

Update

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U.S. Imperialism Must End its Military Occupation and Interference in Korea!

On March 29 U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel blamed the perceived "tone" of formal proclamations made by the North Korean government for "ratcheting up the danger." In response to clear cut statements from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it would never yield to U.S. threats and pressure nor give up its sovereign rights, Hagel simply badmouthed the DPRK's head of state, Kim Jong-un.

Even while violating to this extent the elementary norms of relations between states, the Obama administration is applying increasingly aggressive threats and pressure against North Korea. For example, formally to last from March 1-April 30, U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises officially proclaimed to be "unrelated to events on the Korean peninsula" feature drills directly adjacent to the airspace, land and waters of North Korea. The drills involve tens of thousands of troops, war-planes and battleships. Most recently, the Pentagon admitted that on March 28-29, two nuclear-capable B-2 bombers participated in "routine" and "defensive" training drills by flying from a U.S. air base, dropping munitions on a South Korean training range and returning to the U.S. air base.

Accompanying this latest

U.S. government campaign against North Korea, the capitalist media unleashed a torrent of racist, war-mongering propaganda against the government and people of the DPRK.

The facts show that the real nuclear threat in the Korean peninsula and the main source of tension and war in the world is U.S. imperialism.

For over 60 years, U.S. imperialism has been at war against the DPRK.

During the Korean War of 1950-53, the U.S. killed 2 million Koreans in a barbarous war of aggression. 78 cities and towns in the DPRK were bombed off the map; 75% of the country's food and irriga-

tion systems were destroyed, etc. The U.S. used chemical and biological weapons and threatened to use nuclear weapons.

Since the end of open hostilities, the U.S. has still refused to sign a peace treaty with the DPRK and remains in a state of war. Thirty-seven thousand (37,000) U.S. troops occupy south Korea preventing the peaceful reunification of Korea. Through economic and financial sanctions, the U.S. is trying to strangle the DPRK. It continually carries on aerial espionage and regularly engages in "war games" to prepare for invading the country. For de-

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Recent exposures of atrocities committed by the U.S. military during the Korean War have again provided a glimpse of the typical methods used by U.S. imperialism. Such monstrous crimes against the people are the inevitable product of the aims of U.S. imperialism.

U.S. imperialism launched the Korean War in order to deprive the Korean people of independence, permanently partition the country and occupy South Korea. This war was part of U.S. imperialism's post-World War II strategy to suppress commu-

nism and the movements for national liberation and to extend its own colonial empire to the four ends of the earth. To this day, the U.S. maintains its occupation of Korea just as it remains, on a world scale, the center of counter-revolution and main obstacle to the peoples' struggles for national liberation, progress and emancipation.

The struggle of the Korean people against U.S. occupation and for the reunification of their country – a struggle which the people have

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persisted in for more than 60 years – is an inseparable part of humanity's struggle for progress and peace. The struggle of the Korean people deserves the support of people everywhere.

The following article provides a political history of U.S. intervention in Korea.

The Partition of Korea and U.S. Military Occupation

In early August, 1945, just prior to the surrender of Japanese forces throughout Asia, U.S. officials decided to partition the Korean peninsula at the 38th parallel. In the weeks following Japan's unconditional surrender on August 14th, U.S. military forces moved quickly into the southern half of the Korean peninsula. John Hodge, commander of the US Army's XXIV Corps, was appointed Commanding General of Korea by General Douglas MacArthur, the Commander of all U.S. military forces in the Pacific.

Although U.S. officials had previously expressed support for "a free and independent Korea," such as in the statement issued at the 1943 Cairo Conference, it soon became apparent that the US government and its army commanders in Korea were following an entirely different agenda.

