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A Korean view of current situation

By Stan Smith posted on April 11, 2013

Stan Smith is an anti-war and Latin America solidarity activist in Chicago who recently returned from a trip to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (stansfieldsmith@yahoo.com) Below are excerpts from an interview he did with his Korean tour guide. See the full interview at workers.org.

Has the DPRK made proposals for reunification?

In our history we proposed three principles for reunification: that the North and South unite the country independently of foreign forces, that we reunify peacefully, and that we work together over the years to create the unity of the whole nation.

Our historic option is a federal republic: a central government concerned only with national defense and diplomacy, and two local governments, North and South, handling all other issues.

But recently the situation on the peninsula is deteriorating. There are no signs of resolving the issue. If South Korean provocations continue, war will break out and we are prepared to fight. Because the situation has deteriorated, that is why we invalidated the 1953 ceasefire agreement. What we need is a permanent peace treaty, so there will be no more war danger.

Now there is no contact between North and South. Now there are no phone lines between North and South, there is no hotline.

Now the U.S. and South Korea plan is that the DPRK will collapse. The situation continues to deteriorate. They are playing a dangerous game.

Japan is also very hostile. The present government is very right wing. It is trying to build a strong military using "dangerous" DPRK as a pretext to justify turning its self-defense force into a regular army. Not only the DPRK, but many Asian countries are concerned with this right-wing Japanese resurgence.

The American people should ask the U.S. government to change its hostile policy. Make America aware of the real situation in the Korean peninsula. Ask the American government to sign a peace treaty and push for diplomatic ties with the DPRK.

Why did the DPRK develop a nuclear bomb?

Koreans had to deal with the reality of nuclear weapons before. Many thousands of Koreans were used as slave labor by the Japanese in World War II, and many of these were forced labor workers in Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb.

Later, in the U.S. war in Korea, U.S. General MacArthur wanted to drop 50-70 atomic bombs along the China-Korea border to create a belt of land people cannot live on or cross.

Later in the Pueblo incident in 1968, when the DPRK captured a U.S. spy ship in our waters, President Johnson sent aircraft carriers with nuclear weapons to Korea. And in 1969 when the U.S. E-C spy plane was shot down over our territory, the U.S. again threatened us with a nuclear attack.

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The “Team Spirit” U.S.-South Korea war exercises from the 1970s to the 1990s practiced with using nuclear bombs.

The DPRK joined the International Atomic Energy Agency and became a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty member in 1985. We wanted to develop cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. Our purpose for joining was to be safe from nuclear attack. But the threat has continued.

In 1994 with our agreement with the U.S., we froze our nuclear program. In exchange, President Clinton and the U.S. promised to supply us with a light water reactor. As we now know, Clinton only made those promises because the U.S. thought the DPRK would collapse, and so did not need to honor the agreement. We allowed nuclear inspections until 1999, to show that our nuclear power was only for peaceful purposes. The U.S. broke the agreement in 2002 under Bush, and we resumed using our nuclear power plant.

The Yugoslav war showed us that we need to defend ourselves. We learned that the U.S. has no justice, no fairness. The U.S. respects only power. So the DPRK developed nuclear weapons to have power.

The DPRK needs to allocate resources to meet people’s needs but must spend money on nuclear weapons to protect and defend our country. We learned the lesson in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan: be strong.

The DPRK negotiated with the U.S., but the U.S. broke agreements and increased sanctions five times. When the DPRK would agree to some terms, the U.S. would raise the ante. The U.S. had said we cannot have nuclear power, because we could use it for bombs. We cannot have satellites because the missiles we send them into space with can be used as military missiles. They say these things can have dual purpose, one civilian, one military. They deny us food because they say it can be used to feed the military. If we kept going along with this, they would say we cannot have kitchen knives because we could use them for fighting.

There are slave states and noble states. Noble states develop their own technological infrastructure, GPS, weather reporting, etc., so need satellites. These days satellites are used for many things. If your country doesn’t have your own technology, you end up a slave state, dependent on other countries. Noble countries are in control of their own development and have a future.

Maybe without nuclear weapons we could already have been attacked by the U.S. in a war. Now our people can live more peacefully. The people of the DPRK are proud we have nuclear weapons, they are a guarantee of peace. Only we on our own can safeguard the peace.

The U.S. has over 1,000 nuclear weapons in South Korea — nuclear artillery, nuclear missiles, nuclear bombs, nuclear landmines.

The DPRK has called for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, but this call has been ignored. Now that we saw no choice but to develop nuclear weapons to defend ourselves, we are sanctioned. This is a double standard insulting to our people.



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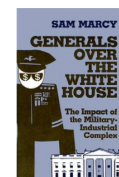
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