

North Korea, “Genocide by Sanctions”: UN Double Standards Pertaining to Sanctions and their Devastating Social Impacts

The UN Sanctions Committee Must Make its Records Public

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The terms “transparency” and “accountability” are used with greater frequency at United Nations briefings than in practically any other venue. Yet, information on the impact of sanctions on the people of the DPRK and third states affected by the sanction is confidential to the Sanctions Committee. Only the Sanctions Committee secretariat in the Department of Political Affairs is permitted access to this information. Whose political agenda is served by this secrecy, this total failure of transparency and accountability?

The United Nations Security Council has imposed multiple sets of sanctions on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, including Resolution 1718 (October 14, 2006), Resolution 1874 (June 12, 2009), Resolution 2087 (January 22, 2013), and Resolution 2094 (March 7, 2013). It is striking that in all four resolutions imposed on the DPRK, the sanction language used to prohibit items from entering or leaving the DPRK is sufficiently broad and vague that practically any item essential for the normal, healthy functioning of society is vulnerable to proscription and exclusion of use by the DPRK: the use of the word “could” so excessively prevails throughout (as indicating possibility) as does the use of the vague phrase “reasonable grounds to believe,” which does not require a high standard of proof, or any actual demonstrable evidence, whatsoever, but relies on subjective “belief” which may be based upon or distorted by political bias.

According to Susan Hannah Allen and David J Lektzian in the Journal of Peace Research, (2013)

“The increased use of sanctions and the resultant humanitarian crisis with which they became associated led policy makers and academics to re-evaluate their potential negative externalities. Unlike military conflict, sanctions are not intended to kill citizens of the target country (Drezner, 1998) so they are considered to be a more humane coercive policy. However, following the experience with sanctions in the 1990’s critics began to challenge this logic, arguing that sanctions are a potentially immoral foreign policy tool that indiscriminately and unjustly targets poor and innocent elements of society. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to sanctions as a “blunt instrument which hurts large numbers of people who are not their primary target.”

“One explanation for the coercive mechanism at work when economic sanctions are employed is that they will hurt (or at least inconvenience) the general public sufficiently that the leaders are compelled to alter their behavior and policies as a result of pressure from the population. This traditional

thinking suggests that sanctions are imposed to reduce the available resources in the targeted state, which reduces national wealth and creates a sense of deprivation in the targeted population. If the people suffer enough, they will pressure their government to alter its behavior in order to have the sanctions lifted. Other coercive mechanisms for sanctions besides civilian punishment have been explored, but given the fact that modern sanctions have their root in the deprivation-based concept of the medieval siege, their impact on the health of the targeted population should be considered. Because the civilian population is expected to be affected when economic sanctions are implemented, sanctions have come under fire with many suggesting that they violate Just War Principles.

The Just War Doctrine requires aggressors to clearly differentiate between combatants and non-combatants. Critics of sanctions suggest that sanctions directly target civilians, often inflicting the greatest harm against the weakest elements of society, thus blatantly violating these principles. Garfield and Mueller & Mueller (1999) go so far as to suggest that populations at war may be better off than those under sanctions because the Geneva Conventions govern behavior in war but do not deal with sanctions. Because sanctions do not clearly discriminate between civilians and those that perpetrated the acts that led to international censure, sanctions are seen as unfairly punishing targeted publics....Even when provisions for humanitarian exemptions are included in sanctions policies, the general public may still suffer – especially the urban poor. Food aid programs are likely to be politically manipulated. Rationing programs increase dependence on the state. Without unfettered access to nutritious food and clean water, the average level of health of the civilian population will decrease. These shortages result from the broader economic impact that sanctions can have on a sanctioned society.”

Among the strangling sanctions inflicted on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, S/RES/1718 (2006),

8. “Decides that:

(a) All member states shall prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to the DPRK, through their territories or by their nationals, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, and whether or not originating in their territories of:

(ii) All items, materials, equipment, goods and technology as set out in the list of documents S/2006/814 and S/2006/815, unless within 14 days of adoption of this resolution this Committee has amended or completed their provisions also taking into account the list in document S/2006/816, as well as other items, materials, equipment, goods and technology, determined by the Security Council or the Committee, which COULD contribute to DPRK’s nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related or other weapons of mass destruction – related programmes.”

