

# Chinese Views of the Singapore Summit Between Donald J. Trump and Kim Jong-un

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Chinese observers generally view the summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as a positive step towards denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. Authoritative and non-authoritative sources confirm that Beijing believes the summit's apparent confirmation of its "dual track" and "double suspension" approaches to the problem, the subsequent improvement of its relations with North Korea, and Pyongyang's apparent receptivity to adopting Chinese-style economic reform policies greatly serve its interests. However, while both types of sources have reaffirmed China's importance for and commitment to achieving lasting peace on the peninsula, many Chinese observers have come to question the success of the summit and whether the positive momentum that resulted from it is markedly slowing down.

The long-awaited and much-hyped summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was finally held on June 12, 2018. The purpose of the talks was to improve relations between the U.S. and North Korea and to establish a clear basis for the resolution of the escalating crisis triggered by the development of Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal. Nearly five hours of talks between the two leaders resulted in "fulsome declarations of a new friendship but just vague pledges of nuclear disarmament."<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the unprecedented nature and positive atmospherics, the most significant outcome of the summit was a short joint statement. It asserted that Trump and Kim were committed to implementing four agreed-upon stipulations "fully and expeditiously" via follow-up negotiations at the "earliest possible date." These include:

- A commitment to "establish new U.S.-DPRK relations in accordance with the desire of the peoples of the two countries for peace and prosperity;"
- Joining "efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula;"
- A DPRK commitment "to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula;" and
- A commitment "to recovering POW/MIA remains."<sup>2</sup>

In addition, Kim destroyed a nuclear weapons test site and Trump announced the suspension of U.S.-ROK military exercises. Yet despite such arguably positive gestures,

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the two countries made no outward progress in developing the specific goals, timing, and roadmap for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

While some observers in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and elsewhere hailed the summit as a step toward peace and stability on the peninsula, many in the U.S. criticized it as high on gestures of good will but low on substance, while providing Pyongyang (and Beijing) with far more strategic gains than the U.S.<sup>3</sup>

This essay describes and assesses the Chinese views to date on the Singapore summit. As usual, such views are divided into authoritative and non-authoritative categories to identify possible lines of debate within both official and unofficial leadership and elite circles.<sup>4</sup> The essay ends with a summary and assessment of the Chinese perspective and its implications for the North Korea nuclear crisis and U.S.-PRC relations.

## Chinese Assessments and Observations

### *Authoritative Sources*

Given Beijing's longstanding position of support for direct U.S.-DPRK talks, it is no surprise that both authoritative and non-authoritative Chinese sources praised the decision to hold the Singapore summit, often calling it a "historic opportunity." Prior to the summit, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) spokesperson stated:

Currently, years of deadlock have been broken regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula and achieving the denuclearization is facing a historic opportunity. We encourage and support the efforts made by the DPRK and the U.S. to further demonstrate goodwill, engage in positive interactions, and hold the summit as scheduled so as to jointly unlock the door to denuclearization, peace, and prosperity of the Peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

On the day of the summit, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi described the unprecedented meeting as "history making." Wang also repeated the oft-stated PRC position that:

- The core of the nuclear issue on the peninsula involves security, especially the provision of security for North Korea;
- The security issue must be solved through direct and equal dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang;
- Such a dialogue must involve the creation of a peace mechanism that addresses the DPRK's "legitimate concerns;" and
- A pledge that China will continue to play a unique and constructive role in this process.<sup>6</sup>

These standard positions were repeated by authoritative sources in the days and weeks following the summit. Overall, the event was deemed "successful," representing "the important headway in promoting the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the

political settlement process of the issue.” Beijing applauded “the political decisions made by the leaders of the DPRK and the United States.”<sup>7</sup>

What is more interesting is that authoritative sources also asserted that the summit confirmed the implementation of Beijing’s well-established approach to dealing with the North Korea nuclear issue. In the words of the MoFA spokesperson, “the China-proposed ‘suspension for suspension’ [or freeze for freeze---Author] initiative has been materialized and now the situation is also moving forward in the direction of Beijing’s ‘dual-track’ approach,” thus confirming China’s “positive and constructive role” in the process.<sup>8</sup>

