



[The North Korean Regime Breaks Its Silence with a Fiery Message to the United States](#)

In its first public comments since President Biden was elected and inaugurated, the North Korean regime warned the new U.S. administration against antagonizing it. The comments from Kim Yo-jong, the sister of leader Kim Jong-un, coincided with the beginning of joint military drills between the United States and South Korea. North Korea has long decried these drills, calling them “the preparation for an invasion.” In criticizing the drills, Kim Yo-jong said that if the United States “wants to sleep in peace for the coming four years, it had better refrain from causing a stink at its first step.” After entering office, high-level officials from the Biden administration reportedly reached out to North Korea through intermediaries, but received no response. The hostile rhetoric from North Korea comes as Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin are in Asia for meetings with Japanese and South Korean officials, with the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula a topic of discussion.

After taking office, the Biden administration launched a thorough review of policy toward North Korea. Included in this review were the views of several stakeholders, including South Korea and Japan. Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has long been a bipartisan goal of the United States, and successive presidential administrations have worked to accomplish this. The Trump administration successfully engaged North Korea on several issues, which culminated in a historic summit back in 2019 in Hanoi. However, talks between the countries broke down after the United States refused to remove sanctions on North Korea in exchange for the dismantling of some of its nuclear armory.

President Biden reportedly sought to open a dialogue with North Korea in the early stages of his presidency, but efforts to communicate with the reclusive country were met with silence. Instead, the first that the Biden administration heard from North Korea was threats over joint military exercises with South Korea. Additionally, Biden is expected to formalize his policy toward North Korea in the coming days, and analysts have noted that Pyongyang could be seeking to influence the direction of this policy. Despite the bellicose rhetoric, it is thought that North Korea appreciated the rapprochement policies deployed by President Trump, and could be seeking a continuation of this. Kim Jong-un has shown a willingness in previous negotiations to acquiesce to some demands made by the United States and South Korea, although he has been steadfast in demanding the end of American sanctions and joint military drills before any denuclearization can take place.

North Korea’s statements have complicated the Asia trip that Secretaries Blinken and Austin are currently on. The two cabinet officials are due to meet with their counterparts from Japan and South Korea, and policy toward North Korea was scheduled to be a priority on the agenda. North Korea has frequently accused South Korea of destabilizing relations between the countries, and warned that any actions it took were in retaliation to aggression from Seoul. However, South Korea is staunchly backed by the United States and has not taken any aggressive steps toward its northern neighbor. Blinken and Austin will likely be tasked with assuring policymakers in Tokyo and Seoul that the United States remains a capable partner in seeking to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.