

## 《Japan using DPRK issue to beef up military》

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is using the rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula to its advantage. The Japanese media are playing up the nuclear and ballistic missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, making Japanese people more apprehensive of the threat from Pyongyang. This in turn has created a public perception that the Abe administration has no choice but to deepen its military cooperation with the United States to protect Japan against external threats. As a result, many Japanese have to come to believe that only a stronger US-Japan alliance can stop the DPRK from pursuing its nuclear programs.

The Japanese administration has been hyping the threat from the DPRK instead of trying to ease public tensions. And Abe's remarks and some media reports have made many in Japan believe that the country will bear the brunt of a conflict, if one were to break out. The fear among Japanese people therefore can be mainly attributed to the exaggerated propaganda of Abe and the media.

Amid the rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, Abe has delivered many sensational speeches and taken moves that could stir up more trouble. On Tuesday he reiterated the need for explicitly defining the status of Japan's Self-Defense Forces under his plan to revise the pacifist Constitution by 2020.

Addressing a recent meeting of the parliamentary panel on national security, Abe even said Pyongyang might already have the resources and technical know-how to develop and fire missiles equipped with sarin nerve gas. The message he tried to convey is that, since Pyongyang has the capability to launch chemical attacks on other countries, the US should join Japan to launch a military strike in order to preempt a possible attack by the DPRK.

Besides, the Abe administration has also been talking about how its Self-Defense Forces will cooperate with the US military if a conflict with the DPRK were to break out. Perhaps Japan is hyping up the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue to use it as an excuse to dispatch its Self-Defense Forces to help the US in a conflict with the DPRK.

Japan's new national security law came into effect in March last year, allowing it to exercise the right to dispatch Self-Defense Forces to defend the country or a friendly country facing attack. As a result, Tokyo can now provide strategic help for the US and other allies even if Japan itself is not attacked. The purpose of this law is to enable Japan's Self-Defense Forces to take part in conflicts in other parts of the world, albeit on the side of its allies, on the pretext of helping friendly countries in trouble.

Now that Abe has freed the Self-Defense Forces of the restrictions of Article 9 of the Constitution, Japan can pretend to be a "normal country". That will also lay the foundation for Japan's next step, which is to amend the Constitution, and boost its strategic strength to become a major military power. And since the Self-Defense Forces have not found a chance to take part in actual combat after the new security law came into force, Japan sees the DPRK issue as an opportunity to exhibit as well as test its military strength.

Thus it can be safely concluded that the hyping up of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is a well-planned move by Abe to stir up trouble, even a conflict, in the region.

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