

# Can Words Lead to War?



Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump, June 2018

Photo by Dan Scavino, Jr.; [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kim\\_and\\_Trump\\_standing\\_next\\_to\\_each\\_other.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kim_and_Trump_standing_next_to_each_other.jpg)

## Supporting Questions

1. How do world leaders use the media to communicate their messages?
2. How have contemporary American presidents communicated with North Korea?
3. What historical events from the Korean Conflict might escalate current diplomatic tensions?

# TEACHING THE C3 FRAMEWORK

## Grades 6-8 Korean War Inquiry

Can Words Lead to War?	
<b>C3 Framework Indicator</b>	<b>D2.His.4.6-8.</b> Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	Discuss the impact of words within particular historical eras while viewing a video clip from Aljazeera: <i>“Trump Escalates Threats on North Korea as Tensions Rise.”</i>

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
How do world leaders use the media to communicate their messages?	How have contemporary American presidents communicated with North Korea?	What historical events from the Korean Conflict might escalate current diplomatic tensions?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Make a timeline of the historical evolution of media used by world leaders to communicate their messages.	Make a Venn diagram illustrating how presidents Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump have communicated with North Korea.	Create an infographic describing US diplomatic tensions with North Korea during the Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<p><b>Source A:</b> Article, “8 Presidential Communication Firsts,” Nick Keppler, <i>MentalFloss.com</i></p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Article, “How Presidents Communicate with the Public Will Surprise You,” K. C. Morgan, <i>RealClear Politics</i></p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Article, “How Trump’s Predecessors Dealt with the North Korean Threat,” Russell Goldman, <i>New York Times</i></p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Article, “Trump’s Year of Taunting, Teasing and Threatening Kim Jong-un,” Julie Vitkovskaya, <i>Washington Post</i></p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Article, “Trump’s North Korea Tweets Renew Debate over Nuclear Authority,” Ashleigh Killough, <i>CNN</i></p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Article, “The U.S. and North Korea on the Brink: A Timeline,” Priyanka Boghani, <i>PBS Frontline</i></p> <p><b>Source C:</b> Speech, Kim Jong-un responding to Trump’s UN address, National Committee of North Korea Database</p>

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<b>ARGUMENT</b> “Can words lead to war?” Construct an argument (e.g., an essay, outline, or poster) that responds to the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from the sources provided, as well as one other source, while acknowledging competing views.
	<b>EXTENSION</b> Using the argument as a foundation, engage in an informed debate or Socratic Seminar responding to the compelling question, “Can words lead to war?”
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p><b>UNDERSTAND</b> Examine the role social media plays in international diplomacy.</p> <p><b>ASSESS</b> Consider whether social media should be used as a communication platform for world leaders.</p> <p><b>ACT</b> Compose an op-ed letter or article for your school or local newspaper, using specific claims and relevant evidence, discussing the impact social media has on contemporary diplomatic tensions.</p>

### Overview

#### Inquiry Description

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This inquiry leads students through an investigation of the importance words have in easing or escalating diplomatic tensions. By investigating the compelling question “Can words lead to war?”, students evaluate the historical context of American tensions with North Korea. The formative performance tasks build on knowledge and skills through the course of the inquiry and help students trace the evolution of the contemporary Korean Conflict through an analysis of how contemporary American presidents have communicated in general and specifically with North Korea. Students create an evidence-based argument about whether words can lead to war, and about the implications of social media for international diplomacy.

This inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of historical events and ideas. Thus, students should have already studied or be somewhat familiar with contemporary tensions between the United States and North Korea.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take three to four 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries to meet the requirements and interests of their students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans for students with disabilities.

#### Structure of the Inquiry

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In addressing the compelling question “Can words lead to war?”, students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence while acknowledging competing perspectives.

### Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, “Can words lead to war?”, teachers may prompt a discussion among students about the impact of words within particular historical eras with a video clip from Aljazeera, “*Trump Escalates Threats on North Korea as Tensions Rise.*” The discussion can provide an opportunity for students to express their opinions and to organize their existing knowledge about how the words of world leaders convey messages that may be viewed by others as threats and may lead to increased tensions.

### Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“How do world leaders use the media to communicate their messages?”—has students thinking critically about the role media plays in governmental communications.

The formative performance task asks students to read two articles: Featured Source A, “8 Presidential Communication Firsts,” from Mental Floss, and Featured Source B, “How Presidents Communicate with the Public Will Surprise You,” by K. C. Morgan at RealClear. These sources provide students with a historical overview of presidential communication in terms of both the technologies used and the styles of individual leaders. After students have read the articles, the formative performance task asks them to make a timeline of the historical evolution of media used by American presidents to communicate their messages.

### Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“How have contemporary American presidents communicated with North Korea?”—has students compare and contrast the ways in which US presidents have communicated with North Korea in the contemporary era.

In preparation for the formative performance task for this question, students will read two additional articles. Featured Source A is a *New York Times* article by Russell Goldman, “How Trump’s Predecessors Dealt with the North Korean Threat.” Featured Source B is a *Washington Post* article by Julie Vitkovskaya, “Trump’s Year of Taunting, Teasing and Threatening Kim Jong Un.” After students read the articles, they will make a Venn diagram comparing how presidents Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump have communicated with North Korea and will discuss how these communications may exacerbate diplomatic tensions.

### Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“What historical events from the Korean Conflict might escalate current diplomatic tensions?”—encourages students to explore historical events during the Korean Conflict and analyze the role these events may have played in escalating current diplomatic tensions between the United States and North Korea.

Featured Source A is an article by Ashleigh Killough, from CNN, “*Trump’s North Korea Tweets Renew Debate over Nuclear Authority.*” Featured Source B is an article by Priyanka Boghani, from PBS Frontline, “*The U.S. and North Korea on the Brink: A Timeline.*” Featured Source C is the text of Kim Jong-un’s speech made on September 22, 2017 in response to President Trump’s comments to the United Nations General Assembly just three days earlier—which teachers might also want students to read or watch.

For this question’s formative performance task, students will create an infographic describing US diplomatic tensions with North Korea during the Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations.

### Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined how world leaders can use the media to communicate their messages, how historical events during the Korean Conflict have the potential for escalating current diplomatic tensions, and how contemporary American presidents (Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump) have communicated with North Korea.

Students should be able to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and their ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument using multiple sources to answer the compelling question “Can words lead to war?” Students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments will vary, but could include any of the following:

- Words lead to war because international leaders may use media outlets to spread propaganda.
- Words lead to war by creating tension and conflict among nations.
- Words cannot lead to war because modern countries know wars are too costly based only on words.

To extend their arguments, teachers may have students engage in an informed debate or Socratic Seminar analyzing the compelling question, “Can words lead to war?”

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by drawing on their understandings of their understanding of the current and historical relationship between the United States and North Korea. To *understand*, students can examine the impact social media now plays in international diplomacy. To *assess* the issue, students can consider whether social media should be used as a communication platform for world leaders. To *act*, students can compose an op-ed letter or article for their school or local newspaper, using specific claims and relevant evidence, discussing the impact social media has on diplomatic tensions.

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### Staging the Compelling Question

#### Featured Source

Source: Article, "Trump Escalates Threats on North Korea as Tensions Rise" (excerpt), accessible at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/trump-escalates-threats-north-korea-tension-rise-170810223728805.html>

Doubling down on his war of words, US President Donald Trump warned Kim Jong-un's government on Thursday to "get their act together" or face extraordinary "trouble," and suggested his earlier threat to unleash "fire and fury" on North Korea was too mild. "Maybe that statement wasn't tough enough," Trump said, in the latest US salvo in an escalating exchange of threats between the nuclear-armed nations.

A day after North Korea laid out plans to strike near Guam with unsettling specificity, there was no observable march toward combat, despite the angry rhetoric from both sides. US officials said there was no major movement of US military assets to the region, nor were there signs Pyongyang was actively preparing for war.

## Supporting Question 1

### Featured Source

Source A: Nick Keppler, "8 Presidential Communication Firsts," MentalFloss.com, March 13, 2016, accessible at <http://mentalfloss.com/article/77071/8-presidential-communication-firsts>

When Franklin Roosevelt declared "I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking" in a radio address to the American people on March 12, 1933, he was making history. The address—in which Roosevelt explained his reasoning behind calling a banking holiday to reorganize the battered industry and to announce their reopening—was the first of FDR's "fireside chats," which represented a game-changing communications strategy and use of technology for the White House. Roosevelt bypassed the news media and spoke directly to the citizenry, creating an aura of calmness and confidence during the Great Depression and World War II (though he never gave a radio address near an actual fireplace). Here are eight other firsts and breakthroughs in presidential communication.

### 1. First State of the Union Address // George Washington

Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution stipulates that the president "shall from time to time give to Congress information of the State of the Union and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The task first fell to George Washington eight months after his inauguration. On January 8, 1790, the former general addressed Congress at the provincial capital of New York City. Because the nation was new, the address covered some basics of maintaining a country. Washington called for the creation of a standing army; money to fund foreign relations; a process for naturalizing foreigners, "[u]niformity in the currency, weights, and measures," and "the promotion of science and literature."

