

# Press Releases: Senior State Department Official On North Korea

Special Briefing

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**MODERATOR:** Thank you all for coming today to this on-background briefing. For your situational awareness only and not for reporting, with us today is [Senior State Department Official]. You may – for purposes of attribution, he is a senior State Department official. This briefing is embargoed until its conclusion. None of this may be used for broadcast. And with that, [Senior State Department Official], why don't you start us off, and we'll take a couple questions.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Okay. Thanks, [Moderator].

Let me say a few things up front, just to frame where we are on our work with the North Koreans. All of you follow this closely enough that I don't need to go – I don't need to wind the clock back to 2017, much less to the Singapore summit in 2016. The Singapore summit does remain very relevant to our discussions because that summit joint statement laid out the framework that we've been using to pursue negotiations with the North Koreans over the past many months.

We went through a bit of a holding pattern with the North Koreans in the fall of last year, but we've been at a pretty active pace – in fact, the most robust pace – of diplomacy between the United States and North Korea in many, many years, since the – since Christmas and through the new year.

I, myself, have made several trips to the region. I have had the opportunity, with the Secretary of State, to participate in discussions that we had here in Washington, D.C. in mid-January with Kim Yong-chol, the Secretary of State's counterpart in the North Korean diplomacy. We have had working-level negotiations between the United States and North Korea on several occasions now, most recently in the run-up to the Hanoi summit. A team of U.S. negotiators has made a trip to Pyongyang, where over several days in-depth discussions took place in early February. And we had quite a bit of interaction between our North Korean counterparts and the U.S., as I said, in the days leading up – in the week leading up the President's summit with Kim Jong-un.

Throughout those negotiations, it's largely been the same set of parties on

both sides involved in these discussions. And as the President and the Secretary of State summed up at the end of the Hanoi summit, we have managed to close gaps on a number of issues in the U.S.-North Korea relationship. There are still important areas for us to progress, none more so than in the area of denuclearization. But the summit itself also provided us a very important opportunity at the senior levels of government to have an important exchange that lays out at least the options that we have to move forward on this issue, although ultimately at the conclusion of the summit, the ball was in North Korea's court. And it is going to be up to the North Koreans, to some extent, to decide to engage on meeting some of the expectations that are out there on denuclearization.

I think I'll leave that, leave the framing at that, and then I'm going to ask [Moderator] if [Moderator] would help me here to call on questions, since [Moderator] is much more familiar with you than me.

**MODERATOR:** Point of clarification. Singapore summit was in 2017.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** What year did I say? It's 2018. It was June of 2018.

**MODERATOR:** '18, '18. And now I'm doing the same thing. Sorry about that. Excellent. Andrea, please.

**QUESTION:** Hi. Thank you very much. Andrea Mitchell from NBC. There have been satellite images – two more identified today. Two think tanks are saying that it shows that a particular site that had been discussed in Singapore, and which the North Koreans, according to the President, had agreed to dismantle in Singapore and had been dormant since August is now fully operational – no sign of anything being put on a launchpad, but operational, that there had been a lot of activity in recent days or weeks. They are interpreting this to mean a symbol – a signal that –

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Who's "they?"

**QUESTION:** These experts at CSIS and at 38 North are interpreting this to mean that Kim Jong-un wants to send a message – he knows we're watching; it's commercial satellite imagery – that he's angry about not getting more sanction relief offered, and that it's a response to Hanoi. Do you interpret this imagery the same way? Do you interpret the – Kim Jong-un's response at all, and has there been any discussions about this issue?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So we are familiar and well aware of what you're describing. We obviously watch very closely developments in North Korea, both in open source and sensitive areas, and we have seen the open source reporting on this issue. We have not drawn the same conclusions that you cited, although it remains to be seen what exactly the purpose is of this activity. I think you heard the President's comments yesterday that he would be disappointed, very disappointed, if this was in any way backsliding against commitments that the North Koreans have made to date, and we would very much see it as that if they use this facility in any capacity, because it is one that they have cited their intention to dismantle.

