

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

### TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *We should thank South Korean president Moon Jae-in for saving diplomacy with North Korea.*
- *The Islamophobia Industry has taken over the White House.*
- *The Senate is getting close to authorizing forever war.*

### IT'S PRESIDENT MOON, NOT TRUMP, LEADING ON DIPLOMACY WITH NORTH KOREA

As diplomacy with North Korea gets back on track after Donald Trump last week canceled the upcoming summit with Kim Jong-un, it's worth taking a 30,000 foot view of the past few weeks' worth of diplomatic efforts to rein in North Korea's nuclear program and move toward peace on the Korean peninsula. In doing so, it becomes clear that:

1. Donald Trump and many within his inner circle have shown time and again that they're not up to the task of nuts and bolts diplomacy, and
2. We are on the precipice of a real diplomatic achievement with North Korea because of South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

### **PRESIDENT MOON IS THE REAL DRIVER OF DIPLOMACY**

One day after Trump canceled the summit, a "[perplexed and disappointed](#)" President Moon held a spontaneous and unexpected meeting with Kim just north of the DMZ. The two leaders spent the afternoon carrying on with their diplomatic efforts -- without Trump -- toward peace on the Korean peninsula.

Soon after the Moon-Kim meeting, Trump decided that the summit might well take place after all.

While Trump is scrambling to take credit for anything positive relating to North Korea and remain fully in the spotlight (with mainstream U.S. [media outlets willingly helping him](#)), the reality is that

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Moon is the serious and influential player: “Moon has become the go-between figure in this drama,” a piece in the New Yorker [noted](#).

Moon’s outsized role may sound a bit counterintuitive given that Moon himself has been out in front of the pack [giving Trump all the credit](#). But experts say that’s Moon “[flattering Trump into diplomacy](#).”

“[It’s] likely also why Moon’s government credited Trump with driving North Korea to negotiation through maximum pressure and suggested that Trump receive a Nobel peace prize,” [said](#) Robert E. Kelly, political science professor at Pusan University in South Korea. “It is an open secret in Korea that this was just flattering Trump to prevent him from starting a war. No one actually believes it. ... No one thought the western media would actually start seriously debating it. Trump is loathed here.”

But that’s not just the view from Korea.

“[T]he summit would likely never have happened if it hadn’t been for Moon’s behind-the-scenes efforts to finally bridge the North-South divide,” a [piece](#) in Foreign Policy noted earlier last month.

“Americans have been too busy debating whether their own president, Donald Trump, deserves credit for bringing North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un to the table,” journalist J. Alex Tarquinio [wrote in Politico this week](#). “Diplomacy is rarely so neat. It takes planning -- and South Korea’s Moon Jae-in has been preparing for this moment for his entire life. It’s not Trump or Kim who should be lauded for setting the conditions for peace in Korea -- it’s Moon.”

## **NOTHING BUT CONFUSION AND PROVOCATION FROM TEAM TRUMP**

While Moon has been leading, it appears that the Trump administration has [finally got some experts involved](#) in this process. But throughout the past couple months, Trump himself and his closest advisers -- via a series of screw-ups, competing goals, and contradictory public statements -- are lucky there’s still a process. Consider the following:

1. **Trump is more focused on Trump than on diplomacy with North Korea.** Not only did Trump hastily accept the meeting with Kim [without proper planning](#), he’s also been largely disinterested in the details, instead “almost [singularly focused](#) on the pageantry of the summit.” He has [not even been preparing](#) for his meeting with Kim.
2. **Continued provocations and bellicose rhetoric.** Since Trump agreed to the Summit, his top aides, including National Security Advisor [John Bolton](#), Vice President [Mike Pence](#), and [Trump himself](#) have been threatening military conflict, regime change and

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even nuclear war.

3. **Confusion, contradiction, and disarray.** Politico reviewed public statements on North Korea from Trump administration officials and [noted](#) this week “that Trump and his senior aides have articulated different goals at different times — even on a basic question like the meaning of denuclearization. Officials such as [Secretary of State Mike] Pompeo, national security adviser John Bolton, Vice President Mike Pence and Trump himself have contradicted one another, sometimes raising and lowering expectations within a span of hours.”

And while Team Trump seemed [surprised](#) that the North Koreans said they wouldn't dismantle their nuclear program, non-proliferation expert Jeffrey Lewis, who has called this whole Trump-led process a “[total goat rodeo](#),” [noted](#) that he and his colleagues have been saying this all along.

Kim's call for a denuclearized peninsula “is an aspiration, not a concrete offer to hand over bombs,” Lewis said, “What Kim is saying is more like Obama's pledge to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons (while maintaining an arsenal of [about 4,500 of them](#)).”

