

Glimmer of Korean sunshine amongst dark regional clouds?

Tim Beal

NZIIA, Auckland

20 March 2013

What's behind the headlines?

The New Zealand Herald

[National](#) [World](#) [Business](#) [Sport](#) [Technology](#) [Enter](#)

Live updates: Black Caps v England - 2nd test... read more

World [Next Article: Japan marks catastrophe as](#)

North Korea threatens war

10:35 AM Tuesday Mar 12, 2013 [☆ Save](#) [f](#) 299 [t](#) 13 [in](#)



"North Korea threatens war." NZ Herald, 12 March 2013. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10870654

Overview

- Reality check
 - Facts and figures to set the scene
- Framework of analysis
 - Location, history, and political dynamics
- Positions and policies
 - China, Russia, Japan, DPRK, US, ROK
- Current crisis
- Prospects and hopes

Reality check – facts and figures

- 12 December 2012 DPRK launches satellite
- Questions

How many attempts?

- ?
- Five
 - 1 August 1998
 - 2 April 2009
 - 3 April 2012
 - 4 December 2012

What other countries had satellite launch capability?

(on that day)

- Nine (or so)

– 1	Soviet Union	1957
– 2	United States	1958
– 3	France	1965
– 4	Japan	1970
– 5	China	1970
– 6	United Kingdom	1971
– 7	India	1980
– 8	Israel	1988
– —	Russia[1]	1992
– —	Ukraine[1]	1992
– 9	Iran	2009

Which country joined the club recently?

- South Korea on 30 January

How many attempts?

- ?
- 3 and a bit
 - 2009
 - 2011
 - 2012 (cancelled)
 - 2013

How many countries have been censured by the UNSC for launching satellites?

- One
- North Korea

What happened 13 February 2013?

- North Korea conducted nuclear test
 - (in response to US-initiated UNSC condemnation on 22 January of satellite launch)
- How many tests?
- Three

On that day how many tests by other countries?

- Six – India, Pakistan
- 45 – China, UK (Australia?)
- 210 – France
- 715 – Soviet Union
- And, the clear winner?
- United States – 1054

Tests and the rest

- Israel has many nuclear weapons but has not conducted tests
 - (help from friends?)
- Only NK currently conducts physical tests
- Countries with well-tested nuclear weapons (eg US) use sub-critical tests and computer simulations
 - They don't let their nuclear weapons get rusty

How many countries have been censured by the UNSC for nuclear testing (or having nuclear weapons)?

- One
- North Korea

Who threatens whom?

