

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

KIM IL SUNG

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
RAISED BY A JOURNALIST
DELEGATION FROM THE
AMERICAN NEWSPAPER
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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Welcome to our country.

Thank you for your congratulations on my birthday.
I shall answer your questions.

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 far worse than it was two years ago. By making unilateral demands in direct violation of its agreements with us, the United States is threatening us with military forces, which have been reinforced in south Korea and around the Korean peninsula. It is stepping up the pressure by manipulating even international organizations. The south Korean authorities, in tune with the United States' nuclear clamour, have engineered a rupture in contacts between

working-level delegates for the exchange of special envoys between north and south, and are fanning north-south confrontation and war hysteria. These have rapidly aggravated the situation on the Korean peninsula, and created the threat that war may break out any minute. It is intolerable on any account to continue threatening others with force, now that 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 great apprehension to peace-loving people throughout the world.

Question: Like south Korea, your nation experienced the ravages of war less than half a century ago. Yet one of your officials recently said that the DPRK 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?

Answer: Our people love peace and treasure what they have built through their devoted efforts. War will benefit neither north nor south. If a war breaks out in

our country, our nation will suffer greatly. 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. However, if anybody breaches our sovereignty and attempts to conquer us by force of arms, we will be obliged to exercise our right to self-defence and counter him with armed force. No attempt should be made to bring us to our knees or stifle us by pressure and threats. This path leads 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.

Question: 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?

Answer: To shape the future of Korea successfully, north and south must reject dependence on foreign forces and exert joint efforts. Korea belongs to the Korean people, who are capable of shaping the country's future. No one else can bring the Korean nation reunification and prosperity. Dependence on foreign forces is the path to national ruin; national self-reliance alone is the road to independence and prosperity. This is the truth we gained in the long revolutionary struggle, as well as a lesson of history.

Our struggle to reunify the country, which was divided into north and south by foreign forces, is also aimed at attaining the prosperity of the country and nation through the united efforts of the people. When our country is reunified and the effort and wisdom of the whole people 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.

Question: The statement by one of your negotiators recently that the DPRK would consider turning Seoul into a "lake 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?

Answer: This remark was made by an individual official to calm down war maniacs. I think there is no need to be nervous about it.

Question: 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?

Answer: The joint statement agreed upon and published by the DPRK and the United States clarifies the principles of refraining from the threat and use of force, including nuclear weapons, respecting each other's sovereignty, refraining from interfering in each other's affairs and supporting the peaceful reunification of Korea. Both the DPRK and the United States must adhere to these principles and carry them out in good faith. Then, all the problems arising between the DPRK and the United States could be resolved satisfactorily.

Question: 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?

Answer: Japan’s moves to arm itself with nuclear weapons are entering a dangerous phase, presenting a great threat to peace and security in the Asian region including the Korean peninsula. If Japan pushes its nuclear armament policy in full swing, our efforts to denuclearize the Korean peninsula will come to nothing.

We are all very apprehensive about this potential development.

Question: One US 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 programme is an important element in getting the attention of the United States and in being taken seriously by them?

Answer: It is well known that the United States has ignored our Republic for half a century and pursued a policy against socialism and the DPRK. It is good that, after the termination of the cold war, some far-sighted

figures in the United States insist on establishing peaceful relations between the DPRK and the United States.

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

Question: What lies behind your nation’s seeming “on-again-off-again” approach to international inspections to which you agreed voluntarily in 1992?

Answer: Since the very first day, when the United States brought nuclear weapons to south Korea, we have striven to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. We acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to make the United States withdraw nuclear weapons from south Korea and effect the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Nevertheless, our sincere efforts were disregarded. Instead, attempts were made to violate our sovereignty through inspections, contrary to the principles stipulated in the NPT; therefore, we were compelled to

declare our withdrawal from the NPT as a measure of self-defence. Subsequently, however, as a show of our goodwill, to prove the innocence of our nuclear programme, we permitted the requisite inspections from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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

Question: Last month your Foreign Ministry announced that your nation may withdraw completely from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), because IAEA inspections are “unfair.” What will it take to resolve the nuclear issue from the DPRK’s perspective?

Answer: The satisfactory resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula depends entirely on the attitudes of the parties concerned. If one side attempts

to exploit the nuclear issue for its selfish goals, or if the international agency, to be governed by the principle of fairness, adheres to someone's unreasonable demands, 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 its demands absolute.

