

As tensions escalate with Kim Jong Un and North Korea, we must unite around Trump

✖ *President Trump campaigned successfully on making America great again. But with tensions escalating with North Korea, and the threat of a nuclear war on everybody's mind, Trump is now face Defense where he traveled to Iraq 14 times.* President Trump campaigned successfully on making America great again. But with tensions escalating with North Korea, and the threat of a nuclear war on everybody's mind, Trump is now faced instead with the daunting task of making America safe again.

One can't help but draw comparisons to the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were on the brink of war over the deployment of Soviet missiles on the island of Cuba. But despite rising tensions, the U.S. maintained backchannel communications with the Soviet Union, and President John F. Kennedy himself exchanged direct, private messages with his Soviet counterpart Nikita Khrushchev to try and avoid going to war. And in the end, it worked.

But with North Korea, no such backchannel communications exist, and Trump or Kim Jong Un are not in direct communication with one another like Kennedy and Khrushchev. In fact, the only person on the planet who appears to be in regular and direct communication with the Kim is basketball legend Dennis Rodman.

The threat posed by North Korea is real and presents an unimaginable danger to the U.S. and our allies abroad. In Iraq, we went to war on the "possibility" that Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons. With North Korea, we know for a fact that Kim has them.

North Korea's nuclear weapons program is more advanced than anyone could have ever imagined, and they can build nuclear weapons at a rate of three per year. Experts also believe North Korea is in possession of at least 60 nuclear weapons, with the capability of reaching Los Angeles, Chicago, or New York in under 39 minutes after launch. Since 2016, Kim has tested more than 20 ballistic missiles, and on July 4, he reached a milestone by launching the first

intercontinental ballistic missile.

So, how did North Korea get here? The answer points back to then-President Bill Clinton when he negotiated a deal with North Korea in 1994. "This U.S.-North Korean agreement will help to achieve longstanding and vital American objective: an end to the threat of nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula. It's a crucial step toward drawing North Korea into the global community." And with that, Clinton promised billions of dollars in aid for a North Korean nuclear weapons freeze.

In addition to funding the advancement of North Korea's nuclear weapons program in the 1990s, the U.S. has always had a weak hand when dealing with North Korea. Take Otto Warmbier, for example. For 15 months, he sat in a North Korean prison before anyone heard from him. And when they finally did, he was unconscious and barely clinging to life.

But what options are on the table if the president intends on settling this issue once and for all? The answer is, "Not many." A diplomatic option remains the safest bet, forcing North Korea to recalibrate following economic sanctions. But to date, that hasn't worked either.

The second option would be to unleash a cyber-attack on North Korea in hopes of dismantling their weapons technology and significantly damaging their missile launch capabilities. A third option is an assassination of Kim and his inner circle, but even that is risky because we do not know who is next in the line of succession. The fourth option would be a swift and decisive military strike to destroy all the weapons sites that we are aware of through intelligence gathering. But again, this poses a significant risk and could force Kim to retaliate, perhaps with nuclear weapons.

Trump, in an Oct. 9 tweet, said that "Our country has been unsuccessfully dealing with North Korea for 25 years, giving billions of dollars & getting nothing. Policy didn't work." And he is right.

The bottom line is that there are no good options on the table to deal with North Korea. But the one thing the president has going for him is a fresh set of eyes. As a Washington outsider, he is not a career politician, and he is results-driven. Rather than kicking the can down the road and leaving this issue for his successor, Trump wants to address this issue once and for all.

Many may disagree with the president on a variety of issues, but one thing is for certain – he has surrounded himself with the best and brightest military leaders in the country. Rest assured that he is getting the very best advice possible. Gens. Mattis, Kelly, and McMaster will not let the president down, nor will they let the country down.

Cooler heads must prevail, and we need to practice strategic patience to give the president some time to fully assess the situation in North Korea and to evaluate all his options. With so much on the line, the last thing we need is a misstep or miscommunication leading to war.

Our country has been divided for a very long time, and political rhetoric remains heated on both sides of the aisle. Passions are high. But at a time like this, we need to be rallying around our president.

North Korea will, without a doubt, define this presidency. But I know that Trump is up to the task.

On this day, and in the days ahead, our country is rooting for President Trump. Our future depends on it.

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