

Great Decisions, January 25, 2011 North Korea and Iran

Summary by Elizabeth Hall

Sanctions don't seem to be working in Iran and North Korea, yet they seemed a success with Libya.

Should the U.S. and U.N. be willing to use force in the case of Iran? We went to war with Korea to contain a communist ideology, why not now?

We're in the post-Pandora's box era. The evils have already been released, and the number of nuclear powers continues to grow. It's hard for the U.S. to deny nuclear power to other countries when we're the only country that has used nuclear weapons.

If Iran has a workable bomb, we are equally ready. We will engage in brinksmanship. As long as Israel has the bomb, middle-Eastern countries could be ready to use it.

It may take a nuclear strike before the world raises this problem to the priority it must have.

One of the major reason Qadaffi changed his policy was because of what we did to Iraq. We also killed one of his sons.

Could we devise non-nuclear weapons that were more of a deterrent in some respect than nuclear weapons?

If we had a system that makes missiles negligible, would North Korea still be so determined to develop them?

When we expect China and Russia to honor sanctions against Iran and North Korea, we're expecting pie in the sky.

Are Russia and China simply taking tactical positions? Why would they think Iran or North Korea would ever target them? They don't expect the U.S. to impose sanctions on them. It's a win-win situation for Russia and China.

Like the TV program Survivor, all these countries are cutting side deals all the time.

We have enough nuclear states already. The U.S. is already target of a jihad.

We need to start trading with Iran. Why not use economic inducements to get Iran to give up nuclear bombs.

China has many priorities and is at a very different stage of development from the U.S.

If there were a nuclear strike, it might trigger Arab states against Iran. (Wikileaks indicated that Arab states had urged U.S. to take out Iran's nuclear installations.)

You look at Iran to see how you can prevent their development of nuclear weapons. But what is their internal motivation? Is it the people? Some of the rulers? What is their inner conflict?

There's a basic element of pride in joining the nuclear club. Persians believe U.S. supports Israel in everything. Iranian oil infrastructure needs money and foreign investment to keep the economy putting along. They are a former world power and see themselves as natural leader of that part of the world.

What will happen when China wants to build more atomic plants? China is growing rapidly, sucking up huge amounts of energy.

There is a sense that the new leader of North Korea will not be as crazy as his father.

U.S. is not enthusiastic about the six-party talks. Why? No one's been willing to budge enough to create a solution. U.S. would like reunification of Koreas, but not China.

Are there viable actions for North Korea? What would their response be to a surgical strike that took out their nuclear installation?

We're arrogant when we say we can use force. But to not consider force as an element of the Western response is foolish.

The potential viability of military action is not obvious in either case.

If there were a way to neutralize the Arab-Israeli problem, other problems, such as nuclear force, would disappear.

We have to understand all these complexities before we know what to do.

A Western businessman who was offered a deal by the Chinese went to China but simply listened and build relationships each time he went. One of the Chinese offered his firm a deal and said that it was because he took the time to build a relationship. Therefore, the Chinese trusted him.