

**CENTER FOR
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CSIS STATEMEN'S FORUM

UPDATE ON THE SIX-PARTY TALKS

**WELCOME:
DEREK MITCHELL,
SENIOR FELLOW,
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM
CSIS**

**SPEAKER:
AMBASSADOR CHRISTOPHER HILL,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE,
BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS**

TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2008

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

DEREK J. MITCHELL: Good morning, everybody. Thank you for joining us on a beautiful summer's day to welcome Chris Hill home. He just got in last night about 7:30 on the plane. I hear he was quite exhausted but exhilarated by the events that have occurred over the past few weeks and certainly the past week in particular.

Before I introduce him, I just want to thank a few folks in particular, some colleagues here at CSIS, particularly our external relations people who put this together. I know you all got this notice one day ahead of time; that is because we arranged this starting yesterday. So we apologize for the late notice, but our people who do the Statesmen Forums put this together remarkably quickly, and they are led by Andrew Schwartz. I include Neal Urwitz, who works with the media, and particularly Russ Oates, who is our point of contact. I thank them. And of course, my team, Brian Harding and Alyson Slack for their contributions to this.

Also, even though this is at CSIS, we're doing this with the National Committee on North Korea. Karin Lee, who is here, I want to thank her for working with us on the program. She won't be sitting up here, but she is equally responsible for this event.

I don't need to introduce Chris Hill to you. You know, I think when things happen in Six-Party Talks, some people in the media and otherwise say, well, it's peace in our time, and others are sort of shooting from behind. And as typical with these things, it's somewhere in between. There is progress. I think Chris will agree that it is a necessary step, but certainly not sufficient. And we're always grateful that Chris has come here and come to other places right after each step to talk about what he has achieved and what is yet to be done.

So with the 20 cameras here and the about 200 media that seem to have signed up to come, there should be plenty of time, after maybe 15 or 20 minutes of introduction for Q&A, and we will be grateful, as always, for Chris Hill's candor. So with that, let me introduce Chris Hill.

AMBASSADOR CHRIS HILL: Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much, Derrick (ph). It's a pleasure to be back here at CSIS. It's a great pleasure to be back in Washington. You know, when you're off outside Washington, you really miss it. (Laughter.) You know, you can get press clips. It's just not the same. It's just not the same as holding those newspapers here – anyway. It's great to be back. I've been gone for about 12 days, really missed it.

Let me just say obviously we have come to, I think, an important juncture in this process. I think the president spoke very clearly on Thursday about where we are and where we are not in this Six-Party Talks. I know the secretary also just returned from a

trip that was even longer than mine, and I think she spoke very clearly as well about where we are and where we still have to be.

I think the key thing that we have been doing throughout this is to make sure that as we go forward, we do it in a multilateral framework. Now, there are people who say, well, it's not really multilateral; after all, you're having bilateral meetings. But in fact, what we have tried to do with the Six Parties is to create a very strong platform on which we can do a number of things because as the end of the day, the issue of North Korea's aspirations for nuclear weapons is an issue rooted in the region, an issue that cannot be solved by the U.S. alone, an issue that really needs the active engagement of its neighbors.

And so throughout this process, we have tried to make sure that the Six Parties is a strong institution and capable of handling the tough issues. In fact, what the Six Parties is doing is trying to deal with some of the causes of conflict in the region, trying to deal with the difficulty of relations among states in the region; in short, trying to not only address some of the historical antecedents that got us where we are, but also try to set up a framework for the future where the countries in the region can address – can look for areas of cooperation where there was conflict in the past, and look for areas where we can really set up a sort of lasting mechanisms for peace and security.

And indeed, I think we are doing that. Anyone who has been involved in multilateral diplomacy knows the proverbial difficulty of herding cats. It's not easy to get everyone going in the same direction at the same time. And in this regard, it is our very strong conviction that China has really stepped up. China has played, I think, a very important role in the chair of the Six Parties. China is a country and of course a rapid development, rapid growth, not only economically but in other ways as well.

And so for China to step up in this means that it must not only call on its old relationship with North Korea, it also needs to call on all of the aspects of the new relationship with some of the other countries, including our own. The U.S.-China relationship during this administration I think has grown tremendously. And the Six-Party process is one of the areas that we have been able to work together with the Chinese.

So we have really needed to do this with China because in some respects, China has a lot of – certainly has a capacity to reach out to the North Koreans. They probably have the best access to them in Pyongyang. But also, we feel at the end of the day, we need a situation in Northeast Asia where all countries can feel that they're moving ahead.

