

KOREA

Hi Everyone,

I have had people asking me what I see around North Korea and the hyperbolic rhetoric we have just seen flying between the US and NK leaders. I want to take a couple of minutes and address a few points. Firstly, this back-and-forth between Kim Jong-un and Trump is basically a game of 'chicken', which was showing signs of cooling off, but now have become hotter than ever. It is actually quite foolish and does no good. All being well, we (the US) will soon enter into a new round of talks with the North Koreans after the to-and-fro has died down. The present tensions were ratcheted up after the UN slapped sanctions on North Korea in response to its ICBM tests, then the war games with the South Koreans and Americans, and finally the test of a purported hydrogen bomb by the North. North Korea typically reacts to such things with great bombast in order to bring parties to the bargaining table. North Korea also is convinced that they must have a deterrent to US posturing on the peninsula. Kim has met his match in Trump, though, in terms of exaggerated rhetoric, and thus we have our current shouting match. In essence, if cooler heads are in control in Washington, there is not much to worry about, despite the fear that the media is trying to generate in the American public.

Secondly, as an American and Australian, I must say that I am far more concerned with issues such as domestic terrorism, gun violence in the US, destruction of the environment, diet-induced health problems and deaths, climbing suicide rates, and a large list of other issues, than I am with an attack by North Korea – or with 'radical Islamic terrorism'. We just saw more deaths caused by white supremacists in Charlottesville, VA and New York this year, for example, than we have in the US by Islamic terrorists so far. Likewise, it is difficult to see North Korea as an existential threat outside the Korean peninsula, for reasons outlined below. I would also be more concerned that the Trump administration is either enabling or actively promoting some sort of military confrontation with the North and with Iran due to the people he has gathered around him in his administration. As an astrological note, Trump's Mars/Descendant line (a very confrontational indicator) in his astrocartography strikes an arc right through the Koreas and eastern China, so it is hardly a surprise that he wants to pick a fight with North Korea or feels beholden to take a hard line against them and China. That Mars/Descendant line has been activated by the eclipse on the 21st and Mars from then through to mid-September. His Jupiter line, as a matter of interest, runs through Europe and Saudi Arabia, so it is also hardly a surprise he has sidled up to the Saudis.

With regard to the present situation in the Korean peninsula, there are a few points to keep in mind, if you don't know these already;

- 1) North Korea was nearly bombed out of existence by the US in the Korean War. The people and the regime remember this, and as a result they will seek any and every deterrent to prevent it from happening again, which they have done. Their weapons systems are defensive, not offensive.
- 2) The North Korean regime is neither crazy nor stupid. Their primary aim at this point is to survive. They are fully aware of what a war would mean. Their rhetoric says, "Take notice of me!" They know they would be wiped out in a war. They are not suicidal. True, it is a terrible regime, but an all-out war with them would more than likely cause the deaths of millions of innocents on both sides of the border. And even a limited nuclear war? I wonder how the South Koreans, Japanese, Chinese and Russians would be affected or respond? Winds from Korea normally drift westward to the Chinese mainland, for example.
- 3) Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is within range of thousands of North Korean artillery pieces and rocket launchers, well concealed and fortified, which would rain shells and missiles down upon Seoul if there is a military conflict, resulting in probably at least many tens of thousands of deaths in Seoul alone within a brief time, and that is barring a nuclear device going off there. No THAAD missile system will defend against those. That missile

system would do next to nothing to protect the South. The South Koreans know this, hence part of their opposition to the system being placed in their country, along with it heightening tensions with the North and China.

4) Nearly half of the population of just over 50 million South Koreans lives in the Seoul area, including over 1,000,000 Chinese, over 150,000 Americans Korea-wide in the South, and foreign nationals of many other nations. Any military confrontation between the two countries would be catastrophe. This talk of “fire and fury” by Trump is exactly what would happen to the South if war were to break out, not to mention what would happen to the North.

