

[Home](#) [Issues & Press](#) [Travel & Business](#) [Countries](#) [Youth & Education](#) [Careers](#) [About State](#)

Special Briefing  
**Sean McCormack, Spokesman**  
Washington, DC  
October 11, 2008

## Briefing on North Korea With Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks Ambassador Sung Kim, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Sean McCormack, Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation Paula DeSutter, and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Patricia McNerney

[View Video](#)

2008/869

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Good morning, everybody. I want to thank you for coming in on a Saturday morning. I see a few faces that we don't normally see in the briefing room.

You have a couple of pieces of paper in front of you. One of them is a [fact sheet](#) that I'm going to read here just for the record. You also have in front of you a fact sheet called [Existing Sanctions and Reporting Provisions Related to North Korea](#). I think that's a useful reference for part of our discussion a little bit later on. So let me get started here. I'm going to read a couple of statements which we'll have in paper form for you, and we're also going to invite a couple of other guest speakers up here: Ambassador Sung Kim from the EAP Bureau, Acting Assistant Secretary Patty McNerney, Assistant Secretary Paula DeSutter. They're going to make brief statements and then we can get into a Q&A session and talk about this morning's events.

The participants in the Six-Party Talks have, for some time, been discussing the importance of verification measures that will allow the parties to reliably verify North Korea's denuclearization as the process moves forward. The Six-Party heads of delegation met in July to discuss verification measures and draft papers were exchanged among the parties. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, China, the chair of the Six-Party Talks, released a press communiqué stating that verification measures would include visits to facilities, review of documents, and interviews with technical personnel as well as other measures unanimously agreed among the Six Parties.

Upon the invitation of the North Korean Government, a U.S. negotiating team, on behalf of the Six Parties, visited Pyongyang from October 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> for intensive talks on verification measures, and Ambassador Sung Kim was part of that delegation. He can talk a little bit in depth and from firsthand accounts about those negotiations.

Based on these discussions, the United States and North Korea negotiators agreed – and I have to emphasize this is an agreement – on a number of important verification measures, including agreement that experts from all Six Parties may participate in verification activities including experts from non-nuclear states; agreement that the IAEA will have an important consultative and support role in verification; agreement that experts will have access to all declared facilities, and based on mutual consent, to undeclared sites; agreement on the use of scientific procedures, including sampling and forensic activities, and agreement that all measures contained in the verification protocol will apply to the plutonium-based program and any uranium enrichment and proliferation activities. In addition, the monitoring mechanism already agreed by the Six Parties to monitor compliance with the Six-Party documents applies to proliferation and uranium enrichment activities.

The U.S.-North Korea agreement on these verification measures has been codified in a joint document between the United States and North Korea and certain other understandings, and has been reaffirmed through intensive consultations. The agreement and associated understandings have been conveyed to the other parties and these measures will serve as a baseline for a verification protocol to be finalized and adopted by the Six Parties in the near future.

And let me just a couple addenda to this, and our experts can speak to this in a bit more depth. Every element of verification that we sought is included in this package. That's an important point. Every single thing that we sought going in is part of this package. And on the point about the intensive consultations, I think Ambassador Kim can speak to that a bit more, but we also had intensive consultations with our Japanese colleagues. And in the course of those consultations, Japan made it clear that the agreement should be formalized, including in writing, at the level of the Six Parties. And we agree with that, and I have to emphasize here that this is already in agreement.

So what you are, in essence, doing is – the next step is living up to a key tenant of the Six-Party Talks, and that is that an agreement between any two parties will ultimately be guaranteed and formalized by all the Six Parties. So again, Ambassador Kim can speak a little bit more to that, but that's an important point. And you already have the fact sheet on the existing measures, and then this is a statement from me and we'll put this out on paper form afterwards.

The Democratic People's Republic of North Korea has agreed to a series of verification measures that represent significant cooperation concerning the verification of North Korea's denuclearization actions. Those understandings are detailed in a separate fact sheet which I have just read to you. Based upon the cooperation and agreements North Korea has recently provided and the fact that the DPRK has met the statutory criteria for rescission, the Secretary of State this morning rescinded the designation of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism, and that was effective with her signature.

