

# North Korea in 2017-2018: Donald Trump's Failures

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## Introduction

In January 2017, I began writing an essay at [www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf](http://www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf) that chronicled factual errors by Donald Trump, as well as chronicled some other evidence that Trump was unfit to be president of the USA. Part of that essay was a section on Trump's response to tests of ballistic missiles by North Korea. When that one section on North Korea grew to 33 pages on 12 August 2017, I made that section into this separate essay.

This essay is focused on Trump's failure to stop the North Korean nuclear weapons program and ICBM program. I document the Trump administration's inconsistent and amateurish attempts to solve the North Korean problem.

After North Korea successfully tested its second nuclear weapon in 2009, I responded by adding links to English-language news from South Korea to my list of [news links](#).

## Introduction to North Korea Problem

There can be little doubt that North Korea is one of the worst rogue nations in the world. The North Korean history of illegal acts during 1950-2007 is documented in a [report](#) by the U.S. Congressional Research Service. The North Korean army has approximately one million men, making it one of the largest armies in the world. The North Koreans are known to have a large stockpile of chemical weapons. Beginning in 1993, the North Koreans pursued a program of developing nuclear weapons, and they successfully tested their first atomic bomb in October 2006. The North Koreans also have a program to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that will be able to deliver their nuclear weapons to the U.S. mainland.

For more detail, see webpages from the following nonprofit organizations:

### [Nuclear Threat Initiative](#).

- [38North](#), The Henry L. Stimson Center at Johns Hopkins University.
- [Arms Control Association](#), Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy.
- [James Martin Center](#) for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute for International Studies in Monterey, California.
- [Beyond Parallel](#), at The Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC.

### **Negotiations and Sanctions Both Failed**

The governments of the USA, South Korea, Japan, as well as the United Nations, responded to this North Korean aggressive weapons program in two ways. First, there were negotiations during 2003-2009, the so-called six-party talks with China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the USA. Second, the United Nations passed economic sanctions on North Korea, as described [below](#).

North Korea has been an unreliable negotiating partner, because they have violated *every* agreement. For example:

- In the January 1992 "Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula", North Korea agreed: "shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons."
- In the 19 Sep 2005 "Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks", North Korea agreed: "The D.P.R.K. committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning, at an early date, to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards."
- In the 13 Feb 2007 Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks, North Korea agreed: "The DPRK will shut down and seal for the purpose of eventual abandonment the Yongbyon nuclear facility, including the reprocessing facility and invite back [International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)] personnel to conduct all necessary monitoring and verifications as agreed between IAEA and the DPRK."
- In the second summit between the leaders of North and South Korea, on 4 October 2007, they promised "to resolve the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula."
- In the July 2008 Sixth Round of the Six-Party Talks, North Korea agreed: "The DPRK will work to complete the disablement of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities by the end of October 2008."

Note that North Korea went on to produce dozens of nuclear weapons and the Yongbyon

facility has been operational since 2009, continuing as I write this in July 2018. See my [webpage](#) on denuclearization agreements with North Korea for citations to the agreements, and full text of some agreements.

During 1991-2008 there were intermittent, tortuous negotiations with North Korea to prevent production of plutonium at their Yongbyon reactor. The North Koreans allowed IAEA inspectors into North Korea after agreements were signed and the U.S. provided food, fuel oil, or other humanitarian aid to North Korea. But after North Korea received the benefit of the bargain, North Korea expelled the IAEA inspectors on 27 Dec 2002 and again on 16 April 2009. Plutonium from that reactor's fuel rods was used as an ingredient in North Korea's atomic bombs.

As another example, there was a manufacturing plant in Kaesong, North Korea that used cheap North Korean labor to produce goods for South Korean companies. The plant operated intermittently beginning in 2005, but was permanently closed in February 2016.

The most recent six-party negotiations ended in April 2009, when the North Korean delegation quit, in response to the United Nations Security Council's [condemnation](#) of the North Korean launch of a ballistic missile.

Past economic sanctions on North Korea have been ineffective, partly because China, Russia, and other rogue nations ignored the sanctions. It is also possible that more sanctions could make North Korea more isolated, more paranoid, and feeling more in need of a strong military.

The policy of the governments of the USA, South Korea, and Japan is that we will *never* accept North Korea possessing nuclear weapons. That policy is enshrined in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions, where the policy is expressed in a positive way as "verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula". Despite that policy, the U.S. Government has tolerated North Korea having nuclear weapons since 2006.

The U.S. Government has a second policy of *not* wanting North Korea to possess ICBMs, which could be used to threaten the USA. That "red line" began to be crossed by North Korea in July 2017, when North Korea tested two ICBMs.

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## Trump

In November 2016, American voters elected Trump — a man with absolutely *no* experience in government at any level — to be president of the USA. When Trump became president on 20 January 2017, the North Korean problem became Trump's problem. This section of my essay shows that Trump gave little thought to the North Korean problem before 2017.

In December 2012, when Obama was president, Trump tweeted:

We can't even stop the Norks from blasting a missile. China is laughing at us. It is really sad.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12 Dec 2012.

In December 2012, Trump appeared to believe there was a simple solution for the North Korean problem. Trump's simplistic view of a complicated problem shows, in my opinion, that Trump was unqualified to be president of the USA.

There is only one other tweet about North Korea from Donald Trump before 1 January 2017:  
China controls North Korea. So now besides cyber hacking us all day, they are using the Norks to taunt us. China is a major threat.  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12 April 2013.

Trump does *not* appear to have appreciated the seriousness of the North Korea problem until the year 2017. I searched Twitter for tweets by Trump on the dates of four North Korea's nuclear weapons tests in the years 2009, 2013, and 2016 — and for three days after each test — but found *no* tweets by Trump on this serious problem. I also searched for tweets by Trump before 1 Jan 2017 that contained either "North Korea" or "Norks", but found only the two tweets quoted above.

In a tweet on 2 Jan 2017, Trump appeared to promise he would prevent North Korea from acquiring ICBMs that could reach the USA.

North Korea just stated that it is in the final stages of developing a nuclear weapon capable of reaching parts of the U.S. It won't happen!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:05 EST, 2 Jan 2017.

Trump's legendary short-attention span — together with Trump's inability to comprehend complex facts — makes it unlikely that Trump can find a good solution to the North Korean problem. Meanwhile, in late July 2017, the U.S. Military correctly warns us that time is running out to solve the North Korean problem.

Can we rely on Donald Trump — a man full of bluster and braggadocio — to stop the North Korean programs in nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles? As shown in this essay, the answer is "**NO**", as I describe the futile attempts of the Trump administration to stop the North Korean weapons program.

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The next few sections contain detail that is relevant at many places in this essay. Rather than repeat these details throughout my essay, I am collecting the details in the following sections.

## **Urgency of Solving North Korean Problem**

In 2017, the North Korean government is continuing to test ballistic missiles that are forbidden by multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions. In April 2017, the U.S. Government — quite rightly — also fears that the North Koreans will soon make a sixth test of a nuclear weapon. Because of the failure of past negotiations and sanctions, North Korea is becoming stronger and stronger.

The North Koreans have a long-standing plan to develop ICBMs that could hit the west coast of the USA (e.g., Seattle, San Francisco). The North Koreans have three significant technical problems to solve:

1. miniaturize a nuclear warhead that can be delivered by their ICBM,
2. develop an accurate guidance system for their ICBM, and
3. develop a reentry vehicle that can withstand the heat of reentry.

In April 2017, the U.S. Government estimates that the North Koreans can solve the first two problems by the year 2020. [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#)(28April2017); [Reuters](#)(7June2017); [Washington Post](#). But on 25 July 2017, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that North Korea could deliver nuclear weapons via ICBMs in 2018. [Washington Post](#).

### **Why a pre-emptive military strike is *not* a viable option**

It might seem that a pre-emptive U.S. military strike could destroy North Korea's nuclear reactors, centrifuges for separating Uranium-235 from other isotopes, other nuclear weapons manufacturing facilities, nuclear weapons test site(s), etc. Such a pre-emptive military strike is *not* a viable option, for the following reasons:

1. We do *not* know the location of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons. Some of those nuclear weapons are presumedly stored near mobile missile launchers, to avoid a pre-emptive strike. Those hidden nuclear weapons would be available for North Korea to use in retaliation for the pre-emptive first strike.
2. North Korea has a large number of artillery and rocket launchers positioned north of Seoul, which could turn Seoul into a "sea of fire". There are more than ten million people living in Seoul whose lives would be endangered by a North Korean retaliation.
3. The huge Chinese army could come to the aid of the North Koreans, just as they did in 1950 during the Korean war. That could begin World War III.
4. South Korea is a prosperous, industrialized nation, while North Korea is an impoverished agrarian economy — that means war with North Korea will inflict more damage on South Korea than on North Korea, because there is more value in South Korea.

Statements from the South Korean government are clear that there must *not* be another war on the Korean Peninsula, which makes unacceptable any pre-emptive U.S. strike on North Korea. As long as the USA listens to South Korea, there will be *no* pre-emptive first strike on North Korea by the U.S. Military.

On 4 October 2017, a report by [38North](#) says an attack by North Korea on Seoul and Tokyo could kill *more* than two million people, using North Korea's current nuclear weapons. [Yonhap](#); [The Telegraph](#).

On 12 June 2018, at a press conference in [Singapore](#), Trump said that as many as 50 million people could die in a war with North Korea. That makes war *not* a reasonable option. On [15 June](#) and [23 June](#), Trump reiterated that point. In his 23 June remarks, Trump remembered to mention the North Korean artillery near Seoul.

## Way Forward (my opinion)

Because I am critical of Trump's inconsistent and ineffective policy on North Korea, permit me to sketch a policy.

From the viewpoint of the USA, North Korea is a rogue nation that has repeatedly violated United Nations Resolutions. But, if we are to avoid another war in Korea, we need to understand the North Korean position and then negotiate with North Korea.

At least since the early 1990s — perhaps earlier — the government of North Korea has misunderstood military exercises by the USA and South Korea. North Korea misunderstands these military exercises as preparations for the invasion of North Korea, the removal of the Kim government in North Korea, and the reunification of Korea. In response, North Korea has developed nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, to deter that invasion of North Korea.

The U.S. Government acts like denuclearization is something that the U.S. is demanding, but denuclearization is actually an international demand that is expressed in a series of United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Those U.N. Resolutions call for the “complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.” (See, e.g., Resolution 2375 at §31. I traced this phrase back to Resolution 1718 (Oct 2006) at §6. Commonly the acronym CVID is used for “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization”.)

How do we accomplish “irreversible denuclearization”? The North Koreans have scientists and engineers with knowledge and experience in designing and building nuclear weapons. That knowledge can *not* be erased, except by the death of those scientists and engineers. The problem with knowledge of how to make nuclear weapons is once that knowledge exists, the Genie can *not* be put back in the bottle.

I suggest a resumption of six-party (China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the USA) talks with *no* preconditions.

The USA and its allies should be prepared to agree to:

1. a peace treaty that formally ends the Korean War.
2. end U.S. military exercises in South Korea and also in the ocean near the Korean peninsula.
3. end aggressive displays of U.S. Military forces (e.g., bomber flights over South Korea, groups of U.S. Navy warships near Korea).
4. recognize North Korea as a sovereign nation, including exchanging ambassadors.
5. the U.S. Government promises to honor the “four noes”, provided North Korea honors this agreement:



- i. the U.S. does *not* seek regime change in North Korea,
  - ii. the U.S. does *not* seek regime collapse in North Korea,
  - iii. the U.S. does *not* seek accelerated reunification of North and South Korea, and
  - iv. the U.S. military will *not* move north of the 38th Parallel.
- (See [below](#) for the origin of these four noes.)

In exchange, North Korea should be prepared to agree to:

1. moratorium on all tests of nuclear weapons.
2. moratorium on all tests of ballistic missiles, including alleged launches of satellites.
3. immediate cessation of production of additional nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons.
4. “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization” (CVID), which means destruction of *all* nuclear weapons, destruction of *all* weapons-grade radioactive isotopes, *and* destruction of *all* infrastructure (e.g., nuclear reactors, centrifuges for separating isotopes, bomb factories) for the production of nuclear weapons.
5. allow IAEA inspectors to visit — anywhere and anytime — sites to verify that North Korea has both permanently stopped producing nuclear weapons, and has destroyed *all* of its nuclear weapons.

This suggested way forward is the essence of a proposal by China, but both the USA and South Korea have rejected this proposal in 2017. See, e.g., [ABC News](#)(24Apr); [BBC](#)(28Apr); [RIA-Novosti](#)(29Apr); [Associated Press](#)(4July); [Reuters](#)(4July).

An additional advantage of accepting the proposal by China is that the Chinese might become guarantors of compliance with the negotiated treaty. For example, provided that North Korea does *not* breach the treaty, China might agree to militarily defend North Korea if the USA violates the treaty by invading or attacking North Korea.

Economic sanctions on North Korea, expressed in United Nations Security Council Resolutions, should continue until there has been “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization” (CVID) of North Korea. A few, incomplete “concrete steps” toward denuclearization should *not* be rewarded by easing sanctions on North Korea.

A generally ignored problem is how to destroy all ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons in North Korea. As with nuclear weapons, all of the manufacturing infrastructure associated with production of ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons must also be destroyed.

Admittedly, North Korea has a long history of breaching or abrogating written agreements, which makes North Korea an unreliable negotiating partner. But negotiations seem the least-worst option for South Korea, Japan, and the USA.

### U.S. Government Position on

## Negotiations with North Korea

In contrast to the Chinese proposal discussed above, when U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson mentions negotiations or talks with the North Koreans, he means the process of North Korea abandoning their nuclear weapons program and destroying their stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Tillerson's goal is futile for two reasons:

1. Since the 1990s, the North Korean government has pursued the development of nuclear weapons to deter the U.S. Military from invading North Korea. Look at this problem from the North Korean perspective: for more than twenty years they have pursued a program of developing nuclear weapons, with great suffering of their people as scarce resources were diverted from food to nuclear weapons development. Trump's belligerent threats surely strengthen the conviction of the North Koreans that they *need* nuclear weapons to deter aggression by the USA. Currently, North Korea — an impoverished nation — is able to threaten the USA, South Korea, and Japan. That gives North Korea a kind of respect and importance that it has never had before. Now that North Korea is on the threshold of being a significant nuclear threat, why would they suddenly abandon their cherished nuclear weapons and return to their weak position in the 1990s? If they abandon their nuclear weapons, they would also suffer a tremendous loss of face.
2. Secondly, the U.S. Government in 2017 is *not* prepared to offer the North Koreans anything that they want (e.g., end to U.S. military exercises in South Korea, peace treaty, diplomatic recognition, etc.), so the U.S. is futilely pursuing a surrender by North Korea.

*Successful* negotiations require that each side give up something that it has and that the other side wants. If only one side gives up something, then the agreement is likely to be seen as unfair and the agreement is more likely to be abrogated in the future.

In 2017, the U.S. State Department (e.g., Tillerson and Nikki Haley) — and sometimes also Trump himself — piously say they hope to avoid war with North Korea. But then they hypocritically demand pre-conditions on any possible future negotiations with North Korea — conditions that guarantee there will be *no* negotiations with North Korea, leaving war as the only option.

I think it is *not* realistic to ask North Korea to abandon its existing nuclear weapons (i.e., denuclearization of the Korean peninsula mentioned in various United Nations Resolutions). In my opinion, *if* the U.S. Government really wanted to stop the development of nuclear weapons by the North Koreans, then the U.S. *should* have done something *before* the North Koreans tested their first atomic bomb in October 2006. The failures of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush closed the window of opportunity to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

If Kim Jong-Un refuses to denuclearize, then the best possible realistic agreement with North Korea might have the following features:

1. moratorium on all tests of nuclear weapons.
  2. moratorium on all tests of ballistic missiles, including alleged launches of satellites.
  3. recognize North Korea as a nuclear-armed nation that can keep its nuclear arsenal that existed on 1 January 2018, but *not* manufacture any new nuclear weapons. North Korea would need to destroy in an irreversible and verifiable way *all* infrastructure (e.g., nuclear reactors, centrifuges for separating isotopes, bomb factories) for the production of nuclear weapons.
  4. allow IAEA inspectors to visit — anywhere and anytime — sites to verify that North Korea has permanently stopped producing nuclear weapons.
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### **List of U.N. Security Council Resolutions on Nonproliferation by North Korea**

The United Nations refers to North Korea by its official name: "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (DPRK). There is nothing democratic about the DPRK, its government is a hereditary Stalinist dictatorship.

The United Nations Security Council attempted to prohibit North Korea from developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles:

1. [Resolution 825](#) (11 May 1993) Calls upon the DPRK to reconsider withdrawing from the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
2. [Resolution 1540](#) (28 April 2004) "Decides that all States shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery...."
3. [Resolution 1887](#) (24 Sep 2009) "Calls upon all States to refrain from conducting a nuclear test explosion and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), thereby bringing the treaty into force at an early date...."

While Resolutions 1540 and 1887 do *not* explicitly mention the DPRK, these two Resolutions are cited in many subsequent Resolutions that condemn North Korea's tests of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles.

The United Nations Security Council condemned North Korea's tests of nuclear weapons and/or ballistic missiles:

1. [Resolution 1695](#) (15 July 2006) "Condemns the multiple launches by the DPRK of ballistic missiles on 5 July 2006 local time...."
2. [Resolution 1718](#) (14 Oct 2006) "Condemns the nuclear test proclaimed by the DPRK on 9 October 2006 in flagrant disregard of its relevant resolutions, in particular

resolution 1695 (2006), ...." First U.N. Resolution to say: "... the DPRK shall abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner,...."

3. [Resolution 1874](#) (12 June 2009) "Condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on 25 May 2009 (local time) in violation and flagrant disregard of its relevant resolutions, ...."
4. [Resolution 2087](#) (22 Jan 2013) "Condemns the DPRK's launch of 12 December 2012, which used ballistic missile technology...."
5. [Resolution 2094](#) (7 March 2013) "Condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on 12 February 2013 (local time) in violation and flagrant disregard of the Council's relevant resolutions...."
6. [Resolution 2270](#) (2 March 2016). "Condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on 6 January 2016 in violation and flagrant disregard of the Council's relevant resolutions, and further condemns the DPRK's launch of 7 February 2016, which used ballistic missile technology and was in serious violation of resolutions...." §24 says: "Decides that the DPRK shall abandon all chemical and biological weapons and weapons-related programs, ...."
7. [Resolution 2321](#) (30 Nov 2016) "Condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on 9 September 2016 in violation and flagrant disregard of the Security Council's resolutions...."
8. [Resolution 2356](#) (2 June 2017) "Condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities including a series of ballistic missile launches and other activities conducted by the DPRK since 9 September 2016 in violation and flagrant disregard of the Security Council's resolutions...."
9. [Resolution 2371](#) (5 Aug 2017) "Condemns in the strongest terms the ballistic missile launches conducted by the DPRK on 3 July and 28 July of 2017, which the DPRK has stated were launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and which used ballistic missile technology in violation and flagrant disregard of the Security Council's resolutions".
10. [Resolution 2375](#) (11 Sep 2017) "Condemns in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on September 2 of 2017 in violation and flagrant disregard of the Security Council's resolutions...."
11. [Resolution 2397](#) (22 Dec 2017) "Condemns in the strongest terms the ballistic missile launch conducted by the DPRK on 28 November 2017 in violation and flagrant disregard of the Security Council's resolutions."

There are also relevant formal statements by the president of the U.N. Security Council:

1. [S/PRST/2006/41](#) (6 Oct 2006) "The Security Council expresses its deep concern over

the statement of 3 October 2006 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in which it stated that the DPRK would conduct a nuclear test in the future."

2. [S/PRST/2009/7](#) (13 April 2009) "The Security Council condemns the 5 April 2009 (local time) launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which is in contravention of Security Council resolution 1718 (2006)."
  3. [S/PRST/2012/13](#) (16 April 2012) "The Security Council strongly condemns the 13 April 2012 (local time) launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)."
  4. [S/PRST/2017/16](#) (29 August 2017) "The Security Council strongly condemns the 28 August 2017 (local time) ballistic missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) that flew over Japan, as well as the multiple ballistic missile launches it conducted on 25 August 2017. The Security Council further condemns the DPRK for its outrageous actions and demands that the DPRK immediately cease all such actions."
  5. 15 Sep 2017 [press statement](#) "The members of the Security Council strongly condemned these launches [14 Sep and 28 Aug 2017], condemned further the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for its outrageous actions, and demanded that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately cease all such actions."
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## North Korean Tests of Nuclear Weapons

Here is a terse list of North Korea's tests of nuclear weapons. (The dates are in Korea, which is approximately halfway around the world from Washington, DC.)

1. 9 October 2006, [USGS](#) magnitude 4.3  
[New York Times](#)
2. 25 May 2009, [USGS](#) magnitude 4.7  
[New York Times](#)
3. 12 February 2013, [USGS](#) magnitude 5.1  
[New York Times](#)
4. 6 January 2016, [USGS](#) magnitude 5.1  
[New York Times](#). [Yonhap](#) reported that the yield was 6 kilotons of TNT.
5. 9 September 2016, [USGS](#) magnitude 5.3  
[New York Times](#). [Yonhap](#) reported that the yield was 10 kilotons of TNT.
6. 3 Sep 2017, [USGS](#) magnitude 6.3  
[New York Times](#)

On 3 September, the South Korean government estimated the explosive yield was 50 kilotons of TNT. [Yonhap](#). The Japanese defense minister estimated the yield was 70 kilotons of TNT. [Associated Press](#). And on 13 September 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported: “The new [analysis](#) by 38 North ... [gives a] yield of ... roughly 250 kilotons. .... The United States intelligence assessment put the blast at 140 kilotons, Japan at 160 kilotons and South Korea at 50 kilotons.”

Earthquake magnitudes (i.e., the Richter scale) use base-ten logarithms, so a magnitude 6.3 quake has ten times more energy than a magnitude 5.3 quake.

The explosive yield of the October 2006 test was approximately 1 kiloton of TNT. There *may* have been earlier tests that were total failures, and were *not* detected in South Korea.

The North Koreans were slow in developing nuclear weapons. In July 1945, the USA tested its first atomic bomb in New Mexico that had a yield of 21 kilotons of TNT. In January 2016, 71 years later, the North Koreans still had *not* mastered the technical skills that the USA had in 1945 — the North Korean test in January 2016 had a yield of approximately 6 kilotons, and the earlier North Korean tests had smaller yields.

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### **North Korean reaction to Trump: More Frequent Missile Tests**

Here is a terse list of North Korea's missile tests during 2017, each of which is Trump's problem. (The dates are in Korea, which is approximately halfway around the world from Washington, DC.)

1. On 12 Feb 2017, North Korea launched a missile that flew 500 km. [New York Times](#); [CNN](#); [BBC](#).
2. On 6 March 2017, North Korea launched four SCUD missiles, each of which flew 1000 km. [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).
3. On 22 March 2017, North Korea tested a missile that exploded within seconds of launch. [New York Times](#); [CNN](#).
4. On 5 April 2017, North Korea launched a solid-fuel Pukguksong-2 missile, which flew 60 km. [New York Times](#).
5. On 15 April 2017, North Korea tested a missile that exploded 4 seconds after launch. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
6. On 29 April 2017, North Korea tested a missile that failed several minutes after launch. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
7. On 14 May 2017, North Korea successfully tested the re-entry of an Hwasong-12 ICBM. [New York Times](#).

8. On 21 May 2017, North Korea tested a Pukguksong-2 missile that flew 500 km. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
9. On 29 May 2017, North Korea launched a SCUD missile that traveled 450 km. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
10. On 8 June 2017, North Korea tested several (four?) anti-ship cruise missiles, which traveled 200 km and landed in the Sea of Japan. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#); [CNN](#); [New York Times](#).
11. On 4 July 2017, North Korea launched one missile that flew 930 km and landed in the Sea of Japan. The missile was launched on a high trajectory, with a maximum altitude of 2800 km, so it would not fly over Japan. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

Later on 4 July, the North Korean government *boasted* it had successfully tested an Hwasong-14 ICBM that was capable of "reaching anywhere in the world". [Yonhap](#); [JoongAng](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [CNN](#). This boast seems intended to expose Trump's bluff about a preemptive military strike on North Korea. Despite the North Korean propaganda, this missile could reach Alaska, but *not* the west coast of the USA.

12. On 28 July 2017 at 23:41 South Korean time (14:41 GMT), North Korea launched an ICBM that reached an altitude of 3,700 kilometers before plunging into the Sea of Japan. This missile could reach Los Angeles, Denver, or Chicago. [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#); [JoongAng](#); [38North](#).
13. On 26 August 2017, North Korea fired three short-range missiles, two of which traveled 250 km into the Sea of Japan. The U.S. Military claimed the second missile exploded "almost immediately". [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#)(blog); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#).
14. On 29 August 2017, North Korea fired a Hwasong-12 intermediate-range missile over Japan. The missile landed in the Pacific Ocean, 2700 km from its launch site. The South Korean military said the missile was launched from near the Pyongyang International Airport, perhaps from a mobile launcher. NHK said the missile "split into three pieces before splashing into the Pacific Ocean". [Yonhap](#); [NHK](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#).
15. Friday morning, 15 September 2017, 06:57 South Korean time (21:57 GMT on 14 Sep), North Korea launched a Hwasong-12 intermediate-range missile that flew over Japan. As with the 29 Aug 2017 launch, the missile was launched from near the Pyongyang Airport. The missile flew for 3700 km before landing in the Pacific Ocean. [Yonhap](#)(launched from Pyongyang); [Yonhap](#); [NHK](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
16. On 29 November 2017, at 03:17 South Korean time, North Korea launched its longest-range ICBM to date, a new Hwasong-15. The missile was fired on a lofted trajectory, which reached an altitude of 4500 km and traveled horizontally 950 km, before landing



in the Sea of Japan. If launched on a standard trajectory, it would have traveled at least 10,000 km, maybe more than 13,000 km, but with a payload of only 150 kg. That range would allow North Korea to hit Washington, DC. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [38North](#).

On 29 November 2017, [Yonhap](#) News Agency in South Korea published a list of forty "major missile provocations" by North Korea, mostly since April 2015.

Firing *one* missile could be an engineering test, while firing multiple missiles in one day is likely to be a military training exercise.

In 2017, Trump repeatedly made belligerent threats against North Korea, backed up with military exercises with U.S. Navy aircraft carrier(s) off the eastern coast of Korea and U.S. bomber flights over South Korea. (On 12 June 2018, Trump publicly admitted that such exercises were "provocative".) Trump's belligerent threats reinforced Kim's zeal to develop nuclear weapons and ICBMs, to deter Trump's future aggression. Specifically, Trump's belligerent threats caused Kim to accelerate the development of nuclear weapons and ICBMs.

During April 2017, the conventional wisdom was that North Korea would test another nuclear weapon, given preparations seen by reconnaissance satellites at the test site. But *no* nuclear test occurred. Does that mean that Trump's belligerent threats were successful? No, because the North Koreans tested three ballistic missiles during April 2017 and three more during May 2017, each time in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and in defiance of international demands. Before Trump's belligerent threats began in April, North Korea had a total of three missile tests during January, February, and March 2017. Apparently, North Korea's response to Trump was to accelerate their missile tests from an average of one/month to three/month.

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## March 2017

On 16 March 2017, U.S. Secretary of State declared in Japan:

Well, I think it's important to recognize that the diplomatic and other efforts of the past 20 years to bring North Korea to a point of denuclearization have failed. So we have 20 years of failed approach, and that includes a period in which the United States provided \$1.35 billion in assistance to North Korea as an encouragement to take a different pathway. That encouragement has been met with further development of nuclear capabilities, more missile launches, including those of the recent February 11th and March the 5th. In the face of this ever-escalating threat, it is clear that a different approach is required.

Rex Tillerson, "Press Availability With Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida," [U.S. State Dept](#), 16 March 2017.

On 17 March 2017, Trump tweeted:

North Korea is behaving very badly. They have been "playing" the United States for years. China has done little to help!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:07 EDT, 17 Mar 2017.



On 17 March 2017, U.S. Secretary of State declared in Korea:

We stand together in facing what was once a regional security challenge, but today North Korea threatens not only its regional neighbors, but the United States and other countries. Efforts toward North Korea to achieve peaceful stability over the last two decades have failed to make us safer. The U.S. and our allies have repeatedly reassured North Korea's leaders that we seek only peace, stability, and economic prosperity for Northeast Asia. As proof of our intent, America has provided \$1.3 billion in assistance to North Korea since 1995. In return, North Korea has detonated nuclear weapons, and dramatically increased its launches of ballistic missiles to threaten America and our allies.

The U.S. commitment to our allies is unwavering. In the face of North Korea's grave and escalating global threat, it is important for me to consult with our friends, and chart a path that secures the peace. Let me be very clear: the policy of strategic patience has ended. We are exploring a new range of diplomatic, security, and economic measures. All options are on the table. North Korea must understand that the only path to a secure, economically-prosperous future is to abandon its development of nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other weapons of mass destruction.

....

.... It is important that the leadership of North Korea realize that their current pathway of nuclear weapons and escalating threats will not lead to their objective of security and economic development. That pathway can only be achieved by denuclearizing, giving up their weapons of mass destruction. And only then will we be prepared to engage with them in talks.

Rex Tillerson, "Remarks With Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se Before Their Meeting," [U.S. State Dept](#), 17 March 2017.

On 16 March, Tillerson said diplomacy with North Korea had "failed" and "a different approach is required." On 17 March, Tillerson said U.S. "patience has ended" — and he said the U.S. is considering "new ... security ... measures" and "All options are on the table." On these two days, Tillerson seems to be hinting at a possible pre-emptive military strike by the U.S. on North Korea.

Note that Tillerson demands that North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons program *before* the U.S. Government will engage in more negotiations with the North Korean aggressors. The leadership of North Korea is paranoid that the U.S. Military is preparing an invasion of North Korea, and so the North Korean government strongly believes that it *needs* nuclear weapons to deter the U.S. It is unlikely that the North Koreans will voluntarily abandon their nuclear weapons program.

On 31 March 2017, the U.S. Secretary of Defense said North Korea's weapons development program has "got to be stopped". [Associated Press](#). In a 2 April 2017 interview with the [Financial Times](#), Trump said the U.S. Government would act unilaterally to solve the North Korean problem if China declined to help solve the problem: "Well if China is not going to solve North Korea, we will. That is all I am telling you." In an interview with *The Times* of

London on 4 April, retired U.S. General Jack Keane said: “A pre-emptive strike against launch facilities, underground nuclear sites, artillery and rocket response forces and regime leadership targets may be the only option left on the table. We are rapidly and dangerously moving towards a military option.” [The Australian](#).

On the early morning of 7 April 2017, the U.S. Navy suddenly launched a massive airstrike with Tomahawk cruise missiles against one of Syria's military airfields. On 13 April, the U.S. Air Force dropped a 20,000 pound bomb on caves in Afghanistan, perhaps entombing 100 Taliban members. That was the first combat use of the Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb, the largest conventional explosive in the U.S. arsenal. Those two airstrikes showed the world — including North Korea — that U.S. president Trump was much more willing to use military force than president Obama.

The above paragraphs are background for what happens next.

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## **U.S.S. Vinson and inconsistent U.S. policy on North Korea**

### **9 April 2017: U.S.S. Vinson to Korea**

On 9 April 2017, the U.S. Navy announced the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Carl Vinson and three other warships — each of the three carry Tomahawk cruise missiles — began sailing on 8 April to the ocean near North Korea. (All of the following news articles were published on 9 April, except as noted.) [U.S. Navy](#); [Reuters](#); [U.S. Pacific Command](#)(10Apr); [Pentagon](#)(10Apr); [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [JoongAng Ilbo](#)(Yonhap 10Apr); [The Guardian](#).

The obvious U.S. intention was to be ready to launch a pre-emptive military strike against North Korea, perhaps to decapitate the government in Pyongyang, destroy their nuclear weapons development program, and/or destroy their ballistic missile program.

### **9-12 April 2017: quotations from White House & Pentagon**

On Sunday, 9 April, the U.S. Navy's Third Fleet issued a press release. On Monday 10 April, the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) posted an identical press release at its website, of which I quote the first two paragraphs:

Adm. Harry Harris, commander, U.S. Pacific Command, has directed the Carl Vinson Strike Group to sail north and report on station in the Western Pacific Ocean after departing Singapore April 8.

Carl Vinson Strike Group, including Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2, Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108) and USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112), and Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain (CG 57), will operate in the Western Pacific rather than executing previously planned port visits to

Australia. The Strike Group will remain under the operational control of U.S. 3rd Fleet as part of the 3rd Fleet Forward initiative.

"Carl Vinson Strike Group Departs Singapore for Western Pacific," [PACOM](#), 10 April 2017. Same press release posted at the [U.S. Navy](#) website on 9 April.

On 9 April 2017, Trump's National Security Adviser, General H.R. McMaster, tersely said on a television program:

CHRIS WALLACE, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Why the carrier strike force to the Korean Peninsula?

McMASTER: Well, it's prudent to do it, isn't it? I mean, North Korea has been engaged in a pattern of provocative behavior. This is a rogue regime that is now a nuclear capable regime, and President Xi and President Trump agreed that that is unacceptable, that what must happen is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And so, the president has asked to be prepared to give him a full range of options to remove that threat the American people and to our allies and partners in the region.

"Exclusive: General H.R. McMaster on decision to strike Syria," [Fox News](#), 9 April 2017.

On 11 April 2017, Trump tweeted that the USA would solve the North Korean problem, either with or without the help of China.

North Korea is looking for trouble. If China decides to help, that would be great. If not, we will solve the problem without them! U.S.A.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11 April 2017.

On 11 April, the White House press secretary said at a press briefing:

[About Trump's tweet] .... I just said that, as you know, when the President is ready to act, he makes it very clear. And I think there is no question that when the President is ready to make a statement, he will do that.

But I think he has made it clear with respect to North Korea that their behavior and their actions with respect to the missile launches is not tolerable. The last thing we want to see is a nuclear North Korea that threatens the coast of the United States, or, for that matter, any other country and any other set of human beings. So we need stability in that region, and I think he has put them clearly on notice.

....

QUESTION: .... And when you unpack it through that lens and the fact that the USS Carl Vinson is sort of steaming out toward the Sea of Japan, that may be an additional pressure to maybe get China to come to the table. .... Putting that strike carrier group in the Sea of Japan, in that region, is that also a messaging circumstance? Or is that simply protective for our allies in Japan and Korea?

MR. SPICER: A carrier group is several things. The forward deployment is deterrence, presence. It's prudent. But it does a lot of things. It ensures our -- we have the strategic capabilities, and it gives the President options in the region.

But I think when you see a carrier group steaming into an area like that, the forward

presence of that is clearly, through almost every instance, a huge deterrence. So I think it serves multiple capabilities.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sean Spicer, 4/11/2017, #36," [White House](#), begins 13:42 EDT, 11 April 2017.

On 11 April, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Jim Mattis, gave a press briefing.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, if I can ask you about North Korea, the Vinson strike group has now been redirected towards the Sea of Japan in the coming weeks. .... Has tension ratcheted up just recently in the past few days and can you explain why, what has changed just in the past couple of days or week?

SEC. MATTIS: .... As far as the movement of the Vinson, she's stationed there in the western Pacific for a reason. She operates freely up and down the Pacific, and she's just on her way up there because that's where we thought it was most prudent to have her at this time. There's not a specific demand signal or specific reason why we're sending her up there.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) unusual for us to know about a ship movement in advance. That was sort of what — what got everyone's attention. So why was that? I mean, why was it put out in advance? Was it just to signal to North Korea that there would be a show of presence there?

SEC. MATTIS: I believe it's because she was originally headed in one direction for an exercise, and we canceled our role in that exercise, and that's what became public. We had to explain why she wasn't in that exercise. [Sic: The ship's port visit to Fremantle, Australia, was cancelled; the exercise with the Royal Australian navy is proceeding as planned.]

"Press Conference by Secretary Mattis and Gen. Votel in the Pentagon Briefing Room," [Pentagon](#), 11 April 2017, retrieved 22 April 2017. [Material in brackets added by Pentagon after the press conference.]

In an interview by Maria Bartiromo of Fox Business Network, Trump tersely spoke about North Korea.

Although he didn't get into specifics, Trump spoke about his decision to send the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier and its battle group to waters off the Korean Peninsula.

"We are sending an armada. Very powerful." Trump said. "We have submarines. Very powerful, far more powerful than the aircraft carrier, that I can tell you."

"Trump on North Korea: 'We Are Sending an Armada'," [Fox News](#), 07:27 EDT, 12 Apr 2017.

On 13 April 2017, Trump *again* tweeted that the USA would solve the North Korean problem, either with or without the help of China.

I have great confidence that China will properly deal with North Korea. If they are unable to do so, the U.S., with its allies, will! U.S.A.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13 April 2017.

China is obviously an indispensable party to solving the North Korean problem. Trump's

threat to ignore China is like poking China in the eye.

*If* the U.S. Military launched a pre-emptive strike on North Korea, then North Korea might respond with artillery fire on Seoul, the capital of South Korea. North Korea might even invade South Korea. Even if the U.S. does *not* launch an airstrike on North Korea, the U.S. saber-rattling increases tension with North Korea and might provoke North Korea to attempt a pre-emptive strike. [Hankyoreh](#)(11Apr); [Washington Post](#). On 12 April, the [Korea Herald](#) said: "North Korea's threat of impending nuclear and missile tests and the US escalation of saber-rattling in response have raised tensions around the Korean Peninsula."

### **17-18 April: U.S.S. Vinson actually went to Australia**

But on 17-18 April 2017, it was revealed that the U.S.S. Carl Vinson and three other ships had sailed south from Singapore on 8 April to join the Australian Navy for previously scheduled exercises. On 8 April, the U.S.S. Carl Vinson did *not* sail north from Singapore, towards Korea. [Defense News](#)(17Apr); [Stars&Stripes](#); [NY Times](#); [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [CNN](#)(19Apr); [Reuters](#)(19Apr); [Straits Times](#)(20Apr).

That could mean the U.S. Government engaged in a hoax, deception, or deliberate falsehood. As Trump has previously said in other contexts, this is FAKE NEWS! The U.S. Government lost credibility as a result of this hoax. Worse, the U.S. Government was recklessly gambling with peace and safety in South Korea.

The admission by the U.S. Government on 18 April can also be interpreted as neither the Pentagon nor the White House knew the location of the U.S.S. Carl Vinson for 9 days — which is colossal incompetence.

Note that on 9-10 April, the Navy and PACOM falsely said: "to sail north ... after departing Singapore April 8". But on 8 April, the U.S.S. Vinson actually sailed *south* from Singapore, toward Australia. Note the Navy and PACOM also falsely said: "... will operate in the Western Pacific rather than executing previously planned port visits to Australia." And that is not all. Concurrently with these Navy press releases, anonymous Navy officers were telling journalists about the intent of sending the U.S.S. Vinson group to North Korea. (See, e.g., [Reuters](#)(UK); [Reuters](#)(USA), which are cited in many news articles.)

Summarizing the above quotations, on 9-12 April, McMaster, Trump, Mattis, and Spicer all apparently believed the U.S.S. Carl Vinson was heading toward Korea. The fact that so many high-level government officials had their facts wrong is really distressing. But when one considers the anonymous Navy officers who talked to journalists on 9 April about the intent of sending the U.S.S. Vinson to North Korea, there is a *possibility* that the 9 April statements were a deliberate hoax by the U.S. Government.

My search of the Pentagon news articles and news releases on 22 April 2017 shows the Pentagon did *not* correct their erroneous news article of 10 April. Further, my search of the PACOM news on 22 April shows PACOM did *not* correct their erroneous news article of 10 April. The failure to correct erroneous articles is consistent with a deliberate hoax.

I would expect that someone in either PACOM or the Pentagon would read a newspaper article about how the U.S.S. Vinson strike group was traveling towards Korea, when that someone knew the Vinson strike group was traveling towards Australia. That someone could have sent an e-mail to the Pentagon press office and aborted the spreading of false information. The fact that many knowledgeable Navy officers did *not* correct the false information again suggests to me the *possibility* that the 9 April statements were a deliberate hoax by the U.S. Government.

Finally, the cancellation of the U.S.S. Vinson's port visit in Australia is consistent with a deliberate hoax, in order to conceal the fact that the Vinson was near Australia.

Regardless of whether Trump engaged in deliberate hoax or colossal incompetence, the false claim that the U.S.S. Vinson was heading towards Korea on 8 April was criticized in South Korea. See, e.g., [New York Times](#); [JoongAng Ilbo](#); [Hankyoreh](#); [Hankyoreh](#)(editorial); [JoongAng Ilbo](#); [Chosun Ilbo](#).

On 18 April, *The New York Times* said: "With Mr. Trump himself playing up the show of force, Pentagon officials said, rolling back the story became difficult."

On 20 April 2017, the *Joong Ang* newspaper in South Korea explained:

The New York Times wrote Tuesday [18 April] that White House officials declined to comment on the confusion, referring questions to the Pentagon. Unnamed Pentagon officials reportedly characterized it as a miscommunication among U.S. authorities that later involved the media, saying it became difficult to correct the story once President Donald Trump began playing it up.

It is unclear whether Trump, a crusader against what he deems to be "fake news," purposefully ignored the truth in order to deter Pyongyang, which said the Vinson strike group was proof that the United States was planning an invasion.

Lee Sung-Eun, "Carl Vinson to arrive in Korea around April 25," [JoongAng Ilbo](#); 20 April 2017.

From the incidents chronicled in my essay at [www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf](http://www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf), we know that Trump is *not* capable of admitting he made a factual error. It now appears that once Trump has publicly asserted a factual error, it is impossible to correct Trump. In this way, Trump's personality and management style prevents correction of his errors. And that could lead to Trump starting a major war that kills tens of thousands of U.S. Military personnel and wastes more than a trillion dollars of U.S. taxpayers' money.

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### **19 April 2017**

### **Stupid Excuses from White House**

On 19 April, the president's press secretary said at a press conference:

QUESTION: And, Sean, on the USS Carl Vinson, what happened? Can you take us through the events from the perspective of the White House that led to the

miscommunication — this administration thinking that this vessel was thousands of miles away from its actual location?

MR. SPICER: I'm sorry, can you repeat the last part?

QUESTION: Can you take us through the events that led people within this administration to believe the vessel was thousands of miles away from its actual location?

MR. SPICER: Well, I mean, PACOM put out a release talking about the group ultimately ending up in the Korean Peninsula. That's what it will do. I think we were asked very clearly about the use of a carrier group in terms of deterrence and foreign presence and what that meant, and we were — that's what we discussed. I'd refer you back to any other issues with that to the Department of Defense.

[QUESTION:] Does the President believe that he might have spoken too quickly on this location of the vessel before it was actually —

MR. SPICER: The President said that we have an armada going towards the peninsula. That's a fact; it happened — it is happening, rather.

QUESTION: Sean, I just want to follow up on that. Obviously, when the President of the United States says there is military hardware going to a region in the middle of a crisis on the Korean Peninsula, the allies of the United States are encouraged. When that happens to not be the case, they can interpret that as a false encouragement. So how is this White House explaining to South Korea and Japan that, in fact, during the buildup and the actual DPRK missile launch, there was no USS Carl Vinson off the coast of the Korean Peninsula?

MR. SPICER: Well, respectfully, Jessica, I would ask you to either touch base with PACOM or the Department of Defense. The statement that was put out was that the Carl Vinson Group was headed to the Korean Peninsula. It is headed to the Korean Peninsula. And it will arrive there —

QUESTION: It's headed there now, though.

MR. SPICER: What's that?

QUESTION: It's headed there now. It wasn't headed there last week.

MR. SPICER: Sure. No, no, no — but that's not what we ever said. We said that it was heading there, and it was heading there — it is heading there. So that remains —

QUESTION: — the impression that allies have —

MR. SPICER: But if there is an impression, then that's not — then there should have been clarification from people who were seeking it.



But, I mean, PACOM put out a release talking about what its ultimate destination was going to be, and that's where it ended up.

....

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sean Spicer, 4/19/2017," [White House](#), begins 12:08 EDT, 19 April 2017.

Spicer is correct that PACOM put out an erroneous press release on 10 April. Spicer should have stopped there, and let PACOM take the blame. But then Spicer makes a specious and verbose argument that the White House correctly said the U.S.S. Vinson *will* arrive in Korea. There is a huge difference between the false version that the Vinson began heading from Singapore towards Korea on 8 April, and the true version the the Vinson finished the Australian exercises on 18 April and then began heading towards Korea. For example, some days are more important than others in North Korea: 15 April is the birthday of the Kim Il-sung, the founder of North Korea, and a day when many commentators expect weapons tests in North Korea. As another example, 25 April is the anniversary of the founding of the North Korean army, another day when many commentators expect weapons tests in North Korea.

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### North Korean threats & propaganda

On 10 April 2017, the Korean Central News Agency — the North Korean propaganda machine — responded to the announcement about the U.S.S. Vinson by saying “(North Korea) is ready to react to any mode of war desired by the US.” [The Guardian](#); [Joong Ang](#).

On 16 April 2017, North Korea released a propaganda video showing an imaginary attack by North Korean missiles on an unnamed U.S. city. [Washington Post](#).

On 23 April 2017, an editorial in the North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* says the North Koreans "revolutionary forces are combat-ready to sink a US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier [i.e., U.S.S. Vinson] with a single strike". [Reuters](#).

On 27 April 2017, North Korea released a propaganda video showing the White House in the crosshairs of a rifle sight, and also showed an aircraft carrier in flames following an imaginary attack by North Korea. [Washington Post](#); [The Independent](#).

I attempted to access the website of the Korean Central News Agency, hoping to quote the text from the original source, but the North Korean propaganda website was offline when I looked on several different days during April 2017. The KCNA is amusing with their extreme propaganda that is written in stilted English that *no* fluent speaker of English would use.

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### Japanese Cooperation

On 12 April 2017 — when people believed the U.S.S. Vinson would soon arrive near Korea — Japan announced it would conduct military drills with the Vinson. [Reuters](#); [Japan Times](#)(Reuters); [Asahi Shimbun](#).



On 23 April 2017, the U.S.S. Vinson group was joined by two ships of the Japanese Navy for exercises east of the Philippines. [Reuters](#); [Japan Times](#); [Yomiuri Shimbun](#).

On 29 April 2017, the U.S.S. Vinson group sailed into the Sea of Japan (which South Korea calls the "East Sea"). [Mainichi](#); [NHK](#). The Vinson will presumably stay close to the Japanese coast, to avoid short-range missiles from North Korea, and to give ample warning of any North Korean aircraft that might approach the U.S. Navy ships.

On 1 May 2017, Japan sent its largest warship, the helicopter carrier Izumo, as a symbolic escort for a U.S. supply ship sailing to the Vinson group. [Asahi Shimbun](#); [Mainichi](#).

On 3 May 2017, Japan added the destroyer Sazanami to the escort mission. [Japan Times](#); [Mainichi](#).

Later on 3 May 2017, the two ships of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force completed their mission of escorting one U.S. Navy supply ship. [Kyodo](#).

Skipping ahead to 1 June 2017, Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force began a final training exercise with the USS Vinson and USS Reagan strike groups. The exercises ended on 3 June. [Reuters](#); [Japan Times](#); [Asahi Shimbun](#).

On 14 June 2017, the USS Vinson arrived in Hawaii on its way to its home port of San Diego. [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#); [KITV](#).

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## **"Maximum Pressure" on North Korea Trump also wants diplomacy**

Concurrent with belligerent threats of U.S. military action to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons and to prevent North Korea from developing ICBMs to deliver those nuclear weapons, people in the White House told journalists that Trump would be pursuing diplomacy with North Korea, as well as increased economic sanctions on North Korea. Specifically, on 14 April the [Associated Press](#) cited anonymous government officials as declaring a policy of "maximum pressure and engagement". See, e.g., [NY Times](#)(10Apr); [Washington Post](#)(14Apr); [Reuters](#)(16Apr); [CNBC](#)(16Apr); [Associated Press](#)(19Apr); [Washington Post](#)(19Apr); [Los Angeles Times](#)(19Apr); [NY Times](#)(26Apr); [Associated Press](#)(27Apr).

I have three comments:

1. As Tillerson said on 16-17 March 2017 (quoted above), diplomacy has *failed* to stop the North Koreans from developing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. The North Koreans have a long track record of violating past agreements, which makes negotiations only a temporary solution ("kicking the can down the road"). More diplomacy appears futile.
2. Past economic sanctions on North Korea have been ineffective, partly because China,

Russia, and other rogue nations ignored the sanctions. But China has been enforcing sanctions on North Korea beginning in February 2017, so it is *possible* that sanctions *might* pressure North Korea into negotiating an end to their nuclear weapons program. It is also possible that more sanctions could make North Korea more isolated, more paranoid, and feeling more in need of a strong military. More sanctions appear futile.

3. The leadership of North Korea must be truly bewildered by U.S. policy towards North Korea. On 9 April and following days, it appeared that Trump might either launch Tomahawk cruise missile strikes on North Korea, or a pre-emptive bombing of North Korea's nuclear weapons development and test sites. Almost simultaneously, anonymous U.S. Government employees were quoted by journalists as saying Trump is bluffing with the military threats, and that Trump will pursue diplomacy. My comment is that this inconsistency by Trump's administration is not only dangerous, but also exposes Trump's administration as a bunch of amateurs who are *not* competent to deal with North Korea.

On 19 April 2017, Evan Horowitz wrote an editorial in the [Boston Globe](#) with a title: "There are no good options on North Korea. Zero."

On 26 April 2017, Trump hosted an extraordinary meeting for all 100 U.S. Senators at the White House, at which the Trump administration declared that defending the USA from nuclear attack by North Korea is now Trump's "top foreign-policy priority". See the [Joint Statement](#) by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, and Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats.

Immediately after the meeting at the White House, many of the Senators blabbed to journalists. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [McClatchy](#). One wonders why the White House did not simply invite journalists to attend the briefing.

On 27 April, Trump was interviewed by Reuters, during which interview Trump admitted that a major war with North Korea was possible.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday [27 April] a major conflict with North Korea is possible in the standoff over its nuclear and missile programs, but he would prefer a diplomatic outcome to the dispute.

"There is a chance that we could end up having a major, major conflict with North Korea. Absolutely," Trump told Reuters in an Oval Office interview ahead of his 100th day in office on Saturday [29 April].

Nonetheless, Trump said he wanted to peacefully resolve a crisis that has bedeviled multiple U.S. presidents, a path that he and his administration are emphasizing by preparing a variety of new economic sanctions while not taking the military option off the table.

"We'd love to solve things diplomatically but it's very difficult," he said.

....

[Trump] also said he wants South Korea to pay the cost of the U.S. THAAD anti-missile defense system, which he estimated at \$1 billion, and intends to renegotiate or terminate a U.S. free trade pact with South Korea because of a deep trade deficit with Seoul. Asked when he would announce his intention to renegotiate the pact, Trump said: "Very soon. I'm announcing it now."

Stephen J. Adler, Steve Holland, & Jeff Mason, "Exclusive: Trump says 'major, major' conflict with North Korea possible, but seeks diplomacy," [Reuters](#), 03:10 EDT, 28 April 2017.

See also [NY Times](#).

More about South Korea paying for THAAD is in my separate essay at [www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf](http://www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf)

Incidentally, during the Reuters interview, Trump went off topic and talked about the 2016 election results. While this digression is *not* relevant to North Korea, it is relevant to why Trump may be unfit to be president, so I am including it here. Reuters reported:

More than five months after his victory and two days shy of the 100-day mark of his presidency, the election is still on Trump's mind. Midway through a discussion about Chinese President Xi Jinping, the president paused to hand out copies of what he said were the latest figures from the 2016 electoral map.

"Here, you can take that, that's the final map of the numbers," the Republican president said from his desk in the Oval Office, handing out maps of the United States with areas he won marked in red. "It's pretty good, right? The red is obviously us."

He had copies for each of the three Reuters reporters in the room.

Stephen J. Adler, Jeff Mason, & Steve Holland, "Exclusive: Trump says he thought being president would be easier than his old life," [Reuters](#), 13:02 EDT, 29 April 2017.

My comment is that this is more evidence of Trump's narcissistic character flaw. And now back to North Korea.

Unfortunately, war with North Korea is increasingly likely, because previous U.S. presidents — at least back to Bill Clinton — erroneously believed that they could negotiate with North Korea. North Korea has gotten stronger and stronger, despite all of the sanctions and rhetoric from the USA, South Korea, Japan, and the United Nations. As North Korea accumulates more nuclear weapons, and more missiles, the apparently inevitable war with North Korea will become much worse for South Korea, the USA, and Japan.

On 29 April 2017, after a North Korean missile test, Trump [tweeted](#): "North Korea disrespected the wishes of China & its highly respected President when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!"

On 1 May 2017, North Korea reacted to Trump's belligerence, and reacted explicitly to Trump's new policy of "maximum pressure and engagement". The Associated Press reported: North Korea's Foreign Ministry says the country will speed up measures to bolster its

nuclear program "at the maximum pace" in response to the new U.S. policy that calls for new sanctions and "maximum pressure and engagement."

A statement from the Foreign Ministry spokesman on Monday [1 May] that was circulated by North Korea's U.N. Mission says the government is ready to respond to any option taken by the United States.

"NKorea says it will speed up nuke program in response to US," [Associated Press](#), 2 May 2017.

[Reuters](#) reported on 1 May 2017:

"Now that the U.S. is kicking up the overall racket for sanctions and pressure against the DPRK, pursuant to its new DPRK policy called 'maximum pressure and engagement', the DPRK will speed up at the maximum pace the measure for bolstering its nuclear deterrence," a spokesman for North Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement carried by its official KCNA news agency.

North Korea's "measures for bolstering the nuclear force to the maximum will be taken in a consecutive and successive way at any moment and any place decided by its supreme leadership," the spokesman said.

A summary of North Korea's tests of missiles during 2017 is given [above](#), which shows more frequent missile tests during April/May 2017.

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## 1 May 2017: Trump's offer to negotiate

On 1 May 2017, Trump told Bloomberg News:

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would meet with Kim Jong Un amid heightened tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program if the circumstances were right.

"If it would be appropriate for me to meet with him, I would absolutely, I would be honored to do it," Trump said Monday [1 May] in an Oval Office interview with Bloomberg News. "If it's under the, again, under the right circumstances. But I would do that."

Margaret Talev & Jennifer Jacobs, "Trump Says He'd Meet With Kim Jong Un Under Right Circumstances," [Bloomberg News](#); 1 May 2017.

Later on 1 May, Trump's press secretary was asked about Trump's offer of a meeting with Kim.

QUESTION: On North Korea, today the President told Bloomberg he was open to meeting with Kim Jong-un if the conditions were right. How does the President define the right condition to have this meeting?

MR. SPICER: Well, there's a lot of things that go along with that, and that's the key thing. "Under the right circumstances" was, I believe, the phrase he used. And I think that is something in keeping with our — consistent with the policy expressed by Secretary Tillerson as well.

We've got to see their provocative behavior ratcheted down immediately. There's a lot of conditions that I think would have to happen with respect to its behavior and to show signs of good faith. Clearly, conditions are not there right now, but I think the President has made it clear, as Secretary Tillerson had the other day, that if the conditions, if the circumstances present themselves we'll be prepared to, but they're clearly not at this time.

....

QUESTION: Coming back to North Korea, the President didn't just say he would be open to meeting with Kim Jong-un under the right circumstances. He said he would be "honored" to meet with him. This is somebody who has starved his own people, somebody who has threatened to destroy the United States. Just last week he put out a video showing the Capitol getting destroyed by North Korea fighters. How could he be "honored" to meet with Kim Jong-un?

MR. SPICER: Well, the President understands the threat that North Korea poses, and he will do whatever is necessary under the right circumstances to protect our country from the threat that they pose, so —

QUESTION: How could that be an honor?

MR. SPICER: I guess because he's still a head of state. So it is sort of — there is a diplomatic piece to this. But the bottom line is the President is going to do what he has to do. Right now he's building a coalition in the region to isolate North Korea both economically and diplomatically to get the threat — to take that threat down. And so — but that is his number-one priority right now, is protecting this country and our people.

....

QUESTION: Sean, two questions. One on — just to clarify on North Korea, were those conditions that you laid out to the earlier question, are those the conditions that would have to be met before there was any meeting — i.e. that North Korea would have to agree to totally disarm its nuclear program, stop threatening their neighbors? Are those the conditions?

MR. SPICER: I think those are some of the conditions. There's going to be a whole host of ones that we determine, that the State Department determines in consultation with the President that have to be met.

As I mentioned, we are so early into this process that I don't see this happening anytime soon. But I think that, as the President said, under the right circumstances. Those circumstances aren't present today, and there would have to be significant change for that to even be a possibility.

"Daily Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sean Spicer — \*43," [White House](#), begins 13:55 EDT, 1 May 2017.

My comment is that Trump being "honored" to meet Kim the belligerent dictator does *not* sound like the Trump who ordered the U.S.S. Vinson to sail towards North Korea just three weeks earlier. Trump is being inconsistent. Furthermore, if Trump and Tillerson want negotiations, then they need to *clearly state all of the pre-conditions* that North Korea must satisfy before such negotiations are scheduled. Adding more conditions later would be likely to scuttle the negotiations that Trump allegedly desires.

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On 29 May 2017, after a North Korean missile test, Trump [tweeted](#): "North Korea has shown great disrespect for their neighbor, China, by shooting off yet another ballistic missile...but China is trying hard!"

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## June-July 2017: North Korean Situation Worsens

The world needs China and the USA to work together to solve the North Korean problem. But on 20 June 2017, Trump publicly complained that China had failed to end the North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs:

While I greatly appreciate the efforts of President Xi & China to help with North Korea, it has not worked out. At least I know China tried!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20 June 2017.

See also: [Washington Post](#) and [New York Times](#).

On 29 June 2017, the U.S. Government announced a US\$ 1.4 billion sale of weapons and munitions to Taiwan. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The communist Chinese government was outraged, because it regards Taiwan as a renegade province that is part of China.

[Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#). After the weapons sales to Taiwan, it will be even more difficult for China to cooperate with the USA in solving the North Korea problem. If the USA and South Korea — without the cooperation of China — launch a military strike on North Korea, there is a real risk that China would join with North Korea in a retaliation.

On 30 June 2017, Trump [tweeted](#): "The era of strategic patience with the North Korea regime has failed. That patience is over. We are working closely with...." He did not finish his tweet, but he probably intended to say the U.S. Government is working with the South Korean government.

On 29-30 June 2017, the new South Korean president met with Trump at the White House, and they issued a Joint Statement that said in part:

President Trump and President Moon pledged to continue to coordinate closely to achieve our shared goal of complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. The two leaders called on the DPRK [North Korea] to refrain from provocative, destabilizing actions and rhetoric, and to make the strategic choice to fulfill its international obligations and commitments. The two leaders affirmed that the DPRK's nuclear tests and unprecedented number of ballistic missile tests constitute direct violations of multiple United Nations Security

Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) and highlight the accelerating threat the DPRK's missile programs pose to international peace and security. They affirmed their commitment to fully implement existing sanctions and impose new measures designed to apply maximum pressure on the DPRK and compel Pyongyang to cease its provocative actions and return to sincere and constructive talks. The two leaders also urged all UN member states to swiftly and fully implement UNSCR obligations and took note, with appreciation, of constructive actions by some countries around the world to exert diplomatic and economic pressure on the DPRK to return to credible negotiations on denuclearization.

"Joint Statement between the United States and the Republic of Korea," [White House](#), 30 June 2017.

Notice that this Joint Statement, which is official U.S. policy, clearly calls for negotiations with North Korea, and does *not* mention military action. But the goal is "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" — meaning North Korea must give up its nuclear weapons, something that North Korea will *not* do.

On 26 June 2017, James Clapper — a former general in the U.S. Air Force and Obama's Director of National Intelligence from Aug 2010 to Jan 2017 — was in South Korea, where he made a speech that was reported on 3 July.

James Clapper, former U.S. director of national intelligence for the Barack Obama administration, said North Korean denuclearization is no longer achievable and that Washington should focus on capping its nuclear and missile capabilities.

Clapper also confirmed, when asked last week in Seoul by reporters from the Korea JoongAng Daily and the JoongAng Ilbo, that this means South Korea and the United States must acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear power.

Clapper, who retired in January after serving six and a half years in his post, said he could attest from first-hand experience in North Korea during his trip there in November 2014 that Pyongyang will not give up its nuclear arsenal.

"Would be nice if they did, would be great if we could figure out some incentive to motivate them to give up their nuclear weapons, but they're not going to do that," said Clapper. "That's their ticket to survival. It's how they create deterrence against attacks against them, which they are very afraid of, and it's how they have leverage, how they have face."

Clapper's assertion undermines U.S. President Donald Trump's North Korea policy, which includes not recognizing North Korea as a nuclear state, imposing sanctions, not seeking regime change and resolving the problem with dialogue.

....

Clapper says the U.S. realistically has no pre-emptive military options and that attacking the North would be reckless. "That's not really plausible," he said, because "if we were to preemptively attack North Korea, they would automatically respond, and all that artillery and rocketry on the DMZ [demilitarized zone] would be unleashed



on Seoul, and there would be great death and destruction if that was to happen.”  
Lee Sung-Eun, "Clapper: North Korea is now a nuclear power," [JoongAng](#), 3 July 2017.

The Truth is that North Korea has had nuclear weapons since its first test of an atomic bomb on 9 Oct 2006. The public declarations of U.S. Presidents George W. Bush, Obama, and now Trump that the U.S. Government will *never* accept North Korea's nuclear weapons were false. The U.S. Government has *no* choice — diplomacy and sanctions have failed, and it is *not* a viable option to have a preemptive military strike on North Korea's nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons manufacturing plant(s).

On the night of 2 July 2017 in Washington, DC, Trump called the premier of China. Trump again asked China to help end the threat of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. But China has been miffed by at least three recent provocative actions of the USA: U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, U.S. accusing the Chinese government of human rights violations, and sending a U.S. warship near an island in the South China Sea that is claimed as Chinese territory. [White House](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Again, Trump's government is following an inconsistent policy toward China, repeatedly offending China and then asking for China's help on North Korea.

On the night of 3 July 2017 in Washington, DC, North Korea successfully tested a long-range ballistic missile. Trump tweeted:

North Korea has just launched another missile. Does this guy have anything better to do with his life? Hard to believe that South Korea.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:19 EDT, 3 July 2017.

....and Japan will put up with this much longer. Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:24 EDT, 3 July 2017.

Japan has little choice — it must "put up" with North Korea because Japan has an anemic military. South Korea understands that the North Korean army has artillery aimed at Seoul, where more than ten million people live, so South Korea does *not* want war with North Korea. Finally, Trump's colloquial phrase "heavy move" may be difficult for the Chinese to understand.

On the night of 4 July 2017, the U.S. Secretary of State issued the following statement about North Korea's test of their first successful ICBM.

The United States strongly condemns North Korea's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile. Testing an ICBM represents a new escalation of the threat to the United States, our allies and partners, the region, and the world.

Global action is required to stop a global threat. Any country that hosts North Korean guest workers, provides any economic or military benefits, or fails to fully implement UN Security Council resolutions is aiding and abetting a dangerous regime. All nations should publicly demonstrate to North Korea that there are consequences to their pursuit of nuclear weapons. We intend to bring North Korea's provocative action before the UN Security Council and enact stronger measures to hold the DPRK accountable.



The United States seeks only the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the end of threatening actions by North Korea. As we, along with others, have made clear, we will never accept a nuclear-armed North Korea.

The President and his national security team are continuing to assess the situation in close coordination with our allies and partners.

Rex Tillerson, "Statement by Secretary Tillerson," [State Dept](#), 4 July 2017.

My comment is that the U.S. Government needs to stop saying "we will *never* accept a nuclear-armed North Korea". In negotiations, the best outcome that the U.S. can realistically hope to achieve is to have North Korea limit their nuclear weapons and ICBM programs. As I said above, the U.S. has been tolerating North Korea's nuclear weapons since 2006.

On 5 July 2017, the Associated Press reported that the North Korean premier, Kim Jong Un, declared that North Korea would never give up its nuclear weapons:

Kim also said North Korea "would neither put its nukes and ballistic rockets on the table of negotiations in any case nor flinch even an inch from the road of bolstering the nuclear force chosen by itself unless the U.S. hostile policy and nuclear threat to the DPRK are definitely terminated," the Korean Central News Agency reported.

Foster Klug And Hyung-Jin Kim, "Kim vows North Korea's nukes are not on negotiation table" [Associated Press](#), 5 July 2017.

On 5 July, Trump tweeted:

Trade between China and North Korea grew almost 40% in the first quarter. So much for China working with us — but we had to give it a try!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:21 EDT, 5 July 2017.

The approximate 40% figure appears correct. The [New York Times](#) reported: "China's trade with the North grew 37.4 percent during the first three months of the [2017] year, compared with the same period in 2016, Chinese trade data released in April showed." See also [Washington Post](#). My comment is that Trump should use trade data from the second quarter of 2017, because China banned imports of North Korean coal only on 18 Feb (midway through the first quarter), and because the Chinese premier met Trump face-to-face on 6-7 April (*after* the first quarter).

### **Quest for Sanctions on North Korea after 4 July ICBM test**

On the afternoon of 5 July 2017, in a speech to the United Nations Security Council, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley threatened military action against North Korea.

The United States does not seek conflict. In fact, we seek to avoid it. We seek only the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and an end to the threatening actions by North Korea. Regrettably, we're witnessing just the opposite. Make no mistake, North Korea's launch of an ICBM is a clear and sharp military escalation. The North Korean regime openly states that its missiles are intended to deliver nuclear weapons to strike cities in the United States, South Korea, and Japan. And now it has a greater capacity to do so.

In truth, it is not only the United States and our allies that are threatened. North Korea's destabilizing escalation is a threat to all nations in the region and beyond. Their actions are quickly closing off the possibility of a diplomatic solution.

The United States is prepared to use the full range of our capabilities to defend ourselves and our allies. One of our capabilities lies with our considerable military forces. We will use them if we must, but we prefer not to have to go in that direction. We have other methods of addressing those who threaten us and of addressing those who supply the threats. We have great capabilities in the area of trade. President Trump has spoken repeatedly about this. I spoke with him at length about it this morning.

....

The international community has spoken frequently against the illegal and dangerous actions of the North Korean regime. For many years, there have been numerous UN sanctions against North Korea. But they have been insufficient to get them to change their destructive course. So in order to have an impact — in order to move North Korea off its military escalation — we must do more. We will not look exclusively at North Korea. We will look at any country that chooses to do business with this outlaw regime. We will not have patience for stalling or talking our way down to a watered-down resolution.

Nikki Haley, "Remarks at an Emergency UN Security Council Meeting on Nonproliferation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," [State Dept](#), 5 July 2017.

My comment is that Trump's policy bounces inconsistently between:

1. Ask China to stop the North Korean weapons programs.
2. Tell China if they will not stop the North Korean weapons program, then the USA (and our allies) will stop the North Koreans without the help of China. This policy denies that China is an indispensable party to solving the North Korean problem.
3. Irritate China with U.S. sale of weapons to Taiwan, U.S. accusing the Chinese government of human rights violations, and sending a U.S. warship near an island in the South China Sea that is claimed as Chinese territory. Then either ask for China's help — or criticize China for not helping — solve the North Korean problem.
4. Threaten preemptive military strike by the USA on North Korea.
5. Propose negotiations with North Korea to abandon their nuclear weapons and ICBMs.
6. International trade sanctions on North Korea.

But none of these six methods have stopped North Korea's long-range missile programs. The [Washington Post](#) notes: "Trump has never had a plan for dealing with North Korea".

On 25 July, Nikki Haley reported "progress" at the United Nations Security Council in

formulating new sanctions on North Korea, but China and Russia are delaying agreement. Despite North Korea's public claim that they tested an ICBM on 4 July, Russia says it was only a medium-range missile that should *not* cause sanctions. [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#). Before Nikki Haley could negotiate sanctions for the 4 July launch of an ICBM, the North Koreans launched a bigger ICBM on 28 July.

On 28 July 2017, the United Nations Secretary General promptly condemned the launch of a second ICBM by North Korea:

The Secretary-General condemns the launch of another ballistic missile of possible intercontinental range by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 28 July.

This is again a manifest violation of Security Council resolutions. The DPRK leadership must comply fully with its international obligations and work together with the international community to resolve the outstanding issues on the Korean Peninsula.

The Secretary-General reiterates his call on the DPRK leadership to respond to the Republic of Korea's proposals to reopen communication channels, particularly military-to-military, to lower the risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding and reduce tensions.

Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, "Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," [U.N.](#), 28 July 2017.

On 30 July, there was some discussion of whether to call an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to condemn the test of a second ICBM by North Korea on 28 July. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, issued a terse statement saying such a meeting would be futile, because past resolutions have been violated by both North Korea and U.N. member states (e.g., China).

Following North Korea's second ICBM launch on Friday [28 July], many have asked whether the United States will seek an emergency Security Council session on Monday. Some have even misreported that we are seeking such a session. That is mistaken.

There is no point in having an emergency session if it produces nothing of consequence. North Korea is already subject to numerous Security Council resolutions that they violate with impunity and that are not complied with by all UN Member States. An additional Security Council resolution that does not significantly increase the international pressure on North Korea is of no value. In fact, it is worse than nothing, because it sends the message to the North Korean dictator that the international community is unwilling to seriously challenge him. China must decide whether it is finally willing to take this vital step. The time for talk is over. The danger the North Korean regime poses to international peace is now clear to all.

Nikki Haley, "Statement by Ambassador Haley on North Korea," [State Dept](#), 30 July 2017. Haley's statement was reported by [Reuters](#).

Notice that the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations just declared that the United Nations is unable to solve the North Korean problem, and further discussion is "worse than nothing".

On Saturday afternoon, 5 August 2017, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved [Resolution 2371](#), which imposes sanctions on North Korea for two ICBM tests in July. The sanctions prohibit the export of coal, iron, lead, and seafood. *If* China and other nations obey the sanctions, then the sanctions are intended to reduce by 1/3 North Korea's export income of approximately US\$ 3 billion/year. [U.N.](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 6 August 2017, the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, publicly urged North Korea to stop tests of missiles, stop tests of nuclear weapons, and return to negotiations. [Associated Press](#); [The Telegraph](#).

On 7 August 2017, the North Korean foreign minister predictably declared that North Korea would *never* ("under no circumstances") abandon either its nuclear weapons or its ballistic missiles. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

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### 8-31 July 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem

On 8 July 2017, the [Associated Press](#) explained why all of the options (e.g., preemptive military strikes, persuading China to motivate North Korea, economic sanctions, diplomacy) are likely to be unacceptable or fail. But, as is obvious even to Trump, the North Korean problem *needs* a solution, and that problem may be the most important problem currently facing the U.S. Government.

On 8 July 2017, Trump met the Chinese premier, Xi Jinping, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Hamburg Germany. Trump again asked the premier to help solve the North Korea problem. [White House](#); [Xinhua](#); [CNN](#); [Reuters](#).

On 11 July, China publicly whined that it should not be held responsible for solving the North Korea problem. [Reuters](#). In my opinion, there are three good reasons why China should be responsible for helping to solve this problem: (1) China is the largest trading partner of North Korea, (2) China often protects North Korea in votes at the United Nations Security Council, and (3) China has ignored some past U.N. Resolutions that restricted trade with North Korea. Journalists report that China's main concern is *not* North Korea's nuclear weapons. Instead, China's main concern is that trade sanctions could destabilize the North Korean government, with a flood of millions of unwanted North Korean refugees into China. Secondly, China does *not* want a unified, capitalist Korea under control of the South Koreans on the Chinese border.

On 13 July 2017, [Reuters](#) reported that China's trade with North Korea had increased by 10.5% during the first half of the 2017 year, compared with the first half of the 2016 year.

On 14 July 2017, [Reuters](#) reported that a nongovernmental organization suggests that North Korea "may have reprocessed more plutonium than previously thought" and "also indicate operation of centrifuges that could be used to increase North Korea's stock of enriched uranium". If true, this is another indication of Trump's incompetent handling of the North

Korean problem.

On 17 July 2017, the South Korean president proposed talks between military officers of South and North Korea on 21 July at Panmunjom in the DMZ. [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). On 27 July, there was still *no* reply from the North Korean aggressors about the invitation to talk. [Hankyoreh](#). On the night of 28 July, North Korea successfully tested a second ICBM, which the [Associated Press](#) said "dimmed" the possibility of talks. On 2 August, the [Chosun Ilbo](#) reported that the North Koreans had *not* yet replied to the South Korean offer of 17 July. And on 5 September 2017, South Korea [said](#) the offer of talks was still valid, despite North Korea's tests of ballistic missiles and an alleged hydrogen-bomb.

On 25 July 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported "a new assessment by the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency [concluded] North Korea will be able to field a reliable, nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile as early as next year". The previous estimate was that the North Koreans would be ready in 2020, but now they will be ready in 2018. As mentioned above, on 26 April 2017 the Trump administration declared the North Korean problem to be the U.S. Government's "top foreign-policy priority". But during June/July 2017, the Trump administration seems to have forgotten about its top-priority. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Tillerson on 25 July took a few days vacation amongst speculation that he is unhappy. [CNN](#). In April 2017, Trump *talked* about applying "maximum pressure" to North Korea, but the reality is that the North Koreans are applying pressure to the ineffective U.S. Government, to force the U.S. to appease the North Koreans.

On 27 July 2017, General Milley, the commander of the U.S. Army, gave a speech in which he said "time is running out" for non-military solutions (e.g., diplomatic or economic sanctions). General Milley said: "A war on the Korean Peninsula would be terrible. However, a nuclear weapon detonating in Los Angeles would be terrible. The fact of the matter is we are at a point in time where choices are going to have to be made one way or the other." [NHK](#)(Japan); [Stars&Stripes](#); [Reuters](#); [The Hill](#).

On 28 July 2017, when journalists were reporting a second successful test of an ICBM by North Korea, Trump was on Long Island, NY giving a speech in which he spoke about the need to arrest and deport MS-13 gang members from the USA to El Salvador. [White House](#); [Washington Post](#); [CBS NYC](#). The MS-13 gang is bad, but North Korea has nuclear weapons and ICBMs, which makes North Korea a much worse problem than MS-13.

During May, June, and July 2017, Trump seems to have mostly ignored the North Korean problem, despite Trump's many promises to solve the North Korean problem.

On the night of 29 July — more than 32 hours after the launch of a bigger ICBM by North Korea — Trump finally reacted.

I am very disappointed in China. Our foolish past leaders have allowed them to make hundreds of billions of dollars a year in trade, yet...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:29 EDT, 29 July 2017.

...they do NOTHING for us with North Korea, just talk. We will no longer allow this to continue. China could easily solve this problem!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:35 EDT, 29 July 2017.

Just because China sells products to the USA (including some of Ivanka Trump's line of clothing), does *not* mean that China is obligated to solve the North Korean problem. "Just talk" is also what Trump does: more speeches, more tweets, more promises, but *no* results. Notice that Trump has *no* plan to solve the North Korean problem. Blaming "our foolish past leaders" and blaming China are *not* solutions to the North Korean problem.

On 31 July 2017, Trump made some public remarks in a cabinet meeting.

We have some interesting situations that we'll handle: North Korea, Middle East, lots of problems that we inherited from previous administrations. But we'll take care of them. We'll take care of them very well.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, what can you do about North Korea?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll handle North Korea. We're going to be able to handle them. It will be handled. We handle everything. Thank you very much.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 10:07 EDT, 31 July 2017.

Trump's facile promise to "handle" North Korea is contradicted by Trump's failure during the past seven months.

On 31 July 2017, several technical problems were revealed that North Korea has *not* yet solved:

1. Analysis of Japanese video of the reentry of the 28 July ICBM test "suggests it failed to survive the extreme heat and pressure after re-entering the Earth's atmosphere". [Associated Press](#). See also [38North](#).
2. We do *not* know if North Korea has an accurate guidance system for its ICBM.
3. We do *not* know the mass of the dummy warhead used in the 28 July test. The heavier the warhead, the shorter the range of the missile. Also, we do *not* know if North Korea has miniaturized a nuclear weapon so it can be carried by their ICBM.

For purposes of prioritizing problem solving, I suggest we ignore these technical problems and assume that North Korea can explode a nuclear weapon in Seattle, San Francisco, etc. in February 2018. That means Trump has six months remaining in which to solve the North Korea problem.

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## August 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem



On the morning of 1 August, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham appeared on the NBC Today program and relayed that Trump had said the U.S. was willing to go to war with North Korea.

There will be war between the United States and North Korea over the rogue nation's missile program if it continues to aim intercontinental ballistic missiles at America, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said President Donald Trump has told him.

"He has told me that. I believe him," the lawmaker said Tuesday 1 Aug] on TODAY. "If I were China, I would believe him, too, and do something about it."

Graham said that Trump won't allow the regime of Kim Jong Un to have an ICBM with a nuclear weapon capability to "hit America."

"If there's going to be a war to stop [Kim Jong Un], it will be over there. If thousands die, they're going to die over there. They're not going to die here. And He has told me that to my face," Graham said.

....

[Graham said:] "[Trump is] having to make a choice that no president wants to make. They kicked the can down the road for 20 years, there's no place else to kick it."

Erik Ortiz & Arata Yamamoto, "Sen. Lindsey Graham: Trump Says War With North Korea an Option," [NBC News](#), 09:03 EDT, 1 Aug 2017; updated 05:54 EDT, 2 Aug 2017.

This news article was the top story at [Yonhap](#) and [JoongAng](#) in South Korea, as their nation would be devastated to protect the USA from North Korean warheads. Graham is wrong about "thousands die". A better estimate is millions, maybe tens of millions, dead.

On 1 August 2017, Secretary of State Tillerson appeared at the daily press briefing at the State Department and invited North Korea to negotiate with the USA.

One of the first threats we were confronted with upon entering office is North Korea, and it was the first policy area that we felt an urgency to deal with. And I think, as many of you have watched over the last several months, that threat has materialized in the ways that we expected it would. And that's why early on we identified it as a very urgent matter, and the North Koreans have certainly proven the urgency of that to us.

We initiated a sustained and continued intensified campaign on what I like to call peaceful pressure, because the options available to us, I think as all of you well understand, are limited, and particularly if we think we are operating under a short period of time. So we felt the appropriate thing to do first was to seek peaceful pressure on the regime in North Korea to have them develop a willingness to sit and talk with us and others but with an understanding that a condition of those talks is there is no future where North Korea holds nuclear weapons or the ability to deliver those nuclear weapons to anyone in the region much less to the homeland.

In doing so, we've sought to partner with China. China does account for 90 percent of economic activity with North Korea. The Chinese have been very clear with us that we share the same objective, a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. They do not see it in their

interest for North Korea to have nuclear weapons, just as we do not see it in anyone's interest. China has ways that they can put pressure on and influence the North Korean regime because of this significant economic relationship that no one else has.

We've been very clear with the Chinese we certainly don't blame the Chinese for the situation in North Korea. Only the North Koreans are to blame for this situation. But we do believe China has a special and unique relationship because of this significant economic activity to influence the North Korean regime in ways that no one else can.

And that's why we continue to call upon them to use that influence with North Korea to create the conditions where we can have a productive dialogue. We don't think having a dialogue where the North Koreans come to the table assuming they're going to maintain their nuclear weapons is productive. So that's really what the objective that we are about is.

We have reaffirmed our position towards North Korea, that what we are doing, we do not seek a regime change; we do not seek the collapse of the regime; we do not seek an accelerated reunification of the peninsula; we do not seek an excuse to send our military north of the 38th parallel. And we're trying to convey to the North Koreans we are not your enemy, we are not your threat, but you are presenting an unacceptable threat to us, and we have to respond. And we hope that at some point, they will begin to understand that and that we would like to sit and have a dialogue with them about the future that will give them the security they seek and the future economic prosperity for North Korea, but that will then promote economic prosperity throughout Northeast Asia.

This is going to be a continued effort to put ever greater pressure on the North Korean regime because our other options, obviously, are not particularly attractive.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Remarks at a Press Availability," [U.S. State Dept](#), 1 Aug 2017.

Tillerson said "a condition of those talks is there is no future where North Korea holds nuclear weapons or the ability to deliver those nuclear weapons to anyone in the region much less to the homeland." Abandoning their nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is *not* acceptable to North Korea. If Tillerson really wants to negotiate with the North Koreans, Tillerson needs to get rid of pre-conditions that will be nonstarters for North Korea. The USA must now accept North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles as a *fait accompli*.

When Tillerson told the North Koreans "we are not your enemy", he needs to back up those words with an end to joint U.S.-South Korean military drills and perhaps also end other aggressive displays of U.S. military force.

It is unfortunate — and an indication of an amateurish, unplanned White House — that Trump's belligerent threats appeared hours before Tillerson proposed negotiations with North Korea. Trump's threat of war undercut Tillerson's proposed negotiations, and Tillerson's statement that "our other options, obviously, are not particularly attractive" hints that Trump is bluffing about war.

On 5 August 2017, General McMaster, Trump's National Security adviser, told MSNBC that



Trump was considering a “preventive war” against North Korea. [Newsweek](#); [Fox News](#).

On 7 August 2017, U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson gave a press conference at which he again disclosed the U.S. pre-conditions for negotiating with the North Koreans.

**Question [by Josh]:** .... On North Korea, I’m wondering if you can discuss more specifically what the exact preconditions are for the U.S. to engage in the type of talks that you said we’d ultimately would like to have with them. ....

**Tillerson:** Well, the best signal that North Korea could give us that they’re prepared to talk would be to stop these missile launches. We’ve not had an extended period of time where they have not taken some type of provocative action by launching ballistic missiles. So I think that would be the first and strongest signal they could send us is just stop, stop these missile launches. Obviously, we have other means of communication open to them, to certainly hear from them if they have a desire to want to talk.

....

**Question:** Secretary, you said earlier to Josh that preconditions for North Korea would be stopping missile launches. So how long do they need to stop those missile launches for in order to have conversations? ....

**Tillerson:** With respect to the North Korean missile launches, we’ll know it when we see it. We’re not going to give someone a specific number of days or weeks. This is really about the spirit of these talks, and they can demonstrate they’re ready to sit with a spirit of finding a way forward in these talks by no longer conducting these missile tests. So this is not a give me 30 days and we’re ready to talk. It’s not quite that simple. So it is all about how we see their attitude towards approaching a dialogue with us.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Press Availability in Manila, Philippines," [U.S. State Dept](#), 7 Aug 2017.

Note that the North Koreans refuse to meet for negotiations until after the U.S. Government abandons its "hostile policy" toward North Korea (e.g., abandons military drills with South Korea, etc.). [Korea Herald](#). Tillerson refuses to meet for negotiations until after the North Koreans have suspended all tests of ballistic missiles (and also continue to suspend tests of nuclear weapons?). Both North Korea and the USA are intransigent about *not* satisfying these pre-conditions for negotiations, so there will be *no* negotiations in the foreseeable future. *If* Trump and Tillerson want diplomacy to prevent North Korea from acquiring ICBMs that can deliver nuclear warheads to the continental USA, then negotiations must begin soon, without waiting months to verify whether North Korea has suspended tests of ballistic missiles. Because of the failures of Obama and Trump, we no longer have the luxury of time — we need a solution *now*.

On the afternoon of 8 August 2017, the [Washington Post](#) published the conclusion of a classified report by the Defense Intelligence Agency that North Korea now has a miniaturized nuclear warhead that will fit on their ballistic missiles.

The report that North Korea could deliver a nuclear weapon with its ICBMs apparently made Trump angry, and he responded with an impulsive, belligerent outburst:

North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen. He has been very threatening beyond a normal state. And as I said, they will be met with fire, fury, and, frankly, power, the likes of which this world has never seen before.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump Before a Briefing on the Opioid Crisis," [White House](#), 15:17 EDT, 8 August 2017.

Then on 8 August, the North Korean Army announced it was preparing a plan to test a group of four missiles, which are intended to land in the ocean, about 35 km from the U.S. Military base at Guam. The details of the test were announced on 10 August. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#)(10Aug); [Voice of America](#)(10Aug); [Reuters](#)(10Aug); [Associated Press](#)(10Aug).

I believe the North Korean threat against Guam is a bluff. Over the past several years, North Korea has repeatedly threatened to destroy South Korea and/or the USA, but North Korea never made their threats into reality. It would be very reckless for North Korea to fire missiles with an unproven accuracy to hit just 35 km from U.S. territory, and the North Koreans have not been reckless in their past actions.

The [New York Times](#) criticized Trump's "harsh language" on 8 August. [The Guardian](#) in England commented that "The US president's 'fire and fury' rhetoric echoed the language of North Korean propaganda, and served as the reminder that on both sides of the lines in the confrontation, there are now volatile and brittle leaders, each insecure in their position and anxious to bolster their strongman image." [The Telegraph](#) in England remarked: "Donald Trump promises 'fire and fury' but the truth is he doesn't know what to do about North Korea." On 9 August, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump improvised "fire and fury", without any review by his advisers. Also on 9 August, the [Washington Post](#) reported that U.S. government officials are privately talking about "an undisciplined presidential eruption threatening nuclear conflict".

My comment is that Trump has descended into a childish, amateurish escalation of rhetoric with North Korea. The North Koreans are experienced masters of propaganda and insults, and Trump is way out of his league in trying to compete with North Korean rhetoric. Moreover, Trump's belligerent rhetoric is recklessly endangering peace in Korea and likely postponing negotiation with the North Koreans. Furthermore, Trump's belligerent rhetoric will make it more difficult for Trump to build an international consensus (including China!) against North Korea.

What Trump said on 8 August was quite clear. But, on 9 August, Tillerson attempted to interpret it for the North Koreans:

And so I think in response to that, North Korea's rhetoric has just ratcheted up louder and louder and more threatening. So I think the President — what the President is doing is sending a strong message to North Korea in language that Kim Jong-un can understand, because [Kim] doesn't seem to understand diplomatic language. I think the President just wanted to be clear to the North Korean regime on the U.S. unquestionable ability to defend itself, will defend itself and its allies, and I think it was important that he deliver that message to avoid any miscalculation on their part.

....

QUESTION: Do you have any immediate diplomatic plans to de-escalate the situation that could have an impact within days instead of months or years?

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Well, we have a very active, ongoing diplomatic effort, most of which is behind the scenes because that's where diplomacy is most effective. We had very open conversations and our telephone lines remain open, certainly, to China and Russia as well as our allies, and I think publicly, we've been pretty clear in our statements directed at the North Koreans as to what we would like to see happen and make clear to them that we do not seek to be a threat to them, but we have to respond to the serious threats that they make towards us.

....

I think the strategy we're currently on is working. In fact, again, we have now garnered widespread international support, obviously, not just with the UN Security Council resolution, but globally, countries are speaking out and expressing the same view as to what North Korea should do, which is not be a threat to the stability of the region.

I think, in fact, the pressure is starting to show. I think that's why the rhetoric coming out of Pyongyang is beginning to become louder and more threatening. Whether we've got them backed into a corner or not is difficult to say, but diplomatically, you never like to have someone in a corner without a way for them to get out.

QUESTION: And what is Pyongyang's way out?

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Talks. Talks with the right expectation of what those talks will be about.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson With Press [en route Guam]," [U.S. State Dept](#), 9 Aug 2017.

Tillerson said "we have to respond to the serious threats that they make towards us." Tillerson is wrong. It would have been preferable if Trump had simply ignored the belligerent rhetoric from North Korea. North Korea spews belligerent rhetoric like a cheap firework and should not be taken seriously.

Later on 9 August, the U.S. Secretary of Defense released a statement that said:

The United States and our allies have the demonstrated capabilities and unquestionable commitment to defend ourselves from an attack. Kim Jong Un should take heed of the United Nations Security Council's unified voice, and statements from governments the world over, who agree the DPRK poses a threat to global security and stability. The DPRK must choose to stop isolating itself and stand down its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The DPRK should cease any consideration of actions that would lead to the end of its regime and the destruction of its people.

President Trump was informed of the growing threat last December and on taking office his first orders to me emphasized the readiness of our ballistic missile defense

and nuclear deterrent forces. While our State Department is making every effort to resolve this global threat through diplomatic means, it must be noted that the combined allied militaries now possess the most precise, rehearsed and robust defensive and offensive capabilities on Earth. The DPRK regime's actions will continue to be grossly overmatched by ours and would lose any arms race or conflict it initiates.

Jim Mattis, "Statement by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis," [Dept of Defense](#), 9 Aug 2017.

As an example of quality belligerent threats, consider the North Korean propaganda on 8 Aug 2017:

Timed to coincide with the fabrication of the heinous "sanctions resolution" against the DPRK at the UN, the U.S. war-thirsty forces are engrossed in war hysteria without discretion.

....

All these military actions being conducted in the ground, sea and air clearly go to prove that the nuclear war hysteria of the U.S. authorities including Trump has reached an extremely reckless and rash phase for an actual war after crossing the red line.

Under the prevailing grave situation, the General Staff of the KPA clarifies at home and abroad its resolute stand as follows to mercilessly smash all sorts of military provocation, being planned by the U.S. imperialist warmongers, with the inexhaustible military might of the powerful revolutionary Paektusan army which has so far been built.

1. The KPA [Korean People's Army] will start the Korean-style preemptive retaliatory operation of justice to wipe out the group of despicable plot-breeders once a slight sign of the U.S. provocation scheming to dare carry out a "beheading operation" against the supreme headquarters of the Korean revolution out of wild calculation is detected.

....

2. The provocative "preventive war" the U.S. has devised and plans to execute will be countered with a just all-out war of wiping out all the strongholds of the enemies including the U.S. mainland.

....

3. The attempt at "preemptive attack" oft-repeated by the U.S. military warmongers will be mercilessly foiled by the Korean style preemptive attack which will be mounted earlier. Preemptive strike is no longer the monopoly of the U.S.

....

4. The U.S. "secret operation" targeting the creation of disorder inside the DPRK and a regime change in it will be foiled by its all-people resistance.

....

The DPRK is an invincible ideological power in which all the service personnel and people are united around their leader in single mind and a country of an impregnable fortress in which all the people are armed and the whole country has been fortified.

....

Should the U.S. finally opt for a reckless military adventure, defying the stern warning of our revolutionary armed forces, the tragic end of the American empire will be hastened.

Korean Central News Agency, "U.S. War Hysteria Will Only Bring Miserable End Of American Empire: Spokesman For KPA General Staff," [KCNAwatch](#), 9 Aug 2017.

After the 5 August United Nations Security Council unanimous vote for sanctions on North Korea, it appeared that China might finally be part of a consensus to force North Korea to negotiate. But then on 8 August, Trump had his belligerent outburst about "fire and fury". The Chinese government responded to Trump by urging Trump to stop threatening North Korea. [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

On 4 July 2017, China and Russia repeated their proposal of negotiations that are described [above](#). Both the North Koreans and the U.S. have ignored the reasonable Chinese-Russian proposal. Instead, the U.S. Government arrogantly issued ultimatums to the North Koreans, without regard to two powerful neighbors of North Korea (i.e., China and Russia). There are two ultimatums: the first was the declaration by U.S. presidents George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump that North Korea will *never* be allowed to have nuclear weapons — despite the U.S. toleration of North Korean nuclear weapons since 2006. The second ultimatum is by Trump: the North Koreans will *never* be allowed to have ICBMs that could deliver a warhead to the USA. As the North Koreans defy the U.S. ultimatums (and humiliate Trump), Trump has become increasingly belligerent.

Worse, the U.S. is scheduled to begin military exercises in South Korea on 21 August 2017, which will further provoke tensions with North Korea.

On 10 August 2017, Trump had another impulsive, belligerent outburst. The White House did *not* post a transcript of Trump's outburst, but fortunately *The Washington Post* did post a transcript:

QUESTION: Mr. President, the North Koreans said yesterday that your statement on Tuesday [8 Aug] was "nonsense" — that's the word that they used. Do you have any response to that?

TRUMP: Well, I don't think they mean that, and I think they — it's the first time they've heard it like they heard it. And, frankly, the people that were questioning that statement, "Was it too tough?" — maybe it wasn't tough enough. They've been doing this to our country for a long time — for many years. And it's about time that somebody stuck up for the people of this country and for the people of other countries.

So, if anything, maybe that statement wasn't tough enough, and we're backed 100 percent by our military. We're backed by everybody, and we're backed by many other leaders. And I noticed that many senators and others today came out very much in favor of what I said. But, if anything, that statement may not be tough enough.

QUESTION: What would be tougher than "fire and fury"?

TRUMP: Well, you'll see. You'll see.

....

So we will do, I think — the people of our country are safe, our allies are safe. And I will tell you this: North Korea better get their act together or they're going to be in trouble like few nations ever have been in trouble in this world. Okay?

Donald J. Trump, "Trump's tough-on-North Korea, toned-down-on-Russia Q&A session, annotated," [Washington Post](#), posted at 09:35 EDT, 11 August 2017.

See also news articles at: [Washington Post](#) and [New York Times](#).

On Friday morning, 11 August 2017, Trump tweeted:

Military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded, should North Korea act unwisely. Hopefully Kim Jong Un will find another path!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:29 EDT, 11 Aug 2017.

The [Washington Post](#) tells us that the phrase "locked and loaded" was used in the year 1949 in a movie that starred John Wayne.

On 11 August 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported that the U.S. and North Korean governments have been secretly communicating for the past "several months".

On Friday afternoon, 11 August 2017, Trump made some remarks to journalists:

QUESTION: Any progress on the diplomatic backchannel?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we don't want to talk about progress, we don't want to talk about backchannels. We want to talk about a country that has misbehaved for many, many years — decades, actually — through numerous administrations. And they didn't want to take on the issue, and I have no choice but to take it on, and I'm taking it on. And we'll either be very, very successful quickly or we're going to be very, very successful in a different way, quickly.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, you've said you want to send a strong message to North Korea. What do you say to your critics who say that your rhetoric is actually raising the tension?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, my critics are only saying that because it's me. If somebody else uttered the exact same words that I uttered, they'd say, "What a great statement, what a wonderful statement." They're only doing it — but I will tell you, we

have tens of millions of people in this country that are so happy with what I'm saying — because they're saying, finally we have a President that's sticking up for our nation and, frankly, sticking up for our friends and our allies.

And this man will not get away with what he's doing, believe me. And if he utters one threat, in the form of an overt threat — which, by the way, he has been uttering for years, and his family has been uttering for years — or if he does anything with respect to Guam, or anyplace else that's an American territory or an American ally, he will truly regret it and he will regret it fast.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump Before Workforce/Apprenticeship Discussion," [White House](#), 15:38 EDT, 11 August 2017.

