

# Trump Suspended “War Games” against North Korea in Return For Unconditional and Unilateral Denuclearization

Trump "War Games" Announcement Shocks South Korea, US Military Forces

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*In what was perhaps the most surprising announcement to emerge from today's Trump-Kim summit, president Trump agreed to [suspend military exercises](#) with South Korea in return for a commitment to denuclearisation from North Korea.*

As we reported earlier, Trump said the war games were expensive and “very provocative”, and yet stopping them has been called a “major concession”, something the US has previously rejected as non-negotiable on the grounds that the exercises are a key element of its military alliance with Seoul, and maintaining a deterrent against North Korea. In return, Trump said Kim had agreed in a joint statement to reassert “his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula”.

In other words, Trump made it appear that he is negotiating from a position of weakness to achieve a diplomatic goal which would have remained unachievable had Trump not taken the initiative. In doing so, however, he infuriated the neocons in his immediate circle. Immediately after the announcement, the WaPo's Josh Rogin noted that

“Everything Trump is saying and doing goes directly against everything Bolton has ever said or believed about North Korea.”

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— Josh Rogin (@joshrogin) [June 12, 2018](#)

On the surface, anything that neocon warmonger Bolton hates can only be good.

But it wasn't just Trump's closest advisors that were shocked: both the South Korean government and US forces in the region appear to have been taken by surprise by Trump's declared suspension of joint military exercises.

According to Reuters, US forces in Korea said they had not received updated guidance on military exercises.

“In coordination with our ROK [Republic of Korea] partners, we will continue with our current military posture until we receive updated guidance,” a spokesperson told Reuters.

Trump’s announcement also came as a surprise to the South Korean government.

“At this point, we need to know President Trump’s exact meaning or intentions,” according to a statement released by the office of South Korean President Moon Jae-in. “However we think that it is crucial to pursue various solutions for better dialogue.”

The South Korean military appeared similarly taken aback, with NBC News quoting a statement as saying:

“Regarding President Trump’s comment regarding ending of the combined military drills ... we need to find out the exact meaning or intention behind his comments at this point.”

Military officials from both countries, including the US defence secretary, James Mattis, had vigorously opposed curtailing joint military exercises, on the grounds that doing so would undermine the alliance and its deterrent against North Korea.

Kelly Magsamen, a senior Pentagon official dealing with Asian and Pacific security in the Obama administration, blasted the surprise suspension of military exercises and their disparagement as expensive and provocative “continues Trump’s disturbing pattern of undermining our democratic alliances while praising our adversaries”.

Then again, with North Korea having repeatedly said that any denuclearization could only take place if the US stops naval drills in the region, Trump’s surprise decision just may be the missing link that gets North Korea to finally do what generations of western leaders have failed to achieve.

Trump said the summit on Tuesday would be followed next week by more negotiations between US and North Korean officials to work out the details of the agreement.

In an amusing twist, before his press conference, reporters were shown a video that Trump said he had played to Kim and his aides towards the end of their talks. It was made by Destiny Productions and was presented in Korean and English in the style of an action movie trailer.

It sought to illustrate alternative futures for North Korea: one a bright, colourful world of scientific progress and happiness, the other a monochrome world full of weaponry accompanied by ominous music. Only one person could choose between these two destinies, the film’s narrator said.

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