The spokesperson added:

I can only say that this once again proves that China's initiative is reasonable and feasible, not only in the interest of all parties, but also in addressing the most urgent security concerns of all parties.<sup>9</sup>

In response to criticism that the summit had not resulted in concrete measures for North Korean denuclearization, the MoFA spokesperson cautiously stated:

We hope that the DPRK and the U.S. could follow through on the consensus reached by their leaders, advance follow-up consultations, further consolidate and expand the outcomes, and make the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue a sustainable and irreversible process. China supports the efforts made by the DPRK and the U.S. to this end.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to such positive statements, authoritative Chinese sources struggled somewhat to explain Beijing’s stance toward sanctions on North Korea. Immediately after the summit, an authoritative source *seemed to imply* that the positive environment created by the summit might justify an easing of sanctions on North Korea:

The relevant Security Council resolutions stipulate that we shall adjust sanction measures as may be needed in light of the DPRK’s compliance, including suspending or lifting relevant sanction measures. China always believes that sanction itself is not the end, and the Security Council’s actions should support and conform to the diplomatic dialogue.<sup>11</sup>

Some Western media misinterpreted this statement as Beijing’s suggestion that the international community “could consider lifting economic sanctions on North Korea.”<sup>12</sup> In fact Beijing was at most indicating that sanctions should be eased if Pyongyang were indeed showing compliance with UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. However, authoritative Chinese sources did not explicitly state that those conditions were being met.

Nonetheless, some confusion continued. On June 13, MoFA spokesperson Geng Shuang repeatedly avoided direct media questions on whether Beijing was promoting an easing of sanctions, stating:

We hope all parties will seize the opportunity of positive changes currently taking place on the Peninsula to take a firm step forward towards the process of denuclearization...and political settlement of the Peninsula issue.<sup>13</sup>

Following post-summit talks between Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on June 14, Pompeo stated at a press conference “that China had committed to maintaining the UN sanctions until the denuclearization process was complete.”<sup>14</sup> However, Wang did not confirm this. In fact, he did not mention sanctions at the press conference, instead reaffirming Beijing’s strong support for the U.S. and North Korea in “implementing the consensus reached by the leaders at the summit as soon as possible.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Wang, in line with other authoritative sources, avoided providing any timetable or conditions for the denuclearization process.<sup>16</sup>

Yet during a press conference in July, a MoFA spokesperson reaffirmed China’s commitment to enforcing the UN sanctions. When asked about China’s connection to a dramatic fall in DPRK gasoline prices, the spokesperson responded that “China has been strictly and earnestly implementing all the DPRK-related Security Council resolutions.”<sup>17</sup> Of course, this did not address the issue of whether Beijing now thinks such sanctions should be eased.

In contrast, authoritative sources have been very clear about China’s long-standing opposition to any sanctions on North Korea *outside* the UNSC framework and have called for their cancellation.<sup>18</sup>

Beijing’s calls for its “dual-track” approach have arguably increased in the aftermath of the summit, in part reflecting the leadership’s apparent belief that Kim Jong-un is now prepared to initiate genuine economic reform and reduce his reliance on nuclear weapons if given the right security incentives. Indeed, authoritative sources, including Xi Jinping, have repeatedly asserted since the summit that North Korea “has made the important decision to shift its focus to economic development and the DPRK’s socialist cause has entered a new historical stage.”<sup>19</sup>

Since Kim Jong-un’s trips to Beijing before the summit and continuing to the present, authoritative Chinese sources have accompanied this view with very positive statements supporting Pyongyang. For example, Xi Jinping reportedly stated after his meeting with Kim in late June after the Singapore summit:

No matter the changes in the international and regional situation, China’s party and government’s resolute position on being dedicated to consolidating and developing Sino-North Korea relations will not change. The Chinese people’s friendship for the North Korean people will not change, and China’s support for socialist North Korea will not change.<sup>20</sup>

In responding to the Singapore summit, Chinese authoritative sources have also mentioned the issue of U.S. troops in South Korea. A MoFA counselor reportedly stated:

If North Korea is no longer an issue, what's the purpose to still have troops there?  
...If there is no terrorist, if there is no enemy, why do we need those troops?<sup>21</sup>

