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China inspires SCO's growth as it enters new era

Inside C2

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Trump upbeat ahead of North Korean summit; Kim visits Singapore sites

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday his historic summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore could "work out very nicely" as officials from both countries sought to narrow differences on how to end a nuclear stand-off on the Korean peninsula.

Kim, one of the world's most reclusive leaders, made an evening tour of sites on Singapore's waterfront, on the eve of the summit that is due to get underway on Tuesday morning at a nearby resort island.

While Trump was optimistic about prospects for the summit between the old foes, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo injected a note of caution ahead of the first-ever meeting of sitting U.S. and North Korean leaders, saying it remained to be seen whether Kim was sincere about his willingness to denuclearize.

Officials from the two sides held last-minute talks aimed at laying the groundwork for a meeting that was almost unthinkable just months ago when the two leaders were exchanging insults and threats that raised fears of war.

But after a flurry of diplomatic overtures eased tension in recent months, the two leaders are now headed for a history-making handshake that U.S. officials hope could eventually lead to the dismantling of a North Korean nuclear program that threatens the United States.

Offering a preview to reporters, Pompeo said it could provide "an unprecedented opportunity to change the trajectory of our relationship and bring peace and prosperity" to North Korea.

However, he played down the possibility of a quick breakthrough and said the summit should set the framework for "the hard work that will follow", insisting that North Korea had to move toward complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation.

North Korea, though, has shown little appetite for surrendering nuclear weapons it considers vital to the survival of Kim's dynastic rule.

Sanctions on North Korea would remain in place until that had happened, Pompeo said. "If diplomacy does not move in the right direction ... those measures will increase."

"North Korea has previously confirmed to us its willingness to denuclearize and we are eager to see if those words prove sincere," he said.

The White House later said discussions with North Korea had moved "more quickly than expected" and Trump would leave Singapore on Tuesday night, after the summit. He had earlier been scheduled to leave on Wednesday.

Kim is due to leave on Tuesday afternoon, a source involved in the planning of his visit said on Sunday.

Kim was not believed to have left his hotel since a meeting with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong soon after his arrival in the city on Sunday, but he ventured out on Monday evening.

The Swiss-educated leader, who is believed to be 34, has not left his isolated country since taking office in 2011 other than to visit China and the South Korean side of the border Demilitarized Zone, which separates the two Koreas.

His first stop was a waterfront park with futuristic installations, Gardens by the Bay, which boasts the largest glass greenhouse and tallest indoor waterfall in the world.

He joined Singapore's foreign minister, Vivian Balakrishnan, who took a selfie, before stopping at the Marina Bay Sands hotel, which resembles a giant surfboard perched on three tall columns, for a look out over the bright lights of the city from its rooftop garden and swimming pool.

On the way back to his hotel, Kim walked along a promenade near the Merlion, a giant statue, and fountain, of a mythical creature, half lion, half fish - Singapore's unofficial mascot.

The rare public appearance of Kim, waving and smiling to onlook-



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un visits Merlion Park in Singapore

ers, adds to the more affable image of the young leader that has emerged since his summit in April with South Korean leader Moon Jae-in.

Just a few months ago, Kim was an international pariah accused of ordering the killing of his uncle, a half-brother and scores of officials suspected of disloyalty.

Former U.S. National Basketball Association star Dennis Rodman arrived in Singapore late on Monday for the summit, saying he was "excited to be part of it", although there has been no indication he would be involved in any official talks.

"It should go fairly well, but people should not expect so much for the first time," Rodman told reporters at the airport.

"The doors are opening."

'INTERESTING MEETING'

Trump arrived in Singapore on Sunday after a blow-up over trade with other members of the Group of Seven major industrialized nations that cast a cloud over his efforts to score a major foreign policy win in the nuclear talks.

Although gaps remain over what denuclearisation would entail, Trump sounded a positive note in a lunch meeting with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee.

"We've got a very interesting meeting ... tomorrow, and I just think it's going to work out very nicely," Trump said.

It was a far cry from last year when Trump threatened North Korea with "fire and fury" and mocked Kim as "little rocket man," and Kim denounced the U.S. president as the "mentally deranged U.S. dotard."