And one of the areas where we have been most concerned, where the U.S. has really – where we have really worked very hard is on the issue of Japan, and Japan's own special problems with North Korea. Now, Japan, like all of us, has to be very concerned about nuclear weapons in North Korea. And indeed, if you look at a map, you can see why. Japan has to be very concerned about North Korea's development of longer-range missiles. And if you look at a map, you can see why.

But also, Japan has a very important issue that many Japanese felt was not dealt with adequately early on, and that is the issue of abductions. And so this is an issue. For any of you who haven't heard about this, in the late '70s and early '80s, North Korea had a program that they have since admitted to where they literally snatched Japanese off of streets, off of sidewalks. In Japan, sometimes Japanese were lured to North Korea, but it was a program by which they brought Japanese to North Korea against their will. And for years and years, people could not quite believe that it had happened. Some people maintained that it had, and indeed those people turned out to be right.

And so it's not just an issue that the Japanese government has been concerned about; it's an issue that the Japanese people have been concerned about. And as we go forward in trying to deal with the problem of nuclear weapons in North Korea and going forward in an effort to normalize with a denuclearized North Korea, we cannot ignore; indeed, we need to embrace the issue of how Japan's relationship with North Korea will develop.

There is really no future that North Korea can have if it does not have a good relationship with its neighbors, especially Japan. So we have worked very hard on this issue. Indeed, Japan was able to have some initial meetings to discuss the abduction issue. Indeed, they have been able to work with the North Koreans on some measures that they're helping will come to fruition. And we have followed this very carefully; we have been very encouraging about it. We made very clear to the North Koreans that we don't want a situation where we're moving ahead on denuclearization and where we don't see some of the other elements of these Northeast Asian relationships moving forward.

And so I think in many respects, the Six-Party process is not only beginning to show some results in the issue of denuclearization; we're also showing results in the issue of bringing the countries closer together. The China-Japan relationship is a better relationship today than it was before the Six-Party process got going. Indeed, I would argue the Japan-South Korean relationship throughout its difficult periods has actually always been maintained within the Six Parties.

And in that regard, we have been able to recreate one of the things that we had going early, and we now have it going in the current round, which is before we have Six-Party meetings, before they're important events that take place in the Six-Party process, we have a trilateral; that is, we have the South Korean, Japanese, and the U.S. representatives sit together and work on issues of common interest. We did that in Washington a few weeks ago; we did it in Tokyo a couple of weeks ago, and I'm sure we'll do it in Seoul and probably in China whenever we have the next Six-Party meeting.

So we have – in constructing this Six-Party process, what the president had in mind was putting together a process, a broad framework, a platform in which you can do a number of different things and meet in a number of different configurations, and that's what we've been able to do.

The events that got us to where we are on denuclearization, it took a while; it was not easy. There are – some people have argued that somehow we've rushed to this process. In fact, we had hoped to have this done in December, and it took us till the end of June. That is hardly rushing. We have had to deal with a regime in North Korea that is not inclined to talk about its internal decision-making, not inclined to talk openly about what is going on there. We have tried to address a number of different issues with them and trying to lay the stage for when we are able to get through denuclearization, what is normalization going to look like, what are the sort of issues we need to deal with.

You know, when you look at the U.S.-North Korea relationship, this is not a relationship that will begin and end with denuclearization; we have to work on some other issues where we have some profound differences with North Korea, and one of those of course is human rights.

So we have a long way to go, but I do believe that the Six-Party mechanism has put all six countries in the same boat, has kind of created a situation where we can all move together. There are times when there are going to be a lot of bilateral activities as there were in recent months, and then there are times where we're going to see a lot more multilateral activities, and I think that's what we're going to see in the coming months.

So I think the president spoke very clearly about what we expect to see out of this current – out of the current situation where we are coming to the end of phase two. We need to work very hard on verification. We need to make sure that the understandings we have on verification, the various elements of verification, which include documents, physical access to sites, and interviews with personnel, that these can all be turned into a verification mechanism that will function. I believe based on our understandings with the different parties, including with North Korea, we should be able to do that.

We have to keep working on issues that have still not been fully disclosed, although not denied by the North Koreans. We need to deal with the uranium enrichment issue, an issue that we have to continue to – facts of which we have to continue to excavate, as Secretary Rice has said. We need to continue to work on proliferation issues, and indeed, in getting to the end of this final phase, it was agreed among the Six Parties that we would have a monitoring mechanism to look at these issues and other issues; that is, to address the need to continue to monitor pledges that are made within the Six Parties; that is, monitor the obligations of all members of the Six Parties to fulfill their obligations. And so we will be working on that kind of thing.

