

North Korea At War. Are We Going In?

In July of 1953, the Korean armistice was signed by North and South Korea, China and the United Nations Command, putting a stop to three full years of conflict.

This isn't to say the war ended, because it really didn't. An armistice and a peace treaty aren't the same thing. All an armistice is, is an agreement to cease hostilities. After that, a treaty is usually negotiated and then signed. But in this case, there was no treaty.

Considering [the latest events](#) in North Korean crisis, we're about to fight. Are we fighting the same war, or we're going into another?

For more than a half century, all we've seen on the Korean peninsula is a cessation of hostilities, a pause in the war. Both sides are still fully armed, poised for battle and staring at each other across the demilitarization zone.

From time to time, the North sends incursions into the South, small unit raids across this area of no-man's-land, proving that to them, the war isn't really over.

Part of the reason for this lull in the war has been the North Korean obsession with becoming a nuclear power. Ever since the United States first unleashed nuclear energy in the form of a bomb, ending World War II, being a nuclear-armed country gave one entry in the world's most exclusive club. Only the big boys had nukes and other countries who craved power and position, also craved to be part of this club.

Probably no country has put more effort into gaining membership in this exclusive club than North Korea, putting their entire country on a war footing and starving their own

people, so that resources could be poured into both their nuclear program and their missile program.

During all this time, the belligerence coming out of Pyongyang has increased. While the North Korean government has focused their hatred on three historic enemies, South Korea, Japan and the United States, they have essentially given the middle finger to the rest of the world as well.

As far as the North Koreans are concerned, the rest of the world has to accept them on their terms, essentially allowing them to have dominance over countries which are much larger, more powerful and richer than they are.

This incessant drive for power has been fueled by the rhetoric of the Kim dynasty, of which the current leader is the third to rise to power in that small country. As crazy as it might sound to us, the Kims are revered by their people, who look to them almost as gods.

They have succeeded in molding the whole country's collective will to their desire, essentially turning the entire population into an extension of their army.

A New Cold War

North Korea's efforts have not been in vain either. In recent months they have tested a number of newer missiles, one of which was multi-staged. According to calculations made by South Korea's intelligence agencies, that missile has enough range to target a large part of the United States mainland.

In addition, [North Korea's nuclear weapons program](#) has accelerated rapidly, with them recently conducting their sixth testing of a nuclear bomb. This bomb was reported by the state news agency to be a hydrogen bomb, roughly ten times more powerful than anything that the North Koreans have successfully fielded before.

This has served to merely up the ante on North Korean threats and intimidation tactics. Their most recent threat is to “sink Japan” with nuclear weapons. Whether that is nothing more than a figure of speech or whether Kim Jong-un actually thinks that the Japanese Islands are afloat is a question we will probably never see answered. Either way, it is a very real threat to one of our allies, one that can't be ignored.

Between their threats and their rapid development of the necessary hardware to carry them out, North Korea has succeeded in doing something that no other country has been able to do, since the end of the Soviet Union... start a new cold war.

One of the theoretical basis behind the Cold War was MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction. As things sit right now with North Korea, that philosophy is back in effect. Any military attack on North Korea is bound to result in retaliatory attacks by the North Koreans, launching as many nuclear-tipped missiles as they can at Japan, South Korea and the US.

While that launch would most likely guarantee the total destruction of North Korea, it would carry a very high cost. Recent studies show that even a very minimal nuclear war with North Korea would cost a minimum of four million lives, just between the attacks launched against Seoul, South Korea and Tokyo, Japan; attacks that could very well succeed.

Anti-Missile Defenses

While we and our allies in this conflict all have anti-missile defense systems, their capabilities are limited.

For example, between Alaska and Southern California, the US has only 32 anti-ICBM missiles deployed. That number is scheduled to increase to 44 in the near future, but even that does not guarantee having overwhelming force to defend ourselves.

The real danger here is shown by statements from the Pentagon, which has said that our missile defense are sufficient against a few ICBMs, but not against a large-scale attack. Since these defenses have been in place for a long time, we can be sure that the North Korean military is aware of them, as well as being aware of their capabilities and limitations.

The limitations are something to be concerned about, as the testing they have undergone has been, like all such testing, rather contrived. In other words, until the North Koreans actually launch an ICBM towards us, with the intent of hitting one of our cities, we really don't know how well it will work.

Yes, those missile systems have worked well in tests, succeeding about half the time, including the one time they were tested against an actual ICBM. But hitting an incoming ICBM is about as difficult as shooting at a bullet that's been shot at you. The missiles are less than three meters in diameter, which is a really small target to hit with a kinetic weapon over such a huge distance.

No matter what, Kim Jong-un can overcome our missile defenses by the simple expedient of using a mass-attack. All he needs is enough missiles to fire at us, so that he can ensure that we'll expend our defensive rockets shooting down the first wave or two. After that, we're sitting ducks.

The situation is even worse for Japan and South Korea, mostly due to their close proximity. The THADD anti-missile system was just recently installed in South Korea and Japan doesn't have it yet. While President Trump has indicated a willingness to sell more military hardware to both countries, in order to help them prepare for the inevitability of an attack, military hardware is expensive and those countries have to come up with the money to make the purchase.

Then, of course, there's the problem of training the personnel who will man those weapons. Putting a new weapons system into

play requires much more than just buying hardware and assigning people. The people need to be trained. While that can be done and even done fairly quickly, you can't give them experience quickly.

That can only come with time and nobody knows how much time is available.

