

North Korea Urges Nuclear Talks 'Without Preconditions'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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BEIJING — North Korea's senior nuclear strategist on Wednesday called for a new round of six-nation denuclearization talks without preconditions, a proposal unlikely to gain traction in Washington.

North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan's remarks in Beijing on Wednesday came at a forum marking the 10th anniversary of the talks that have been stalled since the last round in 2008 broke down over how to verify that North Korea was meeting its pledges.

"We are ready to enter the six-party talks without preconditions," Kim said, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported.

U.S. officials have rejected holding new discussions before the North Korea makes a clear commitment to carry out earlier promises to disarm, saying holding new talks that go nowhere would only undermine the six-party framework.

South Korea and Japan are also dubious of such calls. The other two parties to the talks, Russia and China, have been more supportive of getting the dialogue back on track.

Since the breakdown in talks, Pyongyang has ramped up tensions with a third nuclear test and missile launch, prompting a tightening of UN sanctions against the isolated communist regime.

The 10th anniversary forum had been promoted as a way of highlighting the achievements of the negotiations, but there were no immediate signs that it had brought the sides any closer.

The U.S. Embassy in Beijing said it was sending a diplomat to attend only as an observer and said there were no plans to meet with any North Korean representatives.

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