Team Trump then tried to blame the miscommunication on North Korea, on China, and [even on President Moon](#).

But, “this is a fiasco of the White House's own making and we should not let them shift the blame to Pyongyang,” Lewis subsequently [tweeted](#). “No one double-crossed you; Trump is just a moron.”

Indeed, the CIA recently [assessed](#) that the North Koreans have no intention of giving up their nuclear arsenal anytime soon.

And Trump has since [backed away](#) from demanding that Kim immediately dismantle its entire nuclear weapons program.

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We should be clear that we are hoping, cheering even, for diplomacy with North Korea to continue and achieve a lasting solution to North Korea's nuclear program and peace on the Korean peninsula. But going into next month's historic summit, should it take place, we should also be clear-eyed about how we got here, who is largely responsible for diplomacy with North Korea and its outcome, and what we should expect in terms of realistic outcomes.

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Indeed, Siegfried Hecker, a former director of the Los Alamos weapons laboratory in New Mexico and the only American to have toured North Korea's nuclear facilities, [said this week](#) that denuclearization, if agreed to and successfully implemented, could take up to 15 years.

Let's also remember: In addition to all the ways Team Trump has mishandled the North Korea issue so far -- which includes by the way, Trump starting this whole mess by threatening "fire and fury" and putting the U.S. on the brink of nuclear war -- Trump is seeking a deal with North Korea that almost entirely mirrors the one with Iran he pulled out of last month. And if Team Trump's [negotiating style with China](#) over trade is any indication, we can only hope that Moon is the one calling the shots. Heck, Trump can't even pay off a porn star without messing it up.

- For more on Trump and diplomacy with North Korea, **check out this [new memo](#) from National Security Action.**

## [THE ISLAMOPHOBIA INDUSTRY IS SOLIDIFYING ITS HOLD ON THE WHITE HOUSE](#)

John Bolton's presence in the White House is growing more toxic by the day. Not only has Bolton [tried to sabotage diplomacy with North Korea](#) at every step, he's also bringing more anti-Muslim hate to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Bolton this week hired Fred Fleitz, a senior vice president at the Center for Security Policy (CSP) and one of the [Islamophobia Industry's](#) chief tycoons, as his chief of staff at the National Security Council.

CSP is run by Frank Gaffney, a [far-right conspiracy theorist](#) and arguably the don of American Anti-Muslim movement. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has [designated](#) CSP a hate group, saying that with Gaffney at the helm, the group "has gone from a respected hawkish think tank focused on foreign affairs to a conspiracy-oriented mouthpiece for the growing anti-Muslim movement in the United States." (Recall that Bolton himself has [strong ties](#) to, and is a big [enabler](#) of this movement.)

The tip of CSP's anti-Muslim spear is its [promotion](#) of the conspiracy theory that the Muslim Brotherhood is secretly infiltrating and taking over the U.S. government.

But back to Fleitz, who's been a key leader in peddling CSP's wacky conspiracy theories and anti-Muslim hate. Here's some of what he's been up to in recent years:

- **Fleitz is a big proponent of the claim that there are supposedly "no go zones" for non-Muslims** throughout parts of Europe (there aren't), [said](#) Muslims in the UK "are deliberately not assimilating," and even blamed American Muslims living in Minnesota

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and Michigan for a measles outbreak. He said Muslim communities want “[to destroy](#) modern society, create a global caliphate and impose sharia law on everyone on Earth.”

- Media Matters [noted](#) that “[i]n several [op-eds posted to right-wing media websites](#), Fleitz repeatedly questioned the [intelligence community assessment](#) from early 2017 that Russia meddled in the presidential election to help Trump -- an assessment [recently backed up by](#) the Senate intelligence committee -- **calling it ‘rigged and a ‘politicized analysis to sabotage an incoming president from a different political party.’”**
- Fleitz also [believes](#) there actually were WMD in Iraq before the U.S.-led invasion, and just like Bolton, **he also has a history of fighting subordinates with whom he disagrees**. According to New York Magazine, when he worked for Bolton at the State Department during the George W. Bush years, “Fleitz fought viciously with analysts at the State Department and Central Intelligence Agency -- because they refused to let Bolton publicly claim that [Cuba was attempting to acquire biological weapons](#), on the basis of his idiosyncratic interpretation of intelligence reports. In declassified email exchanges, Fleitz derided the State Department’s assessment that there was insufficient evidence to claim Cuba was seeking illegal weapons as ‘wimpy.’”