Finally, many Chinese authoritative statements have stressed Beijing's ongoing contributions and dedication to realizing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. When asked about accusations that China was negatively influencing the DPRK's stance toward the U.S. in talks with Secretary of State Pompeo, a MoFA spokesperson responded in early July:

I believe that it does not make any sense. China's attitude on this issue is consistent and clear-cut. We will continue to play a positive role in and making constructive contributions to realizing the denuclearization of the peninsula and achieving the long-lasting peace and stability of the region.<sup>22</sup>

And again in early August:

We hope that all relevant parties can work with China to seize the opportunity presented by the current détente on the Korean Peninsula and meet each other halfway so as to realize the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue and achieve the denuclearization of the peninsula at an early date.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Non-Authoritative Sources*

Unsurprisingly, many non-authoritative observers initially echoed authoritative sources in hailing the summit as a history-making success and in line with Beijing's interests in strengthening stability and moving toward the denuclearization of the peninsula.<sup>24</sup>

Although non-authoritative Chinese sources generally seem to agree that the summit is a great success, they also assert that, even under the best of circumstances, considerable time and effort are needed to realize permanent peace on the peninsula. This would require Washington and Pyongyang to respect each other's principal demands – in other words, “the United States' demand for denuclearization and the DPRK's demand for security – and to negotiate a road map to improve relations and restore permanent peace on the peninsula.”<sup>25</sup> One described the summit as “a good start,” but also stated:

The two leaders should have reached more agreements than the four points in their joint statement. Some significant work is still needed to carefully design a road map for the peace and denuclearization process on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>26</sup>

Another asserted:

When thinking about the future of the U.S.-North Korea relationship, and the prospect of denuclearization, it is important to keep in mind what happened between late May and early June when both sides were preparing for the summit, and that President Trump is not a patient person. If both are to turn fire and fury into friendship, it will be up to the two unconventional leaders to do business in an unusual way.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, one observer reportedly stated:

In Pyongyang, there's still internal opposition to giving up their nuclear weapons which they have worked so hard to obtain and they are waiting for the U.S. to extend more goodwill, so a narrative can be built up for the domestic audience that America is sincere.<sup>28</sup>

As suggested above, some observers also clearly recognize the dangers ahead, including possible returns to confrontation and threats by both Pyongyang and Washington.<sup>29</sup>

One observer adds:

The DPRK may not completely denuclearize "very soon," as the U.S. expects because it considers its nuclear program an important bargaining chip, and the U.S. will not lift sanctions against the DPRK now because it believes it was because of the strict sanctions that Kim agreed to the summit.<sup>30</sup>

Both before and after the Singapore summit, non-authoritative Chinese sources generally echoed authoritative sources in praising Beijing's unique and constructive role in creating the conditions for the improvement in U.S.-DPRK relations. First and foremost among these contributions were, of course, China's "suspension for suspension" and "dual-track" recommendations mentioned above.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, non-authoritative Chinese observers took pains to dispute the notion that Beijing might be marginalized by an improvement in U.S.-DPRK relations and left out of peace treaty negotiations. Regarding the latter, one observer remarked:

The peace treaty should in no way be signed without China's participation, and will not marginalize China on the peninsula issue... If Washington, Seoul and Pyongyang abolish the armistice and sign a declaration in an intention to end the state of war on the peninsula without Beijing, China has the right to nullify it.<sup>32</sup>

Non-authoritative sources also pointed to several areas where Beijing would likely play a crucial role in the development of the peace process and denuclearization, including the provision of economic assistance to North Korea and expertise in the dismantling and verification of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. Regarding the issue of whether Beijing will play a role in providing security assurances to North Korea, non-authoritative sources reject the idea of China offering a "nuclear umbrella" to Pyongyang

(which would violate China's "no first use" stance toward nuclear weapons), and look to Washington to take the lead in such efforts.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding China's role in denuclearization talks in general, non-authoritative experts reportedly remarked:

The summit's vaguely worded agreement to pursue denuclearization without providing details on how or when to achieve that goal gives Beijing time to lobby Washington, Seoul and Pyongyang for a direct role in negotiations.<sup>34</sup>

