



Situation in Korean Peninsula: Responses of Six Party Members (North Korea, United States, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan) - Who Said What

February 19-28, 2018

*Compiled by Dr. Jojin V. John **

Country	Comments
North Korea	<p style="text-align: center;">Spokesman- Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>February 25, 2018¹</p> <p>“United State is running amok to bring another dark cloud of confrontation and war over the Korean peninsula by announcing enormous sanctions against the DPRK.”</p> <p>“We will consider any type of blockade an act of war against us and if the U.S. has indeed the guts to confront us in 'rough' manner, we will not necessarily take the trouble to stop it.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spokesman- Asia-Pacific Peace Committee</p> <p>February 25, 2018²</p> <p>"Unpardonable are that Pence dared to defame the inviolable DPRK</p>

¹ “US hit for bringing clouds of war to hang over Korean Peninsula”, KCNA, February 25, 2018, www.kcna.kp

² "N. Korea condemns Pence for attacking leader's sister", The Yonhap News, February 25, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/25/0401000000AEN20180225000500315.html

	<p>government, terming it 'dictatorial regime,' and absurdly slandered our congratulatory missions including the first vice department director of the WPK Central Committee.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chang Ung- Member of the International Olympics Committee (IOC)</p> <p>February 20, 2018</p> <p>"It is sufficiently possible. ... Since a smaller number of countries participates in the Asian Games, it would be easier than the Olympics."</p> <p>"The Masikryong Ski Resort could be used."</p> <p>Ung's remark was in response to Gov. Choi Moon-soon of South Korea's Gangwon Province comment that he is considering a bid to co-host the Asian Winter Games with North Korea and that the North's ski resort could be used. Gangwon Province is the location of PyeongChang Winter Olympics, currently under way.</p>
USA	<p style="text-align: center;">Heather Nauert- Spokesperson, State Department</p> <p>February 27, 2018³</p> <p>“Our condition is denuclearization. Our policy has not changed. We have talked about this policy since day one of this administration; and that’s maximum pressure, but it’s also the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Let me remind you it’s something that China agrees with, it’s something that South Korea and Japan agree with, it’s something that Russia agrees with, along with many other countries – the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and we stand firmly behind that.”</p> <p>“The top national security issue for this administration has been and remains to this day the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, working on the maximum pressure campaign to try to stop North Korea from developing its ballistic and nuclear weapons programs.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Marc Knapper- Charge d'affaires, U.S. Embassy, Seoul</p> <p>February 28, 2018⁴</p>

³ "Department Press Briefing", The US Department of States, February 27, 2018 <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2018/02/278913.htm>

"We have seen enough times the North used dialogue with us and South Korea and others to continue to buy time to pursue nuclear and missile developments. North Korea should show some willingness to talk about denuclearization if any talks between the U.S. and North Korea can be possible."

On the retirement of Joseph Yun, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, Mr. Knapper said;

"There have been some concerns raised in the Western press and the Korean press -- somehow the departure reflects a change in the U.S. policy or somehow undermines U.S. efforts in our own state policy of the pressure campaign or our own close coordination with South Korea."

"Nothing could be further from the truth. Our policy remains the same. Our close coordination with South Korea continues, unabated, and we will continue to work very close with our Korean friends and allies here in Seoul, Washington and New York going forward without any change whatsoever."

Joseph Yun- Special Representative for North Korea policy

February 27, 2018⁵

"I'm very hopeful about talks. I hope there is a good dialogue, there is a peaceful resolution, improvement in the security climate on the Korean peninsula."

Joseph Yun, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, is retiring at the end of this week. The State Department said the ambassador would be retiring for personal reasons.

Sarah Sanders- Press Secretary, White House

February 26, 2018⁶

"We will continue to lead a campaign of maximum pressure on the regime. We also believe that there is a brighter path available to North

⁴ "U.S. does not want talks with N.K. aimed at buying time: acting ambassador", The Yonhap News, February 28, 2018,

english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/28/0401000000AEN20180228004954315.html

⁵ "Outgoing U.S. diplomat hopeful about U.S.-N.K. talks", The Yonhap News, February 28, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/27/0401000000AEN20180227013152315.html

⁶ "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders", The White House, February 26, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-press-secretary-sarah-sanders-022618/>

Korea. They have expressed a desire to hold talks. But let us be completely clear: Denuclearization must be the result of any dialogue with North Korea. Until then, the United States and the world must continue to make it known that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are a dead end."

