

Open North-South Silk Road To Prevent New Korea Crisis

by Kathy Wolfe

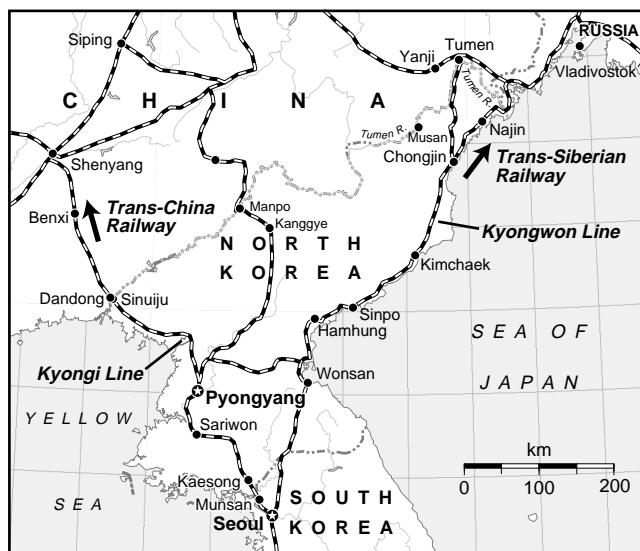
The “Iron Silk Road” rail link between North and South Korea could be completed in time for large numbers of Chinese and North Koreans to visit Seoul by rail as soon as May, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung said in a speech in Seoul on Jan. 17. “Only 14 kilometers of rail” in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas “remains to be completed,” Kim said, “for the Korean Peninsula to become a major commercial area that links Eurasia with the Pacific, and offers new advancement into the vast China market.” Kim reported that North Korea is preparing to reconstruct the northern end of the Seoul-Sinuiju line, running north from Seoul to Pyongyang and Beijing. North Korea is repairing barracks and moving in engineering troops, Kim said, to complete the line before the World Cup soccer games begin in Seoul on May 31.

North Korea has also announced in the Chinese press, its desire to complete the line, Beijing sources told *EIR*. At North Korean-Chinese talks in Beijing recently, agreement was reached on rail transport of up to 100,000 Chinese soccer fans to Seoul via North Korea, the *Korea Times* said on Jan. 22. The North has also offered the new inter-Korean railroad to Southern visitors to this Summer’s Arirang Festival in Pyongyang.

With peace breaking out, President Kim in his New Year’s press conference urged U.S. President George Bush, who is scheduled to visit Seoul on Feb. 19-21, to soften his North Korea policy. Bush, however, did the opposite in his Jan. 29 State of the Union speech. Pressured by lunatics such as Undersecretary of State Richard Armitage, by the U.S. economic crisis, and by the Enron scandal, Bush put North Korea first on a list of “regimes developing nuclear missiles and arming with weapons of mass destruction.” Saying North Korea is part of an “axis of evil,” he concluded: “The United States will not allow the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most dangerous weapons.”

The New Silk Road and related economic development agreements, proposed by U.S. Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche in 1992, have suddenly thus become the only path to move the Korean Peninsula away from confrontation. Korea requires a breakthrough more dramatic than after the last confrontation over nuclear weapons policy in 1994, when LaRouche intervened with the Clinton

FIGURE 1
North-South Korea Rail Connections



John Sigerson / EIRNS 2001

North and South Korea’s rail lines, when re-connected, will establish continuous rail travel and shipping entirely across Eurasia, via the Trans-Siberian and Chinese Land-Bridges. In Cologne in December, President Kim Dae-jung spoke of an “Iron Silk Road” benefiting all of Eurasia.

Administration, resulting in the Framework Accord based on peaceful development of nuclear electricity. Rather than biting the hook thrown by Armitage and his “clash of civilizations” crowd, for example, North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-il could boldly move to visit Seoul for the Second Inter-Korean Summit, demonstrating that there is a better way out.

Ten Miles of Iron Silk Road

Korean press reports since Jan. 17 have noted hopefully that since Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and other world leaders will be in Seoul for the World Cup, North Korean Chairman Kim might also fulfill his promise to travel to Seoul—by rail!—at that time, which would mean a heads of state gathering of enormous international weight. On Jan. 22, South Korean Foreign Minister Han Seung-soo confirmed that Seoul’s invitation to world leaders to attend the World Cup “includes major dignitaries from North Korea.” South Korea also agreed in mid-January to allow South Korean tourists to go from Mount Kumgang on North Korea’s east coast, overland to the Northern capital of Pyongyang to attend the “Arirang” festival.

