

CHINESE BEHAVIOR IN A KOREAN CRISIS

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This Presentation Is UNCLASSIFIED

This discussion is descriptive, not prescriptive. It is based on over 50 visits and two years in China since 1997 and on a score of field trips along the China-North Korea frontier since 2003, and includes personal observations, interviews and discussions with municipal officials, businessmen, Chinese academics, think tank analysts , and regular folks in the region.

This discussion is informed by 24 years US Army infantry command and operations including combat command; communications support to the White House; experience in defense models and simulations; and over a decade of executive-level support to combined and joint defense exercises in the Pacific Theater, for:

- Ministry of Defense, Taipei, Taiwan
- Republic of Korea Army and U.S. Forces-Korea, Yongson Base, South Korea
- U.S. Pacific Command, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
- Japanese Joint Staff and U.S. Forces-Japan, Yokota Air Base, Japan
- Coming soon: Malaysian Joint Staff and U.S. Marine Corps, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The views expressed here are mine alone, and do not represent the views of any government agency or organization. –Chuck Hawkins

North Korea

- International boundary
- - - Internal administrative boundary
- ★ National capital
- ⊙ Internal administrative capital
- +—+—+ Railroad
- Expressway
- Road

North Korea has 12 internal divisions: nine provinces (do) and three municipalities (si).

0 25 50 Kilometers
0 25 50 Miles

Lambert Conformal Conic Projection, SP 36N/40N



Korean Crisis, August 2015

Chinese PLA self-propelled
155mm artillery moves
through Yanji toward assembly
areas on the Tumen River
frontier with North Korea.



Chinese PLA self-propelled artillery on the move in Yanji and staging at a frontier railhead.



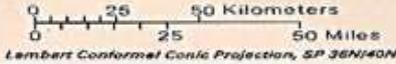
The August 2015 Crisis

- How it began
 - Mine moved by NK in DMZ; two SK soldiers wounded
 - SK retaliates w/loud speakers
 - NK small arms, machine gun and light artillery fire
 - SK disproportionate response w/battery-six of 155
 - NK movement of missiles, artillery, tanks near DMZ
 - US-ROK Alliance goes on alert
- How it ended
 - SK-NK top level negotiations at Panmunjon
 - A statement of “regret” from NK
- But, what if...?

