

By Our Nation Itself

On June 15, 2000, the North-South Joint Declaration, regarded by the Korean people as a milestone for their reunification, was made public in Pyongyang, DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).

Nearly 15 years have passed since then. However, the ideal of By Our Nation Itself, the fundamental spirit of the joint declaration, has been an unchangeable banner of Korea's reunification.

The ideal is run through with the thoroughgoing spirit of independence.

As is generally known, Korea was divided not by any internal contradiction within the Korean nation, but was enforced by foreign forces.

Having occupied south Korea under the guise of "liberator" after World War II, the US has ceaselessly strengthened its military rule over south Korea with an ambition to dominate the whole of Korea and the rest of the Asian Continent. Outwardly it has pretended to be interested in the reunification issue of the Korean nation, but has not wished them to take the road of reconciliation, unity and reunification and laid one obstacle after another on the road of their reunification movement. This has created serious challenges for Korea's reunification and forced its people to suffer the tragedy of national division.

The history of national division spanning nearly 70 years vividly shows that the independent development and reunification of the Korean nation cannot be realized without putting an end to domination and interference by foreign forces.

The reunification question of the country must be solved by the efforts of the Korean people, its masters, and in accordance with their opinion and demand. In other words, it is a question related with the right to national self-determination. There is no reason for outside forces to interfere with it. This is just the *raison d'être* of the ideal of By Our Nation Itself.

The ideal which embodies the thoroughgoing spirit of independence of the nation is most reasonable and righteous in view of the situation on the Korean peninsula divided by outside forces and of the essential nature of the issue of relinking the bloodline of the nation.

The ideal reflects the Korean nation's will to defend peace.

All the Korean people are desirous of putting an end at the earliest date to the sharp military confrontation for several decades between the north and the south and of achieving peace and reunification.

However, owing to the active participation by the south Korean authorities in the tenacious isolate-and-stifle policy and military threat of the US against the DPRK, military confrontation and tension, instead of peace and stability, constantly prevail on the Korean peninsula. In January this year the DPRK National Defence Commission made crucial proposals to the south Korean authorities on adopting practical measures to cease extensively all military hostilities against the

other side. Nevertheless, the US and south Korea further increased the tension in the region by conducting large-scale Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises from the end of February.

Had the south Korean authorities not followed outside forces who are intent to do harm to their fellow countrymen and had they rejected the joint military exercises with the US and not allowed their land, sky and sea to be turned into venues of war games by US troops, in other words, had they respected the ideal of By Our Nation Itself, the situation on the Korean peninsula would not have faced such a crisis as it is today.

Peace and security on the Korean peninsula is linked to peace and security in the world. If another war breaks out on the Korean peninsula, it will inevitably be developed into a thermonuclear war mankind have never experienced. It will spill over into the wide areas of the world imposing great losses and calamities upon mankind. The US will never be safe either.

The ideal of By Our Nation Itself also reflects the spirit of great national unity.

The eye-opening and impressive events that took place on the Korean peninsula after the publication of the June 15 Joint Declaration eloquently prove that reunification of Korea can be fully achieved only when the whole nation is united.

The railways and roads were relinked and the air and sea routes opened between the north and the south of Korea, making breakthroughs in the walls of division. Inter-Korean high-level political and military negotiations and over 20 rounds of ministerial-level talks discussed matters of common interest of the nation to reach agreement. An industrial park was established in Kaesong situated near the Military Demarcation Line as a symbol of economic cooperation and exchange between the two sides. A tourist route to Mt. Kungang, a world-famous mountain in the north, was opened for south Koreans.

Reunion of separated families and their relatives in the north and the south took place on several occasions. Joint entrance of the players from the north and south in international matches flying the flag of reunification and joint cheering by people from both sides touched the heartstrings of the world people. The world realized the Korean people are of one blood with one language and culture and it must be reunified.

The demonstration of great national unity by the north and the south of Korea, which had been hostile to and confronted to each other for over half a century is the fruition of the ideal of By Our Nation Itself advanced by the June 15 Joint Declaration.

The international society wishes the north and the south of Korea to be faithful to the last to this ideal, the major spirit of the June 15 Joint Declaration.

On the way of defending and achieving this ideal lie the reunification and common prosperity of the Korean nation and peace and security of the region and the rest of the world.