

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

### TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *Trump lies about diplomacy with North Korea but that doesn't mean we should stop talking.*
- *Killing the Iran nuclear deal makes us less safe in more ways than you think.*
- *The U.S. military is continuing to boot immigrants with distinguished service records.*

### NO, DIPLOMACY WITH NORTH KOREA ISN'T DEAD

The Washington Post [reported](#) this week that according to U.S. intelligence, it appears that North Korea is building new missiles at a production facility that it previously used to construct its long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles. This news, coupled with a recent report that North Korea is increasing its nuclear fuel production has left some speculating that diplomacy with North Korea is showing to be, once again, a fool's errand.

So what's going on?

Much of this analysis has centered around the fact that:

1. Donald Trump and his top aides have **set expectations unreasonably high** (like say, that North Korea will get rid of all of its nuclear weapons [in one year](#)).
2. Trump declared victory on the North Korea issue **before anything has actually happened**.

As such, there are two key facts that one needs to keep in mind when reading, hearing about, or analyzing news about diplomacy with North Korea:

1. **Trump is a liar** who is largely more interested in the optics of talking to Kim Jong-un, rather than the substance of the talks.
2. A lasting peace and true denuclearization (a definition of which all sides agree upon) of the Korean Peninsula **will take a long time**, some experts say up to 15 years.

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**The reality is that diplomacy with North Korea continues to show signs of progress**, not in the sense of how Donald Trump portrays it, but there has been progress nonetheless. Both the U.S. and the North have engaged in confidence building measures, but the U.S.-North Korean angle shouldn't necessarily be the focal point, as Washington Post columnist David Ignatius [noted](#) this week:

Trump gets the headlines when it comes to North Korea. **But the real driver may be inter-Korean contacts.** Kim signaled in a [speech Jan. 1](#) that he wanted to leverage his nuclear-weapons capability for economic development, and South Korean President Moon Jae-in responded boldly with his [Olympic diplomacy](#). Trump embraced this opening, but he didn't create it.

"This week's most important conversation on Korea," he adds, "may have been the [meeting](#) between a North Korean and a South Korean general at the border village of Panmunjom" where they discussed actually demilitarizing the Demilitarized Zone. De-escalating the conflict and moving toward a peace agreement, South Koreans say, is the real path to denuclearization.

## SO WHAT ABOUT THE MISSILE & NUCLEAR FUEL PRODUCTION?

Well yes, it is unfortunate that North Korea appears to be continuing on with its missile and nuclear weapons programs, and yes that contradicts Trump's claim that North Korea is no longer a threat. But context and the bigger picture are important. Consider the following:

1. **North Korea never agreed to stop its missile and nuclear programs.** Kim Jong-un did agree to cease testing, and so far, he has adhered to that promise.
2. **It's not uncommon for parties in negotiations to increase their bargaining position while talks are ongoing.** "If you look at the history of every nuclear arms-control negotiation [from] the end of the Cold War up until the present day," [said](#) Korea expert Joel Wit, "you will find that as people are negotiating, the countries participating ... are still building weapons until the agreements are finalized."

"[L]et's stop crying wolf every time North Korea does things on the nuclear and missile front that it is not prohibited from doing, and instead focus on getting a real agreement to end these dangerous activities," the Ploughshares Fund's Tom Collina and Catherine Killough [noted](#).

Indeed, in the meantime, there's nothing wrong with [calling Trump out](#) for his lies about North Korea. Criticizing Trump doesn't mean that you oppose diplomacy or cede that it's dead.

## [HOW TRUMP KILLING THE IRAN DEAL DRIVES EUROPE FURTHER FROM THE U.S.](#)

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A few days after Trump threatened Iran with annihilation in a tweet, the president seemed to reverse course, saying he'd be willing to meet with Iran's leaders without any preconditions (only to have his Secretary of State later lay out some preconditions).

Of course meeting with Iran is a good thing. But there's one major problem: For a variety of reasons, Iran's leaders aren't going to be meeting with Trump (an Iranian official even [likened the proposal](#) to be "as futile as milking the ram").

