

# *Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs*

## *All's Quiet on the North Korean Front*

It happens this time of year. Peaceful overtures flow from the DPRK, including offers to renew remains recovery operations. The U.S. rejects these but the opportunities are there.

All the trouble comes early, in the spring, March through April, when the U.S. and South Korea practice war. *Key Resolve/Foal Eagle* are the mission names. The soldiers. The weaponry. Land, sea, and air. A big to-do ... that scares North Korea to death.

During past exercises, the DPRK has bombarded a South Korean island, possibly sank a South Korean ship, and this year threatened to turn Seoul and Washington into a *Sea of Flames*. North Korea truly believes they will be invaded. Each year, the U.S. fails to acknowledge this fear (or doesn't care). It would be comical if it wasn't so dangerous.

In 2011, the U.S. and North Korea agreed to renew remains recovery operations. The next year, a U.S. ship was loaded with military personnel and equipment then sent to a Chinese port to wait for entry visas into North Korea.

Six long years had passed since recovery operations were suspended by the U.S. Hope rose among the families.

When did the U.S. choose to send this ship loaded with equipment and military personnel into North Korea? Yes, the first day of *Operation Foal Eagle*. The very day that other U.S. military personnel and equipment began their practice for war against North Korea.

The outcome should have been predictable. The DPRK stalled the recovery team's visas then went on to test a ballistic missile. The U.S. threw up its hands and called the recovery team home. The comedy went full course.

Wiser, more insightful minds would have scheduled the recovery team's deployment after the dust settled from the military exercises, when North Korea was no longer manic about an invasion. If/when another opportunity to resume recovery operations in the DPRK comes along, we must be sure that U.S. policymakers, earning a living at this sort of thing, recall that North Korea thinks differently than we do. Let's schedule the deployment of a humanitarian mission when the host isn't paranoid that the operation is a side-door way of invading their country!

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