

# **The Cold War and the United States Reaction to North Korea's Nuclear Arms Program**

## **Assignment Planner**

**Course: World Studies Teacher: Robin Mayo-White**

**Unit Topics: Nuclear North Korea the results of the U.S. and Soviet Union's Cold War**

**Estimated Length of Unit 5 days GLI: 10th-12th**

**Students Name: \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Lesson Essential Questions:**

***How does the United States respond to a Nuclear Armed North Korea?***

**Question of the Day (QOTD) - Explain what you think the U.S. current policy should be in dealing with North Korea's Nuclear Weapons program as it relates to U.S. security concerns.**

### **Students Learning Targets: *(Provided by Columbus City Schools)***

#### **➤ The Cold War (1945-1991)**

**Learning Target 23: Summarize how atomic weapons have changed the nature of war, altered the balance of power and started the nuclear age?**

Atomic weapons have changed the nature of war, altered the balance of power and started the nuclear age? Following World War II, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) emerged as the two strongest powers in world affairs. The U.S. and Soviet Union had opposing political and economic ideologies. The U.S. was democratic and capitalist. The Soviet Union was autocratic and communist. From 1945-1991, the two nations challenged one another in a series of confrontations known as the Cold War.

During World War II, the U.S. began a secret program, known as the Manhattan Project, to develop atomic weapons. The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945. This was followed by the dropping of the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki on August 9. The dropping of atomic bombs on Japan led to the rapid end of World War II in the Pacific. (The War in Europe had already ended in May.) The use of atomic weapons changed the nature of war, altered the balance of power and began the nuclear age. The dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan is considered the beginning of the nuclear age. The use of these bombs introduced a new type of weapon capable of mass destruction.

For four years following World War II, the United States was the only country in possession of atomic bombs. This contributed to its status as a global superpower. The threat of using this weapon was seen as a deterrent against the ambitions of the Soviet Union. The testing and

explosion of the atomic bomb by the Soviets in 1949 established the Soviet Union as a second global superpower. In 1952, the U.S. tested its first hydrogen bomb. Three months later, the Soviet Union tested its first thermonuclear bomb, and by using lithium, they made a bigger bomb small enough to fit into a plane. This nuclear arms race continued for decades and threatened world peace.

➤ **The Cold War (1945-1991)**

**Learning Target 24: Explain the reasons that America chooses a policy of containment during the Cold War in response to the spread of communism?**

The reasons that America chooses a policy of containment during the Cold War is in response to the spread of communism?

The United States followed a policy of containment during the Cold War in response to the spread of communism. The policy of containment began in the late 1940s to stop the spread of communism in Europe and Asia. It became U.S. policy for decades. Following World War II, most of the Eastern Europe countries had communist governments and were under Soviet control. In 1949, the Chinese Revolution established a communist government in China. In Europe, the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were efforts to contain communism. The Marshall Plan was a program that provided \$13 billion in U.S. aid to help rebuild Western European economies after the end of World War II. By creating strong economies and stable democracies in Western Europe, the U.S. was assured of allies against the Soviet Union. NATO was created in 1949 by the United States, Canada, and Western European countries to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.

In Asia, the policy of containment was the basis for U.S. involvement in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The Korean War started as a civil war between North and South Korea. The war quickly became international when the United Nations (led by the U.S.) joined to support South Korea and communist China entered on the side of North Korea. In Vietnam, North Vietnam wanted to unify the entire country under a single communist government. The government of South Vietnam, however, was more closely allied with the U.S. The U.S. sent military advisers and combat units to support South Vietnam. The Soviet Union and China sent weapons, supplies, and advisers to support North Vietnam.

➤ **The Cold War (1945-1991)**

**Learning Target 26: Analyze the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international policies between the end of World War II.**

Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international policies between the end of World War II and 1992 . The Cold War dominated international politics and impacted domestic politics in the United States for almost 45 years. The intense rivalry between

the U.S. and the Soviet Union led to the creation of alliances, an arms race, and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. The Cold War also affected international politics in the Middle East and Latin America. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 was a direct confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It brought the world close to nuclear war over the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from the U.S. coast.

