



Press Conference at U.S.-DPRK Bilateral Working Group Meeting

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United States Mission to the United Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
September 2, 2007

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Well, first of all, I just want to thank Amb. Tichenor and his team here for being here throughout this Labor Day weekend and supporting this bilateral working group that we've had with the DPRK. We really appreciate all the help of this U.S. Mission. So thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

We've completed two days of our bilateral working group. As I mentioned yesterday, this is the fourth of five working groups that we've held in connection with getting ready for the next Six-Party plenary. The fifth working group will take place next week in Ulanbaatar in Mongolia between Japan and the DPRK.

I would say we had, I think, very good and very substantive talks. I think we have an expectation that, because of this bilateral meeting, that we can look forward to a better chance of success at the next Six-Party plenary. We discussed all issues, of course focusing very much on the bilateral issues but not excluding, of course, the main event in the Six Parties, which is the denuclearization. And one thing that we agreed on is that the DPRK will provide a full declaration of all of their nuclear programs and will disable their nuclear programs by the end of this year, 2007.

I think this is very important. Of course, we will have to work out some of the details of this in the Six-Party process. As I've stressed many times, this is not a bilateral process at all. It's a multilateral Six-Party process. But we had a very good understanding of this today and an understanding that we need pick up the pace and get through this phase in 2007.

Our hope, of course, in getting through this phase in 2007 is to get on to other events in 2008 such that we can finish this job in the calendar year 2008 and complete the implementation of the September '05 statement. It's, of course, going to require continued, a great deal of effort on everyone's part. We're especially appreciative to the Chinese, who continue to be in the chair and a key factor in the Six-Party process. Indeed, I look forward to briefing China and the other delegations on our talks today. It's going to require efforts by all the participants in the Six-Party process, because everybody will have a role to play as we go through what will be an arduous amount of work.

But we're very appreciative of some other countries that have stepped forward and helped us out. And in that regard, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Swiss authorities, who have done such a marvelous job of getting us all together here in this beautiful city and ordering this wonderful weather.

So with those comments maybe I can go to some questions.

QUESTION: Sir, is this the first kind of breakthrough, major breakthrough you achieved with the DPRK, and how would you really describe what you have achieved in the two days? My second question is a very different question. I know that you're a big baseball fan. So how did the Boston Red Sox do?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Well, I could talk about that for the next hour. But as you know, they had a rookie named Clay Buchholz who pitched a no-hitter. So we followed up on that work today.

But let me say that I think that our reaching an understanding with the DPRK on completing these – that is, on completing a declaration and disabling their nuclear programs by the end of the year – is important. I will leave it to you to write your own headlines. I'd rather not use words like "breakthrough." I just want to tell you that it's important. But why is it important? It's important because it allows us sufficient time to get through to completing the September '05 agreement. And what we're in this for is not just declarations or disabling of facilities. We're in this for denuclearization. We want to complete the task, to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

And I would say we're in this for an even broader purpose, which is to help create the sense of neighborhood and to bring all the countries together. I think the Six-Party process has been very important in that regard, and China's leadership in the Six-Party process has been very important. But what we're looking forward to as well as we get into calendar year '08 – thanks to the expectation that we can complete this disabling in calendar year '07 – is we can get on with beginning this Northeast Asian peace and security mechanism. The Russian Federation has done a lot of work on that as the Chairman of that particular working group.

We have dealt with some of the bilateral issues. The U.S. and DPRK relationship is very important to this overall process. But also the Japan-DPRK relationship is very important, and we're pleased that that working group is getting going. And we have reason to believe that that will also meet with some success.

So I just want to emphasize, this is not, we are not in this for just these interim measures. We're in this to complete the overall process.

QUESTION: From what you have heard and what you have discussed and agreed on over the past couple of days, would you say that the United States will have to take action and steps on delisting North Korea from the terrorism list for North Korea to complete its commitments in the second phase?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Well, again, I don't want to get into some of the specific things that we're prepared to do. Obviously, we had a considerable discussion about these, but I need to consult within my government and also among the Six Parties before I consult with the press on that.

QUESTION: Do you have commonality that the uranium is included in the full declaration of nuclear programs?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Full means full. All nuclear programs means all nuclear programs.

