

Kim Jong's got a licence to il

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF NORTH KOREA'S entrance into the ranks of the Nuclear Weapon Club has prompted criticism from all around the globe, from bitter enemies such as the United States and Japan to economic and ideological buddies like China. But even though the two countries are buddy-buddy, China knows what the rest of the planet does—that Kim Jong-il is unpredictable enough to actually use the weapons.

Which leads us to the 64 000-megaton question: what's to be done now? Despite the fact that a nuclear-armed North Korea is a supremely scary thought, the cards aren't all down yet. While economic sanctions such as those implemented by Japan, along with others proposed by US President Bush yesterday, are arguably a necessity, they must be paired with one-on-one diplomatic talks. Otherwise, we risk falling into the trap of one-upmanship: harsher sanctions prompting more atomic muscle-flexing and vice versa. However, while no one is suggesting taking a soft stance on North Korea, recently history has shown that a tough-talking, no-quarter-given stance simply doesn't work.

The threat of force is only effective when it's coupled with the option of diplomacy. What those who advocate an unyielding, hard-line stance seem to forget is that threats of military intervention with no hope of a diplomatic alternative will do nothing but back North Korea into a corner. A corner with primitive but functional nuclear weapons. And while there is no doubt that Kim Jong-il's military would stand no chance in a military contest against those collectively calling for an end to the tests, the costs of a conflict in the area—economic, military and diplomatic—are enough to demand that all diplomatic avenues are exhausted before military action is set in motion.

The diplomatic approach is also our only real hope for preventing other nations from developing nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), designed during the Cold War to discourage weapons testing in exchange for greater access to peaceful nuclear technology, needs to be reworked. The document—written in a time before the Middle East and Asia became the focus of debates on nuclear weapons—is full of loopholes, but still holds one of the greatest hopes of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. While probably not of great use when it comes to North Korea, as they already have developed and tested nuclear weapons, the NPT's promise of delivering much-needed technology—with crippling economic sanctions being the alternative—might be enough to convince other nations, like Iran, to abandon their offensive nuclear programs. And of course, while Kim Jong-il's condemnation of the atomic arsenals of countries like the US and Great Britain seem to be nothing more than a lame justification for his nation's own weapon tests, a sincere effort at gradual disarmament from the world's largest nuclear powers is an important step in preventing proliferation.

Tough talk and economic sanctions are an essential, but not sufficient, response to the North Korean tests—diplomatic talks are required. If one simply tries to bully a bully, all that results is a playground pissing-contest. And it's no fun being caught with your pants down in the middle of a cold nuclear winter.

