

Have Sanctions Stopped Joint Iran – North Korea Nuclear ICBM Development?

by Jerry Gordon and Ilana Freedman (May 2016)



South Korea TV Screen Shot of alleged Nuclear Warhead

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This has been a banner year for North Korea and its partner, the Islamic Republic of Iran. They have demonstrated the failure of the JCPOA, UN Res. 2231 and “tougher” March 2, 2016 [UN sanctions](#) to deter, let alone stop, provocative violations by both Iranian and North Korean ballistic missile development and nuclear tests in North Korea. As if to underline this brazen defiance of international efforts, North Korea released on March 27, 2016 a propaganda video, “Last Chance,” proclaiming its armament prowess culminating in a fictional ICBM attack on Washington, DC. [Watch](#) the “Last Chance” video:

Gordon Chang in a *Daily Beast* [the video’s Korean-language subtitles said](#). “The United States must choose! It’s up to you whether the nation called the United States exists on this planet or not.”

This may sound like bluster, but only part of it is. In fact, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) can incinerate the American city of its choice. ...It will not have that ability for about a half decade, [report](#) on intelligence information:

It’s the prudent decision on my part to assume that [North Korea] has the capability to miniaturize a nuclear weapon and put it on an ICBM.

The development of an advanced version of the KN-8, the KN-14, was the subject of a Bill Gertz [intelligence report](#) in the *Washington Free Beacon*. The KN-14 was first displayed publicly in 2012:

Rick Fisher, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center who has studied the two missiles' Chinese launchers, said Russia has estimated the KN-14 could have a range between 5,000 and 6,200 miles.

From the far northern corner of North Korea, [6,300-mile] range is sufficient for the KN-14 potentially to reach Chicago or Toronto.

North Korean missile analyst Scott LaFoy, writing in *NKNews.com*, said the KN-08 shown in October 2015 appears similar to the Russian SSN-18 submarine-launched ballistic missile.

Note this comment from Adm. Gortney about the KN-14:

I agree with the intel community that we assess, they have the weapons, the ability to miniaturize those weapons, and they have the ability to put them on a rocket that can reach US homelands.

China is the supplier of the mobile launchers for the intermediate range Musudan, the K-08 and K-14 longer range ballistic missiles. This despite both the US and China behind the alleged tougher UN sanctions released on March 2nd. Gertz noted:

The Obama administration has not taken action against China for its significant contribution to the KN-08 and KN-14, namely the Chinese-made transporter erector launchers that carry the missile and appear to have been exported in violation of United Nations sanctions.



North Korean Cargo Vessel Jin Teng, Subic Bay Philippines, March 4, 2016

Source: Associated Press

The apparent failure of US Sanctions to stop North Korean – Iran Joint Development

Claudia Rosett wrote an April 26, 2016 *Wall Street Journal* opinion article, "[The Failure of Sanctions Against North Korea](#)." The bottom line is the sanctions look like the proverbial Swiss cheese. No surprise there, given the failure to stop the Iran nuclear deal. Further, Rosett discloses the US has sanctions against Iranians involved with North Korean missile testing. That means our government

believes that Tehran and Pyongyang are cooperatively developing nuclear warheads to fit on missiles that North Korea may be shipping via its merchant fleet to Iran.

North Korea has also threatened a fifth nuclear test, the second one this year, perhaps timed to coincide with the seventh party congress on May 6th. So what did President Obama threaten in the wake of the April 26 announcement from North Korea? [According](#) to *Reuters*, "The United States warned ...it would consider "other" options, which could include new sanctions or security steps, if North Korea continued nuclear and ballistic missile testing."

Note what Rosett wrote:

In the latest push to stop North Korea's rogue nuclear and missile programs, the United Nations Security Council on March 2 passed a sanctions resolution widely hailed as the toughest in decades. U.S. UN Ambassador Samantha Power said "this resolution is so comprehensive, there are many provisions that leave no gap, no window." But when it comes to North Korea's merchant shipping ventures, these sanctions are a sieve.

[...]

These ships may be carrying legitimate cargo. But they have links to two rogue states that have cooperated for years on weapons smuggling and missile development. North Korea, which carried out its fourth illicit nuclear test this January, was caught proliferating nuclear technology to Iran's mascot state, Syria, in 2007. The Iran nuclear deal implemented in January hasn't stopped Iranian arms smuggling.

Both countries continue to defy U.N. sanctions by testing ballistic missiles. In January, the U.S. Treasury Department designated Sayyed Javad Musavi, a senior official in Iran's missile program, for working "directly with North Korean officials in Iran" and overseeing Iranian missile technicians who in recent years "traveled to North Korea to work on an 80-ton rocket booster being developed by the North Korean government."

[...]

Against this background, a pattern of North Korea-flagged ships visiting

Iran should raise questions. While U.N. sanctions now require all member states to inspect cargoes of North Korea-flagged ships, this means that Iran is in charge of any such inspections at its own ports. When I asked Treasury if these North Korea-flagged ships are cause for concern, a spokesperson replied, "Treasury does not comment on the activity of entities that are not designated."

Conclusion:

North Korea and Iran have been joint partners in developing nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles capable of reaching the US by the start of the next decade. Since [March 2014](#), the co-authors and Shoshana and Stephen Bryen argued in [July 2015](#) what better place to conduct those developments than in the hermit state of North Korea? Assessments by the US Northern Command, South Korean, US intelligence and independent experts have confirmed the likely development of nuclear warheads and the technical feasibility of fitting them to ICBMs within the next half decade. What investigative journalist Claudia Rosett has revealed are the significant loopholes in US and UN sanctions that have enabled the joint development projects of both countries to continue unabated.

Also see Jerry Gordon's collection of interviews, [here](#).

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