

Hansun Brief

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Urgent Self-Defensive Strategy for Enhanced Right of Self-Protection

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〈Summary〉

The Kim Jong-un administration, which is now its five-year term, has continued making a limitless rush at nuclear and missile program. As of this year, the Kim administration conducted nuclear tests two times, and the test cycle became even shorter than before. Additionally, the North also succeeded in launching ballistic missiles for development of ballistic missiles to carry nuclear warheads and test-firing a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). The North's such dash shows the Kim administration's aggressive character, and also could be a factor expressing an increasing uncertainty of the North Korean regime. The bigger problem is that the brakeless rush towards nuclear weapons and missiles has been accelerating further.

Amid the situation, the important task facing South Korea is to possess stronger capabilities enough to defend its own security. The key of more national power is to establish self-defensive capabilities, and to that end, its defense capability should be strong first of all. At this time, making the nation stronger by itself requires a combination of enhanced military & strategic capabilities with more modern armament and strong mental power of the unified nation as well as the military force.

The South has depended solely on the U.S.'s nuclear umbrella against the North's nuclear attack threats. However, if North Korea's nuclear attack becomes realized, as some pointed out, there are suspicions of the U.S. possibly using the nuclear umbrella, and limits exist due to operational time of the nuclear umbrella. Because of the suspicions and uselessness of the nuclear umbrella, South Korea's nuclear armament must be one of the alternatives that should be under review as a new strategy. The nuclear armament could bring about economic disadvantages internally and externally. But when there are conflicts between security interest and economic interest, it is required that the nation chooses the security interest with firm determination while the nation becomes unified.

Even though the U.S. and China concern collapse of the nonproliferation treaty (NPT) system, nuclear proliferation has been rather spurred due to arbitrary double standards. It is an unjustifiable act to enforce only South Korea to keep the NPT system especially when the South is under direct nuclear threats. From the perspective of the South, when there is a conflict between the nation's self-interest and allies' interest, the South has to choose its own interest. In that sense, South Korea should take forward-looking position by considering that the nuclear armament should have China give up its protective policy for the North while South Korea's nuclear power can be

a driving force in resolving the North's nuclear issue. In addition, in order to weaken North Korea's self-defense capabilities, South Korea should block funds flowing into the Kim's regime through cooperation between the South and the U.S. and actively search measures for North Koreans' further access to information.

1. Kim Jong-un's unstoppable ambitions for nuclear weapons and missiles

The Kim Jong-un administration, which is now its five-year term, has continued making a limitless rush at nuclear and missile program. On January 6, 2016, the North staged the fourth nuclear test, and again, the fifth nuclear test was conducted on the anniversary day of September 9 when the North regime first took the power. While it took each three-year cycle from the first nuclear test to the fourth test, the fifth nuclear test was done in 8 months, making the test cycle shorter. This means the North is speeding up its nuclear development. Furthermore, North Korea is rush to develop ballistic missile which will carry nuclear warheads. Until August of this year, the North had fired 22 ballistic missiles—a total of 14 times. In particular, it was a shock that the regime was successful in test-firing submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) on August 24. The success of the SLBM showed that North Korea has capabilities to go ahead with strategic provocation anytime anywhere on the ocean bottom at unexpected times. It is also known that the North recently has accelerated manufacturing of the launch pad for train ballistic missiles and development of torpedoes loaded with the nuclear warhead. North Korea's provocative move towards nuclear weapons and missiles has become even bolder to the international society as the North fired a long-range missile when the G20 summit meeting was held in Hangzhou on September

5. The missile launch during the G20 meeting is interpreted as an act of defiance aimed at China gathering with the international society in order to condemn the North. But since Kim Jong-un took power, as seen from specifying itself as a nuclear nation in the Constitution, The launch also resulted from the North's nuclear ambition. And the North standardized nuclear warheads through the fifth nuclear test. North Korea's such serious provocation clearly strains South-North relations and threatens peace and stability of Northeast Asia. In other words, North Korea's reckless nuclear & missile moves demonstrate the Kim administration's aggressive character, which increases unpredictability of the North regime.

So far this year, we have witnessed a series of evidences of the North's escalating development of nuclear weapons and missiles such as two nuclear tests, 14 ballistic missile launches, and successful launch of the SLBM. In consideration of its ever-faster moves, many have raised concerns over possible ballistic missile launch and additional nuclear tests in the near future. Meanwhile, the U.S sent B-1B Lancers, which are long-range supersonic bombers, on 13 September in a show of force reacting to the North's latest fifth nuclear test. The North Korea's Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho who participated in the 17th Non-Aligned Movement summit made the remarks that North Korea is ready to launch another attack, warning the sixth nuclear test or inter-continental ballistic missile test. Right after its fifth nuclear test, there exist concerns over another sixth nuclear test, which means there is no deterrence against the North's accelerating spiral of escalation. This prediction was confirmed from Kim Jong-un's statement, "creating milestone miracles with the magnificent and exhilarating sound of the first H-bomb of our republic" right after missile launch and the fifth nuclear test on September 5. On the day, Mr. Kim's motivations for pursuing nuclear

weapons increasingly are a mere extension of his simultaneous nuclear and economic development policy which is the basis of the national development strategy of 2013. It is only a matter of time before the North repeats grave provocations.