The first and foremost principle for settling the nuclear issue is fairness. If fairness is ensured and there is mutual understanding, the nuclear issue will be resolved without difficulty. We have consistently stated that the issue must be resolved through dialogue and negotiations.

If the United States adopts a sincere attitude to resolving the issue, it will not be as complicated as has been made out today, and can be resolved more easily than we think.

Question: 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 reprocessing of fuel. Your critics contend that with the reprocessing facility at Nyongbyon you are openly violating this agreement. What is your response?

Answer: 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 development, which will prevent a nuclear holocaust in Korea and ensure genuine peace and security. This is the result of our long, persistent efforts to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. We will make every effort to implement the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Our radiochemical laboratory, described by some people as a “reprocessing facility,” is in fact 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 the DPRK-US talks and the light-water reactor is delivered, nobody will suspect the peaceful character of our nuclear activity.

Question: 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?

Answer: We have already declared on numerous occasions that we do not need to make nuclear weapons and lack the will and ability to do so. However, US intelligence agencies have invented intelligence materials devoid of any authenticity and are clamouring that we are involved in “nuclear development” or have made one or two nuclear weapons. This cannot be considered anything other than pursuit of an ulterior, political purpose.

Question: Before I 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?

Answer: The West has been speculating and making exaggerated reports about our “nuclear problem.”

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

Question: No doubt you have deeply analyzed US

intentions as regards the DPRK. What is your assessment of the US position towards your nation? What outcome is the US seeking?

Answer: Apparently there are still many people in the United States, who have failed to get rid of the concept of confrontation dating back to the cold war and are not willing to shake off the war psychology of the '50s. They emphasize the “alliance” with south Korea, avoid talks with us and increase the military threat and pressure upon us. I believe that all this is due to such old conceptions.

Such sections are resorting to attempts to isolate and stifle our Republic. Such a policy, which runs counter to the times, is bound to fail.

Question: 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 this planned deployment?

Answer: The United States is now bringing *Patriot* missiles to south Korea and advertising them as

defensive, rather than offensive, weapons. To all intents and purposes, *Patriot* missiles are war weapons, regardless of their use. Shipping them to south Korea will increase the tension in the Korean peninsula. Therefore, the south Korean people also oppose their shipment to south Korea. Nothing can justify the shipment of *Patriot* missiles to south Korea.

Question: 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?

Answer: If the United States forces unwarranted pressure like “economic sanctions” upon our Republic through the UN Security Council, we will consider this to be a grave challenge.

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 to submit or stifle us.

Question: 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?

Answer: An improvement in relations between countries does not mean that one side is charitable.

We do not want to improve our relations with the United States because we seek some kind of benefit from this country. We want the peoples of the DPRK and the United States to abandon hostile relations and establish normal relations and thereby 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 discarded its hostile policy towards us and established a policy of goodwill towards the DPRK.

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

Question: 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 towards the DPRK?

Answer: I think it is significant that talks have begun between the DPRK and the United States and that agreement has been reached on important principles during the Clinton Administration. It is most important that we continue consistent and sincere efforts to bear good fruit.

Question: The US State Department still classifies the DPRK as a “terrorist state.” What do you say to this accusation?

Answer: This is part of the policy against the DPRK. The Government of our Republic not only rejects all sorts of terrorism, but also opposes any encouragement and support for terrorists.

Question: The DPRK leadership succession plan has been under way for several years and Chairman Kim Jong Il 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?

Answer: Comrade 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 ideas and intentions. His ideas and leadership reflect precisely my ideas and leadership.

Our people have been holding Comrade Kim Jong Il in high respect and absolute trust since long ago, calling him “dear leader.”

Because Comrade Kim Jong Il, who is endowed with all the qualities and qualifications for the people’s leader, has taken over our ideas and leadership creditably, all work is going well in our country and will continue to go smoothly in the future, as well.

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

Question: 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 US and the DPRK develop open relations, no doubt

the human rights issue will loom large. What is your position on this?

Answer: By human rights we mean the people's rights to independence as social beings, while a civilized society fully ensures the people their rights to independence.

