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ON DRUGS, PART I:

METH, KOREA - POWER GAMES

The geopolitical & junked-up Weirdness in Korea

One wonders what really lies behind the [recent bust](#) in South Korea of two twenty-year old US privates, who were allegedly trying to smuggle into Seoul 12 million dollars' worth of methamphetamine (9 pounds). We are told that the drugs were shipped out of California, hidden in corn flakes boxes, and conveyed to the Army Postal Office at Camp Humphreys, the South Korean garrison, which hosts the busiest U.S. Army airfield in Asia.

According the story, the drugs were seized last December at Incheon International Airport. They were supposed to reach approximately 130,000 consumers through a drug ring with a front in Seoul's Gangnam district. As it always is in these cases, US authorities find themselves, awkwardly, on both sides of the fence. They are, quite naturally, (said to be) part of the successful joint investigative team (with South Korea) —in the guise of the

DEA and of the official military investigators. Yet the US military are at the same time the custodians of the base, and, as such, they, quite naturally, decline to comment.

This quaint state of affairs is typically the rule in the grey area of drugs. Everybody says they are bad; massive forces are deployed to suppress them, and severe penalties are contemplated for pushers. But they persist, flooding our societies in waves, ever the same, yet ever more varied. Often lethal. Exemplary punishments are meted out — it is not clear what is going happen to the two young soldiers— but mass addiction, in one form or another, continues. Clearly, tiers of administrators at the top echelons of the technocratic machine do not just *know* (all there is to know), but must, by

and large, be involved in fomenting the flow itself. It is a substantial matter of technical and political policy.

This last episode in South Korea, whatever its ramifications and purposes, is nothing new. It reminds us of other “classic” instances, which have been abundantly documented and confirmed. Two such classic instances, in fact, are the last two tides of heroin addiction recorded in history, in the 1970s and 1980s. As known, a “segment” of the US administration — prominently the [CIA](#), as the story goes— was one of the important players in the general smuggling operations: viz. in Vietnam, and, a decade later with the creation (and funding) of the Mujahidin, in Afghanistan. Purportedly, the Agency poured loads of narcotics on the home turf to

fund guerrilla warfare, in both cases.

Drugged up Sisters

In connection with the first wave (early to mid-Seventies), in Italy, e.g., the word among insiders was that the heroin which began to flood the (politically agitated) North with a view to sapping the (youths in the) anti-war (i.e., anti-US) movement was circulated out of the NATO base in Vicenza. One may thus wonder whom, what youths (?), those 9 pounds of meth were for. South Korea has had, allegedly, a serious addiction to meth since the [Eighties](#), in fact. As of February 2015, meth makes up [55 five percent](#) of the trafficked drugs. But the story with her controversial sister, up North, is far more sensational. Of course, it must

be so for it is North Korea, after all: the so-called “hermit kingdom.”

A fantastic relic from the Cold War, North Korea is possibly America’s favorite “Rogue State” —if it didn’t exist, America would have to photoshop it from an old Polaroid of Maoist China. We “know” North Korea, in our western imaginarium, as an *evil Communist* dictatorship made up of fanaticized ant-soldiers and fronted by a cabal whose portraiture seems inspired by the kitschiest collage of pulp clichés one could have culled from a Seventies almanac. The buffoonish dynasts —Kim-II-This, and his son, Kim-II-That, his grandson, Kim-II-the-Other, and the scary uncle, Kim-II-Whatever— are like mimeographed and over-saturated Mao-like figur(in)es; grotesque spoofs of the

mandarin-collared villains in the James Bond movies of the Sixties —you know, those cinematographic characters that titter maniacally as they caress a nuclear detonation trigger.

And North Korea, like rogue magick, does it all. “The world’s most opaque country” fascistizes, Commie-style; she enslaves and starves her own. She has the gall to [counterfeit](#) US dollars; she contrabands cigarettes, and —how could she not?— traffics drugs galore (even into China): more than anything, methamphetamine, again, of which, allegedly, she is [voracious](#). “Sources” say that, “perhaps,” the [“toxic fumes”](#) of the drug are cooked in [“factories hidden among North Korea’s mountainous countryside.”](#) More than that, we are also told that more than

[30 percent](#) of North-Koreans, like termite-slaves thirsting for queenly secretions, [are addicted to the drug](#); and that the elite specially spoon-feeds them the meth crystals ([“ice”](#)) in order to rush the [completion](#) of numerous high-rises in the capital, including a pyramidal 105-story [sky-scraping monstrosity](#), which apparently yearns to shoot up like an Illuminati-HQ (without the wincing eyeball at its summit): the Ryugyong “Hotel of Doom” in Pyongyang, which is still empty after thirty years of construction.

