



Special Briefing  
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## On-the-Record Briefing by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Head of the U.S. Delegation to the Six-Party Talks Christopher R. Hill On His Upcoming Trip and the Six-Party Talks

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**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Hi.

**QUESTION:** How are you?

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** Are you ready for another party?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Am I ready for another party? Well, I know Americans need maps, but -- I don't even have any notes here.

Anyway, I'm heading off tomorrow night to go to Geneva to have the second working group with the DPRK delegation. We'll be starting, I think, early in the morning on Saturday and going through to Sunday afternoon. As I understand, we'll have the first session, I believe, at the U.S. mission, the second session at the DPRK mission. The purpose of these working groups, of course, is to fulfill the requirements set out in the February agreement that there should be five working groups and they need to proceed, make progress on their various issues. In our case, our working group deals with the bilateral relationship with the DPRK, obviously.

I've been in touch with my counterpart from Japan, Ken Sasai, and I'm aware that the Japanese -- and I guess it's also been announced that the Japanese DPRK working group will happen, I think, a week later starting on Wednesday. So ours goes Sunday -- Saturday and Sunday and from there, I will go to participate in the APEC meetings and will have the opportunity to brief Secretary Rice on the outcome of our working group. After APEC, I expect to spend a little more than a day, I believe in -- I guess a two-day visit leaving Sunday, leaving -- and then leaving there on Monday night, New Zealand, and then we'll see after that whether I come back here or whether there's any additional travel.

The purpose, of course, of these working group -- of our working group is to deal with the bilateral relationship, but we will also be very much focused on the next six-party plenary session which we expect to take place sometime in early September. Those of you who follow this stuff realize that that's already somewhat of a delay, but as we've tried to put together the calendar, I mean, we've found we -- there is a tendency to slip, but we are really going to try to get this -- get to this in early September so that we can then have an agreement on the implementation of the next phase, which is disablement and declaration on the part of the North Koreans and then heavy fuel oil on the part of -- on our part.

So we will try to set that up in our next six-party meeting and then begin implementing it in the fall with the hope that we can get through this in the -- by the end of calendar year '07. We'll then look at where we are and then try to go to what I hope will be the endgame, which is the issue of, pursuant to the September '05 agreement, having North Korea abandon its fissile material and explosive devices.

So if we're going to achieve that or if we're going to get to that in '08 -- and also, I might add, what we also want to do by the end of '07, beginning of '08 is to begin a peace process on the Korean Peninsula, as well as set up a Northeast Asia peace and security mechanism. If we're going to get to those endgame elements, we're going to have to make progress on this next stage. And so in that regard, I think much of my time or a good deal of the time in Geneva will be spent on comparing notes and getting ready for the next six-party plenary meeting. So with those introductory comments, we can go to questions.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Chris, two things. One, in your final comments at Shenyang, I think the night before you left, you said that you thought that you now have the basis for achieving a consensus on disablement and the declaration. Do you think it is likely that you'll be able to hammer out an agreed definition of disablement in these talks in Geneva? And second, on the declaration, there was a report in *The Tokyo Shimbun* newspaper recently saying that North Korea had said that its declaration would be limited to only three facilities at Yongbyon and that it said this in Shenyang. Is that right? Did they give you a reason to believe that the declaration would be quite limited, rather than complete, as called for?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, you know, I would be careful about press reports that are reporting on opening statements in a denuclearization working group. I think everyone understands that the declaration and indeed, the disablement, has to be of all the nuclear programs. So I'm not concerned that we have any kind of misunderstanding on that issue.

With respect to whether we have a basis to move forward, I think we do. To be sure, we -- during that two-day meeting in Shenyang, there were a lot of discussions among experts. And so the comments I made were based on what happened throughout the two days. I think the press report you saw was based -- it was on the basis of the opening session. So clearly, we need a declaration that involves all of their nuclear programs and we need clarity and, in particular, on a program that is not yet acknowledged, which is uranium enrichment. And I think to achieve what we're trying to achieve, we do need to get through that issue.

