

Summary statement by Dr. Siegfried S. Hecker about visit to DPRK (North Korea), Feb. 12. – 16, 2008. The delegation consisted of:

Prof. Siegfried S. Hecker, Co-director, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University.

Mr. Joel Wit, former State Department official.

Mr. W. Keith Luse, Staffer for Senator Richard Lugar, U.S. Senate.

Siegfried S. Hecker statement:

1) We visited the Yongbyon Nuclear Center on Feb. 14 to assess the disablement actions in the Oct. 3 six-party agreement. The Yongbyon nuclear facilities are shut down and are being monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The disablement actions at the three key nuclear facilities are almost complete. I judge these to be serious actions that will require significant time and effort to restart the facilities. We saw the fuel fabrication facility, the 5 Megawatt (electric) reactor, and the reprocessing facility and were allowed to photograph the disabled facilities and stored equipment. By DPRK officials' count, they have completed 10 of 12 disablement actions. The two remaining are completion of the discharge of the spent fuel rods from the reactor and removal of control rod drive mechanisms once the reactor is fully discharged. DPRK has slowed the rate of removing spent fuel rods because it is waiting for the other five parties to catch up with their compensating measures (such as the rate of delivery of heavy fuel oil).

We found the level of cooperation between the DPRK nuclear specialists and the U.S. team that is supervising the disablement to be excellent. The U.S. has supplied equipment to allow the DPRK to disable the facilities. Until the slow-down, the two sides struck the proper balance between doing the job expeditiously and doing it safely.

2) In Pyongyang, we discussed the status of the six-party talks with DPRK officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). We found that significant hurdles remain before the DPRK will offer a complete declaration of its nuclear program. We were told that the DPRK has informally presented a preliminary list to the United States. They are in consultation with the United States, but the DPRK is not prepared to present a complete list until the other parties meet their obligations in the Oct. 3 agreement. We were told that the DPRK wants these obligations to be met quickly so they can move into the dismantlement stage.

3) We discussed the future of the nuclear workers at the Yongbyon nuclear center with officials from MFA and the technical leadership at the site. The DPRK is not prepared to engage fully in such discussions until the other parties meet their obligations and the disablement phase is complete. At Yongbyon, we discussed a range of possibilities for the future of the workers once the facilities are dismantled. These discussions represent a good first step. Our DPRK hosts mostly listened and responded to our ideas.

4) I also continued discussions on a broader range of issues involving exchanges of personnel in the medical, scientific and educational fields.

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