### 2. First Telegraph Line // Abraham Lincoln

Congress authorized funding for Samuel F. B. Morse to build a test telegraph between Washington, DC and Baltimore in 1843. While Lincoln's may not have been the first administration to send or receive information via telegraph, it was the first to have a line installed in the War Department, starting in May 1862. (Previously, public officials who wanted to wire a message had to stand in line in a clerk's office with everyone else.) Throughout the Civil War, Lincoln used the line extensively, starting his day by shifting through communication from various state governors and generals. Some nights, he even slept in the telegraph room. The wire also allowed him to directly oversee the war, giving specific orders for movements and troop counts.

### 3. First Telephone Line // Rutherford B. Hayes

Fred A. Gower, the managing agent of Alexander Graham Bell, personally oversaw the installation of the first telephone line in the White House in 1877. Gower helped President Rutherford B. Hayes dial up Bell at a hotel in Providence, Rhode Island, in June of that year. According to the *Providence Journal*, "The President listened carefully while a gradually increasing smile wreathed his lips, and wonder shone in his eyes more and more, until he took the little instrument from his ear, looked at it a moment in surprise, and remarked, 'That is wonderful.'" The phone was connected permanently to the only other one in Washington, that of the Treasury Department.

### 4. First Radio Address // Warren G. Harding

Roosevelt was not the first president heard over the airwaves. That honor goes to Warren G. Harding. On June 14, 1922, Harding gave a speech to commemorate the unveiling of a memorial to Francis Scott Key. Due to concerns that too many people would want to hear Harding speak for the venue to accommodate, the decision was made to broadcast the speech on radio. Originally, a transmitting station was going to be built in Baltimore, but that was deemed too expensive. Instead, Harding's voice was transmitted via



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telephone to the Anacostia broadcasting station and then from Anacostia broadcast to the people of Baltimore. A few months later, Harding used the same transmit-to-Anacostia trick for his State of the Union, which, according to a contemporary *New York Times* article, was “passed along through relay stations to a good part of the country,” including his sick wife.

### 5. First Televised Address // Harry Truman

There were 44,000 TVs in the United States when President Harry Truman made the first televised primetime address on October 5, 1947. Truman essentially called on Americans to eat less, saving the country’s excess food supply for European countries still recovering from World War II. Truman suggested Americans skip meat on Tuesdays and eggs and poultry on Thursdays and set aside a slice of bread each day. He also suggested restaurants skip the complimentary bread and butter. “We believe that self-control is the best control,” he said. “From now on, we shall be testing at every meal the degree to which each of us is willing to exercise self-control for the good of all.”

### 6. First Email // Bill Clinton

Bill Clinton has often said that the first email he sent as president was to astronaut John Glenn, who had recently boarded the International Space Station to test the effects of space on aging. But as *The Atlantic* confirmed last year, this is a complete myth. John Gibbons, Clinton’s Science Advisor, explained, “we wanted to introduce the President to email and the Net. So we brought him over to the old EOB, and he sat down in front of this computer—it may have been the first time he sat down in front of a computer—and showed him how email worked and gave him his email address over across the street in the Oval Office. So he typed in his first email message. It was something like, ‘Bill Clinton, it’s time to come home for lunch. Signed, Hillary,’ something like that. I saved a copy of it. That was his first email.” And in 1994, the *New York Times* reported on an email that Clinton sent to the Prime Minister of Sweden. And in what was described as a breach of netiquette even back then, it was “COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF CAPITAL LETTERS.”

### 7. First Webchat // Bill Clinton

Almost exactly a year after his purported exchange with Glenn, Clinton became the first president to take questions from Internet users in a forum hosted by the Democratic Leadership Council and the Internet company Excite@Home. Digital communications had boomed during his administration. In 1993, 1.3 million computers were connected to the web. By 1999, 56 million were online. For 90 minutes on November 8, 1999, a moderator sorted through questions posed to Clinton and an assistant typed out his answers. (The 53-year-old president admitted to being “technologically challenged.”) About 50,000 watched the video feed. Clinton responded to a questioner that the chances of a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians were “better than 50-50.” He also told “Cynthia in Arizona” that he was not hoarding food in preparation for the Y2K computer crash.