On 12 August 2017, Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping had a telephone conversation, in which Xi told Trump to stop using inflammatory language about North Korea. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 13 August 2017, Trump's national security adviser, General H.R. McMaster, calmed the situation:

"We're not closer to war than a week ago but we are closer to war than we were a decade ago," McMaster said, adding that the Trump administration is prepared to deal militarily with North Korea if necessary.

But [McMaster] stressed that the U.S. is pursuing "a very determined diplomatic effort" led by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that's coupled with new financial sanctions to dissuade North Korean leader Kim Jong Un from further provocations.

Richard Lardner, "U.S. Officials Says Confrontation With NKorea Not Imminent," [Associated Press](#), 14:44 EDT, 13 Aug 2017.

Also see, Carol Morello, "Officials downplay idea that nuclear war with North Korea is imminent," [Washington Post](#), 19:24 EDT, 13 Aug 2017.

North Korea made a sudden and unexpected leap in ICBM technology in July 2017. On 14 August 2017, the [New York Times](#) cited a [report](#) that suggested North Korea purchased missile engines from a factory in the Ukraine, or from warehouses in Russia. Such a purchase would be another failure of United Nations sanctions on North Korea.

On 15 August 2017, Kim deferred his decision on whether to launch four missiles toward Guam. [The Guardian](#) reported: "But in a sign that Kim may be attempting to lower the diplomatic temperature, KCNA said he would continue to watch the 'foolish and stupid conduct of the Yankees' before deciding whether to give an order for the launch." The [Associated Press](#) reported: "Kim praised the military for drawing up a 'close and careful plan' and said he would watch the 'foolish and stupid conduct of the Yankees' a little more before deciding whether to order the missile test, .... Kim's comments, however, with their conditional tone, seemed to hold out the possibility that friction could ease if the United States made some sort of gesture that Pyongyang considered a move to back away from previous 'extremely dangerous reckless actions.'" See also: [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 15 August, China urged the USA and North Korea to "hit the brakes" on threats.



[Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The Chinese foreign minister made the remarks in a telephone call to the Russian foreign minister. Later, the Chinese foreign ministry publicly disclosed the conversation.

Stephen Bannon, Trump's chief strategist, gave an interview on 15 August to *The American Prospect* magazine that was published on 16 August.

Bannon said he might consider a deal in which China got North Korea to freeze its nuclear buildup with verifiable inspections and the United States removed its troops from the peninsula, but such a deal seemed remote. Given that China is not likely to do much more on North Korea, and that the logic of mutually assured destruction was its own source of restraint, Bannon saw no reason not to proceed with tough trade sanctions against China.

Contrary to Trump's threat of fire and fury, Bannon said: "There's no military solution [to North Korea's nuclear threats], forget it. Until somebody solves the part of the equation that shows me that ten million people in Seoul don't die in the first 30 minutes from conventional weapons, I don't know what you're talking about, there's no military solution here, they got us." Bannon went on to describe his battle inside the administration to take a harder line on China trade, and not to fall into a trap of wishful thinking in which complaints against China's trade practices now had to take a backseat to the hope that China, as honest broker, would help restrain Kim.

Robert Kuttner, "Steve Bannon, Unrepentant," [American Prospect](#), 16 August 2017.

Incidentally, Bannon's final day in the White House was Friday, 18 August. Bannon immediately returned to his previous position as executive chairman at the Breitbart news website. [Associated Press](#). While I agree with Bannon about Seoul and "no military solution", Bannon was wrong to undercut Trump and the U.S. Government, thereby exposing Trump's bluff about a military attack.

On 17 August, Tillerson and Mattis again said the U.S. was considering "military options" for North Korea. [Associated Press](#).

On 21 August 2017, [Reuters](#) disclosed a confidential OPCW report that says twice in the past six months North Korea has been caught sending chemical weapons to Syria. This is a very serious violation of United Nations Resolutions.

On 21 August, the U.S. Navy demonstrated their incompetence for the fourth time since Trump became president. See [below](#).

On 22 August 2017, the U.S. Secretary of State made some rather patronizing comments about North Korea:

And before taking your questions [on Afghanistan], I do want to make one comment on North Korea. I think it is worth noting that we have had no missile launches or provocative acts on the part of North Korea since the unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council resolution. And I want to take note of that; I want to acknowledge it. I am pleased to see that the regime in Pyongyang has certainly demonstrated some level of restraint that we've not seen in the past. We hope that this is the beginning of this signal that we've been looking for that they are ready to restrain their level of

tensions, they're ready to restrain their provocative acts, and that perhaps we are seeing our pathway to sometime in the near future having some dialogue. We need to see more on their part, but I want to acknowledge the steps they've taken thus far. I think it's important to take note of that.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Secretary of State Rex Tillerson Press Availability," [U.S. State Dept](#), 22 August 2017.

My comment is that, *if* we are to solve the North Korean problem by negotiations, then we need to treat North Korea as a sovereign nation that possesses both nuclear weapons and ICBMs, and *not* treat North Korea as a rogue nation that will become part of South Korea. Tillerson seems to treat North Korea as a child who is subject to our control and approval. Ideally, the U.S. would end military drills with South Korea and the six-party negotiations would agree on an armistice, in exchange for North Korea agreeing on a moratorium on tests of both nuclear weapons and ICBMs.

On the night of 22 August 2017, Trump spoke at a campaign rally in Phoenix Arizona and said the following about North Korea:

And you see what's going on in North Korea. All of a sudden, I don't know — who knows. But I can tell you, what I said, that's not strong enough. Some people said it's too strong, it's not strong enough.

But Kim Jong Un, I respect the fact that I believe he is starting to respect us. I respect that fact very much. Respect that fact.

And maybe — probably not — but maybe something positive can come about. They won't tell you that, but maybe something positive can come about.

Every American deserves a government that protects them, honors them, defends them, and fights for them.

Donald J. Trump, "President Trump Ranted For 77 Minutes in Phoenix. Here's What He Said," [Time](#), 23 August 2017.

My comment is that Trump's rant in Phoenix is *not* something that a mentally competent president would say. He only mentions the word "Korea" once. There is a lack of factual detail, only some vague, general statements. Trump's opinion that Kim is beginning "to respect us" is ludicrous — Kim and his father have been terrified of a U.S. invasion of North Korea, that is what motivated Kim and his father to seek nuclear weapons and ICBMs. The real issue, which Trump ignored, is how do we solve the North Korean problem. Trump showed *no* understanding of history or facts, and offered *no* solution to the problem.

On 23 August 2017, North Korea released some photographs of Kim giving "field advice" to engineers who design missiles. On the wall are drawings of a three-stage missile that are more advanced than anything North Korea has tested. It is not known whether the North Koreans intended to show the drawings for the three-stage missile, but those drawings indicate an intent to develop longer range missiles. [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#); [BBC](#).

On 23 August 2017, [Politico](#) published an article by Siegfried Hecker, a metallurgist who was the director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory from 1986 to 1997 and who visited

North Korea's nuclear facilities seven times, beginning in 2004. Dr. Hecker wrote: "Trump administration officials should talk with Pyongyang, face to face, without any preconditions, ...." Later, Dr. Hecker wrote: "And we have to talk now, without demanding that North Korea agree to any preconditions, .... Pyongyang is not about to make unilateral concessions before talks." Dr. Hecker knows what he is talking about, unlike Trump and his associates. Tillerson and Mattis should listen to Dr. Hecker.

On the night of 25 August (Washington time), the North Koreans fired three missiles, which shattered Tillerson's illusion of North Korean restraint since the newest United Nations sanctions were announced on 5 August 2017. On 27 August, Tillerson appeared on the Fox News Sunday program and talked about North Korea:

CHRIS WALLACE: All right. Let's turn to your day job. North Korea fired three short-range missiles on Friday [25 August]. What message do you think the Kim regime is sending?

TILLERSON: Well, the firing of any ballistic missile is a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and we do view it as a provocative act, a provocative act against the United States and our allies. We continue to want the Kim regime to understand, there is a different path that he can choose. The international community has been quite clear with the unanimous 15-0 approval of the U.N. Security Council resolution imposing the most stringent sanctions ever to be imposed on North Korea.

There's also a unified international voice echoing our messages that no one wants to see a nuclear Korean peninsula. So, we are all unified in our mission to say (ph) denuclearize Korean peninsula. We hope for the opportunity to engage with them as to how we might achieve that.

WALLACE: This week, both — before the missile test, both you and the president suggested that Kim might be backing off of his missile program. Here both of you are.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Kim Jong-un, I respect the fact that I believe he is starting to respect us.

TILLERSON: I am pleased to see that the regime in Pyongyang has certainly demonstrated some level of restraint that we've not seen in the past.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

WALLACE: Were both of you wrong about Kim?

TILLERSON: Well, I don't know that we're wrong, Chris. I think it's going to take some time to tell. This type of launch again, it is a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. So, it is — clearly, they are still messaging us as well, that they are not prepared to completely back away from their position.

Having said that, we are going to continue our peaceful pressure campaign as I have

described that working with allies, working with China as well, to see if we can bring the regime in Pyongyang to the negotiating table, with a view to begin a dialogue on the different future for Korean peninsula and for North Korea.

"Gov. Abbott on Harvey's impact, Secretary Tillerson talks North Korean threat, Afghanistan strategy," [Fox News](#), 27 August 2017.

Copy at [U.S. State Dept.](#)

North Korea violated the United Nations sanctions for the 13<sup>th</sup> time during the Trump presidency (see [list](#)), but Tillerson wants to "continue our peaceful pressure campaign" that has failed. Someday Tillerson will drop his preconditions on meeting with the North Koreans, and then it will appear that the North Koreans forced the USA to drop those preconditions. Trump himself had *no* public comment on the 26 August missile test by North Korea.

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## U.N. Response to 29 August Missile Test

On the morning of 29 August (Korean time), the North Koreans launched a missile that flew over Japan and landed in the northern Pacific Ocean. The flight over Japan was an extremely provocative move by the North Koreans. Japan, South Korea, and the USA requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to be held at 20:00 on 29 August (New York time).

On the morning of 29 August, the White House issued the following terse statement:

The world has received North Korea's latest message loud and clear: this regime has signaled its contempt for its neighbors, for all members of the United Nations, and for minimum standards of acceptable international behavior.

Threatening and destabilizing actions only increase the North Korean regime's isolation in the region and among all nations of the world. All options are on the table. "Statement by President Donald J. Trump on North Korea," [White House](#), 29 August 2017.

On 5 August 2017, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations was delighted to approve the latest ineffective sanctions on North Korea. Just 24 days later, she — together with Japan and South Korea — was calling for *more* sanctions in a closed meeting of the Security Council. [Reuters](#) reported that China and Russia opposed new sanctions, because they support sanctions only for tests of nuclear weapons or ICBMs, not for intermediate-range missile tests. The Security Council issued a Presidential Statement, see list [above](#). During the Security Council meeting, the U.S. Ambassador said: "The United States will not allow its [the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's] lawlessness to continue, and the rest of the world is with us." [U.N.](#) After the Security Council meeting, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations made a statement:

Thank you, Mr. President. We called this meeting tonight knowing that we had to come away unified. I personally appreciate your commitment and willingness to move quickly.

And, once again, all 15 members of the Security Council have spoken in unison. All of us: The United States, Japan, China, Russia, Europeans, Africans, South Americans.

We are all together.

And what are we saying? We are all denouncing North Korea's outrageous act against another UN Member State, Japan. We are all demanding North Korea stop any further missile launches. We are all demanding North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons.

North Korea has violated every single Security Council resolution, and violated international law. We are all calling on every nation to strictly, fully, and immediately implement all Security Council sanctions on North Korea.

The world is united against North Korea. There is no doubt about that. It is time for the North Korean regime to recognize the danger they are putting themselves in. The United States will not allow their lawlessness to continue. And the rest of the world is with us.

Nikki Haley, "Remarks Following the Adoption of a UN Security Council Statement Condemning North Korea's Latest Ballistic Missile Launch," [U.S. State Dept](#), 29 August 2017.

Haley bleated that the U.S. "will not allow" North Korea to continue to defy United Nations Resolutions, but the U.S. Government does *not* control North Korea. In fact, the U.S. Government has so little influence on North Korea, that the U.S. has repeatedly asked China to exert control over North Korea. Instead of making belligerent threats, demands, and pre-conditions for negotiations, the U.S. should resume six-party negotiations with North Korea.

Journalists reported that the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, said he would continue to launch ballistic missiles in defiance of United Nations Resolutions. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Korea Times](#). Kim's defiance means that more Resolutions, and more sanctions, are unlikely to stop the North Korean ballistic missile program. Kim may have chosen the 29 August launch date to vex Japan, because it is the anniversary day of the annexation of Korea by Japan in the year 1910. [Bloomberg](#).

On the morning of 30 August 2017, Trump complicated a bad situation with his tweet that contradicted Tillerson and Mattis:

The U.S. has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:47 EDT, 30 August 2017.

The [Associated Press](#) explained: "According to the Congressional Research Service, between 1995 and 2008, the United States provided North Korea with more than \$1.3 billion in assistance: slightly more than 50 percent for food aid and about 40 percent for energy assistance. But since early 2009, the U.S. has provided virtually no aid to North Korea."

Trump's tweet on 30 August is another example of his impulsiveness, his lack of consistency, and getting his facts wrong.

Later on 30 August, Mattis gently rebuked Trump, when Mattis told journalists: "We are never out of diplomatic solutions." [Pentagon](#); [transcript](#).

The [Washington Post](#) published an article by Laura Rosenberger — a former member of the National Security Council and a member of the six-party talks with North Korea — that said: “So far, the Trump administration has been unable to execute a clear strategy for dealing with Kim .... [This mixed messaging] is an inability to execute on a strategy to deal with the most serious national security challenge we face.”

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## U.S. Navy incompetent

At a time when Trump is using the U.S. Military to intimidate North Korea, the U.S. Navy is demonstrating its lack of competence by twice colliding with cargo ships and having two other accidents since Trump became president.

1. On 31 January 2017, the guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam ran aground near the Yokosuka naval base in Japan.
2. On 9 May 2017, the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain collided with a South Korean fishing boat.
3. Before dawn on 17 June 2017, the destroyer USS Fitzgerald collided with a cargo ship off the coast of Japan. Seven sailors who were sleeping drowned. [Reuters](#); [Pentagon](#). On 17 August 2017, the Navy punished officers aboard the Fitzgerald for “poor seamanship”. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
4. Before dawn on 21 August 2017, the destroyer USS John S. McCain collided with an empty oil tanker near Singapore. Ten sailors died in the collision. [Associated Press](#)(21Aug); [Associated Press](#)(27Aug).

On 23 August 2017, the U.S. Navy relieved the commanding officer of the 7th Fleet. He was responsible for the four ships mentioned in the previous paragraphs. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).

On 10 October 2017, the U.S. Navy relieved the commanding officer and executive officer of the U.S.S. McCain and assigned them to duties elsewhere. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

The punishment of senior officers on the USS Fitzgerald, relieving the commander of the 7th Fleet, and relieving the two senior officers on the USS McCain must be seen as an admission by the Navy that their officers had unacceptable conduct.

I remind the reader that on 9 April 2017 the U.S. Navy did *not* know whether the U.S.S. Vinson was headed to Korea or [Australia](#).

On 31 Jan 2018, the U.S. Navy failed to intercept a test missile, see [below](#).

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## September 2017:

## Continuing North Korean Problem

On 1 September in the USA, Trump called South Korean prime minister Moon. On the night of 2 September in the USA, Trump called Japanese prime minister Abe. Journalists reported that they pledged to increase pressure on North Korea to negotiate. [The Hill](#)(Moon); [Reuters](#)(Moon); [Reuters](#)(Abe). The U.S. White House website did not post a summary of these two conversations until 5 September, probably because they occurred during the Labor Day 3-day weekend: Moon on 1 Sep at [White House](#); Abe on 2 Sep at [White House](#).

On Sunday morning, 3 September 2017 in Korea, journalists reported that Kim Jong Un posed for photographs with a homemade hydrogen-bomb that could be fitted on an ICBM. There are two new things here. First, the alleged development of a hydrogen bomb, which is much more powerful than the atomic bombs that North Korea has tested in the past. Second, the alleged miniaturization of the hydrogen-bomb so it will fit on an ICBM. Note that there is *no* evidence that either alleged claim is true. [NHK](#); [Reuters](#).

On Sunday, 3 September 2017, at 12:29 South Korean time (23:29 EDT on 2 Sep in USA), North Korea conducted their sixth test of a nuclear weapon. [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(blog); [Reuters](#).

The U.S. Geological Survey said the underground test caused a magnitude 6.3 artificial earthquake, while the South Koreans claimed a magnitude 5.7 earthquake. Using the South Korean measurement, the test was 5 times stronger than the previous North Korean nuclear weapons test on 9 September 2016. Using the U.S. measurement, the test was 10 times stronger than the previous test, and is consistent with the test of a small hydrogen-bomb with an explosive yield of 100 kilotons of TNT. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

There is an interesting little detail that has been widely overlooked by journalists. Initial seismic reports mentioned *two* earthquakes, the second earthquake coming 8 minutes after the big earthquake from the nuclear weapon. It is suggested that the second earthquake was from collapse of tunnels at the test site that is buried under a mountain. [BBC](#); [ChosunIlbo](#). One Chinese geoscientist suggested the mountain at the test site was at risk of collapsing, which would release radioactive debris into the environment. [South China Morning Post](#). The radiation leak could contain debris from all six "successful" tests, plus any radioactive material from failed tests. *If* North Korea is concerned with protecting the environment, then they need to find a new test site for future tests of nuclear weapons — which could delay future tests.

Surely, diplomats had hoped that the North Koreans had ended their provocative tests of nuclear weapons. But the 3 September 2017 test proved the diplomats were wrong about restraint by North Korea. It is now obvious that economic sanctions have failed to alter North Korea's behavior, which pushes us closer to a military strike on North Korea.

On Sunday, 3 September 2017, Trump fired off a series of five tweets about North Korea:  
North Korea has conducted a major Nuclear Test. Their words and actions continue to be very hostile and dangerous to the United States.....  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:30 EDT, 3 Sep 2017.



..North Korea is a rogue nation which has become a great threat and embarrassment to China, which is trying to help but with little success.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:39 EDT, 3 Sep 2017.

Trump took a cheap shot at the president of South Korea, who has wanted to negotiate with North Korea.

South Korea is finding, as I have told them, that their talk of appeasement with North Korea will not work, they only understand one thing!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:46 EDT, 3 Sep 2017.

I will be meeting General Kelly, General Mattis and other military leaders at the White House to discuss North Korea. Thank you.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:07 EDT, 3 Sep 2017.

Trump then threatened to end trade with China, amongst other nations that do business with North Korea:

The United States is considering, in addition to other options, stopping all trade with any country doing business with North Korea.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:14 EDT, 3 Sep 2017.

Notice that Trump did *not* confirm or reiterate the treaty obligation of the USA to defend South Korea and/or Japan. This omission of standard diplomatic language marks Trump as an amateur.

Separately on 2 September, Trump hinted the U.S. would abrogate the Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and South Korea. [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that during a crisis with North Korea is a very poor time to withdraw from the trade agreement with South Korea, and harm the economy of our ally. Together with Trump's 3 September cheap shot at the South Korean president for "appeasement" of North Korea, Trump seems to have begun a battle with South Korea.

Then the U.S. Secretary of Defense issued a terse statement, part of which said:

Any threat to the United States, or its territories — including Guam — or our allies will be met with a massive military response — a response both effective and overwhelming.

Kim Jong Un should take heed the United Nations Security Council's unified voice — all members unanimously agreed on the threat North Korea poses, and they remain unanimous in their commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula — because we are not looking to the total annihilation of a country — namely, North Korea.

But, as I said, we have many options to do so. Thank you very much.

Jim Mattis, "Secretary Mattis Statement at the White House," [Pentagon](#), 3 Sep 2017.

To skip the United Nations Security Council response to the 3 September nuclear weapons test, go [here](#).

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## U.N. Response to 3 Sep Nuclear Weapon Test

Immediately, Japan, France, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and the USA requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council. The meeting was scheduled for 10:00 EDT on 4 Sep 2017. [U.S. State Dept.](#)

Here is the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations entire speech to the Security Council on 4 September 2017.

Thank you, Mr. President. And we want to thank you for allowing us to have this prompt meeting, as it's very urgent. And we also want to thank the Ambassador of Egypt and his team for the steady hand and the calm way in which he lead in this past month.

For more than 20 years, this Security Council has taken actions against North Korea's nuclear program. And for more than 20 years, North Korea has defied our collective voice. It's worth taking a few moments to recount some of the history.

In 1993, the Council approved Resolution 825 calling on North Korea to remain in the Nonproliferation Treaty. That didn't work. North Korea withdrew from the treaty and continued its nuclear pursuit.

In 2006, the Six Party Talks faltered, and North Korea conducted several ballistic missile launches. That led to Resolution 1695 condemning them.

The same year, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test. That led to Resolution 1718, establishing a UN sanctions regime, aiming to stop all nuclear, ballistic missile, and other weapons of mass destruction programs.

After Six Party Talks fell apart again in 2009, North Korea conducted additional missile launches and its second nuclear test. That led to Resolution 1874, which expanded sanctions, including an arms embargo and cargo inspection obligations.

In 2012, the Leap Day Deal failed, and North Korea conducted two new space launches. The Security Council responded with the adoption of Resolution 2087.

Following North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013, the Council adopted Resolution 2094, expanding sanctions to restrict financial, maritime, aviation, and diplomatic activities.

By 2016, North Korea had conducted its fourth nuclear test and another space launch. They followed that with more missile launches. In response, the Council adopted multiple resolutions expanding sanctions even further, targeting whole sectors of North Korea's economy.

Finally, this year, the Council got even more serious.

First, we adopted Resolution 2356 designating high-ranking North Korean government officials and the military's Strategic Rocket Forces Command for individual sanctions. Then, just last month, after the regime's first two ICBM launches, we adopted Resolution 2371 — the strongest sanctions we have ever imposed on North Korea.

That resolution banned North Korean exports of coal, iron, and seafood, and imposed several other measures that will significantly cut off the revenues needed to fund their nuclear program.

Why did I take the time to go through this history?

To make this point. The United Nations Security Council has spoken with unusual unity and consistency on North Korea. That's a good thing. Along the way, there have been problems with implementation, and the Council has at times been too slow and too weak; but this is not a situation in which we have allowed divisions among us to stop any action.

Still, here we are.

Despite our efforts over the past 24 years, the North Korean nuclear program is more advanced and more dangerous than ever. They now fire missiles over Japanese air space. They now have ICBM capabilities.

They now claim to have tested a hydrogen bomb. And just this morning, there are reports that the regime is preparing for yet another ICBM launch.

To the members of the Security Council, I must say, "enough is enough."

We have taken an incremental approach, and despite the best of intentions, it has not worked.

Members of this Council will no doubt urge negotiations and a return to talks. But as I have just outlined, we have engaged in numerous direct and multilateral talks with the North Korean regime, and time after time, they have not worked.

The time for half measures in the Security Council is over. The time has come to exhaust all of our diplomatic means, before it's too late.

We must now adopt the strongest possible measures.

Kim Jong-Un's action cannot be seen as defensive. He wants to be acknowledged as a nuclear power. But being a nuclear power is not about using those terrible weapons to threaten others. Nuclear powers understand their responsibilities. Kim Jong-Un shows no such understanding.

His abusive use of missiles, and his nuclear threats show that he is begging for war. War is never something the United States wants. We don't want it now. But our country's patience is not unlimited. We will defend our allies and our territory.

The idea that some have suggested of a so-called freeze-for-freeze is insulting. When a rogue regime has a nuclear weapon and an ICBM pointed at you, you do not take steps to lower your guard. No one would do that. We certainly won't.

The time has come to exhaust all diplomatic means to end this crisis, and that means quickly enacting the strongest possible measures here in the UN Security Council. Only the strongest sanctions will enable us to resolve this problem through diplomacy. We have kicked the can down the road long enough. There is no more road left.

This crisis goes well beyond the UN. The United States will look at every country that does business with North Korea as a country that is giving aid to their reckless and dangerous nuclear intentions.

And what we do on North Korea will have a real impact on how other outlaw nations who seek nuclear weapons choose to conduct themselves in the future.

The stakes could not be higher. The urgency is now.

Twenty-four years of half measures and failed talks is enough. Thank you.  
Nikki Haley, "Remarks at an Emergency UN Security Council Briefing on North Korea," [U.S. State Dept](#), 4 September 2017.

In a later [statement](#), Haley said the U.S. would propose a draft Resolution and she wanted an 11 September vote on the final draft.

The United Nations Security Council [meeting record](#) is posted at their website, along with a [press release](#) that summarizes the meeting.

### **my comments on Haley's speech**

I have several comments on Haley's speech, which displays U.S. Government policy.

Haley said "The idea that some have suggested of a so-called freeze-for-freeze is insulting." That refers to China's proposal that North Korea have a moratorium on tests of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in exchange for a moratorium on U.S. Military exercises with South Korea. Haley seems to regard a moratorium on U.S. Military exercises with South Korea as blackmail, and she simply dismisses China's proposal.

Haley wants the United Nations to impose more sanctions on North Korea: "Only the strongest sanctions will enable us to resolve this problem through diplomacy." But in Haley's speech, she made the point that United Nations sanctions since 2006 had *failed*. Haley said: "... the Council has at times been too slow and too weak". Although she did not say it, there are two main reasons why past sanctions have failed. First, rogue nations (e.g., China and Russia) continued trade with North Korea in defiance of the sanctions. Second, the North Korean government was willing to suffer effects of sanctions to pursue their programs to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Haley said: "... we have engaged in numerous direct and multilateral talks with the North Korean regime, and time after time, they have not worked." That may be because the previous talks did *not* address the reason that the North Koreans want nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. China's proposal does address that reason.

There is an unresolved inconsistency in Haley's speech. She said: "Only the strongest sanctions will enable us to resolve this problem through diplomacy." But she also said that "time after time, [talks with the North Koreans] have not worked." Haley does *not* explain why more sanctions will make diplomacy successful next time, when past sanctions have a spectacular 11-year record of failure.

Haley reminded the Security Council that on 5 August, "... we adopted Resolution 2371 — the strongest sanctions we have ever imposed on North Korea." What Haley did *not* explicitly say was that after those "strongest sanctions", the North Koreans fired an ICBM over Japan and then tested an alleged hydrogen-bomb. *If* those "strongest sanctions" had any effect on North Korea, it was to encourage North Korea to accelerate their provocative tests of weapons. What is clear is that North Korea is belligerently pursuing an aggressive policy of developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that threatens South Korea, Japan, and the USA. Not only is North Korea continuing their policy of provocations, but also North Korea is becoming stronger and stronger. See the lists of North Korean [nuclear weapons](#) tests and [missile launches](#) in the introduction of this essay.

China and Russia want to restart the six-party talks. But there is *no* assurance that North Korea would attend if the talks were convened. As mentioned above, on 17 July 2017 the president of South Korea proposed talks with North Korea, but he was ignored by North Korea. From the perspective of North Korea, *why* should North Korea negotiate a moratorium on their tests of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles? At the moment, North Korea — an impoverished nation — is able to threaten the USA, South Korea, and Japan. That gives North Korea a kind of respect and importance that it has never had before, and is probably loath to abandon.

There was very little criticism of Haley's speech in the news media in the USA. One exception is an article at Fox News, by Judith Miller, who was formerly a reporter for *The New York Times*:

Rather than offer yet another resolution denouncing North Korea and calling for even stronger sanctions against dictator Kim Jong Un's brutal rogue regime, Ambassador Nikki Haley attacked China, the only country capable of isolating North Korea, calling its ambassador's proposal to the U.N. for defusing the crisis "insulting." Then [Haley] reiterated her administration's threats to use military force and total economic warfare against the North, both widely seen as empty threats given the grave damage either would inflict on America and our Asian allies.

....

Ambassador Haley's short statement seemed designed to out-Trump President Trump in bellicose rhetoric and empty threats. By saying that Mr. Kim was practically "begging for war" and that "enough is enough," she echoed Secretary of Defense

James Mattis' threat to use military force to stop Kim's nuclear program and protect America and its allies. She also repeated Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin's threat to sever trade with any country which trades with North Korea, calling for the "toughest sanctions possible." Since more than 80 percent of its trade is with China, Ms. Haley was yet again threatening the only country capable of inflicting sufficient pain on North Korea to tempt it back to the negotiating table.

[Haley's] performance left seasoned U.N. and Asia analysts perplexed or downright alarmed. Abraham Denmark, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia called the administration's response "chaotic." Robert Einhorn, a former senior State Department nonproliferation expert now at the Brookings Institution, called President Trump's tweets and conflicting policy statements "an incoherent mess."

....

Roughly 20 million people live in Seoul, within range of North Korean artillery, among them, roughly 140,000 Americans, 20,500 of them U.S. soldiers. Empty, too, is the bluster about cutting off all trade with countries which trade with North Korea. U.S.-China trade accounts for roughly 4 percent of U.S. GDP. Ending it would throw America's and the world's economy into turmoil.

Judith Miller, "To defeat North Korea, Trump (and his team) need to quit making empty threats, focus on a coordinated strategy," [Fox News](#), 5 Sep 2017.

### More developments at United Nations

At 04:00 EDT on 4 September 2017, [Reuters](#) reported anonymous diplomats suggested the United Nations could consider:

- "banning Pyongyang's textile exports,
- banning the North's national airline,
- stop supplies of oil to the government and military,
- prevent North Koreans from working abroad, and
- add top officials to a blacklist to subject them to an asset freeze and travel ban."

The same information is also contained in an [Associated Press](#) article.

At 03:06 EDT on 5 September 2017, the [Associated Press](#) explained why China would *not* want to increase sanctions on North Korea: "Chinese leaders worry about instability on the Korean Peninsula if Kim's regime collapses, which would eliminate a buffer between China and South Korea, a heavily armed U.S. ally with American troops on its soil." Reducing oil shipments from China to North Korea "could rupture relations, wiping out any influence Beijing has over Pyongyang". China is reluctant to cut imports of textiles and clothing from North Korea, because "That would hurt Chinese companies that are part of that supply chain, and ... Chinese leaders are eager to see [textile exports] develop as [a] way to make [North Korea] more prosperous and stable."

On 6 September 2017, [Reuters](#) and the [Associated Press](#) saw a confidential U.S. draft of a

United Nations Security Council Resolution that will

1. prohibit exports of both crude oil and petroleum products to North Korea,
2. ban exports of textiles from North Korea,
3. prohibit employment of North Korean laborers in foreign nations, and
4. impose an asset freeze and travel ban on Kim Jong Un and four other senior officials.

On Friday, 8 September, the U.S. asked the Security Council for a vote on Monday, 11 September on the U.S. draft of the Resolution. [U.S. State Dept](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 10 September, [Reuters](#) reported that Nikki Haley had weakened her earlier draft to avoid vetoes by China and Russia. See also [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [U.S. Fact Sheet](#). The changes include:

1. delete total ban on exports of petroleum to North Korea, insert cap on exports of refined petroleum products (e.g., gasoline, diesel, heavy fuel oil, etc.) at 2 million barrels a year, approximately a 55% reduction. Also insert cap on exports of crude oil to North Korea, at the level of the last 12 months.
2. change total ban on employment of North Korean laborers in foreign nations to prohibiting new work permits for North Korean laborers and also prohibiting renewals of current work permits for North Korean laborers.
3. delete asset freeze and travel ban on Kim Jong Un and three other senior officials.
4. delete asset freeze on North Korea's Air Koryo airline, the Korean People's Army, and five other government organizations.
5. delete authorization to use force to inspect 9 North Korean ships that had previously violated economic sanctions.

On 11 September, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to approve Nikki Haley's watered-down draft, which became Resolution 2375. After the vote, here is what Haley told the Security Council:

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for calling this meeting and allowing us to have this vote.

The images from space of northeast Asia at night show brightness and prosperity surrounding a dark, lonely space that is North Korea. Those images are a good illustration of where the North Korean regime is today. It is alone. It is dark. And it's getting darker.

North Korea's neighbors, its trading partners, and the entire international community are united against its dangerous and illegal actions. Today's resolution builds on what were already the deepest cutting sanctions ever leveled against North Korea. We've been down this road before. The Security Council has expressed its condemnation. We've leveled sanctions. But today is different. We are acting in response to a dangerous new development: North Korea's September 3 test of a claimed hydrogen bomb.



Today, we are saying the world will never accept a nuclear-armed North Korea. And today, the Security Council is saying that if the North Korean regime does not halt its nuclear program, we will act to stop it ourselves.

Over the years, we have learned many things about the North Korean regime. We have learned that it does not care about being a part of the community of decent, law-abiding nations. It has violated every United Nations resolution against it. We have learned that the North Korean regime doesn't care about its own people. It has denied them the most basic necessities to finance its weapons program. And we have learned that half-measures against the regime have not worked.

Previous efforts to bring North Korea to the negotiating table have failed. They have repeatedly walked back every commitment they have made. Today, the Security Council has acted in a different way. Today, we are attempting to take the future of the North Korean nuclear program out of the hands of its outlaw regime.

We are done trying to prod the regime to do the right thing. We are now acting to stop it from having the ability to continue doing the wrong thing. We are doing that by hitting North Korea's ability to fuel and fund its weapons program. Oil is the lifeblood of North Korea's effort to build and deliver a nuclear weapon. Today's resolution reduces almost 30 percent of oil provided to North Korea by cutting off over 55 percent of its gas, diesel, and heavy fuel oil. Further, today's resolution completely bans natural gas and other oil byproducts that could be used as substitutes for the reduced petroleum. This will cut deep.

Further, a large portion of North Korea's revenues come from exports, revenues they use to fund their nuclear program. Last month, we passed a resolution banning its coal and iron exports. Today's resolution bans all textile exports. That's an almost \$800 million hit to its revenue.

When these new stronger sanctions are added to those passed last month, over 90 percent of North Korea's publicly reported exports are now fully banned. Moreover, this resolution also puts an end to the regime making money from the 93,000 North Korean citizens it sends overseas to work and heavily taxes. This ban will eventually starve the regime of an additional \$500 million or more in annual revenues. Beyond the \$1.3 billion in annual revenues we will cut from North Korea, new maritime authorities will help us stop them from obtaining funds by smuggling coal and other prohibited materials around the world by ship.

Furthermore, this resolution prohibits all joint ventures with the regime, resulting in a significant amount of lost revenue. But more importantly, the regime can no longer obtain critically needed foreign investments, technology, and know-how needed for its commercial industries.

Finally, this resolution imposes asset freezes on the most central North Korean regime entities, affecting both the military and the government itself. In short, these are by far the strongest measures ever imposed on North Korea. They give us a much better chance to halt the regime's ability to fuel and finance its nuclear and missile programs.

But we all know these steps only work if all nations implement them completely and aggressively. Today's resolution would not have happened without the strong relationship that has developed between President Trump and Chinese President Xi, and we greatly appreciate both teams working with us. We have seen additional encouraging signs that other nations in Asia have stepped up to the plate. The Philippines has cut off all trade with Pyongyang. Thailand has drastically cut its economic ties with North Korea. And states much further away are also doing their part. Mexico recently declared the North Korean ambassador to its country persona non grata. Along with strictly enforcing sanctions, these are important steps toward complete international unity. They make clear that all nations can act to deny North Korea the funds to build its nuclear arsenal.

Today is a solemn day in the United States. It is the 16th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that killed nearly three thousand innocent people — most of them in this very city. It hurts as much today as it did 16 years ago. We will never forget the victims of September 11. And we will never forget the lesson that those who have evil intentions must be confronted.

That day, the United States saw that mass murder can come from a clear blue sky, on a beautiful Tuesday morning. But today, the threat to the United States and the world is not coming out of the blue.

The North Korean regime has demonstrated that it will not act on its own to end its nuclear program. The civilized world must do what the regime refuses to do. We must stop its march toward a nuclear arsenal with the ability to deliver it anywhere in the world. We must do that by cutting off the fuel and the funding that supports it.

We don't take pleasure in further strengthening sanctions today. We are not looking for war. The North Korean regime has not yet passed the point of no return. If it agrees to stop its nuclear program, it can reclaim its future. If it proves it can live in peace, the world will live in peace with it.

On the other hand, if North Korea continues its dangerous path, we will continue with further pressure. The choice is theirs.

Nikki Haley, "Remarks Following the Adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2375 on North Korea Sanctions," [U.S. State Dept](#), 11 Sep 2017.

The Associated Press reported:

But [the Resolution's] provisions are a significant climb-down from the very tough sanctions the Trump administration proposed last Tuesday [5 Sep], especially on oil, where a complete ban could have crippled North Korea's economy.

The cap on the import of petroleum products could have an impact, but North Korea will still be able to import the same amount of crude oil that it has this year.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, China supplies most of North Korea's crude oil imports, which a U.S. official put at 4 million barrels a year.

The agency cited U.N. customs data showing that China reported sending 6,000 barrels a day of oil products to North Korea, which it said is mostly gasoline and diesel fuel vital to the country's agriculture, transportation and military sectors.

That would mean North Korea imports nearly 2.2 million barrels a year in petroleum products, so the 2 million barrel cap in the resolution would represent a 10 percent cut. But the U.S. official, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said North Korea now receives about 4.5 million barrels of refined petroleum products, which would mean a more than 50 percent cut.

The textile ban is significant. Textiles are North Korea's main source of export revenue after coal, iron, seafood and other minerals that have already been severely restricted by previous U.N. resolutions. North Korean textile exports in 2016 totaled \$752.5 million, accounting for about one-fourth of its total \$3 billion in merchandise exports, according to South Korean government figures.

....

As for North Koreans working overseas, the U.S. Mission said a cutoff on new work permits will eventually cost North Korea about \$500 million a year once current work permits expire. The U.S. estimates about 93,000 North Koreans are currently working abroad, the U.S. official said.

....

China and Russia had called for a resolution focused on a political solution to the escalating crisis over North Korea's nuclear program. They have proposed a freeze-for-freeze that would halt North Korean nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the U.S. and South Korea stopping their joint military exercises — but the Trump administration has rejected that.

Edith M. Lederer, "UN approves watered-down new sanctions against North Korea," [Associated Press](#), 21:02 EDT, 11 Sep 2017.

The United Nations Security Council [meeting record](#) is posted at their website, along with a [press release](#) that summarizes the meeting.

On 12 September 2017, Yonhap News Agency in South Korea predicted that the new economic sanctions in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2375 would *not* change North Korea's behavior. Yonhap quoted an anonymous "North Korea expert" as saying:

"The North is unlikely to come out to negotiate until it announces the completion of its nuclear capabilities. Until that time, the U.S. will continue to impose additional sanctions and the North will continue to seek provocations. Eventually, we will have to get to the endgame. Before that part comes, the U.S. seems to have cards left that it can use."

Koh Byung-joon, "UNSC resolution insufficient to change N.K. behavior, signals tougher action ready: experts," [Yonhap](#), 12 Sep 2017.

The [Korea Times](#) reported that the new sanctions will *not* stop the North Korean nuclear and

ICBM programs.

At noon EDT on 12 September, Trump criticized U.N. Resolution 2375:

We had a vote yesterday on sanctions. We think it's just another very small step — not a big deal. Rex [Tillerson] and I were just discussing — not big. I don't know if it has any impact, but certainly it was nice to get a 15-to-nothing vote. But those sanctions are nothing compared to what ultimately will have to happen.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak of Malaysia Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 12 Sep 2017.

I am concerned that the ban on export of clothing (i.e., textiles) by North Korea will encourage the North Korean government to illegally export more weapons and munitions. The North Koreans have abundant experience in evading sanctions. We should be encouraging the North Koreans to diversify their manufacturing away from weapons and towards consumer items, such as clothing.

So what did U.N. Resolution 2375 accomplish? In the short term, it made matters worse, as the North Koreans promise to accelerate their development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and — of course — North Korea will defy the sanctions. Bloomberg News reported:

In its first official response to the new resolution, North Korea's foreign ministry released a statement on state-run media saying the sanctions justified its nuclear push and strengthened its will to "follow this road at a faster pace without the slightest diversion until this fight to the finish is over."

"The adoption of another illegal and evil 'resolution on sanctions' piloted by the U.S. served as an occasion for the DPRK to verify that the road it chose to go down was absolutely right," the ministry said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

"The DPRK will redouble the efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence," KCNA said, using the country's formal name.

Kanga Kong, "North Korea Slams 'Evil' Sanctions, Vows Faster Nuclear Push," [Bloomberg News](#), 23:10 EDT, 12 September 2017.

See also [Reuters](#).

The launch of another North Korean missile over Japan on the morning of 15 September 2017 (Korean time) — approximately three days after U.N. Resolution 2375 was passed — shows this Resolution will *not* stop North Korean development of prohibited weapons.

### **U.N. experts say North Korea evaded sanctions**

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874 at §26 created a committee of experts to review sanctions on North Korea. On 5 September 2017, those experts reported in [S/2017/742](#) that North Korea was evading economic sanctions. S/2017/742 at ¶70 says "During the reporting period [28 February 2017 to 5 August 2017], the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to export prohibited commodities to generate at least [US]\$ 270 million." At ¶79: "Following China's suspension of the import of coal from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as from 19 February 2017, the [DPRK] started to diversify the countries to which it exports coal to include Malaysia and Viet Nam." And at ¶28: "The Panel is investigating reported prohibited chemical, ballistic missile and

conventional arms cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea including activities on Syrian Scud missile programmes and maintenance and repair of Syrian surface-to-air missile air defence systems."

Although exports of clothing from North Korea are not yet prohibited, North Korean sweatshops are already sewing "Made in China" labels in their clothing, as reported on 12 August 2017 by [Reuters](#). Aside from economic sanctions, informed consumers would be loath to purchase items with a "Made in North Korea" label, so simple fraud by North Korea makes their merchandise more appealing.

On 7 September, the [Wall Street Journal](#) and [Foreign Policy](#) were among the first journalists to publicize this September Report by the experts.

On the night of 9 September 2017, the Associated Press reported:

North Korea illegally exported coal, iron and other commodities worth at least \$270 million to China and other countries including India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka in the six-month period ending in early August in violation of U.N. sanctions, U.N. experts say.

The experts monitoring sanctions said in a report released Saturday [9 Sep] that Kim Jong Un's government continues to flout sanctions on commodities as well as an arms embargo and restrictions on shipping and financial activities.

....

The experts said implementation of existing sanctions "lags far behind what is necessary to achieve the core goal of denuclearization" of the Korean peninsula.

They blamed "lax enforcement" of sanctions coupled North Korea's "evolving evasion techniques" for undermining the achievement of this goal which would see the North abandon all weapons of mass destruction.

On the export of commodities — a key source of foreign exchange for the DPRK — the experts said that following China's suspension of coal imports from the North in February, the DPRK has been rerouting coal to other countries including Malaysia and Vietnam.

Edith M. Lederer, "UN experts: NKorea exported \$270 million illegally recently," [Associated Press](#), 20:58 EDT, 9 Sep 2017.

The president of the U.N. Security Council scheduled a meeting on 11 September to discuss the U.N. experts' report. Ironically, the meeting on the experts' report occurred immediately before the vote on Nikki Haley's draft resolution for *more* economic sanctions. The meeting was closed to the public.

My comment is that diplomats in the U.S., South Korea, and Japan continue to call for *more* economic sanctions on North Korea. But those same diplomats have *failed* to enforce past economic sanctions, ignoring violations by numerous rogue nations. The refusal of those diplomats to enforce past sanctions since 2006 is responsible for the failure of those

sanctions. The failure of past economic sanctions helped finance North Korea's continuing programs of developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

On 11 September 2017, the [Washington Post](#) published an article that explained how Russian smugglers are helping North Korea evade U.N. economic sanctions.

On 1 October 2017, the [Washington Post](#) revealed that Egypt had ordered "more than 30,000 rocket-propelled grenades" from North Korea, which were delivered in August 2016.

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### **4-15 Sep 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem**

Currently, a U.S.-South Korean agreement limits South Korean missiles to a maximum payload of 500 kg. During a telephone call between Trump and Moon on 4 September, Trump agreed to remove that limit. [White House](#); [Reuters](#). Soon the South Koreans will be able to shoot missiles with much larger warheads into North Korea. This is just one of many ways that the provocative North Korean tests of nuclear weapons have made North Korea *less* secure. During the cold war in the 1960s and 1970s, the USA and Russia realized that an arms race makes everyone *less secure*, but North Korea has not yet understood that lesson.

On the night of 4 September 2017, I looked at the websites of the Russian and Chinese missions to the United Nations, to quote their reaction to North Korea's test of a nuclear weapon. In response to Haley's assertion that the Chinese proposal "is insulting", the Russian Ambassador [replied](#): "I didn't respond to that but I was wondering really what is insulting about that? This is the only proposal for political way out of this situation which is on the table at the moment."

The Chinese mission to the United Nations has a [website](#), but on 4 Sep 2017 there was *no* mention of the North Korean problem. The Chinese website does *not* include North Korea in their "Regional Hotspot Issues" for Asia. A search of the Chinese website for "Korea" shows the most recent webpage is a 5 August [statement](#) after the adoption of Resolution 2371.

On 5 September 2017, the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, gave a press conference on a wide range of topics. Here is what he said about the North Korean problem.

The latest nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are profoundly destabilizing for regional and international security. I condemn them unequivocally.

Yet again, the DPRK has broken the global norm against nuclear test explosions.

Yet again, the country has defied the Security Council and the international community.

Yet again, the DPRK has needlessly and recklessly put millions of people at risk — including its own citizens already suffering drought, hunger and serious violations of

their human rights.

I call again on the DPRK authorities to comply fully with its international obligations, including Security Council Resolution 2371 adopted last month.

I welcome yesterday's meeting of the Council. The unity of the Council is crucial in addressing this crisis.

That unity also creates an opportunity to engage diplomatically to decrease tensions, increase confidence and prevent any escalation — all aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Let us promote the dialogue and communication necessary to avoid miscalculation [or] misunderstanding.

Confrontational rhetoric may lead to unintended consequences.

The solution must be political. The potential consequences of military action are too horrific.

As Secretary-General, I am ready to support any efforts towards a peaceful solution of this alarming situation, and as I said, to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

....

QUESTION: Mr Secretary-General, on North Korea, do you think the Russian-Chinese proposal for freeze, for a freeze, should be entertained by the US? And, in terms of... you said you would support, but how about meeting efforts? Would you meet with the Foreign Minister of North Korea when he's in town in two weeks? Would you like to go to North Korea to meet with the leadership there?

Secretary-General: Well, I think what is important is the capacity of the Sec... that all members of the Security Council to come together and of the five countries that deal with [the Democratic People's Republic of] Korea in the framework, the past framework of the six-party talks to be entirely united. So, my appeal is not for any specific solution. It is for the capacity to people to come together and make it clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that they need to negotiate in order for the achievement of the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. I know that the leverage of the UN is limited. I know that our capacity is limited. I've just signalled to the parties that I'm entirely at their disposal, but I recognise that what is crucial here is the unity of the Security Council and the capacity of the five countries to come together with a single strategy to deal with the Government of the DPRK.

....

QUESTION: .... which issue do you think will be the most focussed for world leaders when they meet here the High-Level Week?



I think the most dangerous crisis we face today, the crisis related to the nuclear risk in relation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We all have the experience of the First World War. Wars usually do not start by a decision taken in a moment by the parties to go to war. If you look at the history of the First World War, it was on a step-by-step basis, one party doing one thing, the other party doing another, and then an escalation taking place. And, as a book called *The Sleepwalkers* described in an extremely effective way, all of a sudden, the parties discovered they are at war. This is the risk we need to avoid in relation to the situation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Antonio Guterres, "Secretary-General's press encounter," [U.N.](#), 5 September 2017.

I agree that Trump should stop his "confrontational rhetoric", because Trump is making a solution to the problem more difficult, by exciting the North Koreans. Also, there is a danger that Trump may take his threats seriously in the future and impulsively order a pre-emptive military strike on North Korea. Furthermore, the North Koreans may misunderstand Trump's empty threats or bluffs. On the other hand, I suggest that it is futile to ask the North Koreans to stop their "confrontational rhetoric". Instead, I urge that we focus on stopping the development of North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

The Secretary General calls for negotiations. But it is *not* clear that the North Koreans *want* to negotiate. Also, the United Nations is stuck on its dogma about "denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula", which will be unacceptable to North Korea.

On 5 September 2017, the White House press spokesperson said pushing for "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" was Trump's priority. Talks with North Korea are *not* a priority: "now is not the time for us to spend a lot of time focused on talking with North Korea". [White House](#); [Reuters](#). In my opinion, Trump is wrong. He should be pursuing talks with North Korea to resolve this problem.

On 5 September 2017, the North Korean ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Han Tae Song, announced that "The recent self-defence measures by my country, DPRK, are a 'gift package' addressed to none other than the U.S." He added: "The U.S. will receive more 'gift packages' from my country as long as its relies on reckless provocations and futile attempts to put pressure on the DPRK." [Reuters](#). My comment is that North Korea does *not* need nuclear weapons and ICBMs to deter an invasion of North Korea — conventional artillery aimed at Seoul has been an adequate deterrent. Further, the past history of belligerent acts shows that North Korea is untrustworthy with any weapons of mass destruction (i.e., nuclear, chemical, biological weapons). Reading the numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions shows the nations of the world are unanimous that North Korea should *not* have either nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles. North Korea has not only defied these Resolutions since 2006, but also intends to continue to defy these Resolutions (i.e., "more gift packages"). I suspect that North Korea will continue these prohibited tests, even if the U.S. Government stopped its "provocations and futile attempts to put pressure on the DPRK."

On 6 September 2017, Eric Talmadge — the Associated Press bureau chief in Pyongyang — wrote an insightful article that quotes three experts on North Korea.

1. Vipin Narang, a nuclear strategy and nonproliferation expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, believes U.S. policymakers need to let [deterrence is about making sure your opponent has no good military moves] sink in.

“Saying that this nuclear program has not augmented or improved North Korea’s ability to deter particular actions, especially regime change or invasion or disarmament, is simply denying reality and putting our head in the sand,” he said.

....

Upping the game will require two things Narang believes are now lacking: a coherent and unified message to Pyongyang from President Donald Trump’s administration, and strong, believable reassurances to America’s regional allies.

....

Moreover, the different messages coming from the White House, State Department and Department of Defense — ranging from Trump threatening “fire and fury” to the more conciliatory tone of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson — Pyongyang has more incentive to push ahead quickly to either take advantage of what it sees as weakness or bolster its capabilities ahead of what it fears to be a looming invasion.

....

And maybe one more thing. Tone down the tweets. “When President Trump tweets the day after the alleged H-bomb test that South Korea should stop ‘appeasement’ of North Korea, Pyongyang can be nothing short of delighted at its strategy [of creating discord among the U.S., Japan, South Korea, and China] working,” Narang said.

2. ... China’s and Russia’s national interests aren’t the same as Washington’s. Shifting the onus to them for a solution diminishes U.S. leadership and control, said Joel Wit, a senior fellow at the Johns Hopkins’ School of Advanced International Studies and a former State Department official who developed strategies to deal with the crisis over North Korea’s weapons program in the 1990s.

....

[Wit] said that instead of pointing fingers, Washington needs to accept that the core problem is between the U.S. and North Korea and firmly take the wheel.

3. If the U.S. is going to get what it wants, it has to know what it wants. And it will probably need to give up something to get it.

John Delury, an associate professor of Chinese studies at Yonsei University in Seoul, believes the most realistic path forward involves three steps: “dialogue, negotiation, settlement.”

....

Washington’s focus [in negotiations] should be clear and specific. Negotiators should push for a missile and nuclear test moratorium, a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons, the return of nuclear inspectors and increased transparency. There must also be nonproliferation commitments.

Eric Talmadge, "How can US stop North Korea nukes? 3 experts have ideas," [Associated Press](#), 03:20 EDT, 6 September 2017. [Indented list with three numbers added by Standler, to clearly separate the three experts.]

On 6 September 2017, Trump told journalists:

President Xi [of China] would like to do something. We’ll see whether or not he can do it. But we will not be putting up with what’s happening in North Korea. I believe that President Xi agrees with me 100 percent. He doesn’t want to see what’s happening there, either.

Donald J. Trump, *not* posted at the White House website, 6 Sep 2017.

Quoted by Anne Gearan, "Trump’s zigzagging approach to North Korea veers toward military options," [Washington Post](#), 6 Sep 2017. Gearan wrote: "... the zigzagging U.S. response and the president’s willingness to talk openly about a military attack could be creating its own set of problems by raising the price of an eventual deal and probably making negotiations impossible for now, Asia security analysts said."

Quoted by Jeff Mason & Michael Martina, "Trump says U.S. not 'putting up with' North Korea's actions," [Reuters UK](#) or [Reuters USA](#), 6 September 2017.

My comment is that the USA has been "putting up with" (i.e., tolerating) North Korea's belligerent actions, including tests of nuclear weapons and tests of ballistic missiles, since 2006. Except for a forbidden military strike on North Korea's weapons manufacturing plants, Trump has *no* choice — Trump must accept as reality North Korea's current weapons development program.

On 7 September 2017, the White House had a moment of realism. An anonymous staffer told the [Washington Post](#) and [Reuters](#): "We are very concerned that North Korea might not be able to be deterred, that there are real differences between North Korea and the small, small group of nations that have these weapons." My comment is that, while the pessimism by the White House is realistic, North Korea's inability to be deterred might have been inspired by bluffs and empty threats by Trump, which eroded the credibility of the White House. Anyway, negotiations *might* provide a tolerable solution to the problem, if the warmongers in the White House can be muzzled long enough for diplomats to do their job.

### **Diplomatic Isolation of North Korea**

The numerous United Nations Resolutions condemning North Korea's tests of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons expresses the outrage of the international community. Mexico began a flood of expulsions of North Korean diplomats:

1. On 7 September 2017, Mexico expelled the ambassador from North Korea as persona non grata following the test of an alleged hydrogen-bomb. The ambassador has 72 hours to leave Mexico. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).
2. On 11 September, Peru expelled the ambassador from North Korea as persona non grata following the test of an alleged hydrogen-bomb. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
3. On 17 September, Kuwait expelled the ambassador from North Korea. Kuwait's decision is significant because there are approximately 3000 North Korean laborers living in Kuwait. Although other Arab nations employ North Koreans, Kuwait had the only North Korean embassy amongst Arab nations. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
4. On 18 September, Spain expelled the ambassador from North Korea, because of his country's continuing nuclear weapons program. [Reuters](#).
5. On 2 October, [Reuters](#) reported that Italy will expel North Korea's ambassador. See also [Washington Post](#).
6. On 12 October 2017, [Reuters](#) reported that the United Arab Emirates had terminated the North Korean mission in the UAE.
7. On 20 October 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported that "Uganda has expelled North Korean military experts and representatives of North Korean companies, including its top arms dealer". However, Uganda continues diplomatic relations with North Korea.
8. On 2 February 2018, [Yonhap](#) News Agency in South Korea reported that Jordan severed diplomatic relations with North Korea.
- 9.

Expelling the North Korean ambassadors shows that North Korea is a pariah nation, and is a different expression of outrage of the international community from passing U.N. Resolutions that condemn North Korea.

### 11-14 Sep 2017

On 11 September, I noticed that Tillerson had been publicly silent on North Korea during the past two weeks. On 22 August 2017, Tillerson praised the North Koreans on their restraint, then the North Koreans fired three short-range missiles into the Sea of Japan, launched a missile over Japan, and detonated an alleged hydrogen bomb. Tillerson last publicly spoke about North Korea on a Fox News program on 27 August. On 14 September, [Korea Times](#) reported that the U.S. and North Korea recently held a secret "back channel" conversation in Switzerland.

On 12 September, the U.S. Treasury secretary was in New York City, where he said in an interview:

STEVEN MNUCHIN: I think we have absolutely moved the needle on China. I think what they agreed to yesterday [11 Sep] was historic. I'd also say I put sanctions on a major Chinese bank. That's the first time that's ever been done. And if China doesn't follow these sanctions, we will put additional sanctions on them and prevent them from accessing the U.S. and international dollar system. And that's quite meaningful.

"CNBC Exclusive: CNBC's "Squawk Box" Interviews Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin from CNBC Institutional Investor Delivering Alpha Conference Today," [CNBC](#), 12 Sep 2017.

In the early morning of 13 September, Reuters reported:

... comments on Tuesday [12 Sep] by the North's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Han Tae Song, who said Pyongyang was "ready to use a form of ultimate means". "The forthcoming measures ... will make the U.S. suffer the greatest pain it ever experienced in its history," Han said.

....

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin warned China, North Korea's main ally and trading partner, that Washington would "put additional sanctions on them and prevent them from accessing the U.S. and international dollar system" if it did not follow through on the new measures.

Another senior administration official told Reuters any such "secondary sanctions" on Chinese banks and other companies were on hold for now to give China time to show it was prepared to fully enforce the latest and previous rounds of sanctions.

Jack Kim & Roberta Rampton, "North Korea defiant over U.N. sanctions as Trump says tougher steps needed," [Reuters](#), 07:30 GMT, 13 Sep 2017.

On 6 July 2017 and again on 12 September 2017, the South Korean government revealed that they are training a "decapitation squad" to go inside North Korea and assassinate Kim Jong Un. [Chosun Ilbo](#); [New York Times](#). In my opinion it is incredibly stupid to publicize this decapitation squad, because it will make Kim even more paranoid and more convinced that he needs nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

On 13 September 2017, there were hints that China was more concerned about North Korea's nuclear weapons and less concerned about having North Korea as a buffer against the capitalist South Korean nation. [Yonhap](#); [Hankyoreh](#). This change in China's policy could signal an increased willingness of the Chinese government to enforce economic sanctions on North Korea.

On 14 September 2017, North Korea spewed some inflammatory, bellicose, meaningless threats. First, the Korean Central News Agency declared: "The four islands of the [Japanese] archipelago should be sunken into the sea by the nuclear bomb of Juche. Japan is no longer needed to exist near us." (Juche is a military-first, self-reliant philosophy created by Kim's grandfather, who was the first dictator of North Korea.) Second, the KCNA declared: "Let's reduce the U.S. mainland into ashes and darkness. Let's vent our spite with mobilization of

all retaliation means which have been prepared till now.” [Reuters](#). My comment is that the KCNA propaganda is hyperbole, because it would take more hydrogen-bombs than North Korea can manufacture to "sink" part of one of the Japanese islands. The threat to reduce the USA to ashes is hyperbole, because the USA has a very large geographical area. The KCNA statements about sinking Japan and reducing the USA to ashes should be ignored, as hyperbole. When the North Koreans develop a reliable ICBM that can carry a hydrogen-bomb to Kansas, detonating that one warhead in the ionosphere above Kansas could create an electromagnetic pulse that could knock out the electric power grid in much of the USA. Further, North Korea is moving closer to its goal of being able to deliver a hydrogen-bomb to annihilate cities in the USA.

### 15 Sep 2017: Another North Korean Missile Test

Early Friday morning, 15 September, Korean time (about 18:00 EDT on 14 September in the USA), North Korea launched a missile that flew over Japan. Citations to news articles are provided [above](#).

Back on 8 August 2017, North Korea threatened to launch four missiles at Guam, but on 15 August North Korea backed away from its threat. Guam is 3400 kilometers from Pyongyang, while the most recent North Korean missile traveled 3700 kilometers — proving that North Korea *could* accomplish its threat. But the accuracy of the North Korean missile remains unproven and it is unknown if the North Korean missile could carry a heavy nuclear warhead all the way to Guam.

On the night of 14 September, Tillerson ended his silence on North Korea since 27 August: North Korea's provocative missile launch represents the second time the people of Japan, a treaty ally of the United States, have been directly threatened in recent weeks.

These continued provocations only deepen North Korea's diplomatic and economic isolation.

United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the most recent unanimous sanctions resolution, represent the floor, not the ceiling, of the actions we should take. We call on all nations to take new measures against the Kim regime.

China supplies North Korea with most of its oil. Russia is the largest employer of North Korean forced labor.

China and Russia must indicate their intolerance for these reckless missile launches by taking direct actions of their own.

Rex W. Tillerson, "North Korea's Missile Launch," [U.S. State Dept](#), 14 Sep 2017.

The english-language website of the Chinese government news agency posted the following propaganda:

"China opposes DPRK ballistic missile launches against the UN Security Council resolutions," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

"Currently the situation on the Korean Peninsula is complex, sensitive and serious. All parties concerned should exercise restraint and avoid any acts that may escalate tensions," Hua said.

In response to U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's statement calling on China and Russia to take "direct actions" to rein in the DPRK, Hua said China has comprehensively and completely implemented Security Council resolutions and made great sacrifices for this.

"There is no doubt about China's sincerity and efforts in carrying out its international obligations, and its determination to realize denuclearization on the peninsula and uphold the nuclear non-proliferation regime," said Hua.

She said the essence of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is a security issue and the crux is the disagreements between the DPRK and the United States.

"China is neither the focus of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, nor the core to resolving the issue. Neither is it the propellant of the current tensions," she said, urging parties directly concerned to take up their due responsibilities.

"China opposes DPRK's missile launch: FM spokesperson," [Xinhuanet](#), 15 Sep 2017.

Note that Hua ignores that 90% of North Korea's imports/exports are with China, so China has significant control of North Korea's foreign trade and international banking. Hua also ignores that China — together with Russia — has protected North Korea from more severe sanctions by the United Nations Security Council. Further, Hua ignores that China has assisted North Korea in evading U.N. sanctions. And responding to China's propaganda, I have huge "doubts about China's sincerity and efforts", given their past history. However, I do agree with China urging reduction in tensions (i.e., North Korea stops tests, *and* the USA stops military exercises in or near Korea).

The U.S. National Security Advisor, General H.R. McMaster, and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, appeared at the White House press briefing on Friday, 15 September.

QUESTION: Thank you, General. My question is about North Korea, which is perhaps the biggest foreign policy challenge for President Trump right now. About a month ago, the President issued a threat to North Korea; he warned of "fire and fury." And as you know, Ambassador, at the U.N. Security Council you've imposed tougher sanctions on North Korea. Both of these efforts do not seem to be changing their behavior. Is it time for the U.S. to change its approach to North Korea? Is that something that you're contemplating? And, General, if you could weigh on this well. I appreciate it.

AMBASSADOR HALEY: I think what was really important with North Korea was that we try and push through as many diplomatic options as we have. If you look at the resolutions that have passed in the last month, the two of them, they cut 30 percent of the oil. They banned all the laborers. They banned 90 percent of the exports. They banned joint ventures. We've basically taken and, in the words of North Korea, we have strangled their economic situation at this point. That's going to take a little bit of time, but it has already started to take effect.



What we are seeing is they continue to be provocative, they continue to be reckless. And at that point, there's not a whole lot the Security Council is going to be able to do from here when you've cut 90 percent of the trade and 30 percent of the oil.

So, having said that, I have no problem kicking it to General Mattis, because I think he has plenty of options.

GENERAL MCMASTER: I'd just emphasize the point that Ambassador Haley made. These sanctions are just now taking effect. What's really important is rigorous enforcement of those sanctions so that we can really let the economic actions and diplomacy progress as best we can. But I think we ought to make clear what's different about this approach is, is that we're out of time, right? As Ambassador Haley said before, we've been kicking the can down the road, and we're out of road.

And so for those who have said and have been commenting about the lack of a military option, there is a military option. Now, it's not what we would prefer to do, so what we have to do is call on all nations, call on everyone to do everything we can to address this global problem short of war.

So that is implementing now these significant sanctions that have just now gone into place, and it is convincing everyone to do everything that they can and that it's in their interest to do it.

What's different, I think, about this approach to North Korea is worth noting. First of all, there is consensus among all key nations that denuclearization of the Peninsula is the only acceptable objective.

The second thing is, this is not an issue between the United States and North Korea. This is an issue between the world and North Korea.

And the third recognition is, there is a lot that we can do about it together. And so we need time, obviously, for any strategy to work. It is a sound approach to a very difficult problem, and we'll see if it succeeds.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, and U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley," [White House](#), 13:21 EDT, 15 Sep 2017.

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## 15 Sep 2017: U.N. Response to 14 Sep Missile Test

The North Korean missile was launched only three days after the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 2375. Japan and the U.S. immediately requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, which was scheduled for 15:00 EDT on Friday, 15 September. The meeting was closed to the public, so few details are available. The Security Council issued a press statement, which was not posted at the U.N. website until Sunday, 17 September. The U.N. Security Council commonly uses a press statement to condemn a terrorist attack by a nonmember of the United Nations (e.g., ISIL), see [U.N.S.C.](#)

In my opinion, this emergency meeting of the Security Council was a fizzle, because it produced *no* new sanctions on North Korea, despite the continuing open defiance of U.N. Resolutions by North Korea.

The United Nations News Centre promptly posted a news [article](#). A few journalists reported the emergency meeting. See, e.g., [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). However, the top news story on 15 September was the Islamic terrorist attack on the London subway, and the U.N. news about North Korea was ignored.

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### **16-30 Sep 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem**

On 17 September, Trump sarcastically referred to Kim Jong Un as "Rocket Man":

I spoke with President Moon of South Korea last night. Asked him how Rocket Man is doing. Long gas lines forming in North Korea. Too bad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:53 EDT, 17 Sep 2017.

Taunting an angry, hostile nation that has nuclear weapons is *not* a mature, rational act. Trump's assertion about "long gas lines" is a false fact. [Washington Post](#); [PolitiFact](#). Trump's continuing invective and threats are making the North Korean problem worse.

Later on 17 September, Nikki Haley appeared on CNN to emphasize that the U.S. is considering a military strike on North Korea. Sadly, *no* transcript of her remarks is available.

We wanted to be responsible and go through all diplomatic means to get [North Korea's] attention first. If that doesn't work, General Mattis will take care of it.

....

If North Korea keeps on with this reckless behavior, if the United States has to defend itself or defend its allies in any way, North Korea will be destroyed. And we all know that, and none of us want that.

....

We have pretty much exhausted all the things that we could do at the Security Council at this point.

"Nikki Haley: Trump's fire and fury comment 'not an empty threat'," [CNN](#), 19:10 EDT, 17 Sep 2017.

China has urged the United States to refrain from making threats to North Korea. Asked about President Donald Trump's warning last month that the North Korean threat to the United States will be met with "fire and fury," Haley said, "It was not an empty threat."

"U.S. Ambassador Haley — U.N. has exhausted options on North Korea," [Reuters](#), 17 Sep 2017.

See also [Washington Post](#) article titled: "U.S. warns that time is running out for peaceful solution with North Korea".

On 18 September, the U.S. flew four F-35 stealth fighter jets and two B-1 bombers over South Korea in a military exercise with the South Korean air force. [Pentagon](#); [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The display of U.S. Military superior airpower underscored Nikki Haley's threat yesterday to evaporate North Korea.

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### **19 Sep 2017: Trump at United Nations**

On 19 September 2017, Trump gave a horrible speech at the United Nations General Assembly in which he again threatened North Korea. Here is what Trump said about North Korea:

The scourge of our planet today is a small group of rogue regimes that violate every principle on which the United Nations is based. They respect neither their own citizens nor the sovereign rights of their countries.

If the righteous many do not confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph. When decent people and nations become bystanders to history, the forces of destruction only gather power and strength.

No one has shown more contempt for other nations and for the well being of their own people than the depraved regime in North Korea. It is responsible for the starvation deaths of millions of North Koreans, and for the imprisonment, torture, killing, and oppression of countless more.

We were all witness to the regime's deadly abuse when an innocent American college student, Otto Warmbier, was returned to America only to die a few days later. We saw it in the assassination of the dictator's brother using banned nerve agents in an international airport. We know it kidnapped a sweet 13-year-old Japanese girl from a beach in her own country to enslave her as a language tutor for North Korea's spies.

If this is not twisted enough, now North Korea's reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles threatens the entire world with unthinkable loss of human life.

It is an outrage that some nations would not only trade with such a regime, but would arm, supply, and financially support a country that imperils the world with nuclear conflict. No nation on earth has an interest in seeing this band of criminals arm itself with nuclear weapons and missiles.

The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. The United States is ready, willing and able, but hopefully this will not be necessary. That's what the United Nations is all about; that's what the United Nations is for. Let's see how they do.

It is time for North Korea to realize that the denuclearization is its only acceptable future. The United Nations Security Council recently held two unanimous 15-0 votes adopting hard-hitting resolutions against North Korea, and I want to thank China and Russia for joining the vote to impose sanctions, along with all of the other members of the Security Council. Thank you to all involved.

But we must do much more. It is time for all nations to work together to isolate the Kim regime until it ceases its hostile behavior.

....

Earlier in his speech, Trump explained:

We do not expect diverse countries to share the same cultures, traditions, or even systems of government. But we do expect all nations to uphold these two core sovereign duties: to respect the interests of their own people and the rights of every other sovereign nation. This is the beautiful vision of this institution, and this is foundation for cooperation and success.

Strong, sovereign nations let diverse countries with different values, different cultures, and different dreams not just coexist, but work side by side on the basis of mutual respect.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly," [White House](#), 19 Sep 2017.

I am aghast that Trump would call Kim Jong Un "Rocket Man" in a formal speech at an international meeting. Trump explicitly said "if [the USA] is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." Trump said "It is an outrage that some nations would not only trade with [North Korea], but would arm, supply, and financially support a country that imperils the world with nuclear conflict." Trump needs to be reminded that the USA *gave* billions of dollars of food and fuel oil to North Korea, which made North Korea stronger.

Trump created his foreign policy around respect for sovereignty. But then Trump arrogantly declared that some rogue nations (e.g., North Korea, Iran, "the criminal regime of Bashar al-Assad" in Syria, Venezuela) are unworthy of our respect for their sovereignty. Trump said "We must reject threats to sovereignty, from the Ukraine to the South China Sea." But Trump failed to explicitly mention that Russia and communist China are those rogue nations who have annexed Crimea and annexed islands in the South China Sea. Apparently, nations that have a veto on the United Nations Security Council — and who use that veto to protect Assad in Syria and to protect North Korea — are immune from being identified as rogue nations. In my opinion, rogue nations should be identified by international consensus, and *not* by one arrogant nation that is self-appointed to identify Evil.

Trump's speech is also remarkable for what it did *not* say. The words "negotiation" and "talk" appear nowhere in his speech, despite those words being essential to diplomats at the United Nations. In the context of an agreement with Iran, Trump declared: "we cannot abide by an agreement if it provides cover for the eventual construction of a nuclear program," which means the USA will *not* necessarily honor its past agreements with other nations.

(Incidentally, it is well known that Trump withdrew the USA from the Paris climate accord, Trump is currently renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement, and Trump has threatened to renegotiate the Free Trade Agreement with South Korea.) Trump wants North Korea to obey United Nations Resolutions, but Trump's administration is failing to meet its obligations under the same United Nations Resolutions to engage North Korea in six-party talks without preconditions. See, e.g., Resolution 2375 at §28 ("Reaffirms its support for the Six Party Talks, calls for their resumption, ...."); Resolution 2371 at §27; Resolution 2321 at §47; etc. Instead, Trump's administration demands that North Korea indicate its willingness to abandon all of its nuclear weapons, *before* the U.S. Government will negotiate with North Korea.

*The Guardian* newspaper in England reported that the North Korean foreign minister made the first official North Korean reaction to Trump's speech:

Speaking to reporters outside his hotel after arriving in New York on Wednesday [20 Sep], Ri cited a Korean proverb when asked to respond to Trump's vow to destroy his country.

"There is a saying that the marching goes on even when dogs bark," Ri said, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

"If he was thinking he could scare us with the sound of a dog barking, that's really a dog dream," he added. In Korean, a dog dream is one that makes little sense.

Asked what he thought of Trump's description of Kim as rocket man, Ri replied: "I feel sorry for his aides."

Justin McCurry, "'Sound of a dog barking': North Korea ridicules Trump threat," [The Guardian](#), 23:36 EDT, 20 Sep 2017.

The North Korean foreign minister's reaction is also reported by: [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

Trump's childish threats and mocking "Rocket Man" did *not* move us closer to solving the North Korean problem.

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On 21 September 2017, [Reuters](#) reported that China's Central Bank on 18 September had ordered banks in China to stop doing business with North Korea. The order specifically forbids loans to North Korean companies. Trump responded to this Reuters report by saying: "... I want to just say, and thank President Xi of China for the very bold move he made today. That was a somewhat unexpected move and we appreciate it." [White House](#).

Back on 12 September, [Reuters](#) reported that China's four largest state-owned banks had stopped doing business with North Korean companies. Reuters reported: "The measures taken by the largest Chinese banks began as early as the end of last year, when the Dandong city branch of China's most international lender, Bank of China Ltd (BoC), stopped allowing North Koreans to open individual or business accounts, said a BoC bank teller who declined to be identified. Existing North Korean account holders could not deposit or remove money from their accounts, the BoC bank teller said."

On 21 September 2017, Trump announced [Executive Order 13810](#) that imposed economic sanctions on people and companies that do business with North Korea. See Trump's [letter](#) to Congress that explains his Executive Order. [White House](#)(Trump's remarks); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Later on 21 September in the USA (22 Sep in Korea), Kim Jong Un — who Trump derisively called "Rocket Man" — said: "I will surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged U.S. dotard [Trump] with fire." [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

The personal statement by Kim in the previous paragraph is unprecedented, in that the leader of North Korea normally lets his propaganda ministry speak for him. [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#) article cited in previous paragraph; [Reuters](#)("South Korea said it was the first direct statement of its kind by a North Korean leader."); [The Guardian](#).

Clearly, the North Korean problem now includes a *personal* dispute between Trump and Kim. Trump and Kim are both angry, impulsive men. Both of them are refusing to negotiate a solution to this crisis. I worry which one will launch a preemptive military strike first.

Trump's belligerent speech on 19 September made the North Korean problem worse by adding reasons for Kim to seek nuclear weapons and ICBMs, to deter aggression by the U.S. warmongers. In his 21 Sep reply, Kim said: "[Trump's] remarks ... have convinced me, rather than frightening or stopping me, that the path I chose is correct and that it is the one I have to follow to the last."

The [Associated Press](#) published the full text of Kim's criticism of Trump's speech. Also at: [New York Times](#); [Voice of America](#); [The Independent](#); [Korea Herald](#); [Korea Times](#).

Then Yonhap reported a statement by the North Korean foreign minister:

North Korea may conduct the most powerful test of a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific Ocean in its possible "highest-level" actions against the United States, the North's top diplomat said Thursday [21 Sep].

Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho made the comment after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said that he is considering the strongest actions in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to "totally destroy" the country.

"It could be the most powerful detonation of an H-bomb in the Pacific," Ri told reporters. "We have no idea about what actions could be taken as it will be ordered by leader Kim Jong-un."

"N.K. FM says 'highest-level' actions in Kim's remarks may be H-bomb test in Pacific," [Yonhap](#), 09:57 Korean time, 22 Sep 2017.

Detonation of a hydrogen-bomb in the Pacific Ocean would produce a large amount of radioactive sodium and radioactive chlorine from salt in seawater. These two radioactive elements could enter human's food chain through fish and become an environmental disaster. A nuclear test in the atmosphere (as opposed to underground) would release large amounts of

radioactive fallout into the atmosphere, which is why tests of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere were banned by an international treaty in 1963. A test of a nuclear weapon in the Pacific Ocean would add a new dimension to North Korea's tests of weapons forbidden by multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

On Friday morning, 22 September, Trump tweeted:

Kim Jong Un of North Korea, who is obviously a madman who doesn't mind starving or killing his people, will be tested like never before!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:28 EDT, 22 Sep 2017.

On Friday evening, 22 September, Trump gave a campaign speech in Huntsville, Alabama for Luther Strange, a Republican running for U.S. Senate. Perhaps because Trump repeatedly departed from his prepared text, I can not find a transcript of what Trump said. The following quotation from Trump's speech is from *The Telegraph* in England:

We have some really, really bad people and we are going to take care of the bad people. It's about time.

Little Rocketman should have been handled a long time ago, by [Bill] Clinton — I won't mention the Republicans — by Obama.

We can't have that madman out there shooting rockets all over the place.

He is talking about massive weapons exploding all over the Pacific Ocean which causes a terrific calamity where the plume goes.

Maybe something gets worked out, maybe it doesn't, personally I am not sure it will.

But I will tell you something, you are protected. Nobody is going to mess with our people, nobody is going to play games, nobody is going to put our people in that kind of danger."

He may be smart, he may be totally strategic, he may be crazy, but we are going to handle it, folks."

David Millward, "Donald Trump promises Americans will be protected from 'little Rocketman' Kim Jong-un," [The Telegraph](#), 21:34 EDT, 22 Sep 2017.

See also [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#)(22Sep); [Washington Post](#)(23Sep).

My comment is that Trump's audience in Alabama is "protected" from North Korea by the long distance and by the fact there are more important targets in the USA. But Seoul could be destroyed in any war with North Korea. Trump says nothing about protecting Seoul.

Also notice Trump's childish remark about "bad people". An educated adult would be expected to use a more precise, more erudite, expression.

My comment is that lost in the insults and rhetoric is the fact that Trump has *not* proposed a viable solution for the North Korean problem. And Trump's belligerent remarks have reinforced Kim's zeal to develop nuclear weapons and ICBMs, to deter Trump's aggression.

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On 23 September 2017, the U.S. Air Force flew B-1 bombers from Guam and F-15 fighters from Japan to international waters on the eastern coast of North Korea, in another display of U.S. Military might to frighten Kim. A Pentagon spokesperson said: "This is the farthest north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) any U.S. fighter or bomber aircraft have flown off North Korea's coast in the 21st century, underscoring the seriousness with which we take [North Korea's] reckless behavior." [Pentagon](#); [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On the morning of 23 September, the North Korean foreign minister, Ri Yong Ho, gave a speech to the United Nations General Assembly that responded to Trump's recent threats and insults. Ri's speech is important in that he clearly explained the reasons why North Korea has developed nuclear weapons, and why North Korea will *not* abandon its nuclear weapons.

Here is part of what Ri said:

Before going into the main points in my debate, I feel forced to make comments on the speech uttered 4 days ago by someone called the U.S. president that rendered this sacred UN arena tainted.

Since Trump uttered such reckless and violent words provoking the supreme dignity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) at this very platform, I think it is fair enough for me to make a response in the corresponding tone.

During his 8 months in power, he has turned the White House into a noisy marketing place full of crackling sounds of abacus beads and now he has tried to turn the UN arena into a gangsters' nest where money is respected and bloodshed is the order of the day.

The absurd reality that the person like Trump, a mentally deranged person full of megalomania and complacency, the person who is chastised even by American people as "Commander in Grief, "Lyin King", "President Evil" is holding the seat of the U.S. President, and the dangerous reality that the gambler who grew old using threats, frauds and all other schemes to acquire a patch of land holds the nuclear button; these are what constitute the gravest threat to the international peace and security today.

Due to his lacking of basic common knowledge and proper sentiment, he tried to insult the supreme dignity of my country by referring it to a rocket. By doing so, however, he committed an irreversible mistake of making our rockets' visit to the entire U.S. mainland inevitable all the more.

None other than Trump himself is on a suicide mission.

....

The United States is the country that first produced nuclear weapons and the only country that actually used it, massacring hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians.

It is the U.S. that threatened to use nuclear weapon against the DPRK during the Korean War in 1950s and first introduced nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula after the war.

The U.S. started large-scale joint military exercises against the DPRK during the Cold War period and further increased their scope and aggressive nature after the Cold War, staging the exercises several times a year by mobilizing more of nuclear strategic assets.

What else could be a bigger threat than the violent remarks such as pouring "fire and fury", "total destruction" coming from the top authority of the world's biggest nuclear power.

The very reason the DPRK had to possess nuclear weapons is because of the U.S. and it had to strengthen and develop its nuclear force onto the current level to cope with the U.S.

....

Although our decision to possess nuclear weapons was an inevitable option forced by the United States, it resulted in our country achieving the status of a nuclear weapon state and a rocket power, and this prestige has now become an immortal destiny of the DPRK.

....

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a responsible nuclear weapon state.

We will take preventive measures by merciless preemptive action in case the U.S. and its vassal forces show any sign of conducting a kind of "decapitating" operation on our headquarters or military attack against our country. However, we do not have any intention at all to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the countries that do not join in the U.S. military actions against the DPRK.

....

Through such a prolonged and arduous struggle, now we are finally only a few steps away from the final gate of completion of the state nuclear force. It is only a forlorn hope to consider any chance that the DPRK would be shaken an inch or change its stance due to the harsher sanctions by the hostile forces.

The day will certainly come in near future when we settle all damages inflicted to our peaceful economic development and improvement of the people's livelihood and all the sufferings imposed on our innocent women, children and elderly by the heinous and barbaric sanctions against our Republic.

"Statement by H.E. Mr. RI YONG HO, Minister for Foreign Affairs, of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," [U.N. General Assembly](#), 23 Sep 2017.

Journalists reported on Ri's speech: [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

**My comments:**

Ri's name has the prefix "H.E.", which customarily stands for "his excellency", but in Ri's case stands for "high explosive". <grin>

Ri asserts "[Trump] has turned the White House into a noisy marketing place full of crackling sounds of abacus beads". I am pretty sure that Trump neither owns nor uses abacus beads. Trump probably uses an electronic calculator, which have been common in the USA since the 1970s.

Trump is *not* Evil. When I think of Trump as president, the word "unfit" comes to mind. As do the words "incompetent", "inexperienced", "amateurish", "inconsistent", and "ineffective".

Ri said "[Trump] tried to insult the supreme dignity of my country by referring it to a rocket." That is wrong. Trump personally insulted Kim, the current leader of North Korea, by calling Kim "Rocket Man" — or more recently "Little Rocket Man" — but Trump did *not* insult the nation of North Korea.

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In a late night tweet on the day of Ri's speech to the General Assembly, Trump replied:  
Just heard Foreign Minister of North Korea speak at U.N. If he echoes thoughts of  
Little Rocket Man, they won't be around much longer!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:08 EDT, 23 Sep 2017.

Once again, Trump is making a bad situation worse by continuing the insults, invective, and threats. If Trump has any effect, it will be to push North Korea and the USA closer to war. Trump is *not* pursuing a solution to the North Korean problem, but he is doing a good job at childish insults.

On 24 September, North Korea released fictitious photographs of North Korean missiles destroying the U.S.S. Vinson aircraft carrier and shooting down U.S. Air Force bombers. These propaganda photographs were posted at a North Korean government website. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [The Telegraph](#). My comment is that this North Korean propaganda has the status of a cheap cartoon. The North Koreans should have called Trump "Mr. Tweet".

On 24 September, the [Washington Post](#) reported that China is frustrated, as the North Korea problem worsens, and China really does have limited influence over the North Korean government's policies. *The Post* said: "Unwilling to completely pull the plug [from North Korea], [China] has nevertheless agreed to a stiff package of sanctions at the United Nations and implemented them with unprecedented determination, experts say. So far, all that has achieved is to alienate its neighbor and erstwhile friend. .... But China is not prepared to do anything that might bring down the North Korean regime, potentially bringing refugees streaming across its border and unifying the Korean Peninsula under a U.S.-friendly government." On 25 September, [Yonhap](#) reported that the most recent high-level contact between the Chinese and North Korean governments was on June 2013.

On 25 September 2017, the hysterical foreign minister Ri declared that Trump's tweet on 23 Sep was a "a declaration of war" by the USA. Ri also declared that North Korea would shoot down U.S. bombers that flew over international waters near North Korea. [Yonhap](#);

[Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#).

My comment is that Ri's speech on 23 Sep actually said that Trump's "Rocket Man" insult made it "inevitable" that North Korea would launch missiles at the U.S. mainland, which is essentially a declaration of war by North Korea. *If* North Korea can shoot at U.S. bombers flying over international waters, then Ri's logic would seem to also allow North Korea to shoot at U.S. Navy ships in international waters near North Korea.

Is Ri's threat to shoot down U.S. bombers that fly over international waters another empty threats from North Korea? On 26 September, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea was "readjusting the position of its warplanes and strengthening its coastal defenses". Further, Yonhap tersely suggested that North Korea may not have been aware of the B-1 bombers' flight on 23 Sep until *after* the Pentagon's public announcement, perhaps because North Korea "was unable to keep its radar system fully operational due to an electricity shortage". [Reuters](#) reported a U.S. reconnaissance satellite "detected a small number of North Korean military aircraft moving to the North [Korea]'s east coast." See also: [Korea Times](#); [Korea Herald](#).

On 26 September 2017, Trump spoke to journalists at the White House and said the following about North Korea:

It is time for all responsible nations to join forces to isolate the North Korean menace. North Korean nuclear weapons and missile development threaten the entire world with unthinkable loss of life. All nations must act now to ensure the regime's complete denuclearization.

I appreciate the United Nations Security Council voting twice, unanimously — 15 to nothing, twice — to adopt hard-hitting resolutions against North Korea. I have recently issued tough new sanctions against those who do business with this outlaw regime, and I applaud China's latest action to restrict its trade with North Korea. And, in particular, I applaud China for breaking off all banking relationships with North Korea — something that people would have thought unthinkable even two months ago. I want to thank President Xi.

....

QUESTION: And on North Korea, very quickly, the [North Korean] Foreign Minister said you have declared, effectively, war on North Korea. And the North Korean government has threatened to shoot down or aim at American planes flying in international airspace. I would like your reaction to that.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Okay, well, I'll answer the second [question] first. We're totally prepared for the second option; not a preferred option. But if we take that option, it will be devastating — I can tell you that — devastating for North Korea. That's called the military option. If we have to take it, we will.

He's acting very badly. He's saying things that should never, ever be said. And we're replying to those things, but it's a reply. It's not an original statement; it's a reply. But the things that he said over the last year — and if you look back, the things that he said

to past administrations — North Korea is a situation that should have been handled 25 years ago, 20 years ago, 15 years ago, 10 years ago, and five years ago, and it could have been handled much more easily.

You had various administrations — many administrations which left me a mess. But I'll fix the mess. So we'll see what happens with North Korea.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and President Rajoy of the Government of Spain in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 26 Sep 2017.

My comment is that Trump is rambling. Trump says the "second option" is the "military option", but Trump did not say what is the first option. Presumably, negotiations are the first option. Trump says Kim is "saying things that should never, ever be said." Trump's criticism of Kim also applies to Trump, who has engaged in a long series of belligerent threats to North Korea. Finally, Trump blames the North Korean problem on previous administrations (e.g., Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Obama) who left a "mess". While Trump is correct about his three predecessors, Trump has been president for eight months without announcing a consistent plan for solving the North Korea problem. And the real blame for this mess should be on the North Korean government, who has violated a long series of United Nations Resolutions and who has refused to negotiate. Trump's belligerent threats have made the problem worse, by accelerating the development of North Korean weapons. Further, Trump's preconditions for negotiations have made negotiations unacceptable to North Korea.

On 28 September 2017, China ordered businesses in China that are owned by North Korea to close before 11 Jan 2018. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 28 September 2017, there was a burst of honesty in the U.S. Senate Banking Committee, in which it was admitted that North Korea was *not* going to abandon its nuclear weapons.

The Associated Press reported:

A senior State Department official acknowledged Thursday [28 Sep] that U.S. intelligence agencies don't believe North Korea will ever pull the plug on its nuclear program, raising concerns among lawmakers over the Trump administration's strategy for bringing a mounting crisis to a peaceful close.

Susan Thornton, the acting assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, said her department and other federal agencies are "testing" the conclusion reached by the intelligence agencies. The administration, she told members of the Senate Banking Committee, is ratcheting up "international isolation and pressure" on North Korea, with essential help from China, which she called Pyongyang's "leading enabler."

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un views nuclear weapons as "his ticket to survival" and there's virtually nothing to make him turn back. Corker, who also chairs the Foreign Relations Committee, asked Thornton and Sigal Mandelker, the undersecretary of Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, what steps could quickly steer North Korea from being able to fire missiles at the United States.

"We're trying to turn China's position from looking at North Korea as some kind of

asset, to looking at them as a liability,” Thornton said. “I think that (Secretary of State Rex) Tillerson has made a lot of progress on that front.”

But Corker said that while he applauded Tillerson’s efforts, the secretary is “working against the unified view of our intelligence agencies.”

Echoing Corker’s concerns, Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said “there may be a contradiction between the conclusions of the intelligence community and what the secretary of state is trying to do.”

Richard Lardner, "Senators question strategy for halting NKorea’s nuke program," [Associated Press](#), 28 Sep 2017.

Above in this essay, I quoted James Clapper (26 June 2017) that the North Koreans will *not* abandon their nuclear weapons. Senators Corker and Warner note the U.S. Intelligence community says the North Koreans will *not* abandon their nuclear weapons. But the U.S. State Department is pursuing a delusion that economic sanctions will force the North Koreans to abandon their nuclear weapons. See [above](#).

Given that we must solve the North Korean problem in the next few months, we do not have the luxury of allowing the U.S. State Department to pursue a delusion, while the North Koreans develop an ICBM that can carry a nuclear warhead to the U.S. mainland.

On 30 September 2017, Tillerson told journalists that the U.S. Government has three direct channels of communication to the North Korean government. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#). Unfortunately, Tillerson wants to talk about the North Koreans abandoning their nuclear weapons program, and destroying their entire stockpile of nuclear weapons — a topic that is unacceptable to the North Koreans. As explained [above](#), this U.S. policy is a recipe for failure.

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## October 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem

On Sunday, 1 October 2017, Trump fired off two tweets about North Korea.

I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:30 EDT, 1 Oct 2017.

...Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:31 EDT, 1 Oct 2017.

Four or five hours later on 1 Oct, Trump tweeted:

Being nice to Rocket Man hasn't worked in 25 years, why would it work now? Clinton failed, Bush failed, and Obama failed. I won't fail.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:01 EDT, 1 Oct 2017.

See reports by journalists, e.g., [Politico](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#);

[Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

Tillerson is wasting his time, because Tillerson is intransigently demanding that the North Koreans abandon their nuclear program. As explained [above](#), the North Koreans want to keep their existing nuclear weapons. But if Tillerson were to invite the North Koreans to negotiations without any pre-conditions, then maybe negotiations could solve the North Korean problem. [Above](#), I sketch a Chinese proposal that might be acceptable to North Korea.

Moving beyond the substance of Trump's two tweets, Trump again insulted Kim by derisively calling him "Little Rocket Man". And Trump publicly undercut his own Secretary of State by saying Tillerson was "wasting his time". Since Trump gave his horrible speech at the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2017, Trump seems to emphasize a military solution to the North Korean problem. Trump's belligerent threats surely convince the North Koreans that they need nuclear weapons to deter aggression by the USA. Moreover, with Trump advocating a military solution and Tillerson advocating diplomacy, U.S. policy is inconsistent and incoherent — a strong indication of the inexperienced and amateurish people like Trump and Tillerson.

Responding to his afternoon tweet, "Rocket Man" (Kim Jong Un) has been the leader of North Korea since December 2011, 6 years ago, *not* 25 years ago. Trump should have said "being nice to North Korea hasn't worked in 25 years". Perhaps the reason "being nice" failed was that the U.S. did not give North Korea what it really wanted: recognition as a sovereign nation with nuclear weapons.

Trump has already failed to prevent North Korea from developing an ICBM and failed to prevent North Korea from developing a hydrogen-bomb. Trump has also failed to convince North Korea to negotiate a solution to the problem. I fear that soon I will say "Trump has failed to prevent war with North Korea."

On 2 October 2017, the [Associated Press](#) tersely noted: "The North professes to not even be interested in diplomacy unless the U.S. abandons its 'hostile policy'." "Hostile policy" includes U.S. Military exercises in South Korea.

On 2 October 2017, the White House press spokesperson stated that the U.S. Government would *not* negotiate with North Korea about nuclear weapons "at this time".

QUESTION: Sarah, thank you. Following up on the tweets about the DPRK over the weekend, the President tweeted, "Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!" So is it the stated position of the White House that you're trying to get back to talks? Or have you given up?

MS. SANDERS: No, this is — we've been clear that now is not the time to talk. The only conversations that have taken place, or that would, would be on bringing back Americans who have been detained. Like with Otto, those were the type of conversations that this administration was willing to have. Beyond that, there will be no conversations with North Korea at this time.

....



MS. SANDERS: There are three Americans still detained in North Korea. That would be the only reason for us to have conversations with them at this time.

QUESTION: Sarah, can I follow on that? I also want to ask about today. But does the President believe diplomacy then is not worth pursuing in North Korea?

MS. SANDERS: There's a difference between talking and putting diplomatic pressure. We still strongly support putting diplomatic pressure on North Korea, which we're continuing to do. But now is not the time simply to have conversations with North Korea.

We've encouraged all of our allies and partners to do more, and we're going to continue to keep all options on the table when it comes to that.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, 10/2/2017, #18" [White House](#), 2 October 2017.

So the U.S. Government continues to violate United Nations Security Council Resolutions that call for resumption of six-party talks with North Korea.

On 5 October 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump will next week "decertify" the agreement on Iran's development of nuclear weapons, not because Iran violated the agreement, but because Trump believes the agreement "is not in the national interest of the United States". I mention the Iran agreement here, because North Korea will see Trump's decision as an indication that the USA does *not* honor its agreements. Previously, Trump withdrew the USA from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Paris accord on climate change. Does Trump *understand* what he is doing? Of course, not. Which is why I am writing this essay to chronicle Trump's amateurish and incompetent decisions.

On the evening of 5 October 2017, Trump hosted a dinner at the White House for senior U.S. Military leaders. Speaking to journalists, Trump ominously told them: "You guys know what this represents? Maybe it's the calm before the storm." When asked to clarify, Trump cryptically replied: "You'll find out." Trump was apparently referring to Iran or North Korea. [The Guardian](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

At the [White House](#) press briefing on 6 October, Trump's spokesperson refused to clarify what Trump meant by "storm". But on 11 October, Trump told Fox News that he was thinking of North Korea when he said "calm before the storm". [Reuters](#); [CNBC](#). (During 12-13 October, I searched both Google News and Fox News websites, but I was unable to find a Fox News article about this 11 October interview of Trump.)

My comment is that Trump may have intended to sound like a television announcer who says "tune again next week for the next thrill-packed episode of Mr. Tweet Goes to Washington". But leaders in Iran and North Korea may misinterpret Trump's remarks.

On Saturday, 7 October 2017, Trump fired off two more tweets:

Presidents and their administrations have been talking to North Korea for 25 years, agreements made and massive amounts of money paid.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:40 EDT, 7 October 2017.

...hasn't worked, agreements violated before the ink was dry, makings fools of U.S. negotiators. Sorry, but only one thing will work!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:45 EDT, 7 October 2017.

Two days later, on 9 October 2017, Trump again tweeted about North Korea:

Our country has been unsuccessfully dealing with North Korea for 25 years, giving billions of dollars & getting nothing. Policy didn't work!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:50 EDT, 9 Oct 2017.