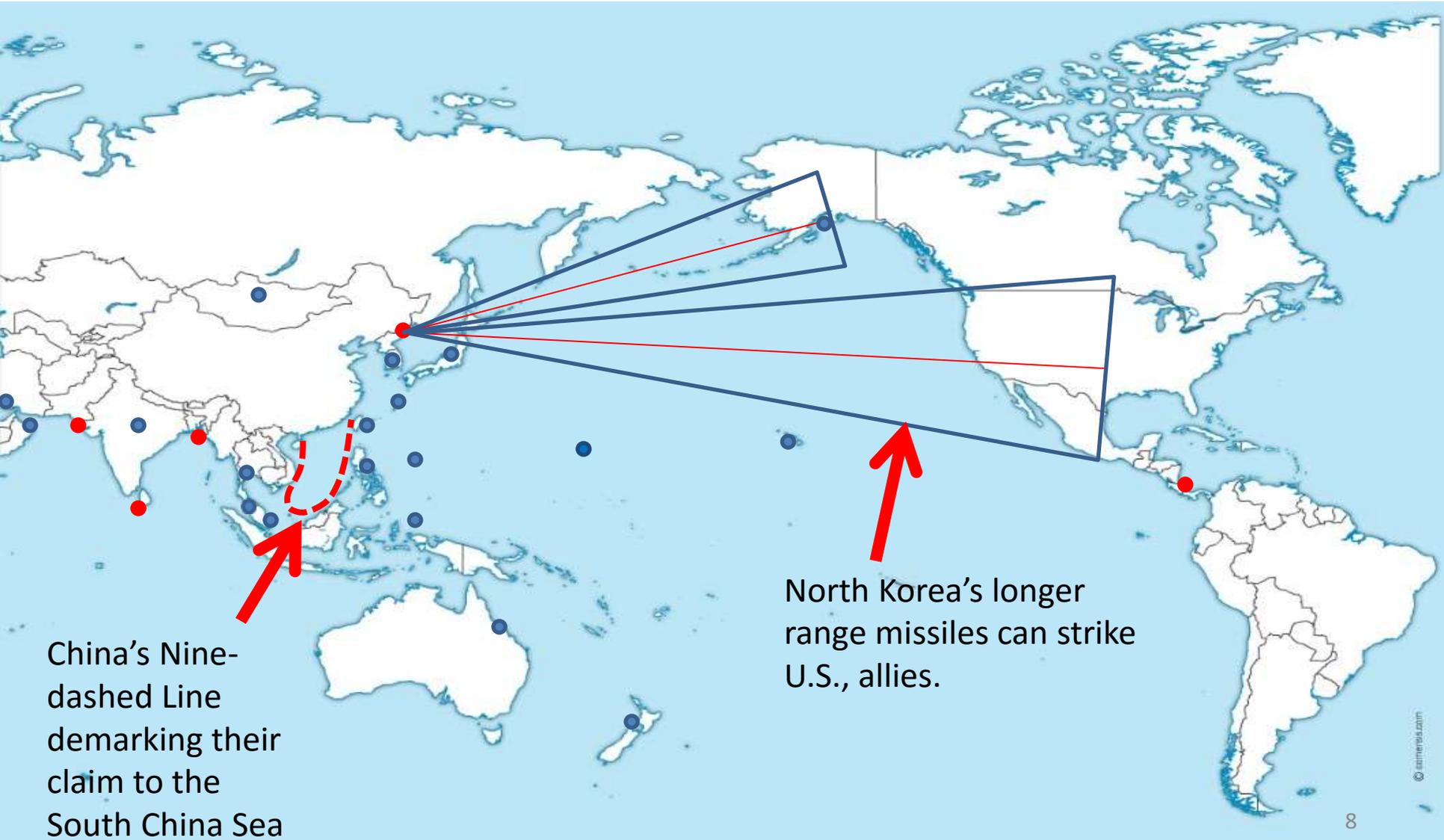
North Korea

1. Hypothetical War of North Korean Aggression
2. Hypothetical plan of ROK-US counterattack
3. Hypothetical plan of Chinese Incursion into North Korea

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Peril In the Pacific



US Engagement in Pacific Theater

- US Pacific Command is executive agent for policy implementation, coordination, other activities
- Defensive exercise regime is key component of military/naval, diplomatic, economic engagement
 - Some are bilateral; some are US-only; and some are multilateral
 - Funding comes from various sources: CJCS; USPACOM
- Don't forget: USPACOM area of responsibility includes major part of Indian Ocean

Pacific Theater Exercises

- Examples: Pacific Sentry; Talisman Saber; Cobra Gold; Balikatan; Pacific Pathways; Keen Edge/Keen Sword; Yama Sakura; Ulchi Freedom Guardian; Key Resolve/Foal Eagle; RIMPAC; Red Flag; Cope Tiger; Sandfisher; Han Kwang... and many more
- Exercises can be field training, command post, or a combination; they can be oriented on threat countries, humanitarian aid to man-made or natural disasters, diplomatic needs, reassurance to allies and partners, or presence missions

Wartime Exercise Scenarios

- Two major threats – China, North Korea – with multiple variations on scenarios, exercise goals, objectives
 - Example scenarios: NK attacks ROK & Japan, China sits out; China seizes islands claimed by Japan; China blockades Taiwan, fires missiles
 - Example objectives: Training; test new concepts, equipment; targeting drills; confidence building...
- Lesser threats might include: Russia; Malaccan Strait pirates; terrorists (Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia)
- Major alliances: South Korea (has its own wartime theater, otherwise comes under USPACOM); Japan; Philippines
- Command relationships are complex, dynamic
- Three to five planning conferences help prepare for each exercise