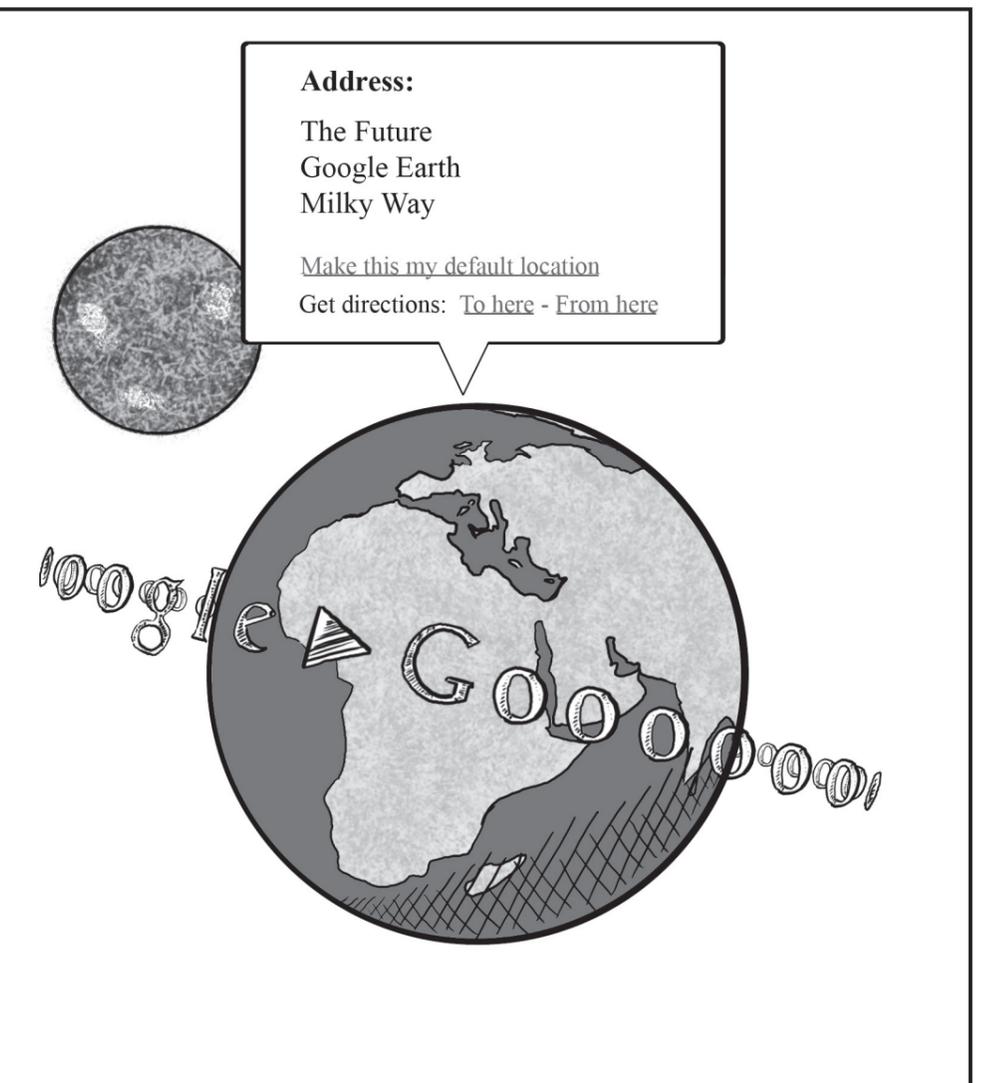
SCOTT LILWALL
Deputy News Editor

There's always room at the apocalypse inn

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT POOR OLD KIM-JONG JUST isn't getting a fair chance here. I mean, doesn't North Korea deserve as fair a shot as anyone at ending civilization as we know it? Sure, their having nukes increases the odds that someone will actually use them, but as a belligerent species that continually neglects to learn from its own history, who are we to decide who can and can't blow us up sky high? Oh yeah, the US, that's who—I guess they're the most experienced in this matter, after all ...

ADAM GAUMONT
Opinion Editor

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MATTHEW BARRETT

LETTERS

Conditions in Middle East not so sweet

In response to Rivka Kushne's article "In the land of milk and honey" (5 October), I would kindly like to point out that in an article published by the Israeli news source *Haaretz*, it was reported that more than 1.2 million cluster bombs were dropped into Lebanon, and quoting the head of the Israel Defense Forces rocket unit in Lebanon, "What we did was insane and monstrous, we covered entire towns in cluster bombs."

According to the UN, around 40 per cent of all cluster bombs dropped fail to detonate on impact, and these bombs have a margin of error of up to 1200 meters in accuracy. You gotta love the "heroic" army and their cute "leaflets" warning Lebanese their country will be blown to pieces.

Long story short: end the occupation of the Shebaa farms, return the 10 000-plus Lebanese prisoners (compare this with the two soldiers Israel is outraged over), and stop the massacres in Gaza. This will indeed bring peace.

ALI HUSSEIN
Science III

Intolerance is a two-way street, Frehner

Rather than get into an unending debate about the nature of the word "tolerance" I will instead present a counter argument on behalf of those who believe that a Justice of the Peace *should* be allowed to refuse to marry a homosexual couple, or any couple for that matter, that he or she feels would be contravening his or her personal morality in regards to marriage.

