

Korea: Washington is Playing a Dangerous Game

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The Obama administration is playing a dangerous game of chicken on the Korean peninsula and it could end in war.

North Korea responded to provocative joint military operations between the US and South Korea off its coast by shelling nearby Yeonpyeong Island which lies in disputed waters. The North's artillery attack killed four and left many others wounded. US and South Korean officials have vehemently condemned the attack and promised to retaliate to any similar incident in the future.

The media has helped to whip the public into a frenzy by leading the call for revenge. This has played into the hands of South Korea's right-wing President Lee Myung-bak, who has abandoned the Sunshine Policy for a more confrontational approach with the North. Lee's hawkish views and public statements have exacerbated the problem and paved the way for escalation.

Propaganda fliers have been spread across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), some of them reaching as far north as Pyongyang. According to the Korea JoongAng Daily an official from the South Korean Ministry of National Defense said "the South is prepared to broadcast propaganda along the DMZ and that the ministry is "weighing the timing."...Loudspeakers are already installed in 11 areas along the DMZ for further propaganda attacks." ("Propaganda war escalates; use of loudspeakers mulled", Korea JoongAng Daily)

Journalist Gregory Elich explains the details surrounding the incident in an article on Global Research:

"In response to the South Korean announcement of an impending artillery drill, North Korea telephoned the South Korean military on the morning of November 23, urging them to cancel plans to fire shells into what the North regarded as its territorial waters. The North warned that if the drill proceeded, they would respond with a "resolute physical counter-strike." (Greg Elich, [Spiralling out of Control: The Risk of a New Korean War](#), Global Research, December 4, 2010)

Nevertheless, the artillery drill proceeded and four hours later, North Korean artillery fired on the island. In the first round, 150 shells were shot, of which 60 hit the island. Then 20 more shells were fired in a second round. In all, four people on the island were killed and 18 wounded." (Ibid)

The US/South Korea war games are a deliberate provocation, no different than if China or Russia sent an armada to conduct operations 3 miles off Cape Cod. Even so, the White House is using the incident to put pressure China to coerce the North into acceding to US

diktats. So far, China has played a constructive role by calling for 6 party talks, but that hasn't placated the Obama administration. What Washington wants is regime change, and it's tightened sanctions and increased its saber rattling to achieve its goal. Here's more from the Korea JoongAng Daily which lays out the US plan for escalation:

"The heads of the U.S. and South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to change defenses against North Korean attacks yesterday, with South Korea getting a leading role in immediate retaliations and the Americans pledging support.

The agreement was made as Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, made an unexpected visit to Seoul yesterday to reaffirm America's commitment to its alliance with South Korea. Mullen spoke with his South Korean counterpart, Han Min-koo, about North Korea early yesterday.

"North Korea's attacks are getting bolder and bolder," said Han. "If they choose to strike again they will be punished severely, and North Korea will pay a big price." ("U.S. top brass discusses new retaliation strategy", Korea JoongAng Daily)

The US wants China to show that it is a "responsible stakeholder" in the region, which means that it will comply with US foreign policy objectives. But China has other ideas and will not allow itself to be used as a stick to beat up on Washington's enemies. In fact, on Thursday, a delegation of high-level Chinese officials met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in a public display of support. China has frustrated Obama's plan to further isolate the North or to give the US a bigger role shaping regional policy.

The administration has shown no interest in diplomacy, negotiations or meeting US obligations under the terms of the 1994 Agreed Framework. (which is still the main bone of contention) The US will fulfill its end of the bargain or there will be no peace on the peninsula. A deal is a deal.

More US/South Korea maneuvers are planned before the end of December, suggesting that hostilities could break out at any time. The US believes it can control the conflict in a way that serves its own interests, but that might not be the case. After all, North Korea's leaders have no illusions about what a war with the US would mean. They haven't forgotten the 3 million Koreans who died during the war or the atrocities that were perpetrated by the invading American army. Here's a refresher for those readers who may be sketchy on the details. This is from an article titled "A New Look At The Korean War" by John H. Kim, Veterans For Peace:

"Massacre of Korean Civilians

The U.S. Army, Air Force and Navy were directly involved in the killing of about three million Korean civilians—both South Koreans and North Koreans—at many locations throughout Korea, including Masan, Sachon, Tanyang, Iksan, Changyong, Wegwan, Ducksung, Sinchun, Wonsan, Pyongyang, etc. Several hundreds of civilians refugees were blown apart when the U.S. Army blew up Wegwan and Ducksung bridges in S. Korea..... Among the several branches of the U.S. military, the U.S. Air Force was probably more responsible than any other branches for the huge number of civilian killings because of its indiscriminate shootings and bombings of civilian refugees, villages, towns, and cities in violation of Hague Conventions. At the end of the war, almost all the North Korean cities were leveled to the ground by carpet bombing, including Pyonyang, Najin, Shiniju, Wonsan, Hungnam, etc. It is

reported that the U.S. dropped some 650,000 tons of bombs, including 43,000 tons of napalm bombs, during the Korean War.” (“A New Look At The Korean War” by John H. Kim, Veterans For Peace)

Additionally, major dams and water supplies were blown up, hydroelectric power plants were destroyed, oil refineries, factories, bridges, hospitals, food storage units were all reduced to rubble. The North faced a decade of grinding poverty and starvation due to US attacks on vital infrastructure and supplies. Also-similar to Falluja-“American war planes dropped chemical bombs on the North Korean military positions as well as on villages, resulting hundreds of North Korean civilian deaths. The U.S. also experimented with biological weapons in the North, with the active assistance of the Japanese war criminals who were involved in human experiments during WWII.”

Sound familiar?

North Korea has a good grasp how the US fights its wars. That’s why it may not be persuaded that “limited engagement” is the way to go. Kim may just pull-out-all-the-stops and use the tools he has at his disposal-including nukes-to protect his people from an irrational and ruthless bully. The risks are just too great to act otherwise.

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