Complexity of Command

- USPACOM is the 'supported' command
 - US Forces-Korea is a 'supporting' command; however, USFK, like USPACOM, is a four-star command; and
 - USFK commander is obliged to also report to the secretary of defense, and
 - Is also the commander of Combined Forces Command in wartime and commander of United Nations Command in wartime
- In a Korean Peninsula war USPACOM becomes the 'supporting' command to CFC/UNC/USFK, and a Korean Theater of Operations is created once defensive conditions (DEFCON) warrant
- However, if wartime involves an enemy other than North Korea, then USPACOM remains the 'supported' command in the Pacific Theater less the KTO
- US Forces-Japan remain under USPACOM in peacetime and wartime and becomes the executive agent for USPACOM for receiving forces and combat operations in a 'to be determined' Japan Theater of Operations
- Conundrum: There could be two (nearly) simultaneous wars, one with China, another with North Korea... what happens then? Who's in charge?

Challenges of Complexity

It's all good fun, this running around the house like wild Indians. That is, until someone falls and pokes a pencil in their eye. –Mom Mary Hawkins when brother Richard and I were growing up.

- Resources and Force Flow – who gets what when?
 - If a war involves both China and North Korea, both Pacific AOR and KTO have equal claim to troops, equipment and supplies coming from CONUS
 - But there are not enough ships or aircraft
 - Sending States: A number of allied and partner nations have obligated themselves to provide various support to KTO in a war with North Korea
- Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)
- Support from Government of Japan
- Further challenges include a complex array of permissions and authorities based on U.S. legal system, status of forces agreements with allies and partners

Third Party Intervention

- So far we've just discussed one side of the warfighting equation – but the other side gets a vote too
 - Will China intervene in a Korean Peninsula war? If so, how will it?
 - Will North Korea limit its aggression or expand it to encompass nearby states, e.g., Japan, Philippines?
 - Will Russia intervene in any case? To what end?
- And, allies South Korea and Japan must also be included
- This is just the tip of the iceberg

Interests Determine Behavior

- North Korea:
 - 1. Regime survival
 - a. Develop nuclear weapon and missile capability
 - b. Keep elites happy (KWP, KPA)
 - c. Keep America as a *valuable enemy*
- China:
 - 1. Maintain stability in North Korea and along Sino-North Korean frontier
 - a. Integrated economic development
 - b. Control/minimize North Korean refugee flow into China
 - 2. Strategic access to East Sea (Sea of Japan)
 - 3. Buffer against ROK-US; balance Russian influence
- United States:
 - 1. Deter, defeat North Korean aggression
 - 2. Eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon program
- South Korea
 - 1. Protect, defend Seoul
 - 2. Keep US forces in country
 - 3. Unification

Reasons for Chinese Intervention In North Korea



- Restore (or maintain) stability
 - Provide humanitarian assistance
 - Secure nuclear facilities
- } Publicly stated by state-level Chinese think tanks*
- Prevent or neutralize Russian intervention
 - Secure important infrastructure interests
 - Ports in Rason (Luoxin) EDZ – economically and strategically important
 - Islands, ports at mouth of Yalu River
 - Power generation facilities on Yalu River
 - Frontier commercial structures, industrial/mineral assets
 - Communications hubs/transportation nets (within reach)
 - Establish buffer zones on the frontier against possible ROK-US intervention

* See Bonnie Glaser, et. al., 'Keeping an Eye on an Unruly Neighbor,' Center for Strategic and International Studies & U.S. Institute for Peace, Washington, D.C., January 2008; position also taken by Shanghai Institutes for International Studies in January 2009.

Center of Gravity for China In NE Asia



Beijing feels it must control, maintain stability in the red (Yanbian Prefecture) and pink (NK's Hamgyong Bukto Province) areas. In Beijing's view this is key to stability in NE Asia. China's actions support this view.

