

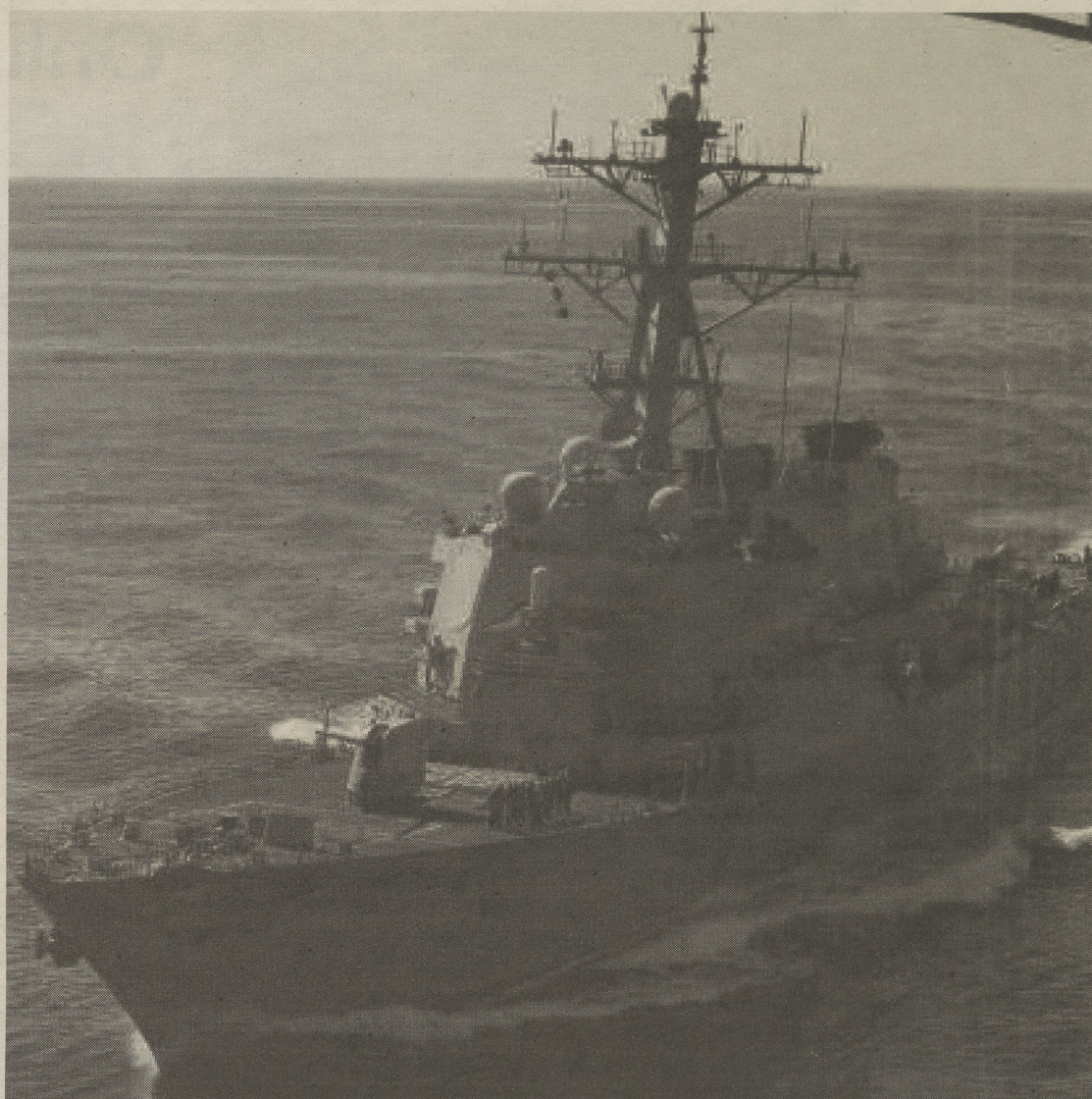
North Korea's Latest Threats

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It has been 60 years since the armistice between the democratic South Korea backed by the U.N. mainly the U.S. forces and the communist North Koreans supported by the Chinese and Soviet Union ended the Korean War. Although tense relations did not end between the neighboring countries, there has not been a full scale conflict between the two since. Well, in the past few months, things seem to have gotten heated once again to the point that North Korea has threatened to throw away the armistice that would start yet another war between the two. In the past few months, North Korea, led by Kim Jung Un, son of the late leader Kim Jung Il, has conducted multiple nuclear tests that have been strongly opposed by the United States as well as the entire United Nations. This has led to harsh sanctions from the United Nations as well as America, who have been strong allies with the South Koreans since the Korean War.

North Korea is obviously angered by these sanctions and other such restrictions being imposed on them due to their hostility. This has led to multiple threats from leader Kim Jung Un, including attacks on the United States homeland as well as bases in nearby countries such as Japan. Fortunately for the United States, the missile defenses would be able to intercept any ICBM or nuclear warhead directed at our country as well as America's allies. The North threatening to throw away the armistice has been one of the more alarming threats that they have proposed doing. As well as the claims that they have all missile and artillery sites pointed at their southern neighbors and the U.S. bases. However, this may be impossible to do for one simple reason; North Korea is not the only country that fought in the war in the name of communism. The other country is their neighbor, China. This means that the armistice cannot be rendered invalid by the North without any type of agreement with the Chinese, which is extremely unlikely. Even to the point that China has asked the North Koreans to stop conducting all these unauthorized nuclear tests. The South Koreans have been conducting war game exercises with the United States in the past few weeks, showing the constant partnership between the South and the United States among the growing threat of hostilities between the North and South.

