

U.S.-North Korea talks likely this month

by UPI

MANILA, Philippines -- The chief U.S. negotiator on North Korea's nuclear program said Thursday U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks may be conducted this month. Speaking in Manila, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said the venue for the talks hasn't been decided but could be somewhere in Southeast Asia, Yonhap news agency reported. Hill, who is in the Philippines for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Regional Forum, was quoted as saying he and his North Korean counterpart Kim Kye-gwan have discussed resuming negotiations. Hill and Kim represent their countries at the six-party talks on the North's denuclearization. The other countries are Russia, China, Japan and South Korea. The bilateral talks will be followed by a number of working group meetings for a timetable for North Korea to implement the remaining steps in its nuclear disarmament under the six-party agreement reached in February. They include disabling its key nuclear facilities and disclosing all its nuclear programs in exchange for a package of economic aid. At the last round of the six-party talks in Beijing in July, the participants decided Japan will also hold such diplomatic normalization talks with the North as part of the denuclearization process.

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