I have also seen in that open source analysis – and I wouldn't contradict it – that it's likely that these steps were happening prior to this summit in Singapore –

**QUESTION:** Can I just clarify?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** – and were that the case, it would be very difficult to establish a causality between the outcome of a summit in which the North Koreans came to the table very much expecting a certain outcome and any steps that were taken. That's not to rule out the possibility. We simply haven't reached any specific conclusion about what's happening there, nor would we necessarily share the conclusion – at least, I don't have information that would support that that site is at this point, quote, “operational,” unquote.

**QUESTION:** Would – can I just clarify about what your conclusion is? Would you accept the conclusion that there is a lot of activity that was not seen during months of it being dormant?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** We watch all of – we watch as much of North – as the President has said, we watch as much of North Korea as we can see, and we are not always able to explain activity that happens. We have not – we clearly see in the commercial satellite photography that there is some level of reassembly going on in these buildings, so I'm not disputing what's in plain sight. Why it's happening, for what purpose it's happening, are areas that we're not ready yet to reach a conclusion, but suffice it to say the President has spoken quite clearly on this, that he would be disappointed – in fact, I think he said very disappointed – if this, in fact, did turn out to be backsliding on commitments that had been previously made to him.

**MODERATOR:** Let's go to Michael Gordon.

**QUESTION:** Sir, just to clarify, would you interpret a launch of a space launch vehicle to be a violation of North Korea's self-declared moratorium on missile launches? I ask that in light of the U.S. experience with the Leap Day Accord, where the North Koreans interpreted a space launch as consistent with a moratorium on missile launches. And have you conveyed that to them? Have you told them that if they launch a space launch vehicle, it would be considered to be a breach of their missile launch moratorium?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So I won't – I'm not going to elaborate on things that we might have discussed in privately with the North Koreans, but let me just say in our judgment, launch of a space launch vehicle from that site in our view would be inconsistent with the commitments that the North Koreans have made.

**MODERATOR:** Let's go to *New York Times*, David Sanger.

**QUESTION:** Thanks very much for doing this. Good to see you. If – just following on Andrea and Michael's question here, you suggested that a lot of this activity had been going on prior to the summit, which seems reasonable, given all of the other reports we were seeing over the months from – between

Singapore and the Hanoi summit. So first of all, in your view, did any of the activity that you were seeing on the satellites run counter to any commitments that you had gotten in Singapore or in your conversations with them since? And –

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** On the satellites, to deal –

**QUESTION:** Right, so from the satellites what you've seen are expansions of missile bases.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** You mean from the commercial photography? Is that what you're referring to?

**QUESTION:** The commercial photography, right.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Okay.

**QUESTION:** Okay. So the first question is: did you – was any of this inconsistent? Second, have the North Koreans in any way explained this activity, even if to say we never told you we would stop doing this? And thirdly, the President, during the press conference, talked a bit about the second enrichment facility, which was obviously outside of Yongbyon and therefore a concern, given the Yongbyon proposal that President Kim made. Have you addressed that particular issue? Because that is obviously the one that would continue production in a significant way even if they closed Yongbyon.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So, David, first let me correct your characterization of what I said to Andrea. I said that we have also seen in the open-source reports suggestions that this activity had started prior to the Singapore – prior to the Hanoi summit.

**QUESTION:** And you agree with that?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** That's – I'm just telling you what I saw. I saw the reports, and that's what they suggest. So that's what we're talking about here. Obviously, I'm not going to talk about intelligence information in this setting.

As far as your second question, the President communicated to the North Koreans yesterday – the President suggested publicly, in front of the entire world, that he would be disappointed, very disappointed, if they were taking steps that would represent backsliding from commitments previously made. The North Koreans in fact not only mentioned the disassembly and dismantlement and destruction of this site, which is variously known as Sohae, or Tongchang-ri, or in some cases (inaudible) – the President not only received that commitment from Kim Jong-un in Singapore, but likewise Chairman Kim made that commitment to President Moon Jae-in at the Pyongyang summit on September 19th, when the North-South summit occurred, and specifically declared a North Korean intent to destroy that facility and allow access to international – what they said at the time was international inspectors to the facility.