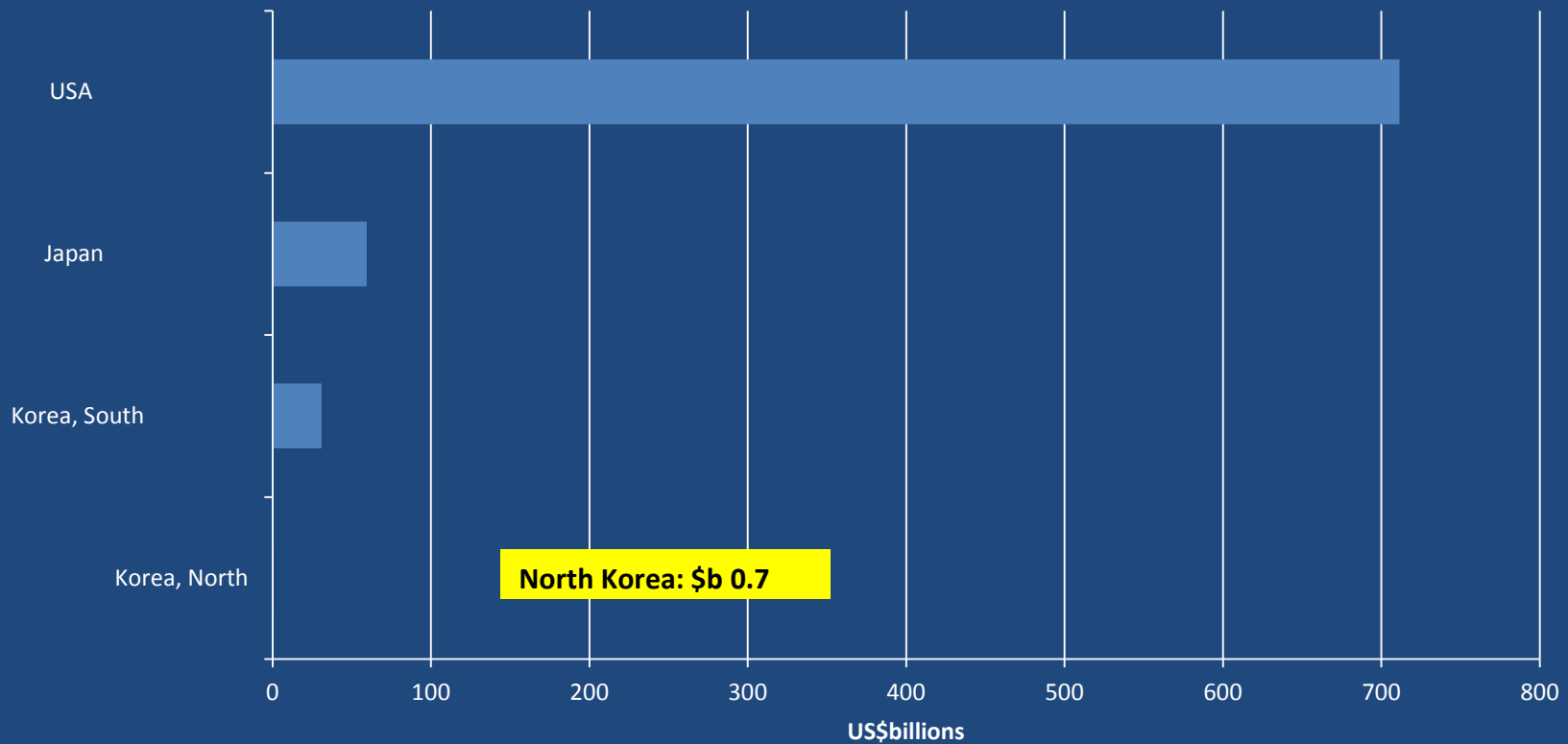
- Lots of hysterical comment and spurious figures around
- Eg Submarines
 - US #1 – 71
 - NK #2 -70
 - "Total submarine strength by country." <http://www.globalfirepower.com/navy-submarines.asp>.
- But
- US – nuclear powered nuclear armed submarines capable of destroying most of world
- NK – small old submarines for coastal defence

Military capacity

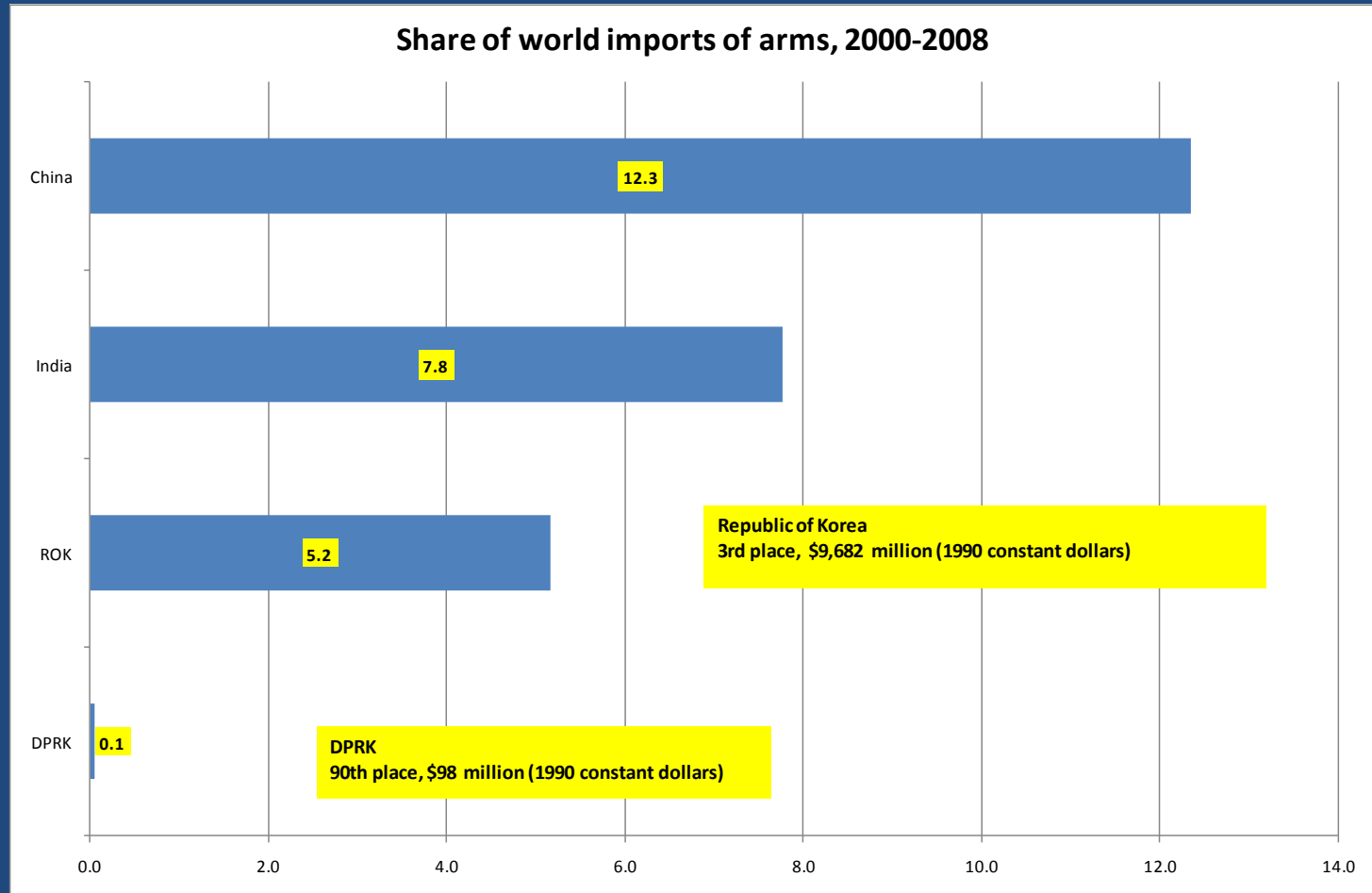
- Relative military capacity can be difficult to pin down
- Governments don't tell the truth (up or down)
- Apples and oranges
- NK has lot of people under arms
 - Iraq showed numbers can be meaningless
 - Poorly equipped
 - Poorly trained (have to run farms and factories), lack of fuel, ammunition
 - Good for defence, not for offense

Military expenditure

Military expenditure 2011



Share of world imports of arms, 2000-8



Reality>>rational analysis

- Subject fraught with hysterical comment
- Dominion Post, Wellington
 - Lock up your daughters! Armageddon is coming!
- Understanding, and solutions, need dispassionate, informed analysis
- >>framework for analysis

Importance

- Meaningful analytical framework *plus*
- Attention to basic facts *plus*
- Healthy scepticism towards official propaganda *plus*
- Robust common sense =
- Ability to make some sense of what is going on
- Starting point

Starting point

- No definitive answers, but
- Discriminate between plausible and implausible, the likely and the unlikely
- Privileges the negative (null hypothesis)
 - Disproves rather than proves
- We know what is not true, but not necessarily what is true
- Eg Invasion of Iraq 2003
 - Easy to see official explanations (WMD, Al Qaeda, imminent threat) were false
 - Never be certain about real reasons, motives, objectives

Framework for analysis

- Three components
- Location
- History
- Contemporary political dynamics

Location, Location

Korean peninsula is where US, China, Russia, Japan intersect and contend



Conduit and dagger

Buddhism, writing, Confucianism...invasion both directions



Strategic location

- Mongols needed Korea for invasion of Japan
- Japan needed Korea for invasion of Asia
- 1945 – US divided Korea to have a buffer against Communist contagion
- Need continues today as containment of China
 - Division of Korea>>tension>>justifies US presence
- China (+ Russia) want NK as buffer against US
 - But also want stability

