**What is Kim Jong Un up to these days?**

**Kim Jong Un continues to bark loudly, but his limited military capabilities are not a threat to continental America.**

**His nuclear weapons are just a bluff, and his only real possible targets are American troops in S. Korea, or Japan, or Okinawa or Diego Garcia. His rockets can go far, but they are not armed with nuclear weapons. North Korea is still trying to resurrect their nuclear teeth, after a major nuclear test failure in 2017 which wiped out most of his staff of nuclear engineers.**

**Also, a reality is that if war were to be initiated by Kim’s military, a joint US and S. Korea response would level N. Korea in a week. Past joint war games with the S. Koreans have been conducted very successfully. N. Korean air defense systems are Cold War vintage and are very vulnerable to a joint US Air Force and South Korean Air Force offense. We also have B-2 bombers, F-35s, and their 100 Advanced F-16s stationed in S. Korea capable of quickly destroying the North Korean Air Force which would severely weaken North Korea.**

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**Sources:**

**Kim Flaunts North Korea’s Newest Weapons**

**BY DASL YOON AND TIMOTHY W. MARTIN, *The Wall Street Journal* | Page A009, 29 July 2023**

SEOUL—**Flanked by Russia’s defense minister and a Chinese Politburo member, Kim Jong Un smiled as North Korean missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland rumbled through the streets of Pyongyang.**

The scene from a Thursday evening North Korean military parade reflected a new bravado from **Kim, the 39-year-old dictator who has labeled his country a nuclear power.**

During similar celebrations in prior years, Pyongyang had toned down its displays of nuclear firepower when officials from Moscow and Beijing were present or did so at the risk of upsetting its two allies who could vote for fresh sanctions at the United Nations Security Council. But **lately the three countries have rallied together—and around their shared grievances against the U.S. and its allies**. **North Korea has conducted dozens of illegal missile tests in recent years,** though China and Russia have repeatedly blocked efforts to hold the Kim regime accountable.

**North Korea’s Thursday military parade celebrated the 70th anniversary of the ceasefire that brought an end to fighting in the 1950-53 Korean War. The country highlighted its newest intercontinental ballistic missiles—named the “Hwasong-17” and “Hwasong- 18”—as well as new attack and spy drones.**

As part of the festivities, Kim invited the first foreign delegations to North Korea since the pandemic, with the Russians led by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and the Chinese headed by Politburo member Li Hongzhong.

North Korean Defense Minister Kang Sun Nam warned the country’s adversaries. “Now, the question is not if a nuclear war will occur on the Korean Peninsula, but rather who will ignite this nuclear war and when,” he said, according to a state media report published in Korean.

**Shoigu, in a meeting with Kim, discussed developing “strategic and tactical collaboration” with North Korea in the field of defense and security, said Pyongyang’s state media.**

**China has little incentive to cross North Korea now, as the U.S. increases its military presence in the region, while a collapse of the Kim regime would create instability on China’s borders.**

**North Korea is suffering through one of its worst food shortages in decades, with its economy bitten hard by sanctions and border restrictions that remain in place because of Covid-19 fears.** The country’s weapons accomplishments are one of the few areas that Kim can tout with pride. State media reports published on Friday stressed North Korea had bolstered its military capability following the fight against “imperialist war maniacs,” referring to the U.S. In recent months, the Kim regime has lashed out against the U.S., South Korea and Japan over their improved military ties.

**Kim’s five-year weapons capability focuses on drones, tactical nuclear arms and other modern advances, as well as a push into cyber**, said Kim Young-jun, who advises the South Korean government on national-security issues. These programs are real, because these weapons are less costly and more efficient than conventional military capabilities, he said.

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**How the U.S. Air Force Would Wage War Against North Korea**

**America would need to sweep the skies of enemy fighters—not a difficult prospect considering the decrepit state of the North Korean air force.**

by Kyle Mizokami, December 2, 2021

Kyle Mizokami is a defense and national security writer based in San Francisco who has appeared in the Diplomat, Foreign Policy, War is Boring and the Daily Beast. In 2009 he cofounded the defense and security blog Japan Security Watch. You can follow him on Twitter: @KyleMizokami.

Here's What You Need to Remember: A second Korean conflict will require a multirole fighter capable of close air support and interdiction tasks. The nature of the North Korean air defense threat, largely comprised of outdated fighters and air defenses, means a fifth-generation fighter is useful but not essential to prosecuting the war in the air.

