

# 2nd North Korea-US summit to be held in Hanoi

Another working-level negotiation to be held just before summit.



US State Department Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun prepares to leave South Korea via Incheon International Airport on Feb. 10. (Yonhap News)

Preparations are moving ahead for the second North Korea-US summit. Following an announcement that the summit will be held on Feb. 27-28, Hanoi, Vietnam, has been confirmed as the location of the summit. After a round of working-level negotiations held in Pyongyang from Feb. 6-8, the two sides agreed to meet again in Hanoi shortly before the summit to make final tweaks to the denuclearization

program and corresponding measures. The Blue House indicated that it hopes North Korea and the US will reach a bold agreement, with an official remarking that Seoul doesn't want the summit to result in a "small deal."

Shortly after US President Donald Trump tweeted on Feb. 9 that the second summit would be held in Hanoi on Feb. 27-28, US State Department Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun met with South Korean government officials and politicians to share the results of three days of meetings in Pyongyang with North Korean officials such as Kim Hyok-chol, the State Affairs Commission's Special Representative for US Affairs. Biegun met in turn with South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha; Lee Do-hoon, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs; Chung Eui-yong, director of the Blue House National Security Office; and lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties.

Biegun also attended a luncheon for senior envoys on the North Korean nuclear issue from South Korea, the US and Japan along with Lee Do-hoon and Kenji Kanasugi, director-general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau.

### **Biegun says he had a "candid, complete and very concrete" discussion in Pyongyang**

During his meeting with Kang, Biegun said that his discussion with North Korea had been "productive." During a meeting with Liberty Korea Party (LKP) floor leader Na Kyung-won, Biegun reportedly said that North Korea had engaged more proactively than in the past. Blue House Spokesperson Kim Eui-kyum said on Feb. 10 that Chung Eui-yong had concluded from Biegun's summary of his visit to North Korea that "overall, the North Korea-US talks are going well." Biegun was quoted as saying that he hadn't gone to North Korea to negotiate. "Rather than negotiations in which things are exchanged, Biegun said the two sides had had a beneficial chance for a candid, complete and very concrete discussion about what they're able to exchange," Kim Eui-kyum said. The implication is that the meetings offered the two sides a chance to sound each other out in regard to their core areas of disagreement.

The success of the Hanoi joint statement, therefore, will depend on how much of a meaningful agreement can be reached during the two sides' working-level

negotiations during the approximately two weeks that remain before the summit. “They decided that [Biegun and Kim Hyok-chol’s] next round of negotiations will be held in another Asian country during the week beginning on Feb. 17,” Kim Eui-kyum said. The final working-level negotiations are likely to be held in Hanoi, shortly before the summit.

“We have some hard work to do with the DPRK between now and [the summit]. I’m confident that if both sides stay committed we can make real progress here,” Biegun said.

The US is reportedly asking for a roadmap for North Korea’s total denuclearization and the dismantlement of its nuclear and missile programs, including the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, while North Korea is asking for sanctions to be relaxed. The corresponding measures currently being reviewed by the US, sources say, are an end-of-war declaration, the establishment of a North Korea-US liaison office, and the expansion of humanitarian aid, along with preparations for relaxing sanctions and making a large-scale economic investment once denuclearization is complete.



The Vietnam National Convention Center, where the second North Korea-US summit is most likely to be held

### **Trump promises bright economic future for North Korea**

While Trump announced that the summit would be held in Hanoi, he once again promised a bright future for North Korea: “North Korea, under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, will become a great Economic Powerhouse. [. . .] He may surprise some but he won’t surprise me, because I have gotten to know him & fully understand how capable he is. North Korea will become a different kind of Rocket – an Economic one!”

In connection with this, a key official at the Blue House said that Seoul doesn’t

want the second North Korea-US summit to result in a “small deal.” Rather than a minor swap, the official underlined, the summit should produce an agreement about North Korea’s complete denuclearization and the normalization of relations between the two sides. Kim Eui-kyum announced that the leaders of South Korea and the US would soon be discussing the second summit. The Blue House is preparing for a phone call between Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Kang Kyung-wha and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are also reportedly scheduled to have a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of an upcoming multilateral event.

After spending a week, beginning on Feb. 3, shuttling back and forth between Seoul and Pyongyang, Biegun departed from the Korean Peninsula via Incheon International Airport on Feb. 10. After returning to Washington, DC, Biegun plans to brief Pompeo on the results of his visit to North Korea and to prepare for the next working-level negotiations. By Hwang Joon-bum, Washington correspondent, and Seong Yeon-cheol and Lee Kyung-mi, staff reporters

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