

Trump and Korea. I'm Also Scared

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President Trump's ability to trigger a nuclear war is 'pretty damn scary' said former US intelligence director James Clapper this week. Remember when Trump vowed to 'bomb the shit' out of his enemies?

I don't have much respect for Clapper, who brazenly lied to Congress and is a ringleader of the deep government's efforts to overthrow Trump. But this time, Clapper is 100% right. He's scared and I am too.

This week, Trump proclaimed he would continue the pointless, stalemated US colonial war in Afghanistan and might ask India to help there - a sure-fire way to bring nuclear-armed India and Pakistan into a terrifying confrontation.

Meanwhile, Trump has backed himself into a corner over North Korea. His threats and bombast have not made the North's leader Kim Jong-un stop threatening to launch nuclear-armed missiles at the US island of Guam, Hawaii, Japan and South Korea. That is, if the US and South Korea keep up their highly provocative annual military war games on North Korea's borders that each year invoke North Korea's fury.

The Pentagon insists these war games are just a routine military exercise. But that's not the view in Pyongyang, and, as a long-time Korea military analyst, not mine.

North Korea, which faces the 500,000-man South Korean Army (ROK) most of which is just down the main highway, has good reason to be nervous. I've been with the 1st ROK Division up on and under the Demilitarized Zone. The South Koreans are heavily armed with top line equipment and tough as nails. They are backed by massive US/South Korean air and naval power.

North Koreans are well aware that Egypt deceived Israel in the 1973 war by using frequent military exercises to mask its plans to storm the Suez Canal. It worked. Israel was caught flat footed by the surprise Egyptian attack on the canal.

By refusing a peace to end the 1950-53 Korean War, and by continuing economic and political warfare against North Korea, the US has only itself to blame for North Korea developing nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them. Kim Jong-un saw what happened to Libya's Muammar Gaddafi (thanks to Hillary Clinton) and Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

Trump is now in a serious fix over North Korea. Jong-un has called Trump's bluff and sneered

at the Donald's fire and brimstone threats. So Trump's choices are to back away from the Korean crisis he created or else attack North Korea. But the North's weapons and leadership are very well dispersed and deeply dug into the mountains. A US conventional attack on the North is estimated to cost 250,000 American casualties.

The US can certainly knock out some of Kim's medium and longer-ranged missiles in a major blitz, but it can't be certain that a few nuclear tipped N. Korean missiles won't survive to strike Japan, South Korea, Hawaii, Okinawa or Guam - and maybe even Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is unlikely that South Korea and the US can decapitate North Korea's leadership by using conventional weapons - starting with Kim Jong-un.

Unless, of course, Trump, who managed to avoid Vietnam era military service because of a bump on his foot, decides to go nuclear. This would mean hitting North Korea with a score or more nuclear weapons, large and small, before the North could riposte. North Korea would be totally destroyed, and its 25 million people left dying, maimed or starving. Japan, the world's third largest economy, would also be shattered.

Nuclear fallout would shower South Korea, Northern China, and Pacific Russia - and eventually blow east to the US and Canadian west coasts. If the Trump administration decided to use nuclear weapons against North Korea, then why not in Afghanistan? The temptation will be obvious.

President Dwight Eisenhower refused pleas by France to use nuclear weapons to rescue the besieged French garrison at Dien Bien Phu. Trump may not be as cautious. He can't afford to be seen backing away from the Korean crisis. His aides clearly did not think through the ramification of his bellicose threats against North Korea. Bullies tend to grow lazy.

That's why I'm as nervous as Lt. Gen. Clapper.

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