

LaRouche Warns: Bush Is on Autopilot for Korea Conflict

by Kathy Wolfe

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and Chinese President Hu Jintao have just warned George Bush and Dick Cheney, in strong terms, not to start a war in Korea. But Bush is almost on “auto-pilot” for military confrontations worldwide, American Democratic leader Lyndon LaRouche said Dec. 1. The Administration’s first strike doctrine, and insane actions globally, must be stopped, he said, or no one is safe—Korea least of all. “Bush probably could not find North Korea on the map, but he is, for the moment, nonetheless determined to bomb it,” LaRouche said.

In a blunt speech to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council Nov. 12, which elicited a State Department protest, President Roh ruled out South Korean cooperation with any U.S. military action, even as a negotiating bluff. “It is too much to ask of the Korean people, who have risen from the ashes, to submit to the risk of a war again,” Roh said. “Even now, half a century later, the pain of the Korean War is still felt. . . . Due to this, the utility of the use of force is limited, even as a negotiating strategy. . . . In the end, there is no other way, other than dialogue.”

Mr. Roh also for the first time said that “it is quite understandable” that North Korea claims to need nukes to defend itself against U.S. attack, while Washington insists on its first strike option. The U.S. must give up the doctrine and join with Asian powers to “guarantee North Korea’s security and give it a chance to overcome its plight through reform,” Roh said.

Chinese President Hu Jintao and Roh then told Bush in person, that no discussion of military action, or even embargo, can be allowed, at the Santiago, Chile APEC meeting Nov. 20. “We must have a resolution through dialogue, to maintain peace and stability,” Hu said. “The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is complicated, and all parties concerned should show patience, flexibility and sincerity in resolving it.” Bush issued joint statements with both Hu and Roh Nov. 20, vowing to stick to peace.

Roh, after making his case to 13 Asian heads of state at their Nov. 30-Dec. 1 summit in Laos, toured Europe Dec. 1-7 to repeat the message, and was widely feted.

Insults and Rebellion

Yet, in closing APEC Nov. 21, Bush insulted North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in public, “just as Ronald Reagan demanded Soviet President Gorbachov must dismantle the

Berlin Wall,” as the *New York Times* put it. Bush said he had told the Presidents of China, Korea, Russia, and Japan, that Pyongyang must return to peace talks, despite Washington’s threat to give them the “Iraq treatment.”

“I can report to you that having visited with the other nations involved, that the will is strong, that the effort is united, and the message is clear to Mr. Kim Jong Il: ‘Get rid of your nuclear weapons.’ ” Bush said.

But the more Bush makes personal threats to North Korea’s leader, the more Kim must tend toward a hard line, to save face before his senior military chiefs—and the more things veer out of control.

Richard Armitage, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State who is departing in January with Colin Powell, warned Nov. 30 that the storm must be defused by reconvening the Six-Party Korea peace talks in December or early January. He told Japan’s *Yomiuri News* that there is rebellion across Asia against the Bush policy. If the U.S. doesn’t speed up peace talks, the Chinese and South Koreans will escalate their demands that Washington “do something new” to offer concessions to Pyongyang, he said.

Armitage said he hoped talks could restart this month or next, but this was dashed by top Chinese and Japanese officials Dec. 2, who said there is no sign that North Korea is ready to talk, while Washington is so hostile.

In Honolulu Nov. 22 and Vientiane, Laos, Nov. 28, South Korea’s Roh and his Foreign Minister claimed that Bush has given up the option of force since meeting Roh in Chile. “Now, we’ll have full-scale dialogue” said Roh in Hawaii, since Bush has “clearly stated that the international community will embrace North Korea and the North will get the security guarantee” once it gives up its nuclear weapons. In Laos, Roh told 13 Asian heads of state that “Bush fully agreed” to give up all use of force, while Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon asserted on TV: “Yes, the possibility is ruled out.”

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, and President Roh also issued a joint “action statement” at the Laos ASEAN Plus 3 summit Nov. 29, vowing to work “for peaceful de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through Six-Party talks.”

Japan should be wary of imposing economic sanctions on North Korea, over its failure to adequately explain Pyongyang’s 1970s abductions of Japanese citizens, or because of its missile and nuclear programs, Tokyo’s ruling Liberal

Democratic Party Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe also cautioned Nov. 29: “We must be careful not to become emotional on this issue . . . we must find solutions by peaceful discussion in the Six-Party talks.”