North Korea has stated it will resume disablement of its nuclear facilities. This demonstrates that the Six Party principle of action for action is working. We welcome the recent progress made in discussions between Japan and the DPRK toward addressing Japan's concerns, particularly those arising from the DPRK's past abductions of Japanese nationals. We strongly urge North Korea to address Japan's concerns without further delay. The United States wholeheartedly supports Japan's position on the abduction issue. We have not forgotten and will never forget the suffering of the abductees and their families.

North Korea remains subject to numerous sanctions resulting from its 2006 nuclear test, its proliferation activities, its human rights violations, and its status as a communist state. You have a list of those. The United States will continue to work toward the verifiable end of all North Korean nuclear programs and activities. We will not stop until this work is done.

So at this point, what I'd like to do is turn it over to Ambassador Kim and then we'll go through our other speakers and then we can get right to questions.

**QUESTION:** Just --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Was there something --

**QUESTION:** Well, you addressed -- I just want to ask that you -- the one line where you said -- talked about the verification protocol to be finalized and adopted by the Six Parties in the near future, maybe Ambassador Kim could speak with -- but when exactly in the near future?

**MR. MCCORMACK:** In the near future. I think Sung Kim can speak to that.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Thanks. Thanks, Sean. Good morning. I think Sean covered most of the important points, but I thought I'd give you some negotiating history so that you have a better sense of how this -- how we arrived at the agreement.

As Sean mentioned, the Six Parties have been pursuing strong verification measures to reliably verify the North Korean declaration for some time now. We have continued to conduct very intensive consultations with all of our five party partners in addition to our discussions with the North Koreans. In fact, verification activities really began even before the declaration was submitted in June. In early May, as you may recall, the North Koreans gave us 18,000 pages of documents related to their Yongbyon facilities. An analysis of those documents have given us some useful information.

In conjunction with the submission of the declaration on June 26<sup>th</sup>, the China – the Chinese, as the chair of the Six-Party process, announced that the parties agreed that that declaration would be subject to full verification and that there is an agreement within the Six Parties on principles to guide the verification regime. This was further refined during the July 10-12 Six Party heads of delegation meeting as well as the denuclearization working group meeting. And I think Sean mentioned the press communiqué that the Chinese issued as a result of those discussions.

We continue to have follow-up discussions with all of the parties throughout, including on the margins of the informal Six-Party ministerial meeting in Singapore on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. After further discussion with the parties, on twenty – August 22<sup>nd</sup>, a revised draft verification paper was circulated. We did not receive any substantive response from the North Koreans, but they did invite a U.S. delegation led by Assistant Secretary Hill to visit North Korea last week.

And during that visit, we had detailed and substantive discussions on a set of verification measures. And as Sean mentioned, we reached agreement on these verification measures. Now these measures will have to be codified in the Six-Party process. As Secretary Rice likes to say, we need to “Six-Partyize” this bilateral agreement, and that is our – that is the next step. You asked about the timing of the Six-Party meeting. We have been talking to the Chinese, and I think the Chinese would like to call a meeting as soon as possible, possibly within this month, to finalize and adopt this verification package.

I just want to mention again that we have continued to have very intensive consultations with all of our parties, especially Japan. In fact, just a couple of days ago, an NSC colleague and I were in Tokyo and met with Japanese counterparts for four to five hours going through details of the agreement that we had reached with the North Koreans. And there have been several senior-level communication with Japanese leaders as well.

I also want to mention – remind you a couple – of other very important points. As Sean just read in the press statement, we welcome the recent progress between Japan and the DPRK to address Japan’s concerns, particularly the abductions issue. We strongly urge the North Koreans to implement their agreement as soon as possible. I also want to mention that we remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in North Korea in general, and that we have made clear to the North Koreans that the human rights situation would be an important concern that needs to be addressed as we move forward towards – in the Six-Party process as well as in improving bilateral relationship. Thanks.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** What we’ll do is we’ll have Acting Assistant Secretary McNerney come up and then Assistant Secretary DeSutter. Then we can get into your questions.

**MS. MCNERNEY:** Good morning. I just wanted to talk a little bit generally about what we’ve done from the perspective of the International Security and Nonproliferation Bureau in conjunction with my colleague, Paula DeSutter, who can talk to some of the specifics about verification.

We’ve basically been focused since October 3<sup>rd</sup> of last year, when Korea agreed it would provide us with a complete and correct declaration of its nuclear programs. In order to assess that completeness and correctness of the declaration that was provided by North Korea, the United States and the Six Parties affirmed that we need to see a robust verification mechanism in order to assess the completeness and correctness. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, we met in Beijing and the Six Parties – as you know, Sean described – released a communiqué that laid out some of the general elements of such a verification regime.

