

KIM JONG IL

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
RAISED BY ITAR-TASS
OF RUSSIA**

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

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I express my thanks to ITAR-Tass for the written questions they have put to me concerning my successful visit to the Siberian and Far East regions of the Russian Federation.

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

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

I am very glad to have visited our friendly neighbour Russia 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 welcome us, nor can I forget the warm hospitality that officials from Moscow and the local areas and the Russian people accorded us everywhere we visited. And I recall with great pleasure the days early in the new century when I met former President Vladimir Putin on several occasions and deepened our friendship.

I was deeply moved when I returned after nearly a decade to the Far East and Siberian regions visited previously by the great President Kim Il Sung who established the priceless traditions of the DPRK-Russia friendship and made an undying contribution to strengthening and developing them.

During our 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 in Siberia, and various cities and economic and cultural facilities. In the course of this we saw for ourselves and were deeply moved by the successes the Russian government and people were recording in building a powerful state, and

gained a better understanding of the thoughts, feelings and customs of the brave and diligent Russian people.

The continued development of the history and traditions of the DPRK-Russia friendship accords fully with the interests of the peoples of our two countries and is a key to defending peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

The DPRK-Russia summit and other talks held in Ulan-Ude were an important occasion for further expanding and developing the traditional relations of bilateral friendship and cooperation in line with the aspirations and wishes of the peoples of the two countries. At the summit and other talks we reached the mutual understanding that the development of bilateral economic relations in different fields, including the laying of a gas pipeline and the linking of railways, accords with the interests of the peoples of the two countries and will do much for regional prosperity. Accordingly, the two countries are now energetically pushing ahead with our practical efforts to develop cooperation in the energy sector, including the laying of the gas pipeline.

I am confident that the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries will be further expanded and cemented in all fields—politics, the economy, culture and military affairs—on the basis of the agreements reached at the recent summit and other talks and of 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 values the traditional DPRK-Russia friendship highly and will make joint efforts with its Russian counterpart for the steady consolidation and development of the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries and two peoples.

Next, I would like to speak about the nuclear issue on the

Korean peninsula and the resumption of the six-party talks.

That the whole Korean peninsula should be 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 lifeblood of a country and nation. We have acquired a nuclear deterrent in order to protect our sovereignty in the face of the blatant nuclear threat from the United States and its increasingly hostile policy.

As we agreed at the recent summit, there is no change in our principled stand, which is 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 fully and in a balanced way on the principle of simultaneous action.

We will continue to work with the Russian side to oppose high-handed and arbitrary practices in the international arena, establish a fair international order and defend peace and security in 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 develop good relations with all the countries that are friendly to it, in conformity with the principles of independence, peace and friendship.

In the new century, too, as it did in the past, the United States is persistently pursuing policy that is hostile to the DPRK; it continues to step up its pressure on the DPRK and by doing so is driving the situation to crisis point.

As the history of antagonism between the DPRK and the US shows, any act of hostility by the US and any moves towards invasion and disintegration will cut no ice with us and are doomed to failure.

If the US, though belatedly, abandons its hostile policy towards the DPRK and approaches us in good faith, we are willing to improve bilateral relations.

The primary issue in promoting relations between our country and Japan is for Japan to atone for the past crimes it committed against our country and people.

If Japan takes a resolute step towards redressing its dubious past and abandoning its hostile policy, this may make it possible to normalize bilateral relations.

Our Russian friends are showing a keen interest in the epochal progress our people are making in their efforts to build a thriving country.

During my visit to Russia, President Medvedev conveyed his kind greetings to our people; he acknowledged the devoted efforts they are making to bring about fresh progress in their efforts to build a thriving country to mark the centenary of the birth of President Kim Il Sung, and he expressed his support for the positive measures we have taken to develop the country's economy and improve the people's standard of living. He also referred to his conviction that our people will achieve renewed success in their drive to build a prosperous and powerful country. All this serves as a great encouragement to our cause.

Today our people are fully committed to implementing the cause of building a prosperous and powerful socialist country, which was the life-long wish of President Kim Il Sung; in particular, they are directing their efforts at improving their standard of living.

We will without fail achieve brilliant success in the cause of

building a thriving nation on the strength of the single-hearted unity of the Party, army and people, and the sound potential of our independent national economy.

It is my greatest wish to enable our people at the earliest possible date to live with nothing to envy, and it is my greatest pleasure to work energetically, sharing joy and sorrow with our people, as we work towards translating my wish into reality.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend once again my friendly greetings to the Russian government and people and wish them great success in their efforts to build a powerful state.