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North Korea's Kim calls nuclear talk 'fictitious'

By: THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The following are North Korean leader Kim Il-sung's written responses to questions submitted by The Washington Times.

Question: When we met two years ago there was much hope throughout the world that the situation on the Korean Peninsula would be peacefully resolved and that some sort of peaceful reunification could take place in the near future. Yet since that time the situation has worsened until now and all sides speak openly about the possibility of war. Who is responsible for this?

Answer: As you rightly pointed out, the situation in our country is much worse than it was two years ago. Making one-sided demands in violation of her agreements with us, the United States is threatening us with military forces, which have been reinforced in South Korea and around the Korean Peninsula. She is stepping up pressure upon us by manipulating even international organizations. The South Korean authorities, in tune with the United States' nuclear clamor, have brought to a rupture the contacts between the working-level delegates for the exchange of special envoys between North and South and are fanning the North-South confrontation and war hysteria. These have quickly aggravated the situation on the Korean Peninsula and created a danger of war breaking out any minute. It is intolerable on any account to threaten others with force still now when the Cold War between East and West has come to an end. The world's attention is now focused on Korea, and the situation on the Korean Peninsula causes a great apprehension on the peace-loving people throughout the world.

Q: Like South Korea, your nation experienced the ravages of war less than half a century ago. Yet one of your officials recently said the

the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or North Korea] is "ready for dialogue or ready for war." Why would war even be an option when the Korean people on both sides have already lost so much to war and have had to painfully rebuild from the bottom? How could there be any "winners" under such a scenario?

A: Our people love peace and treasure what they have built through their devoted efforts. War will benefit neither the North nor the South. If a war breaks out in our country, our nation will suffer a disaster. The government of our republic consistently hopes to find a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula through dialogues with the United States and has been making every effort to achieve the peaceful reunification of the country.

We set great store by peace and do not want war, but if anybody infringes upon our sovereignty and comes to conquer us by force of arms, we shall have to exercise our right to self-defense and counter him by armed forces. There should be no attempt to bring us to our knees or stifle us by pressure and threat. That is the way to war. The government of our republic and our people regard their sovereignty as their lifeblood and are firmly determined and prepared to defend the freedom and independence of their country from any encroachment.

Q: Would not a violent end to negotiations on reunification and nuclear issues inevitably mean that Korea would enter the new century devastated militarily and economically, leaving Japan and China to dominate the strategic and economic future of Asia? Isn't it the most urgent priority that the two Koreas come together and successfully plan a joint future?

A: In order to shape the future of Korea successfully, North and South

must oppose dependence on foreign forces and exert a joint effort. Korea belongs to the Korean nation, which is capable of shaping her future. No one else can bring the Korean nation its reunification and prosperity. Dependence on foreign forces is the way to national ruin; national self-reliance alone is the road to independence and prosperity. This is the truth we have gained in the long revolutionary struggle, as well as a lesson of history.

Our struggle to reunify the country which has been divided in North and South by foreign forces is also aimed at attaining the prosperity of the country and the nation through the united effort of the nation. When our country is reunified and the effort and wisdom of the whole nation are pooled together, our country will become more prosperous and more civilized and make a better contribution to the common cause of the peoples of Asia and the rest of the world for peace and prosperity.

Q: The statements by one of your negotiators recently that the DPRK would consider turning Seoul into a "sea of fire" has led many in the United States to believe that you may initiate war with the South. Is this a wrong reading of this statement?

A: It is a remark an individual official made to calm down war manias. I think there is no need to be nervous about it.

Q: What would it take from your perspective to get relations between the DPRK and the United States back on track moving toward a peaceful resolution of all issues?

A: The joint statement agreed upon and published by the DPRK and the United States clarifies the principles of refraining from the threat and the use of force including nuclear weapons, of respecting each other's sovereignty, not interfering in each other's affairs, and supporting the peaceful reunification of Korea. Both the DPRK and the United States must keep these principles and carry them out in good faith. Then, all the

problems arising between the DPRK and the United States will be resolved satisfactorily.

Q: A Pyongyang radio broadcast last month warned that your nation may have to "reconsider its official denuclearization policy" because "Japan is promoting nuclear armament policies." Are you reconsidering your policy?

A: Japan's moves to arm herself with nuclear weapons are creating a dangerous stage, presenting a great threat to the peace and security in the Asian region, including the Korean Peninsula. If Japan pushes her nuclear armament policy in full swing, our effort to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula will come to no avail. We are very apprehensive of this.

Q: One U.S. policy expert recently pointed out that the DPRK had been ignored for nearly half a century by the United States but this changed with the nuclear issue. Have you found that your nuclear program is an important element in getting the attention of the United States and in being taken seriously by them?

