

North Korea Would Hold Talks if South Korea Supports Peace Treaty with US

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North Korea is said to be willing to hold ministerial talks with South Korea if the South allows and supports a peace treaty between Pyongyang and Washington. Besides, the North seems to have a plan to freeze its nuclear program and ultimately discuss the issue of Korean reunification. In other words, North Korea has clearly set its policy not to respond to South Korea's proposal to hold inter-Korean military and Red Cross talks as long as the South keeps its stance as in the past.

According to influential Korean and Chinese sources familiar with North Korea's information on Monday, North Korea is ready to respond to inter-Korean talks at any time. But the biggest obstacle seems to be the fact that there aren't much benefits in return to attract North Korea. Y, who served as a senior official in Liaoning provincial government situated on the China-North Korea border, said,

"North Korea is not opposed to inter-Korean dialogue itself. It wouldn't want to talk for nothing."

He said it's obvious that North Korea rejected the South's recent proposal for military talks. He claimed that the North Korea might accept the South's offer if the South shows a positive attitude toward signing of Pyongyang-Washington peace agreement, saying,

"I recently met a senior official of the North Korean Embassy. He talked about a precondition to the talks. It was South Korea's acceptance and support for conclusion of Pyongyang-Washington peace treaty."

K, a Korean source who recently contacted a number of North Korean senior officials staying in Beijing and Dandong, had a similar opinion.

"On the surface, North Korea claims that it is not open to dialogue because the South refused to repatriate 13 North Koreans restaurant workers who it claimed were abducted by South Korea. However, if South Korea does not oppose the North Korea-U.S. peace treaty, it is expected to pass the problem. I was also asked to deliver this position to the authorities," he said. "North Korean high-ranking officials in China insist that there is no reason to seek a nuclear program if a North Korea-U.S. peace treaty is signed. The ultimate goal of North Korea is normalization of the US-North Korea diplomacy through a

peace treaty and guarantee of its system.”

According to the source, since some of North Korean officials revealed that the North would be able to hold ministerial talks if the atmosphere heightens, it's clear that North Korea has adopted a bold strategy to link the North Korea-U.S. peace agreement with the inter-Korean talks. This means that South Korea should be free from its existing framework in order to resume inter-Korean conversation.

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