

Pyongyang or Islamabad?

A tough choice from [Defend the Modern World](#):

Here's an interesting fact you might not be aware of: The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is the only foreign country North Koreans are allowed to study in during their period of higher education.

No other nation's universities are open to the citizens of the Communist republic, presumably because of the well-grounded fear that those students might choose not to return. It speaks volumes that the North Korean regime has no such fears in sending its citizens to India's chaotic neighbour, and says even more that there have been no recorded defections to Pakistan in the time this policy has been active.

Ever since I read this information, I've been imagining which I would personally prefer out of the two great evils of our time. That is, whether I would rather live in a starving, cruel and genocidal Communist state or in a nation ruled (albeit unofficially) along the lines of Islamic fundamentalism...

It really is a tough one. On the one hand, the DPRK has advantages over Pakistan. Unlike Pakistan, the DPRK is not chaotic but orderly and the state has absolute control over the people. True, this is ordinarily a bad thing, but given the activities that prevail in Muslim states when the government loses control, it is surely comforting by comparison. Furthermore, the DPRK does not forbid intoxication, an important means of escape from an unpleasant or insufferable reality.

On the other side, Pakistan, for all its hysterical unreason, is in reality a variety box of primitives, some of them violent, some of them merely stupid and quietly

devout. If a North Korean lucked out and managed to study in whatever passes for a liberal area of the Islamic Republic, he/she might discover a forbidden liberty, like reading non-state-sponsored books, or watching unbiased international news via satellite.

Of course, the most clear and obvious advantage in going to Pakistan from Korea is the opportunity, however perilous, to cross the border into India and from there to get to the West. Indeed one could even switch planes at a Pakistani airport and get to the Korean Republic instead of the DPRK. But this takes us away from the point of the thought experiment.

Let's say instead, that you have a choice to live for the rest of your natural life in Pakistan or in the DPRK. What would appeal to you more.

Where do you think your suffering might be least, and your prospects of happiness greatest?

After thinking it through, I would probably plump for the savagery of Pakistan, purely on the grounds that there must surely be pockets of civility in a country of that size. There is also the factor of nutrition to consider. A starving life is no life at all.

I'm very much interested in your responses and reasoning.