And so -- you know, I don't want to predict what this -- what the game is going to look like. But I do believe we have the elements to come to a full declaration and a disablement and a disablement that satisfies our definition of disablement. There are many ways to disable nuclear programs, but we did -- there was a lot of exchange of views on that and I think we can come up with something.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, could you talk a bit about the denuclearization verification process? You used to say in the past that perhaps the P-5 should be in the lead, then you used to say a couple of times that Russia, which has quite a large expertise in the field, might be in the lead. Where are you standing on that issue right now?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah, I mean, I think there have been a lot of discussions bilaterally and multilaterally about the verification. I don't think we have -- there is yet a consensus position on how this ought to be done. But certainly we would expect the nuclear weapons states in the six-party process; that is, Russia, China and the U.S. to play a substantial role in this. So I think we from the U.S. perspective were very satisfied with our discussions with the delegation from the Russian Federation, which had some very good nuclear experts, and we look forward to very close cooperation with the Russian nuclear experts as we move to this phase.

Right now, however, what we're trying to do is to sequence a declaration and as well as a disablement activity. I must say, as a result of Shenyang -- the meeting in Shenyang -- the sort of -- the consensus position that emerged was that we could get going on disablement even before the declaration phase is entirely done. And that's based on the fact that some of the elements that need to be disabled are well known already and we certainly don't need to wait for a declaration; for example, a declaration that there's a 5-megawatt reactor in Yongbyon. We already know it's there and so what we need to do now is not wait to declare it, but rather figure out how to disable it.

So rather than the sequential process that we've been -- that we've had in mind for many months, I think we're looking at an overlapping process.

Yes, ma'am.

**QUESTION:** Chris, do you think Secretary Rice has a plan to visit North Korea within this year? And have you ever been discussing with North Korea regarding the Secretary visit to North Korea?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, I have not.

**QUESTION:** When you visit North Korea last time --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** We did not have a discussion about that. We focused on the task we had of declaration and disablement, so we didn't discuss any further visits.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Just to follow up first on that first question. When you say you're looking at an overlapping process, don't you run the risk that you could perhaps disable the reactor at Yongbyon but never actually get to the declaration of how much fissile material they have and how much --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Whose risk would that be?

**QUESTION:** Your risk.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Why would it be our risk?

**QUESTION:** Is that -- it seems like the -- the whole point -- the main point of this exercise is to find out what the North Koreans have and get them to explain what they have done, how much uranium enrichment they have, how much fissile material they have.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah, and when you set up an overall approach, you need to know where you're going to end up with. So I don't think we would be in the -- you know, I don't think we'd be, you know, constructing the house without a plan of what the house looks like at the end, so --

**QUESTION:** Well, okay, that's what I didn't -- but you talked about -- that there were elements there and you kind of dismissed the Japanese newspaper report as talking about the opening statement. But I never really got a sense from your answer as to what the North Korean position was at the end of those meetings.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** That's because I didn't want to tell you what their position was because they're -- (laughter) -- you know, it's not for me to stand here and tell you about the North Korean position.

**QUESTION:** Right.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** But I can tell you our position. But I did feel it was worth mentioning that the press reports -- I didn't say "Japanese," by the way -- the press reports concerned opening statements in Shenyang.

**QUESTION:** So you think that they've moved beyond those opening statements --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** (Laughter.) I think we have a basis for moving forward --

**QUESTION:** Well, because it's -- you left

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** -- to coin a phrase.

**QUESTION:** Okay, well -- but you left open the possibility that they hadn't really moved beyond their opening statement. You simply said that report was based on it.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Again, I don't want to characterize their statements, but I do believe, and you can read things into this if you'd like, you're welcome to, that --

**QUESTION:** I do it all the time.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** -- we have a basis for moving forward. (Laughter.) But to your question, could we get into a situation where we've disabled something, but we still don't know the full range of their nuclear programs, the point is to have complete denuclearization, the point is to have a full range. And so some of the elements that we would be putting forward would depend on satisfaction in terms of knowing what the full range of nuclear programs are and that they are complying with the September '05 statement to abandon all nuclear weapons and all nuclear programs.

