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Trump roils oil markets in pulling out of Iran nuclear deal



Inside C2

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Europeans work to save Iran deal, and business, after Trump pulls out

WASHINGTON/PARIS (Reuters) - Dismayed European allies sought to salvage the international nuclear pact and preserve their business with Iran on Wednesday after President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the landmark accord and ordered sanctions reimposed on Tehran.

"The deal is not dead. There's an American withdrawal from the deal but the deal is still there," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said.

But Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, a pragmatist who helped engineered the 2015 deal to ease Iran's economically crippling isolation, told French counterpart Emmanuel Macron in a phone call that Europe had only a "limited opportunity" to preserve the pact, the Iranian Students' News Agency reported.

Macron, who like other European leaders had lobbied Trump to keep the agreement signed before he took office, urged Rouhani to keep respecting the deal and consider broader negotiations.

Trump said on Tuesday he would revive U.S. economic sanctions, which would penalize foreign firms doing business with Tehran, to undermine what he called "a horrible, one-sided deal that should have never, ever been made".

On Wednesday, he said Iran would now either negotiate or "something will happen." It was not immediately clear what actions he was suggesting would take place.

Iran has drafted a "proportional" plan to cope with the U.S. move, the official news agency IRNA quoted government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht as saying. He said budgets had been drawn up to deal with various scenarios, though did not elaborate.

The fruit of more than a decade of diplomacy, the nuclear agreement was clinched in July 2015 by the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Russia, China and Iran.

It was designed to prevent Iran developing a nuclear bomb in return for the removal of sanctions that had crippled its economy, not least by Washington threatening to penalize businesses anywhere in the world that traded with Iran. "We're at a point now where big data is helping optimize inspection programs, so we don't have to send guys into the field," King said.



Trump delivers remarks on his intentions regarding the Iran nuclear deal at the White House

Drones and crawlers may be a stepping stone. Norwegian oil producer Statoil is eyeing an unmanned, remotely operated production concept. Noble Drilling and General Electric Co this year launched a partnership to produce a fully digitized drilling vessel, work the companies said paves the way for an autonomous drilling fleet. "We have the technology. It's just a matter of getting these projects executed. We're not there yet on unmanned platforms for deepwater, but it's coming," said Statoil's Lockhart.

France's Le Drian, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) all said Iran was honoring its commitments under the accord. "The region deserves better than further destabilization provoked by American withdrawal," Le Drian said. Later on Wednesday, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis sought to allay concerns that Washington had alienated itself from close allies with Trump's decision. "We will continue to work alongside our allies and partners to ensure that Iran can never acquire a nuclear weapon, and will work with others to address the range of Iran's malign influence," Mattis told a U.S. Senate hearing.

‘Yeah, I was there!’: HOUstorical events that Houstonians brag about experiencing

By Craig Hlavaty

“It will never flood this bad again,” Houstonians said 17 years ago.

There exist a handful of major events in Houston history that have united our rag tag population. Some of them are scary and harrowing like floods and hurricanes, testing the strength and sanity of a city’s people.

Depending on their vintage, natives can tell you where they were when Carla, Alicia, Ike and Harvey hit Houston, or what they were doing when Tropical Storm Allison set down over Houston for a few days in 2001 and caused havoc.

Then there are the joyous occasions, where we collectively celebrate, rejoice and a hug a stranger. That might be a sports championship, a major team win, a great cultural moment, or simply witnessing something magical happen that will never be seen again.

We will never get to hear Marvin Zindler talk about a fancy foodie place in Montrose getting dinged for “slime in the ice machine” or hear Milo Hamilton cheer over a “Springer Dinger” either. But those who experienced Houston with those two will remember them forever.

How many of us will sit around a bar after a few and wax poetic about the best concert we ever saw in Houston? Was it Selena at the Dome during rodeo? Or maybe it was Nirvana at the Astroarena.

Houston had one of those big moments just last October when we all stayed up way past our bedtimes to see the Astros finally win Game 5 of the World Series in extra innings. The lack of sleep united us and made the

party after Game 7 just a few days later all the more sweet.

It doesn’t need to be a landmark event like a big game or a fearsome hurricane either.

