



Briefing on Latest Developments in the Six-Party Talks

Sung Kim, Director of the Office of Korean Affairs

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(10:30 a.m. EDT)

MR. CASEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Pleasure to be here with you. We did think that in addition to the presence of Sung Kim here that we should have some props. And Gonzo had suggested that Sung do a Captain Morgan shot like the commercial and put his foot up on these. I think we'll avoid that for now.

But as you can see, we did have him come down with some of the items that he did have a chance to pick up on his latest trip to North Korea. And with that, having now vamped while the box was unloaded, let me just say again, thank you all for being here. We did think it was important to take an opportunity to let Sung Kim, our Director of Korean Affairs, come down here and talk to you about his most recent trip to North Korea, where, as you know, he did successfully receive from the North Korean Government a number of documents related to their nuclear program, some of which -- a sampling of which we have here with you. And he'll talk to you a little more about that.

Again, we think that this is a very important process that we're going through in the six-party talks. This certainly was another step forward for us, though this is a long road. And you've heard from the Secretary that we intend to follow it to the extent possible.

So with that, let me turn the podium over to Sung, let him make a couple of introductory comments, and then we'll get to your questions.

Sung.

MR. KIM: Thanks, Tom. Good morning. As you know, I just came back yesterday from my second trip to North Korea in two weeks. We brought back, as you can see, documents from North Korea. These are operating and production records for the 5-megawatt reactor and the reprocessing plant in Yongbyon. They number 18,822 pages, 314 volumes. We believe these documents will provide an important first step in verifying the North Korea's -- the DPRK's declaration.

Our team of experts now have these documents and will be undertaking a comprehensive review of the contents. I might just, for prop's sake, this is an example of a volume of operating records. These documents are in Korean, so it will actually take some time to translate all of the documents. But we have a team of experts working on these documents and, hopefully, we'll be able to conduct at least a preliminary review of the documents in a few weeks.

In addition to receiving the documents, we had very detailed, substantive discussions with DPRK interlocutors from the Foreign Ministry as well as the General Department of Atomic Energy on all aspects of their declaration. As you know, the declaration will be submitted to the Chinese because China chairs the process, but we were able to discuss some reference materials that would form the basis for the declaration. I think those discussions were productive, and we look forward to continuing the exchange with them through the New York channel.

We also mentioned the importance of verification. North Korea has acknowledged the requirement for verification and indeed agreed to cooperate fully with verification activities. Of course, the exact modalities for verification will be decided in the six-party process.

We have continued to consult very closely with our six-party partners. In fact, I had an opportunity because I crossed through the DMZ to have discussions with the South Korean officials, but I also had a discussion with my Japanese interlocutor over the weekend as well as a lengthy phone conversation with Chinese officials.

We look forward to continuing that process. In fact, the six-party negotiator, Ambassador Hill, is likely to engage his six-party counterparts possibly as early as early next week.

Let's see, I think I'm going to stop there and take questions.

MR. CASEY: Anne, why don't you go ahead.

QUESTION: Can you describe how these documents will be used or sort of, I guess, you know, spread around once you've translated them? For example, will you hold briefings for Congress? Will these be held within the State Department? And how will they be shared with the other members of the six-party talks?

MR. KIM: Some of those issues need to be decided still, but the first step is to translate the documents and have our experts start a review, a comprehensive review of the documents. And as they proceed with the review, we'll decide how and when to share with the other parties as well as Congress. We'll obviously be briefing Congress as early as possible.

QUESTION: Do you hope that these documents will go some distance to convincing Congress that the process is bearing fruit and that the -- you know, that you actually will be able to get the declaration?

MR. KIM: I do think these documents are an important first step in terms of verifying North Korea's declaration. Obviously, the documents themselves, alone, is not enough. We will need to conduct a very full verification, including access to their facilities, sampling, interviews with personnel involved in nuclear programs. But these documents are an important first step.

QUESTION: In the fact sheet that you put out early Saturday morning, you said that eight out of the eleven agreed disablement activities have been completed. Which three have not been completed? And is there a sort of a slowdown, still a slowdown in getting that completed? And when do you expect that to be completed?

