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'We don't need nuclear weapons'

By: THE WASHINGTON TIMES

This is the transcript of the interview between Kim Il-sung, the president of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and The Washington Times, conducted April 12 in the presidential palace in Pyongyang. The questions were asked in English, answered in Korean, and translated consecutively by an interpreter supplied by the North Korean government. The first 11 questions were asked spontaneously.

Question: Is your country developing any nuclear weapons? What is your position to this issue?

Answer: As far as the nuclear issue is concerned, our country does not have any nuclear weapons. . . . And, what is more, we don't need nuclear weapons. What is the use of producing one or two nuclear weapons while the big countries have several thousand, several tens of thousands of nuclear weapons? What is the point for us to have nuclear weapons? And we don't have a delivery system either. So, to be honest with you, we don't need nuclear weapons. We are not intending to talk about this issue further, because this issue will soon be solved. And we are quite ready to receive the inspection from outside. So the only thing that remains to be done is the procedural matters to inform the International Atomic Energy Agency what we decided. I don't think there will be any contradiction between our country and the United States in terms of the nuclear issues.

Q: Mr. President, is there any progress on the return of additional remains of American soldiers lost in the Korean War? Is this the time when the wounds of the war can be healed? This is certainly important to

many
American families.

A: We've already sent several groups of remains to the United States. We plan to send more as soon as we discover, unearth, the remains. I think it is the correct thing, from the humanitarian point of view. So we intend to convey the remains to you as soon as we unearth the remains in the days ahead.

Q: It is well known that Secretary Kim Jong-il is taking more and more responsibility for the day-to-day governing of your nation. Will there be any additional responsibility handed to him on your 80th birthday?

A: He is already taking full responsibility of our country. In fact, all affairs of our country are run by him. As far as I am concerned, I am carrying out some external work. And as far as the internal affairs of our country are concerned, everything is dealt with by him.

Q: So do you have more time now for fishing and other things you enjoy?

A: Of course! I have some time to go fishing and I have some time to go hunting. I love hunting and I love fishing also. Although I am celebrating my 80th birthday, I find myself always among the people giving on-the-spot guidance in the countryside, in the factories and enterprises.

Q: What is your vision for Korea's role in Asia in the 21st century? Are you confident your nation will play a key role in the future?

A: We don't wish to become a big power. When I advanced the proposal to reunify our country by founding the Democratic Federal Republic of Korea, I said our country is surrounded by big countries in the world and therefore our country should remain neutral. That is the most favorable status for us - without becoming the satellite of any country. Also, we don't wish to become the agent of any other country.

We should remain an independent, sovereign, non-aligned and neutral state. That is our wish. We should maintain friendly relations with our neighboring countries. And in the meantime we should remain independent and lead a very harmonious life within our nation.

Q: You have stated your political position. But the main competition now is economic. What role will North Korea play in the future in economic competition?

A: Again, I should apply the word neutral to that aspect. We are not just intending to have economic competition with other countries in terms of economic development. We don't want to become more developed than others and we don't want to become less developed than others. We should remain neutral in this respect too.

Q: When will we see a United States embassy in Pyongyang?

A: We'll have to wait and see. I hope that should be done as quickly as possible, but that depends on the decision of the two countries. My wish is to establish [a U.S. embassy] as quickly as possible.

Q: So as far as you are concerned, you are ready?

A: Yes, we are ready.

Q: What about a united Korea? When will we see that?

A: That depends on the extent of unity of our nation. Our intention is to reunite all Korean nationals letting bygones be bygones. If all of us unite together, then the reunification will be done.

There are fewer and fewer people opposed to reunification and a great many people desire to see reunification. It is for this reason that I maintain the principle of great national unity. I've maintained this position in the past, of course, and now even more I maintain this position.

Q: Do you feel that the Korean people are ready to forget the past and

come together at this time?

A: Yes, I see that. We can forget the bitter past and unite together. What is the use of taking issue with bygone days? That will bring us nothing. We must look into the future and realize the unity of our nation.

That is important.

Q: Do you have any message for the American people or the president?

A: What I want to say to the American people, on the occasion of my birthday, my wish is to establish peace between the people of my country and the people of the United States. When the Rev. Billy Graham came to our country and I met him he conveyed to me the verbal message from President Bush. And I replied to him that there is spring between the people of our country and the people of the United States. Spring begins.

Please convey to the people of your country that I wish to be harmonious. There should be harmony between our people and the people of the United States. There should be peace between our people and the people of the United States.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE:

Q: Mr. President, what is your estimate of the present relations between the two countries, and what do you hope to be done to improve the relations between your republic and the United States?

A: Moves have recently begun to improve the relations between Korea and the United States, and this is attracting the attention of the world. The abnormal relations that have continued until now can be considered, in short, to have something to do with the Cold War between East and West. It is natural that the matter of improving their abnormal relations has become the order of the day with the end of the Cold War.