Again, I want to stress none of this is possible without a Six-Party framework. We cannot do this bilaterally. We can talk to North Korea bilaterally but we have to come back to a Six-Party framework. All of this is based on probably the sort of founding document of the whole process, which is September '05. Whenever there is a disagreement, whenever there is some misconception or misunderstanding, we come back to the September '05 statement.

So I think this is something that has, I think, just as in the life of an individual, it happens in the life of a nation where you have to rise to the occasion, and I think some of the countries that have been engaged in this have actually risen to this occasion to work together to put aside some bilateral differences, to find ways to talk about the bilateral differences. Indeed, as we have been able to go forward, we have found that – we have found that there was this kind of unintended byproduct of the Six Parties where we've actually been able to work very closely together with the other countries, even in issues not directly related to denuclearization. We've been able to find ways to communicate thanks to the Six-Party process so much so that we're looking to see how this process can form a mechanism for the future, even beyond the issue of dealing with denuclearization.

For this we need – there have been a lot of ideas put forward in the non-governmental sector, and for that, we're very much open to hearing different ideas about how we can turn the Six-Party process that has been very singularly focused on denuclearization and see if it can address some of the broader issues as we go forward post-denuclearization.

So I hope we can do that. We have some ideas, some principles that we would look to to work on. In so doing, of course, the United States considers its bilateral relations in this part of the world really very much bedrock. We consider our bilateral relationship with Japan, our alliance with Japan to be really – one of our bedrock items in the region, similarly our bilateral – or alliance with South Korea is also of an unchanging nature that we will preserve.

So what we do in this multilateral process is not at the expense of our bilateral relationships, but really aims to form a greater sense of community in the region. Similarly our bilateral – our alliance with South Korea is also of an unchanging nature that we need to – that we will preserve. So what we do in this multilateral process is not at the expense of our bilateral relationships but really aims to form a greater sense of community in the region. So it's been a long and difficult process. Again, when I hear people say that we're rushing to something, if you're in the middle of it, you wouldn't call it rushing unless you like to watch turtles race or something. It's taken a lot of wear and tear on all of us.

We have Sung Kim here in the audience – I don't know where; there's Sung – who went off to North Korea just before the cooling tower came down. And we – he was there and met with the North Koreans and got a sense of the real atmosphere in the spot. You know, this was the cooling tower we always envisioned as our 12th disabling action. The trouble was the North Koreans wouldn't agree to it. They only agreed to 11. And so, we went with 11 in October.

But we thought the cooling tower was very important to try to get done and get down, so we kept working at it. And finally, the North Koreans agreed to make it be the 12th element. And that's what we agreed in December and we hoped to have it done in December. But as I've often said, the Six-Party process offers no refuge for those in need of instant gratification. Everything takes a little more time than you thought it would.

But I think the fact that they were able to take down the cooling tower, I think, demonstrated that we really do have a procedure on this disablement and that Yongbyon, which was entirely capable of producing more and more plutonium – there was nothing wrong with Yongbyon when it was shut down. I've heard people say, well, it was old and decrepit. Believe me, that was from a technical point of view. The answer to the question of how long Yongbyon could have operated is as long as they want it to operate, because there is nothing old or decrepit about its capacity to produce plutonium. So the fact that it was shut down and the fact that some major disablement steps were taken, I think, is a very good sign.

I thought, to be sure, the cooling tower did have a symbolic value. I mean, I've spoken to audiences about how I thought it was very important that we cut the reverse cooling loop on the reactor. But many of the audiences would slump over and go to sleep as I would explain the cutting of the reverse cooling loop. But I think now people understand that indeed we are doing some things. And it's not just the cooling tower. There are a number of things that have been done and that will continue to be done, including discharging the actual reactor.

So a lot of work ahead of us. But I think, you know, as we contemplate the end of the Six – the second phase, we can take some sense of renewed enthusiasm, can't we Sung? If you'll – okay – and move forward from here as the president very clearly articulated last Thursday.

So thank you very much. And we could go to some questions.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay, thanks very much. Let me take the prerogative of the chair here to ask the first question. And what I'd like – we'll turn to questions and we'd like people to give their name, affiliations, and wait for the microphone. I failed to give my name and affiliation. I'm Derek Mitchell, senior fellow and director for Asia here at the international security program.