Verifying North Korea’s nuclear declaration will be a serious challenge and we’re not going into this naïvely. This is the most secret and opaque regime in the entire world. Secretary Rice outlined, for that reason, some of the elements that we need to see in a declaration. These included – this was her statement of June 18<sup>th</sup> – and these include on-site access to facilities and sites in North Korea; collection and removal of environmental and material samples; forensic analysis of materials and equipment; access to documents and other records; as well as interviews with North Korean personnel involved in the nuclear program. The agreement that we are discussing today meets all of these criteria.

Since we began the Six-Party process, we’ve learned more than we knew about North Korea’s nuclear program. As Sung mentioned, our experts have had the opportunity to review 18,000 pages of operating records from the Yongbyon facility. We know that North Korea has pursued a uranium enrichment – we assess that they pursued one in the past. And as we’ve gotten deeper into the process, we’ve been troubled by additional information about its uranium enrichment capability.

We’ve been engaged in these negotiations on behalf of the Six Parties for the past several months in order to develop such a regime, as outlined by the Secretary. This agreement and associated understandings are now being reviewed by the Six Parties and we believe will serve as a baseline for a formalized verification protocol that would be discussed in the coming weeks. Once agreed by the Six Parties, we believe we will have a solid basis for undertaking a robust verification regime. This will be a lengthy process, however, and progress will depend on the North Korean cooperation.

I’d also like to just highlight the fact sheet, again, on the existing sanctions. North Korea will still remain one of the most sanctioned countries in the world in terms of U.S. law. In fact, all exports by the United States remain subject to licensing by the Commerce Department, as well as many prohibitions from the missile standpoint, the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons standpoint. And so the lifting today certainly does not remove at all the leverage that we will maintain as we move forward in this process. Thank you.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Assistant Secretary Paula DeSutter.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** You know, Sean, you need one of those podiums that goes up and down, you know, so I would look more statuesque.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Would you like one done?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Let me tell you that what Sean said is exactly right. All of the elements of verification that we sought, and that includes the verifiers – and you know how we are – are included in the various documents and agreements that they’ve obtained with the North Koreans.

Now that’s a breakthrough, but not because there’s anything novel or unique in the verification measures that we’ve been pursuing. They’re – every different regime, every type of problem, whether it’s bio or, you know, fissile material, has different requirements. The question is, what is the verification question you’re trying to answer and how do you structure the rights and responsibilities of the various parties so that the way is forward for us to go in and implement a verification agreement?

So there are things that are agreed in here that most countries in the world that have experience with – with arms control and verification wouldn’t blink an eye at, sampling, how are we going to deal with the problem of undeclared sites, documentation, taking samples out of countries. All of these are things that have been done in verification in the past, and what is the breakthrough is that we have now obtained North Korean agreement to all of those elements. And so again, you know, it isn’t tied up in a pretty bow that Sung can hand out to you, but the elements are agreed and that’s very important. It’s a very big step.

As Patty mentioned, there is a lot of work that will be required. This is going to be difficult. And you know, I think those of you who have dealt with the verification bill on Libya or anything else know that verifiers, by nature and by their job description, tend to be skeptical. We don’t trust anybody. We want to see the data. We want to do the work. We’ve also learned that this can be done in a fairly cooperative process if the other side is willing, and we’re hoping that we can move forward on that basis.

One of the other things that was agreed that I think is important is that all of the parties can participate in these inspections, and we have envisioned all along that we would have teams of inspectors where we’ve coordinated this and take advantage of, you know, different attributes and skills and capabilities that they have. And so I think that the ways is open.

We, of course, like everybody else, look forward to it being tied up in a bow. But the big achievement is that they have now agreed to everything that we wanted. And I know that the Secretary felt very strongly that there would be no rescission until that was done. And so we are – as verifiers, we’re never exactly optimistic, but very cautiously optimistic and keenly aware that the verifiers are going to have a lot of work to do in the future. And so if you have questions later, I’ll be happy to --

**QUESTION:** Can I --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Okay. Why don’t we go ahead and take your questions.

**QUESTION:** Can I follow up here? Let me just ask two good – before people get into specifics, and I’m sure they will, I just want to ask two pretty broad questions. One is, what gives you confidence that the North Koreans are actually going to agree to the protocol? Has this – have these – has this agreement, that codified agreement that you reached with the North Koreans, and the related other understandings, has that been deposited with the Chinese? Are they willing – do you have confidence that, in fact, the protocol will actually be done?

