

Will Obama Start War over Korea?

April 2—The crisis on the Korean Peninsula threatens to break out into a regional war, which could be the spark for global thermonuclear war. The crisis comes in the midst of the terminal breakdown of the Western financial system, and an escalating confrontation between the Obama Administration, and Russia and China, over U.S. military encirclement of those countries. Any effort to approach this crisis from a lesser perspective could well lead to World War III in the near term.

On March 28, Iran's English-language news station, Press TV, interviewed *EIR*'s Mike Billington on the situation in North Korea, publishing the [transcript](#) under the title "Global Thermonuclear War Not That Far-Fetched." Billington's review provides the crucial facts about the current confrontation.

Essential Background

To understand how we got here, it must first be recognized that the Korea crisis, a remnant of the Cold War, was well on the way to being resolved in the 1990s under the Clinton Administration. The "Agreed Framework" established with North Korea in 1994 provided for the closure of North Korea's plutonium-producing nuclear facilities, in exchange for the construction by an international consortium of two light-water nuclear reactors, considered far less capable of producing weapons-grade material, under the close observation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The U.S. was to provide oil to North Korea during the construction phase of the new nuclear reactors.

Also of great importance to North Korea was the pledge to work toward improving relations between Pyongyang and Washington, with the aim of replacing the 1953 Armistice, which ended hostilities but not the state of war, with a peace treaty and cooperative relations.

This process proceeded constructively throughout the years of the Clinton Administration. When George Bush and Dick Cheney came to power in 2001, every-

thing changed. Secretary of State Colin Powell recognized the importance of the Agreed Framework, and stated immediately that the Clinton policy would be continued; however, he was publicly contradicted by Vice President Cheney the following day. Suddenly, unconfirmed accusations emerged from neo-conservative circles around Cheney that North Korea was secretly running a nuclear weapons program, and within months the entire successful move for peace in the region was in shambles.

North Korea then watched closely as Iraq, and later Libya, two nations that had given up their nuclear weapons programs, were destroyed, and their political leaders killed, by U.S. and NATO assaults under both Presidents Bush and Obama. Pyongyang's conclusion can be seen in the official statement of the special Central Committee meeting held on March 31, 2013: "The D.P.R.K.'s nuclear armed forces represent the nation's life which can never be abandoned as long as the imperialists and nuclear threats exist on Earth."

Interview: Mike Billington

An edited version of the Press TV interview follows:

Press TV: The basic question is if there is going to be a war. If so, what will it look like, and what would trigger a war?

Billington: It is very, very possible that there will be a war, a thermonuclear war—but not with Korea alone. What is going on in the Korean situation is basically fraudulent, similar to what is going on with Iran.

Put this in the world context. We are in the midst of the total breakdown of the Western financial system. As we saw, with the breakdown in Cyprus—which is not a Cypriot problem, it is not even a European problem; it is a Western financial system problem, where we are looking at the death of the euro.

The United States itself is bankrupt; it is printing huge amounts of money, to bailout bankrupt banks, while the physical economy in Europe and the U.S. is



EIR's Mike Billington briefs Iranian TV, March 28.

crumbling. It is under that impetus that Wall Street and the City of London are using their puppet in the White House to lead an open provocation against Russia and against China, demanding that they back down from the new colonial policy of "regime change."

This is a demand upon him by the financial oligarchs. The intent is to justify setting up offensive military structures around both Russia and China, as we are doing with the ABM systems and other offensive weapons, which the Russians and the Chinese have publicly and repeatedly identified as a very serious threat, a potential "counterforce" threat, which could take out their retaliatory capacity against a first strike, and which therefore has moved the world closer to a thermonuclear holocaust than we have ever been in history, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and similar situations.

The idea that these massive capacities are being put in place to deal with Iran—which has no weapon, and which our own American intelligence sources have confirmed, over and over again, is not building a weapon—or against North Korea, which has a small nuclear capacity, is unsupportable. North Korea is not insane; it may carry out a military provocation in response to the repeated provocations, back and forth, between the U.S. and North Korea, but it would be small

scale, of the sort that you saw with the shelling of a South Korean island.

The idea that Pyongyang would launch a nuclear attack is, of course, ludicrous technically as well as politically. The danger is how this is being played, as you see in the headlines all over the world. Even though our own Chief of Staff, Gen. [Martin] Dempsey, who is a far more solid thinker than the fool in the White House, said just yesterday, that he has seen no movement in North Korea any different from the normal kinds of movements and statements that you see during these periods of exercises, which occur annually on both sides.

This forces us to reflect on the insane policies coming out of London and Washington, leading toward what could very likely be a near-term nuclear war between the superpowers, one which would literally destroy civilization, for which there would be no winner.

Press TV: One thing that does not add up, and that is something that you said about what the U.S. has done, this build-up of military equipment and personnel. Why didn't China react quicker when these military exercises were going on, only later coming down and saying the sanctions are okay?

Billington: Mr. Putin and Mr. Medvedev have stated repeatedly that the threat of a counterforce strike, as is being constructed in Europe and in Asia, with new anti-missile systems, the X-band radar systems that are being installed in Japan and in Philippines, are in no way necessary against the very small threat from North Korea. The Russians and the Chinese have repeatedly warned, as Medvedev said, that we are potentially on the brink of war. He said, "I do not want to scare you," but, he said, "thermonuclear war."

The situation within the United States is highly factionalized. What is standing between us and war at this point is the Chinese and Russian refusal to capitulate to the regime-change policies across the Middle East, after making the mistake of capitulating in Libya. They will not capitulate in Syria or Iran, and while the West may not want a nuclear war, they want Russia and China to capitulate to their regime-change policies, and if they do not, the British and Obama are willing to risk that war.

What Next?

Press TV: [What should be done in Korea?]

Billington: I would say two things. One is that I

think you should look at what Donald Gregg, the former CIA official and Ambassador to Korea, had to say last week when he returned from Korea.

He said that if you look at the world from North Korea's view, and you see that those nations in the Middle East that have in fact given up their nuclear weapons programs, like Iraq, like Libya, have been destroyed. Gregg says that North Korea, seeing this, is absolutely unwilling to accept the current demand by the West that they will only talk with North Korea if North Korea first gives up its nuclear weapons.

They want a nuclear deterrent. But Gregg said that what the North Koreans really want right now, and the reason they disbanded the Armistice, is that they are tired of living in the "no peace—no war" situation—basically an official state of war existing since the Korean War—and they want to talk about a peace treaty.

If the West were willing to stop the tit-for-tat provocations, talk seriously about trying to reduce tensions in Asia, rather than increasing them, then they would be willing to talk. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's response today to this situation was that provocations are coming from both sides, that the measures taken at the United Nations—which both Russia and China agreed to, to warn North Korea to hold back on its nuclear tests and its missile tests—were adequate. But the expansion of military operations around North Korea, which happens to also be around China, is threatening an escalation, or, as he said, "slipping into chaos."

Obama continues to take down our NASA program, continues to massively cut our military capacities, and threatens war rather than building up the kind of global collaborative efforts needed to deal with the actual threats to civilization, those of a potential nuclear war between the superpowers and those of the asteroids, like the one we saw over Russia just recently, which could in fact threaten civilization.

That is human; that is using our minds to collaborate on a global basis to deal with the problems facing mankind, instead of being drawn into these regional wars, regime-change policies. We need to launch Glass-Steagall policies, to deal with the bankrupt banking system, and we need to launch global collaboration on advanced technologies—Strategic Defense of Earth, as it is called by the Russians—to get down to work to do what mankind had better do, if we are going to survive.