The second tweet on 7 October is similar to Trump's 1 Oct tweets that said:

"I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man. Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done! Being nice to Rocket Man hasn't worked in 25 years, why would it work now? Clinton failed, Bush failed, and Obama failed. I won't fail."

Donald J. Trump, Three tweets, citations above.

On 1 October, Trump plainly says negotiations are a "waste of time" and have failed during the past 25 years. On 7 October, Trump again criticized negotiations with North Korea and ominously declared: "only one thing will work!" Trump's meaning is clear: he is now focusing on a military solution to the North Korean problem. Trump's tweets on 1 and 7 October are consistent with what Tillerson said (quoted [above](#)) in March 2017, before Tillerson became committed to negotiations to denuclearize North Korea.

[Above](#), I explained why a pre-emptive military strike on North Korea was *not* a viable option. Additionally, Trump — and others at high levels of the U.S. Government — have been threatening a military strike on North Korea since mid-March 2017, which has given the North Koreans more than a half-year to prepare for a U.S. attack.

On 10 October, a South Korean legislator publicly disclosed that North Korean hackers may have stolen war plans from a South Korean military computer in September 2016. It was a massive theft: "235 gigabytes of military documents" were allegedly stolen by North Korean hackers. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The U.S. and South Korean militaries will need to prepare new plans that are significantly different from the old plans.

Trump currently favors the military option in North Korea, while U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson favors a negotiated denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. At the White House on 11 October, Trump made clear that his policy would prevail.

QUESTION: Are you [and Secretary Tillerson] on the same page on North Korea?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I think I have a little bit different attitude on North Korea than other people might have.

QUESTION: And your Secretary?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I listen to everybody, but ultimately my attitude is the one that matters, isn't it? That's the way it works. That's the way the system is.

But I think I might have a somewhat different attitude and a different way than other people. I think perhaps I feel stronger and tougher on that subject than other people, but I listen to everybody. And ultimately, I will do what's right for the United States and, really, what's right for the world. Because that's really a world problem; that's beyond just the United States. That's a world problem, and it's a problem that has to be solved. Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 11 October 2017.

See the report by [Yonhap](#) News Agency in South Korea.

[Above](#), I mentioned that there were *two* earthquakes at the North Korean test site on 3 September 2017. The first was from an underground detonation of a nuclear weapon. Eight minutes later, the second earthquake was perhaps from collapse of tunnels into the mountain at the test site. On 13 October, there was a magnitude 2.7 earthquake at the test site, the fourth natural earthquake since the 3 September nuclear weapon detonation. [CBS News](#) reported that "Some experts suggested the area is now too unstable to conduct more bomb tests." See also [Reuters](#). The high explosive yield of the 3 Sep test apparently ruined the North Korean underground test site. On 27 Oct 2017, the [South China Morning Post](#) in Hong Kong reported that Chinese geologists had warned colleagues in North Korea that another nuclear weapon test could cause the mountain to implode and release radioactive debris.

On 13 October 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Bob Corker, chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told *The Post*: "Tillerson has been instrumental in opening a path away from confrontation with North Korea through quiet diplomacy with China." But Trump's tweet on 1 October about negotiations being a waste of time, and similar tweets by Trump, torpedoed Tillerson's efforts to begin negotiations.

On 13 October, Trump spoke at the [White House](#) and said he would *not* certify the Iran agreement. Trump's decision was forecast on 5 October by *The Washington Post*. Trump's decision sent a message to the governments of the world that the USA does *not* honor its past agreements. Trump's decision may discourage negotiations on the North Korean problem.

On 13 October, [Reuters](#) reported that China's imports from North Korea were 38% less in September 2017 than in September 2016.

During 16-20 October, the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and many other ships participated in U.S.-South Korea military exercises. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). North Korea will see these exercises as another provocation and more evidence of a hostile U.S. policy toward North Korea.

On 18 Oct, China began its once-every-five-years communist party conference, which means China is focused on that event, instead of the North Korean problem.

Yonhap News Agency in South Korea reported that North Korea will *not* negotiate until after the USA ends its "hostile policy" against North Korea.

The current crisis on the Korean Peninsula is due to the United States' hostile policy against the North, [Choe Son-hui, director-general of the North American department of North Korea's foreign ministry] said, adding Pyongyang will not return to any

multilateral talks, including the six-party talks, until it deals with Washington, according to the source.

Choe said the North will continue developing its nuclear program if the U.S. does not give up on its hostile policies toward Pyongyang, according to the source. "Pyongyang won't return to six-party talks until change in Washington's attitude: N.K. diplomat," [Yonhap](#), 22 Oct 2017.

Both Trump and North Korea should end their inflammatory remarks, meet without pre-conditions, and agree to the Chinese proposal suggested [above](#). But there is *no* sign of any of that happening.

On 25 October 2017, North Korea renewed their threat to detonate a hydrogen-bomb in the north Pacific Ocean. The North Koreans previously made the threat on 21 September, during an exchange of bellicose rhetoric with Trump. [CNN](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

During 17 September 2017 to 1 October 2017, Trump issued a series of bellicose threats and insults against North Korea. Strangely, Trump has been silent about North Korea since 1 October. It will take a long time for the effects of Trump's bellicose threats and insults to dissipate. Trump's rhetoric during September significantly worsened an already bad problem.

On 28 October 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that the North Korean problem may motivate Japan and South Korea to acquire nuclear weapons. See 10 Oct opinion by Bilahari Kausikan in the [Washington Post](#) and the 18 Oct call by the leader of South Korea's political opposition [CNN](#). In my opinion, this proliferation of nuclear weapons is regrettable, but it would be a rational move by Japan and South Korea to deter the belligerent and aggressive North Korean government that already has nuclear weapons.

On 29 October, U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) was interviewed on the [CBS News](#) program, "Face the Nation". Corker criticized Trump for undercutting Tillerson's attempts at negotiations with North Korea: "When our Secretary of State is sitting down with a partner that matters most, China, trying to negotiate something that would resolve and keep us from going into military conflict with North Korea which brings in South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia, and he's kneecapped by the president, it hurts our nation. It hurts our efforts."

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## **November 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem**

On 1 November 2017, [Reuters](#) reported that the U.S. Government is continuing to pursue direct talks with North Korea.

On 1 November, the president of South Korea addressed the South Korean Parliament and said that South Korea would neither develop nor possess nuclear weapons. The president cited an agreement between the two Koreas that the North has abrogated. A consequence of the president's decision is that South Korea will never accept nuclear weapons in North

Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#). My comment is that basing a policy on an abrogated agreement is like prosecuting someone for violating a repealed statute.

On 2 November 2017, the U.S. National Security Director said the world was running out of time to stop the North Koreans.

The United States remains committed to the complete, verifiable, and permanent denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. President Trump will reiterate the plain fact that North Korea threatens not just our allies, South Korea and Japan, and the United States — North Korea is a threat to the entire world. So all nations of the world must do more to counter that threat.

That is happening, but the President recognizes that we're running out of time and we'll ask all nations to do more. In particular, the President will continue to call on all responsible nations, especially those with the most influence over North Korea, to isolate the North Korean regime economically and politically; to convince its leaders that the pursuit of nuclear weapons is a dead end and that it is past time to denuclearize; and he will remind friend and foe alike that the United States stands ready to defend itself and our allies using the full range of our capabilities.

....

QUESTION: General, you mentioned in your opening comments that the world is running out of time to deal with North Korea. If you could expand on that for a moment. ....

GENERAL MCMASTER: So on the first — on "out of time" — we're out of time because approaches in the past have not delivered; have not delivered on halting and then reversing North Korea's very dangerous nuclear and missile programs. And the approach of the past has been that we'll be happy with something — what some people call a "freeze for freeze" or "suspension for suspension." And that's the beginning, then, of a long, drawn-out negotiation process, or talks, during which the North Korean regime has, in the past, continued to develop its nuclear capability, continued to develop its weapons.

Then, upon delivery of a weak, non-enforceable agreement — the Agreed Framework, for example, in '94 — ... what that agreement does is it locks in the status quo as the new normal. And then, of course, North Korea then breaks the agreement and continues with the programs.

So we're out of time to do that because of how these programs have advanced over time. So what it's time for is a really concerted effort to do everything — everything all of us can — to resolve this, short of military action.

....

The second thing that's really critical is the universal acknowledgement that denuclearization of the Peninsula is the only acceptable outcome. No more "freeze for freeze", "suspension for suspension".

H.R. McMaster, "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders and National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, 11/2/2017, #31," [White House](#), 2 Nov 2017.

My comment is that we were really "out of time" at least months ago — possibly back in the year 2006 when North Korea tested their first successful nuclear weapon. But it is pointless to quibble about *when* we ran out of time to solve the North Korean problem, because we can *not* now change the past failures of the U.S. Government.

The governments of the USA, South Korea, and Japan seem to believe that economic sanctions will motivate the North Koreans to abandon their nuclear weapons program. What happens if economic sanctions fail to motivate the North Koreans? What happens if North Korea is so committed to its cherished nuclear weapons that the North refuses to negotiate? The answer to those questions is that the U.S. Military will need to launch a massive pre-emptive strike to destroy North Korea's nuclear reactors, centrifuges and other nuclear weapons manufacturing plants, *and* storage facilities for their stockpile of nuclear weapons. If the U.S. Military overlooks any of the North Korean nuclear weapons during the first strike, then those nuclear weapons will probably be detonated in South Korea or Japan.

I am *not* advocating a pre-emptive military strike on North Korea. Instead, I advocate backing away from the phrase in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions: "complete, verifiable, and permanent denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula". Instead, I [advocate](#) that we should try the Chinese proposal that General McMaster called a "freeze for freeze". The current U.S. demand for "denuclearization" paints us into a corner, where there are *no* satisfactory options.

On 3 November 2017, [Reuters](#) reports: "... Kim Jong Un, shows little interest in negotiating either, at least not until he has developed a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland."

On 4 November, North Korea "reiterated that the country will never agree to holding talks with the United States if required to give up its nuclear weapons." [NHK](#). Also see [Yonhap](#).

On 4 November, the [Washington Post](#) reports the Pentagon says the *only* way to locate and secure all of North Korea's nuclear weapons is with a ground invasion.

On 6 November 2017, Trump held a press conference in Japan during a two-day visit. Here is part of what Trump said about North Korea:

Most importantly, we're working to counter the dangerous aggressions of the regime in North Korea. The regime-continued development of its unlawful weapons programs, including its illegal nuclear test and outrageous launches of ballistic missiles directly over Japanese territory, are a threat to the civilized world and international peace and stability.

We will not stand for that. The era of strategic patience is over. Some people said that my rhetoric is very strong, but look what's happened with very weak rhetoric over the last 25 years. Look where we are right now.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan in Joint Press Conference — Tokyo, Japan," [White House](#), 6 Nov 2017.

On 7 November 2017, Trump held a press conference in South Korea. Astoundingly, Trump called for negotiations to solve the North Korean problem. Here is part of what Trump said about North Korea:

North Korea's sixth test of a nuclear device and its missile launches are a threat not only to the people of South Korea but to the people all across our globe. We will together confront North Korea's actions and prevent the North Korean dictator from threatening millions of innocent lives. He is indeed threatening millions and millions of lives so needlessly.

....

All nations must implement U.N. Security Council regulations and cease trade and business entirely with North Korea. It is unacceptable that nations would help to arm and finance this increasingly dangerous regime.

As we work together to resolve this problem using all available tools short of military action, the United States stands prepared to defend itself and its allies using the full range of our unmatched military capabilities if need be.

....

QUESTION [by Margaret Brennan from CBS]: .... But, President Trump, you spoke here in South Korea saying that you do believe that the crisis with North Korea will be worked out. So, specifically, have you seen any success in your diplomatic strategy so far? And do you still believe that direct talks are a waste of time?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I think you know me well enough to know that I don't like talking about whether I see success or not in a case such as this. We like to play our cards a little bit close to the vest.

I will say this — that I believe it makes sense for North Korea to do the right thing, not only for North Korea, but for humanity all over the world. So there is a lot of reason, a lot of good reason behind it.

With that, yes, I think we're making a lot of progress. I think we're showing great strength. I think they understand we have unparalleled strength. There has never been strength like it.

You know we sent three of the largest aircraft carriers in the world, and they're right now positioned. We have a nuclear submarine also positioned. We have many things happening that we hope, we hope — in fact, I'll go a step further, we hope to God we never have to use.

With that being said, I really believe that it makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and to make a deal that's good for the people of North Korea and the people of the world. I do see certain movement, yes. But let's see what happens.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and President Moon of the Republic of



Korea in Joint Press Conference — Seoul, Republic of Korea," [White House](#), began 17:20 KST, 7 Nov 2017.

My comment is that Trump actually says "I think we're making a lot of progress" on diplomatic negotiations with North Korea. But there is *no* public indication of any progress. "A lot of progress" seems to be a fantasy by Trump. Notice that Trump also said: "I really believe that it makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and to make a deal that's good for the people of North Korea and the people of the world. I do see certain movement, yes." The North Koreans surely remember that Trump threatened them in September 2017 and repeatedly insulted their leader as "Little Rocketman". And on 1 October 2017, Trump said that negotiations were a waste of time. Trump's bellicose threats and insults during September were *not* the words of a president who was attempting to negotiate.

Notice Trump says "it makes sense for North Korea to do the right thing" and "I really believe that it makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and to make a deal that's good for the people of North Korea." These bizarre statements show Trump has *no* understanding of the history of the Kim dynasty in North Korea. The three Kim leaders of North Korea have a more than 60-year history of doing the wrong thing. The following day, Trump gave a different speech in which he summarized some of the human rights abuses by the North Korean regime, as well as some of North Korea's aggressive military conduct that has killed people. These human rights abuses and aggressive military conduct show that the leaders of North Korea are *not* doing what is best for their people.

See reports by journalists on 7 November at [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

Finally, on 8 November, Trump addressed the South Korean parliament, where he said the following about North Korea:

And Korean golfers are some of the best on Earth. (Applause.) .... the Women's U.S. Open was held this year at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey, and it just happened to be won by a great Korean golfer, Sung-hyun Park. An eighth of the top 10 players were from Korea. And the top four golfers — one, two, three, four — the top four were from Korea. Congratulations. (Applause.) Congratulations. And that's something. That is really something.

....

North Korea is a country ruled as a cult. At the center of this military cult is a deranged belief in the leader's destiny to rule as parent protector over a conquered Korean Peninsula and an enslaved Korean people.

....

... the regime has pursued nuclear weapons with the deluded hope that it could blackmail its way to the ultimate objective. And that objective we are not going to let it have. We are not going to let it have. All of Korea is under that spell, divided in half. South Korea will never allow what's going on in North Korea to continue to happen.

The North Korean regime has pursued its nuclear and ballistic missile programs in defiance of every assurance, agreement, and commitment it has made to the United States and its allies. It's broken all of those commitments. After promising to freeze its plutonium program in 1994, it repeated [reaped] the benefits of the deal and then — and then immediately continued its illicit nuclear activities.

In 2005, after years of diplomacy, the dictatorship agreed to ultimately abandon its nuclear programs and return to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation. But it never did. And worse, it tested the very weapons it said it was going to give up. In 2009, the United States gave negotiations yet another chance, and offered North Korea the open hand of engagement. The regime responded by sinking a South Korean Navy ship, killing 46 Korean sailors. To this day, it continues to launch missiles over the sovereign territory of Japan and all other neighbors, test nuclear devices, and develop ICBMs to threaten the United States itself. The regime has interpreted America's past restraint as weakness. This would be a fatal miscalculation. This is a very different administration than the United States has had in the past.

Today, I hope I speak not only for our countries, but for all civilized nations, when I say to the North: Do not underestimate us, and do not try us. We will defend our common security, our shared prosperity, and our sacred liberty.

....

I also have come here to this peninsula to deliver a message directly to the leader of the North Korean dictatorship: The weapons you are acquiring are not making you safer. They are putting your regime in grave danger. Every step you take down this dark path increases the peril you face.

North Korea is not the paradise your grandfather envisioned. It is a hell that no person deserves. Yet, despite every crime you have committed against God and man, you [we?] are ready to offer, and we will do that — we will offer a path to a much better future. It begins with an end to the aggression of your regime, a stop to your development of ballistic missiles, and complete, verifiable, and total denuclearization. (Applause.)

A sky-top view of this peninsula shows a nation of dazzling light in the South and a mass of impenetrable darkness in the North. We seek a future of light, prosperity, and peace. But we are only prepared to discuss this brighter path for North Korea if its leaders cease their threats and dismantle their nuclear program.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump to the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea — Seoul, Republic of Korea," [White House](#), began 11:24 KST, 8 Nov 2017.

Trump summarized his speech in one tweet:

NoKo has interpreted America's past restraint as weakness. This would be a fatal miscalculation. Do not underestimate us. AND DO NOT TRY US.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:15 EST, 8 Nov 2017.

Just 18 hours after his conciliatory speech on 7 November, Trump insulted North Korea (e.g.,

"North Korea is a country ruled as a cult. At the center of this military cult is a deranged belief ...."). And then Trump issued pre-conditions for negotiations with North Korea: "It begins with an end to the aggression of [the North Korean] regime, a stop to [North Korea's] development of ballistic missiles, and complete, verifiable, and total denuclearization. .... But we are only prepared to discuss this brighter path for North Korea if its leaders cease their threats and dismantle their nuclear program."

Trump mentioned a brighter future for North Korea if they abandoned their nuclear weapons program. But the Kim dynasty in North Korea is mostly concerned about staying in power, and *not* concerned with a bright future for the North Korean people. Indeed, the Kim dynasty frequently abuses the human rights of the North Korean people.

Finally, I comment on Trump's golf paragraph in his speech to the South Korean parliament. A paragraph on recreation or entertainment is way out of place in speech on the somber topic of nuclear weapons in North Korea. And the mention of a golf course personally owned by Trump is offensive commercialism, that is also very inappropriate in this speech.

After Trump departed from South Korea, [Yonhap](#) reported: "U.S. President Donald Trump avoided harsh rhetoric and references to military options during his two-day visit to South Korea. Despite his unusual carefulness, experts here said Wednesday [8 Nov] the trip fell short of producing a much-expected breakthrough in the nuclear standoff." Notice the South Korean journalist characterized Trump on 7-8 Nov as "unusual carefulness", which means that Trump did not screw up as badly as feared. Later in the article, Yonhap says: "Complete and verifiable denuclearization has been the same condition for dialogue with North Korea with the former U.S. administration's unsuccessful North Korea policy and is a far cry from what North Korea holds as the condition for dialogue."

Two days later, [NBC News](#) cited anonymous White House staff as saying Trump's speech to the South Korean parliament would have been worse, except that the staff persuaded Trump to delete parts that "more directly criticized the North Korean regime". NBC News quotes "Retired U.S. Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, who has worked on North Korea strategy for decades, said .... 'We've got a president of the United States who is publicly taunting and mocking a 33-year-old squirrely dictator with a nuclear program, and Kim Jong Un cannot look weak in front of his generals. They'll murder him.'"

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On 10 November 2017, Tillerson noted that North Korea's most recent missile launch was on 15 September — 56 days ago. [Bloomberg](#) reported that on the flight from Beijing to Vietnam (where the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting is held), Tillerson told reporters: "Eventually we're going to have one of those days where we're both going to say OK, maybe it's a good time to have that first conversation. Not to start negotiations but to have that conversation." In my opinion, Tillerson is overly optimistic. I think the U.S. Government needs to abandon the goal of a "complete, verifiable, and permanent denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" before there will be any negotiations with North Korea. And Trump needs to stop both (1) threatening North Korea with overwhelming U.S. Military firepower and (2) insulting Kim Jong Un. It is really unwise to speculate on *why* North Korea has not recently tested its missiles.

On 11 November 2017, [Yonhap](#) reported that the U.S. Government continues to have direct contact with North Korea, "but little progress has been made toward any serious dialogue".

On 11 November 2017, *three* U.S. Navy aircraft carriers — USS Ronald Reagan, USS Nimitz, and USS Theodore Roosevelt — along with 11 other U.S. Navy ships, 7 South Korean ships, and 3 ships from Japan, began a four-day military exercise off the east coast of Korea. This is the first time since 2007 that the U.S. Navy has had three aircraft carriers in one military exercise in the Western Pacific Ocean. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). On 13 November, North Korea complained to the United Nations Secretary General about the provocative U.S. Military exercise. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP).

The North Korean Foreign Ministry said Trump's speech in South Korea was "reckless remarks by an old lunatic". [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). On Saturday, 11 November 2017, Trump was in Vietnam, where he tweeted about Kim Jong Un.

Why would Kim Jong-un insult me by calling me "old," when I would NEVER call him "short and fat?" Oh well, I try so hard to be his friend — and maybe someday that will happen!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:48 EST, 11 Nov 2017.

This kind of childish tweet by Trump is disgusting. To answer Trump's rhetorical question, Kim insulted Trump because Trump had previously (22-23 Sep, 1 Oct) insulted Kim by calling Kim "Little Rocketman". Trump is *not* trying to be Kim's "friend". Trump badly misuses the word "friend". The correct response to North Korean insults is to ignore them.

*The Washington Post* and the Associated Press (cited above) suggest that Trump was being sarcastic when he used the word "friend". Those of us who know a second language know that one should speak literally — and avoid sarcasm and idioms — when speaking in English to people who are not fluent in English, and who might misunderstand sarcasm. But a few hours after the above-quoted tweet, Trump spoke to journalists, and Trump seemed sincere about possible friendship with Kim:

QUESTION: You tweeted this morning about trying very hard to be friends with Kim Jong-un. Is that really a possibility? What would it take for that to happen at this point?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Steve, I think anything is a possibility. Strange things happen in life. That might be a strange thing to happen, but it's certainly a possibility. If that did happen, it would be a good thing for — I can tell you — for North Korea. But it would also be good for lots of other places, and it would be good for the world.

So, certainly, it is something that could happen. I don't know that it will, but it would be very, very nice if it did.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and President Quang of Vietnam in Joint Press Conference — Hanoi, Vietnam," [White House](#), 11 November 2017.

On 14 November, the president of South Korea weakened the pre-conditions for negotiations with North Korea:

South Korea and the international community may begin discussions on possible rewards for North Korea if the reclusive state decides to at least freeze its nuclear program and come to the denuclearization dialogue, South Korean President Moon

Jae-in said Tuesday [14 Nov].

"I believe it will not be easy realistically to move on to complete dismantlement of North Korean nukes in the near future, considering recent advances in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs," the president said at a press conference.

"That means it will likely be North Korea first freezing its nuclear program and then moving onto complete dismantlement, and if that happens, I believe we and the international community may discuss what we can do in return," he added.

Byun Duk-kun, "Moon says 'all' will be possible following nuclear freeze of N. Korea," [Yonhap](#), 20:01 KST, 14 Nov 2017.

Notice that the South Korean position is still that the final agreement with North Korea must implement the United Nations Resolutions that call for a "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner." What is new is that the negotiations can *begin* with a moratorium on North Korean tests of nuclear weapons.

On 15 November, Trump returned to the White House after a 12-day visit to Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Trump gave a summary of his trip:

Speaking before the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, I spoke the truth about the evil crimes of the North Korean regime, and I made clear that we will not allow this twisted dictatorship to hold the world hostage to nuclear blackmail.

I called on every nation, including China and Russia, to unite in isolating the North Korean regime — cutting off all ties of trade and commerce — until it stops its dangerous provocation on — and this is the whole key to what we're doing — on denuclearization. We have to denuclearize North Korea.

We have ended the failed strategy of strategic patience, and, as a result, we have already seen important progress — including tough new sanctions from the U.N. council — we have a Security Council that has been with us and just about with us from the beginning.

....

During our visit [to China], President Xi pledged to faithfully implement United Nations Security Council resolutions on North Korea and to use his great economic influence over the regime to achieve our common goal of a denuclearized Korean Peninsula.

President Xi recognizes that a nuclear North Korea is a grave threat to China, and we agreed that we would not accept a so-called "freeze for freeze" agreement like those that have consistently failed in the past. We made that time is running out and we made it clear, and all options remain on the table.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump on His Trip to Asia," [White House](#), 15 Nov 2017.

Despite what Trump claims Xi said, the [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), and the [Associated Press](#)

on 16 November report that China has *not* abandoned their proposal that calls for a moratorium on North Korea testing nuclear weapons and ICBMs in exchange for the U.S. suspending military exercises in South Korea. The Chinese proposal would be the first step in a long series of agreements that end with North Korea abandoning its nuclear weapons.

On 15 November, it was announced that China would send an envoy to North Korea on Friday, 17 November. This meeting *might* be the beginning of dialogue with North Korea. [Xinhuanet](#) in China; [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#).

On 16 November, Trump tweeted:

China is sending an Envoy and Delegation to North Korea — A big move, we'll see what happens!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:43 EST, 16 Nov 2017.

Trump expects that the Chinese envoy will discuss North Korea's nuclear weapons and ICBM programs. The official purpose of the Envoy's trip is to inform the North Koreans of the results of the Chinese Communist Party Congress that began on 18 October 2017.

On 17 November, [Yonhap](#) reports that the *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper in North Korea declared the continued development of nuclear weapons "can never be put on the negotiating table". But the newspaper left open the possibility of negotiations *if* the U.S. ended its "hostile policy" toward North Korea.

Also on 17 November, [Reuters](#) reported that the North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva said: "As long as there is continuous hostile policy against my country by the U.S. and as long as there are continued war games at our doorstep, then there will not be negotiations."

On 17 November, [Reuters](#) reported that the U.S. envoy on the North Korean problem is perplexed that the North Koreans have not tested any missiles or nuclear weapons during the past 63 days, but there has been "no signal" and "no communication" from North Korea regarding talks with the U.S. Government. My comment is that North Korea has been consistent and very clear that there will be *no* talks with the U.S. Government while U.S. Military exercises continue in South Korea and in the ocean near Korea.

On 20 November, the Chinese envoy returned to China. (There are only two round-trip flights on Air China each week between Beijing and Pyongyang, one on Friday and one on Monday. The Chinese envoy took the Friday flight on 17 Nov and the Monday flight on 20 Nov.) On 20 November, [Xinhuanet](#) tersely reported that "the two sides also exchanged views ... on the Korean Peninsula issue". Most of the Xinhuanet article is about relations between China and North Korea. See also: [Yonhap](#); [JoongAng](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 20 November, Trump declared that North Korea was an official sponsor of terrorism. President George W. Bush had removed the declaration in 2008, to improve the environment for talks with North Korea, but North Korea has always been a sponsor of terrorism, at least since 1987, when they bombed a South Korean airliner. [White House](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that Trump's declaration will make talks with North Korea more



difficult, as the North Koreans will see the declaration as another hostile act by the USA. [New York Times](#).

On 20 November, Sarah Sanders gave a press briefing at the White House at which she explained that there is *no* "moral equivalency" between (1) North Korea developing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and (2) South Korea and the U.S. holding joint military exercises. In the White House view, because there is *no* "moral equivalency", the U.S. rejects the Chinese proposal for freezing both the North's weapons development and U.S./South Korea military exercises. As of the night of 28 November, there was still *no* transcript of this press briefing posted at the White House website, so I am unable to quote her exact remarks. The White House is correct that there is *no* equivalency between the two — South Korea has the legal right to conduct military exercises inside its territory. But the Chinese proposal does *not* say the two are equivalent. Simply, the North Koreans want a moratorium on South Korean military exercises and the U.S. wants a moratorium on North Korean weapons' tests. Further, just because South Korea has the legal right to conduct frequent military exercises with the U.S. Military does not make those exercises a prudent act, especially when those exercises provoke North Korea.

On 22 November, North Korea whined that designating it as a sponsor of terrorism was a "serious provocation" that justified its development of nuclear weapons. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 22 November, [Reuters](#) reported that Air China indefinitely suspended all flights between Beijing and Pyongyang, allegedly owing to a small number of passengers. The Air China office in Pyongyang will continue to "operate normally", although it no longer sells tickets. My comment is that this decision further isolates North Korea.

### **28 November 2017: North Korea launches ICBM U.N. Response**

On 28 November, Trump reacted to North Korea's launch of an ICBM:

Thank you very much. As you probably have heard, and some of you have reported, a missile was launched a little while ago from North Korea.

I will only tell you that we will take care of it. We have General Mattis in the room with us, and we've had a long discussion on it. It is a situation that we will handle.

....

And with that, I may just have General Mattis say just a couple of words about what he has found out. General, do you want to say just a couple of little pieces of information to the media?

SECRETARY MATTIS: Mr. President, Senator, Speaker, a little over two and a half hours ago, North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile. It went higher, frankly, than any previous shot they've taken. It's a research and development effort on



their part to continue building ballistic missiles that could threaten everywhere in the world, basically.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Congressional Leadership," [White House](#), 15:41 EST, 28 Nov 2017.

My comment is that, back on 31 July 2017, Trump promised "We'll handle North Korea. We're going to be able to handle them." Since then Trump has made the situation much worse, by his repeated belligerent threats, insults, and continuing military exercises that North Korea interprets as provocations. Trump is *not* solving the North Korean problem.

U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, issued the following statement:

The United States strongly condemns North Korea's launch of what is likely an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan, indiscriminately threatening its neighbors, the region and global stability.

The D.P.R.K.'s relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them must be reversed. Together the international community must continue to send a unified message to North Korea that the D.P.R.K. must abandon its WMD programs. All nations must continue strong economic and diplomatic measures. In addition to implementing all existing UN sanctions, the international community must take additional measures to enhance maritime security, including the right to interdict maritime traffic transporting goods to and from the D.P.R.K.

The United States, in partnership with Canada, will convene a meeting of the United Nations Command Sending States to include the Republic of Korea and Japan and other key affected countries to discuss how the global community can counter North Korea's threat to international peace.

Diplomatic options remain viable and open, for now. The United States remains committed to finding a peaceful path to denuclearization and to ending belligerent actions by North Korea.

Rex Tillerson, "On the Latest D.P.R.K. Missile Launch," [U.S. State Dept](#), 28 Nov 2017.

On 29 November, Trump gave a speech on alleged "tax reform" in St. Charles, Missouri. Trump went off script and called Kim Jong Un "Lil' Rocket Man" and said "[Kim] is a sick puppy." [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#); [USA Today](#). This childish name-calling by Trump is really *not* helpful in solving the North Korean problem.

On 29 November, North Korean propaganda said: "After watching the successful launch of the new type ICBM Hwasong-15, Kim Jong Un declared with pride that now we have finally realized the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force, the cause of building a rocket power." [Reuters](#). Does the word "completing" mean that North Korea is finished with tests of ballistic missiles? Is Kim Jong Un stupid enough to put the Hwasong-15 into production based on *one* test? There are *no* answers to these questions. But [The Telegraph](#) in London quotes Melissa Hanham, Senior Research Associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, as suggesting the word "completing" hints at an endgame for North Korea: "So perhaps this is an out. A way to say they've achieved what they want (as long as we treat them the way they want to be treated)." My opinion is that it is unwise to put so

much weight on *one* word in a North Korean propaganda statement.

Following Tillerson's announcement on 28 November, on 29 November Canada said 16 foreign ministers would meet in Vancouver to develop "better ideas". [Reuters](#). The meeting in Vancouver will occur on 16 January 2018. The meeting will be attended by foreign ministers of nations that fought against North Korea and China in the Korean War during 1950-53, plus Japan and India. [Associated Press](#); [CBC](#). The meeting in Vancouver is discussed [below](#).

At 17:11 EST on 29 November, the United Nations Security Council held another emergency meeting on North Korea. And once again, Nikki Haley delivered a fiery speech, most of which is quoted below:

This is the ninth time this year that the Security Council has met in reference to North Korea. Last time we spoke in the Security Council about North Korea's development of nuclear weapons, the United States made clear that the future of North Korea was in the hands of its leaders. If they chose the path of peace, the world would live in peace with them. But if they chose the path of defiance, we would respond appropriately. The choice, we said, was theirs.

Yesterday, the North Korean regime made a choice. It chose to feed its nuclear aggression. It chose to thumb its nose at the civilized world. It chose to challenge the patience of a world united against its recklessness.

And with this choice comes a critical decision point for the rest of the world. The world has responded powerfully to North Korea's outrageous and lawless actions. This Council has taken unprecedented measures to stop North Korea's development of a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile. We have leveled the most impactful sanctions that any country has experienced in a generation. We have cut deep into North Korea's major export industries to eliminate the revenue for its illegal missile program. We have reduced its military access to the refined petroleum needed to run its war machine.

In addition to our work here in the Security Council, many nations have taken their own strong actions against North Korea's threat to peace. Just this year, as North Korea's behavior has become more intolerable, over 20 countries from every corner of the globe have restricted or ended their diplomatic relations. Mexico, Peru, Italy, Spain, and Kuwait have expelled North Korea's ambassadors from their countries. Portugal and the United Arab Emirates have suspended diplomatic relations. The Philippines and Taiwan have suspended all trade with North Korea. Singapore, formerly North Korea's seventh largest trading partner, has cut all trade ties. Uganda has halted all military and security ties. The European Union, Australia, South Korea, and Japan have made additional sacrifices for peace and security by going well beyond what the Security Council requires.

All of the countries that have taken actions to isolate North Korea have acted out of deep concern about the regime's dangerous refusal to abandon its nuclear program. They have selflessly put the security of all of us above their individual political and economic interests. They have won the gratitude of the international community for their responsible actions.

Regrettably, not all countries have done the same.

All UN Member States are — at the very minimum — obligated to fully implement all UN sanctions. But we know that's not happening in every case.

This Council has banned coal exports from North Korea. And yet, we have reports of the regime continuing to smuggle coal into neighboring Asian countries using deceptive tactics to mask the coal's origins.

This Council has required that all refined petroleum imports into North Korea not exceed the annual cap, and we banned ship-to-ship transfers. And yet, we see North Korea illegally obtaining refined petroleum from neighboring states through ship-to-ship transfers in the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan.

There are countries that are continuing to fund the North Korean nuclear program by violating UN sanctions and obstructing our efforts. The world knows who many of them are.

As successful as we have been in leveling multilateral sanctions against it, the North Korean regime continues to test new and more powerful missiles. And as it does, it continues its march toward a functional nuclear arsenal. The continuing development of these missile systems demands that countries further isolate the Kim regime. **So today, we call on all nations to cut off all ties with North Korea.**

In addition to fully implementing all UN sanctions, all countries should sever diplomatic relations with North Korea and limit military, scientific, technical, or commercial cooperation. They must also cut off trade with the regime by stopping all imports and exports and expel all North Korean workers.

....

We have some options.

**First, we should continue to treat North Korea as the international pariah it has become by taking its UN Rights and Privileges away, including its voting powers.**

Second, we know the main driver of its nuclear production is oil. Through sanctions we have cut off 90 percent of North Korean trade and 30 percent of its oil. But the crude oil remains. The major supplier of that oil is China. In 2003, China actually stopped the oil to North Korea. Soon after, North Korea came to the table. We need China to do more.

President Trump called Chinese President Xi this morning and told him that we have come to the point that **China must cut off the oil from North Korea.** That would be a pivotal step in the world's effort to stop this international pariah. As I mentioned, many countries have made some big economic and political sacrifices by cutting ties with North Korea. They did that to serve the peace and security of all of us. We now turn to

President Xi to also take that stand.

We believe he has an opportunity to do the right thing for the benefit of all countries. China must show leadership and follow through. China can do this on its own, or we can take the oil situation into our own hands.

The dictator of North Korea made a choice yesterday that brings the world closer to war, not farther from it. We have never sought war with North Korea, and still today we do not seek it. If war does come, it will be because of continued acts of aggression like we witnessed yesterday. **And if war comes, make no mistake, the North Korean regime will be utterly destroyed.**

The nations of the world have it within their power to further isolate, diminish, and, God willing, reverse the dangerous course of the North Korean regime. We must all do our part to make that happen.

Nikki Haley, "Remarks at an Emergency UN Security Council Meeting on North Korea" [U.S. State Dept](#), 29 Nov 2017. [Boldface added by Standler.]

The United Nations press release on this emergency meeting of the Security Council is posted [here](#). There seems to be a consensus in the Security Council that North Korea is badly misbehaving.

My comment is that is unwise to ostracize North Korea (e.g., "cut off all ties with North Korea" and "taking its UN Rights and Privileges away, including its [U.N. General Assembly] voting powers"), because that could increase North Korea's isolation and paranoia, and also impede communications with North Korea.

Back on 16 November, Trump tweeted that he was awaiting results of a visit by a Chinese envoy to Pyongyang during 17-20 Nov. The visit apparently produced *no* breakthrough on either North Korea's weapons program or their unwillingness to negotiate. Kim Jong Un did *not* personally meet with the envoy, which could be seen as a snub of the Chinese by North Korea. On 30 November, Trump recognized the failure of the Chinese envoy. Also, Trump again insulted Kim Jong Un.

The Chinese Envoy, who just returned from North Korea, seems to have had no impact on Little Rocket Man. Hard to believe his people, and the military, put up with living in such horrible conditions. Russia and China condemned the launch.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:25 EST, 30 Nov 2017.

My comment is that the people of North Korea have *no* choice, they must "put up with living in such horrible conditions". The people of South Korea, Japan, and the USA also have *no* choice, they must put up with Trump, an incompetent and belligerent U.S. president.

On 30 November 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that General Kelly, the White House chief of staff, had developed a plan to replace Tillerson with Mike Pompeo, who is currently director of the CIA. My comment is that Tillerson is one of a few people in the Trump administration who want to solve the North Korean problem with diplomacy. The removal of Tillerson would push us closer to war with North Korea. Note this is only a *plan*, Trump has not yet approved the change. It is also possible that this alleged plan is fake news, intended to

undermine Tillerson. U.S. Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, told the [Washington Post](#) “It's been evident to me that, for some time, somebody has been seeking to undermine [Tillerson's] presence. I don't know who that is.” On 1 December, the [Washington Post](#) confirmed *The Times* article with two anonymous sources. But later on 1 December, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump [tweeted](#) that Tillerson would remain Secretary of State. My comment is that this confusion about Tillerson continuing as Secretary of State is not only harmful to Tillerson's reputation, but also shows the petty squabbles inside the White House by a bunch of amateurs.

On 14 December — after Tillerson publicly announced a new U.S. policy with which Trump disagreed (see [below](#)) — the [Washington Post](#) reported that Tillerson would be replaced in February 2018.

On Thursday, 21 December, the U.S. scheduled a vote in the United Nations Security Council on 22 December, on a draft Resolution calling for increased sanctions on North Korea, in response to the North's test of an ICBM on 28 November 2017. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The vote comes just before the Christmas holiday.

On Friday, 22 December 2017, the United Nations Security Council unanimously voted for Resolution 2397 that increases sanctions on North Korea in response to the North's test of an ICBM on 28 Nov 2017. This Resolution has several new features, as paraphrased or copied from the U.S. [fact sheet](#) and the Resolution itself:

- Strengthens Resolution 2375 limit on crude oil exports to North Korea by establishing a new limit of 4 million barrels/year.
- Reduces Resolution 2375 limit on exports to North Korea of refined petroleum (e.g., gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuel) from 2 million barrels/year to 0.5 million barrels/year. This is a reduction of 89% from the summer of 2017.
- Requires North Korean workers in foreign nations to return home within 24 months.
- Seize and impound ships caught smuggling illicit items — including oil imports and coal exports — to/from North Korea.
- Prohibits all countries from exporting industrial equipment, heavy machinery, transportation vehicles, and industrial metals to North Korea.

[U.N.](#); [U.S. State Dept](#)(fact sheet); [U.S. State Dept](#)(Haley); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

In my opinion, the reduction in oil imports to North Korea is significant and *might* motivate Kim to negotiate. It will be difficult for North Korea to have a war when there is no fuel for its military vehicles and aircraft.

As one would expect, North Korea was angry at these additional sanctions, as explained [below](#).

## December 2017: Continuing North Korean Problem

On 1 December, the United Nations Security Council scheduled a meeting of foreign ministers on 15 December to discuss North Korea's nuclear and missiles programs. [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 2 December, [CNN](#) cited an anonymous U.S. official as saying the Hwasong-15 missile launched on 28 November "likely broke up upon re-entry into the earth's atmosphere". That means this new missile can not deliver a warhead.

On 4 December, it was reported that the pilots of Cathay Pacific flight CX893 from San Francisco to Hong Kong on 29 Nov told Japan Air Traffic Control "Be advised, we witnessed the DPRK missile blow up and fall apart near our current location." [South China Morning Post](#); [CNBC](#).

My comment is that there is some hysteria amongst U.S. politicians that North Korea now has an ICBM that allegedly can reach anywhere in the USA. These hysterical politicians are ignorant of three critically important facts:

1. To reach the east coast of the USA, the Hwasong-15 missile can carry only a 150 kg warhead, too small a warhead to be a nuclear weapon.
2. As the two previous paragraphs state, the Hwasong-15 missile exploded during re-entry into the earth's atmosphere, meaning that it can not deliver a warhead anywhere.
3. The accuracy of the Hwasong-15 missile's guidance system remains unproven.

Despite these three unsolved problems facing the North Koreans, the U.S. politicians are right to be concerned, because the North Koreans are rapidly developing better missiles and the U.S. has been unable to stop the North Korean progress.

On 4 December, the U.S. Military began five days of exercises with the South Korean military. The massive exercises involve more than 230 warplanes, including a dozen U.S. stealth fighters. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

Apparently, the U.S. Military is now having monthly major military exercises, which North Korea sees as provocations. Remember that on 11 November 2017, *three* U.S. Navy aircraft carriers began a four-day military exercise off the east coast of Korea.

Jeffrey Feltman, the United Nations' political affairs chief, will visit Pyongyang from 5 to 8 December, including meetings with North Korea Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho and Vice Minister Pak Myong Guk. Feltman is the first senior United Nations official to visit North Korea since October 2011. [U.N.\(dpb\)](#); [U.N.](#); [Reuters](#). On 5 December, [Reuters](#) speculates that Feltman's visit may be the beginning of the United Nations Secretary General's efforts to mediate negotiations on the North Korean problem.

On 7 December 2017, [Reuters](#) reports that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Tillerson that "North Korea wants direct talks with the United States to seek guarantees on its security from Washington". See also [TASS](#). *If the Russian report is correct — I am skeptical of anything from the Russian government — then Trump is probably too belligerent to take advantage of the opportunity to begin negotiations with North Korea.*

In a foreign policy decision that is unrelated to the North Korean problem, Trump proposed to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This really angered the palestinians, who believe that Jerusalem is part of palestine. There was also a chorus of protest from Arab nations. But, on 6 December 2017, Trump announced he would move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. See, e.g., [The Independent](#)(5Dec); [Associated Press](#)(5-6Dec); [Washington Post](#)(AP 5Dec); [White House](#)(6Dec); [New York Times](#)(6Dec); [Reuters](#)(7Dec); [Washington Post](#)(8Dec). At an 8 December emergency [meeting](#) of the United Nations Security Council, 14 of the 15 members criticized Trump's decision. I think this decision by Trump shows that he is willing to do something that is provocative, confrontational, and disruptive. Aside from strong foreign policy implications, Trump's decision will cost U.S. Taxpayers millions of dollars to build a new Embassy with higher security costs, and it is easily foreseeable that people in Israel and palestine will *die* in protests of Trump's decision. There is a strong international consensus that Trump's decision was really stupid, but Trump ignored the international consensus and did what he wanted to do. If Trump does something similar with the North Korean problem, Trump might launch a pre-emptive military strike on North Korea that begins World War III. (On 18 December, the U.N. Security Council voted 14 to 1 for a draft Resolution calling on the U.S. Government to rescind moving its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The U.S. vetoed the draft Resolution. [U.N.](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). On 21 December, the U.N. General Assembly voted 128 to 9 to declare Trump's moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem "null and void". A total of 56 nations (29%) either abstained or were absent. [U.N.](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).) Note the inconsistency here: the USA says North Korea should abandon its nuclear weapons because the world is opposed to North Korea having nuclear weapons. But when the world is opposed to the USA moving its embassy to Jerusalem, the USA simply ignores the world.

On 9 December, Jeffrey Feltman, the United Nations' political affairs chief, arrived in Beijing, where he refused to speak to journalists, because he first needed to brief the U.N. Secretary General. [Associated Press](#). Later, [Reuters](#) reported the [U.N.](#) in New York said Feltman told the North Korean government there was an "urgent need to prevent miscalculations and open channels to reduce the risks of conflict". Reuters said the KCNA announced that North Korea and Feltman "agreed to communicate regularly."

On the night of 9 December 2017, the [Washington Post](#) criticized Trump's unwillingness to accept the reality that North Korea possesses nuclear weapons.

On Monday, 11 December 2017, the U.S., South Korea, and Japan began two days of joint military exercises to test their ability to track missiles from North Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that this exercise could be very useful to the Allies, but this exercise — like other U.S. Military exercises in South Korea — will be seen as a provocation by North Korea.



On 12 December, Jeffrey Feltman told journalists that North Korean officials told him "that it was important to prevent war". However, the two North Korean officials with whom Feltman talked last week would *not* commit to negotiations. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 12 December, Tillerson publicly revealed a U.S. agreement with China about North Korea. Specifically, Tillerson talked about securing North Korean nuclear weapons *after* the North Korean government collapsed.

We also have had conversations about in the event that something happened — it could happen internal to North Korea; it might be nothing that we from the outside initiate — that if that unleashed some kind of instability, the most important thing to us would be securing those nuclear weapons they've already developed and ensuring that nothing falls into the hands of people we would not want to have it. We've had conversations with the Chinese about how might that be done.

The four noes that I articulated in that first trip to Asia were intentional: that

1. we do not seek regime change;
2. we do not seek regime collapse;
3. we do not seek an accelerated unification of the Korean Peninsula;
4. we do not seek a reason to send our own military forces north of the demilitarized zone.

We have had conversations that if something happened and we had to go across a line, we have given the Chinese assurances we would go back and retreat back to the south of the 38th parallel when whatever the conditions that caused that to happen. That is our commitment we made to them.

Rex Tillerson, "On 'Meeting the Foreign Policy Challenges of 2017 and Beyond'," [U.S. State Dept](#), 12 Dec 2017. [Numbered indented list added by Standler.]

On 17 December, the [New York Times](#) explained the significance of Tillerson's remarks. The earliest public mention of the "four noes" that I can find is in Tillerson's [speech](#) to State Department employees on 3 May 2017. On 21 December, the [Korea Herald](#) reported on Tillerson agreeing contingency plans with China. It is good to have contingency plans, but bad to publicize them.

### **12-15 December 2017: U.S. talks with North Korea ?**

On 12 December 2017, in an important move, Tillerson invited North Korea to talk with *no* preconditions: "... we're ready to talk anytime North Korea would like to talk, and we're ready to have the first meeting without precondition." Tillerson's invitation made it appear that the U.S. Government has now retreated from its previous demand (i.e., precondition) that, before talks begin, North Korea must agree to abandon its nuclear weapons program. [U.S. State Dept](#); [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#); [Yonhap](#). Note that "the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" continues to be the final goal of the U.S. Government. And that final goal is currently unacceptable to North Korea. Moreover,

Tillerson has one hidden precondition: that North Korea stop testing missiles and nuclear weapons during the talks.

It is worth quoting Tillerson's complete words on several critical issues:

Our policy with respect to the DPRK is really quite clear, and that is the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. It is a policy that is shared by others in the region; in fact, that is China's policy as well. And Russia has stated it is also its policy. ....

....

The President would like to see China cut the oil off. The last time the North Koreans came to the table, it was because China cut the oil off. Three days later, the North Koreans were at the table talking. And the President feels we're really at that stage. So he's putting a lot of pressure on the Chinese to do more with respect to oil.

When do the talks begin? We've said from the diplomatic side we're ready to talk anytime North Korea would like to talk, and we're ready to have the first meeting without precondition. Let's just meet and let's — we can talk about the weather if you want. We can talk about whether it's going to be a square table or a round table if that's what you're excited about. But can we at least sit down and see each other face to face? And then we can begin to lay out a map, a roadmap of what we might be willing to work towards. I don't think — it's not realistic to say we're only going to talk if you come to the table ready to give up your program. They have too much invested in it. And the President is very realistic about that as well.

....

The only — if there was any condition at all to this, it's that, look, it's going to be tough to talk if in the middle of our talks, you decide to test another device. It's going to be difficult to talk if in the middle of our talks, you decide to fire another one off. So I think they clearly understand that if we're going to talk, we have to have a period of quiet. We've got to have a period of quiet or it's going to be very difficult to have productive discussions.

And so we continue to indicate to them we need a period of quiet. You need to tell us you want to talk. The door is open. But we'll show up when you tell us you're ready to talk.

....

Our only objective is to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, and that is all. And out of that and out of these discussions, perhaps we can create a different future for the North Korean people because the one they have right now is pretty dismal.

Rex Tillerson, "On 'Meeting the Foreign Policy Challenges of 2017 and Beyond'," [U.S. State Dept](#), 12 Dec 2017.

My comment is that it is especially important when Tillerson publicly stated that the North

Koreans have "too much invested in" their nuclear weapons to quickly abandon those weapons. Tillerson recognized that it is "not realistic" to demand that North Korea agree to abandon its nuclear weapons before negotiations can begin.

A few hours after Tillerson's speech that invited North Korea to talk without preconditions, the White House sent an e-mail to journalists that publicly undercut Tillerson. *The New York Times* reported:

In an unusual statement released to reporters on Tuesday [12 Dec] evening, the press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, said Mr. Trump's position on North Korea had not changed — namely, that talks were pointless if the North's leader, Kim Jong-un, continued to menace his neighbors.

"North Korea is acting in an unsafe way not only toward Japan, China, and South Korea, but the entire world," she said. "North Korea's actions are not good for anyone and certainly not good for North Korea."

....

White House officials were alarmed by Mr. Tillerson's remarks, according to several people, fearing that they would sow confusion among allies after Mr. Trump rallied them behind a policy of "maximum pressure."

....

Adding to the muddled messages, Mr. Tillerson spoke a few hours after the national security adviser, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, offered a more hard-line version of the administration's policy. He warned that time was running out to avoid a military confrontation with North Korea, and that China needed to do more to squeeze the North economically.

Mark Landler, "White House Corrects Tillerson on Whether U.S. Will Talk to North Korea," [New York Times](#), 13 Dec 2017.

Given the White House statement on the evening of 12 Dec, it is strange that journalists waited until the afternoon of 13 Dec to report this story. Reuters began reporting this story at 01:01 EST on 13 Dec. A later version of the Reuters news article says:

No negotiations can be held with North Korea until it improves its behaviour, a White House official said on Wednesday [13 Dec], raising questions about U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's offer to begin talks with Pyongyang any time and without pre-conditions.

"Given North Korea's most recent missile test, clearly right now is not the time," a White House official told Reuters.

Matt Spetalnick & David Brunnstrom, "Despite Tillerson overture, White House says not right time for North Korea talks," [Reuters](#), 16:46 EST, 13 Dec 2017.

The Associated Press reported:

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's surprising diplomatic offer of unconditional talks with North Korea hinges on two big X factors: Does the North even want talks, and is

President Donald Trump fully behind his top diplomat? The early signs were not promising. The White House on Wednesday [13 Dec] contradicted Tillerson's overture. North Korea has yet to respond.

....

On Wednesday, the White House conflicted with Tillerson's offer of talks without preconditions. A National Security Council spokesperson said that North Korea must not only first refrain from provocations but take "sincere and meaningful actions toward denuclearization." The spokesperson, who was not authorized to be quoted by name and requested anonymity, said that given North Korea's most recent missile test, now was not the time for talks.

Matthew Pennington, "Tillerson's offer of talks with North Korea left hanging," [Associated Press](#), 13 Dec 2017.

Adding to the confusion was the Daily Press Briefing at the U.S. State Department, where the spokeswoman said Tillerson had not changed the U.S. policy toward North Korea.

QUESTION: I just — on North Korea, I think there's a lot of discussion about whether Secretary Tillerson's comments yesterday [12 Dec], saying that there were no preconditions for talks, are in opposition to the White House policy. You saw that a White House official, I guess, is saying that now is not the time for talks. Could you clear up whether the Secretary was making some kind of new policy or if he was just sticking to something that he's said before?

MS NAUERT: The Secretary was not creating any new policy. Our policy remains exactly the same as it was, the very same policy that we've talked about in this room for months and months now. First and foremost, diplomacy is our top priority. We have worked very hard on our maximum pressure or peaceful pressure campaign. We continue to work on that every single day. The second thing is the policy has not changed. I just want to be very clear on that. We remain open to dialogue, and we've long said this. We remain open to dialogue when North Korea is willing to conduct a credible dialogue on the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We are not seeing any evidence that they are ready to sit down and have those kinds of conversations right now. Some of you may say, well, that sounds like it's without preconditions. No. We would say that's actually in accordance to international norms. When somebody is shooting off ballistic missiles, when someone is conducting advanced nuclear tests, they're not showing any kind of interest or seriousness about wanting to sit down to talk. At some point we would like to do that, but our policy has not changed.

QUESTION: ....

....

MS NAUERT: Look, North Korea has been choosing to regrettably to show that they are [not] serious about talking. Our policy has not changed. We have long said that at some point we would be willing, when the time is right — and clearly the time is not

right right now — when the time is right to sit down and have conversations with them. But we are not seeing that they are interested in doing that, and so our policy hasn't changed. We are on the same page at the White House and at the State Department on this.

....

MS NAUERT: We will not recognize North Korea as a nuclear state.

Heather Nauert, "Department Press Briefing — December 13, 2017," [U.S. State Dept](#), 13 Dec 2017.

Despite what Ms. Nauert said, there is a significant difference between what Tillerson said on 12 Dec and the U.S. policy. Tillerson invited North Korea for talks anytime, but without tests during the talks. The U.S. policy includes the following pre-conditions before talks begin:

1. no tests of nuclear weapons or missiles for at least 60 days before talks begin
2. North Korea indicates willingness to destroy all of its nuclear weapons (i.e., "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula")
3. and no tests during talks.

My comment is that Tillerson's position is much more reasonable than Trump's position. But Tillerson should have checked with Trump before announcing a change in U.S. policy. North Korea must now be really confused about the U.S. policy. It appears that North Korea will refuse to suspend its tests of missiles and nuclear weapons, and North Korea will refuse to "denuclearize" — which makes negotiations with the U.S. Government impossible for the foreseeable future.

On 13 December, the former U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, agreed with Tillerson that China should unilaterally cut oil exports to North Korea by at least half. [South China Morning Post](#); [Korea Herald](#)(SCMP). I interpret Ban's agreement as indicating that Tillerson's suggested policy is correct.

On 14 December, the United Nations Secretary General was in Japan, where he held a press conference:

As you can imagine, in my discussions with Prime Minister [Shinzo] Abe today we covered many aspects of the international situation, but the main focus was in relation to North Korea. I would like to say that my position is very clear. It is essential that all Security Council resolutions are implemented. First of all, they are implemented by North Korea, then they are implemented by all the countries that have obligations derived from those Security Council resolutions. The objective is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and it is extremely important to preserve the unity of the Security Council. Unity of the Security Council — that is a very important tool to achieve this goal but also to allow for diplomatic engagement that might allow this goal to be achieved in a peaceful manner.

I think we all want to avoid that things get out of control and that misperceptions and mishandling of situations make us sleepwalk into a war that will have devastating

consequences. We will have tomorrow [15 Dec] again a debate in the Security Council in relation to this, and once again, I will be very clear in stressing that all Security Council resolutions must be implemented and that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is an essential objective for the international community.

QUESTION: As you said, Mr. Guterres, you mentioned North Korea. Mr. [Jeffrey] Feltman, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, visited Pyongyang, had talks with the North Korean side. His visit to North Korea, his visit to Pyongyang, how do you look at the outcome of that meeting? And Mr. Feltman's visit to North Korea for the future of North Korea resolution towards dialogue, towards that goal, what do you think was the impact of Mr. Feltman's visit to North Korea?

SG: As you know, in diplomacy and especially in discreet diplomacy, it is difficult to measure an immediate result of any initiative. I think that the important thing was to convey a very strong message, and the message was conveyed — not only that Security Council resolutions have to be implemented, but there must be a sense of urgency in creating the conditions for a meaningful dialogue to achieve the denuclearization of the Peninsula. I think it is important for all parties to understand the urgency of finding a solution, avoiding the kind of confrontation that could have tragic consequences for everybody. I think the message was clear. I think the message was delivered and I hope that this will be a positive contribution in order for a solution in line with the principles that we have always advocated to be obtained. As I said, it is almost impossible to measure immediate results in the kind of discreet diplomacy that is absolutely essential to solve today's problems.

....

QUESTION: My question is about North Korea. I understand that the UN has been urging dialogue among North Korea and the international community. Recently, the US Secretary of State, Mr. [Rex] Tillerson, signaled the possibility of dialogue without preconditions. That is different from the position of Japan and that of conventional United States Government position. I wanted to ask for your comments on this.

SG: Dialogue must have an objective. And this is what is important. The objective for us is to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to do it in a peaceful manner. So, this is what we define as the useful dialogue that is necessary. I do not like to comment on expressions that sometimes might not translate exactly the thinking of people there. What is important is that dialogue to be meaningful, must have an objective. That objective is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and to do it by peaceful means.

Antonio Guterres, "Secretary-General's press conference at Japan National Press Club," [U.N.](#), 14 Dec 2017.

The Secretary General, of course, demands that North Korea comply with United Nations Security Council Resolutions that require "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner." When the Secretary General says meaningful dialogue "must have an objective", he may be agreeing with the U.S. policy that North Korea must express a willingness to denuclearize before talks can begin.

On the night of 14 December, [Reuters](#) and the [Associated Press](#) reported that the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, Joseph Yun, called for direct talks between North Korea and the USA. Yun agreed with Tillerson's remarks on 12 Dec, but Tillerson's remarks have now been thoroughly repudiated by the White House and State Department.

On 15 December 2017, U.N. Secretary General told the U.N. Security Council:

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is the most tense and dangerous peace and security issue in the world today. I am deeply concerned by the risk of military confrontation, including as a result of unintended escalation or miscalculation.

....

While all concerned seek to avoid an accidental escalation leading to conflict, the risk is being multiplied by misplaced over-confidence, dangerous narratives and rhetoric, and the lack of communication channels.

Antonio Guterres, "Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on Non-Proliferation/DPRK [as delivered]," [U.N.](#), 15 Dec 2017.

On the afternoon of 15 December 2017, Tillerson spoke twice at the meeting of foreign ministers at the United Nations Security Council in New York City. Here is some of what Tillerson said there:

We particularly call on Russia and China to increase pressure, including going beyond full implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions. Continuing to allow North Korean laborers to toil in slave-like conditions inside Russia in exchange for wages used to fund nuclear weapons programs calls into question Russia's dedication as a partner for peace. Similarly, as Chinese crude oil flows to North Korean refineries, the United States questions China's commitment to solving an issue that has serious implications for the security of its own citizens.

Recently the North Korean regime has sought to portray UN sanctions as harmful to women and children. But this is a regime that hypocritically spends billions on nuclear and ballistic missile programs while its own people suffer great poverty. The regime could feed and care for women, children, and ordinary people of North Korea if it chose the welfare of its people over weapons development. The DPRK has a choice: It can reverse course, give up its unlawful nuclear weapons program, and join the community of nations, or it can continue to condemn its people to poverty and isolation. The regime in Pyongyang bears the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of its people.

North Korea claims to undertake its nuclear weapons program as an essential step for the survival of its regime. In making this choice, North Korea has made itself less secure, and its economy has become further isolated and disconnected from the global economy.

We have been clear that all options remain on the table in the defense of our nation, but we do not seek, nor do we want, war with North Korea. The United States will use all necessary measures to defend itself against North Korean aggression, but our hope



remains that diplomacy will produce a resolution. As I said earlier this week, a sustained cessation of North Korea's threatening behavior must occur before talks can begin. **North Korea must earn its way back to the table.** The pressure campaign must, and will, continue until denuclearization is achieved. We will, in the meantime, keep our channels of communication open.

Our message today is one that this body has heard before, and one that we will continue to repeat: The United States will not allow the regime in Pyongyang to hold the world hostage. We will continue to hold North Korea accountable for its reckless and threatening behavior today and in the future. We ask every nation here to join us in exerting sovereignty to protect all of our people. We ask all to join a unified effort to achieve a complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Remarks at the UN Security Council Ministerial Meeting on D.P.R.K.," [U.S. State Dept](#), 15 Dec 2017. [Boldface added by Standler.]

Tillerson now adopts part of U.S. policy when he says "a sustained cessation of North Korea's threatening behavior must occur before talks can begin." But that is *not* what Tillerson said on 12 December, despite his saying "as I said earlier this week".

When Tillerson said "North Korea must earn its way back to the table", it sounds like the U.S. Government is punishing North Korea for reneging on past agreements. While that may be an appropriate punishment, it will make future negotiations less likely.

The second time Tillerson spoke, he replied to the North Korean ambassador:

.... There is no doubt that the DPRK's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal is in clear violation of international law, directly challenges the global nonproliferation regime, and greatly threatens international peace and security. This body has unanimously made these points for well over a decade now. The international community condemns North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal, and we will never accept a nuclear North Korea.

The DPRK's unlawful acts cannot be ignored, nor can they be explained away. The DPRK must be held accountable for its actions. And in that regard, any notion that the source of tensions on the peninsula are the fault of no one party — there is but one party that has carried out illegal detonation of nuclear devices; there is but one party that continues to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, overflying another sovereign nation, Japan, threatening civil aviation security because these launches are undertaken with no notification.

There is but one party that has been targeted with punishment and penalties through the most vigorous regime sanction ever enacted, and that is the Kim regime in North Korea. They alone are responsible for these tensions, they alone must take responsibility for these tensions, and they alone can solve these tensions.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Remarks at the UN Security Council Ministerial Meeting on D.P.R.K.," [U.S. State Dept](#), 15 Dec 2017.

My comment is that Tillerson is correct in what he says, about the responsibility of North Korea. However, Tillerson ignores that the current North Korean leader, and his predecessor, have a paranoia that the U.S. will invade North Korea. The U.S. Military exercises with

South Korea feed that paranoia. Trump's belligerent threats have reinforced that paranoia. North Korea is well aware that the U.S. Government forced regime change in Iraq, encouraged regime change in Libya, and called for regime change in Syria — making North Korea reasonably wonder if the U.S. Government would force regime change in North Korea. Tillerson sanctimoniously pretends that the U.S. Government is totally innocent in creating the North Korean problem.

At the U.N. Security Council meeting on 15 December, China criticized the U.S. for continuing large military exercises in South Korea. [U.N.](#); [CNN](#).

At the U.N. Security Council meeting, North Korea was oblivious to the fact that the world was united against the North Korean program of developing nuclear weapons. The AP reported that the North Korean ambassador told the Security Council that North Korea's nuclear weapons were “‘an inevitable self-defensive measure’ to defend the country against ‘the U.S. nuclear threat and blackmail.’” [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [Reuters](#).

My comment is that the U.S. Government had a similar reason for its nuclear weapons program — to deter aggression by the Soviet Union during 1950-1990. Trump's repeated belligerent threats against North Korea help the North Koreans justify their need for nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

After the U.N. Security Council meeting on 15 December, Tillerson held a short press conference:

QUESTION [by Conor Finnegan, ABC News]: Mr. Secretary, you’ve previously said that a precondition to talks with North Korea is the regime agreeing to give up its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. On Tuesday [12 Dec], you said that wasn’t realistic. And today, you didn’t even mention the issue at all, despite what was in your prepared remarks. Does it remain a precondition for the United States and are you and President Trump on the same page on whether and when to engage in talks?

SECRETARY TILLERSON: The President’s policy on North Korea is quite clear, and there is no daylight at all between the President’s policy and the pursuit of that policy. And the President, I think, has been very clear that we are going to lead this pressure campaign, we’re going to unite the international community, and we’re going to keep the pressure as much as we can and increase it where possible. Most recently, the President called President Xi personally and asked him for China to cut the oil supplies off to North Korea to increase this pressure. That is intended to lead to diplomatic talks. In the meantime, the President has been very clear: Militarily, we are going to be prepared should something go wrong. And our military is prepared.

With respect to the talks, we are not going to accept preconditions. You heard others who have called for a freeze for freeze. We do not accept a freeze for freeze as a precondition to talks. We do not accept any relaxing of the sanctions regime as a precondition of talks. We do not accept a resumption of humanitarian assistance as a precondition of talks. So we are not going to accept preconditions for these talks, but as I indicated in my remarks, our communication channels remain open. North Korea knows they’re open; they know where the door is; they know where to walk through that door when they want to talk.

Rex W. Tillerson, "Press Availability at United Nations," [U.S. State Dept](#). 15 Dec 2017.

Tillerson says the U.S. does *not* "accept preconditions" for talks with North Korea. But U.S. policy has at least three preconditions that North Korea must satisfy before there are talks. What Tillerson means is that the U.S. will not allow North Korea to establish preconditions for talks. Treating North Korea as a misbehaving child who is not allowed to establish preconditions (unlike the USA, which established three preconditions) is *not* a good way to begin negotiations with North Korea. That is why Tillerson's 12 December proposal for talks with *no* preconditions was so important.

Looking at this problem from the North Korean perspective, their nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile program have caused fear and alarm in the U.S. Government, as well as in Japan and South Korea. North Korea has never had that kind of attention before, and it must make North Korea feel proud of its accomplishments. North Korea will probably continue to test ballistic missiles, to solve remaining technical problems. Those continuing tests will upset the U.S. Government. It is impossible to predict what Trump will do. He *might* impulsively launch a pre-emptive military strike on North Korea. He might recognize the reality of the North Korean weapons program, and accept the Chinese proposal for suspending U.S. Military exercises in South Korea. He might continue to spew threats and insults.

On 22 December 2017, the South Korean Unification Minister said he was open to talks with North Korea "without preconditions". [Yonhap](#).

### North Korea's cyberattacks

North Korea has perpetrated cyberwarfare against South Korea at least since 2009 — possibly earlier. [The Guardian](#);

In November 2014, North Korea was angry about the planned release of a Sony Pictures satirical movie "The Interview," about the fictional assassination of Kim Jong Un. North Korean hackers stole e-mails and copies of new Sony movies from Sony headquarters in Los Angeles. North Korea posted those confidential e-mails and new movies on the Internet. In response to threats of terrorist attacks on movie theaters, Sony canceled the release of "The Interview". [The Guardian](#)(20Dec2014); [New York Times](#)(21Dec2014);

In May 2017, there was an epidemic of malicious software that encrypted files on a victim's computer and then demanded a ransom for unencrypting the files and restoring normal operation. This malicious software was named "WannaCry". Unfortunately, a bug in WannaCry prevented unencrypting the user's files after the ransom was paid. One of the largest victims was the National Health Service in England, where WannaCry prevented physicians from accessing patient's medical records, and where WannaCry prevented patients from scheduling appointments to see a physician.

On 18 December 2017, the U.S. Government announced that North Korea had created and profited from WannaCry. [Wall Street Journal](#); [White House](#)(19Dec); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [The Guardian](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). On 19 December, the

United Kingdom reiterated its earlier conclusion that North Korea released WannaCry. [U.K.](#)(19Dec); [Reuters](#)(27Oct).

In December 2017, the U.S. Government's response to WannaCry is only publicity about North Korea, which is intended to "shame" North Korea into stopping cyberwarfare. In my opinion, that response is woefully inadequate. The North Koreans have been defying multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions prohibiting development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles since 2006. North Korea has an appalling human rights record. North Korea is clearly *not* concerned with its international reputation.

Politicians are properly worried about a future war with North Korea using nuclear weapons. But the Truth is that the North Korean government's hackers has been waging cyberwar against South Korea, Europe, and the USA for years. This cyberwar is the clearest example of the belligerent intent of North Korea.

On 2 October 2017, [Reuters](#) reported that "Russian telecommunications company TransTeleCom" now transmits about 60% of North Korea's Internet traffic, while China Unicom transmits the remaining 40%. My comment is that the United Nations Security Council should consider disconnecting North Korea from the Internet, in retaliation for years of cyberwarfare by North Korea.

### 16-31 December 2017

On 20 December 2017, the [The Telegraph](#) newspaper in London, England reported that the U.S. Military was making plans to give Kim Jong Un a "bloody nose" and stop his nuclear weapons program. My comment is that it does *not* matter whether this report is true, the effect will be to increase Kim's paranoia. If the report is true, this kind of limited attack could easily escalate into a full war on the Korean peninsula, when Kim retaliates.

On 23 December, [Reuters](#) reported that China purchased US\$ 388 million of goods from North Korea during November 2017. That was a 16% increase from October 2017.

On 23 December, [NBC News](#) concluded that "Kim Jong Un bested Donald Trump in the slugfest that was 2017". On 24 December, the [Washington Post](#) reported that "For North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, 2017 has been a very good year." I agree. Kim got what he wanted: better nuclear weapons and better missiles. Trump did *not* get what he wanted: "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula". On 22 Sep 2017, North Korea called Trump a "dotard", which was a better insult than Trump calling Kim "Little Rocket Man". Americans needed to consult a dictionary — or read a newspaper — to learn what "dotard" meant. [New York Times](#). No one needed a dictionary to understand Trump's childish insults.

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On 24 December, North Korea responded to U.N. Security Council Resolution 2397 that was passed two days earlier. Yonhap News Agency in South Korea quoted the KCNA as saying:  
The United States, completely terrified at our accomplishment of the great historic

cause of completing the state nuclear force, is getting more and more frenzied in the moves to impose the harshest-ever sanctions and pressure on our country.

If the U.S. wishes to live safely, it must abandon its hostile policy towards the DPRK and learn to co-exist with the country that has nuclear weapons and should wake up from its pipe dream of our country giving up nuclear weapons which we have developed and completed through all kinds of hardships.

We will further consolidate our self-defensive nuclear deterrence aimed at fundamentally eradicating the U.S. nuclear threats, blackmail and hostile moves by establishing the practical balance of force with the U.S.

"North Korea rejects U.N. sanctions," [Yonhap](#), 24 Dec 2017. (quoting KCNA).

Reuters reported that North Korea called the U.N. sanctions an act of war, which is typical rhetoric for North Korean propaganda, and should *not* be taken literally.

The latest U.N. sanctions against North Korea are an act of war and tantamount to a complete economic blockade against it, North Korea's foreign ministry said on Sunday [24 Dec], threatening to punish those who supported the measure.

....

In a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency, North Korea's foreign ministry said the United States was terrified by its nuclear force and was getting "more and more frenzied in the moves to impose the harshest-ever sanctions and pressure on our country".

The new resolution was tantamount to a complete economic blockade of North Korea, the ministry said.

"We define this 'sanctions resolution' rigged up by the U.S. and its followers as a grave infringement upon the sovereignty of our Republic, as an act of war violating peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the region and categorically reject the 'resolution'," it said.

"There is no more fatal blunder than the miscalculation that the U.S. and its followers could check by already worn-out 'sanctions' the victorious advance of our people who have brilliantly accomplished the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force", the ministry said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Nov. 29 declared the nuclear force complete after the test of North Korea's largest-ever ICBM test, which the country said puts all of the United States within range.

Kim told a meeting of members of the ruling Workers' Party on Friday [22 Dec] that the country "successfully realized the historic cause of completing the state nuclear force" despite "short supply in everything and manifold difficulties and ordeals owing to the despicable anti-DPRK moves of the enemies".

....

“We will further consolidate our self-defensive nuclear deterrence aimed at fundamentally eradicating the U.S. nuclear threats, blackmail and hostile moves by establishing the practical balance of force with the U.S,” [the North Korean foreign ministry] said.

“The U.S. should not forget even a second the entity of the DPRK which rapidly emerged as a strategic state capable of posing a substantial nuclear threat to the U.S. mainland,” it added.

North Korea said those who voted for the sanctions would face its wrath.

“Those countries that raised their hands in favour of this ‘sanctions resolution’ shall be held completely responsible for all the consequences to be caused by the ‘resolution’ and we will make sure for ever and ever that they pay heavy price for what they have done.”

Ben Blanchard & Hyonhee Shin, "North Korea says new U.N. sanctions an act of war," [Reuters](#), 14:35 GMT, 24 Dec 2017.

See also [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

North Korea again referred to having "completed" its nuclear weapons program. This is premature given North Korea's unproven ability to deliver a nuclear warhead to the USA. If the program is really completed, no further testing will be necessary. But the conventional wisdom is that North Korea will continue testing ballistic missiles, and perhaps also continue testing nuclear weapons.

North Korea's threat to make nations who voted for the sanction "pay a heavy price" is silly. Those nations who voted for the sanctions include the USA, Russia, and China — and North Korea can not defeat any *one* of them.

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On 26 December, [Reuters](#) reported that China stopped selling refined petroleum to North Korea in November 2017. But the [Chosun Ilbo](#) newspaper in South Korea reported that "U.S. reconnaissance satellites have spotted Chinese ships selling oil to North Korean vessels on the West Sea around 30 times since October."

Trump was angry that the Chinese were cheating on sanctions.

Caught RED HANDED — very disappointed that China is allowing oil to go into North Korea. There will never be a friendly solution to the North Korea problem if this continues to happen!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:24 EST, 28 Dec 2017.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2375 prohibits ship-to-ship transfers of any goods destined for North Korea. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2397 allows nations to seize ships that are violating the sanctions against North Korea. On 29 December, South Korea publicly announced that it had seized a ship registered in Hong Kong after the



ship transferred 600 tons of refined petroleum on 19 October to a North Korean ship. The seized ship is owned by a man in China, and the crew is mostly Chinese, but the refined petroleum originated in Japan. Despite what Trump said, the Chinese government appears to be innocent in this one violation of U.N. sanctions. [Yonhap](#); [South China Morning Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 29 December, [Reuters](#) reported that "Russian tankers have supplied fuel to North Korea on at least three occasions" in October and November 2017. The Russian ships transferred Russian petroleum to North Korean ships in ship-to-ship transfers at sea. Reuters says there is *no* evidence of Russian government knowledge of the illicit petroleum transfers.

On 31 December, South Korea announced that it had seized a ship registered in Panama after the ship had transferred petroleum to North Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

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## **January 2018: Continuing North Korean Problem**

On 1 January 2018, Kim Jong Un gave a public speech in North Korea. Reuters reported: Kim Jong Un on Monday [1 Jan] warned the United States he has a “nuclear button” on his desk ready for use if North Korea is threatened, but offered an olive branch to South Korea, saying he was “open to dialogue” with Seoul.

....

U.S.-based experts saw Kim’s speech as a clear attempt to divide South Korea from its main ally, the United States, which has led an international campaign to pressure North Korea to give up weapons programs aimed at developing nuclear missiles capable of hitting the United States.

....

“Implicit in Kim Jong Un’s speech is a willingness to engage with others, including the United States, on the basis of their acceptance of the ‘reality’ of North Korea’s permanent nuclear status. That’s not a basis on which the United States is prepared to engage,” [Evans Revere, another former senior U.S. diplomat who has taken part in unofficial talks with North Korean officials this year,] said.

....

After North Korea tested its most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in November, which it said was capable of delivering a warhead to anywhere in the United States, Kim declared his nuclear force complete. [Kim] continued that theme in his New Year’s address, announcing that North Korea would focus in the coming year on “mass producing nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles for operational deployment”.



Heekyong Yang & Josh Smith, "North Korea's Kim says 'open to dialogue' with South Korea, will only use nukes if threatened," [Reuters](#), 17:21 GMT, 1 Jan 2018.

*The New York Times* reported:

Beyond a New Year's declaration by North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, that he would move to the mass-production of nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles in 2018 lies a canny new strategy to initiate direct talks with South Korea in the hope of driving a wedge into its seven-decade alliance with the United States.

....

The strained relationship between the allies has been playing out for months, as Mr. Moon, a liberal, argued for economic and diplomatic openings with the North, even as Mr. Trump has worked hard to squeeze the North with increasingly punishing sanctions. Mr. Moon also angered Mr. Trump and his aides in recent months by suggesting he holds what he called a veto over any American pre-emptive military action against the North's nuclear program.

Until now Mr. Kim has largely ignored Mr. Moon, whom the North Korean media has portrayed as a spineless lackey of the United States. But the dramatic shift in tone and policy, toward bilateral talks between the two Koreas, suggests that Mr. Kim sees an opportunity to develop and accentuate the split between Mr. Moon and Mr. Trump, betting that the United States will be unable to mount greater pressure on the North if it does not have South Korean acquiescence.

The gambit may work. Hours after Mr. Kim's speech, Mr. Moon's office welcomed the North's proposal, in a way that could further aggravate tensions with the United States.

"We have already expressed our willingness to engage in a dialogue with North Korea at any time, in any place and in any format, as long as both sides can discuss restoring their relations and peace on the Korean Peninsula," said a presidential spokesman, Park Soo-hyun.

The statement emphasized the roles of the two Koreas in resolving the nuclear crisis. President Trump, in contrast, has pursued a tougher approach, saying there can be no talks without signs that the North is giving up its nuclear and missile testing, and without an understanding that the ultimate goal of any negotiations is a complete, verifiable dismantlement of the North's nuclear capability.

Choe Sang-Hun & David E. Sanger, "Kim Jong-un's Overture Could Drive a Wedge Between South Korea and the U.S.," [New York Times](#), 1 Jan 2018.

Astoundingly, Yonhap News Service in South Korea was more interested in whether North Korea would send athletes to compete in the Winter Olympics in South Korea during 9-25 February 2018, than in Kim's offer to negotiate peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Yonhap reported:

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's offer of an olive branch toward South Korea is seen as an attempt to use better inter-Korean ties to break the current stalemate amid deepening international sanctions, experts here said Monday [1 Jan].

....

The North has kept mum toward the South's July [2017] offer for military talks and dialogue for holding reunions of war-torn families. It has also rejected South Korean civilian groups' bid for aid and exchanges.

But in the New Year's message, Kim hinted at efforts to spur inter-Korean civilian exchanges and hold dialogue at various levels.

"It is noteworthy that Kim expressed active will to improve inter-Korean relations based on the announcement that his country has completed its state nuclear force," said Cheong Seong-chang, a senior research fellow at the Sejong Institute.

But while launching a peace offensive toward Seoul, the North's leader also made it clear to the U.S. that his country has no intent to give up its nuclear and missile programs.

Kim Soo-yeon, "N.K.'s olive branch toward Seoul targets breakthrough amid sanctions: experts," [Yonhap](#), 1 Jan 2018.

My comment is that it is stupid for Kim to "mass produce" the Hwasong-15 missile, based on only *one* test flight that showed the missile did *not* survive re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. The Hwasong-15 needs more engineering development and more tests, *before* it is put into production.

It may be significant that North Korea is now willing to negotiate with South Korea, just days after South Korea announced seizure of two ships that had illicitly transferred petroleum to North Korea. Stopping North Korea from evading sanctions, and significantly reducing petroleum supplies to North Korea, may have gotten Kim's attention.

On the afternoon of 2 January, Yonhap reported that South Korea proposed talks beginning 9 January. The main topic would be North Korea's participation in the Olympic games, but the two nations would also discuss "suspended inter-Korean communication channels should be immediately restored". [Yonhap](#).

On 2 January, Trump attempted to take credit for motivating North Korea to negotiate with South Korea.

Sanctions and "other" pressures are beginning to have a big impact on North Korea.

Soldiers are dangerously fleeing to South Korea. Rocket man now wants to talk to

South Korea for first time. Perhaps that is good news, perhaps not — we will see!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:08 EST, 2 Jan 2018.

Trump's "for the first time" is wrong. North and South Korea held high-level talks as recently as December 2015. [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#).

Later, Trump boasted that he had more nuclear weapons, and more powerful nuclear weapons, than Kim.

North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un just stated that the "Nuclear Button is on his desk

at all times.” Will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:49 EST, 2 Jan 2018.

Obviously, just *one* nuclear weapon with a 20 kiloton yield can destroy a medium-sized city. One does *not* need megaton-yield nuclear weapon to kill hundreds of thousands of people in a city, so Trump's "more powerful" is irrelevant. Notice that Trump's confrontational taunt is in response to North Korea's offer to *negotiate* with South Korea. Trump's taunt follows his tweet earlier in the day, in which Trump again used the derisive "RocketMan" to refer to Kim. Journalists and commentators were aghast at Trump's childish taunt. See e.g., [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [The Guardian](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#). My comment is that this childish taunt clearly shows that Trump is unfit to be president of the USA.

At 16:35 Korean time, 3 January 2018, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea restored telephone communications between the two Koreas at the truce village of Panmunjom. North Korea had shut the telephone line in February 2016, in retaliation for South Korea closing the joint manufacturing plant at Kaesong in North Korea.

At 17:41 Korean time, 4 January 2018, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea had *not* responded to South Korea's offer two days ago to begin talks on 9 January.

Early on the morning of 4 January, Trump tweeted:

With all of the failed “experts” weighing in, does anybody really believe that talks and dialogue would be going on between North and South Korea right now if I wasn’t firm, strong and willing to commit our total “might” against the North. Fools, but talks are a good thing!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:32 EST, 4 Jan 2018.

My comment is that it is astounding that, after Trump repeatedly undercut Tillerson's efforts to negotiate with North Korea beginning on 1 October, Trump now takes credit for making talks possible. After Trump said on 1 October 2017 that negotiations would be a waste of time, Trump now says "talks are a good thing!" Trump is wildly inconsistent.

Later on 4 January, Trump agreed with president Moon of South Korea to postpone military exercises until after the Olympics in February. [Washington Post](#); [Yonhap](#). [Yonhap](#) reported the military exercises will occur in April 2018.

At 10:49 Korean time on 5 January, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea accepted South Korea's offer of talks to begin on 9 January.

On 5 January 2018, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Robert Kelly — a professor of international relations at Pusan National University in South Korea — predicted that North Korea will expect South Korea to pay for the North to participate in the Olympics, treating the talks as “a shakedown racket.”

On 6 January 2018, at a short press conference at Camp David, Trump said:

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think so. I spoke with the President, as you know — with President Moon of South Korea. He thanked me very much for my tough stance. And you know, for 25 years, they haven't been using a tough stance. They've been giving everything.

When you look at what Bill Clinton did — and you've seen the famous clip where Bill Clinton wants to give them everything, and where I said, years ago, with Russert on Meet the Press — many years ago, I talked to — I don't think anything has changed. You have to have a certain attitude and you have to be prepared to do certain things. And I'm totally prepared to do that.

But President Moon called me, and we had a great discussion a couple of days ago, and he thanked me very much. And I hope it works out. I very much want to see it work out between the two countries. I'd like to see them getting involved in the Olympics and maybe things go from there. So I'm behind that 100 percent.

He actually thanked me. He said — and a lot of people have said, a lot of people have written — that without my rhetoric and without my tough stance — and it's not just a stance — I mean, this is — this is what has to be done, if it has to be done — that they wouldn't be talking about Olympics, that they wouldn't be talking right now.

QUESTION: Are you comfortable that they're not also taking the conversation beyond the Olympics while he continues to —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope they do. I hope they do. I would love to see them take it beyond the Olympics. We have a very good relationship with South Korea. I would love to see it go far beyond the Olympics, absolutely.

And at the appropriate time, we'll get involved. But I like the idea of their dealing on the Olympics. That should be between those two countries.

....

QUESTION: Just to follow up on the conversations between North Korea and South Korea, are you willing to engage in phone talks with Kim Jong-un right now?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure. I always believe in talking.

QUESTION: Do you think that that would be helpful?

THE PRESIDENT: But we have a very firm stance. Look, our stance — you know what it is. We're very firm. But I would be — absolutely I would do that. No problem with that at all.

....

THE PRESIDENT: .... Look, right now, they're talking Olympics. It's a start. It's a big start. If I weren't involved, they wouldn't be talking about Olympics right now.

They'd be doing no talking or it would be much more serious.

He knows I'm not messing around. I'm not messing around — not even a little bit, not even 1 percent. He understands that. At the same time, if we can come up with a very peaceful and very good solution — we're working on it with Rex and we're working on it with a lot of people — if something can happen and something can come out of those talks, that would be a great thing for all of humanity. That would be a great thing for the world. Very important, okay?

"Remarks by President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and House Speaker Paul Ryan After Congressional Republican Leadership Retreat," [White House](#), noon, 6 Jan 2018.

At the 6 January press conference, Trump reiterated what he said in his 4 January tweet about talks being desirable. Trump said he hoped the agenda for the talks that begin on 9 January would go beyond the North's participation in the Olympics. Trump also repeated what he had said way back on 1 May 2017: that he would be willing to negotiate with Kim Jong Un. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Yonhap](#). Trump appears unconcerned about North Korea driving a wedge between South Korea and the USA.

### **9 January 2018: Talks between North & South Korea**

On 9 January in Korea, North Korea immediately agreed to send athletes to the Olympic games in South Korea. North Korea will also send a delegation of high-ranking officials and journalists to the Olympics. Furthermore, North Korea accepted the South's offer of military talks, but the North declined to discuss reunions of families separated by the Korean war in the early 1950s. [Yonhap](#).

[Reuters](#) reported: "North Korea said on Tuesday [9 Jan] it would not discuss its nuclear weapons in coming talks with Seoul because they were aimed only at the United States, not its 'brethren' in South Korea."

On 9 January, North Korea promised to resume tomorrow a military telephone line on the west coast between the two Koreas. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

North and South Korea released a Joint Press Release at the end of their one-day high-level meeting on 9 January 2018. The unofficial English-translation at the South Korea Unification Ministry website says:

The inter-Korean high-level talks were held at Panmunjom on January 9, 2018.

South and North Korea sincerely discussed issues regarding North Korea's participation in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics and Paralympics, as well as ways to improve inter-Korean relations to meet the desire and expectations of all Koreans.

The South and North agreed as follows:

1. South and North Korea will actively cooperate to ensure that the PyeongChang Winter Olympics and Paralympics be held successfully and improve the status of

Korean nationals.

In this regard, the North stated that it will send delegates of its National Olympic Committee, athletes, cheering and performing squads, observers, Taekwondo demonstrators, and reporters together with high-level delegates to the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. The South will ensure necessary accommodations for the visiting North Koreans.

The two sides are to hold working-level talks regarding the dispatch of an advanced team for a preliminary site visit and the North's participation in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. The schedule will be shared and negotiated through document exchange.

2. The South and North will put joint efforts to ease military tensions, create a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula, and promote national reconciliation and unity.

Both sides recognized the need to resolve current military tensions, and agreed to hold inter-Korean military dialogue.

The two sides will activate contact, come-and-go, and exchange and cooperation in various fields, and promote national reconciliation and unity.

3. South and North Korea respect previous inter-Korean agreements, and as directly-concerned parties on matters pertaining to the Korean Peninsula, will resolve all issues raised in inter-Korean relations through dialogue and negotiation.

To this end, the two sides will hold talks in various areas, along with high-level government talks to improve inter-Korean relations.

"Joint Press Release of the Inter-Korean High-Level Government Talks,"  
[Ministry of Unification](#), 10 Jan 2018.

Notice that South Korea "will ensure necessary accommodations for the visiting North Koreans". That means South Korea will pay for the hotel rooms for hundreds of North Koreans. A quick estimate of the cost to South Korea is US\$2.4 million for a delegation of 400 people, for 20 days, at US\$300/day.

### **10-11 January 2018: Trump's reaction to Korean talks**

On 10 January, Trump had a telephone call with the president of South Korea. The [White House](#) press release said: "The two leaders underscored the importance of continuing the maximum pressure campaign against North Korea. President Trump expressed his openness to holding talks between the United States and North Korea at the appropriate time, under the right circumstances."

On 10 January, before a cabinet meeting, Trump told journalists:

I just spoke to President Moon. He's very thankful for what we've done. They're having talks with North Korea. We'll see how that happens. He felt that the initial talk was extremely good. Had a lot of good comment. Rex [Tillerson] was on the phone, and Nikki [Haley] has been totally briefed.

But we had a very, very good conversation, and we'll see where it goes. He's very thankful for what we've done. It was so reported today that we were the ones — without our attitude, that would have never happened. Who knows where it leads. Hopefully, it will lead to success for the world — not just for our country, but for the world. And we'll be seeing over the next number of weeks and months what happens. Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 10 Jan 2018.

On 11 January, the U.S. Air Force deployed three B-2 stealth bombers to Guam, to augment the strike force against North Korea. [Washington Post](#); [Yonhap](#). My comment is that this deployment is a needless provocation to North Korea, and possibly interferes with reduction of military tension on the Korean peninsula.

On 11 January, Trump gave an interview to *The Wall Street Journal*:

President Donald Trump said he believes he has developed a positive relationship with North Korea's leader despite their mutual public insults, suggesting he is open to diplomacy after months of escalating tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program.

"I probably have a very good relationship with Kim Jong Un," Mr. Trump said in an interview Thursday [11 Jan] with The Wall Street Journal. "I have relationships with people. I think you people are surprised."

Asked if he has spoken with Mr. Kim, Mr. Trump said: "I don't want to comment on it. I'm not saying I have or haven't. I just don't want to comment."

Mr. Trump's remarks on North Korea, with which the U.S. has no formal diplomatic relations, came in a wide-ranging, 45-minute interview in the Oval Office about the first year of his presidency.

Michael C. Bender, Louise Radnofsky, Peter Nicholas, and Rebecca Ballhaus, "Donald Trump Signals Openness to North Korea Diplomacy in Interview," [Wall Street Journal](#), updated 20:21 EST, 11 Jan 2018.

"Transcript of Donald Trump Interview With The Wall Street Journal," [Wall Street Journal](#), (requires subscription), updated 19:15 EST, 11 Jan 2018.

My comment is that Trump is delusional if he believes that he has a "very good relationship with Kim Jong Un". Trump has repeatedly insulted Kim, as described above, since 17 Sep 2017. Kim believes that Trump wants to invade North Korea and do regime change, to remove Kim from power. North Korea has one of the worst human rights records in the entire world. This is *not* a friendly relationship between Trump and Kim.

On 14 January — three days after the transcript of the interview was published — Trump



claimed there was a transcription error: "I" should be "I'd" in "I probably have a very good relationship with Kim Jong Un". That tiny detail changes the meaning of the sentence from describing a current relationship to predicting a future relationship. The Wall Street Journal said the original transcript was correct and declined to make Trump's suggested correction. The Washington Post reported: "Listening to the recordings, it is difficult to tell whether Trump said "I" or "I'd."" [Wall Street Journal](#)(twitter); [Trump](#)(twitter); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 17 January, Trump gave an exclusive interview to Reuters, in which Trump was again skeptical of negotiations with North Korea:

With North Korea persisting as the major global challenge facing Trump this year, the president cast doubt on whether talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would be useful. In the past he has not ruled out direct talks with Kim.

"I'd sit down, but I'm not sure that sitting down will solve the problem," he said, noting that past negotiations with the North Koreans by his predecessors had failed to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

....

Trump said he hoped the standoff with Pyongyang could be resolved "in a peaceful way, but it's very possible that it can't."

Steve Holland, Roberta Rampton, & Jeff Mason, "Exclusive: Trump accuses Russia of helping North Korea evade sanctions; says U.S. needs more missile defense," [Reuters](#), 19:44 EST, 17 Jan 2018.

As usual, Trump gave *no* reason for his change of opinion.

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### **Hawaii state government proves its incompetence**

On 13 January at 08:07 Hawaii time, a state government employee sent a false alarm to hundreds of thousands of cell phones that said: "BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL." At 08:45, the state finally sent a cancellation notice to the cellphones. For 38 minutes, residents of Hawaii were in a panic. [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(timeline); [Reuters](#); [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#)(panic); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Hawaii's system can provide 12 minutes of warning before a North Korean missile strikes the island. [Reuters](#).

My comment is underground shelters for nuclear weapon attacks were common in cities during the 1950s, but abandoned long ago. Obviously, residents of Hawaii were totally unprepared for an attack by North Korea. If the U.S. president is going to pursue a militaristic policy and threaten North Korea with annihilation, the least the U.S. Government can do is build shelters for its citizens and stock those shelters with food and water. Currently, the only thing residents of Hawaii can do with 12 minutes of warning is select a nearby place to die.

The [Washington Post](#) and [CNN](#) explained how the false alert in Hawaii occurred:

1. From a drop-down menu in a computer program, the state employee had two options: “Test missile alert” and “Missile alert.” He erroneously chose the latter.
2. A confirmation box appeared on the computer display, and the state employee erroneously chose "yes" to send the alert.
3. There was *no* procedure at the state emergency agency for correcting a false alert, so it took 38 minutes to send a second cell phone message that cancelled the alert.

The combination of poorly designed software and an inattentive employee resulted in a state-wide panic.

A 51-year old man suffered a massive heart attack after calling his children to say goodbye. [Star-Advertiser](#).

On 30 January 2018, journalists reported on the results of a preliminary investigation that showed the state employee deliberately chose to send the attack warning. The employee had a history of confusing drills with real attacks. The employee had his employment terminated on 26 Jan. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Star-Advertiser](#).

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On 31 January 2018, the U.S. Navy tested its Aegis Ashore Ballistic Missile Defense system in Hawaii. The intercept *failed*. A test in June 2017 also failed, but there was a successful test in August 2017. [CNN](#); [Defense News](#); [Aviation Week](#)(2Feb).

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### **16 Jan 2018: Meeting in Vancouver, Canada**

On 15 January, foreign ministers from 20 nations arrived in Vancouver Canada for a one-day meeting on 16 January. Canadian government officials hope to send a message to Trump to stop the belligerent threats and insults, and support negotiations with North Korea. Canadian "officials insist the goal of the summit is to find ways to tone down the escalating — ‘my nuclear button is bigger than your nuclear button’ — rhetoric."

[Canadian Broadcasting Corp](#)(15Jan); [Canadian Broadcasting Corp](#)(12Jan).

On 16 January, Tillerson and four other foreign ministers made remarks to journalists *before* the Vancouver meeting began. Here is the substance of what Tillerson said:

Well, first let me thank [Canadian] Foreign Minister Freeland for agreeing to cohost this event, and also thanks to Canada for allowing us to meet in Vancouver as well. North Korea is just one of many security issues of which the United States knows we can rely on our neighbor and friend, Canada, for close alignment. I also want to recognize Foreign Minister Kang, the Republic of Korea’s [sic] Foreign Minister Kono, and thank them for joining us as well. As allies, their nations have been at the center of the maximum pressure campaign against the DPRK, and our lockstep coordination with them will continue. The United States extends its appreciation to all nations here for their efforts to date in the pressure campaign.

This assembly of representative countries of the original UN Command sending states are all represented by foreign ministers and diplomats. These are nations that answered the call almost or about 60 years ago to fight for freedom on the Korean Peninsula, to ensure freedom would be preserved on the Korean Peninsula, and through great sacrifice secured freedom on the Korean Peninsula for the people of the Republic of Korea. And while that conflict remains frozen in time with an armistice, all of these nations have never lost their interest in ensuring freedom is maintained on the peninsula.

