

North Korea Steadfastly Resisting US Hegemony

Book review of "Immovable Object: North Korea's 70 Years at War with American Power" by A.B. Abrams

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I learned a while back to be especially skeptical of western mass media and their governments. [1] My experience of life in China is nothing like how western demonization portrays it to be. Therefore, I looked forward to the chance to experience North Korea first hand. I traveled there with a Chinese group departing China. Starting out from Dandong, China, we crossed the Yalu River to Sinuiju, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK). From Sinuiji we took a train to Pyongyang and explored other areas of the DPRK in 2017. I wrote about this in "[There Are Human Beings in North Korea. Neither Wealthy Nor Poor.](#)" My impression of North Korea was extremely positive, and I look very forward to returning there one day.

A.B. Abrams has written a comprehensive book, [Immovable Object: North Korea's 70 Years at War with American Power](#), [2] that is extensively footnoted and details how American imperialism works. Abrams does this by focusing on a United States-designated enemy state: the DPRK.

Abrams begins with the history. He writes about the role of Lyuh Woon Hyung (aka Yo Un Hyung) [3] and the seldom-mentioned formation of the People's Republic of Korea at the end of World War II, a republic that was successfully functioning before the arrival of the Americans in Korea. However, the "independence and nationalist character of the People's Republic was seen as a threat to American designs for the Korean nation..." and the republic was deposed and outlawed. (p 14)

The US split the peninsula into northern and southern states. The United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) ruled the southern half of the Korean Peninsula using the despised former Japanese occupiers to aid in ruling. Later the US brought in an Americanized Korean, Sygnmann Rhee, to be a dictator. The US staunchly opposed reunification fearing a democratic result that would bring about socialism in the entire peninsula. North Koreans formed their own government and at the outset outperformed the Republic of Korea (ROK, i.e., South Korea) economically.



To maintain a grip, the Americans and Rhee government brutally suppressed socialism in South Korea, committing many massacres. (ch 6) This helped set the stage for war on the peninsula.

Abrams casts serious doubt on the notion that the Korean war started by the North. Several South Korean attacks on North Korean communities “confirmed by U.S. and British intelligence” and the seizure of the small North Korean city of Haeju initially confirmed by South Korean sources. (p 68)

Regardless of whichever side fired the first shots, Abrams posits this may be inconsequential to the actual *casus belli*. He points to

... the forceful abolishment of the Korean People’s Republic and later extremely brutal suppression of its remnants by the United States Army Military Government with the assistance of youth groups—described as terrorists even by their American allies—and with the backing of the Rhee government itself. (p 59)

After the onset of war, the DPRK almost achieved a quick military victory, but after the US landing at Inchon, the forces and military equipment of the US were too much for the small republic to withstand. In addition, the DPRK was facing a United Nations coalition arranged to back the US. The US pushed back and carried out a scorched earth campaign. General Douglas MacArthur of the UN Forces in Korea referred to the devastation as “a slaughter

never heard of in the history of mankind.” (p 65)

Chapters 3 to 8 in *Immovable Object* are a must read to grasp the magnitude of the extreme brutality and gore fomented by US warfare; the killing of civilians (including South Korean political prisoners); [4] widespread rapes and sexual violence; torture by US forces; its willfulness to lie for imperial ends; the obliteration of agriculture (to create famine), industry, cities, towns, and buildings; firebombing and the use of chemical and biological weapons along with the demands by the US military brass to use nuclear bombs.

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It is important to realize that the US carries out its warring and provocations against foreign countries often with overwhelming approval of the American populace. Abrams writes that the majority of American citizens supported using nukes against North Korea. (p 131) American public support for warring was also evident by support for intensified bombing by the US during armistice negotiations. (p 224) This American public support was also the case during the US attacks on Muslim nations following 9-11, with 70% of Americans indicating belief in Saddam Hussein being connected to Al Qaeda. (p 390)

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Abu Ghraib, Bagram, and My Lai are just more recent accounts of the cornucopia of American war crimes. WARNING: The following accounts are graphic!

