

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

September 22, 2010

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United States and China Agree on Talks with North Korea

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg says the United States and China agree that North Korea must comply with a 2005 agreement on nuclear programs before Six-Party Talks can resume.

“On the Korean Peninsula, we have a shared interest both in making sure that we reverse North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs and also that we sustain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula,” Steinberg told a forum September 20 at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

“Our strong message to not only China but all of our friends in the region has been that ultimately we cannot have peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula if we don’t address Korea’s nuclear program and we don’t see the implementation of the 2005 joint declaration.”

Six-Party Talks began in 2003 to convince the North Korean regime to abandon its nuclear weapons and long-range missile development program in return for an array of political and economic benefits including a final resolution of the Korean War armistice. Talks have been held sporadically since then, but broke down in December 2008 and have not resumed. The North Korean regime last tested a nuclear device May 25, 2009, and the U.N. Security Council imposed new sanctions on June 12, 2009.

The Six-Party Talks include China, which serves as chairman of the talks, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and the United States.

North Korea promised in a September 2005 joint statement that it would give up its nuclear weapons and long-range missile development program for energy assistance, security guarantees and broader diplomatic recognition. Negotiators pledged that North Korea could have a nuclear energy program for civil electric generation by meeting internationally sanctioned safeguards. Twice since then the North has tested modest nuclear devices and conducted a number of unsuccessful long-range missile tests.

Steinberg said the United States has been “deeply engaged with China and Russia” to sustain the effort to keep the diplomatic track open.

“We had very productive discussions with China’s representative to the Six-Party Talks, Wu Da Wei, just a few days ago, and we look forward to continuing to find common ground to move forward on that,” he said.

The U.S. relationship with China, Steinberg said, is critical in the context of developments in East Asia as a whole. “It is, I think, impossible to understand the trajectory and the objectives of our bilateral relationship with China without understanding the regional context,” he added.

The U.S.-China strategic and economic relationship is part of a broader strategy of engagement as the United States tries to generate enhanced global cooperation to deal with increasingly common challenges. Most countries share a common interest, but the world still lacks the capacity to generate the collective action needed to address problems with the global economy, terrorism, weapons proliferation, pandemic diseases and climate change, Steinberg said.

“These are all issues where many of the interests are in common, but we need to find better ways to work together,” he said.

NATO Foreign Ministers to Meet with Russian Foreign Minister

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Foreign ministers from NATO and Russia will meet on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly September 22 to discuss issues likely to be on the agenda for world leaders at the 2010 Lisbon NATO Summit in November, a senior U.S. diplomat says.

The hour-and-a-half meeting in New York marks the third time the foreign ministers have met since resumption of the NATO-Russia Council, U.S. NATO Ambassador Ivo Daalder says. But he added that this meeting between the 28 NATO foreign ministers and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is informal and no major decisions will be announced.

NATO has extended an invitation to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to attend the Lisbon Summit.

“I hope what we get out of this is that everyone will leave with an understanding that there is a good basis for trying to achieve some significant breakthroughs by the time we are able to get together at the leaders’ level in November,” Daalder said during a press briefing with journalists at the Washington Foreign Press Center.

The 2010 summit will be held November 19–20, and the U.S.-European Union Summit will be held following it on November 20. Russian and NATO leaders last met at the April 2008 Bucharest Summit.

Issues concerning counterterrorism and maritime piracy, as well as air defense and the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, will be part of the brief meeting in

New York, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told reporters at a Brussels press conference recently. Rasmussen was in Washington September 7 for consultations with President Obama at the White House.

The NATO-Russia Council was created on May 28, 2002, during the Rome Summit, to coordinate security discussions and joint projects. Relations between the security alliance and Russia became strained in the summer of 2008 after a brief conflict between Russia and Georgia over two breakaway provinces – South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Agreements Signed to Boost Jobs, Health Care in Haiti

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington – New jobs and improved health care are key to Haiti's recovery from the January 12 earthquake, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said at the September 20 signing of two agreements that will create an industrial park near Port-au-Prince and rebuild the University Hospital of Haiti.