(iii) Luxury goods”

Many of the basic chemical, biological, electrical, medical etc. substances which are essential for normal daily living “could” also be included in the category defined as potentially “contributing” to the DPRK’s nuclear –related activities, etc., but denying these crucial substances to the civilian population of the DPRK because they “could” have other uses is an act of violent aggression, which leads to drastic deterioration in their health and general standard of living. Under the description of possible “dual use,” anything and everything necessary for life can be denied to the civilian population of that

country.

Resolution S/RES/2094 (2013) contains this extremely dangerous passage:

23. Reaffirms the measures imposed in paragraph 8 (a)(iii) of resolution 1718 (2006) regarding luxury goods and clarifies that the term 'luxury goods' includes, but is not limited to the items specified in annex IV of this resolution"

This last (23) intentionally vague and non-descript passage is surreptitiously making possible the designation of any item necessary for the normal, healthy, effective living and functioning of society to be labeled "luxury goods," and thereby proscribed, since to a starving person food is a luxury, and to a freezing person, the fuel necessary to heat his home or school is also a luxury. To many, clean water is a luxury, and is sold in bottles in stores all over the world to those who can afford to pay for it. To the destitute, necessities for living are luxuries.

The hyperbaric chamber, which provides a cure for a gangrenous arm or leg, preventing the necessity for amputation, is complex equipment, involving chemical, biological, and electrical components, all of which are prohibited and denied to the DPRK by these sanctions, because the components necessary for the construction and maintenance of a hyperbaric chamber "could" be used for other purposes. (Dual use, again). And further, the hyperbaric chamber could also be designated a "luxury good," different in kind and substance from jewelry or a yacht, but a luxury, nevertheless.

In a superb essay by Joy Gordon, entitled "Cool War: Economic Sanctions as a Weapon of Mass Destruction" (published in Harper's, 2002) Ms. Gordon states:

"News of Iraqi fatalities has been well documented (by the United Nations, among others), though underreported by the media. What has remained invisible, however, is any documentation of how and by whom such a death toll has been justified for so long. How was the danger of goods entering Iraq assessed, and how was it weighed, if at all, against the mounting collateral damage? ...It was easy to discover that for the last ten years a vast number of lengthy holds had been placed on billions of dollars worth of what seemed unobjectionable - and very much needed - imports to Iraq. But I soon learned that all U.N. records that could answer my questions were kept from public scrutiny. This is not to say that the UN is lacking in public documents related to the Iraq program. What is unavailable are the documents that show how the U.S. policy agenda has determined the outcome of humanitarian and security judgments....The operation of Iraq sanctions involves numerous agencies within the United Nations...These agencies have been careful not to publicly discuss their ongoing frustration with the manner in which the program is operated....Over the last three years, through research and interviews with diplomats I have acquired many of the key confidential UN documents concerning the administration of Iraq sanctions. I obtained these documents on the condition that my sources remain anonymous. What they show is that the United States has fought aggressively throughout the last decade to purposefully minimize the humanitarian goods that enter the country. And it has done so in the face of enormous human suffering, including massive increases in child mortality and widespread epidemics...What is less well known is that the government of Saddam Hussein had invested heavily in health, education, and social programs for two decades prior to the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Before the

Persian Gulf war Iraq was a rapidly developing country with free education, ample electricity, modernized agriculture and a robust middle class. According to the World Health Organization 93 percent of the population had access to health care. The devastation of the Gulf War destroyed all that.”

On October 21, 2011 Valerie Amos, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs addressed the press in Beijing, China, on conditions in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and she gave a similar press briefing at the United Nations headquarters, which I attended. Ms. Amos stated:

“The background for my visit was the increasingly worrying information coming from the DPRK Government and in-country aid agencies, indicating that over 6 million people are in need of food assistance this year...The average annual food gap is around 1 million tonnes per year, out of a total food requirement of 5.3 million tonnes...Recent figures for children under five years of age show chronic malnutrition levels (i.e. stunting) at 33 percent nationwide and 45 percent in the north of the country. One nurse that I met at the pediatric hospital in HamHung told me the number of malnourished children coming to her hospital had increased 1.5 times (i.e. 50%) only since last year.”

Ms. Amos then stated: “People in the DPRK suffer from a complex set of challenges including chronic poverty and under-development – structural causes with humanitarian implications.”