Stability in NE Asia Is China's #1 Interest



Jilin Province

- 27 million total
- 91% Han
- 4% Korean

Yanbian Prefecture

- **2.3 million total**
- **58% Han**
- **39% Korean ←**



Heilongjiang Province

- 36 million total
- 95% Han
- 1% Korean



Liaoning Province

- 42 million total
- 94% Han
- 0.5% Korean

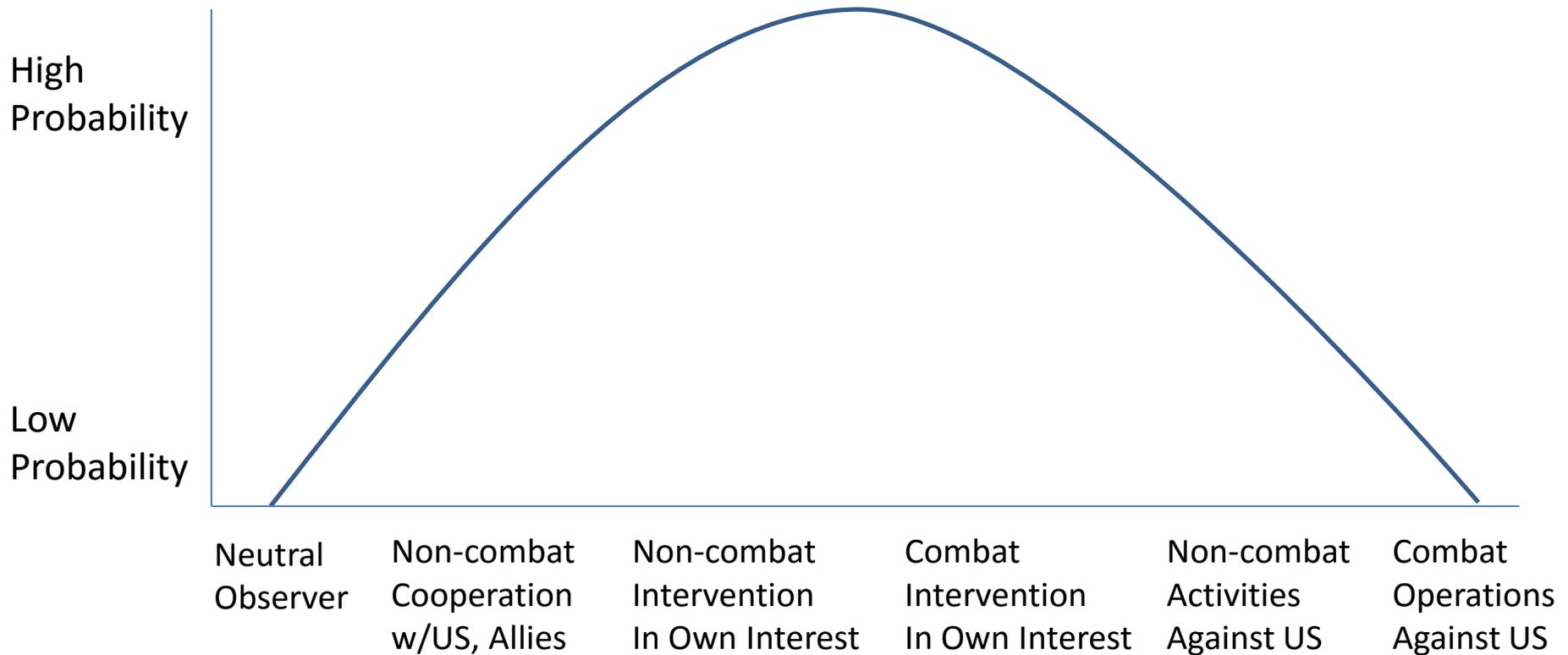
Chinese Behavior Patterns

- Since 2008 Chinese PLA has become more assertive in influencing Beijing's policy direction; more aggressive in its actions (South China Sea; Japan; frontier w/North Korea)
- Beijing hard liners have succeeded in clamping down on Chinese political populists
- For many centuries China's leaders have shown a pattern of opportunism
- So, make no mistake: China remains a potential, probable threat

