

North Korea; Threat, Détente...Peace?

The Nuclear Missile Threat & The Singapore Summit

After the inter-Korean summit at the end of April, a gulf of optimism engulfed the World. The Korean question might be solved peacefully after all! Two weeks later a date was set; June 12 in Singapore. Only to be cancelled again two weeks later at May 24, by US president Trump. At May 26, the North-Korean leader held a surprise meeting with his South-Korean counterpart, president Moon Jae-in, who's intermediacy might have reignited the US-NK dialogue. Since then the possible summit is on the table again. Although the process of the on-again, off-again summit shows there might be many hurdles on the road ahead.

North Korean leader, Kim Jung-un's, trump card is the claimed ability to attack the US-mainland with a nuclear-tipped ICBM. "Unacceptable", according to the president of the United States. Hence his demand for "denuclearization". Judging the validity of the NK- claim from the outside is difficult. Nonetheless, that is exactly what we will do in this seminar. Any informed policy towards North Korea should start with a sound technical analysis of their missile program and the ability to produce a reliable nuclear warhead. This is the only way to make a realistic assessment of the NK- threat & leverage. This approach should also appeal to military planners and policymakers, because it will show how much room is left for a military or a political solution.

Please note: to comfort / reassure the non-engineers in the audience, the technical analysis will be presented in a way, so it will be understandable to the broader public.

After setting the scene by a technical assessment of the North Korean nuclear missile threat, the military options will be investigated. Finally, the geopolitical context of the North Korean case and the likelihood of a negotiated settlement will be explored.

PROGRAMME

12.30 – 13.00 Registration
13.00 – 13.10 Welcome & Introduction
13.10 – 14.30 Technical analyses
14.30 – 15.25 Military options
15.25 – 15.50 Tea break
15.50 – 16.45 Geopolitical context
16.45 – 17.15 Panel-discussion
17.15 – 18.00 Drinks

The Chatham House Rule applies.

LOCATION

Royal Netherlands Society of Engineers
Prinsessegracht 23, 2514 AP Den Haag

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

Please follow the link to this seminar
at www.kivi.nl/dv

13.00 – 14.30 Technology aspects

Dr. Ir. Ralph Savelsberg:

An introduction to DPRK ballistic missiles & nuclear warhead design

By using knowledge of existing missiles and information available from photographs and flight tests, the performance of the missiles can be estimated. As an example, Dr. Savelsberg will apply such an analysis to the Hwasong-10, first launched in June of 2016, showing its trajectory could only be flown with a reduced payload, but that considerable advances were made nonetheless. This case will be illustrative for determining reliable range estimates.

Dr. Savelsberg will also, briefly, discuss the DPRK H-bomb claim, after its latest nuclear test, and which role this claim plays in miniaturizing a thermonuclear device. Going from a test device to a viable ICBM warhead, however, is fraught with difficulties. Historically, miniaturising a thermonuclear weapon and optimising the heat shield required extensive testing. So what will all of this mean for a hypothetical DPRK nuclear warhead ?

Dr. Ing. Markus Schiller: Explaining NK missile progress; an overview & analysis

Dr. Schiller's presentation will give an overview of the NK missile program, the general assumptions and public opinions about it, and what it really seems to be once you start digging deeper. In doing so he will touch on the most sensible hypotheses; reverse engineering vs. supplied by a foreign source. This overview will start in the 1980s with the NK Scuds, and lead up to the most recent developments with the HS-15.

14.30 – 15.25 Military options

Last year tensions run high and many observers deemed war, or at least military action possible on the Korean peninsula. At this moment in time President Trump threatening North Korea with "fire and fury" and North Korea threatening to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire", seemed all but forgotten. However if negotiations fail, all options are at the table again, including military options. Hence we will investigate if there are any viable military options. Since we are dealing with a ballistic missile threat there is some special attention paid to the possibilities and limitation of missile defense.

Lt.Gen. (rtd) Ton van Loon: Possible military options by the U.S. and its Allies

General Van Loon will replace the earlier announced Lt. Gen. ret. Mart de Kruif, who will not be able to attend. In his presentation general Van Loon will focus on possible military options by the U.S. and its Allies to solve the ongoing Korean Conflict, bearing in mind the strategic, operational and tactical implications.

Dr.Ir. Ralph Savelsberg:

Ground-based Midcourse Defense, protecting the US against North-Korean ICBMs?

Following the end of the Cold War, efforts to counter the threat of ballistic missile strike against the US mainland have focused on limited strikes from countries such as Iran and North Korea. The current system, called Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD), consists of different sensor systems and includes a total of 44 interceptor missiles, based in Alaska and California. The current system has a number of weaknesses and a patchy test record, which raises questions about its effectiveness.

15.25 – 15.50 Tea break

15.50 – 16.45 Geopolitical context

Ambassador ret. Marc Vogelaar: North-Korean incentives & tactics

In his contribution the ambassador will look into the incentives for North-Korean foreign policy making and discuss their negotiation tactics. Based on his experience in dealing with North Korea and the US, he will present the more realistic outcomes of a negotiation between the two opponents. What will be the geopolitical consequences if the North Korean nuclear crisis is not solved?

Drs. Alexander Bon (NI. Defence Academy):The perceived NK nuclear missile threat by the US and the tensions with it's allies

In exploring the broader geopolitical context, drs. Bon will focus predominantly on the role of the US and its most important allies in the region, Japan & South-Korea. Different threat perceptions and positions resulted in differing views on effective policies towards North Korea. Trumps "crisis-management" triggered again the ever lingering fear among allies for abandonment, fuelling the already existing tensions and complicating their options in view of a receding US in Asia.

16.45 – 17.15 Panel-discussion

17.15 – 18.00 Drinks