### 8. First Tweet // Barack Obama

Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign made unprecedented use of social media. When he was elected to office, his staff instituted the White House Twitter account, while political allies kept up his @BarackObama. Obama never sent a tweet from his own fingers, however, until a tour of the Red Cross’s Washington, D.C. headquarters on January 18, 2010. A Red Cross employee apparently coaxed Obama to hit the “send” button on a tweet reading, “President Obama and the First Lady are here visiting our disaster operation center right now,” marking the first tweet physically delivered by a US president. On May 18, 2015, Obama established his own Twitter account, @POTUS.

Used with permission from Mental Floss



## Supporting Question 1

### Featured Source

Source B: K. C. Morgan, "How Presidents Communicate with the Public Will Surprise You," RealClear Politics, January 15, 2016; text, images, and video clips accessible at [http://www.realclear.com/history/2016/01/15/how\\_presidents\\_communicate\\_with\\_the\\_public\\_will\\_surprise\\_you\\_12694.html](http://www.realclear.com/history/2016/01/15/how_presidents_communicate_with_the_public_will_surprise_you_12694.html)

### How Presidents Communicate with the Public Will Surprise You

For the most recent State of the Union address, President Barack Obama appeared on primetime TV on just about every channel. But it wasn't always this way. Once upon a time, the President of the United States used all sorts of ways to talk to the American people.

#### FDR's Weekly Address

President Franklin D. Roosevelt reached out to the American people once a week by radio while he was in office and his fireside chats are the stuff of legend, but he wasn't the first to do so. FDR just addressed the nation so often, he became famous for it.

#### Reagan Does the Radio

President Ronald Reagan brought back Roosevelt's weekly radio broadcasts while he served the nation. Later presidents modernized the practice while maintaining it. George W. Bush did his by podcast. Barack Obama does short videos for the Internet.

#### Coolidge Makes History

It was President Calvin Coolidge who first addressed the American public live from a national platform: the radio. His 1923 State of the Union speech was broadcast nationwide.

#### Truman on TV

The first president to deliver a televised address was Harry Truman. He addressed the nation in 1947 from the White House to ask the public to use less grain. This was to help those starving in Europe, riddled with famine after WWII. Only a few thousand people in the country had television sets at this time.

#### George Washington's State of the Union

Appropriately, George Washington was the first president to deliver a State of the Union address. He helped to make the speech a yearly thing after he spoke at Federal Hall in New York City in January, 1790. He praised the first-ever session of Congress and outlined his plan for the coming year. His goals involved building roads for the postal service, creating a uniform measuring system for the new country, and shoring up the army.

#### Johnson in Primetime

Through Truman was the first to televise his State of the Union, it was LBJ that turned it into must-watch TV. He went on primetime in 1965 to give his address. President Johnson spoke about civil rights reform and wanted to appear at night in order to reach a larger audience.

#### Clinton [Takes It] Online

Bill Clinton was the first president to take his State of the Union worldwide. His 1997 address to America was the first to be broadcast live on the Internet.

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### **Washington Says Farewell**

Before radio, before television, way before the Internet, presidents didn't get to talk to the whole nation all at once. In 1796, George Washington delivered his Farewell Address by letter. It was published in newspapers across the new nation, and was even printed up in pamphlet form for distribution.

### **The Gettysburg Address**

Heralded as one of the greatest of all presidential speeches—truly the president of all speeches—the Gettysburg Address was delivered mainly to an audience of military personnel, politicians, reporters, and some spectators. There was little applause following President Lincoln's famous words, which were reprinted in newspapers all over the United States and skewered by some media outlets.

Used with permission from RealClear

## Supporting Question 2

**Featured Source**

Source A: Russell Goldman, “How Trump’s Predecessors Dealt with the North Korean Threat,” New York Times (excerpt), August 17, 2017, accessible at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/17/world/asia/trump-north-korea-threat.html>

HONG KONG — Carrots or sticks? Aid or sanctions? Engagement or containment? American attempts to counter North Korea’s nuclear program did not begin last week when President Trump promised to unleash “fire and fury” against the isolated government. For decades, Mr. Trump’s predecessors have waded into the diplomatic mire, trying to threaten or cajole North Korea’s ruling family into abandoning the country’s weapons programs. Each failed.

## TEACHING THE C3 FRAMEWORK

### Supporting Question 2

#### Featured Source

Source B: Julie Vitkovskaya, "Trump's Year of Taunting, Teasing and Threatening Kim Jong Un," Washington Post (excerpt), January 4, 2018, accessible at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/04/trumps-year-of-taunting-teasing-and-threatening-kim-jong-un/>

Relations between the United States and North Korea got off to a rocky start this year. After fireworks lit up the night sky in Pyongyang, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced in a televised speech that the United States is within a "nuclear striking range" and the regime's nuclear forces are "a reality."

