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Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un trade threats over June 12 Summit.*
- *We're a country that rewards those who torture.*
- *Team Trump celebrated the U.S. Embassy move to Jerusalem as Gaza burned.*

TRUMP WANTS A VICTORY WITH NORTH KOREA BUT CAN'T GET OUT OF HIS OWN WAY

North Korea canceled a high-level meeting with South Korea this week complaining that the presence of strategic bombers during an annual U.S.-South Korea military exercise violated the [Panmunjom Declaration](#) signed last month by North and South Korea. The training exercise involving B-52s [has now been scrapped](#) (imagine the right-wing outrage machine had Obama done something like that).

Meanwhile, the North Koreans also balked at National Security Advisor John Bolton's claim that the U.S. seeks a "Libya-style" outcome from talks with North Korea; that is, that North Korea will completely dismantle the entirety of its nuclear program. (Notwithstanding the obvious difference that North Korea has a nuclear weapons arsenal and Libya only had an early-stage nuclear program.) Though the White House [distanced itself](#) from Bolton's claim, North Korea announced that the episode could cause it to pull out of the June 12 summit between Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump.

Trump addressed the matter this week, [seemingly confused](#) about just what the "Libya model" is.

"The Libya model is not a model we have at all with North Korea," Trump said, adding that Kim would "be there, running his country."

Of course Qaddafi was "there, running his country" too after he gave up his nuclear weapons program in 2003. Perhaps Trump was thinking of the U.S., British, and French-led military operation that led to Qaddafi's ouster and ultimate death in 2011. That model seems to be on the table, as Trump is [now back to threatening military action](#) to wipe out Kim if he doesn't get a

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deal ([as is Sen. Lindsey Graham](#)). He even presented a strange offer [to protect](#) Kim Jong Un if he agrees to give up his nukes.

TOPLINES

- These events underscore the complexity of diplomacy with North Korea, how difficult these negotiations will be, and the patience that will be required from all sides to achieve a favorable outcome.
- North Korea's response to the U.S.-South Korean military exercises reflects the normal push and pull of negotiations.
- The U.S. should not overreact and instead continue on a diplomatic path.
- This episode also highlights competing priorities within the Trump administration on North Korea, and the contradictory policy outcomes Trump officials have articulated for these negotiations.

For further messaging, click [here](#).

RESOURCES/ANALYSIS

- "Kim in Control," Slate [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Trump's North Korea Nobel buzz could die with John Bolton," Politico [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Bolton Emerges as Potential Wrecking Ball for Trump's Kim Summit," Bloomberg [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Making Sense of the Trump-Kim Summit," CAP [\[LINK\]](#)
- "On-again, off-again Korean summit," IISS [\[LINK\]](#)
- "President Trump 'Doesn't Think He Needs' to Prepare Much for His Meeting With North Korea's Kim Jong Un," Time [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Enough with the gamesmanship. Dealing with North Korea requires pragmatism," Washington Post [\[LINK\]](#)
- "On North Korea, Trump is getting played by both sides," Washington Post [\[LINK\]](#)

HASPEL'S CONFIRMATION CLOSES THE BOOKS ON TWO TRUMP NOMINEES THAT COULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED

The Bush administration torture program is a black stain on our country's history. What's even worse is that the perpetrators of the program have not faced the slightest amount of accountability. And what's even worse than that, we once again learned this week that we are

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apparently so unwilling to reckon with this dark past that we're okay with rewarding those who presided over it.

The U.S. Senate confirmed Gina Haspel yesterday to become Donald Trump's CIA Director. Haspel oversaw a CIA black site in Thailand after 9/11 where terror suspects were subjected to brutal torture, and she led a cover up of what she did there by helping to destroy video recordings of the interrogations. And despite Haspel's [refusal](#) to acknowledge that what she did was wrong, six Democrats joined all but three Republicans in approving her ascension to the top job at Langley.

THE SMALLEST OF SILVER LININGS

"Activists' prodding of Democrats to oppose Trump's nominees did have some impact," Politico [noted](#) in a fairly demoralizing after action report. "Only five of the 15 minority-caucus senators who supported Pompeo to lead the CIA last year backed him again to be secretary of state last month, and Haspel was confirmed with the lowest number of votes of any director in the spy agency's history."

Well that's something.

If you're looking for somewhere to channel your disappointment about the fact that we're now rewarding torturers, you can check out [this Twitter thread](#) from Indivisible's Associate Director of Foreign Policy Elizabeth Beavers, who pulled out one disturbing fact from the Senate's torture report for every Senator who voted for Haspel.

See our statement on Haspel's confirmation [here](#).

