

Is Trump's "Friend" Kissinger Steering Him from Calm to Storm?

Henry Kissinger, seemingly returned from oblivion, has been in the ear of "old friend" Trump since mid-primary season, just after Trump declared himself open to negotiation with North Korea. Since that moment, Trump's stance and rhetoric have veered inexorably toward war.

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President Donald Trump [met with top defense officials](#) Tuesday morning — including **Secretary of Defense James Mattis** and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chair **General Joseph Dunford** — in the White House Situation Room, to discuss potential options for responding to any North Korean "aggression" as well as how to prevent North Korea from threatening the United States with nuclear weapons.

The meeting, which was later confirmed by the State Department and a White House press release, came a day after Mattis [instructed the U.S. Army](#) to stand ready if North Korea diplomacy fails, and less than a week after Trump's cryptic "[calm before the storm](#)" [comments](#) about a previous meeting with top military commanders. Some [have noted](#) that the decision to have the meeting in the Situation Room, sometimes called the War Room, was significant, as it is often used to hold secure meetings regarding disasters, military conflicts, and other major crises both domestic and global.

While most reporting gave some context to Trump's most recent meeting with top defense officials on tensions with Pyongyang, hardly any mentioned that the meeting [had been immediately preceded](#) by another. This meeting, also on the topic of North Korea, was held between the president and former Secretary of State and unindicted war criminal **Henry Kissinger**.

In his [post-meeting remarks](#), Trump praised Kissinger's 'immense talent.'

"Henry Kissinger has been a friend of mine," he added. "I've liked him. I've respected him. But we've been friends for a long time, long before my emergence into the world of politics, which has not been too long."

Kissinger is also [a long-time advisor](#) and [confidante](#) of Trump's former rival for the presidency, **Hillary Clinton**.

Tuesday's meeting was not the first occasion Trump has met with Kissinger since becoming a fixture in American politics. The pair's first meeting after Trump's rise to political prominence [took place](#) in May of 2016. That meeting occurred a day after then-candidate

Trump said he would open dialogue with North Korean leader **Kim Jong-un** if elected President. Since that initial meeting, Kissinger and Trump met [last November](#) and have already met [twice this year](#).

After their November meeting, Kissinger remarked that Trump would likely [not be keeping](#) all his campaign promises, as he was undergoing “the transition from being a campaigner to being a national strategist.” This apparently included his promise of opening dialogue with North Korea.

While often characterized by the mainstream press as a [leading “statesman” and “diplomat.”](#) Kissinger’s record shows he is anything but. While serving as Richard Nixon’s Secretary of State, Kissinger oversaw [a bloody coup in Chile](#), an [illegal bombing campaign](#) in Cambodia, and [millions dead](#) in Vietnam.

Despite overseeing such actions, Kissinger ended up being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in the same year as the Chilean coup, for his role in bringing “peace” to Vietnam and ending the Vietnam war, though he had actually [worked to extend](#) it. The choice of Kissinger was so outrageous that several members of the Nobel committee resigned in protest. Kissinger [is also credited](#) with transforming U.S. foreign policy into one of perpetual, undeclared war – a policy that continues today and one that Trump has embraced since becoming President.

Given Trump’s bellicose rhetoric and threats towards North Korea – as well as [his rejection of diplomacy](#) in resolving the crisis despite [both Pyongyang’s](#) and his own State Department’s [apparent willingness](#) to attempt it – Kissinger’s timely guidance to the President during “the calm before the storm” should give the American public considerable cause for concern.

Watch | Henry Kissinger on his 2016 meeting with Donald Trump

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