



## Six-Party Talks

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Opening Remarks Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Washington, DC  
March 2, 2004

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to review our efforts to deal with the threat that North Korea's nuclear programs pose to regional peace and security and to the global non-proliferation regime. Having just returned from the six-party talks in Beijing, I am grateful to have the chance to discuss with you our work, together with like-minded countries at the talks, toward a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.

The multilateral process is off to a very good start. The false notion that North Korean nuclear weapons are the unique concern of the United States is all but gone. Our goal -- complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of North Korean nuclear programs -- has been dubbed by the South Koreans "CVID," and that acronym and the important goal it represents has been accepted by all but the North Koreans. And with each of the countries having large and direct interest in the issue, the process is unusually well focused.

The first round of six-party talks, in August 2003, provided the opportunity for governments directly concerned with the Korean Peninsula, and the nuclear issue in particular, to state their positions authoritatively before all of the other parties. This created a solid baseline from which we are working together to bring about a diplomatic solution to the problem.

We began the second round last Wednesday, February 25, with hope for concrete progress that would lay the basis to continue moving forward. I am pleased to report that the talks are working to our benefit and are moving a serious process forward. The parties agreed to regularize the six-party talks, to convene a third round of talks before June, and to establish a working group to continue our efforts in the interim.

This is a good foundation on which we can build in future rounds. Key, substantive differences do remain that will need to be addressed in further rounds of discussions. However, we worked closely with our partners in the talks and were pleased with the high degree of cooperation among us. Most importantly, we kept the talks focused on our objective: the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs, by which we mean both plutonium and uranium enrichment-based programs. It was clear by the conclusion of the talks that this is now very much on the table.

The onus is on the D.P.R.K. to demonstrate its commitment to abandoning its nuclear programs by being forthcoming about the entirety of its efforts, including uranium enrichment. The other five parties are all in full agreement on this fundamental idea. North Korea heard what it needs to do in sessions with all parties represented, and it heard it from us in direct encounters on the margins of the formal sessions. By the way, after these encounters, I was quick to brief the other parties. Transparency is an important part of the six-party talks, and essential to its core premises.

These accomplishments are evidence of a very different, promising atmosphere at this round. All parties came prepared to be blunt about their positions, but also ready and willing to take on board the concerns of the other parties. The North Koreans came to the table denying a uranium enrichment program and complaining about the inflexibility of the U.S. position, but they have gone along with the institutionalization of the process.

The achievements from the talks are in no small part due to the extensive efforts of the Chinese. They have worked as intermediaries to bring about and host this second round, and we are extremely grateful for the hard work they have been doing. More importantly, China has been active as a participant and makes clear it will not accept nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. The Republic of Korea has also made a valuable commitment. It would offer fuel relief to the North if there were a halt or "freeze" of the nuclear programs. But South Korea has made clear that any such freeze is but a temporary measure toward the larger goal, and will have to be complete and verifiable.

We will continue working side by side with the Chinese, the Russians, and our Japanese and South Korean allies to reach the result we seek. We have already begun to discuss next steps, and will be actively consulting with China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Russia in preparation for the next round and the intersessional working group.

The process of transforming the situation on the Korean Peninsula in the interest of all these parties must begin with a fundamental decision by the D.P.R.K. The D.P.R.K. needs to make a strategic choice for transformed relations with the United States and the world -- as other countries have done, including quite recently -- to abandon all of its nuclear programs. We also made clear that there are other issues that, as the nuclear issue begins to unfold, can be discussed with the U.S. Missiles, conventional forces, and serious human rights concerns could be discussed, and progress could lead to full normalization.

There is also something else important that is beginning with the six-party talks. As the Committee knows, the numerous and intensive security dialogues of Europe are not matched in East Asia, where the only comparable institution is the annual and slow-growing ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Northeast Asia has had no such event. But the chemistry of articulating interests in a direct but respectful way -- on an equal footing -- is developing at the six-party talks in a way that I anticipate will someday pass beyond the D.P.R.K. nuclear issue.

In his February 11 remarks at the National Defense University, President Bush called on other governments engaged in covert nuclear arms programs to follow the affirmative example of Libya. As he put it, "Abandoning the pursuit of illegal weapons can lead to better relations with the United States, and other free nations. Continuing to seek those weapons will not bring security or international prestige, but only political isolation, economic hardship and other unwelcome consequences," the President declared.

The Libyan case demonstrates, as President Bush has said, that "leaders who abandon the pursuit of (WMD and their delivery means) will find an open path to better relations with the United States and other free nations.... When leaders make the wise and responsible choice...., they serve the interest of their own people and they add to the security of all nations." Indeed, last week the U.S. responded to Libya's concrete steps to repudiate weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by easing certain bilateral restrictions to encourage Libya to continue on its current path.

We discussed Libya's example with our North Korean counterparts, and we hope they understand its significance. Once North Korea's nuclear issue is resolved, discussions would be possible on a wide range of issues that could lead to an improvement in relations.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to meet with the Committee today. We remain convinced that our multilateral diplomatic approach is correct and will bear fruit, though we know that more work is ahead. The President is committed to the six-party talks. We are offering North Korea a chance to choose a path toward international responsibility. We hope we and our partners in the six-party talks can bring North Korea to understand it is in its own interest to take the opportunity. We will

continue to work closely with the Committee as we proceed.

I'll be happy to take any questions that you have.

Released on March 2, 2004

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