

North Korea: Deafening Silence Around the Moon-Putin Plan. One Possible Path To Peace

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In-depth Report: [NORTH KOREA](#)

“In the heart of appeasement there’s the fear of rejection, and in acts of fear there are mirrors of oppression.” —Chris Jami

As the world hurtles ever closer to war in Asia, there is an Alice-in-Wonderland media narrative that has North Korea as the aggressor that must be controlled and punished at all costs. And in the face of that narrative, the deafening silence of intellectuals is starting to bear a remarkable resemblance to appeasement.

In 1938 one of the most heinous war criminals of the 20th century was planning to occupy Czechoslovakia, a country where about three million people of German origin lived. War seemed imminent as Hitler continued to make inflammatory speeches. The British prime minister Neville Chamberlain offered to go to Hitler’s retreat and discuss the situation personally. Chamberlain’s placatory efforts produced the Munich Agreement that he, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Édouard Daladier signed, handing over a large chunk of Czechoslovakia to Germany. People in Czechoslovakia felt betrayed, but Chamberlain was praised. He told the British public he had achieved “peace with honor. I believe it is peace for our time.” In later years the lesson drawn from the Munich Agreement was that expansionist totalitarian states must not be appeased.

Today it would seem the very same farce is being re-enacted in a contemporary version of appeasement that Chamberlain would have envied. History demands that we ask all the academics, intellectuals, media and the like who claim to represent the left-to-liberal spectrum, why they are so unconcernedly complicit with the United Nations in appeasing the blood-thirsty Trump administration. Some parrot the Alice-in-Wonderland narrative concerning North Korea; many others remain silent.

The Moon-Putin Plan: One Possible Path To Peace

One could be forgiven for not having heard of it since it disrupts the standard “North-Korea-Problem” narrative, but there is a realistic solution to the crisis that liberal and progressive appeasers are keeping silent about. This is the Moon-Putin Plan unveiled in September in Vladivostok. President Moon outlined it as nine “bridges” of cooperation linking South Korea to Russia via North Korea—“gas, railroads, ports, electricity, a northern sea route, shipbuilding, jobs, agriculture, and fisheries.” Siberian oil and gas pipelines would be extended to Korea, both North and South, as well as to Japan. Both Koreas would be linked up with the vast rail networks of Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative, including high-speed rail, and the Eurasian Economic Union, which includes the Trans-Siberian Railway. In the words

of Gavan McCormack,

“North Korea would accept the security guarantee of the five (Japan included), refrain from any further nuclear or missile testing, shelve (‘freeze’) its existing programs and gain its longed for ‘normalization’ in the form of incorporation in regional groupings, the lifting of sanctions and normalized relations with its neighbour states, without surrender.”

This Moon-Putin Plan has the potential to satisfy all the states involved, possibly even the US. One would think, “Done deal. Problem solved.” Yet mainstream journalists in Japan and English-speaking countries have largely ignored it, and even very few non-mainstream journalists have covered it.

Why should this be so?

US and UN Atrocities

Let us review a few facts about crimes committed on the Korean Peninsula, not only those of the US but also those of the UN, the post-WWII institution that admittedly has often provided at least some kind of forum for states to settle their differences in a rational and just manner. On 12 December 1948 the UN General Assembly declared that the Republic of Korea (i.e., South Korea) was the only lawful government on the Peninsula. This was UN Resolution 195, and it was one of the UN’s worst moments, a gross injustice to the bulk of the population and a cause of the Korean War.



Syngman Rhee

First, Resolution 195 was a violation of the UN’s own charter (most obviously Article 32) since North Korea was never invited to discuss the dispute over who was the legitimate government on the Peninsula.

Second, the position of the US State Department and the UN had originally been that the government of South Korea could only have jurisdiction over those areas where the UN Commission on Korea had observed elections, which was only in some parts of the South.

Third, during the elections, even at those polling places where the UN had been watching, there were rightist police and fascist, terrorist youth groups all around the polling places, just as under the Japanese colonizers.

And fourth, the new president Syngman Rhee (1875–1965) was a tyrant and his government was riddled with notorious collaborators who had served the Japanese colonizers. Koreans knew they were in for a repeat—same injustice, different masters. The UN had lent the government the legitimacy it needed.

Especially in places like Cheju Island, where people had built their own self-governing committees, the rigged elections on the mainland caused tremendous anger. The residents had had a taste of undemocratic policies of the American occupation, and the unfair elections were the last straw. Only after thousands of political murders and imprisonments could an election be held on Cheju Island, one year after the mainland elections. In May 1949 an American Embassy official reported that “the all-out guerrilla extermination campaign...came to a virtual end in April with order restored and most rebels and sympathizers killed, captured, or converted.”

In the Taejon (Daejeon) Massacre from the 2nd to the 6th of July 1950, American officials stood idly by and took photos while Korean police massacred 3,000 to 7,000 political prisoners—men, boys, and women. The UN Command was known at that time for hiding the truth, and unsurprisingly, the UN Commission on Korea did nothing to investigate.

Or consider that the US Air Force (USAF)’s horrific bombing campaign in the Korean War, under the aegis of the United Nations Command, constituted genocide. Neither the United Nation’s Genocide Convention approved in 1948 and going into effect in 1951, nor the Red Cross Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Wartime of 1948 had the “slightest impact on this air war” in the words of the American historian Bruce Cumings, who has covered the history thoroughly, from all sides of the War, including the various ways in which Americans abused Koreans, both North and South, as well as about the abundant lies in North Korean government propaganda.