Our country is socialist, based on the masses of the people. In our country the people's individuality and their rights to independence are respected and protected substantially. The Government of our Republic provides all members of society equally and fully with all their rights as social beings, including the rights to work, rest, education and medical care, as well as political freedom and rights. From their own life experience our people are convinced that our socialist system is truly popular, as it guarantees all the people a worthwhile and dignified life. The standard of human rights which is approved by the people is just.

The concept of human rights, based on the American view of values, cannot be applied to our country. It cannot be regarded as suitable, if it is used for political purposes or put forward as a prerequisite to the development of relations between countries.

Question: 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?

Answer: We are building and developing an independent national economy, but this does not mean that we rule out economic cooperation with other countries.

The promotion of economic and technical exchanges and cooperation with other countries on the principle of complete equality and mutual benefit is an invariable policy of the Government of our Republic. As our economy develops, our external economic relations will be expanded and developed even further.

To meet the demands of economic development in our country and the international trend towards economic cooperation, we are developing foreign trade and expanding economic relations with other countries in various forms and methods, such as joint ventures and collaboration.

We are now building the Rajin-Sonbong area as a free economic trade zone and are providing in this area more favourable circumstances and conditions for

foreign investment. We promulgated relevant laws already in 1992, to enable foreign investors to invest money, set up and manage foreign enterprises in the Rajin-Sonbong free economic trade zone. At the recent Seventh Session of the Ninth Supreme People's Assembly, we decided to make unremitting efforts to build the zone and provide foreign investors with satisfactory investment terms.

Many foreign investors are interested in our Rajin-Sonbong free economic trade zone and are expressing plans to invest. If they do invest in this zone, they will contribute to the expansion and development of their economic ties with our country and also their economic and technical exchange and cooperation with different countries the world over, including China and Russia.

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

Answer: It is our consistent aim to reunify the country peacefully through dialogue and negotiation.

The north and south have, via dialogue, agreed on the three principles of independence, peaceful

reunification and great national unity, the fundamental principles for reunification, and adopted the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Cooperation and Exchange between them and the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. On the basis of these results, in May last year we 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 a way for reunification.

We have worked to engage in dialogue at official and public level, in order to create an atmosphere of harmony and unity of the whole nation. But the south Korean authorities have, by bringing the “nuclear problem” to the fore, blocked dialogue on a public level, and even between the authorities.

Consequently a joint meeting of the DPRK Government, political parties and public organizations recently made a new proposal for holding in Pyongyang or Seoul on August 15 this year a national conference of the authorities and representatives of political parties and organizations and individuals from north and south and representatives of overseas compatriots. This demonstrates once again our sincerity and desire to hold a broad dialogue of the

whole nation, including the authorities.

We will continue to make sincere efforts to solve peacefully through dialogue and negotiations pending problems arising between north and south and the reunification issue.

As is widely known to the public, 1995 is the timetable for reunification, set by our 70 million fellow countrymen. Our compatriots in the north, south and abroad have every confidence in reunification and have worked hard to achieve it.

It is only one year until 1995, which our people fixed as the year for 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 or south or abroad, are members of a homogeneous nation, which has descended from Tangun, so they are bound to achieve unity transcending everything. We have set out *10-Point Programme 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 struggle, united closely under the banner of great national unity, we will be able to achieve national reunification, overcoming any difficulties and obstacles.

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

Answer: I have devoted myself to achieving the sovereignty of our nation and the independence of our people. We have, through long and arduous struggle, achieved national independence and established the most excellent, people-centred socialism of our own on this land. By implementing 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 the masters of their own destiny. Consequently their centuries-old desire has been fulfilled and they have come to exalt the dignity and honour of an independent people.

A revolution, aimed at achieving the independence of the people, is not accomplished in the lifetime of one generation; it is a long undertaking, carried on for many generations until its completion. We have done a great deal of work, but we still have a great deal to do. We must achieve the cause of socialism in the northern half of Korea 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.

Question: 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?

Answer: Ours is an age of independence. Many countries aspire to independence and fight 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 round the world must respect, cooperate with one another and make joint efforts to achieve the common prosperity of mankind, on the principles of international justice and equality, in accordance with the trend of our times towards independence.

We hope that the United States will also abandon its outmoded cold war conceptions and keep pace with the age of independence. Then the US will make a notable contribution to world peace and progress.

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