"As we've said in the past, that any conversation that we have would match the comments that we've been making in public, and anything that would be discussed would have to be solely on the focus of them agreeing to denuclearize the Peninsula. That would be the primary factor in whether or not we would have any conversation with them."

Donald Trump- President

February 26, 2018⁷

"I think that President Xi is unique. He's helping us with North Korea — who, by the way, wants to talk, as of last night; you heard that. They want to talk. And we want to talk also, only under the right conditions. Otherwise, we're not talking."

"China has been good, but they haven't been great. China has really done more, probably, than they've ever done because of my relationship. We have a very good relationship, but President Xi is for China, and I'm for the United States. And Russia is behaving badly because Russia is sending in what China is taking out."

"So China is doing pretty good numbers, but Russia is now sending a lot of stuff in. But I think they want to see it come to an end also. I think everybody does — talking about tremendous potential loss of lives; numbers that nobody has ever even contemplated, never thought of."

"So they want to talk. First time — they want to talk. And we'll see what happens. That's my attitude: We'll see what happens. But something has to be done."

Statement- Whitehouse

February 25, 2018⁸

⁷ "Remarks by President Trump at 2018 White House Business Session with Governors", The White House, February 26, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-2018-white-house-business-session-governors/>

“President Donald J. Trump’s Administration is committed to achieving the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The United States, our Olympic Host the Republic of Korea, and the international community broadly agree that denuclearization must be the result of any dialogue with North Korea. The maximum pressure campaign must continue until North Korea denuclearizes. As President Trump has said, there is a brighter path available for North Korea if it chooses denuclearization. We will see if Pyongyang’s message today, that it is willing to hold talks, represents the first steps along the path to denuclearization. In the meantime, the United States and the world must continue to make clear that North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs are a dead end.”

Steven Mnuchin- Treasury Secretary

February 23, 2018⁹

“Today, the Treasury Department is announcing the largest set of sanctions ever imposed in connection with North Korea.”

“This action targets the deceptive shipping practices that have enabled the Kim regime to fund its dangerous weapons programs. Our actions target shipping and trade companies, vessels, and individuals across the world who we know are working with North Korea’s behalf. Specifically, we are sanctioning 27 entities, 28 vessels, and 1 individual, all involved in sanctions evasions schemes.”

Donald Trump- President

February 23, 2017¹⁰

“North Korea — we imposed today the heaviest sanctions ever imposed on a country before.”

⁸ "Statement by the Press Secretary on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula", The White House, February 25, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-denuclearization-korean-peninsula/>

⁹ "Press Briefing by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on North Korea Sanctions", The White House, February 23, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-treasury-secretary-steven-mnuchin-north-korea-sanctions/>

¹⁰ "Remarks by President Trump at the Conservative Political Action Conference", The White House, February 23, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-conservative-political-action-conference-2/>

“And frankly, hopefully something positive can happen. We will see. But hopefully something positive can happen. But that just was announced, and I wanted to let you know. We have imposed the heaviest sanctions ever imposed.”

H.R. McMaster- National Security Advisor

February 22, 2017¹¹

“Last year, nations gathered here initiated an international campaign to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. We must pressure the Kim regime—using all available tools—to ensure that this cruel dictatorship cannot threaten the world with the most destructive weapons on earth.”

“Nations that evade full enforcement and fail to take these steps are acting irresponsibly. Now is the time to do more—a nuclear North Korea poses a direct threat to all of us and seriously undermines the non proliferation regime.”

Donald Trump- President

February 23, 2018¹²

“If the sanctions don’t work, we’ll have to go phase two.”

“Phase two may be a very rough thing, may be very, very unfortunate for the world. But hopefully the sanctions will work.”

