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President Clinton. Well, we'll have a statement about that later. We just started our meeting. So I think we have to have the meeting before we can make a statement.

Q. But it appears that President Kim seems to have a deviation in the policy.

President Clinton. We haven't had our meeting yet. Give us a chance to talk about it, and then we'll be glad to comment about it.

Q. Are your options limited since China and Japan don't want you to proceed with sanctions?

President Clinton. I think I'd like to comment on all that in the—we'll have a press statement, and then I'll answer questions about it. But I really would like to speak with President Kim first.

Q. Do you know if North Korea has a nuclear weapon at this point?

President Clinton. I want to have this meeting first and then I'll——

Q. What else can we ask you about?

Q. Nothing ventured——

Philadelphia State Senate Campaign

Q. Are you going to ask the Attorney General to look into the Philadelphia State senate race? One of the——

Q. Gingrich said you would.

Q. Are you going to do that, do you think?

President Clinton. The first I even knew about it was this morning. I don't know enough about it to give an answer. I'll have to look into it. I had not heard anything about it until this morning. I knew nothing about it until he mentioned it this morning.

President's Schedule

Q. How come you didn't jog together today?

President Clinton. Tomorrow. I don't know if he'll run with me tomorrow, but I'd like him to.

Q. It depends on how late your dinner is. [*At this point, one group of reporters left the room and another group came in.*]

President Kim. My impression is that most of the journalists would like to raise interest by describing the subject as a very difficult issue. In fact, sometimes they're very simple ones, in a way unnecessarily complicates—[*inaudible*]

I think that this time we had a very sizable amount of journalist delegation this time. More than 100 people, I think, accompanied me on my visit in the U.S. this time.

President Clinton. They all got to go first to Seattle, and then here?

President Kim. Yes.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:08 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea

November 23, 1993

President Clinton. Good afternoon. It is a great pleasure and an honor for me to welcome President Kim Yong-sam to Washington today. During my visit to Seoul in July, I had the opportunity to visit with President Kim at the Blue House, which is Korea's Presidential residence. I am honored to return his gracious hospitality today by welcoming him to our White House.

I have a great deal of admiration for President Kim, who for decades has worked tirelessly to broaden Korea's democracy at great personal cost to himself. His democratic passage to the Presidency is an inspiring measure of Korea's progress, proof that freedom knows no regional bounds. I'm delighted his contributions to Korean democracy were acknowledged when he received the Averell Harriman award from the National Democratic Institute last evening.

The discussions President Kim and I held today were far ranging and highly productive. We continued our conversation from the APEC leaders meeting in Seattle and expressed our mutual support for APEC's ideal of an Asian-Pacific region even more closely integrated through open markets and open societies.

Today we discussed the actions President Kim is taking to advance that vision in his nation. He's taken a number of encouraging steps to remove barriers to foreign investment, open financial markets, and strengthen

intellectual property rights. I'm also very encouraged by the good start of the U.S.-Korea dialog on economic cooperation. We must work now to implement the proposals raised in that dialog. Our economic cooperation will be especially vital as both our nations seek to achieve a new GATT agreement in the next few weeks. Like the United States, Korea has both a crucial role and a substantial stake in bringing the Uruguay round to a successful conclusion.

The most important piece of our discussions centered on North Korea. We are both concerned by North Korea's concentration of forces near the Demilitarized Zone and by its refusal to grant international inspectors full access to its nuclear sites.

In recent weeks, my administration has been working with the Congress, South Korea, Japan, our partners in the United Nations Security Council and others to address North Korea's nuclear program in a firm manner. Today I reaffirmed to President Kim America's unyielding commitment to South Korea's security. My administration has made it clear to North Korea that it now faces a simple choice. If it abandons its nuclear option and honors its international nonproliferation commitments, the door will be open on a wide range of issues not only with the United States but with the rest of the world. If it does not, it risks facing the increased opposition of the entire international community.

Our goals in this matter are clear: a nonnuclear peninsula and a strong international nonproliferation regime. To these ends, we are prepared to discuss with North Korea a thorough, broad approach to the issues that divide us, and once and for all to resolve the nuclear issue. But we cannot do that in the absence of a dialog between North and South Korea and while there is still growing doubt about the continuity of IAEA safeguards.

