

Who is Driving Tensions on the Korean Peninsula?

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With North Korea's recent nuclear weapon test, it appears the East Asian state is transitioning from possessing a demonstration capability toward hosting a functional nuclear arsenal. While analysts believe North Korea has yet to miniaturise its nuclear weapons to fit in rocket-launched warheads, the frequency and size of the nation's nuclear tests indicate expanding capabilities in both research and development as well as in fabrication and deployment.

BBC's article, "[North Korea's nuclear programme: How advanced is it?](#)," would claim:

North Korea has conducted several tests with nuclear bombs.

However, in order to launch a nuclear attack on its neighbours, it needs to be able to make a nuclear warhead small enough to fit on to a missile.

North Korea claims it has successfully "miniaturised" nuclear warheads – but this has never been independently verified, and some experts have cast doubt on the claims.

And despite Western commentators and their counterparts in South Korea and Japan's claims that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is a proactive, provocative policy, closer scrutiny reveals that Pyongyang's defence policy may be instead predicated on legitimate fears reflecting and reacting to American and South Korean foreign policy.

An Axe Poised Above Pyongyang

The International Business Times in an article titled, "[As nuclear threat escalates, South Korea has concrete plans to eliminate Kim Jong-un](#)," would report:

South Korean troops are reportedly on standby to "eliminate" North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un, should they feel threatened by their nuclear weapons.

According to CNN International, South Korean Defence Minister Han Min-koo revealed the information in parliament on 21 September. When asked whether a special forces unit had already been put together to eliminate the North Korean dictator, Han confirmed that such a plan was already in place.

Such an announcement, while at first may appear to be South Korea reacting to what it believes is a legitimate threat, is instead a clearly provocative move meant specifically to escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula, not assuage them.

Such an operation, to maximise chances for success, would be kept secret, not announced to the world. Additionally, “eradicating” a leader believed by many to serve mainly as a figurehead, with a large network of military and industry leaders surrounding him handling various aspects of North Korean foreign and domestic policy, would accomplish little in negating any actual military threat the nation posed to its southern neighbour.

Instead, a much larger and more involved plan would need to be put in place and prepared vigorously for, one that would entail hundreds of thousands of South Korean and American troops and possibly even other forces brought in under the guise of a UN peacekeeping force to overwhelm and subdue North Korea.

And such a plan does indeed exist.

A 2009 paper published by influential US-based think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations, titled, “[Preparing for Sudden Change in North Korea](#),” would enumerate a deeply involved plan for US and South Korean forces to fill any void that may develop in the event that North Korea’s government collapses.

While the report itself does not mention US activities underway to induce such a collapse, such activities are indeed ongoing, as they are elsewhere around the world, as are their effects are on display where they have already unfolded, namely Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan.

The plan itself involves subduing any and all resistance from North Korea’s military and population with an occupying force nearly a half-million strong, as well as the complete seizure of North Korea’s economy and its subsequent integration into South Korea’s “market economy.”

With such plans in place, with US and South Korean forces clearly practising for them annually and with the US intentionally and persistently attempting to undermine political stability within North Korea itself, what other sort of geopolitical posture should the world expect to see pursued by Pyongyang’s leadership besides paranoia and a perpetual war footing?

It is clear that covert and overt threats made by the West and its political proxies in Seoul either directly or through policy either put on paper or into practice indirectly, drives North Korea’s reciprocal belligerence.

The United States and its East Asian proxies have a clear material and military advantage over North Korea and could afford more than Pyongyang to make concessions and to redirect energy and resources away from threatening the North Koreans, toward genuine rapprochement.

However, while genuine rapprochement would be in the entire Korean Peninsula’s best interests, as well as in China and Japan’s, it would negate any further need for the United States’ presence on the Peninsula. Thus, as long as Seoul depends on or allows the US to provide regional security, it will entail such security that will ensure America’s perpetual presence and influence over the region. With America’s dual purpose being to both control the Koreas as well as encircle neighbouring China, there is virtually no reason ever for the United States to foster genuine peace and coexistence on the Peninsula.

The removal, therefore, of American forces from both Korea and Japan would be the first and

most crucial step toward real reconciliation and progress in the region, reconciliation and progress that Asia requires but would acquire at the cost of America's regional hegemonic ambitions.

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