

North Korea Responds to Trump's Fire and Fury Threat

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Heated rhetoric risks something much more serious. The problem lies in Washington, not Pyongyang.

Throughout its post-WW II history, the DPRK never attacked another country. In June 1950, it responded to repeated South Korean cross-border provocations.

Harry Truman's devastating war followed – why Pyongyang genuinely fears US aggression now, doing what it thinks best to avoid it, the reason for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Without them, it would be defenseless. With them, it's a regional power to be reckoned with.

Pulling back from reckless brinksmanship on the Korean peninsula is as simple as America extending an olive branch, halting provocative area military exercises Pyongyang believes are preparations for war, choosing diplomacy over saber rattling – an alternative approach it rejects.

Trump's bombast via Twitter and other rhetoric shows profound recklessness, likely along with ignorance about the horrors of aggressive wars, especially if nuclear weapons are used.

Via Twitter he boasted

"(m)y first order as President was to renovate and modernize our nuclear arsenal."

"It is now far stronger and more powerful than ever before...(T)here will never be a time that we are not the most powerful nation in the world."

"(B)eing unpredictable is a big asset," he said. "North Korea knew exactly what President Obama was going to do."

He backs up his bombast with naked aggression in multiple theaters, threatening North Korea and Iran with more, maybe Russia and China to follow.

Pyongyang didn't ease things by threatening to attack Guam this month – even though 2,131 miles between them likely puts the island beyond the reach of the DPRK's ability

to strike it, let alone accurately.

Of greater consequence would be devastating war on its territory in response, turning large parts of the country to rubble, causing millions of casualties, South Korea as well caught in the firestorm, hammered by the DPRK's military capability until it was destroyed.

Defense Secretary "mad dog" Mattis warned Kim Jong-un of "the end of (his) regime and the destruction of its people" if DPRK threats continue, adding:

He "should take heed of the United Nations Security Council's unified voice, and statements from governments the world over, who agree the DPRK poses a threat to global security and stability."

The only Korean peninsula threat comes from Washington, not Pyongyang. Combatively Mattis blustered that "the combined allied militaries now possess the most precise, rehearsed and robust defensive and offensive capabilities on earth" - America perhaps willing to destroy the planet to own it.

DPRK heated rhetoric included the official KCNA news agency quoting General Kim Rak-gyom blasting Trump, saying:

"Sound dialogue is not possible with such a guy bereft of reason and only absolute force can work on him,"

adding:

Hwasong-12 ballistic missiles can "be launched (by mid-August to) hit the waters 30 to 40 km away from Guam" - sounding more like a shot across the bow threat than an attempted attack on its territory, which may not be possible anyway.

A separate Pyongyang statement said

"(i)f the US fails to act with discretion, persisting in its reckless attempts to stifle the DPRK, we will not waver or hesitate to use any form of ultimate means."

Heated rhetoric on both sides risks "miscalculation and inadvertent war, particularly if North Korea feels that it must act before an imminent US attack," according to Professor of Government Jessica Chen Weiss.

"From the standpoint of avoiding war, one hopes that Trump's improvised threat is correctly interpreted as bluster," she added.

Given its nonbelligerent history, the DPRK is unlikely to attack America or any other country except in self-defense.

China and Russia continue doing all they can to prevent unthinkable war on the Korean peninsula from erupting.

On Wednesday, Moscow's UN envoy Vasily Nebenzya stressed the importance of Washington remaining "calm and refrain(ing) from any moves that would provoke another party into actions that might be dangerous" – responding to heated rhetoric on both sides, adding:

"As we said, we want the tensions to ease, and we have to start seriously about devising and inventing ways for a political dialogue on this issue."

At best, it'll take a concerted effort by both sides to step back from the brink. The alternative is potentially catastrophic nuclear war, affecting far more than the Korean peninsula if launched.

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