In any conflict in the skies over North Korea, the U.S. Air Force will likely follow a familiar pattern. First, it will need to sweep the skies of enemy fighters—not a difficult prospect considering the decrepit state of the North Korean air force. Concurrent with that will be a campaign to shut down the country’s command and control and air defense systems, and finally a close air support and interdiction campaign designed to support friendly forces and locate and destroy enemy ground forces. Here are five weapons systems the air force would need for these missions in the next war in North Korea.

**B-2 Spirit Bomber**

North Korea’s air defenses are dense but outdated, relying on anti-aircraft guns and, with the exception of a S-300 long range SAM knockoff, fairly obsolete. Despite their obsolescence, most aircraft would need careful planning to avoid being shot down.

The B-2 Spirit bomber, being stealthy would have relatively little to fear from North Korean defenses. The B-2’s combination of stealth, payload, and range would make it one of the first weapons to be used early in a war scenario, chasing down the DPRK leadership. Uncertainty over where the leadership may try to hide could necessitate flying over large swathes of the country, and a stealthy bomber could also prevent neighboring countries from giving Pyongyang advance warning of their approach.

One arrow in the B-2’s quiver that makes it particularly relevant is the Massive Ordnance Penetrator, or MOP. The twenty foot long, thirty-thousand-pound bomb can reportedly penetrate up to sixty feet of concrete or two hundred feet of earth, making it the most effective nonnuclear weapon against North Korean underground facilities. A B-2 bomber can carry two MOP bombs at once.

**KC-135 Stratotanker**

The distance between North Korea and U.S. bases on Okinawa, Guam, and even Japan dictate that any future air campaign would need extensive tanker support. Air force tankers would not only supply U.S. Air Force aircraft but also U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and even Republic of Korea Air Force warplanes.

The bulk of aerial tanker duties would fall on the KC-135 Stratotanker. First deployed in 1956, each KC-135 can carry up to 200,000 pounds of fuel for thirsty fighters, bombers, transports and special mission aircraft operating over or near North Korea. The tanker has both boom (U.S. and ROK Air Force) and drogue (U.S. Navy and Marine Corps) refueling systems, and some can refuel two aircraft at once. 167 KC-135s are still operational worldwide.

**C-130J Hercules**

North Korea will be a difficult country to get into, and one of the first things allied forces on the ground would do is begin securing North Korean airports and military airfields to bring in supplies and reinforcements. These facilities could sustain destruction in a war that might prevent most aircraft from using them until air force RED HORSE engineering units arrive to repair the damage.

The C-130J Hercules’ ability to conduct short takeoffs and landings, as well as operate from unimproved surfaces such as hard-packed dirt and gravel make it an excellent candidate for operating from airstrips near the front lines. In production for more than half a century, the latest -J version can carry up to eighteen tons of cargo. Alternately, the C-130J can carry 128 combat troops, ninety-two paratroopers, or up to seventy-four litters in the aero-evacuation medical role.

**F-16C Fighting Falcon**

A second Korean conflict will require a multirole fighter capable of close air support and interdiction tasks. The nature of the North Korean air defense threat, largely comprised of outdated fighters and air defenses, means a fifth-generation fighter is useful but not essential to prosecuting the war in the air. A fourth-generation fighter capable of quickly switching from air-to-air to air-to-ground roles in the same mission, downing MiG-29s one moment and dropping bombs on hardened artillery sites the next is perfectly up to the task.

The workhorse fighter of a second Korean conflict will be the Fighting Falcon. Nearly one hundred USAF F-16s are based in South Korea and Japan, including two squadrons of “Wild Weasels” tasked with suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD). Air Force F-16s will carry Sniper targeting pods paired with JDAMs and laser-guided bombs to deliver precision ordnance on ground targets, AGM-88 HARM anti-radiation missiles to target North Korean radars, and AIM-9X Sidewinder and AMRAAM missiles for air-to-air engagements.

**RQ-4 Global Hawk**

A key USAF requirement for Korean War II is a high altitude, long endurance drone capable of keeping watch on North Korean strategic assets, particularly its land-based missiles and missile submarines. A persistent Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability will allow the United States to hunt down mobile missile systems stashed in valleys, hillsides, and built-up areas, handing off targeting information to other forces.

The RQ-4 Global Hawk is ideally suited to the role. Capable of flying for more than thirty-four hours, Global Hawk could fly from airfields as far away as Guam, spend half a day over North Korea, and go home again—freeing up tarmac space in closer air facilities. Global Hawk’s ability to conduct surveillance day or night is a major plus and its unblinking gaze will be invaluable in tracking enemy movements. Another less well-known feature that will be important over North Korea: Global Hawk’s Battlefield Airborne Communications Node (BACN) will provide a secure communications link between troops on the ground and close air support aircraft.