North Korea's nuclear program and its continuing military threat pose serious challenges to both South Korea and America. Our two nations have worked together to overcome these challenges before. Our friendship was forged in the heat of war as our forces fought shoulder to shoulder to turn back aggression. Our friendship has continued over four decades since that war ended as the people of Korea have transformed their country into an economic and democratic model for the entire region.

I've enjoyed working with President Kim to deepen the historic friendship between our two nations. And I look forward to working with him and with the Korean people in the days to come, on economic issues and on important issues of security.

Mr. President.

President Kim. Ladies and gentlemen, first of all I would like to thank President Clinton for his welcome extended to me at the White House today. Having met with President Clinton in Seoul in July and Seattle last week and here in Washington, DC, today, I feel like I'm meeting an old friend.

President Clinton has aptly summarized what was discussed in our meeting this morning, so I would like to add only a few points to what he has mentioned. President Clinton reaffirmed the strong commitment of the United States to the security of Korea and made it clear that there would not be an additional reduction of U.S. troops stationed in Korea until the North Korean nuclear issue has been resolved.

President Clinton and I agreed to continue our close working relationship to ensure peace on the Korean Peninsula as well as its regional stability. In particular, I welcomed and supported President Clinton's policy of continuing to maintain the strategy of forward deployment by the United States in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Korean Peninsula.

As for the North Korean nuclear issue, President Clinton and I reaffirmed our shared belief that the resolution of this issue should not be delayed any longer, as it poses great threats not only to the security of Korea but also to the global nonproliferation regime. In particular, we agreed to make thorough and broad efforts to bring about a final solution, bearing in mind the grave concern the international community has demonstrated over this issue. Both of us expressed satisfaction over the close cooperation between our two governments on this issue. And we once again agreed that the maintaining a close working relationship is essential to the complete resolution of this issue.

President Clinton and I shared our mutual satisfaction over the success thus far of the dialog for economic cooperation, a mechanism that we had agreed to establish in our meeting in July. We hope that our two countries will be able to draw up a long-term plan to expand our mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

I also explained to President Clinton that the internationalization of the Korean economy, along with the liberalization and deregulation were major goals of the new economic policy that my government has actively pursued, and that the new economic policy would help broaden the scope of the Korea-U.S. economic partnership.

During our discussion, I congratulated the President Clinton, the success of the APEC leaders economic conference that was held in Seattle last week. And I would like to pay high tribute to the President for his outstanding leadership which helped to make the meeting a resounding success. We are convinced that this meeting will be recorded as an important milestone that heralds the coming era of a new Asia-Pacific partnership. Based upon the continued development of APEC, President Clinton and I reaffirmed our resolve to work closely together to build a new Pacific community.

I'm entirely satisfied with today's meeting. I'm confident that our meeting will help Korea-U.S. relations to evolve to an even higher dimension of partnership.

Finally, I again would like to express my gratitude to President Clinton for the warm welcome and hospitality.

Thank you.

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, you've spoken of a new approach to get North Korea to open up its nuclear program to inspection. Did the two of you agree today on a new approach, and does that represent any relaxation in the U.S. stand? And if so, why wouldn't that be rewarding North Korea for its intransigence?

President Clinton. We did not agree to relax anything. What we agreed was that the two of us, based on our own security needs, would reexamine what our policies are if the North Koreans are willing to allow IAEA inspectors and resume the serious dialog with the Republic of Korea; that we needed to make it clear that all of our security decisions would be made in light of that context. And I don't consider that weakening our position or changing it or rewarding aggression. In fact, what we want to do is to diminish the military tensions in the area. That has to begin by a willingness on the part of North Korea to allow the inspections and to resume the dialog.

Yes, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

Q. Mr. President, it doesn't sound like you two are in sync on what to do about North Korea. And also, do you think that North Korea will accept our approach of more concessions?

President Clinton. Well, we're asking them to make two concessions that they're already committed to do. And we're committing then that the two of us will reexamine our security approach in light of that. But we're not divided at all. We reached agreement. We, indeed, have reconciled the precise language that would be used by each of us in this statement today. So there is no division between the two countries on our position.

Q. Will you call off the military maneuvers?

President Clinton. That is something that would have to be decided by both of us at a later date, depending on what would be done or not done by North Korea. We've made no decision on that and no commitment on that, and we couldn't now.

