

October 4 Declaration and Peace on the Korean Peninsula

From October 2 to 4 in 2007, meetings and talks were held between Kim Jong Il, chairman of the National Defence Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Roh Moo Hyun, president of south Korea. The heads of the north and south signed and published the Declaration for the Improvement of North-South Relations, and Peace and Prosperity, which consists of eight articles.

What is most noteworthy in the declaration is the first article: "The north and the south shall uphold and positively implement the June 15 Joint Declaration."

The fundamental principle of the June 15 Joint Declaration, which was adopted at the historic Pyongyang summit between Chairman Kim Jong Il and the then south Korean President Kim Dae Jung in June 2000 is By Our National Itself, or national independence. This principle of independence was reaffirmed in the October 4 Declaration as the core principle, cornerstone for national reunification.

What draws attention in the declaration next is the new proposals for the political and military fields, for definitely converting north-south relations into those of mutual respect and confidence and closely cooperating with each other in the efforts to ensure peace on the Korean peninsula.

The declaration opened up a bright prospect for removing the main obstacles to national reunification by putting forward specific methods for building military confidence between the north and south and new proposals which had never been seen before, including that of pushing forward with arranging of a meeting on the Korean peninsula of heads of three or four parties directly concerned with the Korean war to declare an end to the war.

Specific proposals for developing cooperation in the economic, cultural and humanitarian fields are stipulated in the declaration. The north and south agreed to set up a west sea peace and cooperation special zone as an economic cooperation area on the West Sea of Korea where acute

military tension prevails and expand it to some areas on the East Sea of Korea. They also referred to the issue of realizing tourism on Mt Paektu as well as on Mt Kumgang and the issue of expanding the reunion of members of families and their relatives separated in the north and south.

For the very detailed and progressive contents, the declaration was warmly welcomed by all the Korean people and other peace-loving peoples of the world, instilling in them confidence in and optimism about peace on the Korean peninsula and national reunification.

However, over the past nine years, far-right conservative Lee Myung Bak and Park Geun Hye regimes denied the October 4 Declaration, persisting in north-south confrontation.

The incumbent south Korean ruler, who took office advocating “progress,” disregards the declaration and is following the policy of subservience to the US and confrontation with the fellow countrymen in the north. He remains tight-lipped about the fundamental and principled issues for the improvement of north-south relations, studying the faces of the US and the south Korean conservative forces. Worse still, he is not willing to hold any talks with the north under the pressure of the US, and makes fuss about “south-north relations based on south Korea-US alliance,” and “sanctions and pressure,” aggravating the north-south relations.

The south Korean authorities’ anti-reunification policy is arousing strong protest and denunciation among the Korean people not only in the south but in the north and abroad.

If the south Korean authorities wish sincerely peace and prosperity, they should make a switch in policy-making with a view to respecting the October 4 Declaration and thoroughly implementing it.