**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?*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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. | Deterrence puts pressure on North Korea to think twice about its actions, reminding them that there are consequences that could include military retaliation.  | Talking tough runs the risk of isolating N. Korea and increasing tension. If they misread these messages, it could lead to accidental war.  | 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 access to trade and banking. This pressure could also be put on Chinese companies working with N. Korea. | This option could limit N. Korea’s ability to raise money to develop its nuclear and missile programs. This may force the country to negotiate to regain trade and banking. | Sanctions have been used before with limited results, as they can be difficult to enforce. Since N. Korea has been under penalties for so long, they have become good at working around them.  | Historically, N. Korea often responds to new sanctions with more nuclear or missile tests. Sanctions also take a long time to have an effect on its economy.  |
| **Launching a Preventive Attack** **on North Korea** | A **Preventive Strike** is when a country sees a threat and attacks. The U.S. could use this option to strike N. Korea’s missile/nuclear sites. | Preventive strikes on key North Korean nuclear or missile sites could damage their program development and prevent it from being able to attack. | 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.  | We know very little about where all the key weapons sites are located, making it almost impossible to eliminate all of them. |
| **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. |

Note: A U.S. preventive strikes on North Korea will likely be considered illegal by international community.