Trump and Kim are staying in separate hotels less than a kilometer apart in the famous Orchard Road area of Singapore, dotted with high-rise luxury apartment blocks, offices and glittering shopping malls.

Commenting for the first time on the summit, North

Korea's state-run KCNA news agency said the two sides would exchange "wide-ranging and profound views" to re-set relations. It heralded the summit as part of a "changed era". Discussions would focus on "the issue of building a permanent and durable peace-keeping mechanism on the Korean peninsula, the issue of realizing the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and other issues of mutual concern", KCNA said.

In the lead up to the summit, North Korea rejected any unilateral nuclear disarmament, and KCNA's reference to denuclearisation of the peninsula has historically meant it wants the United States to remove its "nuclear umbrella" protecting South Korea and Japan.

RISK

The White House said Trump would hold a one-on-one meeting with Kim on Tuesday on the small island of Sentosa. The two will later be joined by officials and have lunch together.

Many experts on North Korea, one of the most insular and unpredictable countries in the world, remain skeptical Kim will ever completely abandon nuclear weapons. They believe Kim's engagement is aimed at getting the United States to ease the crippling sanctions that have squeezed the impoverished country.

Kelsey Davenport, director for Nonproliferation Policy at the Arms Control Association, said there were signs that the gaps between the two sides were narrowing but there was also risk.

"Trump is likely to declare the summit a victory irrespective of the outcome, but if the two sides fail to reach a common understanding of denuclearisation it will put at risk any process that the summit kicks off," he said.

"The process could be doomed before it begins."

Trump initially touted the potential for a grand bargain with North Korea to rid itself of a nuclear missile program that has advanced rapidly to threaten the United States.

But he has since lowered expectations, backing away from an original demand for North Korea's swift denuclearisation.

He has said the talks would be more about starting a relationship with Kim for a negotiating process that would take more than one summit.

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Spotlight: China inspires SCO's growth as it enters new era

QINGDAO, China, June 8 (Xinhua) -- Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are traveling to this scenic Chinese coastal city for a summit over the weekend set to open a new chapter in the bloc's history.

As a founding member and the cradle of the SCO, China has played an important role in developing the 17-year-old organization into the world's largest regional institution.

Particularly, under the leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Beijing has been offering more and more wisdom for the SCO to advance into a new era with more possibilities and a brighter future.

VISIONARY GUIDANCE

The bedrock of the SCO's remarkable development is the Shanghai Spirit, which features mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity and pursuit of common development.

Over the past five years, Xi has further enriched the Shanghai Spirit with such philosophical concepts as cultivating a new type of international relations and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Meanwhile, China has also been boosting SCO cooperation with new practical proposals promising benefits to all involved, with the flagship being the Belt and Road Initiative, which was put forward by Xi in 2013.

China-proposed initiatives "bear profound strategic character," SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov told Xinhua in an interview, stressing the importance of

aligning the Belt and Road Initiative with the development strategies of all SCO members.

"Xi Jinping is providing a visionary and inspiring leadership not just to China but also to Asia and the whole world," said Sudheendra Kulkarni, a former chairman of Observer Research Foundation, an Indian think tank.

FRUITFUL COOPERATION

Over the past five years, a series of major joint projects have been rolled out within the SCO's framework, steadily improving cross-border logistics and promoting its members' development.

In 2017, China's trade with other SCO members totaled 217.6 billion U.S. dollars, and the trade structure continued to improve, with mechanical equipment and mechanical and electrical products taking up a larger share, according to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.

The ministry said that in the first quarter of 2018, trade between China and other SCO members increased 20.7 percent year on year, higher than the 19-percent annual growth last year.

During the same period, it added, Chinese investment in other SCO countries reached 84 billion dollars, with several large energy, mining, and industrial projects progressing smoothly.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to the SCO's efforts to enhance development synergy with the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative, and expressed optimism about regional trade and economic cooperation.

Such alignments, said the Kazakh president,

would create conditions conducive to a future free trade zone within the SCO.

INTO NEW ERA

Seventeen years after its establishment, the SCO has evolved from a security cooperation platform into an organization for comprehensive cooperation, including economic cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

As China hosts the first SCO summit after India and Pakistan became full members in 2017, the organization is widely believed to be marching into a new era.

