



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 20, 2013

North Korea Threatens South Korea with “Final Destruction”

Speaking at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on February 19, North Korean diplomat Jon Yong Ryong threatened South Korea with “final destruction.”

A [transcript of the conference](#) posted by the United Nations Office at Geneva recorded that “The Republic of [South] Korea reiterated the call on Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to suspend nuclear tests and its nuclear programme” in response to the North’s third nuclear test conducted on February 12.



Recording the North’s response to the South Korean statement, the transcript notes:

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, responding to the comments made by the Republic of Korea, said that as it had been declared on many occasions, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had never recognised the resolutions concerning sanctions by the United Nations Security Council and, as the saying went, a new born puppy knows no fear of a tiger. “South Korea’s erratic behaviour would only herald its final destruction.”

Firing back, the South Korean diplomat reprimanded the North for expending “enormous” resources to its nuclear program while food shortages existed in the communist state. Furthermore, charged the spokesman from the South, North Korea “continued to request humanitarian assistance.” Therefore, South Korea urged the North to “focus on improving the living situation of its people and to halt its nuclear and ballistic programs.”

[Reuters news](#) reported that Jon’s statements provoked swift reactions from diplomats from other nations, including the UK’s Permanent Representative to the UN Disarmament Conference, Joanne Adamson, who called the North Korean’s language “completely inappropriate.”

“It cannot be allowed that we have expressions which refer to the possible destruction of U.N. member states,” said Adamson.

Spanish Ambassador Luis Javier Gil Catalina told Reuters: “In the 30 years of my career I’ve never heard anything like it and it seems to me that we are not speaking about something that is even admissible, we are speaking about a threat of the use of force that is prohibited by Article 2.4 of the United Nations charter.”

The UN’s transcript of the conference provided other reactions to the North Korean statement:

Germany had not been sure about the use of the phrase “destruction of another Member State” but, after being confirmed by other delegations, stressed that this was indeed troubling and inappropriate.

France said that there were some things that should not be heard in this body, such as the



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statements by a Member State that it did not recognise Security Council resolutions, which was incompatible with participation in the Conference. Threats concerning the “destruction” of other Member States went beyond what was acceptable.

North Korea took exception to the statement from France, saying that it and other nations were attempting to “mislead public opinion” against Pyongyang. The spokesman complained that North Korea “was under constant nuclear threat by the United States and had long been placed by the United States on the list of pre-emptive nuclear strikes.”

North Korea, continued the transcript, noted that “There had been more than 2,000 nuclear tests and at least 9,000 satellite launches over the 60 years spanning the United Nations’ history, but there had never been a United Nations Security Council resolution banning a nuclear test or launch. The United States had conducted more nuclear tests and launched more satellites than others and yet, it had cooked up Security Council resolutions banning the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear tests and satellite launches.”

North Korea called this policy “the preaching of international law and double standards.”

An editorial appearing in the *Christian Science Monitor* on February 20 headlined [“US leadership needed to prevent nuclear testing by North Korea,”](#) written in response to the ongoing controversy following North Korea’s recent nuclear test, is as significant because of the credentials of its author, as for its content. Writing the editorial is Thomas R. Pickering, a career diplomat who, as the author’s note details, “helped to draft the Kennedy Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and served as US ambassador to the United Nations, the Russian Federation, India, Israel, El Salvador, Nigeria, and Jordan.”

The term “Kennedy Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty” in the above note is somewhat confusing, considering that the treaty was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 10 1996 and entered into force in December 2012. (China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the United States have signed but not ratified the treaty.) While those dates might suggest the involvement of the late Sen. Edward Kennedy, who died in 2009, the informal use of the Kennedy name in connection with the treaty actually refers to President John F. Kennedy, who died in 1963. An article about the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (its correct name) posted in the Audiovisual Library of International Law by Thomas Graham, Jr. (who, like Thomas Pickering, is a member of the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations, or CFR) notes:

President John F. Kennedy was one of those who feared that nuclear weapons would inherit the earth.... President Kennedy’s darkest fears were not realized. The principal reason that this did not happen was the entry into force of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970 along with the related extended deterrence policies of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

An article about the treaty on the [State Department website](#) begins: “The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a legally binding global ban on nuclear explosive testing and the final step in the vision laid out fifty years ago by President John F. Kennedy.”

With that background, we can read Pickering’s article in its intended light. The former ambassador and promoter of the test ban treaty used North Korea’s recent nuclear test as a jumping-off point to call for U.S ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. He writes: “US ratification of the test-ban treaty would increase the global leverage necessary to curtail North Korea’s nuclear weapons



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program and help deter Iran's leaders from pursuing a nuclear weapon."

Pickering continues:

Like any treaty-ratification effort, securing Senate approval will be tough, but is within reach. The Senate's approval of the New START treaty (a nuclear arms reduction agreement between the US and [Russia](#)) in December 2010 shows that the White House and the Senate can work together when US national security interests are at stake.

Pickering also writes (with apparent approval) that "The treaty can also be enforced by action from the UN Security Council. The Security Council found unanimously at a summit-level meeting in January 1992 that nuclear proliferation is a threat to world peace and security. If a signatory country violated the nuclear testing ban, action to enforce the treaty could include sanctions and use of force if authorized."

In tracing the roots of the treaty that he advocates, Pickering recalls: "It has been a half-century since President John F. Kennedy sought to negotiate a comprehensive test ban but achieved only the Limited Test Ban Treaty."

The timing of Pickering's editorial is fortuitous in that it serves to shed light on the agenda of his fellow internationalists (many of whom, like Pickering, are CFR members) to turn control of the world's nuclear arsenal over to the UN. And since Pickering gives full credit to President John Kennedy for creating the vision leading to the test ban treaty, we repeat what we wrote in our [previous article](#) related to North Korea's nuclear test:

John F. Kennedy (also a CFR member) ... on September 25, 1961, presented to the 16th General Assembly of the United Nations a disarmament proposal entitled, Freedom from War: The United States Program for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World (State Department Publication 7277). One of the planks of that document called for "progressive controlled disarmament and continuously developing principles and procedures of international law would proceed to a point where no state would have the military power to challenge the progressively strengthened U.N. Peace Force and all international disputes would be settled according to the agreed principles of international conduct."

In President Kennedy's day, the old Soviet Union provided a formidable nuclear threat that served to help the president make his case for nuclear disarmament. (Russia inherited that title, but our government seems to ignore that fact.) Today, rogue states like North Korea serve the same function — to frighten Americans into acceding to a program of nuclear disarmament and UN control.

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