You mentioned that it took – and you say, six months more to get this agreement. What is your analysis of what broke the impasse after six months? Was it just simply wearing down? It took that long? Or is there something that in your analysis that changed on the North Korean side? Or how would you explain what happened to get us to this point today?

AMB. HILL: Well, you know, some of these issues are tougher than they seem. I know a lot of people look at these negotiations and say, how could you spend eight hours changing three words in a statement? Well, anyone who has been involved in these negotiations understands that just the friction of the process can lead to major delays.

But we needed North Korea to really understand that we are not talking in narrow terms, that we're talking in very broad terms. For example, we needed them to understand that the purpose of disabling Yongbyon was not to figure out ways that it

could be re-enabled. But rather, the purpose of disablement was for abandonment. And we put that word in there for a reason.

And so, a lot of things – and not just in these negotiations but in other negotiations – happen because people get used to the idea. And getting used to an idea is something that doesn't happen overnight. People need to think about it, live with that idea for a few weeks and sometimes months, and finally come to understand that if you want to go forward, you have to accept that idea.

So we did that. And we put together sort of an overall package of things. I think one thing that we had to make very clear to the North Koreans is we needed to see movement on the Japan issue. We needed to make very clear to the North Koreans that we could not have a situation where things go ahead on denuclearization and things fall behind on the relationship with Japan, because in the long run, North Korea needs a healthy relationship with the Japanese. So we're not asking them to do anything that's not in their interest to do. But sometimes, people don't see their interests overnight. It takes a while.

So you know, and this opens up the question, well, why do you set these unrealistic deadlines? Well, you know, I mean, as any high school history teacher can tell you, if you don't set a deadline, chances are, it will be missed and you'll never get the paper in on time. So you set these deadlines and you hope that people kind of respond to the deadlines and won't immediately ask for an extension the moment the date is set. But you know, I think you have to keep doing this. And if we didn't set some of these tight deadlines, I don't think we would have done it and we would have gotten where we are in June. We might have gotten where we are in June but it might have been June in the next century.

Q: Hi, Ambassador. I'm John Wolfsthal here at CSIS, also senior fellow and a former DOE onsite monitor at Yongbyon during the 1990s. You talked about under the verification plan that there would be access to documentation, facilities, and individuals. One of the technical aspects of verification is getting direct access to the plutonium that was produced. Is that something that is included in the verification plan? And since we're thinking broadly, what sort of deadline should we be setting for when the United States will be able to take that plutonium out of North Korea?

AMB. HILL: Yeah, well, taking the plutonium out of North Korea, as the president has made very clear, is the ultimate goal, because you can't have a denuclearized North Korea if you still have plutonium there. So I don't want to speculate at this point on the time. Let me just say, Secretary Rice is frankly working very hard and is very much engaged on this with me and my staff and with Steve Hadley, the other interagency. And we will – first of all, we need to really study what the North Koreans have given us. And then we need to figure out how we can verify.

Now, I've mentioned these overall principles. But just mentioning principles isn't going to get you there. I mean, access to facilities is good. But what do you mean by

access? I mean, you know, what kind of people can you bring there? How many people? What kind of equipment can we bring?

We've had discussions about this. But obviously, one of the reasons we need to be working in the July 4th week is that we need to work through some of these things. Again, verification is absolutely key to this whole process. You know, people often say how can you trust them? This has nothing to do with trust. This has everything to do with verification. So we didn't want to just not have any idea of what we were going to face in verification. We didn't want a situation where we would go to the North Koreans and say, now, about the verification and we'd draw a blank stare.

So obviously, a lot of our discussions in the last few months have been very much dealing with the issue of verification. That is, after they do what they were supposed to do – that is, give us a declaration and get going on this 12th disablement activity – we would need to move directly to verification. So we're going to work very hard on that this week. There are a lot of interagency people going to be working on it. And so, when we do sit down with them, that is, when the Chinese call the next meeting, I think we'll be ready. And you know, let's hope we can get through this.

Q: Yes, Ambassador. Bill Jones, Executive Intelligence Review. On the herding cats issue, you mentioned, of course, the situation with Japan. And it was clear in the president's statement that he did address the issue of the abductees. And when the Japanese ambassador was here, when he was asked for comment on that, he quoted that part of President Bush's speech, indicating that they realize that the U.S. is on board there.

