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Trends. The Mother of All Warnings to North Korea

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In response to public ambiguity about a suspected North Korean nuclear weapons development site, the United States Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, has been cited in *The New York Times* as making a warning to the North Korean Government: if the North Koreans do not allow the site to be inspected, they risk losing financial aid for a nuclear power project.

There is a significant problem in logic with the warning. The financial aid for a nuclear power project is a consequence of the 1994 Agreed Framework. The Framework stipulated a quid pro quo involving a North Korean termination of nuclear weapons development for financed nuclear power projects that would be much more difficult to divert into nuclear weapons development than power projects existing at the time in various stages of development. The Framework was considered a good deal for the US and its allies because--if implemented successfully--it would put an end to a source of nuclear weapons proliferation.

By warning to de facto terminate the Agreed Framework, the Secretary of Defense is effectively warning the North Koreans that if they do not allay suspicions that they are continuing to engage in nuclear weapons development in violation of an agreement, the US will punish them by creating a situation wherein they can engage in nuclear weapons development without violating an agreement. With sticks like that, who needs carrots? (See Chung, W.S., & Bagozzi, R.P. (1997). The construct validity of measures of the tripartite conceptualization of punishment attitudes. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 22, 1-25; Fischhoff, B., Riley, D., Kovacs, D.C., & Small, M. (1998). What information belongs in a warning? *Psychology and Marketing*, 15, 663-686; National Security Policy and Toleration for Ambiguity: Israel, Northern Ireland, North Korea, and the World. (September 4, 1998). *IBPP*, 5(10); North Korea, Nuclear Arms, and the Psychology of Trust. (January 8, 1999). *IBPP*, 6(1); North Korea: Warning from U.S. ((January 13, 1999). *The New York Times*, p. A8.) (Keywords: Agreed Framework, North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, William Cohen.)