Beyond noting China's positive role, several non-authoritative sources initially praised Trump to varying degrees for the success of the summit. Perhaps the most effusive (and exaggerated) example states that Trump's "brave" decision to meet with Kim marks an important first step in changing

...the U.S. domestic political and intellectual climate of dealing with North Korea... to "respect and talks" from the previous "crime and punishment" approach. This is an encouraging sign for facilitating diplomatic efforts to replace the "punishment" mind-set.<sup>35</sup>

However, other observers were somewhat less charitable toward Trump, stating:

Although Trump's negotiation strategy was driven by no coherent goal or methodology, he stumbled into making some right decisions... Trump probably did not realize that he made a decision that can help tackle [the] "underlying problem" of Pyongyang's "deep paranoia and distrust of the Western countries."<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, as recent talks between Pompeo and his North Korean counterpart have produced no real progress, many more non-authoritative Chinese observers have come to express serious concern about the peace process and been far less charitable toward Trump. For example, in early July, a *Global Times* editorial described how

Chinese strategists are worried that the Trump administration may go beyond diplomacy and undermine China's interests on the peninsula... By tightly controlling the valves of the regional situation, the U.S. is trying to manipulate the tension of the peninsula according to its strategic needs to maximize its interests.<sup>37</sup>

Cui Zhiying, director of the Korean Peninsula Research Center at Tongji University, stated:

There has been little progress on denuclearization since the Singapore summit and the situation now seems to be at a stalemate.... North Korea is expecting ...measures from the U.S., such as relaxing the sanctions, but the U.S. has yet to respond.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, Lü Chao, a research fellow at the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences, stated:

The U.S. has given only lip service to a declaration ending the war and has actually hindered the peace process by accusing North Korea of attempting to open its nuclear test sites and calling for more sanctions.<sup>39</sup>

Other Chinese observers have stressed the importance of the Trump administration having a clear plan to prevent Kim from losing faith. One observer writes:

It's now up to the Trump administration to decide the next steps... Denuclearization can be achieved when the U.S. and North Korea abandon nuclear weapons for security and set up a new peace mechanism that can replace the armistice. Otherwise, North Korea won't abandon nuclear weapons - either in a phased manner or at one go. Regrettably, the U.S. has not provided a clear plan in this regard.

He adds:

The Trump administration needs to drop its so-called art of the deal that advocates maximum pressure and caprice. Instead, it has to act boldly by making a compromise or striking deals with Pyongyang to work out a clear plan on security guarantee, arrangement for denuclearization and the peace mechanism on the peninsula.<sup>40</sup>

One observer, along with many others, also criticized the idea that China has benefitted from the summit at America's expense, stating:

Apparently, it is only logical for the U.S. to benefit at the expense of others. Why can't the result of the summit be a bonus for China?... U.S. media failed to realize that China – a ballast of regional peace and stability – gaining benefit is favorable to regional development. The U.S. will also benefit enormously from it.<sup>41</sup>

He also repeated the highly unlikely notion, often heard among non-authoritative Chinese observers, that the U.S. deliberately encourages tension on the Korean Peninsula to “uphold its strategic pressure against China.”<sup>42</sup>

Regarding the sensitive issue of U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula, non-authoritative sources are far more direct than their authoritative counterparts in speaking of the lack of any need for the U.S. to maintain its forces on the peninsula or hold large-scale military exercises with South Korea once the North Korea nuclear issue is “completely resolved.”<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, just before and after the summit, some non-authoritative sources strongly criticized the U.S. military presence on the peninsula as a primary reason for

Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons and hence an obstacle to both denuclearization and the emergence of a sovereign, independent South Korea.<sup>44</sup>

On the issue of sanctions, some non-authoritative sources are again more explicit than their authoritative counterparts. One states that, following the success of the summit and Pyongyang's supposed new priority on economic development announced at the Third Plenary Meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea on April 20, 2018, "it is time to consider alleviating sanctions against Pyongyang."<sup>45</sup> However, other observers stress the need for China to continue implementing UN sanctions and not compromise on sanctions or the ultimate goal of denuclearization.<sup>46</sup>

