

Reality and Hypocrisy: North Korea's Nuclear Test Condemned by Nuclear Powers

By [Christopher Black](#)

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The news of another nuclear weapon test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, often referred to in the west as North Korea, has been met with condemnation from the most powerful nuclear armed state of them all, the United States of America, the only nation to have actually used them, against the people of Japan in 1945, and a nation that still retains a first strike strategy against its claimed enemies. This was to be expected from the greatest hypocrite state in the world. But the United States is not the only nuclear weapon state that showed blatant double standards in reaction the news. Both Russia and China have condemned the test of what the DPRK claimed was a miniaturized hydrogen bomb.

This hypocrisy is even more startling since both Russia and China are modernizing and increasing their nuclear weapon systems to deal with the existential threat from the United States which is doing the same. Meanwhile Britain claims the right to renew its Trident submarine programme with its nuclear arsenal and France, Pakistan, India, and Israel continue to maintain their nuclear weapon systems. None of them have followed South Africa's example of dismantling its nuclear weapons as it did after the African National Congress took power in the early 90's.

One would have expected that Russia and China, which constantly and rightly complain about western double standards vis a vis their policies and actions, would support the right of the DPRK to defend itself against the nuclear threat from the United States and demand that the United States itself disarm its nuclear weapons in return for the DPRK eliminating its nuclear arsenal. One would have expected solidarity with the DPRK that faces the same common enemy as Russia and China face and that they would understand the fears of the Koreans in the face of that threat. But it seems that the Americans are not the only ones capable of displaying double standards.

And why is it that Israel, a state that continues to lie about its possession of nuclear weapons, escapes this criticism? Why does Iran suffer under years of economic sanctions, as does the DPRK, merely for developing a civilian nuclear programme with only the possibility of building nuclear weapons? We can only scratch our heads at this irrationality, arrogance and hypocrisy of the big and medium powers; as well as the United Nations that joined in the condemnation of the DPRK but which stays enigmatically silent about the weapons possessed by those most likely to use them.

Since no journalist has asked these powers to justify their hypocrisy and no newspaper or media dares to question it, we, the people of the world are not allowed to know the real reasons why this double standard is applied to the DPRK and to Iran, except that the nuclear armed nations do not want those two countries to be able to defend themselves in the event of a military attack by the United States and its allies. Why this is so they must explain. For it is obvious that neither the DPRK nor Iran have any desire to use such weapons offensively against any nation and surely not Russia or China.

Russia and China need all the credibility they can establish to be able to counter the domination of the United States, to create a truly multipolar world, or even better, a world of equal nations where no nation dominates any other. They lose credibility by acting in the same manner as the imperial power they rightly criticize. Instead of appearing as defenders of the weak and oppressed, they will come to be perceived as just another set of bullies, threatening smaller nations that dare to actually be equal. And, in the case of the DPRK, they lose their credibility the more rapidly they ignore, or pretend to ignore, the history of the Korean peninsula since the Americans attacked the north in 1950, which itself was a failed attempt to make a thrust into China to attack the newly established communist government

During the savage war that followed, the Americans and their allies killed an estimated 5 million Koreans. The Chinese, who came to the aid of the north then, as did the Soviet Union, also suffered large numbers of casualties in repelling the American attack. The Russians and Chinese are now acting as if none of this ever took place. But the DPRK has vowed that it will never happen again and so they defend themselves, as best they can.

The only justification for Russia or China condemning the DPRK nuclear weapons programme would be if they guaranteed the security of the DPRK, but this is something they are clearly not now prepared to do, though once they did. So what choice does the DPRK have? And yet, and yet, the government of the DPRK has stated consistently that it is prepared to eliminate its nuclear weapons if two conditions are satisfied; first the removal of the American occupation forces and the reunification of the Korean peninsula under a federal system in which both the south and the north retain their current socio-economic systems and, secondly, a written guarantee from the United States that it will not attack them. Since the United States refuses to provide such a guarantee (probably worthless anyway knowing their history of duplicity) the government of the DPRK is convinced that the Americans intend to attack it. No other conclusion is possible from their point of view and that view is entirely logical.

During my visit to the DPRK in 2003 as part of a team of the National Lawyers Guild of the United States, I had the opportunity to speak to members of the leadership in the government and what was learned is contained in our report of that trip. I will restate it here.

