

Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: War, its lessons, and the search for a permanent peace, 29th January 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Ri, Permanent Mission of Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations

Allow me, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Jordan's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Let me also welcome your initiative, Sir, which is very timely and on the right topic. We are convinced that this debate will meet with success under your able leadership. My delegation would also like to note the remarks made by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman.

It is 70 years since the end of the Second World War, which imposed unspeakable suffering and misfortune on humanity. With the end of the Second World War, the desire of humanity was to establish a world free of war and to achieve common prosperity and development for all people. Despite decade after decade having passed since that time, we cannot see any major breakthrough in achieving peace in the world. Instead, we are witnessing the challenges. In the world, large hotspots and the anachronistic and outdated military alliances of the cold war era continue to strengthen. Military alliances are still formed and large-scale military exercises continue to be launched one after the other, posing a greater threat to international peace and security. The act of interference in and infringement upon the sovereignty of other countries and attempts at regime change and armed invasion continue in an open manner under the pretext of so-called freedom, democracy, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. We can name all the pretexts.

That reality demonstrates that international peace and security is increasingly the primary issue of the world. In particular, global attention is focused on the trustworthy and responsible attitude and role of the United Nations in its mission to maintaining international peace and security. In that regard, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to underscore the following principles.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is cognizant of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs as fundamental principles that should be strictly abided to in international relations with a view to achieving international peace and security. Whether a large or a small country, there is no aspect of international law that allows or tolerates infringement by a big Power on the interests and sovereignty of a small country. The Charter of the United Nations clearly stipulates sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs as fundamental principles to be upheld among States Members of the United Nations in international relations.

The acts of a specific State Member misusing its privileged status in the United Nations should no longer be tolerated. The acts of defying the Charter of the United Nations and considering itself more equal than others by making a show of its strength and attacking other Member States should no longer be tolerated.

I want to draw attention to a second principal issue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea insists that the United Nations should pay due attention to and make every effort with regard to the unresolved issue of crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War. As for past crimes committed by Japan against the people of Korea, China and South-East Asian countries, a precedent cannot be found in the history of humanity regarding the degree of savageness and brutality. It is a common issue. It does not concern only Asian countries but all humanity. Of the past crimes committed by Japan, the main unresolved crime is sexual slavery, in particular that imposed on 200,000 Korean women by soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army. It is becoming an increasingly wide-ranging issue throughout the world with growing outrage at and condemnation of crimes that trampled on the dignity of Korean women and of the Korean nation as a whole.

The reality is that Japan is now hell-bent on denying and covering up its past crimes. Recently, it went as far as to commit a further error by stabbing at the wounded hearts of the victims and their States. The most representative example is the visit to the Yasukuni shrine by Mr. Abe, Prime Minister of Japan. That visit is a totally anachronistic crime intended to prompt the Japanese people to revive their militarist ambition and to incite them to commit another crime against humanity, thereby deluding the entire Japanese territory and population towards its own total destruction.

The Asian countries and the international community did not hesitate to voice their outrage at and condemnation of the visit. A State Member of the United Nations that has a close alliance with Japan did not hesitate to adopt a resolution on the sexual slavery of Korean women, as well as those of other Asian and European countries.

All those facts indicate that Japan is being driven into the role of offender. Mr. Abe should never gamble politically against the international community again. Instead of visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, he should visit Germany. That way he could at least learn about the best example of past crimes being settled in an excellent manner. That is in the best interests of Japan. It is the only way to shake off the inferior morality that is unique to Japan, and thereby restore the international community's confidence in Japan.

There is no place for Japan's militarism in this world. With regard to the Korean people, during the military occupation Japan massacred 1 million Koreans and, as I have told the Council in the past, they turned 200,000 Korean women into sex slaves, which is out of an estimated total of 300,000 women sex slaves under the euphemism of so-called comfort women. Furthermore, they abducted or drafted over 8.4 million Koreans and put them into forced labour sites during the Second World War.

The Korean people will never forget, no matter how much time and how many decades pass by. Without fail, the people will be repaid for what Japan has done to provoke the anger of our ancestors.