So I think we can work that through. Some of it has to do with sequencing and some of it will be a sort of iterative process where they give us something and we work on it and give it back to them and back and forth. But what we don't want is a situation where we're going back and forth on that, with the understanding we'll get to a good end on that, and then meanwhile nothing happens on --

**QUESTION:** On Yongbyon.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** So --

**QUESTION:** Okay, well there was -- sorry, I apologize. I actually had a question before the (inaudible).

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Wait a minute, you've had a question.

**QUESTION:** I know.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** That was a clear --

**QUESTION:** I have another question.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Okay.

**QUESTION:** I want to know what does North Korea need to do to get off the terrorism list, because isn't that one of the main issues --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** We're going to talk about that.

**QUESTION:** -- one of the main issues in this normalization process?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** That's part of the bilateral process and --

**QUESTION:** Right, which is this meeting.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** And that's part of a -- yes, and we're going to talk about that, and --

**QUESTION:** What do you intend to tell them they need to do?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, we're going to talk about that and we're going to have a discussion about things that they need to do and, you know, how far we're going to expect to see denuclearization go in order to move -- or to continue the process that we are committed to doing, which is to remove them from the terrorism list. But I'm not prepared to tell you at this moment what we're looking for from them in order to be removed from that list.

**QUESTION:** Will it be known by -- at the end of the session what they need to do?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I don't know. But I think it will emerge from these bilateral discussions. But I don't want to negotiate here on it. I want to wait till I get to Geneva, so -- let's go for some geographic distribution. So why don't we go to the back and then come back to the front.

**QUESTION:** Seven years ago, North Korea sent their number-two man, Marshal Cho Myong-nok, to Washington, D.C., White House. Do you think that similar thing happen -- next 17 months?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, we have not discussed further visits with the DPRK at this time. I certainly don't rule out further visits, but we have not -- this has not been a subject of discussion or negotiation at this point.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** When you talk about the nuclear programs, does that include like, nuclear weapons program as well from not only U.S. perspective, from North Korean perspective?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** When I talk about nuclear programs from --

**QUESTION:** Does that include the North Korean nuclear program -- nuclear weapons program as well? And I'm just wondering if the North Koreans understand that that's the case.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** That they have to be abandoned as well, you mean?

**QUESTION:** Right.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Oh, yes. That's in the first line of the September '05 statement. Glenn can read it to you.

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** But North Korea -- it is in the 9 September -- no, '05 -- the agreement, but it's not included in the February 13th --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** February dealt with the first phase.

**QUESTION:** Right.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** And the first phase did not include the weapons phase. Weapons phase is what I refer to as endgame and what I would hope to be on to by the beginning of '08.

**QUESTION:** And the North Koreans definitely understand that?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** They understand what I've said about that, absolutely. They also understand and they have reiterated their commitment to full denuclearization including abandonment of programs and weapons because that's right up front in the September '05 statement. And they've repeated that many times, both privately and publicly.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yes, Michael.

**QUESTION:** In terms of disabling, I'm wondering -- one of the first things that needs to be done, and it's already in process, is the cooling of the fuel rods at Yongbyon. Do you have a timeframe of how long it takes to cool those fuel rods and are there things that can be done while those cool rods are (inaudible)?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** There was a -- that subject was discussed at length in Shenyang and some experts have gone back and forth on when is a safe interval after which -- or how long would be a safe interval after which you could pull the fuel rods. So there's been a lot of discussion about that and I think they're continuing to discuss issues like that.

**QUESTION:** Are there --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Sure.

**QUESTION:** Are there things that can be done while the fuel rods --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** It is our view that there are things that can be done, yes.

**QUESTION:** Chris, can you get into the various facilities at Yongbyon and what would be satisfactory in terms of shutting them down? There's several, I think, under construction perhaps at the --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, you know, everything is shut down. The issue is disabled --

**QUESTION:** Disabled.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** -- at this point. And the point I have made is that we are not -- in terms of the disablement phase of their nuclear programs, this should not be seen as just Yongbyon, because Yongbyon is what is, in effect, declared because that's been shut down and the IAEA is there. But there will be other nuclear facilities which will also need to be declared and disabled. And those are facilities that might go beyond the Yongbyon complex.

