

### **VOA Note #13**

**DATE: June 10-11, 1993**

**PLACE: US Mission to the United Nations**

**Event: US-DPRK Agreement on a Joint Statement**

**Participants: US and DPRK delegations headed by US Political-Military Affairs Assistant Secretary Robert Gallucci and DPRK 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Sok-ju.**

The US-DPRK nuclear negotiations resumed on June 10 in New York at the US Mission to the UN (USUN). Expectations were high on the US side that the worse of the talks was behind and the wording for a joint statement could be quickly finalized. After all, it was the day before the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT was to take effect on June 11.

But such expectations were promptly dashed. Kang Sok-ju was in fine form. Well rested, fully recovered from jet lag and equipped with new instructions, he lunged into the talks determined to press the US for more concessions. But Gallucci held firm. Kang demonstrated what became his classic negotiating posture – run down the clock toward a deadline and create a last minute crisis in the hope that his adversary would buckle and concede more to the DPRK side.

But Gallucci was a quick learner. He had already figured out Kang. A patient and polite Gallucci frustrated his adversaries most vigorous efforts by simply holding firm as he reiterated the US position and claimed to lack the authority to change his instructions.

When we broke for lunch, Kang accepted Gallucci's invitation to share lunch together. Kang, accompanied by Kim Gye Kwan and Li Yong-ho, and Gallucci accompanied by newly appointed East Asia Bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary Tom Hubbard, the interpreter and I as note taker, headed to the nearby UN Plaza Hotel for a private lunch. Gallucci, Kang, the interpreter and I were in one room, the others in a separate room. Kang ordered spaghetti – his favorite Western food. When his noodles arrived, he asked for Tabasco sauce which surprised us. Gallucci, who is of Italian ancestry, commented that this was a new twist for Italian food. Kang proceeded to spice up his spaghetti and began enjoying his meal.

Nothing new was raised during lunch. Instead the two chief negotiators learned about each other – their families, hobbies, life experience, education, and private preferences (baseball for Gallucci and chatting over a drink and cigarette for Kang). This established common ground between them. For the first time they saw each other as human beings who shared much in common about life. Certainly this was nothing profound, but for men representing two nations that had never shared any memories except that their predecessors killed each other in Korean War, chatting over lunch was a very important first step toward establishing mutual trust. Hubbard and Kim Gye Kwan, however, made little if any progress on any topic. Their shared language was French but Kim's French – he had lived in France and traveled extensively in Europe as North Korea's Ambassador-at-large for nuclear matters – was far superior to Hubbard.

June 10 proved to be a draw. Kang got nothing more by the end of a hard day of negotiation than what Gallucci had offered in the morning - a US joint statement, the US pledge not to threaten the use of force and the US promise of no first strike with nuclear weapons so long as North Korea remained in the NPT – a promise that the US made to all NPT members, including Russia.

June 11 was the deadline. If the wording of a joint statement was not nailed down, North Korea would be out of the NPT. Washington feared that if this happened, the entire international nuclear non-proliferation regime might begin to unravel as other nations decided to pull out of the treaty.

The final two sticking points were “full scope safeguards” and “membership in the NPT.” The US demanded that North Korea “maintain full scope nuclear safeguards,” a code phrase that would require North Korea to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct “routine” inspections at the Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center. Also the US insisted that North Korea agree to remain in the NPT.

After many hours of futile and frustrating discussion, a compromise was agreed upon. At Li Yong-ho’s suggestion, North Korea agreed to “suspend” its withdrawal from the NPT. Gallucci accepted this in exchange for North Korea’s promise to “maintain full scope safeguards.” Once the agreement had been reached, both sides stood and began to clap. I caught the moment on film – the only person with a camera during the talks.

To celebrate, earlier I had purchased a large bottle of Tabasco sauce which Gallucci presented Kang. Again I caught the moment on film as a slightly blushing but obviously proud Kang accepted the gift from Gallucci. Later that day I was given several bottles of Pyongyang Liquor (white lighting). Each bottle contained a snake. Thereafter at the end of each round of talks, the North Koreans lightened their baggage by giving the Americans bottles of “Pyongyang Sul.” Unfortunately, the lids were poorly made and leaked the foul smelling liquor into our suitcases. Nevertheless, each American delegate later proudly displayed their “snake liquor” bottle in the office.

The first round of talks ended on a secret note. After the joint press conference, Gallucci and Kang got together in the corner of the meeting room. The only other persons present were the interpreter and I, again as note taker. Kang explained that further progress in the negotiations would not be possible if the US insisted on using the term “special inspection.” (Note: this term referred to the IAEA provision that, if the UN Security Council authorized, the IAEA could conduct inspections in any member nations’ nuclear facilities at any regardless of the member nation’s objections. Kang said the DPRK military would never accept such a provision and would use any reference to “special inspections” to block future progress.)

Gallucci finally agreed not to use the term in any future statement or agreement. He kept his promise to Kang, but as the talks came to a successful end eighteen months later, he pressed for and Kang reluctantly agreed to include in the final agreement the phrase “satisfy the IAEA’s needs.” The hope was that no special inspection would ever be necessary because ultimately North Korea would have to allow the IAEA accept to all of North Korea’s nuclear facilities.

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