



*A pedestrian passes
portraits of the late
Kim Il Sung, left,
and Kim Jong Il
in Pyongyang
on Feb. 17*



World

North Korea: How to Stop Kim Jong Un

Over the past year, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has accelerated his country's rush toward nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles, presenting President Donald Trump with an impending crisis. **TIME** asked six experts how we got here, why the problem is so urgent and so hard—and what China and the U.S. can do now to solve it

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and diplomat **Evans Revere**

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North Korea conducts a ballistic rocket-launching drill in an undated photo released on March 7

Why we've fallen short and why that's no longer an option

By Wendy Sherman and Evans Revere

NORTH KOREA'S ISOLATED dictators have long believed that nuclear weapons will ensure regime survival against U.S. military power, enabling it to unite the Korean Peninsula on its terms. Successive U.S. Administrations have tried various strategies to thwart the dangerous trajectory of the regime. Some have made progress, only to be set back by North Korean perfidy, by changes in policy direction and by cautious partners and allies in the region who wanted a different approach. We now know that for much of this time Pyongyang was working to preserve and even expand its nuclear program. North Korea has several nuclear weapons and is perfecting the missiles

that are designed to deliver them. The North Korea challenge is, as President Obama reportedly told then President-elect Donald Trump, the most dangerous and difficult security challenge he will face.

In exchange for a "freeze" in North Korea's programs, the U.S. has tried diplomatic inducements, including normalization of relations, security guarantees, economic and food aid, and more. Nothing has produced lasting results. North Korea agreed to several freezes of its nuclear-weapons program but still found ways to violate the deals, and when caught refused international monitoring and verification. U.S. Administrations have tried sanctions but have

faced a China reluctant to enforce them and an inadequate international response. During the Clinton Administration, a negotiated plan to stop North Korea's program showed some success but ultimately was unsustainable. U.S. Administrations have considered military action but have pulled back, assessing the risk of catastrophic war as too great.

The main reason we are where we are today is because North Korea has walked away from every denuclearization agreement ever reached. The regime clearly wants nuclear weapons more than any inducement. And it has not

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changed its behavior in the face of sanctions.

But no U.S. Administration, working with regional leaders and the international community, has ever arrayed all its tools and advantages simultaneously and overwhelmingly to end North Korea's nuclear-weapons program, forcing the regime to choose between nuclear weapons and regime survival. Compelling Pyongyang to make that stark choice offers the best way forward. A successful U.S. strategy will entail risk, but a growing North Korean nuclear threat and the possibility that miscalculation could lead to war means that we must do all that we can, and soon, to deal with the challenge of Pyongyang.

Sherman was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from 2011 to 2015. Revere was CEO of the Korea Society from 2007 to 2010

Avoiding the temptation to do nothing

By Chris Hill

There are, no doubt, problems and even crises in the world that go away on their own. The North Korean nuclear issue is not one of them. The growing number of tests in recent years, including two nuclear explosions in 2016 alone, suggests that North Korea has made development, deployment and the capability to deliver nuclear weapons a national aspiration. With its accelerating intercontinental ballistic missile program, it has made clear that it seeks a capacity to strike targets far from the Korean Peninsula, namely the continental U.S.

Yet after decades of this, it is tempting just to do nothing. After all, Pakistan developed and tested nuclear weapons with little international reaction. So did India. And Israel. Why can't North Korea do the same? The answer lies in the essence of the North Korean state. North Korea has little interest in being a member of the international community, in having allies or in collective security. It dumbs down to a series of bargaining transactions, and sneers at international standards of behavior.

Some argue that North Korea wants nuclear weapons for regime security, an analysis that would suggest that North Korea is simply warning predatory states to stay away or else. In fact, North Korea's contempt for its neighbors suggests that it would hold them hostage with its nuclear weapons. North Korea famously threatened to reduce South Korea's capital city to a "sea of fire." Such a threat takes on new meaning when a country holds nuclear weapons.

While South Korea and Japan are protected by their alliances with the U.S. and its nuclear umbrella, how long would that situation hold? If North Korea invaded South Korea (again), would the U.S. come to its defense if North Korea could threaten the U.S. with a nuclear strike? Would the South Korean people believe in a certain U.S. response? Would proliferation stop with South Korea and Japan? What about Taiwan? The Non-Proliferation Treaty would quickly be reduced to tatters, and so would the sense of security in the region.

And if North Korea fields a deliverable nuclear weapon that could reach the U.S. in the next few years, would President Trump want to face the American people with the explanation that he weighed the options and decided that doing nothing was best?

A career foreign-service officer, Hill was ambassador to South Korea from 2004 to 2005 and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2005 to 2009

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

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, TWEETING ON MARCH 17

The dangers of a preemptive strike

By Gregory F. Treverton

MORE THAN ONE AMERICAN President has been tempted by some form of preemptive attack on North Korea. However, the rub with preemption is that for the limited purpose of taking out the country's nuclear program, it isn't likely to work, and for the grander goal of decapitating the regime, success could create more problems than it solves.