MR. KIM: The three outstanding steps are the discharge of spent fuel from the reactor, the disabling of the control rod mechanism, and disabling of the fresh fuel rods. Those three are outstanding. As you know, the discharge is continuing. I think they're proceeding at about 30 rods a day. We would like to see it sped up a bit. I think, at the current rate, we still have a few months to go. But the process is ongoing, and as soon as the spent fuel rods are discharged, we will do the disabling of the control rod mechanisms.

QUESTION: But are they intentionally slowing down those activities -- the disabling -- those disabling activities because you're not coming forward with what you had promised?

MR. KIM: I believe they have slowed down the pace a bit and they have cited the need to sort of coordinate the timing with energy assistance.

QUESTION: With energy assistance?

MR. KIM: Assistance, right.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: You said that Chris Hill is going to engage the -- his colleague at the six-party talks. Will it be a meeting in the region or it will be by phone?

MR. KIM: Oh no, it will be a meeting. The venue hasn't been decided, but he does expect to see both Ambassador Saiki and Ambassador Kim Sook early next week.

MR. CASEY: Go ahead, Dan.

QUESTION: Can you tell us a little bit -- Dan Dombey, *Financial Times*. Can you tell us a little bit about the interplay between these documents and the declaration that you expect? Would you be able to come up with -- would you give a first -- once you have a declaration, will you go back to these documents for a first, rough check about whether it squares? And will -- is that what's needed to get out of phase two or do you have to go through every single page of the 18,000 translated pages?

And another question, if I may: Is it your understanding that there's an implicit number in these documents of 30 or 35 or 40 kilograms? Have you been briefed on that at all since they will all be pointing in that direction?

MR. KIM: Well, these documents -- I consider these documents to be an important set of supporting documents for the declaration. It would help us verify the contents of the declaration. We will undertake a full review of these documents. That really has already started and it will continue. I mean, it'll obviously take several weeks. And I think, you know, the interplay between the declaration and the documents is obvious. We'll continue this process of review. When the declaration is submitted to the Chinese, we will obviously refer back to the -- to the documents.

QUESTION: And is there a number implicit in there at all? Were you briefed on that?

MR. KIM: These are 18,000 pages. I actually didn't get a chance to review all of the pages, so -- these are more like daily records.

MR. CASEY: Charlie.

QUESTION: Yes. Can you give us a little bit more of a detailed idea about how this process is going to happen? I mean, how many translators will it take, how many departments of the government are involved, et cetera?

MR. KIM: Well, it is an interagency team. Obviously, experts from the intel community are involved. The Department of Energy is involved, Department of Defense, the State Department. In fact, when I arrived yesterday at Dulles, I was met by an interagency team that included someone from the (inaudible), someone from the State Department's Verification Bureau. I don't know, actually, how many translators will be used for this effort, but I assume it would be several.

QUESTION: I just wondered, are you confident that these documents are complete in regards to North Korea's plutonium production? Are you expecting more documents in the future in that regards? And did you get a number from North Korea, what they expect these documents will show in terms of plutonium production over the years?

MR. KIM: Well, I believe these are a complete set of documents for the 5-megawatt reactor and the reprocessing plant. These, in fact, date back to 1986. On a very quick preliminary review, it does appear that they're complete. You know, they have daily logs, operator's log books, operation records, you know, operation records of receipts, operational records of (inaudible) process. So they appear to be a complete set.

With respect to the documents for other facilities, yes, we do, in fact, expect to receive them during the verification phase. In fact, the North Koreans made clear to us that during the verification phase, they will make other records and documents available to the six parties.

QUESTION: And for the number, did the North Koreans tell you what to expect in terms of kilograms of plutonium that you might figure from these documents?

MR. KIM: No, we didn't get into that.

MR. CASEY: Let's go back here.

QUESTION: Sung, you just mentioned that the document is not alone -- itself alone is not enough for the verification. And how was the discussion on the actual physical inspection of the sites and the interview to the experts went on? Have they agreed to do that?