The SCO has emerged as an excellent multilateral mechanism for regional security, economic cooperation and transnational connectivity, said B.R. Deepak, a sinologist and professor of Chinese studies at the New Delhi-based Jawaharlal Nehru University.

As the bloc grows on, Xi, in a meeting with SCO foreign ministers in April, called on all members to remain true to their original aspirations, advocate the Shanghai Spirit, and fully unleash the SCO's potential after its expansion.

The Qingdao summit will be a historic meeting as it serves as a link between the past and the future, said Sun Zhuangzhi, head of the Institute of East European, Russian and Central Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

As the birthplace of the SCO, China will contribute more Chinese wisdom to its future development, he added. Enditem

(Xinhua reporters Hao Weiwei, Deng Xianlai and Ma Qian in Beijing, Zhou Liang in Astana, Hu Xiaoming in New Delhi, and Zhang Xingjun in Mumbai contributed to this article.)

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Editor's Choice



Former basketball player Dennis Rodman arrives at Changi Airport in Singapore



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un leaves after a visit to The Marina Bay Sands hotel in Singapore



Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and Singapore's Education Minister Ong Ye Kung pose for a photo in Singapore



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un visits The Marina Bay Sands hotel in Singapore



U.S. President Donald Trump blows out the candle on his birthday cake as he attends a lunch with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana in Singapore



FILE PHOTO: Members of the North Korean delegation arrive at St Regis hotel, in Singapore



The motorcade transporting U.S. President Donald Trump arrives at the Istana in Singapore



A member of the North Korean security detail speaks with a member of the U.S. delegation at the entrance of the Capella Hotel on Singapore's resort island of Sentosa



Police officers are seen at the Capella Hotel, the venue for the June 12 summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, on Singapore's resort island of Sentosa



New studies have confirmed, once again, the rapid melting of the polar ice in both hemispheres.

A British team has used satellite data to reveal that the retreat of the all-important grounding line of many Antarctic glaciers has accelerated to five times the historic level. And US scientists have confirmed that in Arctic waters the West Greenland ice sheet is now melting faster than at any time in the last 450 years.

Both studies deliver ominous evidence of the long-term consequences of climate change due to profligate human use of fossil fuels. The Greenland icecap holds enough water to raise global sea levels by seven metres. The West Antarctic ice sheet - where the latest study has identified most of the change - holds enough water to raise sea levels by up to five metres.

The UK measure of Antarctic ice retreat is important because it confirms on a wider scale what individual measurements of glacier retreat have already shown: that increasingly warm southern ocean waters are melting the ice at depth.

Depth in this study is critical: glaciers move slowly because the frozen rivers are "anchored" or grounded in bedrock as they flow off the continent, and then grounded again up to a kilometre deep off the continental shelf.



This applies a brake to the flow towards the open sea. The further from the coast the grounding line, the slower the glacier's flow, the more stable the ice shelf, and the slower the consequent sea level rise.

Hannes Konrad of the University of Leeds in the UK and colleagues report in the journal Nature Geoscience that they used the European Space Agency's satellite Cryosat-2 data to track the changes in the grounding line along 16,000 kilometres of southern polar coastline.

Around West Antarctica, more than a fifth of the ice sheet has retreated faster than the 25 metres or so a year that has been normal since the end of the last ice age. In some cases the retreat of the grounding line has been five times that rate. The retreat has been extreme in eight of the ice sheet's 65 biggest glaciers.

"Long-Term Consequences Of Climate Change Due To Extreme Human Use Of Fossil Fuels"

Polar Ice Is Melting Fast In Both Hemispheres

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

Clear evidence

"Our study provides clear evidence that retreat is happening across the ice sheet due to ocean melting at its base, and not just at the few spots that have been mapped before now," Dr Konrad said.

"This retreat has had a huge impact on inland glaciers, because releasing them from the sea bed removes friction, causing them to speed up and contribute to global sea level rise."

