

Beat: Politics

North Korea chides U.S. for pressing sanctions

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USPA NEWS - North Korea accused the United States on Thursday of pushing for international sanctions despite goodwill moves by Pyongyang and said progress on denuclearization promises could not be expected if Washington continues to follow an "outdated acting script."

A foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement on state-run KCNA that North Korea was still willing to implement a broad agreement made at the landmark June 12 summit in Singapore between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The two sides vowed to work towards North Korea's denuclearization but have struggled to reach a deal to meet that goal, with the United States insisting sanctions pressure must be maintained during negotiations.

The North Korean statement followed comments this week by top American diplomats stressing the need for Pyongyang to take additional steps toward denuclearization. Those followed contentious remarks last week by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho on the sidelines of a regional summit in Singapore.

North Korea's foreign ministry said on Thursday it had stopped testing missiles, conducted nuclear tests and dismantled "the nuclear test ground," yet the United States still insisted on "denuclearization first."

North Korea went ahead with the return of the remains of some U.S. soldiers killed in the 1950-53 Korean war in a goodwill measure aimed at breaking down mistrust between the countries, it said.

"However, the U.S. responded to our expectation by inciting international sanctions and pressure against the DPRK," it said in a statement carried by KCNA news agency.

The United States was "attempting to invent a pretext for increased sanctions against the DPRK."

"As long as the U.S. denies even the basic decorum for its dialogue partner and clings to the outdated acting script which the previous administrations have all tried and failed, one cannot expect any progress in the implementation of the DPRK-U.S. joint statement including the denuclearization," it said.

The White House and State Department did not immediately return requests for comment.

North Korea also accused unidentified high-level U.S. officials of "going against the intention of President Trump" by "making baseless allegations against us and making desperate attempts at intensifying the international sanctions and pressure."

On Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said the United States was "not willing to wait for too long" for North Korea to take steps toward denuclearizing.

"This is all in North Korea's court," Haley told reporters travelling with her during a visit to Colombia.

Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, also said this week North Korea has not taken the necessary steps to denuclearize.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri travelled this week to Iran, where President Hassan Rouhani told him the United States cannot be trusted after the Trump administration reneged on a 2015 deal to lift sanctions in return for curbs on Iran's own nuclear program.

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