

American soldier entered N. Korea because of 'discrimination in U.S. army'

From page 1 ▶ North Korean investigators have also reached a similar conclusion that he crossed from South Korea deliberately and illegally, intending to stay in the North or in a third country, but added that the investigation was still active.

"During the investigation, Travis King confessed that he had decided to come over to the DPRK as he harbored ill feeling against inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the U.S. Army," KCNA said.

"He also expressed his willingness to seek refuge in the DPRK or a third country, saying that he was disillusioned at the unequal American society."

King was being "kept under control by soldiers of the Korean People's Army" after his crossing, the agency said.

U.S. officials have said the North had not provided substantive responses to requests for information on King.

How to classify the 23-year-old has been an open question for the U.S. military.

Despite the fact that he is an active-duty soldier and the United States and Korea technically remain at war, issues such as King's decision to cross into North Korea of his own free will, in civilian clothing, appear to have disqualified him from POW status, U.S. officials have said.

King, who joined the U.S. Army in January 2021 as a cavalry scout with the Korean Rotational Force, which is part of Washington's security agreement with Seoul.

He had finished serving his service and had been transported by the U.S. military to the airport to return to his home unit in the United States.

Instead, King left the airport and joined a civilian tour of the area separating the North from the South, where he then ran across despite attempts by South Korean and U.S. military guards to catch him.

The Pentagon said it could not verify King's comments as reported by KCNA and remains focused on his return to the United States. It did not address whether it had heard



more details from North Korea.

What the Pentagon can verify is that nearly a third of Black U.S. military service members have reported experiencing racial discrimination, harassment or both during a 12-month period.

That's according to the results of a long-withheld U.S. Defense Department survey that highlighted the grave concerns about racism across the military ranks and was only leaked by American news outlets in 2021.

Whilst the U.S. military is diverse in its lower ranks, it is largely white men at the top.

Human rights advocates say discrimination goes unpunished, and racial harassment has played a major role in pushing out minority groups.

Racism and discrimination against black American service members and other minority groups have been cited in a number of studies and surveys as a disturbing factor and ongoing occurrence in the U.S. military.

In 2021, the same year that King joined the U.S. army, a survey organized by "Blue Star Families" found that 42 percent of service members from minority groups have turned down a military assignment or permanent change of station order because of concerns about racism and discrimination, even when they were aware that doing so can negatively affect their career because of perceptions of racism in the local community.

A Blue Star Family is the

immediate family of a U.S. military member who is serving during war.

The survey found that more than 40 percent of active-duty family respondents also factored in concerns about racial discrimination or safety when listing where they prefer to be based.

About 33 percent of active-duty families and 34 percent of veterans in the survey also reported that concerns about racial and ethnic discrimination were a factor in conversations with family members about whether to continue serving in the U.S. military.

The findings were part of the Blue Star Families' "Social Impact Research 2021: The Diverse Experiences of Military & Veteran Families of Color," that asked 2,731 people, including 622 active-duty spouses, 303 active-duty service members and 306 veterans.

Blue Star Families argued that the survey represents an important starting point for an area of research that has been lacking attention.

"Around the George Floyd murder and the unrest that summer, we started to recognize that one thing we hadn't been paying as much attention to as we should have is, what are the experiences of military families of color," Kathy Roth-Douquet, CEO of Blue Star Families, said at a virtual event launching the report.

"What we came to understand is, actually no one had ever asked these questions before... There's sort of a culture of silence about this because it's not what we

aspire to be or what we aspire to experience."

Many also reported safety concerns, racial profiling by police, racial slurs, and other forms of discrimination.

57 percent of active-duty family respondents reported hearing military-connected peers make racist remarks or jokes and about 46 percent said they have been the subject of slurs or jokes in their military community at least once since January 2020, according to the report.

About 41 percent of active-duty family respondents said they feared for their personal safety in their military community due to their ethnicity or race at least once since January 2020, with some citing displays of the Confederate flag or discussions about politics "in ways they viewed to be coded racism" as factors that made them feel unsafe.

And about 33 percent of Black active-duty family respondents reported being racially profiled by military law enforcement at least once since January 2020, compared with about 36 percent who said they were profiled by civilian law enforcement.