Kim Sun Ok, 37, the mother of four children [who had been] killed by a bomb, stated that she was evacuated in the village by Americans.... The Americans led her naked through the streets and later killed her by pushing a red-hot iron bar into her vagina. Her small son was buried alive. (p 175)

Kim Sen Ai, another 11-year-old girl..., said she was in the fourth class in school when American soldiers entered her village and apprehended her and her parents. Her mother was a member of the Korean Workers' Party, and so earned special treatment—her breasts were cut off. Her father was tortured and thrown in a river, and her four-year-old sister was then buried alive. (p 177)

Jo Ok Hi, chairman [sic] of the Haeju women's organization, was imprisoned and submitted to slow torture. Her eyes were pulled out, and after some time her nose and breasts were cut off. (p 178)

The Commission of the Association of Democratic Lawyers issued a report that concluded:

Taking the view that excessive murders are not the result of individual excesses, but indicate a pattern of behaviour by the U.S. forces throughout the areas occupied by them... the Commission is of the opinion that the American forces are guilty of the crime of Genocide as defined by the Geneva Convention of 1948. (p 183)

With the US military approaching the Yalu River despite warnings from China to steer clear, China entered the war and together China and the DRRK pushed the US-ROK-UN forces back to the middle ground of the peninsula. China had recently emerged from a civil war, and the

war on the peninsula was a costly proposition for China.

Americans threw a wrench in talks to end the war by.....

what can only be described as gross violations of the law and serious war crimes. These pertained to the brutal mistreatment of prisoners including killings, medical experimentation, torture and coercion of the most extreme kind to force them to remain behind enemy lines after the war's end. (p 230)

China has trumpeted the end of the warring 70 years later [as a victory](#) for itself and North Korea. Abrams is more circumspect: "Which party, if any, 'won' the Korean War [5] remains open to interpretation." (p 240)

The results reverberate through to today as the clean-up for unexploded American ordnance is estimated to endanger North Koreans for another century. (p 66, 242)

An armistice has been signed but no peace treaty; therefore, the foes remain technically at war. The DPRK has learned from its experience and has made itself militarily adept at defending itself. North Korea has become a leader in underground fortifications, and has placed much of its armaments and materials deep beyond easy reach of missiles. Northerners have also become technically proficient and have developed an intercontinental ballistic missile capability of striking anywhere in the continental US. These missiles can be topped with miniaturized nuclear devices and pose a most credible deterrent. And a deterrent it is, as the DPRK has pledged no first use of nukes — unlike the US. As well, it is well known that the DPRK will not hesitate to respond to provocation. The DPRK's nuclearization has prevented any attack against it by a rational actor, as both sides would be extremely bloodied and damaged by such a conflict.

It is an important lesson that Iran ought to closely consider: the effectiveness of military strength, including nuclearization, [as deterrence](#). In fact, much of Iran's missile capability and fortification resulted from cooperation with the DPRK. (p 289-295)

Libya paid the price for

having ignored direct warnings from both Tehran and Pyongyang not to pursue such a course [of unilaterally disarming], Libya's leadership would later admit that disarmament, neglected military modernisation, and trust in Western good will proved to be their greatest mistake—leaving their country near defenceless when Western powers launched their offensive in 2011. (p 296)

Has South Korea Not Also Paid a Price for Trusting Western Goodwill?

Abrams examines how the ROK has fared as an independent and sovereign state. Is South Korea independent and sovereign? [6] Asked Abrams, "Could America claim to 'liberate' southern Korea while at the same time occupying it, forcefully dismantling its existing government and threatening those Koreans who did not abide by its will with death?" (p 310)

Abrams describes the "apparently sadistic pleasure [American] personnel took in tormenting the [South] Korean people..." (p 312) the objectification of "servile Korean women," (p 313)

and the massive expansion of the Japanese system of comfort station. (p 314) “Methods used to recruit comfort women to serve American soldiers involved rape and violence to disorient and break women in. They would afterwards have little choice but to ‘consent’ to sex work for the U.S. Military.” (p 327)

In contrast,

Pyongyang not only abolished the comfort women system from 1945, but strictly enforced the outlawing of prostitution entirely and establishing formal legal equality for women.... [Thus] the nation’s dignity, pride and right to self-determination were never violated—neither were its women. (p 330)

In the 1990s, the North Koreans were hit hard by weather calamities, crop failures, while the western sanctions continued to be applied, but the DPRK pulled through what they call the Arduous March.

