

Why we won't go to war with North Korea

A LOT of attention is being paid lately to America's impending war with Iraq. Other writers refer to it as "Bush's War," since the whole fracas is basically a hillbilly family feud, with George W. whining on about how Saddam tried to kill his pappy. But while it's the Bush family's feud, it's not their war. They aren't going to fight it. Their kin aren't going to die in it. They don't fight wars. They order other people to fight and die. This means the children of the poor, for whom military service was the only option for education or employment.

That's why Charles Rangel and Ron Dellums, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, are calling to reinstate the draft: perhaps if the children of the middle class wound up having to fight and die, they and their parents would be less likely to frivolously send our armed forces into battle on behalf of the Bushes and their friends and family in the oil industry.

For the American media, the war is a done deal. Despite a second wave of UN inspectors unable to find weapons of mass destruction, American "reporters," rather than focus on the lack of reason for this war, are focusing instead on the logistics of the war, as if it were a sporting event.

The massive American and international anti-war movements, by contrast, are invisible. The situation is so bad that the normally staid Columbia Journalism Review (CJR) recently blasted The Washington Post, The New York Times and other corporate papers for

WHY WE WON'T GO TO WAR WITH NORTH KOREA / 2

downplaying or outright ignoring massive anti-war demonstrations. They slam The Post for ignoring the September 28th rallies in Europe, which drew, by the most conservative legitimate estimates, many hundreds of thousands of people. It was only after many complaints, that The Post gave the story minimal coverage a few days after the event.

CJR slammed The New York Times for their October 27th coverage of the previous day's Washington anti-war rally. Organizers hoped for 20,000 attendees, but were overwhelmed with 200,000. The Times, however, reported that "fewer people attended than organizers had said they hoped for." They then went on to speculate about why the rally failed. NPR, as reported here, joined in disseminating misinformation, reporting a mere 10,000 participants. All of these "news" outlets, while censoring the peace movement, have continued to bang the drums of war with regards to Iraq .

North Korea is another story. They recently went public, declaring that they are indeed doing exactly what the Bush administration has failed to prove Iraq is doing: building nuclear weapons. This development of course begs the question: if unfounded suspicion of building American-style weapons of mass destruction mandates war against Iraq, what about North Korea ?

The answer is simple. The United States is not going to war against North Korea precisely because they DO have weapons of mass destruction. It goes like this: we can attack Iraq for having weapons of mass destruction because in all likelihood they don't actually have them, while we can't attack North Korea for having them since they have them and, hence, can use them.

A new kind of war

The impending escalation of the ongoing Iraq war opens up a new chapter in the history of warfare. The invading forces get unlimited access to go on the ground to identify and inventory all of their enemy's weapons, military installations and command bunkers before launching their attack against those facilities. They will also know beforehand what their enemy's defense capabilities are so that they can game the whole war out before firing a shot, thus leaving no aspect of victory to chance.

The Iraqi war games out as a victory while a potential Korean war promises a thermonuclear and biological holocaust. The other key reason the Bush regime isn't pushing for a new Korean war is that Korea doesn't have oil. Of the dozen nations that the U.S. Department of Defense argues are building nuclear weapons, only Iraq has massive oil reserves. Korea, by contrast, has nothing that we want. In fact, their continued existence as an "enemy" state is necessary to justify America 's military presence in Asia . Without North Korea, the U.S. military presence becomes transparent,

WHY WE WON'T GO TO WAR WITH NORTH KOREA / 3

defending corporate interests and a hegemonic economic order in the sweatshop and timber regions. It's not about Korea. It's about Wal Mart.

But what about these North Koreans? Why are they suddenly rattling nuclear sabers? Conventional wisdom says they're nuts, but their actions are actually quite predictable. It's been one year since George W declared North Korea "evil." During that year, the Bush administration announced that North Korea would be eligible to receive a "pre-emptive" nuclear first-strike from the U.S. Couple this with the Bush administration's \$60 billion "missile-defense" program, which they argue would be used in a war against North Korea, and we begin to see why the North Koreans are nervous.

Bush also put the kabosh on South Korea 's reunification plans with the north, thus guaranteeing the continued existence of North Korea and the continuation of hostilities between that nation and ours. In light of all of this, North Korea's weapons program seems like a predictable and even rational response. They still claim that they are willing to stop the program, but only in exchange for a U.S. promise not to launch a first strike attack against their country. The Bush regime won't make that commitment, reserving its right to attack any nation at any time, with or without provocation. In the case of North Korea, however, it's more about keeping a paper war alive, even at the risk of a real nuclear war. ●