The Korean War also fed into the anti-communist hysteria of the late 1940s and 1950s. The United States was able to secure support from the United Nations for the defense of South Korea while the Soviet Union was boycotting the United Nations Security Council. Continued U.S. intervention in the Vietnam War divided the U.S. and sparked widespread protests. Spending for the war came at the expense of the domestic programs launched by President Johnson. The difficulties and eventual withdrawal from Vietnam led to concerted efforts on part of the U.S. to find allies in future conflicts.

***Background information: The History of the Cold War and how it shaped the present?***

- 1. How did World War II lead to the Cold War?***
- 2. What were the consequences of the Cold War?***

**Student Objectives: Students will be able to:**

- **Analyze connections between World War II, the Cold War and contemporary Conflicts.**
- **Analyze the influence of opposing governments and the actions or inactions of their citizens.**
- **Analyze ways people achieve governmental change, including political action, social protest and revolution.**
- **Analyze the consequences of the Cold War: a. Atomic weapons**

**The Cold War Background:**

The major conceptual understandings students will walk away with from this lesson includes:

- Two major powers emerged from the aftermath of World War II: The United States and its capitalist economy, and the Soviet Union and its communist system. The two powers and their allies represented forces locked in an ideological clash known as the Cold War. Soon after the Cold War began, the two powers aimed to control ever-growing spheres of influence as protection from each other.
- U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was based on the policy of containment—stopping the spread of communism. The U.S. believed appeasement prior to World War II was a mistake and communism must be stopped at all costs. The Marshall Plan, Truman Doctrine, formation of NATO, intervention in Korea and Vietnam were all driven by the policy of containment.
- The atomic bomb was first developed and used by the United States during World War II.

During the Cold War, a dangerous arms race between the United States and Soviet Union developed. The potential for global nuclear destruction made both sides eager to avoid direct military confrontation.

- The arms race nearly destroyed the Soviet economy and led to demands for reform. As reforms swept through the Soviet Union, growing dissent in Eastern Europe led to the collapse of communism in former Soviet satellites. By 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved and the Cold War was thought to be over.

### **The creation of a Nuclear North Korea:**

The Cold War became a military conflict resulting in the Korean War. This all began at the end of WWII, when the Japanese forces in Korea surrendered to the United States in the South and to the Soviets in the North. The superpowers created a line of demarcation between the two regions. This line divided the country in two—a communist north and a capitalist south. In the south, U.S. backed Syngman Rhee became president. He set up an anti-communist regime. In the North backed by the Soviet Union Kim Il Sung, a staunch communist renamed north Korea the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Korean War started when Sung invaded south Korea in hopes of reunifying the two Koreas.

After three years a truce was negotiated but the South Korean president refused to sign it. Today technically the two Koreas are still at war. The U.S. still have military bases in South Korea. The U.S. had nuclear weapons there until they were removed in 1991.

North Korea today is one of the most isolated societies on earth. Despite recent economic growth, millions suffer from hunger and malnutrition. North Korea is one of the most militarized countries in the world. Today they have nuclear weapons that can reach the United States. (*Choices from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program*)

**1<sup>st</sup>. Assignment:** Continue to research North Korea to answer the following questions in 3 or more sentences.

1. Why does North Korea want nuclear weapons?
2. What role have other countries played in both Koreas?
3. Why is Korea divided today?
4. Are U.S. and North Korea relations hostile today?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment: In two or more paragraphs create an essay predicting what each leader will do economically, physically, politically and social/culturally in response to North Korea's nuclear weapons program. How will each react?**

**Examine: CNN news report on President Trumps and Kim Jong Un summit.**

## **Trump declares North Korea 'no longer a nuclear threat'**

By [Veronica Stracqualursi](#) and [Stephen Collinson](#), CNN

Updated 4:48 PM ET, Wed June 13, 2018

**Washington (CNN)** President Donald Trump declared Wednesday that the North Korean regime no longer poses a nuclear threat following his summit with Kim Jong Un, even though the meeting produced no verifiable proof that the rogue regime will discontinue its nuclear program.

