

Neo-Cons Push Korea Conflict To Divert From Iraq Failure

by Kathy Wolfe

Under attack for fraud in Iraq, Vice President Dick Cheney and fellow neo-cons such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have escalated threats against North Korea to divert attention from their Iraq failures. They proclaimed it a “serious concern” July 15 that Pyongyang reprocessed 8,000 fuel rods for nuclear weapons, and they released a provocative new war plan against the North. Former Defense Secretary William Perry warned July 15 that war could be imminent unless this stops. Yet the irony is that just now, regional leaders—China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea—and cooler heads in Washington, appear close to significant new compromises to resolve the crisis. However, as Democratic frontrunner Lyndon LaRouche has warned, as long as Cheney remains in office, mere threats might, at any time, turn into a nuclear showdown on the Korean Peninsula.

It appears that despite ongoing efforts by the Cheney cabal to hype a North Korea war crisis, the Asian regional powers—if left alone—are very close to solving the problem. Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo shuttled from Pyongyang to Washington July 14-19 with a peace plan, and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi offered to visit Pyongyang. The Seoul government said July 22 that as a result, U.S.-North Korea talks could resume by September. As with the Washington war lobby’s alarm last September, when Koizumi went to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K.), the neo-conservatives don’t want “peace to break out” in Korea.

Minister Dai Bingguo returned to Beijing after four days of “highly successful meetings” with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang. Dai said he had told Kim that “all

nations involved would jointly guarantee the North’s security,” *Tokyo Shimbun* reported. If accurate, then China has won a major new concession from the United States to match the pledges already made by Russia and China to guarantee the North’s security. Until now, the Bush Administration had refused all North Korean requests for a security guarantee, and refused to rule out a U.S. pre-emptive military strike on the Yongbyon nuclear reactor.

North Korea also told Dai, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, that Pyongyang, in return, will accept U.S. demands for multilateral talks—an equally new concession—as long as Washington agrees also to a bilateral U.S.-D.P.R.K. meeting on the sidelines, thus recognizing Pyongyang’s national sovereignty.

Minister Dai then held discussions in Washington on July 18 with top officials, led by Secretary of State Colin Powell, and delivered a letter from China’s President Hu Jintao to President Bush. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that, based on Dai’s diplomacy, Washington is considering reopening talks similar to those held with North Korea in Beijing in April. They could start as three-way talks with China, and include some bilateral U.S.-D.P.R.K. discussion—but should then be expanded to at least five-party talks which would include South Korea and Japan, or six-power talks also including Russia.

Neo-Cons Trying To Change the Subject

If Cheney, Rumsfeld, and the Washington neo-cons are, instead, acting pre-emptively to trigger hostilities on the Korean Peninsula, this may reflect set-backs for their imperial



This June meeting of North and South Korean officials and workers on the track of rejoined peninsular railroad, illustrates the Eurasian Land-Bridge potential which is one target of the Washington neo-conservative faction which wants nothing but war or “regime change” in North Korea.

policy in Iraq, and a desire to abort the economic-development prospects for a “New Silk Road” solution, which involve the major nations in the region.

“The neo-cons may try to change the subject from Iraq to North Korea,” an Asian diplomat warned on June 16. “Since their Iraq adventure has gone bad, Mr. Cheney, Mr. Rumsfeld, and their group have grown suddenly aggressive against Pyongyang.” He referred to a White House announcement July 15, of “serious concerns” that North Korea has just re-processed 8,000 fuel rods for nuclear weapons at its Yongbyon plant.

He counterposed this to the U.S. death toll in Iraq, and to revelations by former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, and by top CIA and State Department officials, that Vice President Dick Cheney committed fraud in Iraq War intelligence.

“There is enormous U.S. diplomatic pressure on Japan, Australia, and other countries to enforce what amounts to a blockade against North Korea, including sanctions, and interdiction of their ships on the high seas, which Pyongyang has called an act of war,” the diplomat said. “The Pentagon has released a new war plan for North Korea, Operations Plan 5030, calling for higher levels of harassment, provocations, and misinformation.” He also noted the shocking warning by former Defense Secretary William Perry July 15, that the United States could go to war against Pyongyang “as early as this year.”

“Their aim is to bring down the [North Korean] regime,”

he said. “Not only is this illegal—like the invasion of Iraq—under international law, but it is also a deliberate violation of the Korean War armistice, the only document now preventing conflict in Korea. It appears designed to provoke Pyongyang into a reaction which could be portrayed as aggressive—so as to justify a U.S. pre-emptive military strike.”