And then secondly, do you have a commitment from the North Koreans that now that the rescission has taken place, that they will stop what they are doing at Yongbyon in terms of moving to restart it and, in fact, again begin to revert to a disablement plan?

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Let me answer very generally and then I can turn to Ambassador Kim.

On the first of those, this is an agreement. The United States was, if you will, point person for the other four parties in negotiating this. But the key principle of the Six-Party Talks is that any agreement must be agreed upon and, in essence, guaranteed by all the parties. So it’s no longer just a bilateral agreement; the stage we are at is a bilateral agreement between the United States and North Korea. The next step is to go to the Six and have this formalized, and then the step after that, should all agree, is to have it implemented. Then the – in terms of the North Korean actions, they – the statement that I read, they have agreed that they are going to immediately start completing work on their disablement actions.

**QUESTION:** But --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** I think Ambassador Kim – why don’t I have Ambassador Kim say his first --

**QUESTION:** Does that mean they'll allow the IAEA inspectors back into the facility?

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Thanks. This is not the first time that we are taking an agreement or an arrangement reached bilaterally into the Six-Party process. It's worked well in the past and I have confidence that this time, again, we'll be able to finalize and adopt the agreement we reached with the North Koreans, the package, in the Six-Party process.

You know, the understandings that you mentioned were reached through very intensive consultations, and were reaffirmed subsequently through our communications through the New York channel. So I think we and the other partners in the five – other five party partners have confidence that we will be able to turn this package into a Six-Party protocol.

**QUESTION:** But still, the question about the – what's going on right now --

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Yeah, we – North Koreans have committed that the disablement activities in Yongbyon will resume immediately. In fact, I -- we expect to see a statement out of Pyongyang – I don't know the exact timing, but sometime soon.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Okay, Glenn.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, just one specific question, then a broad question. First of all, my understanding is that declared facilities is about 15 sites, most of which are at Yongbyon, maybe some university sites. It does not include the nuclear test site or any military facilities, so in essence, you're saying that they still have veto power over whether to go to the nuclear test site or to military facilities?

And then more broadly, you know, the devil is in the details. And broad agreement on elements is interesting, but it – you know, the actual document you put forth in July had many more specific things that you were seeking, which I don't necessarily see here. And you know, many outside experts and even some U.S. officials say that this agreement is simply a cynical effort to keep the process on life support until the next president takes office a hundred days from now, and then it will collapse. And in fact, Senator McCain last night put out a rather tough statement that was critical of how Japan's interests were ignored in what he called an agreement for its own sake.

So I was just wondering if you could respond to some of the criticism that has been circulating out there, as well as address that specific question about what exactly are the declared sites.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** All right. Let me --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** I'll do declared sites. I don't do cynical efforts. (Laughter.)

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Right, let me take a crack at sort of the broad perspective of how Secretary Rice and the Administration view the Six-Party process of moving – in trying to move this process forward.

She very strongly feels that it is our responsibility, up until January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, to act as good stewards of the national interest, and to act in the best interests of this country and the national security and foreign policy interests of this country. We will continue to do that without compromising on principle until January 20<sup>th</sup> and when we hand over responsibility to the next team that comes in. So we enter into this – you know, we enter into this agreement with that thought in mind.

I have to come back to a key element, and Paula can probably speak to some of the details and perhaps Ambassador Kim as well. Every single element of verification that we sought going in is part of this package. And Paula can speak to some of the details there and Ambassador Kim can speak to some of the details that you're talking about.

**QUESTION:** But we did --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** The fact sheet – I know the fact sheet that we handed out is – it gives very general areas and I think that they can talk to some of the details there. In terms of the politics, we're not going to talk about the politics; we're not going to talk about political campaigns.

But I can tell you the Secretary and the President wouldn't take these kinds of decisions if they didn't think that these decisions would help us, the United States, ultimately get to the goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, again, without compromising on principle. And very clearly, if this process is to play out in its completion, others will have to finish it. We have three months here or so left, a little bit more. But again, this is a principled decision based on fundamental U.S. interests.

Paula, why don't you talk about some of the details.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Yeah, let me talk about the language on mutual consent to undeclared sites. First, it's very important in this particular case that we do have access to undeclared sites. The declared sites are, we know, inadequate and don't fully describe the North Korean nuclear program.

