



THE EMBASSY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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Answers of Kim Jong Il, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and chairman of the National Defence Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Questions Raised by ITAR-Tass of Russia

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I offer my thanks to ITAR-Tass for having put a written question as to my successful visit to the Siberian and Far East Regions of the Russian Federation.

You have asked several questions and I am going to answer them by groups for the sake of convenience.

First, I would like to refer to my impression of the Russia visit and the prospects of the development of the DPRK-Russia relations.

I am very glad to have visited Russia, a friendly neighbour, in August and met President Dmitri Anatoliyevich Medvedev.

I cannot forget the fact that President Medvedev travelled thousands of kilometres to Ulan-Ude from the capital of Moscow to warmly welcome us and officials from Moscow and local areas and the Russian people accorded us warm hospitality everywhere I visited. And I pleasantly recollected the days of the early new century when I met former President Vladimir Putin on several occasions and deepened friendship between us.

I was deeply moved as I visited again after nearly a decade the meaningful Far East and Siberian regions bearing vividly the noble traces of the great President Kim Il Sung who had established the precious traditions of the DPRK-Russia friendship and made an undying contribution to strengthening and developing them.

During the third visit to Russia in the new century we looked round the Bureya Hydropower Station, a giant power producer in the Russian Far East, Lake Baikal, a scenic

attraction of Siberia, different cities and economic and cultural facilities and in the course of this we witnessed the achievements the Russian government and people were making in building a powerful state with deep emotion and had a better understanding of the thoughts, feelings and customs of the brave and diligent Russian people.

To continue to develop in depth the history and traditions of the DPRK-Russia friendship accords fully with the interests of the peoples of our two countries and is of great significance in defending peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

The DPRK-Russia summit meeting and talks held in Ulan-Ude marked an important occasion in further expanding and developing the traditional relations of bilateral friendship and cooperation in conformity with the aspirations and wishes of the peoples of the two countries. At the summit meeting and talks we reached a common understanding that to develop bilateral relations of economic cooperation in different fields including the building of gas pipeline and the linking of railways accords with the interests of the peoples of the two countries and will go a long way towards regional prosperity. Accordingly, the two countries are now briskly pushing ahead with the practical measures to achieve cooperation in the energy sector, including the building of the gas pipeline.

I am confident that the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries will be further expanded and cemented in all the fields of politics, the economy, culture and military affairs on the basis of the agreements reached at the recent summit meeting and talks and the spirit of the DPRK-Russia Joint Declaration, the DPRK-Russia Moscow Declaration and the DPRK-Russia Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation. The government of our Republic highly values the traditional DPRK-Russia friendship and will make joint efforts with the Russian side to steadily consolidate and develop the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries and the two peoples.

Next, I would like to speak on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and the resumption of the six-party talks.

To make the whole Korean peninsula nuclear-free was the behest of the great President Kim Il Sung, and it is the consistent stand of the government of our Republic.

The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula arose as a result of the United States constantly threatening the sovereignty and security of our people.

Sovereignty is the lifeline of a country and nation. We have possessed nuclear deterrent to protect our sovereignty from the blatant nuclear threat of the United States and its increasingly hostile policy.

As agreed at the recent summit talks, there is no change in our principled stand to strive to make the whole Korean peninsula nuclear-free by resuming the six-party talks as early as possible with no strings attached and implementing the September 19 Joint Statement in an all-round and balanced way on the principle of simultaneous action.

We will make continued efforts with the Russian side to oppose high-handed and arbitrary practices on the international arena, establish a fair international order and defend peace and security of Asia and the rest of the world.

As for the prospect of normalizing relations between our country and the United States and Japan, it depends entirely on the standpoint and attitude of the United States and Japan.

It is a consistent foreign policy of our Republic to further develop relations favourably with all the countries that are friendly to it in conformity with the ideals of independence, peace and friendship.

In the new century, too, as it did in the past, the United States is persistently pursuing policies hostile towards the DPRK, while stepping up its pressure on it in all aspects and driving the situation to a dangerous line.

As the present reality testifies to the history of antagonistic DPRK-US relations, any sort of US acts of hostility and manoeuvres of invasion and disintegration will cut no ice with us and always meet with failure.

If the US, though belatedly, abandons its policy hostile to the DPRK and approaches it with good faith, we are willing to improve our relations with it.

What is primary in promoting relations between our country and Japan is that Japan should atone for the crimes it committed against our country and people in the past.

If Japan takes a resolute step towards the redress for its dubious past and the abandonment of its policy hostile towards us, it may lead to the normalization of the bilateral relations.

Russian friends displayed much interest in the fact that our people are making epochal progress in their efforts to build a thriving country.

During my visit to Russia, President Medvedev conveyed his kind greetings to our people who are making devoted efforts to effect fresh changes in their efforts to build a thriving

country to mark the centenary of the birth of President Kim Il Sung, expressing his support for the positive measures we have taken to develop the country's economy and improve the people's standard of living as well as his conviction that our people will achieve greater successes in their drive to build a prosperous and powerful country. This serves as a great encouragement to our cause.

Today our people are all out to implement the cause of building a prosperous and powerful socialist country, the lifetime wish of President Kim Il Sung, and particularly they are directing all their efforts to improving their standard of living.

We will brilliantly achieve the cause of building a thriving nation without fail on the strength of single-hearted unity of the Party, army and people, and the solid potentialities of our independent national economy.

It is my greatest wish to enable our people to live with nothing to envy at the earliest possible date, and it is my greatest pleasure to work energetically, sharing my joys and sorrows with our people, on the road of translating my wish into reality.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I extend again my friendly greetings to the Russian government and people and wish them great success in their efforts to build a powerful state.