



The Six Party Process: Progress and Perils in North Korea's Denuclearization

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Introduction

Thank you, Chairman Faleomavaega and Chairman Sherman, Ranking Member Manzullo and Ranking Member Royce, and distinguished Members for inviting me to discuss with your subcommittees recent developments in our efforts to achieve the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party process.

I am pleased to report several positive and significant steps toward achieving our goal. Most recently, on October 3, 2007, the Six Parties announced an agreement on "Second-Phase Actions for Implementation of the Joint Statement" which outlines a roadmap for a declaration of all of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear programs and disablement of its three core nuclear facilities at Yongbyon by the end of the year. These Second-Phase actions would effectively block the DPRK's known ability to produce plutonium – a major step towards the goal of achieving the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We are working closely with the other parties to implement this agreement expeditiously, and in the past few weeks we have taken several steps forward on implementation of the agreement.

Implementation of February 13 "Initial Actions" Agreement

The October 3 agreement builds on the February 13, 2007, agreement on "Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement." Pursuant to the February 13 agreement, the DPRK in July shut down and sealed the core nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and invited back the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to conduct monitoring and verification activities, as provided for in the February 13 agreement. Upon returning to the DPRK in July, the IAEA verified the shutdown status of the 5-MW(e) reactor, fuel fabrication facility, reprocessing facility, an uncompleted 50-MW(e) reactor, and an uncompleted 200-MW(e) reactor. The IAEA continues to monitor and verify the shutdown status of those sites.

The IAEA has reported excellent cooperation from DPRK authorities, and we have urged the DPRK to continue to provide full cooperation to the Agency's personnel working at Yongbyon. To support the work of IAEA monitoring and verification activities in the DPRK, the United States provided \$1.8 million from existing funds as the U.S. voluntary contribution to the IAEA to help cover associated expenses. Japan has also pledged \$500,000 to support this effort, and we would welcome voluntary contributions from other member states to support the IAEA's ongoing work in the DPRK.

Under the February 13 agreement, the Six Parties agreed that as the DPRK implements its commitments to denuclearization, the other parties would provide the DPRK with energy assistance in the form of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) or its equivalent in alternative economic, energy, and humanitarian assistance. Thus, as agreed, once the DPRK implemented its Initial-Phase commitments to shut down and seal Yongbyon facilities and invite back the IAEA, it received 50,000 tons of HFO. As the DPRK has taken steps to implement its Second-Phase commitments to provide a complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs and to disable facilities at Yongbyon, the other parties have begun implementing their commitment to provide an additional 950,000 tons of HFO or equivalent. Additionally, as part of beginning the movement toward normalization of relations between the United States and the DPRK, the United States committed to begin the process of removing the designation of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism and advance the process of terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA) with respect to the DPRK. To help implement these tasks, the February agreement established five working groups, all of which have met at least twice and reported their results to the Heads of Delegation.

October 3 Agreement on Second-Phase Actions

Building on the successful implementation of these Initial-Phase actions, the Six Parties announced on October 3 an agreement on a set of Second-Phase actions. Under this latest agreement, the DPRK agreed to provide a complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs by the end of the year. The declaration will include all nuclear facilities, materials, and programs. As the President said last week, it must include "plutonium that has been manufactured and/or the construction of bombs." The DPRK also agreed to address concerns related to any uranium enrichment programs and activities.

The DPRK also agreed to disable all existing nuclear facilities subject to the September 2005 Joint Statement and February 13 Agreement. As a start, the core nuclear facilities at Yongbyon – 5-MW(e) nuclear reactor, reprocessing plant, and fuel rod fabrication facility – are to be disabled by the end of the year. Specific disablement actions will be based on the findings of the U.S.-China-Russia experts who visited the DPRK in September to survey the facilities at Yongbyon and the U.S. technical team that visited from October 11 to 18. At the request of the Six Parties, the United States has agreed to lead disablement activities. We will provide initial funding for these activities and expect to have our technical experts back on the ground in Yongbyon shortly. They will begin the actual work of disabling the facilities in a manner that should ensure that the DPRK would have to expend significant time and effort to reconstitute its ability to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

The task of disablement will not end with the core facilities at Yongbyon, and it will not end on December 31, 2007. The Parties have agreed that disablement will extend to all existing nuclear facilities and that this process will extend beyond December 31, 2007. But by the end of the year, implementation of the October 3 agreement will have effectively blocked the DPRK's known ability to produce plutonium, and it would take the DPRK a significant period of time to restart those activities.