But with respect to the Yongbyon complex, there are five main elements there. There's the 200 and the 50-megawatt reactors which are unfinished and therefore, you know, not -- they did not need to be shut down and probably don't need to be disabled because they have -- they are only partially built. Then there are the three other elements that have been active. One is the fuel fabrication facility, the other is the reprocessing facility, and of course, the 5-megawatt reactor. So those are -- if we talk about disabling, those are probably the three that really need to be looked at first because they're there and we know -- everyone knows about them.

Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** You mentioned that they have yet to acknowledge enrichment activities and I just wondered -- it's slightly worrying that -- you know, you've been in these talks for some time already and you've not yet got any answer on that. And the question --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, everything about this process is slightly worrying, so -- but I will tell you that it is fully understood that a satisfactory answer must be given, a acknowledgement, explanation and disposition of enrichment activities. So we continue to have discussions about that and I'm not prepared at this time to say the outcome of those discussions, except to say that they're ongoing.

**QUESTION:** But you've been given no indication -- I mean, you put the question to them and they just haven't answered?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I think -- again, I don't like to stand up here and tell you what they say. But I can tell you we've had some lengthy conversations about this. We have -- it is not resolved yet, but -- and we will continue to have lengthy conversations about this issue.

**QUESTION:** And just in a very sort of simplistic way, which you probably shoot down --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I can't even handle those either, you know --

**QUESTION:** But I mean, how far do you think you are to reaching your goal? Are you halfway there or are you --

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Oh, God.

**QUESTION:** If people could understand -- if people could understand, there's a main goal here and where -- you know, where -- if this is going anywhere, they want to know how far are you down the road.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, that's -- you know, actually it may be simplistic, but it's -- I mean, it's understandable why you ask. You know, I'll give you an even simpler answer; once we're done, I'll look back and tell you where we were now. (Laughter.)

But you know, I think getting the thing -- getting Yongbyon, which is not the totality of what we're dealing with, but getting Yongbyon shut down pursuant to a multilateral agreement with the full cooperation with IAEA is an important step and I don't want to minimize that. But I certainly don't want to suggest that that puts us halfway there.

God, I mean, anything I say will end up, you know, in print and, you know, and I really have no basis for saying like I'm a third of the way there or something. But you know, I think the first tranche of actions, getting the thing shut down, getting an overall framework and, by the way, we don't talk about this sort of overall framework of the six parties and how we've set up working groups and how we've got this process going forward, but that's something that's important as well because there's an expectation that things go forward together. So I would put that in the "done" category along with the shut down. And we're definitely not halfway there, but we're beyond just the beginning.

**QUESTION:** Thanks.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Sorry, I just -- (laughter) -- you know, anything I say will, you know, it will be one-third and then I'll just get in trouble. And what's the point of that, you know?

All right.

**QUESTION:** Are there any idea in your mind to hold next plenary session, not as an (inaudible) agreement but to focus on holding a ministerial meeting?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, I think what I'd like to do is we had very good energy and economic meeting in Panmunjom about a month ago, I think -- early August. Then we had a pretty successful denuclearization meeting in Shenyang. Now, one of these -- and we also had I think a very -- a good meeting in Moscow on this Northeast Asian security -- peace and security mechanism, so, so far so good. And I would like to reserve on that question until we get through the bilateral meetings, because I'm going to be -- I'll see Ken Sasai in Sydney and probably our counterparts from Russia as well. And we will -- we'll have some discussions in Sydney after this meeting.

Then I know that the Japanese will have their bilateral working group and then at that point, all five working groups will be done and we can talk to the Chinese hosts about where we are. And my hope is that we will be in a position that after APEC -- and I say after APEC because that would be the last working group, which is the Japanese working group -- we would be in a position to announce a further six-party meeting.

I think it ought to be done as soon as possible so, you know, I'm taking a few extra pairs of socks after New Zealand in anticipation that maybe it could be done the following week after APEC. But that's up to the Chinese hosts and it's also to some extent, or to a great extent, up to, you know, how we do in these next two and final working groups.

Once we -- let's say we do it soon after APEC and -- again, I haven't talked to the Chinese about this. They are in charge of scheduling these things and, you know, they're in the chair. But let's say we have it soon after APEC and let's say it's successful -- by successful I mean we have a sort of -- something that looks like a February agreement, except not for shutdown, but rather, for disablement and declaration and then we implement it and let's say we implement it -- and we have an agreement on the implementation and no real barriers ahead -- then I think we can look to schedule getting six ministers together.