Just prior to his death in 1994, Kim Il Sung wrote that the two countries on the Korean peninsula must make all efforts to achieve reunification. In fact a monument to that historic document is found on the north side of DMZ. We must remember that the country has been one nation for 1300 years, and two nations for only 68. In 2000, a joint declaration was made, after a meeting between the Presidents of the two splintered nations, to use their respective proposals to achieve a confederation. They agreed further to economic cooperation and exchanges in "civic, cultural, sports, public health, environment and all

other fields.”

The DPRK officials provided us with their written proposal for unification. It calls for a Federation with a joint Supreme Assembly to pass laws for the federation, but one that allows each side to maintain its systems of government. Whether this is achievable remains uncertain, but the point remains that both sides want to have a united and peaceful nation.

It was our observation that the U.S. “defenses” on the peninsula may be doing more than “protecting” the South Koreans as is claimed by the US. In fact, a unified and peaceful Korea, with a combined population of 77 million people, coupled with the growing economic power of China and the increased trade with Japan, makes all Asia an increasing threat to the economic prowess of the United States. It was our opinion that by maintaining instability in Asia, and maintaining a massive military presence there, in Japan and Korea, they try keep China at bay, Japan a vassal and Russia off-balance.

With the continuing pressure to remove the U.S. bases in Okinawa, the American military occupation of the peninsula remains a central focus of American efforts to dominate the region. Furthermore, when read in light of right wing pronouncements in the United States of a New American Century and the Clash of Civilizations, wherein the United States has planned and fought several simultaneous wars to “preserve Western culture against Islam” and defend the west against “terrorism” it is clear there is more at work here than we are being told.

The U.S. military estimates that a new Korean war would lead to as many as 1 million people being killed, including 80-100,000 Americans, with out of pocket expenses of over \$100 billion and an impact on the region of over 1 trillion dollars. War is not a viable or civilized option. Yet, the U.S. continues to spend huge sums every year to maintain its equipment and forces in South Korea.

The fundamental foundation of DPRK policy is to achieve a non-aggression pact and peace treaty with the United States. The North Koreans repeatedly stated that they did not want to attack anyone, hurt anyone or be at war with anyone. But they have seen what has happened to Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. They have no intention of having that happen to them. It is clear that any U.S. invasion would be defended vigorously and that the nation can endure a long, arduous struggle

The real issue is not whether the DPRK has or can have nuclear weapons, but whether the United States, which has nuclear arms capability on the Korean peninsula, is willing to work with the North towards negotiating a peace treaty. We found North Koreans sincerely searching for peace. They are not attached to having nuclear weapons if peace can be established.

However, in this age of “regime change,” “pre-emptive war” doctrines, American efforts to develop low yield nuclear weapons, and their abandonment of international treaties, it is not surprising that the DPRK plays the nuclear card. The tragedy is the failure of the American people and now the Russian and Chinese people, in fact the people of the world, to demand that their leaders exhaust all avenues of dialogue and peace before contemplating war and using constant deception to justify maintaining a state of militarism on the Korean Peninsula, a militarism aimed straight at the heart of the people of the DPRK.

Instead of berating the DPRK for developing a defensive nuclear weapons system, it would

be better for the nuclear powers to lead the way forward and declare an immediate programme of disarmament of their own nuclear weapon systems and all other weapons systems capable of mass destruction. It would be better if they would guarantee that no nation would be subject to their aggression.

In the meantime, if Russia and China want to prevent a nuclear catastrophe from happening on the Korean Peninsula then they should consider the real danger that the DPRK faces from the United States, and remember the recent history of American aggression and occupation. They must approach the DPRK, not as inferiors, to be lectured and scolded, but as serious and worthy equals with valid concerns about their security, who require their assistance and cooperation, not their hypocrisy and rejection.

I will conclude with the words of Albert Einstein, expressed in the Japanese magazine Kaizo in September 1952, since they convey the very thoughts expressed to me by leaders of the DPRK when I had the chance of meeting some of them on our visit there some years ago and which, I am sure, still reflect their position:

“To kill in war is not a whit better than to commit ordinary murder. As long, however, as the nations are not resolved to abolish war through common actions and to solve their conflicts and protect their interests by peaceful decisions on a legal basis, they feel compelled to prepare for war. They feel obliged to prepare all possible means, even the most detestable ones, so as not to be left behind in the general armament race. This road necessarily leads to war, a war which under the present conditions means universal destruction.

Under these circumstances the fight against means has no chance of success. Only the radical abolition of wars and of the threat of war can help. This is what we have to work for.”

Christopher Black is an international criminal lawyer based in Toronto, he is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada and he is known for a number of high-profile cases involving human rights and war crimes, especially for the online magazine [“New Eastern Outlook”](#).

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