Things with North and South Korea are hitting it big

Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un decided to clear up the mines on the border and to reunite the railways. Pyongyang hosted the third inter-Korean summit, during which the parties agreed to reunite the railway across the Peninsula, to put right the mechanism for the prevention of incidents at the border and to deoperationalize North Korean test facilities. The majority of measures are symbolic: in documents the information about denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea , which the US insists on, is concealed. According to Russian and South Korean experts interviewed by ” Kommersant, the main task for the leader of the DPRK Kim Jong — UN now is to show that the American line of highest political leverage possible towards Pyongyang is inconsistent. The sleeping volcano Paektu Mountain, which is situated on the border between North Korea and China, is considered to be the sacred place for the Koreans. According to the legend, it is the place where Dangun, the founder of the first Korean state of Gojoseon, was born. No wonder it was Paektu where the leaders of the two States of the Peninsula, Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un decided to dispose of their summit. Moreover, the results of their meeting are more of symbolic importance rather than practical. In the documents signed in Pyongyang — political, economic and military ones – the principal achievements of the meeting are specified. The first part was entitled the Pyongyang Declaration and, as the opposition deputies of the South Korean parliament have already noted, it duplicates the sense and the style of the manifest of Panmunjom, which was forged on the 27thof April following the results of the first meeting of the leaders. The second part was presented as an Agreement for the practical implementation of the historical manifest of Panmunjom in the military field. From the practical point of view it is designed “to bring to nothing the danger of war”, and, in fact, it particularizes the arrangements which were signed in April. These agreements are related to the establishment of the hotline by the military personnel of both countries in order to activate contacts and to prevent “accidental incidents”. As the professor of Kookmin University in Seoul Andrey Lankov commented on this clause for “Kommersant”, “Everything seems to suggest that many of the events considered to be the DPRK’s provocative acts against South Korea, could be tragic accidents, because accidents happen when half a million armed young men are amassed in a small territory.” Particularly, since the 1st of November the parties agreed to cease all military training exercises near the border, to establish air-exclusion zones of different depth (from 10 km to 40 km) for different types of aircrafts, helicopters and drones, near the borderline, and to deoperationalize the checkpoints in the territory which is 1 km away from the borderline on either side. Since the 1st of October North and South Korea and UN troops (American contingent), in demilitarized zone between the two states, also are to start the mine clearance. The number of military personnel in the joint security zone demilitarized zone will also be reduced to 35 on each side. The biggest amount of controversy among experts and politicians was caused by the part of the agreements which is related to the denuclearization of DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). In the "presence of experts from the corresponding countries", Kim Jong-UN agreed to deoperationalize the training range for the testing of rockets and the launching cradle in Tongsin County, and also agreed to establish "close cooperation" with South Korea concerning the denuclearization and "achieving the nuclear-free status of the Korean Peninsula". The President of the United States Donald trump was encouraged by this fact. As he wrote on Twitter, after a while there will be neither rockets nor nuclear tests (in North Korea.- "Kommersant"), Meanwhile, the researcher of the South Korean ASAN Institute Guo Myung-Hyun perceived the statement of the leader of the DPRK with immense skepticism. The inferior limit that is now needed in order to advance the negotiations concerning denuclearization is the assignation of a list of military facilities and nuclear weapons which is now at the disposal of Pyongyang. Such list is to build a" road map " of disarmament, which was the subject of the agreement forged by the leaders of the US and North Korea on the 12th of June in Singapore. According to Mr. Guo, without it, "it will be difficult for Donald Trump to convince his advisors that a second meeting with Kim Jong-UN is necessary." The Pyongyang Declaration also States that the DPRK agrees to deoperationalize the The Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center if the US "takes appropriate steps in keeping with the Declaration of the 12th of June. The mentioned center is one of the main plants producing weapons nuclear fuel, and, according to Andrei Lankov, its shutdown “would seriously decrease the nuclear industrial capacity of the DPRK." However, Pyongyang will require drop at least part of sanctions instead, and in Washington there is a consensus claiming that it should not be done. The most essential part of the agreements reached includes new economic projects. The work of Kaesong Industrial Complex and tours to Geum mountain resumption are among these projects, as soon as the corresponding conditions are fulfilled (there is no specification about the kind of conditions in the document). It was also decided to discuss the prospects of the establishment of a special economic zone along the Yellow sea shore and a tourist zone along the shore of the Sea of Japan (The Koreans call it the Eastern sea). South Korean media have already reported that after the publication of the Pyongyang declaration the leaders of all chaebols (South Korean manufacturing conglomerates Samsung, Lotte, LG, etc.) arranged the meeting of all directors and deputies in order to "discuss the emerging prospects resulting from this achievement." Special prospects for Russia are emerging resulting from the clause presupposing the connection of South and North Korean railways into single (unified) railroad chain. Russian Railways have been nourishing an idea to connect the TRANS-Korean railway with the TRANS-Siberian railway for many years, and even began to implement it practically in the late 2000s by establishing a section from the coastal village of Hasan to the North Korean harbor of Rajin. In 2014, the construction of section was completed, and the transportation of Russian coal to the ships delivering the coal to Pacific Rim countries through this section has begun. The idea was that if the relations between the North and the South return to normal Hasan—Rajin road would allow Russian Railways to start transporting South Korean goods to Russia and Europe by rail. However, it’s got a long way to go. According to the report of the source in Russian Railways to Kommersant, the c company considers so far the connection of the two railways to be the symbolic step. According to the interlocutor of Kommersant, “It is necessary to modernize everything in there, to construct capacities in order to electrify the railway. I think the railroad crossing gate will simply be opened in the border, as the coupling part has already been built there.” The interlocutor reminded that during the Eastern Economic Forum held from the 11th to the 13th of September in Vladivostok the Russian Railways company offered to put a test container which could help to examine the state of the canvas to Russia across the Peninsula. Representatives of North and South Koreas who were at the event, took a favorable view of the idea, but as for its implementation, it’s got a long way to go. According to Andrei Lankov, the entire document resulting from the summit is largely symbolic. YThe expert is convinced that “This is a psychological operation against the American "war hawks". Kim Jong-UN is aimed at making the process of disarmament appear to be in progress, albeit it is quite slow. The DPRK is not going to turn in nuclear weapons but it is necessary to create a peaceful atmosphere and deprive supporters of the hard line in the US of reasons. Moon Jae-In has already said that he is going to tell Donald Trump about the results of the negotiations next week during a visit to the United States.