Some of us remember relatively minor events that led to much bigger things. Where we were when we first noticed J.J. Watt doing amazing things on the field at NRG Stadium?

What did you think when you saw that first post-sack salute? Did you think that one day he would raise over \$30 million for the city?

“If you weren’t here, man, you just don’t get it.”



Trump roils oil markets in pulling out of Iran nuclear deal

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump announced Tuesday he was pulling the United States from the Iran nuclear deal and reinstating sanctions, curbing supply from the Middle East at a time oil prices at their highest level in three years.

Oil prices had been climbing steadily for weeks in anticipation of the announcement, with analysts warning of a more severe price spike should Trump carry through. Oil, which fell Tuesday after settling above \$70 a barrel Monday, quickly reversed its losses after Trump's announcement.

With crude production near 4 million barrels a day - the equivalent of Texas - Iran is the world's sixth largest oil producer, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

But only a fraction of that supply is expected to come offline. Trump has so far failed to win over his counterparts in Asia, some of whom, including China and India, have signaled they plan to continue to import Iranian crude despite U.S. sanctions.

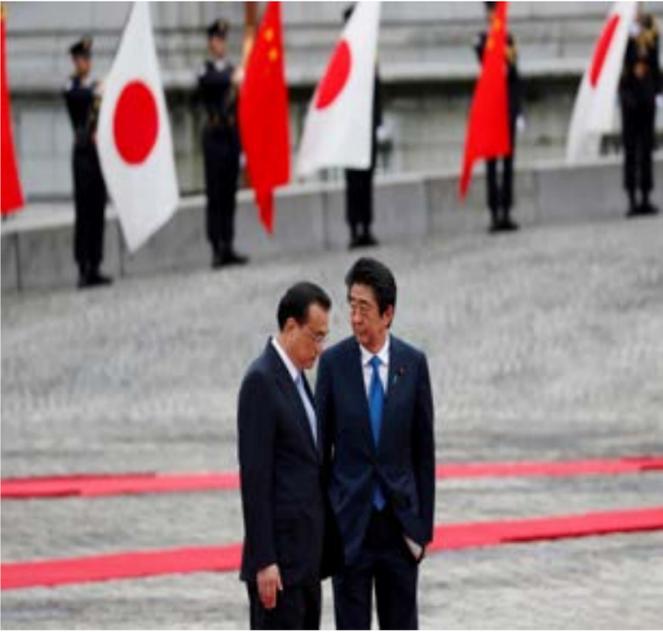
“This time, we don't think it will be anywhere near as successful as it was in 2012,” Edward Morse, global head of commodities research at Citi, told CNBC, referring to sanctions imposed against Iran by the Obama administration.

With crude prices rising and producers within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries pledging to limit supply, shale drillers in Texas and elsewhere in the United States are expected to jump in to fill the void left by Iran.

“Any additional supply will fall on the shoulders of U.S. producers. Something I'm sure they are happy to hear,” Dan Eberhart, CEO of Denver-based oil field services firm Canary LLC, said in an email.

Analysts are projecting between 300,000 and 500,000 barrels of crude will be removed from the market in the months ahead, enough to raise prices but not enough to cause a sustained spike. “The market's initial reaction is likely to overshoot (although current sentiment has probably priced in at least a portion of the sanctions risk already),” wrote Frank Verrastro and Kevin Book, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in report last week. “The magnitude and duration of the increase, however, will more likely be determined by the details.”