A: It is well known the United States has ignored our republic for half a century and pursued the policy against socialism and the DPRK. It is a good thing that, after the termination of the Cold War, some farsighted figures in the United States insist on establishing peaceful relations between the DPRK and the United States.

We are not using, as some people think we are, the "nuclear issue" as a means to improve our relations with the United States. The relations between countries are improved only when they understand each other and come to agreement; they are never improved by the use of artifice by either of them.

Q: What lies behind your nation's seeming on-again, off-again approach in international inspections to which you agreed voluntarily in 1992?

A: Since the first day, when the United States brought nuclear weapons into South Korea, we have striven to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. We acceded to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] in order to make the United States withdraw nuclear weapons from South Korea and effect the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Nevertheless, such sincere effort of ours was disregarded, and instead there was an attempt to violate our sovereignty through the lever of inspection contrary to the principles stipulated in the NPT; therefore we were compelled to declare our withdrawal from the NPT as a measure of self-defense. Subsequently, however, as a show of our good will to prove the innocence of our nuclear programs, we have received necessary inspections from the International Atomic Energy Agency continually.

Certainly, some problems are said to have cropped up in the course of inspections, but these are problems raised in the special circumstances in which we have suspended temporarily the effectuation of our withdrawal from the NPT. In essence, these are transitional circumstances and will be resolved on their own accord when the negotiations for settling the nuclear issue proceed satisfactorily in the future.

Q: Last month your Foreign Ministry announced that your nation may withdraw completely from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty because the IAEA inspections are "unfair." What will it take to resolve the nuclear issue, from the DPRK's perspective?

A: Whether the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is resolved satisfactorily or not depends entirely on the attitudes of the countries concerned. If one side attempts to make use of the nuclear issue for its selfish purpose, or if the international agency whose principle is fairness obeys the unreasonable demands of someone, the nuclear issue will never be resolved. As mutual understanding between both sides is a precondition for

negotiations, it is intolerable that one side makes demands absolute.

The first and foremost principle of setting the nuclear issue is fairness. If fairness is ensured and if there is mutual understanding, the nuclear issue will be resolved without difficulty. It is our consistent stand that the issue must be resolved through dialogues and negotiations.

If the United States takes a sincere attitude of resolving the issue, it will not be a complicated issue as is thought to be today and it can be resolved more easily than we think.

Q: In addition to the NPT, your nation signed an agreement with South Korea in 1991 barring the production, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons and the processing of fuel. Your critics contend that with the reprocessing facility at Yongbyon you are openly violating this agreement. What is your response?

A: The adoption of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula between the North and the South of Korea is an epoch-making progress in preventing a nuclear holocaust in Korea and in ensuring her genuine peace and security. This is the result of our long and persevering efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. We will make every effort to put into effect the joint declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

As for our radiochemical laboratory which is alleged by some people to be a "reprocessing facility," it is an indispensable element for the development of our peaceful nuclear power industry and has nothing to do with the "development of nuclear weapons." If the proposal for a package deal of the nuclear problem becomes a reality through DPRK-U.S. talks in future and the light-water reactor is delivered, the radiochemical laboratory itself may not be needed.

Q: American intelligence officials have given your nation high marks for weapons technology and have stated that they now believe that the DPRK has developed at least one or two crude nuclear weapons. Has your nation successfully developed a nuclear weapon?

A: We have already declared more than once that we have neither the need to make nuclear weapons nor the will and the ability to do so. Nevertheless, U.S. intelligence agencies have invented intelligence materials devoid of any authenticity and are clamoring that we are promoting the "nuclear development" or have made one or two weapons. This cannot be regarded otherwise than their pursuit of an ulterior political purpose.

Q: Before we left to come to the DPRK, the big news in the United States was that satellite intelligence has convinced the United States that the DPRK is doubling its reprocessing capability. Are these reports accurate?

A: In the West there are now many speculations and exaggerated reports about our "nuclear problem."

Western countries unreasonably connect our peaceful nuclear activity with "nuclear weapons development," which is fictitious, and make a fuss as if something grave had happened. This is aimed at increasing "nuclear suspicion" about us.

Q: No doubt you have deeply analyzed U.S. intentions as regards the DPRK. What is your assessment of the U.S. position toward your nation? What outcome is the U.S. seeking?

A: It appears there are still many people in the United States who have not rid themselves of the conception of confrontation from the period of Cold War and who are not willing to shake off the war psychology of the '50s. They emphasize the relations of "alliance" with South Korea, avoid talks with us, and increase military threat and pressure upon us. I believe that all this is due to such an old conception.

Such sections are resorting as ever to the policy of isolating and stifling our republic. Such a policy running counter to the times cannot have effect.

Q: The United States has announced its intention to deploy Patriot missiles in South Korea. Top defense officials have told me that they are confident that your military has accurately assessed that these are for defensive, not offensive, purposes only. What is your assessment of the planned deployment?