[TEAM TRUMP CELEBRATES IN JERUSALEM AS GAZA BLEEDS](#)

Trump administration officials and family members celebrated the opening of the United States [Embassy in Jerusalem](#) on Monday as Israeli soldiers less than 50 miles away opened fire on unarmed Palestinian protesters in Gaza, [reportedly](#) killing dozens and injuring thousands including a victim as young as eight-months-old.

Not only is Trump's unilateral move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and "[blank check](#)" approach to Israel furthering senseless suffering and isolating the United States from the [international community](#), but it has also furthered prospects for building a just peace to end the decades of military occupation and conflict in the Middle East.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

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- Instead of embracing violence, systematic land confiscation and annexation, and permanent occupation, **the Trump administration should invest in inclusive, robust, and sustained diplomacy** that helps build a just and sustainable peace.
- **The scenes of horrific bloodshed and suffering in Gaza were merely the latest in a long string of** assaults against protestors and systematic deprivation of Palestinians' human rights, with nearly 2 million people in Gaza living "caged in a toxic slum from birth to death," as the United Nations human rights chief recently [said](#).
- Israel has a right to defend itself but its [violations](#) of international law and its continued blockade on Gaza **do nothing for defense and preventing violence**, and only further human suffering in the "[world's largest open-air prison](#)."
- A strong, principled, U.S. foreign policy **should reflect our shared values** of [peace](#), cooperation and commitment to the human rights, freedom and security of all people.

Human rights and progressive groups are calling on [Members of Congress](#) to not remain silent and to speak out. Read statements here: [Amnesty International USA](#), [Indivisible](#), [J Street](#), [MoveOn](#), and [Win Without War](#).

RESOURCES/ANALYSIS:

- "Trump Has Freed Progressive Democratic Senators To Finally Criticize Israel," The Forward [\[LINK\]](#)
- "The US-Israeli relationship faces a storm on the horizon," The Guardian [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Donald Trump has ruined any chance of a two-state solution in the Israel-Palestine conflict – and the American public knows it," The Independent [\[LINK\]](#)
- "How Trump Withdrawing from the Iran Deal is Directly Connected to Moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem this Monday," IfNotNow [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Trump administration support for Israel goes beyond its predecessors and isolates U.S. internationally," Los Angeles Times [\[LINK\]](#)
- "Pastor at US Embassy opening in Jerusalem says Trump is 'on the right side' of God," Vox [\[LINK\]](#)
- "From Jerusalem to Gaza: The Bloodstained First Act of the Trump Intifada," Haaretz [\[LINK\]](#)
- "The Democrats' Shameful Collective Silence on Gaza," The Daily Beast [\[LINK\]](#)
- "This is why Gazans won't back down," CNN [\[LINK\]](#)

BURIED LEDES

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[This](#) probably shouldn't be too surprising but **Trump apparently had no idea the U.S. was in talks with Europe on the Iran deal** when he made his decision to violate it, and he [never had](#) a senior-level debate about it.

The president of the European Council [had this to say](#) about Trump and his decision to violate the Iran deal: “**with friends like that who needs enemies.**” (One observer [notes](#) that Putin “only dreamed” of such transatlantic rifts before Trump realized them.)

Meanwhile, the EU is [looking to invoke a regulation](#) from the 1990s [to protect](#) European companies doing business in Iran from U.S. sanctions, “**put[ting] itself on a collision course with the US** over Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran.”

Also, the New York Times [picked up on the fact](#) that **an influential Iran deal critic is trying to skirt responsibility** for the consequences of the agreement falling apart now that Trump has violated it.

Shiite Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's [surprise showing](#) in Iraq's recent parliamentary elections “**again demonstrate Iran's limited popular support in the country.**”

Sen. Jeff Merkely [announced](#) that he will soon [introduce legislation](#) that **seeks to rein in the executive branch's war powers**. The bill will be offered as a stronger alternative to a recent Corker-Kaine proposal for a new Authorization for Military Force that, [from our estimation](#), will essentially give the president a blank check to wage war wherever and whenever he or she wants.

“We see in 2018 the humanitarian situation inside Syria **being the worst we have seen since the war started,**” a UN official [said](#) this week.

The U.S. has spent \$2.3 trillion on counterterrorism since 2001. [Feel safer?](#)

Rep. Ro Khanna isn't backing down from [trying to limit](#) the U.S. role in Saudi Arabia's disastrous war in Yemen.

File [this](#) in the “This Would Probably Be a Huge Deal in Normal Times” folder: The Pentagon said **Special Forces were unprepared in deadly Niger ambush.**

Experts [say](#) it's probably not helpful that **most of Trump's foreign policy advisers are old white men.**

And finally: Yeah okay, Trump doesn't know what the “Libya model” is. [But maybe he was “referring to this little-discussed 'Libyan model',](#) where you steal the flux capacitor, go back in time, and denuclearize North Korea while Kim Jong-un is still a baby”?