Here is the comparison I will draw. Within the Canadian justice system any attorney, Crown prosecutor or even judge for that matter has the right not to get involved with a case in which his or her personal conscience would seriously "cloud" their ability to execute their profession task. Such examples are as self-evident as when a relative is involved in a case, and as ambiguous as, say, if a gay student is challenging a Catholic school board in court to try and win the "right" to take his gay date to the Catholic graduation dance. So let's say that the judge appointed to the case was a strict Roman Catholic; or reversely, President of the Canadian Rainbow Society. Now that seems like a good instance where a government official should make a judgment of personal conscience and step aside. Would you not agree?

Back to the letter. Why would any gay couple wish to be married by anyone who is thinking through the entire ceremony "this marriage is not real and is only a fake marriage based on a panicked Liberal government vote-grab policy"? There are thousands of JPs out there. Why not make it easier on everyone, most of all yourselves, and seek out someone who will perform the ceremony with genuine warmth and acceptance?

Tolerance is not a government policy; it is an everyday type of interaction. Tolerance is an implementation of the very act of justifying the ends with the *means*, and never vice versa. If one believes that forcing a Muslim, Catholic or Biblicist JP into performing a gay marriage is a victory for true justice in the name of tolerance, then that one's paradigm is truly just as intolerant as those who would wish to see homosexuality become a criminal offence once again. If the thought of forcing the Knights of Columbus into renting their hall out for a gay marriage

reception pleases certain members of the Rainbow movement and some of their journalist sympathizers, then truly such people are not above being intolerant themselves.

If transitions in social mentalities must occur, it must be through mutual respect and a willingness to engage in dialogue. Forcing anyone to support something that they believe is immoral is simply intolerant. No tolerant society justifies the means with the ends: not everyone believes that the Rainbow version of utopia is morally right not to mention the fact there is not even any professional consensus on the issue of homosexuality being a "biological thing." We must all learn to respect these differences of paradigm, for history tells us that paradigms will always differ no matter what education or social system is implemented.

JOE NUSSE
History V

More balance needed in marriage laws

The Gateway's latest editorial attacking the non-existent "Defence of Religions Act" is underwhelming. Right from the headline, it screams predictability. At the very hint of an attack on same-sex marriage, the author screams that such a suggestion weds "intolerance" and "hypocrisy." Far from being brave or courageous, its mediocrity suggests that it [was] created by a cliché generator.

Substantially, Mr Frehner has things backwards. Instead of accusing people of refusing to perform same-sex marriages as being intolerant, the real intolerance is forcing people to marry against their conscience. Saying people are "intolerant" for obeying their convictions seems to be quite a ridiculous proposition. Being simple "yes-men"

to the state denies the humanity of state actors and ultimately is the disposition that governments use to oppress their citizens.

Mr Frehner no doubt thinks that "personal politics or religious convictions have absolutely no place" in "public" positions. If this were held true, the result would be that people of all religions would be excluded from positions within government, since the religious cannot simply deny their conscience when it suits the state. Mr Frehner's suggestion that people leave their faith at home, if anything, is both intolerant and incoherent.

A reasonable balance, in my view, can be easily achieved. If a public officer doesn't want to marry a same-sex couple, why couldn't a couple find an officer that is okay with marrying them? Must people be forced into violating their will to marry someone? That, as opposed to this non-existent act protecting people's ability to make free choices, is the real concern.

JONATHAN MARYNIUK
Law I

Doubting Thomas finds faith in Oilers, puns

I was a Streater in last Thursday's Gateway, and I made a pretty pessimistic comment about the Oilers. I'm sorry. I don't know what I was thinking; maybe staying late for micro lab just had me in a huff. Anyway, I'd like to revise my previous statement to, "He Cam't Ward us off this time!" I hope you publish this so I don't get beaten up. Thanks.

ALEX CAMERON
Genetics III

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca.