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North Korea - Yes, You Have Our Attention

By Richard Stoyeck

North Korea has tested a low yield nuclear device with 4% of the destructive power of the bomb that the United States dropped on Hiroshima, Japan at the end of World War II.

Some believe that the device was much larger but may have failed for technical reasons.

We don't know the truth, because the United States has not devoted the resources to know what is really going on. If you are surprised, don't be. Intelligence collection is a tricky business.

When Richard Nixon was President, you may remember that one of our ships, the USS Pueblo was brazenly attacked and hijacked in international waters in 1968, off the coast of North Korea. The 82 member crew was taken prisoner and tortured over an 11 month period before their release was negotiated.

There is such a thing as institutional memory. The senior members of the military remember the Pueblo incident well, and it still influences our behavior towards North Korea. As an aside, President Nixon gave the order to attack North Korea in retribution for the Pueblo incident. At the time the President believed a show of force was absolutely necessary to dissuade the Koreans from further provocative acts. Nixon's Secretary of Defense at the time did not carry out the Presidential directive. To the end of his life, Nixon felt the biggest foreign policy error of his administration was the failure to carry out a retaliatory raid against North Korea for the Pueblo capture. The Pueblo incident has emboldened the North Koreans ever since.

Both the Clinton and Bush Administrations were aware of the Pueblo incident and its aftermath, when attempting to configure a new US policy towards North Korea's nuclear program. We have 37,000 American soldiers stationed in South Korea protecting our alliance and interests with South Korea. There is a phased troop withdrawal from the South Korea Peninsula taking place.

You have to wonder why we are willing to withdraw troops from South Korea during a time when they wish to pursue a nuclear development process. The answer is that this area of the world is loaded with dynamite, and if it blows up, you don't want to have 37,000 American troops sitting in the middle of it.

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North Korea has one of the largest stockpiles of artillery weapons of any army in the world. They are capable of striking Seoul, South Korea's capital from across the border.

It was recently reported that Prince Bandar, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States had a private conversation with President Bush. In the conversation the Prince told the President that the United States should withdraw US troops from South Korea. Bandar felt it was too dangerous to leave our soldiers in the middle of a possible confrontation where our OPTIONS would be limited. As Bandar put it, without troops on the border, if there's problem, it's a REGIONAL PROBLEM. With troops, you could have thousands of American lives at risk, and it becomes a major WAR instantly.

So what do we do about the North Koreans announcing the ACTUAL testing of a nuclear weapon? We have to realize that words have power. We have to be careful what we say. President Bush announced the "axis of evil" speech several years ago. He named North Korea and Iraq as two of the three countries. It would seem that he started his anti-terrorism campaign in the wrong end of the world.

Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction (WMD), while North Korea has gone live with them. Now we are in a bind. Our defense policy has been altered whereby we can only fight one war in one country at a time, while fighting a holding action in a second country. Prior to the Bush Administration holding power, we were postured to fight two simultaneous wars on two fronts.

The bad guys know our new policy and will take advantage of us being pinned down in Iraq to expand their own power bases. Since we have a fear of losing pilots or better yet, having a pilot shot down, we are not doing the reconnaissance flights that we would normally do over North Korea.

The best thing to do right now is to realize that if North Korea is a problem for the United States, it is a much bigger problem for Japan, China, Philippines, and South Korea. This is a regional problem in spite of our alliances, and treaty involvements. Its one thing to build and detonate a nuclear weapon, it's quite another to have a long range missile delivery system. North Korea could fairly easily develop a delivery system capable of hitting the countries in its immediate vicinity.

Hitting the United States from a 9,000 mile plus distance is another story, not so easy really. Since the countries bordering North Korea have the most to lose, they should be the ones bearing the brunt of the responsibility for multi-lateral talks among the powers involved.

The real deal is that North Korea is a dictatorship that routinely starves its own people for the benefit of the small leadership that has basically enslaved the country. This leadership wants to play the cards that it can. What it now has is nuclear weapons. They will use this card to maximize whatever concessions they can from the United States and the immediate surrounding neighbors.

Are we going to cave, and make concessions to the North Koreans? Of course we are, because that's what superpowers do. It's not about appeasement, it's about business, and what makes good business sense. Churchill said that "People have friends, nations have interests".

It is in our interest to not divert ourselves from the issue of extricating ourselves from a tortuous situation in Iraq. It is costing us treasure, and beginning to eat at the social fabric our country as Viet

Nam did a generation ago. We must put a good face on Iraq and get out. The President may not be aware of it, but he is on a short leash in Iraq. The American people are very intolerant of wars without objectives that last too long, and that's precisely where George Bush finds himself. It is highly questionable that his party will survive the mid-term elections intact. The country will embrace CHANGE, even from a Democratic party that is devoid of ideas.

Richard Stoyeck's background includes being a limited partner at Bear Stearns, Senior VP at Lehman Brothers, Kuhn Loeb, Arthur Andersen, and KPMG. Educated at Pace University, NYU, and Harvard University, today he runs Rockefeller Capital Partners and

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Get Intimate With Asia: Travel To Korea

By Frank Johnson

South Korea is one of the smaller nations in Asia, with a size comparable to the state of Indiana. What it lacks in size it makes up for in abundant culture, turbulent history, exquisite cuisine and a generous and welcoming society.

If you want to experience South Korea's rich culture, history, and cuisine, be sure to find discount airfare to Korea. cFares is a great place to find deals on wholesale travel to Korea. cFares offers amazing travel deals and discount airfare to Korea that just can't be found anywhere else. So if you looking to book a flight to Korea but want the best deal possible, check out cFares for discount airfare to Korea. Wholesale travel to Korea is the answer to finding the best travel deal.

A Little Background before You Travel to Korea

The Korean peninsula has been literally and figuratively stuck between a rock and a hard place, namely Japan and China, for most of its existence. The region was prosperous under the three kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla during the first four centuries AD until the Mongolians raided the land and built an empire. The 16th century brought the end of the Mongolian Empire and the beginning of a massive game of tug-of-war between China and Japan over the strategic landmass. After World War II Korea finally broke free from Japan, with the USSR managing the North and the United States occupying the South. Today the North and South are two sovereign nations separated by a demilitarized zone. South Korea is officially known as the Republic of Korea (ROK) and commonly referred to simply as Korea.

There's Still Soul in Seoul

Despite the fact that Seoul was largely burned to the ground during the Korean War (1950–53), the northern part of the capital city is still home to hundreds of spectacular palaces and shrines. The Chosun Dynasty's Gyeongbokgung Palace is a 5.4 million square foot landmark with a 500-year

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history and stands among the remaining four palaces in Seoul. Nearly an entire day is necessary to explore the regal palace in all its magnificence. The Jongmyo Royal Shrine is a perfect next stop, as it was where the Chosun Dynasty worshipped. On the first Sunday of May each year a traditional memorial ceremony is held at the Shrine with all the grandeur of the occasion 500 years past.

The southern part of Seoul is the commercial center of the city and boasts a fascinating blend of traditional and hyper-modern architecture. It is also home to World Cup Stadium, intricately weaving shopping streets and even an amusement park, Lotte World. Make sure to visit the city gates, and then venture beyond into the strikingly lush and green landscape to travel Korea more personally.

When to Travel to Korea

Korea has a temperate climate, which results in heavier rain in the summer months (July and August) and a drier winter. Winter is white and snowy all over Korea and the ski season from November to March is extremely popular. There are 13 ski resorts in South Korea alone! After a day on the slopes it is common to relax in one of the many spas with natural hot spring baths. Summer is extremely crowded and very wet in Korea. For milder weather it is best to travel Korea in the spring or fall.

Traveling to South Korea any time of year is sure to be an exciting and rewarding experience, regardless of the weather!

For additional information on travel to Korea and other parts of Asia, visit

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