

# On north korea's refusal to give up its nukes

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About whether or not North Korea's nuclear arms program and development capabilities are substantial to be regarded as a threat. Now that the cat's out of the bag, it seems that the communist state has no plans of letting go of its arsenal, despite numerous calls and threats of sanctions from other countries, like the United States, Japan and China.

Since North Korea is a very poor country, posting resistance to the world powerhouses does not appear to be the most prudent choice, especially since the government needs to maintain congenial relationships with its trade partners to stay afloat. However, it appears that Kim Jong Il has a more important and higher end in mind. Thus, we present this question: What factors explain North Korea's vehement and continued resistance to calls for the discontinuation of its nuclear weapons program?

The North Korean nuclear weapons program was established in the 1960s under the assistance of the then-power USSR. Unfortunately, its nuke plans were doused in the wake of the Cold War, particularly following the decline of the Soviet power. This did not stop North Korea from pursuing its goal, developing and launching the 20-megawatt thermal reactor in 1986.

Nobody really knew to what extent North Korea's nuke capabilities had reached, but intelligence analysts had estimated that the country had enough plutonium to make several warheads. How much, nobody could say -- and the mystery had started to become a cause for alarm. So, when they finally declared that they, indeed, have weapons of mass destruction, the international community thought it best to intervene.

Has the US lost its credibility as a key world force in this situation? For North Korea, perhaps. The fact that the US was found to have manipulated intelligence about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq had made observers dubious about its claims that North Korea's nuclear capabilities were on highly destructive and potentially abusive levels. In addition, US President George W. Bush calling the country an 'axis of evil' and 'outpost of tyranny' even with the lack of sufficient evidence had made North Koreans questioning of the US' intentions. In fact, it has been said that North Korea's nuclear abilities are what deter other more powerful countries from taking advantage of it.

Economy: North Korea is a poor nation. Thus, it is using its leverage against trade partners in order to get better exchange deals and extract maximum values. Its weapons of mass destruction is its bargaining chip. Also, given the US' predisposition to abuse its power, North Korea is using its arsenal as security insurance. Another possible factor is that Kim Jong Il intends to make a huge mark as a political leader and be identified as the leader that secured for the country economic security and world fame.

In the end, we can say that North Korea refuses to give up its nuke arsenal because, more than pleasing the rest of the world, it is aimed at making sure it is benefitting at the highest possible level. North Korea has gone too far behind the rest of the world to give up the one thing that gives it leverage now.

Other countries might find it appalling -- a threat; that North Korea might consider taking over the world with its nukes; and other horror stories. It

could be so. However, it could also be a grand attempt at keeping the country alive. North Korea has survived years operating independently and it is not likely to back down now. When we really look deep into the issue and see it from North Korea's vantage point, it is a noble act.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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