

## N. Korea Offers a ‘Silk Road’ Bargain to the United States

by Kathy Wolfe

The “North Korean Nukes” story began, curiously, with a late-night “emergency briefing” Oct. 16, at 10 p.m., by White House spokesman Sean McCormack and Richard Boucher of the State Department—breathlessly announcing news which was 12 days old. U.S. envoy James Kelly had reportedly confronted North Korea on Oct. 4 in Pyongyang, with “new intelligence,” and forced Pyongyang to admit to a secret nuclear weapons program. Kelly’s report was that North Korea had unilaterally abrogated the 1994 Agreed Framework signed with President Bill Clinton, allowing UN inspections.

The instant headlines across Western press were fanned by the same “Utopian” ideologues pushing for war with Iraq. North Korea stands “in direct breach of four separate agreements,” Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told the Oct. 17 Pentagon briefing. “They have violated the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the IAEA Safeguards agreements, the North-South Denuclearization agreement, as well as the so-called Agreed Framework.” Rumsfeld read from a recent CIA assessment that North Korea has one or two operable nuclear weapons, and announced: “That is the assessment of the Intelligence Community. . . . I believe they have a small number of nuclear weapons.”

The real story, however, is the tale of two very different reactions, to the extraordinary advances by the two Koreas in the Sept. 17-20 opening of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to rebuild the Trans-Korean Railroad—the linchpin of the “Pusan to Paris” New Silk Road. Anglo-American Utopians promoting a Clash of Civilizations against Islam and the Third World, such as Rumsfeld, believe the industrial potential of developing vast populations along the New Silk Road is a threat to the world dominance of new American Empire. With “peace breaking out” in Korea, they are demonizing North Korea.

South Korean sources in Seoul told *EIR* a very different story: that U.S. envoy Kelly, in Pyongyang Oct. 3-5, was actually offered a “comprehensive new deal,” to involve the United States in the development of the “Iron Silk Road,” as South Korean President Kim Dae-jung has called it. Worked out among China, Russia, South Korea, North Korea, and Japan, the idea is to trade away North Korea’s nuclear capability; to get the United States to sign a peace treaty finally ending the Korean War; and to engage America with Japan and others in economic development in Asia. This is the necessary next step after opening the DMZ, to solidify peace.

### Striking a Bargain

“It’s obvious that North Korea does not intend to start a nuclear war,” *EIR* Founding Editor Lyndon LaRouche noted in an Oct. 19 webcast (see *National*). “Obviously, they did it to create a bargaining chip,” LaRouche said, noting that North Korea would like to strike some sort of new peace agreement with the United States. “You may recall that the United States was in support of the Sunshine Policy under Clinton. The idea was that we’d bring the two Koreas together, and the United States would be the sponsor of some economic assistance and other things which would help this process along. . . . That was sabotaged. . . . So now, North Korea wants financial or equivalent help, to bail out their ailing economy. They figure, now they can use the nuclear bombs as a bargaining chip, to get some cooperation from the U.S.: ‘Okay, we’ll give up our nuclear weapons. Give us some help.’ . . . I don’t think North Korea is alone in this. I think some other countries in Asia may be thinking in similar directions—to try to get some sense into Washington.”

In a Pyongyang press conference on Oct. 23, concluding four days of top-level Unification Ministers’ talks, North Ko-



North Korea's acknowledgement of its nuclear capabilities is meant as a bargaining chip, with the United States, on behalf of the two Koreas' attempts to use economic development for reunification. Here, the "unification train" on the rail line being cleared and built through the Demilitarized Zone in September.

rean President Kim Yong-nam all but confirmed that analysis, saying their aim is to get the Bush Administration to talk peace. "We are taking this issue seriously," said Kim, North Korea's second highest official, asked about their nuclear program. "If the United States were to scrap its hard-line policy toward us, we are ready to resolve security concerns through dialogue." Seoul's Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun, likewise, emphasized "North Korea's intent to resolve the issue of its nuclear weapons program through dialogue with the United States." North Korea, Jeong said, "is willing to allay all international fears over its nuclear program, if the United States will abandon its anti-North policy. As Chairman of the North's Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Yong-nam clearly stated such an intention."

