

War against the “Axis of Evil”. How Hollywood Smears North Koreans

The New “Argo:” Evil North Koreans Trash the White House In Latest Hollywood Fear Vehicle

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Region: [Asia](#)

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The trend towards movies ripped from the news, or perhaps ripping off the news continues.

Olympus Has Fallen is the latest in the popular “learn to fear thy enemy even more than you did before” category, as director Antoine Fuqua visualizes a story that can’t be more topical with the White House (Secret Service Code: “Olympus”) occupied by a North Korean terrorist fanatic and his barbaric followers.

The President is held hostage, the building is trashed, and its defenses shredded while our hero, a disgraced former Presidential guard, becomes the savior despite the mounting body count including a massacre of civilians and military responders as well as the near capture of top secret nuclear codes.

Of course, at the last moment, Mr. America fights off the incompetent Pentagon bureaucracy, repels the invaders and singlehandedly saves the President’s son, before rescuing the commander in chief and averting the war to end all wars.

(Didn’t we see a similar scenario recently set in the White House Bunker/command module in Salt starring Angelina Jolie? That was an actionmovie that started with her rescue from a grim North Korean torture chamber.)

With patriotic music swelling and flags waving, the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave is liberated once again to stand by its values and invade more countries.

When I returned to my computer, fiction had morphed into ‘faction’ amidst reports that the Obama Administration sent a new armada to the region while North Korea apparently decided to ramp up its only feared defenses: its nuclear capacity.

The United States has denied that its recent maneuvers with the new right-wing government in South Korea was provocative or a stalking horse for an invasion, but the North Koreans were not convinced and restarted a shuttered nuclear plant to be on the safe side.

Is war on the horizon? The emergence of war propaganda like Olympus Has Fallen and earlier demonizations of the North certainly shows there is a market for cultural products about the Evil Empire.

It’s worth recalling that books about Hitler were in a best selling back in the days when people read books.

If entertainment about the Korean bad guys—devoid of any real history about how Korea was divided and the million North Koreans who died in that “police action” (not even a war in US parlance) is now boffo box office the real conflict is beginning to feel more like show biz than news biz.

Is it just more “militainment?”

Olympus Has Fallen will do more to frighten Americans than the “bluster” coming out of Pyongyang. Recall that the North Korean “supreme leader” Kim Jong Un, is the son of a man who was obsessed about movies and wanted to look like Elvis.

Notes the New York Times, “Despite a drumbeat of increasingly bellicose threats from [North Korea](#), the White House said Monday that there was no evidence that the country’s leader, [Kim Jong-un](#), was mobilizing troops or other military forces for any imminent attack.

“Though American officials said they remained concerned about the invective flowing from North Korea — and [South Korea](#)’s president ordered military commanders to carry out a swift and strong response to any provocations — the Obama administration took pains to emphasize the “disconnect” between Mr. Kim’s “rhetoric and action.”

Here’s a country that routinely denounces the United States and yet seems fascinated with it, recently inviting a Google executive and basketball star/weirdo Dennis Rodman to visit.

CNN reported, “ Not only did the American basketball star — known for his over-the-top publicity stunts — visit North Korea, but he also was joined by three members of the famed Harlem Globetrotters, who played against North Korea’s “Dream Team” (no surprise, the game ended in a tie). Rodman proclaimed Kim “a friend for life,” and appeared courtside with the North Korean leader.”

Wining a tie with The Globe trotters is no easy feat . but it also shows that there may be a joke here that we are not getting. North Korea has managed to put itself on the world “stage” once again at a little cost

All the alarmism in the movies and the headlines miss a counter trend that a CIA analyst raised on PBS News Hour. Listen to this:

ROBERT CARLIN, Former CIA and State Department Intelligence Analyst: I think the rhetoric is at a high level.

I would hope that the events over the past couple of days in North Korea would provide an opportunity for us to lower the temperature a little bit. We had some pretty important developments in terms of policy and personnel from the North Koreans over the last two days. I think we should step back.

JUDY WOODRUFF: What are you referring to?

ROBERT CARLIN: I’m referring to the lower profile that the military now has in the top-level leadership in North Korea.

I’m referring to something that the North Koreans — they don’t use this term, but I will. It’s the nuclear dividend. It’s the ability now that they have nuclear weapons, they say, to divert more money for their civilian economy. And the question is, is there an opening there? Does that provide some element of

stability in this situation that we can use?

JUDY WOODRUFF: You mean because they feel more secure about their nuclear capability, they then have the space to expand in the economic front?

ROBERT CARLIN: Yes. Yes.

Ach so, a note of rationality in a media story that so easily escalates with the rhetoric. As usual, Democracy Now featured a more informed assessment in an interview with University of Chicago Historian Bruce Cumings who notes that the last place to find out what is really going on is in the media:

“So, the media — I should say the mainstream media, not Democracy Now! — they pay no attention. Along comes North Korea trying to get our attention. They do a bunch of provocative things. And there’s no question that what they’re doing is provocative, but it’s nothing new for them. And then people pay attention, but without the context that’s so essential to understand this.

The Obama administration, and especially Secretary of State Clinton, are running on the same tracks as George Bush did in ’07 and ’08. They’re even talking about the Proliferation Security Initiative, PSI, which is something that was handcrafted by John Bolton to put pressure on North Korea. So President Obama needs to pay attention to a situation that he actually might be able to solve if he paid attention, get back to talks with North Korea. And if he can solve this problem, as his predecessors did, at least temporarily, he would put tremendous pressure on Iran also to give up its enriched uranium program. So I think that’s what’s going on.

But you really — I mean, you have to read the fine print of even our paper of record to find any of this out. For example, this morning we learn, of course, they’ve raised the alert to high levels, but our commanders say there’s no unusual military activity in North Korea. North Korea doesn’t want a war. But this train wreck could have been seen coming from a mile away, or two years away, at least, and the Obama administration is just not paying attention.”

Not paying attention? Nothing new about that! Maybe the Obamas are in the screening room at the White House coming up with options to defend against an attack like the one dramatized in “Olympus Has Fallen.”

It’s not clear these days who is the more dangerous adversary—North Korea or Hollywood?

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