, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) reportedly test-fired four ballistic missiles into waters off its east coast, the second of its kind in less than a month if confirmed.

A report by the South Korean news agency Yonhap said Pyongyang's latest missile test is in "an apparent reaction to huge military drills by Washington and Seoul that Pyongyang insists are an invasion rehearsal."

The latest missile test took place two months after top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un warned in his New Year's message of more missile tests aimed at improving Pyongyang's capabilities to defend its security interests.

Those include deterring hostilities from Seoul and Washington, such as their two-month-long joint military drills described by the DPRK as military provocations and the planned deployment of the U.S. THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) system in South Korea.

The U.S.-South Korean planned deployment of THAAD has also sparked strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition from both Russia and China as it will damage the delicate strategic balance in Northeast Asia.

For the DPRK, developing ballistic missiles will do no good as it would lead to economic

sanctions in accordance with related United Nations resolutions.

As for South Korea, the current situation proves that neither military muscle-flexing with the United States nor the U.S. THAAD system could provide it with protection and security.

To stop the situation from simmering, the United States and South Korea should halt their military games and abandon the deployment of THAAD, while the DPRK needs to exercise more political restraint.

Besides, greater diplomatic efforts are needed, including resumption of the Six-Party Talks that had proved to be the only effective way out of the stalemate in denuclearization of the peninsula.

U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted a "No" to the DPRK's any of its ICBM (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile) effort before taking office, and his administration is now saying "No" to talks with Pyongyang.

Media reports said the Trump administration earlier refused to issue visas for DPRK diplomats set to visit New York in March for unofficial talks with former U.S. officials.

In comment, Doug Bandow, an expert at the U.S. think tank Cato Institute, said "refusing to engage won't make that prospect (DPRK missile and nuclear threats to the United States) go away."

"Military strikes could lead to full-scale war. Sanctions have so far been a dead end," he wrote in an article in the U.S. international affairs magazine *The National Interest*. "Certainly, talking isn't likely to make the problem worse, and it appears to be the only path that moves forward."

It is time for parties concerned to go back to the negotiating table to end wrangles and wrestles and reopen the long stalled Six-Party Talks that once brought the Korean Peninsula nearest to denuclearization with a settlement acceptable to all.