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Trump Team Debates Limited Strikes on North Korea

North and South Korea have gotten together for their first direct talks in over two years, which is raising hopes of improved relations and reduced tensions after a solid year of war rhetoric. The Trump Administration may have other ideas, however.

Reports from the Wall Street Journal say that a team within the administration continues to debate the possibility of [carrying out a unilateral US attack on North Korea just out of the blue](#), arguing they could get away



with a “limited” strike without starting a full-scale war that would kill millions.

While analysts have repeatedly confirmed that it is impossible, the Pentagon has long debated a “bloody nose” attack, that would be enough to show North Korea how serious the US is, without North Korea retaliating. North Korea has affirmed its military’s standard orders are total retaliation irrespective of the size of the first salvo of an attack.

It’s probably not going to sit very well with South Korea either, as the Moon government has been cheering “breakthrough” talks with North Korea ahead of the Winter Olympics, and that seems like it couldn’t possibly be a worse time for the US to launch a sneak attack on their neighbor to the north, particularly a neighbor whose entire arsenal of weaponry is aimed squarely at huge, densely populated South Korean cities.

Time and again, analysts have warned that North Korea's hair-trigger retaliation, and belief that any US strike would be the start of a war of regime change means that there could be no limited exchanges, and anything would eventually boil down into a full-scale exchange.