While that was the big news on Iran this week, **the substance of U.S.-Iran policy has once again been buried amid Trump's carnival barking.** The reimposition of American sanctions is set to take place next week as part of Trump's efforts to kill the Iran deal. And while that's bad for our ability to continue to keep Iran's nuclear program in check (i.e. without any economic incentive, there's little reason for Iran to continue to keep sharp restrictions on its program in place), the move has wider ramifications for U.S. national security, namely, **further driving a wedge between the United States and Europe.**

## KEY POINTS:

1. **Trump is taking money out of European pockets.** The U.S. will impose so-called secondary sanctions on any European entity doing business in Iran, effectively, as one analyst [put it](#), "forcing its closest friends to implement policies that undermine their self-defined national interests as well as global nonproliferation efforts."
2. **China and Russia will benefit from further U.S.-European friction.** "This is not strategic behavior," former State Department official Jarrett Blanc [said](#) this week. "We're all over the map, we don't have a list of priorities, we're not relating issue A to issue B and so then of course that puts in a stronger position anyone who can set their priorities and tie these issues together."
3. **U.S. leadership of the global financial system could be at risk.** Richard Nephew, a former State Department official responsible for sanctions policy, [also said](#) this week that as our European allies become increasingly frustrating with American financial dominance, a long term risk is they'll look to "development of alternative systems."

So while yes, while Trump's attacks on NATO, the EU, and some of our closest European allies have largely been rhetorical, Trump killing the Iran deal is putting those works into concrete American policy, further alienating the U.S. from its closest allies and the international system it has spent the last 70-plus years creating and maintaining.

For more on Iran news this week, see Diplomacy Works' weekly [digest](#).

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## TENS OF THOUSANDS TELL MATTIS TO END CRACKDOWN ON IMMIGRANT RECRUITS

Win Without War, along with our partners Common Defense and MoveOn, delivered nearly 70,000 [petition](#) signatures to the Pentagon this week asking Defense Secretary James Mattis to stop kicking immigrants out of the military and investigate past discharges and canceled contracts.

(You can watch NBC's coverage of the petition delivery [here](#).)

Earlier this month, the Associated Press [reported](#) that dozens of highly skilled immigrant military recruits -- who were promised a path to citizenship for signing up -- are being abruptly kicked out, in a move that not only puts their legal status in jeopardy, but also could make them eligible for deportation.

U.S. Army Spec. Yea Ji Sea, a Korean immigrant who has been in the United States legally since 1998, is the [latest example](#) in what her lawyer describes as "part of a larger anti-immigration scheme of the Trump administration."

The Pentagon says Trump's hardline immigration stance is unrelated, and claims that Sea was discharged for making a false statement on a visa application. But while Sea denies that charge, it's unclear why the Pentagon is acting on this information now, as the alleged offense occurred more than four years ago. "Throughout the entire time, they never sought to discharge her," Sea's lawyer says. "They're claiming now the reason for discharging her is based on her being an alien, which makes no sense. Everyone in the [Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest] program is an alien."

(The Trump administration is also [trying to kick out](#) service members who are HIV positive. Meanwhile, the Army is [issuing more waivers](#) for past misconduct or drug use to fill recruiting quotas.)

### BURIED LEDES

A leaked U.S. intelligence [report describes](#) how **Saudi military officials launched a drone strike on a nomadic family** in what experts are calling a clear violation of the laws of war. Meanwhile, the Saudi-led assault on the Yemeni port of Hodeidah [continues to cause civilian casualties](#). (This report [highlights](#) the possibility that the Pentagon lied to Congress about what it knows about Saudi-led strikes in Yemen.)

Despite Saudi Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's recent charm offensive in the U.S. painting Saudi Arabia as a newfound human rights champion, [the Gulf kingdom is](#) "broadening a

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**campaign of arrests** that has drawn international criticism and tainted the kingdom's top-down reforms agenda.”

John Bolton [brought a guy into the White House](#) who thinks “**arms control**” means **stopping arms control**.

END IN SIGHT? It what has been described as a [significant breakthrough](#), **U.S. officials and representatives from the Taliban reportedly met in Qatar last week** to [discuss the groundwork for peace talks](#) and the Taliban are [reportedly](#) open to keeping U.S. troops on Afghan soil.

The Trump administration is [continuing](#) to **slowly eradicate the number of refugees the U.S. takes in**.

**Next week marks the 73rd anniversary of the U.S. dropping atomic bombs** on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Survivors are [still suffering](#) emotionally and physically. (Physicians for Social Responsibility [compiled](#) remembrance related events across the country.)

And finally, Foreign Policy Interrupted [analyzed](#) foreign policy related op-eds in four major U.S. newspapers from the years 1996, 2006, and 2016 and found that **just 15 percent were written by women**.