Many non-authoritative sources also believe that North Korea has made a fundamental shift away from the development of nuclear weapons toward reform-based economic growth. Indeed, some express considerable optimism that Pyongyang is now adopting Chinese-style economic reforms and opening to the outside.<sup>47</sup>

Another observer, an associate professor at the Renmin University of China's School of International Studies, more cautiously asserts:

Although the Kim-Trump summit shows the potential for future economic development, it is too early to have high expectations of business opportunities in North Korea...The opening up of North Korea requires a firm determination and concrete policies from the government and the establishment of formal diplomatic ties with other major economies, especially the U.S. and Japan, and the lifting of all sanctions against North Korea. This will take at least 3-5 years.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, one observer remarked that the emergence of a U.S.-China trade war

Will make the cooperation between China and U.S. in North Korea's nuclear issue more complicated... There will be a big question mark over whether China and the U.S. will continue this cooperation.<sup>49</sup>

## Concluding Observations

Overall, there is little doubt that most Chinese view the summit as a significant step toward stabilizing the Korean Peninsula and moving Pyongyang to relinquish its nuclear weapons. Moreover, Beijing almost certainly believes that the summit's apparent confirmation of its "suspension for suspension" and "dual track" approach to the Korea problem, the accompanying improvement in PRC-DPRK relations, and Pyongyang's apparent greater receptivity to adopting Chinese-style economic reform policies all greatly serve Chinese interests. Thus, there is considerable room for optimism in Beijing. This optimism is undoubtedly further bolstered by the clear commitment of the South Korean government under President Moon Jae-in to build on the positive momentum of the summit by focusing on the construction of a peace regime on the peninsula.<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, Chinese observers recognize that much more needs to be done to turn the summit into a solid pathway toward denuclearization and the stabilization of the peninsula. In addition, non-authoritative sources have expressed considerable concern over the lack of progress in U.S.-DPRK negotiations since the summit, and they have raised the prospect that the positive momentum created by the summit could easily collapse, given both sides' suspicions and incompatible beliefs about leverage. However, many non-authoritative sources primarily blame the U.S. for pressing Pyongyang to move toward denuclearization without providing tangible security assurances.

In contrast, authoritative Chinese sources understandably seek to avoid commenting on the obvious dangers ahead, including the fear that closer U.S.-DPRK relations might reduce China's influence on the peninsula. However, it is unclear whether Beijing is seriously concerned over this prospect, especially given its generally positive stance toward the current situation the contrasting views of some non-authoritative sources.

Finally, although Beijing has avoided any open suggestion that the UN should now ease sanctions on Pyongyang, positive developments in both PRC-DPRK relations and ROK-DPRK relations suggest that the maintenance of sanctions at pre-summit levels could prove virtually impossible if these relationships continue to improve. Of course, the major danger in this situation is that Beijing and Seoul could move closer together in support of positive relations with Pyongyang while the U.S. (and possibly Japan) loses patience and puts more pressure on Pyongyang to take concrete steps toward denuclearization. This could severely disrupt the U.S.-ROK relationship, to China's likely benefit. Or it could also result in Trump taking aggressive actions against Pyongyang that return the peninsula to a high-crisis mode, which is certainly not in China's interest. Beijing thus faces a daunting challenge ahead.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kevin Liptak, "Trump's North Korean gamble ends with 'special bond' with Kim," *CNN Politics*, June 12, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/11/politics/trump-kim-summit-singapore/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "Full text of Trump-Kim signed statement," *CNN Politics*, June 12, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/12/politics/read-full-text-of-trump-kim-signed-statement/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> See Jung H. Pak, Jonathan D. Pollack, Evans J. R. Revere, Robert Einhorn, Ryan Hass, Richard Nephew, Katharine H.S. Moon, Jonathan Stromseth, Michael E. O'Hanlon, Tarun Chhabra, and Jeffrey A. Bader, "Around the halls: Brookings experts react to the Trump-Kim Jong-un summit in Singapore," Brookings Institution, June 12, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/06/12/around-the-halls-brookings-experts-react-to-the-trump-kim-jong-un-summit-in-singapore/>; Nicholas Eberstadt, "Kim Wins in Singapore," *National Review*, June 21, 2018, <https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2018/07/09/kim-jong-un-singapore-summit-north-korea-wins/>; and Gillian Wong and Christopher Bodeen, "China Winner From Summit but Wary of Closer US-N. Korea Ties," *US News*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2018-06-13/after-summit-china-likely-to-remind-n-korea-of-close-ties>.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed description of the nature and definition of various types of Chinese sources, see Footnote 1 in Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Views of the U.S. National Security and National Defense Strategies," *China Leadership Monitor* 56 (May 2018), <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/clm56ms.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on May 31, 2018," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, May 31, 2018, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t1564526.htm>. For similar statements, see "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua

