

## Option 1: Launch a Preemptive Military Strike

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The security of the United States is in jeopardy as long as the current regime in North Korea is in power. This belligerent regime has a history of taking aggressive action on the Korean Peninsula and its nuclear initiatives pose a threat to the entire world. In order to eliminate the nuclear threat posed by North Korea, the United States must act quickly and decisively. A speedy, surgical attack on nuclear weapons sites will destroy North Korea's existing arsenal and its ability to make nuclear bombs, initiate the downfall of Kim Jong Un's regime, and send a clear message that the United States will not accept nuclear proliferation (the spread of nuclear weapons). North Korea has already declared that it has several nuclear weapons and has claimed to have tested three of them. Waiting will only give them time to develop more. North Korea could use these weapons against its neighbors, if not against the United States. Weapons-grade fissile material is also easy to transport, and North Korea could sell its nuclear materials to whomever it wants. If we give the North Koreans time, they can make the weapons-grade nuclear material that they need and hide it away from future international inspectors. Therefore, we will never be able to remove North Korea from the list of countries possessing nuclear weapons. This uncertainty could compel Japan or Taiwan to develop their own nuclear weapons program as a deterrent. Nuclear proliferation in Asia could, in turn, set off an arms race that could go worldwide. The United States must act now to prevent this possibility. The only option for peace and security in the future is to take military action now.

### Goals of Option 1

- Eliminate North Korea's nuclear capability by destroying its arsenal as well as the reactors and processors that are producing weapons-grade plutonium and uranium.
- Communicate to other states that nuclear proliferation is unacceptable.

### U.S. Policies to Achieve These Goals

- Use the U.S. military to destroy North Korea's nuclear weapons production facilities.
- Prepare to respond to any North Korean attacks or actions to transport weapons or materials.

### Underlying Beliefs of Option 1

- North Korea wants to be a nuclear state and intends on using nuclear weapons or selling its materials and technology to other countries or terrorists.
- The molasses-like speed with which the international community deals with problems such as these will allow the problem to escalate.
- The policy of containing North Korea and its nuclear ambitions has failed.

### Arguments Against Option 1

- A preemptive unilateral attack on North Korea would violate international law. Additionally, the U.S. mission in Iraq proved that using military force for regime change abroad can be incredibly risky and costly.
- To bypass negotiation in favor of plans for military action will only increase North Korea's determination to build a nuclear capability as quickly as possible as a deterrent.
- In response to a military strike North Korea could launch strikes of its own against Japan, China, or South Korea, or U.S. bases in those countries. It might also retaliate with a nuclear attack.
- The radiation released from attacks against nuclear weapons facilities could kill thousands and be deadly for years to come.
- U.S. allies in the region are opposed to military action against North Korea.

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## Option 2: Convince North Korea to Return to the Six-Party Talks

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North Korea's nuclear tests are part of an attempt to gain international leverage with the United States. North Korea wants more promises of economic aid and more international prestige, and it believes that it can achieve these things by bullying the United States. North Korea's long-range missiles and its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction are of the utmost concern. But if the United States submits to one-on-one negotiations with North Korea, Kim Jong Un will take advantage of what he perceives to be weakness, and he will only be back later asking for more. The United States must stand by its policy of negotiating with North Korea only in the company of Russia, South Korea, China, and Japan. In addition, the international community should not provide anything that North Korea wants unless there is evidence that North Korea has begun not only to dismantle but irreversibly destroy its nuclear weapons program. The burden should be on North Korea to change its policies first. The United States should use economic pressure to force North Korea to return to the six-party negotiations. Although countries in the region are afraid of a refugee crisis, the international community must be willing to pressure North Korea to return to the negotiating table. The alternative could be an international catastrophe.

### Goals of Option 2

- Contain the threat from North Korea and eliminate its weapons of mass destruction.
- Protect U.S. interests in the region and deter North Korean aggression.

### U.S. Policies to Achieve These Goals

- Engage with North Korea only as part of multi-party talks. Do not reward North Korea's threatening behavior with direct negotiation or with aid.
- Make it very clear that the United States will counter with force—alone or with others—any aggressive actions on the part of North Korea.

### Underlying Beliefs of Option 2

- North Korea wants nuclear weapons to use as a bargaining chip with the international community, in order to get additional economic aid.
- Aid from the international community has only served to prop up a repressive North Korean regime.
- Kim Jong Un is a dangerous dictator, but he is not irrational. He will not use weapons of mass destruction if he faces the risk of complete annihilation.

### Arguments Against Option 2

- Unless the United States destroys North Korea's weapons facilities, North Korea will continue to build nuclear weapons. Nothing short of a military attack can guarantee U.S. security.
- Pitting five countries against North Korea will not address the underlying problem: North Korea believes that its national security is threatened by the United States. Only bilateral negotiations with the United States will address this fear.
- While the United States waits for North Korea to come back to the table, North Korea's weapons could find their way into the hands of terrorists or other states willing to use them. The United States and its allies could eventually become targets of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction.
- The U.S. presence in the Koreas is unwelcome. Continuing to meddle in the affairs of the region will only subject the United States to further danger.

