

Rep. Ro Khanna Says Fellow Democrats Should Support Diplomacy with North Korea

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On Monday, Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA), joined by 14 fellow Democratic United States House of Representatives members, sent a [letter](#) to President Donald Trump supporting Trump pursuing diplomacy and “incremental progress” with North Korea. The letter also expresses concern about efforts toward peace being hindered by people — both Republican and Democrat, and both inside and outside the Trump administration — seeking “to scuttle progress by attempting to limit the parameters of the talks, including by insisting on full and immediate denuclearization or other unrealistic commitments by North Korea at an early date.”

The Khanna letter contrasts with a [letter](#) seven US Senate Democrats sent Trump last week that argues several major North Korean concessions should be required in any deal. The signers of that earlier letter include two top Democratic leaders in the Senate — Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) — as well as Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Bob Menendez (D-NJ).

Interviewed Tuesday at Democracy Now, Khanna discussed in more detail his concerns about some members of his own party seeking to prevent diplomatic steps in regard to North Korea. Addressing fellow Democrats’ criticism of Trump meeting with North Korea leader Kim Jong-un, Khanna states:

Imagine if it weren’t Donald Trump there but if it were Barack Obama there having that kind of breakthrough. I think there would be a reaction from almost every progressive Democrat cheering that on.

Further, the criticism by Democrats of engaging in the diplomatic discussion, suggest Khanna, will tarnish Democrats’ reputation. In particular, Khanna notes

“Democrats risk looking like we’re being excessively partisan by attacking the president from the right” in regard to a meeting Americans will view as “a constructive step and a success.”

Khanna describes the letter Schumer and other Democratic senators sent Trump as “basically parroting the talking points of” Trump’s National Security Advisor John Bolton that the US should not engage in any diplomacy with or make any concessions to North Korea unless North Korea undergoes “complete denuclearization.”

This approach, argues Khanna, "is not realistic."

Instead, says Khanna, an "incremental approach" is needed, including possible steps on the US side in regard to military exercises near North Korea and on the North Korea side in regard to nuclear testing.

Watch Khanna's interview [here](#).

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