

Trump-Kim Summit Updates: 'Sometimes You Have to Walk,' Trump Says as Talks Collapse

The New York Times, Feb. 27, 2019

Live Briefing

President Trump with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during a news conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Thursday after the abrupt end of a summit meeting with North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un. Doug Mills/The New York Times



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- President Trump and Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea, failed to reach a deal on denuclearization during their second summit meeting in eight months. "Sometimes you have to walk," Mr. Trump said after the talks broke down.
- Mr. Trump said Mr. Kim was willing to close some but not all nuclear sites in North Korea in exchange for the lifting of all international sanctions.
- The leaders were scheduled to have lunch together and sign a joint agreement, but those plans were abruptly called off. After a news conference, Mr. Trump boarded Air Force One to return to Washington.

[Read about why the talks collapsed. Learn who was at the negotiating table. And see the summit meeting unfold in pictures.]

Mr. Kim, center right, responding to reporters' questions during a meeting with Mr. Trump at the Metropole Hotel in Hanoi on Thursday. Doug Mills/The New York Times



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[Disagreement over sanctions led to breakdown in talks, Trump says](#)

A day that started with the promise of a denuclearization deal and talk of an official declaration to end the Korean War ended abruptly, without an accord.

"Sometimes you have to walk," Mr. Trump said at a news conference after the talks fell apart.

[When it came to negotiating, the North Koreans were more experienced. Here's a look at who was on either side of the table.]

Mr. Trump said the major sticking point was the lifting of economic sanctions against North Korea. Mr. Kim, the president said, wanted sanctions fully lifted in exchange for dismantling some — but not all — of the North's nuclear weapons program.

“Basically they wanted the sanctions lifted in their entirety and we couldn’t do that,” Mr. Trump said. “They were willing to denuke a large portion of the areas that we want, but we couldn’t give up all of the sanctions for that.”

Lifting punishing international sanctions that limit North Korea’s ability to import oil, and to export lucrative goods including coal and seafood, is the North’s primary goal in any negotiation. As a result, the United States sees the sanctions as a critical bargaining chip.

Mr. Trump said he and Mr. Kim discussed the closure of North Korea’s main nuclear complex in Yongbyon, and Mr. Kim expressed a willingness to allow the facility to be dismantled.

“He would do that but he wants the sanctions for that,” Mr. Trump said. “As you know, there’s plenty left after that. I just felt it wasn’t good.”

Yongbyon is the North’s largest facility, but not its only one. At his news conference, Mr. Trump acknowledged that the country had another uranium enrichment plant. North Korea has long been suspected of having uranium enrichment capabilities beyond Yongbyon.

Conflicting reactions from North Korea’s neighbors

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan fully backed President Trump’s decision to walk from his summit meeting with Kim Jong-un, North Korea’s leader, without an agreement, while South Korea called the move regrettable.

“With the strong determination to realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, President Trump did not make an easy compromise,” Mr. Abe said, speaking to reporters after a phone call with the American president. “I fully support Mr. Trump’s decision.”

Mr. Abe reiterated his desire to meet the North Korean leader and discuss the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea’s agents decades ago. But he has been hawkish on North Korea, championing strong enforcement of sanctions against Pyongyang.

In Seoul, the government of President Moon Jae-in, an outspoken supporter of engagement with North Korea, expressed dismay at the breakdown of the Hanoi talks. Mr. Moon spoke with Mr. Trump after the meeting ended.

“It is regrettable that they could not reach a complete agreement,” said Kim Eui-kyeom, a spokesman of Mr. Moon. “But it also seems clear that both sides have made more significant progress than ever.”

Although the meeting failed to produce an agreement, it has helped Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump “expand the width and depth of understanding what each side needed,” Mr. Moon said. “The prospects for a next meeting are bright given President Trump’s will to continue dialogue and his optimistic views.”

China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi, struck a cautious tone at a meeting in Beijing with a senior North Korean diplomat. Chinese state television reported that Mr. Wang said that while difficulties in Trump-Kim talks were unavoidable, China hoped that the dialogue would continue.

— *Hisako Ueno and Choe Sang-Hun*

Otto Warmbier, an American college student, being held up by officers at the Supreme Court in Pyongyang in 2016. Jon Chol Jin/Associated Press

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[Trump gives Kim a pass on American detainee’s death](#)

Mr. Trump said he and Mr. Kim discussed the case of Otto Warmbier, the American college student who died last year after being imprisoned in North Korea.

