



# U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

---

**Chairman Joseph R. Biden, Jr.**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Hearing**  
**“Status of the Six Party Talks for the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula”**  
**February 6, 2008**  
**Opening Remarks**  
**As Prepared for Delivery**

Today, the Foreign Relations Committee will examine the efforts of the United States and the other participants in the Six Party Talks to remove the threat of nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and build a permanent peace there.

I want to welcome Ambassador Christopher Hill, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, back to the committee today. I thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for your tireless efforts over the past three years to try to resolve this difficult problem.

I also want to take note of the fact that the Foreign Relations Committee was originally scheduled to have Assistant Secretary Hill up here today to testify on a different subject – Vietnam – at a hearing to be chaired by my friend Senator Boxer.

I want to thank Senator Boxer, the chairwoman of our East Asia Subcommittee, for agreeing to reschedule her hearing for early March, at which time we look forward to seeing Ambassador Hill again.

## No Alternative to Patient Diplomacy

I look forward to the day that we can close the book on the nuclear issue and turn to other challenges, like how the United States and North Korea might cooperate to expand trade and cultural and educational exchanges between our two nations.

But we are not there yet.

The New York Philharmonic will be playing a concert in North Korea at the end of the month, the first ever visit by a U.S. orchestra to North Korea.

I understand they will perform the New World Symphony, by Dvorak. That is fitting. But for now we have to keep our eye on the ball and deal with the old world we still inhabit.

Our goal – and the stated objective of the Six Party Talks – is to peacefully dismantle North Korea’s nuclear weapons program in exchange for energy assistance, sanctions relief, and the creation of a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

This objective is consistent, in my view, with the vital national security interests of all six nations joined in the Six Party Talks. Nuclear weapons offer only a false sense of security to North Korea. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or DPRK as it is called, will find true security only when it has jettisoned its nuclear weapons program, rejoined the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and fully normalized relations not only with the United States, but even more importantly, with its neighbors to the south.

South Korea is America’s close friend and ally. Last December, South Koreans went to the polls and elected a new president, Lee Myung-bak. Today, Senator Murkowski and I plan to introduce a resolution congratulating President-elect Lee and the people of the Republic of Korea on their nation’s vibrant democracy and affirming our desire to strengthen and deepen our alliance in the years ahead. There is much we can accomplish together both on and off the Korean Peninsula.

Some say we should never negotiate with North Korea because they can’t be trusted. This view offers no viable solution to a problem – a problem that got much worse when the Bush Administration disengaged from the effort.

We wasted a lot of time; time that North Korea used to acquire uranium enrichment equipment and to more than double its stockpile of plutonium, leading ultimately to an actual test of a nuclear device on October 9, 2006.

There is still no substitute for patient, principled, sustained, high level diplomacy. Moreover, our efforts are more likely to succeed when we enlist our allies South Korea and Japan and other friends to help us.

That is what this committee has been calling for on a bipartisan basis for six years.

The formula for success is clear, and I am glad that President Bush finally embraced it and chose Ambassador Hill to undertake it.

The formula is validated by history. President George Herbert Walker Bush in 1991 agreed to remove U.S. tactical nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula – weapons we no longer needed to station in Korea given advances in technology – and thereby convinced North Korea to remain inside the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to accept inspections. Inspections by the IAEA yielded evidence late in 1992 that North Korea was violating its NPT commitments as well as the terms of the 1991 South-North Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Without the first Bush’s diplomatic efforts, we might have remained in the dark, giving North Korea a free path to pursue its nuclear ambitions unchecked.

Under President Clinton, the United States negotiated the October 1994 Agreed Framework.

The North agreed to freeze and eventually eliminate its nuclear facilities under international monitoring. In exchange, Pyongyang was to receive two proliferation-resistant Light Water nuclear reactors (LWRs) and annual shipments of heavy fuel oil during construction of the reactors. The LWRs were to be financed and constructed through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), a multinational consortium including South Korea, Japan, and the European Union.

The Agreed Framework failed to eliminate the North's nuclear programs. But it prevented the North from producing even one ounce of plutonium from 1994-2003. That is no small accomplishment.

And the creation of KEDO established a useful precedent – namely, that the United States should reach out to other nations that share our interest in a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula to help shoulder the financial and diplomatic burdens.

Under the terms of a February 17, 2007 agreement hammered out by our witness today and North Korea's lead nuclear negotiator, North Korea promised first to freeze and then to disable its key nuclear facilities and to provide a complete and accurate declaration of all of its nuclear programs, facilities, and materials. In exchange, the North is to receive energy assistance and sanctions relief. The ultimate goal remains the same: the complete dismantlement of the North's nuclear facilities in exchange for normalization of relations with the United States and the establishment of a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

The freeze was implemented without a hitch, and North Korean workers under the direct supervision of U.S. technicians are today in the process of disabling the three key nuclear facilities at Yongbyon – the reactor, the spent fuel reprocessing plant, and the fuel fabrication plant.

North Korea is no longer in the plutonium production business.

But as we will hear from our witness, we still have a long way to go.

The North has not yet submitted a complete and accurate declaration of its nuclear programs, as called for under the agreement. The original December 31, 2007 deadline has come and gone.

North Korea's preferred outcome still appears to be having both a limited nuclear deterrent and good relations with the United States. They must choose one or the other. The United States will never acquiesce to a nuclear-armed North Korea.

I hope Assistant Secretary Hill will share with us the administration's game plan going forward. How does the Administration plan to convince North Korea to submit a declaration of

its nuclear activities, including any proliferation of nuclear know-how, promptly so that we can get on with the business of dismantling the North's nuclear facilities, removing fissile material from the country, and ultimately normalizing our bilateral relations and integrating North Korea into the community of nations? What do we want South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia – as equal members of the Six Party Talks – to do to help us?

I also hope that Ambassador Hill will share with us some thoughts on how the Administration plans to actually implement the next phase of the agreement. Specifically, I hope he will address the concern that Senator Lugar and I have expressed about the Glenn Amendment, which currently prohibits the Department of Energy from providing more than token assistance to the denuclearization effort. Senator Lugar and I have drafted legislation that would provide the Department of Energy and the Department of State with the necessary authority to implement a robust denuclearization plan, and I hope the Administration will endorse it.

Mr. Ambassador, I look forward to your testimony. Let me now turn to my friend Senator Lugar.