White House expresses optimism on Xi-Kim talk

2018-03-29

By Zhao Huanxin in Washington |   
 China Daily USA |  
 Updated: 2018-03-29 23:45

The White House on Wednesday expressed cautious optimism about the first visit to China by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea leader Kim Jong-un, an event that some analysts said has underscored China's role in the settlement of the nuclear issue on the peninsula.  
"We're going to be cautiously optimistic, but we feel like things are moving in the right direction and the meeting yesterday was a good indication that the maximum pressure campaign has been working," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said on Wednesday.  
During his unofficial visit to Beijing from Sunday to Wednesday, Kim met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who said that China calls on all parties to support the improvement of inter-Korean ties and take concrete efforts to facilitate peace talks.  
China will continue to play a constructive role on the issue and work with all parties, including the DPRK, toward the thaw of the situation on the peninsula, Xi said, according to Xinhua.  
Kim said it is his country's "consistent stand to be committed to denuclearization on the peninsula" and the DPRK is willing to have dialogue with the United States and hold a summit of the two countries.  
The reported commitment by the DPRK to denuclearization was welcomed by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.  
"He views the latest positive developments as the start of a longer process of sincere dialogue, leading to sustainable peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula," the UN chief's spokesman Farhan Haq said in a statement.  
"Now there is a good chance that Kim Jong Un will do what is right for his people and for humanity," Trump tweeted. "Look forward to our meeting!"  
Ryan Hass, a senior fellow at the John L. Thornton China Center of the Brookings Institute, said that with the Xi-Kim meeting, "Beijing reasserted itself as a central actor in managing security issues in Northeast Asia."  
The visit gave the impression of a White House that was caught off guard rather than leading international efforts to confront North Korea and push it toward denuclearization, Hass said in an analysis on Wednesday.  
South Korea's daily newspaper The Hankyoreh said the visit has sent a positive signal — China's constructive role is indispensable in the settlement of the nuclear issue through the inter-Korean and DPRK-US summits and the construction of a system enjoying lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, according to Xinhua.  
"As this trip represents Kim's first known sojourn outside of the country to meet a foreign head of state, it suggests that the North Korean leader may not be averse to traveling outside of the country (perhaps even overseas) for a summit with the US president," said Victor Cha, Senior Adviser and Korea Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in a commentary co-authored with Sue Mi Terry, a senior fellow at the CSIS.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201803/29/WS5abd0a1da3105cdcf65152c4.html