

Statement of Governor Bill Richardson (WB Richardson LLC)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and Nonproliferation
“On the Eve of the Summit: Options for U.S. Diplomacy on North Korea”
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The first summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim in June 2018 produced a good moment for both leaders, striking a personal relationship; an aspirational joint statement; and a couple of positive developments, such as the repatriation of remains of U.S. servicemen.

The summit, however, failed to produce a workable framework for negotiations. Unlike other summits, there was little to no staff work to develop substantive demands prior to the meeting.

As a result, following the summit the two sides had no roadmap to proceed, and what we saw was a discombobulated effort to get to a framework, with both sides positioning but without any progress.

Chairman Kim has made it very clear that his preferred negotiating partner is President Trump, not Secretary of State Pompeo or the working-level teams. This is why it was only after the second summit was announced that negotiations and communications between the two sides were revived.

President Trump puts significant weight on dangling the prospect of economic development and prosperity to North Korea, as he believes that will make them compromise on the nuclear items.

We should be clear about our expectations of what is possible, what is not, and what would be the cost of an agreement with the North Koreans:

1. The chances that the North Koreans will get rid of their existing stockpiles are slim. They believe that these weapons are the reason we are negotiating with them, and the only reason we have not yet overpowered them militarily.
2. We can expect and demand the North Koreans cease their development of nuclear weapons, WMDs and ballistic missiles; and that we have clear means for verifying the dismantling of such capabilities.
3. We can expect and demand the North Koreans cease all testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles; and have verification of the dismantling of launch and test sites.
4. We can expect and demand the North Koreans cease any proliferation operations of nuclear technology and WMDs; and determine the means to verify this.
5. In return, the North Koreans will demand the removal of sanctions, end of war, normalization of relations and reduction of military presence on the Peninsula.

An agreement with these guidelines should be gradual and broken into smaller reciprocal steps.

Thus, a successful second summit between the two leaders should produce what the first summit failed to do:

1. A detailed framework for negotiations, including timelines, terms of reference, and a schedule of future summits:

- Set times for ongoing negotiations, both working-level, high-level, and Presidential summits. Considering Chairman Kim's preference to negotiate directly with Trump, Presidential Summits might occur every 2 or 3 months.
 - Terms of reference for negotiations. General guiding principles for a final agreement, definitions and constraints.
 - Timelines and benchmarks for the negotiation process.
2. An agreed pathway to recover and repatriate remains of U.S. servicemen. Since this is a mutual interest of both sides, it is an easy and very powerful outcome for the summit. I have been personally involved in these efforts since 2007 and am still working with families of servicemembers to bring their relatives' remains home.
 3. A mechanism and safeguards to mitigate risk of conflict if a crisis in negotiations occur. This can be by establishing a hotline between the leaders, or a mitigating contact group to include regional stakeholders.
 4. There are other gestures the U.S. can offer that are short of policy concessions, which can be highly symbolic and motivating for the North Koreans.
 5. Recommitment to the aspirational joint statement of the June summit.

The summit can be considered a failure if the following occurs:

1. Failure to produce a practical and detailed framework for negotiations. Failure to define benchmarks and terms of reference. Without such framework, negotiations will fizzle again until the next summit is announced.
2. Failure to establish a roadmap for recovery and repatriation of remains.

3. Ambiguity and no record of agreements and understandings reached between the two leaders during a one-on-one meeting.