The most recent attacks between the two countries have not resulted in any deaths but rather have halted internet activity and caused banks to shut down after multiple malicious cyber attacks had occurred. In the week of March 11, North Korea accused the South and the Americans for disabling internet in the North via cyber-attack. That following week on March 20, South Korea had to shut-down multiple TV broadcast stations and two major banks after a malicious cyber attack was corrupting their systems. Although nobody has come forward on the attack, many believe that it was North Koreans hackers who were using this attack to plant a virus in South Korean banking systems. Regardless of how tough the South's defenses are, it will be tough to stop the North Korean hackers, who are recognized as some of the best hackers in the world. It would seem that they will stop at nothing until they are able to cripple their two main enemies, the South Koreans and the United States. The



US Navy Cruiser CG-56, USS San Jacinto Patrols The Pacific. Photo by the AP.

United States has been in the region the past weeks conducting its annual war games exercises with the South in case of an invasion by the hostile Northerners. This time around, however, the U.S. has flexed a little more of their military muscle to act as a deterrent for any actions by the North and a display of their commitment to protecting South Korea.

With the constant threats of attacking the United States and recurring propaganda films showing the capitol building in flames, the United States has increased their deployment power for these drills and exercises. As a display of the United States seriousness over these threats, they promptly sent two B-2 "Spirit" stealth bombers to the region from a U.S. base. These bombers can carry up to 50,000 pounds in a variety of bombs that range from conventional bombs to nuclear weapons. Their radar absorbing technology makes them nearly invisible to a radar system. They have also deployed their stealthy F-22 "Raptor" air superiority fighters to the region to take part in the drills. These fighters are capable of supersonic speeds topping off at an estimated 1,500 mph and are the next generation of air superiority. Lastly, the United States has also deployed the USS John McCain and the USS Decatur to the seas just outside of the Korean Peninsula. These are two Aegis-class missile destroyers used as a defense against ballistic missiles. This is in response to North Korea vowing to restart one of its mothballed nuclear plants capable of making weapons grade plutonium. It is unclear if this will continue to escalate until a conflict is all but certain or if both sides will come to some sort of an agreement and some sort of peace will be restored. However the South and the United States do not wish to replicate the bloody conflict that ravaged the peninsula nearly 60 years ago.

The New Pope: Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio

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From Buenos Aires to Vatican, Catholics celebrated worldwide when Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio became the new pope. He's the first Latin American and the first Jesuit of modern time to lead the 1.2 billion Catholics in the world today.

Something that may surprise you is that unlike recent pontiffs (John Paul II, Benedict XVI) Pope Francis does not have a roman numeral after his name. The reason being, he is the first to take the name Francis. Why chose the name Francis, you may ask. The new pope chose the name Francis because he wanted to honor St. Francis of Assisi who was an admirer of nature and a servant to the destitute and poor. St. Francis of Assisi lived in rags among beggars at St. Pete's Basilica in Rome though he was born the son of a rich cloth merchant. Those who are closest to Pope Francis see similarities between the two gentlemen. "Francis of Assisi is someone who turned his back on the wealth of his family and the lifestyle he had, and bonded with lepers and the poor," said the Rev. Thomas Rosica, the Vatican's deputy spokesman. "He scolded those priests

last year and said, 'How can you turn these people away when they belong to us?' The pontiff of fists, Pope Francis, breaks away from tradition.

Contrary to popular belief, he's not actually the very first pope from outside of Europe. You'd be correct in saying that, Francis is the first non-European pope in modern times but a Syrian Pope named Pope St. Gregory III led the church from 731 to 741 A.D. back in the 8th century. Also we've had popes from Bethlehem (St. Evaristus, from 97 to 105 A.D.), Jerusalem (Pope Theodore I, from 642 to 649) and modern-day Libya (Saint Victor I, from 189 to 199). In the last millennia, several Syrians gave also been pontiff as well. Though as we know, a majority of popes have been of Italian decent but with Francis' appointment, this may mean the tide could be shifting away from Europe.

It's not surprising as leader of the socially conservative Catholic Church, that Francis opposes abortion and same-sex marriage. Francis clashed with the government of Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirch-

ner as a cardinal over his opposition to gay marriage and free distribution of contraceptives. In Argentina his career as a priest coincided with the so-called Dirty War and some say the church didn't do enough to confront the military dictatorship. In particular, Francis was accused of complicity in the 1976 kidnapping of two liberal Jesuit priests, Allen wrote. Francis denied the charge. "The best evidence that I know of that this was all a lie and a series of salacious attacks was that Amnesty International who investigated that said that was all untrue," said Jim Nicholson, former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. "These were unfair accusations of this fine priest."

Francis takes the helm of a church that has been rocked in recent years by sex abuse by priests and claims of corruption and infighting among the church hierarchy. Phillip M. Thompson, executive director of the Aquinas Center of Theology at Emory University suggests that Pope Francis may need to find a new way to draw new Catholics into the church where it is in decline. He also suggests that he'll also need to find ways of working with shifting viewpoints among Catholics. In the United States, for instances, 90% of Catholics are using contraception and 82% think it is morally permissible. "The church has conservative positions on human sexuality, bioethics, etc., but liberal positions on issues such as economic regulation, the death penalty and immigration," Thompson said. "A church divided against itself seems unlikely to renew our political or cultural structure."