Location dilemma

- Korea's location produces dilemma shared by other similar countries eg Belgium, Sweden
- How to cope with powerful neighbours
- Two broad strategies
 - Collaboration
 - >>>Autonomy with nominal tributary fealty
 - Independence
 - Play one off against another

Two exemplars

- Kim Il Sung
- Park Chung-hee

Kim Il Sung

- Anti-Japanese guerrilla leader
- Established independent state (DPRK)
 - Last Chinese soldiers left in 1958
- Played Soviet Union/Russia off against China
- Wanted good relations with US, Japan but on the basis of independence

Park Chung-hee

- Served in Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria
 - Wrote letter to emperor in his own blood
- Bumpy ride in post-Liberation ROK but seized power in 1961
- US client
 - ROK only survived because of American military and treasure
 - Sending troops to Vietnam was major source of foreign exchange earnings in 1960s
- But.....

Park Chung-hee 2

- Developed strong economy on basis of export-led growth
 - Still lagged behind DPRK
- Stressed self-reliance and followed Japanese example rather than American advice
- Carved out considerable degree of autonomy
- Neither he, nor successors have achieved independence
 - ROK military still under wartime control of US

Independence or collaboration?

- Collaborators have bad reputation if they are on the losing side
 - If Germany had won the war Quisling and Petain would have been hailed as statesmen
- In reality a complex matter
- Subordination not necessarily subservience
 - Karzai
- Negotiated relationship within a specific context
 - Eg position of client strengthened if alternatives for hegemon are worse

Continuities of history

- Kim Jong Un – grandson of Kim Il Sung
- Park Geun-hye – daughter of Park Chung-hee
- And in Japan.....
- Abe Shinzo
- Grandson of Kishi Nobusuke
 - , who is not only Abe's revered grandfather but was a key planner of Japan's empire in the 1930s, member of Tojo's wartime cabinet and for three years an unindicted Class "A" war criminal, before becoming Prime Minister between 1957 and 1960.
 - » McCormack, Gavan. "Abe Days Are Here Again: Japan in the World." *The Asia Pacific Journal* 10, no. 52, No. 1 (1 December 2012).

Policies and positions of the main actors

- North Korea
- China
- Russia
- Japan
- US
- South Korea

Making sense of North Korea

- Problem of epistemology
- NK's propaganda/communication capability abysmal
 - Partly matter of resources (eg translators)
- US is superb
 - Huge outflow of expert opinion/commentary saying the same thing in different ways
 - Dominates the world media, much of academia
 - Fashions the way we think about the world, establishes the paradigms
 - Virtually everything we read/hear about NK (and most other things) *originates* in the minds of US officials

Despite that.....

- It is not too difficult
- Given the situation the options are very limited
 - Surrender to the US, become a Chinese protectorate, or continue current strategy
- Cliché of NK being ‘unpredictable’
- In fact it is very predictable
 - There are few choices

North Korea's predicament

- Before collapse of Soviet Union NK economy did very well
- Star of developing world
 - Ahead of SK, and China
 - Until the early to mid 1980s
- Loss of SU meant that it had to cope in US-dominated global economy
 - US sanctions since 1950s

Economic free-fall

- Economy went into free fall
 - Eg agriculture was industrialised so lack of industrial inputs (oil, fertiliser, spare parts..) was catastrophic
- Rapprochement with US had been policy aim since 1960s but now became imperative
- If NK is to really rehabilitate economy it needs a non-hostile US
 - Limited recovery mainly due to increased Chinese trade and investment

North Korea's survival objectives

- Small, vulnerable, threatened country with few options
- Prime foreign policy objective is to force US into peaceful coexistence (regime survival)
 - Lifting of sanctions (physical, financial)
 - Removal of military threat
 - Normal state-to-state relations (no 'hostility')
 - Aid