Finally, about 39 percent of active-duty service member respondents said their race or ethnicity "significantly" or "slightly" hurt their ability to get ahead at work, including about 48 percent of Black respondents.

"This is just the beginning of the work ahead," the co-chairs of Blue Star Families' racial equity and inclusion committee wrote in the 189-page report. "It is our hope that findings from this report will serve as a framework for policy and program recommendations that will help improve the service experiences of military families of color, strengthening our military overall."

Since 2021, it appears that no reforms have been made, despite widespread research about racism in the military and a black U.S. soldier fleeing to North Korea because of reported racism and discrimination.

U.S. imperialism remains very sticky and terribly tragic...

From page 1 ▶ And this is because he objected to the U.S. proxy war on Russia in Ukraine. One also witnesses efforts by the U.S. to corral China both economically and politically with the focal point on Taiwan to ensure that it remains a U.S. vassal and does not re-join China even while the U.S. allegedly recognizes that Taiwan is in fact "Chinese".

The U.S. is even sending "cookie monster" Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland to Vietnam soon to try to convince the Communist government in Vietnam to support the Biden Administration. Nuland failed in her recent mission to Niger in her opposition to that country's new government. She is likely to fail in Vietnam, too, whatever her precise demands

as if truths don't matter. They simply cannot conceive of supporting a geopolitical strategy where cooperation might prevail even now when it becomes a necessity because tensions could explode in a nuclear war.

Biden just this month authorized or suggested another \$40 billion to push the bloody war further, according to James Rickards, an American lawyer, financial expert and author. The U.S. may already have committed some \$200 billion into the overall effort to castrate Putin's Russia, Rickards says, and will brook no competition economic or military to U.S. dominance. And this is a financial environment where the U.S. is \$33 trillion in debt and the annual interest on the debt is well over \$730 billion. This expense will surpass a trillion

Note that some 70 percent or more Nigeriens don't even have electricity for light bulbs, but France depends to a significant degree for its own power needs on uranium extracted on the cheap by and from Niger's poor.

dollars in another year, more than the entire U.S. "defense" budget which itself is insane. It's totally unsustainable but there you have it, another failure to recognize a truth.

Even Muammar Gaddafi, who was sodomized with a bayonet and murdered in Libya, the most prosperous African country in his day, said this way back in 2005: "NATO is expanding towards Russia to reach and capture the gas, oil, coal and iron owned by Russia." Gaddafi felt on in his long-ago speech vaguely foreshadowing his demise and the NATO/U.S. destruction of prosperous Libya, adding that the U.S. is in effect killing itself.

claiming that the hour will come when the U.S. will collapse like the Soviet Union did just over three decades ago.

But none should make the mistake of failing to recognize that the U.S. has not seriously been about promoting "freedom and democracy" and especially goodwill, but about resource theft, dominance, control and rapine, all at bottom to try to make sure that the "empire" survives and thrives with little regard even for the longer term well-being its NATO allies in a de-industrializing Europe that has lost its independence and become dependent on the U.S. for table scraps of economic support.

Multilateralism in a changing world order needs more Global South power

By Professor ZHANG Yuan

Faced with the increasing uncertainty of the world, the comparison of national strength has changed rapidly, and a new world order is being brewing. As unilateralism and hegemonism are increasingly unable to be popular, the development direction of multilateralism is being increasingly discussed.

Firstly, good multilateralism should be equal, open and inclusive.

The universal multilateralism established after the Cold War was progressive for the times, but it did not prevent the resurgence of exclusivism and protectionism. Especially for emerging market economies and developing countries, a multilateral mechanism that continuously explores the breadth and depth of win-win cooperation should adhere to the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and equality. Equality in multilateralism is beyond ideology, social system, and development paths differences.

For the purpose of global prosperity and universal security, our world needs multilateralism. Key demand of Multilateralism is practitioners of activism. When a country's development strategy is aligned with regional cooperation initiatives, it can lead to more effective identification of shared interests and concerns between countries. An example is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Currently, the SCO contains 9 member states, 3 observer states and 14 dialogue partner states. 2023 is the 22nd year of the establishment of the SCO. As an important comprehensive regional organization, the SCO is playing a positive role in bringing peace, prosperity and development to the world. The "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation,

respect for diverse civilizations and the pursuit of common development is exuding vigorous vitality.