Far to the north, ice is also melting. Erich Osterberg of Dartmouth College in the US and colleagues report in the journal Geophysical Research Letters that they collected seven ice cores from a remote zone in the West Greenland ice sheet where meltwater trickles down into the deeper snow and then freezes again: this "new" ice in the compacted snow provides scientists with a record of melting over time.

Longer Record
Researchers have been watching the apparent acceleration of the summer melting of Greenland's ice for decades: they have monitored ever faster rates of glacier flow and tried to identify direct influences on the surface of the ice sheet that might accelerate overall melting.

But direct observation of the northern hemisphere's largest concentration of ice began only about five decades ago. The Dartmouth cores provide a total of almost five centuries of summer melt patterns.

"The ice core record ends about 450 years ago, so the modern melt rates in these cores are the highest of the whole record that we can see. The advantage of the ice cores is that they show us just how unusual it is for Greenland to be melting this fast," Dr Osterberg said.

"We see that West Greenland melt really started accelerating about 20 years ago. Our study shows that the rapid rise in the West Greenland melt is a combination of specific weather patterns and an additional long-term warming trend over the last century." (Courtesy <https://www.truthdig.com/articles>)

Related

West Greenland Ice Sheet Melting At The Fastest Rate In Centuries

Weather patterns and summer warming trend combine to drive dramatic ice loss
HANOVER, N.H. - March 2018 - The West Greenland Ice Sheet melted at a dramatically higher rate over the last twenty years than at any other time in the modern record, according to a study led by Dartmouth College. The research, appearing in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, shows that melting in west Greenland since the early 1990s is at the highest levels in at least 450 years.

While natural patterns of certain atmospheric and ocean conditions are already known to influence Greenland melt, the study highlights the importance of a long-term warming trend to account for the unprecedented west Greenland melt rates in recent years. The researchers suggest that climate change most likely associated with human greenhouse gas emissions is the probable cause of the additional warming.

Ice cores from the West Greenland Ice Sheet 'percolation zone' were studied under a light table at Dartmouth's Ice

Core Laboratory to reveal ice layers that tell the history of how much melt has occurred through time.

"We see that west Greenland melt really started accelerating about twenty years ago," said Erich Osterberg, assistant professor of earth sciences at Dartmouth and the lead scientist on the project. "Our study shows that the rapid rise in west Greenland melt is a combination of specific weather patterns and an additional long-term warming trend over the last century."

According to research cited in the study, loss of ice from Greenland is one of the largest contributors to global sea level rise. Although glaciers calving into the ocean cause much of the ice loss in Greenland, other research cited in the study shows that the majority of ice loss in recent years is

from increased surface melt and runoff.

While satellite measurements and climate models have detailed this recent ice loss, there are far fewer direct measurements of melt collected from the ice sheet itself. For this study, researchers from Dartmouth and Boise State University spent two months on snowmobiles to collect seven ice cores from the remote "percolation zone" of the West Greenland Ice Sheet.

When warm temperatures melt snow on the surface of the percolation zone, the meltwater trickles down into the deeper snow and refreezes into ice layers. Researchers were easily able to distinguish these ice layers from the surrounding compacted snow in the cores, preserving a history of how much melt occurred back through time. The more melt, the thicker the ice layers.



"Most ice cores are collected from the middle of the ice sheet where it rarely ever melts, or on the ice sheet edge where the meltwater flows into the ocean. We focused on the percolation zone because that's where we find the best record of Greenland melt going back through time in the form of the refrozen ice layers," said Karina Graeter, the lead author of the study as a graduate student in Dartmouth's Department of Earth Sciences.

The cores, some as long as 100-feet, were transported to Dartmouth where the research team used a light table to measure the thickness and frequency of the ice layers. The cores were also sampled for chemical measurements in Dartmouth's Ice Core Laboratory to determine the age of each ice layer.

The cores reveal that the ice layers became thicker and more frequent beginning in the 1990s, with recent melt levels that are unmatched since at least the year 1550 CE.



"The ice core record ends about 450 years ago, so the modern melt rates in these cores are the highest of the whole record that we can see," said Osterberg. "The advantage of the ice cores is that they show us just how unusual it is for Greenland to be melting this fast".

