

Press Statement
Sean McCormack, Spokesman
New York City, NY
September 19, 2005

North Korea -- U.S. Statement

The following statement by the head of the U.S. delegation to the Six-Party Talks, Christopher R. Hill, was released in Beijing on September 19, 2005

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill's Statement at the
Closing Plenary of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks
September 19, 2005

I would like to join with my colleagues from the ROK and Russian delegations in expressing my deep appreciation for China's leadership in chairing and hosting this fourth round of the Six-Party Talks. The United States is able to join in supporting the Joint Statement on the basis of the following understandings:

Let me start by noting that the goal of the Six-Party Talks is the prompt and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. When this goal is achieved, it will open up a new chapter for all Korean people. We know that the document includes undertakings for all the parties; my government is prepared to fulfill all our undertakings.

All elements of the DPRK's past and present nuclear programs - plutonium and uranium - and all nuclear weapons will be comprehensively declared and completely, verifiably and irreversibly eliminated, and will not be reconstituted in the future. According to these principles, the DPRK will return, at an early date, to the NPT and come into full compliance with IAEA safeguards, including by taking all steps that may be deemed necessary to verify the correctness and completeness of the DPRK's declarations of nuclear materials and activities.

But in addition to these obligations, there are also benefits that the DPRK will accrue. But these benefits will only accrue in the context of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In the statement of principles, there is a reference to the "appropriate time" to discuss the subject of the DPRK's use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, such as the subject of the provision of a light water reactor, but that "appropriate time" will only come when the DPRK has:

- Promptly eliminated all nuclear weapons and all nuclear programs, and this has been verified to the satisfaction of all parties by credible international means, including the IAEA; and,
- When the DPRK has come into full compliance with the NPT and IAEA safeguards, and has demonstrated a sustained commitment to cooperation and transparency and has ceased proliferating nuclear technology.

When these conditions have been met, I want to be very clear - we will support such a discussion.

The United States notes that the NPT recognizes the right of parties to the Treaty to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the context of compliance with Articles I and II of the Treaty.

Foremost among the Treaty's obligations is the commitment not to possess or pursue nuclear weapons. The Treaty also calls for its parties to adhere to safeguards agreements with the IAEA. Thus, the DPRK's statement concerning its "right" to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be premised upon the completion of verification of the DPRK's elimination of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and full compliance with the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

I would like to note also that the United States supports a decision to terminate KEDO by the end of the year.

We should also note for the record that the United States will take concrete actions necessary to protect ourselves and our allies against any illicit and proliferation activities on the part of the DPRK.

The United States desires to completely normalize relations with the DPRK, but as a necessary part of discussions, we look forward to sitting down with the DPRK to address other important issues. These outstanding issues include human rights abuses, biological and chemical weapons programs, ballistic missile programs and proliferation, terrorism, and illicit activities.

The Joint Statement accurately notes the willingness of the United States to respect the DPRK's sovereignty and to exist with the DPRK peacefully together. Of course, in that context the United States continues to have serious concerns about the treatment of people and behavior in areas such as human rights in the DPRK. The U.S. acceptance of the Joint Statement should in no way be interpreted as meaning we accept all aspects of the DPRK's system, human rights situation or treatment of its people. We intend to sit down and make sure that our concerns in these areas are addressed.

The Joint Statement sets out a visionary view of the end-point of the process of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. It is a very important first step to get us to the critical and urgent next phase: implementation of DPRK commitments outlined above and the measures the United States and other parties would provide in return, including security assurances, economic and energy cooperation, and taking steps toward normalized relations.

The United States believes that it is imperative to move rapidly on an agreement to implement the goals outlined in the Joint Statement. We look forward to working with all the other parties, including the DPRK, to do so.

2005/T13-29

Released on September 19, 2005