We have pressed the North Koreans on moving forward with that step. I should

say that the Tongchang-ri rocket engine and missile test site is not a critical part of North Korea's nuclear infrastructure, but it is an important location where they tested many of their early ICBMs, and it is certainly a facility that, as part of our efforts on denuclearization, we would like to see completely dismantled and destroyed in a verifiable manner. You will know this from your previous coverage, that many of the more recent tests that the North Koreans made with their nuclear – excuse me, with their ICBMs – were actually from mobile launchers, or in sites outside of Tongchang-ri, or Sohae.

So this is – I don't want to under – I don't want to diminish the concern that we would have if there is North Korean backsliding on commitments to dismantle and destroy Tongchang-ri, but I also don't want to exaggerate the effect on their missile programs if we were to permanently disable and destroy it. It's part of that infrastructure, but it is not a critical part of that infrastructure at this point.

**QUESTION:** Just to be clear on this, they never did allow the inspectors into Tongchang-ri, and they have committed as well, if I remember right, to the Secretary during one of his trips to Pyongyang that they would allow inspectors to the nuclear test site where they had blown up the entrances, that they would allow inspectors there, I think the Secretary said publicly. Did that ever happen?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Yeah, so that was Punggye-ri site, and your citation is correct; that was during Secretary Pompeo's trip to Pyongyang. And in that case they declared in the meeting to the Secretary that they would do that in the presence of U.S. inspectors. I'm not sure there's a consequence between the two constructs they used, but in the case of Punggye-ri they have also not yet permitted the admission of experts to confirm the destruction. Needless to say, these places are in open view and commercial satellite photography has achieved a level of excellence in which it's possible, even for a reporter from *The New York Times*, to monitor developments at those sites. But in terms of destroying and dismantling those in a manner that's fully verifiable and to our satisfaction, in neither case have those occurred yet. They haven't used the facilities to date, but they also haven't completed to our satisfaction the destruction or dismantlement.

**QUESTION:** So no inspectors at either location that they have committed to?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Correct.

**MODERATOR:** Margaret Brennan.

**QUESTION:** Hi, thank you for doing this. Margaret Brennan from CBS. Two questions. One: Can you clarify what the President meant today when he said we'll see in a year? He was asked in the Oval Office by some reporters shouting questions about North Korea, he said we'll see in a year. And sort of part two to that is: Can give you us a sense of your timeline here? John Bolton has said it would take a year from the point that the North Koreans agree to our definition of denuclearization to actually dismantle everything. That was the timeline he said the U.S. had worked out. How much time do you

have for the diplomacy to get to that point?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So, Margaret, I have been in a communications cocoon all day and I have no idea what was discussed today or what might have been in the news today. I'd suggest on that one you go to the White House and ask them for an explanation. I wasn't part of that discussion. I – this is the first time –

**QUESTION:** You don't know anything about a one-year limit on any of your work?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Well, what I would say more generally, and this is to your second question, is that we still believe this is all achievable within the President's first term, and that's the timetable we're working on. We have discussed extensively the outlines of the calendar that allow us to do that, and it is doable. The – ultimately, the ultimate driver of this is not going to be the amount of days it takes. It's going to be the degree to which we can satisfactorily achieve the steps that we feel are necessary to finally and fully verify the denuclearization of North Korea. That's what we're working for, but I fully believe at this point we have sufficient time in the President's first term to do that. That's a little more than a year.

Originally, we set out the aggressive timetable for this to happen in a year, but we also aren't at a starting point yet where I think you could reasonably begin to run that clock. We're not going to be held to a limit of 365 days to get this done. It's the job that's going to drive the outcome, not the timing. But in our view it is still doable within the President's first term, and that's what we're pushing very hard with our North Korean interlocutors to achieve.