Chunying's Remarks on the Latest Progress in Preparation for the DPRK-US Summit," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs), June 2, 2018, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2535\\_665405/t1565097.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1565097.shtml); and "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on June 11, 2018," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 11, 2018, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1567808.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1567808.shtml). Similar sentiments of support were made with regard to the ongoing DPRK-ROK dialogue as well. See "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Press Conference on June 4, 2018," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 4, 2018,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1565728.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1565728.shtml).

<sup>6</sup> "Will the Korean Peninsula meet a lasting peace mechanism? The Chinese Foreign Minister responds to 'self-stories and names'" (朝鲜半岛将迎来永久和平机制? 中国外长回应 "深藏功与名"), CCTV, June 12, 2018, <http://news.cctv.com/2018/06/12/ARTITirT0HMzemRaRrYR1cm180612.shtml>; "Wang Yi: Hope the DPRK-US Summit Will Take Substantive Steps Towards Realizing the Denuclearization and Establishing the Peace Mechanism on the Korean Peninsula," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 12, 2018, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjb\\_663304/wjbz\\_663308/activities\\_663312/t1568882.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/activities_663312/t1568882.shtml). Also see Benjamin Haas and Justin McCurry, "Optimism and confusion in Seoul over Trump-Kim summit," *The Guardian*, June 12, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/12/north-korea-sanctions-may-be-lifted-after-summit-says-china>.

<sup>7</sup> "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on June 13, 2018," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 13, 2018, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1568643.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1568643.shtml).

<sup>8</sup> "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on June 12, 2018," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 12, 2018, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1568234.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1568234.shtml). The former concept envisions the cessation of U.S.-ROK military exercises in return for a halt in Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. The latter refers to the parallel and mutually reinforcing processes of denuclearization and the creation of a peace mechanism that addresses Pyongyang's security concerns. See Zhong Sheng, "Solving the Korean Peninsula Issue Requires a Rational and Feasible Path" (解决半岛问题需要理性可行路径), *People's Daily*, January 10, 2018, [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-01/10/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20180110\\_2-03.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-01/10/nw.D110000renmrb_20180110_2-03.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Alexandra Ma, "The Trump-Kim summit is over, but it's China's vision that emerged dominant," *Business Insider*, June 13, 2018, <http://www.businessinsider.com/china-world-vision-emerged-dominant-at-trump-kim-singapore-summit-2018-6>.

<sup>10</sup> "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on June 13, 2018." Also see "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Regular Press Conference on June 29, 2018," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 29, 2018,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1572946.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1572946.shtml). Lu added that the two sides should "... meet each other halfway with active interaction..."

<sup>11</sup> "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on June 12, 2018."

<sup>12</sup> For example, see Haas and McCurry, "Optimism and confusion in Seoul over Trump-Kim summit" and "China suggests sanctions relief for North Korea after Trump-Kim summit," CNBC, June 12, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/12/china-suggests-sanctions-relief-for-north-korea-after-trump-kim-summit.html>.

<sup>13</sup> "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on June 13, 2018."

<sup>14</sup> Jeremy Page and Chun Han Wong, "Kim Jong Un Meets Xi in China After Singapore Summit With Trump," *Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/kim-jong-un-is-heading-to-china-after-his-singapore-summit-with-trump-1529375929>.

<sup>15</sup> "State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi Holds Talks with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of the US," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 14, 2018, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjb\\_663304/wjbz\\_663308/activities\\_663312/t1569824.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/activities_663312/t1569824.shtml).

