



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 19, 2018

U.S.-South Korea War Games Cancelled After Trump/Kim Meeting

South Korea and the United States have agreed to delay this year's joint military exercise called "Ulchi Freedom Guardian," South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported on June 19. The exercise, which last year involved 50,000 South Korean and 17,500 U.S. troops, was initiated in 1976 and is conducted annually during August or September.



The news was not surprising, since President Trump said during a news conference after meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore on June 12: "We will be stopping the war games, which will save us a tremendous amount of money."

Trump explained further:

Yes, we've done exercises for a long period of time working South Korea. And we call them war games, that I call them war games, and they're tremendously expensive, the amount of money that we spend on that is incredible. And South Korea contributes, but not a hundred percent, which is certainly a subject that we have to talk to them about also. And that has to do with the military expense and also the trade....

But the war games are very expensive, we pay for a big majority of them, we fly in bombers from Guam.

While Trump focused mostly on the expense of the "war games" as the reason for stopping them, the timing of the announcement — coming immediately after the president's meeting with Kim — suggests that the primary reason for ending them is to pacify the North Koreans, who have long objected to them. It is likely that this was done in exchange for Kim's willingness to give up his nuclear-weapons program.

Trump also said during the press conference: "So number one, we save money, a lot, and number two, it really is something that I think [the North Koreans] very much appreciated."

A *San Diego Tribune* report noted that the suspension of war games had been proposed by China "as a concession to Pyongyang officials who have long viewed them as a threat close to their border and a mimicked invasion."

Photo: AP Images

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