Mike Pence- Vice President

February 22, 2018¹³

“You know for all the media fawning over the sister of the North Korean dictator, I think it’s important that every American knows who

¹¹ "Remarks by LTG H.R. McMaster at the Munich Security Conference", The White House, February 22, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-ltg-h-r-mcmaster-munich-security-conference/>

¹² "U.S. imposes more North Korea sanctions, Trump warns of 'phase two'", The reuters, February 23, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-trump/u-s-imposes-more-north-korea-sanctions-trump-warns-of-phase-two-idUSKCN1G71RD>

¹³ "Remarks by Vice President Pence at the Conservative Political Action Conference", The White House, February 22, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-conservative-political-action-conference/>

this person is and what she's done.”

"The sister of Kim Jong-un is a central pillar of the most tyrannical and oppressive regime on the planet -- an evil family clique that brutalizes, subjugates, starves and imprisons its 25 million people."

"For all those in the media who think I should have stood and cheered with the North Koreans, I say, the United States of America doesn't stand with murderous dictatorships, we stand up to murderous dictatorships."

Statement-White House

February 21, 2018

"President Donald J. Trump today announced the designation of the Presidential Delegation to the Republic of Korea to attend the Closing Ceremony and events of the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games beginning Saturday, February 24, 2018."

"Ms. Ivanka Trump, Assistant to the President and Advisor, will lead the delegation."

Heather Nauert- Spokesperson, US State Department

February 20, 2018¹⁴

"During the Vice President's recent visit to South Korea to demonstrate allied resolve and support American athletes, the possibility arose of a brief meeting with the North Korean delegation leaders. The Vice President was ready to take this opportunity to drive home the necessity of North Korea abandoning its illicit ballistic missile and nuclear programs."

"At the last minute, DPRK officials decided not to go forward with the meeting. We regret their failure to seize this opportunity. We will not apologize for American values, for calling attention to human rights abuses, or for mourning a young American's unjust death."

"We will not allow North Korea's attendance at the Winter Olympics to

¹⁴ US State Department, Facebook, February 20, 2018
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10155262793261074&id=15877306073

	<p>conceal the true nature of the regime and the need for the world to remain united in the face of its illicit weapons programs. The maximum pressure campaign deepening North Korea's diplomatic and economic isolation will continue until North Korea agrees to credible talks on a way forward to a denuclearized Korean peninsula."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nick Ayers- Chief of Staff, Vice President</p> <p>February 20, 2018¹⁵</p> <p>"North Korea dangled a meeting in hopes of the vice president softening his message, which would have ceded the world stage for their propaganda during the Olympics."</p> <p>"North Korea would have strongly preferred the vice president not use the world stage to call attention to those absolute facts or to display our strong alliance with those committed to the maximum-pressure campaign. But as we've said from Day One about the trip: This administration will stand in the way of Kim's desire to whitewash their murderous regime with nice photo ops at the Olympics."</p>
South Korea	<p style="text-align: center;">Statement – Foreign Ministry</p> <p>February 28, 2018¹⁶</p> <p>Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha and her Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, met in Geneva on the sidelines of the U.N. Human Rights Council meeting, according to the ministry,</p> <p>"The two agreed to make diplomatic efforts to maintain the momentum created by the PyeongChang Winter Olympics for inter-Korean dialogue and turn this to talks aimed at peacefully resolving North Korea's nuclear problem."</p>

¹⁵ "Pence was set to meet with North Korean officials during the Olympics before last-minute cancellation", Washington Post, February 20, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/pence-was-set-to-meet-with-north-korean-officials-during-the-olympics-before-last-minute-cancellation/2018/02/20/89392dfe-1684-11e8-942d-16a950029788_story.html?utm_term=.1935bbf76627

¹⁶ "S. Korean, Russian foreign ministers vow to peacefully resolve N.K. nuke issue", The Yonhap News, February 28, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/28/0401000000AEN20180228010700315.html

Kang Kyung-wha- Foreign Minister

February 28, 2018¹⁷

"I cannot predict the timing (of U.S.-North Korea talks) for sure, but we are pursuing the goal of helping generate the talks between the U.S. and North Korea."

Statement- Unification ministry

February 27, 2018¹⁸

"North Korea will send a Paralympic Committee delegation and athletes to the PyeongChang Winter Paralympics."