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### Supporting Question 3

#### Featured Source

Source A: Ashleigh Killough, "Trump's North Korea Tweets Renew Debate over Nuclear Authority," CNN.com (excerpt), accessible at <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/03/politics/trump-nuclear-authority/index.html>

**Washington (CNN)** President Donald Trump's escalated statements against North Korea have revived questions in Washington about the president's authority to approve the use of nuclear weapons.

## Supporting Question 3

### Featured Source

Source B: Priyanka Boghani, “The US and North Korea on the Brink: A Timeline,” PBS Frontline, October 4, 2017

### The US and North Korea on the Brink: A Timeline

Last year, a war of words between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un sparked fears that the escalating rhetoric could spill over into military confrontation. This year, the two appeared to move towards what would be the first-ever meeting between a sitting US president and North Korean leader.

Threats, talks, sanctions, and missile tests are not new developments in the US-North Korea relationship. What’s different now, experts say, is that the gap in knowledge about what the other side is thinking seems wider than ever, with North Korean officials puzzling over President Trump’s threats, and Americans trying to understand Kim Jong-un’s motivations.

Here, we examine the turbulent history between the two countries, from North Korea’s work to develop nuclear and missile programs, to US efforts to stop them.

### Early Ambitions

North Korea’s quest for a nuclear weapon can be traced back decades to the Korean War.

“They felt that they needed to develop a capability that would deter an American attack,” said Duyeon Kim, a visiting senior fellow at the Seoul-based Korean Peninsula Future Forum.

The fear was not unfounded. In 1950, President Harry Truman said there was “active consideration” of using the atomic bomb in the conflict. “Ever since the Korean War, they always assumed that Washington would attack them any day and wipe them out,” Kim said. “The only way for them to survive and not get attacked would be to develop the most powerful weapon on Earth, which would be the nuclear bomb.”

With the help of the Soviet Union, North Korea began work on a nuclear complex, and in the early 1980s, built its first power plant, Yongbyon.

In these early days, Pyongyang insisted that its aims were peaceful. It became party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, and signed an agreement in 1991 with its rival South Korea in which both countries agreed not to produce or use nuclear weapons. But as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pressed for access to the North’s nuclear waste sites, the country warned that it would withdraw from the NPT.

### 1994-2001: Clinton Tries for a Deal

In early 1994, North Korea threatened to reprocess fuel rods from its nuclear reactor, a step that would give it enough weapons-grade plutonium for five or six nuclear weapons. The Clinton administration considered various responses, including a strike on the Yongbyon facility, but eventually chose to negotiate with Pyongyang. Amid the crisis, Kim Il-sung—the founding dictator of North Korea, who ruled for more than four decades—died. His son, Kim Jong-il, took over as leader.

By October 1994, negotiations resulted in a deal known as the Agreed Framework. Under the framework, North Korea agreed to freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear facilities, in exchange for a move toward normalizing relations with the United States. North Korea would also receive shipments of fuel oil and assistance with constructing light-water reactor power plants (which would have safeguards to ensure that fuel could not be diverted to weapons).

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“The North Koreans agreed to the deal because there was a shift in the geopolitical situation in the late 1980s, early 1990s,” said Joel Wit, a senior fellow at the US-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and one of the negotiators of the Agreed Framework.

“First of all, they lost the Soviet Union as their main ally, and secondly, the Chinese were shifting towards establishing better relations with South Korea,” Wit said. “And so the North Koreans made a strategic decision that if they could secure better relations with the United States, they were willing to pay the price. And the price was, of course, their nuclear program.”

North Korea shut down its nuclear reactor, and stalled construction of two others. In 1998, it test-fired an intermediate-range missile—the Taepo Dong-1, with an estimated range of 900 to 1,800 miles—that failed. Nevertheless, negotiations kept on. North Korea agreed to a moratorium on testing medium- and long-range missiles as long as talks with the United States continued.

Madeleine Albright, then the secretary of state, visited North Korea’s capital in 2000 and met Kim Jong-il. The North Koreans hoped Clinton would also visit before he left office, moving North Korea and the United States closer to normalizing relations. But time ran out with the end of the Clinton presidency.

### **2001-2003: The Framework Collapses**

When President George W. Bush took office in 2001, his administration took a more hardline approach to North Korea, postponing talks and expressing skepticism about whether Pyongyang was adhering to the Agreed Framework. North Korea warned Washington that such tough talk would force it to “strongly react.”