Doing nothing is not an option

- NK criticised for nuclear weapons programme but it appears that it is the only thing that gets the US talking
- US sanctions/hostility long pre-dated nuclear programme
- Obama's policy of 'strategic patience'
 - i.e. no negotiations
- Test>>>flurry of calls to negotiate

US diplomatic experts speak on need for dialogue with North Korea

Posted on : Mar.9,2013 12:25 KST Modified on : Mar.9,2013 12:28 KST + - 呂



Stephen Bosworth argues for engagement on a broader basis than simple denuclearization

By Park Hyun, Washington correspondent

In a hearing on North Korean policy held in the US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee on Mar. 7 (EST), current and former representatives at the six-party talks spoke of the necessity of dialogue with North Korea.

Glyn T. Davies, the US State Department's special representative for North Korea, was among those testifying at



Will it work?

- NK strategy of prodding US into negotiations may not work
- Is there an alternative?

Aspirations

- Friendly relations with US to counterbalance China
- Aspirations of any other modern country
 - Security, prosperity
 - Soccer + IT

China

- Peaceful rise main priority
- Avoid giving US cause/excuse/pretext for conflict
- Korean peninsula is most likely place for conflict
- Stability on peninsula essential
- Keep US away from border
- Has issued warnings to US that it will support NK if invaded
- But also chastises NK

China's dilemma

- Does not want NK swallowed up by SK
 - Extension of US empire to borders of China
 - Conflict with US almost inevitable
- Time for a commercial

Read all about it

Crisis in Korea: America, China, and the Risk of War –Updates and Appendices - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.timbeal.net.nz/Crisis_in_Korea/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Norton Safe Web Identity Safe

Favorites Suggested Sites 1. WildTangent ORB 2. Norton Security Cent... Get more Add-ons

Bombardment of Yeonpye... Crisis in Korea: America...

Crisis in Korea: America, China, and the Risk of War

Tim Beal



- [Description](#)
- [Foreword and table of contents](#)

Available from good bookshops worldwide, such as [Arthur Probsthain's in London](#), from [Amazon](#), or direct from the publisher and agents:

- [Direct from Pluto](#)
- [Australia and NZ](#)
- [United States](#)

- [North Korea: The Struggle against American Power](#)
Pluto Press, 2005

- [Updates](#) Articles and blogs
- [Viewpoints](#) Relevant quotes from across the spectrum
- [Events](#) Launches, presentations, and interviews
- [Appendices](#) Appendices to the book
- [Reviews](#)

Done Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

5:44 p.m. 20/03/2012

China's dilemma 2

- Unhappy with NK's independent policies
 - Two reasons
- 1 Produces tension with US, endangers 'peaceful rise'
- 2 Provides Japan for pretext for remilitarisation and nuclearisation
 - South Korea, Taiwan....

The Japan danger

- Despite 'Peace Constitution' has
 - Large military budget
 - Considerable military potential

Japan's military expenditure 2011

Country	Rank	\$b
USA	1	711.4
China	2	142.9
Russia	3	71.9
UK	4	62.7
France	5	62.5
Japan	6	59.3

Nuclearisation?

- **A Japan with an army and nuclear weapons. This has long been the dream of the country's conservatives** - and now they have a good opportunity to make it come true, with a cash-strapped Washington asking Tokyo to play a more active role in Northeast Asian security. **Prime minister Shinzo Abe has been using tensions with China over the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands as an excuse to amend the Constitution and allow the country to have a national guard. Constitutional restrictions on the use of military force are disappearing bit by bit.**
- **If given enough of an excuse, Japan could arm itself with nuclear weapons in no time at all.** It already has 30 tons of plutonium, having earned permission from the US to reprocess spent nuclear fuel. It also has superior transportation technology. While it isn't clear whether it has the reentry technology needed to operate intercontinental ballistic missiles, its rocket technology is second to none.
 - Jeong, Nam-ku. "Avoid a nuclear arms race between South Korea and Japan." *Hankyoreh*, 16 February 2013.http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_editorial/574156.html

China attempts to square circle

- Does not oppose US headlong
- Does not veto UNSC resolutions
- Negotiates to tone them down
- Does not implement them rigorously
- Eg Resolution 2094

UNSC resolution 2094

- Plenty of scope for interpretation
- Eg
 - • Calls on states to prohibit the opening of North Korean bank branches on their territories **if** there is a link to North Korea's illicit programs or the violation of Security Council resolutions
- US will interpret one way, China perhaps another

Appeasement

- Veiled criticism from NK that China (and Russia) are appeasing US
- Probably true
- Anti NK resolutions are in violation of international norms, and UN Charter
- Iraq>>>Libya>>>Syria
- Where is the line in the sand?