But there's also, with regard to the South Koreans, there seems to be also some concern that the North Koreans want to deal with the United States rather than with them. And how do you deal with that problem in indicating to them that they are on board and assisting them in this relationship?

AMB. HILL: Well, I think the president – first of all, with respect to abductions, I think the president has spoken very clearly, and not just once on this subject. He's spoken many times. And I think he has abundantly made clear, not only to all of us who work for him but maybe as importantly to the Japanese. We will not forget this issue. We will stay on this issue. We will really work hard on this issue.

And so, I have never had a meeting with the North Koreans where I have not raised this issue, really. It is of that importance to us. And the reason is, we have a very special relationship with Japan. They are a very key ally, not only a regional ally but an international ally. So this is an issue fundamentally important to the Japanese. Therefore, we have to make it fundamentally important. And we understand that. So I think we're – I think there was – the fact that there were meetings and the Japanese have been able to talk to the North Koreans about some agenda for going forward is encouraging. But obviously, we have to monitor this process and make sure that it is going forward.

Again, we're not looking for the junior college try here. We're looking for a real effort to make progress on abductions. We're in touch with the Japanese on a daily basis on it. I talked to my partner, Sai (ph) Kei-san, virtually every day. I didn't talk to him yesterday. I talked to him the day before though. So let's see how we go.

With regard to South Korea, I think the North Koreans are obviously registering their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the elections in South Korea and the emergence of President Lee Myung-bak. They, I think, are trying to sort of impede North-South relations in a way that I don't think is really in their interest now. And we have made very clear to the North Koreans that just as with the Japanese, North Korea needs to reach out and respond on North-South initiatives. And so, we have made that clear to the North Koreans. And I think most importantly we have a very important relationship with South Korea.

And Secretary Rice was just in South Korea, had very good discussions with President Lee Myung-bak and with Foreign Yu Myung-hwan on these issues. While in South Korea, I also met with my counterpart. So we're going to stay shoulder to shoulder with the South Koreans on this. And occasionally, we've – the South Koreans have had bilateral meetings with the North Koreans. And what we've asked from the South Koreans is that we try to coordinate. And they've always done that and we've always coordinated with the South Koreans whenever we have bilateral meetings.

So I can assure you, when I have a bilateral meeting with the North Koreans, I place a number of phone calls. And Japan and South Korea are usually the first two phone calls I place to make sure my counterparts know what we're doing. So we're trying to establish a kind of level of transparency in this process. And I like to think we're succeeding. And any time we meet with the North Koreans, we're certainly not doing it in a way that would impede their reaching out to South Korea. On the contrary, we're stressing the fundamental importance of that.

Again, as I said earlier, we're trying to look at a Six-Party process that can move the region forward. And so, we don't want to make progress on the nuclear issue and then have the issue of creating a neighborhood in the region, have progress on that fall behind. We want to make sure that relations among states are left better off as a result of our efforts to deal with the nuclear issue.

Q: Mike McDevitt from CNA Strategic Studies. Just to pick up on the last point you made, I know I was struck, I guess, by the amount of emphasis you placed in your comments on the Six-Party process as a framework, a more lasting framework in the region. I know that in the past, people have speculated and said, yes, once we solve the North Korean nuclear issue, perhaps, it sounds to me like in terms of policy, you shifted to a more focused attempt to turn the Six-Party process into something lasting. Is this in conjunction with the workgroup five that the Russians chair? Or is this a separate step?

AMB. HILL: Well, you know, if you look at September '05, the notion of a sort of lasting mechanism there in the region, it's there in September '05. But I take your point. I think it was like in the next to last paragraph or something.

But I think what is happening, and I think you're correct that the more we deal with this, the more we believe in the Six-Party process and believe in its ability – not only to deal with the immediate task at hand, which is denuclearization – I must say, without denuclearization, it's tough to move ahead on anything with North Korea. I mean, we're not going to accept North Korea as a nuclear state. We're going to have to get that part done.

But we found that even when Japan and China were having some of the worst problems, then-representative of Japan to the talks, Kenichiro Sasae was still able to deal with his Chinese counterpart in the Six-Party process. So we think it's the right process. And it really, I think, is a sort of precursor for an eventual mechanism of some kind. Now, we use this very clumsy word "mechanism." And I think what we need is not only to talk more within the six parties – and indeed the Russians have done some good work on this. And when Secretary Rice was in China, the Chinese talked with her. She and the Chinese talked about this issue as well.

