



## Press Stakeout at APEC

**Christopher R. Hill, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs**

Lobby of the Sheraton Four Points Hotel  
Sydney, Australia  
September 7, 2007

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** All my Beijing buddies are here. (laughter) What are you all doing here?

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) hear the announcement that you made inside.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** What I did was to announce that the three nuclear states in the Six Parties – that is Russia, China, and the U.S. – at the invitation of the DPRK – will go to the DPRK next week. And I believe the plan is for everybody to get together in Pyongyang on the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup>.

We are working very hard to get the teams identified. China, for example, just gave a name of a nuclear scientist who will be coming. We are putting together our list of people.

And so they will assemble in Pyongyang. The purpose is to do a survey of the sites that need to be disabled pursuant to our agreement. And so they will visit Yongbyon in particular, because Yongbyon – as we already know even without a declaration – we know that Yongbyon has three of the main sites. That is, the fuel fabrication facilitation, the 5-megawatt reactor, and the reprocessing facility. And so the idea is for these nuclear experts to look at these three facilities and – working with the DPRK experts – figure out how they can be disabled and how to do that disablement before December 31<sup>st</sup>. And we anticipate that the visit will last until the 15<sup>th</sup>. So they will arrive on the 11<sup>th</sup> and depart – I believe – on the 15<sup>th</sup>. That's the current estimate. And then they will report to the next Six-Party plenary meeting. It is not yet scheduled, but we believe it will be soon after this visit.

Now this idea came up in our Geneva talks, but what we wanted to do was to fully consult with all of the other parties. So – for example – when I got to Sydney on Tuesday morning I had a meeting with Ken Sasae and discussed this and described this with Ken Sasae. I had a similar meeting on Tuesday with Song Min-soon. Secretary Rice also talked to the Russian Foreign Minister about this. We talked to the Chinese both in Beijing through our Embassy, but also I had a discussion with one of the members of the Chinese delegation here. In short, we wanted to consult with all of our Six-Party colleagues before announcing that this was going to happen.

So today we are announcing this. We have a lot of work to do to get ready for Tuesday. People have to get their gear together. We believe the U.S. group -- which will consist of a few experts from, for example, from the Department of Energy, but also the Department of State; I think we also have someone from the National Security Council staff -- the plan is for our team to arrive in Pyongyang the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> and rendezvous with experts from Russia and China. Then, probably starting on the 12<sup>th</sup> they will go and visit probably the Yongbyong facility – because everybody knows that's what needs to be done.

**QUESTION:** How do you feel about the result of the bilateral meeting between the Japan and North Korea at Mongolia?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Okay. We heard a good report on that from the Japanese side. But are there any other questions about this team?

**QUESTION:** About the timing? September 11 is obviously is a (inaudible). Is there anything that should be read into the timing?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No. It's a question of people leaving. In Washington's case, we would leave Monday morning. That puts us in Seoul probably Tuesday at noon, and then you try to get up to Pyongyang by Tuesday night. So I guess they'll leave Washington on the 10<sup>th</sup>. But, no, there is no symbolic consideration there. It's a question of -- We want to do it next week because we anticipate, again this is up to the Chinese hosts, we anticipate that perhaps the following week we could have a plenary. Perhaps, but we don't know. We want to give the team a good week in which to do their survey.

**QUESTION:** Do you think those people will visit sites other than at Yongbyon?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I don't know. I don't want to get into the specific sites. But I know they will be visiting Yongbyon.

**QUESTION:** Are they going to actually enter the facilities?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Again, they will have to work this out, because there will be a lot of DPRK, a lot of North Korean experts there as well. So we'll have to work that out. This plan has not been choreographed every step of the way, so I am sure they will encounter issues there. But we'll try to deal with them.

**QUESTION:** How would you characterize the U.S.'s reaction (inaudible) --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I'm sorry?

**QUESTION:** Could you just characterize for me the U.S.'s reaction?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** We think this is a very positive step. It's another example of the Six Parties working together, because – even though it's only the three nuclear states – we had good discussions about this with the Japanese and the South Koreans. So I think it's a good step.

We have to see what the results are of the visit. Our hope is that they can agree on some disabling measures that, first of all, meet the definition of disabling -- which is to make it very difficult to bring a facility back on line. Right now, the facilities are shut down, but in theory one could bring them back up online. The idea of disabling is to make it difficult to bring things back online. So we hope that, within that definition of disabling, we can agree on some measures with the North Koreans that mean we will be able to meet our deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**QUESTION:** Is that more for the disablement, rather than declaration?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** This is more for the disablement. Now I don't think this will be the last team either. But this is a start of the disablement process. And the reason I know they are going to Yongbyon is that the facilities in Yongbyon don't need to await a declaration in order for technicians to begin looking at the technical

task of how to disable them.

**QUESTION:** Are they not going to look for uranium facilities?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** This delegation is probably not going to be looking at uranium facilities at this time. But, as we have made very clear, when we get to a declaration – and we need a declaration that can be done in time to have all the nuclear facilities disabled by the 31<sup>st</sup> -- I think that's the time when we have to look at those other questions.

