



Statement Before the
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific

***“The Trump-Kim Summit: Outcomes
and Oversight”***

A Testimony by:

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Chairman Yoho, Ranking Member Sherman, I am pleased to speak before this committee on the outcomes of President Trump's June 12 Summit in Singapore with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. I hope to add some clarity about what we have accomplished, failed to accomplish, and potentially unleashed in terms of the larger geopolitics of East Asia. There is an important oversight role for Congress in each of these areas which I will highlight in my remarks.

Kim Jong-un appears to have achieved two of his objectives with this summit. First, the summit allows him to claim *de facto* U.S. recognition of his nuclear weapons status. The North sought summits with Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush for this reason. Both Presidents understood the real purpose and refused, but now Pyongyang has checked that box. Second, Kim has succeeded in blunting and diluting the U.S. campaign of "maximum pressure"—at least in terms of China, which accounts for 90% of North Korean trade and has visibly backed away from full implementation of sanctions since the summit was announced.

What did the United States achieve? North Korea has stopped testing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. Kim Jong-un appears to be enjoying the international acclaim he is receiving. He probably realizes that a resumption of testing would allow the United States to reassemble the international coalition needed to return to maximum pressure. However, we must acknowledge that North Korea has violated testing freezes in the past and could do so again at any time. Moreover, a freeze in testing does not constitute a freeze in the regime's ongoing nuclear weapons development programs.

Kim Jong-un may be a new and different leader, but there is nothing in the June 12 Singapore Joint Statement that would constitute a new commitment by the North to denuclearization. In fact, the language in the June 12 Joint Statement falls far short of previous agreements. Kim's "firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" is a rehash of earlier North Korean language that Pyongyang has always conditioned on the United States first ending *its* security commitments to Japan and South Korea. This unhelpful language contrasts with the specifics of prior diplomatic agreements with North Korea:

- in the 1992 North-South Denuclearization accord the North committed to "not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons;"
- in the 1994 Agreed Framework the North pledged to allow full International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and inspections;
- and in the 2005 Six Party Joint Statement the North committed to "to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and returning at an early date" to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards.

It is possible that Secretary of State Pompeo will produce more detailed plans in the weeks and months ahead, but the general pattern to date has been for North Korea to prevaricate and stall after the ink has dried on agreements – not to add more details for implementation. As we know, the North began cheating on the 1992, 1994 and 2005 agreements almost immediately by restarting reactors, embarking on clandestine uranium enrichment paths to nuclear weapons, or testing nuclear weapons.

We will know this time is different if Secretary Pompeo's team can compel their counterparts to produce a statement on the North's full weapons and missile inventory and to agree on verification protocols for inspections. This would not necessarily mean that the North intends to follow through, but it would represent a concrete step towards verifiable denuclearization that Pyongyang was supposed to have delivered in previous agreements. Alternatively, the North may turn over weapons or allow inspectors into a critical facility –but it would have to be considerably more than what we saw last month when the North invited friendly journalists to witness the pretend demolition of a collapsing test site. Absent real steps towards denuclearization, Congress would be right to insist on fuller implementation of sanctions, including secondary sanctions against Chinese or Russian firms, and to do so before Kim Jong-un embarks on his expected visit to address the UN General Assembly in September.

A second area requiring greater Congressional oversight is management of our alliances. The President's abrupt cancellation of U.S. joint military exercises with South Korea was a bombshell to our allies. It would be a mistake to call this a "unilateral" decision. It was, in fact, a *bilateral* decision reached with North Korea at the suggestion of China and Russia over the heads of our closest allies in the region. The shock to our alliances was compounded by the President's statement that he would like eventually to pull all U.S. troops out of South Korea. If you ask veterans of North Korea diplomacy from either party, the overwhelming majority would predict that Kim Jong-un is not going to denuclearize. This does not mean that we should abandon our current diplomatic path, but it does mean that we should be reinforcing our alliances to contain and deter a significantly more dangerous North Korea. Signaling a desire to retreat from the peninsula only encourages the North to think that its nuclear weapons can break our will and intimidate our allies.

A dismissive attitude towards our alliances also emboldens China. The President's 2018 National Security Strategy rightly identified great power competition with China and Russia as the central challenge to our security and our alliances as essential to meeting that challenge. As the U.S. Pacific Commander testified in Congress in April, China has a "clear intent to erode U.S. alliances and partnerships in the region." In recent years Beijing has pressured South Korea to sign a declaration opposing U.S. alliances in Asia –unsuccessfully --and has boycotted billions of dollars in South Korean products in an effort to stop U.S. missile defense deployments to the peninsula. Congress would be right to ask the administration how the June 12 summit will impact our ability to meet the challenges posed by China, which is no less important than the North Korea nuclear negotiations themselves. Indeed, the credibility of our alliances is one of the greatest sources of leverage we have to push both China and North Korea to do the right thing on the Korean peninsula.

Thank you.