

Rumsfeld Aims at China, Korea in Hearings

by Our Special Correspondent

China and South Korea have reacted strongly against extended statements by incoming Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at confirmation hearings on Jan. 11, and statements from George W. Bush, that they intend to put the dysfunctional National Missile Defense (NMD) and Theater Missile Defense (TMD) programs on fast track. Under the headline "Rumsfeld Vows To Press For U.S. Missile Defense System," China's Xinhua News Agency on Jan. 12 quoted Rumsfeld's statement that "Missile defense . . . must be achieved in the most cost-effective manner that modern technology offers." Xinhua reported that "George W. Bush has promised to construct an NMD system despite the opposition from China and Russia, and concern in Europe that it could wreck the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty." Rumsfeld, Xinhua noted tersely, described the ABM Treaty as "ancient history."

"This is not conducive to world disarmament and arms control efforts and will have a negative impact on the 21st Century global and regional strategic balance," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said on Jan. 16. "The Chinese side expresses serious concerns over this."

EIR Founding Editor Lyndon LaRouche wrote the original Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) policy for President Ronald Reagan in 1980-82, proposing entirely new physical principles, such as space-based lasers and relativistic beam weapons, which could actually stop missiles—and could be shared with Russia, China, and other nuclear powers, rendering nuclear weapons obsolete. Today's NMD/TMD program, however, pits missiles against missiles, and doesn't work. Its primary use is to politically bludgeon other countries.

Worse, Bush and Rumsfeld have made negative comments on China and North Korea which turn back to a Cold War policy bent, just as peace is breaking out in Asia. Bush told the *New York Times* on Jan. 7 that China is "not a strategic partner" of the United States, as Bill Clinton advocated, and Rumsfeld elaborated on Jan. 11. "It is true, as the President-elect said, that we are competitors," Rumsfeld said. "They are seeking influence in the region, and we're in the region. And I read their military writings, and we see their defense budget increasing by double digits every year. And we see their military doctrine talking about leap-frogging generations of capabilities and moving towards asymmetrical threats to the United States—cyberwarfare. . . . I think we have to be wise and we have to be engaged. But we can't engage in self-delusion. They are not strategic partners, in my view."

Throwing It All Away

Rumsfeld's comments on North Korea, in particular, drew an angry response from Seoul, where South Korean President Kim Dae-jung has been moving mountains to cooperate with Pyongyang and finally sign a peace treaty ending the Korean War. "We are urging the Bush team: 'Don't throw it all away,'" a South Korean official told *EIR* on Jan. 16. He was irate about reports from Washington in Japan's *Nihon Keizai* daily, that the Bush Administration plans to cancel delivery of peaceful nuclear reactors for North Korea, and offer coal plants instead. "Does Washington want a crisis? Why would they provoke the North Koreans to restart their own nuclear program in such a way?" the official said. "Replacing a nuclear power plant, currently under construction in North Korea, with a thermal plant, is unworkable politically, economically, and technologically," Song Min-soon, director of the Seoul Foreign Ministry North American Bureau, told the *Korea Times* on Jan. 14.

The South Korean official also reiterated Seoul's opposition to unilateral construction of a TMD in Asia, as a provocation. "Your new government is portraying the North as a missile proliferator which is starving their own people deliberately," he told *EIR*, because "they would like to have a certain missile policy."

Rumsfeld's testimony was indeed negative on North Korea. "I think it is in our anti-proliferation interests across the globe that North Korea stop proliferating, stop threatening South Korea and behave rationally to its people, and stop having them die of starvation," he said. "It's hard to believe that a country that can't feed its own people, that has a dictatorship that is repressive and damaging to its country as anything on the face of the Earth, could be developing and marketing and benefitting financially from the proliferation of these technologies, but it's a fact."

Asked whether North Korea weren't dismantling its plutonium plants as promised, Rumsfeld replied: "I know what I know, and I know what I don't know. . . . Specifically, they are world-class tunnelers. They have gone underground across that country in a way that few other nations have done. They have underground implacements of enormous numbers of weapons. For me to sit here, having never been there, and not being a sufficient expert to know anyway, and say that I have high confidence that they are doing what the agreed framework suggested, would be foolhardy. It's a shell game with those folks. . . ."

"Well, North Korea is . . . selling those capabilities and technologies and trading them around the world. They are an active world-class proliferator. . . . When we asked if they would change their behavior with respect to ballistic missiles, one of the responses was: 'America, you've bombed in the Sudan, you've bombed in Afghanistan, you're bombing in Kosovo, you're bombing in Iraq, and you're giving food aid to North Korea.' Now, why? Why is the behavior so different? Well, they believe it is because they have those weapons."