The North Korea Deadlock: A Report from the Region

Recommended Citation

"The North Korea Deadlock: A Report from the Region", Briefing Books DPRK, January 15, 2004, https://nautilus.org/briefing-books/dprk/the-north-korea-deadlock-a-report-from-the-region/

Jack Pritchard, former Bush administration special envoy for negotiations with the DPRK, co-sponsored by the Brookings Institution's Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies (CNAPS) and the Asia Society Washington Center, and held at Brookings, January 15, 2004.

CHARLES L. "JACK" PRITCHARD: Now, before I give you some of my impressions, let me just set a little bit of the ground rules in advance. The presence of the former Director of Los Alamos, Dr. Sig Hecker, made the trip, I think, a little bit more significant in that he brings with him the credibility of being able to understand and put into perspective things that he did see, recognize things that we didn't see. He has been asked to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday, and he is going to be presenting a detailed technical view of everything that we saw at Yongbyon.

So there are parts of what we did and what we saw at Yongbyon that are most appropriately covered by Dr. Hecker, and I will not go into that. I have no doubt during the Q&A you will try to get that out of me, but it is really to your benefit and to mine that Dr. Hecker's observations be the ones that are recorded in terms of being able to understand that.

Now, having said that, I will speak a little bit about what we did and some of what we saw at Yongbyon facilities. But I'll just give you a quick overview and then go into a couple of observations I had. But I'd like to focus a lot on the discussions we had with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel with regard to six-party talks and the possibility of resolving the nuclear issue in a peaceful, negotiated way.

We arrived on Tuesday, the 6th of January, confirmed our schedule, what we'd be doing, had a preliminary discussion with Ambassador Li Gun. He, as you may know, headed the first three-party talks in Beijing in April. He's someone that I have known and negotiated with for about seven years now.

But the main part of our trip really began on Wednesday. In addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were able to have a briefing by members of the Committee for the Promotion of International Trade, and I only bring that up because there are, you know, just anecdotal observations of the conditions in Pyongyang that I have seen progress over the years, and some of

you have been there as well. I have been getting reports myself over the last year about improvements in the quality of life, and everything about North Korea is done in relative terms, not in absolute terms. So I'll speak about that in a minute.

But at the Committee for the Promotion of Trade, they were focused on what they were doing as a result of the reforms that were put in place in July of 2002, things like rezoning lands. They were talking about the rice production that they have. Eighty-five percent of the country is mountainous, and they've got terraces that are, you know, 0.1 hectare in size that are very inefficient. And so their point was to try to rezone land into the flat areas to increase to 0.65 hectares and to have far more efficient use. Whether they do it or not, somebody else will have to observe that.

Read the full event transcript (- 85KB)

Event Information

For the first time since he left his post as the Bush administration's point man for relations with North Korea, former Ambassador Charles L. "Jack" Pritchard traveled to North Korea this month as a private citizen even as the U.S. government was preparing for continued formal talks with Pyongyang through the six-party process.

Pritchard, the Bush administration's special envoy to North Korea and the U.S. representative to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, was also deputy chief negotiator for the U.S.-Korea peace talks in 1997, where he helped negotiate U.S. access to a sensitive underground facility in North Korea.

Following his return from North Korea, Pritchard will participate in a briefing sponsored by the Brookings Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies and the Asia Society. Pritchard will report on his trip and join a panel of Brookings experts who will assess the chances for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/briefing-books/dprk/the-north-korea-deadlock-a-report-from-the-region/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org