

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

### TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *When it comes to Korea, there's more than just the Trump show.*
- *Trump is helping make what is already the world's worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen much worse -- so bad the UN Expert on Genocide Prevention has weighed in.*

### THE SINGAPORE SUMMIT: WE'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT TRUMP, BUT NOT TOO MUCH ABOUT THE KOREAN PEOPLE

After all the endless cable news coverage, the made-for-TV moments, and the super-weird propaganda videos, the Singapore summit has come and gone. While Donald Trump has tweeted “mission accomplished,” experts agree that the jury is decidedly out on whether the summit was a success, and the hard work of diplomacy is only just beginning. And while we’re simultaneously [hopeful](#) that these talks will ultimately lead to a wider peace, and horrified by Trump’s embrace of yet another brutal, human rights abusing authoritarian leader as a “tough guy,” we also remain concerned that Trump’s war cabinet may yet use even the slightest diplomatic setback as a pretext for war.

Yet while American media has continued to obsess over the Trump show, what we haven’t heard too much about is what the summit will do for Koreans actually living in this decades-long conflict zone and how they feel about Kim meeting Trump.

First, it’s important to recognize that, hard as it may be to realize from here in the USA, Trump is not actually driving this diplomatic train. South Korean President Moon Jae-in not only initiated this diplomatic breakthrough, it is just the latest episode in his years-long quest for peace on the Korean Peninsula. After Trump’s reckless threats of nuclear war last year, Moon took advantage of the opening provided by the Olympics. He organized an Olympic truce with North Korea in February, arranged a historic meeting with Kim in April at the DMZ, and followed that by facilitating the historic Singapore summit between Trump and Kim this week. And when Trump abruptly cancelled the summit, Moon – determined to keep diplomacy alive – met with Kim again to keep moving the peace train forward.

And President Moon isn’t acting alone. After overthrowing the corrupt, anti-diplomacy Park administration, South Koreans elected Moon on a mandate to work toward peace with North Korea -- and they’ve supported him every step of the way. After the Singapore summit, South Koreans aren’t distracted by Trump or U.S. politics; instead, they see a real path to peace.

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



In fact, after the summit, while we in the U.S. were quick to obsess about what Trump did and didn't do and who "won" and "lost" in the endless political horse race of American politics, Moon took the opportunity to lock in a diplomatic path forward, [reminding](#) us all: "This is just a beginning and there may be many difficulties ahead, but we will never go back to the past again and never give up on this bold journey."

"South Koreans don't love Trump, but, in a place where the U.S. military led a war that killed millions and created a multigenerational, literal rift, American standing and protocol are not the priority," [writes](#) E. Tammy Kim. "Koreans see the Singapore summit not just as another sensational episode in the story of Donald Trump, but as a step away from a sixty-eight-year-old unfinished war."

"Can we stay focused on how this is an incredible moment for the Korean people?" expert and activist Christine Ahn wondered in [a must-read recent interview](#) with In These Times. Ahn says she is frustrated with some American progressives who are pressuring Trump to take a harder line (like, for example, perhaps cancelling the military exercises with South Korea [isn't such a bad thing?](#)).

"I was incredibly frustrated by going around the capitol yesterday talking to the offices of members of Congress and also the quick knee-jerk reaction from liberals and left," she said. "I was on the Joy-Ann Reid show, and the whole framing was about how Trump just met with the G7 and trashed France and other allies, and now he was going to North Korea to meet with a dictator."

Ahn adds, "Can we stay focused on how this is an incredible moment for the Korean people? This is about ending a seven-decade war with a country the United States has been at war with."

Indeed, [88 percent](#) of South Koreans support the April 27 peace declaration between Moon and Kim, and [81 percent](#) were optimistic about the Singapore summit. Additionally, Moon's ruling party just won [local elections](#) by a landslide, affirming Moon's mandate.

To be sure, South Korea does have its hard-line voices too. But Korea Institute for National Unification analyst Hong Min said that critics of the summit are missing the larger issue, saying, [according to the AP](#), that "it's meaningful in itself that the leaders of the United States and North Korea met, talked and signed an agreement that will carry more weight and significance than any pact previously made between the wartime foes." Hong said the summit declaration's vague and aspirational language was a "strategic decision" to reduce pressure on both sides and keep the process going.

## WHAT ABOUT NORTH KOREANS?

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



Perhaps the most disgusting spectacle throughout this week's coverage of the summit has been Trump's [dismissal](#), and even [praise](#) of the Korean regime's gross human rights violations.

"He speaks and his people sit up at attention," Trump [said](#) on Friday. "I want my people to do the same."

Thankfully, the American media hasn't ignored this. Here's a sample:

- "Human Rights Pushed Aside at Trump-Kim Summit," Human Rights Watch [\[LINK\]](#)
- "What the hell? Trump-Kim lovefest ignores human rights nightmare," Politico [\[LINK\]](#)
- "A look at N. Korea's human rights abuses Trump played down," AP [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Atrocities Under Kim Jong-un: Indoctrination, Prison Gulags, Executions," New York Times [\[LINK\]](#)

## **TRUMP GREEN LIGHTS MORE SUFFERING IN YEMEN AS UN GENOCIDE EXPERT ISSUES WARNING**

On Monday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [essentially green-lighted](#) a planned UAE military offensive on the Yemeni port of Hodeidah to relinquish its control from Houthi rebels, an effort the United Nations predicted [could cost](#) 250,000 civilian lives. The UAE launched the offensive Tuesday evening.

