

North Korea likely tested a weapon that could start a Second Korean War

Question: Why didn't President Bill Clinton in 1994—when the North Korean nuclear menace was still in its infancy—destroy Pyongyang's atomic program before it would transform into the existential threat it is today?

Simple. He risked the possibility that the Kim family would, at the very least, rain down a barrage of massive artillery and rocket fire on the capitol of South Korea, Seoul, just some 35 miles from the Demilitarized Zone.

As one senior Clinton official told me some months ago: "We just couldn't take that risk."

And this weekend's test of three successful weapons remind us yet again that Pyongyang doesn't need to fire nuclear missiles at targets in Asia or strike the U.S. homeland to kill scores of people—its conventional weapons can do enough damage all on their own.

So much for the restraint the Trump Administration was commending Pyongyang for just a few days ago.

Indeed, in the event of a Second Korean War—or a continuation of the first, as we must remember, the First Korean War never ended with a treaty but a mere armistice—North Korea could very well open its assault with such weapons targeting downtown Seoul, home to 25 million people in that metro area alone.

Stop and think about it for a second. Kim Jong Un, seems to be reminding us again and again of his capabilities—one at a time.

Over the course of this year alone, Kim has been testing—and showing off—his ability to not only attack with short-, medium- and long-range missiles, but also killing off his half-brother with chemical weapons.

But Friday night Kim seemed to want to make a statement that he can strike with weapons we almost always forget about, with reports claiming that North Korea

tested what is referred to as MLRS, or a multiple rocket launcher system, with a range that could put a large portion of South Korea under threat of attack.

Such systems are nothing new and not exactly a novel concept. What is concerning, however, is that the system that was potentially tested, according to reports in South Korean media, was one of North Korea's more advanced missile systems, a 300-mm artillery rocket launching platform, commonly referred to as the KN-09.

The system, per the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has a range of 190km, carrying a total of eight rockets in two pods of four launchers. These deadly weapons sit on a mobile truck, making them mobile and harder to destroy in a conflict.

The danger of such weapons is obvious: such a platform might just be the ultimate terror weapon.

Consider this: With little or no warning, and if used in combination with more classic artillery platforms, these weapons could do tremendous damage to not only South Korean cities but also incite a mass panic the likes of which has not been seen in decades.

Imagine in Seoul large skyscrapers collapsing thanks to MLRS fired in a surprise attack with millions of people heading for safety. Roads, bridges, and highways would be clogged for miles. Social media worldwide would be filled with images of what looks like 9/11—but far worse than you can possibly imagine.

Now to be fair, such weapons would not last long in a conflict with South Korea and America, and indeed, Kim's army is no match for Allied forces on the peninsula as it is old and clearly obsolete.

However, as the saying goes, quantity is a quality all its own. And the North Korean military is large—it has over 1 million men under arms, 4,300 tanks, potentially as much as 5,000 tons of chemical weapons and as many as 60 nuclear weapons. In wargame after wargame I have been a part of over the years, millions of people could be killed in a conflict with North Korea—as many as 8 million or more in one simulation I was part of.

Clearly the Trump Administration must redouble its efforts to contain North

Korea as much as possible, as Kim Jong Un will no doubt to continue to show off his growing military might. He is also likely trying to sprint towards even more deadly nuclear and missile technologies—pictures coming out of the hermit kingdom last week seem to make that point crystal clear.

In fact, in the coming weeks, we will likely see Kim test another nuclear weapon or ICBM, potentially as early as September 9th, on North Korea's founding day—the last time Pyongyang tested a nuclear device.

But no matter what Kim does next, he will continue to reinforce his ultimate point—to show that he can reach out and kill someone—lots of someones.

And we need to take that very seriously.

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