

Two Koreas: 'Silk Road And Sunshine,' Not War

by Kathy Wolfe

The Six-Power Talks on North Korea's nuclear crisis, which recessed in Beijing Aug. 8 to resume Aug. 29, were "inconclusive," because the American side continued Dick Cheney's deliberate "deal-breaker" demands, a South Korean diplomat told *EIR*. U.S. negotiator Christopher Hill, he said, is "charming," but so far, he has only repeated Cheney's demands that North Korea unilaterally disarm before receiving any security guarantee; give up all nuclear programs, including electric power plants; and "surrender up" a uranium enrichment program which Pyongyang says does not exist.

But, as these demands have failed repeatedly, the question is whether Hill can now wrangle a new negotiating position out of the White House before he returns to Beijing. A *New York Times* editorial Aug. 6, titled "Glimmer of Hope," said that Hill might be able to offer a security guarantee when talks resume, which could swing a deal. Hill told a Washington forum on Aug. 17 that he has signalled to Pyongyang his desire for a peace treaty to end the Korean War, to replace today's unstable cease-fire. "We are not just talking about denuclearization," said Hill. "The hope is that this six-party process can be a sort of embryonic structure for Northeast Asia," a security structure to finally end the war.

The chance for such changes, however, depends on whether Cheney's hand can be removed from the White House steering wheel before he provokes nuclear Armageddon in Iran, making events in Korea moot.

Meanwhile, the two Koreas are moving full steam to cement peace at home, building up economic ties by moving to open the New Silk Road—as Lyndon LaRouche has consistently advised—and other initiatives of the "Sunshine Policy." One day after President Bush demanded in public that North Korea give up all nuclear power plants, Seoul Unification Minister Chung Dong-Young said Aug. 10, "We think differently from the United States on this." The South, he said, which depends on nuclear power for almost 50% of its electricity, will back the North's right to power plants if it allows UN inspections.

Rail and Diplomacy

Seoul's Unification Ministry said Aug. 17 that South and North Korea would proceed Aug. 18-25 with a week of joint inspections of rails and roads across the demilitarized zone (DMZ). This concretizes plans, announced July 31, to run a "test train" across the DMZ in late October, for the first time

since 1950, from Seoul to the ancient capital Kaesong in the North. This would connect Korea to the New Silk Road, the final link in a rail system across China and Russia, "from Pusan to Paris." A July 29-30 meeting created a joint management committee to run the rail lines. Seoul agreed to pay for construction of three train stations on the northern side, now well under way. "Once trains start making test runs on the railway linking the two countries in October, full service could take place by year end," an official said.

Speculation is—supposing there is no disruption at the Six-Power Talks in September, which again makes the major assumption that Cheney is muzzled—that after North Korea's Workers' Party Day on Oct. 10, head of state Kim Jong-il may finally visit Seoul for a second Inter-Korean Heads of State summit. This would pave the way for a train to run that month.

South Korea announced Aug. 4 that tourists will soon be able to travel across the DMZ from Seoul—"by rail as well as road"—to Kaesong, an historic site, Korea's equivalent of Colonial Williamsburg. This first tourist package near Seoul, a drive of less than an hour, will cost \$100 a day for up to four-day stays at Northern guest houses. Such "popular pricing" could lead hundreds of thousands of Seoul's more than 13 million citizens to visit. A population flow of that magnitude—presuming North Korea would allow its citizens such extensive contact with southerners—would make today's constant threat of war look absurd.

On Aug. 12, military officials from both Koreas announced at Panmunjom, inside the DMZ, that all propaganda posters, loudspeakers, and tons of hostile equipment have been removed along the length of the DMZ from east to west, and the area de-mined. On Aug. 13, North and South began operation of a military hotline.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Aug. 15 surrender of Japan in World War II, the two Koreas held a giant "One Korea" Liberation Day festival Aug. 14-17 in Seoul, with 180 North Korean guests and 20,000 South Koreans celebrating. Seoul's 12-lane boulevards were closed to traffic so people could jam the streets under giant block-long signs displaying the "Unification Flag" of the peninsula in blue, labelled simply, "One Korea."

The Northern delegation "made history" as South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun told them, with a number of "breakthroughs in normalization." North Korean Worker's Party Secretary Kim Ki-nam, Pyongyang's No. 2 leader, surprised the South by doing the unthinkable: visiting the National Cemetery in Seoul, where 54,000 military leaders and war dead are buried, including 1970s dictator, Park Chung Hee. The northern delegates bowed their heads in memory of their fallen enemies. "It was a difficult decision to pay homage there," said Lim Dong-ok, North Korea's Unification chief. "But we should transcend everything in the era of reconciliation."

Other breakthroughs included a first-ever North Korean visit to the South Korean National Assembly.