Editor's Choice



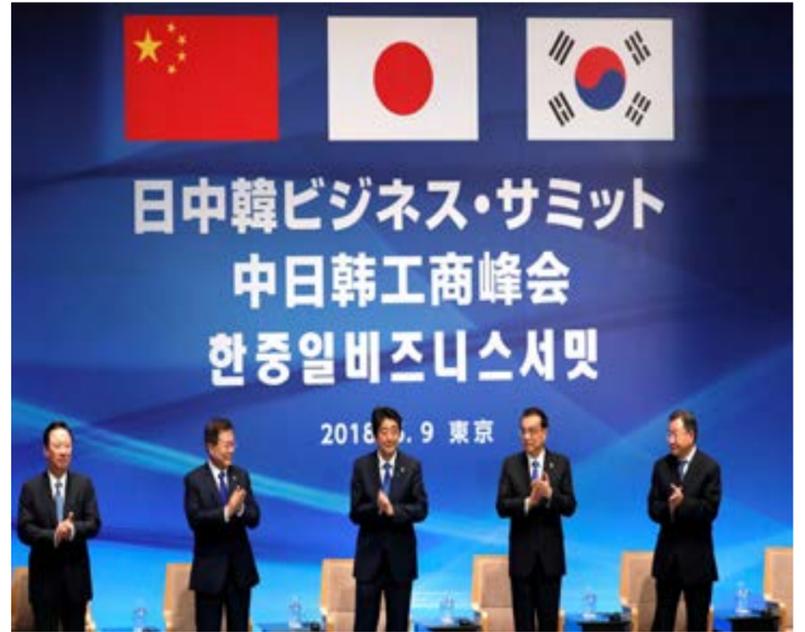
Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attends a welcome ceremony with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe before their bilateral meeting at Akasaka Palace state guest house in Tokyo



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un meets with China's President Xi Jinping, in Dalian, China in this undated photo released on May 9, 2018 by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)



Soccer Football - Coupe de France Final - Les Herbiers VF vs Paris St Germain



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, South Korea's President Moon Jae-in and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attend the 6th JAPAN-CHINA-KOREA Business Summit in Tokyo



Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un meet in Dalian



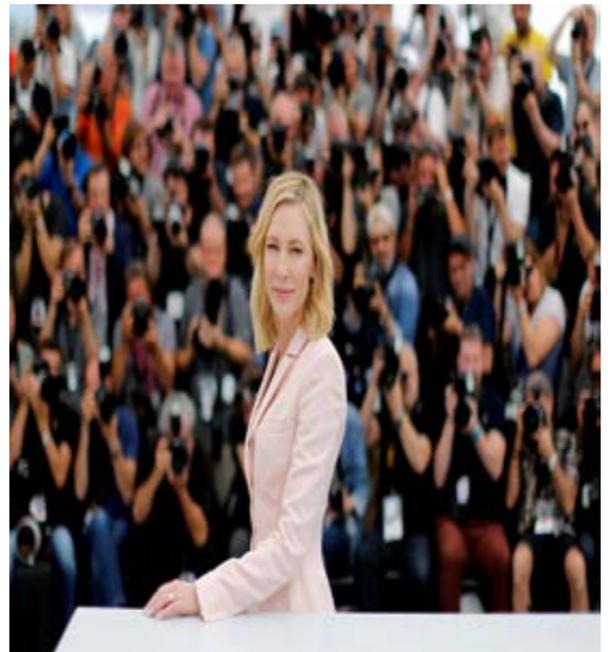
Veterans sing inside the retro train named Pobeda during the Victory Day celebrations in the far eastern city of Vladivostok



WTA Mandatory - Madrid Open



2018 IIHF World Championships



71st Cannes Film Festival - Photocall of the jury

Quiet Teen Who Rescued 17 In Harvey Flooding Wins National Citizen Hero Award

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A Texas teenager is getting some serious recognition for rescuing 17 people from Harvey's floodwaters.

Virgil Smith of Dickinson is **among the five** citizens chosen this year to receive the Citizen Honors Award by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

Last year, a 13-year-old Smith used his air mattress to rescue 17 neighbors trapped due to high water.

In an interview with ABC 13, the young hero said he received a call from one of his neighbors asking for help because his family couldn't swim.

Smith didn't hesitate. During his first rescue mission, he saved his entire friend's family by putting them on the air mattress and pushing them to safety with the help of two other neighbors, all while swimming in Harvey's floodwaters.

But Smith didn't stop there and went on to rescue several others, including a woman in a wheelchair.

"I thank God that no snakes or no alligators bit us," Smith told ABC 13.



At first glance, Virgil Smith looks and acts like a typical 13-year old — a soft-spoken, sports-obsessed Texans and Rockets fan who loves playing "NBA2K" online with friends.

But the raging floodwaters of Hurricane Harvey turned this shy teenager into a "citizen hero."