Speaking in New York with Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, Clinton said that more than eight months after the disaster, the people of Haiti continue to suffer.

"They need jobs, they need health care, they need us – their own government and the international community – to follow through on our promises and translate our good intentions to real concrete progress on the ground," she said.

The two memorandums of understanding signed in New York will encourage progress in both job creation and providing a foundation to rebuild the country's health system, Clinton said.

The first, signed by Haiti, the United States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation and South Korea's Sae-A Trading Company, would establish an industrial park and a garment manufacturing operation that Clinton said has the potential to create more than 10,000 permanent jobs.

"These are not just any jobs; these are good jobs with fair pay that adhere to international labor standards," she said. "And the impact on Haiti's economy has enormous potential for being significant and sending a message that Haiti is open for business again."

The second, signed by Haiti, the United States and France, commits each country to help rebuild the University Hospital of Haiti, which serves as the central public hospital for Port-au-Prince and as the country's main

teaching hospital.

"Since January 12th, it has been serving thousands of people, even though it is crippled by physical damage, limited equipment, limited electrical and other critical services," Clinton said. "The United States and France will each invest \$25 million to rebuild this hospital, to create a facility that meets the needs of the Haitian people, and the Haitian government will contribute \$3.2 million in funding."

Clinton said the devastation in Haiti has been enormous, and people who are expecting immediate progress are "unrealistic and doing a disservice to the many people who are working so hard."

"But to expect less than concerted effort every day that produces results would be a great tragedy," she said.

Since the quake, many have spoken not only of rebuilding the country, but to "fundamentally re-imagine the Haitian landscape by building a stronger economy, better infrastructure and a sturdier social system, not just in Port-au-Prince but nationwide," she said. She pledged that the Obama administration will work hard on Haiti's behalf with all of its international partners.

Prime Minister Bellerive said the signing of the agreements had made September 20 "a great day for Haiti." He spoke of the need for private investment and cooperation on Haitian health needs to help the country recover.

"It was a great day for Haiti, creating new jobs. But it's also a great day when we see the coordination and cooperation between the partners of Haiti are working together to support the Haitian plan," he said.

Foreign Minister Kouchner urged Haitian authorities to have a public health plan and offer health insurance so the poor will also be able to access the University Hospital.

"I'm very happy that we have started working together here, and that this wonderful hospital that we're going to build will tend to every Haitian in the country – the big ones and the small ones too," he said.

Following the signing ceremony, Clinton joined Bellerive and former President Bill Clinton at a special session of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) that met to measure progress in the country.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley told reporters in New York September 20 that the secretary received a lengthy update at the IHRC on the preparations for Haiti's November 28 presidential and legislative elections.

Crowley said the IHRC is coordinating reconstruction activities in the country, with \$1.6 billion worth of projects approved so far.

Former President Clinton told the commission that it is important for every country to make sure its plans to assist Haiti are "worked through the IHRC [to ensure] there is full transparency and accountability," according to Crowley.

"President Clinton is putting a system in place that worked in the efforts that he undertook with the tsunami to make sure that all projects in Haiti are available on the Internet so everybody knows what's being planned and what's been approved," Crowley said.

Energy Secretary Chu Proposes International Nuclear Fuel Bank

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu has proposed the creation of an international civilian nuclear fuel bank to encourage the peaceful use of nuclear power while enhancing global efforts to curb nuclear weapons development.

Chu told delegates to the annual International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) general conference in Vienna September 20 that it would cost approximately \$150 million to set up and would acquire 60 to 80 tons of low-enriched uranium that could supply nuclear fuel to about 60 nations.

The United States has contributed \$50 million to the IAEA to support an international fuel bank, Chu said. "Taken together with pledges from the Nuclear Threat Initiative and other member states, \$150 million has been pledged for this purpose."

"This offer has been extended several times and presents member states with an excellent opportunity to realize one of the founding objectives of the IAEA. But these resources will be at risk if we do not reach a decision soon," he said.

Chu said the United States, working with other IAEA members, will develop a common approach and seek adoption of a resolution for the IAEA-administered fuel bank at the agency's board of governors meeting in December.