North Korean senior leader Yang Hyong-sop also made an appeal for new talks with Seoul, at a meeting in Pyongyang on Jan. 22 which was widely reported by North Korean media. “In order to warm inter-Korean relations it is imperative to seek authorities-to-authorities dialogue and all forms of non-

governmental talks and contacts and work harder to boost them," Yang said.

The re-connection of the Inter-Korean Railroad, which would be a breakthrough for the worldwide Eurasian Land-Bridge project, has become a serious possibility only because of major advances in relations between the Koreas, China, Russia, and the entire Eurasian region. President Kim's renewed drive for the "last 14 km of the Iron Silk Road," in his December tour of Europe (see *EIR*, Dec. 21, 2001) was hailed by Jacques Cheminade, candidate for the Presidency of the Republic of France and an associate of LaRouche, as the best way "to restore just economic growth" for all people of Europe and Asia. "Europe, with Russia," he said in a Jan. 12 statement, "should make clear that we fully support South Korea's infrastructure and industrial efforts, by organizing long-term, low-interest-rate credits for those projects which will draw North Korea into the overall drive for Eurasian development. As President Kim has repeatedly made clear, only 14 km of rail need to be built to establish a rail link between the two Koreas and Europe, which would enable the Trans-Korean [between North and South Korea] Railway to reach the Russian Trans-Siberian, the Trans-Chinese, and the Trans-Mongolian Railways" (see full statement below).

Italian, Russian, and other European support is also coming in. The article "Ten Miles of Iron Silk Road," by Moscow commentator Andrei Piontkovsky, picked up Kim's theme. In the Jan. 25 *Russia Journal*, Piontkovsky said that "Korea is lobbying a project at the highest level that could become a catalyst" to "rebuild our [Russia's] economy." The existential crisis facing Russia in the 21st Century isn't "whether tiny Estonia will join NATO," he wrote, but "whether Russia will remain a key Eurasian power and keep its territory in eastern Siberia and the Far East," which is being depopulated by the global economic crisis. The Iron Silk Road, he said, could reverse this, save Russia, and "link the Pacific Ocean to Europe for the first time in history across the Russian territories of Siberia and the Far East."

Russia has not only been working with China to encourage North Korean openings, but has also been promoting the connection of the west-to-east railway from Seoul to North Korea's eastern port of Wonsan, with the Russian Trans-Siberian Railway. The project has been basically agreed upon among the three nations concerned, the *Korea Times* reported on Jan. 22, and now under negotiation is the precise method of sharing the construction cost. "Such a tripartite agreement would be a great boost to the improvement of the inter-Korean relationship," it said.

But could this all be done as quickly as May? "The line could be finished quickly by combining a North Korean workforce with South Korean technology," an official accompanying President Kim noted on Jan. 17. "If North Korea is serious about the connection of the rail link, it is certainly physically possible to finish it before May," an official Seoul source told *EIR*. "Since there is only a short distance of about 14 km to



"Only 14 kilometers of rail remains to be completed for the Korean Peninsula to become a major commercial area that links Eurasia with the Pacific," South Korean President Kim Dae-jung said on Jan. 17. President Bush should welcome a chance to be part of such a diplomatic breakthrough.

reconnect, it should be feasible to de-mine that area of the DMZ and clear it for the rail line in time. South Korea is trying to prepare for the World Cup as a world festival. In light of this, we would welcome any world leaders coming to attend." This includes Chairman Kim Jong-il, who is being constantly invited to Seoul.

"The South Korea government has decided to forge the railroad connection with both the Trans-China and Trans-Siberian Railroads," the state-owned Radio Korea International reported on Jan. 18. "They want to make South Korea into a logistical intersection for Northeast Asia. The decision was made under the leadership of Finance Minister Jin Nyum," the Deputy Prime Minister, who is working directly with President Kim and the Unification Ministry on the Silk Road. This implied that Jin, the architect of Korea's economic program, contemplates serious reorientation of South Korea toward the Chinese and Eurasian market.

Flank Armitage and Brzezinski

President Bush, who has been facing the threat of a military coup d'état inside the United States since Sept. 11, has shown himself able to cooperate with new and unusual allies since then, especially with Russian President Putin and Chinese President Jiang. By himself, Bush might easily welcome a chance to be part of a major global diplomatic breakthrough which the Seoul World Cup could present, since the U.S. President would be heartily welcome at the World Cup heads of state meeting.

