

## Has Trump Gone Full Neocon??

Pentagon launches provocative new military drills putting North Korea nukes talks at risk

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*The details of what took place at the Hanoi Summit strongly suggests that President Donald Trump has joined the neocons in their quest to strangle the North Korean economy and bring about regime change. As it happens, the Trump delegation did not negotiate in good faith or make an honest attempt to resolve the nuclear issue but, instead, piled on a list of unrelated demands that they knew would blow up the summit. Multiple reports point to John Bolton as the author of the plan to sabotage the meetings which seems to be the case. Check out this excerpt from the Pearls and Irritations website:*

**"In his article on the Hanoi talks ... Richard Broinowski reported that a senior Asian diplomat, in Canberra, had told him that an important reason for the break-up of the talks was that Trump's National Security Advisor, **John Bolton, had persuaded Trump to add, at the end, the demand that DPRK also disclose it's holdings of chemical and biological weapons.** This report has now been confirmed by a report published in the March 4th edition of **The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists**, which cites a statement by the DPRK Foreign Minister, Ri Yong-Ho, in Hanoi, that **"John Bolton disrupted the talks by demanding that North Korea disclose it's chemical and biological arsenal as well as it's nuclear arsenals"**. This would seem to answer the question I posed in my article on whether or not a spanner had been thrown into the works and if so, by whom? Not unusually, there seems to have been no report of this highly salient fact by western mainstream media." ([John Menadue-Pearls and Irritations](#))**

The new list of demands was confirmed in an article at The Guardian on Thursday which said:

**"The US is demanding North Korea destroy all its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons before receiving any sanctions relief...Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, said the US president was open to another summit with Kim, but that the US wanted to discuss a "big deal" involving complete disarmament in return for comprehensive sanctions relief....**

**"Nobody in the administration advocates a step-by-step approach. In all cases the expectation is the complete denuclearisation of North Korea as a condition for all the other steps being taken," the official said, confirming that Trump had also called on Kim to get rid of all North Korea's chemical and biological weapons at the same time." ("North Korea must give up all nuclear weapons before any sanctions relief, says US ", [The Guardian](#))**

The Trump administration's objective in changing the focus from nuclear weapons to a more comprehensive disarmament was not intended to simply "move the goalposts" but to undermine mutual trust to the extent that future negotiations would be impossible. Trump's performance in Hanoi suggests that he is now willing to participate in a confrontational and potentially-explosive strategy in exchange for the tacit support of the neocons and foreign policy establishment elites who have opposed any cooperation with the DPRK from the very beginning. Trump supporters- who felt that the president was sincere in promising a non-interventionist "America First" foreign policy- should pay close attention to these recent developments as they portend a dramatic reversal in Trump's stated position. The President appears to be abandoning his campaign promises to garner greater political support from his former adversaries.

There's always been ferocious opposition to negotiations with the DPRK, particularly from foreign policy elites see great benefit in preserving the status quo. It is in their interests to continue the 65 year-long occupation of a divided peninsula in a strategically located region. Washington's military presence allows it counter emerging rivals and assert its dominance a full 10,000 miles from its own shores. That is why any movement towards constructive dialogue, peace or reunification is avoided like the plague. It's because elites figure that peace will inevitably undermine public support for a permanent US military presence in the South.

Maintaining a 30,000-man garrison in South Korea also allows Washington to preserve its role as regional policeman, further encircle China and Russia, dictate how the South Korean Army may or may not be used under the terms of the Combined Forces Command, strengthen America's influence in the critical Asia-Pacific theater, and provide the essential military component needed to implement America's "pivot to Asia." For these reasons, foreign policy elites oppose any change in the present arrangement, which is why they have used their agents in the intelligence community, the administration, the military and the media to torpedo any move towards resolution or reconciliation.

Some readers might remember how the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, tried to sabotage the upcoming summit just a month before Trump was scheduled to meet Kim Jong un in Hanoi. Coats appeared before the Senate Intelligence Committee on January 29, 2019- accompanied by the Directors of the CIA and FBI- and told the Committee that, in the his estimation, Kim would never give up his nukes:

"We currently assess that North Korea will seek to retain its WMD (weapons of mass destruction) capabilities and is unlikely to completely give up its nuclear weapons and production capability because its leaders ultimately view nuclear weapons as critical to regime survival."

Coats testimony was clearly crafted for political purposes. He was not trying to inform the senate about a sensitive matter of national security. He was using his high office to apply political pressure on the president. He chose to use the prestigious setting of the Senate chamber to throw cold water on Trump's policy of engagement and dialogue. His objective was to reinforce feelings of distrust towards Kim Jong un and to strengthen public opposition to the summit. Coat's performance provides another glaring illustration of how politicized the intelligence community has become.

Coat's appearance on Capitol Hill was the first shot fired at the Trump-Kim bandwagon. The

next, and perhaps most effective was Bolton's bombshell delivered during the talks themselves. Bolton's additional demands gave Kim no choice but to end the meetings and delay any further concessions on denuclearization. Clearly, this was Bolton's objective from the get go.