When Virgil's hometown of Dickinson, about 30 miles southeast of downtown Houston, was drenched in the wee hours of Sunday, Aug. 27, he was locked in an online video game matchup with his friend Keshawn. The rain and thunder outside provided a noisy soundtrack to their competition, but Virgil paid the weather little mind.

"I checked out my window first and I was like, 'Nah, it ain't nothing,'" Virgil recalled in a recent interview. "It was raining but didn't look like nothing that would flood. Then, in about an hour, the



Virgil Smith, 13, of Dickinson, is one of five recipients who received the Citizen Honors Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society shown Thursday, March 15, 2018, in Hitchcock. During Hurricane Harvey, he used an air mattress to rescue 17 trapped neighbors. (Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle)

whole apartment just got flooded super quick."

Water poured in after Virgil's mother, Lisa Wallace, opened the front door of the family's first-floor apartment. In a panic, Wallace, Virgil and his older sister, Diamond, grabbed as many things as they could and got out, the water rising to nearly above their heads. Two men helped Lisa up nearby stairs to a neighbor's apartment on the second floor, while Virgil swam with his sister to the stairs.



When Virgil reached the top step, though, he received a cellphone call from Keshawn, pleading for help. Keshawn and his family were stranded by floodwaters in their apartment, about 50 yards away and across the courtyard. Virgil raced down the stairs back to his apartment

and sprang into action. Wading through water that was up to his head, Virgil went to a closet and grabbed a full-sized air mattress that his family used for guests and swam with it in the darkness toward the back door of Keshawn's apartment.

"The water started getting higher, so we went outside to see if we could see something and we saw (Virgil) swimming around," Keshawn later told the online TV program "SoulPancake."

Virgil dragged the air mattress to the back window of Keshawn's building and began lifting members of his friend's family onto the air mattress one by one — Keshawn and his two sisters, his brother and baby brother, as well as his mom and stepdad.



The two men who had helped Virgil's mother now assisted him in steering the

air mattress full of neighbors back to the stairs on the other side of the courtyard, where they went up to the second-floor apartment.

By the time the floodwaters had filled with debris, making it unsafe for swimming, Virgil had helped 17 people to safety, swimming with the air mattress in tow to get them to higher ground.

News of his actions ultimately reached the Medal of Honor Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, which awarded Virgil one of its five annual Citizen Hero awards.

The field of 20 finalists included two other Texans: Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale of Houston, a mattress business owner who sheltered Harvey victims, and Stephen Willeford of Sutherland Springs, who helped take down the gunman responsible for 26 killings at First Baptist Church in November.

To Virgil, though, his actions were no big deal.

"It was my friends and family," Virgil said nonchalantly, almost shrugging. "I wasn't afraid of drowning or nothing."



Virgil's heroic acts stunned his mother, who watched from the top of the stairs as her asthmatic son dragged the air mattress back and forth.

"It amazed me, but I know he can swim," Wallace said. "He's been swimming since he was 7, so I knew that wasn't a problem. I had a little fear, but once we got to those stairs, that was it. I gave it to God and left it there."

After ferrying several groups to safety, Virgil was nearly spent. Fire ants were crawling all over him, and his stamina

was beginning to wane.

Suddenly, a beam of light flashed from across the street, roughly 70 yards away, and Virgil heard a scream. With little time to think, he plunged back into the floodwaters with the mattress, swimming furiously toward the light.

An elderly woman in a wheelchair and her grandson had waved a flashlight from their submerged apartment.



Virgil Smith, 13, of Dickinson, who has been recognized with several awards, is one of five recipients who will receive the Citizen Honors Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society shown Thursday, March 15, 2018, in Hitchcock. During Hurricane Harvey, he used an air mattress to rescue 17 trapped neighbors. (Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle)

Virgil swam to the apartment, the mattress beginning to wilt from the weight of its previous passengers. Virgil broke the apartment window to get to the woman, the water nearly clearing her head as she sat frozen in panic. Her grandson was having a seizure, so Virgil helped calm him before piling both of them and their small dog, locked in a crate, onto the air mattress. He got them all back to the second-floor apartment, his final rescue mission complete.

