

Discussion of “U.S. Can’t Act Alone in North”



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Discussion of "U.S. Can't Act Alone in North"

Joong-Ang Ilbo Editorial

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I. Introduction

The following are comments on the essay "U.S. Can't Act Alone in North" an editorial which

appeared in the Joong-Ang Ilbo, which appeared as Policy Forum Online 05-41A: May 17th, 2005. This includes comments by Jeong C. P.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Nautilus Institute. Readers should note that Nautilus seeks a diversity of views and opinions on contentious topics in order to identify common ground.

II. Comments by Jeong Cp

So Far So Bad

Any US involvement in the Korea peninsula must be seen in the context of expediting the peace and unification process between the North and the South. Thus far, the US is not serious in assisting either the South or the North towards that goal, contrary to the objectives of the South Korea Ministry of Unification blueprint.

Any unilateral position taken by the US or under the pretext of the US-South Korea Combined Forces Command is also contrary to the function of the UN Charter and international world body and opinions that no one country is given the sole power to act without consultation with the world body i.e the United Nations Council.

Any interference by the US into North Korea internal affairs under the pretext of instability or a regime failure or whatever the situation is a direct extension of the Iraq precedent. This is also construed as a breach of sovereignty in the absence of approval from the UN body. Even South Korea has no valid authority under international law to interfere/intercept into North territory on the basis of a national emergency situation or even a humanitarian crisis in the North unless consented by the North and sanctioned by the UN world body.

Admiral Greenert's recent statement/view that the US can enter into North Korea territory if there is a perceived national chaos or emergency is a mere speculation and shows his lack of understanding of international law regime and smacks of US arrogance. In the event of such an occurrence, neither the US nor any foreign power for that matter has international valid authority to enter into North Korea without her consent or approval from the UN Security Council.

South Korea is Militarily Ready

South Korea is well prepared to face a North Korea threat even without the US support based on current South Korea military combat readiness and the availability of emergency facilities throughout the capital and suburban regions. Hence, there is no longer a need for a US military presence in South Korea.

The statement/remark by the South Korea President that South Korea alone is incapable of dealing with threats posed by North is politically correct but deceptively misleading. His views would probably be accepted three decades ago. However based on present military technological hardware and readiness by the South Korea armed force, South Korea is more than ready to tackle all North Korea threats and attacks, if any even without US support.

Unknown to all, US justification in maintaining military presence in South Korea is to continuously reinforced the perception that South Korea is weak and incapable of defending itself in the face of a North Korea invasion. However this position can no longer be accepted in the light of North Korea obsolete military armament vis-vis South Korea advanced military hardware. To continuously assume that South Korea is incapable of handling all North threats reflect a lack of appreciation and understanding of the spirit of the people of South Korea even after five decades of rapid economic

development and military readiness.

Overhaul of Current US-South Korea Approach

Dismal performances record by current US-South Korea cooperation towards the North call for an urgent overhaul and a drastic need to adopt a radical change in approach and a paradigm shift in addressing the South-North Korea stalemate from two perspectives.

From the international perspective, unilateral US-South Korea efforts in achieving an agreement with the North is viewed as one-sided without the critical partner of the UN and EU bodies. In other words, the US is perceived as acting only to its interests or upholding South Korea interest to the perceived detriment of the North. In this context, there is a need to open up the cooperation to include the UN and not just seclude the matter to just US involvement in the South-North Korea conflict.

A Need for International Participation

From the North Korea point of view, a US-South Korea overture is a distasteful proposal which is treated with standard suspicion by the North. Without international support, all US-South Korea proposals will be treated with suspicion as the North may see itself at a disadvantaged position. Therefore, a peace plan drawn up by US-South Korea initiative will fail to attract similar enthusiasm from the North without some kind of international support i.e UN, EU and China participation.

Thus, a change in the North Korea attitude can be attained if international participation is involved for the purpose of transparency. Here, China involvement is critical as China is seen as a North Korea comrade to act as a counterbalance to US-South Korea alliance. On the other hand, the involvement of the UN and the EU can be seen as a counterbalancing force in maintaining fairness in the bargaining and implementation process. Any attempts to depart from the above proposal will be doomed to fail if these realities are not taken into effective account.

III. Nautilus Invites Your Responses

The Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network invites your responses to this essay. Please send responses to: napsnet-reply@nautilus.org. Responses will be considered for redistribution to the network only if they include the author's name, affiliation, and explicit consent.

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