

## **KOREA CHAIR PLATFORM**

### What Must Be Done About North Korea

By General B. B. Bell (Retired)  
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When I served as the senior military commander in Korea between the years 2006 and 2008, I thought the issues with North Korea and with the U.S.- South Korean Alliance were very daunting. North Korea exploded their first nuclear weapon and repeatedly launched missiles to test Alliance resolve. North Korean naval challenges and incursions along the Maritime Northern Limit Line were frequent and very disturbing. North's Korea's rhetoric was offensive and threatening, with almost daily proclamations about bringing a firestorm onto the South.

Meanwhile, in the South many Korean citizens were exhibiting their displeasure with the United States and the Alliance. Almost daily, there were demonstrations proclaiming that U.S. forces were carelessly polluting the land, or that U.S. beef was infecting the population, or that U.S. Forces personnel were drunken, drug crazed renegades.

There was a precipitous directed downsizing of Republic of Korea military forces in the face of a very threatening North Korean army. Also, there was pressure from Washington to further downsize the number of U.S. military personnel and units stationed on the Peninsula. Disagreement between Washington and Seoul regarding security policy and the future of the Alliance was common and frequent. Demonstrations in Seoul proclaimed that the United States Forces should go home.

Those were very complicated days for us all, and as Combined Forces Commander, I worried about them every day, and I worried about them a great deal. The two nations, the United States and South Korea, appeared to be heading in opposite directions. Nonetheless in looking with clear eyes at the situation in the region today -- just over two years later -- I suppose I could conclude that the days of my service there were perhaps "the good old days."

Today, many of the challenges between South Korea and the U.S. have been or are being resolved. Our relationship has regained strength and the South Korean citizenry frequently demonstrates their friendship with and support for the United States. However, the challenges put forth by the North have been growing and growing significantly. The situation is indeed more dangerous now than it has been in some years.

All Korea watchers know what is going on with provocations and attacks on South Korean sovereignty by the North, ranging from the recent sinking of the Cheonan patrol ship and the loss of 46 sailors, to the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, with the loss of both

Marines and innocent civilians. We all now know about the North's secret Highly Enriched Uranium program which was clearly ongoing clandestinely at the same time as the now defunct nuclear disarmament agreement coming out of the Six Party Talks process.

We know about what surely must have been North Korean assistance to the Syrian development of a probable weapon's grade plutonium producing reactor, which thankfully was bombed and destroyed by the Israelis

This secret nuclear proliferation, in violation of international sanctions, was also ongoing during the supposed good days of engagement and peaceful coexistence between the North and South. We know about the Taepodong two and three stage missile development program. We know about North Korea's long standing military first policy, a policy which keeps a huge military capability, far beyond any realistic defense needs of the regime, while denying the civilian population the basic necessities of wellness, happiness, and even life.

Indeed, we all know that North Korea is a belligerent rogue aberration of history, which has repeatedly proven that it cannot be trusted, and with whom good faith negotiations are simply not possible. I will repeat myself. In the current environment and with the continuing leadership of Kim Jung Il, good faith negotiations are simply not possible with North Korea.

The North's strategy is clear, and it has been repeatedly and predictably demonstrated over the past decades -- they conduct provocations, short of general war, until there is a crisis environment, thus, in their view, compelling South Korea and the United States to come to the negotiating table to defuse the situation and grant the North concessions. This strategy of brinkmanship can no longer be tolerated and can no longer be rewarded. The North has gone too far -- way too far. Too many South Korean lives have been lost. Not only is the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea being tested and violated by the North, but the very viability and credibility of the Alliance is on the line.

It is time for all nations in the region, including China, to wake up to the realities of North Korea. Sixteen years of failed diplomacy since the signing of the Framework Agreement have resulted in a nuclear armed North Korea, more belligerent than at any time since the signing of the Armistice. It is time to change course. It is time to recognize the threat that North Korea poses to the entire region, and yes to the world. It is time to confront and contain North Korea with military might, total economic sanctions, and resolute diplomacy.

Towards this end, I was heartened by and thankful for the proclamations made by South Korean President Lee Myung Bak in his address to the nation following the Yeonpyeong Island shelling. I applaud President Lee's statement that, "If the North commits any additional provocations against the South, we will make sure that it pays a dear price without fail."

I can also state that from my discussions with leader in Seoul, it is clear that the South Korea and United States military and civilian leaders are working well together to ensure that the sovereignty and security of South Korea is preserved, and that appropriate responses to North Korea provocations and aggression are planned and ready for execution. The cooperation and coordination is very impressive, and South Korean citizens should be comforted by that.

From my perspective, I believe that South Korea and the United States should immediately adopt the following policies regarding relations with North Korea:

First, announce that as long as Kim Jung Il remains in power in the North, all efforts towards engagement, negotiations, and reconciliation are suspended. Now is the time for the Alliance to show strength, and it must not negotiate or compromise with an individual who since March of this year has ruthlessly and without warning killed dozens of South Korean citizens -- 46 sailors, 2 marines, and 2 innocent civilians, while grievously wounding dozens more. Negotiations are simply not possible with a leader who never abides by the agreements he makes, while recklessly wielding military power.

