**American Foreign Policy Options for Dealing with a Nuclear North Korea**

**Question:** *How should the United States respond to North Korea’s nuclear and ICBM tests?*

*Please underline the key points as you see them, then be prepared to make your case to the President.*

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| **Options** | **What this Means** | **Pros** | **Cons** | **Considerations** |
| **Act Tough**  **to Deter**  **North Korea** | The U.S. could respond by talking tough, and exercising its military in the region. This pressure is known as **deterrence,** which can prevent an enemy from being hostile for fear of military consequences. | Deterrence puts pressure on North Korea to think twice about its actions, reminding them that there are consequences that could include military retaliation.  No actual military actions are taken, just reminders of capabilities. | Talking tough runs the risk of isolating N. Korea and increasing political tension. If North Korea misreads these messages and thinks the US will attack, this could lead to accidental war.  Also, Kim uses such talk to rally North Korean citizens behind him, making them believe that the world is actually against them. | Historically, North Korea has chosen to respond to tough talk with more nuclear and missile tests, rather than be deterred. |
| **Impose More U.S. Sanctions Against N. Korea or China** | A **sanction** is a restriction on N. Korea that limits its ability to trade goods and services with other countries. It may also cut off North Korea’s access to international banking systems.  This pressure could also be put on China, especially against Chinese companies or banks working with North Korea. | This option could limit North Korea’s ability to raise money to continue developing its nuclear and missile programs.  This option is non-military, and may force North Korea negotiate in order to regain trade and banking access. | Sanctions have been used before with limited results, as they can be difficult to enforce. Also, North Korea already has limited trade with outside countries and since they have been under sanctions for so long, they have become good at working around them.  Sanctioning China or Chinese companies could hurt US-China cooperation on solving the North Korea problem in the future. | Historically, North Korea often responds to the imposition of new sanctions with more nuclear or missile tests.  Sanctions will have an immediate political effect (showing that North Korea’s actions are unacceptable), but take a long time to have an effect on North Korea’s economy. Often takes months to years to see results. |
| **Launching a Preventive Attack on North Korea** | A **Preventive Strike** is when one country perceives a threat from another party and attacks, not in retaliation, but to prevent it from gaining certain military attack capability.  The US could use this option to strike key North Korean missile or nuclear sites. | Preventive strikes on key North Korean nuclear or missile sites, could damage their program development and prevent North Korea from being able to continue development or attack in the future. | N. Korea would likely respond by using its arsenal of weapons against S. Korea, Japan, and/or US military bases in the region, potentially sparking a larger war.  Casualty estimates range from hundreds of thousands to several millions, including more than 30,000 US troops and nearly 300,000 US citizens living in the region.  If US takes preventive action without consulting allies in S.Korea and Japan, the alliance may fall apart. | We know very little about where all the key weapons related sites are officially located in N. Korea, making it almost impossible to eliminate all of them.  North Korea also has a large stockpile of chemical and biological weapons.  US preventive strikes on North Korea will likely be considered illegal by international community. |
| **Using Diplomacy and Negotiation** | **Diplomacy** is dealing with international issues *without* the use of force. It often includes negotiation between governments to reach a mutually beneficial outcome such as peace agreements and economic incentives. | Through talking directly with North Korea, you can identify why they acting in such a way and find ways to address those issues.  A diplomatic effort could help de-escalate a tense situation, and if sustained, could help prevent future conflict. | Positive outcomes of negotiations are never guaranteed and criticism for failure will likely be high.  Negotiations will likely be very difficult and take a long time.  Short term “wins” may not lead to “long-term” solutions. | Negotiations with North Korea have a mixed record of success while they were in force; but all nuclear agreements have eventually have been cancelled by one party or another. |

“To govern is to choose.”

President John F. Kennedy