You recall from the press statement in Beijing in, I think was it July -- I lose track now, July I guess -- we talked about doing it in China. So I don't think we'd try to have the ministers meet in New York even though I think they'll all be there. So I think we'd be probably looking at back in China. You know, again, I shouldn't stand up here and speculate about dates, but October sounds reasonable to me.

**QUESTION:** So before you're going to have agreement on a schedule of disablement, you're not going to have a ministerial?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, it's just the sequences I've laid out. I mean, again, we're prepared to have the ministerial promptly. But I think the sequence is such that -- look, we've had three of five. We're going to have five of five working groups. We're going to try to put that together, get on with the task and have a ministerial as promptly. So again, I would avoid -- I don't want to put ourselves in the position of, you know, something depends on something else.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** In relation --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Sorry, I'll get you next.

**QUESTION:** In relation to the State Sponsor of Terrorism list issue, does the U.S. or do you have any idea how they can possibly go forward on the Japanese abduction issue and are you going to talk about it in the working group?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** We will talk about it. And I'm sure that is a subject that the Japanese delegation will talk about in their bilateral working group meeting in connection with the Japanese DPRK issues. So it's an issue that I think will be addressed. And you know, I've raised it on every -- I've raised it in every six-party meeting. I've raised it in every bilateral meeting. It's an issue we want to see some resolution to.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** How do you expect or hope the Roh-Kim Jong-il meeting in October to play into this?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well --

**QUESTION:** Will there be any nuclear negotiating? Do you expect to send an observer there?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No. We will not have an observer there. We --

**QUESTION:** Have you been lobbying the South Koreans about what you hope or expect to happen?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Lobbying the South Koreans I don't think is how we deal with the South Koreans. We have very close consultations. We're treaty allies. We work very closely on issues. Issues involving peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, of course, are very important to us because of the presence of our forces and the presence of our commitment. The South Koreans have assured us on many occasions that the purpose of this summit meeting, which has been postponed because of the flooding situation was -- the purpose of it is to enhance peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and to support the six-party process. And everything they have said to us is consistent with that declaratory aim.

**QUESTION:** Do you expect -- just --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Do you expect the human rights to come up into --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah. Again, I don't -- I'm not in a position to talk about the agenda between the two Koreas, but I know that the issue of divided families and the issue of, you know, the treatment of -- I mean, human rights policies I'm sure have been addressed in the past and I'm sure will continue to be addressed.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** I was wondering if you could expand a little on the whole idea of the bilateral channel in terms of -- you've had a couple of -- you've met bilaterally. Traditionally you've always dealt through the New York channel, but I was wondering if this kind of exercise has enabled you to deal more directly, it seems at least with your North Korean counterparts, not necessarily on formal restoration of relations issues, but on day-to-day issues that come up. It seems that it might have moved a little bit to a higher level of engagement.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, I think there are two other distinct processes. One is the bilateral working group, our bilateral working group that was set up pursuant to the February agreement, and that working group is aimed at addressing our bilateral issues with the understanding that normalization is the goal. But you know, normalization is also going to depend on denuclearization. I mean, we, you know, cannot be in a position of normalizing relations with a nuclearized North Korea. And we won't do that.

So -- but within that, we can continue to work on the process of normalization. So that's a sort of formal bilateral mechanism. The New York channel is something that we use that for passing -- it's not a negotiating channel, it's an information passing channel and we do that quite often and we've certainly -- since the six-party process has been going in earnest, when we need to get a message to the Foreign Minister in Pyongyang, we do it through New York. And so it's -- I won't say it's daily, but it's close to it.

**QUESTION:** Well, I was just wondering if --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** First, you know --

**QUESTION:** -- you've seen like, an -- I'm sorry.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** And then the -- I said there are two, but actually there are three. And then the third issue is just the whole structure of the six-party process. You know, you cannot sit in a room with six delegations and expect to get a lot done, so you do break up into bilateral meetings. At one point, I remember we counted them and after a certain number of days, we had something like 56 bilateral meetings, of which we had something like eight with the North Koreans. And you know, I remember most, I think, was with the Japanese and the South Koreans.