And I think as President Trump highlighted so well in his remarks to the Republic of Korea's General Assembly in November, the differences between freedom and democracy for the people of the Republic of Korea is striking when compared to the conditions of life for the people who live under the tyranny of the regime in North Korea. And it is only a threat of this nature, a serious nuclear weapons threat, that would unite what were once enemies — the sending states with China — in a common goal to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. And the sending states stand shoulder-to-shoulder with China, with the Republic of Korea, with Japan, with Russia, and is now joined by the entire international community in saying to the regime in North Korea we cannot and will not accept you as a nuclear state.

It has been nearly one year since the United States in concert with our allies and partners initiated the global campaign to maximize pressure against North Korea. As it was in the beginning, the great goal of the pressure campaign is to cut off the sources of funding that the DPRK uses to finance its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Additionally, we must increase the cost of the regime's behavior to the point that North Korea comes to the table for credible negotiations.

The object of negotiations, if and when we get there, is the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. All nations here today are united on that goal. Let me clear: We will not allow North Korea to drive a wedge through our resolve or our solidarity. We reject a "freeze-for-freeze" approach in which legitimate defensive military exercises are placed on the same level of equivalency as the DPRK's unlawful actions.

The pressure campaign will continue until North Korea takes decisive steps to denuclearize. This is a strategy that has and will require patience, but thanks to everyone's support at this table and around the world, the regime is already facing costs that it is having difficulty bearing. The purpose of our meetings today is to improve the effectiveness of the maximum pressure campaign and combat North Korea's attempts to evade sanctions. The United States looks forward to hearing from all participants on how we can best do that.

Today the United States is encouraged by the steps that nations around the world have already taken. In 2017, the UN Security Council passed three unanimous resolutions, levying the toughest-ever sanctions on North Korea. And nations around the world have taken their own unilateral actions, such as expelling North Korean laborers, closing North Korean embassies, and banning the importation of North Korean goods. The United States commends those nations for taking these actions.

This progress is encouraging, but we cannot be complacent. Kim Jong-un's regime continues to threaten international peace and security through unlawful ballistic missile and nuclear tests. I ask you to take a look at a map behind me, and this is to make the point of the equivalency of military — defensive military exercises and their irresponsible testing. The map is a snapchat of air traffic in Asia on the morning of Friday, January the 12th — a rather ordinary day. Each plane icon represents a plane passing through the region, and as you can see, a lot of activity is in the skies each day.

The potential for a North Korean missile or parts of it to affect civilian aircraft is real. On November 28th, individuals on the flight traveling from San Francisco to Hong Kong witnessed with their own eyes parts of the North Korea ICBM test flying through the sky. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, the flight was 280 nautical miles from point of impact, and at the time there were nine other flights within that range. Over the course of that day, according to the Department of Defense, an estimated 716 flights were due to pass within that range. The FAA says the total available seats on those 716 flights were 152,110. That's a lot of people from a lot of countries being put at risk by an irresponsible testing of ballistic missiles.

My point is this: North Korea's willingness to launch missiles at any time presents a threat to people of all nationalities in the region's air space each day. Based on its past recklessness, we cannot expect North Korea to have any regard for what might get in the way of one of its missiles or part of a missile breaking apart. This is to say nothing of potential technological errors associated with a launch that could result in disaster.

Of course, this is hardly the only threat or likeliest threat posed by North Korean missiles. Twice last year, North Korea launched missiles over Japan, which could have fallen on population centers. The North Korean threat has many dimensions, all of which must be countered. The regime has shown a recklessness among the nations of the world. Based on its actions now, we can see what North Korea may very well do later if it obtains complete nuclear and missile delivery capabilities.

When we consider the DPRK has avowed strikes on civilian targets, that Oslo is nearer to Pyongyang than Seattle, that London is nearer to North Korea than Los Angeles, that Amsterdam, Ankara, Brussels, Beijing, Paris, and Moscow are nearer than New York City, we see a global problem requiring a global solution. In light of North Korea's steep trajectory of regression, we must implement a permanent and peaceful solution to avert a future crisis. North Korea's provocations have been and continue to be met with clear and substantial consequences, as are appropriate.

First, we all must insist a full enforcement of UN Security Council sanctions, as this is the letter of the law. We especially urge Russia and China in this matter. Full implementation is an essential measure for the security of their people and a clear indication of their willingness to honor their international commitments. We cannot abide lapses or sanctions evasions. We will continue to call attention to and designate entities and individuals complicit in such evasive actions.

Second, we all must work together to improve maritime interdiction operations. We

must put an end to illicit ship-to-ship transfers that undermine UN sanctions. And third, there must be new consequences for the regime whenever new aggression occurs.

We recognize that no one action or resolution will compel North Korea to give up its nuclear program, but if all countries cut off or significantly limit their economic and diplomatic engagements with North Korea, the sum total of our individual national efforts will increase the chances of a negotiated resolution. Our nations desire a future for North Korea, but the ultimate responsibility for producing that new future lies with North Korea. Only by abandoning its current path can North Korea achieve the security and stability it desires and a prosperous future for its people.

On behalf of the United States, I look forward to sharing ideas today with our allies and partners to strengthen the maximum pressure campaign and provide a pathway to security for all of our people as a result. Thank you.

Tillerson, "Remarks With Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland, South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono, and UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson At the Vancouver Foreign Ministers' Meeting On Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula," [U.S. State Dept](#), 16 Jan 2018.

Note that Tillerson once mistakenly identified Japanese Foreign Minister Kono as coming from "the Republic of Korea".

My comment is that it is important that Tillerson emphasize the recklessness of North Korea testing ballistic missiles that land in the Sea of Japan, where there are frequent commercial airplane flights. Tillerson did *not* mention that there are also numerous ships in the Sea of Japan, including U.S. Navy warships. Years ago, North Korea gave advance warning of target areas for its missile tests, but North Korea has not given advance warning in 2017.

*After* the Vancouver meeting, Tillerson again spoke to journalists:

The steps [representatives of the UN Command sending states along with our trilateral partners — the Republic of Korea and Japan] and indeed the broader international community have taken and will take to implement the maximum pressure campaign are essential to resolving this situation through diplomatic means, as the United States hopes to do. Our nations repeated a unified message that we have sent the regime before: We will not accept a nuclear-armed North Korea. All of us share one policy and one goal, and that is the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Our unity and our common cause with others in the region, most particularly China and Russia, will remain intact despite North Korea's frequent attempts to divide us and sow dissension. Today we discussed ways to further increase pressure on North Korea through more effective sanctions implementation and compliance, and countries came forward with proposals on how they intend to do that. We agreed that the need for UN member-states, especially China and Russia, to fully implement agreed-upon sanctions is essential to their success.

We discussed the importance of working together to counter sanctions evasion and smuggling. And we also issued a call to action to strengthen global maritime

interdiction operations to foil the illicit ship-to-ship transfers. In doing so, let me be clear: We do not seek to interfere with legitimate maritime activities. Our diplomats in New York will continue to press for tighter sanctions on the DPRK should there be subsequent provocations.

The goal of the maximum pressure campaign is and always has been to move North Korea towards credible negotiations on denuclearization. And our diplomatic talks have always been backed up by a strong and resolute military option. Today, however, we had constructive discussions about how to push our diplomatic efforts forward and prepare for the prospects of talks.

But productive negotiations require a credible negotiating partner. North Korea has not yet shown themselves to be that credible partner. The United States has always been open to clear messages that North Korea — and we have sent clear messages to North Korea that we are ready for serious negotiations. North Koreans know our channels are open, and they know where to find us. But a sustained cessation of North Korea's threatening behavior is necessary — is a necessary indicator of whether the regime is truly ready to pursue a peaceful, diplomatic resolution to the security threat that it has created.

Our nations must remain united on sustaining pressure until North Korea takes concrete steps toward and ultimately reaches denuclearization. Again, I thank Foreign Minister Freeland for Canada's resolve and determination in finding a diplomatic solution for denuclearizing the North Korean situation. The same goes for all other nations that were here with us today as well. And I thank our allies, Japan and the Republic of Korea. And finally, the United States extends our best wishes for a very successful Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Thank you.

....

QUESTION [by Barbara Plett Usher, BBC]: Mr. Tillerson, you've made quite clear that you want this issue solved through diplomacy backed up by strong resolute options, as you just said. There are many reports of talk in the White House about the option of a limited military strike, a so-called "bloody nose" that would send a message to North Korea rather than start a war. Do you think that's a bad idea?

And in a related question, if I may, sir, the question that's in the minds of many Americans especially after the false missile alert at the weekend, do Americans need to be worried about a possible war with Korea?

[Third question, which Tillerson refused to answer, omitted here.]

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Well, I'm not going to comment on issues that have yet to be decided among the National Security Council or the President, so I have no comment on the, quote, "bloody nose," as you named it.

With respect to whether Americans should be concerned about a war with North Korea, I think it's — we all need to be very sober and clear-eyed about the current

situation. As North Korea has continued to make significant advances in both its nuclear weapons, the lethality of those weapons as demonstrated by their last thermonuclear test as well as the continued progress they've made in their intercontinental ballistic missile systems, we have to recognize that that threat is growing. And if North Korea is not — does not choose the pathway of engagement, discussion, negotiation, then they themselves will trigger an option.

I think our approach is, in terms of having North Korea choose the correct step, is to present them with that is the best option, that talks are the best option, that when they look at the — a military situation, that's not a good outcome for them. When they look at the economic impact of ever-growing sanctions and the pressure campaign, there is no — there is no end to that. And I think for North Korea and the regime, what we hope they are able to realize is the situation only gets worse. It gets worse with each step they take, it gets worse with time. And that is not working to their objectives of wanting to be secure. They are not more secure. They are becoming less secure. They certainly are not more economically prosperous. They're becoming less prosperous.

And we do think that that message is beginning to — I don't want to say resonate with them, but there is a realization with them that the rest of the world is quite resolute in this stand we're taking that we will never accept them as a nuclear power. And so it's time to talk, but they have to take the step that says they want to talk.

....

Again, just as I said in my remarks, what is the purpose of the maximum pressure campaign? It is intended to cause North Korea to engage as a credible negotiating partner in addressing a pathway to a denuclearization of the peninsula. That is the purpose of the maximum pressure campaign. So we all are working towards the same goal with the same set of tactics.

"Remarks With Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland at a Press Availability," [U.S. State Dept](#), 16 Jan 2018.

Summarizing Tillerson's position, in somewhat different words than Tillerson used: The purpose of the economic sanctions is to force North Korea to agree to abandon its nuclear weapons program (and also abandon its ballistic missile program?), and to negotiate. *If* North Korea refuses to abandon its weapons, then their decision will cause the U.S. to make military strikes on North Korea to destroy their weapons and weapons factories, because "we will never accept them as a nuclear power." Before the U.S. Government will negotiate with North Korea, "a sustained cessation of North Korea's threatening behavior is necessary".

There was *no* communiqué issued at the meeting in Vancouver. A written communiqué would be useful to memorialize whatever was decided at that meeting.

There are three big problems with the meeting in Vancouver:

1. The list of nations attending the Vancouver meeting was initially those nations who fought alongside South Korea in the Korean war in the early 1950s, plus Japan. Later the list of nations attending the Vancouver meeting was expanded to include India,



Greece, Belgium, Colombia, and Luxembourg. But North Korea's traditional allies, China and Russia, were *not* invited. Excluding China and Russia not only omits indispensable parties, but also may fracture a delicate consensus at the United Nations Security Council, where China and Russia each have veto power.

2. Trump will ignore whatever the foreign ministers decide in Vancouver. Gary Mason, writing in the [Globe&Mail](#), said: "Mr. Trump's inability to follow even the simplest of scripts was always going to be a problem that threatened to undermine the value of anything accomplished at the international summit on North Korea in Vancouver on Tuesday.... You have to be able to count on your partners in order to have a plan. Yet, Rex Tillerson, the U.S. Secretary of State, doesn't know from one day to the next what fresh global tempest his boss is going to touch off."
3. A one-day meeting is *not* long enough to discuss and explore various alternatives for convincing North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The one-day meeting was barely long enough for the foreign ministers to give speeches on their nation's position.

The meeting in Vancouver reminds me of Hillary Clinton's Friends of the Syrian People, a group of anti-Assad foreign ministers who met for 16 one-day meetings, issued communiqués, and accomplished absolutely nothing.

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### Negotiations continue

On 12 January, [Yonhap](#) reported that "North Korea's propaganda outlet [website Uriminzokkiri] called for the total suspension of joint military drills between South Korea and the United States on Friday [12 Jan], in response to the allies' decision to delay them until after the PyeongChang Winter Olympics." My comment is that this is the beginning of the North driving a wedge between South Korea and the USA. On 25 January, the [Chosun Ilbo](#) newspaper reported that the [North] Korean Central News Agency made the same proposal. Note that North Korea is *not* offering anything (e.g., moratorium on weapons tests) in exchange for South Korea ending military drills with the USA.

On 15 January 2018, working-level delegations from North and South Korea met and agreed that North Korea will send a 140-member "art troupe" to give performances in two cities in South Korea. The so-called "art troupe" is actually an 80-member orchestra, plus dancers and singers. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

On 16 January, North Korea finally replied to Trump's belligerent tweet on 2 January. The *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper in North Korea wrote: "The spasm of Trump in the new year reflects the desperate mental state of a loser who failed to check the vigorous advance of the army and people of the DPRK. He is making (a) bluff only to be diagnosed as a psychopath." [Associated Press](#). The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) summarized the newspaper article: "Trump's bluff is regarded by the DPRK as just a spasm of a lunatic frightened by the might of Juche Korea and a bark of a rabid dog." [Washington Post](#).

On 17 January, working-level delegations from North and South Korea met and agreed their

athletes would march together in the Olympic opening ceremonies, and they would have a "joint women's ice hockey team" in the Olympic games. Also "the North will send a 230-member cheering squad and a 30-member taekwondo demonstration team to the South." [Yonhap](#). The previous day, the South Korean women's ice hockey coach said that adding North Korean athletes would "damage" South Korean athletes. The so-called "damage" is apparently "South Korean players may be robbed of a chance to play". The coach also worries about political pressure to put less qualified North Korean athletes in the Olympic games. [Yonhap](#).

On 17 January, the working-level delegations from North and South Korea met and also agreed that Korean athletes would train at the Masikryong resort, which Kim Jong Un ordered built. The Masikryong resort opened in 2013, but with 30-year old ski lifts, because of sanctions on North Korea. The South Koreans will presumably pay more than US\$ 300/night for hotel rooms at the Masikryong resort. The South Koreans could train at ski resorts in South Korea that have modern equipment and cheaper fees. [Chosun Ilbo](#). On 26 January, [Yonhap](#) reported that a South Korean team returned from an inspection tour of the Masikryong resort and declared it was "good enough".

On 18 January, [Reuters](#) reported that a Gallup Korea opinion poll shows president Moon's approval rating fell from 73% last week to 67% "after a public backlash over a decision for South and North Korea to field a joint ice hockey team at next month's Winter Olympics." See also [Associated Press](#). My comment is that his approval rating should fall further when South Koreans realize how much money they are paying for hotel rooms for the huge North Korean delegation to the Olympics.

On Friday, 19 January, North Korea abruptly cancelled the visit tomorrow by a seven-member advance team for the "art troupe". North Korea did *not* give a reason for the cancellation, and it is not known whether the visit is "permanently canceled or postponed." [Yonhap](#). But on 20 January, North Korea said the visit would begin tomorrow. North Korea did *not* give a reason for one-day delay. [Yonhap](#). This is an example of the abrupt changes by North Korea without explanation that cause frustration when dealing with North Korea.

On 20 January, the International Olympic Committee made an extraordinary approval for North Korea to send 22 athletes and 24 officials, including coaches, to the Olympic games. The approval was extraordinary, because the North Korean athletes did *not* qualify for the games in the usual way. For the unified women's hockey team, "South Korea named 23 players on Thursday [18 Jan], and North Korea will add 12 players. Game rosters are set at 22, with 20 skaters and two goalies, and the head coach Sarah Murray will have to pick at least three North Koreans for each match." [Yonhap](#).

On 25 January, the dozen North Korean women's ice hockey players arrived in South Korea for training. The first Olympic game for the team will be on 10 February, giving only 15 days to train the North Koreans and integrate the new joint team. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). In contrast, the South Korean team has been training since February 2017. [Yonhap](#).

On 25 January 2018, [Reuters](#) reported: "The controversy [over the unified women's ice hockey team] has sent South Korean President Moon Jae-in's overall approval rating below 60 percent for the first time since he took office in May last year, according to a survey

released on Thursday [25 Jan] by South Korean pollster Realmeter, dropping more than 6 percentage points since last week." See also [Chosun Ilbo](#). On 24 January, [CNBC](#) reported that "... critics say South Korean President Moon Jae-In's recent actions — allowing athletes from both sides of the border to march under the Korean Unification Flag and the approval of a joint women's ice hockey team — reveal a leader who is pandering to the rogue state."

Also on 25 January, [Reuters](#) reported: "Early on Thursday [25 Jan], North Korea sent a rare announcement addressed to 'all Koreans at home and abroad', saying they should make a 'breakthrough' for unification without the help of other countries, its state media said. All Koreans should 'promote contact, travel, cooperation between North and South Korea' while adding Pyongyang will 'smash' all challenges against reunification of the Korean peninsula." This is another proposal by North Korea to drive a wedge between South Korea and the USA. After Korea is unified, the Korean government would presumably expel the U.S. Military from Korea. The peaceful reunification is a dream, as there is *no* easy resolution of whether a unified Korea would have a democratic government like South Korea or a Stalinist dictatorship like North Korea.

On 25 January 2018, [Reuters](#) reported that North Korea shipped coal to Russia "at least three times" since 5 Aug 2017. The coal was then loaded onto different ships that delivered the coal to South Korea and Japan. This is a continuing violation of U.N. sanctions by Russia.

On 23 January 1968, the North Korean Navy seized the USS Pueblo and her crew. The ship is still proudly displayed by North Korea on the Potong River in Pyongyang. The U.S. Government was forced to admit that the USS Pueblo had "illegally intruded into the territorial waters of North Korea", in order to get the release of 82 sailors. [Associated Press](#); [Wall Street Journal](#). My comment is that this fifty-year old incident reminds us that the North Korean government has a long history of misbehaving. The USS Pueblo fared better than the South Korean Navy ship, Cheonan, that North Korea sunk in March 2010, killing 46 sailors.

On 27 January 2018, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea declared that the South Korean military alliance with the USA "may also lead to an end of ongoing dialogue between the two Koreas". My comment is that this is another attempt to drive a wedge between South Korea and the USA. Beginning 12 January, North Korea has made a series of propaganda statements that may be attempts to probe how far North Korea can push President Moon.

On 29 January 2018, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea had abruptly canceled a joint cultural event at Mt. Kumgang on 4 February. The North Koreans were miffed by what they claimed were "'biased' media reports about the upcoming event" and also media reports of a military parade scheduled in Pyongyang on 8 February. My comment is that the event at Mt. Kumgang is of only symbolic significance, what is important is the abrupt change by North Korea causes frustration when dealing with unreliable North Korea.

Trump had chosen Victor Cha as his ambassador to South Korea. But Cha opposed Trump's "bloody nose" preemptive strike on North Korea. So Trump decided *not* to nominate Cha. ([Washington Post](#)) On 30 January, Cha retaliated with an op-ed in the [Washington Post](#) that carefully explained why Trump's preemptive strike "carries a huge risk to Americans". On 1 February, [Yonhap](#) distributed an editorial by JoongAng newspaper that expresses worry that

Trump will unilaterally order a preemptive military strike on North Korea. See also [Yonhap](#); [CNBC](#).

### 30 Jan 2018: Trump's SOTU speech

On the night of 30 January 2018, Trump read his State of the Union (SOTU) speech. Here is part of what Trump said about North Korea.

But no regime has oppressed its own citizens more totally or brutally than the cruel dictatorship in North Korea. North Korea's reckless pursuit of nuclear missiles could very soon threaten our homeland. We are waging a campaign of maximum pressure to prevent that from ever happening.

Past experience has taught us that complacency and concessions only invite aggression and provocation. I will not repeat the mistakes of past administrations that got us into this very dangerous position.

We need only look at the depraved character of the North Korean regime to understand the nature of the nuclear threat it could pose to America and to our allies.

Otto Warmbier was a hardworking student at the University of Virginia — and a great student he was. On his way to study abroad in Asia, Otto joined a tour to North Korea. At its conclusion, this wonderful young man was arrested and charged with crimes against the state. After a shameful trial, the dictatorship sentenced Otto to 15 years of hard labor, before returning him to America last June, horribly injured and on the verge of death. He passed away just days after his return.

Otto's wonderful parents, Fred and Cindy Warmbier, are here with us tonight, along with Otto's brother and sister, Austin and Greta. Please. (Applause.) Incredible people. You are powerful witnesses to a menace that threatens our world, and your strength truly inspires us all. Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause.)

Tonight, we pledge to honor Otto's memory with total American resolve. Thank you. (Applause.)

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in State of the Union Address," [White House](#), begins 21:10 EST, 30 Jan 2018.

Trump did *not* mention that Otto was a thief who stole a North Korean government propaganda banner from a hotel. It is silly to make foreign policy in response to Otto's severe punishment by North Korea, as well as North Korea putting Otto in a coma. The consequences of war with North Korea are at least tens of thousands of times worse than the death of Otto.

In the paragraphs after Otto quoted above, Trump rambled about the life story of Ji Seong-ho, a defector from North Korean. After four paragraphs — all irrelevant to topic of the SOTU speech — Trump said: "Seong-ho's story is a testament to the yearning of every human soul to live in freedom. It was that same yearning for freedom that nearly 250 years ago gave birth to a special place called America." We do *not* need a history lesson while

trying to learn what Trump is going to do to the USA during 2018.

The [Korea Herald](#) said: "[Trump's] message is that (the North Korean) regime is not one that can co-exist with the values the US has defended since the country's foundation,' said Cha Du-hyeogn, a visiting research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. .... 'This is very serious (message). This implies that US-North Korea dialogue, denuclearization talks will be difficult and should not be hoped for.'"

Writing in the [Washington Post](#), Elizabeth Saunders said "By threatening a war that South Korea understandably wants to avoid, Trump risks allowing North Korea to drive a wedge between the United States and its longtime South Korean ally. .... ... in the absence of war, Trump's rhetoric may ultimately mean that the United States simply has less influence over what happens in North Korea than it otherwise would."

On 4 February, the North Korean government reacted to Trump's SOTU speech. Predictably, the North Koreans did *not* approve of Trump's speech: "Our self-reliant defense capability with the nuclear force as its backbone will, however, completely deter Trump and his lackeys from showing off on the Korean peninsula." [Yonhap](#).

On 2 February, Trump met at the White House with seven defectors from North Korea.

I also spoke to Prime Minister Abe of Japan, and we also had a very good call. So it's a very tricky situation. We're going to find out how it goes. But we think the Olympics will go very nicely. And after that, who knows. We'll find out. We're going to find out pretty soon, I suspect.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you believe there's more the United States can do to help North Korean defectors?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're doing a lot. We've done more than — I mean, we have many administrations that should have acted on this a long time ago when it wasn't that this kind of a — when we weren't in this kind of a position.

You know, we ran out of road — you know the expression. The road really ended. They could've done it 12 years ago. They could have done it 20 years ago. They could've done it four years ago and two years ago. We have no road left.

So we'll see what happens. But, in the meantime, we'll get through the Olympics and maybe something good can come out of the Olympics. Who knows. Thank you very much everybody. Thank you.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with North Korean Defectors," [White House](#), 11:29 EST, 2 Feb 2018.

On 2 February, Trump is clueless about what happens next in Korea. But since 24 January, there is a consensus of commentators that *after* the Paralympics in March 2018:

1. South Korea and the U.S. will resume joint military exercises.

2. Kim Jong Un will be angered by the joint military exercises.
3. North Korea will test another ballistic missile, because it needs to test to fix design flaws.
4. North Korea is *not* prepared to abandon either its nuclear weapons or its ballistic missiles.

[Yonhap](#) quoted Robert Manning, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington, "As sure as day follows night, after the Olympics tensions will be renewed: the U.S. and (South Korea) will resume military exercises and Kim will likely test an intercontinental ballistic missile — he has to keep testing, because that's the only way to find out what is wrong and fix it." See also: [NBC News](#)(24Jan);

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## February 2018: Continuing North Korean Problem

On 2 February 2018, [Chosun Ilbo](#) tells us the South Korean government will spend *more than* US\$ 1.8 million to pay for "the expenses for hundreds of North Korean cheerleaders and other support officials, including accommodation, transportation and meals." My comment is that one can *not* purchase friendship with North Korea. Past history shows that North Korea will absorb money and gifts like a sponge, then continue their belligerent policies. Moreover, there is an ethics problem with being friendly with the North Korean government that commits atrocious human rights abuses, commits cyberwarfare, and threatens to destroy nations with nuclear weapons. It is one thing to negotiate a reduction in military tension, another thing to pretend that North Korea is friendly.

On 2 February 2018, the United Nations Security Council received a report that North Korea sold US\$ 200 million in prohibited goods during the last nine months of 2017. The Associated Press reported: "The report said North Korea exported coal to China, Malaysia, South Korea, Russia, and Vietnam in 2017 in violation of sanctions." North Korea also supplied weapons to Syria and Myanmar. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 3 February, [Reuters](#) reported that the head of Germany's domestic intelligence agency said North Korean staff in the embassy in Berlin were purchasing components for missiles, in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

On 6 February, [Yonhap](#) reported: "North Korea warned Tuesday [6 Feb] that a resumption of South Korea and the United States' annual joint military exercises will throw the Korean Peninsula back into a state of confrontation." Again, North Korea seems to be driving a wedge between South Korea and the USA. Given the resumption of military exercises, there appears to be little hope of a long-term peaceful environment between the two Koreas.

On 6 February, the North Korean art troupe (i.e., orchestra, singers, dancers) arrived in South Korea on a ferry boat. North Korea then asked South Korea to supply fuel to the ferry, because the art troupe is using the ferry instead of a hotel. The request is problematic because of United Nations sanctions on supplying petroleum to North Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). On



9 February, North Korea canceled their fuel request. [Yonhap](#). And on 12 February, the North Korean ferry carried the art troupe home. [Chosun Ilbo](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 8 February — one day before the Olympic games open in South Korea — North Korea held a grand military parade in Pyongyang. But, surprisingly, foreign journalists were excluded from watching the parade. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#). My comment is that this parade is an unnecessary provocation, which belligerently displays North Korean military hardware during a time when North Korea *says* it is seeking peace with South Korea. Perhaps not inviting foreign journalists was a way for the North Korean government to make the parade a celebration only for North Koreans, without provoking South Korea.

On 9 February, the Olympic games had their opening ceremony. U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence attended the opening ceremony with the stated goal of countering the North Korean charm offensive. The North Koreans frostily announced in advance that they had *no* intention of meeting with Pence. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). Although Pence was seated near the North Korean government delegation at a reception and the opening ceremonies, Pence avoided any contact with the North Koreans. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#)(no shake hands); [New York Times](#)(no shake hands); [Reuters](#). Afterwards, journalists agreed the North Korean charm offensive defeated sour Pence. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 10 February, South Korean president Moon hosted a lunch for visiting North Korean government officials, including Kim Jon Un's sister. Kim Jong Un sent an invitation to Moon to visit Pyongyang for talks. Without accepting the invitation, Moon replied: "Let's create the conditions to make it possible." [Yonhap](#); [Yonhap](#)(reaction); [Chosun Ilbo](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 10 February, the highly-publicized joint North/South Korean women's ice hockey team ignominiously lost to Switzerland, with a score of 8 to 0. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#). On 12 February, the joint North/South women's ice hockey team lost to Sweden, with another 8 to 0 score. The joint North/South team is now history, as it has been eliminated from the Olympic games. [Yonhap](#). The third scheduled game is now irrelevant, since the joint team has already lost twice. But on 14 February, the joint team lost a third game, as Japan beat Korea with a score of 4 to 1. [Yonhap](#).

On 11 February, on the airplane home from South Korea, Pence gave an exclusive interview to the [Washington Post](#) in which Pence declared that the U.S. Government is ready to talk to North Korea without preconditions: "So the maximum pressure campaign is going to continue and intensify. But if you want to talk, we'll talk." When North Korea makes a "meaningful step toward denuclearization", then the sanctions will stop intensifying. *The Post* reported: "Pence told Moon the international community must not repeat the mistakes of the past by giving North Korea concessions in exchange for talking." Moon replied that North Korea would obtain "economic or diplomatic benefits ... only for taking concrete steps toward denuclearization." See also: [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that Pence's offer of unconditional talks with North Korea is similar to Tillerson's offer of 12 December 2017. But this time, Trump has approved Pence's offer. In my opinion, this is a major change in U.S. Government policy, and opens a weak possibility of resolving the North Korean problem with diplomacy. I say "weak possibility", because North Korea does



*not* want to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles; because North Korea has abrogated *all* of its previous agreements with South Korea or the USA; and because North Korea is a rogue nation that continues belligerent acts, human rights abuses, cybercrimes, and open defiance of United Nations sanctions.

On 13 February, [Yonhap](#) News Agency reported that North Korea has asked South Korea to pay US\$ 2.7 million in expenses of North Korea's high-level delegation, art troupe, cheerleaders, and other Olympic expenses. On 14 February, [Yonhap](#) reports the South Korean government approved the reimbursement of North Korea's expenses. See also [Reuters](#).

On 17 February, [Yonhap](#) reported that South Korean president Moon is still uncertain whether to accept Kim's invitation of 10 February to have a summit in Pyongyang at the earliest date possible. Today, Moon told reporters "We are waiting for the ongoing dialogue between South Korea and the North to lead to talks between the United States and North Korea and to the denuclearization (of North Korea)." Earlier on 17 February, [Yonhap](#) reported that Rodong Sinmun, the party newspaper in North Korea, wrote: "To say the obvious, we, who have done everything that needs to be done and own everything, are not thirsty for dialogue with the U.S. It is the U.S who will feel anxious as time goes by."

On 20 February, the Pentagon said it would announce the date for the joint U.S. and South Korean military exercises sometime between 18 March and 1 April. [Yonhap](#). My comment is that in April 2018, the relationship between North Korea and both South Korea and the USA will return to the normal belligerence. The harsh reality is that North Korea is *not* going to "denuclearize" in the foreseeable future, while the U.S. and South Korean governments will continue to demand the denuclearization.

On 20 February, Pence's office revealed that a secret meeting between Pence and high-level North Korean officials was scheduled for 10 February, but the North Koreans canceled the meeting less than two hours before it was scheduled to begin. The [Washington Post](#) reports "The vice president's office said that when canceling the meeting, the North Koreans expressed dissatisfaction with Pence's announcement of new sanctions as well as his meeting with North Korean defectors." See also: [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that Pence is the wrong person to meet with the North Koreans. Tillerson, and his representative Joseph Yun, are the obvious choice.

Prof. Dorothy Denning, an internationally recognized expert on computer security, wrote an [article](#) on North Korea's increasing computer hacking program.

On 21 February 2018, [Yonhap](#) reported that South Korea's Foreign Ministry "sees inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korea talks as "major pillars" of any dialogue aimed at denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula." My comment is that it is *not* foreseeable that North Korea will denuclearize, while both South Korea and the USA demand that North Korea denuclearize. All three nations are intransigent on this issue, making negotiations impossible.

On 22 February 2018, the performance of North Korean athletes in the Olympic games was announced. The *best* performance by North Korea rated 13th place, but medals are awarded only to the top 3 athletes or teams. Kim Jong Un's impulsive decision in early January 2018 to send athletes to the Olympics was a spectacular failure — not even the 229 North Korean

cheerleaders could inspire the poorly prepared 22 North Korean athletes. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 23 February, Trump tweeted that his daughter had arrived in South Korea to represent the USA at the closing ceremonies of the Olympics and to meet with South Korean president Moon.

My daughter, Ivanka, just arrived in South Korea. We cannot have a better, or smarter, person representing our country.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:07 EST, 23 Feb 2018.

I can think of a better *and* smarter person than Ivanka: Dr. Condoleezza Rice, a professor at Stanford University and former (2005-09) U.S. Secretary of State. Ivanka owns trademarks for women's fashions, Ivanka is *not* a diplomat.

[Yonhap](#) reported that Ivanka "came to South Korea to reaffirm the 'strong and enduring commitment' to the people of the U.S.' ally." Her father could have done that with one brief telephone call to Moon.

### **23 Feb 2018: More U.S. Sanctions on North Korea Trump's speech to CPAC**

On 23 February, the U.S. Treasury Secretary announced new sanctions on North Korea. SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Hello, everybody. Today, the Treasury Department is announcing the largest set of sanctions ever imposed in connection with North Korea.

This action targets the deceptive shipping practices that have enabled the Kim regime to fund its dangerous weapons programs. Our actions target shipping and trade companies, vessels, and individuals across the world who we know are working with North Korea's behalf. Specifically, we are sanctioning 27 entities, 28 vessels, and 1 individual, all involved in sanctions evasions schemes.

Today's actions will significantly hinder North Korea's ability to conduct evasive maritime activities that facilitate illicit coal and fuel transports, and limit the regime's ability to ship goods through international waters.

Our actions are part of the ongoing maximum economic pressure campaign to cut off sources of revenue that this regime derives from U.N. and U.S. prohibitive trade to fund its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

We are also issuing a global shipping advisory, in conjunction with the Coast Guard and the State Department, to put everyone on notice of North Korea's illicit maritime tactics and underscore the significant sanctions risk of engaging in maritime business with North Korea.

We are releasing new imagery of the deceptive shipping practices used by those who aid and profit from illicit trade with North Korea. These images from December 2017

reveal ship-to-ship transfers of fuel and other products destined for North Korea in an attempt to evade sanctions. They shine a spotlight on the practices employed by the government of North Korea to falsify identifying information on ships and conceal illicit cargo.

....

QUESTION: .... How impactful, actually, is going after these 27 entities and these 28 vessels?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: This is very impactful. This is virtually all the ships they're using at this moment in time. We will obviously continue to monitor and use all of our resources to monitor activities going forward. And we will do new sanctions as needed going forward.

But this is a very, very significant action, along with, I might just say, the advisory that the Coast Guard has worked on with us that we think will be very impactful.

QUESTION: If it's virtually all of the ships, do you expect these ship-to-ship transfers to essentially be eliminated after this?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: We're going to do everything to stop these ship-to-ship transfers.

"Press Briefing by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on North Korea Sanctions," [White House](#), 11:40 EST, 23 Feb 2018.

On 23 February, Trump boasted of new sanctions on North Korea at a purely partisan speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC).

I do want to say, because people have asked — North Korea — we imposed today the heaviest sanctions ever imposed on a country before. (Applause.)

And frankly, hopefully something positive can happen. We will see. But hopefully something positive can happen. But that just was announced, and I wanted to let you know. We have imposed the heaviest sanctions ever imposed.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at the Conservative Political Action Conference," [White House](#), 10:16 EST, 23 Feb 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) reported that Trump's new sanctions on North Korea were *not* "the heaviest sanctions ever imposed on a country". Given the immense importance of the North Korean problem, it was surprising that the above-quoted two terse paragraphs was all that Trump said about North Korea at CPAC.

[Reuters](#) has an exclusive report that the U.S. Government is planning to intercept ships destined for North Korea.

**25 Feb 2018: North Korea willing to talk to U.S. Government**

On 11 February 2018, the U.S. publicly said it was willing to talk to North Korea without preconditions. (See [above](#).)

At the closing ceremony of the Olympic games on 25 February, Kim Yong-chol, the leader of the North Korean delegation, told South Korean president Moon that the North was willing to talk directly to the USA. (Kim Yong-chol is *not* a benevolent person, he is widely believed to have ordered the sinking of a South Korean Navy corvette in 2010, which killed 46 sailors.) [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#). I wonder if the U.S. Government has anything to say to North Korea. If the U.S. demands that North Korea denuclearize, the North Koreans will surely reject that demand. Trump is famously uncompromising. I hope that Joseph Yun, who speaks fluent Korean, leads the U.S. delegation to the talks.

The U.S. had a lukewarm response to the North Korean offer of talks. The White House Press Secretary released the following statement:

President Donald J. Trump's Administration is committed to achieving the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The United States, our Olympic Host the Republic of Korea, and the international community broadly agree that denuclearization must be the result of any dialogue with North Korea. The maximum pressure campaign must continue until North Korea denuclearizes. As President Trump has said, there is a brighter path available for North Korea if it chooses denuclearization. We will see if Pyongyang's message today, that it is willing to hold talks, represents the first steps along the path to denuclearization. In the meantime, the United States and the world must continue to make clear that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are a dead end.

Sarah Sanders, "Statement by the Press Secretary on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," [White House](#), 25 Feb 2018.

Notice North Korea offered "talks" while the USA is only interested in "denuclearization". The parties show huge differences before they meet. See also: [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 26 February, [Yonhap](#) reported that Kim Yong-chol reiterated North Korea's willingness to have direct talks with the USA.

On 26 February, Trump again changed his position on talks with North Korea. On 11 February, Pence said (with Trump's approval) that the U.S. would talk without preconditions. But on 26 February, Trump again added preconditions.

[President Xi of China] helping us with North Korea — who, by the way, wants to talk, as of last night; you heard that. They want to talk. And we want to talk also, only under the right conditions. Otherwise, we're not talking.

You know, they've been talking for 25 years. Other Presidents should have solved this problem long before I got here. And they've been talking for 25 years. And you know what happened? Nothing. The Clinton administration spent billions and billions of dollars. They gave them billions. They built things for them. They went out of their way, and the day after the agreement was signed, they continued with nuclear research. It was horrible.

The Bush administration did nothing — both. The Obama administration wanted to do something. He told me it's the single biggest problem that this country has. But they didn't do anything. And it would have been much easier, in those days, than it is now. I think most people understand that. But we've been very tough with them.

....

So they want to talk. First time — they want to talk. And we'll see what happens.

That's my attitude: We'll see what happens. But something has to be done.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at 2018 White House Business Session with Governors," [White House](#), 26 Feb 2018.

Trump did *not* say what the "right conditions" would be. Trump probably does *not* know, as he is horrible with facts and details. But Trump's press secretary, Sarah Sanders, clarified:

On Friday [23 Feb], the United States announced the largest-ever set of new North Korea sanctions. Companies and countries around the world should know that the Trump administration is 100 percent committed to the permanent denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And we are watching closely who joins us in fully enforcing United States and United Nations sanctions.

We will continue to lead a campaign of maximum pressure on the regime. We also believe that there is a brighter path available to North Korea. They have expressed a desire to hold talks. But let us be completely clear: Denuclearization must be the result of any dialogue with North Korea. Until then, the United States and the world must continue to make it known that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are a dead end.

....

QUESTION: I want to get a sense about whether there are any preconditions for talks that would occur between U.S. and North Korean officials.

MS. SANDERS: I mean, as we've said in the past, that any conversation that we have would match the comments that we've been making in public, and anything that would be discussed would have to be solely on the focus of them agreeing to denuclearize the Peninsula. That would be the primary factor in whether or not we would have any conversation with them.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), 26 Feb 2018.

On 26 February 2018, Joseph Yun — the North Korean expert at the U.S. State Department — suddenly announced he would retire on 2 March after 32 years of service. Yun speaks Korean fluently and would have been extremely useful in negotiations with North Korea. The [Washington Post](#) reported: Yun's "departure reflects the widespread frustration within the State Department at diplomats' relative lack of power in the Trump administration, according to someone familiar with Yun's thinking." See also: [Yonhap](#); [CNN](#); [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#); [The Telegraph](#).

[Reuters](#) quoted a former U.S. Defense Department official on the significance of Yun's

retirement.

Joe Yun was one of my State Department counterparts during the Obama administration. He is a consummate diplomat. Thoughtful, experienced, knowledgeable, and effective. A huge loss for the US government at a critical moment.

Abraham Denmark, [tweet](#), 22:02 EST, 26 Feb 2018.

On 27 February, [Reuters](#) suggested that Yun resigned because of Trump's decision on 26 February to reject unconditional talks with North Korea. CNN posted a news article that said:

The sudden retirement of a top US State Department diplomat dedicated to North Korea policy is raising concerns that the Trump administration lacks the experienced personnel needed to peacefully rein in Pyongyang's nuclear program.

....

A source close to Yun said the decision to step away from his diplomatic post was the result of a combination of factors and was not intended as a protest statement.

Several sources familiar with Yun's decision told CNN he had planned to serve for only a year when the Trump administration took office and had already indicated a desire to retire for various personal and professional reasons.

But the source close to Yun added that he was certainly disappointed in what he viewed as a general lack of coherence on the administration's North Korea policy that made it difficult at times for him to discern the path forward.

The source described the administration's policy process as amateurish, but that was not the only reason for Yun's decision as he was a career diplomat familiar with messy policy making.

....

"What we've seen in recent months is an unraveling of what was once a fairly coherent North Korea policy," according to CNN military analyst John Kirby, who added that internal issues have created a divide with the State Department and Pentagon on one side and the National Security Council on another.

Zachary Cohen, Nicole Gaouette, & Elise Labott, "Loss of key diplomat revives concerns about Trump's North Korea strategy," [CNN](#), 01:02 EST, 28 Feb 2018.

My opinion is that Trump's foreign policy is amateurish, because he lacks understanding of history and facts, and because he has *zero* experience in foreign affairs. Further, Trump is arrogant and he frequently interferes with delicate diplomatic issues. Trump's inconsistent North Korea policy indicates a lack of a coherent strategy.

On 28 February, [Yonhap](#) reports: "Both Seoul and Washington are aware that they have until April to generate any chance to formulate avenues for talks with North Korea, [South Korean Foreign Minister] Kang said, referring to the resumption in April of the joint annual military exercises between Seoul and Washington, which were delayed due to the PyeongChang

Olympics." My comment is that the U.S. could relax the schedule by delaying U.S. Military exercises, as long as North Korea refrains from testing either nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles.

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## **March 2018: Continuing North Korean Problem**

On 23 February 2018, the U.S. attempted to have the United Nations Security Council sanctions committee "to blacklist 33 ships [19 of which are North Korean vessels], 27 shipping companies, and a Taiwan man for violating international sanctions on North Korea". On 2 March 2018, China objected to the request. [Reuters](#).

On 2 March 2018, South Korean president Moon decided to send a "special envoy" to North Korea. [Yonhap](#).

On 3 March, [Yonhap](#) reports that "North Korea said Saturday [3 Mar] there will be no talks with the United States if they come with any 'preconditions,' reasserting that it has no intent to abandon its nuclear and missile programs in exchange for dialogue with Washington."

On Monday, 5 March 2018, the South Korean delegation was scheduled to depart for Pyongyang at 14:00 Korean time and return to Seoul at 18:00 on Tuesday. The principal goal of the trip is "to persuade North Korea to resume denuclearization dialogue with the United States". [Yonhap](#). The [New York Times](#) reports this is the first South Korean envoy to visit North Korea since 2007, 11 years ago, and the first time Kim Jong-Un has met with officials from the South Korean government. Kim is reclusive and isolated. [Yonhap](#) reports the envoys arrived in Pyongyang at 14:50 and had dinner with Kim Jong-Un (who Trump calls "Little Rocketman") at 18:00.

At 08:22 Korean time on 6 March, [Yonhap](#) reported that the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) announced that agreement was reached on Moon visiting Pyongyang for a summit with Kim. Then Yonhap said: "The KCNA report did not mention North Korea's denuclearization and U.S.-N.K. dialogue."

### **5 March: North Korea willing to denuclearize**

At 21:25 Korean time on 6 March, [Yonhap](#) reported the results of a 5 March meeting between Kim and envoys from South Korea:

- Moon and Kim will hold a summit in April 2018.
- The head South Korean envoy, Chung Eui-yong, said: "The North side clearly affirmed its commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and said it would have no reason to possess nuclear weapons should the safety of its regime be guaranteed and military threats against North Korea removed." "Chairman Kim said the denuclearization issue may be discussed as an agenda for the North-U.S. dialogue.



What we must especially pay attention to is the fact that [Kim] has clearly stated that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was an instruction of his predecessor and that there has been no change to such an instruction.”

- Yonhap said: "The North also expressed its willingness to hold 'candid' talks with the United States on ways to realize the denuclearization of the peninsula and normalize the countries' bilateral ties."
- Yonhap said: "Chung said the North has also promised to suspend all military provocations, including nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, as long the U.S.-North Korea talks are progress."

After the South Korean government announced that North Korea was willing to negotiate with the U.S. on denuclearization, Trump had an opinion.

Possible progress being made in talks with North Korea. For the first time in many years, a serious effort is being made by all parties concerned. The World is watching and waiting! May be false hope, but the U.S. is ready to go hard in either direction!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:11 EST, 6 Mar 2018.

In my opinion, Trump *should* have reciprocated by suspending U.S. Military exercises in South Korea while talks with North Korea are in progress. Not only would suspending U.S. Military exercises reduce tensions, but also it would remove an obvious excuse for North Korea to renege on its offer of talks to denuclearize.

On 6 March, Trump appeared to take credit for economic sanctions on North Korea that Trump believes motivated North Korea to talk with the U.S. Note that the economic sanctions were imposed by the United Nations Security Council.

QUESTION [by Saagar Enjeti, Daily Caller]: Thank you, Mr. President. Since it's my first time before you, I thought you might indulge me with two questions. First, sir, do you believe that North Korea's recent willingness to talk is sincere, or is it an effort to buy time for their nuclear program? And to what do you owe this recent openness to talk?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Me. No, I think that — (laughter). Nobody got that. (Laughter.) I think that they are sincere, but I think they're sincere also because the sanctions and what we're doing with respect to North Korea, including, you know, the great help that we've been given from China. And they can do more, but I think they've done more than, certainly, they've ever done for our country before. So China has been a big help. I think that's been a factor.

But the sanctions have been very, very strong and very biting. And we don't want that to happen. So I really believe they are sincere. I hope they're sincere. We're going to soon find out.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Löfven of Sweden in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 15:38 EST, 6 March 2018.

On 8 March, Tillerson was in Africa, where he told journalists that "we're a long ways from negotiations" with North Korea:

... I think, as President Trump has indicated, potentially positive signals coming from North Korea by way of their intra-Korean dialogue with South Korea. We maintain very, very close communication with President Moon of the Republic of Korea. They are keeping us well informed of their meetings, the content of those meetings and the nature of those meetings, and we're providing them input as well.

In terms of direct talks with the United States — and you asked negotiations, and we're a long ways from negotiations. I think we just need to be very clear-eyed and realistic about it. I think the first step — and I've said this before — is to have talks, have some kind of talks about talks, because I don't know yet, until we are able to meet ourselves face to face with representatives of North Korea, whether the conditions are right to even begin thinking about negotiations. And that's kind of the current state of play.

"Press Availability With Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu," [U.S. State Dept](#), 8 Mar 2018.

My comment is that Tillerson should *not* have traveled to Africa at this critical time in the North Korean problem. Not only did Tillerson miss the meeting at the White House with the South Korean envoy, but also Tillerson is clearly unaware that negotiations could begin in May 2018, when Trump meets Kim Jong Un. Later on 8 March, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump's North Korea gambit "blindsided" the U.S. State Department. See also [New York Times](#).

On the afternoon of 8 March, South Korean envoy Chung Eui-Yong arrived at the White House to brief General McMaster, Trump, and Vice-President Pence. Afterwards, Chung spoke to journalists for two minutes. Here are Chung's entire remarks:

Good evening. Today, I had the privilege of briefing President Trump on my recent visit to Pyongyang, North Korea. I'd like to thank President Trump, the Vice President, and his wonderful national security team, including my close friend, General McMaster.

I explained to President Trump that his leadership and his maximum pressure policy, together with international solidarity, brought us to this juncture. I expressed President Moon Jae-in's personal gratitude for President Trump's leadership.

I told President Trump that, in our meeting, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said he is committed to denuclearization. Kim pledged that North Korea will refrain from any further nuclear or missile tests. He understands that the routine joint military exercises between the Republic of Korea and the United States must continue. And he expressed his eagerness to meet President Trump as soon as possible.

President Trump appreciated the briefing and said he would meet Kim Jong-un by May to achieve permanent denuclearization.

The Republic of Korea, along with the United States, Japan, and our many partners around the world remain fully and resolutely committed to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Along with President Trump, we are optimistic about continuing a diplomatic process to test the possibility of a peaceful

resolution.

The Republic of Korea, the United States, and our partners stand together in insisting that we not repeat the mistakes of the past, and that the pressure will continue until North Korea matches its words with concrete actions.

Thank you.

"Remarks by Republic of Korea National Security Advisor Chung Eui-Yong," [White House](#), 19:11 EST, 8 March 2018.

Then Trump tweeted:

Kim Jong Un talked about denuclearization with the South Korean Representatives, not just a freeze. Also, no missile testing by North Korea during this period of time. Great progress being made but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached. Meeting being planned!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:08 EST, 8 March 2018.

The [Washington Post](#) reported: "In Seoul, the presidential Blue House clarified that the meeting would occur by the end of May."

[Yonhap](#) News Agency in South Korea reported: "Chung said in Seoul earlier this week that Kim was willing to discuss the regime's denuclearization with the U.S. if its security could be guaranteed. Skeptics pointed to the North's track record of breaking past denuclearization agreements and said it remained to be seen what the North would demand in return for dismantling the nuclear weapons program."

My comment is that it is regrettable that Trump will meet Kim sometime before the end of May 2018. As documented above, Trump has repeatedly threatened and insulted Kim. Trump has *no* understanding of the detailed history of North Korea's weapons program. Verification of the end of North Korea's nuclear weapons program is far beyond Trump's limited intellectual capacity. Trump is impulsive, *not* a good attribute for negotiating military weapons. Trump can not negotiate with the U.S. Congress to obtain funding for Trump's wall along the Mexican border, so it is unlikely that Trump will successfully negotiate denuclearization with Kim.

Also, it is unexplained why Kim suddenly wants to abandon his nuclear weapons program that North Korea developed over the past 11 years since their first "successful" test of an atomic bomb. In my opinion, Kim's recent words are too good to be true. The White House propaganda is that economic sanctions on North Korea — Trump's policy of "maximum pressure" — forced Kim to negotiate. But the United Nations imposed sanctions on North Korea years ago, and the North Koreans have learned how to evade those sanctions. Further, Moon and Trump have been clear that the sanctions will remain in place until there is concrete evidence of denuclearization by North Korea. So I think it unlikely that sanctions alone caused Kim's change of policy.

One thing that North Korea will gain from the Kim-Trump meeting is legitimacy: the U.S. Government will recognize that North Korea is a sovereign nation with nuclear weapons. [Washington Post](#).

### 9 March: White House briefly requires “concrete steps”

On the afternoon of 9 March, the president's spokeswoman retroactively attached a precondition to Trump's acceptance of talks with Kim in May 2018. On 11 February, Trump was willing to talk to Kim without preconditions, as explained above. But on 9 March, the White House demanded that North Korea begin denuclearizing ("concrete actions") *before* Trump meets with Kim.

QUESTION: Sarah, does the President think that Kim Jong-un is sincere about talking about denuclearization?

MS. SANDERS: The President is hopeful that we can make some continued progress. Look, what we know is that the maximum pressure campaign has clearly been effective. We know that it has put a tremendous amount of pressure on North Korea. And they have made some major promises. They've made promises to denuclearize. They've made promises to stop nuclear and missile testing. And they've recognized that regular military exercises between the U.S. and its ally, South Korea, will continue.

The maximum pressure campaign, we're not letting up. We're not going to step back or make any changes to that. We're going to continue in that effort, and we're not going to have this meeting take place until we see concrete actions that match the words and the rhetoric of North Korea.

QUESTION: But does he think that Kim Jong-un can be trusted as a negotiating partner?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we're not in the negotiation right now. We've accepted the invitation to talk, based on them following through with concrete actions on the promises that they've made.

....

MS. SANDERS: .... But let's not forget that the North Koreans did promise something: They've promised to denuclearize, they've promised to stop nuclear and missile testing, and they've recognized that we're going to continue in our military exercises.

Let's be very clear: The United States has made zero concessions. But North Korea has made some promises. And, again, this meeting won't take place without concrete actions that match the promises that have been made by North Korea.

....

QUESTION: Sarah, you said they promised to denuclearize. Did they promise to denuclearize or did they promise to talk about denuclearizing?

MR. SANDERS: The understanding, the message from the South Korean delegation is that they would denuclearize. And that is what our ultimate goal has always been, and that will have to be part of the actions that we see them take.

QUESTION: Is that before or after the meeting?

MR. SANDERS: We'd have to see concrete and verifiable actions take place.

QUESTION: Before the meeting?

MS. SANDERS: Yes. Yeah.

....

MR. SANDERS: ... the President will not have the meeting without seeing concrete steps and concrete actions take place by North Korea.

....

QUESTION: Thanks a lot, Sarah. The North Korean government has made promises before; they've reneged on those promises in two prior administrations. What's different now? Why should we trust Kim Jong-un now?

MR. SANDERS: Again, because the United States is going to continue that maximum pressure campaign. We are making no concessions and we are not going to move forward until we see concrete and verified actions taking place by North Korea. We are also operating from a position of strength that we haven't had in previous administrations due to the maximum pressure campaign — not just by the United States.

....

QUESTION: .... Is there a possibility that these talks with North Korea, with Kim Jong-un, may not happen?

MS. SANDERS: Look, they've got to follow through on the promises that they've made, and we want to see concrete and verifiable action on that front. .... But I can tell you that the President has accepted that invitation on the basis that we have concrete and verifiable steps.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), 14:17 EST, 9 March 2018.

In case you missed it, Ms. Sanders mentioned "concrete" *nine* times in the context of Trump's demand on North Korea.

Ms. Sanders omitted a crucial detail mentioned by Chung on 6 March: North Korea is committed to denuclearization *if* "the safety of its regime be guaranteed and military threats against North Korea removed." So before denuclearization can begin, North Korea needs some assurances from the U.S. Government.

As Ms. Sanders indicated, North Korea has already made three concessions:

1. "promised to denuclearize,
2. they've promised to stop nuclear and missile testing, and
3. they've recognized that we're going to continue in our military exercises."

The U.S. has made *no* concessions, and now demands that North Korea begin denuclearizing *before* Trump will talk to Kim. It is *not* plausible that North Korea would denuclearize before obtaining security guarantees from the U.S. Government. Actually, North Korea has a long-standing policy of refusing to denuclearize.

*The Washington Post* commented:

But the comments also give the White House an option they did not seem to reserve Thursday [8 Mar]. The "concrete steps and concrete actions" are so undefined right now — and Sanders declined to detail them — that they could serve as a ready-made excuse to pull out of the whole thing.

Aaron Blake, "The White House sounds as if it might have cold feet about Trump meeting Kim Jong Un," [Washington Post](#), 15:12 EST, 9 March 2018.

Politico commented:

[Sanders'] comments underscored the complexity of staging a dramatic meeting between Trump and the North Korean dictator — and raised doubts about whether it may be possible to arrange such a summit at all.

The North Korea announcement's sudden roll-out, followed by confusion and then tons of caveats, also followed a pattern of policymaking in the Trump White House, in which pronouncements often come before detailed plans are concrete.

At issue Friday [9 Mar] was the nature of what the North Koreans had promised. Sanders called "denuclearization" a precondition for any direct meeting between Trump and Kim. But experts called the prospect of North Korea dismantling its nuclear program before the start of talks totally unimaginable.

Nancy Cook, Eliana Johnson, & Cristiano Lima, "Trump's bold stroke on North Korea dissolves into confusion," [Politico](#) 18:11 EST, 9 Mar 2018.

Later on 9 March, Trump tweeted, without mentioning the new "concrete steps" demand:

The deal with North Korea is very much in the making and will be, if completed, a very good one for the World. Time and place to be determined.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:42 EST, 9 Mar 2018.

On the morning of 10 March, the situation is very confused. On 5 March, Kim appears to have inexplicably reversed North Korea's long-standing policy of refusing to denuclearize. On 8 March, Trump agreed to meet Kim in May 2018 without preconditions, but the following day the White House press spokeswoman added a new condition that North Korea must take concrete steps to denuclearize before Trump would meet Kim. Then Trump tweeted on 9 March that the meeting was "very much in the making", without mentioning the requirement for concrete steps. The confusion in the White House may be the result of

Trump impulsively going in a different direction than his advisers (e.g., General McMaster).

The North Koreans may be having the same problems as Trump's disorganized White House. As of 12 March, the North Korean news media still had *not* reported either Kim's 5 March offer to denuclearize or the proposed Kim/Trump meeting. However, the North Korean news media continued its usual anti-U.S. propaganda. [Yonhap](#)(10Mar); [Yonhap](#)(12Mar); [Associated Press](#).

On Saturday, 10 March, Trump tweeted:

Chinese President XI JINPING and I spoke at length about the meeting with KIM JONG UN of North Korea. President XI told me he appreciates that the U.S. is working to solve the problem diplomatically rather than going with the ominous alternative. China continues to be helpful!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:15 EST, 10 Mar 2018.

North Korea has not conducted a Missile Test since November 28, 2017 and has promised not to do so through our meetings. I believe they will honor that commitment!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:38 EST, 10 Mar 2018.

### **11 March: White House omits “concrete steps”**

On Sunday, 11 March 2018, the deputy White House spokesman, Raj Shah, said on the ABC television program "This Week":

SHAH: Let me step back and when it comes to North Korea it's important to understand how we got here. This president took office a little over a year ago, inherited a policy that wasn't working for the previous eight years. He adopted a policy of a maximum pressure on the North Korean regime. Over the last year, we've seen a lot of success. We've seen China dramatically reduce trade with North Korea. We've seen the United Nations impose some of the toughest sanctions on the North Korean regime. It's been increasingly isolated both diplomatically and economically, with dozens of countries chipping in.

And in this context, Kim Jong-un spoke with the South Koreans and made this overture, they're going to end or — or rather cease missile testing, cease nuclear testing, and they've agreed to not object publicly to the upcoming South Korea, United States joint military exercise.

....

[ABC News chief White House Correspondent Jonathan] KARL: And do we have any indications that Kim Jong-un is now open to denuclearization? This is something that he has — this has been a point of pride, obviously, for North Korea.

Do we have any indication that he's actually changed his view on this?

SHAH: He's stated his commitment to denuclearization to South Korea's delegation



(inaudible).

KARL: Do you believe him? Do you think he can be trusted on this?

SHAH: Well ... we think that Kim Jong-un is the only partner in North Korea that has any authority, that can make any decisions. So he's the only voice, he is committed to — or stated a commitment to denuclearization to South Korea, they've relayed that to us, and so we're open to this invitation.

KARL: And help me understand, when this announcement was made, the White House first just said the president has accepted the offer and then on Friday [9 March], Sarah Sanders press secretary said that there are concrete actions North Korea's agreed to take before.

Are there preconditions or is this definitely happening, what are —

SHAH: No, they have to meet the promises that they relayed to the South Koreans, which is, again, ceasing missile testing, ceasing nuclear testing.

KARL: Okay, that's pausing (ph) [promising ?] something, but are there concrete actions that they've agreed to take?

SHAH: Again, this meeting, this potential meeting has been agreed to, there are no additional conditions being stipulated, but, again they cannot engage in missile testing, they cannot engage in nuclear testing and they can't publicly object to the U.S. South Korea planned military exercises.

KARL: Is there any chance this blows up, doesn't happen?

SHAH: There's the possibility. If it does, it's the North Korean's fault, they have not lived up to the promises that they made.

KARL: But the only thing that could stop this is if they resume their testing or they start —

SHAH: I'm telling you, if they object to the obligations that they made, the promises that they made to the South Koreans, then obviously we would potentially not (ph).

""This Week' Transcript 3-11-18: White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Raj Shah," [ABC News](#), 10:05 EDT, 11 March 2018. [Edited by Standler to omit stammering.]

Later, [ABC News](#) and the [Associated Press](#) posted news articles on this interview of Shah.

Note there was *no* mention by Shah of requiring "concrete steps" by North Korea.

On Monday, 12 March, Sarah Sanders held another press briefing.

QUESTION: The President said Saturday night — he was talking about North Korea — he said, "If the meeting with Kim takes place." Is there a chance that this meeting won't take place?

MS. SANDERS: Look, we fully expect that it will. The offer was made and we've accepted. North Korea made several promises and if — we hope that they would stick to those promises and, if so, the meeting will go on as planned.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), 15:06 EDT, 12 Mar 2018.

On 12 March, Ms. Sanders made *no* mention of "concrete steps" that North Korea needed to take, nor did she explain why she mentioned "concrete steps" nine times in her previous briefing on 9 March. I wonder if Ms. Sanders misunderstood some White House official. It would make sense to continue the sanctions on North Korea until North Korea takes concrete actions according to a draft agreement. That is different from requiring North Korea to take concrete actions on denuclearization *before* Trump meets Kim.

### **advice from experienced negotiators**

William Perry was U.S. Secretary of Defense under Bill Clinton during 1994-97. Perry negotiated denuclearization in Pyongyang in 1999. On 12 March 2018, Perry wrote an opinion article in *The Washington Post* with advice for Trump:

The first and most fundamental [lesson] is that North Korea, at a very high cost, is pursuing a nuclear program to ensure the survival of its regime. That was quite obvious to me during the four days I spent in Pyongyang. Then, North Korea's leaders believed that the U.S. had the intent and the capability to overthrow their regime and that a North Korean nuclear arsenal was the only sure way to deter us from carrying out that plan.

The second lesson is that North Korean leaders are not crazy. They are despotic, they are ruthless, they are cruel to their own people — but they are not irrational. Their intent to stay in power has led to a series of actions they follow with consistency and shrewdness. I should note that all other Stalinist regimes in the world have been overthrown since the end of the Cold War; North Korea is the last one standing. So from their point of view, they are doing something logical.

The third lesson is that the regime is not driven by ideology. .... A corollary of this is that they are not bound by ethical or moral standards, so an agreement is not really binding for them. If they see some advantage in breaking an agreement, they will, particularly if they can do so clandestinely.

The fourth lesson is that while they do value economic incentives and will bargain for them, they will never trade regime survivability for economic benefits, no matter how attractive. Conversely, economic disincentives, or sanctions, hurt North Korea, but by themselves will not cause its regime to give up its nuclear program.

.... In particular, any agreement made must be subject to a rigorous verification process that is included in the agreement. And that will be very difficult in a country rightly called the "Hermit Kingdom."

....

.... So I have a high degree of skepticism that North Korea will really negotiate away the nuclear arsenal it now has, even though South Korean officials have claimed Pyongyang is open to it.

....

.... So it would be a fundamental error to believe that we can reliably verify a treaty by which North Korea agrees to dismantle all of its nuclear weapons and not build more.

However, just because we can't verify a denuclearization agreement doesn't mean we shouldn't have any agreement. Given that North Korea has a nuclear arsenal, we must contain and deter that arsenal. We can strengthen our containment by reaching an agreement with North Korea on a testing ban and a ban on any transfer of nuclear technology or components. Such an agreement would not be as desirable as denuclearization, but it can be negotiated and, once negotiated, it can be verified. Even on this lesser agreement, verification is not simple, especially with the ban on transfer. On this ban, we will need to negotiate intrusive inspection features, such as we negotiated years ago with the Soviet Union.

William J. Perry, "What Trump could learn from my attempts to denuclearize North Korea," [Washington Post](#), 13:34 EDT, 12 Mar 2018.

I am sure that Trump is too arrogant to accept Perry's reasonable advice.

One day before Perry's article, Bloomberg News reported:

Negotiations with the North Korean regime are "very painstaking and, frankly, painful," said Christopher Hill, who served as U.S. ambassador to South Korea and assistant secretary of state under President George W. Bush. "You think you have an agreement one minute and then you don't the next minute."

....

But substantial negotiations will likely prove frustrating. When he negotiated with Kim's father's regime, Samore [who negotiated with North Korea during the Clinton administration and served as President Barack Obama's arms-control coordinator] said, North Korea demanded tangible goods — rice or baby formula, for example — without offering much in the way of concessions. "Whatever we wanted, they would say, 'a million tons of rice.'"

Margaret Talev, "Trump Gambles on Kim Meeting, Predicts It'll Go 'Very Well'," [Bloomberg News](#), 11 March 2018.

On 10 March 2018, two Americans with experience negotiating with North Korea wrote in *The Washington Post*:

Second, Trump must understand that the North Koreans are *not* offering to denuclearize. They see their weapons capability as the only thing standing between them and regime change. They're offering to halt their nuclear and missile programs,

but not to disarm their existing arsenal — that's been their position for years now, and Trump's goal of reversing the Iran deal has only hardened North Korea's stance: *We can't even trust an agreement the Americans have already signed, so giving up all our nukes wouldn't be prudent.*

....

The deal that's on the table now, and has been for a while, is: that the North Koreans will halt their nuclear and missile programs and allow implementation of a verification regime. In return, the United States would withdraw some military assets, ease economic restrictions and sign a treaty declaring a formal end to the war. Any deal would also probably have to include North Korean security guarantees, vis-a-vis South Korea, China and Japan, in exchange for an increased flow of resources — food, fuel, technology — to North Korea from South Korea, China and Japan.

....

Trump routinely shoots from the hip. With the North Koreans, that's a bad idea. He needs to be serious, worry more about what this means for American security and worry less about making himself look good.

Bill Richardson & Mickey Bergman, "Kim Jong Un won't give up his nukes. Trump should meet with him, anyway." [Washington Post](#), 10 Mar 2018.

I have two comments on Richardson and Bergman's article. First, Kim reportedly told the South Korean envoys on 5 March 2018 that North Korea was willing to denuclearize. Denuclearization is difficult to believe, but that is what the South Korean envoys reported. Second, Trump is pursuing a policy of "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner" that is expressed in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Again, it is difficult to believe that the North Koreans will accept "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization".

And on 27 February 2018, *The New York Times* reported:

"This is the real challenge with North Korea," said Mr. Cossa [president of the Pacific Forum at the Center for Strategic and International Studies]. "If you try to confront them, they get their backs up and feel they have to be more confrontational back, to show they are not afraid."

"But if you make an overture, they see this as a weakness they have to exploit," he added. "And if you offer them the moon and the stars, they say 'O.K., we want the sun also.'"

Motoko Rich, "Trump Opens Door, Just Slightly, to Talking With North Korea," [New York Times](#), 27 Feb 2018.

On 3 April, Leon Panetta, the former U.S. Secretary of Defense, wrote:

It is no secret that this president has little diplomatic knowledge or experience nor does he have the patience to devote the time necessary to fully prepare for a high level summit. Without a comprehensive and well thought out strategy working closely with our allies, this president is likely to walk into a summit believing that the strength of

his personality alone plus his gut instincts will be enough to prevail. That is a recipe for disaster.

....

The reality is that the president has two choices to avoid disaster:

1. assume that the summit will largely be a photo op with Kim Jong Un, with an agreement on a broad framework of issues to be considered in future negotiations, and a decision on a place and time for an agreed set of negotiators to begin discussion on the specifics of a possible agreement; or
2. postpone any summit until designated negotiators have determined that there is in fact a set of elements and conditions that can be agreed to that will result in the denuclearization of North Korea.

Leon E. Panetta, "Trump has 'two choices to avoid disaster' at North Korea summit," [CNBC](#), 3 April 2018.

On 17 April 2018, [Chosun Ilbo](#) reported that Thae Yong-ho — the former second-in-command in the North Korean Embassy in London — said:

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un "will drag on [talks] for two to three years" without dismantling his nuclear weapons "while waiting for the U.S. president to be replaced."

On 20 April 2018, Prof. Alex Wellerstein — a historian of nuclear weapons and a professor at Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey — wrote a series of tweets in response to a statement by Kim Jong Un that is quoted [below](#):

Does anyone, on either side of the political aisle, actually think that the DPRK would give up its nuclear capability without receiving in exchange commitments that the US would not be willing to give?

If the answer is "no" — what happens when this (inevitably) becomes clear?

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 22:59 EDT, 20 April 2018.

Let me phrase this another way. People like to talk about North Korea as "crazy." The absolute "craziest" thing they could do is give up their nuclear deterrent in a situation where they have an aggressive nuclear-armed enemy.

Does anyone think they are \*that\* crazy? I don't.

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 23:04 EDT, 20 April 2018.

It's probably my own Twitter bubble speaking but I see literally no informed voices who seem to think that DPRK is actually interested in truly disarming.

So what's the game plan? Is it negotiating on sanctions? Is it stalling to defuse tensions in that time-honored DPRK way?

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 23:32 EDT, 20 April 2018.

Is it flexing some kind of cultural muscle, getting the attention and respect they think

they deserve, by saying a few magic words to an American president very eager to hear them? I don't know.

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 23:33 EDT, 20 April 2018.

What I do know is, taking seriously the idea that they'd spend SIX DECADES building up the infrastructure necessary to have nukes, and then just give it up relatively cheaply... that's the bizarro idea. Is it impossible? I don't know. But it's bizarro.

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 23:35 EDT, 20 April 2018.

If we take the "we don't need to test anymore" rhetoric seriously, they seem [to] feel their missiles and warheads are adequate enough to deter. But they probably lack quantity. So slow everything down for several months or a year. Roll out a real stockpile.

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 23:41 EDT, 20 April 2018.

On 23 April 2018, *The New York Times* reported on differences in the meaning of "denuclearization", which will cause problems in negotiations:

... both sides already appear to misunderstand one another on basic terms.

Mr. Wellerstein is worried over the Trump administration's fixation on hints that North Korea would consider "denuclearization," which North Koreans tend to mean as gradual and mutual easing of tensions but which Americans read as complete North Korean disarmament — an expectation that Mr. Wellerstein called "bizarro" in his [Twitter](#) feed.

The countries are already treating the meeting less as the start of a long and difficult process, in which both would need to make painful compromises for narrow gains, but as the culmination of what each seems to see as its glorious triumph over the other.

But those two imagined victories are mutually exclusive and, barring a drastic strategic shift by either country, categorically unacceptable to the other side.

If both leaders are setting themselves up to fall short of the lofty expectations on which each has staked his reputation and ego, Mr. Wellerstein [tweeted](#), "what happens when this (inevitably) becomes clear?"

Statements by both governments suggest they are not only driving at conflicting goals but also operating within parallel realities.

On Friday [20 April], North Korea announced that it would pause certain nuclear tests and development programs, which its statement portrayed as a result of the country having achieved its technological ambitions. Vipin Narang, a scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, translated the meaning of the statement as: "This is what we will look like as a nuclear weapons power. Get used to it."

But American officials greeted the testing pause as the first of many expected North Korean concessions. Two days later, Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter that North Korea had already "agreed to denuclearization (so great for World), site closure, & no more

testing!”

This confusion appears to extend beyond differing interpretations of terminology, setting up both sides for nasty surprises when they meet.

The North Koreans seem to believe that their nuclear breakthroughs forced Mr. Trump to accede to a leaders’ summit meeting, something they have long desired as a way to prove themselves a peer of the major powers.

But American officials have said Mr. Kim was the one forced to the table, compelled there by American sanctions and military threats.

North Korea’s statements suggests that the country sees itself as on the verge of forcing the world to accept it as it is, finally securing its long-term survival.

American statements, which appear written to fend off critics who say Mr. Trump is getting ahead of himself, imply that Mr. Kim will surrender his nuclear arsenal, which virtually no expert believes the country would do.

Each country is hoping for a dramatic — and unlikely — win over the other. When their realities collide, it is difficult to predict how either leader will respond.

Max Fisher, "An Unpredictable Trump and a Risk-Prone Kim Mean High Stakes and Mismatched Expectations," [New York Times](#), 23 April 2018. [Links to Wellerstein's tweets added by Standler.]

On 1 May 2018, former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice appeared on "Fox & Friends":

"Don't forget that there are other interested parties. For instance, Japan has a very important interest here. Secondly, take it one step at a time. It's fine to talk about a peace treaty on the Korean Peninsula. In fact, we talked about a peace treaty. That should be the ultimate goal. But go step by step, make sure there's good verification of everything the North Koreans are doing, and keep your eye on the prize of denuclearization. Because what we want to do is stop them short of threatening the American homeland," Rice said. "And finally, remember the nature of this regime. This is a regime that murdered an American citizen just a year ago, this is a regime where the leader killed his half-brother in Malaysia... It's a brutal regime, a secretive regime."

....

For verification of denuclearization, Rice advocated for "snap inspections" with North Korea who has cheated on agreements in the past.

"Meaning that you can go anywhere, any time that you wish to send inspectors there. These regimes are very good at, for instance, cleaning up a site after they've been notified that you want to look at that site. And so they tend to list their known sites, but hide other sites. And so you have to be able to go anywhere, anytime," Rice said.

She added that inspectors on the ground make a difference.



"I hope that one of the first steps in these North Korean negotiations would be to get inspectors, International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors, on the ground. Because our intelligence about North Korea is not very good," Rice said. "Being on the ground with experienced people, you pick up things that you wouldn't be able to pick up through other means."

Jean Song, "Condoleezza Rice warns ahead of North Korea talks: 'Beware'," [CBS News](#), 12:40 EDT, 1 May 2018.

On 8 May 2018, Joseph Yun — the former U.S. envoy for North Korean policy — said it would be a mistake to sign a peace treaty *before* North Korea denuclearized, because that treaty would recognize North Korea as a nuclear-armed nation. Moreover, Yun "said the road to a peace treaty will be 'very complicated' and take much longer than two years." [Yonhap](#).

The consensus of people who have negotiated with North Korea is that the negotiations will be extremely difficult. And history shows that North Korea has abrogated every agreement, making negotiations a waste of time. On the other hand, a quality negotiated agreement is much better than military strikes to disable North Korea's known nuclear weapons manufacturing plants and nuclear reactors, with a subsequent war involving North Korea — and perhaps China — against South Korea, the USA, and Japan.

### **13-22 March 2018: slow progress**

On 13 March 2018 at 08:44 EDT, in a [tweet](#), Trump publicly sacked Tillerson, the U.S. Secretary of State. Since 30 November 2017 (see [above](#)), there have been rumors that Trump would replace Tillerson. While Trump is waiting for the U.S. Senate to confirm Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State, Trump needs to nominate an ambassador to South Korea and find a new U.S. envoy to lead detailed negotiations with North Korea (i.e., replace Joseph Yun, who retired on 2 March). In my opinion, the USA — and the world — would be a better place if Trump resigned and Tillerson remained as U.S. Secretary of State. The departure of Tillerson means that war with North Korea is more likely.

On 16 March, Trump and President Moon had a telephone call. The White House summarized their conversation:

President Donald J. Trump spoke today with President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea to discuss ongoing efforts to prepare for their upcoming engagements with North Korea. Both leaders affirmed the importance of learning from the mistakes of the past, and pledged continued, close coordination to maintain maximum pressure on the North Korean regime. The two leaders agreed that concrete actions, not words, will be the key to achieving permanent denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and President Trump reiterated his intention to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un by the end of May. The two leaders expressed cautious optimism over recent developments and emphasized that a brighter future is available for North Korea, if it chooses the correct path.

"Readout of President Donald J. Trump's Call with President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea," [White House](#), 16 March 2018.

See also [Yonhap](#).

I wonder if President Moon fears Trump will withdraw all U.S. Military personnel and weapons from South Korea in exchange for North Korea ending testing of ballistic missiles.

On 15 March 2018, journalists reported that the North Korean foreign minister arrived in Sweden, perhaps to arrange a meeting between Kim and Trump. [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 16 March, the North Korean foreign minister continued his talks with Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. Talks were initially scheduled for 15-16 March, but were extended to 17 March. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 17 March, the North Korean foreign minister concluded his talks with Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, and she issued the following vague statement. I quote the entire statement.

The foreign ministers discussed opportunities and challenges associated with continued diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. They also discussed bilateral relations.

Talks concerned Sweden's consular responsibilities as a protecting power for the United States, Canada and Australia. Sweden underlined the need for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Other discussions centered on the humanitarian situation in North Korea, sanctions, and regional cooperation and security issues for countries including South Korea, Japan, Russia, China and the United States.

"Talks between Swedish and North Korean foreign ministers concluded," [Sweden](#), 17 Mar 2018.

On 17 March, the South Korean Foreign Minister, Kang Kyung-wha, was interviewed on CBS television "Face the Nation" when she was in Washington, DC for talks with the acting U.S. secretary of state. Kang confirmed that Kim was committed to denuclearization.

MARGARET BRENNAN: What conditions do the North Koreans have to meet before this conversation [on key security issues including the denuclearization issue] happens?

MINISTER KANG: Well, in effect they already have. We have asked the North to indicate in clear terms the commitment to denuclearization, and he has in fact conveyed that commitment.

MARGARET BRENNAN: He's given his word?

MINISTER KANG: He's given his word. But the significance of his word is quite weighty in the sense that this is the first time that the words came directly from the North Korean supreme leader himself, and that has never been done before.

"Transcript: South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha on "Face the Nation," March 18, 2018," [CBS News](#), 18 Mar 2018.

On 19 March, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström told [Reuters](#) that the fate of three

Americans currently held in North Korea should *not* be part of the Kim/Trump discussion. She said: "I don't want to have those elements involved in all of this ... this is not a time to put up a lot of conditions and preconditions."

On 19 March, it was announced that the U.S. Military and South Korea would hold military exercises, beginning 1 April. The [Pentagon](#) said the exercises are expected "at a scale similar to that of the previous years." [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 21 March, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2407 that extends until 24 April 2019 the panel of experts on sanctions against North Korea in Resolution 1718 and numerous subsequent resolutions. [U.N.](#).

On 21 March, President Moon floated the idea of a three-way summit with Moon/Kim/Trump, *after* the Moon/Kim summit in April and the Kim/Trump summit in May. [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#). I think this is a good idea, because Moon might be able to moderate Trump's gaffes (e.g., Moon: "What donald intended to say was ....")

On 18 March, journalists reported that Choe Kang-il — deputy director-general for North American affairs at the North Korea foreign ministry — is flying to Helsinki, Finland to meet a delegation of U.S. and South Koreans. The delegation includes former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Kathleen Stephens, and security experts from South Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 20 March, The Finnish foreign minister said that denuclearization was *not* on the agenda of discussions in Helsinki. Talks began on 19 March and are scheduled to end on 21 March. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 21 March, the talks ended in Helsinki. No results were announced. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 22 March, Trump announced John Bolton would be Trump's National Security Adviser, beginning 9 April. On 28 February 2018, Bolton wrote an article for the [Wall Street Journal](#) that advocated a U.S. Military first-strike on North Korea. In my opinion, Bolton's appointment in the White House makes war with North Korea more likely.

Yonhap News Agency in South Korea reminds us that North Korea thinks Bolton is sub-human scum:

The former ambassador [Bolton] represented the U.S. at the U.N. from 2005-2006 and served as under secretary of state for arms control and international security from 2001-2005. At the time, he made a series of remarks highly critical of the regime in Pyongyang and then-leader Kim Jong-il. He also called for a regime change in Pyongyang.

The North unleashed vituperation in response, describing him as "human scum," "devoid of reason," "an ugly fellow who cannot be regarded as a human being" and a "bloodthirsty fiendish bloodsucker," among other things.

"Trump replaces top nat'l security aide with ex-ambassador to U.N.," [Yonhap](#), 23 March 2018.

## Trump pokes China

Trump *needs* China to cooperate with economic sanctions on North Korea, in order for Trump to have a successful "maximum pressure" campaign on North Korea. In fact, Trump frequently complains that China could do more. But Trump recently unleashed a series of three actions that will really irritate the Chinese government:

1. On 16 March, Trump signed legislation that would encourage contacts between the U.S. Government and Taiwan. That apparently ends the "one China" policy by the USA since 1979. [Associated Press](#).
2. On 22 March, Trump imposed tariffs on US\$ 60 billion/year in imports from China, starting a trade war between China and the USA. [CNBC](#); [Washington Post](#)(19Mar); [Washington Post](#)(23Mar); [Associated Press](#).

On 2 April, China politely responded with US\$ 3 billion in tariffs on imports from the USA. [Reuters](#).

3. On 23 March, a U.S. Navy ship sailed near an island in the South China Sea that is claimed by China, but *not* recognized by the USA. [Reuters](#).

Trump repeatedly poking China in the eye is *not* a good way to get China to cooperate with the USA on the North Korean problem.

On 12 June 2018, the U.S. Government reopened a de facto embassy in Taiwan, greatly angering the communist Chinese government. [The Guardian](#); [Reuters](#).

On 15 June 2018, Trump imposed 25% tariffs on approximately US\$ 50 billion of imports from China, about 10% of the total value of imports from China. [Bloomberg](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 17 September 2018, Trump escalated the trade war with China by imposing tariffs on US\$200 billion/year in imports from China. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 24 September 2018, the U.S. Government approved the sale of US\$330 million in spare parts for Taiwan's military aircraft. China was angry at the sale. [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP).

On 26 September 2018, the Pentagon announced there had been two B-52H bomber flights from Guam to the South China Sea, where the bombers flew in airspace claimed by China. [CNN](#); [South China Morning Post](#); [Reuters](#).

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## 26-31 March 2018: slow progress

On 26 March, an armored train from North Korea arrived in Beijing, carrying undisclosed

government officials — possibly Kim Jong-Un. The train departed on 27 March, with neither China nor North Korea disclosing the names of the North Korean visitors. Journalists remind us that Kim has *never* met the head of a foreign government since Kim became supreme leader of North Korea in December 2011. Kim is scheduled to meet with Moon in April and with Trump in May, so it would be appropriate for Kim to meet first with the Chinese government, given that the Chinese are North Korea's best friends. [Yonhap](#); [CNN](#); [Reuters](#).

On 28 March in Asia — after Kim returned to North Korea — state media in China and North Korea reported that Chinese President Xi Jinping had invited Kim to Beijing. The Chinese news agency [Xinhua](#) reported that Kim told Xi that Kim was committed to denuclearization — Kim said: "It is our consistent stand to be committed to denuclearization on the peninsula, in accordance with the will of late President Kim Il Sung and late General Secretary Kim Jong Il." See also: [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#).

On the morning of 28 March, Trump made two tweets about North Korea.

For years and through many administrations, everyone said that peace and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was not even a small possibility. Now there is a good chance that Kim Jong Un will do what is right for his people and for humanity. Look forward to our meeting!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:05 EDT, 28 Mar 2018.

Received message last night from XI JINPING of China that his meeting with KIM JONG UN went very well and that KIM looks forward to his meeting with me. In the meantime, and unfortunately, maximum sanctions and pressure must be maintained at all cost!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:16 EDT, 28 Mar 2018.

Who is Trump kidding when he says Kim "will do what is right for his people and for humanity"? As Trump has previously said on many occasions, Kim is a dictator with a long list of human-rights abuses. Kim's goal is to remain in power, despite Kim's fear of U.S. desires for regime change in North Korea.

On 29 March 2018, a high-level meeting between the North and South Korean governments fixed the date and location of the Moon-Kim summit: 27 April at the Peace House in the South Korean side of the village of Panmunjom. This will be Kim's second trip to a foreign nation since Kim became supreme leader of North Korea in 2011. This will be the third summit between the leaders of the two Koreas, previous summits were in the years 2000 and 2007, both in Pyongyang. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The agenda for the Moon-Kim summit is not clear. [Arirang Television](#) reports "South Korea has had three major topics for President Moon Jae-in to discuss with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un — [1] denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, [2] building a lasting peace with lowered tensions, and finally [3] improving inter-Korean relations."

Trump's government has been renegotiating the trade agreement between South Korea and the USA. On 27 March, it was announced that the USA would be allowed to sell 25,000 more automobiles/year in South Korea, without meeting South Korean safety standards. There are also quotas on exports of steel from South Korea to the USA. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On the morning of 28 March, Trump liked the revised trade agreement.

.@USTradeRep just announced an agreement in principle with South Korea on KORUS! A great deal for American and Korean workers. Let's now focus on our important security relationship.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:14 EDT, 28 Mar 2018.

Instead of accepting the revised trade agreement, Trump announced during a 29 March campaign speech in Ohio that he might delay the agreement until after the Kim-Trump summit:

I may hold it up until after a deal is made with North Korea. You know why? [or] Does everybody understand that? Because it's a very strong card and I want to make sure everyone is treated fairly and we're moving along very nicely with North Korea.

"Trump's Ohio speech to promote infrastructure ranges widely, from North Korea to 'Roseanne'," [Washington Post](#), 16:44 EDT, 29 Mar 2018. (quotes "You know why?")  
"Trump threatens to 'hold up' trade deal with S. Korea as leverage in N. Korea talks," [Politico](#), 15:46 EDT, 29 Mar 2018. (quotes "Does everybody understand that?")

I am astounded that Trump would treat our ally, South Korea, in such a poor way. Why would delaying a trade agreement with South Korea give Trump more leverage over North Korea? Does Trump understand that South Korea and North Korea have separate governments?

And Trump piously says: "I want to make sure everyone is treated fairly". Fairness is a conclusion, *not* a fact. Trump, with his "america first" policy, has an obvious bias in deciding what is fair. If Trump believes the revised trade agreement is unfair, then he should instruct his negotiator to continue the negotiations.

See also [New York Times](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 30 March 2018, the United Nations Security Council blacklisted 15 North Korea ships, 12 other ships, and 21 shipping companies. Five of the shipping companies are in China. The blacklisting is punishment for violating sanctions. [U.S. State Dept](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

### **My comments on future Kim/Trump meeting**

On 8 April, there has been *no* public comment by North Korea on Trump's offer of 8 March for face-to-face talks with Kim sometime in May 2018. It is difficult to know how to interpret silence. In the USA, silence normally implies rejection.

It seems strange that North Korea communicates with the U.S. Government through third-parties (e.g., South Korea, Sweden), instead of using the North Korean diplomats at the United Nations in New York City to talk directly to U.S. diplomats.

We may know more after the Moon/Kim summit in late April 2018.

Having the Kim/Trump meeting first and then have lower-level diplomats draft a treaty is backwards. The lower-level meetings should come first, to see if North Korea is really



sincere about denuclearization and to learn what North Korea wants in exchange for denuclearization.

On 14 March 2018, Trump publicly boasted about his ignorance of essential facts in an important meeting. Trump, a man with a bachelor's degree in economics, planned to discuss trade policy with the prime minister of Canada without Trump bothering to learn whether the USA has a trade deficit with Canada. In that same speech on 14 March, also Trump inflated the number of U.S. Military personnel in South Korea from 28,500 to 32,000. (For quotations and my commentary, see my essay [trump2018](#).) Trump's repeated false or misleading statements make Trump the *wrong* person to negotiate with Kim — or any other leader.

One difficulty that can be foreseen is that the word "denuclearize" has different meanings to North Korea and the USA. The word appears in United Nations Security Council Resolutions, but without a definition. It surely means that North Korea must destroy all of its nuclear weapons. Does it also mean that North Korea can keep the operational nuclear reactor that produces material for nuclear weapons? Does it mean that North Korea can keep the centrifuges that separate isotopes for nuclear weapons? What will happen to the radioactive isotopes in North Korea's dismantled nuclear weapons? A hint of the true meaning of "denuclearize" occurs in the phrase in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2375, §31: "the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner". The words "complete" and "irreversible" imply the permanent disabling of *all* nuclear reactors, centrifuges, and other apparatus that have been used to produce nuclear weapons. Those two words also imply that North Korea's stock of radioactive isotopes for nuclear weapons should be transferred to some other nation, for verified destruction.

As the [Washington Post](#) explained, for North Korea denuclearization "means mutual steps to get rid of nuclear weapons, including requiring the United States to take down the nuclear umbrella it has put up over South Korea and Japan." That would require the U.S. to abrogate treaties with South Korea and Japan, and should be unacceptable to the United States. North Korea will surely object to being required to permanently disable all of its nuclear reactors, which it could claim are used to produce electricity.

Trump's sacking U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on 13 March, and sacking National Security Adviser McMaster on 22 March, leaves Trump's administration *less* prepared to deal with the North Korean problem.

On 8 March 2018, one North Korea expert predicted that "The Trump-Kim Summit Won't End Well". [Foreign Policy](#).

On 21 March 2018, the [Washington Post](#) predicted Trump will go "off script" during his meeting with Kim in May 2018: "Trump's [penchant](#) for off-the-cuff diplomacy and policymaking has been on full display during his presidency."

## **April 2018: Continuing North Korean Problem**



On 5 April, the Nikkei newspaper in Japan reported that during the 26 March Xi/Kim meeting in Beijing, Kim said he wanted to restart the six-party talks about North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The six-party talks were ended by North Korea in 2009. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). The Japanese Foreign Minister said the six-party talks should be restarted *only after* North Korea's "clear commitment to denuclearize is confirmed" at the Moon/Kim and Kim/Trump summits. [NHK](#). My comment is that Kim may want the protection of China and Russia in the six-party talks, compared to direct negotiations between the USA and North Korea. Such protection is especially likely, given the numerous sanctions that the U.S. Government has imposed on Russia, and given the current trade war between the USA and China.

On 7 April, [CNN](#) reported that North Korea was holding "secret, direct talks" with the U.S. Government. My comment is that the talks are *no* longer secret. On 8 April, the [Associated Press](#) reported that North Korea had privately told the U.S. Government "that Kim Jong Un is willing to discuss the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." [Reuters](#) confirmed the Associated Press report.

In remarks to journalists before a cabinet meeting on 9 April, Trump said: "North Korea, by the way, as you've probably seen — and we've been in touch with North Korea — we'll be meeting with them sometime in May or early June." [White House](#). Probably because the North Koreans ignored Trump during March 2018, the time for the Kim/Trump summit has slipped to "early June".

On 10 April, the [Washington Post](#) reported an interesting complication in deciding *where* Kim and Trump will meet. Kim does *not* have any functional long-range aircraft, so Kim can not fly to a meeting in a distance place (e.g., Europe or California). The reclusive Kim has never before needed a long-range airplane, since he stays in North Korea. With Kim unable to fly to Sweden or Switzerland, the U.S. Government is suggesting a meeting site in Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia. [New York Times](#).

On 17 April 2018, the Munhwa Ilbo newspaper in South Korea reported an anonymous government official says that Moon wants not only to denuclearize North Korea, but also obtain a peace treaty with North Korea that will end the Korean war that began in 1950, 68 years ago. [Bloomberg News](#); [CNBC](#). My comment is that the two Koreas have *not* been able to operate their joint manufacturing plant in Kaesong on a long-term basis. It is a fantasy to end the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), withdraw troops and artillery from the border, withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea, .... Eventually, there should be a peace treaty that formally ends the war, but first there should be confidence-building measures like long-term cooperation in Kaesong, denuclearization of North Korea, etc. On 18 April, [Yonhap](#) clarified that any peace treaty would come "when and if the communist state completely gives up its nuclear ambitions".

On 17 April, Trump met with the Prime Minister of Japan at Trump's Mar-a-Lago in Florida. Here is some of what Trump said about North Korea:

North Korea is coming along. South Korea is meeting, and has plans to meet, with North Korea to see if they can end the war. And they have my blessing on that. And they've been very generous that without us and without me in particular, I guess, you

would have to say, that they wouldn't be discussing anything, including the Olympics would have been a failure. Instead, it was a great success. They would have had a real problem.

But as you know, North Korea participated in the Olympics, and it made it — really, it was quite an Olympics. It was quite a success that would not have happened. And they do have my blessing to discuss the end to the war. People don't realize the Korean War has not ended. It's going on right now. And they are discussing an end to the war. So, subject to a deal, they would certainly have my blessing. And they do have my blessing to discuss that.

Japan and ourselves are locked, and we are very unified on the subject of North Korea. We will probably be — depending on various meetings and conversations, we'll be having meetings with Kim Jong-un very soon. It will be — that will be taking place probably in early June or a little before that — assuming things go well. It's possible things won't go well and we won't have the meetings, and we'll just continue to go along this very strong path that we've taken. But we will see what happens.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan Before Bilateral Meeting [at] Mar-a-Lago, FL," [White House](#), 15:00 EDT, 17 April 2018.

I have four comments on Trump's remarks. "Without me in particular" is embarrassing boasting about Trump's importance. Trump's narcissistic character disorder makes him believe he really deserves praise that is actually only insincere flattery. The participation of North Korea in the Olympics did *not* make the Olympics successful — the North Korean athletes were insignificant performers. Trump is condescending when he said: "People don't realize the Korean War has not ended." Maybe the amateurs in Trump's White House don't realize the war never ended, maybe the ignorant people who voted for Trump don't realize the war never ended, but some of us paid attention in school and college and know the war never ended.

About one hour later, Trump told journalists that he might *not* meet Kim. One wonders why Trump is suddenly hesitant to meet Kim.

I look forward to meeting with Kim Jong-un. And hopefully that will be a success. And maybe it will be, and maybe it won't be. We don't know. But we'll see what happens. But I can say this: They do respect us. We are respectful of them. And we're going to see what happens.

....

And let's see what happens. We'll either have a very good meeting or we won't have a good meeting. And maybe we won't even have a meeting at all depending on what's going in.

But I think that there's a great chance to solve a world problem. This is not a problem for the United States. It's not a problem for Japan or any other country. It's a problem for the world.

We've also started talking to North Korea directly. We have had direct talks at very high levels — extremely high levels — with North Korea. And I really believe there's a lot of goodwill. A lot of good things are happening. We'll see what happens. As I always say, we'll see what happens. Because ultimately, it's the end result that counts, not the fact that we're thinking about having a meeting or having a meeting.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan Before Restricted Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 15:54 EDT, 17 April 2018.

On 17 April, two anonymous U.S. Government officials told the [Washington Post](#) and the [Associated Press](#) that CIA Director — and Trump's nominee to be U.S. Secretary of State — Mike Pompeo on 1 April met secretly with Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang.

Normally, Trump hates leaks of secret or confidential information from the U.S. Government. But here Trump confirms the leak.

Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed. Details of Summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:42 EDT, 18 April 2018.

[Politico](#) suggested that Trump leaked the secret Kim/Pompeo meeting, to boost Pompeo's uncertain confirmation as secretary of state.

During a press conference at the end of his meeting with the Japanese prime minister, Trump said the following about North Korea:

We will not repeat the mistakes of previous administrations. Our campaign of maximum pressure will continue until North Korea denuclearizes. We have great respect for many aspects of what they're doing, but we have to get it together. We have to end nuclear weapons, ideally in all parts of the world. That would be a goal for all of us, to hope for and to cherish.

....

So we've never been in a position like this with that regime, whether it's father, grandfather, or son. And I hope to have a very successful meeting. If we don't think it's going to be successful, Mark [Landler], we won't have it. We won't have it. If I think that it's a meeting that is not going to be fruitful, we're not going to go. If the meeting, when I'm there, is not fruitful, I will respectfully leave the meeting, and we'll continue what we're doing or whatever it is that we'll continue. But something will happen.

So I like always remaining flexible, and we'll remain flexible here. I've gotten it to this point. President Moon of South Korea was very generous when he said, if it weren't for Donald Trump, the Olympics would have been a total failure. It was my involvement and the involvement of our great country that made the Olympics a very successful Olympics. If you look at ticket sales prior to what took place with respect to North Korea, it was going to be a big problem, and it turned out to be a very successful Olympics.