Chun Hae-sung- Vice Minister, Unification Ministry

February 27, 2018¹⁹

"We believe that (the Olympics-driven) rapprochement could pave the way for reconciliation of the two Koreas. This also should lead to a fundamental resolution of (North Korea's nuclear) issue and talks between the U.S. and the North."

"We also need to make multifaceted efforts to create an environment to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula."

"(The two Koreas) are in close consultations (over pending issues). There is no particular situation that poses problems."

Moon Jae-in- President

February 26, 2018²⁰

"The United States needs to lower its bar for dialogue and North too

¹⁷ "FM Kang soon to meet Tillerson in effort to broker talks between Pyongyang, Washington", The Yonhap News, February 28, 2018,

english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/28/0401000000AEN20180228006900315.html

¹⁸ "Joint Press Release of Inter-Korean Working-Level Talks regarding the PyeongChang Winter Paralympics", Ministry of Unification, February 28, 2018,

www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/news/news/?boardId=bbs_000000000000033&mode=view&cntId=54364&category=&pageIdx=

¹⁹ "N.K.'s high-level delegation led by controversial official returns home", The Yonhap News, February 27, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/27/0401000000AEN20180227003752315.html

²⁰ "Moon urges U.S. to lower bar for dialogue with N. Korea", The Yonhap News, February 26, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/26/0401000000AEN20180226005751315.html

must show its willingness to denuclearize. It is important so that the U.S. and North Korea may sit down face to face,"

"Recently, North Korea has been showing a willingness to actively seek North Korea-U.S. dialogue while the U.S., too, is talking about the need for dialogue."

Kang Kyung-wha - Foreign Minister

February 26, 2018²¹

"North Korea must heed the call of the international community and abandon its nuclear and missile programs. It should invest more of its resources in its people and the protection and promotion of their human rights."

"My government will continue to join the international community in urging North Korea to change course, both on the security and human rights fronts."

"it is imperative to ensure that the spirit of PyeongChang lives long after the Games so that peace can take firm root on the Korean Peninsula and the dire human rights situation in the North can be improved."

Statement- Office of the President

February 26, 2018²²

On February 26, 2017, Chung Eui-yong, chief of South Korea's National Security Council and the top security advisor to President Moon Jae-in had a meeting with Kim Yong-chol, vice-chairman of the Party Central Committee and the head, North Korean delegation to the closing ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. Regarding the meeting South Korea's Presidential Office said,

"The two sides noted the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games have provided a meaningful opportunity to realize the Olympic spirit of peace and unity, as well as for peace on the Korean Peninsula and the restoration of the South-North Korean relationship, and agreed to continue working together even after the end of the Olympics to

²¹ "Statement at the High Level Segment of the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK, February 27, 2018, www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5689/view.do?seq=319532&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=&page=1&titleNm=

²² "Moon's top security aide holds talks with N. Korean delegates in Seoul", The Yonhap News, February 26, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/26/0401000000AEN20180226006751315.html

enable the establishment of lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, sustainable development of the South-North relationship and cooperation with the international community."

Official- Office of the President

February 26, 2018²³

"Kim (Yong-chol) said the door remains open for dialogue with the United States. He said the North has also repeatedly expressed such a stance."

Kim Yong-chol, vice-chairman of the Party Central Committee and the head, North Korean delegation to the closing ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics, made the remark during his meeting with Chung Eui-yong, chief of South Korea's National Security Council and the top security advisor to President Moon Jae-in.

Kim Eui-kyeom- Spokesman, Office of the President

February 25, 2018²⁴

On February 25, 2017, President Moon Jae-in had a meeting with Kim Yong-chol, vice-chairman of the Party Central Committee and the head, North Korean delegation to the closing ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. Regarding the meeting South Korea's Presidential Office said,

"President Moon pointed out that U.S.-North Korea dialogue must be held at an early date even for an improvement in the South-North Korea relationship and the fundamental resolution of Korean Peninsula issues."

"The North Korean delegation too agreed that North Korea-U.S. relations must develop along with the South-North Korea relationship while noting (the North) has enough intention to hold North Korea-U.S. dialogue."

