

China, N. Korea Hint At Move on Six-Power Talks

by Kathy Wolfe

North Korea announced on Feb. 3 that it will attend a second round of Six-Power talks on its nuclear weapons program in Beijing on Feb. 25, with China, the United States, Russia, Japan, and South Korea. Chinese spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell confirmed the report.

The news first met much speculation, as no reason was given. In fact, it came at a time when Washington was ever more strongly insisting that North Korea simply dismantle all its weapons, as Libya has proposed to do, with no guarantee for its security thereafter—a path North Korea has repeatedly rejected outright. U.S. Ambassador in Seoul Thomas Hubbard again told the press Feb. 6 that Pyongyang must “dismantle its nuclear program completely, verifiably, and irreversibly,” on the Libyan model.

While the other five parties have called for a “simultaneous” U.S. security guarantee of no military action against North Korea if Pyongyang disarms, Washington has refused, most recently on Dec. 12, when negotiations broke down after Vice President Dick Cheney said, “We don’t negotiate with evil; we defeat evil.”

But meanwhile, as *EIR* reported on Feb. 6, Cheney’s intelligence claims about a secret North Korean uranium bomb were being quietly debunked by China, and even American arms specialists, diplomats, and Congressmen, in the wake of exploding revelations of the Iraq intelligence fraud perpetrated by Cheney. As Naval War College Research Chief Dr. Jonathan Pollack was quoted in *EIR* of Aug. 8, 2003, the CIA and other agencies believed that evidence for a uranium program was “far from definitive,” and that “North Korea had no operational enrichment facility.” So much for the crisis.

China and North Korea may be making a move to underline this point, the *Korea Times* reported Feb. 9. “China will surprise the Feb. 25 talks, by announcing that the United

States has failed to demonstrate” that North Korea has a hidden uranium bomb, the paper wrote. There were numerous wires from Washington following that, quoting an unnamed senior U.S. official to say that “China has refused to accept the U.S. contention, that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons based on highly enriched uranium (HEU). U.S. diplomats have told Beijing that its position is not helpful.” He added that North Korea “is hoping that China, by casting doubt on the U.S. contentions, will help discredit them. . . . China’s rejection of U.S. contentions could give Pyongyang a boost” at the talks.

American Experts Cast Doubt

Following hints by Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Los Alamos weapons chief Siegfried Hecker on Jan. 20, that Pyongyang’s uranium program was only “alleged” but unconfirmed (*EIR*, Feb. 6), more American experts have cast doubt on the entire crisis trigger. Ambassador Wendy Sherman, North Korea Policy Coordinator under former U.S. President Bill Clinton, added her voice in a speech at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace on Feb. 5. Sherman said that even if Pyongyang has some kind of uranium program, she doesn’t believe they possess enriched uranium. On the Six-Power Talks, Sherman predicted that Pyongyang may help President George Bush be re-elected, if it believes the talks will produce the progress it wants. However, she added that if the North sees no developments, it will likely slow down and wait for a new Administration.

“Crying Wolf on Iraqi WMD Costs U.S. Credibility on North Korea” was the title of a *Christian Science Monitor* column Jan. 29 by Jon Wolfsthal, deputy non-proliferation chief at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace. After the intelligence failure in Iraq, he wrote, “The costs to U.S. international credibility are high and are being felt in other parts of the

world, most of all with regard to North Korea. Seeds of doubt sown in Iraq over U.S. intelligence now have countries in East Asia, including close U.S. allies, openly doubting U.S. intelligence about North Korea's nuclear program.

"China, a key player in the six-party talks with North Korea, has now begun to express doubts about the U.S. allegations that North Korea has an HEU program. Now, quietly, South Korean officials are beginning to express the same doubts. Echoes of these doubts are being heard in Japan. Even if these countries have other reasons for differing with the U.S., the failure to find WMD in Iraq gives them an excuse to question the reliability of American intelligence. In turn, this makes holding a united front against North Korea more difficult. . . .