So we've gotten us here, and I think we're going to be successful. But if for any reason I feel we're not, we end. Okay?

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 18:16 EDT, 18 April 2018.

On 19 April, [JoongAng Ilbo](#), a major newspaper in South Korea, reported that President Moon said "North Korea is expressing its intention for complete denuclearization. And it is not making demands that the U.S. cannot accept, such as the withdrawal of the U.S. forces in Korea." *If true*, this would be a major change in policy by North Korea. See also [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [The Telegraph](#).

My comment is that we should hear from Kim Jong Un directly, *not* through Moon or another third party. Further, Trump's remarks about North Korea on 17-18 April were disorganized, inconsistent, and confusing.

### 21 April 2018: Kim's plan

On 21 April, Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted Kim Jong Un in an announcement that

1. North Korea will suspend its tests of ballistic missiles
2. North Korea will suspend its tests of nuclear weapons
3. North Korea will shut down its underground nuclear test site at Mount Mantap (Punggye-ri)
4. KCNA reported North Korea will: "never use nuclear weapons nor transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear technology under any circumstances unless there are nuclear threat and nuclear provocation against the DPRK."

[Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#)(quotes KCNA); [Reuters](#).

The English-language text at the KCNA website said:

[Kim Jong Un] saying that the overall situation is rapidly changing in favor of the Korean revolution thanks to the DPRK's initiative action and efforts after the declaration of completing the state nuclear force last year, he informed that a fresh climate of détente and peace is being created on the Korean peninsula and the region and dramatic changes are being made in the international political landscape.

He said that the miraculous victory of having perfectly accomplished the great historic cause of building the state nuclear force in a short span of less than five years is the great victory of the WPK's [Workers' Party of Korea] line of simultaneously pushing forward the economic construction and the building of a nuclear force and, at the same time, a brilliant victory that could be won only by the heroic Korean people.

....

He said that the victory of the WPK's line was won and thus the struggle of the Korean people who worked hard with their belt tightened to acquire a powerful treasured sword for defending peace was successfully concluded and the firm guarantee by

which our descendents can enjoy the most dignified and happiest life in the world was provided.

He said that no nuclear test and intermediate-range and inter-continental ballistic rocket test-fire are necessary for the DPRK now, given that the work for mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic rockets was finished as the whole processes of developing nuclear weapons were carried out in a scientific way and in regular sequence, and the development of delivery and strike means was also made scientifically. He added that the mission of the northern nuclear test ground has thus come to an end.

He clarified the WPK's peace-loving stand to make positive contributions to the building of the world free from nuclear weapons in conformity with the aspiration and desire common to mankind, provided that the DPRK's might was put on the level wanted by it and it became possible to reliably guarantee the security of the state and the safety of the people.

....

He said that it is necessary to launch a general revolutionary offensive and make a dynamic advance in the economic construction under the uplifted militant banner of "Let us further accelerate the advance of our revolution by concentrating all our efforts on socialist economic construction!"

....

The resolution "On Proclaiming Great Victory of the Line of Simultaneous Development of Economic Construction and Building of Nuclear Force" specified the following decisions.

1. First, we solemnly declare that the sub-critical nuclear test, underground nuclear test, making nuclear weapon smaller and lighter and the development of the super-large nuclear weapon and delivery means have been carried out in order in the course of the campaign for implementing the party's line of simultaneously developing the two fronts and thus the work for putting on a higher level the technology of mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic rockets has been reliably realized.
2. Second, we will discontinue nuclear test and inter-continental ballistic rocket test-fire from April 21, Juche 107 (2018).

The northern nuclear test ground of the DPRK will be dismantled to transparently guarantee the discontinuance of the nuclear test.

3. Third, the discontinuance of the nuclear test is an important process for the worldwide disarmament, and the DPRK will join the international desire and efforts for the total halt to the nuclear test.

4. Fourth, the DPRK will never use nuclear weapons nor transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear technology under any circumstances unless there are nuclear threat and nuclear provocation against the DPRK.
5. Fifth, we will concentrate all efforts on building a powerful socialist economy and markedly improving the standard of people's living through the mobilization of all human and material resources of the country.

....

"Third Plenary Meeting of Seventh C.C., WPK Held in Presence of Kim Jong Un," [KCNAwatch](#), 21 April 2018.

My comment is that earthquakes at Punggye-ri ("northern nuclear test ground") *after* detonation of the last nuclear weapon on 3 Sep 2017 show that the mountain is collapsing, and a new test site is needed. (See above for [3 Sep 2017](#) and [13 Oct 2017](#); [Chosun Ilbo](#).) On 25 April 2018, the [South China Morning Post](#) reported that "North Korea's mountain nuclear test site has collapsed". So shutting Punggye-ri is *not* necessarily a step toward denuclearization, but might be recognition by North Korea that Punggye-ri is no longer useful for testing nuclear weapons.

Further, Kim's 21 April moratorium on testing missiles and nuclear weapons may be because he does not want more severe economic sanctions imposed on North Korea. North Korea's last nuclear weapon test was on 3 Sep 2017, more than seven months ago. North Korea's last missile test was on 29 Nov 2017, five months ago.

Notice Kim's reference to "acquire a powerful treasured sword" (i.e., nuclear weapons). I interpret that to mean that Kim will *not* abandon his existing nuclear weapons that are necessary to "reliably guarantee the security of the state and the safety of the people".

[Above](#), I quote Prof. Alex Wellerstein and *The New York Times* on what the KCNA statement means for negotiations between Kim and Trump.

### **21-24 April 2018: Trump's reaction to Kim's plan**

On Friday, 20 April, Trump responded to the North Korean announcement:

North Korea has agreed to suspend all Nuclear Tests and close up a major test site. This is very good news for North Korea and the World — big progress! Look forward to our Summit.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:50 EDT, 20 April 2018.

A message from Kim Jong Un: "North Korea will stop nuclear tests and launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles." Also will "Shut down a nuclear test site in the country's Northern Side to prove the vow to suspend nuclear tests." Progress being made for all!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:22 EDT, 20 April 2018.

Note that North Korea did *not* mention destroying existing nuclear weapons or ballistic

missiles. Such destruction is required in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2397 (i.e., "shall immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner"). North Korea also did *not* mention a moratorium on the production of either more nuclear weapons or more ballistic missiles. There is *no* progress. North Korea has made a few preliminary steps, but denuclearization has *not* begun.

In his 23:22 Tweet, Trump did *not* cite a source for two quotations. Trump managed to graduate from high school — and business college — without learning how to cite a source.

On 22 April, Chuck Todd, the host of NBC News "Meet the Press", said:

TODD: But I want to put up something that Ari Fleischer, a veteran of the Bush administration who sort of has some scar tissue on North Korea. And he writes this "Call me a cynic, but based on history, one they'll suspend today and begin again tomorrow. Two, they have alternative ways, sites to carry out their mission, and three, they're lying now or will lie tomorrow. This is how NK behaves. Remember the Agreed Framework." What has the United States gotten from North Korea? He's done temporary everything. But he's not made a pledge on denuclearization, this last time. He hasn't released these hostages yet. Have we've given him the meeting. That in itself is a huge gift. What have we gotten in return?

....

ANDREA MITCHELL: .... We don't know how many weapons [the North Koreans] already have. [Kim is] not giving up anything that's real. He hasn't tested in months and months. This so-called freeze on testing is what was already taking place.

"Meet the Press- April 22,2018," [NBC News](#), 22 April 2018.

By agreeing to meet Kim, Trump has already given Kim legitimacy as the leader of a nation with nuclear weapons. Trump has ended his belligerent threats of a military strike against North Korea. And some of Trump's public statements show that Trump is desperate for an agreement with Kim, in order to enhance Trump's reputation as a deal-maker.

On 22 April 2018, Trump made another factual error about North Korea.

Sleepy Eyes Chuck Todd of Fake News NBC just stated that we have given up so much in our negotiations with North Korea, and they have given up nothing. Wow, we haven't given up anything & they have agreed to denuclearization (so great for World), site closure, & no more testing!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:50 EDT, 22 April 2018.

North Korea has *not* "agreed to denuclearization". [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(23Apr); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#). The KNCA statement on 21 April does *not* mention the word "denuclearization". At best, North Korea might *discuss* denuclearization with Trump. My comment is that I cringe when I think of Trump — who is incapable of getting his facts correct — negotiating with Kim. Trump's failure to understand "denuclearization" could lead to a disaster in negotiations.

Twelve minutes after falsely saying the North Koreans "agreed to denuclearization", Trump



again expressed uncertainty about the outcome of negotiations.

....We are a long way from conclusion on North Korea, maybe things will work out, and maybe they won't — only time will tell.... But the work I am doing now should have been done a long time ago!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:02 EDT, 22 April 2018.

In his 09:02 tweet, Trump gratuitously included two sets of ellipses that are unnecessary.

On Monday, 23 April 2018, the White House press secretary, Sarah Sanders, said:

QUESTION [by Jonathan]: Sarah, on North Korea: Is the President willing to accept anything short of complete denuclearization before lifting any sanctions?

SANDERS: Certainly the goal is denuclearization of the Peninsula, and we're going to continue the maximum pressure campaign that has been ongoing to North Korea until we see concrete actions taken towards complete and total denuclearization.

QUESTION: But does that mean no sanctions lifted until that's achieved? Are you willing to go incrementally?

SANDERS: Certainly no sanctions lifted until we see concrete actions taken by North Korea to denuclearize

QUESTION: When the President said in his tweet that they had agreed to denuclearize, where did they do that? Have they already agreed to do that?

SANDERS: Certainly in a number of the conversations, including the comments, I'd refer you back to also South Korean President Moon, who has said that North Korea has expressed a will for complete denuclearization. And certainly that's the focus of any conversation and negotiation that the United States will have with North Korea.

....

QUESTION: Thank you, Sarah. Just to go back to Jonathan's question about North Korea, the President tweeted pretty flatly, "...they have agreed to denuclearization." And then, you're saying that they just agreed to talk about it. What is the President's definition of complete denuclearization?

SANDERS: Again, I'm not going to negotiate with you guys. I'm going to leave that to the President and Kim Jong-un to walk through what some of those details would look like when that meeting takes place. But I can be very clear that we expect it not to just be mentioned in words, but there have to be concrete actions that take place towards total denuclearization of the Peninsula.

....

QUESTION: Yeah, Sarah, I just want to follow up on that about North Korea. I'm wondering, what gives you any optimism that the North Koreans are really looking to denuclearize? Because of the statements that they're making, everybody seems to be

jumping on the very positive aspects of the statements. But they were also saying over the weekend that their completion of the nuclear arsenal, which they call their “powerful treasured sword,” firmly guarantees forever the country’s security and well-being. That doesn’t sound like any wiggle room on denuclearization.

SANDERS: Certainly, we’re not going to make mistakes from previous administrations, and we’re not going to take the North Koreans simply at their word. Like I said before and we’ve said many times before, the maximum pressure campaign is going to continue until we see concrete actions taken by — look, we’re not naïve in this process. We’ve seen some steps in the right direction. But we have a long way to go.

We also have seen a major change in what has taken place in the past by having our allies and partners in the region step up and do much more than they have in the past. China has taken a more active role in putting pressure on North Korea. They can certainly do more — we hope they will — and will continue working with us. And that’s all at the direction and because of the relationship that the President has built with President Xi of China.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), 13:39 EDT, 23 April 2018.

Sanders refused to admit that Trump was *wrong* when he tweeted that North Korea had agreed to denuclearization. Trump is still wrong.

My comment is that the president should be able to offer a definition of "denuclearization". Part of the definition is included in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions that say the DPRK "shall immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner". I would put *all* in italics, and change "abandon" to "destroy both".

I suggest that Sanders should have said that no sanctions will be lifted until North Korea completely destroys *all* of its existing nuclear weapons — and also completely destroys *all* of its buildings and equipment for constructing nuclear weapons — in a verifiable and irreversible manner. Then some sanctions might be lifted while North Korea destroys all of its ballistic missiles. More sanctions might be lifted while North Korea destroys all of its chemical weapons.

Further, Sanders should stop using the word "concrete". Back on 9 March 2018, Sanders erroneously required North Korea to take "concrete actions" *before* Trump would meet with Kim.

On 24 April, Trump told journalists:

And as far as North Korea is concerned, we are going to be having a meeting with Kim Jong-un, and that will be very soon. We have been told directly that they would like to have the meeting as soon as possible. And we think that’s a great thing for the world. That’s a great thing for North Korea and South Korea and Japan and France and everybody.

So we’re having very — very good discussions. Kim Jong-un, he really has been very

open and I think very honorable from everything we're seeing. Now, a lot of promises have been made by North Korea over the years, but they've never been in this position.

We have been very, very tough on maximum pressure. We have been very tough on, as you know, trade. We've been very, very tough at the border. Sanctions have been the toughest we've ever imposed on any country. And we think it will be a great thing for North Korea and it will be a great thing for the world. So we'll see where that all goes. Maybe it will be wonderful and maybe it won't. And if it's not going to be fair and reasonable and good, I will — unlike past administrations — I will leave the table.

"Remarks by President Trump and President Macron Before Expanded Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 11:15 EDT, 24 April 2018.

Trump is **wrong** to call Kim "very honorable". Consider the following facts:

- Kim runs a totalitarian government with one of the worst human rights records in the entire world. The [U.S. State Dept.](#) published a 27-page report on human rights in North Korea in 2015.
- In March 2010, North Korea sank a South Korean Navy ship, the Cheonan, killing 46 sailors.
- Has Trump forgotten that Kim's agents killed Kim's half-brother in the Kuala Lumpur airport in February 2017, by applying VX nerve agent to his face? On 6 March 2018, the U.S. State Department imposed [sanctions](#) on North Korea for this use of chemical weapons.
- On 2 February 2018, Trump personally [met](#) with seven defectors from North Korea — didn't Trump learn anything from the meeting?
- Since 20 Nov 2017, North Korea is one of four nations that the U.S. Government has designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. [U.S. State Dept.](#)
- Trump seems to have forgotten that Kim has been developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, something that is *not* honorable.

Trump is **wrong** to call Kim "very honorable".

Trump also said Kim had been "very open". On 8 March 2018, Trump publicly agreed to meet with Kim. But on 24 April, Kim has still *not* made a public statement about meeting Trump. Kim is *not* being "open".

About 90 minutes later, Trump was asked to clarify his position:

QUESTION [by Jeff Mason from Reuters]: Thank you, Mr. President. Hi there. After your discussions today with President Macron, what is your thinking about a timeline for bringing U.S. troops out of Syria?

And on one other topic, you mentioned today that you thought the leader of North

Korea has behaved openly and honorably. This is someone who many people have accused of starving his people, killing family members. What did you mean when you called him that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we will start with your second part of the question. And I hope that we will be able to deal in a very open and honorable fashion with North Korea. I started a process, and when I did, everybody thought I was doing it absolutely wrong. But in the meantime, for 25 years, people have been dealing and nothing happened. And a lot is happening right now. I can tell you that, Jeff. A lot is happening. And I think it's going to be very positive. And I hope it's going to be very positive for North Korea and for South Korea, and Japan, and the rest of the world.

But I am starting at a level that, frankly, I shouldn't have had to start. This should have been worked out a long time ago. This should have been worked out many years ago. We were discussing that we shouldn't be having this situation happen to the United States and the world. This should have been resolved by other Presidents and by other leaders of other countries a long time ago.

With that being said, I think we're doing very well. Meetings are being set up. And I want to see denuclearization of North Korea. A lot of concessions have already been made. We have made no concessions, despite some of the media saying that I've made concessions. I don't — I haven't even discussed a concession other than the fact that meeting is a great thing. And I'm sure that a lot of other people would have liked to have had the position we're having.

....

So the end result is, we'll see. Maybe good things will happen and maybe we're all wasting a lot of time. But hopefully it will be good for everybody concerned.

....

QUESTION: And just to follow up, if I may, sir. On North Korea, you said you believe in complete denuclearization. What does that mean exactly?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It means they get rid of their nukes. Very simple. They get rid of their nukes, and nobody else would say it. It would be very easy for me to make a simple deal and claim victory. I don't want to do that. I want them to get rid of their nukes.

"Remarks by President Trump and President Macron of France in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 12:47 EDT, 24 April 2018.

Notice that Trump evaded the question of what he meant when he said Kim was "very honorable" and "very open". Trump blamed previous presidents for failing to solve the North Korean problem. Trump praised himself: "I think we're doing very well." Trump falsely said: "A lot of concessions have already been made." But denuclearization has *not* begun.

In the follow-up question, Trump should have said "destroy *all* of their nuclear weapons in a

complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner". People who are familiar with the North Korean problem often use the acronym CVID — complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. It is important to use these precise words from the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, otherwise North Korea may misinterpret that the U.S. is changing position.

"Get rid of their nukes" is a childish expression. Trump needs to learn how to speak formal English.

I get the impression that Trump was recklessly speaking when he said Kim was "very honorable" and "very open". On 1 May 2017, Trump said he would be "honored" to meet Kim. Maybe Trump was trying to be gracious. Trump needs to learn to carefully consider the significance of his words, so he does not send the wrong impression.

Reading a transcript of Trump speaking is like watching a train wreck. Trump's false facts and childish expressions are unacceptable. Trump's erratic, impulsive, and unpredictable decisions are worse. It is difficult to conceive of anything good resulting from a Kim/Trump meeting.

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### Too Many Goals for Kim/Trump Summit

Trump originally wanted to denuclearize North Korea. Then Trump began adding additional goals, which will make the negotiations more difficult.

1. On 17 April 2018, Trump wants to add a peace treaty to end the Korean war.
2. On 19 April 2018, Trump wants to destroy all chemical weapons and all biological weapons in North Korea. [Yonhap](#). See Bolton on 29 April, quoted [below](#).
3. Destroy all North Korean ballistic missiles. See Bolton on 29 April, quoted [below](#).
4. Around 1980, North Korea abducted approximately two dozen Japanese citizens. On 18 April 2018, Trump committed to having North Korea return all of these Japanese citizens. [White House](#). On 7 June 2018, Trump repeated his commitment. [White House](#).
5. Tell Kim to stop human rights abuses in North Korea. [Chosun Ilbo](#); [U.S. State Dept](#); [Yonhap](#)(24May).

Remember, this is a *one-day* summit between Kim and Trump, possibly including dinner. There is *not* time to have a substantial discussion on so many different issues.

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### 27 April 2018: Moon/Kim summit

On Friday, 27 April 2018, at 09:30 Kim walked across the DMZ to enter the Peace House in South Korea. This is the first time that any head of North Korea has entered South Korea.

The meeting began at 10:15, they broke for separate lunches at 11:55, met again at 16:30 when they planted a pine tree, had a second round of negotiations from 16:45 until 18:00, held a joint press conference, and then a formal dinner began at 18:30. Notice that in this so-called "one-day" summit, there were only 1.7 hours of negotiations in the morning and about 1.2 hour of negotiations in the afternoon. [Chosun Ilbo](#); [Korea Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

The unofficial English-translation of the statement from the Moon/Kim summit says:

### **Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula**

During this momentous period of historical transformation on the Korean Peninsula, reflecting the enduring aspiration of the Korean people for peace, prosperity and unification, President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea held an Inter-Korean Summit Meeting at the 'Peace House' at Panmunjom on April 27, 2018.

The two leaders solemnly declared before the 80 million Korean people and the whole world that there will be no more war on the Korean Peninsula and thus a new era of peace has begun.

The two leaders, sharing the firm commitment to bring a swift end to the Cold War relic of longstanding division and confrontation, to boldly approach a new era of national reconciliation, peace and prosperity, and to improve and cultivate inter-Korean relations in a more active manner, declared at this historic site of Panmunjom as follows:

1. South and North Korea will reconnect the blood relations of the people and bring forward the future of co-prosperity and unification led by Koreans by facilitating comprehensive and groundbreaking advancement in inter-Korean relations. Improving and cultivating inter-Korean relations is the prevalent desire of the whole nation and the urgent calling of the times that cannot be held back any further.
  - A. South and North Korea affirmed the principle of determining the destiny of the Korean nation on their own accord and agreed to bring forth the watershed moment for the improvement of inter-Korean relations by fully implementing all existing agreements and declarations adopted between the two sides thus far.
  - B. South and North Korea agreed to hold dialogue and negotiations in various fields including at high level, and to take active measures for the implementation of the agreements reached at the Summit.
  - C. South and North Korea agreed to establish a joint liaison office with resident representatives of both sides in the Gaeseong region in order to facilitate close consultation between the authorities as well as smooth

exchanges and cooperation between the peoples.

- D. South and North Korea agreed to encourage more active cooperation, exchanges, visits and contacts at all levels in order to rejuvenate the sense of national reconciliation and unity. Between South and North, the two sides will encourage the atmosphere of amity and cooperation by actively staging various joint events on the dates that hold special meaning for both South and North Korea, such as June 15, in which participants from all levels, including central and local governments, parliaments, political parties, and civil organizations, will be involved. On the international front, the two sides agreed to demonstrate their collective wisdom, talents, and solidarity by jointly participating in international sports events such as the 2018 Asian Games.
  - E. South and North Korea agreed to endeavor to swiftly resolve the humanitarian issues that resulted from the division of the nation, and to convene the Inter-Korean Red Cross Meeting to discuss and solve various issues including the reunion of separated families. In this vein, South and North Korea agreed to proceed with reunion programs for the separated families on the occasion of the National Liberation Day of August 15 this year.
  - F. South and North Korea agreed to actively implement the projects previously agreed in the 2007 October 4 Declaration, in order to promote balanced economic growth and co-prosperity of the nation. As a first step, the two sides agreed to adopt practical steps towards the connection and modernization of the railways and roads on the eastern transportation corridor as well as between Seoul and Sinuiju for their utilization.
2. South and North Korea will make joint efforts to alleviate the acute military tension and practically eliminate the danger of war on the Korean Peninsula. Alleviating the military tension and eliminating the danger of war is a highly significant challenge directly linked to the fate of the Korean people and also a vital task in guaranteeing their peaceful and stable lives.
- A. South and North Korea agreed to completely cease all hostile acts against each other in every domain, including land, air and sea, that are the source of military tension and conflict. In this vein, the two sides agreed to transform the demilitarized zone into a peace zone in a genuine sense by ceasing as of May 1 this year all hostile acts and eliminating their means, including broadcasting through loudspeakers and distribution of leaflets, in the areas along the Military Demarcation Line.
  - B. South and North Korea agreed to devise a practical scheme to turn the areas around the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea into a maritime peace zone in order to prevent accidental military clashes and guarantee safe fishing activities.
  - C. South and North Korea agreed to take various military measures to ensure active mutual cooperation, exchanges, visits and contacts. The two sides agreed to hold frequent meetings between military authorities, including the Defense Ministers Meeting, in order to immediately discuss and solve military issues that arise between them. In this regard, the two sides agreed to first convene military talks at the rank of general in May.



3. South and North Korea will actively cooperate to establish a permanent and solid peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. Bringing an end to the current unnatural state of armistice and establishing a robust peace regime on the Korean Peninsula is a historical mission that must not be delayed any further.
  - A. South and North Korea reaffirmed the Non-Aggression Agreement that precludes the use of force in any form against each other, and agreed to strictly adhere to this Agreement.
  - B. South and North Korea agreed to carry out disarmament in a phased manner, as military tension is alleviated and substantial progress is made in military confidence-building.
  - C. During this year that marks the 65th anniversary of the Armistice, South and North Korea agreed to actively pursue trilateral meetings involving the two Koreas and the United States, or quadrilateral meetings involving the two Koreas, the United States and China with a view to declaring an end to the War, turning the armistice into a peace treaty, and establishing a permanent and solid peace regime.
  - D. South and North Korea confirmed the common goal of realizing, through complete denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. South and North Korea shared the view that the measures being initiated by North Korea are very meaningful and crucial for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and agreed to carry out their respective roles and responsibilities in this regard. South and North Korea agreed to actively seek the support and cooperation of the international community for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The two leaders agreed, through regular meetings and direct telephone conversations, to hold frequent and candid discussions on issues vital to the nation, to strengthen mutual trust and to jointly endeavor to strengthen the positive momentum towards continuous advancement of inter-Korean relations as well as peace, prosperity and unification of the Korean Peninsula.

In this context, President Moon Jae-in agreed to visit Pyongyang this fall.

April 27, 2018  
Done in Panmunjom

Moon Jae-in  
President, Republic of Korea

Kim Jong Un  
Chairman, State Affairs Commission  
Democratic People's Republic of Korea

"Full text of joint declaration issued at inter-Korean summit," [Yonhap](#), 20:01 South Korean Time, 27 April 2018.

My comment is that this Declaration reads like a prelude to a peace treaty and perhaps unification of the two Koreas. That is *not* what I expected this summit to produce. Here are

my comments on the Declaration:

1. On the expected topic of denuclearization, the summit produced a terse little nugget in paragraph 3(D): "South and North Korea confirmed the common goal of realizing, through complete denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula." That is a very vague statement. Does it mean the U.S. Military must leave South Korea? If the U.S. Military departs from South Korea, can the U.S. continue to provide a nuclear umbrella for South Korea using nuclear weapons stored in Japan and Guam?
2. Why did the summit omit the specific words in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions about "verifiable and irreversible manner"? (The Declaration does include the word "complete", which may be a significant achievement at the Moon/Kim summit.) When will North Korea destroy all of its nuclear weapons? How will international inspectors verify that destruction? What does North Korea want in return for destroying all of its nuclear weapons?
3. The United Nations Security Council Resolutions also require destruction of *all* ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons in North Korea. Why is the Declaration silent on this requirement?
4. Paragraph 1(A) says: "by fully implementing all existing agreements and declarations adopted between the two sides thus far." Does that mean that North Korea now repudiates its abrogation of past agreements? Will North Korea rejoin the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons?
5. Paragraph 3(B) says: "South and North Korea agreed to carry out disarmament in a phased manner". This is really surprising that South Korea wants to disarm, given that North Korea is ruled by a tyrannical dictator who commits human rights abuses.
6. Paragraph 3(C) calls for resumption of negotiations involving North and South Korea, the USA, and perhaps China. Notice the absence of Russia and Japan, who were part of the six-party talks. The armistice of 1953 was signed by China, North Korea, and the USA, so those three nations are indispensable for a peace treaty.

For the lofty goals in the Declaration to be credible, one needs details of how these goals will be accomplished. But the Declaration is mostly only empty promises.

Max Boot, writing in the [Washington Post](#), reminds us that in the year 2000 Kim Jong Il — Kim Jong Un's father — promised "ending the Korean War and uniting the two countries" at the first summit between North Korea and South Korea. But what actually followed was development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by North Korea.

*The Washington Post* reported skepticism about the Declaration, but suggested very cautious optimism.

We have been here before.

We were here in 1992, when North Korea signed a denuclearization agreement with South Korea. Again in 1994, when North Korea signed a denuclearization agreement

with the United States. And in 2005, when North Korea signed a denuclearization agreement with its four neighbors and the United States. And then there was 2012, when North Korea signed another agreement with the United States.

North Korea has never stuck to any of its agreements.

So perhaps the wisest course of action would be to bet that North Korea won't abide by this one either.

....

But there are enough differences this time to give even a skeptic pause.

For one, Kim Jong Un is a very different leader from his father. He's an extrovert who's not afraid to make bold gestures, whether it be firing an intercontinental ballistic missile on July 4 or inviting a surprised South Korean president to step into North Korea with him, as Kim did to Moon on Friday [27 April].

....

Maybe this time will be different. Maybe.

Anna Fifield, "Talk of peace with North Korea has the South wondering: Will this time be different?," [Washington Post](#), 28 April 2018.

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### Trump's opinion

Donald Trump — who seems to have an opinion on everything, even if he does *not* understand the topic — expressed his opinion on the Moon/Kim summit.

After a furious year of missile launches and Nuclear testing, a historic meeting between North and South Korea is now taking place. Good things are happening, but only time will tell!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:41 EDT, 27 April 2018.

KOREAN WAR TO END! The United States, and all of its GREAT people, should be very proud of what is now taking place in Korea!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:55 EDT, 27 April 2018.

Trump does not show that he has read the Declaration from the summit. It is very premature to declare an end to the Korean War, when North Korea has not yet begun denuclearization.

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### Prof. Wellerstein's opinion

[Above](#), I quote Prof. Alex Wellerstein on Kim's declaration at the end of a North Korean Congress. Here is Prof. Wellerstein's comments on the Moon/Kim summit.

Glad to see North and South Korea making what appear to be earnest efforts to reduce

tensions and short-term possibility of war. But let us not forget history: DPRK strategy has long been one of oscillation between good and bad relations with regard to ROK. Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 09:39 EDT, 27 April 2018.

I think it is important to ask, again and again here, what seems to be motivating Kim, who appears to be the prime mover in these talks? He may genuinely want to reduce tensions, and thus the possibility of war. But I doubt he wants to lose his new nuclear "hedge."

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 09:39 EDT, 27 April 2018.

I think it's a good thing that DPRK is doing this — because I think reducing the tension of war is a good thing — but I also think we need to be realistic about what is likely to be achieved, so we don't get disappointed and angry if and when we find that little actually changes.

Alex Wellerstein, [tweet](#), 09:39 EDT, 27 April 2018.

### 28-30 April: Details Emerge

Back on 7 August 2015, Kim created “Pyongyang time” that was a half-hour different from South Korea and Japan. [New York Times](#); [The Guardian](#). On 27 April 2018, Kim saw the two clocks on the wall of the Peace House and decided to abolish “Pyongyang time”. [Yonhap](#); [The Guardian](#). This is a tiny concrete step toward reunification. More importantly, it is a public admission by Kim that he was wrong to create a separate time zone for North Korea. The change will come quickly: on 5 May 2018, North Korea will abandon “Pyongyang time”. [Yonhap](#).

On 29 April, the South Korean President's press secretary announced that North Korea would close its nuclear weapon test site at Punggye-ri in May 2018. Yonhap reported that "Kim said he would invite security experts and journalists to the North" to witness the closing. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

Above, I explained that the test site is now probably useless, owing to collapse of the mountain. I would be more impressed if North Korea would permanently disable all of their nuclear reactors at Yongbyon, where radioactive material is made for nuclear weapons. The disabling could be accomplished by inserting all of the control rods to end the reaction, then pouring a mixture of concrete and boric acid in the cooling water to permanently entomb the reactor. (Boron absorbs neutrons.)

On 29 April, the South Korean President's press secretary announced more of what Kim said during the summit on 27 April.

Keeping diplomatic developments coming at a head-snapping pace, the South Korean government said on Sunday [29 April] that North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, had told President Moon Jae-in that he would abandon his nuclear weapons if the United States agreed to formally end the Korean War and promise not to invade his country.

....

Even before Mr. Moon met with Mr. Kim, South Korean officials said any joint statement was bound to be vague on the terms of denuclearization because Mr. Kim would try to settle critical issues directly with Washington.

If Mr. Kim intends to win a peace treaty, diplomatic recognition and billions of dollars in economic aid from Washington and its allies, as South Korean officials hope he does, trading away his nuclear arsenal is his biggest bargaining chip. He cannot reveal his hand too soon, South Korean officials said.

Skeptics fear that Mr. Kim does not really intend to give up his nuclear weapons and is merely trying to soften his image, escape sanctions and make it more difficult for Mr. Trump to continue to threaten military action. But South Korean officials argue that Mr. Kim is sincere in trading his nuclear weapons for a promise to end hostilities and get Washington's help to improve his country's economy.

Choe Sang-Hun, "Kim Prepared to Cede Nuclear Weapons if U.S. Pledges Not to Invade," [New York Times](#), 29 April 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) also reported this announcement of what North Korea wants in return for denuclearizing: a peace treaty that ends the Korean war and a promise by the U.S. not to invade North Korea. My comment is that may be why the Declaration on 27 April at ¶3(C) mentions a peace treaty this year.

On 29 April 2018, the White House National Security Advisor, John Bolton, appeared on the CBS television program "Face the Nation" and outlined some of the U.S. position on the denuclearization of North Korea:

[Margaret] BRENNAN [, host of "Face the Nation"]: Well arguably North Korea also walks in in a position of some strength — economic weakness perhaps — but this nuclear program is further along than any past administration has encountered. So are —

BOLTON: Well because of the mistakes of 25 years of past administrations —

BRENNAN: — but is it a requirement that Kim Jong Un agree to give away those weapons before you give any kind of concession?

BOLTON: I think that's right. I think we're looking at the Libya model of 2003, 2004. We're also looking at what North Korea itself has committed to previously and most importantly I think going back over a quarter of a century to the 1992 joint North-South denuclearization agreement where North Korea committed to give up nuclear weapons and committed to give up uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing. Now we've got other issues to discuss as well:

- their ballistic missile programs,
- their biological and chemical weapons programs,
- their keeping of American hostages,
- the abduction of innocent Japanese and South Korean citizens over the years.

So there's a lot to talk about.

....

BRENNAN: That sounds like you want inspections before any kind of sanctions relief.

BOLTON: Well I think it would be a manifestation of the strategic decision to give up nuclear weapons doesn't have to be the same as Libya but it's got to be something concrete and tangible. It may be that Kim Jong Un has some ideas and we should hear him out.

"Transcript: National security adviser John Bolton on "Face the Nation," April 29, 2018," [CBS News](#), 29 April 2018. [Bulleted list added by Standler, along with minor editing.]

On 16 May 2018, the North Korean government mentioned Bolton's name three times in an article on KCNA that threatened to cancel the Kim/Trump summit.

### **Trump wants the Nobel Peace Prize for 2019**

On 30 April 2018, Moon suggested that Trump should be given the Nobel Peace Prize for ending the Korean War. [Yonhap](#); [Korea Times](#); [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). Trump — with his narcissistic character flaw — *knows* he deserves great praise. But it is very premature to be discussing awards, when there is *no* draft of a peace treaty, and North Korea has *not* begun denuclearization. Trump's narcissism makes him vulnerable to influence by flattery, while Trump's limited intelligence requires a simple factual message. [Washington Post](#). On 2 May 2018, a gang of 18 obsequious Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives sent a letter to the Nobel Prize committee, nominating Trump for the 2019 Peace Prize. [Fox News](#); [New York Times](#)(opinion).

On 9 May 2018, in response to a question "Do you deserve the Nobel Prize, do you think?", Trump actually replied: "Everyone thinks so, but I would never say it." [White House](#).

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### **China ends Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign**

There is a major development that has been ignored by most of the mainstream news media. Trump's position is that "maximum pressure" (i.e., economic sanctions) on North Korea will continue until North Korea completely denuclearizes, or at least until North Korea takes "concrete steps" to denuclearize. But in April 2018, China has already begun to ease sanctions, effectively ending the maximum pressure campaign. [NK Economy Watch](#)(9April); [Washington Post](#)(17May); [Chosun Ilbo](#)(18May); [Chosun Ilbo](#)(23May); [Nikkei Asian Review](#)(23May).

On 24 May, Trump abruptly canceled the Kim/Trump summit that was scheduled for 12 June. On 25 May, the [Washington Post](#) reported that both South Korea and China now have "little appetite" for Trump's maximum pressure campaign. *The Post* says that in Asia, "Kim looks like the levelheaded leader who was trying to build confidence — releasing American detainees, blowing up the nuclear testing site — while Trump looks impetuous and

unreliable."

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## May 2018

On 8 March 2018, Trump announced that he wanted to meet Kim Jong Un in May 2018. The negotiations about a meeting have been secret, but we know that the negotiations began in late March 2018. On 1 May 2018 there is still *no* agreement on a location and date for the Kim/Trump summit. In my opinion, the protracted negotiations about minor details (i.e., location and date) foreshadows months — maybe years — of negotiations about denuclearization and disarmament by North Korea. Does Trump have the patience for such long negotiations?

On 2 May, South Korea publicly announced it wants the 28,500 U.S. Military personnel to remain in South Korea, regardless of any peace treaty with North Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that will be a hedge against both cheating by North Korea, and future repudiation of disarmament agreements by North Korea. However, Trump will probably want South Korea to pay the entire cost of maintaining the U.S. Military in South Korea.

On 4 May 2018, the [Chosun Ilbo](#) newspaper in South Korea reported that the Rodong Sinmun newspaper in North Korea demanded:

1. an end to economic sanctions on North Korea,
2. remove the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile battery from South Korea, and
3. stop mentioning human rights abuses in North Korea.

The North Koreans also tossed out a gratuitous statement: "We're doubtful of America's sincerity whether it really has the intention to have dialogue."

Why does North Korea care about THAAD — North Korea has promised a moratorium on testing missiles and also promised not to attack South Korea. The answer is that China opposes THAAD, because the powerful radars of THAAD can view missile launches in China. North Korea is aligning its demands with those of its ally, China.

On 4 May, the [Korea Times](#) reported that China and the U.S. are in negotiations to remove THAAD from South Korea.

On 4 May at noon EDT, Trump told journalists that there was an agreement on the date and location of the Kim-Trump summit: "[The summit] will be very soon. I have the date. I have the location. It's all agreed to." [White House](#). But on 8 May there was still *no* announcement of the date and location for the summit, which led the [Korea Herald](#) to suggest that a problem had occurred. *The Herald* quoted Victor Cha: "I feel like the longer it takes for this summit in terms of the venue and timing to materialize, the more chance that it could be postponed, or fall through."

On 6 May, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that Trump was ruining the mood



of the summit, when Trump claimed his "maximum pressure" campaign had forced Kim to negotiate. [Associated Press](#); [Korea Times](#)(AP); [Reuters](#).

On 7-8 May, Kim secretly met Chinese premier Xi Jinping at Dalian China. This was Kim's second summit with Xi, the first was on 26 March 2018. [XinhuaNet](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On the afternoon of 8 May, Trump announced that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was en route to Pyongyang, to prepare for the Kim/Trump summit. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 9 May, Pompeo met with Kim for 90 minutes, in addition to meeting other officials in North Korea. Pompeo then flew back to Washington after 13 hours in Pyongyang. [U.S. State Dept](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 2 May 2018, [Yonhap](#) reported that the three U.S. citizens in North Korean labor camps (i.e., U.S. criminals convicted of espionage or "hostile acts") were moved to a hotel in "early April" 2018. The move from a labor camp to a hotel may be to prepare the U.S. citizens for release. On 9 May, U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo picked up the three U.S. citizens during his visit to Pyongyang to finalize plans for the Kim/Trump summit.

### **Kim/Trump summit scheduled**

On 10 May, approximately two months after Trump said he wanted to meet Kim, Trump announced the date and place for the meeting.

The highly anticipated meeting between Kim Jong Un and myself will take place in Singapore on June 12th. We will both try to make it a very special moment for World Peace!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:37 EDT, 10 May 2018.

Now Trump has one month remaining in which to memorize the phrase "destroy *all* of their nuclear weapons in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner". So far, Trump's limited intellectual capacity has proven incapable of memorizing this phrase.

On 11 May, U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo said that the U.S. would provide foreign aid to North Korea, "*if* North Korea takes bold action to quickly denuclearize". [italics added by Standler] And not just foreign aid, but Pompeo said: "the United States is prepared to work with North Korea to achieve prosperity on the par with our South Korean friends."

[U.S. State Dept](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#); [NBC News](#). On 12 May, an anonymous South Korea official told [Yonhap](#) News Agency: "Implementation of a (denuclearization) agreement is expected to proceed swiftly if the leaders are committed to the deal. The goal is complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement [sic]. How to reach the destination will depend on an agreement between the North Korean and U.S. leaders." My comment is that the "quickly" or "swiftly" is a dream, in the current peace hysteria. The reality is that denuclearization is likely to take years, and verification is likely to be sparse.

Further, South Korea worked diligently since 1953 to achieve their current prosperity. It would be a mistake to *give* North Korea equivalent prosperity. North Korea became an

impoverished nation because their Kim dynasty *chose* to spend its limited resources on nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, a program that was forbidden by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718 in October 2006 and many subsequent Resolutions. Incidentally, how can North Korea "quickly" denuclearize? If they completely denuclearize by October 2018, they will have taken 12 years to obey Resolution 1718. Twelve years to obey an international obligation is *not* "quick".

Pompeo was vague on 11 May about whether U.S. taxpayers would be rewarding North Korea. I oppose spending U.S. taxpayers' money on aid to North Korea, a rogue nation with an atrocious human-rights record. There are many places in the USA with old rusted bridges that are closed because they are unsafe for vehicles. The U.S. has many other infrastructure needs, such as widening old highways. U.S. taxpayers can easily think of other needs in the USA. On 13 May, [Reuters](#) reported: "Pompeo said the United States would not be willing to invest taxpayer dollars to help the country, but was willing to lift sanctions to pave the way for private American investment in North Korea's energy, agriculture and infrastructure sectors." See also [Yonhap](#).

On 12 May, the North Korean government announced it is currently dismantling its Pyonggye-ri test site for nuclear weapons. "The [North Korean foreign] ministry added the dismantlement will be done according to this sequence: collapsing all tunnels with an explosion, blocking entrances, and removing all observation and research facilities, as well as the guard unit structures on the testing ground." A formal ceremony with foreign journalists is scheduled for sometime during 23-25 May. [Yonhap](#).

Trump promptly responded and thanked North Korea.

North Korea has announced that they will dismantle Nuclear Test Site this month, ahead of the big Summit Meeting on June 12th. Thank you, a very smart and gracious gesture!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:08 EDT, 12 May 2018.

On 13 May, a group of South Korean businesses asked when the joint manufacturing plant at Kaesong, North Korea would be reopened. [Yonhap](#). Remember that South Korea closed the Kaesong plant on 10 Feb 2016, after North Korea launched a ballistic missile. The continued closure of the plant may now be required by United Nations Security Council Resolutions that imposed economic sanctions on North Korea. On 18 May, the businessmen renewed their request to visit Kaesong. [Yonhap](#).

On 15 May, Han Tae-song, North Korea's ambassador to Switzerland, announced that North Korea might join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). [Yonhap](#).

### **16 May 2018: NK abruptly shifts policy**

High-level talks between North and South Korea were scheduled for 16 May, to begin implementing the 27 April agreement between Moon and Kim. [Yonhap](#). But on 16 May at 00:30 — a few hours before the talks were scheduled to begin — North Korea abruptly announced an "indefinite postponement" of the North/South talks — and also threatened to cancel the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June — citing military exercises by U.S. and South

Korea warplanes. [Yonhap](#); [JoongAng](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

My comment is that North Korea waited less than one month from the Moon/Kim summit before beginning to play its traditional game of abrupt shifts in policy. North Korea had *no* objection to the annual U.S. and South Korean military exercises in March and April 2018. North Korea is erratic and undependable when it make abrupt shifts in policy and last-minute cancellation of negotiations. The date of the Kim/Trump summit was publicly announced on 10 May, but six days later North Korea is already threatening to cancel that summit. North Korea's announcement casts doubt on Kim's sincerity in his nice words and promises since 1 Jan 2018 about denuclearization and a peace treaty.

In reading the news articles cited above, it is clear that the North Korean announcement caught both South Korea and the U.S. State Department by surprise. *Why* would North Korea suddenly change policy? The [Washington Post](#) said: "analysts speculated that hard-liners in the [North Korean] military, concerned about the sudden talk of denuclearization, might be trying to interfere with the current diplomatic efforts."

At about 11:30 Korean time on 16 May, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) announced that North Korea would *not* abandon its nuclear weapons.

A senior North Korean official warned Wednesday [16 May] that Pyongyang will reconsider the agreed-upon summit talks with the United States if it comes under continued pressure to "unilaterally" abandon its nuclear program.

Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan made clear that the communist regime is not interested in any nuclear talks in which it is coerced into giving up its nuclear arsenal, according to Pyongyang's state news agency KCNA.

"We will not be interested in talks anymore if (they) only try to push us unilaterally into a corner and force us to give up nukes," he said in a statement carried by the state media. "It would be inevitable to reconsider whether to respond to the upcoming summit with the U.S."

....

Saying that North Korea has already expressed an intent to make the Korean Peninsula nuclear-free, [Kim Kye-gwan] reiterated Pyongyang's demand for security assurance, demanding the U.S. end its hostile policy and nuclear threats against its regime.

He also made it clear that the North has no interest in a quid pro quo deal in which the U.S. provides economic benefits in exchange for the North giving up its nuclear weapons.

"The U.S. is saying that it will give us economic compensation and benefits if we abandon our nukes. But we have never sought economic development by pinning expectations on the U.S. and such a deal will never happen going forward either," he said.

"N. Korea threatens to rethink Trump-Kim summit," [Yonhap](#), 12:23 Korean time, 16 May

2018.

I comment that the North Koreans are creating an artificial difficulty by failing to say precisely what they desire from the negotiations. Instead, the North Koreans indicate their displeasure from an alleged U.S. "provocation" and alleged U.S. "threats", and then the North Koreans threaten to end negotiations that have not yet begun. Incidentally, Trump played the same game when he threatened to walk out of negotiations if the North Koreans were not sincere about denuclearization. (See Trump's remarks for 17-18 April, 24 April, quoted above.)

There were *two* announcements from North Korea on 16 May. The first announcement objected to joint U.S./South Korea military exercises and indefinitely suspended high-level negotiations with South Korea. The second announcement was published in the KCNA and said North Korea was "reconsidering" whether to attend the Kim/Trump summit, because of increasing demands by the U.S. Government. [Above](#), I quoted part of a 29 April interview with White House National Security Advisor John Bolton, in which Bolton outlined some of the U.S. position in the future Kim/Trump summit.

On 16 May 2018, Kim Kye Gwan, North Korea's first vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, objected to Bolton's 29 April remarks:

In response to the noble intention of Chairman Kim Jong Un, President Trump stated his position for terminating the historically deep-rooted hostility and improving the relations between the DPRK and the U.S.

I appreciated the position positively with an expectation that upcoming DPRK-U.S. summit would be a big step forward for catalyzing détente on the Korean peninsula and building a great future.

But now prior to the DPRK-U.S. summit, unbridled remarks provoking the other side of dialogue are recklessly made in the U.S. and I am totally disappointed as these constitute extremely unjust behavior.

High-ranking officials of the White House and the Department of State including Bolton, White House national security adviser, are letting loose the assertions of so-called Libya mode of nuclear abandonment, "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization", "total decommissioning of nuclear weapons, missiles, biochemical weapons". etc, while talking about formula of "abandoning nuclear weapons first, compensating afterwards".

This is not an expression of intention to address the issue through dialogue. It is essentially a manifestation of awfully sinister move to impose on our dignified state the destiny of Libya or Iraq which had been collapsed due to yielding the whole of their countries to big powers.

I cannot suppress indignation at such moves of the U.S., and harbor doubt about the U.S. sincerity for improved DPRK-U.S. relations through sound dialogue and negotiations.

World knows too well that our country is neither Libya nor Iraq which have met miserable fate.

It is absolutely absurd to dare compare the DPRK, a nuclear weapon state, to Libya which had been at the initial stage of nuclear development.

We shed light on the quality of Bolton already in the past, and we do not hide our feeling of repugnance towards him.

If the Trump administration fails to recall the lessons learned from the past when the DPRK-U.S. talks had to undergo twists and setbacks owing to the likes of Bolton and turns its ear to the advice of quasi-“patriots” who insist on Libya mode and the like, prospects of upcoming DPRK-U.S. summit and overall DPRK-U.S. relations will be crystal clear.

We have already stated our intention for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and made clear on several occasions that precondition for denuclearization is to put an end to anti-DPRK hostile policy and nuclear threats and blackmail of the United States.

But now, the U.S. is miscalculating the magnanimity and broad-minded initiatives of the DPRK as signs of weakness and trying to embellish and advertise as if these are the product of its sanctions and pressure.

The U.S. is trumpeting as if it would offer economic compensation and benefit in case we abandon nuke. But we have never had any expectation of U.S. support in carrying out our economic construction and will not at all make such a deal in future, either.

It is a ridiculous comedy to see that the Trump administration, claiming to take a different road from the previous administrations, still clings to the outdated policy on the DPRK — a policy pursued by previous administrations at the time when the DPRK was at the stage of nuclear development.

If President Trump follows in the footsteps of his predecessors, he will be recorded as more tragic and unsuccessful president than his predecessors, far from his initial ambition to make unprecedented success.

If the Trump administration takes an approach to the DPRK-U.S. summit with sincerity for improved DPRK-U.S. relations, it will receive a deserved response from us. However, if the U.S. is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment, we will no longer be interested in such dialogue and cannot but reconsider our proceeding to the DPRK-U.S. summit.

Kim Kye-Gwan, "Full text: North Korea calls John Bolton repugnant and threatens to bail on summit with Trump," [Quartz](#), 16 May 2018.

**My comments** on the above-quoted Yonhap 16 May news article and Kim Kye-Gwan's KCNA article:

1. North Korea expected that the Kim/Trump summit would *discuss* (i.e., "dialogue")

denuclearization and a peace treaty. But now North Korea finds the U.S. Government — especially Bolton — unilaterally declaring what North Korea must do. And Trump and Bolton are [adding](#) more topics to the summit. North Korea will be especially grieved if Trump mentions North Korea's atrocious human-rights record.

Notice there is some ambiguity in Kim Kye-gwan's announcement. North Korea will *not* be "coerced into [unilaterally] giving up its nuclear arsenal". But there is the possibility of North Korea abandoning its nuclear weapons *if* the USA provides "security assurance" and the USA "end its hostile policy and nuclear threats" towards North Korea. One wonders if Kim Kye-gwan is saying North Korea will not be forced to abandon its nuclear weapons, but it might voluntarily abandon its nuclear weapons in exchange for a new U.S. Military policy (e.g., end to U.S./South Korean military exercises, security guarantee for North Korea, etc.).

2. North Korea seems desperate for *respect* from the U.S. Government, now that North Korea possesses a few nuclear weapons.
3. North Korea is very aware of two historical examples:
  - A. The U.S. Military invaded Iraq in 2003 to remove weapons of mass destruction (e.g., chemical weapons) that were allegedly stockpiled by Saddam Hussein. The new Iraqi government hanged Hussein in December 2006.
  - B. In 2003, the U.S. and U.K. negotiated an end to the nuclear weapons development program in Libya. Then Libyan rebels murdered Qaddafi in October 2011.

The lessons from these two historical examples is that leaders of third-world nations *need* nuclear weapons to prevent overthrow by the USA.

Bolton made a mistake when he mentioned Libya in his 29 April remarks. Mentioning Libya or Iraq is an unpleasant reminder for North Korea.

4. Kim Kye-gwan essentially said that North Koreans would prefer to have intestinal worms than accept economic assistance from the USA. <grin>

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On 16 May, Trump told journalists that he did *not* know if he would have a summit with Kim in June 2018.

QUESTION: Are you concerned that Kim will call off the summit?

QUESTION: Is the North Korea summit still on?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We'll have to see.

QUESTION: We'll have to see?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We'll have to see.

QUESTION: Can the Korean summit be salvaged?

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No decision. We haven't been notified at all. We'll have to see.

QUESTION: Will you call off the military drills?

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We haven't seen anything. We haven't heard anything. We will see what happens. Whatever it is, it is.

....

QUESTION: Is Kim bluffing (inaudible)?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We'll see what happens. We'll see. Time will tell.

QUESTION: Are you still going to insist on denuclearization? Will you still insist on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yeah.

Thank you very much everybody.

"Remarks by President Trump and President Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 11:54 EDT, 16 May 2018.

A journalist asked Trump, "Will you call off the military drills?". Trump ignored the question. The South Korean Defense Ministry said the military exercises would continue. [Yonhap](#).

In my opinion, Trump pretending not to care about whether or not Kim cancelled the summit was exactly the right response by Trump. The worst possible response would have been for Trump to beg Kim not to cancel the summit, which would have given Kim more power.

Trump said the U.S. Government had not been officially notified by North Korea. Heather Nauert said the same thing at the [U.S. State Dept](#). But the KCNA is the official propaganda agency of the North Korean government, so it is one kind of official notification.

On 17 May 2018, Yonhap News Agency reported:

[South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha] refused to attach too much meaning to specific terms to describe the level of denuclearization to be discussed.

U.S. officials have long talked about "CVID," which stands for "complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement." Recently, Pompeo used the expression "PVID" for "permanent" denuclearization, sparking media speculation about whether the Trump administration has raised the bar for North Korea.



"Although the 'P' sounds stronger in tone (in terms of the demand for denuclearization), in fact, (the two) mean the same thing," Kang told the [South Korean] National Assembly's committee on foreign and inter-Korean affairs.

"Minister: N. Korea, U.S. apart over details of denuclearization," [Yonhap](#), 17 May 2018.

This example shows the importance of always using the exact words from the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (i.e., CVID), to avoid misunderstandings.

Then Trump told journalists:

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, nothing has changed on North Korea that we know of. We have not been told anything. And if it does, that's fine. If it doesn't, I think we'll probably have a very successful meeting. But we have not been told anything. We're just reading stories like you are. We've heard certain things from South Korea. But we'll see what happens. If the meeting happens, it happens. And if it doesn't, we go on to the next step.

....

QUESTION: Would you consider a personal outreach to Kim to get him moving toward — keep him moving towards —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, we'll see what happens. Look, you have to want to do it. With deals — that's what I do, is deals. And with deals you have to have two parties that want to do it. He absolutely wanted to do it. Perhaps he doesn't want to do it. Perhaps they spoke with China — that could be right — President Xi, a friend of mine, great guy. But he's for China, and I'm for the United States. And that's the way it is, and I suspect it's never going to change.

But I will say this: We are continuing to negotiate in terms of location — the location as to where to meet, how to meet, rooms, everything else. And they've been negotiating like nothing happened. But if you read the newspapers, maybe it won't happen. I can't tell you yet. I will tell you very shortly. We're going to know very soon.

....

QUESTION: They seemed to get annoyed by a comment that Ambassador Bolton made about the Libya model of denuclearization.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, the Libyan model isn't a model that we have at all, when we're thinking of North Korea. In Libya, we decimated that country. That country was decimated. There was no deal to keep Qaddafi. The Libyan model that was mentioned was a much different deal. This would be with Kim Jong-un — something where he'd be there, he'd be in his country, he'd be running his country. His country would be very rich. His people are tremendously industrious.

If you look at South Korea, this would be, really, a South Korean model in terms of

their industry, in terms of what they do. They're hardworking, incredible people.

But the Libyan model was a much different model. We decimated that country. We never said to Qaddafi, "Oh, we're going to give you protection. We're going to give you military strength. We're going to give you all of these things." We went in and decimated him. And we did the same thing with Iraq.

....

But the model, if you look at that model with Qaddafi, that was a total decimation. We went in there to beat him. Now that model would take place if we don't make a deal, most likely. But if we make a deal, I think Kim Jong-un is going to be very, very happy. I really believe he's going to be very happy.

....

QUESTION: Well, what security guarantees are you willing to give to North Korea, in terms of keeping —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I'm willing to do — we're willing to do a lot. And he's willing to, I think, do a lot also. And I think we'll actually have a good relationship, assuming we have the meeting, and assuming something comes of it. And he'll get protections that would be very strong.

... if you look anywhere around the Middle East — you look at Iraq, you look at Libya — with Libya, certainly they didn't have protection; they had the exact opposite. That was absolute decimation. And that's what we planned to do, and that's what we did. "Remarks by President Trump and Secretary General Stoltenberg of NATO Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 13:47 EDT, 17 May 2018.

### **My comments:**

1. That North Korea is continuing to plan the Kim/Trump summit, despite Kim Kye-gwan's 16 May remarks, suggests to me that Kim Kye-gwan was probing Trump, to see if North Korea could get information — and perhaps better terms (more concessions from Trump) — on the summit.
2. Trump repudiated Bolton's "Libya model" comments. One difference from Libya is that the U.S. is willing to promise *no* regime change in North Korea.
3. But the Libyan model, with regime change, "would take place [in North Korea] if we don't make a deal, most likely." Not nice of Trump to threaten Kim Jong-Un.
4. Trump garbled his history. The denuclearization of Libya occurred years before the U.S.-supported rebellion in Libya. When the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, the Iraqi government unexpectedly collapsed, the Iraqi military disappeared, and Saddam Hussein went into hiding. Trump's statement that we planned to decimate Libya and Iraq is wrong.

5. Trump offered *no* reason(s) to support his speculation that China influenced North Korea's sudden change in policy.

Reuters reported:

North Korea's chief negotiator called the South Korean government "ignorant and incompetent" on Thursday [17 May], denounced U.S.-South Korean air combat drills and threatened to halt all talks with the South unless its demands are met.

The comments by Ri Son Gwon, chairman of North Korea's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the country, were the latest in a string of inflammatory statements marking a drastic change in tone after months of easing tension with plans for denuclearisation and a summit scheduled with the United States.

"North Korea says won't hold talks with 'incompetent' South unless differences settled," [Reuters](#), 19:46 GMT, 17 May 2018.

The good mood from the 27 April summit between Moon and Kim lasted less than one month, before North Korea indignantly ended negotiations. When mature, rational people are irritated they have *more* negotiations, not walking out and refusing to negotiate.

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For many years, refugees have fled from North Korea, usually to South Korea, typically in groups of one or two. In April 2016, a group of 12 North Korea women and one male North Korean manager who were working in a North Korean restaurant in China all defected to South Korea. North Korea has alleged they were abducted by South Korea. On 19 May 2018, North Korea demanded the return of the 12 women and 1 man. [Yonhap](#). On 29 May, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea again demanded the return of the 13 North Koreans. My comment is that this *may* be a reaction to complaints by Japan and South Korea about the abduction of their citizens by North Korea. Regardless of motivation, all three nations should focus on removing North Korea's nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons — issues that affect tens of millions of people in South Korea — and settle the abduction issues later.

On 20 May 2018, *The New York Times* reported:

President Trump, increasingly concerned that his summit meeting in Singapore next month with North Korea's leader could turn into a political embarrassment, has begun pressing his aides and allies about whether he should take the risk of proceeding with a historic meeting that he had leapt into accepting, according to administration and foreign officials.

Mr. Trump was both surprised and angered by a statement issued on Wednesday [16 May] by the North's chief nuclear negotiator, who declared that the country would never trade away its nuclear weapons capability in exchange for economic aid, administration officials said. The statement, while a highly familiar tactic by the North, represented a jarring shift in tone after weeks of conciliatory gestures.

....

Mr. Trump's aides have grown concerned that the president — who has said that “everyone thinks” he deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts — has signaled that he wants the summit meeting too much. The aides also worry that Mr. Kim, sensing the president's eagerness, is prepared to offer assurances that will fade over time.

....

The aides are also concerned about what kind of grasp Mr. Trump has on the details of the North Korea [nuclear] program, and what he must insist upon as the key components of denuclearization. Mr. Moon and his aides reported that Mr. Kim seemed highly conversant with all elements of the program when the two men met, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has made similar comments about Mr. Kim, based on his two meetings with him in Pyongyang, the North's capital.

But aides who have recently left the administration say Mr. Trump has resisted the kind of detailed briefings about enrichment capabilities, plutonium reprocessing, nuclear weapons production and missile programs that Mr. Obama and President George W. Bush regularly sat through.

Grappling with North Korea in negotiations is a new experience not just for Mr. Trump, but also for everyone else in the upper ranks of his administration. South Korean officials say that John R. Bolton, Mr. Trump's new national security adviser, has been in near daily contact with his counterpart in Seoul, trying to work out a strategy.

Mr. Bolton has been clear that in his view the president should use the Singapore meeting to declare that the North must give up its entire arsenal and nuclear infrastructure before crippling economic sanctions are eased.

The South has been advocating a more traditional confidence-building approach, in which concessions by the North result in a gradual lifting of sanctions. But Mr. Trump has said he will not repeat that technique, because it led to failure by his four immediate predecessors.

David E. Sanger, "Trump Grappling With Risks of Proceeding With North Korea Meeting," [New York Times](#), 20 May 2018.

Trump has repeatedly demonstrated his ignorance of facts on a variety of issues. Trump has not yet learned to say the magic phrase “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization” — the phrase used in a series of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, which Trump has obviously *not* read. Trump's public statements shows that Trump lacks the intellectual capacity to understand the complexities of nuclear disarmament.

I am concerned that North Korea has a team of negotiators who have personal experience with negotiating with the USA, while the U.S. Government currently has no one on its negotiating team with personal experience negotiating with North Korea. This problem is a natural outcome of the stable North Korean government, while the USA changes its president every 4 or 8 years. Trump could try to hire as consultants some negotiators with personal

experience with North Korea, but Trump is too arrogant to admit he needs help. Trump also needs diplomats who are native speakers of the Korean language.

On 21 May, Trump again used Twitter to communicate his foreign policy.

China must continue to be strong & tight on the Border of North Korea until a deal is made. The word is that recently the Border has become much more porous and more has been filtering in. I want this to happen, and North Korea to be VERY successful, but only after signing!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:40 EDT, 21 May 2018.

Trump is vague when he says "only after signing" — he does *not* specify what he will sign. A communiqué (i.e., deal) from the 12 June 2018 summit with Kim? A peace treaty between North and South Korea with the USA and China as co-signers? A certification that North Korea has completely and irreversibly denuclearized? Some other document? China should maintain full economic sanctions on North Korea until the United Nations Security Council removes those sanctions. Trump's tweet ("until a deal is made" and "only after signing") is inconsistent with Trump's policy that denuclearization must be completed before sanctions are eased. Indeed, Trump has repeatedly said that previous U.S. presidents made a *mistake* of easing sanctions in exchange for North Korea's *promises* to denuclearize, and Trump will not repeat those mistakes.

As Trump wonders why North Korea suddenly changed position on 16 May, Trump has held telephone calls with South Korean president Moon as recently as 19 May. [White House](#). Moon and Trump had scheduled a 22 May meeting at the White House to work on an agenda for the Kim/Trump summit. Moon will spend about 14 hours in an airplane on the one-way trip, for what is now a 2 hour meeting with Trump. [Washington Post](#); [Yonhap](#). My comment is that the short meeting is not only disrespectful to Moon, but also indicates Trump's lack of interest in detailed preparation for the summit with Kim. At least Moon received lunch at the White House. <grin>

At the beginning of the meeting with Moon on 22 May, Trump told journalists that the 12 June summit may need to be postponed. Trump said "there is a very substantial chance" of postponement.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But the big topic [of today's meeting] will be Singapore and the [Kim/Trump] meeting. See what happens, whether or not it happens. If it does, that will be great. It will be a great thing for North Korea. And if it doesn't, that's okay too. Whatever it is, it is.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think President Kim is serious about denuclearization?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I do think he's serious. I think he would like to see that happen. At the same time, he's going into a future that's different from what they've had. But I think he's absolutely very serious. Yes.

....

QUESTION: Can you give us an update, sir, just on where things stand with the summit? President Moon's national security advisor, on the way here, seemed to think that things are on track and that this will indeed happen.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we're moving along. And we'll see what happens. There are certain conditions that we want, and I think we'll get those conditions. And if we don't, we don't have the meeting. And frankly, it has a chance to be a great, great meeting for North Korea and a great meeting for the world. If it doesn't happen, maybe it will happen later. Maybe it will happen at a different time. But we will see.

But we are talking. The meeting is scheduled, as you know, on June 12th in Singapore. And whether or not it happens, you'll be knowing pretty soon. But we're talking right now.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, what are your conditions for meeting with Kim Jong-un? You said you had —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I'd rather not say. But we are working on something. And, you know, there's a chance that it will work out. There's a chance; there's a very substantial chance it won't work out. I don't want to waste a lot of time, and I'm sure he doesn't want to waste a lot of time. So there's a very substantial chance that it won't work out, and that's okay. That doesn't mean it won't work out over a period of time. But it may not work out for June 12th. But there's a good chance that we'll have the meeting.

....

QUESTION: President Trump, I'm a reporter from South Korea. If North Korea and Kim Jong-un decide CVID, will you literally guarantee the safety of the regime of North Korea?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I will guarantee his safety. Yes, we will guarantee his safety. And we've talked about that from the beginning. He will be safe. He will be happy. His country will be rich. His country will be hardworking and very prosperous. They're very great people. They're hardworking, great people.

"Remarks by President Trump and President Moon of the Republic of Korea Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 12:06 EDT, 22 May 2018.

Also see commentary about the Moon/Trump meeting in: [CNN](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). The North Koreans are apparently moving very slowly on preparations for the summit. After the Moon/Trump meeting on 22 May, [Yonhap](#) reported that Moon had convinced Trump to continue to work toward a 12 June Kim/Trump summit.

On 23 May, Trump told journalists:

QUESTION: Are you 100 percent committed to going through [with the Kim/Trump

summit in Singapore] — (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to see what happens. On Singapore, we're going to see. And it could happen. It could very well happen. But whatever it is, it is. We will know next week about Singapore. And if we go, I think it will be a great thing for North Korea.

....

QUESTION: ... yesterday in the Oval Office, you seemed to suggest some pessimism about the June 12th date. Do you think that will actually happen?

THE PRESIDENT: Someday a date will happen. It could very well be June 12th. Someday a date will absolutely happen. It could very well be June 12th. We'll see. We'll know next week.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 12:12 EDT, 23 May 2018.

### **23 May: Choe's response to Pence and Trump**

On 21 May, the U.S. Vice-President appeared on [Fox News](#) where he repeated Trump's 17 May threat that Kim would end up like Qaddafi, if Kim did not agree to Trump's terms: "It would be a great mistake for Kim Jong Un to think he could play Donald Trump. .... And you know, as the president made clear, you know, this will only end like the Libya Model ended if Kim Jong-un doesn't make a deal."

On 23 May, Choe Son-hui, a North Korean vice foreign minister, called Pence a "political dummy" who made "ignorant and stupid remarks". In a more harsh statement, Choe said: "Whether the U.S. will meet us at a meeting room or encounter us at nuclear-to-nuclear showdown is entirely dependent upon the decision and behavior of the United States." And North Korea again threatened to cancel the Kim/Trump summit. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

My comment is that if North Korea is appalled at Pence's ignorance, wait until they encounter Trump, who is much stupider than Pence. As vice-president, Pence was only reiterating and supporting what Trump had said.

### **two conservative commentators urge Trump to cancel summit**

On 23 May, Rich Lowry, editor of *National Review* and a contributor to Politico, wrote his articulate opinion of why Trump should cancel the Kim/Trump summit.

The meeting is much more likely to serve Kim's interests rather than ours and could well begin the unraveling of the pressure campaign that is our most reliable point of leverage against the regime. There is every reason for Kim to want a superficially successful summit in Singapore, and the easiest way to deny him one is to call the whole thing off.



The past week has shown that the North Koreans aren't to be underestimated — something that is easy to forget because the regime is not just heinous and evil, but ridiculous. Pyongyang managed to wrap the president around the axle on “the Libyan model” and got him to go wobbling on rapid and complete denuclearization with just a few pointed statements.

The Hermit Kingdom can barely feed its people and can't keep its lights on, but it is good at this. Its existence literally depends on its shrewd diplomatic gamesmanship with the West, winning concessions that give it an economic lifeline while still preserving and advancing its weapons systems.

Trump deserves credit for tightening a sanctions regime with considerable slack in it and intimidating Kim with his battery of insults and bombast. But the president was pushing on an open door: If history is any guide, the North wanted to use its bout of missile tests to get back to the negotiating table, and so it has.

While Trump imagines himself doing what no president has before — solving the conflict on the Korean Peninsula — the North Koreans believe they can get Trump to do what other presidents have done before — give it a favorable deal in the hopes of solving the conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

Although the North Koreans surely worry about the “madman” theory of Trump, they also must consider him in some respects an easy mark. His weakness is obviously his susceptibility to flattery and his self image as the world's best deal-maker. Throw in an allergy to details and the North Koreans have plenty of material to work with.

....

It's possible to imagine Kim going further and making a theatrical gesture. What if he immediately agrees to decommission a handful of nuclear weapons and ship them to the United States in a mediagenic sign of his alleged good faith? A sweeping tide of favorable international news coverage of the historic meeting would make holding the line on sanctions difficult to impossible.

South Korea would push to send humanitarian relief to the North and begin economic projects with Pyongyang, on the strength of the supposed breakthrough. We would be hard-pressed to deny the South, and then the policy of maximum pressure would be on the way to steadily loosening pressure. If this isn't their goal, the North Koreans have learned nothing from the past 30 years.

....

There's always the very remote chance that the North is willing to give up its nuclear weapons. If so, let the North Koreans demonstrate their good faith and their new strategic orientation during a year or so of low-level talks building up to a high-profile meeting. In the meantime, maximum pressure can continue.

Rich Lowry, "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," [Politico](#), 23 May 2018.

Also on 23 May, Jennifer Rubin, a conservative columnist for *The Washington Post*, [wrote](#): “Given how poorly informed and prepared Trump is, and how he hungers for any deal he can call a win, a delay in the summit would be a godsend for the United States.”

Lowry makes a good case that Trump is incompetent to negotiate with Kim (e.g., Trump's "susceptibility to flattery" and "allergy to details"). But Kim wants a summit with the president of the USA, to give Kim legitimacy as ruler of a nuclear-armed nation, and the USA is stuck with Trump as president for the next three years.

Trump is now committed to the Kim/Trump summit, so Trump can [win](#) the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. So Trump needs a successful summit, which increases the pressure on Trump to reach a deal at the summit.

As mentioned [above](#), China has already been relaxing the economic sanctions on North Korea, so Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign has already ended. This is another failure by Trump to follow through on his policy.

Lowry is correct to suggest "low-level talks" between North Korea and the USA. Those talks could use competent negotiators from the USA, and work on a detailed agreement that clearly specifies how to obtain "complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization". Having low-level negotiators draft a written agreement, then have the leaders sign that agreement is the usual way to develop a treaty.

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## Nuclear Test Site Dismantled

On 21 April and 12 May, North Korea announced it was dismantling its Pyunggye-ri test site for nuclear weapons. Geologists had suggested that test site was now useless, owing to damage to the mountain from past explosions of nuclear weapons. North Korea invited foreign journalists from South Korea, the United States, China, Russia, and the United Kingdom to view the dismantling. It is interesting how North Korea treated the invited journalists:

1. The journalists need to fly to Beijing, apply for a visa at the North Korean embassy in Beijing, take a charter flight on the North Korean airline from Beijing to Wonsan, then take a slow train on decrepit tracks to the nuclear test site. [Yonhap](#).
2. On 18 May, [Yonhap](#) reported that South Korea submitted a list of eight journalists to witness the dismantling of the nuclear test site, but North Korea refused to accept the list. Because North Korea suspended relations with South Korea on 16 May, North Korea did not approve the eight journalists from South Korea until the morning of 23 May. [Yonhap](#) says the train is expected to travel at a speed of only 35 km/hour. [Yonhap](#).
3. North Korea "is demanding an exorbitant ... visa processing fee from each foreign reporter" equivalent to US\$ 9260. The travel expenses are expected to exceed US\$ 10,000 for each journalist. [Chosun Ilbo](#).

There are two reasons that the dismantlement does *not* meet the CVID standards. First, North Korea did *not* invite inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to witness the dismantlement, so there was *no* verification. Second, North Korea only sealed the entrances to three tunnels in the mountain, an act that is reversible. [Associated Press](#); [BBC](#); [Voice of America](#); [CBS News](#); [Reuters](#).

On 24 May, North Korea blew up the entrances to three tunnels at their nuclear test site, while journalists watched. [Yonhap](#)(24May); [Associated Press](#)(24May); [CBS News](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

On 1 June 2018, [CNN](#) cites experts who doubt that North Korea permanently destroyed their nuclear test site. See also the 3 June report by [The Telegraph](#) in England.

On 29 November 2018, the *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper in South Korea reported:

North Korea's destruction of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site came after such a severe underground collapse that the site was in any case no longer usable, a recent study suggests.

The study published in the journal *Seismological Research Letters* claims that an aftershock observed after North Korea's last nuclear test in September last year was due to the collapse of a void as long as 80 m created after the explosion at Punggye-ri.

The test itself caused an artificial 5.7 magnitude earthquake, and the aftershock registered 4.5 on the Richter scale, causing experts to suspect a major ground collapse. Choi Eun-kyung, "N.Korean Nuclear Site 'Was No Longer Usable'," [Chosun Ilbo](#), 29 Nov 2018.

On 2 January 2019, [Yonhap](#) reported there was a magnitude 2.8 earthquake near the North Korean nuclear weapon test site. This earthquake is additional evidence that the test site is now unusable, because the earth is unstable. [Chosun Ilbo](#).

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## Trump Cancels Summit with Kim

On 24 May 2018 at about 10:00 EDT, the [White House](#) released a graphic image of a letter from Trump to Kim that cancels their summit that was planned for 12 June in Singapore.

Reuters posted a text file of Trump's letter:

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We greatly appreciate your time, patience, and effort with respect to our recent negotiations and discussions relative to a summit long sought by both parties, which was scheduled to take place on June 12 in Singapore. We were informed that the meeting was requested by North Korea, but that to us is totally irrelevant. I was very much looking forward to being there with you. Sadly, based on the tremendous anger and open hostility displayed in your most recent statement, I feel it is inappropriate, at this time, to have this long-planned meeting. Therefore, please let this letter serve to

represent that the Singapore summit, for the good of both parties, but to the detriment of the world, will not take place. You talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God they will never have to be used.

I felt a wonderful dialogue was building up between you and me, and ultimately, it is only that dialogue that matters. Some day, I look very much forward to meeting you. In the meantime, I want to thank you for the release of the hostages who are now home with their families. That was a beautiful gesture and was very much appreciated.

If you change your mind having to do with this most important summit, please do not hesitate to call me or write. The world, and North Korea in particular, has lost a great opportunity for lasting peace and great prosperity and wealth. This missed opportunity is a truly sad moment in history.

Sincerely yours,

[signed]

Donald J. Trump

President of the United States of America

Donald J. Trump, "Trump writes to North Korea's Kim to cancel planned summit," [Reuters](#), 14:29 GMT, 24 May 2018.

There are at least six defects in this one-page letter from Trump:

1. Trump mentioned "the tremendous anger and open hostility displayed in your most recent statement" as the reason for the cancelation. Actually, it was not Kim's (i.e., "your") statement, but was an article in KCNA by Choe Son-hui, a North Korean vice foreign minister. Choe expressed advice that she would give to Kim.
2. Trump's letter has a strange tone. Kim is a dictator who has an atrocious human-rights record, commits cyberwarfare, and threatens to destroy nations with nuclear weapons. But Trump seems apologetic that he is canceling the summit — Trump told Kim: "I was very much looking forward to being [in Singapore] with you. .... Some day, I look very much forward to meeting you."
3. Adding to the strange tone on this letter, amongst Trump's politeness is a military threat, as explained [below](#), that sticks out like a sore thumb.
4. Trump omits the best reasons to cancel the summit: last week North Korea failed to appear for a scheduled meeting with the U.S. team in Singapore, and North Korea failed to communicate with the U.S. team.
5. In my opinion, Trump should have proposed low-level talks between professional diplomats to draft an agreement to be signed at a future Kim/Trump meeting.
6. Trump wrote: "We were informed that the meeting was requested by North Korea, but that to us is totally irrelevant." If it is "totally irrelevant", then omit that sentence.

People familiar with the North Korea government have been telling us that Kim will *not* abandon his nuclear weapons, because those weapons guarantee that the U.S. will not attack North Korea. North Korea's refusal to denuclearize is consistent with North Korea's abrupt policy change on [16 May](#) and Choe's remarks on 23 May. One can speculate that there was some disagreement between Kim and other high-level North Korean officials about denuclearization. Certainly, denuclearization — and abandonment of ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons — would make the North Korean Army less important.

Barely mentioned is U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo's terse remarks that the North Korean government recently failed to respond to preparations for the summit. [CNN](#) tersely reported: "Kim seemed cagey about flying to Singapore" and quoted Pompeo: "Over the past many days, we have endeavored to do what Chairman Kim and I had agreed, was to put teams, preparation teams together to begin to work to prepare for the summit, and we had received no response to our inquiries from them." In the afternoon of 24 May, CNN reported that the team from North Korea failed to appear for a scheduled meeting in Singapore "last week" (sometime 13-19 May). The [Washington Post](#) reported: "Among other things, Kim purportedly is concerned that a trip so far from home could expose him to a military coup or other internal attempts to unseat him, ...." See also: [Reuters](#); [Politico](#); [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Times](#). That suggests that the North Korean government decided to abandon the summit several weeks ago. The lack of response by North Korea may have motivated Trump to begin saying on 16 May — and especially on 22 May — the summit might not occur.

Commentators and journalists have mentioned that Choe's KCNA article was mild criticism by the standards of KCNA, which called Bolton "human scum" in 2003, and called the previous president of South Korea a prostitute. [ABC News](#)(AP). Remember that Trump derisively called Kim "Little Rocket Man" in September 2017, so Trump has unclean hands. In his cancellation letter to Kim, Trump should have mentioned the failure of North Korea to attend a scheduled meeting, and the failure of North Korea to communicate recently with the U.S. Government. Those failures are concrete actions, not mere words. Leaving the U.S. team idle in Singapore for 3 days when North Korea failed to attend a scheduled meeting was particularly rude.

It is difficult to assign blame for the failure of the summit. It appears that *both* North Korea and Trump had second thoughts about the desirability of a summit in May or June 2018.

Trump's government appears very amateurish when Bolton compared North Korea to Libya on [29 April](#). On 16 May, Kim Kye Gwan mentioned Bolton's name three times in a highly critical article in KCNA. On 17 May, Trump himself said that if Kim did not make a deal, Kim would end like Qaddafi! On 21 May, Pence reiterated Trump's threat. And on 23 May, Choe criticized Pence — and indirectly Trump, because Pence was parroting Trump. As the [Washington Post](#) observed, the more the U.S. Government mentioned Libya, the more the North Koreans were angered. The [Washington Post](#) reported that the South Koreans blamed Bolton for problems with the Kim/Trump summit. This confrontation could have been avoided by an U.S. president with experience in foreign policy (i.e., *not* Trump) and who had a knowledgeable negotiating team — including people with personal experience negotiating with North Korea, and including native speakers of the Korean language — advising the

president.

Another amateurish aspect to Trump's cancelation was that Trump made the letter to Kim public *before* Moon in South Korea was informed, thereby blindsiding Moon.

[Washington Post](#). At 23:17 Korean time on 24 May, [Yonhap](#) announced the cancelation in South Korea. At 23:30 Korean time on 24 May, Moon convened an emergency meeting at his office to discuss what the ~~idiot~~ ally in the White House had done. [Yonhap](#). Moon said: "I am very perplexed and it is very regrettable that the North Korea-U.S. summit will not be held on June 12 when it was scheduled to be held." [Yonhap](#). On 21-23 May, Moon wasted three days of his time traveling to/from Washington, DC for a brief discussion with Trump. It appeared that Trump was committed to a 12 June summit with Kim when Moon departed from the White House on 22 May. Once again, Trump is unreliable.

### Trump's military threats

Trump's 24 May letter to Kim contains a terse military threat:

You talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God that they will never have to be used.

[White House](#).

Later on 24 May, Trump told journalists:

THE PRESIDENT: I've spoken to General Mattis and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And our military — which is by far the most powerful anywhere in the world and has been greatly enhanced recently, as you all know — is ready if necessary.

Likewise, I have spoken to South Korea and Japan. And they are not only ready should foolish or reckless acts be taken by North Korea, but they are willing to shoulder much of the cost of any financial burden, any of the costs associated by the United States in operations, if such an unfortunate situation is forced upon us.

Hopefully, positive things will be taking place with respect to the future of North Korea. But if they don't, we are more ready than we have ever been before.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, does the breakdown of this summit raise the risk of war with North Korea?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll see what happens. I hope that we'll continue onward. We'll see. But we are in a very strong position. I think they want to do what's right. I really think that they want to do — and it was only recently that this has been taking place. And I think I understand why it's been taking place. But they want to do what's right. I really believe Kim Jong-un wants to do what's right. So hopefully things will work out. Okay?

"Remarks by President Trump at Signing of S. 2155, Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act," [White House](#), 11:54 EDT, 24 May 2018.

My comment is that if Trump really wants to meet Kim, he should have omitted the military threat from his letter to Kim, and omitted the military remarks in his press briefing. Trump is a bully. Moreover, Trump is again reminding Kim why North Korea *needs* nuclear weapons to deter U.S. aggression.

### North Korea backpedals

A week after North Korea failed to attend a scheduled meeting in Singapore with the U.S. and failed to communicate with the U.S. team that was arranging the summit, on 25 May, Kim Kye-gwa sanctimoniously said that North Korea was open to meeting with the U.S. "at any time". [Yonhap](#)(earlier); [Yonhap](#)(final).

On the morning of 25 May, Trump liked the sanctimonious statement by Kim Kye-gwa.

Very good news to receive the warm and productive statement from North Korea. We will soon see where it will lead, hopefully to long and enduring prosperity and peace.

Only time (and talent) will tell!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:14 EDT, 25 May 2018.

At 09:30 EDT on 25 May, the Associated Press reported:

President Donald Trump says the United States is "talking to" North Korea after he canceled a planned summit with leader Kim Jong Un (kim jawng oon). [Trump] told reporters Friday [25 May] that "everybody plays games."

Asked about the summit, Trump said Friday: "We'll see what happens, it could even be the 12th," referring to the June 12 date originally set.

Trump, who spoke to reporters at the White House before heading to the Naval Academy graduation ceremony, stressed that both sides would like the summit to happen. [Trump] said: "They very much want to do it, we'd like to do it."

"The Latest: ...." [Associated Press](#), 25 May 2018.

The White House did *not* post a transcript of Trump's remarks to journalists, so I used the Associated Press news article. See also: [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Yonhap](#).

My comment is that Trump appears impulsive and thoughtless to restart the Kim/Trump summit one day after Trump canceled the summit. Although Trump is unable to articulate the good reasons for canceling the summit, there exist good reasons (e.g., North Korea's failure to respond to preparations for the summit, Trump's lack of preparation, Trump's ignorance, ....). Does Trump know the consequences of what he is doing? Of course not. But the consequences include:

1. Trump is inconsistent, unstable, and unreliable.
2. Trump can spew invective (e.g., "Little Rocket Man"), but Trump can *not* tolerate personal criticism.
3. Trump's 24 May letter to Kim, and Trump's public statements, display Trump's ignorance of the history of the North Korean problem. Trump does *not* have a consistent strategy for solving the North Korean problem.
4. With the alleged destruction of the nuclear test site, and with Kim Kye-gwa's



sanctimonious 25 May statement, North Korea appears more reasonable than the U.S. Government.

5. North Korea's neighbors (e.g., China, South Korea, Japan) have good reasons to make their own agreements with North Korea, and ignore the unreliable USA.
6. Trump is an amateur at foreign policy, while all of the other nations involved (i.e., North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia) have professional diplomats. On 25 May, Trump blurted: "everybody plays games." It is *not* a game to a professional diplomat.

See, e.g., the [Washington Post](#).

At night on 25 May, Trump tweeted:

We are having very productive talks with North Korea about reinstating the Summit which, if it does happen, will likely remain in Singapore on the same date, June 12th., and, if necessary, will be extended beyond that date.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:37 EDT, 25 May 2018.

On Saturday, 26 May, the White House said a U.S. team was traveling to Singapore to meet with a North Korean team to prepare for the now officially canceled Kim/Trump summit. [Associated Press](#).

On Sunday, 27 May, the [Washington Post](#) reported that there were two U.S. teams in Asia:

1. One U.S. team, lead by Sung Kim, was negotiating on substantive issues at the DMZ. "Sung Kim, who was born in South Korea and was a key diplomat in the 2005 six-party talks, served as [U.S.] ambassador to South Korea from 2011 to 2014, then became special representative for North Korea policy, a position that [Joseph] Yun later took over and that is now vacant."
2. "A separate U.S. team led by Joe Hagin, deputy chief of staff in the White House, is organizing logistics with Kim Chang Son, who is effectively the North Korean leader's chief of staff." This team is meeting in Singapore with the North Koreans to discuss logistics, security, and publicity.

See also: [New York Times](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 27 May, Trump was again effusively touting how North Korea will benefit from a Trump-deal. Trump has forgotten the atrocious human-rights record of the Kim regime and the continuing cyberwarfare of North Korea.

Our United States team has arrived in North Korea to make arrangements for the Summit between Kim Jong Un and myself. I truly believe North Korea has brilliant potential and will be a great economic and financial Nation one day. Kim Jong Un agrees with me on this. It will happen!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:09 EDT, 27 May 2018.

On 28 May, [CNN](#) reported that Sung Kim and Choe Son-hui are preparing a communiqué to be issued at the Kim/Trump summit.

On 29 May, [Reuters](#) reported that Japan has detected a Chinese ship transferring goods to a North Korean ship, in violation of United Nations sanctions on North Korea. [Chosun Ilbo](#) reported that North Korea ship was smuggling oil.

On 29 May 2018, [NBC News](#) reported that a CIA intelligence assessment concludes that North Korea will *not* surrender its nuclear weapons anytime soon. The [New York Times](#) discussed an analysis by Dr. Siegfried Hecker that concludes it could take North Korea "up to 15 years" to denuclearize. My comment is that the U.S. presidential term of 4 years encourages projects that can deliver results in two or three years, and discourages longer-term planning. Trump will surely be seeking results before the next presidential election in November 2020.

On the afternoon of 30 May 2018, Kim Yong-chol — a vice chairman of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee — arrived in New York City for a secret meeting with U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. Kim Yong-chol is the highest-level North Korean official to visit the USA since the year 2000, when North Korean Vice-Marshal Jo Myong Rok met President Clinton at the White House. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). There are now three negotiations in progress: one at the DMZ in Korea, one in Singapore, and one in New York City. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

Because the North Korean government does *not* own any long-haul aircraft, Kim Yong-chol flew to Beijing, then flew on Air China flight CA981 to JFK airport in New York City. [Yonhap](#). My comment is that Kim Yong-chol must have marveled at flying nonstop on a Boeing 747-800 — manufactured in the USA — instead of the aging Soviet-era airplanes owned by North Korea's Air Koryo.

On 30 May, [Yonhap](#) reports that Cho Myoung-gyon, South Korea's Unification Minister, said there were "quite significant" differences between North Korea and the USA on denuclearization.

On Thursday, 31 May — as Trump departed for a meeting with families of pupils killed in an 18 May shooting at a school near Houston — Trump gave a rambling progress report to journalists:

Good morning. I just want to tell you we're doing very well with North Korea. Our Secretary of State has had very good meetings. He's meeting again today. I believe they'll be coming down to Washington on Friday [1 June].

And a letter is going to be delivered to me from Kim Jong Un. So I look forward to seeing what's in the letter. But it's very important to them. So they'll be, probably, coming down to Washington, D.C. on Friday for the delivery of a letter. I look forward to that.

Other than that, the economy is good. Stock market is up. Lot of jobs. Best unemployment we've had in many, many decades, actually. And we're going to Dallas. We're going to Houston. And we're going to have a little fun today.

....

We'll see what happens. It's a process. It's all a process. We'll see. And hopefully we'll have a meeting on the 12th. That's going along very well, but I want it to be meaningful. It doesn't mean it gets all done at one meeting; maybe you have to have a second or a third. And maybe we'll have none.

But it's in good hands, that I can tell you. You know that, actually. Thank you. Thank you.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Air Force One Departure," [White House](#), 09:05 EDT, 31 May 2018.

Reuters reported their exclusive interview with Trump while flying to Texas:

Trump, in a brief interview with Reuters aboard Air Force One as he flew to Texas for Republican fund raising events, said he was still hoping for a summit with Kim on June 12 in Singapore.

The president emphasized that it may take more than one meeting to reach an agreement.

"I'd like to see it done in one meeting. But often times that's not the way deals work," Trump said.

"There's a very good chance that it won't be done in one meeting or two meetings or three meetings. But it'll get done at some point. It may get done really nicely and really intelligently, or it may not get done intelligently. It may have to be the hard way," he said.

The president said he believed Kim wanted a deal.

"But I think it'll get done in a very smart, organised fashion and I think that Kim Jong Un wants to see it also. And I'm going to be very happy when the day arrives when we can take sanctions off, and have a very good relationship with the entire Korean Peninsula," Trump said.

....

In his interview with Reuters, the U.S. president said a nuclear deal with North Korea would have to cover its missile programme. "It means missiles," Trump said.

He said he wanted to see denuclearization occur at a rapid pace. "I'd like to see a total denuclearization in as quick a period of time as is practicable," he said. "You're talking about machinery, you're talking about things that can't necessarily happen immediately but they can happen in as rapid a fashion as they can happen. That's what I want to happen."

Steve Holland, "Exclusive: Trump — nuclear deal may take more than one meeting with North Korea's Kim," [Reuters](#), 12:15 EDT, updated 13:16 EDT, 31 May 2018.

Trump issued another veiled threat: "It may have to be the hard way." Trump's belligerence is unnecessary in negotiations for a peaceful resolution to the North Korean problem.

The Associated Press reported on successful negotiations between Kim Yong Chol and Mike Pompeo:

A U.S. official says that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's meetings with a top North Korean official ended more than two hours earlier than expected because the talks "went well" and "made progress" in salvaging an on-again, off-again summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The official says the high-stakes discussion lasted between 9:05 and 11:25 a.m., concluding well before the scheduled end of 1:30 p.m. The official was not authorized to speak publicly about the details of the meeting and spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The Latest: Talk with Pompeo, NKorean 'went well'," [Associated Press](#), 12:31 EDT, 31 May 2018.

At 14:15 EDT on 31 May, Pompeo gave a press briefing at the Lotte Palace Hotel in New York City, part of a South Korean chain of hotels.

Good afternoon, everyone. As you know, in addition to my meeting with Vice Chairman Kim Yong-chol, we have teams in Singapore and at the DMZ working with their North Korean counterparts to prepare for President Trump and Chairman Kim's expected summit in Singapore. Through these series of meetings, I am confident we are moving in the right direction.

Today, Vice Chairman Kim and I discussed how our countries could come together and take advantage of the unique opportunity that our two leaders have created through their visions of the future that they have so clearly articulated. Vice Chairman Kim Yong-chol is now planning to travel to Washington to deliver a personal letter from Chairman Kim Jong-un.

The proposed summit offers a historic opening for President Trump and Chairman Kim to boldly lead the United States and the DPRK into a new era of peace, prosperity, and security. Our two countries face a pivotal moment in our relationship in which it could be nothing short of tragic to let this opportunity go to waste.

In my conversations with Chairman Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang and today with Vice Chairman Kim Yong-chol, I have been very clear that President Trump and the United States objective is very consistent and well known: the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. President Trump has also made it clear that if Kim Jong-un denuclearizes, there is a brighter path for North Korea. We envision a strong, connected, and secure, prosperous North Korea that maintains its cultural heritage but is integrated into the community of nations.

....

QUESTION: Thanks. Mr. Secretary, last night the State Department told us that the U.S. would be looking for a historic commitment from North Korea before the summit would go ahead. Today you ended talks with Kim Yong-chol early. Can you talk about why you did that? Did you get the commitment you sought and do the U.S. and North

Korea now agree on what denuclearization would mean?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So that's a (inaudible) matter. We didn't end the talks early. We had a set series of items that we wanted to make sure we covered, topics which we made sure that we were clear on in terms of what our expectations were and their expectations in return of us. We achieved that. This is a difficult, difficult challenge. Make no mistake about it. There remains a great deal of work to do. And we made progress here as well as at the same time made progress in the other venues that conversations were taking place. We had all the time we needed today to make the progress that was achievable during our time here in New York City.

Mike Pompeo, "Remarks at a Press Availability," [U.S. State Dept](#), 31 May 2018.

On 1 June 2018, Trump reinstated the 12 June scheduled summit between Kim Jong-Un and Trump, see [below](#).

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## 26 May: Second Moon/Kim Summit

On 16 May, North Korea abruptly canceled high-level talks between North and South Korea, as mentioned [above](#). On 26 May, in a surprise move, Moon and Kim held a two-hour summit. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

At 10:00 Korean time on 17 May, Moon held a press conference about his second summit with Kim. [Yonhap](#) News Agency in South Korea reported that Moon said:

- "We two leaders agreed the June 12 North Korea-U.S. summit must be successfully held."
- "Kim Jong-un has once again clearly expressed his commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula following his pledge in the Panmunjom Declaration".
- "What remains uncertain to Chairman Kim Jong-un is whether he can trust the U.S. promise to end their hostile relationship and guarantee North Korea's security once the North denuclearizes."
- "Should the North Korea-U.S. summit succeed, I would like to see efforts to formally end the (Korean) war through a three-way summit of the South, the North and the U.S." That three-way summit would negotiate a peace treaty.

Kim is correct to be distrustful of Trump, who has abrogated the previous U.S. agreement to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Paris climate agreement, and the multi-nation agreement about Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Trump has been renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the trade agreement with South Korea, and the trade agreement with China. Trump's refusal to honor these *six* agreements makes the USA an unreliable nation. Moreover, Trump is impulsive and inconsistent.

The 16 May high-level talks between North and South Korea that were abruptly canceled by

North Korea were rescheduled for 1 June. [Yonhap](#).

Whenever there are delicate negotiations scheduled, one can count on communist China and Russia to interfere with those negotiations. And so, on 31 May, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held talks with Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang. There may be a future Putin/Kim summit in Moscow. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). [Bloomberg](#) reported that Interfax news agency in Russia reported “Kim ... appreciated Putin’s opposition to U.S. ‘hegemony’ ” The [Chosun Ilbo](#) observed: “Russia and China are both keen to reduce American power in Northeast Asia, and both worry that if the U.S. and North Korea agree a deal they [i.e., Russia and China] will lose influence on the Korean Peninsula.”.

On 1 June 2018, there were high-level talks between the two Koreas, and the following was decided:

1. hold high-level military talks on 14 June at the truce village of Panmunjom.
2. meet on 22 June at Mount Kumgang resort in North Korea, to discuss a reunion of families separated by the armistice in 1953.
3. open a liaison office in Kaesong, North Korea, "at an early date."
4. "have further discussion on
  - A. possible reconnection of railways and roads between the two countries,
  - B. cooperation in the forestry area and
  - C. a decision on the date for working-level talks to prepare for performances planned by the North's art troupe in the South this fall."
5. celebrate the anniversary of the first North/South Korea summit held on 15 June 2000.
6. meet on 18 June "to discuss sports cooperation, including fielding a joint team to the upcoming Asian Games."

[Yonhap](#); [Yonhap](#)(2000 summit).

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## June 2018

### 1 June: Trump reinstates 12 June Kim/Trump Summit

At 13:14 EDT on Friday, 1 June 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Kim Yong Chol had arrived at the White House. About 90 minutes later, Trump made lengthy, rambling remarks to journalists:

THE PRESIDENT: The meeting went very well. We’ll be meeting on June 12th in Singapore. It went very well. It’s really a get-to-know-you kind of a situation.

