

Update on the Six-Party Talks By the U.S. Department of State

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Update on the Six-Party Talks By the U.S. Department of State

Special Report 08-039A: May 15th, 2008
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I. Introduction

The U.S. Department of State released this report on May 9th detailing recent developments in the Six Party Talks process. Please note that these documents do back to 1986, not 1990 as noted in the fact sheet. The report notes, "Eight out of 11 agreed disablement activities at the three core facilities have been completed. Work on disablement activities continues... These actions have halted the DPRK's ability to produce additional weapons-grade plutonium for its nuclear weapons program."

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Nautilus Institute. Readers should note that Nautilus seeks a diversity of views and opinions on contentious topics in order to identify common ground.

II. Report by the U.S. Department of State

- "Update on the Six-Party Talks"

By the U.S. Department of State

Latest News

- On May 8 in Pyongyang, the DPRK provided approximately 18,000 pages of documentation related to its nuclear programs to a U.S. government delegation led by Sung Kim, Director of the State Department's Office of Korean Affairs.
- These documents were provided as part of the Six-Party Talks, the goal of which is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. This goal was stated in the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement of the Six Parties.
- The DPRK has stated that the documentation provided May 8 consists of operating records for the five-megawatt reactor [5-MW(e)] and fuel reprocessing plant at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, where the DPRK had produced its stock of weapons-grade plutonium.
- These operating records date back to 1990 [EDITOR'S NOTE: records go back to 1986] and are expected to cover reactor operations and all three reprocessing campaigns undertaken by North Korea.
- These documents will be examined thoroughly by a team of U.S. verification and other experts.

Declaration, Verification

- The United States and the other parties continue to press the DPRK to fulfill its declaration commitment under the October 3, 2007 agreement.
- Review of the operating records provided on May 8 will be an important first step in the process of verifying that North Korea's declaration is complete and correct.
- We are working with the Chinese and our other partners to establish verification and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that all parties, including the DPRK, are living up to their commitments.

Disablement of Yongbyon

- The DPRK shut down and sealed the Yongbyon nuclear facility in July 2007, in accordance with the February 13, 2007 Six-Party agreement on "Initial Actions for the Implementation of Joint Statement."
- The DPRK agreed in the February 13, 2007 agreement on "Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement" to shut down all its existing nuclear facilities, beginning with the core facilities at the Yongbyon nuclear complex by December 31, 2007.
- The Yongbyon nuclear complex houses the three core facilities of North Korea's plutonium program: the 5-MW(e) reactor, reprocessing facility, and fuel fabrication facility.
- These facilities were operating until they were shut down in July 2007 as part of the Six-Party process.
- In addition, North Korea invited back IAEA personnel to monitor and verify the shutdown and sealing of these facilities.
- The DPRK subsequently agreed in the October 3, 2007 agreement on "Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement" that it would disable all its existing nuclear facilities,

beginning with the core facilities at Yongbyon.

- Since November 2007, U.S. experts have been on the ground at Yongbyon continuously, overseeing disablement activities.
- Eight out of 11 agreed disablement activities at the three core facilities have been completed. Work on disablement activities continues.
- U.S. experts currently are overseeing the discharge of the spent fuel rods from the 5-MW(e) reactor. As of mid-May, more than one-third of the spent fuel rods have been discharged successfully.
- These actions have halted the DPRK's ability to produce additional weapons-grade plutonium for its nuclear weapons program.
- The United States remains committed to the full implementation of the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks, which unanimously reaffirmed that the goal of the Six-Party Talks is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.

III. Nautilus invites your responses

The Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network invites your responses to this essay. Please send responses to: bscott@nautilus.org. Responses will be considered for redistribution to the network only if they include the author's name, affiliation, and explicit consent.

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