The summit was followed by an intensive propaganda campaign aimed at shifting the blame for the meetings' failure from the Trump camp to North Korea. Hundreds of cookie-cutter articles- many featuring scratchy satellite photos of partially abandoned bunkers- popped up in headlines across the country overnight. The obvious aim of this saturation campaign was to convince the American people that Kim was reopening his ballistic missile sites in clear violation of the agreement he made with President Trump in Singapore. The media was trying to drive home the same point as DNI chief Dan Coats, that is, that North Korea cannot be trusted and that Kim is "a cheater". Of course, a closer analysis of these articles, suggests that it is not Kim that can't be trusted but the unscrupulous western media that consistently shapes its narrative to suit the interests of foreign policy elites.

Let's test this theory on the piece that was published on March 5, by the New York Times titled "North Korea Has Started Rebuilding Key Missile-Test Facilities, Analysts Say". Here's an excerpt:

"Speaking to lawmakers behind closed doors at South Korea's National Assembly on Tuesday, officials from its National Intelligence Service indicated that North Korea had been rebuilding the Tongchang-ri facilities even before the Hanoi summit meeting, South Korean news media reported on Wednesday.

North Korea may have wanted to rebuild them in order to make their dismantling more dramatic if the Hanoi summit produced a deal with the Americans, the intelligence officials were quoted as saying. **Or it may have wanted the option to resume rocket tests if the Hanoi talks broke down**, they said."([New York Times](#))

"Resume rocket tests"? What rocket tests? By the Times own admission, the facilities were used "to launch satellites into orbit and test engines". The site is a satellite launching pad not a ballistic missile launching pad. There's a big difference, and I would argue, the Times knows what that difference is, they merely fudge the details in order to hoodwink their readers. And the reason they want to hoodwink their readers is so their readers believe that North Korea cannot be trusted. That's how war propaganda works, by helping to strengthen public opposition to peaceful negotiations and a final resolution of the nuclear crisis.

And let's be clear, Kim **has** kept his word, he has not resumed the nuclear weapons tests or the ballistic missile tests. Also, the United States can call "the satellite program a front for developing intercontinental ballistic missiles", but that doesn't change the fact that a satellite launch site is a satellite launch site. It is not a ballistic missile site. Check out this short clip from Tim Shorrock at <http://peaceinkoreanews.timshorrock.com>

"As I pointed out yesterday on Twitter, the US Defense Intelligence Agency, in a report earlier this year, classified Sohae as a satellite launch site that "supported satellite launch cycles in 2012 and 2016," NOT as a missile site." ...

[Sohae] is a space launch center that was completed in 2011. There was a lot of work and a lot of money sunk into it. North Korea, despite what a lot of people think, has a serious space program. It's hard to believe, but it's true.

Secondly, it has been used trying to put satellites in space and launching space vehicles. It has not been used for missile tests. ...

OK, got it? It's a satellite launch facility where engines for ICBMs have been tested. But it's not a missile site...

....the stories from CSIS and NBC are clearly designed to drum up support for a return to the more confrontational, no-compromise "maximum pressure" campaign that brought US-DPRK tensions to a boiling point in the first place. That's propaganda, not news." ("CSIS and NBC provide a case study in war propaganda", [Tim Shorrock](#))

Bottom line: Kim hasn't done anything wrong and he hasn't violated the terms of the deal he made with Trump. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Trump who promised to discontinue the provocative joint-military exercises the US conducts twice a year with South Korea, but went back on his word. Here's the story:

On Thursday, the United States and South Korea began weeklong joint military drills on the Korean peninsula in clear violation of the agreement that was signed by President Donald Trump and North Korea Chairman Kim Jong un in Singapore in June, 2018. The military exercises, which are called "Dong Maeng" or "Alliance", are a rehearsal for an invasion and "decapitation" of the government in Pyongyang. And while the maneuvers have largely been ignored in the western media, they were sharply criticized by North Korea's state-run KCNA which issued the following statement:

"The threatening moves of the South Korean military and the US are a clear violation of the DPRK-US joint statement (in Singapore) in which both parties agreed to reduce hostilities and tension. These drills undermine the desire of the Korean people and the international community for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula."

It's not clear whether President Trump or South Korean President Moon Jae-in approved the drills or not. It could be that both country's military leaders simply made the decision by themselves. But doesn't that suggest that their agendas are more closely aligned with the foreign policy bigshots than they are with people who want to resolve the nuclear issue, ease sanctions, normalize relations and end the 65 year-long war with North Korea?

The fact that powerful people are trying to derail the peace process doesn't make peace any less desirable. It just means that the peacemakers are going to have to show as much resolve as the warmongers. Kim Jong un appears to be determined to meet the challenge head-on and try to put this 7 decade-long nightmare behind him. That's the kind of doggedness it's going to take to succeed. We wish him luck.

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