Mike [Pompeo] has spent two days doing this. We’ve gotten to know their people very well. And we will — you people are going to have to travel because you’ll be in

Singapore on June 12th.

And I think it'll be a process. It's not — I never said it goes in one meeting. I think it's going to be a process. But the relationships are building, and that's a very positive thing.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what's your sense of what the North Koreans are willing to do on the issue of denuclearization? Are they looking at it all at once?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think they want to do that. I know they want to do that. They want other things along the line. They want to develop as a country. That's going to happen. I have no doubt. Japan is involved, as you know. And South Korea is very much involved. We're involved in terms of getting everything. Everybody wants the United States. So we're going to help in the process very much. Without us, it wouldn't happen.

But I think that you see a lot of very positive things, including with China. I think you see a lot of very positive things happening with President Xi, who has helped me quite a bit with this. So we'll see where it leads.

But we're going to be — June 12th, we'll be in Singapore. It will be a beginning. I don't say and I've never said it happens in one meeting. You're talking about years of hostility; years of problems; years of, really, hatred between so many different nations. But I think you're going to have a very positive result in the end. Not from one meeting, but you're going to have a very positive —

QUESTION: You appeared to question their sincerity in your letter to Kim Jong Un last week. Have they gone far enough now? Do you believe they're sincere?

THE PRESIDENT: My letter [of 24 May] was a response to their letter. The media forgot that. You know, the media said, "Oh, you had a meeting, then you cancelled." I didn't cancel the meeting. I cancelled it in response to a very tough statement. And I think we're over that — totally over that. And now we're going to deal, and we're going to really start a process.

We're meeting with the Chairman on June 12th. And I think it's probably going to be a very successful — ultimately, a successful process. We'll see.

Remember what I say: We will see what we will see. But I think it's going to be a process that we deserve to have. I mean, we really deserve — they want it. We think it's important. And I think we would be making a big mistake if we didn't have it. I think we're going to have a relationship, and it will start on June 12th.

QUESTION: What can you get done in one meeting? What can you get done on June 12th? And why do you think they're open to denuclearization?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this was a very good meeting. Don't forget, this was a meeting where a letter was given to me by Kim Jong Un, and that letter was a very



nice letter. Oh, would you like to see what was in that letter? Would you like it?

QUESTION: Can you tell us?

THE PRESIDENT: How much? How much? How much?

QUESTION: Can you just give us a flavor of what the letter said?

THE PRESIDENT: Ah, it was a very interesting letter. And at some point it may be appropriate, and maybe I'll be able to give it to you. Maybe you'll be able to see it, and maybe fairly soon.

But really, this was a letter presentation that ended up being a two-hour conversation.

QUESTION: Why did it end up going so long, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Because we found the whole subject matter very interesting. And because I really think they want to do something. And if it's possible, so do we.

I think all we're going to do is be there on June 12th, and we're going to see what happens. Mike has been dealing very well. They have a very good relationship with Mike Pompeo, our Secretary of State. It was actually very interesting because this was literally going to be the delivery of a letter, and it ended up being a two-hour conversation with the second most powerful man in North Korea.

....

QUESTION: Did they agree to CVID, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about a lot of things. We really did. But the big deal will be on June 12th. And again, it's a process. It doesn't go — we're not going to sign a — we're not going to go in and sign something on June 12th and we never were. We're going to start a process. And I told them today, "Take your time. We can go fast. We can go slowly." But I think they'd like to see something happen. And if we can work that out, that will be good. But the process will begin on June 12th in Singapore.

QUESTION: Do you believe Kim is committed to denuclearization?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I do think so. He'd like to see it happen. He wants to be careful. He wants to be, you know — he's not going to run and do things. But I told him, to be honest with you, look, we have sanctions on; they're very powerful sanctions. We would not take sanctions off unless they did that. But the sanctions are very powerful. You've seen how powerful in other ways. You're going to see how powerful sanctions are when it comes to Iran. You see what that's doing to Iran.

So we have sanctions on. And at a certain point, I'll tell you what, I look forward to the day when I can take the sanctions off of North Korea.

....

QUESTION: Is maximum pressure over, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: It's going to remain what it is now. I don't even want to use the term "maximum pressure" anymore because I don't want to use that term because we're getting along. You see the relationship. We're getting along.

So it's not a question of maximum pressure. It's staying essentially the way it is. At some point, hopefully, a deal — for the good of millions of people, a deal will be worked out.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, what was your response to the letter? Did you send anything back?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I didn't. I haven't seen the letter yet. I purposely didn't open the letter. I haven't opened it. I didn't open it in front of the director.

I said, "Would you want me to open it?" He said, "You can read it later." I may be in for a big surprise, folks. (Laughter.) So long, everybody.

"Remarks by President Trump after Meeting with Vice Chairman Kim Yong Chol of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," [White House](#), 14:41 EDT, 1 June 2018.

Trump made a number of errors in his rambling remarks:

1. Trump arrogantly said: "Without us, it wouldn't happen." North Korea and South Korea are also indispensable parties.
2. "My letter was a response to their letter." Trump's 24 May letter was a response to an article in KCNA.
3. Kim's hand-delivered letter "was a very nice letter. .... it was a very interesting letter." But later, Trump admitted he had not opened the envelope and he had *not* read the letter.
4. Twice Trump referred to a "a two-hour conversation" with Kim Yong Chol. But it was less than 90 minutes.
5. When asked "Did they agree to CVID, sir?", Trump made an irrelevant response that avoided the CVID issue. Does Trump know what CVID means? Trump's ignorance of technical details is legendary.

Moreover, Trump tediously repeats that the summit will occur on 12 June (10 times), the summit will "start" or "begin" a process/relationship (5 times), "process" (9 times), and there will probably be multiple summits before a final agreement is reached. Does Trump have a

short-term memory problem? Or is Trump repeating words about a relationship beginning on 12 June because he does *not* have anything substantial to say?

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The [Washington Post](#) reports that the North Koreans can not afford to pay for their delegation's hotel rooms in Singapore. Kim Jong-Un's presidential suite costs US\$ 6000/night, and there are also rooms for his advisors, bodyguards, etc. So the U.S. Government or Singapore may pay for the hotel rooms. We are reminded that South Korea paid more than US\$ 2 million for the travel expenses of North Koreans at the Olympics earlier this year. Nonetheless, the impoverished North Korean government insists that they are an "equal partner" in negotiations with South Korea or the USA.

On 3 June, U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis reiterated that there would be *no* relief from economic sanctions on North Korea until North Korea had completely denuclearized. [Yonhap](#).

On 3 June, [Yonhap](#) reported that Sung Kim and Choe Son-hui negotiated for a fourth day, in negotiations that began on 27 May. U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim said there is "still much work left before the proposed summit."

On 3 June, [Yonhap](#) reported that Kim Jong-Un had replaced the three top leaders of the North Korean Military. [Reuters](#) says an anonymous U.S. official confirmed the new appointments, which are apparently to prepare North Korea for more economic engagement with foreign nations. My comment is that there have been rumors that Kim fears a coup while Kim attends a summit in Singapore. Replacing the three top military leaders with younger people who are more loyal to Kim may help avoid a coup.

On 4 June, [Yonhap](#) reported that Sung Kim and Choe Son-hui negotiated for a fifth day. They held only two meetings from 27 May to 1 June, then met every day from 2 June to 4 June. My comment is that the accelerated schedule of meetings every day may have been the result of Trump's 1 June decision to resume the summit on 12 June. [Yonhap](#) reported that Sung Kim "checked out of a Seoul hotel on Thursday [7 June]", but negotiations on the agenda "will likely" continue in Singapore.

On 5 June, the exact venue in Singapore was announced: the Capella Hotel will be the site of the meetings that begin at 09:00 local time on 12 June. [Yonhap](#) reports: "Trump is likely to stay at the Shangri-La" Hotel, while the North Korean delegation will probably stay at the St. Regis Hotel. [Yonhap](#)(4June); [Sanders' tweet](#); [Yonhap](#)(5June).

Back on 22 November 2017, Air China suspended all flights to North Korea. On 5 June, Air China announced regularly scheduled flights between Beijing and Pyongyang would resume on 6 June. The Chinese decision reduces the isolation of North Korea. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

## 6 June: Giuliani makes a mess

On 6 June 2018, Rudy Giuliani — one of Trump's personal attorneys, who talks too much and makes matters worse — actually said about the leader of North Korea: “Kim Jong-un got back on his hands and knees and begged for [resumption of Kim/Trump summit], which is exactly the position you want to put him in.” [Associated Press](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Politico](#); [Yonhap](#); [Straits Times](#). I am aghast. Giuliani publicly humiliated Kim Jong-un, which is *not* a good way to begin a summit. Further, Giuliani's statement was a "metaphor", meaning that Kim was *not* literally "on his hands and knees". Trump and his cronies are worse than amateurs. For anyone familiar with the North Korean situation, it is easy to foresee that Giuliani's remark will anger the North Korean government.

The [Associated Press](#) characterized Giuliani's recent history: "Giuliani has become a lightning rod during his tenure on Trump's team, drawing the president's ire for a series of scattershot interviews." (For more about Giuliani's recent disasters, see my [essay](#) on Trump, in the sections on Pardon Me? and Clifford.)

On 7 June, the U.S. Secretary of State publicly said that: "Rudy doesn't speak for the administration when it comes to this negotiation and this set of issues." [White House](#).

On 8 June, the [Chicago Tribune](#) published an editorial condemning Giuliani's statement about Kim, and concluding: "our security and survival are in the hands of fools, knaves and incompetents."

Fortunately, North Korea ignored Giuliani.

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### **Lack of Preparation by Trump**

The G-7 summit is scheduled in Quebec Canada for 8-9 June. Trump agreed to a summit with Kim Jong-Un in Singapore on 12 June. On 6 June, Trump apparently realized that the G-7 summit would interfere with his preparation for the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore. Trump is scheduled to fly to Singapore from Quebec on the morning of 9 June, leaving the G-7 meeting before it ends. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#).

The Associated Press reported on Trump's lack of preparation for the Kim/Trump summit: Advisers say Trump avoids spending extensive time in preparation. He grew frustrated with former national security adviser H.R. McMaster and his briefing style, though he is said to listen more to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Still, Trump is not a fan of detailed briefing books, preferring limited preparation and instinct. Those close to Trump say he is approaching the Kim meeting the same way. Catherine Lucey & Zeke Miller, "Trump rarely conducts business as usual with foreign leaders," [Associated Press](#), 11:17 EDT, 7 June 2018.

My comment is that Trump reminds me of a college student who crams the night before the final examination, in a desperate hope of passing the class. This kind of behavior is the mark of someone who is *not* sincere about getting an education.

Trump accepted Kim's proposal for a summit on 8 March. That gave Trump *three months* in which to prepare for a summit with Kim. Trump wasted those three months. Actually, Trump

*should* have known for more than one year that he needed to learn about the North Korean problem.

On 7 June, [Politico](#) reported that the National Security Council has *not* had any meetings concerning North Korea in the two months that Bolton has been chairman of the NSC. Politico concludes that "the Trump White House is largely improvising its approach to the unprecedented nuclear talks."

At a White House press conference on 7 June, Trump essentially said that preparation was not important, but that "attitude" and "willingness to get things done" were important. On 8 June, Trump erroneously declared: "I've been preparing for this [Kim/Trump summit] all my life." Trump's remarks are quoted below.

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### **7-11 June 2018: Promises by Trump**

On Thursday, 7 June 2018, Trump spoke to journalists before a meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan:

And obviously, we will be talking at great length on North Korea. We'll be getting some of your ideas. I'll be giving you some of our ideas. Things are moving along well. It looks like the meeting is set. The summit is all ready to go, subject always to change. You never know in this world. Subject to change. But the summit is all ready to go.

North Korean representatives are in Singapore right now working very hard, as are people from the United States. And it's all going along very fine. I hope it continues on this track. If it does, the world will be a very happy place.

....

QUESTION: President Trump, what are you doing to prepare for the summit with North Korea? What are you doing to prepare for the summit with North Korea, President Trump?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I'm very well prepared. I don't think I have to prepare very much. It's about attitude. It's about willingness to get things done. But I think I've been preparing for this summit for a long time, as has the other side. They've been preparing for a long time, also.

So this isn't a question of preparation. It's a question of whether or not people want it to happen. And we'll know that very quickly.

QUESTION: If the critics say it's just a photo op, what do you tell them?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, it's going to be much more than a photo op. I think it's a process; I've told you that many times before. I think it's not a one meeting deal. It will be wonderful if it were. You know, they've been doing this for a long time. There's

been a lot of enemies out there. A lot of dislike, a lot of hatred between countries.

This will not be just a photo op. This will be — at a minimum, we'll start with, perhaps, a good relationship. And that's something that's very important toward the ultimate making of a deal. I'd love to say it could happen in one deal, and maybe it can. They have to denuke. If they don't denuclearize, that will not be acceptable. We cannot take sanctions off; the sanctions are extraordinarily powerful. We cannot — and I could add a lot more, but I don't — I've chosen not to do that at this time. But that may happen.

....

QUESTION: How long will you stay? How long is (inaudible)?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: One, two, three [days] — depending on what happens.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 12:11 EDT, 7 June 2018.

Notice that Trump essentially said that preparation was not important, but that "attitude" and "willingness to get things done" were important. Trump arrogantly asserted: "I don't think I have to prepare very much." North Korea has been preparing for a meeting like this for more than 10 years, while Trump does not seem to know what CVID means. Notice that Trump evaded the question about what he was doing to prepare for the summit with Kim.

Trump notes "A lot of dislike, a lot of hatred between countries." And some of that hatred is caused by Trump's belligerence:

- on 8 Aug 2017 Trump said that North Korea's aggression "will be met with fire and fury",
- on 19 Sep 2017, Trump gave a horrible speech to the United Nations General Assembly that threatened "to totally destroy North Korea",
- beginning in September 2017, Trump derisively called Kim Jong-Un "Little Rocketman",
- Trump appointed Bolton as National Security Adviser, ....

After the meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister, Trump said about the Kim/Trump summit:

Well, the letter [from Kim Jong-Un that was hand delivered to Trump on 1 June] was just a greeting. It was really very nice. Perhaps I can get approval to put it out. It was really a very warm letter, a very nice letter. I appreciated it very much. And nothing other than: We look forward to seeing you, and we look forward to the summit, and hopefully some wonderful things will work out. So it was really very warm, very nice. We appreciated it.

....

QUESTION: .... Mr. President, under what — you've said repeatedly that you are willing to walk away from the negotiations if they don't do well. Under what exact conditions would you be walking away from that summit? ....

PRESIDENT TRUMP: All I can say is I am totally prepared to walk away. I did it once before. You have to be able to walk away.

....

So I am totally prepared to walk. It could happen. Maybe it won't be necessary. I hope it won't be necessary to walk because I really believe that Kim Jong Un wants to do something that is going to be great for his people and also great for his family and great for himself.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 14:22 EDT, 7 June 2018.

Then the U.S. Secretary of State held a press briefing at the White House. Here is some of what Mike Pompeo said about the Kim/Trump summit:

President Trump is hopeful, but he's also going into the summit with his eyes wide open. We've seen how many inadequate agreements have been struck in the past. And you can be sure that President Trump will not stand for a bad deal. The United States has been clear, time and time again, that complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is the only outcome that we will find acceptable.

The President recognizes that North Korea has great potential, and he looks forward to a day when sanctions on the DPRK can begin to be removed. However, that cannot happen until the DPRK completely and verifiably eliminates its weapons of mass destruction programs.

"Press Briefing by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo," [White House](#), 15:49 EDT, 7 June 2018. Copy at [U.S. State Dept.](#)

In the second paragraph quoted above, Pompeo omitted the essential requirement that the denuclearization be "irreversible". That omission shows a careless lack of attention to detail, since Pompeo said it correctly in his previous paragraph. Such carelessness could cause a big problem with North Korea, if they rely on a sentence or paragraph with incomplete conditions.

Also on 7 June, Pompeo gave an interview to a journalist from Phoenix television in Hong Kong.

SECRETARY POMPEO: The President has been very clear: Sanctions will not be lifted until such time as the denuclearization itself has been completed. Look, we've been down the path before where promises have been made and not kept. That would be unacceptable; President Trump is not prepared to take that deal. We are prepared to do many things, but the economic sanctions themselves cannot be lifted until such time as we have confidence that the peninsula has been denuclearized.

"Interview With Bingru Wang of Phoenix TV," [U.S. State Dept.](#), 7 June 2018.



On Friday morning, 8 June, Trump again spoke to journalists about his alleged preparation for the Kim/Trump summit.

QUESTION: Were you serious about really not needing to prepare for the Kim summit? Or were you —

THE PRESIDENT: No, I didn't say that. I said I've been preparing all my life. I always believe in preparation, but I've been preparing all my life. You know, these one-week preparations, they don't work. Just ask Hillary what happened to her in the debates.

So I've been preparing for this all my life. And frankly, it's really just the fake news. Because if you run, Peter, just a little but longer, the clip, you would see: I've really been preparing all my life. I said that, but, you know, the news doesn't pick that up because it's fake news.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 08:02 EDT, 8 June 2018.

Trump is *wrong* when he said "I've been preparing for this [Kim/Trump summit] all my life." Developing and selling real estate in New York City and elsewhere is *not* preparation for denuclearization of North Korea. Operating beauty pageants or hosting "The Apprentice" television program is *not* preparation for denuclearization of North Korea. Giving inflammatory political speeches that contain many factual errors is *not* preparation for denuclearization of North Korea. As explained [above](#), Trump does not appear to have realized the importance of the North Korean problem until 2017. As chronicled in this essay, Trump's approach to the North Korean problem from mid-March 2017 until March 2018 was largely a botch that made the problem worse.

[NBC News](#) summarized Trump's strategy at the G-7 meeting in Quebec on 8-9 June: "Come late, leave early, offend host, alienate allies".

Just before Trump departed from the G-7 meeting in Quebec on Saturday morning, 9 June, he told journalists:

QUESTION: Mr. President, you are about to embark on what may be the most important meeting you've ever had in your life. What's in your gut? Steel nerves or butterflies? Can you describe how you feel?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there's always everything. It's really — you know, this has probably rarely been done. It's unknown territory, in the truest sense. But I really feel confident. I feel that Kim Jong Un wants to do something great for his people, and he has that opportunity. And he won't have that opportunity again. It's never going to be there again.

So I really believe that he's going to do something very positive for his people, for himself, his family. He's got an opportunity, the likes of which I think almost — if you look into history — very few people have ever had. He can take that nation, with those great people, and truly make it great. So it's a one-time — it's a one-time shot. And I think it's going to work out very well.

....

QUESTION [by Eliana Johnson with Politico]: Going into these talks with Kim Jong Un, do you have a clear objective of what you want to get out of them?

THE PRESIDENT: I have a clear objective. But I have to say, Eliana, that it's going to be something that will always be spur of the moment. You don't know. You know, this has not been done before at this level. This is a leader who really is an unknown personality. People don't know much about him. I think that he's going to surprise, on the upside, very much on the upside. We'll see. But never been done. Never been tested. Many people — world leaders — I'm talking about world leaders that have been right next to him [e.g., Japan] have never met him.

....

QUESTION: How long do you think that it will take you to figure out whether [Kim is] serious about (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: That's a good question. How long will it take? I think within the first minute I'll know.

QUESTION: How?

THE PRESIDENT: Just my touch, my feel. That's what I do. How long will it take to figure out whether or not they're serious? I said maybe in the first minute. You know, the way — they say that you know if you're going to like somebody in the first five seconds. You ever hear that one? Well, I think that very quickly I'll know whether or not something good is going to happen.

I also think I'll know whether or not it will happen fast. It may not. But I think I'll know pretty quickly whether or not, in my opinion, something positive will happen. And if I think it won't happen, I'm not going to waste my time. I don't want to waste his time.

....

QUESTION: A follow-up on North Korea. Will you raise of the gulags with Kim Jong Un and —

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to raise every issue.

QUESTION: — and the (inaudible) and kidnappings?

THE PRESIDENT: Every issue is going to be raised.

"Press Conference by President Trump After G7 Summit," [White House](#), 10:13 EDT, 9 June 2018.

My comment is that if Kim Jong-Un cared about his people, then Kim would not have an

atrocious human rights record.

Trump could avoid unpredictable, impulsive, "spur of the moment" deals in the summit, if diplomats had met and reached a consensus on what would be agreed at the summit. Detailed preparation is the key to success.

Trump says he will decide in the "first minute" of the meeting with a stranger (i.e., Kim) whether the summit will be successful. And Kim has only a "one-time shot" at making a favorable impression on Trump. Given differences in cultures between North Korea and the USA, and given Kim's international isolation, Trump is imposing conditions that make the summit more likely to fail. What would be a real waste of time is for Trump to fly 17 hours from Quebec to Singapore, and then walk out of the summit after one minute.

[Above](#), I mentioned that there were too many goals and topics for the Kim/Trump summit. If Trump raises the human rights issue, Kim will be angry, and the summit may collapse. The issue of abductees from Japan is small potatoes, and should be ignored in the first Kim/Trump summit.

In his 9 June press conference, Trump also talked about the U.S. trade deficit. Trump alleged that the U.S. trade deficit was "\$817 billion", but the true government number is actually \$568.4 billion. [Associated Press](#). Trump again mentions false facts in a meeting for which he should have had better preparation.

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On Sunday at 14:35 (Singapore time), 10 June 2018, Kim Jong-Un arrived in Singapore on a chartered Air China flight, using a Boeing 747 airplane. [Straits Times](#); [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#). Apparently, Kim was afraid to fly to Singapore in an old Air Koryo Soviet-era airplane.

On Sunday at 20:30 (Singapore time), 10 June 2018, Trump arrived in Singapore and he was driven directly to the Shangri-La Hotel. [Yonhap](#); [Kyodo News](#).

[Reuters](#) reports that Kim is scheduled to depart from Singapore at 14:00 on Tuesday. That means *fewer* than 5 hours of meeting with Trump, and that means *no* dinner with Trump. On 7 June, Trump said the meeting could last as long as three days.

Here is a terse summary of what we know about Trump's position at the Kim/Trump summit:

- Trump is unprepared, so Trump will improvise at the summit.
- Trump is ignorant of the basic issues in denuclearization of North Korea: "complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization" (CVID).
- Trump has a long history of mentioning false facts, and inventing delusions.
- Trump is arrogantly demanding that Kim immediately agree to denuclearization, or Trump will walk out of the summit.

- Trump desperately wants a deal with Kim, so Trump can win the Nobel Peace Prize for 2019.
- Trump makes impulsive decisions.
- There are too many goals/issues for the first Kim/Trump summit, as explained [above](#).

My essays on Trump for the years [2017](#) and [2018](#) chronicle in detail why Trump is unfit to be president of the USA. Trump's lack of understanding of the North Korean problem, and Trump's lack of preparation for the Kim/Trump summit, is just another example of Trump's unfitness.

In my opinion, the best outcome from this Kim/Trump summit would be the beginning of years of negotiations between North Korea and the USA, to produce a detailed denuclearization agreement and a detailed peace treaty that ends the Korea War. But the economic sanctions on North Korea must continue until they *completely* denuclearize, which might motivate North Korea to negotiate more quickly.

Note that politicians and journalists talk about negotiations between North Korea and the USA. But the demand for denuclearization is actually in a series of United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Why is the United Nations absent from the negotiations with North Korea?

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On Monday, 11 June 2018, Reuters reported:

U.S. and North Korean officials were in talks in Singapore on Monday [11 June] in a late bid to narrow differences before their leaders hold an historic summit aimed at finding ways to end a nuclear stand-off on the Korean peninsula.

....

[An anonymous Trump administration] official said Trump and Kim would hold a one-on-one meeting on Tuesday [12 June] that could last up to two hours. He described it as a "get to know you plus" meeting.

Soyoung Kim & Steve Holland, "North Korean, U.S. officials try narrowing differences on eve of Trump-Kim summit," [Reuters](#), 04:11 GMT, 11 June 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) clarified that the two-hour meeting was between Kim and Trump, with their translators. After that initial meeting, there will be additional meetings on 12 June that include advisors to Kim and Trump.

My comment is that it is good that diplomats are meeting to narrow the agenda, but this should have been done weeks ago.

On Monday, 11 June 2018, the White House issued the following statement:

The discussions between the United States and North Korea are ongoing and have moved more quickly than expected.

President Donald J. Trump will meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un tomorrow [12 June] morning at 9:00 a.m. [21:00 EDT on 11 June] Following the initial greeting, President Trump and Chairman Kim will participate in a one-on-one meeting, with translators only, an expanded bilateral meeting, and a working lunch.

The United States delegation at tomorrow's expanded bilateral meeting will include

- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo,
- Chief of Staff John Kelly, and
- National Security Advisor John Bolton.

Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, Ambassador Sung Kim, and National Security Council Senior Director for Asia Matt Pottinger will join for the working lunch.

At the conclusion of the summit, President Trump will participate in a media availability before departing tomorrow at approximately 8 p.m. for the United States. "Statement Regarding the Summit Between the United States and North Korea," [White House](#), 11 June 2018.

I wish Bolton stayed in the White House, and I wish Sung Kim participated in the "expanded bilateral meeting".

Singapore is paying for the North Korean delegation's hotel bill. Singapore is spending about US\$ 20 million on the Kim/Trump summit, about half of which goes for security costs. [Straits Times](#).

The U.S. and North Korean diplomats held marathon talks on 11 June, to finalize the summit agreement. [Yonhap](#).

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## **12 June 2018: Summit in Singapore**

### **Little Rocketman vs. Donald 'the dotard' Trump**

At 09:55 Singapore time, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Kim and Trump had met privately for 40 minutes, and then Trump told journalists that the two have an "excellent relationship."

The [Associated Press](#) reported that Kim and Trump had completed their expanded bilateral meeting at 12:05 Singapore time and completed their working lunch at 12:45, and were now taking a stroll around the Capella Hotel. Trump told journalists that "We had a really fantastic meeting." And Trump said the summit went "better than anybody could imagine."

At 13:50 Singapore time, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Kim and Trump signed a Statement, which is quoted below.

At 14:15 Singapore time, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Kim had departed from the Capella Hotel, and the summit was finished.

## 12 June 2018: Statement by Kim and Trump

Here is the entire statement that Kim and Trump signed at the end of the summit.

[¶1] President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) held a first, historic summit in Singapore on June 12, 2018.

[¶2] President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un conducted a comprehensive, in-depth, and sincere exchange of opinions on the issues related to the establishment of new U.S.-DPRK relations and the building of a lasting and robust peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. President Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK, and Chairman Kim Jong Un reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

[¶3] Convinced that the establishment of new U.S.-DPRK relations will contribute to the peace and prosperity of the Korean Peninsula and of the world, and recognizing that mutual confidence building can promote the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un state the following:

1. The United States and the DPRK commit to establish new U.S.-DPRK relations in accordance with the desire of the peoples of the two countries for peace and prosperity.
2. The United States and the DPRK will join their efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.
3. Reaffirming the April 27, 2018 Panmunjom Declaration, the DPRK commits to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
4. The United States and the DPRK commit to recovering POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those already identified.

[¶4] Having acknowledged that the U.S.-DPRK summit — the first in history — was an epochal event of great significance in overcoming decades of tensions and hostilities between the two countries and for the opening up of a new future, President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un commit to implement the stipulations in this joint statement fully and expeditiously. The United States and the DPRK commit to hold follow-on negotiations, led by the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, and a relevant high-level DPRK official, at the earliest possible date, to implement the outcomes of the U.S.-DPRK summit.

[¶5] President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have committed to cooperate for the development of new U.S.-DPRK relations and for the promotion of peace, prosperity, and security of the Korean Peninsula and of the world.

DONALD J. TRUMP

President of the United States of America

KIM JONG UN

Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

June 12, 2018  
Sentosa Island  
Singapore

"Joint Statement of President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Singapore Summit," [White House](#), 12 June 2018. [Paragraph numbers added by Standler.]

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### My Comments on the 12 June 2018 Statement

Here are my comments on the Statement at the end of the Kim/Trump summit:

1. The phrase from the United Nations Security Council Resolutions — “the DPRK ... shall immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner” — appears *nowhere* in this Statement. The closest the Statement comes is Kim agreed to "complete denuclearization" twice in the Statement (§2 and §3 at item 3), but the phrase "complete denuclearization" remains undefined.
2. Nothing is said about North Korea agreeing to verification of their denuclearization.
3. Nothing is said about North Korea destroying their ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons. North Korea could use their missiles to deliver chemical or biological weapons to Japan or the USA, making those missiles a security threat.
4. Nothing is said about North Korea stopping production of nuclear weapons, or stopping production of ballistic missiles.
5. There is nothing in the Statement about economic sanctions on North Korea. The Statement should have said that the full economic sanctions will continue until there is "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization" by North Korea.
6. North Korea does *not* promise the USA that the moratorium on testing of both nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles will continue. The Panmunjom Declaration of 27 April 2018, quoted [above](#), is also silent on this issue of testing.
7. The word "peace" appears 5 times, and the word "prosperity" occurs 3 times, but the Statement does not say *how* the peace and prosperity for Koreans will be obtained. Each party to the Statement should promise *not* to attack the other party, which is how peace is obtained.



8. In paragraph 2, "Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK". This vague statement could easily be made more specific by quoting the four noes announced by Tillerson in 2017 (see [above](#)).
9. In paragraph 3(4), "repatriation of those already identified" should say "repatriation of those already collected". North Korea does not have the capability of identifying remains that are more than 60 years old. [Associated Press](#).
10. There are grandiose remarks in the Statement (e.g., "first, historic summit"; "the U.S.-DPRK summit — the first in history — was an epochal event of great significance"). These are judgments that should be made by historians in the future.

I conclude that this Statement is inadequate.

Trump, as is his usual style, had engaged in hyperbole and exaggeration when he had suggested that the summit might result in a peace treaty that would end the Korean War, or that the summit might result in a written timetable for denuclearization of North Korea. What Kim and Trump actually delivered at the end of the less than four-hour summit was an inadequate Statement. In my opinion, Trump and Kim (and their advisers) should have remained in Singapore and continued negotiations until they fixed all of the defects in their Statement. In my opinion, this so-called summit was mostly a photo opportunity, as shown by the access granted to journalists with cameras, and as shown by the inadequate Statement signed by Trump. Given Trump's lack of preparation and his limited intelligence, we are lucky that the summit was not worse.

On 12 June, journalists quoted foreign-policy experts who criticized the Statement, for example:

- "Foreign Policy Analysts Skeptical of North Korea Summit Results, Lack of Details," [Wall Street Journal](#) ("U.S. foreign policy analysts on Tuesday said the U.S. appeared to have given away more than it had received in return in talks between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and took note of the lack of details in the joint communiqué the two men signed.").
- "Trump-Kim summit: Trump says after historic meeting, 'We have developed a very special bond'," [Washington Post](#) ("... the agreement, just over a page long, was perhaps most notable for its lack of details.").
- "Trump celebrates Singapore accord with North Korea, but substance has yet to be revealed," [Washington Post](#) ("The brief document signed by Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un provided virtually no detail beyond a stated commitment to "denuclearize" the Korean Peninsula, a promise that Pyongyang has made and ignored many times in the past.").
- "Live Updates: Trump-Kim Summit Ends with Promise to Suspend Military Exercises," [New York Times](#) ("But the statement was short on details and did not lay out potential next steps or a timetable.").

- "What just happened? Experts break it down," [CNN](#) (quotes 11 experts).
- "The Trump-Kim summit was big on style, short on substance," [NBC News](#) ("[The summit] seems to fall short on substance. Indeed, the longer you focus on the signed agreement and Trump's subsequent news conference, the less there is that meets the eye.").
- "'Now the real work begins:' Experts weigh in on Trump-Kim nuclear pledge," [CNBC](#) (quotes 14 experts).
- "Analysis: By Trump's own yardstick, NKorea pact falls flat," [Associated Press](#) ("[Trump] patted himself on the back for signing a 'comprehensive' pact with Kim paving a path toward denuclearization, but the contours appeared far weaker than even his predecessors' failed deals. .... All this leaves Trump open to criticism that he has given Kim what he has long wanted — recognition, respect and legitimacy on the world stage as an equal — without getting anything substantive on nukes in return.").
- "(US-NK summit) Trump-Kim deal lacks specifics, but augurs well for denuclearization: experts," [Yonhap](#) ("The agreement fell short of expectations that Trump, who recently withdrew the U.S. from the landmark nuclear deal with Iran, would nail down an agreement on a swift and stringent denuclearization. Critics showed dismay over a failure to codify Washington's longstanding demand — the "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" (CVID) of the North's fast-advancing nuclear program.").
- "Pundits Lament Poor Results of U.S.-N.Korea Summit," [Chosun Ilbo](#) (quotes 6 experts).

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## 12 June 2018: Trump's Press Conference

At 16:15 Singapore time on 12 June, Trump gave a press conference for 65 minutes. Here is some of what Trump said about the Kim/Trump summit and the North Korean problem.

THE PRESIDENT: Nearly 70 years ago — think of that; 70 years ago — an extremely bloody conflict ravaged the Korean Peninsula. Countless people died in the conflict, including tens of thousands of brave Americans. Yet, while the armistice was agreed to, the war never ended. To this day, never ended. But now we can all have hope that it will soon end. And it will. It will soon end.

....

And Chairman Kim is on his way back to North Korea. And I know for a fact, as soon as he arrives, he's going to start a process that's going to make a lot of people very happy and very safe.

....

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President. Two questions for you, if you don't mind. First, the man you met today, Kim Jong Un, as you know, has killed family members, has starved his own people, is responsible for the death of Otto Warmbier. Why are you so comfortable calling him "very talented"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, he is very talented. Anybody that takes over a situation like he did, at 26 years of age, and is able to run it, and run it tough — I don't say he was nice or I don't say anything about it — he ran it. Very few people, at that age — you can take one out of ten thousand, probably, couldn't do it.

....

THE PRESIDENT: No, we're not reducing anything. We're not reducing [military capabilities, e.g., U.S. troops in South Korea]. At some point, I have to be honest — and I used to say this during my campaign, as you know, probably, better than most — I want to get our soldiers out. I want to bring our soldiers back home. We have, right now, 32,000 soldiers in South Korea, and I'd like to be able to bring them back home. But that's not part of the equation right now. At some point, I hope it will be, but not right now.

We will be stopping the war games, which will save us a tremendous amount of money, unless and until we see the future negotiation is not going along like it should. But we'll be saving a tremendous amount of money. Plus, I think it's very provocative.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, this joint statement does not talk about verifiable or irreversible denuclearization. .... Did you discuss with Chairman Kim methods to verify, either with the United States or international organizations, that very process? And do you have a timetable —

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we did. Yes, we did. And we'll be verifying.

QUESTION: Can you give that to us?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, we'll be verifying. It will be verified.

QUESTION: How is that going to be achieved, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's going to be achieved by having a lot of people there, and as we develop a certain trust. And we think we have done that. Secretary Pompeo has been really doing a fantastic job — his staff, everybody. As we do that, we're going to have a lot of people there, and we're going to be working with them on a lot of other things. But this is complete denuclearization of North Korea, and it will be verified.

QUESTION: Will those people be Americans or international —

THE PRESIDENT: Uh, combinations of both. Combinations of both. And we have talked about it, yes.

....

THE PRESIDENT: .... So you never know. Right? We never know. But I'll tell you what, we signed a very comprehensive document today, and I think most of you have been given that document. But we signed a very, very comprehensive document, and I believe he's going to live up to that document. In fact, when he lands — which is going to be shortly — I think that he will start that process right away.

QUESTION: Do you trust him, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I do. I do. I can only say that I know him for — really well, it's been very rhetorical, as you know. I think, without the rhetoric, it wouldn't have happened. I think without other things going along — I think the establishment of a new team was very important. We have a great team. But I do, I think he wants to get it done. I really feel that very strongly.

....

QUESTION: Yes, sir. Thank you. What timetable do you envision for their denuclearization? And in the meantime, are you thinking about easing any sanctions?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, scientifically, I've been watching and reading a lot about this, and it does take a long time to pull off complete denuclearization. It takes a long time. Scientifically, you have to wait certain periods of time, and a lot of things happen. But despite that, once you start the process, it means it's pretty much over; you can't use them. That's the good news. And that's going to start very — very soon. I believe that's going to start very soon. We will do it as fast as it can mechanically and physically be done, Steve.

....

QUESTION: Can you clarify, when you said you were stopping “war games,” so you are stopping the military exercises with South Korea?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, we've done exercises for a long period of time, working with South Korea. And we call them “war games,” and I call them “war games.” And they're tremendously expensive. The amount of money that we spend on that is incredible. And South Korea contributes, but not 100 percent, which is certainly a subject that we have to talk to them about also. And that has to do with the military expense and also the trade.

So we're doing that. We actually have a new deal with South Korea, in terms of the trade deal, but we have to talk to them. We have to talk to many countries about treating us fairly.

But the war games are very expensive. We pay for a big majority of them. We fly in bombers from Guam. I said — when I first started, I said, “Where do the bombers come from?” “Guam. Nearby.” I said, “Oh, great, nearby. Where’s nearby?” “Six and a half hours.” Six and a half hours — that’s a long time for these big massive planes to be flying to South Korea to practice and then drop bombs all over the place, and then go back to Guam. I know a lot about airplanes; it’s very expensive. And I didn’t like it.

And what I did say is — and I think it’s very provocative, I have to tell you, Jennifer, it’s a very provocative situation when I see that, and you have a country right next door. So under the circumstances that we are negotiating a very comprehensive, complete deal, I think it’s inappropriate to be having war games.

So, number one, we save money — a lot. And number two, it really is something that I think they very much appreciate it.

....

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President. Could you talk about the military consequences for North Korea if they don’t follow through on the commitments that you’re talking about? Could there be military action?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don’t want to talk. Yeah, I know. That’s a tough thing to talk about because I don’t want to be threatening. I don’t want to be threatening. They understood that. And you’ve seen what was, perhaps, going to happen.

And you know, Seoul has 28 million people. We think we have big cities. You look at New York, where it has 8 million people. We think it’s a big city. Seoul has 28 million people. Think of that. And it’s right next to the border. It’s right next to the DMZ. It’s right there. I mean, if this would have happened, I think — you know, I’ve heard, oh, a hundred-thousand people. I think you could have lost 20 million people, 30 million people. This is really an honor for me to be doing this because I think, you know, potentially, you could have lost, you know, 30-, 40-, 50 million people. The city of Seoul, one of the biggest cities in the world, is right next to the border.

....

QUESTION: And how long will that take [to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula]?

THE PRESIDENT: We don’t know, but it will go pretty quickly.

....

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think that — I don’t view it that way. See, I don’t view it that way. I’ll do whatever it takes to make the world a safer place. .... If I have to say I’m sitting on a stage with Chairman Kim and that’s going to get us to save 30 million lives — could be more than that — I’m willing to sit on the stage. I’m willing to travel to Singapore very proudly, very gladly.

....

So, Brian, if I can save millions of lives by coming here, sitting down, and establishing a relationship with someone who's a very powerful man, who's got firm control of a country, and that country has very powerful nuclear weapons, it's my honor to do it. "Press Conference by President Trump," [White House](#), 12 June 2018.

My comments on Trump's remarks, in the order that he made those remarks:

1. The Panmunjom Declaration of 27 April 2018, quoted [above](#), calls for a peace treaty by the end of 2018. There is nothing in the Kim/Trump Statement about a peace treaty.
2. Recently, Trump is full of effusive praise for Kim Jong-Un. At this press conference, Trump called Kim "talented". Let's talk about Kim's talent. In December 2013, Kim had his Uncle, Jang Song-thaek, executed by firing anti-aircraft machine guns at Jang. In February 2017, Kim had agents wipe VX nerve gas on the face of Kim's half-brother, Kim Jong-nam, at the airport in Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia. Kim Jong-Un has a special talent for murder.
3. Trump is wrong again about the number of U.S. Military personnel in South Korea. Trump says 32,000 but the correct number is 28,500. Trump made the same error on 14 March 2018 in a speech in Missouri. (For citations, see my [essay](#).)
4. Trump promises to end U.S. Military exercises with the South Korean military, because Trump admits those exercises are "provocative". In 2017, the Chinese proposed that the U.S. end those exercises in exchange for North Korea agreeing to a moratorium on testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. But Kim did *not* promise in writing to have a moratorium on testing, so Trump made a concession without receiving anything in return. Trump is focused on saving U.S. taxpayers some money, while possibly diminishing the security of South Korea. Equally bad, Trump's announcement at the press conference blindsided the South Korean government, the U.S. Forces in Korea, and the Pentagon. [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#); [NBC News](#). Unilaterally ending the U.S. Military exercises in South Korea is an example of Trump's impulsive decision making.
5. Trump was asked why the Statement omitted "verification" of denuclearization. Trump's answer was evasive, and I continue to believe that Trump does *not* understand CVID. Trump asserted that the denuclearization "will be verified", but he does *not* say how.
6. I believe Trump is a fool to trust Kim Jong-Un.
7. Trump invokes the word "scientifically", then asserts it will take a "long time" to denuclearize North Korea. A scientist or engineer would use numbers, not words, to characterize a timetable. Trump is *not* capable of understanding science, because he skipped the difficult classes in mathematics and physics in college.
8. *If* personally meeting and establishing a relationship is so important, why did this

summit last less than five hours? Why not have a leisurely dinner together on the first day of meeting? Why not meet for two or three days?

9. Trump said that as many as 50 million people could die in a war with North Korea. That makes war *not* a reasonable option. On [15 June](#) and [23 June](#), Trump reiterated that point.

Trump previously blindsided South Korea on 24 May, when Trump impulsively cancelled the Kim/Trump summit without first informing/discussing the cancellation with President Moon in South Korea. On 12 June, Trump impulsively cancelled U.S. Military exercises in South Korea without first informing/discussing the cancellation with President Moon in South Korea. Trump is proving himself an unreliable ally, and an amateur in foreign policy.

I agree with Trump that the U.S. Military exercises in South Korea are "provocative". But, and this is important, Trump *should* have agreed to a moratorium on U.S. Military exercises in exchange for North Korea agreeing to a moratorium on testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. And Trump *should* have consulted our allies in South Korea before announcing the suspension of U.S. Military exercises in South Korea.

In his press conference that was quoted above, Trump did *not* put any conditions on his stopping the U.S. Military exercises in South Korea. Later on 12 June, in an exclusive interview with Sean Hannity of Fox News, Trump said: "So, we're not going to be doing the war games as long as we're negotiating in good faith." [Fox News](#).

### 13 June 2018: Pompeo's Press Conference

On 13 June, Pompeo spoke to journalists in Seoul, South Korea, and clarified some issues. Pompeo also obstinately refused to answer a good question.

QUESTION: .... My question pertains to President Trump's decision to suspend major military exercises on the Korean Peninsula. There was a reason why these exercises have been done for all these years, according to the Pentagon, in terms of helping the U.S. practice its ability to reinforce in a crisis. Is this decision to cancel the exercises open-ended, or would you resume the exercises if you concluded the North is not engaging seriously in the talks?

SECRETARY POMPEO: .... I was present [at the summit] when the discussion took place. [Trump] made it very clear that the condition precedent for the exercises not to proceed was a productive, good-faith negotiations being ongoing. And at the point it's concluded that they are not, the President's commitment to not have those joint exercises take place will no longer be in effect. ....

....

SECRETARY POMPEO: .... I don't know exactly what the timing will be for our next conversation with North Korea. I would anticipate it will be fairly quickly after we return to our home countries. I don't know exactly what form that will take, but I'm



very confident that by some time in the next week or so we will begin the engagement.

....

QUESTION: .... Why would the President use the term “provocative,” though, to describe the military exercises when that’s a term that often North Koreans and the Chinese use, and we’ve said that they are — that they’re long planned and for purposes of readiness?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah. I mean, I think the President was very clear. His intention here was to put us in a place where we get the opportunity to have productive conversations connected to the denuclearization of North Korea. Our mission hasn’t changed, right. A lot has been made of the fact that the word “verifiable” didn’t appear in the agreement. Let me assure you that the “complete” encompasses verifiable in the minds of everyone concerned. One can’t completely denuclearize without validating, authenticating — you pick the word.

The President’s committed to that. He believes that having made this commitment to Chairman Kim, that so long as we were making progress and having good-faith, productive conversations that we were setting the right conditions for moving forward with those talks. I think that’s what the President was thinking of when he made that commitment to him.

....

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, I wanted to ask you about “verifiable and irreversible.” The day before you said it’s our only objective, our — it’s clear we want that. It’s not in the statement. Why it’s not in the statement? And the President said it will —

SECRETARY POMPEO: Mm-hmm, it’s in the statement. It’s in the statement. You’re just wrong about that.

QUESTION: How is it in the statement? And I am also —

SECRETARY POMPEO: You’re just — because “complete” encompasses verifiable and irreversible. It just — I suppose we — you could argue semantics, but let me assure you that it’s in the document.

....

SECRETARY POMPEO: Just so you know, you could ask me this — I find that question insulting and ridiculous and, frankly, ludicrous. I just have to be honest with you. It’s a game and one ought not play games with serious matters like this.

....

QUESTION: Would you like to accomplish major nuclear disarmament before President Trump’s first term in office ends? Is that your objective?

[long digression omitted] . . . .

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, so most certainly in the President's first term. .... you used the term "major disarmament," something like that. Yes, we're hopeful that we can achieve that in the next — what is it — two and a half years, something like that.

"Remarks to Traveling Press," [U.S. State Dept](#), 13 June 2018. [Minor editing by Standler]

The clarification that the suspension of U.S. Military exercises in South Korea would continue as long as North Korea negotiates denuclearization in good faith makes that suspension easier to accept.

Notice that Pompeo did *not* answer the question about why Trump used the word "provocative" to describe the U.S. Military exercises in South Korea. Pompeo is *wrong* when he asserts that "complete" includes "verifiable". If Pompeo were correct, then the United Nations Resolutions would omit the word "verifiable" as redundant. One can easily envision a scenario in which North Korea destroys all of their nuclear weapons and destroys all of their infrastructure for design, testing, and manufacturing nuclear weapons — but then refuses to prove that the weapons and infrastructure have been destroyed. That scenario would be complete denuclearization without verification.

Pompeo is a graduate of Harvard Law School. That means he can say black is white and tell you three reasons why. <grin> Pompeo can talk all he wants, but the Truth is that "verifiable and irreversible" were omitted from the Statement. Furthermore, "complete" does *not* include "verifiable and irreversible." In the previous paragraph, I explained why complete does not include verifiable. One can easily envision a scenario in which North Korea deactivates all of their nuclear weapons, so the weapons are no longer functional, but can be reassembled in a few weeks. That would be complete, but reversible, denuclearization.

We do *not* know why "verifiable and irreversible" were omitted from the Statement. It could be Trump's ignorance of the details of CVID. It could be that Kim is allergic to the exact words in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Or maybe Kim currently refuses to agree to "verifiable and irreversible" denuclearization.

Finally, Pompeo insults the journalist who asked why "verifiable and irreversible" were omitted from the Statement. It was a good question and Pompeo ought to give an honest answer, without evading the question with bogus assertions and without insulting the journalist. Pompeo is behaving here like Trump with his "fake news" diversion. Pompeo — like Tillerson before him — has *no* experience as a diplomat.

I hope the journalist's question will motivate Pompeo to include the phrase "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization" in Pompeo's next written document. No one wants, years in the future, to hear the North Koreans say: "we never agreed to verifiable denuclearization" or "we never agreed to irreversible denuclearization".

---

**Statement is incomplete**

Both Trump and Pompeo mentioned that there were things that North Korea and the USA had agreed in meetings, but were *not* in the written statement that was signed. At his 12 June press conference, Trump said:

But what we signed today was a lot of things included. And then you have things that weren't included that we got after the deal was signed. I've done that before in my life. We didn't put it in the agreement because we didn't have time. And I think most of you have been handed out the agreement or soon will.

"Press Conference by President Trump," [White House](#), 12 June 2018.

And on 13 June, Pompeo said:

There was a great deal of work done over days and days and days in Panmunjom that led to the discussions that took place there in Singapore for whatever it was, 70 hours or 60 hours, whatever the two sets of teams were on the ground. So not all of that work appeared in the final document, but lots of other places where there were understandings reached. We couldn't reduce them to writing, so that means there's still some work to do, but there was a great deal of work done that is beyond what was seen in the final document that will be the place that we'll begin when we return to our conversations.

"Remarks to Traveling Press," [U.S. State Dept](#), 13 June 2018.

A written contract memorializes what was agreed in meetings or discussions. That contract is incomplete if things were agreed, but not included in the written contract. Trump should have taken the time to include in the written Statement everything that was agreed. The incompleteness of the Statement contributes to its inadequacy. Journalists appear to have overlooked the significance of Trump's and Pompeo's admissions that the Statement is incomplete.

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### 13 June 2018: Trump returns to White House

Early in the morning of 13 June in Asia, Trump tweeted:

Heading back home from Singapore after a truly amazing visit. Great progress was made on the denuclearization of North Korea. Hostages are back home, will be getting the remains of our great heroes back to their families, no missiles shot, no research happening, sites closing...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:40 EDT, 12 June 2018.

I do not see any "great progress ... on the denuclearization of North Korea." The absence of detail in the Statement shows a lack of agreement on all important issues.

On the morning of 13 June in Asia, Trump summarized his view of the summit:

The World has taken a big step back from potential Nuclear catastrophe! No more rocket launches, nuclear testing or research! The hostages are back home with their families. Thank you to Chairman Kim, our day together was historic!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:27 EDT, 12 June 2018.

The Truth is that Kim never promised in writing to end testing of ballistic missiles and

nuclear weapons. Kim never promised in writing to end North Korea's nuclear research program. The return of three U.S. citizens from North Korea's prisons is small potatoes compared to denuclearization and should not divert our attention from disarmament of North Korea. North Korea released the three U.S. citizens on 9 May, so that is old news.

Trump's airplane landed near Washington, DC on the morning of 13 June and the ghost of Neville Chamberlain tweeted that he had arranged peace for our time.

Just landed — a long trip, but everybody can now feel much safer than the day I took office. There is no longer a Nuclear Threat from North Korea. Meeting with Kim Jong Un was an interesting and very positive experience. North Korea has great potential for the future!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 05:56 EDT, 13 June 2018.

Before taking office people were assuming that we were going to War with North Korea. President Obama said that North Korea was our biggest and most dangerous problem. No longer — sleep well tonight!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:01 EDT, 13 June 2018.

My comment is Whoa! North Korea still has every nuclear weapon and ballistic missile that they possessed on 1 Jan 2018, plus any weapons and missiles that they manufactured since then. Trump failed to obtain a written promise from Kim Jong-Un that North Korea will not attack the USA. Trump failed to obtain a written promise from Kim Jong-Un that North Korea will stop testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Trump failed to obtain a written promise from Kim Jong-Un that North Korea will stop manufacturing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Trump failed to obtain a written promise from Kim Jong-Un that North Korea will engage in "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization". Trump is grossly exaggerating what little he accomplished during his brief summit with Kim Jong-Un. Trump has *not* ended the threat of nuclear war with North Korea.

The Associated Press criticized Trump's erroneous tweets:

President Donald Trump falsely declared victory after his meeting with North Korea's leader and twisted history in celebrating Tuesday's summit with Kim Jong Un.

....

Trump is wrong to suggest North Korea no longer poses a nuclear threat. The five-hour summit did give Trump and Kim a chance to express optimism and make of show of their new relationship. But the two countries didn't nail down how and when the North might denuclearize or shed light on the unspecified "protections" Trump pledged to Kim and his government.

....

Trump is also wrong to say there was an assumption before he took office that the United States would go to war. It wasn't until Trump's tenure that North Korea began testing an intercontinental ballistic missile and the bellicose rhetoric between the two leaders ramped up. Fears of conflict were particularly acute after Trump called Kim "Rocket Man" and Kim pledged to "tame the mentally deranged U.S. dotard with fire."

Matthew Pennington & Calvin Woodward, "AP FACT CHECK: Trump falsely declares post-summit victory," [Associated Press](#), 13 June 2018.

The [Washington Post](#) reported: "... weapons experts around the world expressed astonishment Wednesday [13 June] at President Trump's claim that the danger posed by Pyongyang's decades-long weapons buildup had been effectively eliminated...."

Whenever journalists expose an error by Trump, or criticize a policy by Trump, he explodes in an infantile temper tantrum about "fake news" that is "unfair" to Trump. Today is no exception.

So funny to watch the Fake News, especially NBC and CNN. They are fighting hard to downplay the deal with North Korea. 500 days ago they would have "begged" for this deal — looked like war would break out. Our Country's biggest enemy is the Fake News so easily promulgated by fools!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:30 EDT, 13 June 2018.

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### 14-21 June 2018: No progress on denuclearization

After the summit on 12 June, Trump told Sean Hannity of [Fox News](#) that North Korea would begin denuclearization "virtually immediately". And on 13 June Pompeo told journalists that he expected negotiations to continue next week, i.e., sometime 18-23 June. But North Korea failed to resume negotiations on denuclearization.

The 12 June Statement specifies that Pompeo will negotiate for the USA, but North Korea did not name the "a relevant high-level DPRK official" who will negotiate for North Korea. On 13 June, [Reuters](#) reported that Kim Yong Chol — who visited the USA from 30 May to 1 June for negotiations with Pompeo — and Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho are the two most likely candidates.

At high-level negotiations between North and South Korea on 1 June, it was agreed there would be high-level military negotiations on 14 June. Those military negotiations decided "to completely restore their military communication lines". [Yonhap](#). They also agreed to implement a year 2004 agreement "on preventing accidental clashes in the West Sea." [Yonhap](#).

On 15 June, [Chosun Ilbo](#) reported that "Choson Sinbo, a pro-Pyongyang mouthpiece in Japan" said "denuclearization and the 'complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement' of its nuclear weapons the U.S. had demanded are 'separate issues.' " *If* this is actually the North Korean position, then there is *no* agreement about denuclearization — and Pompeo misinformed us.

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On Friday morning, 15 June, Trump gave a press conference in the driveway in front of the White House. Trump rambled more than usual, and he was evasive on the question involving verification of denuclearization.

THE PRESIDENT: .... If we did [go to war with North Korea], millions of people

would have been killed. I don't mean like — you know, people are saying 100,000. Seoul has 28 million people 30 miles off the border. You would have had 30, 40, 50 million people killed. Who knows what would have happened?

....

THE PRESIDENT: Wait, wait. They're doing so much. And now we're well on our way to denuclearization. And the agreement says there will be total denuclearization. Nobody wants to report that.

....

THE PRESIDENT: .... I have solved that problem. Now, we're getting it memorialized and all, but that problem is largely solved, and part of the reason is we signed, number one, a very good document. But you know what? More importantly than the document — more importantly than the document, I have a good relationship with Kim Jong Un. That's a very important thing.

....

QUESTION: What's verification process going to look like?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to have a very strong verification process.

QUESTION: What's it's going to look like?

THE PRESIDENT: Now, if you read the agreement, which most of you didn't, point after point after point he gave, including getting back the remains of our great heroes, okay? Of our great, great heroes. Which made — some people are crying in the streets they're so happy. Nobody thought we were going to get that. Point after point.

All they said about me is, "You met. He met. It's terrible you met." Of course I met. Meeting is a good thing, not a bad thing. By the way, it was good for the United States; it was good for them.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Gaggle," [White House](#), 09:03 EDT, 15 June 2018.

Trump says "we're well on our way to denuclearization." But *no* nuclear weapons have been destroyed. Trump says "the agreement says there will be total denuclearization", but the agreement actually says "complete denuclearization". Trump whines that "nobody wants to report that". As explained above, the Statement is incomplete and inadequate. Trump calls the signed document an "agreement", while the actual title is "Statement".

Trump boasts "I have solved that problem" with North Korea. Then Trump claims "we're getting it memorialized" *after* he signed the Statement. Perhaps Trump intended to say that some things agreed in meetings were not included in the Statement, but they will be memorialized in a future document. Then Trump says his relationship with Kim is "more important" than the Statement. If relationships are so important, then why was the summit less than five hours? The summit could have been two or three days, to develop that

important relationship.

Notice Trump was asked about verification, but his "answer" was about returning corpses killed in the Korean War in the early 1950s. Then Trump digressed about it was good that he met Kim. Also notice that Trump took a swipe at journalists when he said "most of you didn't [read the agreement]." Trump himself appears not to understand that the agreement is vague, inadequate, and is completely silent on verification.

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On Sunday, 17 June, Trump again boasted of his accomplishments at the summit with Kim. But, as usual, Trump's boasts include false facts.

Chuck Schumer said "the Summit was what the Texans call all cattle and no hat."

Thank you Chuck, but are you sure you got that right? No more nuclear testing or rockets flying all over the place, blew up launch sites. Hostages already back, hero remains coming home & much more!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:72 EDT, 17 June 2018.

First of all, Schumer has the Texan idiom backwards. Texans despise a person who wears a cowboy hat, but owns no cattle. The Texan idiom is correctly: "all hat and no cattle".

Schumer's remark is in his 13 June speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate, 164 Congressional Record S3865. See also: [Washington Post](#).

Turning to the significant points, Kim told South Korean envoys on 8 March — and publicly announced on 21 April — he was suspending tests of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The North Korean moratorium on tests was decided more than three months before the Kim/Trump summit. The moratorium on tests was *not* an accomplishment of the summit, and the moratorium is *not* mentioned in the Statement.

Kim did *not* "blew up launch sites". Kim did agree to destroy one test facility for missile engines, but it is *not* mentioned in the Statement.

The hostages returned on 9 May, more than a month before the summit.

Trump boasts of "hero remains coming home", but the last remains were delivered in the year 2007. [Associated Press](#). The Statement does contain a promise by North Korea to return more remains.

---

On Monday, 18 June 2018, Pompeo gave a speech in Detroit Michigan, in which he briefly mentioned North Korea:

There's still much work to do. I'll be hard at it in the days and weeks ahead. But we have now set the conditions where the North Korean people can also have economic success. As the President says, a brighter future for North Korea does not come at the expense of anyone, but benefits us all.

....

As for whether they'll need another summit, hard to know. There is a lot of work between here and there. My team is already doing it. I'll likely travel back before too



terribly long. There's a great deal of work to do. We still have to flesh out all the things that underlay the commitments that were made that day in Singapore. I was there in the room with Chairman Kim. It was the third time I'd met Chairman Kim; twice in Pyongyang and there in Singapore now. He has made very clear his commitment to fully denuclearize his country. That's everything, right? It's not just the weapon systems, it's everything.

Mike Pompeo, "Remarks on America's Economic Revival," [U.S. State Dept](#), 18 June 2018.

On 19 June, the South Korean government formally agreed to suspend joint U.S./South Korea military exercises, after Trump blindsided South Korea on 12 June when he announced the unilateral suspension of the U.S. Military exercises. In particular, the Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG) exercise scheduled for August 2018 is canceled. [Yonhap](#).

On 19 June, Kim Jong-Un arrived in Beijing for his third visit to China in three months. This is a two-day visit. [Yonhap](#). On 20 June, [Yonhap](#) reported that China publicly supported incremental removing of economic sanctions on North Korea in exchange for progress in denuclearization. But on 21 June, [Yonhap](#) reported that China was already removing economic sanctions on North Korea, before any denuclearization occurred.

On 21 June, Trump spoke to journalists before a cabinet meeting and muddled the facts about what was happening in North Korea.

But I think I can speak for both of us [Pompeo and Trump] in saying it's been an incredible experience. The relationship is very good. They've stopped the sending of missiles, including ballistic missiles. They're destroying their engine site. They're blowing it up. They've already blown up one of their big test sites. In fact, it was actually four of their big test sites. And the big thing is, it will be a total denuclearization, which is already starting taking place.

....

But the document we signed, if people actually read it to the public, you'd see: Number one statement, we will immediately begin total denuclearization of North Korea.

Nobody thought that would be possible.

"Remarks by President Trump at Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 11:55 EDT, 21 June 2018.

"They've already blown up one of their big test sites." Trump is referring to the 24 May so-called destruction of the Pyunggye-ri test site for nuclear weapons. That destruction was neither verified nor irreversible, so it does *not* meet the standards in CVID. Then Trump said: "In fact, it was actually four of their big test sites." I think Trump means four tunnels at one nuclear-weapons test site. Finally, Trump optimistically says denuclearization "is already starting taking place". But on 20 June, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis told journalists "I'm not aware of any [steps toward denuclearization]." [The Hill](#); [Associated Press](#); [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#)(fact-check). My comment is that, once again, Trump shows exaggeration and inability to state facts correctly.

Then Trump lied to the American people when he claimed: "Number one statement, we will immediately begin total denuclearization of North Korea." The word "immediately" appears only once in the Statement that Trump and Kim signed on 12 June, and that said: "The

United States and the DPRK commit to recovering POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those already identified.". The Statement is silent on a timeframe for denuclearization. Denuclearization is *not* the "number one" feature of the Statement, because the word "denuclearization" appears only three times, while the word "peace" appears five times and "relations" appears four times. And the Statement says "complete denuclearization", *not* "total". The word "complete" is included to copy the demands in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, so this is an important point. Finally, it may not be possible to denuclearize North Korea: Kim has *never* agreed to "verifiable and irreversible denuclearization". Kim has not yet begun destroying nuclear warheads.

Given Trump's numerous factual errors about the Statement, one wonders if Trump has read the Statement. If he did read the Statement, either (1) he did *not* understand it, or (2) he is a habitual liar. Either way, Trump is unfit to be president of the USA. And if Trump signed the Statement without reading it, then Trump is *not* the Master Negotiator that he claims to be.

Journalists also criticized Trump's 21 June errors, see, e.g., [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [CNN](#).

On 30 June, two political science professors said: "The Singapore Declaration does not say what Trump claims it says." [Washington Post](#).

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## **22 June 2018: Trump continues U.S. National Emergency**

On 22 June, a Friday, Trump signed a continuation of the U.S. National Emergency regarding North Korea, which document summarizes the continuing bad conduct of North Korea and officially declares that North Korea "continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security" of the USA:

On June 26, 2008, by Executive Order 13466, the President declared a national emergency with respect to North Korea pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. §1701-1706) to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula. The President also found that it was necessary to maintain certain restrictions with respect to North Korea that would otherwise have been lifted pursuant to Proclamation 8271 of June 26, 2008, which terminated the exercise of authorities under the Trading With the Enemy Act (50 U.S.C. App. 1-44) with respect to North Korea.

On August 30, 2010, the President signed Executive Order 13551, which expanded the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466 to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by the continued actions and policies of the Government of North Korea, manifested by

- its unprovoked attack that resulted in the sinking of the Republic of Korea Navy

- ship Cheonan and the deaths of 46 sailors in March 2010;
- its announced test of a nuclear device and its missile launches in 2009;
- its actions in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874, including the procurement of luxury goods;
- and its illicit and deceptive activities in international markets through which it obtains financial and other support, including
  - money laundering,
  - the counterfeiting of goods and currency,
  - bulk cash smuggling, and
  - narcotics trafficking,

which destabilize the Korean Peninsula and imperil United States Armed Forces, allies, and trading partners in the region.

On April 18, 2011, the President signed Executive Order 13570 to take additional steps to address the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466 and expanded in Executive Order 13551 that would ensure the implementation of the import restrictions contained in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874 and complement the import restrictions provided for in the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. §2751 et seq.).

On January 2, 2015, the President signed Executive Order 13687 to expand the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466, expanded in Executive Order 13551, and addressed further in Executive Order 13570, to address the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the provocative, destabilizing, and repressive actions and policies of the Government of North Korea, including

- its destructive, coercive cyber-related actions during November and December 2014,
- actions in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, and 2094, and
- commission of serious human rights abuses.

On March 15, 2016, the President signed Executive Order 13722 to take additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466, as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps in subsequent Executive Orders, to address the Government of North Korea's continuing pursuit of its nuclear and missile programs, as evidenced by

- its February 7, 2016, launch using ballistic missile technology and
- its January 6, 2016, nuclear test

in violation of its obligations pursuant to numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions and in contravention of its commitments under the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, that increasingly imperils the United States and its allies.

On September 20, 2017, the President signed Executive Order 13810 to take further steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466, as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps in subsequent Executive Orders, to address the provocative, destabilizing, and repressive actions and policies of the Government of North Korea, including

- its intercontinental ballistic missile launches of July 3 and July 28, 2017, and
- its nuclear test of September 2, 2017;
- its commission of serious human rights abuses; and
- its use of funds generated through international trade to support its nuclear and missile programs and weapons proliferation.

The existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula and the actions and policies of the Government of North Korea continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13466, expanded in scope in Executive Order 13551, addressed further in Executive Order 13570, further expanded in scope in Executive Order 13687, and under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13722 and Executive Order 13810, and the measures taken to deal with that national emergency, must continue in effect beyond June 26, 2018. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. §1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to North Korea declared in Executive Order 13466.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress. "Notice Regarding the Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to North Korea," [White House](#), 22 June 2018. [Formatting with indented lists by Standler.] Published in 83 Federal Register 29661 (25 June 2018), PDF version at [GPO](#).

Since the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June, Trump has exaggerated the achievements of that summit. Trump said North Korea is no longer a threat. But Trump's continuation of the U.S. National Emergency, quoted above, is totally inconsistent with Trump's optimistic view that North Korea is no longer a threat. Trump ignored this inconsistency. One wonders if Trump is aware he is being inconsistent. If there be any doubt, the continuation of the U.S. National Emergency is the correct position.

It is possible that high-level people in the North Korean government will read the harsh words in Trump's National Emergency Notice and wonder if this is the same person who promised Kim peace, prosperity, and a new relationship. Trump's Notice could be improved by adding a few sentences about Trump looks forward to the "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization" of North Korea, at which time the USA will end economic sanctions on North Korea and end the U.S. National Emergency.

However, a better position would be for the USA to insist on the:

1. "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization" of North Korea,

2. destruction of all ballistic missiles,
3. destruction of all chemical weapons and related infrastructure,
4. destruction of all biological weapons and related infrastructure,
5. ending cyberwarfare,
6. ending money laundering,
7. ending the counterfeiting of goods and currency,
8. ending narcotics trafficking, and
9. ending serious human rights abuses

before the end of economic sanctions on North Korea. This list of misbehavior by North Korea shows the depravity of the Kim regime that made North Korea a pariah nation.

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### **22-30 June 2018: No progress on denuclearization**

The Panmunjom Declaration of 27 April 2018 mentions a temporary reunion of families separated by the Korean War. On 22 June, North and South Korea agreed to hold a reunion during 20-26 August 2018 at the Mount Kumgang resort in North Korea. [Yonhap](#). Notice that it took about two months to arrange a meeting and agree on a reunion, something that Yonhap says has happened twenty times since the year 2000. [Reuters](#) says the series of twenty reunions began in 1985.

On Friday, 22 June, Pompeo was interviewed by Hugh Hewitt of MSNBC. The interview was broadcast the following night.

POMPEO: I just don't want to get into the details of the negotiations that took place before in Singapore and have continued since then. I think it is fair to say that there are a number of things, a number of principles that have been agreed to that I think both parties understand — red lines, things that we, neither country is prepared to go past that give us an opportunity to believe that we really might, for the first time, this is not the first rodeo negotiating with North Korea, that perhaps this time is different.

We know, too, that we could be wrong. The President has said this very clearly. If this isn't different, if it's the case that Chairman Kim either is unable to or unprepared to denuclearize, sanctions will remain in place, the enforcement of those sanctions will continue, and we'll be back hard at it if the negotiations prove to be either not in good faith or unproductive.

"Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on MSNBC w/Hugh Hewitt," [MSNBC](#), 23 June 2018. Also at [U.S. State Dept](#), 22 June 2018.

It is good to know that North Korea has been recently negotiating with the U.S. Government. The public silence on this issue gave the appearance that North Korea was not engaged in negotiations.

On 23 June 2018, Trump explained why war with North Korea was *not* a reasonable option. Trump reiterated what he said in Singapore on 12 June.

If you remember, before I got elected, it sounded like we were going to war with North Korea. And that was a war that could have cost the lives of 50 million people. You know, Seoul — Steve [Witkoff], when we think New York City is big — Seoul, which

is 30 miles off the border of North Korea, has 28 million people, Steve. Twenty-eight million. So, New York, we have 8 million, and we think New York is big. Seoul has 28 million people. And it's literally not even nuclear distance; it's right there for their — they call them "cannons." They have thousands of cannons aimed at Seoul. "Remarks by President Trump at a Roundtable Discussion on Tax Reform," [White House](#), 23 June 2018.

On 24 June, [Reuters](#) reports that U.S. negotiators will soon give a list of requests and suggested deadlines to North Korea. Reuters quotes an anonymous U.S. Defense official as saying: "There will be specific asks and there will be a specific timeline when we present the North Koreans with our concept of what implementation of the summit agreement looks like." North Korea's response to the suggested rapid deadlines will tell the U.S. negotiators: "We'll know pretty soon if they're going to operate in good faith or not."

But on 25 June, Pompeo told [CNN](#) there would be *no* timeline for North Korea. Apparently there was a disagreement between the U.S. Defense Department and the U.S. State Department, and the State Department won.

In my opinion, a list of concrete steps with deadlines would be very useful in keeping North Korea on schedule to completely denuclearize before January 2021 (i.e., Pompeo's goal in his 13 June press conference, quoted above). North Korea has a reputation for slowness, going backwards in negotiations (i.e., revisiting already decided issues), and then abrogating written agreements. But North Korea needs to declare *all* of their items that are to be irreversibly destroyed, before we can make a realistic timetable for the destruction.

On 28 June, Pompeo called the Chinese foreign minister and urged China to continue economic sanctions against North Korea, until North Korea finishes "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization". [U.S. State Dept](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 30 June 2018, two political science professors writing in *The Washington Post* made an interesting observation about the 12 June statement at the Kim/Trump summit.

The order of commitments in the Singapore Declaration matters. The declaration first calls for a normalization of relations between the United States and North Korea, then the establishment of a "lasting and stable peace regime," and only then does North Korea commit to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. North Korea has insisted on a step-by-step process.

Critically, the Singapore Declaration, and those before it, referred to denuclearization *of the Korean Peninsula*, not just North Korea. The phrase has long imposed obligations on the United States as well, at the very least, to terminate the "hostile policy" and the nuclear umbrella it extends to South Korea. Kim has no intention of going nonnuclear alone or going first.

Jane Vaynman & Vipin Narang, "There are signs North Korea is still working on its nuclear program. Here's why 'denuclearization' is so problematic." [Washington Post](#), 07:15 EDT, 30 June 2018.

I agree with the two professors that the word "denuclearization" is undefined, and means different things to North Korea and the USA. I disagree with them that "The order of

commitments in the Singapore Declaration matters." Instead, I observe that there are *no* deadlines or timelines in the Statement. The Statement is therefore ambiguous, and can be interpreted in different ways. Notice that paragraph 3, item 4 of the [Statement](#) calls for the "immediate repatriation" of some remains, even though that item is last in the list of four, showing that the list of four is *not* in temporal order. The first sentence of paragraph 3 says that Trump and Kim "state the following:" and then gives a list of four items. There is *nothing* to indicate that the list is in temporal order.

Looking at other available information *not* included in the Statement, there is no doubt that the number one goal of the USA is "denuclearization" of North Korea. It seems clear that North Korea wants security guarantees and other concessions from the USA, *before* North Korea will begin denuclearization, because their nuclear weapons are a deterrent to U.S. aggression. But a sequence of steps is *not* specified in the text of the Statement. This is another way that the Statement is inadequate and amateurishly drafted. A good contract should be difficult to misunderstand.

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### **No return of remains of U.S. Military personnel**

The [Statement](#) signed by Kim and Trump at their 12 June summit clearly states that: "The United States and the DPRK commit to recovering POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those already identified." North Korea claims to have the remains of approximately 200 soldiers. (See, e.g., [Associated Press](#)(19June); [Reuters](#)(19June).) But, on 26 June, two weeks after the summit, North Korea still has *not* "immediate[ly]" returned any remains. Regardless of how one interprets "immediately", two weeks is *not* immediate. North Korea has already failed to honor one of its promises in the Statement. This failure makes specific deadlines more desirable, so North Korea can not attempt to hide behind ambiguities in words.

Incidentally, on 20 and 23 June 2018, Trump falsely claimed that North Korea had already returned more than 200 sets of remains, as documented in my separate [essay](#) on why Trump is unfit to be president.

On 29 June, the [Chosun Ilbo](#), a right-wing newspaper in South Korea, had a news article with the title "N.Korea Drags Heels on Repatriation of U.S. Soldiers' Remains". The 100 caskets sent to the DMZ by the U.S. Military on 23 June are still unused.

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### **Improvements at Yongbyon**

On 26 June, the website [38North](#) reported their analysis of 21 June satellite imagery showed *improvements* at the Yongbyon nuclear reactor where plutonium for North Korea's atomic bombs is produced. I would expect this entire site with many buildings to be destroyed as part of "complete denuclearization". But if Kim Jong-Un wants to continue manufacturing nuclear weapons, then expanding the Yongbyon site is a reasonable decision. Mainstream journalists reported this apparent breach of North Korea's commitment to "completely denuclearize", see e.g.: [The Guardian](#); [NBC News](#); [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#). *If*



there is an innocent explanation for the recent, rapid improvements at Yongbyon, then North Korea *should* make a public explanation *and* allow IAEA inspectors to visit Yongbyon to verify the explanation.

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## Deceit by North Korea

On the night of 29 June 2018, NBC News reported anonymous U.S. intelligence officials as saying North Korea was *not* sincere about denuclearization.

... [Trump] tweeted after his historic June 12 summit with Kim that "there was no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea."

Analysts at the CIA and other intelligence agencies don't see it that way, according to more than a dozen American officials who are familiar with their assessments and spoke on the condition of anonymity. They see a regime positioning itself to extract every concession it can from the Trump administration — while clinging to nuclear weapons it believes are essential to survival.

....

While the North Koreans have stopped missile and nuclear tests, "there's no evidence that they are decreasing stockpiles, or that they have stopped their production," said one U.S. official briefed on the latest intelligence. "There is absolutely unequivocal evidence that they are trying to deceive the U.S."

Four other officials familiar with the intelligence assessment also said North Korea intended to deceive the U.S.

Courtney Kube, Ken Dilanian, & Carol E. Lee, "North Korea has increased nuclear production at secret sites, say U.S. officials," [NBC News](#), 22:13 EDT, 29 June 2018.

On 30 June, *The Washington Post* confirmed the NBC News article:

U.S. intelligence officials, citing newly obtained evidence, have concluded that North Korea does not intend to fully surrender its nuclear stockpile, and instead is considering ways to conceal the number of weapons it has and secret production facilities, according to U.S. officials.

The evidence, collected in the wake of the June 12 summit in Singapore, points to preparations to deceive the United States about the number of nuclear warheads in North Korea's arsenal as well as the existence of undisclosed facilities used to make fissile material for nuclear bombs, the officials said.

....

The new intelligence, described by four officials who have seen it or received briefings, is based on material gathered in the weeks since the summit. The officials insisted on anonymity to discuss sensitive assessments about a country that has long been one of the most difficult targets for spy agencies to penetrate. Some aspects of the U.S.

intelligence were reported Friday [29 June] by [NBC News](#).

Specifically, the [Defense Intelligence Agency] DIA has concluded that North Korean officials are exploring ways to deceive Washington about the number of nuclear warheads, and missiles and the types and numbers of facilities they have, believing that the United States is not aware of the full range of their activities.

....

The lone uranium-enrichment facility that has been acknowledged by North Korea is in Yongbyon, 60 miles north of Pyongyang. That site is estimated to have produced fissile material for as many as a couple of dozen warheads.

Meanwhile, the North Koreans also have operated a secret underground uranium enrichment site known as Kangson, which was first reported in May by [The Washington Post](#). That site is believed by most officials to have twice the enrichment capacity of Yongbyon. U.S. intelligence agencies became aware of the nuclear facility in 2010.

Ellen Nakashima & Joby Warrick, "North Korea working to conceal key aspects of its nuclear program, U.S. officials say," [Washington Post](#), 19:32 EDT, 30 June 2018. [Link to May article added by Standler.]

The news from NBC and *The Washington Post* is entirely consistent with past behavior by North Korea. Sadly for the cause of peace and denuclearization, North Korea took advantage of the ignorance of Trump and Pompeo, as well as took advantage of the enthusiastic desire of Trump and Pompeo for an agreement that North Korea completely denuclearize at some unspecified time.

On 1 July 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported: "The Washington Post on Saturday [30 June] cited unnamed U.S. intelligence officials as concluding that North Korea does not intend to fully surrender its nuclear stockpile. .... A U.S. official told The Associated Press that the Post's report was accurate and that the assessment reflected the consistent view across U.S. government agencies for the past several weeks."

On 1 July, the [New York Times](#) spelled the location of the secret centrifuge site as "Kangsong".

On 16 July, North Korean propaganda denied the existence of a secret uranium enrichment site at Kangson. [Yonhap](#). My comment is that North Korea's propaganda has zero credibility. North Korea needs to invite IAEA to send inspectors to North Korea, and then allow those inspectors to go anywhere at anytime, including visiting sites in Kangson.

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## Procrastination by North Korea

On 26 June 2018, an editorial in *The Korea Times* called on North Korea to make specific steps to denuclearize.

### Pyongyang should make specific actions to denuclearize

Two weeks have passed since the historic Singapore summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in which the two countries agreed on complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

....

.... But it is worrisome that North Korea may be procrastinating too much on making concrete steps to show its unwavering commitment for denuclearization. There is still no word from Pyongyang on when high-level consultations with the U.S. will take place to discuss additional measures to the Singapore summit.

Secretary Pompeo said during a CNN interview that the U.S. will not put a timeline on North Korea's denuclearization.

Pyongyang should make specific and swift actions for denuclearization as Washington and Seoul continue to act in good faith.

"NK's procrastination," [Korea Times](#), 17:39 KST, 26 June 2018. Copy at [Yonhap](#).

On 26 June, Jennifer Rubin, *The Washington Post's* conservative columnist, wrote a blistering opinion on Trump's failure.

President Trump assured us he had removed — not just diminished, removed — the North Korean nuclear missile threat. He'd done what no other sitting president had done, namely met with the North Korean dictator. ([Trump] thinks this was an accomplishment, not realizing Kim Jong Un had gotten what no other president would give away — the stature of the United States — without sacrificing anything.)

Trump aides and sycophants insisted the propaganda coup for Kim, Trump's slavish praise for the brutal human rights criminal, Trump's indifference to his reign of terror, etc., were all worthwhile because we had gotten "something." Oddly, the agreement marking the end of the Singapore summit looked like an even more watery version of the thin gruel we had gotten from past meetings. There were some generic promises about denuclearization, but the "verifiable" and "irreversible" parts of complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization (CVID) were not in the document, an omission that when pointed out sparked a snippy [retort](#) from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

....

... the more likely explanation is that Pompeo is aggressively trying to lower expectations and condition us all for an outcome — that so many predicted — in which Pyongyang never gives up the nukes.

It does not shock me that Trump has become a patsy for another wily dictator. The rogue gallery of autocrats has figured out how to manipulate the foolish, narcissistic president. I am, however, a bit surprised the previously hawkish and responsible Pompeo is facilitating this farce. Surely he knows the United States is being taken for a ride. Doesn't he?

Jennifer Rubin, "Trump's North Korea farce is now plain for all to see," [Washington Post](#), 26 June 2018. [Rubin's link to the [Washington Post](#) replaced with a link to the quotation of Pompeo in this essay.]

On 30 June 2018, we have an accumulation of four examples that show North Korea is *not* serious about quick denuclearization:

1. On 12 June, Trump said North Korea had agreed to destroy one of its missile engine test sites, but this destruction has not yet occurred.
2. The Yongbyon nuclear reactor is being improved, *not* dismantled.
3. The 12 June written Statement at the Kim/Trump summit promises the "immediate repatriation" of remains of U.S. soldiers killed in the Korean War, but *no* remains have been delivered. The 100 caskets sent to the DMZ by the U.S. Military on 23 June are still unused.
4. High-level negotiations between Pompeo and North Korea have *not* resumed after the 12 June Kim/Trump summit.

It may be that there is a cultural difference in the understanding of time by North Korea and the USA. Or maybe North Korea is stalling, to give itself the opportunity to manufacture more nuclear weapons.

So, at the end of June 2018, it appears that North Korea is again using the same strategy and tricks in negotiations with the USA, that North Korea used in previous failed negotiations with the USA. Trump's amateurish and incompetent strategy of a new relationship with North Korea is allowing North Korea to continue manufacturing more nuclear weapons. It appears that the only significant change in the North Korean nuclear weapons situation during the first six months of 2018 is that North Korea has manufactured *more* nuclear weapons.

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## July 2018

### no progress on denuclearization

#### Bolton proposes one-year disarmament of North Korea

On Sunday, 1 July 2018, John Bolton — Trump's third National Security Adviser — appeared on CBS "Face the Nation" television program and said North Korea could denuclearize in one year (i.e., by July 2019). Here is the entire transcript about North Korea:

MARGARET BRENNAN [host]: The Washington Post is reporting that U.S. intelligence has new evidence that North Korea is trying to obscure and hide the number of missiles, facilities and other parts of its nuclear program. Have you seen any evidence that they're actually dismantling their nuclear infrastructure?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Well I don't want to comment on that specific report. I don't really don't want to comment on anything related to intelligence I'd rather discuss it as a more general proposition. We're very well aware of North Korea's patterns of behavior over decades of negotiating with the United States. We know exactly what the risks are of them using negotiations to drag out the length of time they have to continue their nuclear chemical biological weapons programs and ballistic missiles. President would like to see these discussions move promptly to get a resolution. This has been the advice that China's leaders Xi Jinping has given us as well. So we're going to try and proceed to implement what the two leaders agreed to in Singapore, but rather than have a series of reports things are going better things are not going well, they are concealing this, they're not concealing that. Really it doesn't serve the purpose of advancing the negotiations. But there's not any starry eyed feeling among the group doing this that we're well, well aware of what the North Koreans have done in the past.

MARGARET BRENNAN: How quickly will North Korea turn over its actual arsenal? I mean are they using diplomacy as a cover?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Well certainly that's what they've done before. But the Kim Jong-un was very emphatic several times in Singapore he was different from prior regimes. Now we'll let their actions speak for themselves.

MARGARET BRENNAN: And you were emphatic that you were different here as an administration, that the weapons are going to be handed over before concessions are made when you were with us last time.

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Right. And we have developed a program, I'm sure that the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will be discussing this with the North Koreans in the near future about really how to dismantle all of their WMD and ballistic missile programs in a year[.] [I]f they have the strategic decision already made to do that and they're cooperative, [then] we can move very quickly[.] [A]nd it's to North Korea's advantage to see these programs dismantled very quickly because then the elimination of sanctions [and] aid by South Korea and Japan and others can all begin to flow.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Within a year?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Well what our experts have devised is a program that with North Korean cooperation [and] with full disclosure of all of their chemical and biological nuclear programs ballistic missile sites —

MARGARET BRENNAN: That hasn't happened yet?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: [I]t has not. We can get physically we would be able to dismantle the overwhelming bulk of their programs within a year.

"Transcript: National security adviser John Bolton on "Face the Nation," July 1, 2018," [CBS News](#); 09:51 EDT, 1 July 2018. [Minor editing by Standler to omit Bolton's stammering, and repair one run-on sentence.]

Denuclearization of North Korea in one year! Bolton mentioned the one year schedule twice

in this brief interview. Bolton's exact words were: "dismantle all of their WMD and ballistic missile programs in a year" and "... we would be able to dismantle the overwhelming bulk of their programs within a year."

Now the fine print with the conditions:

1. This is *not* an agreement by North Korea. It is only a *plan* developed by the U.S. Government, the folks who brought us an inadequate Statement at the Kim/Trump summit and then lied about the contents of the Statement.
2. Bolton says: "if they have the strategic decision already made to do that and they're cooperative". North Korea has *not* made a decision to denuclearize, instead they are improving their Yongbyon nuclear reactor site. The word "cooperative" can not legitimately be used in the same sentence as "North Korea".
3. Bolton says: "with North Korean cooperation with full disclosure of all of their chemical and biological nuclear programs ballistic missile sites". North Korea has been deceiving the U.S. Government for decades. We do *not* know the number of nuclear weapons possessed by North Korea. We do *not* know the location of all of their WMD manufacturing plants. Without knowing what and where we want to irreversibly destroy, we can *not* make a realistic timetable for the destruction.
4. Bolton omitted any mention of "verification" of denuclearization. There must be extensive and continuing verification of denuclearization. But Kim is sure to object to foreign inspectors roaming around North Korea.
5. In one year, Bolton intends to destroy all — or most — of North Korea's nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and biological weapons. This is a massive undertaking.

In September 2013, Assad in Syria agreed to let OPCW destroy all of his chemical weapons. The destruction was completed in August 2014, 11 months later. Incidentally, Assad missed every deadline established by OPCW, and even now (July 2018) there is doubt whether Assad declared *all* of his chemical weapons. It is not known whether North Korea has more chemical weapons than Syria had. It may be necessary to build incinerators and other facilities in North Korea for the destruction of chemical weapons, which would increase the time required for destruction.

On 3 July, the [Associated Press](#) warned that a one-year disarmament plan "is both unrealistic and risky."

One wonders if Bolton has proposed an unrealistic one-year timetable, which North Korea can not meet. Then when North Korea either rejects the one-year schedule, or fails to disarm in one year, Bolton can advocate military strikes on North Korea, which have always been Bolton's desire. See, e.g., the editorial in the [JoongAng](#) newspaper in South Korea (copy at [Yonhap](#)): "The return of the hawk [i.e., Bolton] hints at the possibility of the Trump administration changing tact at any point if things go badly."

On 2 July, Brian Klaas — a fellow in global politics at the London School of Economics — wrote in *The Washington Post*:

It is becoming alarmingly clear that Trump's "win" [at the 12 June Kim/Trump summit] was a major loss for international security. But it is also a major loss for those who believe in using diplomacy rather than war to neutralize the North Korean nuclear threat.

Perhaps that's by design. John Bolton, [now] Trump's national security adviser, has long [argued](#) (before his current stint in the White House) that the United States should preemptively attack North Korea. In February [2018], he wrote a Wall Street Journal [op-ed](#), providing the legal justification for preemptive strikes to topple Kim's regime and take out their nuclear program — a strategy that most analysts agree could lead to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of deaths.

In March, Bolton argued on [Fox News](#) that a Trump-Kim summit would be a positive development because it would "foreshorten the amount of time that we're going to waste on negotiations." In Bolton's view, meeting with Kim would expose the North Korean regime as untrustworthy scoundrels who could not be swayed by diplomatic olive branches. Once president-to-chairman diplomacy inevitably failed, it would pave the way for Bolton's favored choice: deadly force.

Trump hired Bolton as his new national security adviser exactly one month after that interview.

Bolton may soon be proved right that the time on negotiations was "wasted" — not because diplomacy is doomed to fail, but because the amateur and childishly naive approach that Trump took was always doomed to fail.

Brian Klaas, "Trump's big North Korea deal is already turning out to be a sham," [Washington Post](#), 2 July 2018.

On 3 July, the U.S. State Department spokeswoman, Heather Nauert, said there was *no* timeline for North Korea to denuclearize.

QUESTION: Heather. So John Bolton was mentioned. As he told over the weekend in a media interview that North Korea could dismantle the WMD and ballistic missile program in a year. So my question for you is: Is one year the timeline? ....

MS NAUERT: .... The Secretary has said — and he's been very clear about this — and I know it's much to your frustration, but we're not going to get into all the details about the discussions that are taking place. In terms of a timeline, I know some individuals have given timelines. We're not going to provide a timeline for that. The Secretary's looking forward to having his meetings.

"Department Press Briefing — July 3, 2018," [U.S. State Dept](#), 3 July 2018.

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### **Trump trusts Kim, based on a handshake**

On 1 July 2018, Fox News television channel broadcast an interview of Trump by Maria



Bartiromo. The most important part is that Trump trusts Kim Jong-Un, based on a handshake. I am quoting more of the interview, so the reader can see the context of Trump's astounding statement.

BARTIROMO: Now we're supposed to find out, I've spoken with some military men of my own. And they told us that — they told me that North Korea needs to tell us exactly where their facilities are so that we can [inspect] them — Within the next couple of weeks, if we don't find out in the next couple of weeks —

TRUMP: This has been going on for many years.

BARTIROMO: We know they're not serious about this. What are you going to do?

TRUMP: Oh, I think they're very serious about it. I think they want to do it. We have a very good chemistry. You know we had a lot points, we won a lot of different points. I'd have to go over them. But denuclearization, getting our, getting the remains back from great hero's, great people so many different things.

BARTIROMO: But are we legitimizing —

TRUMP: So many different things. By the way excuse me, getting the hostages back before I even went.

BARTIROMO: That was incredible. Thank you for doing that Mr. President.

TRUMP: But think of this. What did I do, really when you think of it? I went there. So the papers say he went. Oh, meaning I went to Singapore so we had a meeting. We didn't do anything. Now were saving a lot of money by not doing — I asked — I said let's not do the, I call them the war games. OK, they're dropping bombs all over the place every six months. It's unbelievably expensive to do that. The planes fly in from Guam, these massive bombers and all of our — they're flying in from bomb — going back from Guam.

It's crazy. So we gave nothing. What we are going to give is good things in the future. And by the way I really believe North Korea has a tremendous future. I got along really well with Chairman Kim. We had a great chemistry. We really had Chairman Kim —

BARTIROMO: But do we believe him, Mr. President?

TRUMP: I made a deal with him. I shook hands with him. I really believe he means it.

BARTIROMO: OK.

TRUMP: Now is it possible? Have I been in deals, have you been in things where people didn't work out? It's possible.

[Bartiromo changes topic to Iran.]

"President Trump Interview With Maria Bartiromo: Supreme Court, Tax Cuts, Tariffs, Trade

Deals, North Korea, FBI," [Real Clear Politics](#), 1 July 2018.  
Original at [Fox News](#).

My comment is that Trump is incredibly naive, and a gullible fool, to trust Kim Jong-Un based on a "handshake" during a less than 5 hour meeting. Note Trump's rambling about saving money by canceling military exercises with South Korea. Remember on 12 June, Trump said he canceled the military exercises because they were "provocative" to North Korea. Trump canceling the military exercises is *not* relevant to whether Kim can be trusted on denuclearization. Trump ignored the recent U.S. intelligence that Kim was already deceiving the U.S. Government, even after Bartiromo reminded Trump: "We know they're not serious about this."

On Monday, 9 July, Trump reiterated his trust in Kim Jong-Un, based on a handshake.

I have confidence that Kim Jong Un will honor the contract we signed &, even more importantly, our handshake. We agreed to the denuclearization of North Korea. China, on the other hand, may be exerting negative pressure on a deal because of our posture on Chinese Trade — Hope Not!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:25 EDT, 9 July 2018.

Trump has ignored accumulating evidence that North Korea is *not* serious about denuclearization (see [above](#) and the failed negotiations on [6-7 July](#)) and put his faith in a handshake. Again, Trump is incredibly naive and a gullible fool.

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### North Korea improves Hamhung solid-fuel missile site

On Sunday night, 1 July, *The Wall Street Journal* reported an analysis of reconnaissance satellite images by the the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies showed North Korea had expanded a site in Hamhung that produced solid-fuel ballistic missiles. The expansion occurred in April and June 2018, when Kim Jong-Un was conducting summits with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and then Trump.

The first news article on this topic is Jonathan Cheng, "North Korea Expands Key Missile-Manufacturing Plant," [Wall Street Journal](#), 1 July 2018, but this article requires a subscription to read, so I am unable to quote from it.

Assume for a moment that Kim Jong-Un is sincere about completely denuclearizing. Why would he be expanding the sites at Yongbyon and Hamhung, when he would destroy those new buildings in a year or two, as part of irreversible denuclearization? It would be a waste of money to erect and then destroy buildings.

The more rational view is that Kim has *no* intention of denuclearizing. Kim wants to produce *more* nuclear weapons, so he is erecting new buildings at his weapons production sites.

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### 3 July: Trump's tweet

On 3 July 2018, Trump tweeted about North Korea.

Many good conversations with North Korea — it is going well! In the meantime, no Rocket Launches or Nuclear Testing in 8 months. All of Asia is thrilled. Only the Opposition Party, which includes the Fake News, is complaining. If not for me, we would now be at War with North Korea!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:16 EDT, 3 July 2018.

There are multiple errors in Trump's tweet. First, Trump praises himself by saying "If not for me, we would now be at War with North Korea!" As shown earlier in this essay, Trump's belligerent threats in 2017 brought us closer to war with North Korea. It would be more accurate to say, "If not for me, we could have negotiated with the North Koreans in 2017." On 8 March 2018, Trump abruptly and impulsively decided to negotiate with North Korea. Trump denies credit to South Korean president Moon and others who created a climate for negotiations, while Trump was belligerent in 2017. Technically, the Korean war *continues* since the fighting ended in 1953 with an armistice, instead of a peace treaty.

Second, if negotiations with North Korea are "going well", why is North Korea constructing new buildings at two of their weapons manufacturing sites?

Third, Trump asserts "Only the Opposition Party, which includes the Fake News, is complaining." *The Washington Post*, the Associated Press, and *The Wall Street Journal* — amongst others — are revealing the Truth about North Korea not denuclearizing, and revealing the Truth about North Korea deceiving the U.S. Government. The opposition party (i.e., democrats) are *not* affiliated with the mainstream news media (which Trump labels "Fake News").

Fourth, Trump says: "... no Rocket Launches or Nuclear Testing in 8 months." Their last missile test was on 28 Nov 2017, about 7 months ago. Their last nuclear test was on 3 Sep 2017, 10 months ago. But note that since their first successful nuclear test in October 2006, there have been only 6 nuclear tests, an average of one test every 23 months. So no tests for 10 months is not significant.

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### **Negotiations resume, U.S. abandons CVID**

#### **U.S. now pursuing "final, fully-verified dismantlement (FFVD)"**

On 2 July 2018, the [U.S. State Dept](#) and [White House](#) announced that Pompeo would depart for Pyongyang on Thursday, 5 July, for less than two days of negotiations with North Korea.

My comment is that it is approximately a 15 hour flight from Washington, DC to Korea. One day of Pompeo's three-day trip will be spent in an airplane. Pompeo will arrive in Pyongyang on Friday and depart on Saturday for Japan. I suggest that Pompeo should have scheduled more negotiations in Pyongyang, in order to move the process forward and perhaps reach some agreements on substantive issues. In my criticism of the 12 June [Statement](#), I identified eight substantive issues that need to be included. Also there needs to be a written declaration by North Korea of the weapons and production facilities that it agrees to irreversibly destroy. Further, there needs to be a timeline or schedule for North Korea's

denuclearization.

