

# Why the US can never attack North Korea

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TOKYO – A little-noted fact about the second nuclear test conducted on May 25 by the Kim Jong-il administration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is that it was a highly successful fission trigger test for multi-megaton warheads.

These types of warheads can be detonated in outer space, far above the United States, evaporating its key targets. This is a significant indication of the supreme leader's game plan for nuclear war with the crippled superpower and its allies, Japan and South Korea.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry on April 29 announced its plan to test-fire what it termed a long-awaited "intercontinental ballistic missile" (ICBM), the first public ICBM test after numerous missile tests, short-range, medium-range, and long-range, were conducted without notice.

On March 9, the General Staff of the nuclear-armed Korean People's Army had begun preparing to launch simultaneous retaliatory strikes on the US, Japan and South Korea in response to their act of war.

Although no appropriate test site for a thermonuclear bomb is available on the Korean Peninsula, North Korean scientists and engineers are confident, as a series of computer simulations have proved that their hydrogen bombs will be operational. The North Korean message is that any soft spots of the US, Japan and South Korea's defense lines will be used as the testing grounds for their thermonuclear weapons.

The Korean Central News Agency said on May 25 that the underground nuclear test was carried out at the request of nuclear scientists and engineers and reported:

The current nuclear test was safely conducted on a new higher level in terms of its explosive power and technology of its control and the results of the test helped satisfactorily settle the scientific and technological problems arising in further increasing the power of nuclear weapons and steadily developing nuclear technology.

John Pike, the founder and director of [globalsecurity.org](http://globalsecurity.org), told the Weekly Standard on October 19, 2006, that the North Korean nuclear test that year may have been a test of a "trigger device" for a much larger hydrogen bomb. Writing in the New York Times on April 7, 2009, he revealed that "North Korea's low-yield nuclear test in October 2006 did "coincide with the sub-kiloton tests of the fission trigger for a hydrogen bomb". He added, "possibly North Korea's hydrogen bombs can be easily fitted on missiles".

The Kim Jong-il administration has developed its global nuclear strike capability primarily as a deterrent to US invasion to keep the Korean Peninsula out of war. Secondly, it needs operational nuclear missiles targeted at US and Japanese targets in the event of a DPRK-US war.

The North Korean state-run newspaper, Minjo Joson, vowed on June 9 to use nuclear weapons in war as “merciless means of offense to deal retaliatory strikes” against anyone who “dares infringe upon the dignity and sovereignty of the DPRK even a bit”.

## Scenario for nuclear war

After shifting to a plan B, Supreme Leader Kim Jong-il has put in place a nuclear game plan as a part of the plan’s military first policy to deal with nuclear rogue state America and its allies South Korea and Japan. (See Kim Jong-il shifts to plan B, Asia Times Online, May 21)

The nuclear game plan is designed firstly to militarily prevent the US from throwing a monkey wrench into the plans of the Kim Jong-il administration for economic prosperity by 2012 – the centenary of the birth of founding father Kim Il-sung – in a bid to complete its membership of the three elite clubs of nuclear, space and economic powers.

Its second aim is to win the hearts and minds of the 70 million Korean people, North, South and abroad, and leave little doubt in their eyes that Kim Jong-il has what it takes to neutralize and phase out the American presence in Korea. This will hasten the divided parts of ancestral Korean land – bequeathed by Dankun 5,000 years ago and Jumon 2,000 years ago – coming together under a confederal umbrella as a reunified state.

It is designed to impress upon the Korean population that Kim Jong-il is a Korean David heroically standing up to the American Goliath, that he can lead the epic effort to settle long-smoldering moral scores with the US over a more than 100-year-old grudge match that dates as far as the 1905 Taft-Katsura Agreement and the 1866 invasion of Korea by the USS General Sherman.

Third, Kim Jong-il has described the shift to plan B as a stern notice for the governments of the US and its junior allies that they cannot get away with their hostile behavior any longer, unless they are prepared to leave their booming economies consumed in a great conflagration of retaliatory thermonuclear attacks.

The game plan assumes that the US is unlikely to shake off its aggressive behavior until it is wiped off this planet. The Barack Obama administration has not taken much time to reveal its true colors, which are no different from the George W Bush administration. There have been four compelling signs:

First, the March 9-20 Key Resolve (Team Spirit) joint war games between the US and South Korea.

Second, the US-led United Nation Security Council’s (UNSC) condemnation of an innocuous April 5 satellite launch.

Third, the rehashing of counterfeit money charges that the US has failed to produce compelling evidence to support. As Newsweek wrote in its June 8 issue, “The Treasury Department couldn’t find a single shred of hard evidence pointing to North Korean production of counterfeit money.”

Fourth, the presence of Bush holdovers in the Obama administration, such as Stuart Levy, the architect of Bush-era financial sanctions intended to criminalize the DPRK.

## Four types of hydrogen bomb raids

The game plan for nuclear war specifies four types of thermonuclear assault: (1) the bombing of operating nuclear power stations; (2) detonations of a hydrogen bombs in seas off the US, Japan and South Korea; (3) detonations of H-bombs in space far above their heartlands; and (4) thermonuclear attacks on their urban centers.

