

Community Comment  
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### Another Missile Crisis

I lived thru the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 60's. It was scary business. The two competing forces backed away from the brink of nuclear war just in time. President Kennedy and the Head of the Soviet Union both seemed to realize the gravity of the situation and came to an accommodation. This saved the two countries and perhaps the world from destroying our planet. When it comes to nuclear war, I believe a line from a movie "War Games" says it all; the only winning move is not to play the game.

North Korea is a problem for the United States, the countries in the region, and probably the world. The United Nations Security Council all voted to condemn the action of North Korea to continue testing intercontinental ballistic missiles the can deliver a nuclear weapon to the U. S. mainland, Japan, and others. They are clearly going against world opinion, they are lead by a ruthless dictator, and seem to be a country kept in the dark and barely fed. Others have said their actions are irrational and reckless. The U.S. and the world have a right to be concerned that they pose a threat to world peace.

In potential conflicts like this, there has to be an adult in the room. War is seldom the answer, and nuclear war is unthinkable. Diplomacy works best and the words that are used are crucial. When our childish President blurted out we will meet this threat with Fire and Fury, I was shocked and dismayed. He said during the campaign he would use nuclear weapons if necessary, and his statement seems to indicate that he hasn't changed position.

Our constitution clearly puts the president as commander in chief of the armed forces. We clearly thought then, and I still agree, that the civilian president and congress are the ones who should declare war. The military is, therefore, our tool. But reporting indicates that this Fire and Fury statement was not a prepared statement, but was a spontaneous, off the cuff, comment. A prepared statement would tell us that the language was discussed with civilian and military advisors and selected to give the desired message. If this statement was indeed an impulse, then no one had an opportunity to discuss the possible ramifications. We simply cannot afford this level of recklessness.

When this President was elected and took office, the level of incompetence has been almost comical. For a so called successful business man, his inability to organize and delegate and understand the difference between private business and public service is stunning. Worse yet is his lack of intellectual curiosity in learning about democratic process and public service.

This incompetence is something our system can accommodate and manage to the extent that the damage done can be corrected if it's internal to politics and policy development. But when an external force presents a real and present danger, all of us should be quite

worried. It is not appropriate that we look to the military for intelligent and rational diplomatic solutions. But I'm glad to say we can trust the military leadership for this input and in this case, we must. What will it take to see the damage that is being done?

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.