

# Kim-Trump Summit: After Singapore, Are We Safer — and What Next?

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“LITTLE ROCKET MAN” is now, in Donald Trump’s tweetworld, “the very talented and smart leader who loves his people.” Even better, when Kim Jong-un speaks, “his people sit up and listen. I wish it was like that here.” Indeed.

To be fair, Trump is not solely responsible for the twisted form the debate over North Korea has taken after the Singapore summit. While he proclaims that the “North Korean nuclear menace” is over, leading Democrats seem to be channeling their inner John Bolton, denouncing Trump for giving Kim respectability and suspending provocative war games (yes, that’s what they are) without getting tangible concessions from Pyongyang.

Let’s state the most important fact first. Yes, after Singapore the world is a little safer, because the main threat of catastrophe on the Korean peninsula has receded: the immediate danger that the United States, as Bolton advocated, would launch an attack on North Korea — or that the North Korean military might mistake a too-well-simulated U.S. attack for the real thing, with incalculable consequences. That the United States was the most dangerous potential aggressor remains, of course, unstated in post-summit punditry.

As for the summit itself, who got “played” by whom? Both principals got what they wanted: Kim Jong-un got a measure of international recognition and an implicit promise of relaxed sanctions — almost surely, China and Russia will unofficially be letting up on sanctions enforcement — while Trump got his big-time photo-op and press conference (and maybe long-term dreams for Trump Towers and resorts on those fabulous beaches).

The aftermath is less clear. North Korea is now, in fact, a proven nuclear-armed state, and the question is whether the United States will accept that reality in fact, although obviously not officially. The delusion of “complete, verifiable and irreversible de-nuclearization” is a fantasy that can only have further destabilizing implications. (For some historical background and context on the post-World War II division of Korea, see the editorial statement in the forthcoming July-August issue of *Against the Current*.)

Meanwhile, an even more dangerous scenario is developing as the U.S. administration is seeking to destroy what’s left of the multilateral nuclear agreement with Iran — a campaign setting the Trump regime against the closest U.S. European allies, the overwhelming majority of world public opinion, and elementary common sense, although the Democrats’ defense of the deal negotiated by president Obama has been rather feeble. It’s a far “better” deal, in fact, that anything the United States can ever hope to get with North Korea.

Since the nuclear deal was negotiated under the Obama administration, there’s been a wave of pro-American popular feeling in Iran. That will now change, as people’s hopes for improvement in their lives are dashed. Further, Trump’s move immediately plays into the hands of the most reactionary forces in Iran’s internal factional blood feud, at the expense of the reform-minded moderate supporters of president Hasan Rouhani. New arrests and repressive crackdowns on women and

human rights defenders like attorney Nasrin Sotoudeh show that religious fundamentalists who control the courts are emboldened. Tight U.S. sanctions on Iran, while they badly hurt Iran's economy and ordinary people, also enable leading elements in the Revolutionary Guards to enrich themselves through control of smuggling and sanctions-busting schemes.

The Trump gambit also aims at forcing European companies to withdraw from investing in Iran, due to the pressure of crippling U.S. secondary and financial sanctions. It's doing this when the European Union is severely weakened by crises that could threaten the future of the eurozone and even the EU itself — and at the same time that European states and the U.S. may be locking into a round of mutually damaging tariffs and counter-tariffs. Although the major European nations have said they intend to protect their companies against U.S. financial blackmail, whether they can effectively do so is very much in question. Chinese investment will step in to partly fill the gap.

If the deal collapses completely, the Iranian regime will resume nuclear enrichment and the world will be a step closer to the war that Israel and Saudi Arabia, Trump's closest Middle East allies, openly advocate.

Exploiting European weakness, the Trump gang is aligning with Israel and Saudi Arabia in the expectation of crushing Iran and restoring U.S. rule over the world. Already, the nation of Yemen is "collateral damage" as the United States enables the Saudi and United Arab Emirates' destruction of that country.

What might happen first — another hideous Middle East war, or a full-scale U.S.-China trade war that crashes the global markets? Do we really want to find out? If not, we need a new antiwar and social justice movement on a scale we haven't seen in decades.

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\* [https://solidarity-us.org/after\\_singapore/](https://solidarity-us.org/after_singapore/)