"U.S. failure to share the location of any HEU facilities in North Korea, and refusal to share evidence with South Korea, compounds doubts. If the U.S. was wrong—or manipulated intelligence—in Iraq, how can it be completely trusted in North Korea? The question remains: Just what does North Korea's nuclear program include, and does a HEU program really exist?"

'Simultaneously Drop Guns'

All this would help explain the extremely strong tone of a remarkable statement by North Korean Ambassador Li Gun, Deputy Director General of the North Korean Ministry for Foreign Affairs, released in English on Feb. 6. The clear and precise memo, "Requisites for Resolving the Nuclear Issue," is dated Dec. 16, 2003, but its doctrine likely still stands, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K.) would not have permitted its official release now by the Center for National Policy, a bipartisan U.S. Congressional think-tank.

Li's memo is notable for raising the same policy questions aired by Lyndon LaRouche, strongly attacking the policy of "pre-emptive nuclear strike" and documenting how the Iraq invasion convinced North Korea of the necessity of re-arming. The memo states that North Korea will never unilaterally disarm; and that as the United States, while knowing this, continues to insist on this Libya model, the United States is coming to the talks with "an ulterior goal," i.e., "regime change."

Ambassador Li states that the nuclear issue is "an outgrowth of the United States' hostile policy toward us. The Bush Administration's putting an end to bilateral political dialogue, its 'axis of evil' pronouncement, and defining North Korea as a target of pre-emptive nuclear strike. . . . If the U.S. is truly seeking the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, it must change its hostile policy toward us. I repeat, unless the U.S. changes its hostile policy toward North Korea, we absolutely cannot give up nuclear weapons. . . .

"If the U.S. fundamentally changes its hostile policy toward North Korea," Li writes, "we could also give up our nuclear deterrent. That is, only when a legal and systematic security mechanism guaranteeing that the U.S. will not

threaten us is in place, and a certain level of trust is built. . . . However, the U.S. position is that we must first dismantle our nuclear program and that only when the dismantlement has been verified will the U.S. provide security guarantee and economic support. This is impossible to effect."

The statement describes precisely how it was the U.S. side which violated, then cancelled the 1994 Framework Accord, and repeats North Korea's consistent "proposal for simultaneous action and package settlement," the "principle of simultaneous action, a comprehensive settlement," in which the United States must give a guarantee of North Korea's security, and then, it will disarm.

"The Iraqi situation has proven that our distrust of the U.S. is accurate. The Iraq war has proven that the U.S. is an egregious nation that for the sake of its own purpose uses military force, arrogantly ignoring international law, world public opinion, and the advice of its own allies. Despite that Iraq had faithfully subjected itself to inspections by the UN weapons inspection team, and despite the findings by the inspection team that there was not a shred of evidence that Iraq had developed weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. still attacked Iraq. . . . Our position is simple, clear, and just: That is, let us both, North Korea and the U.S., simultaneously drop our guns and coexist in peace. . . . If the U.S. has the right to insist on the 'complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling of North Korea's nuclear program,' then we have the right to demand a complete, verifiable, and irreversible security guarantee."

Yet, "at present, from what we have gathered through various channels, in the U.S. proposal there is not a single reference to the simultaneous package deal, and the U.S. is essentially unwilling to step outside the framework of 'unilateral nuclear dismantlement.' . . . That is, the U.S. appears to be seeking an ulterior goal."

The Pakistan Angle

Meanwhile, the Cheney side has countered with new charges that Pakistan's Abdul Qadeer Khan, founder of that nation's nuclear program, sold nuclear technology to Libya, Iran, and North Korea. This charge conveniently appeared just after Feb. 3, despite the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was told all the details last November during investigations of Iran. American intelligence sources told the *New York Times* of Feb. 3 that Kahn had visited North Korea ten times in the 1990s.

But from what details of Kahn's signed admission have been released in public, Kahn admitted only to supplying old and discarded centrifuge and enrichment machines, together with drawings, sketches, technical data, and depleted hexafluoride gas, to North Korea, according to *The Dawn* of Pakistan. This is consistent with Dr. Pollack's conclusions at the Naval War College that, as the CIA also has said, North Korea had nothing even close to a functional facility that could make weapons-grade uranium, even if it does have some parts.