

HENRY KISSINGER'S KOREAN BLUEPRINT

By THEAUSTRALIAN.com

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After the failure of his three immediate predecessors in the White House to do anything meaningful about the North Korean nuclear threat, Donald Trump's frustration in the crisis he confronts is understandable. So is his recourse to the language of John Wayne in the 1949 World War II movie *Sands of Iwo Jima* in warning Pyongyang's demented despot, Kim Jong-un, that the US military is "locked and loaded", to deal with the threat. As former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger — who at 94 remains one of the world's most profound thinkers on strategic policy — says in a new article, the use of military force cannot be precluded. But the imperative is to avoid war. In outlining a process to achieve that end, Dr Kissinger reflects the views of those in the administration, including Defence Secretary James Mattis, who believe war with North Korea is not realistic and would have "catastrophic" consequences.

"Thousands of artillery tubes entrenched (by North Korea) within range of the South Korean capital demonstrate Pyongyang's strategy of holding hostage greater Seoul's population of 30 million," Dr Kissinger warns. Unilateral pre-emptive military action by the US would involve a risk of conflict with China. Beijing, even if it temporarily acquiesced, "would not long abide an American strategy of determining by itself outcomes on the very edge of China's heartland, as its intervention in the Korean War of the 1950s demonstrated".

An understanding between Washington and Beijing, Dr Kissinger argues, is "the essential prerequisite" for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. China, he says, may have an even greater interest than the US in forestalling a nuclear arms race in Asia, a likely consequence of the current dangers if South Korea, Japan and Vietnam feel compelled to gain nuclear capability. The UN Security Council resolution on North Korea, passed with Chinese support for sanctions and for the principle of North Korean denuclearisation, was a major step and the basis for sustained co-operation between Beijing and Washington. The only feasible approach is a common position, jointly pursued, with South Korea and Tokyo also taking part.

Dr Kissinger's assessment carries enormous weight. After talking at the weekend, Mr Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping both affirmed the importance of the Security Council resolution. Mr Xi emphasised Beijing's willingness to work with the US. Mr Trump must keep him to his word.

As Dr Kissinger says, Sino-US co-operation offers the only option, short of war. North Korea must not be allowed to retain a nuclear capability, with its inherent danger and the chance it would pass it to other rogue states. Mr Trump has good reason to emphasise US military might. But his big challenge is to make US diplomacy work in a way it did not under Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama. Further failure would be a disaster.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on what these "Wars And Rumors of Wars" are leading to, (A One World Political System having "Seven Heads and Ten Horns")

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