MR. KIM: Well, we had very general discussions. We didn't go into exact details or modalities of the verification process because, in fact, it's a six-party effort and those issues need to be decided in the six-party process. We did, however, have a general discussion about the importance of verification, and North Koreans acknowledged it and agreed indeed to cooperate fully with the six parties and the verification effort.

MR. CASEY: Nina.

QUESTION: Just in terms of timing and chain of events, the turning over of these documents, is this something that was prompted by making public the Syrian -- the alleged Syrian facility? Was this something you had discussed for a long time, that they were going to turn over these particular documents or were they prompted specifically by (inaudible)?

MR. KIM: No, we had been discussing with them for a while the importance of making these records available early in the process so that we could start the review. As you know, it's a lot of work to go through these documents, and we wanted to make sure to get it started as soon as possible.

QUESTION: Why do you think they turned them over now, particularly?

MR. KIM: Maybe we just asked enough times? (Laughter.)

MR. CASEY: (Inaudible.) Yeah, go ahead.

QUESTION: If these documents are authentic and you think is authentic, how can you authenticate the documents? And that's my one question.

And the other question is: Is there a possibility that North Korea might have falsified the documents to match what they claim to be 38 kilograms of plutonium extraction?

MR. KIM: Look, I think when our experts do a comprehensive review of the documents, we'll be able to answer those questions.

MR. CASEY: Sue.

QUESTION: Can I just ask you about food aid? Apparently, there's an agreement on food aid for the North Koreans. Could you please say how much food aid the U.S. has agreed to give North Korea, when you're going to deliver it, and why you've decided to do it, and also, whether you have an agreement on monitors?

MR. KIM: No, because I think I'm supposed to focus on, sort of, my work related to the declaration and disablement. As you know, some of our colleagues did have a discussion with the North Koreans on this issue, but it's really separate from, sort of, policy concern – sort of, our work. And I would defer to them.

QUESTION: But is there an agreement on food aid?

MR. KIM: They had a good discussion, but I don't think – I don't believe there's an agreement yet.

QUESTION: Can I just ask a clarifying question? These are copies, right? Not originals?

MR. KIM: Correct.

QUESTION: Okay. And where do the originals reside?

MR. KIM: In North Korea.

QUESTION: And they'll stay there?

QUESTION: Just a small point. How many boxes did you bring back?

MR. KIM: Seven.

QUESTION: Seven? Okay.

QUESTION: Did he already say that?

MR. CASEY: Yeah.

QUESTION: I mean, were there any more discussions while you were up there on the Syrian reactor issue? Because I think this was your first trip there since the intelligence was made public and I'm just curious if there was any more feedback or recognition from the North Koreans that they had played a role in developing it, or are they still outright denying this? Because I assume this was something you raised.

MR. KIM: We actually didn't discuss that issue during my trip.

QUESTION: You said that you talked a lot about the declaration and aspects of the declaration while you were in North Korea. Do you now feel that the declaration is on track and that, within the next few weeks, that you will have a declaration from North Korea?

MR. KIM: Our delegation's sense was that the reference materials that would form the basis for the declaration appears quite comprehensive, quite full. But it's really – I think it's too early to tell whether it would be ready anytime soon. I think we will continue our discussions with the North Koreans through the New York channel and we'll, of course, continue to consult with our six-party partners.

QUESTION: If these – if this is part of a verification process, what precisely will they be putting into the declaration in regards to the plutonium program? I mean, isn't this – would they – are they considering this to be part of their declaration? Not just the verification phase, not for – just for verification purposes, but actually, they're saying, this is what we're doing? And are they considering this their declaration on plutonium?

And secondly, what is going to be the next step for the U.S.?

MR. KIM: I don't believe this – they consider this to be the declaration itself. I think they will be submitting a separate document to the Chinese that would, I think, be their declaration. I think these documents are important supporting documents for the declaration, but not the declaration itself.

QUESTION: Can I just ask -- you said in -- that the U.S. thought that what the North Koreans came out with at the end of last year was inadequate. And it's my understanding it's inadequate because they didn't address things like uranium enrichment and proliferation, but also because you thought the number was too low. To what -- can you tell us why you thought what they said in the end of last year was inadequate and whether this goes any way in terms of meeting those shortcomings, in terms of the background information and possible reasons why the number was so low, for example, with (inaudible) waste?