Next, announce and enforce a policy of containment and economic embargo. The Alliance must show strength and work with all other parties in the region, the United Nations, and the world community to contain and further isolate the North. Bargaining and engaging with North Korea in hopes that they will end their belligerency in exchange for economic assistance or other concessions is misguided.

Additionally, it is important for South Korea to fully recognize that the citizens of the North are not hearing the truth about the regime of Kim Jung Il, nor are they hearing the truth about the potential for their own economic advancement and personal wellness which would result from a reunified, free and democratic Korea. As such, South Korea should immediately and without hesitation re-initiate a long term strategic communications campaign aimed at reaching all North Korean citizens. The campaign should be designed to provide the citizens of the North with the truth about their own government's threat to regional peace, and the opportunities for freedom, economic growth, quality of life, and wellness that await them in a reunified Korea.

Next, we must enforce the Proliferation Security Initiative -- the PSI -- vigorously as it relates to North Korea. We must prevent the North from internationally dealing in nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons technology, and nuclear weapon delivery systems. As long as Kim Jung Il is in power, they will continue to attempt to do this, and they must be stopped.

Also, the Allies must for now abandon the Six Party Talks process. This process has failed and any notion that North Korea might return to the talks and negotiate in good faith is absurd. Their proven track record demonstrates that they will not. As long as Kim Jung Il is in power, the Six Party Talks process is dead, and both the United States and the Republic of Korea should give the talks an official funeral.

Once there is a change of leadership in the North and a new leader solidifies power, the five parties of the six party process should reengage with him to determine North Korean intentions and his desire for meaningful negotiations. Then and only then is there a possibility to restart the Six Party Talk process. It would be appropriate for the five parties -- the United States, the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, and Russia -- to meet now and agree on a united view to contain North Korea; but any notion of bringing North Korea back into a Six Party Talks format should not be permitted at this time.

Lastly, the Allies should clearly reestablish with the North and other regional players that reunification is the only right and proper course for the Korean people. A permanent division of the two Koreas is just as unacceptable as it was for the two Germanys. Anything that furthers the notion of a permanent division, such as recognizing North Korea as a separate nation or signing a peace treaty with them outside the provisions of the Armistice Agreement, should not be discussed by either the United States or the Republic of Korea. A reunified democratic nation of one Korean people is the right answer for Northeast Asia, and it can help lead the region and the world to a more permanent situation of peace and stability. This must be our most outspoken and well articulated policy.

In the context of confronting and containing the North, I believe it is prudent for South Korea to state clearly that it is terminating all efforts to downsize the South Korean Army. Additionally, the South Korea should strengthen their Marine Corps with modern and mobile command and control systems; and it should improve the capability of South Korean Warplanes to deliver precision munitions.

South Korea should procure ground based missile defense systems and fully integrate them with United States missile defense capability. South Korea should vigorously train and exercise its forces in both joint and combined exercises to respond immediately and resolutely to further North Korean provocations.

And, while the U.S. led Combined Forces Command is fully prepared to conduct combat operations to defeat North Korea in a large general war, South Korea needs its own standing joint task force headquarters for smaller scale strike missions to be conducted principally by South Korean forces, in coordination with the United States. As such, South Korea should form, equip, and train a Standing Joint Task Force Headquarters capable of synchronizing selected combat power from all the South Korean military services, and conducting limited but powerful retaliatory strike missions in response to North Korean military provocations and aggression.

For its part, the United States should immediately return an Army attack helicopter battalion to South Korea. This would be the quickest and most effective way to strengthen the U.S. military contribution in defense of the South Korea, while sending a powerful Alliance message to Pyongyang and any other regional troublemakers. Land exercises between the South Korea and U.S. should increasingly include U.S. combat

units deployed from the United States, and U.S. forward bases in the region. Naval exercises, including U.S. carriers, should be ramped up and conducted more frequently.

An additional U.S. Air Force combat fighter squadron could be forward deployed to Korea, while additional elements of U.S. bomber capability should be forward deployed in the region.

The Alliance must quickly show strength and resolution to the North, we must do it now, and it has to be more than just words and a single naval exercise in the West (Yellow) Sea.

Also, the Alliance must stop threatening retaliation -- unless it means it. Again, I am heartened by President Lee's recent speech. Frankly, the North likely sees little credibility in past statements that there will be military retaliation to further provocations, when indeed there have been none. While we all know that military retaliation can potentially lead to uncontrolled escalation and a deepening military crisis, it is nonetheless my sense that military retaliation to North Korean aggression is needed and necessary in the future.

