

# The Singapore summit: Chaos is the new normal

By *Martin Hirst*

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*Chairman Kim Jong-un and President Donald Trump sign "comprehensive document" (screenshot via YouTube).*

***The mainstream media will now try to normalise Trump's abnormal behaviour by focusing only on the "optics" of this week's "historic" Singapore meeting with Chairman Kim Jong-un, writes political editor [Dr Martin Hirst](#).***

TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2018, will go down in history as the day that a U.S. President sat down with a North Korean dictator to attempt a settlement of a 70-year-old conflict that has bedevilled the world.

It is impossible to say, just 24 hours later, if there will be success, or if there will be nuclear annihilation when the peace efforts crash and burn. But what is clear so far is that the Tangerine Fascist met his "[Mini-Me](#)" in the North Korean Supreme Leader.

Chaos is the new normal. Both Donald J Trump and

Kim Jong-un are highly unpredictable, we cannot know what either of them will do next. Both of them thrive on chaos and a dangerous delusion of authoritarian narcissism.

However, this might not be immediately obvious. That's because this simple truth has been forgotten in the rush to celebrate, deify and mythologise the few hours that Trump and Kim spent together this week in Singapore.

I spent a few hours watching coverage of the "historic summit" on Fox News.

There was wall-to-wall gloating and waves of "I told you so" and "fake news media were wrong about him" smarm as the Fox presenters lined up to kick the non-reverential American news media and bow down before Trump.

It was sickening. But, to be fair, the coverage was not much better on the ABC.

What Fox and the ABC shared was an overwhelming desire to normalise Trump's self-aggrandising and far from normal behaviour.

The "optics" and the "atmospherics" of Singapore were endlessly replayed because there was very little else to actually report right up until Trump's extraordinary news conference at the end of the day.

It was extraordinary, but unless you watched it, you are unlikely to get the full weirdness of it. It lasted for just over an hour and Trump's impatience to talk about himself meant that most reporters didn't even get to finish their questions before Trump talked all over the top of them.

And it was all about Trump.

He lambasted all the previous U.S. administrations who had not been able to handle the North Korea situation. It didn't matter that Trump's historical knowledge is negligible, he just kept on repeating the few simple lines he'd managed to practice with his advisors/enablers.

On the whole "peace regime" thing, (former President) Obama couldn't do it, but Trump could because he's such a good deal maker. *"That's what I do"*, he reminded the assembled journalists — and by extension the entire planet!

Trump told us he is a *"tremendous"* deal-maker and he is going to *"get it done"* because he and Kim *"got along"* and Trump had *"tremendous leverage"* over his North Korean counterpart.

Trump had a *"tremendous 24 hours"* and the meeting with Kim held *"tremendous potential"*. The pair spent *"intensive hours"* together and produced a *"very comprehensive document"*. Actually, it's just over a page long — there had to be room for Trump's giant signature.

Trump said Kim has a *"great personality"* and is *"Very smart. Good combination"*. Trump also praised the dictator as *"a very talented man"*, who *"loves his country very much"*. Trump was able — he claimed — to bring the world a *"message of hope, vision and peace"*.

And, importantly — according to Trump's warped view of the world — Japanese Prime Minister [Shinzō Abe](#), *"a friend of mine"* and a *"good man"* and [President Xi Jinping](#) of China — a *"very special person"*, a *"terrific person"*, a *"friend of mine"* and a *"great leader"* were also on board with the *"bold step to a bright new future"*.

Trump claimed the talks had been *"honest, direct and productive"* and had taken place in a *"strong, strong circumstance"* that means conflict on the Korean Peninsula — an unresolved 70-year truce — *"will soon end, and it will"*.

But what exactly has been agreed?

Well, there's a [document that lays out the "contract"](#), as Trump called it in a moment of New York real estate truthiness. It's a short [document](#), full of boilerplate diplomatic [newspeak](#) and some nice motherhood statements. At the core of it is a brief paragraph about the *'complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula'*.

A great statement. Hoping this is followed through in good faith for the benefit of both North and South Korea and the world. Singapore summit: Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un document released after historic meeting - ABC News <https://t.co/f36tLLIYOS>

— Peter McLean (@McLeanPeterJ) [June 12, 2018](#)

President Trump committed to providing security guarantees to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Chairman Kim Jong-un reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

I have a feeling that Trump doesn't really know what that means, because later in his rambling and repetitive media conference, he parsed this important caveat into the denuclearisation of the North Korean Peninsula.

Er, Mr President, Sir ... the Korean Demilitarised Zone ([DMZ](#)) is actually like nearly halfway down the Korean Peninsula; both North and South Korea are on the Korean Peninsula.



Until 1991, the U.S. also had nuclear weapons located on Korean soil and American hawks – including the President’s close adviser [John Bolton](#) – have [recently begun arguing](#) that they should be put back. The American nukes – including nuclear shells for some rifles – were deployed in secret in the late 1950s, after hostilities on the Peninsula had ceased.

It is not beyond possible that Trump might even secretly put them back. The United States also has 32,000 combat troops in South Korea and Trump made it clear they are not going home any time soon.

So, before we get too carried away and get tattoos of Trump and Kim shaking hands, let’s read the fine print of this hastily constructed [document](#).

Of course, the document also had to satisfy the two giant egos in the room and it does this at its conclusion, with adequately pompous language:

*'President Donald J Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong-un of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have committed to cooperate for the development of new US-DPRK relations and for the promotion of peace, prosperity, and security of the Korean Peninsula and of the world.'*

Figure 1: The Korean Peninsula (Screenshot [Google Maps](#)).