2. Broken brakes which would stop the rush for nuclear weapons and missiles

North Korea was listed as targets of sanctions under the UN Security Council Resolution 2270, which was implemented following Pyongyang's fourth nuclear test in January this year. The Resolution 2270 includes strong and effective measures to block development of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by the North. Especially, the Resolution has all kinds of measures to block strong fund sources which could force the North to abandon its nuclear missile program by itself.

In that sense, the UN Security Council Resolution 2270 has been praised as one of the strongest sanctions so far. Against the backdrop, since the North manipulated structural loopholes in the Resolution, Pyongyang's fifth nuclear test became possible. China was the party who created the loopholes in the sanction by accepting the livelihood exception in the sanction in terms of China's trade with North Korea. Such structural loophole is the key factor in accelerating the North's increasing nuclear ambition. Considering the fact that North Korea depends more than 90 % on China in foreign trades, strategic goods of nuclear missiles could be converted into livelihood goods depending on China's position. In fact, since effectuation of the Resolution 2270, China's customs examination on the North's import & export items has been temporary and superficial as seen from several cases. After the fifth nuclear test, China already announced its position that it opposed "unilateral sanctions on North Korea" by individual nations,

hinting there might be other excuses and reasons for another structural loopholes. And China will clearly act as the biggest obstacle during the course of the UN Security Council Resolution to the fifth nuclear test. Moreover, suspicions have turned out as a fact that China aided and abetted silently the North's nuclear missile development. The prime examples are China's cooperation with the North's import of high intensity aluminum pipes, a major source material for centrifugal separators, in 2003, China's export of missile mobile launch pads to the North which were revealed in military parades in 2013, and Pakistan's transit export of nuclear materials after purchasing from Chinese company, "Beijing Suntech technology". China has helped Pyongyang as a guardian whenever the North faces crisis. In fact, China has various measures to curb North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles. However, China has pursued a consistent policy of protecting the North's wrongdoings rather than imposing sanctions, receiving criticism over its negligence.

Such China's protective policy towards the North is compensation that it needs to provide personnel, property, political, and diplomatic supports to Pyongyang which fights against the U.S. instead of China. Additionally, China's protection of the North is also a product of strategy to use the North as a strategic buffer rather than accepting request of the times for nuclear non-proliferation. But as shown from the result of the fifth nuclear test, North Korea's nuclear issue has become an intractable problem as the North has increased its nuclear missile capabilities, causing a nuclear domino in Northeast Asia. That is, there is a high possibility that China's protection of the North leads to enhanced nuclear missile capability of the North, which also cause an increasing possibility of nuclear dominos, raising concerns that China's neighboring nations might have more nuclear powers.

In the meantime, China has interfered in South

Korea's internal affairs explicitly. The reason that South Korea attempts to deploy the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system is part of solution to defend its nation against the North's intensified nuclear weapons and high-altitude missiles. If there is no issue such as the nuclear missile, the South will not need to deploy the THAAD on its territory. That means, if nuclear missile issue of the North is solved, the THAAD issue becomes naturally solved. If ignoring such circumstances and just opposing deployment of the THAAD, it would be like putting the cart before the horse. It seems that since such thought regards South Korea as the periphery of China, relations between the South and China are seen as the ones between the ruler and the ruled to some people. But, as for South Korea, since the nuclear threats by the North are directly related to the very existence of the nation, it is necessary to take all kinds of measures for self-defense.

3. Self-defensive capacity enough to fight against North Korea's nuclear threats

From the geopolitical aspect, four powers are located around the Korean Peninsula. South Korea is a small nation compared with other neighboring powers. Historically, the neighboring powers frequently attacked the nation, and it remains as a painful past for Koreans. Nevertheless, South Korea's current national power is not small at all compared to other nations. In accordance with such national might, it is required to make South Korea stronger enough to keep the nation by itself. Making the nation stronger means Korea has to hold strong military capabilities enough to let others clearly know that attacks on South Korea will do more harm than good. In addition, it also means the South has a certain level of military power enough to have alliance by its own choice. In particular, as the North

has intensified its capabilities of nuclear weapons and missiles, the South must have powerful might enough to prepare for indirect & direct threats and attacks by the North, and this should be the highest national priority. The key in this is to have independent defense capacity. The independent capacity is based on national defense power. Therefore, having strong national defense power is the key. The national defense power means not only military strategic power with modern armaments but also unified spirit of the nation.

South Korea's independent self-defensive capacity is poor compared with four neighboring nations. It lacks the capacity which can guarantee its own security. The insufficient self-defensive capacity should be complemented with Korea-US alliance for national security. The alliance is to complement a lack of self-defensive system through common promise to jointly fight against external invasions. Of course, the alliance is uncomfortable. But it is the cost South Korea should bear for the national security. The Korea-US alliance is a prerequisite for the survival of the South considering the Korean Peninsula's situation amid intensifying Chinese hegemonism. Additionally, we should not underestimate the security value of the alliance, which became the foundation of industrialization and democratization of South Korea. Since the Korea-US alliance, as a controller, has contributed to a stop to regional hegemonic competition by China and Japan since Korean unification, it is an important part of South Korea's self-defensive strength.