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Jeremy Page and Michael R. Gordon, "Pompeo Says China Will Maintain Sanctions on North Korea," *Wall Street Journal*, June 14, 2018, [https://www.wsj.com/articles/pompeo-presses-u-s-case-on-north-korea-following-historic-summit-1528984923?mod=article\\_inline](https://www.wsj.com/articles/pompeo-presses-u-s-case-on-north-korea-following-historic-summit-1528984923?mod=article_inline).

<sup>17</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang’s Regular Press Conference on July 24, 2018,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 24, 2018,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1579914.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1579914.shtml).

<sup>18</sup> Page and Wong, “Kim Jong Un Meets Xi in China After Singapore Summit With Trump.” Also see Christopher Bodeen and Dake Kang, “China hopes for implementation of North Korea-U.S. summit outcome,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 2018, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-north-korea-kim-china-visit-20180619-story.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> “Regarding China-North Korea Relations, Xi Jinping said there are ‘three constants’” (关于中朝关系, 习近平说了三个“不会变”), *China Daily*, June 22, 2018, [http://china.chinadaily.com.cn/2018-06/22/content\\_36435372.html](http://china.chinadaily.com.cn/2018-06/22/content_36435372.html). For similar remarks by Wang Yi, see Wang Yi met with DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 3, 2018,

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<sup>21</sup> Yochi Dreazen, “The big winner of the Trump-Kim summit? China.,” *Vox*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/6/13/17458944/trump-kim-summit-china-response-south-korea-military-drills>.

<sup>22</sup> Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on July 9, 2018,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 9, 2018,

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<sup>23</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang’s Regular Press Conference on August 1, 2018,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 1, 2018,

<sup>24</sup> “How do you view the Trump-Kim Jong-un joint statement? This is the latest interpretation” (如何看待特朗普金正恩联合声明？这是最新解读), *China.com*, June 13, 2018,

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<sup>25</sup> “A milestone in peninsula peace process.” Also see “Trust building is still needed for peninsula denuclearization,” *China Daily*, July 8, 2018,

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201807/08/WS5b421457a3103349141e164e.html>.

<sup>26</sup> “Foreign Policy Experts on the Singapore Summit and What Comes Next,” Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, June 14, 2018, <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2018/06/14/foreign-policy-experts-on-singapore-summit-and-what-comes-next-pub-76612>.

<sup>27</sup> Fan Jishe, “From Fire and Fury to Friendship?,” *China-US Focus*, June 15, 2018,

<https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/from-fire-and-fury-to-friendship>. Fan is a senior fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

<sup>28</sup> Bill Ide and Brian Kopczynski, “China, Moscow See Views Vindicated in Singapore Summit,” *Voice of America*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/china-moscow-see-views-vindicated-in-singapore-summit/4436925.html>.

<sup>29</sup> For example, see Zhao Minghao, “Process of denuclearization remains a sticking point after Singapore summit,” *Global Times*, June 18, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1107333.shtml>.

<sup>30</sup> “A milestone in peninsula peace process.”

<sup>31</sup> For a typical pre-summit view, see Zhong Sheng, “The Positive Momentum of the Korean Peninsula Problem Should Be Maintained” (半岛问题的积极势头应当保持下去), *People’s Daily*, March 10, 2018, <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0310/c1003-29859784.html>; and “Is China being marginalized on Korean Peninsula,” *Global Times*, May 28, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1104531.shtml>. For a post-summit view on these points, see “Situation on Korean Peninsula better if US, ROK stop military

exercise,” *ChinaMilitary*, June 14, 2018, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-06/14/content\\_8062529.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-06/14/content_8062529.htm). This is a reprint of a *Global Times* editorial.

<sup>32</sup> Lu Chao, “China cannot be left out on peace treaty,” *Global Times*, June 10, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1106307.shtml>. Also see Yin Han, “End to Korean War needs Chinese backing: expert,” *Global Times*, July 26, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1112606.shtml>.

<sup>33</sup> Page, “The Unexpected Winner From the Trump-Kim Summit: China.”

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. The authors also quote Zhu Feng, an international security expert at China’s Nanjing University: “This will allow China to breathe easy and not worry about being sidelined.”