In a series of tweets, Trump sought to take political credit for the summit but risked undermining the US strategy in the region.

"Just landed - a long trip, but everybody can now feel much safer than the day I took office," [Trump tweeted](#) as he arrived back in Washington. "There is no longer a Nuclear Threat from North Korea."

Trump also said that his meeting with Kim was an "interesting and very positive experience" and that "North Korea has great potential for the future!"

Trump also said in a separate tweet that North Korea is "no longer" the US' "biggest and most dangerous problem," telling Americans and the rest of the world they can "sleep well tonight!"

After returning to the White House Wednesday, Trump also defended his [decision to halt the joint military exercises](#) with South Korea, which he called "war games" -- a term used by Pyongyang -- arguing on Twitter that the US will "save a fortune."

Trump's tweets pointed to one of the chief gains at the summit from the US point of view -- that its scheduling and the establishing of a relationship between the President and Kim have eased fears that the two sides are on a slide toward a disastrous war.

The argument also allows Trump's political allies and supporters in conservative media to claim ahead of the midterm elections that the President has engineered a triumph overseas that was beyond all his predecessors and has made America and the world much safer.

But much of the fear over imminent war last year was stoked in the first place by Trump's ["fire and fury"](#) rhetoric and [boasts about the size of the US nuclear button](#).

No guarantees from summit. After nearly five hours of unprecedented talks between Trump and Kim on Tuesday, the two leaders signed a document in which Kim "reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" and the US agreed to "provide security guarantees."

However, there was no mention of the previous US aim of "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization" from Pyongyang. Kim's commitments did not appear to go beyond what he already pledged to do in April when he met with South Korean President Moon Jae-in along their countries' border.



### Trump resets the world stage

Following the summit, Trump told reporters during a news conference in Singapore that Kim agreed to "destroying a major missile engine testing site" and that it would be done "very soon," without elaborating further on which testing site or timing.

The President also added that North Korea's promise to complete denuclearization "will be verified," though [the document](#) the two leaders signed did not lay out details of that process.

Trump left the discussions assured that Kim would begin dismantling his country's missile sites in the immediate future, telling ABC News that Kim "[trusts me, and I trust him.](#)"

### Risk of weakening US position

Any lessening of tensions is positive but an assurance that the threat of war is removed based simply on a relationship between a President who is term-limited and a volatile dictator who leads a criminal regime lacks the certainty and permanence of verifiable disarmament that the administration says is its goal.



Ending the US-South Korea war games would be a win for Beijing

By claiming that the North Korean nuclear threat has disappeared, Trump also risks weakening the US negotiating position in talks on denuclearization that were mandated by the summit and will be led from the US side by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. After all, if there is no threat, why would the North Koreans need to give up their arsenal?

Trump's rush to claim credit for the supposed disappearance of the North Korean nuclear threat may also give nations like China and Russia an incentive to ease stringent implementation of the "maximum pressure" sanctions that helped bring Pyongyang to the table.



Trump's pledge to stop 'provocative' military exercises provokes alarm and confusion in Seoul and Washington

Some analysts are likely to see the comments as part of a worrying trend since North Korea showed no public sign at the summit or since that it is now willing to implement the complete, irreversible and verifiable destruction of its nuclear programs. Ultimately, in the short term, at least while diplomacy continues, Trump's tweets seem to indicate he is ready to live with the fact that North Korea has nuclear weapons and potentially the capacity to fire them at the United States, in an implicit erosion of the US strategic position.

Ultimately, that may end up being the only option that the US has short of war. But Trump's triumphalism is not based on concrete commitments by Kim that were established by his own administration's expectations setting before the talks.

*CNN's Kevin Liptak contributed to this report*