How did the North Koreans resist? Early on, the war-ravaged homefront on the Korean peninsula ably put up a staunch defense, abetted by a Chinese peasant fighting force. North Koreans practiced *Juche* (self-reliance), and *Songun*, a military first posture that “is firmly rooted in resistance to external pressure as a means of safeguarding Korea independence.” (p 553) To this end, the DPRK emphasized modernization, advanced technologies, and providing for economic needs.

The DPRK has a no first use of nukes policy, but any strike against the DPRK will result in a lethal counter attack. It must be emphasized that the DPRK military’s orientation is: “among the most defensively oriented in the world, with its power projection capabilities negligible to non-existent—in stark contrast to the U.S. Military which is heavily oriented towards overseas power projection.” (p 437) Along with having achieved a self-sustaining economy that provides the basics for the people, it would appear that the DPRK has withstood, and some would say *triumphed*, against US machinations aimed at the country and its system of governance.

To be fair, it is not just a US persecution and war crimes against the DPRK. Every country that participates in the sanctions against the DPRK, arguably, has sullied itself. Take Canada, for example; Canadian peace activist James Endicott was harassed by his government for verifying American biological weapon use in the war, in which Canada was also a belligerent against the DPRK. (p 141) Reporter George Barrett wrote that Canadian troops along with US troops committed “widespread and regular rapes.” (p 168, 184) Canada was a destination for human trafficking of young girls and women from South Korea. (p 330)

It must also be pointed out that in stark contrast to western forces raping and committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Korea, the Chinese and North Korean troops were highly disciplined in their conduct toward civilians and adversaries. (p 152)

A Highly Recommended Read

Abram has irrefutably laid bare the intentions of US imperialism. *Immovable Object* leaves no stone unturned. The sordid history of the US toward Koreans, in the north and south, is scrutinized, detailed, and substantiated. It is a battle of ideologies that drives Americans to pursue information warfare (actually a disinformation war) and economic warfare

(sabotaging the economies of designated enemy states through sanctions, “[a weapon of mass destruction](#),” and hence the well-being and lives of the people in targeted countries). In the case of imposing US hegemony to Korea, it appears that while the US is succeeding in the ROK, it has suffered ignominious failure against the DPRK.

[Immovable Object: North Korea's 70 Years at War with American Power](#) is a superb book that I most highly recommend. There is so much more information and narrative to be gleaned from Abrams's book that a review (even as lengthy as this) can touch on. Abrams goes into western media disinformation and propaganda campaigns against the DPRK. He answers why the DPRK state secrecy, media censorship, and why North Korean defector accounts should be regarded with deep skepticism. Read the impeccably substantiated *Immovable Object* and find out for yourself what undergirds the DPRK's resistance to US hegemony.

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Notes

1. This can also hold for the purportedly progressivist media. Paul Jay, then with the *Real News*, interviewed the former United States state department employee Lawrence Wilkerson and received a [jaundiced opinion on North Korea](#). The *Real News* presented an account that the DPRK had fired a missile that sank the ROK navy ship *Cheonan* without definitive evidence. Abrams questions placing blame on the DPRK, (p 411-415) noting, “Pyongyang has historically never shied away from claiming credit for previous strikes.” (p 414)
2. I submit that a more accurately worded subtitle would be *American Power's 70 Years at War with North Korea*.
3. Lee Wha Rang, “[Who was Yo Un-hyung? \(Part 2\)](#),” *Association for Asian Research*, 1 March 2004.
4. “South Korean authorities have logged reports of 61 separate massacres of civilians carried out by U.S. forces...” (p 162)
5. I submit that this is a misnomer; more accurately it should be depicted as a US war on Korea since as Abrams makes clear, South Koreans had no heart for battling their northern kin.
6. It is a [question I have posed](#) previously.

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