



U.S. Officials: North Korea Increasing Nuclear Fuel Production

Despite the fact that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un signed a joint statement with President Trump at the conclusion of their meeting on June 11 pledging denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, several news outlets have reported over the last few days that Pyongyang may be violating that agreement. U.S. officials told NBC News that North Korea has increased its production of fuel for nuclear weapons at multiple secret sites in recent months and that Kim may try to hide those facilities as he seeks more concessions in nuclear talks with the Trump administration.



On June 30, the *Washington Post* reported that the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency “has concluded that North Korean officials are exploring ways to deceive Washington about the number of nuclear warheads and missiles, and the types and numbers of facilities they have, believing that the United States is not aware of the full range of their activities.”

During a White House press conference on July 2, press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said she would not “confirm or deny any of the intelligence reporting that’s out there.” However, she also suggested that North Korea had yet to commit to denuclearization.

“If North Korea makes the decision to denuclearize, their ballistics programs could be dismantled in a year,” Sanders said.

“We’re continuing to make progress,” Sanders said. “There’s great momentum right now.”

At the June 11 news conference in Singapore following his meeting with Kim, Trump said, “Chairman Kim and I just signed a joint statement in which he reaffirms his unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

In view of Sanders’ use of the qualifier “if,” Trump’s optimistic words may have been premature.

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