

US-based Human Rights Foundation's Ultimate Aim: To Use 'Soft Power' to Bring Down the North Korean Regime

By [Civilisation 3000](#)

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The USA's use of soft power has been effective with many worldwide, presenting an illusion of a free society ('liberating minds') and reinforcing a consumerist culture and the political regimes which collude with it.

[On this site](#) in 2015 there was an account of soft power – money and commodities poured from the United States into the Middle East. In the name of normality and freedom, all but the strongest young people are being remade in the image of the Western consumer whereas hard power is exerted by financial inducements, invasion and remote killing by drone.

One actor in the North Korean soft power drive is the [Human Rights Foundation](#), whose approving Wikipedia entry emphasises its insistence on 'economic freedom'. In Central and South America and the Middle East it has paved the way for the overthrow of regimes which would not play that game.

In North Korea jeans and pop music, though still part of the scene, have been supplemented by hydrogen balloons packed with DVDs, dollar bills and propaganda leaflets. Drones now drop USB flash drives full of news bulletins and documentaries aim to counter NK's state propaganda with that of the United States; American movies and television shows to spread pro-Western sentiment were called "[flash drives for freedom](#)". See Business Insider's [informative account](#) of this, published last year.

With the help of defectors USB-sticks are smuggled through towns on China's border with North Korea and sold in the flourishing black market for goods and information. The Human Rights Foundation "has financed balloon drops of pamphlets, TV shows, books and movies over a course of several years".

Its founder Thor Halvorssen, according to [Joakim Mollersen](#) a Norwegian economist and journalist, also set up the Oslo Freedom Forum whose story, [he says in some detail](#), is one of US right-wing sponsorship, lack of transparency and "heroes of human rights" involved in supporting serious human rights violations.

State propaganda is ardently supplemented by this foundation which paid for a balloon drop of 10,000 copies of an edited version of the movie [The Interview](#), and North Korea's move towards becoming a denuclearized 'democracy', following its leader's assassination.

In 2014, HRF hosted the world's first hackathon for North Korea at Code for America's offices in San Francisco. According to the [Wall Street Journal](#),

"about 100 hackers, coders and engineers gathered in San Francisco to brainstorm ways to pierce the information divide that separates North Korea from the rest of the world."

Alex Gladstein, HRF's chief strategy officer calls this an 'information war' – the only way to inspire change:

"a third way . . .to liberate minds . . . Given the history of Eastern Europe, I hope that people can think about the potential of information rather than reckless conflict and provocation and totally failed diplomacy".

These soft power illusions of American normality, freedom and prosperity are confidence tricks. The unmentioned features of the USA, a country which young people have been led, by soft power, to admire as 'an ideal state of freedom', are extremes of economic inequality, youth unemployment, high cost housing, military aggression, pollution, gun slaughter, child abuse, violent pornography, and inequality.

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