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Viewing cable 09SEOUL1801, SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; November 12, 2009

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09SEOUL1801	2009-11-12 08:11	2011-08-30 01:44	UNCLASSIFIED	Embassy Seoul

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6205
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TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
Industrial Wastes Illegally Buried in Yongsan Development District;
Account For 80% of Total Area

JoongAng Ilbo
Court Rulings Contradict Each Other Depending
on Judges' Ideological Orientation

Dong-a Ilbo
Damaged North Korean Ship Is Towed Shortly
After Crossing Northern Limit Line

Hankook Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun
Officials to Accelerate Sejong Revision; Alternative Plan
to Be Unveiled in December

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Middle Class-friendly Policies Fail to Protect Middle Class; "Safety
Net" Should Be Established

Segye Ilbo
North Korea Targets Only One ROK Vessel

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

Following Tuesday's naval skirmish with North Korea, the ROK
yesterday beefed up forces in the Yellow Sea and deployed a
destroyer to waters near the maritime border. (JoongAng, Seoul)

In a related development, White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs said on
November 10, "I would say to the North Koreans that we hope that
there will be no further actions in the Yellow Sea that can be seen
as an escalation." (Chosun, Dong-a)

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courage is contagious

According to the ROK's Foreign Ministry officials, an ROK company operating in Afghanistan has recently been attacked three times by the militants. (Dong-a, Hankyoreh, Hankook, Seoul, Segye)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The U.S. has informed North Korea of its decision to send Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth to discuss the regime's possible return to the Six-Party Talks. (All)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-North-South Korea naval clash

Most ROK media carried reports speculating about the motives behind North Korea's attack on an ROK vessel. Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo ran an inside-page report on the North's provocations. The newspaper noted that the North Korean patrol boat attacked the ROK's high speed patrol boat even though the North knew that it had little chance of winning a fight with the vessel. The daily also reported that it seems that North Korea deliberately ignored the warnings from the ROK and opened fire first as a calculated maneuver. JoongAng Ilbo questioned the mild nature of the North's response, given that it suffered casualties. The newspaper also speculated, citing an ROK military expert, that the North Korean military itself may have decided to stage this limited clash to increase tensions on the Korean Peninsula by trying to highlight that the ROKG's North Korea policy prompted inter-Korean conflicts. According to the newspaper, the expert also views that the North's provocations may be a bargaining ploy to increase leverage in negotiations with the

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U.S.

In a related development, Conservative Chosun Ilbo quoted White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs as saying on November 10, "I would say to the North Koreans that we hope that there will be no further actions in the Yellow Sea that can be seen as an escalation."

-Bosworth's visit to North Korea

Most ROK media carried reports on the U.S. State Department's announcement that Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth will travel to Pyongyang by the year's end. Conservative Chosun Ilbo ran an inside-page report saying that Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip Crowley announced this decision only with three sentences, while repeatedly stressing that Ambassador Bosworth's discussions in Pyongyang will take place in the context of the Six-Party Talks. The newspaper noted that the State Department intentionally played down the decision in order to prevent the North from maneuvering to strengthen its bargaining position.

Hankyoreh Shimun editorialized: During Bosworth's visit to North Korea, the U.S. should not be overly cautious but instead try to create a good atmosphere for negotiations. ... Even though, as the USG said, the visit is not for direct talks between the U.S. and North Korea but for discussions in the context of the Six-Party Talks, the Six-Party Talks will face difficulties if the two sides do not trust each other as negotiating partners. The U.S. should lay out its vision on how to get North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions while making efforts to engage in in-depth discussions with the North.

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

CONFIRMATION OF BOSWORTH'S NORTH KOREA VISIT PRESENTS CRUCIAL OPPORTUNITIES
 (Hankyoreh Shinmun, November 12, 2009, Page 27)

On Tuesday, it was officially announced that Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, plans to visit North Korea. This announcement marks three months since former U.S. President Bill Clinton visited North Korea and opened a path for North Korea-U.S. dialogue. The two nations discussed the resumption of dialogue through the New York channel and during North Korean Foreign Ministry U.S. Affairs Bureau Director Ri Gun's visit to the

U.S. The announcement of Bosworth's trip indicates that an agreement has been made on the agenda and format of the dialogue that is to take place between North Korea and the U.S.