Bush listed North Korea among one of three nations in an “axis of evil” in his 2002 State of the Union address. Later that year, in October, the administration said that North Korea was secretly enriching uranium—a claim Pyongyang denied. A month later, the fuel-oil shipments agreed to under President Clinton were suspended. By the end of 2002, North Korea ordered IAEA inspectors out of the country. The Agreed Framework had collapsed.

Experts have described this period as a missed opportunity. Had North Korea not begun enriching uranium, they say, and had the United States moved faster to implement its portion of the agreed framework—including the construction of light-water reactors—things may have gone differently. The Bush administration, said Wit, “thought they could bully the North Koreans into stopping cheating.”

By January 2003, the relationship hit a new low with North Korea’s official withdrawal from the Nonproliferation Treaty. Four months later, US officials said North Korea admitted to having at least one nuclear weapon.

### **2003-2006: Six Party Talks Begin**

The Bush administration would re-engage with North Korea later in 2003, joining South Korea, Japan, Russia, and China in what came to be known as the Six Party Talks.

The talks produced a joint statement in 2005 in which North Korea once again agreed in principle to give up its nuclear weapons program, rejoin the Nonproliferation Treaty, and accept IAEA inspections, while maintaining that it had the right to peaceful nuclear energy.

In exchange, the five other countries agreed to energy assistance and to discuss giving North Korea light-water reactors “at an appropriate time.” The United States and South Korea said they would not deploy nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, and the United States and Japan said they would move toward normalizing relations.

However, progress was short lived. In July 2006, North Korea—angered by US targeting of its financial assets and the pace of the light-water reactor project—broke its 1999 moratorium on testing medium- and long-range missiles. It launched seven ballistic missiles, including the long-range Taepo Dong-2, which if perfected, would have the ability to hit Alaska. The missile failed.



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“Under Kim Jong-il’s rule, a useful way of understanding the dynamics of North Korea and the United States is the idea of cycles,” says Jung H. Pak, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution’s Center for East Asia Policy Studies. “North Korea comes to dialogue, then retracts, using the United States’ ‘hostile policy’ as an excuse to conduct missile or nuclear tests, then re-enters dialogue to dampen sanctions implementation or reduce tension.”

### 2006: A First Nuclear Test

In October 2006, the situation reached a dangerous new stage with North Korea’s first nuclear test. The explosion yielded less than a kiloton, per the Nuclear Threat Initiative. For comparison, the atomic bomb that devastated Hiroshima was 15 kilotons.

The United Nations responded swiftly with a resolution requiring North Korea to stop testing nuclear weapons and to abandon its missile program. In response, a representative for the regime said the nuclear test was “entirely attributable to [the] United States’ threats, sanctions, and pressure.” [The representative] accused the Bush administration of responding to North Korea’s “patient and sincere efforts with sanctions and blockades.”

The regime’s rhetoric aside, the Six Party Talks began to show dividends. In July 2007, North Korea shut down its nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, a move confirmed by a visiting IAEA team. It also agreed to disable the facilities, which would make it harder to restart them. In return, it would receive fuel oil and be removed from the United States’ list of state sponsors of terrorism. However, disagreements on how to verify North Korea’s actions once again led to a stalemate.

### 2009: A Second Nuclear Test

President Barack Obama began his first term with an inaugural address telling “leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict” that “we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your first.”

Just three months later, North Korea launched a Unha-2 rocket with the goal of putting a satellite in space. The United States and its allies had warned Pyongyang they would consider the launch a violation of UN resolutions.

The launch failed, and the Security Council again tightened sanctions. Pyongyang, in turn, said it would no longer adhere to any agreements from the Six Party Talks and threatened to reactivate its nuclear facilities. Days later, it ordered IAEA inspectors out of the country.

Then, on May 24, North Korea conducted its second underground nuclear test, estimated to measure four kilotons, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative. In a statement, it said the test helped “settle the scientific and technological problems” in increasing the power of its nuclear weapons.

Again, sanctions followed—first from the UN Security Council and then [from] the United States. By the fall of 2011, Pyongyang hinted that it would be willing to resume multilateral talks, but then suddenly, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il died in December, after holding power for 17 years. His youngest son, Kim Jong-un, was named North Korea’s leader.

### 2012-2016: Testing Accelerates

The pace of ballistic missile tests and nuclear tests would significantly escalate under Kim Jong-un.

