

## Not Worth Reacting

The People's Daily is carrying a statement from North Korea via KCNA that South Korea's live fire exercise was not worth responding to. (<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7237112.html>) .

*The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said Monday that it "was not worth reacting" to South Korea's artillery drill on a disputed island off the west coast of the Korean Peninsula, state media reported.*

*The official KCNA news agency quoted a statement from the DPRK's Army Supreme Command as saying that it was "not worth reacting" to South Korea's "military provocations."*

**Analysis.** Why did North Korea pull back after raising all of the fuss? They got what they wanted? So what did Kim get? He got perhaps the thing he wanted most: a high US official “unofficially” came to Pyongyang. Whether or not Kim gets anything because of Governor Richardson's visit is as yet unknown. We must wait for the governor to return and debrief the US government. Kim got the Russians and the PRC scared enough that he might actually go to war to get them to go to the UN Security Council to get a document calling on South Korea to stand down while not calling on North Korea to do anything. He didn't get that. But he caused a ruckus.

Kim caused the US and South Korea to spend a lot of money getting ready just in case. War Reserve Spares Kits are now full. All aircraft are mission ready. A lot of ammunition was passed out. Ammunition supplies are at war readiness status. A lot of people inside and outside Korea spent a lot of time not doing their normal daily routines deciding whether or not they would be at war or deploying to one. Training schedules for the end of the year are all screwed up. Tanker deployments and airlift schedules are screwed for a while yet. And Christmas leave and stand down days are probably not there any more.

Kim proved he was still rational and not suicidal ... so far. He also proved that this will not be the last time that this sort of game will be played. A large part of the calculation as to what the next game will be is the progress of the transfer of power from “Dear Leader” to “Clueless Captain”. Another part is the amount of aid that Kim can extort from his neighbors. What other items go in to the calculation we can only speculate upon.

Until the next time....