

## Directions:

1. Highlight your confusion, and be ready to discuss it in class.
2. Show evidence of a close reading of the **entire** text: make connections, ask questions, summarize, **interpret**, or express confusion.
3. Write a **one-page or 250-word** reflection of your thoughts or argument--**not** a summary of the article--on your own sheet of paper. TIP: Use *They Say, I Say* templates.

**sanctions:** A threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule.

**hermit kingdom:** a pejorative term applied to any country or society which willfully walls itself off

**pejorative:** expressing contempt or disapproval

**bellicose:** Demonstrating aggression and willingness to fight.

**rhetoric:** messages intended to impress or persuade

**seismic:** Of or relating to earthquakes or other vibrations of the earth and its crust.

**boffins:** People engaged in scientific or technical research: "a computer boffin".

**op-ed:** literally "opposite the editorial page"; an article written by an outside writer for a newspaper

**imminent:** about to happen

**belligerent:** Hostile and aggressive.

## Could North Korea really nuke the United States?

Source: *TheWeek.com*, 3/7/13, Keith Wagstaff



North Korea raised eyebrows (and heartbeats) this morning by threatening to use its "right to preemptive nuclear attack" against the United States in anticipation of new **sanctions**, which were later passed unanimously by the U.N. Security Council.

The **hermit kingdom** has remained defiant in the face of global criticism

over its most recent nuclear test on Feb. 12, and the resolution, drafted by the United States and China, seeks to halt secret transactions by North Korean banks that could be funding the country's nuclear program, and increase scrutiny of suspicious sea and air shipments.



How worried should you be about North Korea's **bellicose rhetoric**? Is Kim Jong Un, recently seen palling around with tattooed basketball oddity Dennis Rodman, actually capable of hitting the United States with a nuclear missile?

The consensus is probably not — but North Korea is getting closer.

Judging from the **seismic** activity that resulted from North Korea's last nuclear test, the blast was about 6 or 7 kilotons, much stronger than the previous two tests in 2006 and 2009, but weaker than the 16-kiloton bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. But as *The Economist* points out, size isn't everything. Indeed, North Korea's claims that the blast came from a "light and smaller" bomb — paired with its successful launch of a satellite into space using an Unha-3 rocket — has some in the international community nervous:

If the bosses in Pyongyang can master the critical skills required to direct a re-entry, the **boffins** say it is possible that such a rocket could be used to deliver a small nuclear warhead to the United States. [Economist]

Another key question: Whether North Korea is using plutonium, which is expensive and scarce, or highly enriched uranium, which would make building a large nuclear arsenal easier. An analyst for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace told the AP that a "highly enriched uranium test would be a significant development," but "we don't yet have any evidence as to the device's design yield or whether it was made from plutonium or highly enriched uranium."

In an **op-ed** for CNN, Patrick M. Cronin, senior director of the Asian-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, predicts that the "Unha-3 can reach at least Guam now and most likely will be able to reach Alaska and Hawaii and the West Coast of the continental United States within the coming year or two." Building a warhead small enough to fit on that missile, Cronin believes, would take at least three years.

Perhaps of more immediate concern is whether Pyongyang might sell nuclear material to enemies of the United States. Graham T. Allison Jr., director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School, writes in a New York Times op-ed:

As the former secretary of defense Robert M. Gates put it, history shows that the North Koreans will "sell anything they have to anybody who has the cash to buy it." In intelligence circles, North Korea is known as "Missiles 'R' Us," having sold and delivered missiles to Iran, Syria and Pakistan, among others. [New York Times]

The truth is, no one outside of North Korea seems to know for sure exactly what North Korea's nuclear capabilities are. But the fact that China, usually one of the country's strongest allies, pushed for sanctions is a sign that nobody should take this situation lightly.

## What happens if North Korea collapses?

Source: *TheWeek.com*, 3/27/13, Harold Maass



North Korea [shut down its last military hotline](#) to South Korea on Wednesday, warning that nuclear war was **imminent**. The threat was the latest in a series of increasingly **belligerent** statements made by the Hermit Kingdom since world leaders imposed sanctions as punishment for the communist regime's recent missile and nuclear tests. Pyongyang has threatened to

nuke both South Korea and the U.S.

On the bright side, security experts say North Korea [doesn't have the ability](#) to strike the U.S., and war on the Korean Peninsula is far from inevitable. "The North's wild gesticulations are unsettling," but "this is the seventh time Pyongyang has renounced the 1953 ceasefire" with the South, [Doug Bandow points out at \*The American Spectator\*](#). "War has yet to erupt." One can't take anything for granted, but there's little reason to believe that North Korea's untested young leader, Kim Jong Un, "and those around him have turned suicidal after the death of his father."