"About 10 minutes after that," Virgil recalled, "my air mattress burst."

While his actions during Harvey demonstrate courage beyond his years, Virgil is not impervious to fear. To receive his Citizen Hero award, Virgil and his mother will have to fly to Washington, D.C., for the ceremony Friday. The teen has never set foot on an airplane.

"Yeah," he said with a sheepish grin, "I'm kind of scared of that." (<https://www.expressnews.com/news/local>)



North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, arriving in Dalian, China, on Monday. (Photo/Korean Central News Agency/Reuters)

DALIAN, China — The leaders of China and North Korea met for the second time in two months on Tuesday, staying overnight in this Chinese port city as China worked to regain control in the fast-moving diplomacy over the North's nuclear program.

The North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, flew to Dalian on Monday, where he held long rounds of discussions with Chinese officials, attended a formal banquet, and took a stroll on a beachfront sidewalk with China's president, Xi Jinping. The pageantry was shown at length on China's state-run evening television news, with the two men looking like friends, if rather stiff ones.

The Chinese leader appeared intent on showing that the frayed relationship with North Korea was now repaired, and that China was as important to resolving the problems of North Korea's nuclear weapons as the United States



American Prisoners Held In North Korea On Their Way Home After Pompeo Visit, Trump Says

(Fox News -Wednesday, May 9, 2018) - Three American prisoners held in North Korea have been released and are en route to the U.S. after a surprise diplomatic mission by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, President Trump announced Wednesday.

Pompeo is returning with the Americans, said to be in "good health," after a brief visit to Pyongyang. Trump said he plans to greet them at Andrews Air Force Base when they arrive outside Washington.

"I am pleased to inform you that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is in the air and on his way back from North Korea with the 3 wonderful gentlemen that everyone is looking so forward to meeting," Trump tweeted, referring to the prisoners. "They seem to be

Kim Jong Un's Second Surprise Visit To China Heightens Diplomatic Drama

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

in good health."



Donald J. Trump

✓ @realDonaldTrump

I am pleased to inform you that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is in the air and on his way back from North Korea with the 3 wonderful gentlemen that everyone is looking so forward to meeting. They seem to be in good health. Also, good meeting with Kim Jong Un. Date & Place set.

7:30 AM - May 9, 2018



Donald J. Trump

✓ @realDonaldTrump

Secretary Pompeo and his "guests" will be landing at Andrews Air Force Base at 2:00 A.M. in the morning. I will be there to greet them. Very exciting!

7:35 AM - May 9, 2018

Pompeo told reporters during the initial leg of the flight to Japan that he's "thrilled" to have the Americans back. Trump also said that a date and location have now been set for his meeting with Kim Jong Un.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement that Trump "appreciates leader Kim Jong Un's action to release these American citizens, and views this as a positive gesture of goodwill."

President Trump has said he will meet with Mr. Kim in the coming weeks, and tweeted hours after the meeting in Dalian that he expected to talk shortly on the phone with Mr. Xi about North Korea, as well as trade.

A Chinese statement, which was issued on behalf of both leaders after Mr. Kim left, showed the differences between the Trump administration on the one hand, and China and North Korea on the other, over the question of how to rid the North of its nuclear weapons.

It envisioned a far more drawn-out process for the denuclearization of North Korea than the demands of the Trump administration, which has talked about dismantling the North's arsenal in six months to a year.



Kim Jong Un meeting with President Xi Jinping of China in Dalian. Photo/Xinhua/AP)

Mr. Kim wanted "phased and synchronous measures in a responsible manner" and hoped to "eventually achieve denuclearization and lasting peace on the peninsula," the Chinese statement said.

The statement said Mr. Kim expressed his "gratitude to China for its longstanding and significant contribution in realizing denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula," phrasing that seemed to extol China's role in hosting talks among six countries on North Korea's nuclear weapons in the mid-2000s. Those talks fell apart, and the Trump administration has been scathing about them.

North Korea's bare-bones economy — which has been long kept afloat by China, but is now being pummeled by United Nations sanctions — featured in the Dalian talks, the statement said. Mr. Kim told the Chinese that he wanted to develop his economy, a move that China said it supported.