Year-to-year changes in Greenland melt since 1979 were already known to be closely tied to North Atlantic ocean temperatures and high-pressure systems that sit above Greenland during the summer - known as summer blocking highs. The new study extends the record back in time to show that these were important controls on west Greenland melt going back to at least 1870.

The study also shows that an additional summertime warming factor of 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit is needed to explain the unusually strong melting observed since the 1990s. The additional warming caused a near-doubling of melt rates in the twenty-year period from 1995 to 2015 compared to previous times when the same blocking and ocean conditions were present.

"It is striking to see how a seemingly small warming of only 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit can have such a large impact on melt rates in west Greenland," said Graeter.

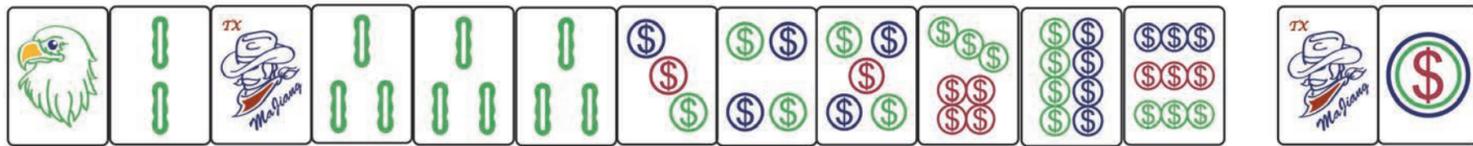


The study concludes that North Atlantic ocean temperatures and summer blocking activity will continue to control year-to-year changes in Greenland melt into the future. Some climate models suggest that summer blocking activity and ocean temperatures around Greenland might decline in the next several decades, but it remains uncertain. However, the study points out that continued warming from human activities would overwhelm those weather patterns over time to further increase melting.

"Cooler North Atlantic ocean temperatures and less summer blocking activity might slow down Greenland melt for a few years or even a couple decades, but it would not help us in the long run," said Osterberg. "Beyond a few decades, Greenland melting will almost certainly increase and raise sea level as long as we continue to emit greenhouse gases." (Courtesy <https://www.eurekalert.org>)

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I'll know whether Kim summit will be successful 'in first minute'. Just my touch, my feel, that's what I do. —President Donald Trump

Donald Trump on Saturday said his summit with Kim Jong-un in Singapore would be a "one-time shot".

"Just my touch, my feel, that's what I do," he said. "How long will it take to figure out if they're serious? You know, the way they say you know if you're going to like somebody in the first five seconds, you ever hear that one? I think very quickly I'll know whether or not something good is going to happen."

Trump spoke as he prepared to depart for Singapore and the first meeting between a North Korean leader and a sitting US president.

"You don't know, it's not been done before at this level," Trump said of attempts to establish peace with a reclusive, authoritarian and nuclear-armed regime.

The Trump administration has said it wants a "permanent, verifiable, irreversible" dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons program and a peace treaty to formally end the Korean war.



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Speaks at Press Briefing From Singapore Summit Monday.

"It's a one-time shot and I think it's going to work out very well," Trump said, though he also indicated that the summit may only be a starting point.

The president also downplayed suggestions he was not well prepared, a notion he appeared to reinforce earlier this week when he said his approach to the meeting was not about prepara-

Denuclearization Of Korean Peninsula Holds Key To Successful Singapore Summit

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

ration but "about attitude". Those comments sparked concerns among national security experts that the North Korean leader could outfox his opposite number.

"So we're going in with a very positive spirit, very well prepared, I think," Trump said, before misidentifying the site of the meeting.

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"Just my touch, my feel, that's what I do," he said. "How long will it take to figure out if they're serious? You know, the way they say you know if you're going to like somebody in the first five seconds, you ever hear that one? I think very quickly I'll know whether or not something good is going to happen."



Journalists outside the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Singapore on Monday. About 2,500 journalists from around the world have registered to cover the event.

Trump spoke as he prepared to depart for Singapore and the first meeting between a North Korean leader and a sitting US president.

"You don't know, it's not been done before at this level," Trump said of attempts to establish peace with a reclusive, authoritarian and nuclear-armed regime.

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stice in 1953.

"It's a one-time shot and I think it's going to work out very well," Trump said, though he also indicated that the summit may only be a starting point.

