

# Closer to War in Korea and Iran: Who Will Stop Obama?

by Jeffrey Steinberg

April 7—Cuba’s Fidel Castro delivered a pointed warning this week, that the crisis on the Korean peninsula represents the greatest danger of thermonuclear war since the Cuban Missile Crisis of the early 1960s. In an April 4 signed article in the daily *Granma*, Castro wrote that the Korean situation is now “one of the most serious dangers of nuclear war since the October Crisis in Cuba in 1962, 50 years ago.” Castro noted that the North Pacific region is home to 5 billion of the planet’s 7 billion inhabitants. “If war breaks out there, the peoples of both parts of the Peninsula will be terribly sacrificed, without benefit to all or either of them.”

After reminding the leadership in Pyongyang that Cuba has remained a loyal friend, but that provocations that could lead to a nuclear war that could wipe out 70% of the population of the planet, Castro warned to President Barack Obama:

“If a conflict of that nature should break out there, the government of Barack Obama in his second mandate would be buried in a deluge of images which would present him as the most sinister character in the history of the United States. The duty of avoiding war is also his and that of the people of the United States.”

Castro is not alone in his warnings about the tripwire for thermonuclear extermination. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff have moved in the past several days to carefully walk back from the brink, after sending clear signals that the United States was fully prepared to defend its Asian-Pacific allies, particularly South Korea and Japan. In a number of public statements and inter-

views, JCS Chairman Martin Dempsey asserted that, while the North Korean rhetoric has been heated, there are no signs of any menacing military deployments. Dempsey noted that every year in which the U.S. and South Korea engage in month-long joint military maneuvers, as are now underway, the North Koreans make bellicose statements, and then pull back.

The reality is that the U.S. has been operating from a “playbook” developed in December 2012, after North Korea’s successful long-range rocket launch and nuclear bomb test. The playbook, enthusiastically endorsed by Obama, and embraced by his new Secretaries of State and Defense, John Kerry and Chuck Hagel, called for a series of escalating military deployments, accompanied by tightly controlled media reports, to force the North Koreans to back down. Among the measures undertaken by Obama in the past month, all in line with the playbook, have been the deployment of B-2 long-range bombers, B-52 bombers, nuclear-armed Ohio-class submarines, Aegis missile defense destroyers, and other military hardware, to the Korean peninsula and its coastal waters.

Last week, in a move aimed at walking back from the provocations, an unnamed “senior Pentagon spokesman” briefed select military correspondents on the fact that the playbook may have gone too far in provoking the North Koreans, and that there would be a series of pull-backs and other measures undertaken to cool out the crisis. A long-scheduled testing of the U.S. strategic missile defense system was postponed indefinitely, and the Obama

Administration dropped some of its provocative language.

Senior U.S. intelligence sources confirmed that the Pentagon and State Department have been conferring regularly with their Chinese counterparts. The Chinese, in effect, are functioning as honest brokers between Washington and Pyongyang. According to the sources, Chinese officials warned the Obama Administration that the North Koreans were viewing the military deployments and statements as provocations, and that Washington's behavior was driving the situation closer to the brink of military confrontation. It was this Chinese intervention, the sources confirmed, that led to the Pentagon background briefing.

In the coming days, Kerry, National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon, and Dempsey will all be traveling to Beijing to confer with their Chinese counterparts.

### **The British-Obama Factor**

The danger is that Obama will refuse to de-escalate the threats against North Korea. In an April 7 article, Leslie Gelb, former State Department official, and ex-president of the Council on Foreign Relations, chastized Obama for remaining committed to military confrontation with Iran, the other prime target of the U.S. efforts to ostensibly prevent nuclear proliferation. Obama has repeatedly threatened to use military force to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb. The tensions rose on the Iranian front as well this weekend, when the latest

round of UN P5+1 talks apparently failed to make progress. Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign minister and the chief representative of the P5+1, issued a statement after two days of talks in Kazakhstan, indicating that they had not achieved a breakthrough. This puts the Iran situation back into play as a second front where thermonuclear weapons could be used.

Kerry is now in Israel for three days of talks, and the Iran situation is at the top of the agenda. Israeli officials, including Minister of Strategic Affairs Yuval Steinetz, have issued bellicose statements warning that Washington must decide "within weeks" to take military action before Iran crosses Israel's "red line" of 225 kilos of 20% enriched uranium. During his recent visit to Israel, Obama reiterated his promise to Prime Minister Netanyahu that Washington was prepared to use military force to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb. Now, Netanyahu is tightening the noose around Obama's neck to force an escalation in the crisis.