Baik Tae-hyun- Spokesperson Unification Ministry

February 23, 2018²⁵

²³ "N.K. delegate reiterates door open for dialogue with U.S.: Cheong Wa Dae", The Yonhap News, February 26, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/26/0401000000AEN20180226010553315.html

²⁴ "Chief N. Korean delegate says Pyongyang willing to hold talks with U.S.", The Yonhap news, February 25, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/25/0401000000AEN20180225005455315.html

"It is clear that North Korea was blamed for the warship sinking and Kim was leading North Korea's reconnaissance bureau at that time."

"But it is also the fact that there is a limitation in pinpointing who was responsible for the incident."

"But because the North said the group's trip is to attend the Olympics' closing ceremony and the government believes that its visit will help improve inter-Korean ties and pave way for dialogue for peace, Seoul has decided to accept Kim's trip."

"The government seeks to focus on who could lead practical dialogue to improve inter-Korean relations and bring peace to the Korean Peninsula, rather than to concentrate on who did what in the past."

Statement- Unification Ministry

February 22, 2018²⁶

"The government plans to push for efforts to create conditions (for a potential summit) in a calm manner with regards to the North's invitation."

"The government will seek to take an initiative in improving inter-Korean ties and helping the (reconciliatory) mood set the tone for denuclearization talks between the U.S. and North Korea."

"Based on inter-Korean talks and coordination with the relevant countries, the government will make efforts to bring the North to the negotiation table to open phased-in and comprehensive denuclearization talks."

Noh Kyu-duk - Spokesperson, Foreign Ministry

February 22, 2018²⁷

"Our basic stance is to stick to the overall frame of the global sanctions

²⁵ "Seoul says it is difficult to pinpoint mastermind of North's 2010 naval attack", The Yonhap News, February 23, 2018,

english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/23/16/0401000000AEN20180223003251315F.html

²⁶ "Too early to predict U.S.-N.K. contact at Olympics: Seoul minister", The Yonhap News, February 22, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/22/0401000000AEN20180222004852315.html

²⁷ "S. Korea in close consultation with U.S. on N.K delegation's trip", The Yonhap News, february 22, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/22/0401000000AEN20180222009100315.html

regime," ministry spokesman told reporters at a regular press briefing. "Close consultation is under way with the U.S. to make the North Korean delegation's trip to the South take place under that frame."

Official- Office of the President

February 22, 2018²⁸

"We believe President Moon will naturally meet the (North Korean) delegation at the closing ceremony."

Statement- Unification Ministry

February 22, 2018²⁹

"North Korea notified that it will send a high-level delegation with Kim Yong Chol, vice-chairman of the Party Central Committee, as the chief delegate on a three day itinerary starting Feb. 25.'

"North Korea's high-level delegation will be composed of chief delegate Kim, delegate Ri Son Gwon (chairman of the 'Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the country') and six support staff."

"We expect the high-level delegation's participation in the closing ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics to help advance the process of settling peace on the Korean Peninsula including the improvement of inter-Korean relations and denuclearization. Against this backdrop, we will accept the visit of North Korea's high-level delegation to the South."

Statement- Foreign Ministry

February 21, 2018³⁰

"We will push to enter into full-fledged dialogue while maintaining inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korea talks as major pillars."

²⁸ "Moon likely to meet N. Korean delegation to Olympics: official", The Yonhap News, February 22, 2017, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/22/32/0401000000AEN20180222006400315F.html

²⁹ "North Korea notifies to send high-level delegation to the closing ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics", Unification Ministry, ROK, February 22, 2018, www.unikorea.go.kr/eng_unikorea/news/releases/?boardId=bbs_000000000000034&mode=view&cntId=54168&category=&pageIndex=

³⁰ "S. Korea sees inter-Korean talks as key to North's denuclearization", The Yonhap news, February 21, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/21/55/0401000000AEN20180221003551315F.html

"We will seek consensus from the international community on the need to create a virtuous cycle, in that improving inter-Korean relations could translate into finding a solution to the North's nuclear problem."

"At the same time, as long as the North continues nuclear development, we will keep working to induce a change of course by the North by joining the international community in its sanctions and pressure campaign."