Some people comment on the termination of the Cold War as if it were the victory of one side over the other. That can be considered to be

a superficial view of the historic change. Since the Cold War was a wrong competition to gain the position of superior power, and now that the Cold War itself has gone bankrupt, there can be no question of the victory of one side over the other.

From the point of view of the development of world history, the end of the Cold War exactly means the bankruptcy of power politics, and this can be assessed as being a major precondition for independence to prevail in the world. If one side assumes that it has monopolized world power by defeating the other side and attempts to maintain and extend the outmoded order of domination and subjugation by means of power politics, it will not only meet the resistance of the peace-loving people of the world, but also be deserted by its partners and ultimately invite its own collapse. On the contrary, if the United States, the only superpower, desists from power politics of its own accord on the occasion of the end of the Cold War, respects and implements the principles of international justice and equality, it will enjoy people's support, and the democratic progress of the international community and the cause of independence for the world will be speeded up so much the more.

If the statesmen who are responsible for the destiny of the United States amend their Korea policy farsightedly and in accordance with the trend of the present times toward independence, a smooth solution will be found to the question of improving Korea-U.S. relations. We hope that the United States will amend its Korea policy without hesitation, make a due contribution to the peaceful reunification of Korea and further join actively in the historic trend toward independence for the world.

Q: The whole world is now very nervous about nuclear development in North Korea. The U.S. government says it has undeniable evidence

that
North Korea is proceeding with such a program. Your government has
declared its nuclear policy on many occasions. In addition, the
recent
Supreme People's Assembly session has considered the matter of
ratifying
the agreement between your government and the International Atomic
Energy
Agency on the safeguards relating to the Treaty of Non-Proliferation
of
Nuclear Weapons and has approved the agreement. Mr. President, can
you,
as the leader of North Korea, give the United States and the world a
responsible guarantee that an inspection that can be trusted by the
rest of
the world will be made?

A: The recent third session of the ninth Supreme People's Assembly of
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has considered and approved
the
agreement on safeguards relating to the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of
Nuclear Weapons. It can be considered, therefore, that the question
of
legal procedure concerning nuclear inspection has been resolved. The
question of nuclear inspection will be smoothly solved, so I think
there is
no need to talk about it any further.

Q: The remains of two groups of soldiers who had been believed to have
died in the Korean War have been returned to the United States via
Panmunjom during the last two years. Are there still more remains of
American war dead to be returned? The returning of their remains is
considered an important signal for improving Korea-U.S. relations.
What
is your opinion on this issue?

A: The government of our republic has continued trying to discover the
remains from the humanitarian stand . . . conducted in compliance with
the
Armistice Agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
(DPRK) and the United States in recent years [and] has returned
several
remains to the U.S. As the DPRK-U.S. relations are improved, the
matter
of returning the ashes will be settled more satisfactorily.

Q: Many people in the world are now speculating that your nation will

gradually establish an economic relationship with the outside world and will begin to open itself economically. Would you tell us the prospects for North Korea's economic opening and your opinion on the foreign investment and the foreign trade?

A: Our policy of building an independent national economy is contradictory to the economic subjugation by others, not to the economic exchange and cooperation with other countries. The consistent policy of the government of our republic is to develop the relations of economic cooperation with other countries on the principle of independence, equality and reciprocity. In recent years we developed more energetically economic cooperation and exchange with other countries. It is natural in the light of the world trend that since the end of the Cold War the economic and technical exchange and cooperation between countries is ever increasing. Our broadening of economic ties with other countries does not mean any change in our principled stand of maintaining economic independence. We will continue to develop on the stand of independence the economic and technical exchange and cooperaton with all other countries that are friendly toward our country.

Q: China is often looked at as an economic development model for a socialist system. Furthermore, so far as we know, the leaders of your nation have visited the special economic zones in China. What is your opinion of China's model of economic opening, and what does this mean for an open-door policy of North Korea?

A: China is our close neighbor and a country of our veteran comrades-in-arms. Our people and the fraternal Chinese people shed blood together in the past in their common struggle against imperialism and are now actively supporting each other and closely cooperating with each other in their struggle to build socialism. We sincerely wish that everything goes well in China. We are very pleased with the great success that the

fraternal Chinese people, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, have achieved in recent years in the building of socialism. So far as the specific method of building socialism is concerned, it is impossible to take the method of one country as an immutable example because there is a difference in the size of the countries and the level of their development and also because the situation is different from country to country. Each country should seek for the way of building socialism that suits its own situation. We actively support China's policy of economic construction regarding it as suitable to her situation.

Q: What are the prospects of the North-South dialogue following the signing of the North-South Agreement, the prospects and possibility of the reunification of the Korean peninsula, as well as about the feasibility of a U.S. embassy being established in Pyongyang?

A: The adoption of the North-South Agreement is a great progress in the struggle of our nation for the reunification of the country. Many dialogues are now being held between the North and the South to implement the agreement. It is necessary to develop the dialogues in conformity with the desire of all our compatriots who wish the satisfactory fulfillment of

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