The lack of confidence in the Anglo-American willingness to solve both the North Korean and Iranian situations through persistent, patient diplomacy has provoked other warnings from informed quarters. Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a lengthy interview to Germany's ARD TV and radio on April 5, assailing the U.S.-Europe policy of regime-change in Syria. Graham Allison, a former top State Department official in the Reagan Administration, in an op-ed, compared Obama

## **Citing SDI: A Call for U.S.-Russian Cooperation**

March 30—Graham Allison, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense, who was involved in developing U.S. policy toward Russia in the Clinton Administration, and is now director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School, penned an op-ed in the March 28 *Los Angeles Times*, wondering what President Reagan would do, were he here today, in the midst of the U.S.-Russia ballistic missile defense impasse.

"My bet is that he would offer the Russians not only transparency about U.S. missile defense systems, but actual shared control of those systems in a reconfigured deployment that would incorporate

Russian as well as U.S. radar systems, and invite Russia to join the U.S. in deploying defenses against emerging nuclear threats."

Allison likens Reagan's proposal to "President Kennedy's pledge to send a man to the Moon." Reagan's vision, he says "was meant to stretch minds to new realities that most found inconceivable."

Allison reviews both the Soviet distrust of Reagan's motives, and the "fiery criticism at home and abroad." Today, ballistic missile defense is a "stumbling block in the U.S.-Russian relations," and requires a Reaganesque "thinking well outside the box" of proposals now on the table.

Allison's writing stands in stark contrast to the SDI 30th anniversary event held on March 19 by the Heritage Foundation, which, 30 years ago, worked tirelessly to sabotage both President Reagan's push to develop new directed-energy technologies for missile defense, and his offer of collaboration with the Soviet Union.

negatively with President Reagan. Allison wrote that, if Reagan were President today, he would immediately revive talks with Russia to build a global shield against nuclear weapons, just as he had proposed in 1983.

Now, more than ever, the world is on the edge of a thermonuclear conflict 20 years after the end of the Cold War. Today's advanced arsenals of thermonuclear weapons could be unleashed on a moment's notice.

The problem, which few understand, is that Obama is a captive of the British imperial faction typified by former Prime Minister Tony Blair. Its policy is genocide, through war, disease, and famine. The empire is more desperate than ever, due to the total bankruptcy of the trans-Atlantic financial and monetary system, and the breakdown of the physical economies of the region as well. War, under these circumstances, is the ultimate tool for Malthusian genocide and provides the perfect context for a financial reorganization, while keeping

the present power structure intact.

In a dialogue with colleagues on April 2, Lyndon LaRouche emphasized that the British ability to press ahead with their genocide plans is totally dependent upon their control over the United States, and that control depends on Obama remaining in the White House, in a position of unchallenged authority. Weaken or remove Obama from office and the British game is up, LaRouche concluded.

Despite the best efforts of the JCS, and a network of active duty and retired diplomats, and military and intelligence officers, to push back from the brink of war by reaching out to Moscow and Beijing, and pressing for an end to the escalating pattern of provocative actions and words, the fact remains that nothing short of the bringing down the Obama Presidency through constitutionally defined measures will be sufficient to prevent thermonuclear extinction.

## Nuclear Experts Warn of War Danger

April 2—A group of high-level military and political leaders from Europe, the U.S., and Russia, published an op-ed in the *New York Times* today, warning of the increasing danger of nuclear war, and insisting on the urgent “Revamping of Euro-Atlantic Security.” The 30-member group, representing institutional resistance to the British Empire’s war policies, is co-chaired by former U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, former German Deputy Foreign Minister (current head of the Munich Security Conference) Wolfgang Ischinger, and former British Defence Secretary Des Browne.

The same group had published, in February 2012, the results of its two-year study calling for an “effective Euro-Atlantic Security Community.” Obviously concerned that things have further deteriorated, they wrote the April 2 op-ed, which more stridently asserts the danger of war, as the following excerpts show:

“Security policies in the Euro-Atlantic region . . . are dangerously out of date and demand urgent attention. . . . Cold War-era security concepts and their associated weapons and military postures continue. Large strategic nuclear forces remain deployed on

prompt launch, ready to be fired in minutes; thousands of tactical nuclear weapons are still stockpiled in Europe; a decades-old missile defense debate remains stuck in neutral; and new security challenges associated with prompt-strike forces, cybersecurity, and space remain contentious and inadequately addressed. . . . The alarming asymmetry between military capabilities and a true Euro-Atlantic partnership is dangerous and potentially destabilizing, undermining the trust necessary for cooperative efforts to meet emerging security threats in Europe and across the world. . . .

“[T]oday’s leaders should move decisively and permanently toward a new security strategy, one that considers offensive and defensive military forces, nuclear and conventional weapons, and cybersecurity and space. Thinking together about these issues in an integrated way can lead to transformational change in Euro-Atlantic security and nuclear and conventional force postures from the persistent Cold War shadow of *Mutually Assured Destruction to Mutual Security* [emphasis added]. Issues relating to nuclear weapons and missile defense should receive the highest priority in the first five years. It should also be possible to take steps relating to conventional forces, cybersecurity and space during the initial phase. . . .

“There is an historic and fleeting opportunity to act. There is no more important security issue for leaders to address.”