Kang Kyung-wha- Foreign Minister

February 21, 2018³¹

To pave the way for full-fledged dialogue on its denuclearization, the Minister said,

"The government will make efforts through various channels to persuade the North to come out for talks with the U.S. and also discuss detailed ways with the U.S. on a possible resumption of bilateral talks."

Chung Eui-yong- Chairman, National Security Office

February 21, 2018³²

"While maintaining the momentum of inter-Korean dialogue created on the occasion of the Olympics, the government will make utmost efforts to help inter-Korean relations and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula move forward in a mutually reinforcing way."

Im Jong-seok- Chief of Staff

February 21, 2018

When asked if the government is considering sending a special envoy to the North in return for the visit by the sister of the North's leader, Im said,

"While communicating with the U.S., we should review any means if

³¹ "S. Korea sees inter-Korean talks as key to North's denuclearization", The Yonhap news, February 21, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/21/55/0401000000AEN20180221003551315F.html

³² "S. Korea to work actively to realize 'constructive' talks between U.S., N. Korea: official", The Yonhap news, February 21, 2018, english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2018/02/21/0401000000AEN20180221005251315.html

	<p>that's helpful to continuing the peace atmosphere."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Song Young-moo- Defence Minister</p> <p>February 19, 2018³³</p> <p>"The exercise was postponed according to the spirit of the Olympics."</p> <p>"We have agreed to uphold the basis until after the Paralympics ... and not to confirm nor deny anything regarding what we would do after that until we announce it".</p>
China	<p style="text-align: center;">Lu Kang- Spokesperson, Foreign Ministry</p> <p>February 28, 2018³⁴</p> <p>"In order to move forward dialogues on this issue, China has proposed to launch bilateral and multilateral dialogues by lowering the threshold and taking synchronized and small steps. By "lowering the threshold" we mean no precondition that the other party finds difficult to accept shall be imposed. In particular, issues that need to be resolved in future talks shall not become preconditions for resuming talks, because after all, nothing will ever change if we don't start talking to one another."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Geng Shuang- Spokesperson, Foreign Ministry</p> <p>February 23, 2018³⁵</p> <p>"We also have stressed many times that the core of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is about security, the settlement of which hinges on the DPRK and the US. Thus, direct talks between the two parties are indispensable if the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is to be resolved and a fundamental turnaround in the Korean Peninsula situation is to be achieved. We hope that all relevant parties could work together towards the same direction and continue with their</p>

³³ "South Korea to announce joint military drill plan with U.S. before April", The Reuters, February 20, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles/south-korea-to-announce-joint-military-drill-plan-with-u-s-before-april-idUSKCN1G407W>

³⁴ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Regular Press Conference", The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, February 28, 2018, www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1538362.shtml

³⁵ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference", The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, February 23, 2018, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1537681.shtml

	<p>support for the improvement of the DPRK-ROK relations so that the hard-won detente on the Korean Peninsula could be sustained and strengthened. Hopefully positive steps can be made by both the DPRK and the US towards opening dialogues and achieving meaningful progress in resolving the Korean Peninsula issue peacefully through talks.”</p> <p>February 22, 2018³⁶</p> <p>“Now with the ROK and the DPRK having taken the first precious steps, we hope that all the other relevant parties could jointly preserve and sustain such hard-won momentum of engagement, so that interactions between the ROK and the DPRK would be expanded to those among all parties, especially between the DPRK and the US, and we will be nearing the goal of pushing open the door for dialogue to resolve the Korean Peninsula issue.”</p>
Russia	<p style="text-align: center;">Sergey Lavrov- Foreign Minister</p> <p>February 28, 2018³⁷</p> <p>"The point is not whether or not we discussed this issue [of the rapprochement between Seoul and Pyongyang at a meeting with South Korea's top diplomat]. The Korean unification issue is on the agenda as a fundamental task, the objective these two countries are moving towards.”</p> <p>"Naturally, we support the Korean people's aspirations to restore its unity. We are ready to help, but Seoul and Pyongyang have the final word. If they, during their contacts, decide that our assistance is necessary, I guarantee that we will render any assistance, which will be useful to our neighbors.”</p> <p>"One should ask the US leadership rather than me about the probability of a military scenario. President Donald Trump has said on numerous occasions that he will take all necessary measures, including military, to solve this problem.”</p> <p>"The US, Russia and other capitals have already come up with their</p>