And so – but the term, mutual consent, I think a lot of people have – take pause at that and say, well, you know, they get a veto. Well, let me just remind you, one of the things that I discussed with Ambassador Hill several times is that you'll never hear anybody that's a verifier from my bureau say, what we must have is challenge inspection or anytime, anywhere inspection. Because for me, that gives you a false sense of security; it doesn't really mean much.

And remember, anytime we do verification activities – okay, with maybe one exception – we are there in another country that has rights. If we want to go to a place, generally speaking, we are going to be asking the host country to provide transportation. They're going to have to provide escorts. They're going to have to ensure that we get the access we need when we get to the site. All of those things have to happen, okay? So the idea of mutual consent is not a showstopper for us. And, you know, one of the ways that I think about it is, you know, we know that there are several different – couple categories of undeclared sites. One of the things that we can do is do a site survey.

But we're not – I mean, I wouldn't be comfortable with a situation where, you know, we have to go give them a consultation that requires that we give them everything we know about the facility. This is going to need to be done in as professional a way as possible, and there is experience with doing that, with giving a country – you know, here is a geo-location that we need to go see. And once we go see that, we need to see if it needs to go on to the declaration, and we need to conduct verification activities there. So it will be a step-by-step process, but the idea that the United States was going to go into North Korea or any other country and say, here's where we're going, by God, and our helicopter is going to fly there tomorrow whether you like it or not – not going to happen. It's just not the way things are done.

And so the mutual consent, it's going to have to be watched, okay? We are going to have to be very mindful as we get into the more specific conversations with them about verification that they understand what we're trying to do and we communicate it clearly to a country that, again, remember, doesn't really have experience with this.

Most of you are too young to have dealt with the INF treaty. I'm not, and when – okay, there is an exception. (Laughter.) But a part of that was – remember, there had never been a case – people said the Soviet Union will never, ever agree to the on-site measures that we've got in mind there, and yet they did, and it was a big decision. There are times, there are issues where having on-site inspection isn't going to solve your problem. There are cases where it's absolutely essential and we believe that this is it.

**QUESTION:** Just to clarify, the nuclear test site is not one of the declared facilities? And do you have any sort of understanding that the United States will be able to go there?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** We have – simply haven't had those conversations, okay? I mean, we have not given them a list of locations that we want to go to. It certainly is high on my list.

**QUESTION:** But it's not on their list of declared sites?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Okay. Actually – that's actually kind of fuzzy, because they did declare the expenditure of material there. And so is it formally declared as a site? No, but indirectly. And so that'll be something that we'd want to see. So --

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Just sort of – the information that you have written in the fact sheet is obviously a summary of the agreement itself. I think when the --

**QUESTION:** Can we see the actual agreement?

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** No, because I think it needs to be Six-Partyized first, I think. But when the verification package is --

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Yes. (Laughter.) That's nice, isn't it? When the agreement – the verification package is finalized and adopted in the Six-Party process, hopefully sometime soon, I think you will be able to see that what we have in the protocol is substantially same as the earlier versions.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Sue.

**QUESTION:** Yeah. If the North does not fulfill its verification promises, then what happens? Would they be put once again on the state sponsors of terrorism list? And do you have a package of punitive measures prepared in case they don't comply with what they've said they're going to do?

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** I mean, I don't want to – speculation on North Korean noncompliance. I think we need to focus on the next step, which is to make this into a Six-Party protocol. And you know, they're obligated to cooperate with verification activities. In fact, they stated in their declaration that they would cooperate fully with the verification activities. And in numerous

discussions, they have reaffirmed that they're prepared to cooperate fully with verification activities, so we will hold them up to their word.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Let me just add a little bit. They're – okay, all right, I'm going to go a little bit further. Everybody remember the START treaty?

**QUESTION:** Mm-hmm.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Okay. We knew when that treaty was finished that it was so detailed, it was so complicated, it was hard, we knew that there were going to be problems, okay? We're not naïve, okay? As verifiers, we try not to be. And so this is going to be in part – I mean, in the first instance, I think really it's going to be sitting down with the North Koreans and doing a little bit of education about how to do that. Usually, if there's one way that you approach it with them, there can be another way to do that. I mean, we had that experience with Libya.