North Korea is certainly dangerous, but as many experts point out, this is a war that the West would likely win. Perhaps that's why officials in Washington have been planning to confront "a more insidious threat: the untimely collapse of Kim Jong Un's government," [says Geoffrey Ingersoll at \*Business Insider\*](#). This is the most closed-off country in the world. If its struggling regime finally collapses, our forces will have to dash over the 38th parallel blind to secure North Korea's nuclear stockpiles and long-range missiles in a rush that will make "the Pentagon's frenzied scramble looking for Iraq's WMD's look calm and orderly by comparison."

The Army has conducted war games to prepare, [says James Joyner at \*Outside the Beltway\*](#), and it took 90,000 American troops 56 days to get into a dummy failed nuclear state and round up its nukes. If we ever do have to go into North Korea, "it would not be a cakewalk."

The trouble is, [says Robert Taylor at \*PolicyMic\*](#), the "threats, sanctions, and dangerous, tax-guzzling war games off the Korean peninsula" are costing the U.S. big-time, even if there's no war and the North Korean regime somehow manages to stay afloat. With President Obama's pivot to Asia, we're adding to billions to the fortune we've spent meddling in Korean affairs over the past several decades. In this time of sequester cuts, Taylor says, this kind of thing could be "disastrous to the fiscal state of America." As Dennis Rodman suggested, maybe the time has come for the U.S. to "try a little basketball diplomacy instead."

## Why the US is flying B-2 stealth bombers over Korea

Source: *TheWeek.com*, 3/28/13, Keith Wagstaff



North Korea has been boasting all week about its military muscle. So on Thursday, the United States flexed its own muscles by flying two B-2 stealth bombers over South Korea.

The American military said the nuclear-capable bombers made the practice run to "provide extended **deterrence** to our allies in the Asia-Pacific region" and demonstrate "the United States' ability to conduct long range, precision strikes quickly and at will," according to the *New York Times*.

The U.S. practice run comes mere days after North Korea threatened to attack Hawaii, Guam, and the U.S. mainland. Pyongyang has become increasingly hostile since tough new sanctions were passed by the U.N. Security Council as punishment for the **hermit kingdom's** nuclear test on February 12.

The two planes left a U.S. military base in Missouri, dropped **inert munitions** on a South Korean island, and then flew back home. While the U.S. military may well have done something like this before, this is the first time the United States has publicly announced it,

which, according to the New York Times, is likely to agitate Kim Jong-Un:

After suffering from the American **carpet-bombing** during the 1950-53 Korean War, North Korea remains particularly sensitive about American bombers. It keeps most of its key military installations underground and its war cries typically reach a **frenetic** pitch when American bombers fly over South Korea during military exercises. [New York Times]

This mission could easily be interpreted as a sign that Washington is looking to get tougher on Kim Jong-Un. "The intensity of the **rhetoric** is a lot hotter, the uncertainty is higher," U.S. diplomat Bill Richardson told CBS News, underscoring that the young leader seems even more unpredictable than his late father, the very unpredictable Kim Jong-Il.

Civilians on the Korean border don't seem worryingly fazed, though. "Tension rises almost every year when it's time for the U.S.-South Korean drills to take place, but as soon as those drills end, things quickly return to normal," Sung Hyun-sang, president of an apparel manufacturer that employs 1,400 North Koreans in the city of Kaesong, told the AP.

While the rhetoric so far hasn't led to violence, the New York Times points out that "under a mutual defense treaty, Washington is **obliged** to intervene should a local skirmish expand into a full-blown war."

### Response Prompt:

- There are many arguable claims presented in these three articles. Choose one and use the template below to respond to it by either agreeing, disagreeing, or complicating it.

*Use some or all of the template below to support your thinking.\**

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

The general argument made by author X in her/his work, \_\_\_\_\_, is that \_\_\_\_\_. More specifically, X argues that \_\_\_\_\_. She/he writes, "\_\_\_\_\_. " In this passage, X is suggesting that \_\_\_\_\_. In conclusion, X's belief is that \_\_\_\_\_.

In my view, X is wrong/right, because \_\_\_\_\_. More specifically, I believe that \_\_\_\_\_. For example, \_\_\_\_\_. Although X might object that \_\_\_\_\_, I maintain that \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, I conclude that \_\_\_\_\_.

*\* This template was created by Dr. Kathy Birkenstein and can be found in [Clueless in Academe](#), by Gerald Graff.*