The [Washington Post](#) reported that U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim met with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui for 90 minutes on 1 July. On 3 July, [Hankyoreh](#), a newspaper in South Korea, reported that Sung Kim had delivered "an important letter" from Trump to Kim Yong-chol. [Hankyoreh](#) says there were no negotiations on 1 July.

On 5 July 2018, the [Korea Times](#) speculates that "hardliners in the [North Korean] military" may be expanding the North Korean weapons production, as well as stalling the denuclearization negotiations.

On 5 July at 11:26 GMT, [Reuters](#) reported that Pompeo appears to have abandoned the U.S. demand that North Korea *completely* denuclearize — destroy *all* of its nuclear weapons and related infrastructure — before economic sanctions would be removed. Reuters also reported that Pompeo seems to have abandoned "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization" (CVID) in favor of "the final, fully verified denuclearisation of [North Korea] as agreed to by Chairman Kim." On 7 July, [Yonhap](#) reported: "In possible pursuit of a more realistic goal, the Trump administration has started to use the term 'final, fully-verified dismantlement (FFVD)' of the North's nuclear program instead of the 'complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization (CVID),' jargon that Pyongyang apparently loathes."

Pompeo appears to have first abandoned CVID in a tweet on 28 June:

.@POTUS had a successful meeting with #DPRK's Chairman Kim. Much hard work lies ahead to achieve the final, fully verified, denuclearization of the DPRK and a brighter future for its people. We are committed to seeing that through to a successful conclusion.

Mike Pompeo, [tweet](#), 09:07 EDT, 28 June 2018.

On 30 June, Pompeo again abandoned CVID in a tweet:

Congratulations to Harry B. Harris, Jr. on his swearing in as the next U.S. Ambassador to South Korea. A lot of work ahead on maintaining our ironclad alliance with #ROK and achieving the final, fully verified denuclearization of the #DPRK, as agreed to by Chairman Kim.

Mike Pompeo, [tweet](#), 18:15 EDT, 30 June 2018.

On 5 July, during his flight to Pyongyang, Pompeo again abandoned CVID:

Looking forward to continuing our work toward the final, fully verified denuclearization of #DPRK, as agreed to by Chairman Kim. Good to have the press along for the trip.

Mike Pompeo, [tweet](#), 12:22 EDT, 5 July 2018.

On 6 July, at a refueling stop in Japan, Pompeo told journalists that he intended to have North Korea agree to specific details in the denuclearization program. Pompeo said: "On this trip, I'm seeking to fill in some details on these commitments and continue the momentum toward implementation of what the two leaders promised each other and the world. I expect that the DPRK is ready to do the same." [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Yonhap](#); [Korea Times](#). A transcript of Pompeo's remarks is *not* posted at the U.S. State Department

website, so one must rely on news reports. My comment is that Pompeo's goals for the 6-7 July exceeded his ability to deliver, given North Korean stalling since the 12 June Kim/Trump summit.

On Friday afternoon, 6 July, Pompeo "held talks with Kim Yong-chol for almost 3 hours". Then Kim Yong-chol and Pompeo had a 105-minute long working dinner on Friday. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

On Saturday, 7 July, Pompeo and Kim Yong-chol met from 09:00 to 15:00, six hours of negotiations, including a working lunch. [Yonhap](#).

Just before Pompeo departed from the Pyongyang airport on Saturday, 7 July, he made some remarks to journalists on his airplane.

SECRETARY POMPEO: So yeah, so let me just — a couple things. We had many hours of productive conversations. These are complicated issues, but we made progress on almost all of the central issues. Some places a great deal of progress, other places there's still more work to be done.

We now have a meeting in Panmunjom set up for July 12 — it could move by one day or two — where there will be discussions between the folks responsible for the repatriation of remains, will take place at the border, and that process will begin to develop over the days that follow. So very productive conversation about the process by which we will deliver on the commitments that were made in the Singapore summit.

The North Koreans also confirmed the missile engine testing facility, we talked about what the modalities would look like for the destruction of that facility as well, and so some progress there as well. And then we have laid out a path for further negotiations at the working level so that the two teams can get together and continue these discussions.

QUESTION: Did you bring up the satellite images that show that the facilities are actually expanding, and what did the North Koreans say when you mentioned that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, your characterization is interesting. We talked about what the North Koreans are continuing to do and how it's the case we can get our arms around achieving what Chairman Kim and President Trump both agreed to, which was the complete denuclearization of North Korea. There is no — no one walked away from that. They're still equally committed. Chairman Kim is still committed. I had a chance to speak to President Trump this morning. I know my counterpart spoke with Chairman Kim during the course of our negotiations as well. We had productive, good-faith negotiations.

MS NAUERT: Last question.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, are you any closer to a sense of a timeline for denuclearization and a baseline declaration for their weapons of mass destruction?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm not going to get into the details of our conversations, but

we spent a good deal of time talking about each of those two things, and I think we made progress in every element of our discussions.

Mike Pompeo, "Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo Remarks to Traveling Press," [U.S. State Dept](#), 7 July 2018.

Just hours after Pompeo departed from Pyongyang, the Korean Central News Agency criticized the U.S. position in negotiations. [Yonhap](#) reported: "'The U.S. just came out with such unilateral and robber-like denuclearization demands as CVID, declaration and verification that go against the spirit of the North-U.S. summit meeting,' [an unnamed North Korean foreign ministry spokesman] added, calling the talks 'really disappointing.'" Copy at [Korea Times](#). The [Associated Press](#) translated the KCNA article as "unilateral and gangster-like" demands for "CVID". North Korea's criticism of the U.S. position diverts attention from North Korea's procrastination on denuclearization. Worse, North Korea's objection to verification of its denuclearization hints that there will be *no* denuclearization.

My summary of the 6-7 July negotiations is [below](#).

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### 7 July 2018: commentary

Notice that there has been *no* denuclearization by North Korea since the 12 June Kim/Trump summit. The 6-7 July negotiations by Pompeo continued North Korea's procrastination, by having more talks in the future. Pompeo talks about "progress", but the reality is that there are *no* tangible acts by North Korea and Pompeo failed to specify any concessions by North Korea. Part of the problem is that Trump and Pompeo have engaged in ~~hyperbole~~ false statements about what was accomplished in negotiations with North Korea. But most of the problem is that North Korea is procrastinating, as well as expanding their weapons production plants — and continuing to produce weapons — while *talking* about disarmament. The [Washington Post](#) reported: "But analysts said the reality is now sinking in that any final accord between the two nations to eliminate Pyongyang's sophisticated nuclear and missile arsenal will be a long slog with no guarantee of success." [NBC News](#) has an article titled "North Korea shatters Trump's boastful assurances of an easy path to denuclearization". On 7 July, the [Daily Beast](#) has an article titled: "Trump's North Korea Policy Just Collapsed". On 9 July, the [Washington Post](#) summarized: "Analysts have cautioned of a difficult road ahead given decades of hostility, unkept promises, and the widespread belief, shared by U.S. intelligence agencies, that North Korea would never give up the nuclear weapons it sought for so long."

One has to wonder if negotiations with North Korea are rational, given that North Korea is already cheating — not only is North Korea continuing to produce nuclear weapons and missiles, but also North Korea is expanding its facilities at Yongbyon and Hamhung. The refusal of North Korea to give the U.S. a list of North Korea's nuclear weapons and weapons manufacturing plants means North Korea is *not* taking the first step in denuclearizing. There seems to be *no* progress in returning international inspectors to North Korea to verify denuclearization. This combination of cheating *and* lack of cooperation by North Korea means that North Korea is insincere about denuclearizing. North Korea has wasted the opportunity given to it by the U.S. Government.

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### 7 July 2018: North Korea humiliates Pompeo

Here is some of the text of the anonymous statement from the North Korean Foreign Ministry, published by KCNA.

It was, however, so regretful to mention what the U.S. side had shown in its attitude and stand at the first DPRK-U.S. high-level talks held on 6 and 7 July.

The DPRK side, during the talks, put forward the constructive proposals to seek a balanced implementation of all the provisions of the Joint Statement out of its firm willingness to remain faithful to the implementation of the spirit and agreed points of the DPRK-U.S. summit meeting and talks.

These include taking wide-ranging proactive steps of simultaneous actions in a respective manner such as

- realizing multilateral exchanges for improved relations between the DPRK and the U.S.,
- making public a declaration on the end of war first on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement to build a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula,
- dismantling the test ground of high thrust engine to make a physical verification of the suspension of ICBM production as part of denuclearization steps and
- making an earliest start of the working-level talks for recovering POW/MIA remains.

....

But, the U.S. side came up only with its unilateral and gangster-like demand for denuclearization just calling for CVID, declaration and verification, all of which run counter to the spirit of the Singapore summit meeting and talks.

....

We thought that the U.S. side would come with a constructive proposal which accords with the spirit of the DPRK-U.S. summit meeting and talks. But expectation and hope of ours were so naive as to be foolish.

....

The first DPRK-U.S. high-level talks this time brought us in a dangerous situation where we may be shaken in our unshakable will for denuclearization, rather than consolidating trust between the DPRK and the U.S.

....

The U.S. is fatally mistaken if it went to the extent of regarding that the DPRK would



be compelled to accept, out of its patience, the demands reflecting its gangster-like mindset.

"FM Spokesman on DPRK-U.S. High-level Talks," [KCNAwatch](#), 8 July 2018.

In the Singapore Statement, Kim agreed to "complete denuclearization". Now the North Koreans object to Pompeo mentioning "CVID, declaration and verification".

Notice North Korea's childish threat to end their denuclearization (which never began): "we may be shaken in our unshakable will for denuclearization".

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### **8 July 2018: Meeting in Tokyo**

On Sunday, 8 July 2018, Pompeo met with the foreign ministers of Japan and South Korea in Tokyo. Afterwards, they spoke to journalists. I deleted their remarks about Japanese abductees in North Korea. All of their remarks about verification, FFVD/CVID, and sanctions are included here:

FOREIGN MINISTER [TARO] KONO [OF JAPAN]:

....

Today, we were able to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to continue strengthening of our trilateral cooperation towards the common goal of North Korea's complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges.

We have also had in-depth discussion on how we can cooperate to urge North Korea to take concrete actions towards the full implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and we confirmed that security assurance will be provided to North Korea, as agreed in the summit in Singapore.

At the same time, we have reaffirmed that international community will continue to fully implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions in order to materialize CVID. Japan continues to seek normalize its relations with North Korea in accordance with Pyongyang Declaration through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern such as nuclear missile and abductions issue, as well as through the settlement of the unfortunate past.

....

SECRETARY POMPEO:

....

Over two days, my team and I met with Vice Minister Chairman Kim Yong-chul and his colleagues. We had good-faith, productive conversations which will continue in the days and weeks ahead. In the meantime, sanctions remain in place, and we will continue to enforce them with great vigor.

During the visit, we intended to build upon the agreements made by President Trump and Chairman Kim, and we made progress. But first let me make clear North Korea reaffirmed its commitment to complete denuclearization. We had detailed and substantive discussions about the next steps towards a fully verified and complete denuclearization.

In addition, North Korea agreed to meet in mid-July in Panmunjom to discuss the repatriation of remains of our American service members. North Korea also reaffirmed its earlier commitment to destroy its missile engine test site, which will make the region and the world safer. We also established a working-level team that will carry out the day-to-day work of our two sides.

Yep, the road ahead will be difficult and challenging, and we know critics will try to minimize the work that we've achieved. But our allies, like the Republic of Korea and Japan, President Trump and I believe that peace is worth the effort. And that's something that we all want. As allies we share and are committed to the same goal — the fully verified, final denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong-un.

As President Trump has said, there is no limit to what North Korea can achieve if it gives up its nuclear weapons. Should the DPRK follow through on its commitments, we look forward to eventually helping North Korea obtain prosperity and earn the respect of the world; however, North Korea will first have to fulfill its commitments to denuclearize. Sanctions will remain in place until final, fully verified denuclearization, as agreed to by Chairman Kim, occurs. Multiple UN Security Council resolutions unanimously passed require all nations to fully enforce those sanctions. Our three countries will continue to be vocal in reminding each country of its obligations to do so.

And so while we are encouraged by the progress of these talks, progress alone does not justify the relaxation of the existing sanctions regime. There is also no change to our ironclad commitment to the defense of our allies, the Republic of Korea and Japan. The security of our allies is integral to our American security. The United States looks forward to continuing our close coordination with Japan and South Korea as we achieve the successful implementation of the agreement that was achieved at the Singapore summit.

FOREIGN MINISTER KANG [KYUNG-WHA OF SOUTH KOREA]:

....

The Security Council sanctions, as we have agreed in our trilateral meeting, will remain in place and faithfully implemented until we are assured of complete denuclearization by North Korea. ....

....

QUESTION: Thank you. This is Ryo Kiyomiya from Asahi Shimbun, Japanese newspaper company. I have two questions. First, I would like to ask each of you, recently the U.S. defines its goal as final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea instead of CVID — complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization. It seems softer than CVID. My question is: Will the U.S., Japan, and South Korea continue to work towards CVID of North Korea? And what do you think is the difference between CVID and final, fully verified denuclearization?

....

FOREIGN MINISTER KONO: (Via interpreter) First, I would like to respond to your question. With respect to related resolutions of the Security Council, it clearly stipulates that North Korea must dismantle in a method — complete and verifiable, irreversible method dismantle the WMD as well as the ballistic missiles. So it is clearly stipulated that CVID is demanded in the resolutions.

As far as we are concerned, we would like to continue to work toward North Korea so that North Korea would completely implement the Security Council's resolution. We are completely in agreement on that.

In terms of the international community, we are in agreement. For me, see, instead of CVID denuclearization of Korean Peninsula, sometimes I refer to this phrase. But even in doing so, what I mean is to look toward the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges, at least as Security Council stipulates certain goals. And that should be solidly implemented by North Korea, and we have to demand North Korea to do that. We are unchanged in that goal. So the words may be different and there is not much significance in the different phrases and words that we may use.

....

FOREIGN MINISTER KANG: Well, I think our goal remains complete denuclearization, and I think the FFVD, as used by Secretary Pompeo, isn't any softer in stating our shared goal of complete denuclearization. Obviously, terms have historical context, and this has been somewhat difficult for North Korea to signed onto in written form, but we are assured that Mr. Pompeo's engagement with the North Koreans have been very, very clear on what complete denuclearization means and how to get from here to complete denuclearization, which means the complete dismantlement of the weapons, the materials, the facilities, the plans. This is a very clearly-set goal for North Korea, and we expect them to deliver on this commitment to complete denuclearization.

....

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think my two colleagues answered your first question very clearly. There is no difference. But most importantly is what the North Koreans understand. We had lengthy discussions about the scope of what complete denuclearization means over the past two days. They acknowledge that this is broad;

this is, as my two colleagues have said, from weapons systems to fissile material to the production facilities, enrichment facilities, across the range of weapons and missiles. It's a broad definition of denuclearization. The North Koreans understand that and have not challenged that.

Second, they also understand that denuclearization makes no sense absent verification, and they acknowledge that as well. There will be a verification connected to the complete denuclearization. It's what President Trump and Chairman Kim both agreed to. And so folks can try and parse words should they choose to do so. What's most important is what the North Koreans understand and the demands that the world is making of North Korea, and there can be — it's unmistakable, the scope of what denuclearization means to the North Koreans. I've been very clear with them.

....

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Secretary. Thank you very much for hosting this. I'm David Clark from Agence France-Presse, AFP. Following your talks yesterday, Mr. Secretary, the North Koreans issued a statement in which they described your demands as gangster-like and insisted that there be a series of political and economic concessions hand-in-hand with the progress towards denuclearization. You have said that maximum pressure will continue until this denuclearization, as you define it, is complete.

Is there any scope for concessions en route, or will they simply have to accept denuclearization before you can move towards sanctions relief and political settlement of the Korean War and so forth, the other demands that they have? Thank you.

Oh, and given what they've said, how can you continue to say that you believe they are negotiating in good faith?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Because they were. And they did. It's pretty simple. So look, people are going to make certain comments after meetings. If I paid attention to what the press said, I'd go nuts, and I refuse to do that. I am determined to achieve the commitment that President Trump made, and I am counting on Chairman Kim to be determined to follow through on the commitment that he made. And so if those requests were gangster-like, the world is a gangster, because there was a unanimous decision at the UN Security Council about what needs to be achieved.

The second point, as we move forward, we have been very clear there were three parts of the agreement in the Singapore summit. There were the establishment of peaceful relations between the countries, increased security assurances to North Korea and its people, and finally, denuclearization. Each of those needs to be conducted in parallel. We need to work on those efforts simultaneously. And so it is absolutely the case that there are places where there will be things that take place along the way that help achieve the security assurances that the North Koreans need and improvement in the peaceful relations between our two countries during the time that denuclearization is taking place.

But the economic sanctions are a different kettle of fish altogether. The economic

sanctions and the continued enforcement — so the world will see continued enforcement actions by the United States in the days and weeks ahead, and I'm counting on those other countries that are with me here today and others around the world to continue to enforce these sanctions as well. The enforcement of those sanctions will continue until denuclearization is complete.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) Hello, I am Yoon Seol-Young from JoongAng Daily, JTBC. Secretary Pompeo, you mentioned how you saw many progress in almost all central issues, however North Korea stated that the United States had unilateral position and it expressed regrets for that. Secretary Pompeo, you highlighted FFVD, so I would like to know what reaction North Korea showed to this.

And we believe that there were also other discussions. So regarding declaration of North Korea's nuclear missile facilities and stockpiles and also timeline to denuclearization, how much achievement have you achieved?

And finally, you did not meet Chairman Kim Jong-un this time around. Is there any particular reason for that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: With respect to progress, you again referred to the statements after the event. I was there for the event. I know actually what precisely took place. When we spoke to them about the scope of denuclearization, they did not push back. It wasn't my language; it was the language of Chairman Kim. He committed to complete denuclearization.

The commitment that Chairman Kim made is important and powerful, and I am convinced that he understands the commitment he made, and I am hopeful that we will find a path forward to achieve that commitment that Chairman Kim himself made personally to President Trump and then to world in the signed agreement between our two leaders.

With respect to timeline, we talked about timeline a great deal during our conversations. There's still much work to do to establish what the precise timeline for the various events will be, and we talked about it in the context of the continued commitment of North Korea to destroy their missile engine test site, a commitment that they reaffirmed yesterday and told us that it would happen at a time that was important. And we told them important would be soon, and I am hopeful that that will take place soon. It will be an important event along the step towards denuclearization. It will be a good step towards fulfilling their goal.

And then your final question was about the fact that I did not meet with Chairman Kim Jong-un on this trip. It was never anticipated that I would meet with him. We went there to work with Kim Yong-chul and our two teams to work together over the course of two days. We did just that.

"Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono, and South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha at a Press Availability," [U.S. State Dept](#), 8 July 2018. [Minor editing by Standler.]

My comments:

1. Beginning 28 June, Pompeo says "final, fully verified denuclearization" (FFVD). The Japanese minister continues to use CVID, the phrase in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The KCNA article quoted above suggests that North Korea considers FFVD to be equivalent to CVID. Pompeo himself said: "There is no difference" between FFVD and CVID. But there is a difference: "irreversible" destruction is omitted in FFVD.

Sometimes when Pompeo says "FFVD", he adds "as agreed to by Chairman Kim." Pompeo may intend to prevent North Korea from reneging on verification of denuclearization, by emphasizing that Kim already agreed to verification. But North Korea could renege, and respond that "verification" is *not* mentioned in the Statement from the Kim/Trump 12 June summit.

2. Pompeo twice says that Kim Jong-un agreed to FFVD, but that agreement is *not* included in the Singapore Statement. It is a major defect that the Statement says nothing about verification. The omission of verification from the Statement is already causing difficulties in negotiations.
3. Pompeo dismisses the North Korean foreign ministry statement: "If I paid attention to what the press said, I'd go nuts, ...." But the KCNA article is an official statement from the North Korean foreign ministry, not an article by a journalist.
4. It is a major defect that the Singapore Statement says nothing about a timetable for tangible acts and agreements. The omission of a schedule from the Statement is already causing difficulties in negotiations. Pompeo wants denuclearization first, while North Korea wants a peace treaty, normalization of U.S./N.K. relationship, and security guarantees before denuclearization begins.
5. The KCNA article clearly indicates that the North Koreans do *not* want to discuss denuclearization at this time. The North Koreans seems to want a peace treaty before they denuclearize. A solution to this dispute may be for the USA, North Korea, China, and South Korea to sign a peace treaty that is conditional on North Korea finishing CVID before 1 January 2022.
6. Pompeo spoke of denuclearization and destruction of one ballistic missile engine test site. Minister Kono of Japan twice correctly mentioned destruction of "all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges". Minister Kang of South Korea seems focused on denuclearization. So there appears to be different scopes of what is required of North Korea. Pompeo and Kang seem to ignore chemical weapons and biological weapons.

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### 6-7 July: Results of Negotiations

Here is a list of results of the 6-7 July negotiations:

1. Established working group to negotiate details of denuclearization. U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim will lead the U.S. team at this working group.
2. U.S. Defense Department personnel will meet with North Koreans on 12±2 July to discuss repatriation of remains of U.S. Military personnel killed during 1950-53. (The 12 June [Statement](#) said at ¶3, item 4, that some of this repatriation was to occur "immediately", but North Korea stalled.)
3. Discussed dismantling North Korea's missile engine testing facility, agreed to working-level talks on this subject.
4. Pompeo and Kim Yong-chol spent "a good deal of time" discussing a timeline for North Korea's denuclearization and declaration of the North's nuclear and missile facilities, but there was apparently *no* agreement.

[Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#)(pool report); [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#).

The negotiations on 6-7 July resulted in an agreement that more negotiations were necessary. But Pompeo's own goals that he expressed to journalists on 6 July show the negotiations failed to deliver Pompeo's desired results. Then, hours after Pompeo departed from Pyongyang, a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman criticized the "unilateral and gangster-like" demands of Pompeo for CVID, declaration of things to irreversibly destroy during denuclearization, and verification of destruction — which casts doubt on the sincerity of North Korean denuclearization.

On 10-11 July, a few days after Pompeo departed from Pyongyang, journalists began to report that Kim Jong-Un had snubbed Pompeo. Kim Jong-Un visited a potato farm during Pompeo's negotiations. [Washington Times](#)(10July); [Sky News](#)(10July); [The Telegraph](#)(11July); [CNN](#)(11July).

On 12 July 2018, [Yonhap](#) recognized the emerging reality that Pompeo's negotiations during 6-7 July had *failed*: "U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo failed to make any significant progress in fleshing out the North's denuclearization process during his third visit to Pyongyang last week." It is rare that Yonhap criticizes the USA, so Yonhap's sentence is especially significant.

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## Trump realizes negotiations have stalled

On 13 July 2018, Trump seemed to begin to realize that negotiations with North Korea were going to take a longer time than Trump previously said.

Look, we haven't had nuclear testing, we haven't had missile launches, we haven't had rocket launches. Some sites were blown up. And we got back our hostages, our prisoners, even before I left. So a lot of good things are happening. There's some good feeling there. We'll see what happens. It's a process. It's probably a longer process than anybody would like, but I'm used to long processes too.



We haven't taken off the sanctions. The sanctions are biting. We haven't taken them off.

....

QUESTION: And also — and on denuclearization, can you spell out a little bit how you expect that to happen in terms of treaties and in terms of talks?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, it will be a slow process. Don't forget, we're not the only ones that have nukes. And it would be a slow process. But for the world, it would be us and it would be others would have to come along simultaneously, obviously.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister May of the United Kingdom in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 13 July 2018.

Trump is wrong when he said "Some sites were blown up." A few tunnels at the North Korean nuclear weapons test site were closed with explosives on [24 May](#).

On 15 July 2018, Trump continued his optimistic view of North Korea.

There hasn't been a missile or rocket fired in 9 months in North Korea, there have been no nuclear tests and we got back our hostages. Who knows how it will all turn out in the end, but why isn't the Fake News talking about these wonderful facts? Because it is FAKE NEWS!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:11 EDT, 15 July 2018.

I think the ambiguous "it" in Trump's final sentence refers to the mainstream news media. Trump appears to ignore the multiple [examples](#) of recent procrastination and deceit by North Korea, as well as ignoring North Korea resisting both declaring a list of what will be destroyed and having IAEA inspectors verify the destruction. In my opinion, the mainstream media has been very gentle in criticizing Trump's delusions about North Korea.

On Tuesday, 17 July 2018, Trump again insisted that negotiations with North Korea were going "very, very well." Trump also added that there was *no* deadline for the denuclearization of North Korea.

A major topic of discussion [with Russian President Putin] was North Korea and the need for it to remove its nuclear weapons. Russia has assured us of its support. President Putin said he agrees with me 100 percent, and they'll do whatever they have to do to try and make it happen.

Discussions are ongoing and they're going very, very well. We have no rush for speed. The sanctions are remaining. The hostages are back. There have been no tests. There have been no rockets going up for a period of nine months. And I think the relationships are very good. So we'll see how that goes.

We have no time limit. We have no speed limit. We have — we're just going through the process. But the relationships are very good. President Putin is going to be involved in the sense that he is with us. He would like to see that happen.

"Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Members of Congress," [White House](#), 17 July 2018.

On 3 July the U.S. State Department refused to publicly disclose a timeline for denuclearization of North Korea. On 17 July, Trump reiterated there was "no time limit". The U.S. policy gives North Korea a green light to procrastinate on denuclearization. This U.S. policy is especially stupid, given that North Korea is continuing to manufacture nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

On 18 July, Pompeo gave a progress report on North Korea to Trump's cabinet.

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I traveled to Pyongyang for the third time. We made progress on some issues. There's a lot of work to do. It may take some time to get where we need to go, but all of this will be taking place against the backdrop of continued enforcement of the existing sanctions.

The North Koreans reaffirmed their commitment to denuclearize. We're making progress along the border to get the return of remains, a very important issue for those families. We think in the next couple of weeks we'll have the first remains returned. That's the commitment. So progress certainly being made there.

Still a fair amount of work to do, but a very hopeful place that we find ourselves with making this strategic change for North Korea and giving them an opportunity for a brighter future for their people.

"Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Cabinet Members," [White House](#), 18 July 2018.

The amateurs in the Trump administration are slowly realizing that it can take years to negotiate with North Korea. Pompeo's 13 June prediction of substantial completion of denuclearization by January 2021 is unrealistic. History teaches us that the Six-Party Talks on denuclearization of Korea began in August 2003, but North Korea abruptly abandoned those talks in April 2009 — more than five years of wasted negotiations, with North Korea breaching every written agreement.

Pompeo's three-paragraph progress report on North Korea is amazingly low level, as if he were talking to a child.

Meanwhile, China [relaxed](#) the sanctions a few months ago, and North Korea continues to [evade](#) the sanctions, making the sanctions less effective than they should be.

On 20 July 2018, the United Nations Security Council had a meeting on North Korea that was attended by Pompeo and Haley. (See [below](#).)

On 21 July 2018, *The Washington Post* reported Trump was beginning to realize that the negotiations with North Korea had stalled.

When he emerged from his summit with Kim Jong Un last month, President Trump triumphantly declared that North Korea no longer posed a nuclear threat and that one of the world's most intractable geopolitical crises had been "largely solved."

But in the days and weeks since then, U.S. negotiators have faced stiff resistance from a North Korean team practiced in the art of delay and obfuscation.

Diplomats say the North Koreans have canceled follow-up meetings, demanded more money and failed to maintain basic communications, even as the once-isolated regime's engagements with China and South Korea flourish.

Meanwhile, a missile-engine testing facility that Trump said would be destroyed remains intact, and U.S. intelligence officials say Pyongyang is working to conceal key aspects of its nuclear program.

The lack of immediate progress, though predicted by many analysts, has frustrated the president, who has fumed at his aides in private even as he publicly hails the success of the negotiations.

"Discussions are ongoing and they're going very well," Trump told reporters Tuesday [17 July].

The accounts of internal administration dynamics come from conversations with a half-dozen White House aides, State Department officials and diplomats, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

Officials say Trump has been captivated by the nuclear talks, asking staffers for daily updates on the status of the negotiations. His frustration with the lack of progress has been coupled with irritation about the media coverage of the joint statement he signed on June 12 in Singapore, a document that contains no timeline or specifics on denuclearization but has reduced tensions between the two countries.

"Trump has been hit with a strong dose of reality of North Korea's negotiating style, which is always hard for Americans to understand," said Duyeon Kim, a Korea expert at the Center for a New American Security.

... Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has tried to wring concessions from his counterpart, Kim Yong Chol, a former spy chief viewed by the Trump administration as uncompromising and unable to negotiate outside the most explicit directives from Kim Jong Un.

....

Trump and his senior team "haven't given up entirely" on the goal of full denuclearization, but they are worried, said one person familiar with the discussions.

....

U.S. officials lay some of the blame on Kim Yong Chol, who despite being North Korea's chief negotiator has consistently stonewalled discussions by saying he is not empowered to talk about an array of pertinent issues.

....

Many of the president's top security and intelligence officials have long doubted that North Korea would live up to any of its commitments. But given the lack of options outside of the diplomatic realm, some analysts said a tolerant approach still provides the best outlook.

"I worry that Trump might lose patience with the length and complexities of negotiations that are common when dealing with North Korea, and walk away and revert back to serious considerations of the military option," said Duyeon Kim, the Korea scholar. "Getting to a nuclear agreement takes a long time, and implementing it will be even harder."

John Hudson, Josh Dawsey, & Carol D. Leonnig, "In private, Trump vents frustration over lack of progress on North Korea," [Washington Post](#), 18:22 EDT, 21 July 2018.

Trump is dishonest with the public, when Trump claims that negotiations are going very well. In fact, negotiations have stalled and North Korea is [cheating](#). Trump seized a quick failure — *not* a quick denuclearization — by agreeing to an [inadequate](#) Statement at the summit in Singapore on 12 June, and the situation went downhill from there.

On 22 July, *The Korea Herald* published an opinion by a former CIA employee.

No one yet knows what deals US President Donald Trump may have struck with Russian President Vladimir Putin during their private two-hour meeting in Helsinki [on 16 July]. But it is already clear that Trump's self-congratulations for striking a deal to "denuclearize" the Korean Peninsula during his Singapore summit with Kim Jong-un are ringing hollow. In addition to backsliding in its working-level negotiations with the United States, the Kim regime has continued to solidify its position as a nuclear-weapons state. The master of the Kremlin is sure to have taken note of this.

North Korea specialists have long been skeptical that Kim would ever give up his nuclear arsenal, and recent evidence supports their judgment. Reports citing US intelligence officials indicate that the North is pressing ahead with its nuclear-weapons program, by ramping up missile and enriched-uranium production and concealing the size of its nuclear inventory.

Anyone who has followed affairs on the Korean Peninsula has seen this movie before. After all, Kim's father and grandfather wrote the script decades ago. Since the 1970s, the Kims' regime has repeatedly expressed its desire for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, signed non-proliferation agreements, and negotiated with the US and South Korea — all while pursuing its nuclear-weapons program. In this latest rerun, Kim has even reused his father's special effects. In May, he blew up a nuclear test site with the same cinematic flair that Kim Jong-il displayed when he dynamited a nuclear reactor's cooling tower 10 years ago.

Compared to Kim's well-rehearsed theatrics, the Trump administration's performance has been a flop. After threatening North Korea with total destruction last year, Trump made a major concession to Kim by agreeing to attend the summit in June. While there, [Trump] demonstrated that neither he nor his administration had a strategy for getting Kim to make good on any deal. Making matters worse, Trump has continued to insist that follow-up talks with the North are "going well," even though US Secretary

of State Mike Pompeo's last visit to Pyongyang ended with a round of mutual recrimination.

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Trump may not like it, but he must call out Kim's duplicity, especially given the latest intelligence. Among other things, the North is accelerating production of solid-fuel rocket engines and an ICBM-armed submarine. Both technologies would bolster the North's ability to launch a surprise attack, by making its nuclear arsenal more durable, mobile, and easily concealed. The Kim regime's ongoing efforts in this area make clear that it has no intention of scrapping its nuclear program.

Kent Harrington, "Trump in denial about North Korea," [Korea Herald](#), 22 July 2018.

Trump is the wrong person to "call out Kim's duplicity", because Trump does *not* understand facts. While Trump might read a script written by an expert on North Korea, Trump would be unable to answer questions about that script. Furthermore, if the U.S. Government "calls out Kim's duplicity", Kim might angrily withdraw from negotiations, the way Kim's father withdrew from the Six-Party Talks in April 2009. On the other hand, North Korea has shown *no* sincerity in a quick denuclearization, and negotiations are likely to be fruitless.

On Monday morning, Trump denied the 21 July *The Washington Post* report that he was disappointed in the lack of progress on denuclearization of North Korea.

A Rocket has not been launched by North Korea in 9 months. Likewise, no Nuclear Tests. Japan is happy, all of Asia is happy. But the Fake News is saying, without ever asking me (always anonymous sources), that I am angry because it is not going fast enough. Wrong, very happy!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:06 EDT, 23 July 2018.

My comment: how can anyone who wants denuclearization be "very happy" about the procrastination and [cheating](#) by North Korea? Trump's propaganda is *not* plausible.

On 25 July 2018, Pompeo appeared before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he talked briefly about North Korea:

As far as the Trump administration's goals on North Korea are concerned, nothing has changed. Our objective remains the final, fully verified denuclearization [FFVD] of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong-un.

As a follow-up to the President's successful summit with Chairman Kim, on July 5th I traveled to North Korea to make progress on the commitments that were made in Singapore. We are engaged in patient diplomacy, but we will not let this drag out to no end. I emphasized this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice Chairman Kim Yong-chol.

President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects for North Korean denuclearization. Progress is happening. We need Chairman Kim Jong-un to follow through on his commitments that he made in Singapore. Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions, and those at the United Nations will remain — United Nations — will remain in effect. Multiple UN Security Council

resolutions require North Korea to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Those resolutions were passed unanimously, and they remain binding. We absolutely need every single nation to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions to which every nation is committed. The path ahead is not easy, but our hopes for a safer world and a brighter future for North Korea endure.

Michael R. Pompeo, "An Update on American Diplomacy To Advance our National Security Strategy," [U.S. State Dept](#), 25 July 2018.

Pompeo declared: "we will not let this drag out to no end." So suppose North Korea continues to procrastinate, what is Pompeo going to do? Walk away from the negotiations and let the North Koreans continue to produce more nuclear weapons? Annihilate Pyongyang with a megaton nuclear weapon, as a demonstration of Trump's "fire and fury"? Pass another United Nations Security Council Resolution with sanctions that China and Russia will ignore? Pompeo does *not* have any good options other than continuing negotiations, even if the negotiations continue for years.

During the questions from the Senators on 25 July, Pompeo admitted that North Korea is continuing to produce radioactive material for nuclear weapons. [Reuters](#); [The Guardian](#)(Reuters); [Voice of America](#); [Stars&Stripes](#); [Washington Post](#).

In a little noticed exchange during questions from Senators, on 25 July Pompeo mentioned "patient diplomacy":

We're engaged in patient diplomacy. But we will not let this drag out to no end. I emphasized this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice Chairman Kim Yong Chol. President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects for North Korean denuclearization. Progress is happening.

Rebecca Kheel & Morgan Chalfant, "Trump officials urge patience on North Korea," [The Hill](#), 28 July 2018.

See also: [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Globe&Mail](#)(video).

How much patience will Trump show to North Korea? At the end of July 2018, there is no public evidence that negotiations have continued after Pompeo departed from Pyongyang on 7 July. Obama had a policy of "strategic patience", which allowed North Korea to continue to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

On 31 July 2018, both the [Washington Post](#) and [New York Times](#) noted that Trump's optimism about North Korea — while the facts are that North Korea is procrastinating and cheating — is consistent with Trump praising his other failed diplomatic initiatives. *The Washington Post* says: "Trump's self-proclaimed diplomatic coups keep unraveling".

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### **12 July: North Korea Fails to Appear at Meeting 27 July: Repatriation of 55 Remains**

On 11 July, [Reuters](#) published an insightful article about the history of repatriation of remains from the Korean War.

Pompeo's negotiations on 6-7 July reached an agreement to have a meeting in the DMZ on

12 July about repatriation of remains of U.S. Military personnel killed in North Korea during the Korean War.

At 16:57 Korean time on 12 July, the [Korea Times](#) reported that "North Korean negotiators failed to show up for scheduled talks with the U.S. at Panmunjom," for a meeting scheduled to begin at 09:00 Korean time.

At 18:02 Korean time on 12 July, [Yonhap](#) reported that "the talks did not occur." Instead, "the two sides are currently communicating to determine when to meet."

At 19:54 Korean time on 12 July, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korea now wants to upgrade the level of the talks to include a general from the United Nations Command.

[Yonhap](#) reported that the meeting is now scheduled for Sunday, 15 July.

It is a well-established behavior by North Korea that they suddenly and abruptly cancel a scheduled meeting at the last moment. This an element of North Korea's policy of stalling and procrastination, as well as a crude attempt to control the meeting. Sometimes the North Korean simply fail to appear for a scheduled meeting without any communication. For example, in the week before 24 May 2018 (i.e., sometime during 13-19 May), the North Koreans failed to appear for a logistics meeting in Singapore. This failure to appear happened again on 12 July, as [Yonhap](#) reported that the United Nations Command called North Korea after the North Koreans failed to appear.

[CNN](#) notes that North Korea's failure to appear for a scheduled meeting on 12 July is consistent with Kim Jong-Un's snub of Pompeo five days earlier.

The repatriation of remains is specifically mentioned in the Statement from the 12 June Kim/Trump summit. [Above](#), I argue that North Korea has already failed to honor its promise to "immediately" return 200 corpses in its possession. That failure, plus the failure to appear for the 12 July meeting, must increase the distrust of North Korea by the USA.

On 15 July 2018, Maj. Gen. Michael Minihan, chief of staff for the United Nations Command, met with North Korean generals for two hours. [Yonhap](#). Later on 15 July, Pompeo said two things were achieved. First, more negotiations would occur on 16 July about transfer of remains already recovered. Second, there would be a joint U.S./DPRK mission in North Korea in an attempt to recover approximately 5300 remains of U.S. Military personnel. [U.S. State Dept.](#)

On 16 July there was a working-level meeting at Panmunjom on repatriation of remains, but journalists did not report any details. [Yonhap](#).

On 17 July, anonymous U.S. Government officials told journalists that North Korea might hand over approximately 50 corpses, possibly on 27 July, probably sometime before the end of July. [Stars&Stripes](#); [Yonhap](#); [Chosun Ilbo](#); [Reuters](#).

On the morning of 27 July, [Yonhap](#) reported a U.S. cargo airplane had departed from South Korea on a flight to Wonsan, North Korea, to retrieve some remains. [Yonhap](#) reported that



the airplane with the remains returned to South Korea at 11:00 Korean time. [USFK](#) and the [Pentagon](#) reported that North Korea "repatriated 55 cases of remains".

As the cargo airplane was en route to North Korea, Trump tweeted:

The Remains of American Servicemen will soon be leaving North Korea and heading to the United States! After so many years, this will be a great moment for so many families. Thank you to Kim Jong Un.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:50 EDT, 26 July 2018.

My comments on Trump's tweet:

1. The remains are heading to South Korea. On 1 August, the remains will depart South Korea to Hawaii for forensic identification by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.
2. The delivery of 55 remains — assuming all 55 are U.S. Military personnel — is only 1% of the 5300 U.S. Military personnel still missing in North Korea. So only a tiny fraction of families will receive remains.
3. Kim Jong Un agreed to "immediate" repatriation on 12 June, but the repatriation actually occurred 45 days later. Trump ignored the delay by North Korea.
4. It was reported in June 2018 that North Korea possessed approximately 200 remains of U.S. or allied military personnel. (See, e.g., [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [ABC News](#)(26July); [The Hill](#)(31July).) Trump ignored that North Korea has *not* returned the other 145 remains.

Sarah Sanders, Trump's press secretary, posted an uninformative press release at the [White House](#) website.

On Friday, 27 July 2018, Trump spoke at the White House about the U.S. economy. Here is what Trump said about North Korea.

At this moment, a plane is carrying the remains of some great fallen heroes from America, back from the Korean War. They're coming back to the United States. Mike Pence, our wonderful Vice President, will be there to greet the families and the remains. And I want to thank Chairman Kim for keeping his word. We have many others coming. But I want to thank Chairman Kim in front of the media for fulfilling a promise that he made to me. And I'm sure that he will continue to fulfill that promise as they search and search and search.

These incredible American heroes will soon lay at rest on sacred American soil. Even during the campaign, people would come up to me — it's a long time ago — many decades ago. Oftentimes they were older. In some cases, they were younger. Great-grandfathers. My great-grandfather, my grandfather, my father — they asked if I could do something about it. I'd look at them, I'd say, "We don't get along too well with that country." They said, "Whatever you can do." And it's something that was very important to me. Many people have asked that.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump on the Economy," [White House](#),

09:43 EDT, 27 July 2018.

My comments. When Trump said this at 09:43 EDT, it was 22:43 in Korea. The airplane with the remains had already arrived in South Korea at 11:00, Korean time. Pence is currently in Washington, DC. Pence will be at the ceremony in Hawaii on 1 August. Trump continues to be unaware of basic facts. In the second paragraph quoted above, Trump seems to boast of fulfilling a campaign promise, when only a paltry 1% of the total missing in North Korea have been returned.

On 31 July 2018, the [Associated Press](#) and [CNN](#) reported that North Korea delivered only one "dog tag" (i.e., metal identification tag) with 55 remains. The North Koreans also failed to provide the location where each remain was dug up. My comment is that either (1) North Koreans were careless and discarded the dog tags for the other remains, or (2) the other 54 remains are not American.

On 5 August 2018, [The Hill](#) quoted Bruce Klingner — a former CIA division chief for Korea who now works at the conservative Heritage Foundation — who believes North Korea possesses hundreds of remains of U.S. Military personnel, but North Korea was saving the remains to repatriate in small bunches "as negotiating tactics". *The Hill* also reports: "Pentagon officials said Thursday [2 Aug] ... at first glance the returned boxes appear to hold remains not recently recovered, alluding that they may have sat in storage for quite some time."

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### **12 July: U.S. seeks to enforce U.N. sanctions on North Korea**

On 12 July 2018, the U.S. State Department presented evidence to the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee that North Korea had engaged in 89 prohibited ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum between 1 Jan and 30 May 2018. Those transfers easily put North Korea over the half-million barrel limit on imports of refined petroleum in the year 2018. The U.S. then asked the Security Council for an immediate cessation of all exports of refined petroleum to North Korea. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#).

We have known since 26 Dec 2017 that Chinese ships were selling oil to North Korea. On 23 Feb 2018, the U.S. Government sanctioned ships and shipping companies that had evaded the U.N. sanctions. On 30 March 2018, the United Nations Security Council blacklisted ships and shipping companies that had evaded U.N. sanctions. Given this long-term violation of sanctions by North Korea, it is unfortunate that the U.S. moved to enforce sanctions at a time when there are delicate negotiations on denuclearization and repatriation of remains of war dead.

I wonder if Pompeo's emphasis on continuing sanctions in his 8 July press conference, as well as the U.S. action at the U.N. on 12 July, is his response to his failed negotiations in Pyongyang on 6-7 July.

On 19 July 2018, Russia and China blocked the U.S. proposal in the United Nations Security Council until the U.S. provided more detailed information on each of the 89 prohibited ship-

to-ship transfers in the first five months of 2018. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). Incidentally, Edith M. Lederer — the chief of the Associated Press office at the United Nations — observed: “At the historic summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [on 12 June], Kim agreed to denuclearization. But the Trump administration has said sanctions will remain in place until that process is completed and verified — and it hasn’t even begun.”

On 20 July 2018, Pompeo joined Nikki Haley at the United Nations Security Council meeting on denuclearization of North Korea. Japan and South Korea — two non-members of the Security Council — attended the meeting and spoke. North Korea did *not* attend, perhaps because they knew they would be criticized for procrastination and evasion of sanctions. The meeting was closed to the public, so there is no meeting summary from the United Nations. [U.S. State Dept.](#), ([copy](#)); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 19 July, the [Chosun Ilbo](#) newspaper in South Korea reported that China doubled shipments of crude oil to North Korea after Kim's visit with Xi on 19-20 June.

On 24 July, [Reuters](#) reported that gasoline prices in North Korea were now approximately 33% to 44% lower than the price in March 2018, which suggested that North Korea was evading sanctions on imports of fuel.

On 2 August 2018, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that more than 10,000 North Korean workers have entered Russia, in violation of United Nations Security Council sanctions enacted in September 2017. The employers send 80% of the wages to the North Korean government, as a source of foreign income.

On 3 August 2018, independent experts issued a report to the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee that concluded North Korea was evading sanctions, including “a massive increase in illicit ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum products.” Furthermore, North Korea continues to manufacture nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, also in violation of U.N. Resolutions. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 4 August 2018 in Singapore, Pompeo warned Russia to stop violating United Nations economic sanctions on North Korea. Pompeo found *The Wall Street Journal* article on 2 August to be credible. [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Reuters](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 4 August, Pompeo spoke at a press conference in Singapore about sanctions on North Korea.

I’ve also emphasized the importance of maintaining diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as agreed to by Chairman Kim. It’s worth remembering this isn’t just an American security goal; it is clear our partners and allies within ASEAN know how important the denuclearization of North Korea is for their own security. I called on them to strictly enforce all sanctions, including the complete shutdown of illegal ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum destined for North Korea.

We have seen reports that Russia is allowing for joint ventures with North Korean firms and granting new work permits to North Korean guest workers. If these reports

prove accurate — and we have every reason to believe that they are — that would be in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2375.

I want to remind every nation that has supported these resolutions that this is a serious issue and something that we will discuss with Moscow. We expect the Russians and all countries to abide by the UN Security Council resolutions and enforce sanctions on North Korea. Any violation that detracts from the world's goal of finally fully denuclearizing North Korea would be something that America would take very seriously.

....

The process of achieving denuclearization of North Korean — the North Korean peninsula is one that I think we have all known would take some time, but I must say from my meetings here the world is united in seeing this achieved. There has not been a single country that hasn't thanked the United States for its efforts in moving the world towards the possibility of achieving this end-state goal. We're determined to do it. Chairman Kim is committed to doing it. I am optimistic that we will get this done in the timeline and the world will celebrate what the UN Security Council has demanded. Michael R. Pompeo, "Press Availability at the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings," [U.S. State Dept](#), 4 August 2018.

On 18-19 September 2018, South Korean president Moon visited Kim in Pyongyang. Journalists noted that they rode in Kim's S600 Mercedes-Benz sedan, although sales of luxury items to North Korea were banned by a United Nations Security Council Resolution in the year 2006. On 30 Nov 2018, the [Chosun Ilbo](#) reported that the United Nations was investigating the purchase of the Mercedes.

On 7 October 2018, Pompeo visited Kim in Pyongyang. Journalists noted that Kim had a new Rolls-Royce Phantom limousine. [CNN](#)(9Oct); [The Telegraph](#)(11Oct); [Sydney Morning Herald](#)(11Oct).

On 14 December 2018, [NBC News](#) disclosed a secret U.S. military report that North Korea is continuing to smuggle oil into North Korea, in violations of U.N. sanctions.

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### **23 July 2018: Possible Destruction of Missile-Test Site**

On the evening of 23 July 2018, [38North](#) announced that analysis of satellite reconnaissance photographs from 20 July showed possible dismantlement at the Sohae Missile-Test Site. 38North identified two items that were being dismantled: "[1] the rail-mounted processing building — where space launch vehicles are prepared before moving them to the launch pad — and [2] the nearby rocket engine test stand used to develop liquid-fuel engines for ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles." But these are the only two items being dismantled: "... the two fuel/oxidizer bunkers, main processing building and gantry tower remain untouched."

[Reuters](#) reported Jenny Town, managing editor of 38 North, said: "This could (and that's a

big could) mean that North Korea is also willing to forgo satellite launches for the time being as well as nuclear and missile tests. This distinction has derailed diplomacy in the past.”

See also: [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

While one might be encouraged that North Korea is *beginning* to disarm, there are several problems:

1. There is *no* verification of the dismantlement by international inspectors. This dismantlement does *not* meet either the CVID or FFVD standards.
2. The dismantlement is *not* "irreversible", as required in CVID. The test site could easily be restored to operational. Only two items at the Sohae site are being dismantled, the other items remain intact and functional.
3. This dismantlement affects the development of long-range ballistic missile, *not* nuclear weapons. This dismantlement is not part of denuclearization.
4. North Korea did *not* announce this dismantlement, which suggests they want to keep it secret. The first announcement was by 38North, a private organization in Baltimore, Maryland.

On 7 August 2018, [38North](#) reported that analysis of satellite photographs from 3 August show "additional dismantlement activities are ongoing" at the missile test site. Again, this alleged dismantlement does *not* meet the CVID standard.

On 22 August 2018, [38North](#) reported that sometime after 3 August, North Korea stopped dismantling the Sohae Satellite Launching Station.

On 4 October 2018, [38North](#) reported that there had been *no* dismantlement activity at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station since 3 August.

On 8 November 2018, [38North](#) again reported that there had been *no* dismantlement activity at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station since 3 August. "Components that were previously removed remain stacked on the ground at both locations."

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### **30 July 2018: ICBMs manufactured by North Korea**

On 30 July 2018, the [Washington Post](#) reported that U.S. Intelligence agencies had concluded that North Korea is currently manufacturing one or two ICBMs.

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### **Procrastination, Deceit, and Bad-Faith by North Korea**

On 31 July 2018, we have an accumulation of eight examples that show North Korea is *not* serious about quick denuclearization:

1. On 12 June, Trump said North Korea had agreed to destroy one of its missile engine test sites, but this destruction *may* have begun on 20 July. (See [above](#).) This is an example of procrastination by North Korea.
2. The Yongbyon nuclear reactor is being improved, *not* dismantled. (See [above](#).) This is an example of bad-faith by North Korea, when they *talk* about denuclearization while building more nuclear weapons.
3. The North Korean site in Hamhung that produced solid-fuel ballistic missiles is being expanded. (See [above](#).) This is an example of bad-faith by North Korea, when they *talk* about disarmament while building more ballistic missiles.
4. There is apparently a secret uranium enrichment site at Kangson. If true, this is deceit by North Korea. (See [above](#).)
5. North Korea is currently manufacturing more ICBMs. (See [above](#).) This is an example of bad-faith by North Korea, when they *talk* about disarmament while manufacturing more ballistic missiles.
6. In the Statement at the 12 June summit, ¶4, it is promised that negotiations will resume "at the earliest possible date". On 13 June, Pompeo said negotiations would resume "some time in the next week or so" (e.g., 20 June). The negotiations actually resumed on 6-7 July, but the negotiations failed to deliver Pompeo's desired results. This is an example of procrastination by North Korea.

Furthermore, the refusal of North Korea to give the U.S. a list of North Korea's nuclear weapons and weapons manufacturing plants means North Korea is *not* taking the first step in denuclearizing. There also seems to be *no* progress in returning international inspectors to North Korea to verify denuclearization.

On 18 July 2018, [Reuters](#) reported: "North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a broad commitment to denuclearize at an unprecedented summit with Trump in June, but offered no details as to how and when this might take place, leaving considerable doubts about Pyongyang's intentions."

7. The 12 June written Statement at the Kim/Trump summit promised the "immediate repatriation" of remains of U.S. soldiers that are already in possession of North Korea. But those remains were not delivered until 27 July, 45 days later, so North Korea breached its promise of "immediate". The North Koreans also failed to appear at a 12 July meeting to discuss the repatriation of remains. (See [above](#).) These are other examples of procrastination by North Korea.
8. North Korea is continuing to evade economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. (See [above](#).) This is an example of deceit by North Korea.

It may be that there is a cultural difference in the understanding of time by North Korea and

the USA. Or maybe North Korea is stalling, to give itself the opportunity to manufacture more nuclear weapons. So, at the end of July 2018, it appears that North Korea is again using the same strategy and tricks in negotiations with the USA, that North Korea used in previous failed negotiations with the USA. Trump's amateurish and incompetent strategy of a new relationship with North Korea is allowing North Korea to continue manufacturing more nuclear weapons.

The insincerity and deceit of North Korea about denuclearization is enough to scuttle the denuclearization process. But there is another significant problem — my essays on why Trump is unfit to be president in the years 2017 and 2018 show that Trump repeatedly fails to cite correct facts, and Trump often publicly talks about his delusions. In the context of the North Korea problem, Trump simply ignores factual evidence of procrastination, deceit, and bad-faith by North Korea. Instead of recognizing facts, Trump trusts Kim Jong-Un based on a [handshake](#) at the summit on 12 June 2018. Trump is incredibly naive and a gullible fool.

Unfortunately for South Korea and the USA, North Korea believes that it needs nuclear weapons as a deterrent against U.S. Military aggression. Trump has offered North Korea *promises* of nonaggression and peace by the USA. But Trump has a history of abrogating many trade treaties and also abrogated the agreement with Iran, and no one knows if future U.S. presidents will honor Trump's promises. So Trump's promises are unreliable. From North Korea's perspective, it is probably better if they keep their nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, instead of relying on Trump's promises. This analysis results in a huge problem to overcome in any negotiations to denuclearize North Korea.

Negotiations appear to have stalled, because North Korea wants a peace treaty and security guarantees first, while Pompeo demands that North Korea denuclearize first. I suggest that the impasse could be broken by giving North Korea a peace treaty that is conditional on CVID completed before January 2022.

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## August 2018

On the night of 1 August, Trump tweeted:

Thank you to Chairman Kim Jong Un for keeping your word & starting the process of sending home the remains of our great and beloved missing fallen! I am not at all surprised that you took this kind action. Also, thank you for your nice letter — I look forward to seeing you soon!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 24:47 EDT, 1 Aug 2018.

I am dismayed by Trump's tone in thanking Kim for the "nice letter" and then saying "I look forward to seeing you soon!" Kim had an atrocious human rights record, North Korea has been flagrantly violating United Nations Security Council Resolutions since 2006, and North Korea is currently showing [Procrastination](#), [Deceit](#), and [Bad-Faith](#) in the process of denuclearization.

On 1 August, the U.S. Government supported South Korea's 2016 closing of the Kaesong industrial park in North Korea. The park might be restarted *after* North Korea completes



denuclearization. [Yonhap](#). On 3 August, South Korea said Kaesong industrial park will be restarted after sanctions are lifted. [Yonhap](#).

On 3 August, Pompeo was in Singapore for the meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). En route to Singapore, Pompeo told journalists that “Chairman Kim made a commitment to denuclearize. The world demanded that (he) do so in the UN Security Council resolutions. To the extent they are behaving in a manner inconsistent with that, they are in violation of one or both the UN Security Council resolutions, we can see we still have a ways to go to achieve the ultimate outcome we’re looking for.” [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

My comment is that this is the first time that Pompeo has publicly mentioned the bad-faith and deceit by North Korea. Pompeo continues to publicly ignore the procrastination by North Korea in negotiations. Further, Pompeo mentions North Korea has violated one or two United Nations Security Council Resolutions. There are actually *ten* [Resolutions](#) that require CVID, and North Korea has flagrantly violated all ten Resolutions.

On 3 August, Pompeo gave an interview to Channel News Asia. Here is what Pompeo said about North Korea.

QUESTION: It’s been close on two months since the Trump-Kim summit here in Singapore. Are we closer to a denuclearization of North Korea?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Oh, of course we are. Of course we’re closer. The two presidents came here and made a historic commitment to each other. Chairman Kim Jong-un made the commitment to denuclearize. That’s consistent with what the UN Security Council has been demanding. There are two resolutions that require North Korea to do just that. America, in return, made commitments. We said we are prepared to improve the relationship between our two countries and offer a brighter future for North Korea. We’re still intent upon that. We’re thrilled that North Korea fulfilled its commitment by beginning the process of returning the remains of American servicemen this past week. We hope that process will continue. And we’re confident that Chairman Kim remains committed to denuclearization. The world is counting on it.

QUESTION: But you’ve also said that it’s been imperative that the various countries still maintain the sanctions on North Korea. If so much progress has been made, why not then scale back on the sanctions?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Oh, because the sanctions must remain in place until we’re done. So no matter how much progress we make along the way — by the way, these aren’t American sanctions — it’s important for the world to know this — these are the world’s sanctions. Every country supported the UN Security Council resolutions, and those sanctions will remain in place until we have full denuclearization in North Korea. So no matter how much progress we make, those sanctions will remain in place.

But that day, that day when we achieve this thing that the whole world is demanding — we welcome that day — a brighter future for the people of North Korea will be at hand.

QUESTION: So you have got nothing to do with sort of a carrot system in which it’s going to be sort of accretionally; you’ll have some sanctions which will scale back as

North Korea begins to denuclearize?

SECRETARY POMPEO: The UN Security Council resolutions are very clear. There will surely be things along the way that take place. We've already had meetings. We are engaged in things which will improve the trust between our two countries. Those all make sense. But with respect to sanctions, the UN has spoken; the world has spoken.

QUESTION: Time scales. Everybody has — yes, you're right, everybody's watching this, but we all want to know: When will this take place? When do you see denuclearization of North Korea taking place? Because having it open-ended just makes everybody incredibly nervous.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, the world should be less nervous than they were before the summit between the two leaders, where we were in a very difficult place with frequent missile launches, nuclear testing taking place. None of that has taken place since June 12th. We're happy about that. The ultimate timeline for denuclearization will be set by Chairman Kim, at least in part. The decision is his. He made a commitment and we're very hopeful that over the coming weeks and months we can make substantial progress towards that and put the North Korean people on a trajectory towards a brighter future very quickly.

Michael R. Pompeo, "Interview With Lin Xueling of Channel NewsAsia," [U.S. State Dept](#), 3 Aug 2018.

See also [Channel News Asia](#).

On 4 August, the [Hankyoreh](#), a progressive newspaper in South Korea, reported: "The resumption of personal correspondence between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un appears to have created fresh momentum in the deadlocked denuclearization talks between the two countries." For me, the important words are the public recognition that denuclearization talks are currently "deadlocked".

On Sunday, 5 August 2018, John Bolton, Trump's national security adviser, publicly disclosed that Kim Jong Un, on 27 April, had promised to denuclearize within one year.

BOLTON: Well, they [Kim and Trump] are talking about in the exchange of letters what is necessary to get performance on the commitment that North Korea itself made in Singapore to denuclearize. That's the central issue for us. There's a lot of interest in inter-Korean negotiations. They are looking at further discussions there. That's important to them.

That's not our priority, though. Our priority is North Korean denuclearization. Kim Jong-un promised South Korean President Moon Jae-in at Panmunjom on April 27th that he would do it and that he would do it within a year. So, the focus here is getting Kim Jong-un to follow through on what he committed to the president at Singapore.

[CHRIS] WALLACE [, Fox News anchor]: So, you're willing to leave the door open for a year and that it shuts?

BOLTON: No, the year period — there's been a lot of discussion about where the idea

of finishing this in a year comes from. It comes from Kim Jong-un. That if they make a strategic decision to give up nuclear weapons, they can do it within a year. We are waiting to see evidence that in fact that strategic decision has been made.

Fox News Sunday, "John Bolton on Maduro 'assassination' attempt, Russian election meddling," [Fox News](#), 5 Aug 2018.

On Tuesday, 7 August 2018, John Bolton, Trump's national security adviser, admitted that North Korea had *not* begun denuclearization, almost two months after Kim promised to completely denuclearize at the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore. Bolton again mentioned Kim's one-year timetable.

.... The real issue here is denuclearization.

Kim Jong Un pledged that to South Korean President Moon Jae-in at Panmunjom on April 27. He pledged it to President Trump on Singapore on June 12, and we're still waiting for them to take real steps towards denuclearization. The sooner North Korea does that, and Kim Jong Un himself told President Moon of South Korea back in April, they could do it in a year. The sooner they do it, the sooner the sanctions will come off.

So, North Korea holds the answer here. If they want to walk through the door that President Trump has opened, they're free to do it.

....

The president having watched the failure of prior negotiations, the six party talks in the Bush administration, strategic patience in the Obama administration, the agreed framework in the Clinton administration, he's seen 25 years of failure in getting North Korea to stop its nuclear weapons program.

He's not going to fall for those North Korean tricks. He's made it very clear to Kim Jong-un that if he walks through the door there's a different life ahead for the people of North Korea and it's up to them to do it.

But this isn't going to last forever, we see the same pattern in other countries. They try and take advantage of our good will, they try and string the thing out to continue their nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

We want to give North Korea a full opportunity to fulfill their commitment to denuclearize, but we're very well aware of all the tricks they've used in the past. The Brian Kilmeade Show, "John Bolton On Iran & Turkey Sanctions, North Korean Denuclearization & President Trump's Press Conference With Vladimir Putin," [Fox News Radio](#), 7 August 2018. (Edited to remove stammering.)

Bolton's remarks on 7 August were widely reported, see, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#); [Reuters](#); [CNBC](#).

Bolton is correct that North Korea has *not* begun "real steps towards denuclearization." North Korea took some token, symbolic steps at their [nuclear weapons](#) test site and at a [missile](#) test site, but neither alleged dismantlement met the CVID standards. Moreover, North Korea has

shown [Procrastination, Deceit, and Bad-Faith](#) in disarming. However, the U.S. Government has *no* realistic alternative to negotiations, since a [military strike](#) is unacceptable.

Bolton obsequiously says Trump "watched the failure of prior negotiations". During the 25 years of prior negotiations with North Korea, Trump was mostly a real estate mogul in New York City, who ignored foreign policy. During January 2004 to 2016, Trump was host of the television entertainment program, *The Apprentice*, again irrelevant to foreign policy. [Above](#), I argue that Trump ignored North Korea until January 2017. Furthermore, Trump is not capable of understanding the complex history of the North Korean problem, with many factual details.

Bolton caused a controversy in South Korea when Bolton said on 5 and 7 August that Kim Jong Un had, on 27 April, told South Korean President Moon Jae-in that North Korea could completely denuclearize in one year. Moon's office refused to comment on what Kim told Moon, because it was a confidential diplomatic communication. [Chosun Ilbo](#)(editorial); [Hankyoreh](#); [JoonAng](#); [DongA Ilbo](#). What I find strange is that on 1 July 2018, Bolton himself proposed a one-year denuclearization deadline, without mentioning that the one-year deadline was Kim's idea. One can speculate whether on 1 July Bolton knew of the 27 April alleged promise by Kim, whether Bolton invented the deadline and now attributes it to Kim, or whether Bolton has revealed a confidential diplomatic communication.

On the night of 7 August — the same day that Bolton publicly said North Korea had not begun denuclearization, quoted above — Trump spoke to a group of business executives and said: "North Korea — we're doing well. I think we have a lot of good talk going on. .... But I think we're doing very well with North Korea." [White House](#)(transcript); [Associated Press](#). Trump did *not* mention either "denuclearize" or "denuclearization", despite those words being the number one goal of the USA with North Korea. Trump's remarks show he is clueless about the deadlocked negotiations with North Korea.

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On 9 August, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in North Korea reported that the North Korean foreign ministry said: "As long as the U.S. denies even the basic decorum for its dialogue partner and clings to the outdated acting script which the previous administrations have all tried and failed, one cannot expect any progress in the implementation of the DPRK-U.S. joint statement including the denuclearization." The North Koreans are angry at the continuing economic sanctions on North Korea, and also angry at the U.S. insistence on complete denuclearization before lifting sanctions. [Reuters](#); [Voice of America](#)(Reuters); [Associated Press](#). My comment is that continuing sanctions until complete denuclearization is intended to prevent reoccurrence of past mistakes, when North Korea got the benefit of a bargain, then abrogated the agreement. North Korea is following an "outdated acting script", because it worked well on gullible Americans so many previous times.

On 10 August, [Yonhap](#) reported that the North Korean foreign minister, Ri Yong-ho, said: "Since we know that the U.S. will never give up its hostile policy toward us, we will hold onto our nuclear knowledge." My comment is that "irreversible" can only apply to destruction of tangible objects (e.g., nuclear warheads, nuclear reactors, centrifuges for separating isotopes, files and books with information on how to build nuclear weapons).

Irreversible destruction can not apply to knowledge in the brains of scientists and engineers.

On 10 August, U.S. General Paul Selva said Kim Jong Un's moratorium on testing ballistic missiles was preventing North Korea from testing two critical items in their ICBMs: "We've not seen a demonstration of a reliable" reentry vehicle "and we've not seen a demonstration of a reliable arming, firing and fusing system." [Bloomberg News](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Yonhap](#). North Korea may have other technical problems with ICBMs that need to be solved and then verified with tests. For example, North Korea needs to develop and prove an accurate guidance system for their ICBM. (See [above](#).)

On 10 August 2018, *The New York Times* published an insightful article about North Korea. North Korea is insisting that the United States declare that the Korean War is over before providing a detailed, written disclosure of all its atomic weapons stockpiles, its nuclear production facilities and its missiles as a first major step toward denuclearization.

Two months after President Trump declared his summit meeting in Singapore with Kim Jong-un a complete success, North Korea has not yet even agreed to provide that list during private exchanges with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, according to American and South Korean officials familiar with the talks.

....

Neither Mr. Trump nor Mr. Pompeo has acknowledged the impasse. But officials said South Korea has quietly backed the North Korean position, betting that once Mr. Trump has issued a "peace declaration" it would be harder for him to later threaten military action if the North fails to disarm or discard its nuclear arsenal.

....

While there is no agreement on how many nuclear weapons North Korea now owns, the C.I.A.'s official estimate of around 20, issued when Mr. Trump came to office, is creeping up, officials said. The current estimates are closer to 40. The Defense Intelligence Agency uses a larger figure of 60, but that assumes highly efficient production capabilities, which many experts doubt.

David E. Sanger & William J. Broad, "Once 'No Longer a Nuclear Threat,' North Korea Now in Standoff With U.S.," [New York Times](#), 10 Aug 2018.

My comment on the *Times* article is that a list of items to be verifiably and irreversibly destroyed is essential. Without the list, we will not know when denuclearization is complete. Also, as the *Times* says, we need to check North Korea's list against the list of sites known to U.S. Military intelligence.

On 13 August, there were high-level negotiations to arrange a third summit between Moon and Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang sometime in September 2018. [Yonhap](#). The South Korean President's office said the summit would be in mid- to late-September. [Yonhap](#).

At a cabinet meeting on Thursday, 16 August, Pompeo gave his report on North Korea.

SECRETARY POMPEO: .... So we're now many months with no additional missile tests. Many months with no additional nuclear testing from the North Koreans. We're continuing to engage in conversation with them about a path forward to a brighter future for the North Koreans.

We have 55 sets of remains that have been returned. The Department of Defense is working on the next work that will hopefully lead to the returns of not dozens, but hundreds of the remains of our soldiers that were killed in North Korea.

So continuing to make progress and hoping that we can make a big step here before too long.

THE PRESIDENT: And the relationship seems very good. I think it's probably hurt a little bit by China because China isn't really happy with what I'm doing on trade, but we have no other choice as a country. And they understand that. So I think we're probably being hurt a little bit with respect to North Korea, having to do with China. But really, we have no choice on that. We had to do something.

"Remarks by President Trump in Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 16 August 2018.

Pompeo was vague when he said he hoped there would be a "big step" "before too long". He did not specify what the "big step" would be or what month he expected it.

The U.S. Government — including Trump and Pompeo — have been silent on current negotiations with North Korea. But on 18 August, Yonhap News Agency in South Korea reported:

The United States and North Korea will have frequent discussions until the goal of Pyongyang's denuclearization is reached, the State Department said Friday [17 Aug], declining to provide details on a reported meeting last weekend.

U.S. Ambassador to Seoul Harry Harris is reported to have met with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui at the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom Sunday [12 Aug] to deliver a message from Washington.

....

Choe's counterpart in the substantive discussions has until now been U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim, a North Korea expert. The State Department refused to confirm that Harris was sent to Panmunjom.

"We don't have anything to share on this," a department spokesperson said in response to a Yonhap query. "Let me remind you that there will be many follow-up discussions until we reach our desired goal. Not all will be announced or read out." The spokesperson added: "This is one of the most important national security challenges facing us today. It is not in our interest to share every detail of our negotiations."

"U.S., N. Korea to have frequent talks until denuclearization goal reached: State Department," [Yonhap](#), 18 Aug 2018.

Note that Harry Harris only hand-delivered a letter, *not* engaged in negotiations. So it is an



unanswered question about whether Harris will replace Sung Kim.

On 21 August, [Reuters](#) reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concluded “The continuation and further development of the DPRK’s nuclear programme and related statements by the DPRK are a cause for grave concern.”

On 21 August, [Yonhap](#) reported the North Korea reiterated its desire for a peace treaty that ends the Korean war. But the U.S. demands that North Korea submit a list of material that is to be irreversibly destroyed during denuclearization, *before* discussing a peace treaty. [Yonhap](#) also reported that the South Korean Foreign Minister said economic sanctions would continue on North Korea until denuclearization is complete. The U.S. is threatening additional sanctions “unless [North Korea] takes substantive measures for denuclearization.”

On 23 August 2018, Pompeo made two announcements. First, he appointed Stephen Biegun — vice president of international governmental affairs of Ford Motor Company, who has *no* experience in diplomacy — to do the routine negotiations on denuclearization of North Korea. Biegun does *not* speak the Korean language. Second, Pompeo and Biegun will visit Pyongyang next week for negotiations with North Korea. [U.S. State Dept](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that Pompeo should have chosen someone who speaks Korean fluently *and* who has personal experience in negotiations with North Korea.

## 24 Aug 2018: Trump suspends negotiations

On 24 August at 13:36 EDT, Trump cancelled the Pompeo/Biegun trip to Pyongyang, “because I feel we are not making sufficient progress with respect to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula”. [tweet](#). Further, in the second of three [tweets](#), Trump said: “because of our much tougher Trading stance with China, I do not believe they are helping with the process of denuclearization as they once were (despite the UN Sanctions which are in place) ...”

Then Trump suggested that the North Korean negotiations were suspended until the U.S. resolves its trade dispute with communist China.

Secretary Pompeo looks forward to going to North Korea in the near future, most likely after our Trading relationship with China is resolved. In the meantime I would like to send my warmest regards and respect to Chairman Kim. I look forward to seeing him soon!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:36 EDT, 24 Aug 2018.

My comment is that it could take many months for the U.S. and China to resolve their trade dispute. After that resolution, it is *not* clear whether China would resume strict enforcement of economic sanctions on North Korea. It is also *not* clear whether Trump wants other help from China on the denuclearization of North Korea. I believe it is unwise to link the China trade dispute to denuclearization of North Korea, as they are separate issues. Trump's cancellation of the Pompeo/Biegun trip just one day after the trip was announced shows that the U.S. has amateurs running its foreign policy.

On 27 August, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump cancelled Pompeo's trip, after Pompeo received a “belligerent” letter from North Korean negotiator Kim Yong Chol. My



comment is that Trump should have disclosed this reason when he cancelled the Pompeo/Biegun trip, to avoid appearing arbitrary and capricious.

Also on 27 August, *The Washington Post* reported: "... the fact that Trump acknowledged publicly the talks were not going well was a huge reversal for the president." Similarly, the [New York Times](#) reported: "Mr. Trump's announcement, made in a series of tweets [on 24 August], was the first acknowledgment by the American president that the diplomatic process with North Korea had stalled." My comment is that journalists have been reporting that the talks were stalled since Pompeo's failed trip to Pyongyang on 6-7 July 2018. Trump is slow to acknowledge obvious facts.

At the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore on 12 June, Trump suddenly cancelled the large-scale U.S. Military exercises in South Korea for the 2018 year, blindsiding both the U.S. Military and South Korea. At a press conference on 28 August, the U.S. Secretary of Defense noted that the large-scale U.S. Military exercises in South Korea for the 2019 year had never been cancelled, and therefore were still scheduled.

SEC. MATTIS: Let me just talk about the policy of — of the suspension of — of exercises on the Korean Peninsula.

As you know, we took the step to suspend several of the largest exercises as a good-faith measure coming out of the Singapore summit. We have no plans at this time to suspend any more exercises.

We will work very closely, as I said, with the secretary of state, and what he needs done we will certainly do to reinforce his effort. But at this time, there is no discussion about further suspensions.

....

QUESTION: When you say that the initial decision was a good-faith gesture, and now you're not planning to suspend any more at the moment, are you suggesting that North Korea's acting in bad faith?

SEC. MATTIS: No. Not at all.

But we did what we did at the time for that purpose. So that's why we did it.

....

SEC. MATTIS: No, we're not turning them [i.e., military exercises] back on. They've never been turned off.

We turned off several to make a good-faith effort. We are going to see how the negotiations go, and then we'll calculate the future, how we go forward. I mean, this is about as straightforward as I can put it.

"Department Of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Mattis and General Dunford in the Pentagon Briefing Room," [Pentagon](#), 28 Aug 2018.

I think Secretary Mattis was being diplomatic when he refused to say that North Korea was acting in bad faith. The [facts](#) are clear that North Korea is acting in bad faith on denuclearization. And immediately after the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June, Trump said the large military exercises were suspended as long as North Korea negotiated in good faith.

Later on 28 August, Heather Nauert, the U.S. State Department spokeswoman, added to the impression that Trump had temporarily suspended negotiations with North Korea.

QUESTION: After the cancellation of Pompeo's trip, is the diplomatic effort there in trouble? And then I was also wondering if you could give us some further details about why the trip was canceled. There were reports that it was canceled following the receiving of a letter from Kim Yong-chol, and I was just wondering if you could confirm that.

MS NAUERT: Sure. So let me take your second question first. You know we often don't get into the detail about our private diplomatic conversations, but I can tell you that the President and his national security team, which obviously included Secretary Pompeo — and I want to make this clear, too, that Ambassador Bolton, the national security advisor, was a part of these conversations; there were some inaccurate reports that he was not; he happened to be on the phone on a secure call participating in this conversation as well. The entire national security team discussed this. In their judgment, they made the judgment that now is not the right time to travel. The President agreed with that, and that is when the President made the decision to send out some tweets announcing that decision.

QUESTION: All right. And the diplomatic effort?

MS NAUERT: Yeah. So the diplomatic effort is still ongoing. I know a lot of people are interested in sort of where this stands. The President overall remains very clear-eyed about the challenges and difficulties ahead of us. We have long said, the Secretary has long said, that this wouldn't be easy from the start, and it could be a somewhat lengthy process. Overall, sometimes we move forward; sometimes we stand right where we are. We look forward to future negotiations when the time is right.

QUESTION: Has the Secretary spoken to his North Korean counterparts in recent days to explain it? And there's reporting that this letter was rather — it had a belligerent tone, quite aggressive. Can you confirm any of that? I mean, is that the reason why?

MS NAUERT: I can't confirm that. The Secretary, the President, the national security team made the decision that now is not the right time to travel.

....

I have a statement from the Secretary that he provided me earlier today, which I'd be happy to give to you, his take on the situation there. He says:

Despite the decision to delay my trip to Pyongyang, America stands ready to engage when it is clear that Chairman Kim stands ready to deliver on the commitments that he made at the Singapore summit to President Trump to

completely denuclearize North Korea. The world is united behind the need for Chairman Kim to fulfill that commitment. Every member of the United Nations Security Council voted to call upon North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programs, and other weapons of mass destruction. The goal of final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim, is the world's goal. The United States, like the rest of the world, is looking forward to North Korea's compliance with these resolutions, which will enable Chairman Kim to provide a brighter future for his own people.

Mike Pompeo, Statement, 28 August 2018.

....

We stand ready to talk when the North Koreans stand ready to do so and we think it can be productive.

"Department Press Briefing — August 28, 2018," [U.S. State Dept](#), 14:53 EDT, 28 Aug 2018.

Ms. Nauert cryptically said "now is not the right time to travel [to Pyongyang]." Pompeo's statement is clearer, when he says he is waiting for Kim "to deliver on the commitments that he made at the Singapore summit to President Trump to completely denuclearize North Korea."

On 29 August, the [Korea Times](#) newspaper reported that Mattis had blindsided the South Korean government with his unilateral resumption of large-scale military exercises in 2019. Trump previously blindsided South Korea on 24 May, when Trump impulsively cancelled the Kim/Trump summit without first informing/discussing the cancellation with President Moon in South Korea. On 12 June, Trump impulsively cancelled U.S. Military exercises in South Korea without first informing/discussing the cancellation with President Moon in South Korea. The U.S. Government has proved itself to be an unreliable ally, and an amateur in foreign policy.

On 29 August, [Yonhap](#) reported that the South Korean presidential office said there would be discussions with the U.S. on whether to resume large-scale joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises.

Secretary of Defense Mattis handed Trump and Pompeo a much needed increase of pressure on North Korea, when Mattis announced on 28 August that there would be large-scale military exercises in South Korea in 2019. But on 29 August, Trump rejected the resumption of large-scale military exercises in a series of four tweets.

#### STATEMENT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

President Donald J. Trump feels strongly that North Korea is under tremendous pressure from China because of our major trade disputes with the Chinese Government. At the same time, we also know that China is providing North Korea with...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:23 EDT, 29 Aug 2018.

...considerable aid, including money, fuel, fertilizer and various other commodities. This is not helpful! Nonetheless, the President believes that his relationship with Kim

Jong Un is a very good and warm one, and there is no reason at this time to be spending large amounts...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:23 EDT, 29 Aug 2018.

...of money on joint U.S.-South Korea war games. Besides, the President can instantly start the joint exercises again with South Korea, and Japan, if he so chooses. If he does, they will be far bigger than ever before. As for the U.S.-China trade disputes, and other...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:23 EDT, 29 Aug 2018.

...differences, they will be resolved in time by President Trump and China's great President Xi Jinping. Their relationship and bond remain very strong.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:23 EDT, 29 Aug 2018.

My comment is that the denuclearization negotiations stalled two months ago, but instead of increasing pressure on North Korea, Trump is concerned with avoiding "spending large amounts of money on ... war games". The [Wall Street Journal](#) tells us that suspending Ulchi-Freedom Guardian saved US\$ 14 million. But it costs \$ 1.8 billion/year to keep 28,500 U.S. Military personnel in South Korea, and the exercises contribute to the readiness of those personnel. So canceling Freedom Guardian saves 0.8% of the annual cost of U.S. Military personnel in South Korea, but makes those personnel less effective.

Trump still believes he has a "very good and warm" relationship with Kim, despite *no* progress on denuclearization. Further, communist China is violating United Nations economic sanctions on North Korea, but Trump does *not* seem concerned. Finally, Trump's statement should have been posted at the White House website, instead of chopped into a series of four tweets.

The real problem is that the Singapore [Statement](#) is inadequate. There is *no* schedule or timeline, so Kim can legitimately claim that when Trump promised in writing "to provide security guarantees to the DPRK", those guarantees would come *before* denuclearization begins. Since the North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles are a response to what North Korea perceives as military threats by the U.S. Government, it is logical to provide the security guarantees before beginning denuclearization of North Korea.

On 29 August, the [Hankyoreh](#) newspaper in South Korea reported that South Korean military intelligence told the South Korean parliament on 28 August that Trump cancelled the Pompeo/Biegun trip because the North Koreans demanded that Trump sign a declaration that ends the Korean War.

On 30 August 2018, *The Washington Post* correspondent in Tokyo explained why Trump — *not* China — was to blame for the stalled negotiations.

It's all China's fault, at least according to President Trump, who again blamed Beijing late Wednesday [29 Aug] for an impasse in negotiations with Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programs.

But several experts said the real problem lies much closer to home, in Trump's casual approach to negotiations with the North Koreans and the vague, oral promises

exchanged at his meeting with the North Korean leader in Singapore in June.

Citing multiple sources familiar with the negotiations, [Vox](#) reported Wednesday that Trump told Kim Jong Un in Singapore that he would sign a declaration to end the Korean War soon after their meeting.

Since then, the Trump administration has repeatedly asked Pyongyang to first dismantle most of its nuclear arsenal. That explains the current stalemate in negotiations, [Vox](#) reported.

“If that’s true, that’s why the North Koreans are dragging their feet,” said Robert Kelly, a professor of political science at Pusan National University in South Korea. “That’s Trump’s blunder.”

North Korea believes that Trump made the same promise — to declare an end to the war — to Kim Yong Chol, a top North Korean official close to Kim Jong Un, at the White House on June 1 — 11 days before the summit, [Vox](#) also reported.

....

[Trump's] lack of understanding of the issues and lack of attention to detail have finally “collided with the reality of North Korea,” Kelly said. “They are not going to completely denuclearize ever. Nobody actually believes that. They took years developing these weapons. They are not going to give them up because Donald Trump says some stuff on Twitter.”

Simon Denyer, "Trump is blaming China for North Korea impasse, but real fault may lie closer to home," [Washington Post](#), 03:12 EDT, 30 Aug 2018.

[Above](#), I explain three ways in which Trump is making China angry with the USA. Trump has been angering China since March 2018.

### **commentary on Trump suspends negotiations**

On 28 August, [Slate](#) published an article with the title: "The North Korea Peace Process Is All in Trump’s Head". There, Fred Kaplan begins with three points:

1. "First, the talks were never going anywhere to begin with; there is nothing to break down.
2. "Second, the Trump administration’s policy on North Korea is in complete chaos.
3. "Third, the reason it’s in chaos is that Trump himself has no idea that it is in chaos, or that the talks have been moribund from their beginning, or that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is taking him for a ride and everyone knows it, except Trump."

Kaplan recognizes that Trump's 24 August friendly tweet about looking forward to meeting Kim again is *not* consistent with the U.S. Government increasing pressure on North Korea.

On 25 August, the morning after Trump cancelled the Pompeo/Biegun trip to Pyongyang, Politico explained why Trump made South Koreans anxious. Politico also explained how Trump's personality and style made him ineffective with North Korea.

Among the concerns are frustration that Trump

- has failed to secure a formal end to the Korean War while negotiating on nuclear disarmament;
- worries that the president is simply seeking a “trophy” for meeting with Kim and won’t be as engaged in the hard work to come;
- doubts about the “hubris” of the White House’s all-or-nothing approach to negotiating with Pyongyang, as opposed to the incremental process favored by many South Koreans; and
- dismay over why Trump would launch a trade war with China at a time when he needs Beijing’s help in keeping pressure on North Korea.

Most of those concerns relate, in some ways, to Trump’s personal characteristics — his unawareness of history, his short attention span — even as many South Koreans acknowledge that it was Trump’s very brashness that brought about the breakthrough in the first place.

....

The growing number of obstacles and miscommunications — Trump’s recent out-of-left-field tweet canceling his secretary of state’s diplomatic trip to North Korea is a representative example — have made South Koreans more worried that Trump lacks the stamina for the tough work ahead.

....

That image [Trump as a warmonger] could surge back to the forefront of South Koreans’ minds during an upcoming critical stretch of negotiations. Ahead of a September summit in Pyongyang, the two Koreas are discussing broad economic cooperation agreements and reducing the military presence at their border — concessions that may irk the U.S. while Trump’s own talks with Pyongyang have stalled.

Cory Bennett, "Trump anxiety spreads through South Korea," [Politico](#), 06:41 EDT, 25 August 2018.

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## South Korean railway project

Soon after the 27 April 2018 Moon/Kim summit, South Korean businessmen wanted to invest money in improving North Korea's decrepit railway system. The South Koreans envision trains from South Korea passing through North Korea and continuing to major cities in Asia. In August 2018, the South Koreans wanted to send a test train into North Korea. But on 30 August, the United Nations Command (led by U.S. Army General Brooks) denied

permission for sending a train into North Korea, first for procedural reasons, and later explaining the train would violate sanctions on sending diesel fuel into North Korea. It seems that the train project will need to wait until after North Korea has completely denuclearized. [Voice of America](#)(15Aug); [Yonhap](#)(30Aug); [Chosun Ilbo](#)(3Sep); [Yonhap](#)(6Sep).

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## September 2018

On 2 September 2018, Leon Panetta — Bill Clinton's White House chief of staff, and Obama's secretary of defense and CIA director — appeared on the ABC television network program "This Week" and said:

[Host MARTHA] RADDATZ: And I want to move on to foreign policy if we could. I know one of the last conversations you had with John McCain was about North Korea. The President has now cancelled Mike Pompeo's trip to North Korea saying they haven't made enough progress. Where do you think this stands now and what do you do about it?

PANETTA: Well I'm very worried about the situation because frankly I think we have a failed summit on our hands right now and there's a long list of failed efforts throughout history, this may be another one of those. And the problem is that in many ways it was doomed to failure from the beginning because there was never the preparatory work that has to be done prior to a summit meeting. This was all about show. It was about shaking hands and exchanging words but the underlying work on process, on looking at nuclear weapon sites, on inspection regimes, on what should be done with sanctions, all of the things that need to be done to produce some kind of peaceful solution were not done.

RADDATZ: Of course Donald Trump was handed a very bad hand on that.

PANETTA: There's no question — there's no question.

RADDATZ: If not already, he could probably at any point get a nuclear weapon that could reach the United States, an ICBM. So, indeed he ratcheted up the rhetoric but what else could he have done to delay that? You talk about that work. That's the work they're trying to do now.

PANETTA: Well, look, what needs to be done now because it wasn't done before is the basic diplomatic work that looks at all the issues that are involved here, puts them all on the table and begins a diplomatic process between the United States, North Korea, hopefully South Korea as part of that as well as Japan. But putting those parties together with everything on the table so that you can begin to make the tradeoffs that are part of what ultimately would be a resolution to the situation. That's the only way it's going to happen.

RADDATZ: Donald Trump says he still has a fantastic relationship with Kim Jong-un. Why is he saying things like that?



PANETTA: Well, this isn't about the dominance of personalities, this is about the hard work of negotiating the solution to the differences between North Korea and the United States and South Korea. And there are a lot of issues at stake here, but none of that work has been done. We don't know where those nuclear sites are. We don't know where the missile sites are. We don't know where a lot of their chemical sites are located. We have not developed any kind of inspection regime. All of that needs to be on the table. That's what needs to be discussed and we have yet to have a serious meeting on those issues. That's the problem.

"'This Week' Transcript 9-2-18: Sen. Ron Johnson and former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta," [ABC News](#), 09:44 EDT, 2 Sep 2018.

Panetta is correct. As chronicled above, it was easy to foresee that the amateurs in the Trump administration — people with *no* experience negotiating with North Korea, and a poorly prepared Trump — were going to make a botch of the Kim/Trump summit. And the same day the Singapore Statement was released, I wrote a discussion of why it was inadequate.

What no one is saying publicly is that we need to remove Trump from the presidency, and then install a professional career diplomat as U.S. Secretary of State. We need a negotiating team that is both fluent in the Korean language and has personal experience negotiating with North Korea.

On 3 September, Simon Tisdall — a foreign affairs commentator for *The Guardian* newspaper in England — wrote an opinion piece:

North Korea is fast emerging as the definitive example of how Trump takes a pre-existing international crisis and makes it worse. Claiming negotiating skills and a political prescience he does not possess, lacking thought-through and coherent strategies and ignoring the experience of more knowledgeable predecessors, he crassly blunders into sensitive situations, loud mouth blaring. US policy in Iran, Syria and Palestine has been similarly, anarchically upended.

The shattering of the false hopes raised by Trump in Singapore has not taken long. In a letter delivered two weeks ago, Kim reportedly threatened to resume nuclear weapons and missile tests. Talks on denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula — the summit's sole, vaguely tangible outcome — have stalled. Their future is “again at stake and may fall apart”, the letter said, because Trump had reneged on understandings reached with Kim and subsequently zig-zagged to a harder position.

In familiar knee-jerk fashion, Trump responded by scrapping a visit to North Korea by his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo. He then publicly blamed China, not his own muddled messages, for undermining the US-led sanctions policy of “maximum pressure”. The Pentagon then followed up by suggesting that joint allied military exercises in the Korean theatre — suspended by Trump in a high-handed and unreciprocated concession — might soon resume.

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Trump's over-reaching, and subsequent reneging, is likely to enrage the Pyongyang regime, where hardliners are already crying betrayal. Kim himself may feel humiliated

by Trump's failure to fulfil dangled promises about a peace treaty or formal diplomatic recognition. The result could be a redoubling of the north's efforts to build weapons of mass destruction and a rapid reigniting of regional military tensions.

Most dangerously of all, faced by the imminent collapse of his signal diplomatic "achievement" and worried about his standing among supporters ahead of November's mid-term elections, Trump may revert to his previous, reckless posture. It is less than a year since he threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea by raining "fire and fury" on its civilian population. If Trump goes rogue again, there may be no coming back this time.

Simon Tisdall, "Trump is dangerous again as his Kim Jong-un 'breakthrough' turns sour," [The Guardian](#), 05:00 EDT, 3 Sep 2018.

On 3 September 2018, *The Wall Street Journal* summarized the stalled denuclearization negotiations.

Nearly three months after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un shook hands with President Trump and agreed to pursue denuclearization and a reset in relations, the two sides have reached an impasse over who should make the next concession in talks aimed at implementing their accord.

The standoff threatens to derail a delicate detente with Pyongyang, following weeks of negotiations in which both sides say they have given ground but which so far haven't produced a clear agreement on disarmament steps or moves toward a peace treaty.

Mr. Trump expressed frustration with the deadlocked peace process in a series of Twitter posts last week in which he lashed out at China and raised the prospect of resuming joint U.S. military exercises with South Korea and Japan that would be "far bigger than ever before."

Pyongyang says the U.S. needs to reciprocate North Korea's gestures — among them, the dismantling of its underground nuclear test site and the return of U.S. war remains — with a statement declaring an official end to the Korean War.

U.S. diplomats, meantime, have repeatedly asserted that "the ball is in North Korea's court" to make more concrete steps to dismantle its nuclear program, following the suspension of U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises and the summit meeting in Singapore.

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While Mr. Trump has hailed what he describes as a strong personal relationship with Mr. Kim, the stalled talks are exposing the shortcomings of their June 12 agreement. The statement the leaders signed amounted to fewer than 500 words, and offered no timeline or road map for the steps needed to achieve North Korean disarmament.

Jonathan Cheng and Andrew Jeong, "U.S.-North Korea Stalemate Threatens Nuclear Disarmament Deal," [Wall Street Journal](#), 3 Sep 2018.

On 5 September 2018, an envoy from South Korea had a one-day meeting in Pyongyang,

including a meeting with Kim Jong Un. Afterwards, [Yonhap](#) reported: "According to [South Korean] presidential envoy Chung Eui-yong, Kim said he wants to complete his country's denuclearization before Trump's first term ends in January 2021 to improve the relationship with the U.S." [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

In a separate news article, [Yonhap](#) reported: "Chairman Kim especially stressed that he has never talked negative about President Trump to his staff or anyone else. And he said he hoped to end 70 years of a hostile relationship between North Korea and the U.S., and realize denuclearization by improving the North-U.S. relationship within Trump's first term,' Chung told a press briefing in Seoul on Thursday [6 Sep]." (Incidentally, Kim is wrong — Kim publicly called Trump a "dotard" on 22 Sep 2017.) Further, Kim wants credit for having taken "goodwill" measures to denuclearize, even though those measures were neither irreversible nor verified by international inspectors — those measures failed to meet the CVID standard. There is no doubt that Kim is continuing to manufacture nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, despite his words about "goodwill" and his promise to "completely denuclearize".

Trump in a tweet reciprocated Kim's kind words:

Kim Jong Un of North Korea proclaims "unwavering faith in President Trump." Thank you to Chairman Kim. We will get it done together!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:58 EDT, 6 Sep 2018.

In a reminder that North Korea is a state sponsor of cybercrime, on 6 September the U.S. Treasury Department announced sanctions against North Korean computer programmer, Park Jin Hyok, for his work in 2014 attacking the Sony Pictures website and for his work in 2017 on the WannaCry ransomware attack. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). Also on 6 September, the U.S. Justice Department announced criminal charges against Park Jin Hyok. [DoJ](#); [Washington Post](#).

On Sunday, 9 September 2018, North Korea celebrated its 70th anniversary with a big military parade. However, North Korea did *not* display any of their ICBMs, making the parade less belligerent than past military parades. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

The [Washington Post](#) tells us that some of the tanks in the parade were painted with the slogan: "Destroy the U.S. Imperialist Aggressor, the sworn enemy of the DPRK." (See also [The Guardian](#).) But Trump tweeted thanks to Chairman Kim:

North Korea has just staged their parade, celebrating 70th anniversary of founding, without the customary display of nuclear missiles. Theme was peace and economic development. "Experts believe that North Korea cut out the nuclear missiles to show President Trump.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:21 EDT, 9 Sep 2018.

...its commitment to denuclearize." @FoxNews This is a big and very positive statement from North Korea. Thank you To Chairman Kim. We will both prove everyone wrong! There is nothing like good dialogue from two people that like each other! Much better than before I took office.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:31 EDT, 9 Sep 2018.

My comment is that Trump made a bad choice of friends in Kim, who has an atrocious human-rights record, has threatened to destroy the USA, sponsored cybercrime attacks, and repeatedly violated numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

On 10 September 2018, Trump received a letter from Kim Jong Un, in which Kim asks for a second Kim/Trump summit. The White House immediately agreed. [White House](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that this second summit is either premature or unnecessary. Nothing substantial on denuclearization has been accomplished since the first summit on 12 June. And Trump is the *wrong* person to negotiate details in a denuclearization agreement.

On 12 September, [CNN](#) reported that the U.S. Government would begin to publicly "name and shame" firms that evade economic sanctions on North Korea. On 13 September, [CNN](#) reported that the U.S. began their new policy. [Chosun Ilbo](#), a right-wing newspaper in South Korea, noticed the new U.S. policy. My comment is that the new U.S. policy will likely anger communist China and Russia, but not stop them from evading U.N. economic sanctions on North Korea. The new U.S. policy will surely have *no* effect on North Korea, which is one of the worst rogue nations in the world, with an atrocious human rights record.

On 14 September, the North Korean government responded to the 6 September U.S. criminal charges against a North Korean hacker. North Korea calls the criminal charges a "vicious slander and another smear campaign". North Korea claims the sanctioned man does *not* exist. The North Koreans also suggested that the criminal charges could undercut the stalled denuclearization negotiations. [Yonhap](#); [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Reuters](#). In essence, North Korea's position is if the USA expects North Korea to stop sponsoring cybercrime, then North Korea will *not* denuclearize and everyone can live with the threat of nuclear war.

On 14 September, the two Korean governments opened a "joint liaison office" in Kaesong, North Korea, near the border with South Korea. Each nation will have approximately twenty people at the new office. [Yonhap](#). My comment is that North Korea can now insult and threaten South Korea 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

### 18-20 Sep 2018: Moon/Kim summit

The day before the summit began, [Yonhap](#)(15:59) and [Yonhap](#)(12:22) reported that Moon's top priority was to restart the denuclearization negotiations between North Korea and the USA. Yonhap characterized the current negotiations as "deadlock[ed]". On the morning of 19 September, [Yonhap](#) specifically reported: "... Moon says the No. 1 objective of his visit is to break the deadlock in the denuclearization talks between the U.S. and North Korea."

