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Politics of the Earthquake: Respect the People of Haiti

*The following is reprinted from
www.haitiaction.net*

By Robert Roth

In June of 2004, I went to Haiti with two other members of the Haiti Action Committee. We were there to investigate the effects of the political earthquake in which the democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide had been overthrown by a coup orchestrated by the United States, France and Canada.

What we saw still resonates. Hundreds of families who had had to flee their homes in the face of repression, thousands of grass roots activists in prison because of their association with Aristide's Lavalas movement, literacy projects and schools destroyed, community-based activists forced into exile, Haiti returned to elite control in the name of "stability" and "security".

We also saw the beginnings of the United

Nations occupation, labeled "peacekeeping" by UN (Minustah) authorities, but clearly seen by the popular movement as the beginning of an international take-over of Haiti

The coup devastated Haiti. It shattered the promises of a truly democratic period in Haitian history. It interrupted a process of building schools (more schools were built under Lavalas governments than had been built in all of Haitian history), establishing health clinics and parks in the poorest communities, support for literacy efforts among women, respect for the indigenous religion of Vodou, and a commitment to the development of Haitian agriculture in the face of the flooding of Haitian markets by U.S. goods.

Six years later, here we are. Fanmi Lavalas, the most popular political party in Haiti, has been banned from participating in elections, with the full support of the United States. The Preval government has tailored its policies to

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U.S. Urged to Make Decision to Replace Armistice Agreement by Peace Treaty

Since the end of the open hostilities of the Korean War nearly 60 years ago, the U.S. has refused to sign a peace treaty with the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) and remains in a state of war. 30,000 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 decades, 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.

Facing this situation, the DPRK has consistently worked for a negotiated resolution of tensions. While the DPRK has repeatedly called for the signing of a permanent peace treaty, the U.S. has not only refused to sign such

an agreement but has instead responded to these open and sincere efforts with sanctions, pressure and threats.

Below, we reprint an article published by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) calling for the signing of a peace treaty. This article again reveals the principled stand of the DPRK. While the Obama administration and the monopoly-controlled media in the U.S. are relying on gossip, innuendo, slander and the Big Lie to create hysteria against the DPRK, the politics and diplomacy of the DPRK are open and above-board and conducted in full view of world public opinion.

Pyongyang, January 21 (KCNA) – The old armistice regime, a product of the Cold War, still persists on the Korean Peninsula, creating an instable situation of neither war nor peace.

The protracted cease-fire on the peninsula, something unprecedented in the world history

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Korea (from page 1)

of cease-fire is little short of a time bomb posing constant threat to the security in East Asia and, furthermore, in the other regions of Asia-Pacific at present.

The conclusion of a peace treaty would mean the first step toward creating a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula.

This is not an issue different from the issue of the denuclearization of the peninsula.

The settlement of the issue of establishing a peace-keeping regime would lead to automatically solving other matters guaranteeing the peace process on the peninsula.

In the past a series of discussions including the six-party talks for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula had been held for six years, undergoing up and down and repeated failures. As their course indicates, this was attributable not to the order of action but to their failure to properly settle the fundamental issue.

It is the main purport and stand of the DPRK's proposal for concluding a peace treaty to build confidence to facilitate the denuclearization of the peninsula.

The conclusion of a peace treaty would mark the beginning of confidence-building and provide an occasion of wiping out distrust between the DPRK and the U.S. and establishing the relations of bilateral respect and equality in its course.

Confidence-building serves as a main reason why the AA should be replaced by a peace treaty.

The U.S. should fulfill its historic responsibility in ensuring peace on the peninsula.

The U.S. has so far intervened in the Korean issue as a party directly responsible for the conclusion of the AA and established its military control over south Korea.

No one can replace the U.S. in replacing the AA by a peace treaty.

The U.S. had already clarified on several occasions its official stand neither to pose a military threat to the DPRK nor invade it and shown its readiness to conclude a peace accord.

There is neither reason nor condition not to respond to the proposal for concluding a peace treaty replacing the present AA if the U.S. truly wants to coexist with the DPRK peacefully and wishes for peace of the Korean Peninsula.

The DPRK attaches very great importance to concluding a peace treaty.

This reflects the principled stand of the DPRK government to successfully solve all the problems arising in the relations between the DPRK and the U.S. including denuclearization and provide a sure guarantee for peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and, furthermore, in the rest of the world through the conclusion of a peace treaty.

The issue of concluding a peace treaty will find a smooth solution only if the U.S. has a political will to properly assess the changed situation and the trend of development of history and make a bold switchover in its DPRK policy in line with its interests and the aspiration of the world peace-loving

people.

The satisfactory settlement of the issue of establishing a peace-keeping regime depends on the stands of the countries concerned.

It is in line with the interests of the countries concerned and the common interests of various countries in the Asia-Pacific region to protect peace and stability on the peninsula.

The conclusion of a peace treaty is neither a matter of one party giving benefits to the other party nor an issue of one party offering a reward to the other party but a fruitful political matter beneficial to the DPRK and the U.S. and the international community alike and substantially conducive to the preservation of the world peace.

How to approach the proposed peace treaty will be a touchstone distinguishing between those who wish for lasting peace in the Asia-Pacific region including the Korean Peninsula and those opposed to it.

The U.S. would be well advised to face up to the present trend of history and the developing situation and make a decision to replace the AA by a peace treaty as early as possible.

Haiti (continued from page 1)

What the United States demands, rather than to what the people need. There is a deep fissure between the people and the official government, a deep gap between the occupied and the occupiers.

Yes, the earthquake was a violent natural disaster, presenting overwhelming challenges to any government or any aid responders. Yet, it is clear that this natural disaster – just like that of Hurricane Katrina – is compounded by a political failure, the continuation of generations of assaults against Haiti, and – in particular – a brutal UN/US occupation that has brought to a grinding halt the promise of the Aristide years.

Now we watch the U.S. gear up for a massive military operation in Haiti, while people die due to lack of medicine, or starve while food supplies sit on the airport tarmac. We see the pictures of families digging their relatives out of the rubble, with no aid in sight. We read the usual racist slurs against Haitians, called “scavengers” or “looters” when, after many days with no assistance, they look for food and water in abandoned homes. We read that the problems of Haiti are rooted in “their culture and religious beliefs”, rather than in the harsh realities of colonialism and occupation. We hear CNN reports of a field hospital being ordered out of a community for “security reasons” by the United Nations, even in the face of wounded and dying people. And we read that Doctors Without Borders cargo planes were denied landing space in Port-au-Prince by U.S. military authorities.

This is a time to respect the resiliency and courage of the Haitian people. It is a time for aid, not charity, for solidarity not a U.S. military take-over. And it is a time to return President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his homeland.