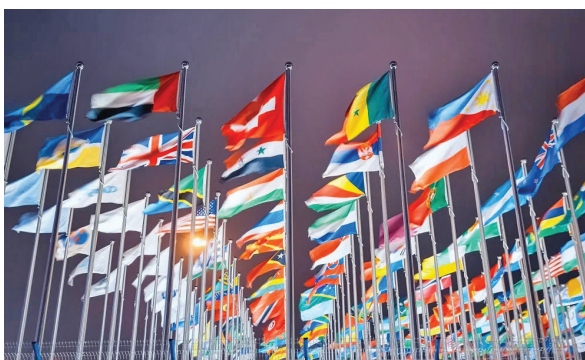
The BRICS mechanism, which is attracting active participation of more Western Asian countries, is also an important force for emerging economies and developing countries to uphold multilateralism. The economic rise and development potential of the BRICS has demonstrated that the Global South countries have a strong capacity to influence the world.

Secondly, good multilateralism should be wary of hegemonic countries using the platform of international mechanisms to create confrontation.

Multilateralism needs to be premised on safeguarding the sovereignty and security of States, should respect national dignity, and should prevent hegemonic countries from weaponizing their leading economic, scientific and technological power.

People throughout the world are looking forward to an effective international mechanism that can truly maintain world peace and stability. Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has reshaped a set of international relationship and world order. International politics has been constantly debugging and oscillating between the realism that pursuing interests and the idealism that revering faith and morality.

NATO, for example, is a very typical military-security alliance with the characteristics of the time. NATO experienced reorientation after the Cold War. Critics of NATO, motivated by an abhorrence of the memory of the Kosovo war, see NATO as the party responsible for the collapse of the post-Cold War European security structures. However, as the Ukrainian



crisis continues, views that affirming NATO see it as a key force in reducing turmoil in Europe, and also as an important tool for the Western world to continue to dominate the future world order. The willingness of some Asia-Pacific countries that do not have geopolitical affinities with the North Atlantic to partner with NATO is driven by a very high expectation of NATO's role in influencing the pattern and order of the world. However, it is important to be cautious about vengeance and, in particular, to be wary of unilateral hegemony hidden behind the international organizations.

The xenophobia of security-oriented multilateral mechanisms is only one side of the coin. In fact, even the international mechanisms that, in an economic and social sense, have welcomed the advancement of trade and investment globalization are in recession. When more and more international powers go against the original intent of the

organization's establishment and rashly expand the coverage of its security concerns in accordance with confrontational logic, it will lead to a more severe political polarization of the world, which is actually a betrayal of the ideal of benign international cooperation.

Thirdly, the Global South needs to be united and self-reliant on issues of core interests and major concerns.

The countries of the Global South are determined to follow their own path, in which it is vital to develop their economies and improve people's livelihoods through modernization in line with their national conditions.

In the turbulent international environment, a friendly partnership of mutual support and win-win cooperation can promote the goals of economic recovery and maintaining peace and stability. In the process of transforming the global governance system, advocating

multilateralism and consistently supporting the United Nations to play an active role in international affairs is conducive to expanding the voice of Global South and promoting international justice.

The call for unity does not mean shaping new allied blocs, but rather bypassing the stereotypical Western notions of blocs and alliances, refraining from subjugation to the big powers, and maintaining a sober neutrality while creating a multipolar environment. It means enhancing the credibility and recognition of international organizations that are independent of the hegemonic powers through solidarity and self-strengthening; expanding the maximum common denominator within the organization by regulating organizational behavior and increasing the effectiveness of cooperation among members; reducing uncertainty while reducing external misperceptions of the organization and reinforcing its own cohesion with pragmatic and collaborative outcomes. China is an ex-officio member of the Global South and has always stood with the emerging economies and developing countries of the world in upholding independence, development and revitalization, and fairness and justice.

Peaceful, stable, prosperous and beautiful homeland for mankind is both a dream and a goal for human to build together. The world is at a crossroads of historical development. The practice of true multilateralism in a changing world order requires more countries from the Global South and more sustainable and innovative forces that they can bring to bear in order to reach a new and more equitable future of global governance.

Dr. ZHANG Yuan, Professor, The Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, China