

U.S. envoy arrives in Pyongyang

by UPI

PYONGYANG, North Korea - The chief U.S. negotiator on the North Korean nuclear issue arrived in Pyongyang Thursday.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill is the highest-ranking State Department official to visit the North Korea since late 2002, Yonhap reported.

His visit came as North Korea prepared to shut down its nuclear program under an international agreement reached in February. The shutdown had been delayed by problems getting \$25 million in North Korean funds transferred out of a Macau bank.

On Monday, an unidentified North Korean diplomatic source told Russia's Interfax news agency that the shutdown could take place "in the second half of July."

Yonhap reported that while traveling to Tokyo Tuesday Hill said the United States wishes to reopen six-party nuclear talks "immediately after the Fourth of July."

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