A: The United States is now bringing Patriot missiles into South Korea and advertising them as defensive, not offensive, weapons. To all intents and purposes, Patriot missiles are war weapons regardless of their use. Shipping them into South Korea will increase the tension in the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, the South Korea people are also struggling against their shipment into South Korea. Nothing can justify the shipment of Patriot missiles into South Korea.

Q: Your nation has declared that the imposition of possible economic sanctions by the United Nations against North Korea would be considered "an act of war." What would the DPRK's response be to such sanctions? How damaging would sanctions be to your economy?

A: If the United States forces unwarranted pressure like "economic sanction" upon our republic through the U.N. Security Council, this will be a grave challenge against it.

We will never permit all manner of hostile acts encroaching upon the sovereignty of our country. No military provocations or economic sanctions will bring us into submission or stifle us.

Q: The big question among experts in Washington is: What does President Kim Il-sung ultimately want from the United States? In the area of diplomatic relations? Economic relations? Do you have a timetable

for
advancing such relations?

A: Improving the relations between countries does not mean one side giving benefit to the other side.

We do not want to improve our relations with the United States because we wish some kind of benefit from her. We want the peoples of Korea and the United States to get out of hostile relations and establish normal relations and thus live in peace with each other and make a contribution to peace in Asia and the rest of the world. I think it is high time that the United States disregard its hostile policy toward us and establish a policy of good will toward Korea.

We consider it desirable to normalize the relations between Korea and the United States as soon as possible.

Q: You have served as leader of your country through the terms of every American president since President Truman. But this is perhaps the most significant period involving relations with the United States since the Korean War. What is your impression of President Clinton and his policy toward the DPRK?

A: I think it is significant that talks have begun between the DPRK and the United States and agreement has been reached on important principles in the period of the Clinton administration. What is important is to continue consistent and sincere efforts to bear good fruit.

Q: The U.S. State Department still classifies the DPRK as a "terrorist state." What do you say to that accusation?

A: This is part of the policy against the DPRK. The government of our republic not only rejects all sorts of terrorism, but also is opposed to encouraging and supporting it.

Q: The DPRK leadership succession plan has been under way for several years, and your son has assumed his role step by step. Can you reveal your retirement plans? When will Chairman Kim Jong-il assume full leadership of the party and state?

A: Secretary Kim Jong-il has long been leading the work of the party, the state and the army as a whole in our country. All his thinking and activities are consistently devoted to fully realizing my idea and intention. His idea and leadership are precisely my idea and leadership.

Our people have been holding Secretary Kim Jong-il in high respect and absolute trust since long ago, calling him "Dear Leader."

Because Secretary Kim Jong-il, who is endowed with all the qualities and qualifications as a people's leader, has taken over our idea and leadership credibly, all work is going well in our country and will continue to go smoothly in the future too.

Serving the country and the people faithfully to the end is the noble duty of the revolutionaries. Although I am advanced in age, I am still healthy and continue to work. I will work with all my strength to help Secretary Kim Jong-il in his work.

Q: Several months ago your brother Kim Yong-ju was named vice president of state and was given a high profile on the Politburo. There has been much speculation in the world media about what this means and what his role will be. What is the correct interpretation of this development?

A: There is nothing special about it. He, who was under medical care for a long time, has recovered his health enough to work again. So he has been put in the right place according to the normal procedures of personnel administration.

Q: As you know, relations between China and the United States have recently been dominated by human rights issues. China has argued that

the United States cannot impose its standards on their country. If the U.S. and the DPRK develop open relations, no doubt human rights issues will loom large. What is your position on this?

A: By human rights we mean the independence of the people as social beings, and the society which fully ensures the people their rights to independence is a developed society.

Ours is a socialist country which is centered on the popular masses. In our country the people's personality and their rights to independence are respected and protected substantially. The government of our republic provides all members of society equally and fully their rights as social beings, including the rights to work, rest, education and medical care as well as political freedom and rights. Through their own life experiences our people are convinced that our socialist system is a truly popular system which guarantees all the people a worthwhile and dignified life. What the people like is the fair standards of human rights.

The concept of human rights based on the American view of value cannot be applied to our country; still less can it be regarded as proper to be used for political purposes or put forward as a prerequisite to the development of relations between countries.

Q: What is your current thinking on expanding economic ties with the world and opening free economic zones like China? Do you still plan to open a free economic zone at the port of Rajin in the next few months?

A: We build and develop an independent national economy, but this does not mean excluding economic cooperation with other countries.

Promoting economic and technical exchange and cooperation with other countries on the principle of complete equality and mutual benefit is an invariable policy of the government of our republic. With the development of our economy, our external economic relations will be expanded and developed further.