## Option 3: Engage North Korea in Bilateral Negotiations

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Nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea are of deep concern. The United States will not be able to address the threat this poses unless it engages directly with the North Koreans and relieves North Korean security fears by making some concessions. Six-party negotiations have proven ineffective. North Korea sees these negotiations as coercive, requiring them to make concessions while getting little in return. It is time to respond to North Korea in a manner that acknowledges North Korean security concerns. North Korea has long feared U.S. aggression and it is for this reason that they have demanded direct negotiations with the United States. Because of the deep distrust between the United States and North Korea, the two sides should take simultaneous steps, each making concessions of sufficient importance to the other in order to facilitate compromise. Initially, the United States should pledge that it will not attack North Korea or seek to undermine North Korea's government if North Korea agrees to shut down its plutonium program. Other concerns, such as a possible uranium enrichment program, can be dealt with through later compromises. These mutual concessions can be negotiated most effectively in a bilateral context.

### Goals of Option 3

- End the development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles in North Korea.
- Repair U.S.-North Korean relations and engage North Korea in the community of nations in order to remove its motivation to possess weapons of mass destruction.

### U.S. Policies to Achieve These Goals

- Engage with North Korea in bilateral negotiations designed to stop the North Korean nuclear program in exchange for normalization of U.S. political and economic relations with North Korea.
- Be prepared to provide energy and other forms of economic aid—and pressure others in the six-party talks to do the same—in exchange for an end to the North Korean nuclear program.

### Underlying Beliefs of Option 3

- North Korea does not want to engage in a suicidal war. It simply wants to get the world's attention, and receive the economic aid and the security assurances it needs.
- Negotiation and diplomacy, even when they require expensive compromises, are less costly in lives, resources, and political capital than war.
- Countries in the region will look favorably on the United States for alleviating the threat of nuclear war in Asia without resorting to aggression.

### Arguments Against Option 3

- Initiating bilateral talks will be submitting to nuclear blackmail and will weaken the United States in the eyes of the world.
- Peace and security on the Korean Peninsula are critical to maintaining stability throughout Asia. This is not just a threat to the United States but also to North Korea's neighbors. They should take responsibility too.
- If the United States initiates bilateral negotiations, small countries will learn that they can get what they want from the United States by using "provocations."
- While the United States negotiates, North Korea could sell its weaponry to terrorists.
- The U.S. troop presence in South Korea may be fueling North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The United States must limit, not increase, its involvement on the peninsula.

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## Option 4: Withdraw from the Korean Peninsula

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The U.S. presence on the Korean Peninsula has not stopped North Korea from acquiring a nuclear capability. In fact, the U.S. presence may have fueled North Korea's desire to build nuclear weapons. The smartest thing that the United States can do at this point is get off of the Korean Peninsula. The 28,500 U.S. troops there are neither wanted nor necessary to protect the United States or its Asian allies. Meanwhile the U.S. troop presence is a drain on the U.S. economy. South Korea has its own army of over 600,000 active troops. The U.S. presence on the peninsula is no longer necessary as a military deterrent. It seems that the presence of U.S. troops only serves to increase anti-American sentiment. Why should the United States risk time, money, lives, and its reputation in the region when it only serves to make the United States a target? Pulling U.S. troops off of the peninsula will eliminate the burdens associated with maintaining a presence, reduce tensions in the region, and place the responsibility for maintaining security in the region squarely on neighboring countries. The United States should remove itself from the peninsula, lower its profile, and use its time, money, and efforts elsewhere.

### Goals of Option 4

- Eliminate what appears to be a growing pattern of manipulation and threat by the North Korean government.
- Lower the U.S. profile on the peninsula and in Asia in general.

### U.S. Policies to Achieve These Goals

- Remove U.S. troops from the peninsula.
- Encourage China, Japan, and Russia to play a more significant role in Asian security.

### Underlying Beliefs of Option 4

- North Korea does not want to go to war with the United States. It just wants publicity, attention, and aid.
- The limited U.S. military presence in South Korea only heightens tension and makes North Korea more belligerent.
- The United States can effectively deter North Korea from afar.

### Arguments Against Option 4

- By withdrawing, the United States would allow North Korea to continue its nuclear program. This raises the potential of North Korean nuclear material for sale to the highest bidder—including the possibility that it will land in the hands of terrorists.
- By ending all aid to North Korea and refusing to discuss a new aid package, the already horrific humanitarian situation in North Korea could be greatly exacerbated, leading to increased starvation and poverty as well as more anti-American sentiment.
- Leaving North Korea's neighbors to fend for themselves may cause them to adopt their own nuclear weapons programs due to feelings of vulnerability.
- The United States must remain engaged around the world if it hopes to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and terror.
- Withdrawing from the peninsula could be perceived by other countries as a sign of U.S. weakness.