

North Korea says Trump administration's policy is "nothing new"

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North Korea said there's "nothing new" about the new North Korean policy (called "maximum pressure and engagement") adopted by the US government under President Donald Trump and criticized it as being "a policy of hostility toward North Korea under a different name."

"[The Trump administration] has declared the end of the age of 'strategic patience,' which was pursued by the Obama administration, but all it has done is choose plans for recklessly using the military and strengthening economic and diplomatic sanctions and pressure to an extreme degree and put those into a single package, on which it has slapped the label of 'maximum pressure and engagement,'" said a column that ran on the sixth page of the Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP), on May 6. The column, which was signed by an individual, was titled, "The US must squarely face the indomitable will of 10 million North Koreans."

The column also mentioned an article by Doug Bandow, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, titled "Strategic impatience won't defeat North Korea," which ran in the bimonthly American journal the National Interest, and said that "Bandow's assessment is accurate." "Aggressiveness and impatience might yield profits in real estate speculation, but they can incur unimaginably negative consequences in politics. That's even more so in a confrontation with us," the column said.

This response to the Trump administration's North Korean policy came after a statement by the spokesperson of the North Korean Foreign Ministry on May 1. "As the US raises the heat on its commotion over full-fledged sanctions and pressure against North Korea while clinging to its newly devised North Korean policy of 'maximum pressure and engagement,' we will be pushed to take measures to strengthen our nuclear deterrence as fast as possible," the spokesperson said. But it's too early to conclude that this backlash from Pyongyang means that it has written off the Trump administration's new North Korean policy. Since the statement by the Foreign Ministry spokesperson and the column signed by an individual both reiterate North Korea's basic position, Pyongyang seems intent on sounding out the US's real intentions.