North Korea: Root Cause of Ukraine Crisis is United States

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In a response to a question from KCNA, the state-run North Korean news agency, the North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson said “The root cause of the Ukraine crisis totally lies in the hegemonic policy of the U.S. and the West which indulge themselves in high-handedness and arbitrariness towards other countries.”

The response of the spokesperson was simply quotation of a few of the more rabid statements which appeared in a commentary by Ri Ji Song, a researcher of the “Society for International Politics Study,” on February 28. The longer version of his “study” was released two days earlier by the foreign ministry. Although the longer piece was originally a
commentary, in North Korea's tightly controlled media world, the commentary comes with full official endorsement. The fact that a couple of the more offensive comments were quoted in full by the Foreign Ministry statement clearly indicates it is the official view.

In this North Korean view of the world, “The U.S. and the West, in defiance of Russia's reasonable and just demand to provide it with legal guarantee for security, have systematically undermined the security environment of Europe.” Thus, 200,000 Russian troops invading Ukraine and a thunderstorm of Russian missiles indiscriminately raining down on Ukrainian cities is the fault of the United States.

The North Korean commentary continued, “The root cause of the Ukrainian crisis also lies in the high-handedness and arbitrariness of the U.S. which has held on solely to the unilateral sanction and pressure while pursuing only global hegemony and military supremacy in disregard of the legitimate demand of Russia for its security.” Again the United States is highlighted as the principal enemy: “The U.S. embellishes its own interference in internal affairs of others as ‘righteous’ for peace and stability of the world, but it denounces for no good reason self-defensive measures taken by other countries to ensure their own national security as ‘injustice’ and ‘provocation.’”

A similar foreign ministry commentary focused on the United Kingdom and the Ukraine. After noting UK financial support for Ukraine and provision of anti-tank weapons, the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Britain’s “tough stance in contrast to German's [sic.] diplomatic tone has something to do with the Prime Minister Johnson's bid to distract criticism and pressure for his resignation.”

The North Korean comments on events in Ukraine largely ignore what the Russian military and Russian government have done in the crisis. The principal focus has been to blame the United States.

Meanwhile, North Korea conducted its 8th and latest ballistic missile test on February 27th firing a ballistic missile reaching an altitude of some 390 miles and going 190 miles into the Sea of Japan (East Sea). Although the missile did not land in Japan's exclusive economic zone, Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi called the launch “a threat to the peace and security of Japan, the region and the international community” and a violation of UN Security Council resolutions. South Korea's Blue House issued a statement saying
“Launching a ballistic missile at a time when the world is making efforts to resolve the Ukraine war is never desirable for peace and stability in the world, the region and on the Korean Peninsula.”

It appears that the North Koreans have resumed their barrage of missile tests which saw seven ballistic missiles fired in January, one of the most intense periods of missile testing by the North. Probably in deference to their Chinese allies, Pyongyang paused the missile tests during the Beijing Winter Olympic Games. North Korea tested more long-range cruise missiles and short-range ballistic missiles, including hypersonic missiles, in January 2022 than any other period of time. It may be that the North will resume its missile test-firings, which can only heighten the danger in this time of Russian hostility in Ukraine.

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