

“The peace process on the Korean Peninsula is incompatible  
with the US-SK joint military exercises.”

*A presentation given by Rev. Lee, Hong Jung at a civil society press conference organized by the 6-15  
Committee opposing the US-SK joint military exercises on Thursday February, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021:*

The peace process on the Korean Peninsula is incompatible with the US-SK joint military exercises. While boasting the strongest military power and state-of-the-art military equipment, we cannot build mutual trust in building peace on the Korean Peninsula by practicing scenarios like Operation Plan 5015 that specifies preemptive attacks on and occupation of North Korea.

The suspension of the US-SK joint military exercises was the key to shepherding in the Pyeongchang Spring of 2018 and opening the tightly closed iron gate of the peace process on the Korean Peninsula. The resumption of US-SK joint military exercises shows that both governments lack the true will to lead the peace process through peaceful means, despite the golden opportunity to once again create a new way out of this stalled peace process.

In the name of supporting U.S. and North Korean diplomatic efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, they changed the name of the exercises to a name less likely to provoke the North and reduced their size, but unless the basic operational plan such as preemptive strikes and removal of the North Korean regime is removed, it is no better than trying to cover up the sky. The fundamental target of the US-SK joint military drills has not changed, and considering the context of the process of peace on the Korean Peninsula the negative meaning of the joint military drills has not changed.

In the midst of a particularly acute battle between the Cold War hegemonies of the U.S. and China, U.S. strategic assets have been deployed near the Korean Peninsula, and the controversy over upgrading the THAAD system in Seongju has resumed; therefore, we must express deep concern for these military actions on the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea, which the U.S. has incorporated into the infrastructure of its Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific including Japan, Australia, and India, lives with a geopolitical fate where it must be mobilized for alliance diplomacy and alliance wars for U.S. interests at any time, and the US-SK joint military exercises serve this purpose.

The anti-life devastation and aftermath of the Korean War, which marked its 70th anniversary last year, the entrenched division of the Korean War and the spread of Cold War culture have become a symbol of anti-peace. The people who live on the Korean Peninsula both in the South and the North are victims of the 70 years of Korean War trapped under a global Cold War system.

With a "holy fury" we strongly urge the immediate suspension of all military actions and hostile policies that encourage confrontation and conflict on the Korean Peninsula in order to protect the right to life and safety of the people.

The leaders of the two Koreas promised to make efforts to establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula through the historic Panmunjom Declaration and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration. The DPRK-US Singapore Summit also shared the same spirit. Nevertheless, even in the midst of the process of visualizing and implementing the spirit of the joint agreements, the military authorities of South Korea and the United States have continued to conduct joint military exercises and to suppress the military strategies toward North Korea.

We will never passively sit by and watch the logic of "war economics" led by the globalized forces of the Military Industrial Complex control the peace process on the Korean Peninsula.

We urge the South Korea, North Korea, and the U.S. authorities to stop all acts of mutual hostility, to actively implement the agreements between the leaders in the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration, and the Singapore Joint Statement, in cooperation with the global religious/civil society.

With the belief that peace can only be achieved through peaceful means, we will pray and unite with the world's religious/civil society for a declaration of the end of the war, the conclusion of a peace agreement, a permanent peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula, and peace in Northeast Asia.