Dangerous Dummy

Unless a major shift is orchestrated on the world stage, however, making peace proposals to Bush now is wishful thinking, LaRouche said, comparing it to “the mathematician who is convinced he has impregnated his girlfriend, the plastic dummy.” Bush’s brain is “not a fertile field” for reasoned ideas just now, he said. Only a global political shift which dislodges the Bush/Cheney grip on U.S. policy (such as a collapse of the dollar) could provide the leeway to resolve the Korean crisis.

If arch neo-con John Bolton is appointed as Number 2 at the new State Department in January, demands to embargo North Korea as a terrorist state, and push confrontation could increase. “There is concern that North Korea, in a desire for hard currency, would sell weapons-grade plutonium to terrorist organizations,” Gen. Leon LaPorte, U.S. military chief in South Korea, said Nov. 19 in Seoul, and “that would be disastrous for the world.”

LaPorte, not normally an alarmist, said that Pyongyang may have harvested plutonium from 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods, as they claim, to yield enough for several atomic bombs. “An additional concern the international community shares is that North Korea is a known missile proliferator,” he said.

In fact, at the Chile APEC meeting, an anonymous senior American official (which usually means a neo-con) said that no security guarantee could happen until North Korea returned to the bargaining table. Bush put “especially harsh pressure on the South Koreans,” the official said. “Mr. Bush was clearly concerned that South Korea’s President Roh might diverge from the American strategy, and offer the North more aid and investment even before it agrees to surrender its weapons.”

The APEC talks, meant to focus on the economy, were in fact overwhelmed by Bush’s “war on terror” rhetoric and his attempts to stampede the two-dozen world leaders gathered in Chile, into hard-balling Iran and North Korea. Many leaders were not amused. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark warned that the anti-terrorist campaign must include a resolution to the Palestinian question and involve a broader coalition. “It is not in the interest of our planet to have a proportion of the Muslim world deeply alienated from the West,” she said.

Regime Change, Again

The neo-cons meanwhile have heated up propaganda calls to overthrow North Korea’s government since Bush’s public attack on Kim Jong-il. *New York Times* Asia hand James Brooke Nov. 22 quoted Japanese ruling party secretary general Shinzo Abe predicting “regime change” in the North, in a feature which begins, “cracks are starting to show in the



South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun warned the U.S. not to expect military cooperation from South Korea in any action against North Korea. He also ruled out the use of force “even as a negotiating strategy . . . there is no other way, other than dialogue.”

Kim family’s control over North Korea after nearly 60 years.” Kim’s portraits are being removed from public buildings “to head off a military coup fomented by China,” Brooke even alleges. He writes that Beijing is fed up and is harboring an opposition government of North Korean military brass defectors.

But “this is not the time to work out a scenario for North Korean instability,” Japan’s *Asahi News* senior analyst Yoichi Funabashi warned Nov. 30, reviewing the rumors. As for claims that China is harboring North Korean military defectors, he notes, the real danger is that Bush’s recent North Korean Human Rights Act “may encourage the trend” by spending \$20 million to fund illegal NGOs (non-governmental organizations) operating in the North to encourage refugee flows, and off-shore Voice of America attacks.

“The greatest wall against a settlement is the North’s failure to make a ‘strategic decision’ to give up its nuclear program—and the U.S. failure to make a ‘strategic decision’ for peaceful coexistence with North Korea,” he points out. As long as Washington refuses to coexist with Pyongyang, a settlement “could become even more difficult.” If North Korea’s regime grows unstable, such that Kim can’t make decisions, it will be “a nightmare sure to give everyone insomnia,” he warns.

Harvard’s top East Asia specialist Professor Ezra Vogel meanwhile warned, in a startling *Asahi News* interview Nov. 22, that Bush’s broader support for confrontations everywhere, could cause a world war between Japan and China. Japanese Premier Junichiro Koizumi “is now pursuing a very dangerous policy with China,” the staid Vogel warns, by provocations such as his war shrine visits. If Koizumi proceeds on his “Bush track,” then “the consequences for peace and stability in Asia are very serious. I doubt that most Washington policymakers are fully aware of the danger of heightened Sino-Japanese tension,” he said.

“Washington no longer thinks in broad global terms, or takes a long-term perspective. A heightening of tension between China and Japan would dwarf some of the intense but much smaller-scale ethnic conflicts around the world.

“American people supported Bush because they want to feel safer,” he says, but “the question should be not only ‘How many terrorists have we killed?’ but ‘How many new ones are we creating?’ ”