But I have frequently told people that we are really in the market for ideas on this. And we've had some discussions with NGOs out there. Indeed, when the Russian representative on this came here, I think it was in February, we had him meet with some NGOs on this. So we're really in the market for some ideas on what can be done in a future Six-Party process, in a future Northeast Asian mechanism. For example, we'll need to look at membership questions. Do you keep it six parties?

Actually, six parties, it's a carefully blended balanced group of countries. But on the other hand, you've got other countries that I think have a real interest in peace and security in Northeast Asia. So what are we going to do on membership issues?

And then, what could a future mechanism deal with? Now, if it's just going to be a talk shop, well, I think the world has enough of those. I mean, Washington has enough of those.

So I think we'd like to see it doing some things that could address some of the not only political, sort of high-end security issues, but can't the Six Party, can't a mechanism like this deal with some energy projects, for example, because there have been efforts to deal with energy in a multilateral setting in northeast Asia? Maybe this could be a framework for that, but I just want to emphasize sort of the open architecture of this. We're not saying no to this, no to that; we're really in the market for some ideas on it because we really – it's not just the U.S. that is interested in this. A number of the countries have been interested in pursuing it. So we'll see.

Q: James Rosen with Fox News. Ambassador, the February 13th, 2007 agreement signed by the Six Parties, which has served sort of as a road map for the

implementation of the September 2005 agreement that you mentioned, required North Korea to submit quote, "a complete declaration of all nuclear programs," by December 31st of this past year. Time and again, in the days that followed, you yourself made clear that the United States would not consider anything less than a complete declaration by North Korea acceptable. On January 7 in Japan, you said, "We can't go with something that's 80 percent or 90 percent; we really need to go with something that's complete." And on that same day you said, "Frankly speaking, a partial declaration is really no declaration at all."

AMB. HILL: Did you memorize that or are you cheating and looking at – (inaudible). (Laughter.)

Q: At least I pay close attention to you, sir. And then on January 25th, when Fox News reported that you were, in fact, considering accepting a partial declaration that would carve out for later resolution the two most contentious issues of HEU and Syria, you responded that that was, quote, "completely inaccurate." Now, we have, by all accounts -- and by the account of Stephen Hadley, in his briefing the other day at the White House -- a declaration that only acknowledges that the United States has concerns about HEU and Syria and does not include "a complete declaration of all nuclear programs" with regard to those two most contentious issues. They appear to have been carved out. How do you explain acceptance of this declaration by the United States? And how do you square it with your past statements, sir? Thank you.

AMB. HILL: All I can tell you is that essentially what our president said on Thursday, which is that we have to have complete denuclearization, we have to make sure that there is no stone left unturned; that is, we have to make sure there is no clandestine uranium enrichment program that is somehow undeclared and unexcavated. We need to make sure especially that the plutonium – which has not been clandestine; on the contrary, plutonium has been produced and a lot of it. And so we need to not only make sure that additional plutonium has been – that the plutonium production has been shut down.

I mean, it is useful to recall – I mean, sometimes when you're on these long journeys, you look ahead but sometimes it's valuable to look where you come from. And it was less than a year ago that they were still producing plutonium and plutonium is what they tested as a nuclear weapon. And plutonium is really, first of all, what we needed to stop their production of, and secondly, what we need to eventually have them abandon. So I think the president has spoken to your points there. I'd have to go back and see the statements and see the context of these statements, but I assure you that we are not interested in partial denuclearization.

Our president, our secretary of state, Steven Hadley – I did read his transcript – made very clear that as we go forward, we are looking for complete denuclearization. We're doing it together with our partners. We have everybody on the same sheet of music on this. It is very important that this is not just the U.S. asking for things and North Korea trying to somehow look for ways that we will get partially what we want.

This is an entire Six-Party process and there is no daylight between us and the other partners on this. So we have to keep working on it.

And I think our president made very clear this is a step; this is not the final step. We have a ways to go on it. I know Secretary Rice has made that abundantly clear on many statements. Look at her Heritage Foundation speech just a week or two ago. We have our eyes open on this and we're trying to go forward and we're trying to deal with this threat and deal with it step by step. Obviously, we would like to deal with things in one fell swoop, but sometimes, as I was saying earlier to Derek's question, you have to kind of do things on an incremental basis to get people used to where they are and to get them to take the next step. But I would draw your attention to the fact that a year ago they were producing plutonium and not only are they not producing plutonium, but they can't produce plutonium because the thing is disabled. And obviously, we have to keep going and certainly, as I stand here before you, I'm talking about a work in progress.