Russia

- Similar to China but involvement less
- Far East is where it is at most military disadvantage
- Third Putin presidency >>stronger line

Japan

- Still US client
- Embracing confrontation with China
- Tension on peninsula important for remilitarisation
- Opposes reunification of peninsula, even under Seoul
- Politicians can utilise anti-Korean feeling for political gain

United States – Making sense of foreign policy

- Others are relatively straightforward – not the US
- America's foreign policy – what is it, and why is it?
- Difficulty to be expected
 - Largest economy
 - 3rd latest population
 - Runs a global empire
 - Foreign policy apparatus greater than population of NZ

Big, unasked question

- NK wants peace with US
 - Trade, investment, ...basketball competitions



What is wrong with that?

- Why cannot the US have peace with NK?
- Parallels with China 40 years ago
 - US resisted coming to terms with PRC for 25 years

Six (and ½) possible reasons

- Military industrial complex needs a threat
- Psychological effect 60 years of anti-NK propaganda
- Privileging the domestic in foreign policy
- Fear of example
- Containment of China
- Missile defense
- (1/2) 'Capture' of Obama NK policy by Lee Myung-bak

Military industrial complex needs a threat

- James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence
 - Testimony to Senate 12 March 2013
 - Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community

Clapper statement

- ‘North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programs pose a serious threat to the United States’
- ‘Because of deficiencies in their conventional military forces, North Korean leaders are focused on deterrence and defense’
- ‘its nuclear capabilities are intended for deterrence, international prestige, and coercive diplomacy’
- ‘the North would only attempt to use nuclear weapons against US forces or allies to preserve the Kim regime’

60 years of propaganda



Original film had Soviet invasion; remake changed to Chinese, then NK

Kinda want to kill some Asians right now and defend the homeland, thank you Red Dawn for sparking some patriotism in me”

“Just saw Red Dawn with the boys...makes me wanna lock-n-load and whoop some Asian Ass”

“Bout to go take over bamboo garden the china in and dragon palace #RED #DAWN”

“Watching red dawn.. Movie is fire!!! F*CK THE CHINKS TRYNA TAKE OVA THE WORLD”

“I wish Red Dawn would happen in real life so I could shoot those chinks coming in by parachute”

Yang, Jeff. "'Red Dawn' Spurs Anti-Asian Tweets." *Wall Street Journal*, 26 November 2012. <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2012/11/26/red-dawn-spurs-racist-tweets/>

Privileging the domestic

- Domestic considerations play larger part in US foreign policy than any other country
- Negotiation is appeasement...adversaries are 'the bad guys'
 - Cheney – we don't negotiate with evil
- Democratic presidents under great pressure to play patriot card
 - Obama, half black, Muslim father....

Fear of example

- Global empire
- If NK negotiates peaceful coexistence then others might
- Proliferation major worry
 - Nuclear weapons are an equaliser
 - Proliferation limits US power to coerce and invade
 - Iraq, Libya gave up nuclear weapons

Containment of China

- Tension on Korean Peninsula important to keep SK, and Japan, in line against China
 - Bases + diplomatic support + military forces
 - » Esp SK troops

Missile defense

- Real targets are Russia and China
 - NK (and Iran) provide pretext

MB's capture of Obama

- Often suggested that Lee Myung-bak 'captured' US Korea policy

South Korea – change agent

- Lee Myung-bak NK policy a failure
- Thought increasing tension could precipitate crisis
 - Collapse of NK
 - Reunification under Seoul
- Inherently dangerous policy
 - Risked 2nd Korean War involving US and China
 - Covering in my book

