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‘The Devil Is in the Detail’: Russia Reacts to Trump-Kim Summit

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Zuma / TASS

U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held a historic summit Tuesday, with a resulting pledge for North Korea to move toward complete denuclearization, while the United States promised its old foe security guarantees.

Trump and Kim gave few other specifics in a joint statement signed at the end of their summit in Singapore. Several analysts cast doubt on how effective the agreement would prove to be in the long run at getting North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons.

This is how Russian officials reacted to the highly-anticipated meeting:

Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“We commend the U.S. president’s statement following the meeting on the inappropriateness of holding [joint U.S.-South Korean] military exercises during the negotiation process.”

“For our part, we will continue making active efforts to uphold the political and diplomatic process around the Korean peninsula.”

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Sergei Lavrov, foreign minister

“The mere fact of the meeting between the leaders of the United States and North Korea is positive [...] We are following the comments that both sides are making but we have not seen the document yet.”

Sergei Ryabkov, deputy foreign minister

“Now we can only welcome the fact that an important step forward has been made. Of course the devil is in the detail, and we have yet to delve into specifics. But the impulse, as far as we understand, has been given.”

Senator Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Federation Council's Foreign Affairs Committee

“Both leaders are masters of what’s referred to in English as a ‘U-turn,’ which was visible to the naked eye in the weeks of preparations for the summit and will hardly stop there.”

“That’s why there’s no certainty that both sides will immediately rush to build on the Singapore success. Trump’s words that the process of denuclearization on the Korean peninsula will begin ‘very very soon’ is more of a wish than fact.”

Senator Vladimir Dzhabarov, deputy head of the Federation Council Foreign Affairs Committee

“The denuclearization issue is unlikely to be on the agenda yet, because Kim Jong-un remembers too well what happened with [Libya’s Muammar] Qaddafi, [Iraq’s Saddam] Hussein, other heads of state. That’s why nuclear weapons is his security guarantee.”

Reuters contributed reporting.

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