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Jason Ditz
02.03.2019

After Trump-Kim Summit Ends in Failure, Conflicting Accounts of What Went Wrong

US, North Korea both confident talks will continue Posted on [February 28, 2019](#)[February 28, 2019](#)Categories [News](#)Tags [North Korea](#), [South Korea](#), [Trump](#)

The Hanoi summit between President Trump and Kim Jong Un came to a literally unceremonious end on Thursday, with the closing signing ceremony canceled and talks ending an hour and a half early. President Trump followed this up with a conference declaring that the US had chosen to “walk away.”

He tried not to present this as a failure, and expressed hope that deals would eventually be made in the future. At the same time, he presented future talks as all but assured, while trying to present North Korea’s current position as unreasonable.

But what actually happened? Since Trump’s statement, North Korea and South Korea have both offered their own contradictory reports on what actually happened, and where the talks are going. This gives us three distinct stories on what was offered, what was rejected, and why.

US Version:

According to President Trump, the split came entirely on the basis of North Korea’s demand for “full” sanctions relief. Though he dodged some reporters’ questions seeking specifics, he gave the impression that the North Korean proposal was to close the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, but only for full lifting of all international sanctions. Trump walked away at this point.

Trump said that there was basic agreement to have more talks in the future, and that the US and North Korea would continue to talk until a future meeting.

North Korea’s Version:

Foreign Minister [Ri Yong Ho said Trump’s claim was inaccurate](#). He says North Korea offered to dismantle all its nuclear material production, including everything around Yongbyon, and was only asking for “partial” sanction relief. It was at this point Trump walked away.

Ri was much less hopeful of future talks, saying that North Korea’s position isn’t going to change, and that right now North Korea believes that the US is not ready to make a deal. Subsequent reports from North Korea’s state media, however, [did anticipate future talks would happen](#).

South Korea Says:

Former South Korean Unification Minister Chong se-hyun, however, suggests that neither of these was the real problem. [Instead, John Bolton showed up at the last minute](#), and started demanding that North Korea not only provide a full accounting of its nuclear program's past, but also full accounts of North Korea's chemical and biological weapons to.

Interestingly, this didn't immediately derail the talks, but led North Korea to ask for more sanctions relief in return. It was at that point, apparently, that the US walked away.