<sup>35</sup> Zhang Yun, “Singapore summit signals key change in US policy,” *Global Times*, June 14, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1107001.shtml>. The author is an associate professor at National Niigata University Japan and a senior fellow at the Institute of Advanced Area Studies and Global Governance, Beijing Foreign Studies University. The Chinese defense of Trump’s approach to North Korea predates the summit. For example, see Zhong Sheng, “The Positive Momentum of the Korean Peninsula Problem Should Be Maintained” (半岛问题的积极势头应当保持下去), *People’s Daily*, March 10, 2018, <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0310/c1003-29859784.html>.

<sup>36</sup> “Foreign Policy Experts on the Singapore Summit and What Comes Next.”

<sup>37</sup> Wang Wenwen, “US sincerity in solving North Korea nuclear issue questioned,” *Global Times*, July 8, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1109926.shtml>

<sup>38</sup> Liu Xin, “China, SK seek end to war,” *Global Times*, August 6, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1114134.shtml>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Li Kaisheng, “Art of the deal unsuitable for North Korean nuke issue,” *Global Times*, July 9, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1110044.shtml>. Li is a research fellow at the Institute of International Relations, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

<sup>41</sup> Ai Jun, “China’s gain from Singapore summit benefits Northeast Asia,” *Global Times*, June 14, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1107064.shtml>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Also see Wang Wenwen, “US sincerity in solving North Korea nuclear issue questioned,” *Global Times*, July 8, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1109926.shtml>.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see “End of ‘war games’ will be a big step forward for peninsula,” *Global Times*, Editorial, June 12, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1106696.shtml>. Also see “Situation on Korean Peninsula better if US, ROK stop military exercise.”

<sup>44</sup> Chen Fengjun, “USFK issue should be solved at critical juncture on Korean Peninsula,” *ChinaMilitary*, June 12, 2018, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-06/12/content\\_8059895.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-06/12/content_8059895.htm). Chen is a professor at the School of International Studies in Peking University. Chen relates the removal of U.S. forces, the ending of both the U.S. nuclear umbrella and U.S.-ROK military exercises and the withdrawal of THAAD as a “...key issue to the success of the summit meeting.” Also see “A milestone in peninsula peace process.”

<sup>45</sup> See “Promote complete denuclearization of Korean Peninsula with further efforts,” *Global Times*, Editorial, June 12, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1106636.shtml>; Also see “A milestone in peninsula peace process” and Hu Weijia, “Getting North Korea on board Belt & Road initiative will be easier than expected,” *Global Times*, June 13, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1106893.shtml>. Hu is a reporter at *Global Times*. He also argues that “The B&R initiative is probably a good chance for East Asia to push forward the integration of economic and social development by involving North Korea in its economic network.”

<sup>46</sup> Yang Wenjing, “Denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula together,” *China-US Focus*, July 4, 2018, <https://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/denuclearizing-the-korean-peninsula-together>. Yang is the Chief of US Foreign Policy at the Institute of Contemporary International Relations.

<sup>47</sup> Zhang Huizhi, “NK can unlock economic potential with capital inflows,” *Global Times*, June 12, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1106710.shtml>. Zhang is the vice dean of the Northeast Asian Studies College at Jilin University.

<sup>48</sup> “Kim-Trump summit triggers business optimism for North Korea,” *Global Times*, June 14, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0614/c90000-9471126.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Bodeen and Dake Kang, “China hopes for implementation of North Korea-U.S. summit outcome,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 2018, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-north->

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<sup>50</sup> Pan Mengqi, "Moon moves to alleviate talks tension," *China Daily*, July 10, 2018, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201807/10/WS5b43e84ca3103349141e1b65.html>; "Two Koreas restore military hotline in western region," *Global Times*, July 17, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1111232.shtml>; "S. Korea hails DPRK's return of remains of U.S. Korean War soldiers," Xinhua News Agency, July 27, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/27/c\\_137351949.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/27/c_137351949.htm); "S. Korea, DPRK discussing cooperation to modernize inter-Korean railways," Xinhua News Agency, August 9, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-08/09/c\\_137378450.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-08/09/c_137378450.htm); and Pan Mengqi, "Neighbors agree to hold third summit," *China Daily*, August 14, 2018, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2018-08/14/content\\_36758347.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2018-08/14/content_36758347.htm).