Despite agreeing to a moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests with the Obama administration in February 2012, North Korea once again attempted a space launch with the Unha-3 that April. But the test was a failure—the rocket disintegrated shortly after launch. The United States halted food aid in response.

In December 2012, North Korea tried again, this time successfully launching the Unha-3 rocket and putting an object into orbit for the first time in [the country’s] history. It maintained that the launch was for peaceful purposes. The rocket was similar in design to a missile

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that could possibly carry a warhead as far as California. The UN Security Council passed a new resolution a month later, condemning the launch and expanding travel bans and asset freezes for certain individuals and organizations.

The international response would do little to slow the new leader's nuclear ambitions. Between 2013 and 2016, North Korea held three more nuclear tests, each more powerful than the last. In September 2016, North Korea claimed to test its first hydrogen bomb, a claim that experts greeted with skepticism. It also continued to make strides in its ballistic missile program.

North Korea used the nuclear and missile tests to establish "strategic relevance in the region," according to Pak. "We can't underestimate how North Korea was devastated during the Korean War, so the Kim family's goal is to ensure the country's survival, but also their own survival." The missile program, she noted, was "for all of those things—detering the United States, deterring South Korea, deterring Japan."

### 2017: A War of Words with Trump

In 2017, North Korea reached two significant milestones. It successfully test-fired its first intercontinental ballistic missiles [ISBMs] in July, capable of reaching Alaska. It once again claimed to successfully test a hydrogen bomb. Whether it was indeed a hydrogen bomb has not been confirmed, but its nuclear test in September was recorded as North Korea's most powerful yet, at an estimated 250 kilotons.

When he addressed the UN General Assembly in September, Trump said that if the United States was forced to defend itself or its allies, it would have "no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." Referring to Kim Jong-un as "Rocket Man," Trump said the North Korean leader was "on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime."

Kim Jong-un responded to Trump's speech by calling the US president "mentally deranged" and warning that he would "pay dearly" for threatening to destroy North Korea. He also said Trump's comments "have convinced me, rather than frightening or stopping me, that the path I chose is correct and that it is the one I have to follow to the last."

"I think North Korea has typically responded to threats with threats, to provocations with provocations," said Kelsey Davenport, director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association. "In part, North Korea is responding to the dangerous and bellicose rhetoric of President Trump."

Still, Davenport sees an opening for negotiations, noting that North Korea has said it would not negotiate while under hostile threat. "I read that as keeping the door open for negotiations, if the United States rolls back its more hostile posturing and rhetoric."

### 2018: An Opening for Talks

As his country prepared to host the Winter Olympics, South Korean President Moon Jae-in reached out to North Korea—inviting athletes from the North to march with their Southern counterparts in the opening ceremony under one flag. Kim Jong-un accepted the invitation and sent his sister as a representative. The détente offered an opening, and a senior North Korean official who attended the closing ceremony indicated that the North was willing to talk with the United States.

In early March, news broke that Kim Jong-un had invited President Trump to meet for negotiations about North Korea's nuclear program. The White House said President Trump had accepted the invitation, and he tweeted that the North Korean leader spoke to South Korean representatives about denuclearization, not just a freeze. He continued [in his tweet], "Great progress being made but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached. Meeting being planned!"

In mid-April, Trump confirmed reports that CIA Director Mike Pompeo made a top-secret trip to meet Kim Jong-un in North Korea in late March, the highest-level contact since [then-US Secretary of State Madeleine] Albright visited in 2000. The meeting came shortly after Pompeo was nominated for [the position of] secretary of state.

## TEACHING THE C3 FRAMEWORK

On April 20, North Korea announced that it would suspend nuclear and missile testing, and shut down the site where its six previous nuclear tests were carried out.

In early May, Trump announced a date and location for the anticipated summit: Singapore, on June 12th. Less than a week later, the plan was thrown into question when North Korea issued an angry rebuke to remarks by Trump's new national security adviser, John Bolton. Bolton had suggested the US plan to denuclearize North Korea might follow the "Libya model." (In 2003, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi gave up his nascent nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. He was brutally killed a few years later by US-backed rebels.) After Bolton's statements, North Korea said it would have to "reconsider" its participation in the summit.

Vice President Mike Pence weighed in on May 21, saying in a televised interview: "This will only end like the Libyan model ended if Kim Jong-un doesn't make a deal." North Korea responded a few days later with a furious statement from Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui, calling Pence's remarks "unbridled and impudent." She once again cast doubt on North Korea's participation in the summit if the United States "clings to unlawful and outrageous acts."

