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Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *Historic diplomacy on the Korean peninsula is a victory for South Korean President Moon Jae-in, the Korean people, and perhaps the world.*
- *Trump is seeking to round out his war cabinet with torture enabler Gina Haspel.*
- *Trump will probably kill the Iran deal and put the U.S. back on a path to war with Iran.*

A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR PEACE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Kim Jong-un today became the first North Korean leader to set foot on South Korean soil, [shaking hands](#) with President Moon Jae-in in a historic meeting at the DMZ.

The BBC called it “the handshake that made history.” Watch it [here](#). And the Washington Post has an [annotated full text](#) of what the two leaders agreed to.

See our statement [here](#).

MESSAGING

- The Inter-Korean Summit is historic and should be celebrated regardless of one’s political affiliation or ideology. It marks the first time that a ruling member of the Kim family has stepped foot in South Korea since the signing of the Armistice Agreement in 1953 and a key step forward to realizing peace on the Korean Peninsula.
- The summit produced a joint declaration that seeks to significantly reduce tensions on the peninsula by, among other things:
 - facilitating family reunions,
 - ending cross-DMZ propaganda such as distribution of leaflets and the blaring of radio broadcasts and music across the border,
 - establishing conditions for an official end to the Korean war through creation of a “peace regime” by the end of the year, and
 - a commitment to “phased denuclearization.”

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- This historic diplomatic moment is a victory for South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has been a staunch advocate for dialogue, peace between the two Koreas, and a resolution to the U.S.-North Korean crisis.
 - The United States should follow South Korea's lead by employing the full resources of the United States government and working closely with South Korea to prepare for the upcoming summit between President Trump and Kim Jong-un.
- Inter-Korean diplomacy is an important first step toward reducing tensions and moving toward a U.S.-North Korean agreement, but persistence and patience will be necessary to navigating and sustaining the complex diplomatic negotiations that lie ahead.
- Like the Inter-Korean Summit, the U.S.-North Korea Summit should be viewed as a first step in a long process toward establishing true peace and security on the Korean Peninsula that may take years, if not decades.
- It's important to recognize that "denuclearization" may have different meanings to the Trump administration and the Kim regime:
 - For Trump, the expectation appears to be North Korea's swift abandonment of its nuclear program, and perhaps even its ballistic missile and chemical and biological programs in short order.
 - Some argue that for Kim, nuclear weapons are seen as North Korea's ultimate security guarantee. As such, denuclearization would potentially happen in phases (if at all), starting with a freeze of its existing testing and production.
 - A failure to reconcile these competing expectations could quickly cause this diplomatic opening to close, showing the importance of managing expectations and preparation going into the Trump-Kim Summit.
- As this process moves forward, we must keep in mind the competing goals of some Trump administration officials, who frame the Summit as merely a box to check before returning to a path to war.
 - New U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, during his tenure as CIA Director, [advocated](#) for regime change with North Korea. Although he recently met with Kim Jong-un, the lack of transparency into that trip and its outcomes leave us with no way to judge its utility or promise for further diplomacy.
 - Just weeks before he was appointed as National Security Advisor, John Bolton wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal [advocating](#) for an unprovoked first

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strike on North Korea.

- Bolton has also [framed](#) the upcoming Trump-Kim Summit as a venue to impose an ultimatum for denuclearization on North Korea, rather than a first step towards de-escalation.
- Diplomacy will be incredibly challenging given there is still no U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, U.S. Special Envoy to North Korea, or a confirmed Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

WITH POMPEO CONFIRMED, TRUMP SEEKS TO ROUND OUT WAR CABINET WITH GINA HASPEL

Last year, 43 Senators said Rex Tillerson isn't fit to be the nation's top diplomat.

They were right.

This week, 42 Senators said the same about Mike Pompeo.

They are also correct.

As Sen. Ben Cardin noted in a Washington Post [op-ed](#), the decision to oppose Pompeo wasn't about politics or disdain for Donald Trump. The reality is that Pompeo -- an anti-climate, anti-diplomacy, anti-Muslim bigot who doesn't support women's and LGBTQ+ rights -- is not the face of American values and diplomacy.

Indeed, the intersectionality of the Pompeo fight is indicative of how disqualified Pompeo is. Nearly [200 organizations](#) from across the policy spectrum agreed that Pompeo is unfit to be Secretary of State. Here are some of their statements on his confirmation this week:

[Food and Water Watch](#), [Human Rights Campaign](#), [Indivisible](#), [J Street](#), [MoveOn](#), [MPower Change Action](#), [NIAC Action](#), [Peace Action](#), [Planned Parenthood](#), [Win Without War](#).

'A FULL-ON PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN'

With two pillars of Trump's war cabinet -- Pompeo and John Bolton -- now in place, he'll seek to round it out next month with his nomination of torture enabler Gina Haspel as the next CIA Director.

Pompeo was known for bringing politics into the CIA, so perhaps it's somewhat fitting that the CIA itself is turning to politics and "waging an influence campaign," as the New York Times [put](#)

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[it](#), to get Haspel confirmed -- a move that some are calling “[inappropriate](#),” “[kinda creepy](#),” and possibly a violation of the [Hatch Act](#).

As part of that campaign, the CIA appears to be only releasing information on Haspel’s career -- most, if not all of which, is secret -- that will benefit her nomination, and nothing about her role in the Bush-era torture program.

“They are basically running a full-on propaganda campaign but withholding the information that the American people need to be able to make an informed decision about this nominee’s fitness for the job,” Sen. Martin Heinrich [said](#).

MESSAGING ON HASPEL

Gina Haspel played a pivotal role in the Bush administration torture program.