The US army had moved into Korea, for example, under the stated goal of "disarming the Japanese military." But rather than disarming them, General Hodge and MacArthur did just the opposite. Hodge declared in early September, for example, that although Japan had surrendered, its colonial government in Korea would continue to function, and he stated that he doubted Koreans would ever be able to govern by themselves since "they were the same breed of cat" as the Japanese. American officers com-

mented frequently about the "camaraderie that existed between the Japanese and American officials" throughout the early months of U.S. occupation. The US army eventually replaced most of the Japanese officials, but many of the Korean officials who had collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation were retained. U.S. army officials admitted that the Japanese continued to "play an important role as advisors" for quite some time, and the national police force setup in Korea by the Japanese during the war was reestablished, and granted immense power and authority by the Americans.

The U.S. thus established a military occupation of South Korea while retaining much of the old colonial government. The U.S. also setup a refurbished colonial bureaucracy throughout the south. Many of the Korean magistrates appointed by the U.S. to occupy the top judicial and police positions were either previous collaborators with the Japanese or were linked with wealthy upper-class Korean families or the large-land-holding classes. Many U.S. army officers reported that such individuals, along with the previous Japanese officials, played a key role in providing the U.S. with "lists of Korean people who were viewed as friends or enemies."

For the new U.S. occupiers of Korea, such "lists" were important since what they saw when they entered Korea in the fall of 1945 was a people organized everywhere into local self-governing bodies and "peoples committees." Thousands of workers and peasants committees existed in every town and village throughout the north and south.

These committees had developed in the course of resistance to Japanese occupation and represented the new, democratic and independent Korea which the people were trying to bring into being. Hodge immediately outlawed these democratic organizations and proclaimed on October 17, 1945 that "the military government office is the sole government of Korea...if there is any person who complains of the orders or deliberately slanders the military government, he shall suffer punishment."

The Communist Party was also outlawed and in 1946, in order to further suppress democratic rights and freedom of association, the U.S. proclaimed the "Political Party Registration Law" under which "every political party or organization with more than three members" was required to provide membership lists to the U.S. authorities. Tens of thousands of Koreans were arrested and imprisoned as a result of such laws, and the U.S. military government, in collaboration with the pro-U.S. Korean militias, unleashed a savage war of repression against all Koreans calling for independence and an end to U.S. occupation. Thousands of Korean communists and democratic activists were killed by U.S. military forces between 1945-1950.

In opposition to the Korean
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ades, the U.S. stockpiled thousands of nuclear warheads in south Korea and today, U.S. nuclear submarines surround the DPRK and dock in south Korean harbors. The U.S. government has branded the DPRK as part of an "axis of evil" and repeatedly called for "regime change." The Pentagon openly boasts of plans for a nuclear first-strike against the DPRK.

In short, it is U.S. imperialism which has aimed its nuclear weapons at the DPRK just as it is U.S. imperialism which has stationed tens of thousands of troops outside its border to threaten the DPRK.

Facing this encirclement, the DPRK has defended its sovereignty by strengthening its economic and political independence as well as its deterrent military power.

It is the indisputable sovereign right of the DPRK to conduct nuclear tests as it has recently done. Neither U.S. imperialism nor anyone else can infringe on this right. In the prevailing conditions the DPRK's nuclear program serves to defend the independence of the country and peace in the Korean peninsula and the world.

At the same time, the DPRK has consistently worked for a negotiated resolution of tensions. The DPRK is committed to the signing of a permanent peace treaty and mutual recognition between the U.S. and the DPRK as well as to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The U.S. has responded to these open and sincere efforts with new economic sanctions, more pressure and threats.

The U.S. government, in its im-

perialist arrogance and belligerence, is enraged at the DPRK because it is resolutely defending its sovereignty.

Since the U.S. first dropped atomic bombs on Japan, it has pursued a policy of nuclear blackmail against the world. Time and again it has threatened countries with nuclear weapons in order to force them to their knees. While the peoples of the world, including the American people, have demonstrated in their hundreds of millions against nuclear weapons, the U.S. government has continuously stockpiled more nukes. The U.S. has deployed its nuclear weapons all over the globe, helped its allies, including Great Britain and Israel, build nuclear weapons even while screaming that no other country is "allowed" to have nuclear weapons. The U.S. has repeatedly sabotaged the efforts of the international community to limit and abolish nuclear weapons. For example, the U.S. brazenly ignores the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which require the U.S. to refrain from threatening non-nuclear countries with nuclear weapons and which also demand that the U.S. dismantle its nuclear arsenal.