But, you know, we just had a lot of bilateral meetings and that's kind of the structure of how it works. I mean, you have a plenary meeting. You might have a heads-of-delegation meeting, where you'll have a head of delegation, a smaller six-sided table, but you'll have a head of delegation with maybe four or five other people each times six. And then the plenary is head of delegation plus, you know, 25 people or it seems like 125 people times six.

And so those, I think, are useful for sort of setting the day's agenda. But in terms of actually getting stuff done, you break it up into bilaterals.

**QUESTION:** I guess what I meant --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Does that --

**QUESTION:** I guess what I meant is, are you at the point now -- like, even though you're working towards this formal, kind of restoration of relations, it seems that relations between the U.S. and North Korea are improving, and I was just wondering if you feel at the point where -- do you have to go through these strict, kind of New York channels, or do you feel at the point where if you need something to talk about with North Korea, can you call up your counterpart and, you know, kind of open up other channels of dialogue that are going to help the relationship improve while these negotiations are going?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, I mean, I think the New York channel works very well for us. I mean, you just dial, you know, area code 212 and, you know, it's -- I think it's very effective in terms of getting messages to Pyongyang. So we're very satisfied with that.

The people in New York who -- from the DPRK understand the issues and are, you know, they're not just -- they're not just, you know, writing verbatim what your question is; they understand what you're talking about. So we find it a very useful mechanism. Often, you know, you'll call them and say, you know, we want to -- I mean, just to set up an appointment. For example, when I went to Beijing en route to Shenyang, we wanted to have a bilateral meeting with Kim Gye Gwan, he was -- we knew he was not going to be in Shenyang because he was going to be elsewhere. So we asked in New York, can we meet with Mr. Kim in Beijing; I get in -- and in fact, I got in on Monday afternoon at 3:30 and we set up a meeting at 5:30, so -- and we did that all through the New York channel. So, you know, it's just helpful on a lot of ways.

In terms of -- you know, you point out the relationship is improving. I'd like to think the relationship is improving because we're beginning to get some things done and -- through the six-party process. It's not just because we're talking more. I think it's because we're getting stuff done. And to the extent we continue to get things done, I think the relationship will continue to improve with the understanding that we're not going to get there unless we get to the destination of the six-party process, which is denuclearization.

Let me take this question and then back to you.

**QUESTION:** People who are ideologically opposed to this process --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** To what process?

**QUESTION:** Critics, let's say, who oppose the idea of --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Who? I mean, you know, could you be more specific?

**QUESTION:** You want a name?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah, I mean, I -- just so I know who you're talking about. I mean --

**QUESTION:** Former Ambassador --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Do you mean, the Nelson report back there?

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** Former Ambassador John Bolton and others --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Oh.

**QUESTION:** -- who have criticized the deal --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Who? I'm sorry. I didn't hear.

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** John Bolton -- John Bolton --

**QUESTION:** Have talked -- you didn't hear me --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, no, I --

**QUESTION:** Former Ambassador John Bolton --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Oh, okay, I got it. Okay.

**QUESTION:** -- and others who have criticized --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Okay, yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- this process have talked about --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- have sort of talked about Yongbyon's lifespan as being sort of on its last leg. They said, "Look, Yongbyon is -- it was dying, it was a spent facility and that - you know, this passed" -- you know, basically -- I'm wondering whether there's any truth at all to that interpretation of what Yongbyon -- what was (inaudible)?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, you know, this is not a spring chicken of a nuclear reactor, that's for sure. But on the other hand, it was working -- it was churning out, you know, spent fuel until the day it was shut down. And I guess that argument is if it weren't shut down, it would eventually break and break forever, but it just has continued to function.

You know, there are parts of the world where old machinery continues to work. I mean, I've been in many countries where things that -- you know, I thought couldn't work continue to work. So I wouldn't -- I mean, I'm sure some of these critics know a lot more about Yongbyon than I do, but all I know is it was working until the day it was shut down. I mean, occasionally, they would have to bring it down to fix it, they would fix it and then turn it back on again. But now, it's shut down and it's not working. I mean, it's pursuant to our agreement and so I think that's the way to proceed.

