

Kremlin Says Korea Talks 'Only Option'

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Medvedev burning incense Wednesday at the National Cemetery in Seoul. **Lee Jin-Man**

SEOUL, South Korea — President Dmitry Medvedev said Wednesday that dialogue remains the only option for ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program as Pyongyang accused South Korea and the United States of blocking the stalled talks.

"As room for conflict remains in Northeast Asia and Asia Pacific region, I believe that countries have no choice but to hold dialogue and cooperate," Medvedev said at a joint news conference with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak. "I believe there is no other option."

A statement said the two leaders agreed to cooperate to revive the talks, which brought together the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia.

North Korea pulled out of the talks last year to protest international condemnation of a long-range rocket launch seen as a test of its missile technology.

North Korea has recently shown willingness to rejoin the negotiations. But at the same time, it has continued to blame its chief foes, the United States and South Korea, for the stalemate.

Pyongyang says if the two countries are serious about resuming negotiations they should stop their military drills that it claims pose a nuclear threat.

The drills are in response to the sinking of a South Korean warship in March. A multinational investigation led by Seoul concluded that a torpedo fired by a North Korean submarine sank the 1,200-ton warship. North Korea has denied involvement in the sinking, which killed 46 South Korean sailors.

"The six-nation talks would be naturally resumed" if South Korea and the U.S. stop interfering, North Korea's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said. The commentary was carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency.

North Korea carried out two nuclear tests in 2006 and in 2009 in the country's northeastern area, drawing international sanctions each time.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who like Medvedev is in Seoul for the Group of 20 summit this week, urged North Korea to rejoin the nuclear talks.

"We expect that they will return to six-party talks and cooperate fully in realizing a denuclearized Korean Peninsula," Ban, a former South Korean foreign minister, told reporters.

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