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Ashok Dhillon has 40 years of front-line business experience in Canada and International markets. He incorporated his first construction company in 1974, and since then has founded and led companies in construction and international power development.

Over the last 20 years Mr. Dhillon, has led and worked with top Canadian talent in the legal, engineering and accounting firms, such as Fasken Martineau, Russell & DuMullen, Stikeman Elliott; Hatch, Monoco Agra, New Brunswick Power, SNC Lavalin; and Ernst & Young, Arthur Anderson, and Grant Thornton. And in London, worked with Perkins Couie and Morgan Grenfell. Mr. Dhillon's companies have partnered and worked with Pan Canadian Oil & Gas, WestCoast Energy, TransCanada Pipelines, and international companies such as AES, Enron Power, Hyundai Heavy Industries.

Mr. Dhillon has worked and negotiated with highest levels of Governments in Canada and India. He has pursued and won mandates to develop power plants in Canada, and foreign jurisdictions such as Hungary, Iran, Pakistan and India with uncompromising ethical standards. His extensive experience in securing and negotiating multi-hundred million and billion dollar mandates in power project development, gives him in-depth knowledge and intuitive insights into macro and micro, national and international, geo-political and economic realities and trends.

Mr. Dhillon has been invited to speak on international business at various forums, including as an expert witness for the Standing Senate Committee, Government of Canada, on "The Rise of Russia, China and India".

Pulling North Korea To The Brink

Since the end of the last Korean War (1953), for similarly structured communist China, North Korea has been a convenient buffer State on its border, against the ideologically opposed, capitalist, democratic, combined alliance of South Korea and the United States. After the collapse of communist Russia, China has continued to be the sole and steadfast patron of this increasingly isolated, dysfunctional and desperate nation. China has been supplying North Korea with critically needed food and monetary assistance, and with political protection, to keep it propped up, and help it survive in spite of its moral and economic bankrupt reality.



But times and global dynamics have changed significantly for North Korea because in the last 20 years China changed. While still committed unflinchingly and determinedly to a single communist party rule, China realized that to prevent its own inevitable economic collapse, Soviet Union style, it will have to abandon its 'Marxist/Leninist/Mao' economic model, and embrace the heretofore vilified capitalist system, modified to its own particular political reality, but a capitalistic style system nevertheless. Over the last few years, China tried to convince North

Korea to adopt similar economic reforms and curtail its nuclear ambitions, but was rebuffed by the paranoid, control obsessed regime. China continued to support North Korea as it served a dual purpose of being a convenient communist buffer State, and a small but vicious pit bull that could, on command, make life difficult and worrisome for its ideological and economic competitors, South Korea, the United States, Taiwan and Japan. But then something else changed.

China came to need the West, and its prosperous South East Asia neighbours (South Korea, Japan & Taiwan) as invaluable investors and economic clients that were in a large measure responsible for its emergence into economic prosperity. The increasingly dependent North Korea started to become more of a political burden, but as it still served its purpose as a border buffer State, China was willing to pay the price of supporting it. What changed this entrenched dynamic was the ability of North Korea to develop nuclear weapons, with the possible short and medium range delivery systems. While the development of nuclear bombs worried the democratic neighbours and their economic and military patron the United States, there was not much that they could do with China being a protectorate of North Korea. The latest underground nuclear test conducted by North Korea with the stated intention, that they would develop 'smaller and lighter' nuclear warheads, to be mounted on medium and long range missiles that could reach the United States, changed the awkward but delicate balance of political and military tolerance. Now North Korea's normal and bellicose rhetoric against the United States and its democratic neighbours, particularly South Korea, isn't all that amusing any more, but represents in the words of the current United States Secretary of

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Defense, Chuck Hagel - "a clear and present danger".

After the last nuclear test even China supported the imposition of additional punitive United States led sanctions, being acutely aware of the inestimable value of its global trading partners, versus the ideologically similar but economically bankrupt, and increasingly troublesome rouge and dependent North Korea.

The double whammy of recent crippling sanctions of the West, and the backing off of its sole supporter China, at least in this instance, has sent North Korea and its new and inexperienced leader into an ever escalating tirade of dire threats, and a upping of the ante towards a destructive and violent military retaliation for the perceived wrongs done it by the United States and South Korea.

In the past a slightly milder version of this game was played by all parties, with the mutual understanding that everyone basically kept to the status quo. North Korea is a dysfunctional State and has survived since 1953 at the largesse of its big brothers Russia and China. After the collapse of Russia, all aid from that quarter disappeared and North Korea was left relying solely on China for all its vital necessities like food and energy, and protection from its ideologically opposed, capitalist, far more prosperous and democratically ruled neighbours. In this neighborhood North Korea's autocratic and paranoid regime has felt ever more defensive, and taken shelter behind a constant carefully orchestrated, predictable and strident belligerence, coupled with constant threats of armed retaliation for perceived provocations from its neighbours or the United States. Under the protection of its patron China, North Korea continued to develop and maintain its considerable military strength, and also managed to develop nuclear weaponry, while its people starved by the millions.



The advancement in nuclear capability of North Korea has upset the status quo and the United States is no longer able to ignore the increasing "clear and present danger". Therefore this time, in our view, the United States and its allies have decided to push North Korea to the brink and call its bluff. When the realization sets in for the regime of North Korea that this time nobody is backing off, they will face the unthinkable, either back down and 'eat crow', and repeatedly swallow the international 'loss of face' and the lasting deep embarrassment, and the tough terms of arms containment that will surely follow. Or - follow through with its escalating threats and military moves into an act of war and face certain destruction, at least at the regime level. The global powers have let and led, the young pampered and inexperienced new leader and his desperate generals paint themselves into a corner with their ill-considered strategy and are now going to exact the price by de-fanging North Korea. We can only hope.