

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

### TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *Diplomacy is winning on the Korean peninsula despite Trump's mad tweets.*
- *Neocons who pushed war with Iran are suddenly concerned about Iranians' plight amid protests against the regime.*

### KOREANS TO MEET FOR TALKS AS TRUMP FIDDLES WITH HIS PHONE

North and South Korean officials [agreed](#) to new talks this week -- in what will be the first high-level contact in more than two years -- after the two sides agreed to discuss "[issues](#) related to improving inter-Korean relationships including the Pyeongchang [Winter] Olympic Games." The announcement came one day after the U.S. and South Korea [agreed](#) to suspend military exercises during the games taking place in South Korea.

Experts welcomed the news but worried that mixed messages from the American side (i.e. Rex Tillerson and James Mattis supporting talks while the White House demands preconditions for negotiations, and Donald Trump fires off tweets threatening nuclear war) could mean that the U.S. is ultimately left out:

**"The U.S. is icing the U.S. out of these discussions,"** [said](#) Jenny Town assistant director of the U.S.-Korea Institute at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

**"Trump's tweets and erratic behavior have gravely shaken allied confidence in his leadership and in America's reliability,"** [said](#) Ploughshares President Joe Cirincione.

**"I don't think the Trump administration knows what they're doing,"** [said](#) nuclear expert Gary Saymore.

Republicans on Capitol Hill are brushing off Trump's reckless tweets, saying it's just "Trump being Trump." But the escalation of tensions is worrying experts normally "[not prone to hysteria](#)," and as former DOD and State Department spokesman John Kirby [noted](#), the North Koreans might not have any idea what to make of it:

KIRBY: All these statements that he makes whether it's Twitter, they're parsed for nuance. And he doesn't have a lot of nuance in there. **So I think we have to worry about how they're going to be perceived over there** [in North Korea]. And that's what,

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I'm sure, my colleagues, my former colleagues in the Pentagon and the State Department are worried about right now.

Meanwhile, Democrats on the Hill are [pushing legislation](#) to rein Trump in. Retweet our call for action [here](#).

And finally, Abigail Stowe-Thurston of the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Erin Connolly at the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation [remind us](#), not only of the [catastrophic consequences](#) of war with North Korea, but also that their younger generation has seen nothing but war and enough is enough. Retweet their op-ed [here](#).

## PROTESTS IN IRAN HIGHLIGHT NEOCONS' BAD FAITH

Protests erupted in Iran last month and quickly spread throughout the country, with Iranians from all walks of life [demonstrating anything](#) from the dire economic situation there to the oppressive ruling regime.

While progressives and others have [offered support for Iranians](#) to peacefully protest, it's [been noted](#) that **concern from neocons who have been calling for war with Iran for years is a tad bit disingenuous.**

And NIAC's Trita Parsi called out Bill Kristol on national TV this week on this after Kristol [argued](#) that Americans should "be more respectful of the Iranian people's desire for freedom":

"With all due respect, Bill, **you've been arguing to bomb Iran for so long, so I don't know if you're really respecting the Iranian people.** You've been advocating killing Iranians. I don't think you or the Trump administration have the credibility to now say that you care for the Iranian people."

Indeed, Given Kristol's past calls for war with Iran, his analysis of what's going on there today -- and his purported concern for the plight of ordinary Iranians -- seems hardly credible. How can one who so cavalierly called for killing Iranians be so worried about their livelihood today? And Kristol's not the only one. [Mark Dubowitz](#) and [Reuel Marc Gerecht](#) of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, for example, have been quoted in the media supporting the Iranian protests despite their repeated calls for war.

Meanwhile, Diplomacy Works [previews](#) the big decisions Trump will make next week regarding the Iran nuclear agreement.

## BURIED LEDES

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**Nearly 80 countries around the world are now on the receiving end** of America's so-called "War on Terror." The Cost of War Project at Brown University [maps it out](#). Speaking of the "War on Terror," CIP's Saleh Booker and William Hartung [explain how counterproductive it is in Africa](#).

From our friends [at Inkstick](#): **The national security debate needs more women of color**. (You can subscribe to Inkstick's podcast, "Things That Go Boom," [here](#).)

We took the Economist [to task](#) for publishing a piece **blaming Yemenis for the famine there**.

Psychiatry professionals [are](#) **growing increasingly concerned about Trump's state of mind**.