Q: So you – if I can follow up – you don't deny that you have now accepted a declaration –

AMB. HILL: Come on.

Q: – that you yourself regarded, as you said, would be unacceptable, that a partial declaration is no declaration at all – your words, sir?

AMB. HILL: Well, I think I made very clear to you that what we worked out, a declaration which we are currently studying, which does address all of the elements of their nuclear program. We know that at the end of the day, nothing will mean anything until we have their complete denuclearization. So again, you're looking at a partially finished product here and we've got to finish the job. I think President Bush made that abundantly clear. We are not looking to say we've made progress and that's enough; we need to keep going and we're doing that.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay, the gentlemen over there that's been waiting patiently?

Q: (Inaudible) – Financial Times. Ambassador Hill, just to follow up to make sure that I understand what you just said.

AMB. HILL: This is not a press conference, is it? I mean –

Q: Is it your judgment that you don't yet know whether the declaration is complete and correct, when you say you're studying it? Or can you already calculate it as complete –

AMB. HILL: Well, I mean, what the declaration needs to be done, we need to verify things that are in the declaration. You don't just accept the declaration and say, it looks good to us. I mean, you have to verify and you have to verify it through a lot of different means. You need to know how you're going to verify it so you don't want to

surprise the other guy with verification. Now, they are committed to fully cooperating on verification, but we needed to have an understanding. And that's why it was important that the Chinese announce that, indeed, within the Six Parties we had had an agreement on what the principles would be on verification.

And briefly speaking, I mean, they are dealing with documents. They are dealing with on-site verification; that is, going to the actual facilities. What we are dealing with is production of fissile material and it's the fissile material that goes into bombs and makes the nuclear threat. So we're dealing with fissile material and we'll have a means to fully verify that what they declare is complete; that is, they haven't squirreled something off and we don't know about it. So there's a lot of work ahead of us.

Q: So you're still verifying whether it is in fact a nuclear threat?

AMB. HILL: Well, we're obviously going to look at the declaration very systematically this week. We're going to work on our verification, how we would approach verification. We've of course talked to parties, but when we do reach a verification agreement, this has to be done within the Six Parties and probably with some other parties as well. So we have a lot of work ahead of us.

Q: Just a question I actually was going to ask, is this related at all to the delay in \$11 billion sales to Taiwan being approved? That's been long delayed –

AMB. HILL: This has nothing to do with Taiwan. (Chuckles.) That's a separate CSIS event, I guess. (Laughter.)

MR. MITCHELL: That will be at noontime, so you all stay here and we'll continue that. Get Sonia back here?

Q: Sonia Friend (ph) with the Los Angeles Times. Two quick questions: first on the neuralgic question of the uranium, so it's now been some time since the news reports about the uranium contamination of the documents came out. I'd just like to know what the North Korean story is about that, what explanation you were offered?

AMB. HILL: Well –

Q: And second, very quickly, the question of the symphony was very controversial. And I was wondering whether, from your point of view, that was helpful or did the North Koreans just pocket that? Thank you.

AMB. HILL: I think with regard to the uranium enrichment issue, I can assure you that this is an ongoing element of our discussion within the Six Parties and with the North Koreans. And I think Secretary Rice has made very clear that we can't just put this under the rug. I mean, we have to get clarity on this. We we're continuing to work that. I don't want to talk about press reports of some findings or something, some information that we've developed from various sources except to assure you we're not looking for a

process that at the end of the day leaves some sort of ambiguity on this. So we will continue to work on that.

As for the symphony as being pocketed by the North Koreans, I never pocketed a symphony before, but I think those people who were at the symphony – I was not, but I have talked to many people who were quite moved by it and saw it as an important sign that we could respond in sort of broad terms and that we are – we're not – we don't have a problem with the North Korean people; we have a problem with the North Korean leadership that has been producing weapons of mass destruction and we need to get at that.

I don't think they were able to pocket the symphony. I think it was done by – it was a private initiative by the New York Philharmonic. I mean, we thought it was a good idea and I think it's probably too early to tell what role it played. You're sort of reminded of the famous Zhou Enlai comment to Richard Nixon that it's still too early to tell what the importance of the French Revolution was. So it's probably still early to tell the role of the New York Symphony, but I really don't see a downside to it at all. I don't see anyone quote, unquote, "pocketing the symphony," and asking for more or something.

