

South Korea's Kim Gets Bush To Back Silk Road

by Kathy Wolfe

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, showing, as he did in Washington, the patient courage of Daniel in the lions' den, on Feb. 20 turned the subject of U.S. President George Bush's East Asia trip to the building of the "Iron Silk Road," and away, for now, from the "axis of evil." Creating a strong sense of optimism, Kim brought Bush to a major appearance at Dorasan Station, to which Seoul has built the Silk Road at the southern edge of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). There, Kim and Bush, under a huge sign reading "Trans-Korean Railroad," focussed on rebuilding Eurasia. This was precisely the invitation to Bush to become a "peacemaker," proposed by *EIR* (Feb. 8, p. 20).

"If this railway is extended by only 14 kilometers northward, the two Koreas will be reconnected," President Kim said, repeating his speeches last December in Europe which expanded on the ideas of U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche. "That means a train that has left Pusan [at Korea's southern tip] will be able to travel all the way to [North Korea's capital] Pyongyang," across China, and on to Europe. Bush responded, "Kim Dae-jung has put forward a vision that can illuminate the whole peninsula. . . . We want all Koreans to live in the light." Bush also endorsed President Kim's Sunshine Policy toward North Korea for the first time, and stated that he has "no intention of invading" North Korea. Since Bush's "axis" speech, "there have been public concerns about peace and stability on the Korean peninsula; President Bush's visit lifted those concerns," said a spokesman from Kim's office.

It seemed that Bush's tours in Japan on Feb. 17-19 and in China on Feb. 21-22 were also tempered by the optimism radiating from Seoul's Blue House. While the pro-war media have reported only negative comments, this is a distortion, as is clear from the speech transcripts. Although he made warlike remarks to U.S. troops in Alaska and Seoul, Bush was milder with Asian audiences. In Tokyo, Bush repeatedly praised Japan's key Meiji Restoration, in an unusual speech to the Diet (parliament). In Beijing, President Jiang Zemin on Feb. 21 hailed Bush's visit as a "highly meaningful" celebration of Nixon's trip to China on the same day 30 years ago. President Jiang announced, "We have reached consensus on many important issues." Bush invited Jiang to visit the United States this Fall, and confirmed the May visit of Vice President Hu Jintao, China's next President.

Window of Opportunity

Asian leaders now have a window of opportunity to move ahead to build the New Silk Road across Eurasia—and they should also take the chance to call for the New Bretton Woods monetary system. President Kim's achievements show that it is foolish to use American bullying and talk of war, as an excuse for inaction. The Bush Administration does not have a real Asia policy, and it can be swept along by a forceful reconstruction movement.

The window won't stay open long: The problem with President Bush, is that he will say whatever a speechwriter puts in front of him, LaRouche commented on Feb. 21. If the speech attacks the "axis of evil," Bush will attack the "axis of evil." If the speech has glowing praise of Korea, he'll turn around and say that, too. If the speechwriter attacks "the axis of ketchup," Bush will attack ketchup. His words don't last long.

The danger of war from what LaRouche, in his Feb. 16 Schiller Institute conference address, called the "utopian" faction of "fascists" in the U.S. military, banking, and policy establishment, is still extremely high. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced on Feb. 21 that he will visit Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines in March. Obviously annoyed at the direction Bush took on his Asia trip, Rumsfeld told Japan's NHK-TV that he wants to "solidify efforts to halt the development of weapons of mass destruction through in-depth discussions on the military situations in Iraq and North Korea."

Utopian Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz told the U.S.-Japan Business Council in Washington on Feb. 18, that Japan has got to fix its economy because Japan has got to re-arm. "Let me be blunt," he said. "Economic recovery in Japan is every bit as important to the security of Japan, the security of the United States, and the security of the region as are the contributions of the [Japan] self-defense forces" to Afghanistan. "The question for Japan is not whether it has the means. . . . The question is whether it has the will." He repeated at length the attack on North Korea, "a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction while its citizens starve. . . . The world's number-one exporter of ballistic missiles and related technology."

Japan's new Vice Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi has already protested. He told the press on Feb. 22 that Japan cannot quickly join any action against Iraq, because legislation used to send ships to assist in Afghanistan "is not applicable to anything other than the precise circumstances of Sept. 11." Regarding North Korea, Takeuchi said that Japan should "open the window as wide as possible" to establish new ties with Pyongyang.

Yet, there is a clearly fight in the Bush Administration over whether and where to extend the war—and that also helps keep open the current window for Asia to act. Secretary Colin Powell's State Department wrote some rather "Asia friendly" speeches for Bush on this trip. War hawk Deputy

Secretary of State Richard Armitage, who is supposed to run Asia policy, was not seen in public in Tokyo, Seoul, or Beijing, something entirely unexpected. Cold Warrior Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is unhappy enough about the Bush trip, that he feels the need to go and re-start the war fever personally.