Military options against the North's nuclear arsenal suffer from two problems: they might not succeed, and Pyongyang has devastating retaliatory options. Intelligence on the North's nuclear program is pretty good but hardly perfect. Since the beginning, the country has hidden key facilities, and as its missiles become more mobile, they are harder to target. Airstrikes on nuclear facilities, coupled with cyberattacks and perhaps commando raids, could do some damage, but since the program is now entirely indigenous, it could be repaired soon enough.

And it is hard to imagine Kim Jong Un doing nothing while the U.S. and its allies pounded his nuclear program. Seoul lies within artillery range of the North. Kim could retaliate even without using nuclear weapons. That would mean any attack on nuclear facilities would have to be accompanied

by attacks on other installations threatening the South. In other words, the war would widen even before Kim retaliated.

The other set of preemptive options, ones designed to overturn the regime, suffer their own set of imponderables. If Kim were killed, would the regime come apart or rally around the family? War gaming suggests a dangerous stew of violence, refugees and a race to control those nuclear weapons would ensue. In that stew, the gaming suggests, allies, not to mention China, would be as much of a problem as opposition from residual North Korean forces.

As things stand, neither diplomacy nor sanctions seem likely to derail the North's nuclear program. So regime change looks more and more attractive. But better that it come from within. Given Kim's reckless habits—drinking and driving are two of his favorite pastimes—a self-inflicted biological solution is more than possible. So is the chance that an insider will finally get angry enough to take him out, never mind the consequences.

Treverton, the former chair of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, is executive adviser to SM&A Corporation

China needs to get serious

By Victor Cha

For decades, China has played a smoke-and-mirrors game on North Korea that traps the U.S. in doomed negotiations that spare Beijing a near-term crisis on its border, but kicks the can down the road on the larger problem. China's gambit has undercut U.S. goals in three key areas.

First, U.S. economic sanctions against North Korea have proved ineffective as long as China continued to fund the regime through back channels, and allowed its companies and banks to deal with North Korea. Second, China has long been a free rider in negotiations, with little at stake in their short-term success or failure. In the past deals, the U.S. and its allies have compensated Pyongyang with heavy fuel oil and energy substitutes in exchange for a freeze on North Korea's missile testing; China, meanwhile, maintained normal bilateral economic relations with Pyongyang, absolving it of any direct stake in the denuclearization project. Third, China has largely ignored the international counterproliferation financing regime, which is designed to sanction North Korean entities that are funneling cash to its weapons of mass destruction programs.

China's economic ties to the North should be the leverage that forces change, not the reason it never comes. First, Washington should make clear to Beijing that it will not re-enter a negotiation as long as China insists on maintaining at least 80% to 85% of North Korea's trade. Second, the U.S. should get China to step up and pay directly for the denuclearization of North Korea. China's payments designed to prop up Pyongyang must be tied directly to nuclear inspections, and ultimately to denuclearization and not to China's economic interests. If China pays for denuclearization, it will take North Korea's violations more seriously than it does now. Lastly, China must clamp down on domestic Chinese entities doing business with North Korea. Just as with human-rights abusers, the U.S. should "name and shame" Chinese nationals—like the four named by the Justice Department in September 2016—who conspire to evade U.S. economic sanctions and facilitate dollar transactions for a sanctioned entity in North Korea. If China is serious about addressing the threat, then it should extradite cases like these.

Cha was director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council from 2004 to 2007, and is now director of Asian studies at Georgetown University

'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.'

SECRETARY OF STATE REX TILLERSON, SPEAKING IN SEOUL ON MARCH 17

Trump's new wrinkle brings promise and risk

By Kurt Campbell

A LONG RECOGNIZED DIPLOMATIC truism is settling in for President Donald Trump: North Korea is the land of lousy options. Which may explain why he and his team have mostly followed a predictable playbook, announcing their intention to strengthen military deterrence with close allies, buttress U.S. defense assets in Asia and stiffen sanctions against the North Korean regime.

The one new wrinkle appears to be that the Administration will seek to forcefully hold China responsible for North Korean provocations. Some senior U.S. officials are threatening to severely penalize any Chinese banks doing business with North Korea and to imitate the kinds of economic approaches and international coalitions successfully brought to bear on Iran under the Obama Administration. Although Beijing continues its calls for regional negotiations, the Trump team correctly counters that two decades of multilateral diplomacy have failed to contain the North. They now argue that China must do more to keep Kim Jong Un underfoot or at least at heel. Coupled with calls for key Europeans to also step up, an early entry for the Trump

Doctrine may very well be: it's up to you guys now.

But Chinese assertiveness, North Korean provocations, Japanese anxieties and South Korean political turmoil are swirling dangerously across Northeast Asia. Normally, uneasiness there would prompt key Asian players to look to the U.S. for steadiness.

But Trump's questioning of the traditional American leadership role in Asia—champion of free trade, supporter of allies and keeper of the peace—has further unnerved Asian capitals. The Trump gambit to get China to do more may well lead to Beijing blinking first in a standoff with Washington over the Korean Peninsula. Yet a more dominant Chinese role in Korea carries with it other risks. American leadership is still seen as vital to the stability and prosperity of the entire region, the cockpit of the global economy. This is why even with lousy options, they all look better with the U.S. deeply engaged in the dangerously evolving Korean equation.

Campbell was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs from 2009 to 2013



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