

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نښاد تن من مباد      بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم      از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

FEBRUARY 1, 2019

by MELVIN GOODMAN  
02.02.2019

## ***Russia's Proposal for North Korean Denuclearization: Will It Survive John Bolton?***

The Trump administration is looking askance at what may be a legitimate Russian effort to break the current disarmament deadlock between the United States and North Korea. According to The Washington Post, Russia made a secret proposal to North Korea last fall to advance negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang regarding North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Moscow offered North Korea a nuclear power plant in return for the dismantling of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Russia would operate the nuclear plant and transfer all byproducts and waste back to Russia so that North Korea could not exploit the plant to build nuclear weapons.

The idea of trading off a nuclear power plant for a dismantling of nuclear weaponry is not a new one. President Bill Clinton negotiated an arms control agreement with North Korea in 1994, promising Pyongyang two light-water reactors in return for a nuclear freeze. Construction on the site for the reactors began in the 1990s, but the Pentagon and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission blocked delivery of the reactors. As a result, North Korea eventually walked away from the agreement in the first years of the Bush administration.

In any event, U.S. officials are already dismissing the Russian idea as mere opportunism. The United States blocked previous Russian efforts to play a role in the denuclearization process, particularly during the George W. Bush administration when John Bolton was undersecretary of state for arms control. As the current national security adviser, Bolton

can be expected to block any role for Russia in the disarmament scheme. This is counterproductive!

Unfortunately, the authors of the Post article, John Hudson and Ellen Nakashima, are similarly dismissive of the Russian proposal, linking themselves to the opposition of Bolton and Pompeo. They describe the initiative as a part of Moscow's efforts to reassert itself in "geopolitical flash points from the Middle East to South Asia to Latin America. They make no attempt to explain the long history of the Kremlin's arms control initiatives from the 1950s to the present.

For the past sixty years, Moscow has been a leading proponent of nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology. The seeds of the Sino-Soviet dispute were planted in the 1950s when Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviet Politburo refused to share nuclear technology with Beijing for its budding nuclear weapons program. A decade later, Leonid Brezhnev took an initiative to President Lyndon B. Johnson to begin negotiations for the Nonproliferation Treaty that was signed in 1968. Brezhnev was particularly concerned with the designs of some U.S. policy makers to create a multilateral nuclear force in Europe that would place West Germany's finger on the nuclear button of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

For the past two decades, the Soviet Union/Russia has tried to engage the United States in a serious dialogue to pledge no first use of nuclear weapons and no militarization of outer space, and to help create nuclear-free zones. Moscow broached the subject of no first use as early as the 1960s, hoping to place such pledges in either the Nonproliferation Treaty or the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty of 1972. Moscow made its first unilateral pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons in 1982. China also renounced the first use of nuclear weapons, but the Pentagon has blocked U.S. administrations from given serious consideration to the idea. The Pentagon has tried to block or weaken virtually every arms control proposal for the past fifty years.

More recently, Russia was a signatory to the 2015 Iran nuclear accord, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, to limit Tehran's nuclear weapons industry. In May 2018, Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the accord, although the U.S. intelligence community asserts that Iran is in full compliance.

There is every reason to believe that Trump's "war cabinet," led by Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, will dismiss any Russian effort to be part of a denuclearization proposal for the Korean peninsula. In view of Trump's interest in a nuclear accord with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as well as his interest in improving relations with

Russian President Vladimir Putin, it is possible that Trump will overrule his “war cabinet” and see the advantage of making Russia a stakeholder in disarmament in East Asia.