Now, if this was going to be a -- in a best of all possible worlds, North Korea would follow the Libya approach where they made it faster, they made it easier, they enabled the United States and the UK at the end of the day to certify their compliance. There is – there should be no anticipation by anybody that there are going to be no bumps in the road. This is going to be a bumpy road because it really hasn't ever been traveled in North Korea. However, we're building a road, and probably, you guys know that if I was – if I felt that this set of documents didn't provide a way forward, you know, I probably wouldn't be standing up here, so --

**QUESTION:** Your former boss, John Bolton, has been very – is very angry about the U.S. coming to this decision. What's your response to his criticism?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** All of my former bosses are almost always right about everything – no. John is the epitome of a skeptical policymaker, and that's appropriate. I mean, nobody – I don't think the Secretary would want anybody to take this and not say that it should be challenged and we should be pushed to make sure that we're doing the best possible job.

And so, you know, I'll tell you this. I have – my first boss in verification, I invite him out periodically and ask him to do a survey, you know, to see how we're doing, how am I doing. And I don't do it that often, and the reason is because when he tells me, it makes me cry. So we all can do better and – you know, those outside voices are important for us to listen to. And so I think we try to do that to make sure that we're doing the best possible job, so--

**QUESTION:** For Sung Kim?

**QUESTION:** Yeah, are you seeing any tangible steps to resume disablement from the inspectors on the ground? What's – we don't really know in the past few days what's been happening with the U.S. inspectors on the ground.

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** The U.S. inspectors are still on the ground prepared to resume monitoring activities. The commitment we have from the DPRK is that they will resume disablement activities as soon as possible after this announcement. So I expect to see some activity over the weekend.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Charlie.

**QUESTION:** Yes, probably for Sean, but can you take us back and tell us when the President signed off on this, when the Secretary actually signed it upstairs? Is this a document that'll --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Right. I don't have exact times for you. The President, late yesterday afternoon, early evening made the decision to move forward on this. And the Secretary actually signed the document, I think, somewhere shortly after 7:30 this morning.

**QUESTION:** Here in the building?

**MR. MCCORMACK:** No, I think she was at her residence.

**QUESTION:** Sean.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Is there any prospect that this next Six-Party meeting will be ministerial-level? And if not, are you envisaging a ministerial-level before the end of the year?

**MR. MCCORMACK:** This will be a heads of delegation meeting and --

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Most likely.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Most likely a heads of delegation meeting. I can't rule out a ministerial-level meeting at some point in the future, but at this point, none is scheduled.

Helene.

**QUESTION:** Can you expand on the agreement on sampling and tell me whether it's your understanding that the United States inspectors will be taking samples out of the country?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Oh, they have water right down here. Yeah, and this was a very big deal for us. Samples are, you know, sort of standard fare. You see the IAEA do it all the time. And what it does is -- because a part of what we will be looking for at facilities is what nuclear material may be there, what may have been there in the past, what may, you know, be going on. And so to take the samples, you've got to bring them back, and we will be using the Air Force Technical Applications Center, who also does some work for the IAEA, and they're fantastic and they do very technical analysis, that it simply wouldn't be possible to do on site.

And so the agreement includes taking samples and bringing them back home. It also includes getting access to documents that we can bring back home. So we have wonderful experts across the board in different elements, but they're not going to be able to look at a fairly complex document over there and come up with an analysis of what it means.

I mean, this is going to be getting – it's a puzzle, all right? And we need to be able to, at the end of the day, say – and, you know, if we find something that the North Koreans don't have on the declaration, we say, okay, you need to add that to the declaration, okay? This should be an iterative process. So those analyses need to come back and then help us with what are the next steps, what are the next things that we need to make sure we get a handle on.

**QUESTION:** So does this mean you can bring all samples you want out of the country? They don't have the right to stop you from taking any samples out?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** They have agreed to the removal of samples.

**QUESTION:** But they have agreed to the removal of all samples? Because it is worded a little ambiguously in the fact sheet here.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** My understanding is that – I mean, when you say samples, it means all samples. Okay. My instant reaction when you said that was, well, you know, if it's really big and heavy, we'll have to figure something out. But yeah, the plan is to collect samples and remove them for analysis here in the U.S. or elsewhere.