The U.S., prior to President Barack Obama's tour of Asia, announced Bosworth's trip despite the first inter-Korean naval clash in the West Sea in seven years. This shows that the U.S. has moved a step closer, since Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to North Korea early last month, towards a firm position to resolve the nuclear issue through dialogue. As a result, it appears that full-scale negotiations will begin during (Bosworth's visit to the North.)

During Bosworth's visit to North Korea, the U.S. should not be overly cautious but instead try to create a good atmosphere for negotiations. It is hard to deny that fundamentally, the two most important actors in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue are the U.S. and North Korea. Even though, as the USG said, the visit is not for direct talks between the U.S. and North Korea but for discussions in the context of the Six-Party Talks, the Six-Party Talks will face difficulties if the two sides do not trust each other as negotiating partners. The U.S. should lay out its vision on how to get North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions while making efforts to engage in in-depth discussions with the North.

North Korea, for its part, must not engage only in dialogue with the
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U.S. and ignore the Six-Party Talks, which has provided the framework for discussing the nuclear issue for the last six years. The Six-Party Talks is the most appropriate framework for furthering discussion on the economic aid, security guarantees, and the Korean peace regime that North Korea hopes for. If North Korea continues to appear rigid, the Obama Administration, which began talks after much difficulty, could suffer a backlash.

The South Korean government must stop going against the greater trend of resolving the nuclear issue through dialogue and consider more intensely what it can do to play a leading role. It is a good thing that the Lee Administration has decided to handle the West Sea naval clash in a way that does not aggravate inter-Korean relations, but it must not maintain this passive attitude. The objective is to improve inter-Korean ties because the level of inter-Korean relations and South Korea's voice on matters pertaining to the Korean Peninsula go hand-in-hand.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

FEATURES

BOSWORTH VISITS PYONGYANG, BUT WHEN?
(Dong-a Ilbo, November 12, 2009, Page 5)

By Washington Correspondent Ha Tae-won

Five questions about Bosworth's visit to Pyongyang

The U.S. has notified North Korea of a decision to send U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Bosworth to Pyongyang. Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip Crowley said on November 10, "President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton prepared for (Bosworth's) visit to Pyongyang after careful consideration and extensive consultation among our allies and partners." He added, "Ambassador Bosworth... will travel with a small interagency team to Pyongyang." Regarding the timing of the visit, he said it has not been determined yet, but added that U.S.-North Korea dialogue is expected to take place "sometime between now and the end of the year." He explained, "The purpose (of Ambassador Bosworth's visit to Pyongyang) will be to facilitate an early resumption of the Six-Party Talks and to secure North Korea's reaffirmation of the September 2005 joint statement of the Six-Party Talks."

Ambassador Bosworth's official North Korean counterpart is First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju. Kang will make his first appearance at an official meeting in seven years after he acknowledged the uranium enrichment program in an October 2002 meeting with then-U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, which sparked the second North Korean nuclear crisis. Ambassador Bosworth's visit will become the

first trip to Pyongyang by a U.S. official in charge (of the nuclear issue) since Christopher Hill, then U.S. Chief Negotiator to the Six-Party Talks, visited the communist state in August, 2008. There are five points at issue regarding Bosworth's trip to Pyongyang.

Why Did Washington Not Determine the Timing of the Visit Yet?

The reason seems to be that during Director General of the American Affairs Bureau of the North Korean Foreign Ministry Ri Gun's visit to the U.S., North Korea did not send a clear signal to Washington that it will return to the Six-Party Talks. When asked if he is sure about North Korea's return to the Six-Party Talks, Assistant Secretary Crowley answered no, simply saying, "We believe that North Korea understands what the purpose of the meeting is." Park Sun-won Park, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution who previously served as a member of the ROK delegation at the Six-Party Talks, said, "The decision to send Bosworth to Pyongyang cannot be seen as Washington's active judgment to improve its relations with North Korea but as a passive response to North Korea's conciliatory moves," adding, "It indicates that there is still a difference of

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opinion over the goal of dialogue."

Will Bosworth Bring Some "Carrots" with Him?