³⁶ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference", The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, February 22, 2018, www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1536763.shtml

³⁷ "News Feed Moscow ready to assist Seoul and Pyongyang in unification process", TASS, February 28, 2018, <http://tass.com/politics/991957>; "Lavrov warns military scenario around North Korea will be a disaster", TASS, February 28, 2018, <http://tass.com/politics/991940>

assessments of this option more than once. These assessments indicate that would be a humanitarian disaster, which would claim the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of civilians."

Sergey Ryabkov- Deputy Foreign Minister

February 26, 2018³⁸

"We are concerned that amid the emerged prospects of stepping up dialogue between Pyongyang and Seoul, when there was a halt caused by the Olympic Games, the US made a new move towards increasing pressure on North Korea."

"The declared American sanctions contain a whole number of alarming and troubling aspects. This runs counter to the understanding that was earlier reached in collective formats, including within the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in which we are also participating."

"As for the re-emerging ideas of re-activating the UN Security Council resource to tighten the sanctions regime for Pyongyang, we confirm our position: the possibilities of further extending sanctions through the UN Security Council have been nearly exhausted. The US is aware of it, and it was repeatedly discussed."

"We cannot repeat the situation again and again when after the countries agree on something in the UN Security Council and make corresponding decisions, the US bolsters unilateral section pressure immediately after that or after some period of time."Can we speak about partnership at all here? This term cannot be applied to describe Washington's behavior."

Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov

February 24, 2018³⁹

"I am confident, the dynamically changing situation on the Korean Peninsula requires an active dialogue on this topic between Russia and the U.S."

³⁸ "Moscow warns against strengthening North Korean sanctions", TASS, February 26, 2018, <http://tass.com/politics/991558>

³⁹ "Korean Peninsula's situation requires active dialogue Russia-US - diplomat", TASS, February 24, 2018, <http://tass.com/politics/991444>

	<p>"We are discussing dates, convenient for both sides. I cannot say, when this meeting may happen."</p> <p>February 24, 2018⁴⁰</p> <p>"Our position is the inter-Korean dialogue expands, including topics of economic cooperation, where is implementation of well-known trilateral projects, involving Russia, the DPRK and the Republic of Korea."</p> <p>"Such cooperation, for example, in supplies of the Russian coal to South Korea via North Korea's Rajin, is beyond the sanctions, announced by the UN Security Council, including Resolution 2397 of last December."</p>
Japan	<p style="text-align: center;">Taro Kono- Foreign Minister</p> <p>February 27, 2018⁴¹</p> <p>"Although North Korea is engaged in a charm offensive, perhaps because sanctions are having an impact, the international community will engage in dialogue with North Korea, if North Korea fully responds to the nuclear, missile, and abduction issues. Japan hopes that the North Korean leadership will clearly change its current policy course and seek dialogue."</p> <p>"An inspection team from the International Atomic Energy Agency is ready to begin inspections in North Korea and would conduct such inspections if North Korea clearly demonstrates its intention to abandon its nuclear and missile programs and to resolve the abductions issue, and takes concrete actions to those ends. If the international community is able to confirm, through careful monitoring, that North Korea's actions will lead to a final, irreversible, and verifiable abandonment of its nuclear and missile programs, and furthermore confirms that the abductions issue is resolved, the international community is ready to engage with North Korea, including the provision of a variety of economic assistance."</p>

⁴⁰ "Inter-Korean dialogue may progress from joint projects with Russia - diplomat", TASS, February 24, 2018, <http://tass.com/politics/991443>

⁴¹ "Press Conference by Foreign Minister Taro Kono Tuesday", MOFA, Japan, , February 27, 2018, www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000467.html

Taro Kono- Foreign Minister

February 23, 2018⁴²

“There is absolutely no discord among Japan, the U.S, and the ROK in the response to North Korea.”

**Dr. Jojin V. John, Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi.*

Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the Researcher and not of the Council.

⁴² "Press Conference by Foreign Minister Taro Kono", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 23, 2018, www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000466.html