In order to meet the demand of the economic development in our country and the international trend toward economic cooperation, we are developing foreign trade and expanding economic relations with other countries in various forms and methods, such as joint venture and collaboration.

We are now building the Rajin-Sonbong area as a free economic trade zone, and in this area we are providing more favorable circumstances and conditions for foreign investment. We promulgated relevant laws already in 1992, so as to enable foreign investors to invest money and set up and manage foreign enterprises in the Rajin-Sonbong free economic trade zone.

At the Seventh Session of the Ninth Supreme People's Assembly we decided to make unremitting efforts to build the zone and to provide foreign investors with satisfactory conditions for investment.

Many foreign investors are interested in our Rajin-Sonbong free economic trade zone and are expressing their hope to invest. If they make investment in this zone, it will contribute to expanding and developing not only their economic ties with our country, but also their economic and technical exchange and cooperation with different countries the world over, including China and Russia.

Q: What is the status of reunification talks with the South? Is the DPRK's timetable for reunification still 1995, just one year away?

A: It is our consistent stand to reunify the country peacefully through dialogue and negotiation.

The North and the South have, through dialogue, agreed on the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity, the fundamental principles for reunification, and adopted the Agreement of Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Cooperation and Exchange between them and the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. On

the basis of these results, we in May last year made a constructive proposal for exchanging special envoys of the highest authorities of both sides, in order to solve the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula and find the way of reunification.

We have worked to hold dialogue both between the authorities and on a public level, so as to create an atmosphere of harmony and unity of the whole nation. But the South Korean authorities, bringing the "nuclear problem" to the fore, have blocked dialogue on a public level, and even between the authorities.

So a joint meeting of the DPRK government, political parties and public organizations made recently a new proposal for holding in Pyongyang or Seoul on Aug. 15 this year, a national conference of authorities and representatives of political parties and organizations and individuals from North and South and representatives of overseas compatriots. This has once again demonstrated our sincerity and desire to build a broad dialogue of the whole nation, including the authorities.

We will continue to make every sincere effort to solve peacefully through dialogue and negotiations the pending problems arising between North and South and the reunification issue.

As has been widely known to the public, 1995 is the timetable for reunification which our 70 million fellow countrymen have set. Our compatriots in the North, South and abroad have had confidence in reunification and worked hard to achieve it.

It is only one year until 1995, which our people fixed as the year of achieving reunification, but we are not disheartened. The question depends on how all our compatriots in the North, South and abroad unite and work. The Koreans, whether they live in North, South or abroad, are members of a homogeneous nation which has descended from Tangun, so they are sure to achieve unity transcending everything. We have set out the Ten-Point Program of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the Reunification

of the
Country in order to achieve national unity and the historic cause of
reunification. I believe that if all the people are united closely
under
the banner of great national unity and struggle we will be able to
achieve
national reunification, overcoming any difficulties and obstacles.

Q: As you look back on your life in politics, do you feel you have
fulfilled all of your dreams? Or is there still an unfulfilled dream?

A: I have devoted myself to achieving the sovereignty of our nation
and
the independence of our people. We have, through a long and arduous
struggle, achieved national independence and established the most
excellent, people-centered socialism of our own style on this land.
Through implementation of our party's Juche idea, the socialist
system, a
genuine society for the people has been established. Our people have
been
freed from exploitation and oppression and have become masters of
their own
destiny, and so their centuries-old desire has been fulfilled and they
have
come to exalt the dignity and honor of an independent people.

The revolution for achieving the independence of the people is not
accomplished in the lifetime of one generation; it is a long
undertaking
which is carried out for many generations until its completion. We
have
done a great deal of work, but we still have much to do. We must
accomplish the cause of socialism in the northern half of the republic
and
reunify the divided country. It is the desire of our nation and
myself to
end the division of the nation which was caused by foreign forces and
reunify our country. We will reunify our country independently and
peacefully by uniting the efforts of the whole nation and will
accomplish
through generations the revolutionary cause of Juche, which we
started.

Q: This is an opportunity for you to tell the world clearly what you
want to say. What is your message? In specific, what is your message
to
the leadership of the United States?

A: Ours is an age of independence. Many countries aspire to independence and are fighting against every manner of domination and enslavement. People's desire for independence and many countries' advance along the road of independence are the main trend of our times which no force can ever check. All nations around the world must respect, cooperate with one another and make joint effort to achieve the common prosperity of mankind, on the principles of international justice and equality, in accordance with the trend of our times toward independence.

We hope the United States, too, will abandon her outmoded Cold War conceptions and keep pace with the trend of the age of independence. Then she will make a notable contribution to world peace and progress.

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Edition: 2

Page: A17

Section: A;Q&A

Photo, President Kim Il-sung smiles during a meeting last week in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital., By Tracy A. Woodward/The Washington Times