Of course, Trump’s slip up was just more grist to the Fox News ass-kissing mill. They gleefully started ["newsing"](#) that it was all about the North’s nukes.

This is only half-right.

The USA has nuclear weapons pointed at North Korea from [bases in Japan, Guam and other parts of the region](#).

### June 12, 2018

Trump is the master of the “art of the deal” and he couldn’t stop himself from boasting about just how good a wheeler-dealer he is. The document was signed after “*vigorous negotiations*” but then Trump announced there was an “*extra bit*” that was added after the text of the document had been agreed.

According to the President, Kim agreed to “blow up” a “missile engine testing site”, indicating that the “menace of weapons” was being removed, making it a “very great day and moment in the history of the world”.

Trump was asked questions about the deal, but most of his answers were just repeats of what he’d already said. However, a few weird moments stood out.

He talked about [the death of an American](#) who’d been held hostage in North Korea, [Otto Warmbier](#). Without shame or any sense of how it might affect the dead man’s family, Trump said, “Otto didn’t die in vain” and invoked his well-worn line that Warmbier’s parents “are friends of mine”.

I’m sure he’s met them once and then promptly moved on to the extra scoop of ice-cream. The anniversary of the 22-year-old student’s death – he was imprisoned for taking a poster off a wall in Pyongyang – is next week. I wonder if Trump’s friends, the Warmbiers, will hear from him then?

Otto Warmbier dies days after being returned from North Korea  
<https://t.co/PciYpRZlfk>

— Maruja Torres (@MistralS) [June 20, 2017](#)

Trump was asked if he’d addressed North Korea’s horrific human rights record with his new friend Kim. If you watch the media conference, I think at this point you’ll agree with me that Trump was likely lying when he said “yes”, he had brought it up, but that it was not discussed “in great detail”. He extemporised — badly.

In answering, he blathered on and

gave only vague answers: “they will be doing things”, he said, adding that Kim was “very smart” and a “great negotiator”.

When he was asked again about the Koreans in gulags who are “brutally repressed” according to one brave journalist, Trump extemporised again. It was clear that the topic of human rights was not a point of discussion between the two champion human rights abusers. Trump fell back on his old schtick, in which he compares oranges and apples as if they have a common genome. It was a “rough situation over there”, he mumbled, just like many other un-named countries.

He offered without much conviction:

“We’ll be doing something on it [human rights] ... it will change.”

The most insensitive moment came when Trump claimed that the Koreans in the gulags “are the great winners today”.

There are [around 120,000 political prisoners](#) in North Korea, according to a recent BBC report; they are used as forced labour and many are incarcerated for life according to [Korean human rights groups](#).

BBC News - North Korea:  
How many political prisoners are detained in prison?  
<https://t.co/ilCg86XSlw>

— Liz (@bluebonnetbunny)  
[June 12, 2018](#)

It was when Trump started talking all sciencey about the timetable for denuclearisation that I almost choked on my kale slaw salad. *“Scientifically and mechanically, it takes a long time”*, he told us, and he again brought up his “genius” uncle who had taught at MIT and with whom a younger Trump had discussed the nuclear stuff.

It was, we learned, from these obviously enlightening conversations that Trump learned *“nuclear is number one to me”*.

Trump offered his opinion that:

*“ ... they say [it can take up to 15 years](#) [to dismantle a nuclear weapons program] but I don't believe them.”*

Of course not, a chat with your uncle 40 years ago is obviously more enlightening than anything actual experts might tell you.

We also learned from his [media conference](#) that Trump knows *“a lot about planes”* and that flying a nuclear bomber from Guam to play in war games in South Korea is *“tremendously expensive”*.

But mainly we learned that for Trump, it's all about him and that *“a lot of great things can happen”* thanks

to his wonderful deal-making.

In fact, we ended up exactly where we were last weekend (June 8-9), back at the [G7 meeting in Canada](#). Despite all of Trump's tweets and his petulant refusal to sign a joint statement with the other leaders, it was in his mind *“a very good meeting by G7”*.

Despite the bluster and bad words, Trump was still claiming that he has [“a superb relationship with Justin Trudeau”](#) and [“really good with \[Angela\] Merkel.”](#)

It was just that they had been *“very unfair”* to him and imposed *“tremendous tariffs”* on the United States.

Trump said that the U.S. global trade deficit is [around \\$800 billion](#), but he thinks that global trade is a zero-sum game and that if you have a trade deficit you are somehow losing. Global trade [can never really be in balance](#) because the reasons for trade are complex and the accounting is very tricky.

For example, the U.S. has a huge trade deficit with China, even though American companies make huge profits from exporting raw materials and then importing manufacturing goods in return.

Trump doesn't understand the basics, even though he

[claims](#) “nobody knows more about trade than me”.

It seems Trump has a very inflated opinion of himself. There’s also a chance that the American President has a pre-dementia condition that is undiagnosed. Great — the most dangerous man on the planet may not only be [mentally unwell](#), [he may have a degenerative brain disease](#) as well. Bear this in mind when you read the hagiographic reports of his “history-making” meeting with Kim.

Trump thrives on chaos and half-truths; if we let the establishment media normalise him and report the Singapore meeting like it will actually bring peace to the Korean Peninsula, we will be as delusional as they are.

*Fox’s coverage of Obama’s plans to meet Kim Jong Un versus coverage of Trump’s meeting (Source [@NowThisPolitics](#)).*

**You can follow political editor [Dr Martin Hirst](#) on Twitter [@ethicalmartini](#).**