**QUESTION:** But to be clear, you don't know that the one year the President referred to was the dismantlement?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** I don't know – I don't know what the President said at all. I could neither clarify nor contradict what the President said because I – this is the first time I've heard it.

**MODERATOR:** David Brunnstrom.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, David Brunnstrom from Reuters. Thanks for doing this. I – have you been in direct contact yourself or have any of your colleagues been in contact with the North Koreans since the summit? And is there any possibility, as Secretary Pompeo suggested, that you could go back to Pyongyang in a couple of weeks? And also, do you agree with the suggestion by John Bolton that new sanctions may be necessary against North Korea to push this forward?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So on the communication and on the trips, to the extent that we have anything to say on those points, we will say them largely after the fact, not before the fact. But let me say that in terms of where we are with the North Koreans, we had a very constructive discussion with them in Hanoi and we left on very good terms. I think both sides agreed

that the door remains open. Ultimately, the proof will be in the pudding. The North Koreans have only been – the North Korean delegation has only been back in Pyongyang for approximately 48 hours at this point. Because keep in mind, while many of us who were there flew back on our U.S. Government aircraft, the North Koreans spent an additional two days in Vietnam conducting a bilateral visit with their Vietnamese hosts, and that was followed by a 60-plus-hour train ride through China back to Pyongyang.

So there will necessarily need to be a period of reflection here. Both sides are going to have to digest the outcome to the summit. We ourselves have thought through some next steps to build on the progress that we were able to make in the discussions over the last several weeks, and quite frankly, in the President's discussions with Kim Jong-un as well. But there's a lot of work that's left to be done as well, particularly around the central issue for us, which is an agreement on the denuclearization that allows us to get to the end state that we aspire to.

As far as what it would take, the sanctions remain in place. Whether the President ultimately decides to expand those sanctions is a decision I think would ultimately rise to the President's level, but at this moment I would say the sanctions are still in place. I think they're still having a crushing effect on the North Korean economy, and we continue to put our full efforts into policing and enforcing those sanctions because, as we all know well, there is a certain amount of leakage and evasion that has taken place with those sanctions. We're looking to many of our international partners to work closely with us in that effort, and we are certain that we can maintain the economic pressure against North Korea that will make clear to the entire North Korean Government, but to Chairman Kim specifically, that there's a clear choice to be made here, and if they choose to go in the direction that the President laid out to them in an expansive manner at the summit in Hanoi, then they can – they have a very bright future ahead of them. Otherwise, the pressure campaign will be maintained and if the President decides, the sanctions will be increased.

**MODERATOR:** Let's go to CNN.

**QUESTION:** Hi. Quick question just following up on two things that you've said. You said that it remains to be seen what the purpose of this activity is at Sohae.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** At Sohae. Mm-hmm.

**QUESTION:** Yeah. So how will you make that determination? Is it based on U.S. intelligence? Is it based on you straight up asking the North Koreans that are your counterparts? How will that determination be made? And then, my second question is you said that this all is achievable within the President's first term. What exactly is "this all?" The deal or denuclearization of North Korea writ large?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So we're watching in real time, as you are, developments at Sohae and we will definitely be seeking clarification on the purposes of that, and we'll definitely be continuing to seek the admission of

U.S. inspectors to the site to verify the permanent dismantlement and destruction. That's our operating plan, and we're going to continue to move forward with that regardless of what we see happening right now. The intent of the North Koreans in this matter is known only to them at this point. We don't know why they're taking these steps. We don't know what they intend to do with it. But suffice it to say we're watching closely and we expect them to abide by the commitments that they've made to the President of the United States. In terms of your second question, it was what?

**QUESTION:** You said, "We believe this all is achievable within the President's first term."

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Yeah, it's quite – writ large, what I'm talking about is the finally, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. That means taking out all their key – parts of their nuclear fuel cycle, removing all their fissile material, removing their nuclear warheads, removing or destroying all their intercontinental ballistic missiles, permanently freezing any other weapons of mass destruction programs, and moving them on a course to reorient their economy towards civilian pursuits in order to make this a permanent direction for their country. In exchange for that, what the North Koreans will be able to enjoy is integration into the global economy, a transformed relationship with the United States of America, a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and a closure to a 70-year relationship characterized by hostility and warfare between our two countries.

**MODERATOR:** Water? You okay on water?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** I'm good.

**MODERATOR:** You're good? Let's go *Washington Times*.

**QUESTION:** Thanks so much for agreeing to interact with the free press. Can you say confidently –

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Grudgingly. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** No, we appreciate it. Can you say confidently that all of the different members of President Trump's advisory team on the negotiations with North Korea were in agreement with the all-or-nothing strategy the President ultimately embraced in Hanoi? And I ask because there's the appearance that Mr. Bolton may have had the most influence over the President's decision not to embrace a more step-by-step approach that others on the team had advocated for in the weeks leading up to this summit.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So nobody in the administration advocates a step-by-step approach. In all cases, the expectation is a complete denuclearization of North Korea as a condition for all the other steps being – all the other steps being taken. It has very much been characteristic of past negotiations to take an incremental approach to this that stretches it out over a long period of time, and quite honestly, has failed on previous occasions to deliver the outcome that both sides at least ostensibly



committed to. This would be in the 1994 Agreed Framework negotiations as well as in the Six-Party Talks. So we're trying to do it differently here. The President has made abundantly clear to Chairman Kim that he's personally invested in taking North Korea in this direction if North Korea gives up all of its weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivery. That's a position that is supported by the entire interagency, Guy.

**MODERATOR:** Yes, ma'am, way back there.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, regarding the Yongbyon plus alpha, and the big deal that the U.S. suggested at the Hanoi, it's not quite clear, because what North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho said was the U.S. side asked for one more. And South Korean media quoting sources say that this "one more" was (inaudible), the underground highly enriched uranium facility. And National Security Advisor John Bolton says that what the U.S. side offered was biochemical and all the WMD. So can you be more clear on what the U.S. side offered? Was it one more uranium facility or the entire WMD? And my second question is South Korea President Moon Jae-in told the National Security Council to speed up efforts to start tourists to Mount Kumgang and Kaesong Industrial Complex after the breakdown of the Hanoi summit. So is the State Department currently considering giving exemptions to the inter-Korean projects? Thank you.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So on your first question, I can't clarify what Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho meant in his presentation, but I can certainly affirm what the President proposed to Chairman Kim, which was the complete elimination of their weapons of mass destruction program. So I'm not sure what Foreign Minister Ri meant by "one more thing," but I will say that – to be clear too, the President's vision wasn't simply invested in what the North Koreans needed to do. The President likewise laid out an expansive vision for a brighter future that would be available for North Korea were it to make the right choices in this regard.

I'm sorry. Your second question was?

**QUESTION:** Is the State Department currently considering giving exemptions to inter-Korean economic projects?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Okay. Yeah, I got it. No.

**MODERATOR:** Please, right there. Barbara.

**QUESTION:** Are you in consultation still with South Korea?

**MODERATOR:** Right here. Right here, please. Barbara.

**QUESTION:** Yeah. Just again to clarify your answer to this last question, the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction program means chemical, biological, and nuclear; is that correct?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** And then also, there have been reports today of a tremor, 2.1 degrees on the Richter scale, coming out of a mine shaft, and I wondered if

you're aware of the reports and what's your take on them?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** I saw the press reports. It's nothing that is causing us any particular alarm right now –

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** – but we'll continue to watch it.

