Student Briefing Packet



Inside the White House Situation Room

A Presidential Advisory Meeting about North Korea and Kim Jong Un

2 clips for students to watch: [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1lFCWWDKSBnn RMeCXLf7fJAVr428e9HYGJrdcbXbcfm4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1lFCWWDKSBnnRMeCXLf7fJAVr428e9HYGJrdcbXbcfm4/edit?usp=sharing)

Background: Security Briefing on North Korea

Mr. President, As your National Security advisors, it is our responsibility to provide you with up-to-date information about situations in the world that present a risk to the safety of the United States, as well as to the world.

Over the past year, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has accelerated his country’s rush toward nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles. 30 Minutes is how long it would take a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launched from North Korea to reach Los Angeles. With Pyongyang working toward making this possible - building an ICBM and shrinking a nuke to fit it - analysts now predict that Kim Jong Un will have this capability during your team ends.

Why we’ve fallen short and why that’s no longer an option Wendy Sherman and Evans Revere

Times 2017

North Korea’s isolated dictators have long believed that nuclear weapons will ensure regime survival against U.S. military power, enabling it to unite the Korean Peninsula on its terms. Successive U.S. Administrations have tried various strategies to thwart the dangerous trajectory of the regime. Some have made progress, only to be set back by North Korean perfidy, by changes in policy direction and by cautious partners and allies in the region who wanted a different approach.

We now know that for much of this time Pyongyang was working to preserve and even expand its nuclear program. North Korea has several nuclear weapons and is perfecting the missiles that are designed to deliver them. The North Korea challenge is, as President Obama reportedly told then President-elect Donald Trump, the most dangerous and difficult security challenge he will face.

The U.S. has tried diplomatic inducements, including normalization of relations, security guarantees, economic and food aid and confidence-building steps. Nothing has produced lasting results. The U.S. and its partners pursued “freezes.” But North Korea agreed to several freezes of its nuclear-weapons program but still found ways to violate the deals, and when caught refused international monitoring and verification. U.S. Administrations have tried sanctions but have faced a China reluctant to enforce them and an inadequate international response.

During the Clinton Administration, a negotiated plan to stop North Korea’s program showed some success but ultimately was unsustainable. U.S. Administrations have considered military action but have pulled back, assessing the risk of catastrophic war as too great.

The main reason we are where we are today is because North Korea has walked away from every denuclearization agreement ever reached. The regime clearly wants nuclear weapons more than any inducement. And it has not changed its behavior in the face of sanctions.

But no U.S. Administration, working with regional leaders and the inter­national community, has ever arrayed all its tools and advantages simultaneously and over­whelmingly to end North Korea’s nuclear-weapons program, forcing the regime to choose between nuclear weapons and regime survival.

Compelling Pyongyang to make that stark choice offers the best way forward. A successful U.S. strategy will entail risk, but a growing North Korean nuclear threat and the possibility that miscalculation could lead to war means that we must do all that we can, and soon, to deal with the challenge of Pyongyang.

*ShermanwasUnderSecretaryofStateforPoliticalAffairsfrom2011to2015.ReverewasCEOoftheKoreaSocietyfrom 2007to2010 (*[*http://time.com/north-korea-opinion/*](http://time.com/north-korea-opinion/)*)*

Mr. President at this point, we kindly ask that you and the other members of the security team answer the questions on the worksheet that follows. Once everyone is finished, you can open up the floor for discussion and debate.

Your task will be to decide upon policy options that the United States should follow to stop Kim Jong Un and his country’s rush toward development of nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles.

**Step One:** Understanding what you just read .

veryone should read *Whywe’vefallenshortandwhythat’snolongeranoption.*

## Underline three facts about North Korea that each adviser feels concerned about.

1. Have a brief discussion about the threat from North Korea.

**Step Two:** Choosing what should be done

A nation’s *foreignpolicy*is a government’s strategy dealing with other nations. Using the checklist below, **circle three** foreign policy options that you feel the President should take in response to North Korea. \*\*

**Option A**: Maintain the Status Quo -US military continues regular activities and military drills while the State Department works on sanctions and diplomatic solutions to the problems

Things to consider:

President Obama spent 8 years with a policy of “strategic patience” and it had limited effects. Presents lower risk of elevating a tense situation into “full-out” warfare.

Has failed for years to stop North Korea from gaining a nuclear weapon or developing long-range missiles.

Would the US come to the defense of its allies is North Korea could threaten to US nucleara weapons against US?

**Option B:** Secondary Sanctions - Economic sanctions on China to force China to deal with North Korea since 80-85% of North Korean trade is with China.

Things to consider:

China does not want a unified North Korea which would send refugees and a American military presence at its doorstep.

US economic sanctions against North Korea have largely

China is one of America’s important trading partners. Economic sanctions against China would likely weaken US-Chinese relationships across the board.

Option C: Arm the region and watch North Korea - This position takes the status quo and magnifies it with the US’s most capable platforms coming to the region and closely monitoring North Korea to make it feels its nuclear program is unwise.

Things to consider:

US stealth jets and bombers, aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, guided-missile destroyers, and even tactical nuclear weapons could deploy to South Korea and Japan on a more permanent basis to step up the US presence in the area.

Increased cyber and naval presence would seek to prohibit any shipment to North Korea could further Pyongyang’s weapons program.

North Korea hates US military deployments to the peninsula and could easily see such a move as aggressive and provide further justification to continue its weapons program at any cost.

The US can’t simply place these assets in the region. It needs to credibly threaten to use them. What happens, for example, if a North Korean ship opens fire on US Navy sailors trying to board and inspect its cargo.

