

Korean Peninsula Brinksmanship

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For a day at least, Washington and Pyongyang stepped back from the brink.

The DPRK refrained from conducting an expected sixth nuclear test, likely postponed, not cancelled.

Trump showed restraint by not belligerently reining on North Korea's Day of the Sun commemorative parade, honoring its founder Kim Il-sung's 105th birthday.

All quiet on the eastern front held on Saturday, fireworks perhaps coming later at a time of Trump's choosing.

Potentially devastating Korean peninsula war threatens the entire region, catastrophic if nuclear confrontation erupts.

The weekend wasn't entirely calm. Early Sunday, the DPRK launched an unidentified ballistic missile. Reportedly it plunged into the sea after exploding. [unconfirmed]

South Korea's military believes it was a Pukguksong-2 intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of traveling up to 1,000 km.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry called the test a threat to regional security. The Pentagon's March 14 B61-12 gravity nuclear bomb test was practically unnoticed until the US National Nuclear Security Administration's April 13 announcement, saying:

"This event is the first of a series that will be conducted over the next three years to qualify the B61-12 for service. Three successful development flight tests were conducted in 2015."

No furor followed the test or announcement. US imperial madness is humanity's greatest threat.

North Korea threatens no one. Throughout its history, it never attacked another country - at war from June 1950 to July 1953 in self-defense after being attacked.

Pyongyang justifiably fears another US war, believing its nuclear deterrent is its best defense. If America normalized relations long ago, the DPRK never would have developed nuclear weapons.

Washington's rage to dominate overrides prioritizing world peace and stability - anathema notions for a nation always at war, enemies invented to justify waging it on humanity.

Korean affairs analyst Cui Zhiying said

“North Korea is now under immense pressure, especially from the US, and Pyongyang wanted to show a united front without making another nuclear test (at this time), a move deemed intolerable by the international community and that might trigger military conflict.”

China Arms Control and Disarmament Association researcher Xu Guangyu believes Pyongyang’s Saturday weapons display and missile test showed its military strength and “capability to fight back (if) necessary.”

Its commemorative parade showed “restraint. It is reluctant to fire the first shot and shoulder the responsibility for provoking conflict on the peninsula.”

Refraining from a nuclear test on Kim Il-Sung’s birthday doesn’t mean future ones aren’t coming. Five were conducted earlier, likely more ahead, perhaps delayed for now given current heightened tensions.

On Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Sergey Lavrov

Beijing “is ready to coordinate closely with Russia to help cool down as quickly as possible the situation on the peninsula and encourage the parties concerned to resume dialogue.”

He also warned Pyongyang and Washington that if war breaks out, both sides will share blame “and pay the corresponding price.”

Trump is at his Florida residence for the Easter weekend. Congress is in recess until April 23.

Pyongyang’s Day of the Sun commemoration passed without imminent threat of war erupting.

Korean expert Bruce Cumings explained North Korea has around “15,000 underground facilities of a national security nature,” the world’s fourth largest military, about “200,000 highly trained special forces,” 10,000 artillery pieces, mobile missiles able to hit all US regional military bases, and nukes more than twice as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb.

While no match against America’s military might, it’s able to cause enormous damage if attacked.

“Why on earth would Pyongyang not seek a nuclear deterrent,” Cumings asked? “(T)his crucial (logic) doesn’t enter mainstream American discourse,” he explained.

“History doesn’t matter, until it does – when it rears up and smacks you in the face.”

The Korean peninsula remains a hugely dangerous tinderbox. Trump’s rage for warmaking could ignite an uncontrollable firestorm.

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