



## Trump exerts leverage at summit with North Korean leader Kim

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June 12, 2018

In a surprise move, President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a one-page joint statement early on Tuesday, which affirmed their “unwavering commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.” While the signed document does not say how North Korea will take steps toward denuclearization, Trump called it a first step in a longer negotiation process.

Appearing elated during a lengthy press conference, the president said of the historic summit: “We’ve gotten a lot,” and added, “All I can say, they want to make a deal.” Trump also noted that he had not slept in 25 hours. Describing the meeting as “honest, direct and productive,” “It’s a first bold step toward a bright new future for his people.” Trump said, “Our unprecedented meeting ... proves that real change is indeed possible ... Adversaries can indeed become friends. We can honor the sacrifice of our forefathers by replacing the horrors of battle with the blessings of peace.”

For his part, Kim called the agreement “historic” and would lead to a new relationship between the United States and North Korea. “We had a historic meeting and decided to leave the past behind... The world will see a major change,” Kim said.

The 403-page document, which Trump called a work in progress, offers unspecified “security guarantees” by the U.S. to North Korea in exchange for an “unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.” The two countries are agreed to establish new diplomatic relations as a means toward “a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.”

I asked Trump why he didn’t stay longer in Singapore and negotiate for more denuclearization details from North Korea.

“I’d rather fly during the night and get back tonight,” he told me.

“There was nothing more we could’ve done. We had the agreement done.”

The U.S. will suspend military exercises in South Korea: “I think it’s tremendously provocative,” Trump said of “war games,” while promising taxpayers that the national treasury will save a “tremendous amount of money” if they end. Also, North Korea is agreed to close a missile engine testing site. However, that feature is not included in the signed document but was verbally added by the two countries at the end of the negotiations. The two countries agreed to recover, identify and repatriate soldiers killed in the Korean War. As for the current U.S. sanctions regime imposed on North Korea, they will continue in force for the time being while the process continues. Trump said, “Our eyes are wide open. ... Sanctions will come off when we’re sure the nukes are no longer a factor.” Trump said.

President Trump said National Security Adviser John Bolton will meet with North Korean representatives next week to hammer out details of the written and oral agreements. In the meantime, the president said he will talk with with the leaders of China, Japan and South Korea and share what he garnered from North Korea. In addition, Trump said he will invite Kim Jong-un to the White House “at the appropriate time...further down the road,” while adding that another “meeting” may be in the works.

### **America's leverage**

In an earlier interview with Spero News, Doug Bandow -- a senior fellow at the Cato Institute - - said that U.S. troops stationed in South Korea are no longer necessary despite the decades-old dispute over the Korean peninsula. He also advised the president to eliminate the American "nuclear umbrella" over the contentious region in return for denuclearization. Bandow suggested that Chairman Kim was more interested in “regime survival” than the prospect of unleashing a nuclear attack on the U.S., which Bandow admitted could “vaporize” North Korea at any time.

Bandow noted that the missile developed by North Korea may be able to reach the American mainland, but whether it can survive re-entry from the atmosphere is questionable. “We don’t think that they have a missile capable of being targetted or carry a warhead against the U.S.” Bandow said. Stopping North Korea's nuclear research and testing, would be useful Bandow said. “There are things that come out of this that are positive. My view is: try to get something positive. And then you can pursue changes along the way.” Putting an end to nuclear weapons testing by the North Koreans is the best outcome for the U.S., which would mean continued negotiations over a range of issues so as to bolster North Korea’s confidence, Bandow said.

### **A bold step**

After meeting Kim, President Trump said, “It does take a long time to pull off complete denuclearization, scientifically.” Trump said, “You have to wait certain periods of time...but once you start the process it’s pretty much over, you can’t use them, and that will happen soon.” The president said that a future verification team will consist of a mix of U.S. government personnel and independent inspectors. At issue in any future negotiations is the future of the 29,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. Importantly, Defense Secretary James Mattis was not part of Trump’s delegation at the Singapore summit.)

For his part Chairman Kim called the agreement with the U.S. “historic.” Kim said, “We had a historic meeting and decided to leave the past behind... The world will see a major change.” No mention was made in the wake of the meeting of signing a peace treaty: which is something that has eluded the parties ever since the ceasefire was concluded in the 1950s. Trump appeared

confident that the meeting was productive. “It’s a first bold step toward a bright new future for his people,” Trump said. “Our unprecedented meeting ... proves that real change is indeed possible ... Adversaries can indeed become friends. We can honor the sacrifice of our forefathers by replacing the horrors of battle with the blessings of peace.”