Now if this were the final step, I would be one of those critics as well, but -- you know, we've done -- we've been working very hard to try to not only just keep the thing shut down, but to disable it so that even if you wanted to turn it back -- even if you wanted to kick all the inspectors out and abrogate a multilateral agreement and turn it back on, you couldn't. We'd like to see the thing disabled. That's what we're working on right now, but -- you know, there are a lot of countries in the world where old things work perfectly okay and I think this is one of them.

**QUESTION:** Have you got time for one more?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah, a couple more

**QUESTION:** Two?

**QUESTION:** A couple more? Okay.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Thanks. I have to say this is the first time I've ever been mentioned in the same sentence as John Bolton, but thank you.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I couldn't resist.

**QUESTION:** I know.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** You were sitting right there.

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** I was going to ask about the Yanks-Red Sox, but I didn't --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Ask me tomorrow.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, really. This business of the terrorism list and removal, you got a sense, in looking at how the North Koreans are using it, that maybe this is the next Macau money or light-water reactor or whatever? Could you give us a sense of how you think that issue is playing? Is this going to become yet another down payment thing that they're going to be demanding from us before they take the next steps or how far along are we on that front?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, you know -- I mean, I'll be very frank that certainly, they've raised it and raised it on a number of occasions. It's important to them and if you look in the February text, we're prepared to begin the process of removing them. It's a process that depends on working with them and to explore some of the issues that led them to get on that list. I think we got a good start on that when we had our first bilateral meeting. I'll expect to continue that.

It's an issue that many people, not just critics, but many other people feel strongly about and, you know, we need to address that. We certainly -- you know, it's in our interest that countries be removed from that list because it means they're no longer State Sponsors of Terrorism. But we're not going to, you know, cup our eyes and pretend that a country is not a State Sponsor of Terrorism if they are a State Sponsor, so we have to work through this and make sure that when and if the decision's taken, it's a decision that can stand the light of day. So we'll do that.

Glenn.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, just to follow up on that, the reasons why they were put on the list have to do with things that took place many years ago. But does the -- the instances of the abductions of Japanese citizens, does that play any role in potential removal from that list?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** You know, the U.S. has a very close and very special relationship with Japan. It's not only a close and special relationship, it's an alliance. So we care very much what our Japanese friends and allies have to say about an issue.

And so in addressing this issue, we want to make sure that as we get -- as we work through this, that we do it in a way that strengthens not only the six-party process, which -- and strengthens the -- increases the momentum toward denuclearization, but we want to do it in a way that strengthens our relationship with Japan. And you can look at that and say, well, this looks a little contradictory. Well, life is full of these things and especially in my line of work. So we just have to keep working through this. We certainly are in very close contact with our Japanese friends and allies on this. And I think we'll -- we can find a way through this.

**QUESTION:** So -- does that mean -- did you say "yes" to my question? (Laughter.)

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I mean, you work for a newspaper. You're not looking for a "yes" or "no." I mean, what about the rest of the page? I mean -- (laughter.) You're asking a question that obviously this is an important issue for Japan, and because it's an important issue for Japan, it's an important issue for us. And so as we try to address this issue, we have to do it, keeping in mind the importance of this issue. So I can't give you a "yes" or "no" on that.

**QUESTION:** Just a quick follow-up? I mean -- but you're talking about a legal determination of this designation and you're saying that it's become a political issue.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, I think if you look at the legal definition, I mean, there has to be a presidential determination and a president is going to look at a lot of factors and needs to justify those factors when he makes that determination. So I wouldn't just look at this as a simplistic check-the-box issue. I think it's an issue that has to be worked through and that's what we're doing.

**QUESTION:** A few more things on this. You said, if I'm not mistaken, that one of the things you would expect to discuss with regard to their presence on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list was how far along down the denuclearization path you would need to go before you could consider doing that.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah, yeah.

**QUESTION:** So it's quite conceivable to you that you -- they might be taken off the list before you get to the end of the denuclearization road?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, again, that's going to be -- depend on that's going to be -- depend on further consultations and negotiations and exchange of information, as I -- I'm not in a position to answer you when this would happen and at what stage of their obligations this would happen.

