



## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*I have been more than a little interested in the political game, played over the past few years by the Government of North Korean, compared with the much poorer political game, played by the (former) President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. President George W. Bush (of the United States of America) has, always, considered those two countries' governments, being international pariahs and part of the world's axes of evil. I cannot, completely, disagree with President George W. Bush, as history has proved, with President Saddam Hussein, known to have been nothing less than a butcher of his own people, either directly giving instructions to use poison gas on those of his population whom he did not like or appreciate, or permitting their murders by proxy. As for the present, ultimate leader of North Korea, Mr Kim Jong Il, it is a slightly different story to those of the governments of other countries' dictators because, thus far, there is no definitive evidence to suggest that he has been responsible for the mass slaughter of his own people, at least, not directly. However, it could be held that, by spending thirty percent and more of the country's annual national budget on building up and maintaining a huge military force, known to be, officially, about one million, three hundred thousand men and women under arms, with reserves of about four million, seven hundred thousand, fully trained men and women, and with military service, being compulsory for every male and female for between three years and ten years, he has permitted the country to go hungry, thereby causing many tens of thousands of the poorer people of his country to starve to death (the actual figures of the North Koreans, who died of malnutrition, have never been published). Whereas, it had been known, for some time, prior to the armed invasion of Iraq by the US Army, in March 2003, that that country did not possess much in the way of nuclear weaponry, if at all, it has been known for many years that North Korea had nuclear capabilities and the ability to deliver rockets, armed with nuclear warheads, for some distance from the borders of this rigid dictatorship. In fact, Kim Jong Il has warned the governments of the world that, in the event that he and/or his generals have reason to believe that an impending invasion from the West is immanent, North Korea would launch attacks on Tokyo, Japan, and Seoul, South Korea, immediately. It is highly unlikely that those threats could not have been backed by actions because the present leader of North Korea is known to be something of an eccentric, if not a raving madman. Yet, the Administration of George W. Bush sanctioned the illegal (according to the Charter of the United Nations) invasion of Iraq, but has never suggested that any consideration be given to attacking North Korea. Potentially, taking Kim Jong Il at his word, North Korea could obliterate vast parts of South Korea and cause hundreds of thousands of deaths in Tokyo, Japan, should this madman of Asia push that red button, ordering that war has been declared on the United States of America and its allies. That North Korea would not think twice of selling nuclear technology, materials and weaponry to the al-Qaeda network at the right price goes without saying. Further, al-Qaeda's Founder and present head, Osama bin Laden, would pay handsomely for such technology and armaments at a time that North Korea dearly needs cash to keep the country's economy, moving ahead, as well as putting rice into the stomachs of the tens of thousands of North Koreans who are on the verge of starvation. It has, always, been known that North Korea was for sale; and, Kim Jong Il has made no secret of this fact. Kim Jong Il is ready and willing to sell his dream of North Korea, becoming a member of the international nuclear 'club', provided that his price can be met. I wonder, however, whether or not one may trust this leader of one of the most reclusive countries of the world with, probably, the most repressive government of the world. Let's look at some of the known facts of this leader of a country of twenty three million people, scattered over a land mass of about forty six thousand, five hundred and forty square miles. It is fact that he had a personal involvement in the planting of a bomb on a South Korean airliner in November 1987, a bomb which exploded with the loss of one hundred and fifteen lives. Prior to that outrageous event, in 1983, North Korean agents killed several South Korean Cabinet Ministers in a bomb attack*

*at Yangon (formerly known as Rangoon), Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). Strangely, while there has never been any attempt to keep these matters secret, there has never been any suggestion of reprisals for the murders – from anybody or any country. North Korea, as I see it, is much more of a threat to world order than Iraq ever was. I wonder whether or not Iraq was considered, by President George W. Bush, as being 'easy meat' whereas North Korea was a much more powerful opponent, whose reactions to a military invasion could not be forecast with any real accuracy except, of course, that the country would hit back, tit-for-tat. As long as Kim Jong Il continues in power, North Korea will be an unsafe country and world peace will, always, be at peril. If any country of the world could do with a shot of US-styled democracy, it is North Korea. However, having said that, I must add that Kim Jong Il is playing the political game with the skill that is rarely seen in Asia. Talk to you next week*

*Chief Lady*

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