On May 24, President Trump cancelled the summit, citing [to Kim Jong-un] the "tremendous anger and open hostility displayed in your most recent statement." But he seemed to leave the door open to future dialogue, thanking North Korea for releasing American hostages and writing, "If you change your mind having to do with this important summit, please do not hesitate to call me or write."

After a White House visit from Kim Jong-un's top deputy and former spymaster Kim Yong-chol on June 1, Trump said the summit was back on.

The unprecedented meeting between a sitting US president and a North Korean leader took place on June 12 in Singapore.

President Trump and Kim Jong-un shook hands, and the statement they signed said Trump "committed to provide security guarantees" to North Korea, and Kim "reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." The statement was short on specifics, but said more negotiations between North Korean officials and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo would be held "at the earliest possible date."

"We had a historic meeting and decided to leave the past behind," Kim told reporters while sitting next to Trump.

"We're very proud of what took place today," Trump said, after both men signed the statement. "I think our whole relationship with North Korea and the Korean Peninsula is going to be a very much different situation than it has in the past."

Media reports noted that the language about disarmament in the statement was similar to agreements in 1994 and 2005 that eventually faltered.

Trump also made what appeared to be a major concession to North Korea, suspending joint military exercises with South Korea, saying the exercises were expensive and "very provocative."

*This post was most recently updated on June 12, 2018. It was originally published on Oct. 4, 2017.*

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### Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**

**Source C:** Kim Jong-un, text of speech made on September 22, 2017 in response to the speech Donald Trump’s made to the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2017, National Committee on North Korea Database, accessible at [https://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/kju\\_statement\\_to\\_trump.pdf/file\\_view](https://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/kju_statement_to_trump.pdf/file_view)



NOTE: According to the National Committee on North Korea ([www.ncnk.org](http://www.ncnk.org)) the following is the text “of a statement attributed to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, responding in direct terms to President Donald Trump’s remarks about North Korea at the UN General Assembly, in which Trump referred to Kim as ‘Rocket Man’ and said that if the United States ‘is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.’” Teachers may want students to also read Trump’s UN speech, which is accessible at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-72nd-session-united-nations-general-assembly/>

## TEACHING THE C3 FRAMEWORK

### Statement of Chairman of State Affairs Commission of DPRK

Pyeongyang, September 22 (KCNA)—Respected Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK, released a statement on Thursday.

The full text of the statement reads:

The speech made by the US president in his maiden address on the UN arena in the prevailing serious circumstances, in which the situation on the Korean peninsula has been rendered tense as never before and is inching closer to a touch-and-go state, is arousing worldwide concern.

Shaping the general idea of what he would say, I expected he would make stereo-typed, prepared remarks a little different from what he used to utter in his office on the spur of the moment as he had to speak on the world's biggest official diplomatic stage.

But, far from making remarks of any persuasive power that can be viewed to be helpful to defusing tension, he made unprecedented rude nonsense one has never heard from any of his predecessors.

A frightened dog barks louder.

I'd like to advise Trump to exercise prudence in selecting words and to be considerate of whom he speaks to when making a speech in front of the world.

The mentally deranged behavior of the US president openly expressing on the UN arena the unethical will to "totally destroy" a sovereign state, beyond the boundary of threats of regime change or overturn of social system, makes even those with normal thinking faculty think about discretion and composure.

His remarks remind me of such words as "political layman" and "political heretic" which were in vogue in reference to Trump during his presidential election campaign.

After taking office Trump has rendered the world restless through threats and blackmail against all countries in the world. He is unfit to hold the prerogative of supreme command of a country, and he is surely a rogue and a gangster fond of playing with fire, rather than a politician.

His remarks which described the US option through straightforward expression of his will have convinced me, rather than frightening or stopping me, that the path I chose is correct and that it is the one I have to follow to the last.

Now that Trump has denied the existence of and insulted me and my country in front of the eyes of the world and made the most ferocious declaration of a war in history that he would destroy the DPRK, we will consider with seriousness exercising of a corresponding, highest level of hard-line countermeasure in history.

Action is the best option in treating the dotard who, hard of hearing, is uttering only what he wants to say.

As a man representing the DPRK and on behalf of the dignity and honor of my state and people and on my own, I will make the man holding the prerogative of the supreme command in the US pay dearly for his speech calling for totally destroying the DPRK.

This is not a rhetorical expression loved by Trump.

I am now thinking hard about what response he could have expected when he allowed such eccentric words to trip off his tongue.

Whatever Trump might have expected, he will face results beyond his expectation. I will surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire.