

# *North Korea calls U.S. secretary of state poisonous as denuclearization talks fall apart*

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Pyongyang, August 24 (RHC)-- North Korea's foreign minister has called U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo a "diehard toxin" and "poisonous" to diplomacy between the two countries. Ri Yong-ho said that Pompeo only complicates denuclearisation talks between Washington and Pyongyang.

Talks have stalled since a failed second summit between Donald Trump and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, in Hanoi in February. The U.S. president and Kim met again in June at the inter-Korean border and agreed to reopen working-level negotiations, but that has not happened.

Since the Vietnam summit, North Korea has demanded that Pompeo be replaced with a "more mature" person, while lauding the rapport built between Kim and Trump. The North Korean foreign minister, Ri Yong-ho, who took part in the Hanoi summit along with Pompeo, called the chief U.S. negotiator someone who employs "hackneyed sanctions rhetoric."

Ri referred to Pompeo's remarks in recent press interviews in which he said sanctions would be kept until North Korea took concrete actions on denuclearisation. "He is truly impudent enough to utter such thoughtless words which only leave us disappointed and sceptical as to whether we can solve any

problem with such a guy,” Ri said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

Ri also accused Pompeo of casting “dark shadows” over the talks and being more interested in his political ambitions than in US foreign policy. “If the U.S. still dreams a pipe dream of gaining everything through sanctions, we are left with two options, either to leave it enjoying the dream to its heart’s content or to wake it up from the dream,” Ri said. “We are ready for both dialogue and standoff.”

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