Chinese analysts speculated that Mr. Kim asked Mr. Xi for relief from the rounds of tough sanctions for which China grudgingly voted last year, at the urging of the United States. Those sanctions have drained the North's foreign-exchange reserves.

Mr. Kim recently met the South Korean president, Moon Jae-in, who is eager to help the North with economic aid, although within the bounds of the United Nations sanctions. That meeting gave the North Korean leader new leverage with Mr. Xi.

In essence, Mr. Kim can say that if China does not help ease the North's economic pain, South Korea will.



South Korean President Moon Jae-in, left, and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, right, on April 15, 2017.

Mr. Xi was joined in the talks by Wang Huning, one of his close aides, as well as others from the Communist Party hierarchy, and

Mr. Kim brought a large retinue of officials, including his foreign minister, Ri Yong-ho. Chinese television footage showed the two delegations seated at a long table during formal discussions, with Mr. Xi doing most of the talking.

The flight from the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, to Dalian is under one hour. Even so, the surprise arrival of Mr. Kim was a departure from protocol, which the Chinese usually take pride in following to the letter, said a Chinese analyst, Cheng Xiaohe. After Mr. Kim's visit to Beijing at the end of March — his first foreign visit after being in power since 2011 — it was Mr. Xi's turn to travel to Pyongyang.

Mr. Xi was expected to wait to go to the North Korean capital until after Mr. Trump's summit with Mr. Kim. But under that schedule, Mr. Xi would have not seen Mr. Kim again until the end of June or July.

It is without modern precedent for a leader to come to China on back-to-back visits as Mr. Kim has done, Mr. Cheng said. "This second meeting demonstrated that North Korea wanted China to play a larger role in the denuclearization process," said Mr. Cheng, a professor at Renmin University. "When Kim enters the meeting with Trump, he will feel more confident, simply his positions on a variety of issues were consulted and sanctioned by the Chinese leader."



North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, taking a stroll on a beachfront sidewalk in Dalian, China, with China's president, Xi Jinping.

But some Chinese analysts said the warmth between the two leaders on display in Dalian — they sat for a while in wicker arm chairs on a bucolic outdoor terrace — should not be overstated. Mr. Kim retains a streak of independence, they said.

"North Korea was never a vassal state," said Shi Yinhong, also a professor at Renmin University. It is even less of one now that the United States has agreed to deal with Mr.

Kim, he said.

Like Mr. Kim's visit to Beijing in March, his visit to Dalian was kept under wraps. But early Tuesday afternoon, the Japanese news service Kyodo reported that a plane from the North Korean carrier Air Koryo was at Dalian's airport. Security at the airport was tight Tuesday afternoon, with flights canceled between 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Chinese officials will be heading to Tokyo for meetings on Wednesday with South Korean and Japanese counterparts as part of the recent burst of diplomacy over North Korea. Japan, the host of the talks, has been pushing the United States to continue a tough line against Pyongyang.

North Korean state news media on Tuesday criticized Japan for continuing to support tough sanctions against the North, with Rodong Sinmun, the country's official newspaper, calling it "tantamount to throwing cold water over easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula."



"If Japan-North Korea relations are normalized, that would greatly contribute to peace and security in Northeast Asia beyond the Korean Peninsula," South Korea's president Moon Jae-in said in written remarks.

But Mr. Moon, who as South Korea's leader has pushed for engagement with Pyongyang, urged Japan to consider normalizing ties with North Korea.

"I think dialogue between Japan and North Korea should be resumed," Mr. Moon said in an interview Tuesday with the Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun.

"If Japan-North Korea relations are normalized, that would greatly contribute to peace and security in Northeast Asia beyond the Korean Peninsula," he said in written answers to questions submitted by the newspaper.

Dalian was also the site of a 2010 meeting between Mr. Kim's father, Kim Jong-il, and Li Keqiang, China's premier.

Mr. Kim, apparently not as fearful of flying as his father, traveled by plane on his latest trip to Beijing. On his earlier visit to Beijing, he travelled to China by a slow-moving train, as his father had done. (Courtesy nytimes.com)