One must question whether Ms. Amos, in mentioning “structural causes” for this tragic, situation is attempting to blame the Socialist government of North Korea, because at no point in her presentation does Ms. Amos mention the devastating impact of the UN Security Council sanctions inflicted upon the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea since 2005, five year prior to the dramatic deterioration in living conditions for “ordinary people” in the DPRK. I asked Ms. Amos about the destructive impact of sanctions upon the lives of citizens of the DPRK, and she did not deny this factor, but she did not discuss this, stating that it is not “within her mandate.”.

On June 12, 2009 at the 6141 meeting, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1874 which contains a particularly ironic passage, and potentially opens an incriminating Pandora’s Box implicating the West in war crimes against North Korea.

“Point 14. Decides to authorize all Member States to, and that all Member States shall, seize and dispose of items the supply, sale, transfer or export of which is prohibited by paragraph 8(a), 8(b) or 8(c) or resolution 1718 or by paragraph 9 or 10 of the resolution that are identified in inspections pursuant to paragraph 11, 12 or 13 in a manner that is not inconsistent with their obligations under applicable Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004) as well as any obligations of parties to the NPT, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction of 29 April 1997, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction of 10 April 1972, and decides further that all States shall cooperate in such efforts.

Therein, to quote Shakespeare, “lies the rub,” or in modern terms, the scandal, the crime. The use of biological weapons was prohibited by the Geneva protocol of 1925.

In the UK Telegraph, 10 June, 2010 was reported the following:

“Did the U.S. Wage Germ Warfare in Korea?” According to Julian Ryall, “In the winter of 1952 Yun Chang Bin recalls, the American bombers flying overhead had become a fact of life...But then, one afternoon in early March, Yun was walking home from school when he saw Chinese troops on their hands and knees in the fields...There were about 30 or 40 of the Chinese volunteer troops spread out across the field...’ Yun, now 72 says. ‘They were wearing masks and gloves and some of them had brooms. They were sweeping up something from the ground and others were picking it up and putting it on a fire. Yun was told: ‘They are catching flies. They came out of the bombs dropped by the American bastards.’ The bombs had opened after hitting the ground and released thousands of insects.

The insects had been spread over a large area of farmland and many escaped the mopping up operation. Disease broke out in the village. ‘I remember the adults calling it enbyo, or heat disease. It was terrible. People developed very high fevers, became delirious....they groaned with the pain and drifted in and out of consciousness. They couldn’t eat anything and just kept asking for cold water...there was little anyone could do for those who had been infected, particularly as no one knew what the illness was. Yun says he was later told it was typhoid. ‘It killed my father. He lost his appetite, then lost all movement in the lower half of his body, so he was not able to move. He died 5 days after first complaining of feeling unwell, aged 52. In his neighborhood more than 30 people from 50 families died.’”

During the Korean War, North Korea and China lost almost a million troops. General MacArthur and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized the use of atomic bomb against the People’s Republic of China. President Truman denied permission. “Historians argue that a nuclear detonation, impossible to conceal from the eyes of the world, would have further inflamed tensions between east and west, but a more insidious form of warfare would have been relatively easy to carry out, and much simpler to dismiss as enemy disinformation.” There are plenty of men and women who support Yun’s claim that North Korean civilians were attacked with American biological weapons that contained flies, beetles, spiders, crickets and other insects carrying various life-threatening pathogens, from plague bacillus to cholera, anthrax, encephalitis and yellow fever.”

“Masataka Mori, Professor of History at Shizuoka University in Japan, who has studied Japan’s World War II biological warfare program, called Unit 731 for many years, “believed that Japan’s biological warfare program was not investigated because ‘Unit 731’s scientists were granted immunity in return for sharing the fruits of their research with the Americans.”

“In Pyongyang “The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum contains exhibitions of civilian victims of the Korean war, children hideously scarred by chemical weapons – in 1951 the US military was using 70,000 gallons of napalm every day. The exhibition also contains an original of the report issued in Peking in 1952 by the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China, set up by the Helsinki-based World Peace Council. Begun after Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai sent a telegram on March 8, 1952 to the Secretariat of the United Nations detailing claims of 448 germ warfare sorties over China by the US Air Force, the Commission’s report was compiled by experts from Sweden, France, Italy, Brazil and Russia, as well as Dr. Joseph Needham, a distinguished British authority on Chinese science.”