Option D: Limited Conventional Military Attack: A limited military attack - or more likely a continuing series of such attacks - using aerial and naval assets, and possibility including narrowly targeted Special Forces operations.

Things to consider:

These would have to be punishing enough to significantly damage North Korea’s capability but small enough to avoid being perceived as the beginning of a preventive strike.

This would leave Kim Jong Un in power but likely force him to abandon his pursuit of nuclear ICBMs.

Option E: Shoot down every medium to long range missile North Korea fires to restrict its testing.

Things to consider:

This approach goes straight for the goal of freezing North Korean nuclear-missile program.

North Korea has to keep testing its missiles to achieve a credible nuclear threat to the US but to do so it has to test missiles that fly beyond its border.

If the US and allies shot down North Korea’s test fires, it would deny Pyongyang the testing data it needs to have confidence in its fleet.

This requires US ballistic-missile-defense assets, like its Navy destroyers to constantly commit to the region, limiting resources available elsewhere.

North Korea could still test shorter-range missiles that put US forces in the region at risk and it's unknown how Pyongyang would respond to having its missiles shot down.

Option F: Destroy all ICBM sites and missile launch pads

Things to consider:

Limited airstrikes and likely some Tomahawk missile launches from the US Navy, the US military would look to destroy in one quick pass every single known launchpad and ICBM manufacturing site.

US doesn’t know the full extent of the North Korea’s missile-producing infrastructure and could easily leave behind some secret or underground sites.

Most North Korean missiles are fired from fixed sites, however, North Korea has developed solid- fueled missiles that can launch from anywhere at virtually any time.

The strike could conceivably remove the threat to the US from North Korea's ICBMS, Pyongyang may very well see the attack as a larger-scale attack.

North Korea may unleash its full, massive artillery force against South Korea and the US forces there.

It may fire nuclear missiles at Japan and South Korea.

Experts assess that an all out war could cost 30,000 to 300,000 lives a day with many coming from civilian populations.

Option G: Massive Preventive Strike - A crushing US military strike to eliminate Pyongyang’s arsenals of mass destruction, take out its leadership and destroy its military.

Things to consider:

Huge commitment of troops and resources

North Korea has a million-man army, chemical and biological weapon and a number of nuclear bombs

Its current striking range is strictly regional. North Korea would not have time to respond

South Korea’s population has 51 million people, including 240,000 US citizens living in Seoul. Unilateral strike by the US would likely divide the international community.

North Korea may unleash its full, massive artillery force against South Korea and the US forces there.

It may fire nuclear missiles at Japan and South Korea.

Option H: Remove Leadership - Removing Kim and his inner circle, most likely by assassination, and replacing the leadership with a more moderate regime willing to open North Korea to the rest of the world.

Things to consider:

US couldn’t simply kill Kim Jong Un and have the other 25 million North Koreans surrender.

North Korea still technically exists under the “forever leader” of Kim II Sung, who has been dead for decades. Rank and file North Koreans inoculated with propaganda could or probably would fight on after Kim died.

The military would have to target “not only nuclear infrastructure but command and control facilities, key leaders, artillery and missile units, chemical and biological weapons and other targets deemed critical to regime survival,” according to a Congressional report.

The operation would be tantamount to a full-scale war.

Option I: Acceptance - Allow Kim’s development of the weapons he wants, while continuing efforts to contain his weapons program.

Things to consider:

North Korea will eventually build ICBMs armed with nuclear warheads. Acceptance is likely because there is no good options militarily.

Pyongyang has long had the means to all but level Seoul.

The international community would allow North Korea to be a nuclear power and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect and gather valuable intelligence about North Korea’s capabilities.

Option J: Just walk away -Pull US forces off of the Korean peninsula.

\*\*Sources:

Things to consider:

It would represent a policy shift on US’s consideration and involvement on the Korean peninsula If US withdrew troops, Kim Jong Un might not feel pressured and China or the international community could sway him to denuclearize

Nothing guarantees that Kim would negotiate after gaining the upper hand on South Korea. North Korea has long stated one of its goals is reuniting the Korean Peninsula under the Kim dynasty and if the US leaves, it might feel emboldened to do so.

Lockie, Alex. “These are 7 military options Congress has been given to deal with North Korea”. *BusinessInsider.* November 2017 Malinowski, Tom. “How to Take Down Kim Jong Un”. *Politico.* July 24, 2017

Metz, Justin. “How to Deal with North Korea” *TheAtlantic.* July/August 2017 Sherman, Wendy and Revere, Evans. “How to Stop Kim Jong UN”. *Time2017*

## \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Summary: Highlight or underline three of the options below that you feel would be best to deal with North Korea and Kim Jong Un.

1. Maintain the Status Quo
2. Secondary Sanctions
3. Arm the region and watch North Korea
4. A Limited Conventional Military Attack
5. Shoot down every medium to long range missile North Korea fires to restrict its testing.
6. Destroy all ICBM sites and missile launch pads
7. Massive Preventive Strike
8. Decapitation:
9. Acceptance
10. Just Walk Away NAME:
11. What are ICBMs? What threat do they pose to US?
12. List three pieces of evidence from the packet that describe why North Korea is a major foreign policy concern.
13. Top three foreign policy options for North Korea and rationale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Policy #1-#3 | Rationale |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

1. List 4 countries that are in this region?

1. If you were a Presidential adviser, what action would you recommend he take to deal with North Korea and the threat it poses to the US and the world?