The first attack involves converting operating nuclear power plants on the coastline of the three countries into makeshift multi-megaton H-bombs.

The New York Times on January 24, 1994, quoted Paul Leventhal, president of the Nuclear Control Institute, warning that North Korea could easily launch de-facto hydrogen bomb attacks on South Korea.

“North Korean retaliation to bombing could result in vastly more fallout in the South than in the North ... North Korean retaliatory bombing could bring Chernobyls multiplied.”

If bombed, one average operating nuclear power station is estimated to spew out as much deadly fallout as 150-180 H-bombs. Bombing one nuclear power station would render the Japanese archipelago and South Korea uninhabitable. Doing the same to the US may require bombing one plant on its west coast and another on its east coast.

Nothing is easier than bombing a power plant on a coastline. There is no need to use a ballistic missile. Primitive means will do the job.

The US has 103 operating nuclear power stations with onsite storage of a huge quantity of spent fuel rods and Japan has 53 operating atomic power stations. Japan has a stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium – enough to assemble more than 1,000 atomic bombs in a short period of time. South Korea has 20 operating nuclear power stations with onsite storage of a huge quantity of spent fuel rods.

The detonation of sea-borne or undersea H-bombs planted on the three countries’ continental shelves will trigger nuclear tsunamis with devastating consequences.

A 2006 RAND study of a ship-based 10-kiloton nuclear blast on the Port of Long Beach had some harrowing conclusions:

“Within the first 72 hours, the attack would devastate a vast portion of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Because ground-burst explosions generate particularly large amounts of highly radioactive debris, fallout from the blast would cause much of the destruction. In some of the most dramatic possible outcomes:

Sixty thousand people might die instantly from the blast itself or quickly thereafter from radiation poisoning.

One hundred and fifty thousand more might be exposed to hazardous levels of radioactive water and sediment from the port, requiring emergency medical treatment.

The blast and subsequent fires might completely destroy the entire infrastructure and all ships in the Port of Long Beach and the adjoining Port of Los Angeles.

Six million people might try to evacuate the Los Angeles region.

Two to three million people might need relocation because fallout will have contaminated a 500-square-kilometer area.

Gasoline supplies might run critically short across the entire region because of the loss of Long Beach's refineries – responsible for one-third of the gas west of the Rocky Mountains.

RAND projects that the economic costs would exceed \$1 trillion.

The third possible attack, a high-altitude detonation of hydrogen bombs that would create a powerful electromagnetic pulse (EMP), would disrupt the communications and electrical infrastructure of the US, the whole of Japan, and South Korea.

Many of the essential systems needed to survive war would be knocked out, as computers are instantly rendered malfunctioning or unusable. Military and communications systems such as radars, antennas, and missiles, government offices, would be put out of use, as would energy sources such as nuclear power stations and transport and communications systems including airports, airplanes, railways, cars and cell phones.

Ironically the ubiquity of high-tech computing gadgets in the US, Japan and South Korea has made them most vulnerable to EMP attacks.

The last and fourth attack would be to order into action a global nuclear strike force of dozens of MIRVed ICBMs – each bearing a thermonuclear warhead on a prefixed target.

The Yongbyon nuclear site has always been a decoy to attract American attention and bring it into negotiations on a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War. Since as far back as the mid-1980, North Korea has assembled 100-300 nuclear warheads in an ultra-clandestine nuclear weapons program. The missiles can be mounted on medium-range missiles designed to be nuclear capable.

A prototype ICBM was assembled by the end of the 1980s. Two prototype ICBMs were test-fired on May 29, 1993, with one splashing down off Honolulu and the other off Guam. The Kim Jong-il administration gave an advance notice to the US government of the long-range missile test. But the American reaction was skeptical.

In April 2001, the Associated Press quoted Navy representative Mark Kirk's "terrifying encounter in 1993 with what seemed possible nuclear attack" from North Korea. He recalled:

It was a no notice, no warning missile launch out of North Korea, and for the first and only time in my career in the NMJIC [National Military Joint Intelligence Center], I got to see all of the panoply of the United States military wake up in a few seconds.

We did not know what kind of missile it was, so the impact area, at the beginning, was the entire United States, and you thought about what we might be doing in the next 12 minutes: would we be notifying the president that we had lost an American city? We were going to know the answer in 12 minutes.

At first it still included the Pacific Coast, then it included Hawaii.

AP added: "Little was made of the 1993 launch at the time because it wasn't determined until later that it likely flew over Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean, Kirk said."

It was not until 1998 that the US notified the Japanese government of the flyover of a North Korean long-range missile before splashing down off Hawaii. The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration quietly labeled the 1998 satellite launch a success.

According to a February 12, 2003, AP report, US intelligence had concluded a few years earlier that North Korea has a ballistic missile capable of hitting the western United States and possibly targets farther inland.

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(Courtesy to Kim Myong Chol.)