STRENGTHENING NONPROLIFERATION

Chu told delegates that the IAEA safeguards system is facing a growing imbalance between workload and resources. The safeguards and technologies require

updating, but the safeguards budget has remained relatively static, he said. For that reason the United States is seeking support for a significant increase in the IAEA's regular budget.

Nuclear safeguards are intended to prevent the diversion of resources from civilian nuclear programs to weapons programs.

"For countries that do not adhere to their safeguards commitments there must be real and timely consequences," Chu told delegates. "We support the IAEA in its efforts to resolve outstanding concerns related to the nuclear programs in Iran and Syria, and we encourage the agency to make full use of existing authorities."

North Korea also continues to present a challenge to nuclear nonproliferation efforts and needs to comply with international obligations, he said.

IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano reported earlier in September that Iran refuses to fully comply with the IAEA and U.N. Security Council resolutions. The IAEA is the official watchdog agency on atomic energy for the United Nations.

"Iran's intransigence represents a challenge to the rules that all countries must adhere to," Chu said. "While we continue to acknowledge Iran's right to pursue peaceful civilian nuclear power and remain committed to pursue a diplomatic solution, Iran must do what it has thus far failed to do: meet its obligations and assure the rest of the world of the peaceful nature of its intentions."

Chu also noted the recent signing of the landmark New START Treaty that would reduce the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals to their lowest levels in more than 50 years. He added that the United States is pursuing ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in the Senate and efforts to negotiate a new treaty that ends the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR SECURITY

Chu said the United States continues to work with friends and allies to keep nuclear weapons and the technology to make weapons from the hands of terrorists.

"The United States is working with the IAEA, international institutions and countries around the world to secure vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials," he said.

He added that the United States has accelerated its efforts to get rid of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and has

successfully removed all HEU from 18 countries. The United States is also working with international partners to convert research reactors and isotope production facilities from HEU to low-enriched uranium (LEU).

The United States' Commitment to Refugees

By Eric P. Schwartz, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration

On March 17th, 2010, the United States celebrated the 30th anniversary of The Refugee Act of 1980, which has proved to be a cornerstone of our international architecture to protect the world's most vulnerable people: refugees. This landmark legislation is a testament to the dedication and passion of the late Senator Edward Kennedy and other members of Congress who insisted on an effective and impartial system to respond to the needs of those displaced by conflict and unable to return home.

The Refugee Act reflects the highest American values and aspirations – of compassion, generosity and leadership in serving vulnerable populations. Moreover, reliance on the support of millions of individual Americans is a fundamental component of the success that the Act has achieved. The U.S. Congress passed the legislation that created the Refugee Act, but it has ultimately been local communities that have helped to safeguard the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program by opening their hearts, homes, and communities to refugees from around the world.

Most refugees have experienced great adversity – seeing their families and communities uprooted, injured or destroyed – and living in highly vulnerable conditions for years or even decades.

The United States has resettled more than 2.5 million refugees since 1980, more than all other resettlement countries combined. Though the resettlement and integration processes are challenging, and many see friends or family members who are overwhelmed by the transition, most of those resettled in the United States ultimately adapt and thrive – an adjustment that requires enormous will, the support of solid communities, and a strong measure of endurance. Among those resettled in the United States since 1980 are Vietnamese and Lao Hmong refugees who now call California home, Iraqis who fled Baghdad and are starting new lives on the shores of Lake Michigan, and Somalis who left the arid East African landscape to restart lives in Minnesota and Maine.

Refugees have resettled in the United States for hundreds of years, and have made valuable contributions to the growth and success of our local communities, regional economies, and national institutions. As a nation, we

understand that our diversity is our strength. We've seen time and again that our ability to integrate disparate peoples from across the globe is a model for creating a vibrant society, thriving cultural and intellectual communities, and democratic governance based on good citizenship. As a nation, we've made it clear that one of our foreign policy priorities is to support the world's most vulnerable citizens, and we've learned that when you reach out to help another in need, that you reap great benefits.

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