Chinese Behavior Patterns in NE Asia Since 2003

- 2003
 - 150k PLA reinforcements
 - Six-party Talks begin
- 2004-08: Yalu River development
- 2008-Current: Tumen River development
 - New expressway
 - New high speed rail
 - General transport net improvement
- 2011: Access to East Sea
- Generally: New infrastructure development, including a theme park, stadium in Yanji, golf resort on the Yalu
- On-going: Gradual dilution of percent of ethnic Koreans in Yanbian
- 2004-Current: Cell phone towers along frontier, including cell phone jammers
- 2012-Current: Steadily worsening relations w/ North Korea
 - Yet cooperation at local level
- 2012-2016: Severe crackdown on NK refugees, including foreign NGOs
- August 2015: PLA troops move to frontier assembly areas during crisis

Korean War Intervention Spectrum for China





A Word On North Korean Refugees

- Beijing doesn't like the term 'refugees,' and prefers 'escapees' or 'runaways' (illegal immigrants?)
- Refugees are most prevalent in Tumen River region – large Korean population in Yanbian acts as a magnet; there are many cross-border family ties
- Christian activists, international aid organizations (NGOs), local Chinese-Korean groups, all assist in providing onward movement for escapees
- Many escapees stay in China until they are forced to move on
- Human traffickers (snakeheads) facilitate escape from North Korea, usually for profit
- Severe crackdown on aid organizations since 2013