This year alone the North has attacked a sovereign South Korean warship and sovereign South Korean territory. The next time the North attacks, there should be an immediate and properly measured asymmetric retaliatory military strike by South Korea. Allowing North Korea to attack the South with no counter-strike consequences sends a message of weakness and timidity to Kim Jung Il. It clearly emboldens him to conduct further attacks in hopes of bringing the Allies to the bargaining table. For now, the only way to respond to attacks by Kim Jung Il is with measured and focused steel and fire.

Now, let me address the South Korean – U.S. Security Alliance itself. Where is it now, and what should it look like in the future? For the past ten years, it is my assessment that the Alliance has remained marginally effective, but it has drifted. Efforts by the North to weaken the Alliance have regrettably had some effect. In the past, some South Korean citizens have even opined that the United States is a larger threat to peace in the region than is Kim Jung Il.

Meanwhile, many in the U.S. have understandably focused on radical Islamic jihad terrorism, and thus their minds have not been properly concentrated on Northeast Asia, and our long standing friend, ally, and economic partner, the Republic of Korea -- ROK (South Korea).

However, the facts are clear. Northeast Asia is enormously important to the United States from both a security and economic perspective. Indeed, America's economic strength depends more on this area of the world than on any other. Further, the long term Security Alliance between the ROK and the U.S. has ensured peace on the Korean Peninsula since the signing of the Armistice, and provided an environment in which

South Korea has been able to become a leading world economic and social power. This is good. It is very good.

Last, the U.S. owes South Korea our continuous support and strongest security guarantee. We all know that following World War II, the U.S. was not as clear and resolute as it should have been regarding our readiness to help the South Koreans defend themselves.

Recall Secretary of State Dean Acheson's 12 January 1950 National Press Club "Asian Defensive Perimeter" speech which many argue emboldened North Korea to attack the South with the help of Russia and China. Today, however, we -- South Korea and the United States -- are blood brothers and sisters, with a relationship forged in war and culturally and economically cemented over the years since the Armistice. Because of the renewed threat posed by North Korea, there can be no more drifting by either the United States or the Republic of Korea.

In this context, I believe strongly that the military relationship must continue to evolve and mature. Shifting wartime military operational control (OPCON) of South Korean forces from the United States to South Korean military leaders makes sense to me, and it is right and proper for a sovereign nation like the ROK to directly command her own forces in wartime. After serving as CFC Commander for nearly two and a half years, I am convinced that the Generals and Admirals who lead the ROK military are among the finest set of military leaders in the world.

While I support our national leaders' decision to postpone OPCON transfer from 2012 until 2015, I do not believe that threats, intimidation or provocations from a rogue North Korea should stand in the way of executing the transfer, which has been the case in the past. The Korean people must know that the Alliance will remain as strong as it has been since the Korean War, even after wartime OPCON transfer is completed.

Let me conclude with some comments about China. We all understand the role and influence of China in Northeast Asia. We all appreciate China's economic strength. We recognize that China is America's second leading trading partner and clearly a key trading partner for South Korea. Furthermore, we all know that China keeps North Korea afloat with economic and diplomatic support and assistance.

Over the last several decades our diplomats have insisted that while China clearly desires to maintain the status quo on the Korean Peninsula with a divided Korea, China likewise would rein in North Korea and prevent it from instigating lethal provocations which might fully destabilize the Peninsula and potentially lead to general war.

Over the last year, however, China has failed totally in reining in the North Koreans. While China says it wants to play an important role in securing peace and stability in Northeast Asia, it has not acted responsibly in its relationship with North Korea. Either the Chinese want to see a more provocative and aggressive North Korea fully destabilize the region, or they are totally unable to control North Korea's behavior. In either case,



China has failed in its leadership role to help maintain peace and stability in Northeast Asia. For whatever reason, China is allowing North Korea to execute its rogue nation assaults on South Korea.

China is culpable in the current crisis. In spite of both the United States' and the Republic of Korea's important economic ties with China, they have failed in their role as responsible leaders in the region. There is only one conclusion to be drawn regarding China. China is not being helpful in reining in Kim Jung Il and his rogue regime. Indeed, China may be encouraging North Korea's rogue behavior.

The United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan must take the lead to contain and punish North Korea. We must continue to ask for and seek China's assistance, but as long as China refuses to be helpful, the three partners -- South Korea, Japan and the United States, must deal with the situation as it presents itself. We must tell the Chinese clearly that we need and want their help; but that regardless of their decisions we must contain and indeed when necessary confront North Korea, and, as such, we are implementing the policies I have proposed.

If and when China decides to exercise mature leadership and responsible engagement with North Korea, we could reconsider our decisions. Until then, the North is simply too dangerous for us to sit idly by. We must take the resolute actions I've proposed.

*General B. B. Bell retired from the United States Army in 2008 after 39 years of military service. From 2006 to 2008, General Bell served as the Commander of United States Forces in Korea as well as Commander of all Allied Forces in Korea.*

*The Office of the Korea Chair invites essays for consideration for the Platform. For inquiries, please email [KoreaChair@CSIS.org](mailto:KoreaChair@CSIS.org).*

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