Nearly 17,000 civilians have [died](#) in the U.S.-backed Saudi-led war in Yemen, and 10.6 million are on the brink of famine, up from 8.4 million in December of 2017, while an [estimated](#) 50,000 children died last year from cholera or cholera-related preventable disease.

This latest offensive will make this situation worse, as around 70 percent of Yemen's humanitarian aid comes through Hodeidah.

"Mr. Pompeo's statement was a significant departure from earlier American policy of warning that such an attack could result in a humanitarian catastrophe and conveying that it would do little to end the war if the emirates-backed forces took the Al Hudaydah port from the Houthis," [said](#) Gregory D. Johnsen, who previously served on the United Nations' Panel of Experts on Yemen, which came to a [similar conclusion](#).

The situation is so bad in Hodeidah that just yesterday, Adama Dieng, the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, [issued a statement](#) expressing "grave concern at the potentially disastrous impact on civilians of the military offensive against the port of Hudaydah," and "called for accountability for alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the conflict in Yemen."

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



Dieng said the offensive appears to be the “first test” of a recent UN Security Council resolution condemning starvation of civilians as a war crime.

The United States has previously opposed proposals for a similar offensive on Hodeidah. However, the Trump administration is standing by as this potential massacre accelerates. Not only that, but the U.S. military is [providing](#) the Saudi-led coalition with increased targeting intelligence in and around Hodeidah, in addition to refueling coalition warplanes that have fueled the conflict for the last three years.

U.S. officials argue that providing this kind of support helps limit civilian casualties and other humanitarian calamities. However:

1. U.S. CENTCOM Cmdr. Gen. Joseph Votel [recently admitted](#) that the U.S. military doesn't really know how the Saudi-led coalition is using American supplied intelligence, so it's unclear how they could possibly improve the humanitarian crisis if they don't know how U.S. assistance is being used, and ...
2. The humanitarian situation in Yemen has worsened and the number of civilian casualties have increased throughout the time the United States has been offering its assistance.
3. Just days ago, the Saudi-led coalition bombed a Doctors Without Borders (MSF) cholera treatment center, despite having been given its coordinates as a medical facility a dozen times (Sen. Chris Murphy [called out Saudi Arabia on Twitter](#) for claiming they didn't know they were bombing the center.)

What's more, the U.S. has not leveraged that assistance to compel a change in behavior from the Saudis and Emiratis, or in this week's case, to stop a military offensive with gross humanitarian costs and questionable military or political upside.

## CONGRESS SPEAKS OUT

On Monday, a bipartisan group of House members [sent a letter](#) to Defense Secretary James Mattis urging him to prevent a “catastrophic” offensive on Hodeidah.

Then on Tuesday, a bipartisan group of 10 Senators – led by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker and Ranking Member Bob Menendez – sent a [stern letter](#) to Secretaries Mattis and Pompeo expressing their grave concern about the assault on Hodeidah and urging a diplomatic intervention to push forward a political solution to the conflict.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

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- Yemeni children appeal to the U.S. and other governments to intervene and stop the war, [via Avaaz](#).
- TAKE ACTION and ask Congress to intervene, via [Oxfam](#), [Win Without War](#), [Yemen Peace Project](#). (See also our action thread on Twitter [here](#).)
- STATEMENTS: [Oxfam](#), [Win Without War](#), [Freedom House](#), [International Rescue Campaign](#), [Norwegian Refugee Council](#), [CARE Joint Humanitarian Statement](#)
- The [New York Times](#) and the [Washington Post](#) published blistering editorials on the same day condemning the offensive and calling out U.S. complicity.
- Professor Sheila Carapico of University of Richmond [dismantles](#) the argument that the war in Yemen is a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia – a favorite talking point of those who want to continue fueling the chaos and death in Yemen.

## **BURIED LEDES**

A senior State Department official -- a former food and beverage lobbyist-turned-wine blogger under the name “Vino Vixen” -- is [leading a program to determine whether civil servants at the State Department and U.N. are sufficiently loyal to Donald Trump](#).

[Sen. Bernie Sanders](#) “is dramatically challenging Beltway discourse on Israel.”

Germany’s foreign minister appears to [confirm that Trump is killing America’s alliances](#).

Saudi women will soon be allowed to drive a car. While activists behind that movement remain behind bars, here are [five things](#) they **still won’t be allowed to do**.

**The battle for Net Neutrality isn’t over yet.** The Senate voted to overturn the FCC’s repeal of net neutrality; [now it’s the House’s turn](#).

In one of few NDAA votes this week, a [majority of the Senate](#) **signaled discomfort with Trump’s new so-called ‘low-yield’ nuclear weapons**.”

**Remember Black Cube** and its quest to spy on former Obama officials? That story [isn’t dead yet](#).

And finally, we wonder if [this](#) **means we’re British**.