Stupendous Rogue

What a stupendous rogue.
What a comfort for our collective sense of dilapidated self-worth, as westerners, to “know” that such muck is not just oozing vivaciously in some



recondite corner of the world, but that it is doing so *menacingly*. At us. Thank God. It is just too surreally, or too really good to be true. Indeed, for all its mystery and deep *"opacity,"* we seem to know *everything* there is to know about the hermit kingdom, especially the fact —and this is the exciting prospect— that this North Korean aberration is *a nuclear power*. It is dirt-poor;

allegedly, it cannot even feed itself (it ostensibly suffers from periodical droughts); it possesses no manufacturing base whatsoever and yet, miraculously, it can somehow afford the greatest, most expensive of all dissipative luxuries: an atomic arsenal.

An atomic arsenal with which this tweaker "rogue" threatens the vicinity (Japan), constantly

and obnoxiously, and, most conspicuously, with which it has the admirable nerve to defy the biggest, most aggressive dog in the kennel, the US itself. And we are supposed to believe this?

Now, it is either one of two things. Someone is clearly animating with malevolent intent this miserable scarecrow. Being its closest neighbor (barring South Korea) and chief supplier, China, as the local powerhouse, is the obvious suspect. While campaigning, in January 2016, Donald Trump declared that China had [“total control”](#) of North Korea. A year later, as president, he still implies that, though she has control of the North-Korean maniacs, China still [does not do enough](#) to rein them in. Right: why doesn't Beijing, [who easily could](#), quash the nuisance in

Pyongyang? Either you control a vassal or you don't. And if you don't, it no longer is a vassal. So, whose vassal/puppet is North Korea? Or it may be that it is [America](#) herself that props up the North Koreans: as it is for Islamism, it is plausible, for, at bottom, the US is the only party that is effectively deriving any “imperial fun” from this tedious, senseless Orwellian scenario. Which suggests, alternatively, that certain factions in China and the US might have agreed to keep up this charade. For the sake of “the game.”

THAAD and CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The latest twist in this macabre soap opera set on the Korean peninsula is the decision this month (March 2017) to begin in South Korea

the installation of THAAD, which stands for Thermal Altitude Area Defense. It is described as a formidable ballistic apparatus complemented by a powerful radar that tracks and hits targets. Of course, its expense and construction are justified by the worrisome “nuclear brinkmanship” and “reckless provocations” of North Korea, especially versus the 28,500 US troops stationed in the South. China is said to have *protested*. It accuses the US of using North Korea as a pretext for wanting to spy with this new toy on her own nuclear layout, and thereby undermine its effectiveness.

The smug oracle of Anglophone Manifest Destiny, *The Economist*, [pointed out](#) that China’s contentiousness is specious in that, according to US experts, THAAD

“interceptors” cannot hit Chinese missiles “in their launch phase” and are in the wrong place to block Chinese megaton firecrackers on their way to nuking California (the game opens up entrancing vistas...). And, so concludes the British weekly, China’s public displeasure is a manifest “indication that the outrage is politically motivated.” “Politically motivated” by what? This, then, would appear to corroborate the surmise that a transversal Sino-American faction is perfectly content on fueling this poor re-edition of Cold War antics. [Others voices](#) appear to substantiate China’s claim, adding that THAAD is also designed to spy on Russia. So are they all “playing”? And if not, it is then a matter of guessing the outlines of the factions involved.

Be that as it may, there is yet another actor on the scene with whom to reckon and that is the South Korean people, which point brings us back to where we started: the 9 lbs. of meth and the intimation that it might have something to do with the youth movement. The timing of the bust is suggestive. As known, starting in October of last year, a vast grassroots movement, which culminated in a mass rally in Seoul of approximately [1.5 million participants](#) on November 26th, succeeded eventually in forcing the [resignation](#) of the country's President over a corruption scandal. President Park Geun-hye, a conservative, was allegedly very close to the US and the military circles favorable to THAAD. New presidential elections are scheduled for May 9th of this year, and there is —whatever

the nature of the game they are playing— what appears to be genuine concern over a marked swerve to the left, which would entail, if not a complete reversal of THAAD's deployment, a concrete obstruction of its progression. Most observers say it is unlikely, though.

Civic protest, it seems, is second nature to South Koreans. [Popular protests against THAAD](#) have already broken out. We pacifists can only hope. To gauge the forces we are opposing, I should like to end this post, on a dismal note (forgive me), [by citing an enlightened politics professor at Wellesley College](#), who had this to say, when interviewed about South Korea's exceptional "history of civic engagement": *"I find worrisome this glorification of South Korea's protests," she says. "If*

governance structures were working properly then citizens normally would be channeling their concerns through institutional processes—reaching out to their elected leaders, going to the courts.

Spilling out into the street is a sign of political dysfunction.”

No comment.

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