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USA and South Korea deliberately work to make North Korean regime invincible

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Why does the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) need nuclear weapons? What is the role of the USA in the rivalry between the two Koreas? How do people live in today's DPRK? Pravda.Ru conducted an interview on the subject with Senior Fellow at the Center for Korean Studies at the Institute of the Far East, Yevgeny Kim.

"What is the DPRK like? The country is living behind the Iron Curtain, and many assume that common people starve there. Is it true?"

"The living standard in the DPRK is not as high as it is in America or Sweden, of course. Maybe it is even not as high as in Russia because North Korea is a poor country. At the same time, this is a country with a growing economy.

"North Korea residents do not die of hunger. They may not have as many food products as we have. For North Korea, it is considered normal if a person consumes 1,700-1,800 calories a day, not 8,000 calories like Olympic champion Phelps does, and not 3,000 calories like ordinary Russians do. Yet, according to World Health Organization standards, the minimum amount of calories needed to maintain vital functions is 1,430. This is all provided. In addition to this, the country has diplomatic relations with about 150 countries. Do you think that it can be called isolation? I think not. Of course, one cannot go to North Korea freely, but there are many other countries in the world where one cannot travel to freely either."

"What does North Korea need nuclear weapons for?"

"The country lives in a state of siege, because the American troops - 28,500 servicemen - are stationed in South Korea, and they are armed with state-of-the-art weapons. Plus, there is a large US military base in Japan, from where US aircraft can reach North Korea in two or three hours only. In addition, the 660,000-strong South Korean army is the fifth largest army in the world. South Korea spends about 35 billion dollars a year on military needs. To make it clear what this money means for the northerners, I can say that North Korea's GDP is about 33-34 billion dollars.

"The military might of South Korea and North Korea is incomparable. North Korea decided to pay first priority to nuclear missile weapons just because the North is unable to compete with the South in conventional weapons.

"North Korea saw what happened to Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein, who had refused from nuclear weapons. Those events made the DPRK authorities come to conclusion that once you have nuclear weapons, the West won't attack you.

"Of course, this requires money, but the presence of these weapons allows the country to spend less on the creation of conventional weapons. It seems that the US and South Korea are deliberately strengthening the regime of North Korea. In the spring of 2016, The Key Resolve and Foal Eagle military exercises were conducted to rehearse the implementation of Operational Plan 5015 (OPLAN 5015), the goal of which is to destroy the North Korean leadership, missile and nuclear control centers of North Korea. This plan means the declaration of war against another country, and who knows when they may make this plan a reality. The North Korean leadership may reason like this: "Look, we're trying to say something to them, and they are constantly trying to destroy us, so we need to be together as a united front to resist American imperialists."

"Of course, both the US and South Korea dream about how to eliminate the North Korean regime. They openly talk about it. Although officially, the South Korean leadership says that they do not want to topple the political regime of North Korea - they say that they want the North

to refuse from nuclear weapons. Well, North Korea will not refuse from nuclear weapons, as long as the Americans are present on the territory of South Korea.

"The US established its presence in South Korea for China, rather than for South Korea. US missiles in South Korea do not targeted the DPRK. When the southerners say that these missiles threaten the national security of South Korea, I always think: "Do they consult their military or not?"

"The system that will be deployed there is designed to shoot down missiles at an altitude from 50 to 150 kilometers. A hundred kilometers and above is space. Therefore, it goes about intercontinental ballistic missiles. It makes no sense for North Korea to use ICBMs to bomb or destroy something in South Korea - they can do it with the use of tactical short-range missiles. The TAT system that the South Koreans want to deploy will be useless as far as North Korea is concerned, but it will come in handy to intercept the missiles that China and the Russian Federation may launch."

"It is generally believed that the Americans invested in South Korea after the war to make it look like an Asian miracle, to make the northerners jealous. Why can't China and Russia join their efforts to make North Korea another Asian miracle?"

"As for the Asian miracle, I would like to say that the Americans had invested about \$5 billion in the South Korean economy before the end of the 1960s. The USSR and China had invested a lot more in the economy of North Korea. Before 1972, North Korea had had a higher standard of living than South Korea, and the economy of the North was more successful.

"When the Americans began the war against Vietnam in 1965, the South Korean government sent two divisions there. In return, the United States increased military aid to South Korea. The American soldiers who fought in Vietnam were in need of recreation, medical treatment, uniforms, bed linen and so on - the Americans got all that in South Korea. The latter profited from it. If the USA had placed all those orders in Japan or on the USA itself, it would have been twice as expensive. The US took advantage of the low living standard of South Korea to receive everything at a very good price - clothing, treatment, women for soldiers and so on."