**MODERATOR:** Rich from Fox.

**QUESTION:** Thank you very much. In your conversations and lead-up to the Hanoi summit, did you feel as though you had exhausted your conversations with the North Korean team and reached an impasse? And with the lack of a written agreement in Hanoi, where does that leave you, and are you confident in hopefully having more discussions with the same North Korean team that you were speaking with prior to the summit?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So thank you. The discussions – the negotiations, really, with the North Koreans in the run-up to the summit were very productive. We covered a lot of areas. The area that we felt most short was on denuclearization and it was clear to us that our North Korean interlocutors had very little authority to move on the set of issues that were, in our view, central to the success of this outcome. We have a lot of areas that we can continue to discuss with the North Koreans, and we will continue to discuss with them when we next engage. But fundamentally, where we really need to see the progress and we need to see it soon is on meaningful and verifiable steps on denuclearization. That's our goal and that's how we see these negotiations picking up momentum.

The – one of the – I suppose every system of government is unique, but the North Korean system is particularly different, and in that system, virtually any position that's going to be explored in the course of negotiations is going to be driven from the top down. There's no clever think tanks or op-ed writers or experts or former government officials who are going to float ideas that people might cling to or think about. The system very much is driven from the top down and the President understands this very much, and that's why he seeks to direct engagement with Kim Jong-un to invest him in a shared vision of that brighter future that could happen if they denuclearize.

In order for our North Korean counterparts to have more latitude, it's clear they're going to have to get direction and space from the top. They will not do that on their own. They will not test ideas at the negotiating table. So there's an important interplay between the President's summit meetings and the President's direct engagement between summit meetings with Kim Jong-un and the amount of latitude that the negotiating teams at the working level are entrusted with in order to breathe life into some of these agreements. We need the North Korean negotiators to have much more latitude than they did in the run-up to the summit on denuclearization, but I'm confident that if they get that direction from the top of the North Korean Government, we can make quick progress with them.

**MODERATOR:** Last, we're going to go to *The Guardian*, AFP, and then we're done. Please.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Julian Borger from *The Guardian*. You said the talks in Hanoi were productive and you said that the two leaders were on good terms. Why, then, was it cut short? Why didn't they stay for lunch?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** So I think that's a bit of a mischaracterization. It's not yours. I've seen it reported many times. I know that. I think the amount of time that the President spent with Kim Jong-un equaled or exceeded what was the original plan. We worked through break times, we worked through scheduled lunches, we worked right up until the point where the President was previously scheduled to move back to his location where he was doing his press conference. So I think the schedule proceeded in a manner that was different than the planned structure, but in terms of the discussions themselves, they went on at quite some length and went on until the President, I think, was convinced that we weren't going to be able to fully close the gap at this meeting.

So a little bit different take on it, but they had more than sufficient time to explore in depth the possibilities here, and ultimately for the President to reach the conclusion he did at the conclusion of the summit.

**MODERATOR:** Please, AFP.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Francesco Fontemaggi for AFP. What would be for you the deadline to reach an agreement in order to get this done, the denuclearization done by the end of the first term?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Yeah, so we are certainly engaged in a forward-leaning way to get there as quickly as we can, because we are mindful that every day the challenge gets greater. The threat posed by North Korea is not going away, and we recognize that fact, but we're not going to be driven by any artificial timeline. Certainly, as I said, we have a confirmed belief that we can achieve our goals for final, fully verified denuclearization in the course of the President's first term. The sooner we get that started, the higher my level of confidence we'll actually do that, but we're not bound to any specific timeline.

**QUESTION:** Excuse me, if I just can add you said that in Stanford, just before the summit, that you didn't even have an agreement on the definition of denuclearization. Do you now have one with the North Koreans?

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** We have the elements of one. We have closed some of the gaps on what that would be, and as we have closed some of the gaps on other issues, like declarations and freezes. Some of that is an accumulation of the issues we have discussed in the course of our discussions over the first three months of this year. Some of the ideas are still ours and remain to be accepted by the North Koreans.

It's a grinding process to negotiate with the North Koreans. Part of it is the nature of their system; part of it is that they've been at this for a

very long time. We're not as far long as we would like to be, but we are making progress, and the door remains open to continue those negotiations as soon as possible.

**MODERATOR:** Great. With that, we'll call it there. Thank you so much for coming today.

**SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL:** Yeah. Thank you, [Moderator]. Thank you all.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you all. Bye-bye.

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