

Officials: No more excuses from N. Korea

by UPI

PYONGYANG, North Korea - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says North Korea has no more excuses for not dismantling its nuclear program now that a key banking issue has been settled.

At least \$20 million in blocked North Korean funds was transferred this week from a Macao bank to a bank in Moscow where North Korea has accounts. Kyodo News Service reported Friday that the money had been received by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, which is to transfer it to Russia.

"To begin with, North Korea's refusal to take the steps was ridiculous," Abe said Friday. "But anyway, their excuse for the refusal has now gone and they must immediately take concrete action to carry out the initial steps."

South Korean and U.S. officials made similar statements Thursday.

North Korean funds in the Banco Delta Asia were blocked after the United States accused the bank of helping North Korea with counterfeiting and money laundering.

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