The Problem of Class Inequality

There has long been extreme class inequality in Korea and it is no accident that President Syngman Rhee was on the side of the ruling class. For centuries Korea had not been a society where there was a fair distribution of wealth between the “unproductive class” and the class of “cultivators,” i.e., a society where “each class enjoys its proper share of the whole annual produce,” to borrow the language of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*. But some of those from the old aristocratic elite had been in the process of finding ways to escape parasitism and modernize their country. Just when they were starting to make progress, “global depression, war, and ever-increasing Japanese repression in the 1930s destroyed much of this progress, turned many elite Koreans into collaborators, and left few options for patriots besides armed resistance.”

The Role of Collaborators

“Extreme rightist power” is how Governor Yu Hae-jin described to the US Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) the people who helped him suppress democracy on Cheju Island. The “leaders who would subsequently shape ROK politics” had mostly collaborated with the agents of the Empire of Japan. (ROK = Republic of Korea). Those leaders were

selected by one Col. Cecil Nist, who viewed them as “conservatives.” To give this group of mostly treacherous, non-patriots some credibility, the US Office of Strategic Services selected Syngman Rhee to give this group a veneer of legitimacy. A fluent speaker of English and a Christian convert, he had received years of indoctrination in higher education in the US, and although he had made efforts on behalf of Korean independence in his younger years, he was Washington’s man.

In contrast to WWII, where American soldiers and soldiers of most of the other UN Command states had fought against fascists, the war in Korea saw the US and UN using “extreme rightist power,” to fight against democracy. The Korean campaign represented a bizarre “vision of bringing freedom and liberty to a sordid dictatorship run by servants of Japanese imperialism.”

While it is true that the US has dominated the UN since its inception, especially during the Korean War, and while the UN Command forces were actually under the command of US generals, the UN Command also shares some of the responsibility for the many atrocities committed against Koreans. Can anyone really argue they have no responsibility to speak the truth about their conduct during the War? Rhee once described to an American reporter what he planned to do:

“With bulldozers we will dig huge excavations and trenches, and fill them with Communists. Then cover them over.”

Ironically, the UN appears comfortable with performing a similar act on its own past.

The Crimes of the UN Today

Some experts are now saying that war has already been declared on North Korea, a country that has yet to attack anyone. The UN has authorized UN member states to “interdict and inspect North Korean vessels in international waters (which amounts to a declaration of war),” according to [Pepe Escobar](#). McCormack concurs, explaining that there is only a very fine line between the sanctions and “outright war.”

Gregory Elich [writes](#),

“U.S. officials are fanning out across the globe, seeking to cajole or threaten other nations to join the anti-DPRK crusade. Since most nations stand to lose far more by displeasing the U.S. than by ending a longstanding relationship with North Korea, the campaign is having an effect.”

And now Washington is talking about a “bloody nose” approach—hoping that we can just smash up their military equipment a little while they stand by and not attack Seoul.

According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, due to a drought that is worse than the one in 2001, the total harvest of staple crops such as rice, corn, potatoes, soybeans, wheat, and barley is far smaller than that of last year. Last month they reported,

“Most households are anticipated to continue to experience borderline or poor food consumption rates.”



Source: Antiwar.com

This means that during the bitterest cold of the year in Korea in the midst of strong icy winds from Siberia bringing temperatures down to a daily average low of -13°C and a high of -3°C , 12 million innocents in North Korea will be suffering from hunger. The government food ration in North Korea is 300 grams of food, i.e., about two medium-size potatoes. So the sanctions are well-timed indeed for maximum suffering.

We are being told over and over that North Koreans are “secretive.” What are “our” governments, i.e., those of the UN Command, doing about that secretiveness? They are pressuring Beijing to shut down North Korean businesses. In other words, we are shutting down communication and all economic exchanges with *them*, establishing a pirate-like siege on their country. Does this make sense—that the best way to solve the problem is to cut off communications, cease doing business, and freeze/starve the civilian population to death? That is what the response of the UN means in diplomatic terms. As Winston Churchill once said,

“To jaw-jaw always is better than to war-war.”

Among the 17 member nations of the UN Command, the only state with roots in that part of the world at the time of the Korean War, who would have had to live with the consequences of a divided country and continued civil war, was South Korea. But South Korea’s blood-thirsty dictator President Rhee had on his side the US as well as the other 16 member states of the UN Command, so the chances of his winning the entire Peninsula were high. As for Japan, it was under US Occupation during most of the War, but it played the role of an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” for USAF bombers, so in that sense it served the UN Command side. On the whole, the UN Command states stand to lose little and possibly even gain if it comes to war and the UN in general has a dark history with Korea, so one cannot expect fairness from them.

Conclusion

The Moon-Putin Plan not only has the potential to radically alter the current global system by setting up an alternative economic and cooperative Asian trading block where mutual aid takes precedence over old enmities but it is also one of the few options on the table that involves a pragmatic and peaceful alternative to Washington’s violent and greedy Open Door Policy. The Moon-Putin Plan must be worrisome for the Pentagon since it has the potential to end that long-standing ideology, the one that has driven humanity into this

crisis.

The current crisis can be resolved by nuclear armageddon, or by a peaceful solution that brings about a new geopolitical order. There is no middle ground. There is no room for appeasers of any kind, whether they be UN and government types or left-to-liberal intellectuals and activists. This is one of those moments in history when we must stand up and be counted. Must we repeat the words of Winston Churchill to Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain? "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour and you will have war."

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Notes

For more on the Moon-Putin Plan, see Gavan McCormack, "North Korea and a Rules-Based Order for the Indo-Pacific, East Asia, and the World," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (15 November 2017). <http://apjif.org/2017/22/McCormack.html>

On the history of the Korean War, see Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History*, (Modern Library, 2011).

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