The president defended Mr. Kim, saying he believed the North Korean leader was unaware of the gravity of Mr. Warmbier’s medical condition.

“He tells me that he didn’t know about it, and I will take him at his word,” Mr. Trump said on Thursday.

Mr. Warmbier, a student at the University of Virginia, was arrested while on a trip to North Korea for stealing a propaganda poster. In [2016 he was sentenced to 15 years hard labor](#).

More than a year later he was released and [returned to the United States gravely ill](#), with doctors saying he suffered a catastrophic brain injury. He [died in June 2017](#).

Mr. Trump has taken credit for the return of Mr. Warmbier and a handful of other Americans held in North Korea. In the past, the president has pointed to Mr. Warmbier’s injuries as an example of the Kim regime’s brutality.

But on Thursday, Mr. Trump refused to place any blame on Mr. Kim.

“I don’t believe that he would have allowed that to happen, it just wasn’t to his advantage to happen,” Mr. Trump said. “Those prisons are rough, they’re rough places, and bad things happened. But I really don’t believe that he, I don’t believe that he knew about it.”

—Austin Ramzy

A cheerful start gave no hint of trouble

Thursday began without any outward sign that talks were about to break down.

President Trump and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, complimented each other in opening remarks at the Metropole Hotel in Hanoi. Neither predicted any imminent breakthroughs, but their comments did not suggest a summit meeting that would end early, abruptly, and without anything to show for it.

“I can’t speak necessarily for today, but I can say a little bit longer term and over a period of time I know we are going to have a fantastic success with respect to chairman Kim and North Korea,” Mr. he said.

Mr. Kim was more circumspect. “It’s too early to say,” he said. “I would not say I’m pessimistic.”

The two went into a meeting with only their translators present, and were later joined by other officials.

The first public sign of trouble was the cancellation of a working lunch. Then the planned signing of a joint agreement was scratched. A closing news conference that was scheduled for 4 p.m. was moved to 2 p.m.

The White House officially acknowledged that the meeting had ended without a formal agreement, but offered no explanation, leaving that to the president at his news conference.

Journalists working at a media center in Hanoi as Mr. Trump’s news conference was telecast. *Nhac Nguyen/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images*

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International news media scrambles

First came word that Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump’s lunch would be canceled. Then the scheduled signing of a joint agreement was called off. By midday Thursday, it was clear the talks had collapsed.

Confusion reigned in the international media center. What was happening? Hundreds of reporters frantically looked for an explanation or a statement from the White House.

Once Mr. Trump’s motorcade left the Metropole Hotel, it was clear that the deal was off.

At the press center, mild mayhem broke out when reporters from a Japanese news network started interviewing a reporter from Voice of America, a news agency funded by the United States government.

A crowd of journalists swarmed the V.O.A. reporter, assuming that she was an official government spokesman. At one point, a reporter who joined the scrum realized that it was just a case of journalists interviewing each other.

“You’re just journalists?” she said in disgust. “Oh my god, why did I run over here?” And stormed off.

— *Motoko Rich*

A satellite view of the Yongbyon nuclear site in North Korea. DigitalGlobe/38 North, via Getty Images

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[Kim cited a willingness to denuclearize](#)

Mr. Kim said that his presence at the summit meeting was a sign of his willingness to denuclearize his country.

“If I’m not willing to do that, I won’t be here right now,” he said in response to a reporter’s question on Thursday morning.

“That might be the best answer you’ve ever heard,” Mr. Trump replied.

“We’ve had very, very productive discussions,” Mr. Trump said before the talks would collapse later that afternoon. “The relationship is as good as it’s ever been, I think better.”

When a reporter asked Mr. Kim whether he was willing to take concrete steps toward denuclearization, he said, “That’s what we are discussing right now.”

After Mr. Kim said the United States would be welcome to open a liaison office in North Korea, Mr. Trump signaled his interest in the idea. “I actually think it’s a good idea, both ways,” Mr. Trump said.

The two countries do not have formal diplomatic relations. United States consular interests in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, are represented by Sweden. North Korea likewise has no embassy in Washington, but its mission at the United Nations in New York is often a channel for diplomacy with the United States.

— *Austin Ramzy*

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