



**Statement of Ranking Member Ted Yoho (R-FL)  
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation  
House Foreign Affairs Committee**

*“On the Eve of the Summit: Options for U.S. Diplomacy on North Korea”*  
February 26, 2019

Remarks as Prepared

Good morning and thank you Chairman Sherman for calling this hearing.

Members on both sides of the aisle share similar national security concerns and oversight priorities in regard to the ongoing nuclear diplomacy discussion between the United States and North Korea. This important issue is fitting for our first Subcommittee hearing of the 116th Congress.

I look forward to continuing the strong bi-partisanship and cooperation that this committee displayed in the 115th Congress. This committee worked respectfully together, even in some areas where we may have had disagreements.

Over the next two days, President Trump will conduct his second summit with Kim Jong Un, the totalitarian leader of North Korea. The word “historic” is often used to describe these summits, and that much is true. U.S.-DPRK diplomacy has never before taken place at the head-of-state level.

We shouldn’t forget that when President Trump took office, President Obama warned him that the Korean Peninsula would present his most urgent security challenge. However, over the course of President Trump’s first term, we’ve moved from the brink of war to a period of diplomacy.



As this administration moves forward, let us not forget who Kim Jong Un is. He is number 3 in a family lineage hierarchy that is held to deity stature. He has allowed his citizens to starve and suffer while chasing his nuclear ambitions.

He is the dictator who has executed over 140 members of the elite and military that surrounded his father and grandfather, including his own uncle. He ordered the assassination of his own brother in Malaysia using VX nerve gas.

He also threatened the US with nuclear annihilation as he sent medium range ballistic missiles over Japan and proudly claimed that he would target our territory in the South Pacific, Guam and the mainland if he so desired.

So yes, this is a historic second summit, but we must call for extreme caution as we move forward. Keep in mind three previous administrations have attempted to solve the North Korea dilemma and failed, allowing the Kim regimes to advance their nuclear programs and capability.

Unfortunately, one fact outside the White House's control remains unchanged: the Kim regime does not deal in good faith.

Kim Jong Un appears to be using the same play book as his two predecessors used before - which is to promise peace and denuclearization in exchange for sanction relief. Once this is granted, the DPRK continues their deceit, lying and continuation of a dangerous nuclear program.



We need to note that nothing has occurred since the Singapore Summit in 2018 in terms of denuclearization. I am extremely concerned that any concessions presented by the DPRK's diplomatic outreach are hiding equally significant risks.

The President and his team have a giant task at hand. The facts show us that North Korea has not taken any meaningful action to dismantle its nuclear or missile programs.

There has been no disclosure of the number of nuclear bombs, ICBM's or even a clear definition of what denuclearization means to all sides. Much work needs to be done during this second historic summit.

Meanwhile, Kim Jong Un's international standing has never been higher. Kim's diplomatic gambit has led South Korean President Moon to embrace him as a partner in a shared dream for peace and reunification.

It has given him the pretext for strategic coordination with China and a personal relationship with Xi Jinping. Kim will also visit Vladimir Putin in Russia later this year.

Kim's diplomacy has cost him nothing, but has short-circuited the unanimous UN sanction campaign although, Putin and Xi were never reliable partners in pressuring North Korea.

Kim has shown how he can leverage China-Russian relations against UN led sanctions and U.S. maximum sanction strategy.

The goal of this committee is to facilitate the summit to allow this administration to be successful where previous administrations came up short.



I believe our combined intentions are to hold the administration accountable and make sure sanctions are not relieved until we get significant assurances and verification that the actions of Kim Jong Un are sincere in bringing denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We're privileged to be joined by two witnesses who have personally sat across from North Korean counterparts at sensitive talks, and I thank them both for being with us here today.

Today's hearing will be a valuable opportunity for the Subcommittee members to develop an understanding of the specifics of this week's summit— what expectations are reasonable, what we should realistically expect, and how to measure success.

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