

# Korean 'settlement' may be in the works

by Lydia Cherry

Numerous behind-the-scenes meetings which took place in Beijing the week of Nov. 6 are believed to have revolved around the future of the Korean peninsula and Eastern Europe. Reliable Taiwanese sources say that a four-hour meeting took place between Henry Kissinger, North Korean hard-liner Kim Il-Sung, and senior Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who stepped down from his last official party post Nov. 9.

Also in Beijing—though reports are unclear if he attended that meeting—was the foreign minister of Bulgaria, Petar Mladenov, who was named Bulgaria's new party chief on Nov. 10, replacing hard-liner Todor Zhivkov. Officially, China is denying the meeting took place, insisting that Kim Il-Sung left Beijing before Henry Kissinger arrived on Nov. 7. But earlier, the Chinese were denying that Kim Il-Sung was in Beijing at all. All Chinese media sources have been mum on the Kim Il-Sung visit which was reported by Japanese news services, quoting reliable sources in Beijing.

Beijing has been the scene of at least four rounds of contacts between "influential diplomats" of the United States and North Korea in the last year. Such diplomacy has increased in frequency and tempo since James Lilley, who previously served as U.S. ambassador to South Korea, was named ambassador to the People's Republic of China in May, and even more so since Bush insider Donald Gregg was finally confirmed as ambassador to Seoul in early September.

## U.S. unilateral action on Korea

U.S. diplomacy to North Korea culminated during the last week in October with a visit by Gaston Sigur, formerly the State Department's top official on Asia. After the supposedly "unofficial" seven-day visit to Pyongyang, Sigur went to Seoul where he announced: "I came away firmly convinced that the paramount goal of the D.P.R.K. [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] is to reunify Korea, and it was emphasized to me that this was to be achieved through peaceful means." Sigur, however, did acknowledge that Ho Tam, chairman of the North's "Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland," at least indirectly admitted that the incident in which the Korean Airlines (KAL) passenger aircraft was shot down in September 1983 occurred as a result of North Korea's manipulation, the Seoul newspaper *Hanguk Ilbo* reported Nov. 1. Sigur acknowledged to a *Tong-a-Ilbo* reporter Oct. 30 that the most important issue he discussed

with the North Koreans was the subject of withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, but he refused to elaborate.

"The U.S. and the Soviet Union are greatly expanding their contacts with the North and South of Korea—evidence that the trend of détente initiated mainly from Europe is rushing toward the Korean peninsula," reported the South Korean newspaper *Hangyore Sinmun*, a pro-opposition daily, on Nov. 2. In recent months, Moscow, which does not have diplomatic relations with Seoul, first sent Georgi Arbatov, director of Moscow's U.S.A. and Canada Institute. Next came Soviet Vice Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa, and most recently, the third week of October—coinciding with the Sigur's visit to Seoul—Viadlen Martynov, director of the Soviet Institute for the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO).

## Korean opposition takes initiative

In each case, the contact point for Moscow in South Korea has been Kim Young-Sam, who heads the Reunification Democratic Party, and is one of three "Kims" heading opposition parties who in recent weeks have joined forces to attempt to bring down the Noh Tae-Woo government. The three opposition leaders, Kim Dae-Jung, Kim Young-Sam, and the supposedly more conservative Kim Chong-Pil, huddled together Oct. 19 when President Noh was visiting the United States to impress upon President Bush and Congress that arbitrary U.S. troop cutbacks would spell disaster. The three Kims, who seldom agree on anything, announced that in concert they would bring down the government and keep legislation stalled in parliament unless the ruling party agree to "the thorough liquidation of the [previous] Chon do-Hwan government," and to the release of pro-North Korean dissidents who have been attempting to negotiate a Korean settlement with North Korea behind the government's back.

This opposition consolidation against the government has moved still further, according to the *Korea Times* Nov. 1, with a decision by Kim Young-Sam's Reunification Democratic Party and Kim Chong-Pil's New Democratic Republic Party to merge. According to Yi Sang-Su, an unhappy spokesman from the third opposition party, the Party for Peace and Democracy, "The two parties are said to be merged into one. Now I must sink to being the spokesman of the second opposition party."

In early October, Kim Chong-Pil, who previously was aligned with the ruling camp, began turning on Noh Tae-Woo, harshly criticizing him for his supposed lukewarm attitude in solving "Fifth Republic problems." Kim Chong-Pil, according to Seoul publication *Iryo Sinmun* Aug. 13, is a close friend of Donald Gregg, and met with Gregg when he visited the United States last February. *Iryo Sinmun* notes that Kim became a "very good friend of Gregg during his stay in Korea from 1973 to 1976. Political observers believe that they met regularly while Kim was prime minister from June 1971 to December 1975."