



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

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### **Governor Bill Richardson Brokers Transfer of Remains of Six American Soldiers; Leads Productive Talks on Nuclear Reactor**

(Seoul, South Korea) – New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson today announced at a press conference in Seoul, South Korea the successful return of the remains of six American servicemen killed during the Korean War. The Governor, following productive meetings with Kim Gye Gwan, the North Korean Vice-Foreign Minister in charge of U.S. Affairs and head of North Korea's delegation to the six-party talks, also reported progress on shutting down the Yongbyon reactor.

Governor Richardson and former US Secretary of Veteran Affairs Anthony Principi, co-heads of a bipartisan delegation, spent the better part of the last three days in North Korea meeting with high level officials including General Ri Chan Bok, North Korea's commanding general at the demilitarized zone, about the remains of the US soldiers. A formal ceremony marking the transfer of remains will be held Thursday in Seoul. An arrival honor guard ceremony is also scheduled later Thursday in Honolulu, where the remains will be DNA tested.

The full text of Governor Richardson's remarks follows:

#### **Governor Richardson's Prepared Remarks** *North Korean Mission – Seoul News Conference* *Wednesday, April 11, 2007*

At the invitation of the DPRK, a bipartisan delegation headed by myself and former U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi visited Pyongyang during from April 8<sup>th</sup>

through the 11<sup>th</sup>. My longtime senior adviser, Dr. K.A. Namkung, served as Deputy Head of the Delegation.

We were accompanied by several U.S. government officials: Dr. Victor Cha, Director of Asian Affairs of the National Security Council, Mr. James Macdougall, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Eurasian Affairs at the Department of Defense and Mr. David Ellis.

In a few moments, I will ask the Co-Head of our mission, Secretary Principi, to make a few remarks. Dr. Namkung will follow with his own remarks.

First, I want to acknowledge and thank the important role of the Bush Administration for its support of this important mission, including the use of a military jet. When matters of national security are concerned, politics stops at the water's edge. That's why we insisted on bringing a bipartisan delegation to Pyongyang.

It has been my distinct privilege to lead the mission together with Secretary Principi, who has served in the first Bush Administration and most recently as President Bush's Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Together, we impressed upon the North Koreans that the American people are united in seeking a peaceful and final end to North Korea's nuclear program.

Today, it gives me great pleasure – on behalf of the many proud Americans who lost loved ones in the Korean War – to announce that the DPRK has returned to us the remains of six honorable servicemen who gave their lives in that war in defense of this country. The DPRK notified me this week of the tentative identities of three of the six remains. Families will be notified in the near future pending positive identification by the Department of Defense.

This is a very positive gesture on the part of the North Korean government. I want to thank the DPRK and the Korean People's Army for retrieving these remains and for the respectful and dignified manner by which they are being returned. Hopefully it will help heal the wounds from the Korean War and start a process to bring closure to the thousands of American families awaiting word about their loved ones that perished.

I am also pleased to report progress on some outstanding issues related to the six-party talks and the timeline for shutting down the Yongbyon reactor.

During productive meetings with Kim Gye Gwan, the Vice-Foreign Minister in charge of U.S. Affairs and head of North Korea's delegation to the six-party talks, we agreed to the following four points:

1. The DPRK affirmed to me that they are still committed to the February 13<sup>th</sup> Initial Actions agreement and their obligations under that agreement.

2. The Treasury Department and Macao BDA have issued statements announcing the release of all DPRK funds. It's time to move on from that issue.
3. With that issue resolved, the DPRK will promptly – within a day after receiving the funds – invite the IAEA to Pyongyang to draw up the terms for shutting down the Yongbyon reactor.
4. Finally, I impressed upon the DPRK to the need to resume the six-party talks as soon as possible to finish the 60-day Initial Actions phase, and to draw up the final phase of disablement and declaration.

I want to emphasize that the primary goal of this bipartisan mission to Pyongyang was the return of the remains of U.S. servicemen who perished during the Korean War. Today, we successfully completed that mission – and the remains of six American servicemen will soon be on their way home.

While this gesture of goodwill by the DPRK is not related to the six-party talks, I am nonetheless pleased to report that as a result of this mission and our discussions with Minister Kim, I believe we are taking another step forward toward a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.