More Fraud in Intelligence, Too

The Korean and Japanese press have so far criticized only President Bush for the Iraq intelligence scandal—in order to renege on commitments to Bush to send large numbers of troops to Iraq, which are raising anger in Tokyo and Seoul. But this selective criticism, disingenuously letting off the hook the author of the pre-emptive war policy, Vice President Cheney, is foolish. If such a cover-up were to continue, and Bush were to be “Watergated” and removed, Cheney would become President. That would make nuclear war in Korea, which would quickly spread to Japan and even more widely, a near-certainty. Cheney has been the mastermind of the “pre-emptive war” drive for 12 years, first advocating it as Defense Secretary in 1990. Cheney and Wolfowitz, in their 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, specifically demanded pre-emptive strikes, on “Iraq and North Korea,” to “test drive” their lunatic new doctrine,

Meanwhile, Korean and Japanese leaders are privately asking: Is the Washington intelligence being used to justify the “need” for a pre-emptive strike on North Korea, also based



Former Defense Secretary William Perry, who had the greatest experience with North Korea in the Clinton Administration, has gone public in mid-July with two warnings that the United States is at the brink of a new Korean War, because of the lack of any policy able to stop war provocations.

on fraud or political manipulation?

Professional U.S. military experts are already warning: "Could be." Having lost so many GIs in Iraq, they are even less willing to risk millions of lives in a Korean nuclear war. The latest issue of the *Naval War College Review* describes CIA reports of ambiguities concerning North Korean plans to build a uranium enrichment plant, used to make fuel for civilian electric power plants. But far more equipment and many years would be needed to retool the plants for much higher-grade weapons fuel.

Dr. Jonathan Pollack, chairman of the Strategic Research Department of the Naval War College, writes that "North Korea had no operational enrichment facility" (not built, only planned). "The intelligence community believed North Korea still confronted daunting obstacles even to acquire the production capabilities that might permit such an option," he added.

"But the stunning disclosure of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang [in September 2002] triggered movement in U.S. policy," Pollack revealed. "The D.P.R.K. had opened the door to a new relationship with America's most important Asian ally and, prospectively, a

major aid donor to the North. There was a real possibility that U.S. options on the peninsula would be driven increasingly by policy agendas of others."

This was intolerable to the Administration, and they sent Assistant Secretary James Kelly to Pyongyang Oct. 4, 2002 to create a confrontation over the uranium, which still festers today. Senior U.S. officials "opted to exploit the intelligence for political purposes," Pollack said.

"Is there a parallel with what is now going on, after the fact, in estimates about Iraq?" asked Pollack, in the July 16 *New York Times*. "I think there may be."

War This Year?

To prevent a war in Korea, based on fake data, as in Iraq, it will be necessary that the truth spread worldwide, about the rebellion against Cheney inside the U.S.A. Until removed, the Cheney group is a deadly danger.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has just completed a horrific new war plan for North Korea, "Operations Plan 5030," with "elements so aggressive that they could provoke a war," *U.S. News & World Report's* July 21 issue reported. Once again in this case, the plan was leaked to the public by competent American military officers who don't want any Iraq-style adventure in nuclear Korea. "Insiders, who are critical of the plan, say it blurs the line between war and peace. The plan would give commanders authority to conduct maneuvers—before a war has started—to drain North Korea's limited resources, strain its military, and try to sow enough confusion that North Korean generals might turn against North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-il. 'Some of the things [they are] being asked to do,' says a senior U.S. official, 'are, shall we say, provocative.'

"Some officials believe the draft plan amounts to a strategy to topple Kim's regime. The reason: It is being pushed by many of the same Administration hard-liners who advocated regime change in Iraq. . . . One scenario involves flying RC-135 surveillance flights even closer to North Korean airspace, forcing Pyongyang to scramble aircraft and burn scarce fuel. U.S. commanders might stage a long, surprise military exercise, to force North Koreans to head for bunkers and deplete stores of food, water, etc."

America's principal allies in the region—South Korea and Japan—warn against this lunacy. "Once we push them too hard against the wall," says a Japanese official, "we do not know what kind of reaction Kim Jong-il will have."

Han Song-ryol, North Korea's deputy UN ambassador, was asked by the South Korean daily *Hankyoreh* on July 15 if Pyongyang's nuclear program was just a negotiating card with the United States—or whether actual nuclear weapons are being produced as a deterrent. "It is both," Han said. "If the U.S. continues to isolate and gag us, we need the nuclear weapons for survival. But if the U.S. normalizes relations with us and guarantees non-aggression towards us, then it is also up for negotiation," Han said.