



North Korea's Kim Arrives in Vietnam for Summit; Trump on His Way

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North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Vietnam on Feb. 26 for a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump where they will try to reach an agreement on a North's Korean pledge to give up its nuclear weapons program.

Trump is due to arrive in the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi, on the evening of Feb. 26.

Trump will meet Kim for a brief one-on-one conversation on Wednesday evening, followed by a social dinner, at which they will each be accompanied by two guests and interpreters, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told reporters on Air Force One.

U.S. President Donald Trump speaks on U.S. and China trade negotiations at the Governors' Ball, in the State Dining Room of the White House, in Washington, U.S., Feb. 24, 2019. (Al Drago/Reuters)

She said that would be followed by more meetings between the two leaders on Thursday.

Their talks come eight months after their historic summit in Singapore, the first between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean leader.

While there is no real expectation that the second meeting will bring a final deal on ridding North Korea of nuclear weapons that threaten the United States, there are some hopes it could lead to a declaration that the 1950-53 Korean War is at last formally over.

But the United States would expect significant movement by Kim toward denuclearization in return.

In Singapore, Kim pledged to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, but the vague agreement struck there has produced few concrete results. U.S. Democratic senators and security officials have warned Trump against cutting a deal that would do little to curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Kim, who traveled from the North Korean capital by train, arrived at the station in the Vietnamese town of Dong Dang after crossing over the border from China.

Vietnamese officials were on hand to receive him at the station with a red-carpet including a guard of honor and North Korean and Vietnamese flags flying.

Kim was seen leaving the train in Dong Dang and getting into a Mercedes Benz vehicle for the 105 miles journey to the capital, Hanoi, by car.

He waved from the car before setting off to young people lining the street waving Vietnamese and North Korean flags.

About a dozen body guards ran along side his car as he set off.

Both Kim and Trump are also due to hold separate talks with Vietnamese leaders.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also arrived in Hanoi, on Tuesday, a reporter traveling with him said.

Pompeo has been Trump's top envoy in his efforts to improve ties with the reclusive North and has made several trips to Pyongyang to negotiate steps toward ending its nuclear program.

Optimism Running High Ahead of New US–North Korea Summit

Ahead of his second summit with North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un later this month in Vietnam, President Donald Trump voiced optimism, saying that the meeting would “be a very successful one.”

“I hope we have the same good luck as we had in the first summit. A lot was done in the first summit,” Trump said at a news conference in the Rose Garden of the White House on Feb. 15.

“No more rockets going up. No more missiles going up. No more testing of nuclear. Get back our remains, the remains of our great heroes from the Korean War. And we got back our hostages.”

Trump administration wants to “get as far down the road as we can,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at a news conference in Warsaw on Feb. 14. Washington aims to map out a set of concrete deliverables, including the denuclearization process.

The announcement of the second summit is a positive development despite some of the frustrations people have, said Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at Cato Institute.

Critics argue that there is no sign of progress toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, a major goal set in Singapore summit last year.

According to Bandow, however, it is not realistic to expect immediate, complete denuclearization of North Korea.

The denuclearization is a useful objective but not a vital one for the United States, he said at a Cato Institute event on Feb. 15.

“It's a bit different than the fear of the Soviet Union having nuclear weapons,” he said, adding that North Korea was not a significant threat to the United States.

Bandow, instead, stressed the importance of setting mechanisms and processes that would help create long-term peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

“I think his expectation might be excessive. Nevertheless, this president has done something I don't think any other president would have done. And I think he deserves credit for that,”

Bandow said, “because we have opportunities today for better resolution of the problems in Korea than we had in prior years.”