A Difficult Battle Problem

The threat of being on the receiving end of [a nuclear attack from North Korea](#) has become increasingly real, attracting the attention of high-ranking officials in our government and military. As we've already discussed, our ability to counter such an attack is somewhat limited, meaning that we, the American people, are at risk, just as our allies are.

Our government, along with the rest of the world, has been trying to use sanctions to force the North Koreans to the bargaining table, if not to quit their nuclear and missile programs altogether. However, those efforts have only served to inflame the rhetoric out of Pyongyang. It seems that there is little that diplomatic pressure can do to alter the situation.

This might be seen to some as a failure and to others as an impossibility. The ethos of the diplomatic community is to avert war at all costs. But that requires either serious discourse between all interested parties or that one side buckle under to the other. Since neither side is willing to buckle under and the North Korean government refused to come to the bargaining table, our options are rapidly dwindling. We will soon be left with no other option than open armed conflict. With nukes in the picture, that's not an attractive option.

The logical strategy to take in that case is a preemptive attack on North Korea, taking out their nuclear and missile

testing facilities. But that wouldn't solve the problem. North Korea already has quite a number of nuclear bombs, as well as missiles of various sorts. They aren't all in one place.

Actually, our government probably doesn't know where the North Korean missiles are, as they are all mounted on mobile launchers. While those are more susceptible to damage than hardened underground silos, you have to find them first.

That's not as easy as one might think. During the First Gulf War, the NRO (National Reconnaissance Office) had a bear of a time locating SCUD missiles in Iraq; and Iraq is a much more open country, with much less vegetation, than North Korea.

Unless we were able to take out all the missiles in one fell swoop, chances are that any missiles which survived would be immediately readied for attack. If they couldn't make it across the ocean, they would at least be able to strike South Korea and Japan. Considering that the North Koreans can hit Seoul, the South Korean capital, with artillery, because it is so close to the Demilitarization Zone, hitting it with missiles wouldn't be much of a challenge.

Video first seen on [Golden State Times](#).

The other preemptive strike that I'm sure has been considered is to assassinate Kim Jong-un, the North Korean dictator. But that wouldn't solve anything either; all it would do is cause some internal conflict, with top military brass jockeying for position and trying to take over the country.

Anyone in the upper echelons of the North Korean government would probably be just as bad as Kim and maybe even worse. We can safely assume that the generals surrounding Kim have more knowledge of military strategy and tactics than he does, so if any of them assumed power, they would be better suited for a retaliatory strike against us than ever.

With the North Korean people being totally behind their government, it wouldn't take much for a popular outcry to rise up, demanding that the government launch an attack. Killing of their beloved leader would certainly cause such an outcry to come forth.

So the battle problem is much more complicated than just destroying the missiles or just destroying the nukes. We would literally have to eliminate the ability of the North Koreans to make any sort of retaliatory strike at all. That means eliminating all their nukes, all their missiles, all their leadership and destroying their military's ability to strike at South Korea, all at the same time.

It Might Mean War

I have to say, we, the United States, as well as the rest of the free world, have kicked this problem down the road just about as far as we can. Previous administrations have tried to appease the North Koreans, hoping to prevent us being in the situation we find ourselves in.

But those efforts were clearly unsuccessful. We are now facing a situation where we are likely going to be forced into war, not because of the things that President Trump has been saying, but because of what Kim Jong-un has said.

I'm sure that there are those on the political left who would say that we should just give North Korea what they want. Those were probably some of the same voices or their ideological descendants, who thought we should give Joseph Stalin what he wanted too. The left is always quick to capitulate to evil regimes, not understanding that such a move merely encourages them to demand more.

Some tried that tactic with Hitler, as he made demands for country after country to be "given" to Germany. That caused a world war. Could this cause another such war? I doubt it.

For it to be a world war, North Korea would need other countries on their side; and right now, it appears that they don't have any. Both Russia and China, the two countries that have traditionally backed the North Koreans, seem to be backing off from them and the danger that they represent.

China has been North Korea's biggest ally. During the first part of the Korean War, it was the Chinese who saved the North Koreans from annihilation. Their military had all but been defeated by UN forces, under the command of General MacArthur. That all changed when the Chinese came in, leading to the armistice.

Would the Chinese back North Korea again? That's the big question. They have joined the international community in levying sanctions on the North Koreans, mostly because of pressure from the United States. But how far will that go? We might not know, until the Cold War with North Korea becomes hot again.

Looking at the alternatives, continuing a conventional war with North Korea might be preferable, as horrible an option as that may be. Even so, conventional war with them doesn't preclude the option of them going nuclear. It could just end up being another excuse for them to press the button.

Besides that, North Korea is much better prepared to enter into a restart of conventional war now, than they were in 1950. Literally every adult in the country is part of their military, if not actively serving, than in the reserves. They aren't all armed, like the Israelis, but are expected to pick up the arms of those who fall in battle.

How does one fight against a populace which is ready and willing to give up their lives for their leaders? Any assumption of someone being an innocent civilian has to go out the window; but that goes against the ethos of our military forces, who are trained to conserve and protect innocent

lives.

Yes, we have faced such a situation before, but it is never easy, and our troops have suffered for it. They either held back and were attacked by those they thought to be innocent, or they attacked and were castigated by the press and in the courts.

It becomes a no-win situation for them, even when they win. All we can do is support them and prepare to face whatever will come!



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*This article has been written by **Bill White** for Survivopedia.*