The bargain offered Kelly, according to Seoul sources and South Korean press reports, was broad indeed:

- Both Koreas, China, and the United States to finally sign a peace treaty to end the 1950-53 Korean war;
- North Korea to pull back 500,000 troops from the DMZ—as the Bush Administration has been loudly demanding;
- North Korea to open its economy and allow large-scale investment by South Korea and allied nations.
- North Korea to sign agreements regulating transport of people and goods across the Trans-Korean Railway, allowing increased freedom for its citizens.

Yim Sung-joon, top South Korean Presidential national security adviser, told the press Oct. 17 that South Korea "saw North Korea's surprising confession as part of a quest for dialogue," the latest of several dramatic steps Pyongyang has taken this year to improve ties with the South and the world. Just as North Korea "came clean" on their abduction of Japa-

nese citizens, Yim implied, they meant to "come clean" on their nuclear program in order to offer the Bush Administration a trade-off for a major improvement in relations with the United States. "We regard it as a sign North Korea is willing to resolve this problem through dialogue," Yim said.

In "N.K. Proposes Peace Treaty With U.S.," the *Korea Times* said Oct. 17 that North Korea asked Kelly for a peace treaty and the lifting of the decades-old U.S. trade embargo. "The North asked Kelly to convey to President Bush its intention to barter U.S. guarantees for its survival, in return for the resolving of U.S. concerns about its weapons of mass destruction," they wrote.

### 'Sabotage'

Not welcoming the overture, however, the Utopian faction in Washington waited, then leaked an isolated aspect of it, as an "axis of evil" scare story. To create the drama of the late

night briefing, it appears that Secretary Rumsfeld and the Utopians at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) staged a leak. First, Reuters ran a wire the afternoon of Oct. 16 on the "threat of North Korean nukes," based on a DIA leak that "the Defense Intelligence Agency had discovered the program within the last couple of months. Since then, U.S. intelligence has identified a dozen worrisome sites related to the program." Reuters cited a DIA source.

Also on the afternoon of Oct. 16, Japan's Nikkei News reported from Washington that Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage had privately called former Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on the carpet about the North Korean nukes, saying Tokyo was being too friendly with Pyongyang. Shortly after the Japanese reports appeared, AP and Reuters were quoting a "senior U.S. official" on North Korea's secret nuclear weapons revelation. Armitage is a Rumsfeld intimate.

"Some in Seoul suspected that the leaks were part of a ploy to sabotage the mood of détente on the peninsula as a result of recent developments in Pyongyang," Seoul's *Korea Times* said on Oct. 17. "Pyongyang has introduced elements of a market economy and designated its border city as an 'open' city, while extending an olive branch to Japan. Washington was under pressure to drop its hard-line policy. . . . This sabotage scenario is lent further credibility considering that U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, leading hawk in the Bush Administration, has repeatedly pointed out Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. Leaks to the press are often used as a tool to thwart a rival policy in the Administration," they concluded.

In fact, the DIA has been demanding war against North Korea on this issue since 1998, when it tried to destroy Presi-

dent Bill Clinton's Korea peace policy by leaking satellite photos to the Congressional right wing, along with claims that Pyongyang had the ability to nuke Los Angeles. This occurred while Clinton was paralyzed by the impeachment procedures. Such hijacking of U.S. foreign policy by the DIA was called, at the time, by Asia specialist Chalmers Johnson, a "military coup."

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, under questioning by reporters on the bizarre Oct. 17 timing, admitted that the entire purpose of Assistant Secretary of State Kelly's mission to Pyongyang was to create a confrontation, and that whether the North Koreans admitted to a nuclear program or not, they were going to be damned either way. Kelly's brief, he said, was "to make clear to the North Koreans that we were prepared to resolve the issues of concern to us, but to make clear as well, that this kind of program and the failure to abide by previous commitments made it impossible to move down that road."