The Anti-Defamation League -- which previously [said](#) CSP is “dedicated to advancement of myriad conspiracy theories and anti-Muslim extremism” -- released a statement this week “strongly” criticizing Fleitz’s promotion to the National Security Council, calling it “deeply disturbing and concerning,” and adding that his role in CSP’s anti-Muslim hate “should automatically disqualify him from a position that deals with America’s most essential foreign policy and national security interests.”

“The White House continues to be the nation’s central organizing body for white supremacist,” rights group Muslim Advocates said in a [statement](#) on Fleitz. “The fish rots from the head down: a president who specializes in conspiracy theories and appoints bigoted advisors like John Bolton, who are, in turn, staffed by hate group officials.”

SPLC [said](#), “Fleitz’s appointment is the latest in a disturbing trend of staffers leaving hate groups and joining the administration.”

## [THE SENATE IS CLOSE TO AUTHORIZING FOREVER WAR](#)

A showdown in the Senate is on the horizon as a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force (S.J.Res 59) proposed by Senators Bob Corker and Tim Kaine, which is facing [widespread](#) condemnation and [strong, bipartisan opposition](#), is expected for mark-up by the end of this month.

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“[T]his legislation would allow any president to unilaterally expand our wars indefinitely by omitting any sunset date and allowing the president to wage war against new groups or in new countries without congressional authorization,” wrote 49 U.S. Representatives in a [bipartisan letter](#) to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

What’s more, as Human Rights First’s Heather Brandon-Smith notes, if Senators Corker and Kaine truly want to restore Congress’ war authority, as they say they do, they should be taking cues from [Sen. Jeff Merkley](#), who recently [introduced an alternative](#):

“It is an effective approach that would provide sufficient authority to the president to use force, while balancing this expanded authority with crucial safeguards to prevent the delegation of congressional war powers to the executive branch, ensure continued congressional oversight and public transparency, and prevent perpetual armed conflict,” she [writes](#).

Win Without War Policy Director Kate Kizer unpacks this further [here](#).

After 17 years of war, we have seemed to become dangerously complacent about how our military is being used around the world. And just this week, we are seeing the horrific effects of this complacency as American-backed Saudi-led coalition forces are preparing to launch a [devastating military offensive](#) at Yemen’s port city of Hodeidah -- risking further catastrophe and suffering, starvation, and disease against millions.

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- **Congress should repeal the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs**, [not pass new legislation that not only codifies](#) their broad interpretations, but also widens and expands the president’s power to engage the U.S. in more war.
- **Polling shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans only want Congress to authorize the use of force as a last resort**, and with clear objectives and end goals (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). The Corker-Kaine AUMF does neither of those, and instead expands Trump’s blank check to wage global wars of choice.
- For 17 years, the original AUMF has been used by three different administrations to wage an endless, global war on terror – **a threat that has only proliferated in the face of a seemingly unlimited use of force** and whose root causes cannot be resolved militarily.

TAKE ACTION HERE: [ACLU](#), [Free the People](#), [United Church of Christ](#), and [Win Without War](#).

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## **BURIED LEDES**

Pompeo said recently that Iran could have a nuclear program as long as there are “inspections at military sites and research laboratories and all the places that had been participants in previous iterations of Iran’s program.” **Diplomacy Works points out that there’s actually a name for that: [The JCPOA](#).**

Speaking of the JCPOA, remember that [crazy story](#) about people close to **Donald Trump hiring an Israeli firm to spy on Obama officials** in an effort to undermine the Iran deal?

“By [most metrics](#) the war in Afghanistan is going badly.”

The Poor People’s Campaign this week [highlighted](#) U.S. military spending and the militarization of local communities, **noting the disparity between military spending and funding for anti-poverty programs.**

**Trump picked an anti-immigration hardliner** to lead the State Department’s office that [coordinates](#) the U.S. response to the global refugee crisis.

How immigration [abuses](#) connect to national security and foreign policy.

More warm and fuzzies from Trump world: “**State Department officials are ‘fucking disgusted’** by Mike Pompeo’s [decision](#) to meet with the foreign minister from Hungary’s Putin-friendly, Jew-baiting, Islamophobic regime.”

“Democrats, [with a few notable exceptions](#), haven’t offered alternatives to Trump’s calamitous, con-man foreign policy.”

We learned two things this week: **Hurricane Maria caused nearly 5,000 deaths in Puerto Rico** (as opposed to the official death toll of 64), and ABC cancelled the *Roseanne* reboot because of Roseanne Barr’s racism. [Guess which piece of information got more air time on cable news.](#)

And finally, **how easy would it be for Trump to launch nuclear weapons?** [Pretty darn easy!](#)