**QUESTION:** But Paula, will you be working in tandem at the IAEA on this kind of thing? Are they being brought back into the equation or is this strictly the Six Party's inspectors?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Yeah, they're being brought back into it. And that's really important, because remember, at the end of the day, what we want to have is a denuclearized North Korea – peninsula. And so at the end of it, the IAEA needs to have a clean balance, a materials balance that says the material that was there is now removed. And so in order for that to happen, they're going to have to have access to the information, and they know a lot about, for example, Yongbyon, where, you know, giving us advice and suggestions about what to do is going to be very important. And so Patty may have more ahead on it.

**QUESTION:** How has their role changed, if at all? Because this says consultative and support role. Is that different from what they have been doing?

**MS. MCNERNEY:** Currently, the only thing the IAEA is doing is basically monitoring the shutdown and sealing of the Yongbyon facilities. In the Phase II piece of it, which was to start the disablement actions, they've been monitoring that themselves, but that wasn't part of the Phase II agreement. We expect, through this language, that we'll work very cooperatively with the IAEA in this third phase. They do not have their standard role under this agreement, so I think we have to be clear on that, but that is because we have the Six Parties doing the actual verification work.

That said, it is certainly our goal that IAEA be integrated as fully as possible into our activities, but there is no, sort of, the generally spelled out kinds of processes for the IAEA under this agreement. And just to add to --

**QUESTION:** So the level of their involvement will be decreased; right?

**MS. MCNERNEY:** No, it will – the level of their involvement will be static, I think, at this point. They will stay on the ground. In fact, the North Koreans have recently reissued their visas, so they will be staying there at the site. We hope to integrate them into our work as closely as possible. The sort of key element at the end of this is that in order for North Korea to rejoin the international nonproliferation regime says that they will have to get right with the IAEA. So they can do that at the end of this process, they can do that in the middle, or they can do that right from the start. And so our hope is that we would have the ability for the IAEA to be fully integrated.

Just another word on, sort of, removal of samples and so forth. The agreement calls for the removal of samples. Just as with disablement, it called for our people to get in there with their equipment. That said, we always work through, sort of processes and coordinating equipment coming in and getting the right documentation. So all of this will be a process as we move forward and I think we just have to recognize that as sort of standard fare when you're talking about international verification regimes, the agreements, the comprehensive safeguards agreements that tend to be the baseline by which we do this internationally. So we'll have a lot of that process as we move forward.

Even when you get a safeguards agreement with a country, including the additional protocol, there are many steps along the way in actually implementing that agreement. So it doesn't sort of stop with this agreement, and I want to really make that clear.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** All right. Let's just take a couple of more questions here. I know there's a lot of demand.

Kirit.

**QUESTION:** Could one of you give us just a sense, going forward, on the timeline of when you expect the verification to begin, if you could, and then how long you think it might take? I mean, I understand maybe that's an open-ended process, but just to give us a sense of when you might expect people to get there on the ground and start working.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Who wants to take that one?

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** As I said, the next step is to finalize and adopt this document in the Six-Party process. The North Koreans have indicated that they're ready to start cooperating with us as soon as this package is adopted in the Six-Party process. So we would like to begin activities soon thereafter. I think in terms of the duration of the verification effort, it may take months, possibly longer than a year?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Let me tell you that how long it will take is going to depend very largely on North Korea and its level of cooperation. Remember in the Libya case, they took us to facilities that we didn't know about, that they hadn't originally declared. That makes it faster.

And remember that – and another exciting part of this agreement is that they have agreed that the verification activities apply not just to plutonium, not just to Yongbyon, but to HEU and to the proliferation activities. And so what – each piece that we do, we hope that that will be additive and make it more efficient. I mean, we don't – we're going to want to conduct an efficient and smart verification regime because that makes more sense for everybody. But if the North Koreans are, you know, ready, willing and able to add facilities – okay, functional facilities, for example – we know that material leaves Yongbyon, and at some point, it becomes a pit in a bomb. We know that happens in one or more places. So where are those places, how are we going to get to them?

So again, we're going to have to conduct verification activities at a number of facilities, make sure that everything that we've discovered that's relevant is added to the declaration so that at the end of the day, we can say – and remember, we're verifiers. We're never – there's never going to be a hundred percent confidence that we're done. There will be questions. There will be ambiguities. The best we can do is say, here are the activities we have undertaken; these are the things that we have discovered; these are the things that we have gotten declared; here is the analysis that we have; and we want to attain a reasonable degree of confidence that we've done that.

