

No. 049-00
(703)697-5131(media)
(703)697-5737(public/industry)

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2000

**UNITED STATES PROPOSES RENEWED REMAINS
RECOVERY TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA**

The United States has proposed to North Korean officials that both nations meet to continue negotiations that broke off in Berlin last December. Those talks were to coordinate joint recovery operations of remains believed to be those of American soldiers from the Korean War.

Last week, North Korea informed the U.S. government and several veterans' organizations that it held about 415 sets of remains of American soldiers. Later, after inquiries by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, North Korean officials admitted that this was not the case. They now claim to have only one or two remains in their possession, and they estimate there may be another 400 that might be found in the same area. This number was well known to the U.S. officials who told the North Koreans more than two years ago during negotiations and technical talks that our estimates showed there were more than 500 sets of potentially recoverable remains in this area. During the past four years, joint recovery teams have conducted 12 operations and returned 42 sets of remains from this same area.

North Korea also reported they had the military dogtag of Charles Sizemore, a U.S. soldier missing in action from the Korean War. North Korean officials, however, informed the United States that there is no correlation between the Sizemore dogtag and any remains in their possession. Moreover, U.S. researchers have discovered many such dogtags in North Korean military museums.

The DPMO talks in Berlin ended with no agreement after North Korea sought to link large-scale economic assistance to joint recovery operations.