QUESTION: They brought some ideas or suggestions?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: We had some very good discussions. I don't want to go into more details than that, except to say that when we say all nuclear programs we mean all. So we had some good discussions on that issue. We will continue to have discussions. And I have reason to believe that we will have, continue to have good discussions on that, but I don't want to get into detail on it.

QUESTION: To follow up on disablement. Does that include more than Yongbyon facility?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: It will be based on the declaration. We have to work out some of the details on that. So I can't give you more information at this time. When we have a declaration and the declaration – We will have a declaration in time to disable what needs to be disabled.

QUESTION: But we already know there is a Yongbyon [inaudible] facility, so that will surely be included?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Yongbyon, for example the Yongbyon reactor would have to be included, absolutely.

QUESTION: I don't mean to sound like somebody of little faith, but in September 2005 North Korea agreed in principle to do what you're describing just now. And then last year it tested a nuclear device. So I'm just wondering what you think has happened recently, in concrete terms, that brought North Korea to make the commitments you have just described, and how much faith do you have that it will actually happen in the timetable that you indicate?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Well, first of all, I think we've talked about a timetable that's realistic. And of course it will depend on technical aspects. But we've had some discussion of technical aspects and what can be accomplished.

I think what's been very important to our process is the fact that we've had, I think, a Six-Party process in which everybody has contributed. We cannot run a Six-Party process with just two countries. It has to be with all six, and I think everybody is very much engaged on it.

As I said earlier, we're not just looking for one interim measure. This is an interim measure -- that is, disabling the nuclear facilities. We also need to complete all the tasks that are laid out in the September '05 statement. And so that requires a lot of efforts by different countries. For example, having Russia work on the Northeast Asian peace and security mechanism is very important. I think China has been a very diligent and very strong chairman through this, and they will have to continue to be. So, of course, in the end it will depend on all sides wanting to make this happen, especially the DPRK side.

What I like to think is that, as the DPRK has participated in the Six-Party process, as we've gone through calendar year '07, they see in this process some reasons to stick with it and an understanding that this will leave their country better off. And I think the Six-Party process offers them some benefits that they don't have now because of, I think, these very much misguided nuclear programs.

QUESTION: Did you agree on the roadmap, or still there is some work you should work out?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: There will be some additional details that need to be worked out, and I think you'll see some of those in the coming weeks as we get ready. Or as we meet in the plenary you'll see some of the specific elements that we're talking about. But we didn't use the word roadmap. But we certainly talked about some of the things we need to do together and some of the time benchmarks we need to get them done in order to complete the task by the end of this year -- or complete the declaration and to disable the facilities by the end of this year.

QUESTION: Ambassador Hill, you're talking so much about what North Korea is willing to do to make --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: You keep asking me that, Mike.

QUESTION: -- to make this agreement work. But North Korea doesn't do anything for nothing. So what is it besides energy assistance that North Korea is going to get in this second phase?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Well, first of all, I wouldn't just dismiss energy assistance. I think that's a very important part of it. And obviously we've discussed some other issues. But we need to brief our partners on what we're going to do, and we need to have discussions in Washington. So I have to do that before I talk to you about it.

QUESTION: You gave them a proposal for disablement. Did they accept that today? You said you thought --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: We had discussions on disablement. We had some ideas on it. They had some ideas on it. I think we've reached agreement between our two parties, that is the U.S. and DPRK, that what we're talking about is feasible by the end of the year.

QUESTION: Did North Korea admit that they have an HEU program?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: We had, I think, a very good discussion about this issue, and we will continue to have good discussions such that I believe we can address this issue in connection with the declaration.

QUESTION: Who is going to check that the North Koreans are doing [inaudible]? Americans are going to [inaudible]?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: In all of these measures that we take we have verification processes built in. So there of course will be verification. But the Six Parties include three nuclear states -- the U.S., Russia and China. And of course right now in connection with the shutdown of the facilities we have the IAEA verifying the continued shutdown. So I think as we go forward we'll continue to have verification mechanisms. And some of those have to be designed for particular stages, but I can assure you we will continue to have verification as an integral part of what we do.

QUESTION: Have you and the North Koreans come to share the same idea on what's needed to delist them from the state-sponsored terrorism list?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: We have come to have some very good discussions on that point. We have had some very good discussions on those issues, and we certainly believe we have a basis for continuing to go forward.

PRESS: Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: OK. See you later. I've got to catch a plane. Thank you very much.

Released on September 3, 2007

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