‘Linked to Eurasia’

Arriving in Beijing on Feb. 21, Bush asked President Jiang to convey to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il “that the United States is willing to engage in dialogue,” China’s official Xinhua news agency reported. “I told him [Jiang] the offer I made yesterday in Seoul was a real offer,” Bush said, “and I asked his help in conveying that message to Kim Jong-il. . . . He can assure him that I am sincere in my desire to have our folks meet. My point is that not every theater in the war against terror need be resolved with force. Some theaters can be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue. And the Chinese government can be very helpful.”

The day before, South Korean President Kim had brought Bush to the DMZ before the entire South Korean cabinet, hundreds of Korean senior citizens separated from family in the North, and some 200 journalists from around the world, all bussed in for the occasion. “If this railway is extended by only 14 kilometers northward,” Kim said, “tensions between the South and the North will diminish, and people-to-people and commodity exchanges will increase dramatically. I hope that the railway will open at the earliest possible date so the 10 million separated family members will be able to visit their relatives. . . .

“That is not all. The train will be able to continue to China, Siberia, Central Asia, and finally to Europe,” Kim said. “When that day comes, this Republic, which has remained a virtual island, will be linked to all of Eurasia and promises to emerge as a distribution hub connecting the continent and the Pacific Ocean.”

“Mr. President,” Kim said to Bush, “I expect that you will also be remembered forever in the hearts of the Korean people as a leader who played a decisive role in settling peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

President Bush then placed his signature, with those of thousands of divided families, on a railroad tie, and wrote: “May this railroad unite Korean families.” “Mr. President,” Bush said to Kim, “your love of democracy and example of courage have changed Korea, have challenged Asia, and inspired the great respect of my government and my country. All your life you have seen the hope of change and progress where few could imagine it. You have shown that sometimes the conscience and will of a single individual can move history. . . . President Kim has just shown me a road he built—a road for peace. . . . That road has the potential to bring the peoples on both sides of this divided land together, and for the good of all the Korean people, the North should finish it.”

“Travelling south on that road, the people of the North would see not a threat, but a miracle of peaceful development,” Bush said. “Asia’s third-largest economy, that has risen from the ruins of war. The people of the North would see more than physical wealth, they would see the creativity and spiritual freedom represented here today. They would see a great and hopeful alternative to stagnation and starvation. And they would find friends and partners in the rebuilding of their country. South Korea is more than a successful nation, it is an example to the world. . . . Kim Dae-jung has put forward a vision that can illuminate the whole peninsula. We want all Koreans to live in the light.”

Meiji Restoration

Bush’s speech on Feb. 19 to Japan’s Diet delivered the expected bad economic advice of Wall Street deregulation and “missile defense.” Bush even presented his father’s deregulation of U.S. banking as the model for Japan. “In the late ’70s and early ’80s, our competitiveness was weak, our banks were in trouble, high taxes and needless regulation strangled innovation,” Bush said. “America overcame these difficulties by reducing taxes and by reducing regulations.” Nonsense. In fact, we survived by borrowing from everyone else, something which is now coming to an end with a loud crash.

But surprisingly, Bush’s speech was framed within long references to Japan’s Meiji Restoration, the 1860s-80s era when Japan adopted many ideas of the American Revolution. “A century ago, our two countries were beginning to learn from one another after a long period of suspicion and mistrust,” Bush began. “The great [Meiji] Japanese scholar and statesman Inazo Nitobe . . . wrote, ‘I want to become a bridge across the Pacific.’ That bridge has been built—not by one man, but by millions of Americans and Japanese.” True. But Bush just used this to push for further deployment of Japan’s military, as with the Japanese Navy near Afghanistan, something very damaging to Japan’s cooperation with China and Korea.

“One of the heroes of the Meiji Restoration, Yukichi Fukuzawa, was a student of the economic ideas that transformed the Western world,” Bush later said. “He saw these ideas spark prosperity and lift millions out of poverty, and he sought to introduce them to his people.” That started out on the right track, but then he insisted that Fukuzawa was a champion of free trade, which is very far from the truth.

Bush, of course, does not understand the Meiji era. During that time, Japan in fact adopted the economic planning ideas of America’s first Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, who fought against Adam Smith, his Opium Wars and rapacious free trade. *EIR* is the only publication in the world to repeatedly propose a return to Meiji planning, instead of Wall Street “free-market fundamentalism.” White House mention of the Meiji idea, shows they feel the need to respond to LaRouche’s influence in Japan. There is no other explanation of why they would even dream of bringing it up.