On Tuesday, 18 September 2018 at 09:50 local time, South Korean president Moon arrived at the Pyongyang airport for a three-day summit with Kim. [Yonhap](#). [Yonhap](#) reported that the summit meeting between Moon and Kim began at 15:45 local time on Tuesday. The timestamp on the first [Yonhap](#) news article on the end of the first round of the summit implies the first meeting ended sometime before 16:25, which gives a duration of less than 40 minutes. But the [Korea Times](#) reported "Their talks at the WPK [Workers' Party of Korea] headquarters lasted for 90 minutes starting at 3:30 p.m. The meeting ended at around

5:40 p.m., according to Cheong Wa Dae." Notice that 17:40 minus 15:30 is 130 minutes, not 90 minutes. The summit was scheduled to begin at 15:30, but actually began at 15:45. I am unable to find a credible end time for the first summit meeting.

The timestamps on Yonhap News Agency news articles indicate the approximate duration of the second round of summit negotiations. The first report that negotiations had begun was at 10:00 local time [Yonhap](#) and the concluding agreement was signed at 11:23 [Yonhap](#). Those numbers suggest an approximate 80 minute meeting.

Notice that the duration of the two summit meetings totaled less than 4 hours. That such brief summit negotiations produced results is probably the result of intensive preparation by competent diplomats before the summit began, as well as a willingness by Kim to disarm.

Beginning at 11:23 Korean time on 19 September (22:23 EDT on 18 Sep), Yonhap News Agency rapidly reported a series of news articles, beginning with Moon and Kim signed an agreement at the end of the second summit meeting, and continuing with the contents of the agreement.

At midnight in Washington DC on 18 Sep, Trump announced some of the results of the first meeting of the Moon/Kim summit.

Kim Jong Un has agreed to allow Nuclear inspections, subject to final negotiations, and to permanently dismantle a test site and launch pad in the presence of international experts. In the meantime there will be no Rocket or Nuclear testing. Hero remains to continue being.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 00:04 EDT, 19 Sep 2018.

....returned home to the United States. Also, North and South Korea will file a joint bid to host the 2032 Olympics. Very exciting!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 00:11 EDT, 19 Sep 2018.

My comments — before I had seen a copy of the agreement — is that Trump should not become too excited about the 2032 Olympics. Trump should stop North Korea from continuing to manufacture nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Trump should dispose of North Korea's existing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Trump should shut down North Korea's cyberwarfare operations. Kim has already repeatedly demanded credit for allegedly dismantling his nuclear weapons test site on 24 May 2018 and partly dismantling his rocket launch site in July 2018.

On the morning of 19 September, Trump elaborated on his reaction to the agreement in Pyongyang, which Trump had not yet read.

THE PRESIDENT: We had very good news from North Korea, South Korea. They met, and we had some great responses. I got a tremendous letter from Kim Jong Un. As you know, it was delivered three days ago. We're making tremendous progress with respect to North Korea.

Prior to becoming President, it looked like we were going to war with North Korea, and now we have a lot of progress. We've gotten our prisoners back. We're getting our remains back. They continue to come in. A lot of tremendous things.

But very importantly, no missile testing, no nuclear testing. Now they want to go and put a bid in for the Olympics. No, we have a lot of very good things going.

Remember this: Prior to my coming into office, a lot of people thought we were going — it was inevitable — we were going to war in North Korea. And now we're — the relationships, I have to tell you, at least on a personal basis, they're very good. It's very much calmed down.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 09:20 EDT, 19 Sep 2018.

Trump's declaration of "tremendous progress" is strange, given that North Korea is continuing to manufacture nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and that *no* CVID denuclearization has occurred.

On the night of Wednesday, 19 September, Moon and Kim attended a performance of the "Mass Games" in Pyongyang. [Yonhap](#). On Thursday, 20 September, Moon and Kim traveled to Mount Paekdu for a friendly walk together. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). Moon returned to Seoul at 17:36 local time on Thursday. [Yonhap](#).

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### 19 Sep 2018: Pyongyang Joint Declaration

Here is the full-text of the 19 Sep 2018 Pyongyang Joint Declaration, in English translation from *The Korea Times*:

Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea and Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea held the Inter-Korean Summit Meeting in Pyongyang on September 18-20, 2018.

The two leaders assessed the excellent progress made since the adoption of the historic Panmunjeom Declaration, such as the close dialogue and communication between the authorities of the two sides, civilian exchanges and cooperation in many areas, and epochal measures to defuse military tension.

The two leaders reaffirmed the principle of independence and self-determination of the Korean nation, and agreed to consistently and continuously develop inter-Korean relations for national reconciliation and cooperation, and firm peace and co-prosperity, and to make efforts to realize through policy measures the aspiration and hope of all Koreans that the current developments in inter-Korean relations will lead to reunification.

The two leaders held frank and in-depth discussions on various issues and practical steps to advance inter-Korean relations to a new and higher dimension by thoroughly implementing the Panmunjeom Declaration, shared the view that the Pyongyang Summit will be an important historic milestone, and declared as follows.

1. The two sides agreed to expand the cessation of military hostility in regions of

confrontation such as the DMZ into the substantial removal of the danger of war across the entire Korean Peninsula and a fundamental resolution of the hostile relations.

- A. The two sides agreed to adopt the "Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjeom Declaration in the Military Domain" as an annex to the Pyongyang Declaration, and to thoroughly abide by and faithfully implement it, and to actively take practical measures to transform the Korean Peninsula into a land of permanent peace.
  - B. The two sides agreed to engage in constant communication and close consultations to review the implementation of the Agreement and prevent accidental military clashes by promptly activating the Inter-Korean Joint Military Committee.
2. The two sides agreed to pursue substantial measures to further advance exchanges and cooperation based on the spirit of mutual benefit and shared prosperity, and to develop the nation's economy in a balanced manner.
  - A. The two sides agreed to hold a ground-breaking ceremony within this year for the east-coast and west-coast rail and road connections.
  - B. The two sides agreed, as conditions ripe, to first normalize the Gaeseong industrial complex and the Mt. Geumgang Tourism Project, and to discuss the issue of forming a west coast joint special economic zone and an east coast joint special tourism zone.
  - C. The two sides agreed to actively promote south-north environment cooperation so as to protect and restore the natural ecology, and as a first step to endeavor to achieve substantial results in the currently on-going forestry cooperation.
  - D. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the areas of prevention of epidemics, public health and medical care, including emergency measures to prevent the entry and spread of contagious diseases.
3. The two sides agreed to strengthen humanitarian cooperation to fundamentally resolve the issue of separated families.
  - A. The two sides agreed to open a permanent facility for family reunion meetings in the Mt. Geumgang area at an early date, and to promptly restore the facility toward this end.
  - B. The two sides agreed to resolve the issue of video meetings and exchange of video messages among the separated families as a matter of priority through the inter-Korean Red Cross talks.
4. The two sides agreed to actively promote exchanges and cooperation in various fields so as to enhance the atmosphere of reconciliation and unity and to demonstrate the spirit of the Korean nation both internally and externally.
  - A. The two sides agreed to further promote cultural and artistic exchanges, and to first conduct a performance of the Pyongyang Art Troupe in Seoul in October this year.
  - B. The two sides agreed to actively participate together in the 2020 Summer Olympic Games and other international games, and to cooperate in bidding for the joint hosting of the 2032 Summer Olympic Games.



- C. The two sides agreed to hold meaningful events to celebrate the 11th anniversary of the October 4 Declaration, to jointly commemorate the 100th anniversary of the March First Independence Movement Day, and to hold working-level consultations toward this end.
5. The two sides shared the view that the Korean Peninsula must be turned into a land of peace free from nuclear weapons and nuclear threats, and that substantial progress toward this end must be made in a prompt manner.
  - A. First, the North will permanently dismantle the Dongchang-ri missile engine test site and launch platform under the observation of experts from relevant countries.
  - B. The North expressed its willingness to continue to take additional measures, such as the permanent dismantlement of the nuclear facilities in Yeongbyeon, as the United States takes corresponding measures in accordance with the spirit of the June 12 US-DPRK Joint Statement.
  - C. The two sides agreed to cooperate closely in the process of pursuing complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
6. Chairman Kim Jong-un agreed to visit Seoul at an early date at the invitation of President Moon Jae-in.

"[FULL TEXT] Pyongyang Declaration," [Korea Times](#), 20:52 Korean time, 19 Sep 2018.  
[Second-level outline changed by Standler from numbers inside a circle to upper-case letters.]

A printable copy of this Declaration, along with links to sources, is at my HTML [webpage](#).

### My comments:

- In the third paragraph of the introduction, there is mention of "reunification." It would be a nightmare to combine North Korea, an impoverished Stalinist dictatorship, with South Korea, a prosperous capitalist democracy. The reunification of Germany occurred only when the communist East German government collapsed, and the West German government expanded to include the former East German provinces. Nevertheless, at a dinner on 19 Sep, Kim and Moon toasted "may we all become one". [Cheong Wa Dae](#).
- In section 2(A), the reconnection of railways and roads between North and South Korea should wait until after economic sanctions on North Korea are ended. I am concerned that North Korea is driving a wedge between South Korea and the USA, aided by the enthusiasm of South Korean businessmen for commercial opportunities in the North.
- In section 2(B), the re-opening of the Kaesong industrial complex must be delayed until after economic sanctions on North Korea are ended.
- In section 5, "that substantial progress toward [denuclearization] must be made in a prompt manner." So when will North Korea submit a list of all of its nuclear weapons,

and a list of all of its infrastructure for production of nuclear weapons? When will North Korea begin destroying its existing nuclear weapons? Will international inspectors from the IAEA be allowed to witness and verify the irreversible destruction of those nuclear weapons and infrastructure?

- In section 5(B), "the permanent dismantlement of the nuclear facilities in Yeongbyeon" has been promised before (e.g., 13 Feb 2007 Six-Party Agreement, 12 July 2008 Six-Party Agreement), but North Korea always breached its promises.
- Section 5(C) seems to be a response to the fact that the U.S.-North Korean denuclearization negotiations accomplished nothing in three months since the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore. Adding South Korea may accelerate the process.
- Note that this Declaration contains *no* deadlines for denuclearization of North Korea, despite Kim's promise on 5 September 2018 to completely denuclearize before the end of Trump's term as president in January 2021.
- Note this Declaration has more detail about inter-Korean relations than about denuclearization of North Korea. That lack of detail about denuclearization *may* indicate Kim is more committed to economic development of North Korea than to denuclearization. Alternatively, North Korea developed nuclear weapons to deter the U.S. Military, so denuclearization is an issue for North Korea to resolve with the U.S. Government.

In section 5(B), Kim offered to dismantle the nuclear reactor and centrifuges at Yongbyon, *after* "the United States takes corresponding measures in accordance with the spirit of the June 12 US-DPRK Joint Statement." Kim is probably referring to paragraph 2 of the 12 June Statement: "President Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK". On 20 September — one day after the Moon/Kim Declaration in Pyongyang — the spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department, Heather Nauert, rejected Kim's offer, because denuclearization must be completed *before* there are "security guarantees", peace treaty that ends the Korean War, etc. Her exact words were: "I think I'd just go back to what I've said about that very issue before, and that nothing can happen in the absence of denuclearization. Denuclearization has to come first, okay." [U.S. State Dept](#); [Yonhap](#); On 8 July 2018, above, I suggested resolving this problem by having the USA, North Korea, China, and South Korea sign a peace treaty that is conditional on North Korea finishing CVID before 1 January 2022. Giving North Korea a conditional peace treaty is a good way to test the sincerity of Kim's promise to dismantle Yongbyon.

Aside from the U.S. intransigence, there is a separate issue that the U.S. Government believes that Kim has secret facilities for producing radioactive material for nuclear weapons, so Kim could continue to produce nuclear weapons after Yongbyon is dismantled.

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## 25 Sep 2018: Trump at United Nations

One year ago, Trump gave an [awful speech](#) at the United Nations General Assembly meeting

in New York City. On 25 Sep 2018, Trump gave another awful speech. Here is what Trump said about North Korea:

From Warsaw to Brussels, to Tokyo to Singapore, it has been my highest honor to represent the United States abroad. I have forged close relationships and friendships and strong partnerships with the leaders of many nations in this room, and our approach has already yielded incredible change.

With support from many countries here today, we have engaged with North Korea to replace the specter of conflict with a bold and new push for peace.

In June, I traveled to Singapore to meet face to face with North Korea's leader, Chairman Kim Jong Un.

We had highly productive conversations and meetings, and we agreed that it was in both countries' interest to pursue the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Since that meeting, we have already seen a number of encouraging measures that few could have imagined only a short time ago.

The missiles and rockets are no longer flying in every direction. Nuclear testing has stopped. Some military facilities are already being dismantled. Our hostages have been released. And as promised, the remains of our fallen heroes are being returned home to lay at rest in American soil.

I would like to thank Chairman Kim for his courage and for the steps he has taken, though much work remains to be done. The sanctions will stay in place until denuclearization occurs.

I also want to thank the many member states who helped us reach this moment — a moment that is actually far greater than people would understand; far greater — but for also their support and the critical support that we will all need going forward.

A special thanks to President Moon of South Korea, Prime Minister Abe of Japan, and President Xi of China.

"Remarks by President Trump to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, NY," [White House](#), 25 Sep 2018.

In 2018, Trump is angry with Iran: "Iran's leaders sow chaos, death, and destruction." Trump is angry with communist China about its trade with the USA: "China's market distortions and the way they deal cannot be tolerated." And Trump is angry about high oil prices from OPEC: "OPEC and OPEC nations, are, as usual, ripping off the rest of the world, and I don't like it. .... We are not going to put up with it — these horrible prices — much longer." And, at the beginning of his speech, Trump boasted about his accomplishments — "In less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country." — and then the delegates laughed at Trump. ([The Guardian](#) called it "derisive laughter from other world leaders.") Those topics are irrelevant to this essay, but indicate that Trump gave another awful speech at the United Nations.

About North Korea, Trump boasted at the United Nations: "Since that [12 June] meeting, we

have already seen a number of encouraging measures that few could have imagined only a short time ago." Notice the *since* in that sentence. Then Trump gave five examples, *none* of which supported Trump's boast:

1. "The missiles and rockets are no longer flying in every direction." The most recent North Korean missile test was on 29 Nov 2017, a half-year before Trump met Kim.
2. "Nuclear testing has stopped." The most recent North Korean nuclear weapons test was on 3 Sep 2017, more than nine months before Trump met Kim.
3. "Some military facilities are already being dismantled." Kim blew up entrances to three tunnels at his nuclear weapons test site on 24 May 2018, again before Trump met Kim. This dismantlement was neither irreversible nor verified by international inspectors. In July 2018, Kim dismantled two items at one of his missile launch sites, again in a neither irreversible way nor verified by international inspectors.
4. "Our hostages have been released." They were released on 9 May 2018, more than a month before Trump met Kim.
5. "And as promised, the remains of our fallen heroes are being returned home to lay at rest in American soil." It was *not* as promised. North Korea delivered 55 remains on 27 July, about 1/4 of the promised number and about a month late. (See [above](#), North Korea's promise of 200 remains is discussed in my [essay](#) on why Trump is unfit to be president.)

In summary, Trump's boasts at the United Nations are total rubbish. North Korea has *not* begun denuclearization. Furthermore, negotiations between North Korea and the USA stalled in July 2018, weeks after the 12 June Kim/Trump summit. In my opinion, Trump's erroneous boasts about North Korea are Trump's way of saying he has solved the North Korean problem, and now Trump can move on to solving the Iran problem, the China problem, and the OPEC problem.

When Trump [suspended](#) negotiations with North Korea on 24 August 2018, Trump blamed China for the stalled negotiations. But on 25 September 2018, Trump is thanking the leader of China, although there has been no change in China's policy on denuclearization of North Korea.

*The Washington Post* fact-checker, Glenn Kessler, said the following about Trump's remarks about North Korea.

... The Washington Post [reported](#) in June that U.S. intelligence officials, citing newly obtained evidence, have concluded that North Korea does not intend to fully surrender its nuclear stockpile and instead is considering ways to conceal secret production facilities and the number of weapons it has. And in July, The Post [reported](#), that U.S. spy agencies are seeing signs that North Korea is constructing new missiles at a factory that produced the country's first intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States.

North Korea has a long history of making agreements and then not living up to them.

The document signed by Trump and Kim was remarkably vague, leaving it open to interpretation and debate, compared with previous documents signed by North Korea. The statement said North Korea (officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK) committed to "work towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." The phrase is not defined and "towards" is rather weak. In the past, North Korea viewed "denuclearization" to mean the United States' removing the nuclear umbrella it provides to Japan and South Korea; there is no indication its definition has changed.

Glenn Kessler, "Fact-checking President Trump's speech to the U.N. General Assembly," [Washington Post](#), 03:00 EDT, 26 Sep 2018.

I mentioned the concerns expressed by Kessler in [June](#) and [July](#), and I criticized the [inadequate Singapore Statement](#). At the end of July 2018, I mentioned [above](#) the Procrastination, Deceit, and Bad-Faith by North Korea, which is still true at the end of September 2018. Unfortunately, it is *not* obvious what Trump and Pompeo should do to counter the deceit and bad-faith shown by North Korea. Trump's policy seems to be to ignore North Korea's deceit and bad-faith, which will surely lead to a huge disappointment in the future.

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### 26 Sep 2018: Pompeo meets Ri

On Wednesday, 26 September 2018, Pompeo had a meeting with the North Korean Foreign Minister, Ri Yong Ho, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly annual meeting. Afterwards, Pompeo announced he would travel to Pyongyang sometime in October 2018 to restart negotiations on denuclearization and to arrange a second Kim/Trump summit. [U.S. State Dept](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Yonhap](#).

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### 29 Sep 2018: Ri at United Nations North Korea's Christmas Wish List

On Saturday, 29 September 2018 — *after* all of the important world leaders had departed from U.N. headquarters in New York City — North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho gave his speech. Here is the important part of what Ri said:

The key to consolidating the peace and security in the Korean peninsula is to thoroughly implement the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement adopted in June at the historic DPRK-U.S. summit in Singapore.

The DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement contains all principled issues regarding eventual solutions of the issues in the Korean peninsula such as terminating decades-long hostility between the two countries and establishing new DPRK-U.S. relations, building solid peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, realizing complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and humanitarian work between the two countries.

Once the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement is implemented, the current trend towards detente

will turn into durable peace and the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will also be achieved and the Korean peninsula, the hottest spot in the globe, will become the cradle of peace and prosperity that contributes to security in Asia and the rest of the world.

The DPRK government's commitment to thorough implementation of the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement is unwavering.

....

Even before the DPRK-U.S. summit, the DPRK government took significant good-will measures such as stopping nuclear and ICBM tests, dismantling the nuclear test site in a transparent manner and affirming not to transfer nuclear weapons and nuclear technology under any circumstances and it continues to put in efforts to trust-building.

However, we do not see any corresponding response from the U.S.

On the contrary, instead of addressing our concern for the absence of peace regime in the Korean peninsula, the U.S. insists on the "denuclearization-first" and increases the level of pressure by sanctions to achieve their purpose in a coercive manner, and even objecting the "declaration of the end of war".

The perception that sanctions can bring us on our knees is a pipe-dream of the people who are ignorant about us. But the problem is that the continued sanctions are deepening our mistrust.

The reason behind the recent deadlock is because the U.S. relies on coercive methods which are lethal to trust-building.

....

If the party to this issue of denuclearization were south Korea and not the U.S., the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would not have come to such a deadlock.

This is why we give great importance to building confidence between the DPRK and the U.S. for the implementation of the Joint Statement. Without any trust in the U.S. there will be no confidence in our national security and under such circumstances there is no way we will unilaterally disarm ourselves first.

....

The UNSC [UN Security Council] poured down on us numerous "sanctions resolutions" making issue of our nuclear tests and rocket test launches. But even today, when one whole year has passed since such tests have been stopped, even a word in those "resolutions" remains unchanged to say nothing about being totally removed or eased.

"Statement by H.E. RI Yong Ho, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly of the

United Nations," [U.N.](#), 29 Sep 2018.

Ri is wrong when he says "The DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement [from Singapore] contains all principled issues". That statement is inadequate, as discussed in detail [above](#).

Ri mentions "significant good-will measures" taken by North Korea. North Korea stopped their tests because Kim had declared the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles completed, and because North Korea did not want more severe economic sanctions from the United Nations. The nuclear test site that was allegedly "dismantled" was useless because of damage to the mountain from previous tests, further the dismantlement did *not* meet CVID standards. Ri is wrong when he says there was no "corresponding response" from the USA — Trump canceled large military exercises in South Korea.

The USA insists on denuclearization first because that is what the United Nations Security Council Resolutions demand. North Korea has an obligation to denuclearize, the USA has *no* obligation under the U.N. Resolutions.

Finally, Ri whines that the United Nations has not changed their Resolutions, a year after North Korea stopped testing nuclear weapons. Ri mischaracterizes the issue. North Korea possesses dozens of nuclear weapons that must be destroyed, along with destroying the infrastructure to produce nuclear weapons — that is the issue.

Journalists in the USA were busy reporting the approval by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, along partisan lines, of Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. However, there are some news articles about Ri's speech: [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#); [NBC News](#). The [Washington Post](#) reprinted the Associated Press news article. On 3 October, the [Washington Post](#) reported that North Korea was increasing its demands.

So here is North Korea's Christmas Wish List of gifts from the U.S. Government, *before* North Korea will begin denuclearization that is required in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions since October 2006:

1. peace treaty that ends Korean War of 1950-1953
2. end to economic sanctions on North Korea in United Nations Resolutions (which North Korea erroneously believes are sanctions by the USA)
3. unspecified "security guarantees" that Trump promised in the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore on 12 June 2018
4. removal of all U.S. Military personnel from South Korea
5. diplomatic relations with the USA.

In my opinion,

1. the U.S. and South Korea should give a peace treaty that is conditional on complete and final denuclearization of North Korea before January 2021. Despite Trump's belligerent threats in 2017, the U.S. has *no* intention of attacking North Korea, so a peace treaty would not inhibit the USA.



2. Trump and Pompeo are correct to demand that the sanctions continue until North Korea completely denuclearizes. North Korea has a history of abrogating *all* of its past treaties and agreements, which makes North Korea an unreliable negotiating partner. Further, currently North Korea is engaged in [deceit and bad-faith](#), which casts doubt on whether North Korea will completely denuclearize. Therefore, continuing sanctions are necessary to motivate North Korea to completely denuclearize.
  3. I can not comment on unspecified security guarantees, because I do not know what will be in those guarantees.
  4. Removal of all U.S. Military personnel from South Korea is a matter to be decided by South Korea.
  5. Diplomatic relations between North Korea and the USA are likely *after* North Korea completely denuclearizes *and* ends its rogue nation behavior (e.g., cyberwarfare, counterfeiting money). If diplomatic relations occur sooner, that is a matter for negotiation between North Korea and the USA.
- 

### 29 Sep 2018: Trump says he "fell in love" with Kim

Trump gave a campaign speech in Wheeling, West Virginia on Saturday night, 29 September 2018. The White House did *not* post a transcript of Trump's speech, and I can not find a transcript elsewhere on the Internet. However, some news media quoted a few sentences in which Trump said he "fell in love" with Kim Jong Un.

TRUMP: You know, the interesting, what I did is — and I was really being tough and so was he. And we go back and forth and then we fell in love. OK? No, really. He wrote me beautiful letters. And they're great letters. We fell in love.

"Trump Not Limiting Probe of Kavanaugh; Indonesia Quake Tsunami; Donald Trump: Kim Jong-un and I Fell in Love; Senators Collins and Murkowski Could Decide Vote; Danish Container Ship Completes Northern Sea Route; ""SNL""s" Take on Kavanaugh."  
[CNN Newsroom](#), 30 Sep 2018.

See also: [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Financial Times](#); [Washington Post](#)(2Oct).

On 3 October 2018, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, a Republican and ally of Trump, got it right when Graham said:

I'm worried that North Korea's dividing us from South Korea. I'm worried that we're being played here. Now I'm telling you, President Trump, enough with 'I love you.' From my point of view, this love crap has to stop. There's nothing to love about Kim Jong Un.

"Graham on Trump's North Korea rhetoric: 'This love crap has to stop'," [The Hill](#), 14:30 EDT, 3 Oct 2018.

*The Hill* included a little longer quotation from Trump's speech in Wheeling:

That was a big, big problem, and you know the interesting thing, and when I did it, and

I was really being tough, and so was he, and we're going back and forth, and then we fell in love. No really, he wrote me beautiful letters, and they're great letters. We fell in love.

*Ibid.*

Back on 1 July 2018, a gullible Trump said he trusted Kim based on a [handshake](#) at the Singapore summit in June 2018. Trump's narcissistic personality disorder makes Trump easily influenced by effusive praise. Kim is apparently using words and false promises to influence Trump, so the personal relationship takes precedence over the fact that North Korea has done *nothing* to denuclearize.

On 11 October 2018, Trump was interviewed by Lesley Stahl of CBS News. The part of the interview about North Korea began with Trump falsely asserting he avoided war with North Korea, then Trump talked about his "love" for Kim Jong Un:

Lesley Stahl: What about North Korea? Talking about accom—

President Donald Trump: Well, I consider it a, so far, great achievement. Look, we—

Lesley Stahl: You say "so far"?

President Donald Trump: It's always so far, til everything's done. I— I— you know, deals are deals, okay? Whether it's a real estate deal or a retail deal, it doesn't matter. But I will say this. The day before I came in, we were goin' to war with North Korea. I sat with President Obama—

Lesley Stahl: We were goin' to war?

President Donald Trump: — and — we were gonna — I think it was going to end up in war. And my impression is — and even in my first few months, I mean, that rhetoric was as tough as it could possibly get. Doesn't get any tougher than that. Nobody's ever heard rhetoric that tough. We were going to war with North Korea. Now, you don't hear that. You don't hear any talk of it. And he doesn't wanna go to war, and we don't wanna go to war, and he understands denuclearization and he's agreed to it. And you see that, he's agreed to it. No missiles.

Lesley Stahl: Do you trust him?

President Donald Trump: I do trust him, yeah, I trust him. That doesn't mean I can't be proven wrong about it.

Lesley Stahl: Why would you trust him?

President Donald Trump: Well, first of all, if I didn't trust him, I wouldn't say that to you. Wouldn't I be foolish to tell you right here, on 60 Minutes —

Lesley Stahl: Well, remember what Reagan said. "Trust, but verify."

President Donald Trump: Sure. I know. It's very true. But the fact is, I do trust him. But

we'll see what happens.

Lesley Stahl: But is it true that they haven't gotten rid of a single weapon, and they may actually be building more missiles —

President Donald Trump: They want to —

Lesley Stahl: With nuclear —

President Donald Trump: And I will tell you that they're closing up sites.

Lesley Stahl: But —

President Donald Trump: Setting it up.

Lesley Stahl: Is what I said true, that they haven't? Gotten —

President Donald Trump: Well, nobody really knows. I mean, people are saying that. I've actually said that.

Lesley Stahl: What? That they're still building missiles, more missiles?

President Donald Trump: We don't really know, Lesley. We really don't know. But I assume —

Lesley Stahl: Suspect that?

President Donald Trump: Let's say the answer is yes, okay? In the meantime, they haven't tested a missile. They haven't tested a rocket. They definitely haven't done a nuclear test because you know about them real fast. It sort of moves the earth. And we have a relationship now.

....

*President Trump at rally:* "And then we fell in love, okay. No really. He wrote me beautiful letters. And they're great letters. We fell in love."

Lesley Stahl: I wanna read you his resume, okay? He presides over a cruel kingdom of repression, gulags, starvation — reports that he had his half-brother assassinated, slave labor, public executions. This is a guy you love?

President Donald Trump: Sure. I know all these things. I mean — I'm not a baby. I know these things.

Lesley Stahl: I know, but why do you love that guy?

President Donald Trump: Look, look. I— I— I like— I get along with him, okay?

Lesley Stahl: But you love him.

President Donald Trump: Okay. That's just a figure of speech.

Lesley Stahl: No, it's like an embrace.

President Donald Trump: It well, let it be an embrace. Let it be whatever it is to get the job done.

Lesley Stahl: He's a bad guy.

President Donald Trump: Look. Let it be whatever it is. I get along with him really well. I have a good energy with him. I have a good chemistry with him. Look at the horrible threats that were made. No more threats. No more threats.

"President Trump on Christine Blasey Ford, his relationships with Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un and more," [CBS News](#), 14 Oct 2018.

It is false that Obama was going to war with North Korea. [Washington Post](#). Obama was the least belligerent U.S. president since Jimmy Carter. If there is any truth to what Trump said about Obama, then Trump was likely confused about contingency plans which are routinely made but never used.

Trump makes an end-justifies-the-means justification for loving Kim: "Let it be whatever it is to get the job done."

Notice Trump's final remark about Kim: "Look at the horrible threats that were made. No more threats. No more threats." Trump worsened a problem in 2017 by making belligerent threats. Now Trump boasts about solving the problem that he created.

The North Korea problem has a long history and is really complicated. In reading news articles and commentary about Trump falling in love, I saw a terse explanation for why the North Korea problem is so difficult to solve.

The two [Kim and Trump] seek what the other side can't give to the other. The U.S. wants the North to denuclearize, giving up something that guarantees its existence, while the North wants the U.S. to offer a safe way out of its isolation, something that is beyond anybody's ability, including the U.S.

Oh Young-jin, "Trump's unrequited love." [Korea Times](#), 5 Oct 2018.

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## October 2018

### Trump and Pompeo remove deadline

Managers like deadlines — sometimes called milestones — because they enable everyone to see if there is adequate progress toward a goal.

Back on [13 June](#), Pompeo said that "major disarmament" (i.e., denuclearization) should be completed by the end of Trump's first term as president (i.e., January 2021).

On 19 September 2018, Pompeo released a [statement](#) that reiterated the Jan 2021 deadline: "This [meeting] will mark the beginning of negotiations to transform U.S.-DPRK relations through the process of rapid denuclearization of North Korea, to be completed by January 2021, as committed by Chairman Kim, and to construct a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula." See [New York Times](#); [CNBC](#).

Notice that the January 2021 deadline for denuclearization is *not* a demand by the U.S. Government, but is a deadline agreed by Kim Jong Un.

On 26 Sep 2018, Trump gave a press conference in which he declared there was *no* deadline for complete denuclearization by North Korea.

QUESTION: How long do you think it should take North Korea to denuclearize?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't want to get into —

QUESTION: We've seen estimates of one year, two year —

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, I don't want to get into the time game. You know why? I told Mike Pompeo, I said, "Mike, don't get into the time game." We stopped them. They're taking down plants. They're taking down a lot of different testing areas. They're going to take down some more. You'll be hearing about that very soon. I don't want to go ahead of myself, but you'll be hearing about it soon. They have no interest right now in testing nuclear.

....

Right now, we're in a great position. I don't want to play the time game. I told Mike Pompeo, "Don't let them do that to you." I haven't given anything.

....

They're [i.e., news media] screaming and I saw that. And our guys were — and not Mike — but our guys were being, "Oh well, we're working as fast..." I said, "I got all the time in the world. I don't have to rush it." There's no — you know, secession [cessation ?] of sanctions. We got the sanctions on. I didn't take any sanctions off.

....

But we're not playing the time game. If it takes two years, three years, or five months, it doesn't matter. There's no nuclear testing and there's no testing of rockets.

"Press Conference by President Trump," [White House](#), posted 27 Sep 2018.

Notice that Trump did *not* explain *why* he refused to play the "time game" with North Korea.

And Trump said: "I got all the time in the world. I don't have to rush it." Does Trump understand that North Korea is continuing to manufacture nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles while the denuclearization negotiations are stalled? The longer we wait for North Korea to denuclearize, the bigger the problem will be.

On 3 October, Pompeo retreated from the January 2021 deadline:

QUESTION [by Kylie from CBS News]: Hi, Secretary. Question. Can you explain to us a little bit the practical reality of the U.S. terminating the amity with Iran, and just how we'll see that play out? And then secondly, just because we're going to North Korea, is there any timeframe for what the U.S. wants to achieve given that last week we heard President Trump say that they're not — the U.S. is not playing a time game, but you said that you want rapid denuclearization of North Korea completed by January 2021?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Those are entirely consistent with each other. We want it fast, but we're not going to play the time game. My comment about 2021 was not mine. I repeated it, but it was a comment that had been made by the leaders who'd had their inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang. They'd talked about 2021 when they were gathered there, and so I was simply reiterating this as a timeline that they were potentially prepared to agree to.

Michael R. Pompeo, "Remarks to the Media," [U.S. State Dept](#), 3 Oct 2018.

See news reports on 26-27 Sep at: [Associated Press](#)(26Sep); [Washington Post](#)(26Sep); [New York Times](#)(26Sep); [Reuters](#)(27Sep); [The Guardian](#)(27Sep). See news reports on 3-4 Oct at: [Associated Press](#)(3Oct); [The Guardian](#)(4Oct).

My comment is now we have a mess in which North Korea agrees to denuclearize *sometime*, but there is *no* date for this goal. Now we can not determine whether North Korea is making adequate progress toward completely denuclearizing. More importantly, without a specific deadline, North Korea can never breach their agreement(s) to completely denuclearize, because their written promise was only to denuclearize sometime in the future. Instead of specific promises that can be declared true or false, we have vague promises that are not enforceable.

Trump may be protecting himself from accusations of failure when North Korea does not completely denuclearize by January 2021.

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### **North Korea, China, Russia: rogue nations**

On 2 Oct 2018, the [U.S. State Dept](#) announced that Pompeo would again visit Pyongyang on 7 October, when Pompeo would meet with Kim Jong Un. Pompeo will attempt to restart the stalled negotiations on denuclearization, and also arrange the second Kim/Trump summit. [Yonhap](#).

On 4 October, [Yonhap](#) reported that North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui visited Beijing, for discussions with China. On 6 Oct, [Yonhap](#) reported that Choe traveled from Beijing to Moscow, for discussions with Russia and China.

An insightful article in the [South China Morning Post](#) — reprinted by [Politico](#) — suggested that North Korea was attempting to get China and Russia on their side, before denuclearization negotiations resumed. Ending the United Nations economic sanctions on North Korea was a likely main topic of the discussions. Note that sanctions on Russia after it annexed the Crimea and interfered in the 2016 U.S. elections have destroyed U.S.-Russia relations. And Trump is currently [destroying](#) U.S.-China relations. So it is likely that North Korea, China, and Russia will form a gang to make life difficult for Trump.

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## 7 Oct 2018: Pompeo briefly visits Pyongyang

On 7 October, [Yonhap](#) reported that Pompeo arrived in Pyongyang before noon and he will depart for Seoul tonight. [Reuters](#) reported that Pompeo arrived in Seoul at 17:15 Korean time. Later, [Yonhap](#) reported: “Pompeo met with Kim for three and a half hours, which included a 90-minute luncheon, and then flew to Seoul later in the day....” Less than 4 hours is surely *not* adequate time to discuss all of the significant issues.

After arriving in South Korea, Pompeo made various vague assertions of progress from his meeting in Pyongyang. The [U.S. State Dept](#); [Yonhap](#) and [Reuters](#) reported Pompeo announced: “As President Trump said, there are many steps along the way and we took one of them today. It was another step forward. So this is, I think, a good outcome for all of us.” Pompeo's vague statement could have been written *before* his meeting with Kim.

Then Trump tweeted:

.@SecPompeo had a good meeting with Chairman Kim today in Pyongyang. Progress made on Singapore Summit Agreements! I look forward to seeing Chairman Kim again, in the near future.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:42 EDT, 7 Oct 2018.

Notice that Trump does *not* specify the progress that was allegedly made.

Later, the [U.S. State Dept](#) announced: “Chairman Kim invited inspectors to visit the Punggye Ri nuclear test site to confirm that it has been irreversibly dismantled.” Punggye Ri is the mountain where North Korea tested nuclear weapons underground. The announcement did *not* say whether North Korea would accept inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or whether North Korea would accept inspectors from the USA. [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#). My comment is that it would have been better if North Korea had allowed international inspectors at the nuclear weapons test site before and during the explosions in the tunnels on 24 May 2018.

[Yonhap](#) reported that Kim also agreed to allow international inspectors to visit the [Sohae](#) Satellite Launching Station. Note that Kim did *not* agree to have international inspectors at the nuclear reactors at Yongbyon. And, of course, Kim did *not* agree to have international inspectors visit any place at any time, to find secret nuclear weapons sites.

Kim's agreement to international inspectors at the missile test site is *not* new. The Moon/Kim summit Declaration on 19 September 2018 at §5(A) mentions “under the observation of



experts from relevant countries."

Narang Vipin — a professor of political science at MIT, who is an expert on North Korea — dismissed Kim's offer of international inspectors at the nuclear weapons test site.

The real takeaway from this Punggye-ri pledge is that Kim has mastered the art of milking a single cosmetic concession for months to burn clock. We are still talking about Punggye-ri and Sohae 6 months after he pledged to dismantle them. Brilliantly selling the same horse twice.

Narang Vipin, [tweet](#), 13:31 EDT, 7 Oct 2018.

Instead of pushing for denuclearization of North Korea (and risking that North Korea will conceal some nuclear weapons, and risking that North Korea will have secret sites for continuing to manufacture nuclear weapons), Prof. Narang suggests accepting North Korea as a nuclear power.

Pointing out reality — that North Korea is a nuclear weapons power, how do we manage that reality? — is not the enemy of peace. Delusion is the enemy of peace. And pushing on the door of unilateral North Korean disarmament is delusional.

Narang Vipin, [tweet](#), 17:49 EDT, 7 Oct 2018.

Both [NBC News](#) and [Reuters](#) (The Reuters article is reprinted by the [Korea Times](#)) report experts are skeptical that Kim gave any new concessions to Pompeo during their 7 Oct meeting.

Look at the basic requirement in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Section 2 of Resolution 2397 reaffirmed in December 2017 the Security Council's many past Resolutions that North Korea "shall immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner". During the next nine months, North Korea totally failed. Zero nuclear weapons have been abandoned by North Korea. North Korea undertook token, symbolic "dismantlement" at its nuclear weapons test site and missile launch site — just two of its many sites for the manufacture and testing of weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore that alleged dismantlement was neither irreversibly accomplished nor verified by international inspectors. Clearly, North Korea is slowly engaged in tiny, insignificant steps that are propaganda, not denuclearization.

The Singapore Statement, at the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June, specifically says at ¶4, North Korea and the USA "commit to hold follow-on negotiations ... at the earliest possible date". But negotiations quickly stalled. Four months later, there are still *no* tangible results from negotiations. Four months are *not* the "earliest possible date" — North Korea is procrastinating and delaying. Not only does North Korea still possess all of their nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, but also North Korea continues to manufacture more nuclear weapons and more ballistic missiles. A reasonable person would say that North Korea has breached the Singapore Statement, the latest in more than twenty years of false promises by North Korea. Is it time for Trump to recognize that Kim is playing Trump?

A more difficult issue is whether to recognize that denuclearization of North Korea is futile, and accept North Korea as a nation with nuclear weapons. On 8 October 2018, I suggest giving Pompeo another few months to persuade North Korea to denuclearize.

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## 10 Oct 2018: South Korea gets Trumped

On 19 Sep 2018, the [Pyongyang Declaration](#) from a Moon/Kim summit suggested some joint projects that could violate U.N. economic sanctions on North Korea. On 10 October 2018, South Korean Foreign Minister, Kang Kyung-wha, publicly suggested that South Korea could remove unilateral sanctions imposed after North Korea sank a South Korean ship in 2010. [Yonhap](#). Trump arrogantly retorted that South Korea would "do nothing without our approval." [White House](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). Then the South Korean Unification Minister quickly declared that South Korea was *not* considering ending sanctions on North Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#).

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## No Working-Level U.S./North Korea Negotiations

On 23 August 2018, Stephen Biegun was appointed as the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, to do "working-level" negotiations with North Korea. But two months later, North Korea had not yet agreed to "working-level" negotiations with the USA.

Biegun did accompany Pompeo on the brief trip to Pyongyang on 7 October, where Pompeo and Kim agreed to begin the working-level negotiations at some unspecified future date. North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui will negotiate with Biegun. [U.S. State Dept.](#)

On 10 October at the [U.S. State Dept](#) daily press briefing, the Deputy Spokesperson said the working-level negotiations would begin "Hopefully soon. Hopefully soon." On 11 October, [Yonhap](#) reported that "the United States hopes to hold working-level talks with North Korea soon".

North Korea's delay or procrastination on scheduling working-level negotiations is an indication that North Korea is *not* sincere about quick denuclearization.

On 24 October, there was an editorial in *The Korea Herald* subtitled "US, North Korea fail to sustain momentum for reviving denuclearization talks":

It is normal to expect rough sailing and uncertainty when one deals with North Korea. But the recent developments surrounding efforts to denuclearize the country are cause for concern.

One big problem is that the US and North Korea seem to have lost the momentum generated by President Moon Jae-in's visit to Pyongyang last month. Moon's North Korean visit, the first in 11 years by a South Korean president, was followed by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to the North Korean capital.

....

Right after Pompeo's visit [7 Oct], Trump and US officials said a second Trump-Kim meeting would take place "at the earliest possible date," sparking speculation that it might happen before the US midterms [6 Nov]. But soon Trump changed position,

saying the US was “not playing the time game.” Now US media outlets report that US officials foresee the Trump-Kim summit happening no sooner than early next year.

The delay in the Trump-Kim meeting may well be linked to the lack of progress in talks on the key issues — a concrete denuclearization road map from the North and steps by the US to end the Korean War and ease sanctions on the North.

The two key officials in charge of the issues, US representative on North Korea Stephen Biegun and North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui, have yet to sit down for discussions. Pompeo said last week only that he expects to meet with his counterpart next week. The date and location have yet to be announced.

....

Moreover, the US tensions with Russia and China come at a time when the two former communist allies of North Korea are trying to check Washington in relation to the North Korean denuclearization process. As permanent members of the UN Security Council, both Russia and China are already pressuring the council to ease sanctions on the North.

....

This is why all the players, not least the Moon government, which had hoped to get the US and the North to declare the end of the Korean War and achieve substantial progress on denuclearization by the end of the year, should abandon their optimism and instead be patient and cautious.

"No Optimism," [Korea Herald](#), 24 Oct 2018.

Reprinted by [Yonhap](#).

On 25 October 2018, a South Korean newspaper, *JoongAng*, reported on the absence of working-level negotiations.

Pyongyang is not coming up with a time and location for the next U.S.-North high-level talks, a senior South Korean government official said Tuesday [23 Oct], lending to a “frustrating” situation.

John Bolton, the White House national security adviser, told Russia’s Echo Moskvyy radio station Tuesday that he expects the second summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to happen after Jan. 1. That delay of the North-U.S. summit puts a further damper on Seoul’s plans for a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War to take place within this year.

The [South Korean] high-level official familiar with the negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington told reporters that an early end-of-war declaration “depends on when the [North-U.S.] working-level talks start and how in-depth their agreement is.”

He noted that the United States considers a declaration to end the war as “part of a bigger picture” in the denuclearization negotiations, and that details “will become more

concrete during the working-level negotiation process.”

....

But working-level talks between Stephen Biegun, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, and Pyongyang’s Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui have not moved forward since [Pompeo visited Pyongyang on 7 Oct].

This high-level official further said, “What is frustrating is that the United States is prepared to meet them at any time, but North Korea is not giving a definite date and location.”

....

Pyongyang has also been demanding sanctions relief rather than an end-of-war declaration as a corresponding measure from Washington.

"North Korea stalls on next talks with U.S.," [JoongAng](#), 25 Oct 2018.

At the end of December 2018, there still had not been any meeting of working-level negotiations between North Korea and the USA.

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## Second Kim/Trump Summit Postponed

On 23 October 2018, a liberal newspaper in South Korea, Hankyoreh, reminds us that Trump is continuing to postpone the second Kim/Trump summit. Hankyoreh reports:

“What this shows is that the North Korea-US summit schedule is essentially predicated on progress with denuclearization,” said a former diplomat familiar with North Korea-US relations.

....

Some analysts have suggested Washington is using the timeline as leverage to pressure Pyongyang into additional denuclearization steps — suggesting that North Korea could help hasten things by making progress with denuclearization.

Hwang Joon-bum, Yoo Kang-moon, & Park Min-hee, "US continually pushes back timeline for 2nd summit with North Korea," [Hankyoreh](#), 23 Oct 2018.

My own research shows the following detail about the repeated postponements.

**26 Sep 2018** Pompeo was interviewed on CBS News, where he said:

SECRETARY POMPEO: So there will be another summit. The location and date have not been set yet, but we’re working diligently to make sure we get the conditions right so that we can accomplish as much as possible during this summit, but we hope it’ll be soon. I’ll personally be traveling to Pyongyang before too long to continue the work that’s ongoing even today to try and deliver on that.

....

I don't know when the summit will take place. It may happen in October, but more likely sometime after that. It takes a little while to put these together, and we want to make sure we've got the conditions just right so the two leaders can be successful.

"Interview With Norah O'Donnell of CBS News," [U.S. State Dept](#), 26 Sep 2018.

Also on 26 September, Trump said:

So we look forward to our second summit that will take place, I believe, fairly quickly. Secretary of State Pompeo is working on that right now. And they want to have it, and we want to have it. And we'll start the process.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), 26 Sep 2018.

**7 Oct 2018** Trump tweeted:

.@SecPompeo had a good meeting with Chairman Kim today in Pyongyang. Progress made on Singapore Summit Agreements! I look forward to seeing Chairman Kim again, in the near future.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:42 EDT, 7 Oct 2018.

Also on 7 October, the U.S. State Department spokeswoman wrote:

President Trump looks forward to continuing to build upon the trust established with Chairman Kim in Singapore and anticipates meeting again soon.

Heather Nauert, "Secretary Pompeo's Meetings in Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea," [U.S. State Dept](#), 7 Oct 2018.

**9 Oct 2018** Reuters reported:

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday his second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would be held after U.S. congressional elections on Nov. 6.

Speaking to reporters as he flew to Iowa for a political rally, Trump said: "It'll be after the midterms. I just can't leave now."

"Trump says next summit with North Korea's Kim to come after November U.S. elections," [Reuters](#), 9 Oct 2018.

**19 Oct 2018** Reuters reported:

The next summit meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is likely to happen early next year, a senior administration official said on Friday [19 Oct].

"Next summit for Trump, North Korea's Kim likely after first of year: senior U.S. official," [Reuters](#), 19 Oct 2018.

On 23 Oct 2018, United Press International reported:

The United States is slowing the pace of negotiations, and the highly anticipated summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un has been officially postponed to 2019.

Speaking on Echo Moskvy radio station in Russia on Tuesday [23 Oct], White House

national security adviser John Bolton said the second summit will take place after Jan. 1.

"Report: North Korea ambassador lobbies for sanctions relief at U.N.," [UPI](#), 23 Oct 2018.

On 7 Nov 2018, Trump said his second summit with Kim would occur early in 2019.

THE PRESIDENT: .... But we're very happy how it's going with North Korea. We think it's going fine. We're in no rush. We're in no hurry. The sanctions are on.

QUESTION: You still expect to meet Kim Jong Un?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Listen. Excuse me. Wait.

QUESTION: Sorry, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: The sanctions are on. The missiles have stopped. The rockets have stopped. The hostages are home. The great heroes have been coming home.

....

But we're not in any rush at all. There's no rush whatsoever. You know, before I got here, they were dealing with this for over 70 years. And I guess, on a nuclear front, for 25 years. That's a long time.

I've been there; I probably left Singapore four or five months ago. And we made more progress in that four or five months than they've made in 70 years. And nobody else could have done what I've done.

But I'll say this — I'll say this very simply: We're in no rush. The sanctions are on. And whenever it is — but that meeting [between Pompeo and Kim Yong-chol] is going to be rescheduled.

QUESTION: That meeting — but about your meeting with Kim Jong Un, sir, will it happen in the next months?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime next year, I would say.

QUESTION: Sometime next year?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime early next year. Yeah.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference After Midterm Elections," [White House](#), 7 Nov 2018.

Notice that Trump turned a simple question about when he would next meet Kim Jong Un into boasting about Trump's accomplishment: "And nobody else could have done what I've done."

Also notice that Trump says "we're very happy how it's going with North Korea" and Trump boasts of "progress". Actually, negotiations stalled soon after the 12 June 2018 Kim/Trump

summit, and working-level negotiations on denuclearization never began. There has been *no* significant progress: North Korea still possesses all of their nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and North Korea continues to manufacture more weapons.

On 1 December 2018, Trump told journalists that the second Kim/Trump summit is likely to occur in January or February 2019: "We're going to do one [summit] fairly — you know, into January, February, I think. We're getting along very well. We have a good relationship." [White House](#); [Reuters](#); [Yonhap](#).

On 4 December 2018, the Presidential National Security Advisor, John Bolton, publicly admitted that the North Koreans had failed to begin denuclearization. But Bolton said that was why a second Kim/Trump summit was needed. *The New York Times* reported:

President Trump plans to hold a second summit meeting early next year with Kim Jong-un, even though North Korea has failed to follow through with promises to start dismantling its nuclear weapons program, John R. Bolton, the national security adviser, said on Tuesday [4 Dec].

"They have not lived up to the commitments so far," Mr. Bolton said. "That's why I think the president thinks another summit is likely to be productive."

Mr. Bolton was referring to a pledge that the North Korean leader made in June at his first face-to-face meeting with Mr. Trump in Singapore. At the time, Mr. Kim said North Korea would work toward "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

....

But Mr. Bolton made clear that the next summit meeting would have to set a schedule for North Korea's compliance.

Edward Wong and David E. Sanger, "Trump to Meet With Kim Jong-un, Despite North Korea's Lapses, Bolton Says," [New York Times](#), 4 Dec 2018.

Bolton's statement was largely ignored in the USA, where the dominant news was the funeral of George Herbert Walker Bush. The [South] Korean Broadcasting System reported:

North Korea is not keeping up with its promises made during the Washington-Pyongyang summit in June.

U.S. President Donald Trump's security adviser, John Bolton, says that's why a second meeting should be held next year.

[Sound bite: White House Nat'l Security Adviser John Bolton]

"They have not lived up to the commitments so far. That's why I think the President thinks that another summit is likely to be productive."

Bolton made the remarks Tuesday at The Wall Street Journal's annual CEO Council conference in Washington. He added that the U.S. would press ahead with a second meeting shortly after the start of the new year in the hope of making further progress.

Following his first meeting with Trump in Singapore, North Korean leader Kim Jong-



un said he would work for the “complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.” Kim Bum-soo, "Bolton: 2nd Trump-Kim Talks Pursued as N. Korea Hasn't Lived Up To Commitments," [KBS](#), 5 Dec 2018.

On 6 December, Bolton was interviewed by National Public Radio, which provided the following transcript:

[QUESTION by Steve Inskeep:] One other thing I want to ask about, ambassador, and it's issue in which China is deeply implicated, and that is North Korea. You said the other day that you thought a second summit between Kim Jong Un and President Trump was needed, and your reason was because North Korea did not keep commitments that it made in the first summit. If they're not keeping their commitments from this first summit, what makes it seem that a second summit would be productive?

BOLTON: Well, I think President Trump is trying to give the North Koreans a chance to live up to the commitments they made at the Singapore summit. He's held the door open for them. They need to walk through it and this is one more chance for Kim Jong Un, who is the, really, the only decision maker that matters in the North Korean system, to deliver on what he said in Singapore. And that, it's possible I think sometime after the first of the year.

QUESTION: But why would you reward him with another summit if the first summit didn't work out?

BOLTON: Well, I don't think the president views it as rewarding him. The issue is not simply what North Korea says. We've heard them say for decades that they're willing to give up their nuclear program. What we need to see is performance. And when we get performance then we can look at removing the economic sanctions.

QUESTION: And when you say one more chance, would that be a last chance then, the second summit?

BOLTON: Well, I'm not going to prejudge what the president may do. We don't have Kim Jong Un in the room yet. And we need to see that happen. We had a meeting scheduled. Secretary of State Pompeo had meetings scheduled right after our election to begin the preparations for the next summit. The North Koreans canceled.

"Transcript: NPR's Interview National Security Adviser John Bolton," [NPR](#), 6 Dec 2018.

I am concerned that Trump is too ignorant of facts and history of North Korea's development of nuclear weapons to be a reliable negotiator. As explained [above](#), the first Kim/Trump summit was a disaster, which produced an inadequate written statement. Trump does *not* deserve a second chance.

Furthermore, a Kim/Trump summit would be a propaganda victory for North Korea, as they show the world that North Korea is important enough that the president of the USA will travel halfway around the world to meet Kim. Any obsequious remarks by Trump (e.g., Trump [loves](#) Kim) will increase the North Korean propaganda victory.

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## Reconnecting Railroads and Roads

At the end of August 2018, there was an aborted attempt to test North Korean railways, as described [above](#).

After negotiations in Panmunjom on 15 Oct 2018 on implementation of the Moon/Kim summit agreement, [Yonhap](#) reported that work will begin in late November or early December 2018 to connect roads and railways in North Korea and South Korea. On 16 Oct, [Reuters](#) reported that the U.S. Government was concerned about South Korea easing sanctions on North Korea.

My concern is that reconnecting roads will make it easier for North Korea to put a nuclear weapon in a truck, drive to Seoul, and detonate it precisely where they desire. Using trucks to deliver nuclear weapons avoids the unreliable North Korean missiles with untested guidance systems and defective re-entry vehicles.

Trump and Pompeo want economic sanctions on North Korea to remain until North Korea completely and finally denuclearizes, and the irreversible denuclearization is verified by international inspectors. In contrast, North Korea would like to be rewarded for each incremental step in denuclearization by removing some economic sanctions. South Korea's position on sanctions is poorly defined and continues to change, but two things are clear. First, South Korea wants to immediately invest in North Korea (e.g., road and railway projects), which requires waiver of some sanctions. Second, South Korea wants to "encourage" more rapid denuclearization by removing some sanctions.

So on 15-20 October 2018, South Korean president Moon visited Paris, Rome, Brussels, and Denmark to persuade European nations to support easing of U.N. sanctions on North Korea. [Korea Times](#); [Yonhap](#)(Paris); [Yonhap](#)(U.K.); [Yonhap](#)(Germany).

Moon's visit to Europe is clearly intended to get allies to oppose the U.S. policy of continuing all economic sanctions until North Korea completely denuclearizes. Fortunately, Moon failed to convince any European leader to relax sanctions on North Korea.

On 24 November 2018, the United Nations Security Council granted an exemption to sanctions on North Korea for surveys on railroads in North Korea. [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 30 November 2018, a South Korean train departed on the railroad along the west coast of North Korea, in the beginning of an inspection of railroads in North Korea. [Yonhap](#); On 5 December 2018, the train returned to South Korea. [Yonhap](#).

On Saturday, 8 December 2018, South Korean rail inspectors departed by bus along the east coast of North Korea, in the beginning of a 10-day inspection of the railroad line along eastern North Korea. The inspectors used a bus, because the railroad near the South Korean border is in poor condition. [Yonhap](#). On 17 December, the inspectors returned to South Korea in a bus. [Yonhap](#). On 18 December, the train returned to South Korea. [Yonhap](#).

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## November 2018

### North Korea threatens to resume development of nuclear weapons

On 2 November, the North Korean Foreign Ministry threatened to resume development of nuclear weapons if the USA does not end economic sanctions. The [Associated Press](#) reports that "... the North has been playing hardball since the summits, insisting that sanctions should be lifted before any progress in nuclear talks, which fueled doubts about whether Kim would ever deal away a nuclear program he may see as his strongest guarantee of survival."

See also: [NBC News](#); [CBS News](#); [Washington Post](#); [Korea Times](#)(AP); [Reuters](#).

My comment is that it is increasingly obvious that North Korea never intended to denuclearize. What North Korea really wanted was bountiful economic benefits from South Korea and the USA in exchange for North Korea's insignificant and unverified steps toward denuclearization.

On Sunday, 4 November, Pompeo was interviewed by CBS News:

QUESTION: Let me ask you a question about North Korea. You have talks this week. North Korea is saying they might restart their nuclear program if the U.S. does not start lifting sanctions. Is it still the U.S. position that North Korea will not see any economic sanctions lift until there is complete denuclearization?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So, John, I will. I'll be in New York City at the end of this week meeting with my counterpart, Kim Yong-chol. I expect we'll make some real progress, including an effort to make sure that the summit between our two leaders can take place, where we can make substantial steps towards denuclearization.

John, we have to remember and the American people need to remember the North Koreans haven't launched a missile, haven't conducted a nuclear test. They allowed the return of American remains. We've had success in just the handful of months since this past June, and we continue to make good progress. I'm confident that we'll advance the ball again this week when I'm in New York City.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you said that North Korea will not see any economic sanctions lifted until it has demonstrated complete denuclearization. Is that still your position?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It is. Not only complete denuclearization, but our capacity to verify that that has taken place is also a prerequisite to lifting economic sanctions.

"Interview With John Dickerson of CBS Face the Nation," [U.S. State Dept.](#), 4 Nov 2018.

North Korea is obviously correct that economic sanctions are not compatible with friendly relations. But before the international community can have friendly relations with North Korea, the North Koreans need to completely denuclearize, as required in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions. One of the reasons for denuclearization first is that North Korea has a long history of abrogating international agreements. North Korea has

mastered the art of deceit, procrastination, and bad-faith negotiations.

North Korea threatened to resume development of nuclear weapons. They can not "resume" development, because they never stopped developing and building more nuclear weapons and more ballistic missiles.

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### **Kim Yong-chol abruptly cancels meeting with Pompeo**

On 4 November, it was announced that Pompeo and Kim Yong-chol were scheduled to meet in New York City on Thursday, 8 November 2018. [U.S. State Dept](#)(4Nov); [CBS News](#)(4Nov); [U.S. State Dept](#)(5Nov); [Voice of America](#); [Yonhap](#).

But then the [Washington Post](#) reported that a Korean-language webpage at the [Korean Broadcasting Service](#) said Kim Yong-chol canceled his airplane flight from Beijing to New York City "early on Tuesday". See also: [KBS](#); [Korea Herald](#); [Yonhap](#).

The spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, Heather Nauert, announced the cancelation minutes after midnight on Tuesday, 6 November.

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo's meeting with officials from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, scheduled for this week in New York, will now take place at a later date. We will reconvene when our respective schedules permit. Ongoing conversations continue to take place. The United States remains focused on fulfilling the commitments agreed to by President Trump and Chairman Kim at the Singapore Summit in June.

Heather Nauert, "Meeting With DPRK Officials," [U.S. State Dept](#), 7 Nov 2018.

Ms. Nauert gave *no* reason for the abrupt cancelation of the meeting. She insisted that "ongoing conversations" would continue between North Korea and the USA, as if those "conversations" were a substitute for the Pompeo/Kim meeting.

A [Washington Post](#) article has the headline: "Trump's North Korea diplomacy quietly stalls". In my opinion, the diplomatic negotiations stalled soon after the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June 2018 — serious negotiations never began. Meanwhile, Trump and Pompeo pretend that negotiations are progressing normally.

On 8 November, journalists reported that the U.S. Envoy Stephen Biegun told his South Korean colleague that North Korea had cancelled the Pompeo/Kim meeting. [Associated Press](#); [Yonhap](#). On the night of 8 Nov, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations confirmed that North Korea had cancelled the meeting. [Associated Press](#).

North Korea has a long history of canceling meetings at the last minute, another reason why they are an unreliable and unreasonably difficult negotiating partner. For previous abrupt cancelations by North Korea, see above at [16 May 2018](#); [12 July 2018](#). Further, sometime during 13-19 May 2018, the North Koreans failed to appear for a scheduled logistics meeting in Singapore, as part of the planning for the Kim/Trump summit.

On 8 November, [CNN](#) reports that North Korea is "really angry" with the U.S. failure to

remove any economic sanctions.

On 11 November, [The Hill](#) reports: "The cancelation of a highly anticipated meeting between Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and North Korean officials has experts worried the quest for Pyongyang's denuclearization is quietly unraveling." *The Hill* quotes Harry Kazianis, director of defense studies at the Center for the National Interest, as fearing that we will return to the threat of nuclear war to solve the North Korean problem.

Since the Kim/Trump summit in June 2018, much of the mainstream news media has been reporting Trump's (and Pompeo's) delusion that progress is being made in negotiations with North Korea. But on Monday, 19 November, National Public Radio (NPR) had a [news article](#) titled: "North Korea Denuclearization Plan Has Gone Nowhere Since Trump-Kim Summit". NPR cites experts as saying the source of the problem is the Singapore Declaration that says "the U.S. will normalize relations with North Korea in exchange for 'denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.' But it does not specify a process or even an order in which these goals would occur."

Following a summit between South Korean president Moon and Kim Jong, a "liaison office" (i.e., a de facto South Korean embassy) was opened on 14 Sep 2018 in Kaesong, North Korea. But on 4 December 2018, Reuters reported:

North Korea itself has been an unpredictable partner. Discussions through the Kaesong office have been few and far between, with Pyongyang's negotiators often failing to show up for scheduled weekly meetings without notice, [South Korean] Unification Ministry officials say.

Hyonhee Shin, "Growing split in Seoul over North Korea threatens Korea detente, nuclear talks," [Reuters](#), 4 Dec 2018.

It seems that Kim Jong Un is enthusiastic about high-level summits that show the world the importance of North Korea, but *not* interested in detailed negotiations on either denuclearization or unification. Kim will insincerely say whatever he needs to say to collect praise for his professed intent to denuclearize.

As of 31 December 2018, the canceled 8 November meeting has *not* been rescheduled. That two-month delay casts doubt on North Korea's intent to negotiate with Pompeo.

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## more North Korea deception revealed

On Monday, 12 November 2018, *The New York Times* publicized a new finding by the Beyond Parallel program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

North Korea is moving ahead with its ballistic missile program at 16 hidden bases that have been identified in new commercial satellite images, a network long known to American intelligence agencies but left undiscussed as President Trump claims to have neutralized the North's nuclear threat.

The satellite images suggest that the North has been engaged in a great deception: It has offered to dismantle a major launching site — a step it began, then halted — while

continuing to make improvements at more than a dozen others that would bolster launches of conventional and nuclear warheads.

....

Weapons experts, as well as [Mr. Pompeo](#), say that North Korea, despite engaging in denuclearization talks, continues to produce the fissile material that fuels nuclear arms.

The North is believed to have about 40 to 60 nuclear warheads.

David E. Sanger & William J. Broad, "In North Korea, Missile Bases Suggest a Great Deception," [New York Times](#), 12 Nov 2018.

*The New York Times* article exposes Trump as a fool for trusting Kim Jong Un's promise to completely denuclearize. At the end of July 2018, I wrote a section in this essay on [Procrastination, Deceit, and Bad-Faith](#) by North Korea. The 12 Nov disclosure adds more evidence to North Korea's continuing deceit.

The report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which was the basis for the article in *The Times*, is available [here](#). The authors of the report identified 13 previously secret missile sites, and they suspect that an estimated 7 other secret missile sites exist. The authors explain: "Missile operating bases are not launch facilities. While missiles could be launched from within them in an emergency, Korean People's Army (KPA) operational procedures call for missile launchers to disperse from the bases to pre-surveyed or semi-prepared launch sites for operations."

Later on 12 November, [Reuters](#); [The Associated Press](#); [The Washington Post](#); and [Yonhap](#) also reported on the hidden North Korean missile sites.

On 13 November, Trump reacted to the disclosure of deceit by North Korea.

The story in the New York Times concerning North Korea developing missile bases is inaccurate. We fully know about the sites being discussed, nothing new — and nothing happening out of the normal. Just more Fake News. I will be the first to let you know if things go bad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:07 EST, 13 Nov 2018.

Trump does *not* say how the news article is "inaccurate". Why criticize *The New York Times* when the important facts are from the Center for Strategic and International Studies? I agree that deceit by North Korea is "normal". This is *not* "Fake News", although it may have annoyed Trump. Negotiations on denuclearization went bad in July 2018, but Trump still insists that progress is being made. Sometime Trump will need to recognize the reality that North Korea is *not* going to denuclearize.

On 14 November, [Yonhap](#) reports that the South Korean spy agency told a closed-door meeting of South Korea's parliament that "Nuclear and missile-related activity is believed to be going on even after the North-U.S. summit. It is presumed that activities like nuclear development and nuclear warhead miniaturization are still going on."

On 22 November, the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna issued a [statement](#) that North Korea is expanding operations at its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon. [Reuters](#).



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## North Korea tests new weapon

On 16 November, North Korea announced that Kim Jong Un had personally inspected the test of an unspecified, new "ultramodern tactical weapon". South Korea and the USA are scrambling to determine what kind of weapons was tested. Kim said that his father had led the early development of this new weapon, which means that the weapon has been in development for at least seven years. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#); [Yonhap](#); [New York Times](#).

On 18 November, [Reuters](#) reports that the new weapon is part of the "modernisation" of North Korea's military.

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## Pompeo calls for "patience" with North Korea

There has been a recent dearth of information about the U.S/North Korea negotiations, so a 25 November 2018 interview with Pompeo is worth quoting:

QUESTION: Can you talk about the working group that has been set up by the U.S. and South Korea on dealings with North Korea?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes. It's important as we work to denuclearize North Korea, as we work to fulfill the promises that were made between President Trump and Chairman Kim, there are lots of elements to them. One of them is the relationship between South Korea and North Korea, and the working group is designed to make sure that that effort, that effort to restore peace on the peninsula, moves in parallel with the denuclearization discussions. We are in lock step with our Republic of Korea partners and we want to make sure we stay that way.

QUESTION: So it's really two issues that are being discussed here, the working group with South Korea, making sure you're working together, relations between the North and South, and then also the denuclearization.

SECRETARY POMPEO: That's right. Yes, sir, that's exactly correct.

QUESTION: Of course, some strong statements recently from North Korea, talk about new tactical weapons they have. What are the next steps on that front?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we think we know what it is they're referring to there; we're pretty sure. I can't say much. Know this: We've known this was going to be a lengthy process. This administration came in with a very difficult risk from North Korea. The President made the decision to have a summit with Chairman Kim, and I've been tasked with negotiating its resolution. It will take time. We are prepared to be patient, but all the while — all the while that we're working to make sure that North Korea has continued to stop its missile tests, continued to stop its nuclear tests, the economic sanctions which have caused North Korea to engage with us will remain in



place.

Michael R. Pompeo, "Interview With George Lawson of KFDI News," [U.S. State Dept](#), 25 Nov 2018.

Pompeo says "we are prepared to be patient" while the economic sanctions remain in place. But the sanctions are being violated on a large scale, with the help of China and Russia. And North Korea is continuing to build more nuclear weapons and more ballistic missiles, while Pompeo and Trump are patient. In my opinion, patience is *not* a good reason for ignoring the failure of negotiations with North Korea during the past five months — not only a failure to produce results, but also a failure to have meetings (with three exceptions by Pompeo on 6-7 July, 26 Sep, and 7 Oct 2018).

Pompeo does not mention what will happen when North Korea resumes testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The U.S. will then probably seek stronger economic sanctions on North Korea at the United Nations Security Council.

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## No Negotiations in November 2018

On 28 November, the [Korea Times](#) tells us that high-level negotiations between Pompeo and North Korea will be again postponed at the request of North Korea. I say "again", because North Korea previously canceled a meeting with Pompeo that was scheduled for [8 Nov](#).

On 23 August 2018, Stephen Biegun was appointed as the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, to do "working-level" negotiations with North Korea. But three months later, North Korea had not agreed to "working-level" negotiations with the USA.

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## December 2018

### 30 Nov 2018: Moon/Trump summit

On 30 November, South Korean president Moon and Trump met for only 30 minutes on the margins of the G-20 meeting in Argentina. [CheongWaDae](#). A mere half-hour is not enough time to discuss all of the details of the North Korean problem. However, given Trump's tenuous grasp of facts and Trump's ignorance of the history of the North Korean problem, a half-hour is enough for Trump.

On 2 December 2018, Reuters reported that Moon announced:

Donald Trump wants North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to know that he likes him and will fulfil his wishes, South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said on Sunday [2 Dec], a day after meeting the U.S. president at an economic summit in Argentina.

....

"The message [from Trump to Kim] is that President Trump has very favourable views toward Chairman Kim and he likes him," Moon told reporters aboard a flight from

Argentina to New Zealand, where he started a three-day state visit on Sunday.

“As such, he asked me to tell Chairman Kim that he wants to implement the rest of their agreement together and he will fulfil Chairman Kim’s wishes.”

Hyonhee Shin, "Trump wants Kim to know he likes him and will fulfil his wishes, South Korean leader says," [Reuters](#), 21:10 GMT, 2 Dec 2018.

Yonhap reported the same news:

U.S. President Donald Trump is ready to give everything he promised to North Korea should the communist state faithfully implement its denuclearization steps, South Korean President Moon Jae-in has said.

Moon said Trump asked him to relay such a message to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in their summit held Friday on the sidelines of the Group of 20 meeting in Argentina.

"And the message was that President Trump has a very friendly view of Chairman Kim and that he likes him, and so he wishes Chairman Kim would implement the rest of their agreement and that he would make what Chairman Kim wants come true," Moon said while meeting with reporters aboard Air Force One en route to New Zealand.

Byun Duk-kun, "Trump says he will give everything Kim wants following denuclearization: Moon," [Yonhap](#), 3 Dec 2018.

*The Washington Post* reported:

President Trump has a “very friendly view” of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and will make his wishes “come true” if he gives up his nuclear weapons, according to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, although Moon also cautions that sanctions will remain in place in the meantime.

....

“The message [from Trump to Kim] was that President Trump has a very friendly view of Chairman Kim and that he likes him, and so he wishes Chairman Kim would implement the rest of their agreement and that he would make what Chairman Kim wants come true,” Moon told reporters on his presidential plane over the weekend.

Simon Denyer, "Trump wants to grant Kim’s wishes, South Korea says ahead of new round of summits," [Washington Post](#), 3 Dec 2018.

Trump confuses (1) personal friendship with Kim and (2) accomplishing denuclearization of North Korea. And "fulfil Kim's wishes" is a broad statement that is likely to be misunderstood by Kim.

*After* North Korea denuclearizes, North Korea will still be a pariah nation because of their atrocious human rights record, their continuing cyberwarfare, and other misconduct.

The word "denuclearization" literally means removal of all nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula. But in the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions, "denuclearization" *also* means removal of all ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and

biological weapons from North Korea. While there is occasional mention of removal of all ballistic missiles, the subject of chemical and biological weapons is being ignored. I worry that someday Pompeo will tell Kim: "By the way, before we can remove sanctions, you must also destroy *all* of your chemical and biological weapons."

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### **Another North Korean Secret Missile Site**

[Above](#), it was revealed that North Korea had at least 13 secret missile sites.

On 5 December 2018, CNN revealed another secret missile site in North Korea.

New satellite images obtained exclusively by CNN reveal North Korea has significantly expanded a key long-range missile base located in the mountainous interior of the country, offering yet another reminder that diplomatic talks with the US have done little to prevent Kim Jong Un from pursuing his promise to mass produce and deploy the existing types of nuclear warheads in his arsenal.

The satellite imagery offers evidence that the Yeongjeo-dong missile base and a nearby, previously unreported site remain active and have been continuously upgraded, underscoring the reality of just how far apart Washington and Pyongyang are on the issue of denuclearization despite five months of sporadic talks.

While the base at Yeongjeo-dong has long been known to US intelligence agencies and analysts, researchers at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey told CNN that the images reveal construction on a new facility just seven miles away from the older site that had not been previously publicly identified.

....

"Construction on the previously unidentified site has continued even after the Singapore Summit" between Kim and President Donald Trump in June, Jeffrey Lewis of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, one of the analysts that identified the site, told CNN. "Whatever Kim says about his desire for denuclearization, North Korea continues to produce and deploy nuclear armed missiles."

The site's unique location makes it a strong candidate to receive North Korea's newest long-range missiles, including those that can carry nuclear weapons and can strike the United States, according to Lewis and his colleague David Schmerler.

Zachary Cohen, "New satellite images reveal activity at unidentified North Korean missile base," [CNN](#), 5 Dec 2018, updated 02:03 EST on 6 Dec 2018.

Yonhap News Agency in South Korea reported:

North Korea has "significantly" expanded a key long-range missile base, while denuclearization negotiations with the United States have stalled, CNN reported Wednesday, citing new satellite imagery.

It's the latest in a series of reports suggesting that North Korea continues to develop its missile programs short of an agreed plan with the U.S. to dismantle them.  
"N. Korea 'significantly' expands key missile base: report," [Yonhap](#), 6 Dec 2018.

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## 14 Dec 2018: Trump's Progress Report

On Friday, 14 December 2018, Trump issued a progress report on North Korea.

Many people have asked how we are doing in our negotiations with North Korea — I always reply by saying we are in no hurry, there is wonderful potential for great economic success for that country....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:17 EST, 14 Dec 2018.

....Kim Jong Un sees it better than anyone and will fully take advantage of it for his people. We are doing just fine!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:17 EST, 14 Dec 2018.

My comments are that Kim Jong Un is doing just fine. Kim has a new Rolls-Royce limousine. Kim is continuing to produce more nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Notice that Trump does *not* answer the question: "how we are doing in our negotiations with North Korea". Those negotiations are nonexistent. Negotiations stalled soon after the Kim/Trump summit in June 2018.

In summary, there is *no* progress, and North Korea is worsening the problem by producing more weapons.

Trump now says "we are in no hurry". That is consistent with Trump's removal of deadlines on [26 Sep 2018](#). Trump said on [7 Nov 2018](#): "We're in no hurry." It is also consistent with Pompeo's [25 Nov 2018](#) call for "patience".

There are at least three big flaws in Trump's strategy on North Korea:

1. North Korea — with the help of China and Russia — is successfully [evading](#) the economic sanctions. In 2018, Kim has acquired a new Mercedes car and a new Rolls-Royce limousine, and North Korea continues to import oil in violation of U.N. sanctions.
2. Trump never convinced Kim to stop producing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.
3. Trump never convinced Kim to allow international inspectors to verify that production of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles has stopped.

Neither stopping production nor international inspectors are mentioned in the inadequate Joint Statement at the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June 2018.

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## 24 Dec 2018: Trump's Progress Report

On 24 December, Trump issued another vague progress report.

Christmas Eve briefing with my team working on North Korea — Progress being made. Looking forward to my next summit with Chairman Kim!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:14 EST, 24 Dec 2018.

Trump does *not* specify what progress is being made. A half-year after the first Kim/Trump summit, North Korea has not yet begun denuclearization.

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## 17 Dec 2018: Is North Korea Impatient with USA?

On Monday, 17 December 2018, Yonhap News Agency in South Korea reported news that was largely ignored in the USA.

After months of restraint, North Korea is gradually shifting gears up in its criticism of the United States over their deadlocked denuclearization negotiations, apparently signaling that its patience is wearing thin.

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The nuclear talks, however, reached an impasse over Pyongyang's demand for sanctions relief in exchange for the denuclearization measures it has taken so far and Washington's insistence on maintaining sanctions until the North takes further denuclearization measures.

With no signs of a resolution in sight, the North has begun increasing its complaints and criticism step by step, with its official news agency issuing a commentary outlining Pyongyang's position on the impasse on Thursday [13 Dec], and then a foreign ministry-affiliated analyst making a similar statement on Sunday [16 Dec].

The upgrading of the level of such statements could be designed to pressure the United States by showing that Pyongyang's patience is wearing thin as it waits for Washington to take corresponding measures, such as sanctions relief, in exchange for its denuclearization steps.

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Should the U.S. think it can force the North to give up nuclear weapons through sanctions and pressure, it will "block the path to denuclearization on the Korean peninsula forever — a result desired by no one," the statement said.

"N. Korea shifting gears up in criticism of U.S. in sign of thinning patience," [Yonhap](#), 17 Dec 2018.

There was a similar article in *The Korea Times*:

The current stalemate between the United States and North Korea in their denuclearization talks shows no signs of abating, as both sides continue to engage in a

war of nerves.

The outlook for their dialogue is apparently darkening since the U.S. slapped heightened human rights sanctions on the North last week. This also bodes ill for their negotiations over the proposed second meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

North Korea criticized the move, saying it "may put a permanent end" to the regime's denuclearization.

"It is a big misjudgment for Washington to believe that the intensified pressure can make Pyongyang scrap nuclear weapons," the North's state-run Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a statement Sunday [16 Dec].

Lee Min-hyung, "US-NK stalemate likely to continue," [Korea Times](#), 17 Dec 2018.

Reuters reported:

North Korea on Sunday [16 Dec] condemned the U.S. administration for stepping up sanctions and pressure on the nuclear-armed country, warning of a return to "exchanges of fire" and that disarming Pyongyang could be blocked forever.

The North's stinging response came after the United States said on Monday it had introduced sanctions on three North Korean officials, including a top aide to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, for alleged human rights abuses.

Denuclearising North Korea has made little progress since Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump met in Singapore in June in a historic summit. The two sides have yet to reschedule working-level talks between U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and senior North Korean official Kim Yong Chol, which were cancelled abruptly in November.

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If the U.S. administration believed that heightened sanctions and pressure would force Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons, "it will count as (its) greatest miscalculation, and it will block the path to denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula forever — a result desired by no one," according to the [North Korea's foreign ministry] statement.

Hyunjoo Jin & Josh Smith, "North Korea condemns U.S. sanctions, warns denuclearisation at risk," [Reuters](#), 10:00 GMT, 17 Dec 2018.

"Block the path to denuclearization ... forever" is typical North Korean hyperbole and hysteria, and should not be taken literally.

On 20 December 2018, the Associated Press reported:

North Korea said it will never unilaterally give up its nuclear weapons unless the United States first removes what Pyongyang called a nuclear threat. The surprisingly blunt statement jars with Seoul's rosier presentation of the North Korean position and could rattle the fragile trilateral diplomacy to defuse a nuclear crisis that last year had

many fearing war.

The statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency comes as the United States and North Korea struggle over the sequencing of the denuclearization that Washington wants and the removal of international sanctions desired by Pyongyang. It also raises credibility problems for the liberal South Korean government, which has claimed that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is genuinely interested in negotiating away his nuclear weapons as Seoul tries to sustain a positive atmosphere for dialogue.

The comments may also be seen as proof of what outside skeptics have long said: that Kim will never voluntarily relinquish an arsenal he sees as a stronger guarantee of survival than whatever security assurances the United States might provide. The statement suggests North Korea will eventually demand the United States withdraw or significantly reduce the 28,500 American troops stationed in South Korea, a major sticking point in any disarmament deal.

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But North Korea for decades has been pushing a concept of denuclearization that bears no resemblance to the American definition, with Pyongyang vowing to pursue nuclear development until the United States removes its troops and the nuclear umbrella defending South Korea and Japan. In Thursday's [20 Dec] statement, the North made clear it's sticking to its traditional stance on denuclearization. It accused Washington of twisting what had been agreed on in Singapore and driving post-summit talks into an impasse.

"The United States must now recognize the accurate meaning of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and especially, must study geography," the statement said.

"When we talk about the Korean Peninsula, it includes the territory of our republic and also the entire region of (South Korea) where the United States has placed its invasive force, including nuclear weapons. When we talk about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, it means the removal of all sources of nuclear threat, not only from the South and North but also from areas neighboring the Korean Peninsula," the statement said.

The United States removed its tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea in the 1990s. Washington and Seoul have not responded to the North Korean statement.

North Korea's reiteration of its long-standing position on denuclearization could prove to be a major setback for diplomacy, which was revived early this year following a series of provocative nuclear and missile tests that left Kim and Trump spending most of 2017 exchanging personal insults and war threats. The statement could jeopardize a second Trump-Kim summit as the United States may have difficulty negotiating further if the North ties the future of its nukes to the U.S. military presence in the South, analysts said.

Kim Tong-Hyung, "N. Korea insists US act first before it gives up nukes," [Associated Press](#),



21 Dec 2018.

See also [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [Korea Times](#).

My comment is that negotiations normally involve the parties agreeing to do something that they have the legal right to do — or the legal right to refrain from doing. But in the case of denuclearization of North Korea, the North Korean government has *no* legal right to develop or possess nuclear weapons. Numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions demand that North Korea stop producing, testing, and possessing nuclear weapons. There are *no* United Nations Security Council Resolutions that demand that the U.S. Government stop possessing nuclear weapons. So I believe that the North Korean government is *wrong* to assert that "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" requires the U.S. to remove nuclear weapons from U.S. Navy ships near Korea, and from Japan and Guam.

On 20 December 2018, [Yonhap](#) News Agency in South Korea reported that the U.S. Government is considering revitalizing denuclearization negotiations by providing humanitarian aid to North Korea.

On 21 December 2018, Pompeo was interviewed by National Public Radio. Here is what Pompeo said about North Korea:

QUESTION: Let me ask about another subject. Has North Korea's Kim Jong-un let you down?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We've known from the very first trip that I took when I was in a previous role that the challenge of denuclearizing North Korea was not one that would be something that would be easy or without bumps in the road or would occur in a way that was like instant pudding. The world doesn't quite work that way.

We have diplomatically, relentlessly worked to support the President's mission statement, which is to denuclearize North Korea. We got the commitment from Chairman Kim. We've made some progress. There remains a long ways to go, but we are hard at even today.

QUESTION: But they haven't agreed to give an accounting of their nuclear weapons, which is something you wanted, and as time passes they're beginning to get concessions. North and South Korea are talking about reopening roads and railroads. The United States is working to loosen travel restrictions. North Korea is getting benefits without giving things up.

SECRETARY POMPEO: The North Koreans have not suffered an economic sanctions regime like the one that the Trump administration has imposed and continues to impose ever.

QUESTION: Will —

SECRETARY POMPEO: Ever, Steve. I mean, you say things and they're just unfounded, Steve. You say we're going to loosen travel restrictions when, if you read the statement very clearly, we're working to make sure that humanitarian assistance

can be delivered.

QUESTION: It is a narrow —

SECRETARY POMPEO: It is right — it's in the statement, Steve. Don't read half of it. Read it all.

QUESTION: I read it all.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's important because this has deep connotations. You're suggesting to your listeners that somehow we're relaxing the economic sanctions campaign. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth of the matter is that we are very consistent with what we've done before, making sure that where there is real need, real humanitarian need there, that we don't deny that to the people of North Korea. And sometimes it takes getting an American to be able to travel in there to achieve that, and where that's the case we want to facilitate that.

QUESTION: I think it is fair to say they, however, have been evasive. They've been canceling meetings with your diplomats. Has Kim Jong-un let you down?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's been a great process. They're not firing rockets. They're not conducting nuclear tests. We have a ways to go, and we will continue to work to achieve the President's agenda.

QUESTION: The second summit's going to happen?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm counting on it.

"Interview With Steve Inskeep of NPR," [U.S. State Dept](#), 21 Dec 2018.

My comment is that Pompeo can *not* stop Trump from having a second summit with Kim. Furthermore, since negotiations between North Korea and the USA stalled soon after the first Kim/Trump summit in June 2018, Pompeo may believe that a [second summit](#) can not worsen the nonexistent negotiations. Also, I am concerned that "humanitarian aid" to North Korea helps a rogue nation that is our enemy.

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### **24 Dec 2018: Otto Warmbier's parents win wrongful death case against North Korea**

In January 2016, Otto Warmbier was arrested in Pyongyang for stealing a propaganda banner from a hotel. Otto Warmbier was sentenced to 15 years in a North Korean prison, becoming a "bargaining chip" in eventual negotiations for his release on "humanitarian grounds". For reasons never adequately explained, Otto Warmbier became comatose soon after the completion of his criminal trial. After approximately a year in coma, Otto was released by the North Koreans. Otto was flown to Cincinnati, where he died in a hospital on 19 June 2017, just six days after his release from North Korea.

In April 2018, Otto's parents filed litigation in United States District Court for the District of Columbia. They alleged that North Korea had tortured Otto, and further that North Korea was responsible for Otto's death. North Korea failed to respond to the litigation. On 24 December, a judge granted default judgment to Otto's parents. North Korea will probably never pay any of US\$ 501 million awarded to Otto's parents.

[Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

The case of Otto Warmbier shows the folly of Trump's friendship with Kim Jong Un, leader of a rogue nation with an atrocious human rights record.

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### **30 Dec 2018: North Korea reaffirms intent to denuclearize**

On Sunday, 30 December 2018, South Korean president Moon received a two-page letter from Kim Jong Un, in which Kim reaffirmed his intent to denuclearize. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#).

Yonhap reported: "Still, no significant progress has been made as North Korea and the U.S. have been deadlocked over sanctions imposed on Pyongyang for its nuclear tests and its long-range rocket launches."

My comment is that the letter is just more empty promises by Kim. If Kim really intended to denuclearize, then he would have stopped production of nuclear weapons *and* he would have begun destroying existing nuclear weapons while international inspectors witnessed the destruction.

On 31 December, North Korea hinted that denuclearization negotiations might progress at some unspecified future time.

A North Korean state media outlet downplayed the deadlock in its negotiating process with the United States as a "temporary phenomenon" that typically happens at times of great changes.

The North's main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, made the assessment in an editorial reviewing 2018, saying there has been a "dramatic change" in the country's strategic position in the international community.

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"Of course, it is true that difficulties have been created in our way forward ... But this is nothing but a temporary phenomenon that happens at a time when old things die out and new things emerge," the editorial said.

The editorial was apparently referring to the denuclearization negotiations with the U.S. that have been stalled over the North's demand for sanctions relief and the U.S. insistence on keeping sanctions until the North takes further denuclearization measures.

"N. Korea downplays deadlock in peace process as 'temporary phenomenon'," [Yonhap](#), 31 Dec 2018.

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## Procrastination, Deceit, and Bad-Faith by North Korea

At the end of 2018:

1. In the written 12 June 2018 Statement at the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore, Kim Jong Un "reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." Then there was *no* significant progress on denuclearization during the next half-year. On 5 Sep 2018 — and again at the Moon/Kim summit in Pyongyang on 19 Sep 2018 — Kim said he intended to complete denuclearization before January 2021. This is an example of procrastination by North Korea.
2. North Korea continues to manufacture nuclear weapons. The Yongbyon nuclear reactor is being improved, *not* dismantled. (See [above](#) and [above](#).) This is an example of bad-faith by North Korea, when they *talk* about denuclearization while manufacturing more nuclear weapons.
3. North Korea continues to manufacture ballistic missiles. (See [above](#) and [above](#).) This is an example of bad-faith by North Korea, when they *talk* about disarmament while manufacturing more ballistic missiles.
4. On 16 November 2018, North Korea [tested](#) an unspecified new weapon. This is an example of bad-faith by North Korea, when they *talk* about disarmament while developing new weapons.
5. North Korea refuses to declare a list of its nuclear weapons and infrastructure for manufacturing nuclear weapons, and other items for destruction.
6. North Korea has failed to destroy any of its nuclear weapons.
7. North Korea has failed to destroy any of its ballistic missiles.
8. North Korea has failed to invite international inspectors to verify the irreversible destruction of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.
9. Despite the promise at the 12 June 2018 Kim/Trump summit in Singapore to resume high-level negotiations "at the earliest possible date", high-level negotiations about denuclearization of North Korea quickly stalled, and working-level negotiations never began. This is an example of procrastination by North Korea.
10. On 24 May 2018, North Korea did a symbolic dismantling of its nuclear weapons test site. (See [above](#).) The alleged destruction was reversible and *not* verified by international inspectors — the alleged destruction does *not* meet the CVID standard in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.
11. On 12 June 2018, Trump said North Korea had agreed to destroy one of its missile engine test sites. This destruction *may* have begun on 20 July. (See [above](#).) However,

the destruction stopped in early August 2018, and only two items were dismantled. The alleged destruction was reversible and *not* verified by international inspectors — the alleged destruction does *not* meet the CVID standard in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

12. There is apparently a secret uranium enrichment site at Kangson. If true, this is [deceit](#) by North Korea. Furthermore, there are at least 13 secret ballistic missile sites in North Korea, which is more [deceit](#) by North Korea. On [5 December](#), CNN revealed another secret missile site.
13. The 12 June written Statement at the Kim/Trump summit promised the "immediate repatriation" of remains of U.S. soldiers that are already in possession of North Korea. But those remains were not delivered until 27 July, 45 days later, so North Korea breached its promise of "immediate". The North Koreans also failed to appear at a 12 July meeting to discuss the repatriation of remains. (See [above](#).) The token repatriation of 55 cases of remains on 27 July was the *only* delivery of remains by North Korea in the year 2018, despite Trump's intent to attempt to recover and repatriate all 5300 U.S. Military personnel who are buried in North Korea.
14. North Korea is continuing to evade economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. (See [above](#).) This is an example of deceit by North Korea.

These 14 examples show that North Korea is *not* sincere about denuclearization. North Korea is slowly engaged in tiny, insignificant steps that are propaganda, not denuclearization. What North Korea really wants was bountiful economic benefits from South Korea and the USA in exchange for North Korea's insignificant and unverified steps toward denuclearization.

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## Conclusion

In May 2018, as I contemplate Trump negotiating with Kim Jong-Un, I remember a lesson from the history books. In September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain traveled to Munich to reach a peace agreement with Hitler. On 30 September 1938, Chamberlain famously declared that he had arranged "peace for our time". After Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939, Chamberlain is now remembered as a fool who appeased Hitler. The lesson that I learned is do *not* negotiate with Evil people, because they will breach their agreements and continue their Evil agenda. If agreements are to be made with Evil people, then there must be extensive and continuing verification of those agreements.

In Trump's quest to prove himself as a Master Deal-Maker — and receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 — will Trump repeat Chamberlain's mistake and appease Kim Jong-Un? There are three big problems: Trump's ignorance of technical details, Trump's impulsive decision making, and Kim's likelihood of violating any denuclearization agreement. I expect Kim not only to refuse to *completely* denuclearize, but also to refuse to allow international inspectors to travel anywhere in North Korea to verify the denuclearization.

I have a number of conclusions about Trump and the North Korean problem:

1. As suggested [above](#), Trump did *not* appreciate the seriousness of the North Korean problem before 2017.
2. From the time that Trump became president on 20 Jan 2017 until 15 March 2017, Trump's administration appears to have done nothing about North Korea.
3. From 16 March 2017 until 1 May 2017, Trump's administration had a burst of belligerent threats of military action against North Korea. These belligerent threats caused North Korea to accelerate its ballistic missile tests from an average of one/month to three/month.

But on 14 April 2017, anonymous White House staffers told journalists that Trump would pursue a policy of "maximum pressure and engagement", to encourage negotiations — exposing Trump's belligerent threats as a bluff.

On 26 April 2017, the U.S. Government declared that North Korea was now Trump's "top foreign-policy priority".

4. From 2 May 2017 until 28 June 2017, Trump appears to have again ignored North Korea.
5. North Korea's ICBM tests on 3 July and 28 July 2017 got the attention of the Trump administration. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations negotiated another worthless United Nations Security Council Resolution, which was passed on 5 August 2017.
6. On 25-27 July 2017, the U.S. Military warned that time was running out to solve the North Korean problem.
7. On 8-11 August 2017, there were more inflammatory and belligerent remarks by Trump.
8. On 29 August 2017, North Korea launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan. The United Nations Security Council issued a worthless Presidential Statement on the same day.
9. On 30 August 2017, there were more inflammatory and belligerent remarks by Trump, in which he said talking with North Korea "is not the answer!".
10. On 3 September 2017, North Korea conducted their sixth test of a nuclear weapon, which may have been a small hydrogen-bomb. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations negotiated another worthless United Nations Security Council Resolution, which was passed on 11 September 2017.
11. On 5 September 2017, a United Nations committee of experts issued a report that said

North Korea was [evading](#) sanctions. That evasion makes the United Nations' economic sanctions worthless.

12. On 19 September 2017, Trump gave a horrible speech to the United Nations General Assembly that threatened "to totally destroy North Korea." Trump's speech began a six-day exchange of threats and insults between North Korea and Trump. Beginning with his 19 September speech and continuing through 1 October, Trump seems to have favored the military option for solving the North Korean problem.
13. On 12 December 2017, the U.S. Secretary of State correctly recognized it was "not realistic" to require North Korea to express willingness to abandon its nuclear weapons program before talks could begin, so Tillerson suggested talks without preconditions. But the White House slapped Tillerson and restored the precondition that North Korea express willingness to abandon its nuclear weapons program *before* talks could begin.
14. On 22 December 2017, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2397 that, if enforced, would put significant sanctions on North Korea.
15. On 11 February 2018 — during the peace hysteria during the Olympic games — the U.S. Government announced it was willing to talk to North Korea without preconditions. On 5 March, Kim told South Korean envoys that North Korea was willing to talk directly with the USA about denuclearization. On 8 March, Trump said he would meet Kim before the end of May 2018. On 10 May, a date and place for the Kim/Trump summit was finally announced. Note that it took two months to schedule a summit, which foreshadows long, difficult negotiations between North Korea and the USA.
16. On 29 April 2018, White House National Security Advisor John Bolton, compared North Korea to Libya. (See [above](#).) That caused North Korea on 16 May to threaten to cancel the Kim/Trump summit. On 17 May, Trump repudiated Bolton's comparison with Libya, but the damage had already been done.
17. On 24 May 2018, Trump canceled the Kim/Trump summit that had been scheduled for 12 June. But on 1 June, Trump reinstated the canceled summit. And on 12 June, Trump signed an inadequate Statement with Kim, as explained [above](#).
18. On 13 June 2018, Trump returned from the summit — and just like Neville Chamberlain 80 years earlier — boasted that he had prevented war with North Korea. Trump was wrong, because North Korea still has all of their nuclear weapons and all of their ballistic missiles.
19. On 30 June 2018, it appeared that North Korea was *not* serious about quick denuclearization, as explained [above](#).
20. On 31 July 2018, there was more [evidence](#) of procrastination, deceit, and bad-faith by North Korea. Finally, on 24 August 2018, Trump [suspended](#) the futile negotiations.



21. On 7 October 2018, Pompeo was again in Pyongyang to restart the negotiations about denuclearization of North Korea. Not only did negotiations *not* resume, but also on 7 November Kim Yong-chol abruptly [canceled](#) a meeting with Pompeo.
22. At the end of 2018, I [listed](#) 14 examples of procrastination, deceit, or bad-faith by North Korea.

At the end of 2018, I concluded that it was obvious that North Korea is *not* going to denuclearize. Instead, North Korea wants to be internationally accepted as a nation with nuclear weapons and ICBMs. Meanwhile, North Korea slowly engages in tiny, insignificant steps that are propaganda, not denuclearization. North Korea also wants bountiful economic benefits from South Korea and the USA in exchange for North Korea's insignificant and unverified steps toward denuclearization.

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