The overall atmosphere in Washington is that since the main purpose of Bosworth's visit to Pyongyang is not to have negotiations with the North but to coax the North back to the table, he will not likely provide incentives to the North in return for its returning to dialogue. Assistant Secretary Crowley said, "We are not going to reward North Korea simply for returning to the Six-Party Talks. We will be looking to see if they are prepared to take the kinds of affirmative steps that they had previously agreed to." Stephen Costello, the president of ProGlobal Inc. who previously directed the Program on Korea at the Atlantic Council, noted, "I do not think that President Obama will delegate all negotiating authority to Ambassador Bosworth and grant him the status of a special envoy."

Some observers say that the issue is how sincere North Korea will be. Assistant Secretary Crowley said, "If North Korea takes the kind of steps that they've committed to in the past, other possibilities open up."

Will a Second U.S.-North Korea Dialogue Take Place?

Experts agree that the situation following the upcoming meeting is vital. Since the two nations are not likely to find a breakthrough for denuclearization at their first meeting, it is important for them to have a second Bosworth-Kang meeting in the U.S. or at a third location at an early date. They should admit that it is realistically difficult to achieve much progress in one meeting and should meet for the second time as early as possible. This can provide a yardstick for judging how seriously the two sides will engage in the upcoming dialogue.

Will Bosworth Meet with North Korean Leader Kim Jong-il?

Regarding the possibility of Bosworth meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il or whether Bosworth will deliver President Obama's personal letter to North Korean leader Kim, a senior State Department official simply said, "I don't know." In order to increase Bosworth's negotiating power, experts advise that the President throw his weight behind Bosworth by having an exclusive meeting with him before his visit to Pyongyang. In other words, "political weight" should be given to Bosworth for his dialogue with North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju, (to counter any appearance) that the "part-time" North Korea envoy has been sidelined in the process of setting Washington's North Korea policy.

Relations between the Inter-Korean Naval Skirmish and Resumption of U.S.-North Korean Dialogue

Secretary Clinton told a November 11 news conference on the sidelines of an APEC meeting that the recent inter-Korean skirmish in the West Sea will not have an impact on the decision to send Ambassador Bosworth to Pyongyang. This statement suggests that Ambassador Bosworth's visit to the North will proceed as planned.

THE U.S.'S THREE-SENTENCE BRIEFING ON BOSWORTH'S VISIT TO PYONGYANG (Chosun Ilbo, November 12, 2009, Page 5)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won

The way that the U.S. Department of State announced a decision to send U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth to North Korea was disappointing for Pyongyang. During a

November 10 regular briefing, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip Crowley said, "I've got several announcements before taking your questions" and mentioned Secretary Hillary Clinton's itinerary. After that, he announced Bosworth's visit while mentioning the "Six-Party Talks" three times in only three sentences.

When Washington announces an "important" decision, it is customary for a Secretary-level official to stand in front of a microphone with other officials at his side. On November 10, however, that was not the case. Neither Secretary Clinton nor Ambassador Bosworth nor

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Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks Sung Kim showed up when the announcement was made on the first significant dialogue with North Korea since the launch of the Obama Administration in February. No one was seen beside Assistant Secretary Crowley, and he repeatedly stressed "bilateral dialogue in the context of the Six-Party Talks" in response to questions from reporters.

This manner of announcing the decision contrasts sharply with the (more formal) statement issued by then-President George W. Bush on the resumption of dialogue with North Korea on June 6, 2001. At that time, President Bush personally said, "I have directed my national security team to undertake serious discussions with North Korea on a broad agenda." After meeting with visiting ROK Foreign Minister Han Seung-soo, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell took reporters' questions (about dialogue with North Korea) in person at the front gate of the Department of State.

Some observers in the State Department say that the Obama Administration intentionally did not give weight to its announcement that Ambassador Bosworth will visit North Korea. The U.S. played down its talks with North Korea to prevent the North from maneuvering to strengthen its bargaining position. The U.S. has been saying for more than one month that it will decide soon on sending Ambassador Bosworth to North Korea for one-on-one talks with Pyongyang.

A diplomatic source in Washington said that Obama Administration officials think that if the U.S. makes a fuss over holding talks with North Korea, it would only give North Korea more room to maneuver. The officials say that unless North Korea changes its attitude, the Obama Administration will continue to respond to the North in a calm manner.

Some observers also believe that the Obama Administration played down its decision to send Ambassador Bosworth to Pyongyang because it is not optimistic about the outcome of U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks. The observers claim that since the prospect of the talks may not be so bright, the USG did not need to attach importance to the announcement.

STEPHENS