

## **Inter-Korean Relations: Challenges and Their Solutions**

In late September this year, the Fifth Session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was convened in Pyongyang. In his policy speech at the session, Kim Jong Un, President of the State Affairs, outlined and assessed the current inter-Korean relations and the situation of the Korean peninsula, before clarifying the policy towards the south Korea at the present stage.

First of all, he mentioned the dishonest behaviour of the south Korean authorities.

Noting that south Korea was conspicuously conducting various military drills and arms build-up under the pretext of "containing" the DPRK and occasionally offending and provoking it in words and in deeds, he scathingly criticized the south Korean authorities for being bent on begging external support and cooperation while clamouring for international cooperation, toeing the line of the US.

In fact, the south Korean army waged various joint military exercises with the US troops, worsening the instability of the situation. In August alone, "exercise of the staff for crisis control" and a "combined command post exercise" took place from 10 to 13 and 16 to 26, respectively. Regardless of their scope and form, they both were aggressive in nature in that they were a rehearsal and preliminary for a nuclear war aimed at perfecting the operation plan, whose key point was a preemptive strike against the DPRK.

Kim Jong Un clarified the DPRK's principled stand on south Korea's proposal on declaring the termination of war.

He said that as long as the factors, the sparks of distrust and confrontation between the north and the south, remained intact, hostile acts would be continued even though the termination of war was declared and, therefore, various unexpected clashes be repeated.

He continued: It is the invariable demand repeatedly explained by us to ensure the respect for each other and withdraw the partial view, unfair and double-dealing attitude and hostile viewpoint and policies towards the other side before declaring the termination of war, and this is an important task to be settled beforehand in order to control the inter-Korean relations and open up a bright future.

Kim Jong Un clearly expressed the DPRK's attitude towards the inter-Korean relations.

He stressed: It is important for the south Korean authorities to change its confrontational and habitual attitude towards our Republic, keep the stand of national independence through practices, not in words, deal with the inter-Korean relations with a view to settling the essential issues and give weight to and sincerely implement the north-south declarations.

Saying that he obviously reminded the south Korean authorities once again of the fact that it depended on the attitude of the south Korean authorities whether the inter-Korean relations would be restored and develop onto a new stage or continue to keep the present state of worsening, he added that the DPRK did not have any aim nor reason to provoke south Korea nor any idea to harm it and it was necessary for south Korea to promptly get rid of the delusion, consciousness of crisis and awareness of getting harmed that it should deter the north's provocation.

In his speech, he advanced magnanimous measures for improving the north-south relations.

To look back, the south recklessly committed a childish act of scattering leaflets to the north last year, thus triggering strong anger of the north, with the result that the communication lines between the two were cut off.

Thereafter, the south did not stop scattering leaflets to the north, under the pretext of the freedom of individuals, and its government did not take active measures to promote its relations with the north but only clamoured about such inessential issues as civilian-level cooperation and humanitarian aid.

This clouded the bright future of the inter-Korean relations.

However, Kim Jong Un, as part of an effort to realize the expectations and desire of the entire Korean nation to see the north-south relations recover from the present deadlock as early as possible and durable peace settle in the Korean peninsula, took the broad-minded measure of restoring the north-south communication lines from early October.

His speech clearly explained the cause of deadlock in the inter-Korean relations and

presented a just and fair proposal to break it. Also, it highlighted the nation-first ideal, the ideal of national independence, that the issues between the north and south should be solved by the Korean nation itself.

The south Korean authorities must approach the DPRK's just and fair proposal in good faith and respond to it with sincere attitude.