And as the President has said, he is pleased with the progress we're making but believes that there is work to be done. This is not the end point of the process, and we hope to move forward early next year to the Third and final Phase, which will be aimed at dismantling all of North Korea's nuclear facilities, capturing all fissile material the DPRK has produced, and the abandonment of its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.

The United States also has several commitments under the February 13 and October 3 agreements. As I mentioned earlier, the other Parties agreed to provide the DPRK with one million tons of HFO or equivalent in return for its actions in the Initial and Second phases. The Republic of Korea supplied the first shipment of 50,000 tons of HFO, and China provided the second. The United States is providing the third shipment, which is set to arrive in the DPRK in late October. Russia has indicated it will provide the next shipment of HFO. At this point, the Japanese government is not yet participating in energy assistance to the DPRK because of its outstanding concerns regarding Japanese abductees, and we continue to press the DPRK to address Japan's concerns. The working group on Economy and Energy Cooperation will continue to meet to review options for other forms of energy assistance that could be provided to the DPRK as HFO-equivalent under the agreement.

Under the October 3 agreement, the United States also reaffirmed its intent to fulfill its commitments regarding the removal of the designation of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism and the termination of the application of the TWEA with respect to the DPRK. U.S. action related to the terrorism designation and TWEA application will depend on the DPRK's fulfillment of its Second-Phase commitments on providing a complete and correct declaration and disabling its nuclear facilities, as well as on

satisfaction of legal requirements. The legal criteria for removing a country's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism are set forth in U.S. law. The Administration intends to consult closely with Congress and follow appropriate procedures on any decision to take action on the terrorism designation or TWEA application with regard to the DPRK.

We remain very concerned about nuclear proliferation – the potential for such proliferation has always been one of our major concerns about the DPRK's pursuit of nuclear weapons programs. In the October 3 agreement the DPRK reaffirmed its commitment "not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how," and we intend to hold North Korea to its word. We have discussed this issue with the North Koreans many times and will remain vigilant about proliferation concerns. The North Koreans are cognizant of the fact that United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718 remains in effect.

The United States recognizes that some issues remain unresolved, including remaining questions about Japanese abductees, and we continue to urge the DPRK at every opportunity to address Japan's concerns. Japan is an important friend and ally of the United States, and we will continue to consult closely with the Japanese government as we move forward on this issue.

Transforming North Korea's Relations with the International Community

As the October 3 agreement is implemented and we move forward into the next phase of actions in early 2008 toward complete denuclearization, I believe the Six Parties can begin to make real progress on transforming North Korea's relations with the international community, and indeed transforming Northeast Asia. The United States and DPRK have committed to improving bilateral relations and working toward full diplomatic relations. One way we will seek to do this is to increase bilateral exchanges between the United States and DPRK aimed at enhancing mutual trust. Our goal through this process will remain improving the lives of the people of North Korea. On a separate track to address humanitarian assistance needs, the United States announced in August that we are prepared to provide substantial food aid to the DPRK, subject to appropriate monitoring procedures. We have also made clear to the DPRK that discussion of outstanding issues of concern, including the DPRK's human rights record, would be part of the normalization process.

We also remain committed to replacing the 1953 Armistice with a permanent peace arrangement on the Korean Peninsula. The United States believes that discussions of a Korean Peninsula peace regime could begin among the directly related parties once the DPRK has disabled its existing nuclear facilities, has provided a complete and correct declaration of all of its nuclear programs, and is clearly on the road to complete denuclearization. We can achieve a permanent peace arrangement on the Korean Peninsula once the DPRK fully discloses and abandons its nuclear weapons programs.

We also hope to move forward on developing a Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism, which would help transform the cooperative relationships built through the Six-Party process into an enduring security framework for Northeast Asia. To advance all of our goals, the Six Parties remain committed to holding a ministerial level meeting in the near future.

The Road Ahead

What I have outlined here today – the agreements implemented to date and commitments still to be fulfilled – represent an important set of achievements on the road to verifiable denuclearization of the DPRK through full implementation of the September 2005 Joint Statement. But much remains to be done. Full implementation of the October 3 agreement, including follow-on disablement activities, should effectively block the DPRK's known ability to produce plutonium, but we must continue to move forward in the Six-Party process to realize the DPRK's abandonment of all fissile material and nuclear weapons in accordance with the September 2005 Joint Statement, as well as its return to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards. We will continue to work closely with our Six-Party partners as we move forward on the tough tasks that lie ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer your questions.

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