

Will Trump Launch a Nuclear Holocaust? US Hysteria Blooms in Wake of North Korean Missile Splashdown

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Suppose an opportunity for peace arrived – could the US see it?

The most dangerous thing about the North Korean missile launch is the reaction of the unprincipled, under-informed, [white identity extremist](#) sitting in the Oval Office. If there's a nuclear war coming out of this manufactured "crisis," the buck will have stopped with him. Not that President Trump doesn't have other fools egging him on to risk global chaos and destruction in response to an imaginary, inflated threat from an impoverished nation of 25 million people. Sadly, this is not a surprising development after more than sixty years of aggressive US behavior toward North Korea.

But first, what about that November 29 missile launch, widely and dishonestly played as showing that that North Korea could hit any point in the US, even Washington or Mar-a-Lago? That meme is a speculative fear-tactic. In the fine print, none of the experts, not even hawkish defense secretary [General Jim Mattis](#), one of the last supposed grown-ups in Trumplandia. The North Korean missile went higher – roughly 2,800 miles – than any previous North Korean missile, but it didn't go very far, about 600 miles, landing in the ocean short of Japan.

Based on this scant information, mostly provided by the North Korean government, experts like David Wright of the Union of Concerned Scientists extrapolated the missile's potential range from the actual 600 miles to an estimated 8,000 miles. This is not a scientific measurement but a speculative conjecture based on science as well as the unknown assumptions that the tested missile was carrying an actual warhead. Wright allowed for the possibility that the missile's high performance was because it carried a dummy warhead of almost inconsequential weight. [Wright concluded](#), according the New York Times, that "the distance traveled, while impressive, does not necessarily translate into a working intercontinental ballistic missile that could deliver a thermonuclear warhead." That's [something of a non-threat threat](#) lurking in a hypothetical future. For General Mattis, the projected possible threat, free of historical or strategic context, was all too real in his hyperbolic projection:

The bottom line is, it's a continued effort to build a threat — a ballistic missile threat that endangers world peace, regional peace, and certainly, the United States.

This isn't General Mattis prematurely overreacting to just one unevaluated missile test. General Mattis engages in the standard military operating procedure of threat-inflation on a regular basis, which does not distinguish him from two generations of other official military and executive branch fearmongers scaring us with apparent North Korean intentions, even while driving those intentions with real, [constant American threatening](#). As General Mattis put it in late October:

North Korea has accelerated the threat that it poses to its neighbors and the world through its illegal and unnecessary missile and nuclear weapons programs.... I cannot imagine a condition under which the United States would accept North Korea as a nuclear power....

He said, "unnecessary." He must know that's absurdly Orwellian. The United States and North Korea have been in [a state of war](#) since 1950. The armistice of 1953 suspended the fighting but did not end the war. From then until now, North Korean sovereignty has been irrelevant to American leaders. So here we are, with North Korea already a nuclear power and the US refusing to accept a new reality, never mind US responsibility for creating that new reality through decades of open bellicosity. The times called the most recent missile launch "a bold act of defiance against President Trump," which is a laughably unaware acceptance of the American assumption that it has any right to any authority over another sovereign state.

American denial of the North Korean perspective is the driving force in this largely artificial confrontation. North Korea has already been overrun by American forces once in living memory, in a war with largely unexamined American atrocities (we've propagandized their atrocities to a fare thee well). Overrun by Americans, only to be counter-overrun by the Chinese, North Koreans might well want to be left alone. The US and its allies, especially South Korea and Japan, have maintained unrelenting hostility to North Korea, whose best friend is an unreliable China. Why wouldn't North Korea want a [nuclear deterrent](#)? Deterrence is the American justification for a nuclear arsenal that dwarfs all others but the Russians'.

But American leaders insist on calling North Korea a threat. North Korea was a threat in 1950. and that turned out very badly for them. Today, North Korea is a credible threat to no one except perhaps its own people. A North Korean attack on anyone would be met with overwhelming force up to and possibly including nuclear obliteration. North Korea is in check, and any honest observer knows that. Some even say so. Defense Dept. spokesman [Colonel Robert Manning](#), in striking contrast to his shrill boss General Mattis, said:

We are working with our interagency partners on a more detailed assessment of the launch.... the missile launch from North Korea did not pose a threat to North America, our territories or our allies.... We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies from any attack or provocation.

That is so rational and basic that it should hardly need saying. We don't live in a time when basic and rational get much attention. American arrogance and paranoia toward North Korea are longstanding, untreated pathologies that continue to worsen. [As our Trump tweeted](#) in early October, with his usual fact-free, threatening bombast:

Presidents and their administrations have been talking to North Korea for 25 years, agreements made and massive amounts of money paid ... hasn't worked, agreements violated before the ink was dry, makings fools of U.S. negotiators. Sorry, but only one thing will work!

Our Trump coyly avoided saying what he thought that one thing was, but his [Secretary of State still says](#), "Diplomatic options remain viable and open for now." Not that anyone pays much attention to Rex Tillerson these days as he guts the State Dept. of effective, experienced personnel. Much greater play goes to the crazy ranters who are already blaming the victims if it turns out we have to attack them (sounds like domestic violence, doesn't it?). Case in point is Lindsey Graham, who plays a [deranged Republican Senator](#) from South Carolina, saying:

If we have to go to war to stop this, we will. If there's a war with North Korea it will be because North Korea brought it on itself, and we're headed to a war if things don't change.

Or as the battering husband puts it: "She just wouldn't listen to me!" Echoing the blame-the-victim mantra, UN Ambassador Nikki Haley ([famous for saying](#) "women don't care about contraception") told the UN Security Council the missile launch was [an act of "aggression"](#) with serious potential consequences:

... make no mistake the North Korean regime will be utterly destroyed.... The dictator of North Korea made a decision yesterday that brings us closer to war, not farther from it. We have never sought war with North Korea and still today we do not seek it.

But they just won't listen!

In North Korea, after the missile launch, [leader Kim Jong Un](#) said that his country has "finally realized the great historic cause of completing the [state nuclear force](#)." A nuclear deterrent, in other words. This may or may not be entirely true. But they may or may not be beside the point. As writers in Japan Times note, this missile launch and its accompanying official statements could be [an olive branch](#):

[North Korea] then said its pursuit of the "strategic weapon" had been intended to "defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country from the U.S. imperialists' nuclear blackmail policy," and emphasized that it would "not pose any threat to any country and region as long as the interests of the DPRK (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) are not infringed upon.... The DPRK will make every possible effort to serve the noble purpose of defending peace and stability of the world."

Does it matter whether this is true as long as everyone acts like it's true? Our Trump has a random relationship with truth, and [his spokeswoman says](#) it doesn't matter whether [his racist tweets](#) are real or fake news. So what we have here is an excellent opportunity for the [mock-in-chief of his Asian allies](#) to seize the opportunity to make white identity extremism great again and— oh, never mind.

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