History shows that U.S. impe-

rialism is not going to give up its nuclear weapons nor will it willingly restrain its aggressive ambitions. History teaches that countries can only defend their independence and their very existence from U.S. aggression by building up their self-defence capacities. This is why the DPRK's resolute defense of its sovereignty is an important force against U.S. aggression and for peace in the world.

The American people, who ardently desire peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons, must, firstly, wage unrelenting struggles against the U.S. government and its program of militarism, nuclear blackmail and war.

We demand an end to U.S. pressure and interference against the DPRK and the withdrawal of all U.S. nuclear weapons and troops from the Korean peninsula.

We demand the total abolition of the U.S. nuclear arsenal; this is the key to global disarmament.

The most important step towards peace is ending all U.S. interference and aggression against other countries, withdrawing all U.S. troops stationed abroad and recognizing the sovereign rights of every country.

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peoples' demands for independence and end to colonial enslavement, the U.S. installed its own puppet-government led by Syngman Rhee. Rhee was known by many Koreans as a staunch reactionary and a traitor who had "begged U.S. officials for the Korean mandate" throughout the 1920s and 30s. He was educated at Princeton, had many friends in the OSS (the U.S. military intelligence division and forerunner of the CIA), and during World War II he lived comfortably in America where he promised various mining and other U.S. capitalists economic rights and concessions in Korea in return for political favor. In 1945, MacArthur flew Rhee back into Korea, and the U.S. immediately took steps to install a separate government in the south and to guarantee a permanent colonial military base.

The establishment of a permanent military base in Korea was an important part of U.S. imperialism's strategy during the post World War II years. The "Cold War" ideology and the imperialist program of "containing communism" and suppressing the peoples' independence movements throughout Asia shaped U.S. foreign policy in the region.

In 1947, the U.S. pushed a resolution through the United Nations

calling for the establishment of a "temporary commission" and an election in Korea "under UN supervision." The proposal was opposed by the Soviet Union and by many Koreans as it was seen as a tool by which the U.S. would permanently divide Korea, and solidify its colonial rule on the peninsula by setting up its own puppet government. Despite such objections, however, in January, 1948, the UN commission was established in south Korea and formally announced that an election would be held in May.

In response to the UN announcement, millions of Koreans came out in struggle against the US occupation. Strikes and demonstrations broke out everywhere, and the US military authorities responded with unprecedented suppression.

Armed struggles occurred in many places between US soldiers and Koreans opposed to the division of their country. In May of 1948, as a result of widespread strikes and demonstrations, the US mobilized enormous numbers of tanks, battleships and bombers to the region. Barricades and machine guns were setup around the polling stations. On May 10, the day of the "election," the US authorities declared a state of emergency as millions of Koreans dem-

onstrated and workers declared a general strike. Even the highest "official" US estimates indicated that only about 10-20 percent of Korean voters participated in the election.

Despite the widespread opposition to the election, however, US authorities established a Korean "National Assembly" on "the basis of the election results," and in August officially announced "a victory for democracy" and the establishment of the "South Korean Government." Syngman Rhee was declared by the US military government as the south's new head of state.

In response to the fraudulent elections and creation by the US of a separate government in the south, Koreans in the north and south held elections to a Supreme Peoples Assembly, which on the basis of the election results was created in September. On September 9th, Kim Il Sung was elected Head of State and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) was officially established north of the 38th parallel. The main points of the DPRK's program included the struggle for national reunification and the withdrawal of US armed forces from Korea, as well as the democratization of the entire country and the establishment of an independent national economy.

(to be continued)

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