Lee's failure

- NK did not collapse
 - Even after death of Kim Jong Il
- SK business suffered
- Drive NK into hands of China
- New policy inevitable whoever won Dec 2012 presidential election

Park Geun-Hye

- She is the daughter of her father, but..
- Times have changed
- She has record on engagement with the North

2002 meeting with Kim Jong Il



Park's Northern policy

- If engages then has Nixon advantage
- Has talked of engagement, building trust, but also confrontation
- Has not been stampeded into burning bridges with the North

National

People

National

Money

Tech

Culture

National > Briefs >



2013-03-11 20:03

President goes 2-track on NK



President Park Geun-hye pays her respects to the national flag along with Prime Minister Chung Hong-won, right, and other Cabinet members ahead of her first Cabinet meeting at Cheong Wa Dae, Monday.

/ Korea Times photo by Koh Young-kwon

'No mercy on misdeeds; trust process to go on'

By Kim Tae-gyu

Too early to tell

- When current crisis has died down..
- Meeting with Obama in May
 - A number of events are scheduled for the interim, including the third anniversary of the ROKS Cheonan warship sinking in late March and April's **Foal Eagle exercises** in South Korea, and Kim Il-sung's birthday and the anniversary of the Korean People's Army in North Korea.
 - Seok, Jin-hwan, and Park Hyun. "President Park to make first overseas visit to the US in May." *Hankyoreh*, 13 March 2013.http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/577831.html

Timeline of current crisis

- Have discussed background
- This particular crisis started with US-initiated UNSC sanctions against NK for satellite launch
- Donald Gregg
 - CIA, Bush snr ambassador to SK, Chairman of Korea Society

Gregg sees satellite sanctions as preemptive strike against Park

- Gregg said the UN's decision to place expanded sanctions on North Korea just before **Park Geun-hye took office as South Korean president** and John Kerry as US secretary of state **put a barrier** to either of them **initiating dialogue with Pyongyang**. In short, he said, the sanctions were very poorly timed.

- Park, Hyun. "Donald Gregg says it's time to enter dialogue with North Korea." *Hankyoreh*, 5 February 2013. http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/572838.html

Lee's capture of US policy

- President Park's hard-line predecessor, Lee Myung-bak, bequeathed a tense situation to his successor. Near the end of his presidency, he pushed hard for additional U.N. sanctions, the passage of which last month precipitated North Korea's third nuclear test. The latest sanctions were in response to that test, and North Korea's new threats have come in immediate retaliation.

– Gregg, Donald P. "Reach Out to North Korea." *New York Times*, 11 March 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/12/opinion/donald-gregg-reach-out-to-north-korea.html?_r=1&

Massive military exercises exacerbate tension

- The Key Resolve annual command post exercise, which starts Mar. 11, comes on the heels of the launch of the Foal Eagle field training exercise, which runs from Mar. 1 to end of April and will include land, air, sea, and special operation drills with **200,000 South Korean troops and 10,000 US troops** participating

• "Korean peninsula bracing for war amid tension." *Hankyoreh*, 11 March 2013. http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/577489.html

Overwhelming US superiority



Back to the headlines

The New Zealand Herald

Search keyw

National World Business Sport Technolo

Live updates: Black Caps v England - 2nd t

World Next Article: Japan marks ca

North Korea threatens war

10:35 AM Tuesday Mar 12, 2013

☆ Save

f 299 t 13 in



- **Caveat lector**
 - SK guns, not NK
- **Conditionality ploy**

"North Korea threatens war." NZ Herald, 12 March 2013. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10870654

Conditionality ploy

- NK is vastly inferior in military strength and fears invasion
- Posture is primarily defensive
 - Military – troops, coastal defences, etc
 - Language
- Threats may be bellicose but they are **conditional**
- IF you attack us, we will counter-attack
- Media leaves out the 'IF'

