

North Korea nuke talks likely delayed

by UPI

WASHINGTON - A dispute over frozen North Korean funds makes it unlikely that a mid-April deadline will be met to shut down North Korea's nuclear reactor.

Top U.S. nuclear envoy Christopher Hill plans to travel to South Korea and China this week for more negotiations. The dispute centers on North Korea's refusal to shut down its Yongbyon reactor until it receives \$25 million of its funds that have been frozen in a Macau bank, the Voice of America reported Monday.

The accounts were frozen after U.S. authorities accused North Korea of counterfeiting and other illegal activity. Federal authorities then agreed the accounts could be unfrozen to help speed the nuclear negotiations, but the Bank of China reportedly refused to transfer the money for fear of damaging its reputation, the VOA reported.

In exchange for closing its reactor, North Korea is to receive emergency aid equal to 50-thousand tons of fuel oil.

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