**QUESTION:** And then the other thing was you said that they hadn't acknowledged the HEU program. But I thought it had been the position of U.S. officials that after the October 2002 meeting where U.S. officials -- I think it was Kelly and Green confronted the North Koreans about the HEU program, that they initially said -- they initially assented and agreed that they had one and then subsequently backed away from it. Is that not the case?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, I think our basis for believing that they have and have had a program is not based on anything they've said. That's not the basis that we've moved forward on this. That's not the basis of our concerns, what they've said or not said. I'll just leave it that way.

Yeah.

**QUESTION:** (inaudible) -- the second bilateral North -- U.S.-North Korea bilateral working group, (inaudible) -- the second session --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- session in --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** You mean in Geneva?

**QUESTION:** In Geneva.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah, it wasn't done on the basis of its proximity to Sydney, I'll tell you that.

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** But then my question is about, you know, you mentioned just before the last session in Shenyang --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- it was a pretty successful session --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- of denuclearization of -- yes.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Because I think we really had some serious discussions.

**QUESTION:** And, you know --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah?

**QUESTION:** As you may know, that Geneva is in north -- the (inaudible) of the Geneva framework, so it would remind all of us, you know, of the good day between the U.S. and North Korea.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Oh, it's, you know --

**QUESTION:** And then initially, reportedly -- you know, Glenn Kessler reported that several months ago, initially North Korea, you know, suggested to have the, you know, last January bilateral talks in Geneva, but at the time, U.S. seems to be very reluctant to have it there.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Glenn reported that?

**QUESTION:** Yes.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Because I don't remember it. (Laughter.)

You reported that they proposed Geneva in January and we turned them down?

**QUESTION:** No, no, no -- but it --

**QUESTION:** I think I did point that out.

(Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** My question is --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Come on up here, Glenn.

**QUESTION:** My question is, I wondered -- it is any indication that both U.S. and North Korea -- you know, is approaching, you know, (inaudible)?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, no. It really isn't. I think Geneva is a place where, you know, we both have missions that are very suitable to these types of discussions. We don't plan to have a Geneva channel. Up until a few weeks ago, I thought we were talking about Southeast Asia and -- but the North Koreans asked about Geneva. You know, I looked at a map and I could find it on the map and thought it would be much easier for me to get to than going off to Southeast Asia. So I was quite happy to say yes to Geneva.

It's not a -- you know, we're not looking at symbolism or historical, you know, what's happened before. But I must say, when we finally got to this timing, the 1st and the 2nd, now I find that I don't just hop on back to Washington, I have to go on to Sydney. So it's not -- it's convenient for me to get there, but not to go to my next destination.

But it is not a symbolic choice and, you know, I'm sure, assuming we have another bilateral working group, we'll probably be in still a third place. I think the Japanese bilateral working group is in Mongolia and I'm not sure that's symbolic either, so --

(Laughter.)

**MR. GALLEGOS:** One last question.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** After denuclearization working group, you said that disablement by definition is not irreversible. But however, you previously said that disablement must be irreversible, so --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, I never said disablement must be irreversible.

**QUESTION:** So it doesn't mean U.S. has changed position on dismantlement?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, no. Look, it took them five years to build the reactor and to produce from it -- you know, from a green field, five years. So disablement -- let's say you took it away and reduced it to a green field. That's a disablement of five years. Obviously, we're not planning on that deep a scale of disablement. We're talking about something less than five years, obviously, because we're not taking the thing down to green fields.

So we've got to figure out what can be done so that you can't -- so that it is really a disablement; that is, you -- it is an inconvenient thing to bring it back on line; a very inconvenient and hopefully, a very expensive thing to bring it back on line, such that you wouldn't want to do that. And so we have to figure out what technologies are available and what can be done to do that. And the further into disablement, probably the more things they will want on their side. So again, when you ask these questions about what constitutes disablement, you're really getting right into the negotiation. And you know, I'd love to tell you, you know, what we're going to do on the terrorism list or et cetera, et cetera, but that's all part of the negotiations.

Okay, thank you.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Thank you all.

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