5) If we are to see a military action by American forces, they would initiate a prior mass evacuation of all military families from the Seoul area. I have yet to hear of anything like that. If you have family members in the military and hear of such a thing, please let us all know if you can so we can mount the strongest possible protests of such actions immediately and lobby for sanity, if it was not already too late.

6) The corporate media is complicit in scaring the US public, which increases stock prices for defense contractors, by the way, and manufactures consent for conflict. They do this partly by misreporting what the North Koreans have said. We see it time and again, and this goes as well for other so-called enemy states. True, the North has said that its nuclear and missile capabilities are off the table for negotiation..., leading us to think that they in no way want peace on the peninsula and that they aim for a first strike capability. However, the media leave off the last bit of their statements, which say in effect, “...unless the Americans cease in their aggressive war games in the region and threatening posture to the North.” Not to excuse the NK regime for its treatment of its people, but if one were the leader of a state that had endured such bombing as in the Korean war, or as one saw in Libya and Iraq and saw only threats, they would want nuclear weapons and ICBMs, too. Other states do also for similar reasons. Iran is a case in point. It is not difficult to see why the North behaves the way it does once we know the history of the peninsula.

7) Military commanders in the US have looked at all the scenarios for toppling the regime or in the event of war ever since the Korean war. If they had thought it would be easy, they probably would have done so by now. One, or we should say two, of the biggest factors preventing such a conflict are Russia and China, not to mention South Korea, the latter who would be one of the biggest losers in such a war.

8) The policy of the US toward the present situation is counterproductive, is playing to the hands of the North Koreans and the hawks in the US, could potentially lead to economic hardship for the US if even tougher sanctions are imposed, and is causing other countries to re-evaluate their alliances with the US. Aside from a disastrous war, the US has no other options except to sit across from the negotiating table with the Koreans on both sides. There are only two ways, given the present regime in the North, that they will put a stop to their nuclear ambitions, and these are non-negotiable for the North:

a. The Americans and South Koreans stop their periodic war games and remove nukes from South Korea

b. A binding peace treaty is signed between the US and North Korea.

9) The Chinese will never tolerate a US-supported state in the North. They intervened in the North and pushed the Americans and UN troops back in the ‘50s, and they would do so again if the US put troops on the ground in North Korea. They have stated such. To threaten the Chinese and the South Koreans with sanctions if they trade with North Korea shows just how short-sighted and ill-conceived current US policy is toward Koreans.

There is much more we could say, but given all the above, it is small wonder we have not gone to war with North Korea. These points also show to a large extent why the North has not attacked the South. Both North and South Korea want peace, not war. This may seem foolish, pie-in-the-sky or

contradictory given our conditioning and indoctrination, especially in the US, but diplomacy is and remains the best path with North Korea. We have an example of what can be achieved in the Iran deal. We need statesmanship now more than ever, instead of brinksmanship and posturing. This present situation is just another episode in a long standoff between the US and North Korea. It is not really between anyone else.

Left to their own devices, North and South Korea could probably work out some sort of serviceable agreement for peace on their peninsula. If that could transpire, the regime in the North will eventually collapse from internal pressures. And the North has stated that it wants a peace treaty with the US, instead of an armistice. If you are a US citizen and are rightly concerned about what has transpired in the past days and the months preceding them, then contact your members of Congress and tell them to tone down the rhetoric, halt the war games in South Korea (which started on the day of the eclipse) and instigate talks with North Korea – meaningful talks. If you are not American, you can contact your ambassadors to the US and even members of the US Congress and tell them of your concerns. Emails and phone calls do have a big impact on elected officials. The very thing we want to avoid is to back the North Koreans into a corner and/or somehow provoke another conflict. What we need is patience rather than posturing. Feel free to share and post this.

In peace,

Malvin.

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Further reading: <http://www.businessinsider.com/kim-jong-un-is-a-survivor-not-a-madman-2017-8?IR=T>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreigners_in_Korea

https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Military_and_Security_Developments_Involving_the_Democratic_Peoples_Republic_of_Korea_2015.PDF (from 2015)