

North Korea – December 7, 2010
Notes by Elizabeth Hall

What methods, other than a military response, would be appropriate in view of the current situation (Nov 23rd shelling of South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island)? Embargo the North's ships moving to other islands. There is a precedent for boarding N.Korean ships. [A U.N. Security Council resolution authorizes member nations to stop and inspect North Korean ships for illicit weapons, but does not authorize the use of force.]

For years, people have expected North Korea to implode, but it hasn't happened yet. There have been few shipments of grain to N.Korea.

What is our vital interest in North Korea? What if we offered to negotiate a peace treaty? We have had tentative acceptance of olive branches in the past, but something always happens to prevent a solution. China doesn't want refugees from North Korea pouring into its territory. Bush's "axis of evil" statement makes a peaceful solution highly unlikely.

We need to acknowledge that we established our own dictator in the South, who was anti-North. Until 1986, South Korea did not have a "politically attractive" ruler. Didn't Congress, under Newt Gingrich stop everything, including the nuclear plant we promised the North.

Would the U.S. attack North Korea with no respect to China? China doesn't want that war, because of its enormous trade and technology it gets from South Korea. Why don't the U.S. and China negotiate a peace treaty with North Korea. The U.N. should have brokered this. Why didn't they?

North Korea has nuclear technology, and it has exported it. Missiles are its biggest export. China has allowed North Korean planes with missiles to use its airports. Without those exports, the North Korean regime might implode.

China and the U.S. have a mutuality of interest in trade. China prefers that North Korea not have nuclear capability. China sees itself as surrounded by strong friends of the U.S. China is afraid that Japan might unilaterally decide to arm.

Two weeks before the island shelling by North Korea, a nuclear expert was stunned by the modernity of a North Korean plant with 2,000 centrifuges that can reprocess uranium. A bomb's trigger is its most important part, and nobody knows whether China has exported such a device to North Korea.

If we take out a North Korean nuclear site, it would be an extremely provocative act. North Korea has 1,200,000 troops on line; South Korea has 500,000 on line with another 500,000 reserves. North Korea's forces have outmoded weapons and are poorly equipped. It has submarines and 30,000 commandoes that speak the South Korean dialect. More than 15,000 missiles are targeted on South Korea. If North Korea starts a war, South Korean cities and missile sites will be toast.

50,000 North Koreans work in manufacturing plants run by South Korea. What do

investors think about investing in South Korea?

Next time North Korea does something, an asymmetric response increases the risk. See Andrew Bacevich's new book, *Washington Rules*. He's highly critical. [From Publishers' Weekly review: A critique of assumptions guiding American military policy. "These central tenets, the "Washington rules"--such as the belief that the world order depends on America maintaining a massive military capable of rapid and forceful interventions anywhere in the world--have dominated national security policy since the start of the cold war and have condemned the U.S. to "insolvency and perpetual war." Despite such disasters as America's defeat in Vietnam and the Cuban missile crisis, the self-perpetuating policy is so entrenched that no president or influential critic has been able to alter it. Bacevich argues that while the Washington rules found their most pernicious expression in the Bush doctrine of preventive war, Barack Obama's expansion of the Afghan War is also cause for pessimism: "We should be grateful to him for making at least one thing unmistakably clear: to imagine that Washington will ever tolerate second thoughts about the Washington rules is to engage in willful self-deception. Washington itself has too much to lose."

Neither China nor the U.S. want to see Japan rearmed. The issue is still on the table. China is cautious about who they want next to them.

Suppose a treaty to end the Korean War was negotiated; would the Senate ever ratify it? What about Taiwan? What do we know about the internal power structure of North Korea? What about the power of the military? Does Kim Jong-il only stay in power as long as he keeps the generals happy?