However, as the Korea-US alliance has firmly continued, there have been also side-effects: the spread of dependency on big nation. The nation has depended on the alliance rather than enhancing its own power. Despite South Korea's remarkable national growth, the nation still depends on the alliance shamefully. Moreover, the defense force who should have been the leader in national self-

defense has shown dependency on alliance, putting aside improvement of the self-defense capacity, and acting like a diplomat. In any case, if the base of the self-defense system is weak in the real international policy, Koreans must face the reality that alliance cannot be maintained. They should consider self-defense first, and then, the alliance can be strengthened.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye made a resolution that she will end the North regime if the North fires nuclear missiles towards the Korean territory. The problem is South Korea does not have self-defensive capacity to end the North's regime holding nuclear weapons. The problem arises from the fact that the South tries to find all measures to weaken the power of the North rather than intensifying its self-defensive system. While Pyongyang's nuclear power has increasingly evolved, the existing self-defensive paradigm is useless. So, the paradigm with the conventional weapons should be shifted into the one with asymmetric weapons. That is, South Korea should consider nuclear armament seriously and take action. At this time, the South nuclear armament would result in economic disadvantages internally and externally. When there is a conflict between security interest and economic interest from the strategy, it is natural to choose security interest. And Seoul also should find ways to weaken the capacity of North Korea's self-defense system. Dictators always rule key associates with governing funds. To that end, Seoul must create ways to divide key associates from Mr. Kim by properly operating secondary boycott by the U.S. through Korea-US cooperation system and by blocking the governing funds flowing into Mr. Kim. At the same time, dictators dislike freedom deeply. So the South must devise all plans and measures to increase the North residents' access to information for their freedom and enhanced human rights. More access to information will divide

residents from Mr. Kim.

4. South Korea's nuclear armament is a compulsory measure to make the North give up its nuclear weapons

South Korea is the nation under threat of direct attacks from the North's nuclear weapons. But the nation depends wholly on the U.S. nuclear umbrella against North Korea's threat. The U.S. nuclear umbrella is a strategy to keep South Korea's security by using the U.S. nuclear power when the South is under threats or attacks by the North's nuclear attacks. The U.S. nuclear umbrella is an obviously previous asset to South Korea's national security. However, if the North's nuclear attack becomes realized, there are increasing suspicions that the U.S. might cancel its nuclear umbrella in order to avoid a risk of nuclear war. In addition, since there is inconsistency between Pyeongyang's nuclear attack time and nuclear umbrella operation time, some point out that nuclear umbrella is impractical in principle. Since the North's fifth nuclear test, the U.S. has put off nuclear umbrella acts on the grounds of bad weather, and when considering three-hour flight time from the air force base in Guam to Seoul, it is reasonable to have suspicions and argument surrounding the uselessness of the umbrella. Now is the time to create new strategy against the North's nuclear threats since it has come to this. In other words, Seoul should deploy strategic nuclear system, or it should strengthen self-defensive capacity through nuclear armament. But, the effective way would be, in reality, nuclear armament rather than strategic nuclear deployment.

In particular, severe oppositions from the U.S. and China are expected regarding South Korea's nuclear armament. But, both the U.S. and China have failed to fulfill their responsibility and duties as a nuclear power in the NPT system. They have followed their own nation's interests with a double-standard,

spreading further nuclear proliferation. The U.S.'s double standard was applied to Israel and India while China applied it to the North and Pakistan. In such circumstances, when it comes to South Korea, which is under direct nuclear threats from the North, it is unfair double standard if they press the South to only depend on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, not allowing nuclear armament. From the South's position, it is obvious to choose its own interest when there is conflicting interest between the nation and the alliance.

South Korea's nuclear armament is the only option which would make China give up its protective policy towards North Korea. In fact, China is the only nation which can put pressure on the North with various measures to give up nuclear weapons. But China has not pressured the North. By using North Korea's nuclear weapons as a strategic method to the U.S., China has rather sat on its hands or even cooperated with the North's nuclear capabilities. Additionally, if China takes a lukewarm position in solving the nuclear issue of North Korea, it could eventually spark nuclear dominos in Northeast Asia, so China will actively respond to solving the issue. In the sense that such spark of nuclear dominos would damage China's national interest, the South's nuclear armament could be a momentum for China to move actively.

In the meanwhile, the U.S. tries to solve nuclear issue of the North through China with the secondary boycott. But due to concerns over trade disputes between the U.S. and China, the U.S. has not used secondary boycott more actively. If the U.S. wants to control the South's nuclear armament, it should solve the North issue by intensifying secondary boycott towards China. Then, South Korea's nuclear armament would become a method for the U.S. to take initiative in negotiation with China. This could make the U.S. shift from defensive position to aggressive position in solving the North's

nuclear issue. In this respect, South Korea's nuclear armament is not just unfavorable to the U.S.'s national interest.