International Crisis Group

- The statement declared that “if the Americans light the fuse of a nuclear war, the revolutionary forces will exercise the right to execute a preemptive nuclear attack against the headquarters of the invaders”. World media reported this as threatening a preemptive nuclear strike against the U.S., but it should be interpreted to mean the North is prepared to retaliate with nuclear weapons against a conventional military attack from the UNC in Seoul.
 - "The Korean Peninsula: Flirting with Conflict." *International Crisis Group*, 13 March 2013.<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/alerts/2013/north-korea-the-korean-peninsula-flirting-with-conflict.aspx>

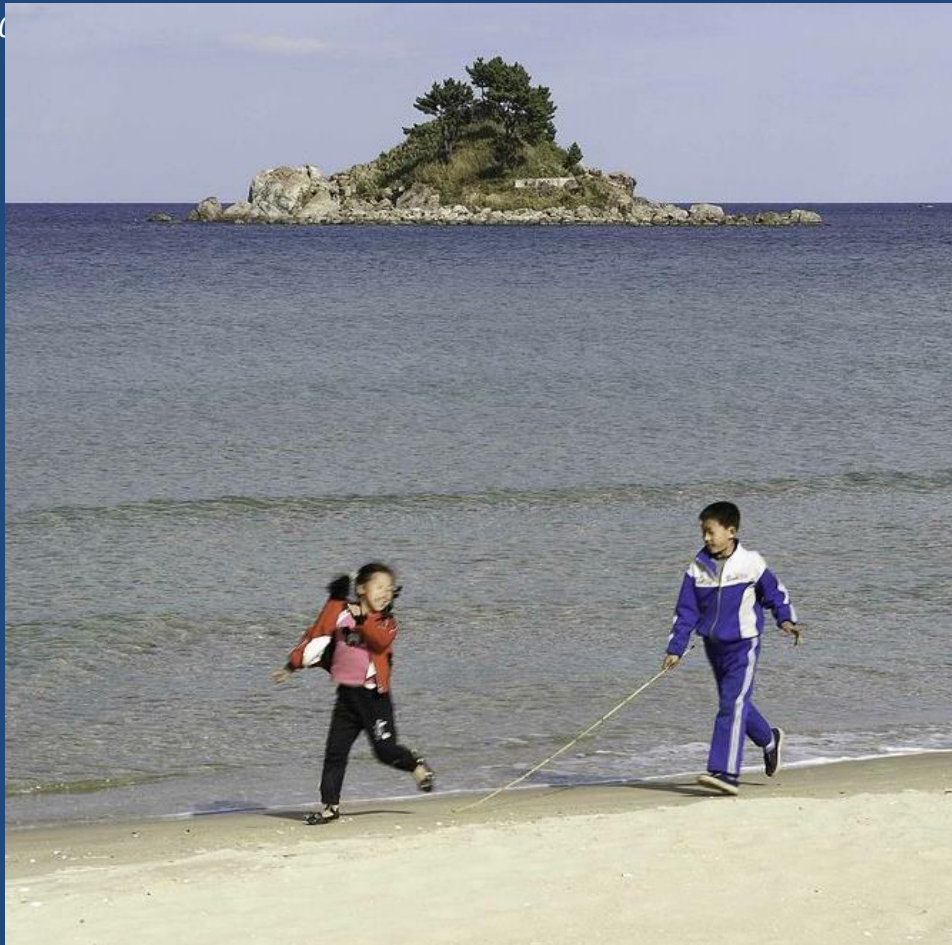
Prospects and hopes

- New government in Seoul will engage meaningfully with Pyongyang
- Kim Jong Un will respond positively
- Rapprochement will be strongly supported by China and Russia
- US will be forced to follow on

Optimal scenario

- Improved inter-Korean relations>> US accepts peace
 - NK denuclearises, US removes nuclear umbrella
- Long-term, consensual, mutual beneficial unification measures
 - Trade, investment, people-to-people
- US military presence removed
- Reunifying Korea independent of major powers but on good relations with all
- Korea's location becomes an asset rather than a liability

Finally, a photo from NZ's Roger Shepherd



Here, a brother and sister play on a beach called Hwajin-po in Goseong-gun, Kangwondo.

Shepherd, Roger. "North Korea Pastoral." *Foreign Policy*, 11 March 2013. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/11/north_korean_pastoral?wp_login_redirect=0