- Haspel oversaw a secret CIA prison in Thailand after 9/11 where a terrorism suspect, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, was waterboarded. [[SOURCE](#)]
- Haspel also drafted the order to destroy video tapes documenting the torture at the Thailand prison. [[SOURCE](#)]

It’s one thing that we have failed to hold the architects of torture accountable, it’s another thing to reward them for it.

- The only person to go to jail over Bush’s torture program was a whistleblower who was trying to expose it. [[SOURCE](#)]

The CIA should be transparent about all aspects of Haspel’s history at the Agency.

- The CIA has refused to declassify information on Haspel [[SOURCE](#)]
- Democrats on the Senate Intelligence committee are calling the CIA’s failure to disclose information on Haspel “unacceptable.” [[SOURCE](#)] [[SOURCE](#)]

MORE BACKGROUND/RESOURCES ON HASPEL:

- “109 Retired Military Leaders Urge Senate to Reject Gina Haspel for CIA Director,” Human Rights First [[LINK](#)] [[LETTER](#)]
- See Haspel campaign tools from Indivisible [here](#).
- LETTER: More than 40 national organizations oppose Haspel’s nomination [[LINK](#)]
- LETTER: More than two dozen national organizations call for Haspel’s role in torture to be declassified. [[LINK](#)] [[REPORT](#)]

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- “Gina Haspel’s Troubling Role in the CIA Torture Program,” the Project on Government Oversight [[LINK](#)]
- “Backgrounder: Gina Haspel, Nominee for CIA Director,” Human Rights First [[LINK](#)]
- “What Happened at the Thailand ‘Black Site’ Run by Trump’s CIA Pick,” the Atlantic [[LINK](#)]

TRUMP AND HIS ENABLERS WILL OWN THE CONSEQUENCES OF KILLING THE IRAN DEAL

French President Emmanuel Macron was in DC this week in an effort to keep Trump from killing the Iran deal, which he has pledged to do at the next sanctions waiver deadline on May 12 if the EU and the US don’t agree on so-called “fix.”

Whether Macron was successful is [anyone’s guess](#) (given Trump’s erratic decision making process), but no one can dispute the facts:

The Iran deal is working to block Iran from building a nuclear weapon

- Because of the deal, Iran eliminated 97% of enriched uranium stockpile, destroyed two-thirds of its centrifuges, disabled its plutonium reactor, and agreed to the most intrusive inspection regime in history.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency verified in March for the 10th time since the signing of the JCPOA that Iran remains in compliance.

“Fixing” the deal means killing the deal

- The U.S. cannot unilaterally alter the terms of a multilateral agreement. Any effort to do so is really an effort to kill it.
- It is standard practice to negotiate follow on agreements to arms control deals. Critics should seek to address concerns with the Iran deal within this framework and include all parties involved: the U.S., Britain, France, the EU, Russia, China, and Iran.

Killing the Iran nuclear deal will only bring Iran and the U.S. closer to war.

- Iran has stated its intent to expand its nuclear program if the U.S. withdraws from the deal, bringing it closer to building a nuclear bomb.

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- Calls for war among deal skeptics and opponents will grow in the absence of the agreement's round-the-clock inspections and monitoring that can currently ensure Iran isn't covertly building nuclear weapons.

Killing the Iran deal sets a horrendous precedent with allies and adversaries alike.

- Walking away from the agreement will weaken our ability to do diplomacy with other countries, particularly North Korea.
- Iran will have no incentive to negotiate on other matters, such as its ballistic missiles, human rights, or other regional issues.
- If the United States moves to unilaterally kill the deal, it will be the U.S. that is isolated, not Iran.

Trump and his enablers in Congress and beyond will own the consequences of killing the Iran deal

- The crisis of the Iran deal's future is entirely one of Donald Trump's own making.
- Trump has already endangered the agreement by creating uncertainty about its future and discouraging investment in Iran.

RESOURCES

- "26 Senior Israeli Commanders Favor Preserving the Iran Nuclear Agreement," J Street [\[LINK\]](#)
- Diplomacy Works Digest, 4/27/18 [\[LINK\]](#)
- "International Support for the Iran Nuclear Deal," Arms Control Association [\[LINK\]](#)
- Defense Secretary Jim Mattis says verification in the Iran deal is "robust" and designed "with an assumption Iran would try to cheat." [\[SOURCE\]](#)
- "Trump's Middle Ground on Sanctions Waivers is a Myth," Foreign Policy [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Europe's Last-Ditch Effort to Save the Iran Deal," the Atlantic [\[LINK\]](#)

BURIED LEDES

A few House members [want to visit Gaza](#) to "oversee the appropriate and effective use of U.S. taxpayer dollars allocated to humanitarian aid for Palestinians living in the region."

Meanwhile, we suppose we shouldn't be surprised that right-wing **pro-Israel types have resigned themselves to sexist attacks on Natalie Portman**, but this is where we were [bound to end up](#).

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Who is Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins and [what is WCAPS?](#)

The United States ranks 45th on Reporters Without Borders' press freedom list. [Forty-five.](#) ... Four, five. ... 45. There are 44 countries with more press freedom than in the U.S.

All four service chiefs [say](#) **there are no negative effects from transgender personnel serving.**

Meanwhile, nearly half of the Senate [say](#) Defense Secretary Jim Mattis's recommendations on transgender troops **represent a return to "Don't ask, don't tell."**

New research [published](#) this week found that more than one thousand tropical islands could be uninhabitable by mid-century due to rising sea levels **"upending the populations of some island nations and endangering key U.S. military assets."**

Reports of sexual assault across the military increased 10 percent [in 2017.](#)

And finally, HUG YOUR FAMILY: **If Donald Trump doesn't end up killing everyone, it sounds like Artificial Intelligence will, [in about 25 years.](#)**