Q: Thanks. Chris Nelson, Nelson Report. I just wanted to say, I think almost everybody in the room recognizes that we are here today because of a remarkable, almost miraculous performance that you put in, including a great deal of persistence, humor, and not a little share of cojones. So when people ask critical questions, it isn't personal.

AMB. HILL: I wasn't looking forward to your question, Chris, but go ahead.
(Laughter.)

Q: (Chuckles.) That's right. On the Japan stuff, I think most of us in the room have heard you for the last three years talking about the importance of Japan and we've all written about it and you say the same thing each time. Yet, it doesn't seem as though somehow that's getting through over there. And given the debate in the Diet last week, and given where we are now and all the things you've been saying about the need to move forward with Six-Party cooperation, everybody involved, are you starting to get worried that the Japanese have really taken themselves out of the discussion because of the abductee problem, or do you think this is going to be resolved? Do you have some sense of are they going to be able to get over this? Or are they really going to be the players that you need them to be?

AMB. HILL: Well, I think Prime Minister – I think on a number of occasions, the Japanese government has made very clear their interest in not only in resolving the abduction issue, which is a huge issue in the Japanese public. I mean, if you spent 10 minutes in Japan, you will sense the importance of it. And so, I think it is a huge issue, but at the same time, I think the Japanese government has also made very clear that denuclearization is also important to Japan.

I mean, after all, who does the North Korean nuclear program threaten? It threatens countries in the region. And so I work a lot with my Japanese colleagues. They put together a very good team in the Six Parties and they have some very talented diplomats who work very hard on this. It's not unusual in Six Party – in multilateral diplomacy that some countries will have particular issues that they need to address. And so I would not say that because country X has a specific issue they need to address in addition to the main issue, I would not say that that puts country X out of the process. I think it simply is a reminder that when you're doing this, you have to have several elements moving forward and you really, you have to be mindful of that fact that countries have specific issues. I mean, I think if you look at the whole Six Parties, I mean, someone could probably write a book about how each of the Six Parties has a somewhat different way of looking at the Six Party process.

And I can think back to the Dayton Peace Accords and the fact that as we kind of looked, what do the Serbs want, what do the Croats want, what do the Bosnians want, what do the European Union want, you could see that everyone had a somewhat different take on what they really needed. I mean, I remember with regard to Croatia, for example, I mean, they were very concerned about an issue that probably no one here has ever heard of called Eastern Slavonia. I mean, there were 22 days in the Dayton Peace Accords; five of those 22 I personally spent dealing with Eastern Slavonia. And it was stuff like would the Croat flag be on the post office in Eastern Slavonia? So you needed to deal with Eastern Slavonia in order to get Croatia locked on to the issue of the final status of Bosnia.

So these things happen and I think anyone who looks at that abduction issue realizes how – I mean, think about it. You have your citizens in some cases being taken off the streets of your own streets. So if you're a government, you can't ignore that your citizens have been abducted by another government. You've got to be engaged on that. And I mean, I don't think anybody should say, well, can't they do that somewhere else? I mean, clearly, when they are at the table, they've got to be engaged on it. I mean, if you look at the G8 ministerial statement, the abduction issue is there and we deal with it. Now, I would take issue with your comment that we haven't made any progress on it. I mean, well, in the three years not much has been done on it.

Q: (Off mike) – making this point that somehow the Japanese feel that you're not taking it seriously.

AMB. HILL: Oh, okay. Well, first of all, I think – we have to see how this comes out. I mean, there were meetings with the North Koreans and the Japanese to discuss this matter. That hasn't happened for quite a while. As I said earlier, we don't want a situation where they had a meeting and then the North Koreans say, well, we did our part, so clearly we've got to go forward. I don't know what the final resolution on this issue, I don't know what it's going to look like, I mean, what an eventual resolution would look like, but I do know that they've got to get a lot further than they've gotten. So we're going to continue to work on this issue.

President Bush spoke and, I think, in very, very meaningful terms and spoke not only to the American people but the Japanese people as well. He talked – also talked to the prime minister about it that we are not going to forget this issue. So we'll keep working at it and like a lot of things in the Six-Party process, it doesn't happen instantly. It's not as fast as we'd like to see, but we will continue to work on it. And speaking of work, I really ought to get back to work. (Chuckles.)

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Chris, for coming out. (Inaudible) – please join me in thanking him. Thank you. (Applause.)

AMB. HILL: Thank you very much.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay, appreciate that. Thank you all.

(END)