At that point, you decide, are there any follow-on measures that you need to have. Like with Libya, we set up a trilateral consultative group so that if we had ongoing issues, we had a venue that we could raise them in. And so, you know, I think I would say probably years. But they could surprise us.

**QUESTION:** Just to clarify on that answer, the declaration that they gave earlier this year was focused mostly on a plutonium program.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** Right.

**QUESTION:** And so is it fair to say that the verification that's going to proceed is going to basically start with the plutonium program, or will you be moving on parallel tracks at the same time with uranium enrichment – possible uranium enrichment and the proliferation activities related to Syria? Or is it you first get through --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** We will --

**QUESTION:** -- this plutonium declaration?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** We will be starting with plutonium, okay? That's not an insignificant challenge, okay? You have to know – we know basically where it's made. We don't know the other places that it goes to. You need to know, you know, what are the test activities. You know, there's an awful lot about the plutonium. You need to follow the material from when it comes out of a uranium mine and goes all the way through the process until it becomes a pit. And so that would be quite a bit. Now will we learn things about the uranium program by virtue of that? I hope so. I haven't – so those are going to be hard.

**QUESTION:** But that's --

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY DESUTTER:** The plan is to start with a materials approach and try to follow the material to see where it's been. We just think that that makes the most sense. We're not going on a fishing expedition.

**QUESTION:** Okay. But – so the uranium enrichment and proliferation is the second order of magnitude at this time?

**MS. MCNERNEY:** I wouldn't say it's – yeah.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** We have time for one last question. Jay, you're going to be it – no --

**MS. MCNERNEY:** I wouldn't say it's the second order of magnitude. On the proliferation, for example, one of the key things the Secretary laid out is we need access to facilities, to people, to documents. And when you start having that kind of access, building a record, you start to determine, was there proliferation of material, did – were people involved in any kind of engagement outside of North Korea. So all of that will be part and parcel of this larger process. Same with uranium enrichment; when you start talking to some of these individuals, you start raising questions across the board. But obviously, the largest program that we all are aware of is the plutonium program, so it makes sense to start there.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Other questions --

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Yeah, just – sorry, just one point of clarification. I don't want to give the impression that this is a completely bilateral effort in terms of how we sequence, how we go about carrying out verification activities. I think we need to discuss with our Six-Party partners. It is a Six-Party effort.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** All right, Jay, you got the last one.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) about when you were up in Pyongyang and doing the negotiations, first, what role did you get a sense that the military was having in the negotiations? I noticed that you guys met with a KPA general and my impression was that the military was not, at least prior to this, willing to meet as part of the Six-Party process. And that seemed like it was a change and maybe the military is more involved than it was previously.

And secondly, what sense you got of Kim Jong-il's kind of – was he involved? Was there a sense that he was functioning and aware of what was going on? So was that part of the negotiating process as well?

**AMBASSADOR KIM:** Our negotiations have been directly with the foreign ministry and the General Department of Atomic Energy. As I think Patti mentioned, North Korea remains a very opaque place. I mean, we don't know exactly how their decision making is formulated. But – you know, so it's difficult for us to speculate on the military's role. Ambassador Hill did meet with one of their generals on this trip and I had – believe had a substantive discussion. But it's hard to speculate, you know, what if any role they were playing in the negotiations. Again, I think it's hard to speculate on their leader's well-being. We do know that there was a period when we weren't getting any substantive response from the North Koreans.

**QUESTION:** Speaking of Chris, where is he?

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Chris?

**QUESTION:** It's a rather glaring omission from the podium here.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** No, I think we have a bright constellation.

**QUESTION:** Well – (Laughter.)

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Actually --

**QUESTION:** Not taking anything away --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** And actually, Ambassador Kim has been the point man on these verification provisions. Of course, Chris is the head of the delegation, but if you remember the last time

you saw Ambassador Kim down here briefing, he had a box full of documents next to him. So he has been deeply involved in the verification provisions and I think it was wholly appropriate that he as well as our other guests were down here.

**QUESTION:** No, I'm not suggesting that it's inappropriate for them to be here.

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** I'm just curious as to why the person who is most identified with this whole process is not here.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) has had an opportunity to meet with the press --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** Well, he is the head of the delegation, but this man earned it by going line by line, word by word --

**QUESTION:** Even before he was punished for -- (Laughter.)

**MR. MCCORMACK:** That's true, not that -- not that speaking to you is a reward. Thank you very much for coming in this morning.

Released on October 11, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.