So I want to emphasize we are in the early part of September. And so if we can get this team in and let's say in Yongbyon they can agree on measures for the three facilities there, that would be very helpful. And then we can take it from there.

**QUESTION:** President Bush said that you briefed on the recent development of Six-Party talks to the present. What was the reaction of the President?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I'm not going to --- I mean, when I give a briefing to my seniors, I don't tell you what the reaction of my seniors is. I think you heard the President's comments publicly, and I think you can draw from that.

**QUESTION:** Ambassador, you seem somewhat restrained?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I'm always very restrained.

**QUESTION:** You talked about a positive step (inaudible). Isn't this, in reality, a major breakthrough for the U.S.?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I don't write headlines for people. You have to write your own headline.

**QUESTION:** What is your own feeling?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I think I've given this to you, that I think this is a very positive step. It's an example of getting the process going. That is, I've talked in the past about how we've talked about documents and agreeing on pieces of paper. Now we have people actually getting on the ground and looking at real facilities and figuring out how things can be done in a real way. But, you know, this is a long process. We're not at the end. We're not even at the beginning of the end. So we've got a ways to go. And so I'm just going to keep my adrenaline in check for the time being.

**QUESTION:** You mentioned in Geneva, you said the between Japan and North Korea --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** You're from TBS?

**QUESTION:** Yes.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I can read that upside down. I learned that in diplomacy. (Laughter)

**QUESTION:** You think there is definitely something of progress after the meeting by, the meeting between North Korea and Japan. But it seems like nothing is happening.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** In fact, we had an opportunity to hear from the Japanese side how the meeting went. Foreign Minister Machimura summarized the meeting to Dr. Rice. We want to see progress in that relationship. We understand that progress isn't necessarily going to be measured by one meeting. We definitely want to see progress there. We think Japan has an extremely important role to play in northeast Asia, an extremely important role to play in the overall task of bringing North Korea across the river, in the figurative sense – that is, away from nuclear programs to, I think, a much better future.

And so we continue to be very supportive of that particular bilateral working group. Our bilateral working group was, I think, a very good session. I've talked about it before. But I think we will all have to continue on this process for some months to come.

**QUESTION:** Is this something that North Korean voluntarily came up with, or is it something that was a response to U.S. requests?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, this was an outgrowth of – It was their suggestion, and it was an outgrowth of the denuclearization working group that took place in Shenyang -- during which there was a discussion of how to do you disable. And one of the questions is, how do you define disablement? And then how do you disable in a way that meets that definition, but also the time frame -- because I think we've lost a lot of time in our process over the spring. And so we want disablement, the disablement phase, to be done by December 31<sup>st</sup>. So rather than talk about ideas on a piece of paper, the North Koreans suggested that some nuclear experts come and have a look and let's figure out what we can get done according to our definition and get it done by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**QUESTION:** Japan and Korea I think also have nuclear experts. What is the reason --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, this has to do with nuclear weapons ultimately. At the end of the day, we're talking about facilities that have been used for military purposes. And I think we have to realize that Yongbyon was a facility that was used to reprocess spent fuel into plutonium for military purposes, and for that reason we have the three nuclear weapons states. In the future, I don't know what kind of experts would be involved. But, at this stage, having the three nuclear weapons states seemed appropriate. I want to stress that the results of this expert-level visit, the results will be forwarded, will be reported to the Six-Party meeting, which is under the chairmanship of the Chinese. So we will go from there.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) to define what disablement means?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** No, this is not a negotiating team. This is a technical team to look at what is feasible and what can be the scope. They need to report to the Six Parties. And then, if there are further negotiations, they would be done by the Six Parties.

**QUESTION:** Does this mean the North Koreans are ready to disable and declare all nuclear programs by the end of this year? Are they really going to do that?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Well, they said they will.

**QUESTION:** By the end of this year?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** They said in public? In public, I don't think they said --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** They've said they will.

**QUESTION:** And if they disabale by the end of this year, are you ready to delist them from the state sponsors list?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Oh, well, we have some very specific understandings about that, but I'm not ready to talk about that publicly.

**QUESTION:** And the report to the plenary, is it going to be a list of technical options?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Probably it will be. It will be a report of the team. And the team will have to talk about what they saw and what is feasible in the team's opinion. And then the Six-Party delegations will have to listen to that and figure out what can be done.

**QUESTION:** Who is leading the U.S. delegation?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** We are putting together our team right now. And so I can probably answer that tomorrow. I think I know, but it has to be approved first. But these are primarily people who are entirely nuclear experts and not policy people.

**QUESTION:** You are not going?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** I am not going. (Laughter) I am not a nuclear expert.

Okay?

**STATE DEPARTMENT STAFF MEMBER:** Sir, I know you have another event to go to about now.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** Thank you very much. Okay. We'll see you all later.

**QUESTION:** Did Boston win?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** They did, 7to 6.

**QUESTION:** Wow. That's great. (Laughter)

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL:** They are six and a half games over the Yankees. So it's looking very good. Thanks for asking! (Laughter)

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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