

**Press Statement of Policy Research Director of Institute for American Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK**

Pyongyang, December 16 (KCNA) -- The policy research director of the Institute for American Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Sunday issued the following statement:

It is a significant event for ensuring peace and security of the region and beyond that the top leaders of the DPRK and the U.S. committed themselves to improve the DPRK-U.S. relations at the historic DPRK-U.S. summit held in Singapore last June, and the current DPRK-U.S. relations are advancing along the steadfast will of the top leaders to follow through on the Singapore DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement in good faith.

However, the continued commission by the United States of vicious anti-DPRK hostile actions, running counter to these developments, prompts my shock and indignation.

During the past six months since the Singapore DPRK-U.S. summit, the U.S. high-ranking politicians including the secretary of state have almost every day slandered the DPRK out of sheer malice, and the State Department and the Treasury Department have taken anti-DPRK sanctions measures for as many as eight times against the companies, individuals and ships of not only the DPRK but also Russia, China and other third countries by fabricating pretexts of all hues such as money laundering, illegal transactions through ship-to-ship transfer and cyber-attack.

Recently, the U.S. is resorting to anti-DPRK human rights plot in such a way that it carries deliberate provocation by adding high-ranking government officials of the DPRK, a sovereign state, to its unilateral sanctions list, while taking issue with the non-existent "human rights issue".

Now, the international society is unanimous in welcoming the proactive denuclearization steps taken by the DPRK and urging the U.S. to respond to these steps in a corresponding manner. And president Trump avails himself of every possible occasion to state his willingness to improve DPRK-U.S. relations.

Far from the statements of the president, the State Department is instead bent on bringing the DPRK-U.S. relations back to the status of last year which was marked by exchanges of fire. I cannot help but throw doubt on the ulterior motive of the State Department.

If they are a sort of diplomats of "only superpower", they should at least realize from the past record of the DPRK-U.S. relations that sanctions and pressure would not work against the DPRK.

The United States will not be unaware of the self-evident fact that its threat, blackmail and pressure against the other side cannot be a solution under the relations of pent-up confrontation, mistrust and hostility between the DPRK and the U.S. and deterioration of the situation that might be incurred by these hostile actions would not be beneficial for peace and security of the Korean peninsula and beyond.

Since we know too well that the deep-rooted hostility between the DPRK and the U.S. cannot be redressed overnight, we have been proposing that the DPRK-U.S. relations be improved on a step-by-step approach of resolving what is feasible one by one, by giving priority to confidence building.

If the high-ranking politicians within the U.S. administration including the State Department had calculated that they could drive us into giving up nuclear weapons by way of increasing the anti-DPRK sanctions and pressure and human rights racket to an unprecedented level, which has nothing to do with confidence building, it will count as greatest miscalculation, and it will block the path to denuclearization on the Korean peninsula forever - a result desired by no one.

The U.S. should realize before it is too late that "maximum pressure" would not work against us and take a sincere approach to implementing the Singapore DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement.