

As the president prepares for nuclear talks, he lacks a close adviser with nuclear expertise. It's one example of a marginalization of science in shaping federal policy.

By **Coral Davenport**

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WASHINGTON — As President Trump prepares to meet Kim Jong-un of North Korea to negotiate denuclearization, a challenge that has bedeviled the world for years, he is doing so without the help of a White House science adviser or senior counselor trained in nuclear physics.

Mr. Trump is the first president since 1941 not to name a science adviser, a position created during World War II to guide the Oval Office on technical matters ranging from nuclear warfare to global pandemics. As a businessman and president, Mr. Trump has proudly been guided by his instincts. Nevertheless, people who have participated in past nuclear negotiations say the absence of such high-level expertise could put him at a tactical disadvantage in one of the weightiest diplomatic matters of his presidency.

“You need to have an empowered senior science adviser at the table,” said R. Nicholas Burns, who led negotiations with India over a civilian nuclear deal during the George W. Bush administration. “You can be sure the other side will have that.”

Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, attending a performance in Pyongyang last year honoring nuclear scientists and technicians. Korean Central News Agency

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