

Statement by Sung Y. Kim
Ambassador-Designate, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
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Madame Chairman, Senator Murkowski, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor and a privilege to be here as President Bush's and Secretary Rice's nominee to serve as Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks and, with your consent, to receive the rank of Ambassador for the duration of my tenure. Few Asian-Americans have had the opportunity to serve the United States as an Ambassador, and I am deeply moved and grateful to be considered for this privilege. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with this distinguished Committee and with other members of Congress to advance U.S. policy with regard to North Korea and the Six-Party process.

I would like to take a moment to recognize my family because without their support I would not be here today. I am joined by my mother and brother who flew in from my home state of California, and my wife Jae and our two daughters Erin and Erica. I am also pleased that my friends and colleagues from the Department of State, some of the most dedicated and talented young officers in the U.S. Government, are able to join me today.

I have had a life-long interest in Asia, and as a Foreign Service Officer, I have had the opportunity to spend much of my time working to advance U.S. interests in Asia. My direct involvement in the Six-Party Talks began with my tenure as Director for the Office of Korean Affairs, but in looking back at my 19 years of diplomatic service, I realize that my experience has prepared me well for this important assignment. As Political-Military Affairs Chief in Seoul, I worked closely with our military colleagues to strengthen our alliance with the Republic of Korea; as a political officer in Tokyo, I covered Japan's relations with China as well as North Korea; and as a desk officer in Washington a decade ago, I focused on a key aspect of our relations with China. The challenge posed by North Korea's

nuclear program figured prominently in all of these assignments. Even my pre-State Department experience as a prosecutor in Los Angeles in some ways has been useful to my work in Six-Party negotiations.

As Director for Korean Affairs and as deputy of our Six-Party delegation for the past year, I have had the honor of leading several interagency delegations to North Korea to advance the implementation of various Six-Party commitments. These efforts included negotiating a robust package of disablement measures for core North Korean nuclear facilities and securing critical information on North Korea's nuclear program. During this time I have had the privilege of working closely with Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who has energetically led the Six-Party negotiations, and I thank him for the trust, support and the guidance he has given me. I am also grateful to Secretary Rice for her leadership and support.

Madame Chairman, during the past two years, we have taken significant steps in the Six-Party process. Working with our Six-Party partners, we have shut down North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex. We have also moved into disabling the core facilities at Yongbyon, and since November 2007 U.S. personnel have maintained a presence on the ground in Yongbyon. North Korea temporarily has halted the disablement activities and appears to be taking steps to reverse some measures, but we remain committed to the Six-Party process and are working closely with our Six-Party partners to ensure the disablement process is put back on track.

On June 26, North Korea provided a declaration of its nuclear programs. The Six-Parties have agreed to guiding principles for verification of this declaration, and we are now working with our partners and the North Koreans to develop a strong verification protocol to move the verification process forward.

We still have concerns with North Korea regarding uranium enrichment and proliferation activities. North Korea has stated that it is not now and will not in the future engage in any uranium enrichment or proliferation activities. North Korea also has committed to cooperate with verification activities related to these two

issues. The Six Parties have established a monitoring mechanism intended to ensure implementation of all Six-Party commitments, including non-proliferation. We believe this will be an important vehicle to pursue any questions regarding North Korea's follow through on its promises.

Madame Chairman, there is much work left to be done. We anticipate many challenges and ups and downs as we pursue the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, the Six-Party Talks process is working, and a denuclearized North Korea remains essential to peace and security for all the members of the Six-Party Talks. With your consent, I hope to continue to serve my country in pursuit of this vital national interest. Thank you, and I am happy to respond to any questions you have.