The president also downplayed suggestions he was not well prepared, a notion he appeared to reinforce earlier this week when he said his approach to the meeting was not about preparation but "about attitude".

"So we're going in with a very positive spirit, very well prepared, I think," Trump said, before misidentifying the site of the meeting.

Asked about suggestions that even granting a meeting to Kim meant conceding valuable ground, he said: "Only the fake news says that. We just got three hostages back, we paid nothing... we have gotten... we haven't done anything. The haters, they say, 'Oh, you're giving him a meeting' - gimme a break, OK?"

Trump also made lengthy complaints about other countries' trade policies and doubled down on his claim that Russia should be reinstated to the G7.

"I think it would be an asset to have Russia back in," Trump told reporters on Saturday. "I think it would be good for the world, I think it would be good for Russia, I think it would be good for the United States, I think it would be good for all of the countries in the G7."

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lunch on Monday with officials in Singapore as the flurry of preparations continued for his meeting on Tuesday with Kim Jong-un of North Korea.

Obama condemned Russia's actions and pursued sanctions against Moscow.

Trump also pushed back at suggestions that under his leadership, amid disputes regarding relations with Russia and international trade, the US was becoming isolated from its traditional allies.

"I would say the level of relationship is a 10," he said, claiming "we have a great relationship" with the leaders of countries including Germany, France and Canada.

After a prompt from his economic adviser Larry Kudlow, the US president then left the summit.

Related

President Trump to Meet Kim Jong-un of North Korea

President Trump and Kim Jong-un of North Korea will hold the first-ever meeting between leaders of their two countries on Tuesday morning in Singapore.

At stake is the American goal of ridding North Korea of its nuclear arsenal, Mr. Kim's desire to remove American weapons from the Korean Peninsula and to be recognized as a player on the world stage.

The talks begin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday — 9 p.m. Eastern on Monday — and could even open the way to an official end to the Korean War, which concluded in 1953 with a truce but never a peace treaty.

The summit meeting is the most prominent moment yet in international affairs for both Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim.

Here's what has happened so far:

Both leaders arrived in Singapore on Sunday, Mr. Trump fresh from a clash with American allies at the Group of 7 meeting in Canada, and Mr. Kim with a little travel help from his Chinese allies.

Just hours before the meeting was to begin, American and North Korean officials continued to scramble behind the scenes, searching for areas of agreement on issues that have eluded consensus for decades.



The North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, arrived in Singapore on Sunday aboard a Chinese jet. (Photo/AP)

With thousands of journalists from around the world congregating in Singapore, Mr. Kim and his entourage left his hotel on Monday night, and the media scrambled before catching up with him at the Marina Bay Sands hotel.

As the meeting approached, American and North Korean officials worked to hammer out a joint statement the two leaders might make at the close of their talks.

Mr. Trump told other Asian leaders he was confident about the prospects for the meeting, but the two sides may have fundamentally different understandings of some crucial issues, like "denuclearization" of the peninsula.

To American officials, that has meant Pyongyang giving up its atomic weapons program, but North Korea has suggested that it would also mean a reduction or even elimination of American arms in the region.

It is also unclear whether the Trump administration would go further than its predecessors in assuring North Korea that, in exchange for concessions, it would be secure from attack by the United States.

The meeting holds the risk of exposing unbridgeable gaps, leaving both sides fuming, with little to show for all the fanfare.



Residents of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, watched footage of Mr. Kim in Singapore on Monday. (Photo/AP)

Mr. Kim arrived for the meeting on Sunday not on one of his country's aircraft, but aboard an Air China jumbo jet — an American-made Boeing 747.

The choice of a plane supplied by China, North Korea's closest ally, highlighted the paucity of resources in Mr. Kim's country.

Other members of the North Korean team arrived, along with Mr. Kim's limousine, on North Korean-owned aircraft.

But Mr. Kim rode in a specially outfitted 747 that has been used to carry top Chinese officials. His usual plane, an Ilyushin-62, was built around 1980, and the type has been out of production since the mid-1990s.

Advertisement for Southern Television 15.3 channel featuring a program schedule table and promotional images for shows like 'China Kung Fu' and 'Family'.