Among the report's specific case studies, one describes more than 700 voles infected with plague found in the Kan-Nan district of China in April 1952, including on rooftops and haystacks, soon after a US aircraft had been seen passing overhead. In another, the following month a young woman is said to have found a straw package containing clams on a hillside close to Dai-Dong, North Korea. She took the shells home and cooked them; by the end of the following day, both the woman and her husband were dead from cholera. A search of the hillside, close to a reservoir turned up several more packages of the infected clams. The Commission stated its belief that the aircraft that had been heard circling before the packages were found had been attempting to drop the clams into the reservoir to infect it. Some of the species of insects found during the conflict had never been seen in this part of Asia before - the illnesses they brought with them were equally unheard of.

'In light of these and similar facts, the report concluded, the Commission has no option but to conclude that the American Air Force was employing in Korea methods very similar to, if not identical with, those employed to spread plague by the Japanese during the Second World War.'

The use of germ warfare is a violation of the Geneva conventions. Just as The People's Republic of China, in 1950, desperately needed peace to rebuild the country after the ravages of the Japanese invasion and the decades-long savage crimes committed by the fascist regime of the US supported Chiang Kai-shek, the Korean War began. In the United States, the psychotically anti-communist tyranny of Senator Joseph McCarthy was destroying freedom of thought in America, and destroying millions of lives of U.S. citizens during the Anti-Communist scourge that shamed and devastated America's so-called democracy. It was obvious and inevitable that the Chinese thought the Americans were using Korea as a base to invade the People's Republic of China, and return America's murderous anti-communist puppet, Chiang Kai-shek, to power in China.

The noble widow of China's first President, Sun Yat-sen, the gifted and idealistic Soong Ching-ling, denounced US intervention in Korea, and exposed America's use of germ warfare in Korea and North-East China. As a delegate to the Congress of Peoples for Peace in Vienna, alongside Berthold Brecht, Jean Paul Sartre, Ilya Ehrenburg and other illustrious delegates convened from throughout the world, Madame Sun Yat-sen accused the United States of using Korea as a springboard in America's attempt to destroy the communist government of the People's Republic of China, in order to restore the hated Chiang Kai-shek to power.

Madame Sun Yat-sen was a paragon of moral and intellectual integrity, and her denunciation of the US use of germ warfare against Korea and China is the most courageous, damning and incriminating testimony exposing the genocidal intent toward North Korea, and toward the People's Republic of China. Had the US been able to "roll back" communism in China, it would have required a genocide of the largest population in Asia. As they say, it is not over until it is over, and the UN sanctions against tiny North Korea are perpetrating the genocide of the Korean people, one of the few remaining socialist countries in the world. What will be next?

Where is United Nations transparency and accountability? The impact of UN sanctions on the people of the DPRK, currently marked "confidential" and only available to the sanctions committee secretariat in the Department of Political Affairs, should be immediately made public. Failing that, the possibility cannot be excluded that the UN is complicit in genocide.

Valerie Amos' presentation showed photos of what appeared to be North Korean infants. She informed us that these were not newly born infants, but in fact were at least two years old each, and as a result of malnutrition were unable to develop beyond the stage of infancy. UN sanctions against North Korea are abetting the extermination of the North Korean people. That country has chosen a different way of life, and a different economic system. The west is determined to engineer the failure of their economic system. Where is the famous democracy - freedom of thought, freedom of choice in all of this? In view of its tragic history, as the victimized springboard for the US attempt to attack and destroy the communist government in China, North Korea's desperate determination to defend itself with nuclear weapons is understandable. After all, in the 1950's the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and General MacArthur took a remarkably promiscuous, and, indeed, psychopathic attitude toward the use of atomic bombs as aggressive weapons against Korea and the People's Republic of China, countries which had never attacked the United States, and clearly had no intention to do so..

It is deplorable that the "international community" refuses to acknowledge all this. It is likely that if the UN made public those "confidential" files, which may conceal multiple scandals and possibly crimes, the "international community" and their collaborative media would be forced to confront the truth about deceptive talk of "democracy" and "human rights."

The attempt to identify and equate democracy with capitalism and predatory neo-liberalism is an Orwellian prevarication that has been used to manipulate too many people to their own detriment, and for too long..

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