

Irreconcilable US/North Korea Differences

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The problem lies in Washington, not Pyongyang the way it's been throughout the DPRK's history.

America tolerates no sovereign independent states it doesn't control – why it wages preemptive wars, stages color revolutions, and assassinates foreign leaders, its post-WW II agenda.

The only way to resolve contentious issues with Pyongyang is through face-to-face diplomacy.

Reported backchannel talks between US envoy for North Korea policy Joseph Yun and senior DPRK UN mission diplomat Pak Song-il in New York are better than nothing, but not good enough.

Former special envoy for earlier six-party talks with North Korea Joseph DeTrani said it's time for formal negotiations to “get North Korea to halt all nuclear tests and missile launches and return to unconditional nuclear discussions and negotiations.”

Sanctions against Pyongyang, China and Russia are counterproductive, accomplishing nothing positive.

Pressure and threats are unacceptable options, diplomatic outreach the only way to save the region from potentially catastrophic war.

Korea affairs expert Charles Armstrong believes there's not “much of a China card to play. The US and China are too mutually interdependent for US pressure to force China's hand. China cannot solve the North Korea problem. The US must deal directly with North Korea as well.”

Former State Department advisor Balbina Hwang stresses

“the road to Pyongyang does not go through Beijing.”

For years, Washington's pressure on China to solve the North Korea nuclear issue was

fruitless. According to Hwang:

“China will not change or dramatically alter its approach to North Korea because it simply is not in China’s national interest – which is to prevent conflict and major instability in all of its bordering regions.”

The only viable option is direct US/North Korea high-level face-to-face talks. Rex Tillerson suggested it’s possible.

It’s time for Washington to follow through responsibly, what it’s shunned so far – ongoing provocative large-scale joint US/South Korea military exercises Pyongyang believes are preparations for war the latest example of its wrongheaded policy.

Perhaps in response, Pyongyang’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Kim Jong-un ordered increased production of solid-fuel rocket engines and rocket warhead tips.

Photos released showed a diagram for a new Pukguksong-3 ballistic missile. North Korea successfully tested the submarine-launched Pukguksong-1 last August.

The land-based Pukguksong-2 was successfully tested in February. Both are believed to be intermediate-range, able to strike regional targets only.

America alone considers war an option to deal with North Korea. China, Russia, South Korea, and other countries strongly oppose hostilities.

Separately, Moscow and Beijing are considering an appropriate response to new US Treasury sanctions – targeting 16 Russian and Chinese entities and nationals for alleged dealings with North Korea.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said an appropriate response is coming.

“(T)he language of sanctions is unacceptable,” resolving nothing, hindering responsible solutions to contentious issues, he stressed.

China called US sanctions illegal, unacceptable and offensive, having little impact on the country.

“(H)ow could Washington be confident about the illegal trade between China and North Korea,” asked the state-run [Global Times](#), adding:

“(W)ho who grants Washington the right to make judgments on which companies violate UN Security Council resolutions?”

“Through unilateral sanctions, Washington aims to tarnish the international image of China and Russia in sanctioning Pyongyang and portray the two as violators of UN sanctions. It also wants to skip its own responsibility in the North Korean nuclear issue.”

“The Chinese government has the obligation to speak for the country’s legitimate companies. Washington had better restrain itself.”

The threat of US war on North Korea abated somewhat. It would surely heat up again following further DPRK ballistic missile tests.

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