

LONG AND BUMPY ROAD

On June 12, US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will hold a historic meeting between the two countries. The twists and turns culminating in the Trump-Kim summit in Singapore have been nothing short of extraordinary.

1945-48

- Korea is liberated from Japanese colonial rule after World War II ends. Soviet troops occupy the north of the 38th parallel, while US forces move into the south. In the north, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is proclaimed and Kim Il Sung is installed as leader. In the south, the Republic of Korea is established. Neither government recognises the other.

1968-88

- US-North Korea ties hit a new low in the late 1960s when a US navy ship is seized and a US spy plane shot down.
- In 1979, North Korea builds a nuclear reactor at Yongbyon research centre that can produce enough plutonium for about one bomb a year.
- US blacklists North Korea as a supporter of terrorism after its agents planted a bomb on a Korean Air flight in 1987, killing all 115 people on board.

1998-99

- North Korea conducts first long-range missile test. It agrees to suspend long-range missile tests and in exchange, the US eases economic sanctions for the first time since the Korean War.

2000

- South Korea's President Kim Dae Jung meets Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang for first summit between Korean leaders since the Korean War.

2003

- North Korea announces it has nuclear weapons and threatens to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- The two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the US launch multilateral Six-Party Talks to get Pyongyang to give up its missile and nuclear programme.

2006

- North Korea conducts its first nuclear weapons test.

2007

- South Korea's President Roh Moo Hyun holds second inter-Korea summit with Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang.

Kim Jong Un, after North Korea fires its first ICBM on July 4, 2017:

American b***ards would be not very happy with this gift sent on the July 4 anniversary.

Trump, in his first address to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 19, 2017:

The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea...

Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime.

2018

Jan 1

- Kim offers to send a delegation to the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang and does so in February.

April 21

- Kim says North Korea has completed the development of its nuclear arsenal and no more atomic or ICBM tests are needed and a nuclear test site will be scrapped.

May 16

- Pyongyang pulls out of planned high-level talks with Seoul in an angry response to South Korea-US air drills.
- It threatens to cancel the summit if the US "drives us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment".
- It blasts US National Security Adviser John Bolton's suggestion of a "Libyan model" for denuclearisation, saying it is a "highly sinister attempt" to enforce Libya's fate on North Korea.

May 24

- North Korea issues new threat to walk away from the summit, saying it is ready for "nuclear-to-nuclear showdown" with the US.
- At the same time, it dismantles its Punggye-ri nuclear test site.
- Trump writes to Kim to cancel the summit, citing Pyongyang's "tremendous anger and open hostility" in recent statements.

May 25

- North Korea issues a conciliatory statement to Trump's cancellation, saying it is "willing to sit down with the United States any time, in any format, to resolve the problems", and urges the President to reconsider.
- Trump says US is back in touch with North Korea and they may reschedule the summit.

1994

- Kim Il Sung dies of heart attack and son Kim Jong Il succeeds him.
- US and North Korea sign an Agreed Framework in which Pyongyang commits to freeze its nuclear programme in exchange for fuel and aid.

1950

- Soviet-backed North Korean army invades the South on June 25. US-led United Nations Command retakes Seoul. China sends troops to save Kim Il Sung from defeat. Some 2.5 million died or were wounded in the Korean War.

1953

- The Korean War ends in an armistice.

If President Trump is successful in getting a peace treaty... with North Korea, I think he certainly ought to be considered for the Nobel Peace Prize.

FORMER US PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER in Politico Magazine's Off Message podcast in May 2018

2002

- US imposes new sanctions and accuses North Korea of breaching the 1994 agreement.

2009

- North Korea walks out of Six-Party Talks.

2011

- Kim Jong Il dies of heart attack and son Kim Jong Un takes over.

2012-16

- US President Barack Obama pursues a "strategic patience" policy, resisting engagement with Pyongyang unless it stops its belligerent behaviour.
- North Korea accelerates its missile and nuclear programme.

Donald Trump, on Aug 8, 2017:

North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen.

2017

- President Donald Trump is sworn in on Jan 20.
- North Korea launches three intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).
- Its most advanced Hwasong-15 ICBM puts the entire US within range.
- Kim and Trump trade insults, threatening at times to attack each other's country.

Kim, as reported by North Korea's official KCNA news agency on Sept 21, 2017:

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.

Trump's tweet on Jan 2, 2018, after Kim says his nuclear button is on his desk at all times:

I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger and more powerful one than his, and my Button works!

March 8

- Trump surprises the world when he agrees to meet Kim "to achieve permanent denuclearisation".

March 25

- Kim meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing during a two-day visit that is revealed after it is over. It is his first trip abroad since taking charge in 2011.

March 31

- Trump's CIA chief and nominee for secretary of state Mike Pompeo travels secretly to Pyongyang to meet Kim to start laying the groundwork for the summit.

April 27

- Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae In hold third inter-Korea summit in Panmunjom in the demilitarised zone (DMZ).

May 7

- Kim flies to China for second meeting with Xi, who reiterates China's support for Kim's new focus on developing the economy.

May 9

- Pompeo, the new US secretary of state, makes second unannounced trip to North Korea. He returns with three Americans detained by Pyongyang.

May 10

- Trump reveals the date - June 12 - and location - Singapore - of his meeting with Kim. Vows to "make it a very special moment for World Peace!"

May 17

- Trump says the US does not have the "Libya model" in mind for North Korea.
- He promises the US would guarantee Kim's security and North Korea would become rich if it agrees to denuclearise.

May 21

- US Vice-President Mike Pence says North Korea might end up like Libya and that military option for it has never come off the table. He also says the US needs complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation.

May 30

- US and North Korean teams spotted in Singapore for pre-summit preparations. Both teams meet at Sentosa's Capella hotel.

May 31

- Pompeo meets former North Korean spy chief Kim Yong Chol in New York.

June 1

- Kim Yong Chol delivers a personal letter from Kim to Trump in Washington. Trump says the June 12 summit is back on.

June 5

- White House announces Trump-Kim summit will be held at Capella hotel.

What a political dummy he is as he is trying to compare the DPRK, a nuclear weapon state, to Libya that had simply installed a few items of equipment and fiddled around with them.