

Thursday, 10 January 2008, 10:13 GMT

## **New nuclear deadline for N Korea**

Christopher Hill (left) meets Lee Myung-bak, 10 January  
Mr Hill (L) briefed Mr Lee on the denuclearisation progress

North Korea needs to complete the disabling of its nuclear facilities by the end of next month, US nuclear envoy Christopher Hill has said.

Speaking in South Korea, Mr Hill said he wanted the process finished by the time the South's incoming President Lee Myung-bak takes office on 25 February.

Pyongyang missed a year-end deadline to give details of its nuclear activities.

The communist state has been promised aid and diplomatic concessions in return for becoming nuclear-free.

Speaking to reporters before boarding a flight to Beijing, Mr Hill said there was no reason why the three-phase denuclearisation process could not be completed in 2008.

### **FEBRUARY 2007 DEAL**

N Korea to "shut down and seal" Yongbyon reactor, then disable all nuclear facilities

In return, it will be given 1m tonnes of heavy fuel oil

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N Korea's demand for a light water reactor to be discussed at an "appropriate time"

### **Q&A: N Korea stand-off**

"It is very desirable if we could complete phase two even before [Lee's] government comes in, so that by the time his government does come at the end of February, we'll be focusing on that last stage."

In the first part of the deal, North Korea shut and sealed its Yongbyon reactor, in return for 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil.

For the second stage - where the process is currently at - North Korea agreed to declare and disable all its existing nuclear facilities, in return for more fuel aid.

Many critics say the most crucial phase will come at the end, when North Korea is required to take steps to irreversibly dismantle Yongbyon, and hand over any nuclear weapons materials it possesses.

Mr Hill said he had briefed Mr Lee on the denuclearisation process, noting the North's failure to account for its nuclear programme by the end of 2007

"We had these bumps in the road, we had these missed deadlines, but ultimately we have been able to continue to make progress," he said.

But potential problems remain, as the US still wants to know how much plutonium is in the hands of the North, which tested a nuclear bomb in October 2006.

There is also the issue of whether or not Pyongyang has a secret uranium enrichment programme - something the US believes but which North Korea denies.

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N Korea agrees nuclear deadline



North Korean nuclear reactor at Yongbyon (2002 file pic)

North Korea closed its main nuclear reactor, in Yongbyon, in July

North Korea has agreed to disable its main nuclear reactor and give complete details of its nuclear programme by 31 December, Chinese officials say.

The agreement came after negotiations last week in Beijing involving China, the US, Japan, Russia and the Koreans.

The US hailed the deal and said it would work with Pyongyang to remove it from the US list of terrorism sponsors.

The North tested a nuclear device last year but agreed to end its nuclear programme for aid and other rewards.

The deal was announced by Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Wu Dawei.

He said North Korea had committed itself to disabling its experimental nuclear reactor at the Yongbyon site as well as a reprocessing plant and equipment for the production of fuel rods.

Under the agreement, a team of experts led by the US will arrive in North Korea in the next two weeks to begin preparing the reactor complex for disablement by the year's end.

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In return, will be given 1m tons of heavy fuel oil

N Korea to invite IAEA back to monitor deal

Under earlier 2005 deal, N Korea agreed to end nuclear programme and return to non-proliferation treaty

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Q&A: N Korea stand-off

Timeline: Nuclear crisis

Key excerpts: Reactor deal

The facilities are believed to have produced the material for the test device detonated a year ago, proving the regime's nuclear capability.

North Korea also agreed to give a "complete and correct declaration" of its nuclear programmes, Mr Wu said.

US President George W Bush welcomed the deal.

Implementation would end North Korea's production of plutonium, "a major step towards the goal of achieving the verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula", a White House spokesman said.

US assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said Washington would work closely with the North on getting it removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism.

He described that move as a very sensitive matter.

Slow process

The latest round of six-nation talks was aimed at developing a timetable for the latest stage of the denuclearisation process agreed in February.

Under the first phase of the deal, Pyongyang shut down the Yongbyon reactor and four other related facilities in July.

It also allowed inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) into the country.

In return, it received 100,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil from South Korea.

A further 900,000 tons is dependent on the North completing the second phase - declaring and permanently disabling all its nuclear facilities.

But the BBC's Jon Sudworth in Seoul says the final, crucial phase - surrendering the North's existing nuclear stockpile - is not due to be implemented until next year, and many experts believe this step will prove the biggest challenge.

Japan on Wednesday said that despite the latest agreement, it would not resume its aid to Pyongyang, citing lack of progress in the dispute over the kidnapping of Japanese nationals by North Korea.

The announcement came as the leaders of North and South Korea met for a historic summit in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang - only the second such meeting since the end of the Korean war.