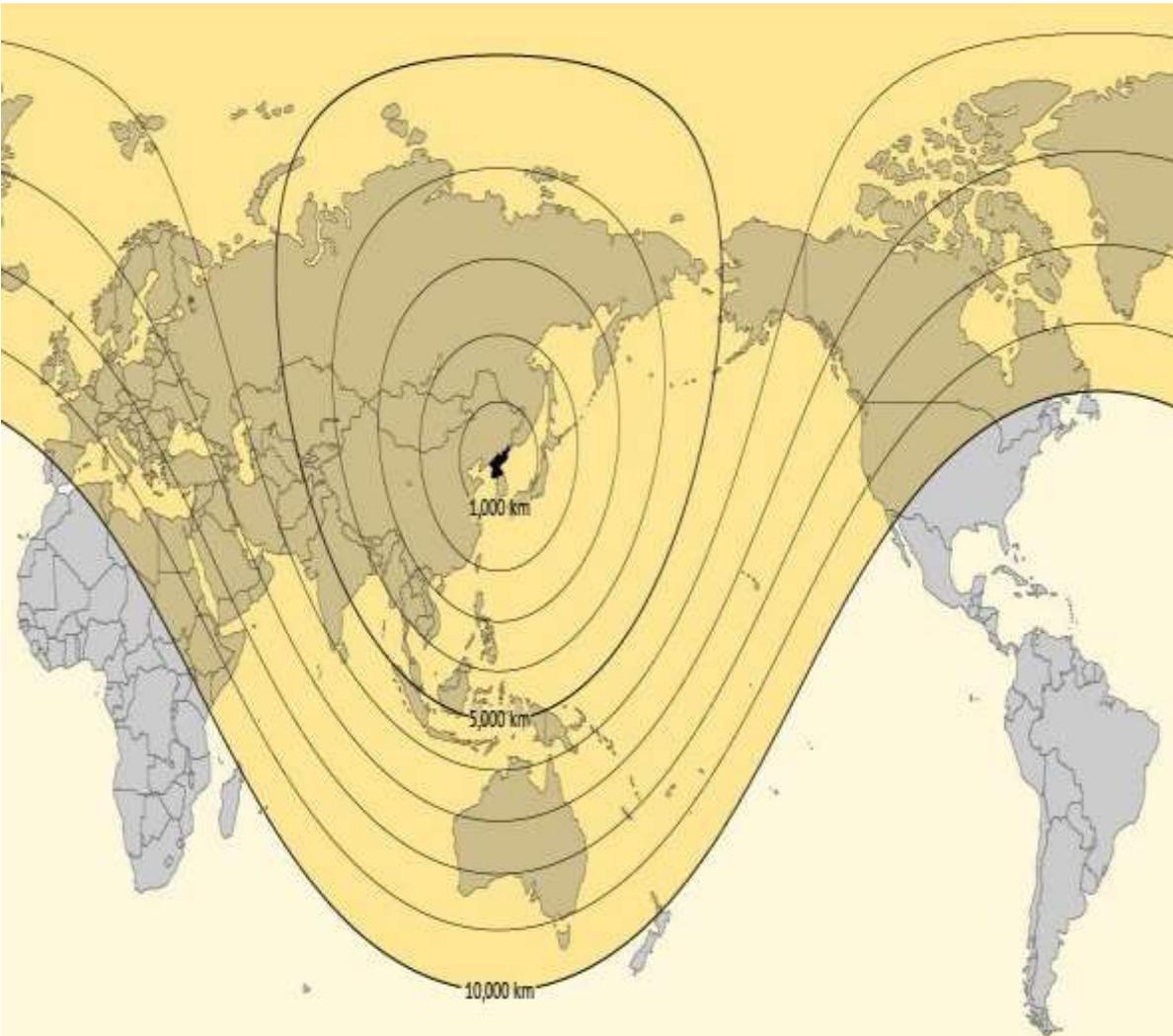
Additional Factors to Consider

- How many refugees is too many? How many can or will China absorb? Rate of refugee flow in a crisis? Acceptable cumulative number? China's policy, response? Assistance from the international community?
- What does the 'end of a war' or aftermath of armed conflict look like? What are the military, diplomatic, financial requirements? Who's in charge?
- What is the impact of war or crisis on financial markets, trade, debt, national economies?
- What does 'Korean unification' look like?
 - Resources and support? Control?
 - Challenges of German unification pale by comparison
- What issues, potentially, could drive allies apart?

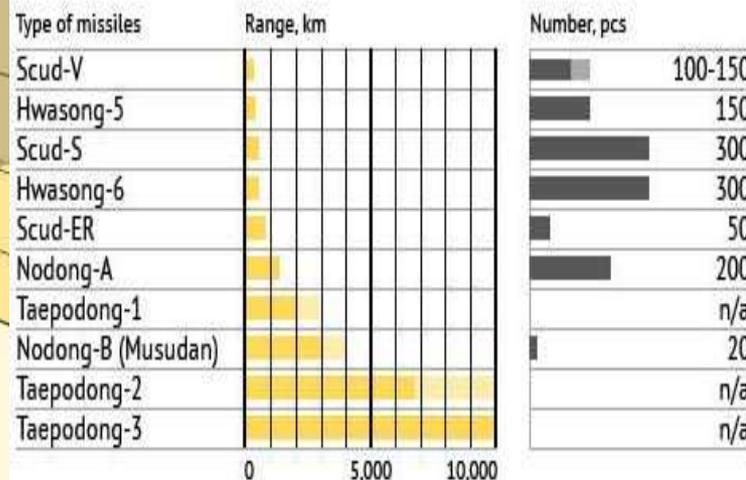
QUESTIONS?



North Korean Missile Capability



Maximum range of North Korean missiles and their number



Regional military balance

	NORTH KOREA	SOUTH KOREA	US
infantry	> 1,000,000	560,000	22,000
tanks	4,060	2,414	140
aircraft	1,337	1,185	370
navy	515	242	50

Sources: GlobalSecurity.org, CIA World Factbook, The Military Balance 2012

Location of Strategic Facilities

