

U.S. is closer to nuclear war with North Korea than ever before, retired Adm. Mike Mullen says

The United States is closer to nuclear war with North Korea than ever before, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Sunday.

"We're actually closer, in my view, to a nuclear war with North Korea and in that region than we have ever been," retired Admiral Mike Mullen said on ABC's "This Week."

"I don't see the opportunities to solve this diplomatically at this particular point."

Mullen, who headed the Joint Chiefs under both Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, said the rising tension on the Korean peninsula is one example of an "incredibly dangerous climate" created as President Trump tries to disrupt the traditional American approach to foreign policy.

"Those that would do us ill seem to be able to take advantage of the uncertainty," Mullen said.

Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea if the U.S. is forced to defend itself or its allies, as the country's leader Kim Jong Un continues to conduct tests of missiles that could be used to carry nuclear weapons.

"He's been incredibly disruptive with respect to the institutions, the commitments, the leadership, where we have been for the last 70 years," Mullen said of Trump's take on foreign policy.

"Clearly, the President has chosen to try to disrupt and break those up as much as possible, create a great uncertainty. And in my view, an incredibly dangerous climate exists out there in that uncertainty with how this all ends up...and one in particular that is (at the) top of the list is North Korea."

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