### **Silk Road Continues Apace**

Neither South Korea nor Japan, however, would be deterred from continuing summitry with North Korea. Minister of Unification Jeong Se-hyun said Oct. 23 that North Korea had cleared 30% of its mines at the demilitarized zone in the path of the Seoul-Pyongyang railway, and 32% in the path of a new road, as of Oct. 3. He said South Korean troops and engineers had cleared about the same portion of their mines by Oct. 6.

The North-South Korean ministerial meeting in Pyongyang on Oct. 23 also issued an eight-point joint press statement, beginning with agreement on the nuclear issue, and then emphasizing new steps being taken to expand the Trans-Korean lines of the Eurasian Land-bridge. "South and North Korea will make joint efforts to guarantee peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and actively cooperate to solve nuclear and all other issues via a means of dialogue," the first point said. "The South and the North shall have ministerial-level talks to speed progress of construction of Kyonggui (west coast) and Donghae (east coast) inter-Korean railway and road links," said the second. "In the first phase, both sides shall link the Kyonggui railway and road links to Kaeseong Industrial Complex and the Donghae railway and road links to Mount Kumgang. Both sides shall push for an early completion of the Donghae railway link and the South shall push for rapid construction of the railway's southern section bound for Gangneung without interruption."

Point five says: "The South and the North shall discuss making an agreement on transportation of people and materials across the border around the time the first inter-Korean railway or road link is opened." Point three called for rapid expansion of the Kaeseong Industrial Complex in North Korea by South Korea. Other points dealt with maritime cooperation. If signed, this highly significant accord would render fruitless a whole range of Utopian provocations. After other

positive proposals, the final point stated that there will be further Cabinet-level talks in January.

From Pyongyang, on Oct. 18, the official KCNA news agency issued a statement entitled "Russia-proposed Tripartite Talks on Connection of Rail Links Hailed." A spokesman for the D.P.R.K. Ministry of Railways said that "Energetic efforts are being made by all parties concerned to connect the inter-Korean railways and Russia's trans-Siberian railroad amid the world's interest. This railway project is an important work, as it is greatly helpful to drastically expanding economic links and cooperation not only between the Korean and Russian peoples, but also between countries in Northeast Asia and Europe and, furthermore, achieving peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific Region and the rest of the world and the common prosperity of humankind. . . . We [are working] to link the railways between Korea and Russia at an early date. The Russian side, too, is vigorously pushing forward the project to put its railways on a modern basis. . . . We hail this proposal, considering that it will be conducive to successfully carrying out the Korea-Russia railway connection project."

The South Korean government on Oct. 19 sent a strong signal toward the North that despite the supposed crisis, the South will push ahead with its policy of reconciliation. It sent a ship with construction equipment and materials for the railroad reconnection to the North.

### **Japan Protests U.S. Pressure**

The same battle is being played out in Tokyo. The Japanese press is full of reports about Armitage confronting Hashimoto over North Korea's "nuclear threat to Japan," to pressure Japan to halt its peace diplomacy with North Korea. "The U.S. fears Japan will emotionally rush headlong into normalization talks with North Korea, without giving due concern to North Korea's nuclear development," Nikkei News reported from Washington Oct. 17. Hashimoto was told, according to Nikkei, that North Korean missiles are aimed at Japan and that this should be Japan's number-one concern, not anything else.

Yomiuri News pointed out that the Utopians want a stop put to Japan's potential offer of \$10 billion in reparations to North Korea for use in building the Land-Bridge. "Observers pointed to increasing concerns in the Bush Administration over the Japanese government's handling of Pyongyang," Yomiuri said Oct. 19. "The United States is concerned about how the Koizumi Administration will conduct its negotiations with North Korea, as it places top priority on the abduction issue and is not reluctant to offer economic aid to Pyongyang."

No matter what Armitage or Rumsfeld say, no sane person in Tokyo wants to be next-door neighbor to a nuclear World War III. The "New Silk Road" faction in Japan believes the U.S. export market and dollar are dead, and rejects the "Washington Consensus" on strategic policy. It believes Japan should take the Korean offer, which its diplomacy helped create.