

DPRK extends olive branch

Kim open to more talks with Trump, but under certain conditions

By PAN MENGQI

panmengqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) top leader Kim Jong-un said on Jan 1 that he is firmly committed to denuclearization and ready to meet with US President Donald Trump at any time, but warned he could seek an alternative path if the United States sticks to sanctions.

Kim made the remarks during his New Year's speech broadcast by the country's state television, as he also urged the US to take measures in exchange for denuclearization steps the DPRK has taken so far.

"I am always ready to sit down again with the US president at any time and will make efforts to produce an outcome that the international community would welcome," Kim said.

"But we could be left with no choice but to seek a new path if the US does not make good on its promises, misjudges our patience, while seeking to force things unilaterally and clinging to sanctions and pressure," he added.

It was not clear what "new path" the DPRK leader was referring to.

Kim emphasized that it is his firm intention to work on building "new relations" with the US, establishing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula and seeking complete denuclearization, as agreed to in his first summit with Trump in June, if the US takes "trustworthy and corresponding measures".



At a railway station in Seoul on Jan 1, people watch a television news screen showing a New Year speech by Democratic People's Republic of Korea top leader Kim Jong-un. JUNG YEON-JE / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

He also called for active pursuit of multilateral negotiations among countries involved in the truce agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War to discuss replacing the armistice deal with a peace treaty, which

he said will lay the groundwork for lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Kim renewed his calls for a complete end to joint military drills between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the US and demanded that no foreign military strategic assets be brought onto the Korean Peninsula. He emphasized that all the agree-

ments reached during last year's three inter-Korean summits carry "significant meaning" in which they could be regarded as a nonaggression treaty between Pyongyang and Seoul.

Kim added that the DPRK will never tolerate outside interferences and interventions intended to block its way toward reconciliation, unity and unification of the Korean people.

Wang Jin, a Charhar Institute researcher, said Kim's speech emphasized Pyongyang's concerns with the stalemate in the denuclearization talks.

"Pyongyang wants corresponding measures for the steps it has taken while Washington asks for more concrete steps before granting any quid pro quo," he said, adding that sanctions on Pyongyang have been regarded as a major stumbling block to denuclearization.

At end-December, the DPRK's top leader sent a personal letter to the ROK President Moon Jae-in in what appeared to be a friendly gesture, expressing his intent to work together with ROK to resolve the denuclearization issue.

Li Chengri, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said since the Korean Peninsula is once again at a crossroad, it is worth anticipating a second summit between Kim and Trump, as the two may push forward a more specific plan to solve their primary differences in the denuclearization issues.

"The two are currently trapped in a dead end. The problem is that Washington has set as a prerequisite that Pyongyang denounce nuclear weapons before any steps are taken, while Pyongyang wants a peace treaty," he said.

Xinhua, AFP and AP contributed to this story.

Hope for end to US-China trade troubles

Resolution appears nearer to ending six-month tariff dispute

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels

chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the United States could be inching closer to calling off their trade feud, some analysts in both countries believe.

President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump both spoke positively of their phone conversation on Dec 29, during which they hoped an agreement beneficial to both nations and the world could be reached.

The US has imposed punitive tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese exports since July, and China retaliated by levying new tariffs on \$110 billion of US exports. The tit-for-tat tariffs have triggered grave concern of an all-out trade war between the world's two largest economies.

Xi and Trump, when meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Buenos Aires on Dec 1, agreed to refrain from imposing new tariffs, a

move described by some as a 90-day truce.

"President Trump's upbeat assessment of this most recent conversation with President Xi gives rise to the hope that bilateral trade tensions soon will be ratcheted down significantly," said Nicholas Lardy, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, referring to Trump's upbeat tweet after the phone talk with Xi.

Lardy believes that the way out is for each side to compromise, but he said it would not be easy, due to domestic reasons in both countries.

"I fear each side has an insufficient understanding of the nature of policymaking in the other country, which increases the risks of the current situation," said Lardy, author of an upcoming book, *The State Strikes Back: The End of Economic Reform in China*. In the book, he argues that China's growth prospects are bright but more reform of State-owned

enterprises is crucial.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-US diplomatic ties, with the two countries more interdependent and intertwined. Bilateral trade exceeded \$580 billion in 2017. Accumulated two-way investment jumped to \$230 billion. And more than 300,000 Chinese students are studying in US universities and colleges.

On Jan 1, Xi and Trump exchanged congratulations on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations, according to Xinhua News Agency.

In his congratulatory message, Xi said China-US relations have experienced ups and downs and made historic progress over the past 40 years, bringing huge benefits to the two countries and contributing greatly to world peace, stability and prosperity.

History has proved that cooperation is the best choice for both sides, Xi said.

Trump said great progress has been made in the development of the bilateral ties. He added that it is his priority to promote cooperative and constructive US-China relations, adding that his solid friendship with President Xi has laid a firm foundation for great achievements of the two countries in coming years.

Douglas Paal, vice-president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, believes the bilateral relationship is already past the crossroads, and the issue now is whether the two sides can find a way to manage the costs of contention.

"There are vested interests on both sides, which see benefits in greater friction. Leaders need to control them better in the pursuit of peace at acceptable costs," he said.

Cheng Li, director of the John L. Thornton China Center of the Brookings Institution, went a step further, describing the bilateral relations as "at cliff's edge" and adding, "It

requires prompt measures by leaders of the two countries to pull it back."

Shen Dingli, a professor of international relations at Shanghai-based Fudan University, said that many in the US think that China aspires to replace the US as the world's top leader.

Many Chinese officials and pundits believe that the US has misread China's intentions. Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations on Sept 28 that "China will neither become another US, nor challenge or replace the US".

On Dec 30, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China stands ready to work with the US to move forward China-US ties underpinned by coordination, cooperation and stability.

Teams from the two governments are reportedly working closely in order to reach a deal as soon as possible.