MR. KIM: Yeah. I think it's probably inappropriate for me to go into details of the declaration and what is likely to be the declaration at this stage. I can tell you that the reference materials that we saw late last year did not have many of the details that is now included in their latest set of reference material.

QUESTION: And was that a large reason why it was inadequate?

MR. KIM: I'm sorry?

QUESTION: Is that a large reason why it wasn't good enough?

MR. KIM: Yeah. I mean, we would like to see a complete, credible declaration.

MR. CASEY: Michelle.

QUESTION: I want to go back to the question of the slowdown of the disablement. You said it was related to fuel supplies. Is the U.S. considering speeding up supplying fuel?

And secondly, do the North Koreans ever bring up the terrorism list issue?

MR. KIM: The energy assistance, as you know, is a five-party effort. Right now, it's a four-party effort because Japan is not participating. I think what has happened is it's not so much that the five parties or four parties were late in -- with their energy deliveries. North Koreans figured out that at the current pace of 50,000 metric tons of heavy fuel a month that if they proceeded more rapidly with disablement, they would -- and several months earlier than the completion of the energy assistance, so they decided to sort of synchronize the timing of those two activities.

North Koreans this time mentioned their interest in getting off the terrorism list, but we didn't really have a substantive discussion on that issue this time.

MR. CASEY: I think we have the chance for a couple more. Let's go -- you haven't had one yet here, if you want to go, yeah.

QUESTION: The meeting between Mr. Hill and Mr. Saiki and Kim Sook, is that going to be a trilateral meeting or is this meeting one by one? And I guess you don't see the declaration before that meeting. And what kind of -- what issues are you going to talk about?

MR. KIM: I believe it is going to be a trilateral meeting, and it's U.S., Japan and the ROK. They'll discuss a whole range of issues.

MR. CASEY: Arshad, why don't you do this and then Nina, and then that'll be it.

QUESTION: Forgive me if I missed it. I listened to most of your briefing just now and I didn't hear much about the questions of addressing the U.S. concerns on a uranium enrichment program if, indeed, North Korea had one, or on fully addressing all of the U.S. concerns on proliferation or possible proliferation activities, including Syria, but also potentially including other countries. It's almost as if you feel as if the plutonium program is the sole component of their declaration. Do you still expect to get a complete and correct declaration that covers those two issues, proliferation and uranium enrichment, from the North Koreans? Is that still your standard, complete and correct, on those two matters as well?

MR. KIM: Well, my visit this time focused on these records and the declaration -- the sort of plutonium aspects of the declaration. We, as you know, have had many, many discussions with them regarding the two important issues you mentioned. But since it wasn't the focus of my trip, I'm going to have no comment. I mean, I would defer -- I will refer you to ask Ambassador Hill.

QUESTION: Well, the standard that is listed in the October 13th agreement, if I'm not mistaken, is that North Korea shall provide a complete and correct declaration, including addressing U.S. concerns on uranium enrichment and proliferation. I'm perplexed that you would not say yes, that is still our standard, since that is what is in the written agreement that the six parties committed to.

MR. KIM: You don't have to be perplexed because, yes, that is, in fact, still the requirement. We do expect the declaration package to address all of our concerns, including any activities they might have had with uranium enrichment and any sort of cooperation with foreign countries.

QUESTION: Great. Thank you.

MR. CASEY: Nina. And this is this last one, you guys.

QUESTION: Yes. Just to follow up on that. You described this as an important first step, the turning over of these particular documents. Is the hope that this process will continue, that they will subsequently turn over specific documents relating to proliferation and to uranium activities?

MR. KIM: I think that will be an ongoing process. We do hope to -- as you know, late last year we had some discussions with them related to some aluminum tubes that they had purchased. We expect that process to continue. So I mean, it's too early to tell right now whether that would involve additional records or documents. But in (inaudible) -- I mean, we will continue to follow up those issues.

MR. CASEY: Okay. Thanks, guys. Appreciate it.

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