

Imperialists line up against North Korea

The detonation of a nuclear device underground by the North Korean regime has sent the Imperialist warmongers in the West into frenzy. Tony Snow the neo con White House Spokesman was quoted as saying "A North Korean nuclear test would constitute a provocative act, in defiance of the will of the international community and of our call to refrain from actions that would aggravate tensions in north-east Asia... We expect the Security Council to take immediate actions to respond to this unprovoked act." Japan has announced stringent sanctions which ban all North Korean imports, and citizens, from entering Japan. The US is pushing for a UN sponsored sanctions against Kim Jong-Il's country. The UN itself organised an emergency session to discuss, and condemn the actions of the North.

Of course the question for Socialists is why is North Korea not allowed nuclear weapons but the USA, France, UK and Israel are? The recent news headlines of concern about 'rogue states' developing new technologies is caused by the dominant world super power, the United States of America, seeing them as a challenge to its strategic aims, that of subordinating all parts of the world to its Imperialist hegemony. As Bush said the "United States has, and intends to keep, military strength beyond challenge".

The USA currently has around 10,000 nuclear warheads, with the equivalent destructive power of around 140,000 Hiroshima's, according to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. The UK has about 200 nuclear war heads, France 350, Israel around 130, along with an unknown quantity of undeclared chemical offensive weapons capabilities. The USA also has 480,000 tonnes of stock-piled depleted uranium shells, a weapon which has caused untold damage to the Iraqi civilian population, including increased birth defects, cancer rates and so on. The USA has also used white phosphorus on Iraqi civilians, which causes terrible burns and has killed many Iraq civilians.

The US and Britain for decades lectured campaigners for nuclear disarmament about the wonderful effectiveness of nuclear weapons as a deterrent. Surely what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. In any case the only country that has ever used nuclear weapons – to slaughter and maim hundreds of thousands is —

the United States. In the last five years it has attacked two sovereign states and threatened several others with attack. It explicitly reserves the right to a first strike use of nuclear weapons.

Is it any surprise that when the Bush administration broke off talks with North Korea, scuppered the Clinton administration's deal to sell nuclear power plants to it in exchange for it signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and put on the list of rogue states Kim Jong-Il restarted a nuclear weapons programme.

We defend North Korea's right to possess nuclear weapons precisely because it is a powerful deterrent against Western imperialist threats against them. Only a liberal pacifist, who has no concept of the unequal power relations between nation states under imperialism, would claim that semi colonies must be or remain disarmed in the face of this inherent aggressive system.

Of course in the case of North Korea it is not just the Imperialist powers that are calling for sanction and actions to be taken against them. China has also publicly called on North Korea to stop its development of Nuclear weapons, but this does not come from any humanistic dislike of the devastations they could cause. China has been acting as an intermediary between the Bush administration and Kim Jong Il for some time now. It fears that if North Korea develops nuclear weapons then it will give political excuse for Japan and South Korea also going nuclear, a situation that would leave the growing regional power surrounded by potentially hostile nuclear armed states. In fact it has been obvious that under both Junichiro Koizumi and Shinzo Abe Japan has been edging towards becoming a military power once again, sparking tensions with China in the process.

Whilst an arms race is only one possibility, the imperialists fear that a nuclear-armed North Korea will weaken the US hegemony the region, with its bases in Japan and Korea. And weaken their capacity for intervention in the region. The real danger is that if nothing is done about North Korea then it will give the green light to countries like Iran to continue with their weapons programme. That is why Snow called on the international community to 'act' to prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons. They will see this as an excuse to further isolate North Korea and begin to the political process of organising support against them, first in the

form of economic and political sanctions, eventually in the form of military actions.

However, North Korea has much to gain from pursuing nuclear weapons technology. Having been clearly identified as one of the axis of evil by President Bush it is in their interests to come to the table with a stronger hand – a successful atomic explosion being the best kind of deterrent against Bush's Imperialist ambitions in the region.

Ordinary workers and peasants though should be clear that such weaponry in the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy of the country is hardly a source for celebrations.

The League for the Fifth International believes that North Korea is a degenerated workers state, by that we mean that the property relations are post capitalist, but the working class is expropriated from political power. The Korean peninsula was divided by the Russians and the USA after the end of the second world war. The Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia and China exported its own economic model to North Korea through the Korean Communist Party, creating a country where the bourgeoisie was removed from political power, and a bureaucratic caste put in control of the country. However, North Korea exists as a very undemocratic and militaristic state, in constant political hostility with both the Imperialists and their stooges in South Korea. The fact that North Korea exists relatively outside of the Imperialist world system, by virtue of its post capitalist economic mode of production, is one of the reasons why Bush and Condoleezza Rice have singled out the small country as a particular "Outpost of tyranny". The League for the Fifth International advocates a political revolution in North Korea to remove the bureaucratic caste from power, smash its police dictatorship over the workers and peasants, put the planned economy under their democratic control and spread a socialist revolution throughout the region.

★ **No economic sanctions or blockade by the imperialist powers or the United Nations against North Korea.**

★ **Defend North Korea against any imperialist attacks.**

Model resolution for RMT and RESPECT Trade Union conferences

Pass this motion in your trade union branch

1. This conference agrees to launch an appeal to set up an organisation of and for the most militant and determined members of the trade union movement in Britain
2. The aim of this organisation should be to transform the unions into bodies that can effectively defeat the bosses neoliberal offensive by
 - Wresting control of the unions by making all officials democratically elected, instantly recallable and paid the average wage of the members they represent
 - Fighting for all strikes to be controlled by the strikers via mass meetings and accountable delegates
 - Campaigning for the total abolition of all the anti-union laws, and for workers' defiance of them, whenever they restrict our actions or our solidarity
 - Rebuilding the unions through recruitment drives among casual, part-time, women, young and migrant workers, and reconstructing a network of shop stewards.
3. This organisation must be totally independent of all factions among the layer of officials, who control the unions. Left wing officials, who want to join the movement of the base, should first make themselves accountable to it.
4. However, the fight against the capitalist offensive - privatisation, anti-union legislation, casualisation, cuts and closures, wars and occupations - is a political fight. This conference pledges itself to fight for all the unions to break from Labour and use or establish political funds to convene a conference of working class organisations to discuss the formation of a new working class party, and to commence the process of drawing up a party programme.
5. In contrast to Labour, the aim of the party programme should not be to trick the electorate with this or that promise and then govern on behalf of the capitalists, but to overthrow the capitalist system through working class action and build a socialist society based on a democratically planned economy.

RMT National shop stewards conference

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