Saner heads in the U.S. administration, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, have insisted repeatedly, until days ago, that there is absolutely no evidence of any North Korean involvement in terrorism against the United States. If he had good advice, President Bush might well be delighted to be present when the ribbon is cut to open the historic Iron Silk Road, an event comparable to the hammering of the Golden Spike which connected the U.S. east and west coasts in the 19th Century.

A group of clinical maniacs, however, led by the State

Department's Armitage, former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, and other proponents of the "clash of civilizations," began beating the war drums against North Korea at the beginning of January—just as peace "began breaking out" in Korea. Their timing indicates that they are more worried about the growing economic cooperation in Korea and its implications for the economic development of Eurasia, and Korea as a new economic superpower, than about any military threat from Pyongyang.

"We don't want a reunified Korea; we don't need a second Japan over there!" a top U.S. official of the Armitage stripe, stationed in Seoul during the first Bush Administration, told *EIR* on March 13, 1995. "Nobody wants that!" Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "was right to try to keep Germany divided," he said, fearing the economic competition a unified Germany might pose for Britain. "Not as a military potential do we want unification, and not even Korea as a strong economy," he said. "We need to keep North Korea just as it is. We need a new enemy to replace the U.S.S.R." (see *EIR*, April 7, 1995, p. 35).

These geopolitical kooks must now be strategically flanked, by bold moves from the Korean side to draw President Bush personally into the peace process. They are able to pressure the President because of the extreme economic crisis inside the United States. It is well known that Armitage insisted in March 2001 that the Bush Administration rip up the Clinton North Korean accords, and demanded a new "comprehensive approach" in which the United States won't talk to Pyongyang until they agree to unilaterally disarm. The geopoliticians knew this was a slap in the face, and did it precisely to keep the "enemy image." Seoul's Kim Dae-jung government made numerous statements to the press in early January that President Kim had planned to appeal personally to President Bush at their Feb. 17 summit, to give up the Armitage approach, let Pyongyang "save face," and move forward.

The Armitage entourage has been building their "case" against North Korea all month:

- On Jan. 11, the CIA, under pressure from Armitage's office, issued a report to the Senate Intelligence Committee, stating that North Korea has finished preparations for tests of the Taepodong-2 missile, which, it said, could put all of North America within its range.

- On Jan. 14, Armitage himself loudly praised Japan's sinking of a foreign ship in its waters, as a victory over a "North Korean drug-running ship."

- On Jan. 20, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), in a Seoul press conference, warned that "North Korea is a threat to South Korea and other countries in Asia at the same time. . . . There is high potential for a nuclear threat from North Korea. North Korea is able to launch germ war and nuclear warheads in many corners of the earth. Even after the Sept. 11 attacks on America, intelligence agencies have been investigating about North Korea and I've

had a report on the North every week."

- On Jan. 24, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control John Bolton, a member of the Armitage coterie, accused North Korea of violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. "The fact that governments which sponsor terrorist groups are also pursuing chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile programs is alarming and cannot be ignored," Bolton told the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. "Countries such as North Korea and Iraq must cease their violations of NPT and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to do its work."

"Is the U.S. Distancing Itself From Kim Dae-jung's Administration?" asked a *Korea Times* Jan. 28 editorial, pointing out that Seoul opposition Grand National Party leader Lee Hoi-chang met Armitage, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Powell, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) and other senior officials—which is quite unusual—during a long tour of Washington on Jan. 22-25. He also met former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Brzezinski, a key architect of the "clash of civilizations."

Lee, in a Jan. 25 Washington press conference, explicitly opposed any visit by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to Seoul, and sharply attacked President Kim's "Sunshine Policy." "They met Lee because he is the favorite for the December election," one Seoul official said. The official noted that the U.S. Embassy in Seoul has mounted a campaign to oust President Kim Dae-Jung's party from power in the Presidential election this Fall. None of this is in America's national interest, and it can be defused, but this will require leadership with vision.

Support South Korea's Peace Through Development Policy

The following statement by Jacques Cheminade, candidate for President of the French Republic, was issued from Paris, on Jan. 12, 2002. It followed South Korean President Kim Dae-jung's visit to Europe in December, in which he proposed the "Iron Silk Road," from the Koreas to Paris and Rotterdam, as a Eurasian-wide economic boon.

On Dec. 11, 2001, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, speaking at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, called upon Europe to support his peace initiative toward North Korea, and his inter-Asian and Eurasian development policy.

This call deserves concrete support, especially from France and Germany, not only because peace through mutual