Q. Mr. President, I have two questions, one for President Kim and one for President Clinton. President Kim, it might be a little general question, however, you have denied several times that—the concept of the absorption unification; so that statement can be construed to the effect that you are giving up your constitutional authority to—[*inaudible*]—North Korea in the case of the self-destruction of the Kim Il-song regime and followed by the big anarchial situation like East Germany. And—[*inaudible*]—also give some clear statement for the North Korean people who are waiting for the new morning, as you said yesterday, for democracy and hope.

And for Mr. Clinton, North Korea has managed a lot to wage a war if U.N. sanctions will be imposed on North Korea. And also on report, actually—[*inaudible*]—quoting a Pentagon classified material, Korea and the United States is losing if war broke out again in the peninsula. So that kind of information is giving some warning more and more to the general innocent people in both North Korea and South Korea. So what is the clear and maybe present remarks concerning that matter, the menace of the possible Korean war again?

Thank you.

President Kim. I would like to respond to your question first. It is our basic policy that we will not try to absorb North Korea. And I mentioned this to the Chinese leader, Mr. Jiang Zemin, when I met him in Seattle and also asked him to convey this message towards North Korea, because we know that North Korean regime is very concerned about the possibility of such an absorption be happening. And the Chinese President promised that he will do so, that is, to convey the message towards North Korea.

Of course, it is very difficult to predict what will happen in North Korea in the future. But I doubt the report that North Korea can launch a successful attack on South Korea and win the war. I very much doubt it. The reason is that South Korean Armed Forces has grown very strong, and in fact after the launching of the new government in Korea, we have replaced all those politicized military generals and established a professional military who will respond very effectively to any provocations or any attempt from North Korea. So combined forces of the United States and Republic of Korea, very stable, decisive, and very strong.

As President Clinton mentioned when he visited Korea, we very much believe in the policy of the United States, the new government's policy, that as long as Korean people want the U.S. forces to be stationed in Korea, then there will be no reduction, no pullout of the U.S. troops.

So I would like to once again reassure you that our defense capability and defense posture remains unchanged. And we are in a position that can deal with North Korea in a position of strength.

President Clinton. With regard to the two questions you asked me, let me say that neither President Kim nor I are eager to go to the United Nations and ask for sanctions against North Korea. We had discussed with the leaders of Japan and China at the recent APEC meeting the fact that that is not a particularly attractive option. We have offered as clearly as we could to North Korea the opportunity to reassess our relationships, at least in terms of our security requirements, if they will simply follow their own commitments and honor them on the IAEA inspections and on resuming the dialog with the Republic of Korea.

Now, as to your second question, I can only reiterate what I said when I was in Korea. I know of no one who seriously believes that the United States and the Republic of Korea would be defeated in a war of aggression by North Korea if they were to attack. And I made it as clear as I could that if they were to do that, they would pay a price so great that the nation would probably not survive as it is known today.

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Yes, Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network].

Q. The International Atomic Energy Agency has suggested that there is a time sensitivity to going back into North Korea and inspecting the two nuclear facilities, a month or 2 months maximum. After that, they couldn't guarantee that North Korea was, in fact, abandoning some sort of nuclear weapons program. Is that, in fact, the case? Is there a month or two that you have now in order to resolve this issue?

And a question to President Kim: Do you support this notion that if the North Koreans do accept some sort of inspection and resume a dialog with you, that the United States and South Korea should cancel the joint military exercises, Team Spirit, next year?

President Clinton. First of all, there is some time sensitivity on this, based on what we hear from the IAEA inspectors. And that's the reason that we're coming forward now and trying to make another good faith effort to reach out and reason with North Korea.

President Kim. With regard to the issue of inspection of the nuclear facilities in North

Korea, President Clinton and I share opinion that still inter-Korean mutual inspection is very important. North Korea and South Korea seem to have different position with regard to the meaning of the exchange of special envoy. I think that North Korea is more interested in holding an inter-Korean summit meeting through this exchange of special envoys, whereas our side, Republic of Korea, is more concerned about removing the suspicions regarding the nuclear facilities, that is, mutual inspection by both Koreas of those facilities.

There is a speculation that if North Korea accepts International Atomic Energy Agency inspection and resumes dialog with South Korea, then there will be concessions to be given to North Korea in return.

I think this matter of suspending Team Spirit exercise should be dealt in its own. And of course, the United States and Republic of Korea will consult very closely about how to deal with the problem caused by North Korea's nuclear development. And in that sense, we are in full accordance with each other.

Q. I'd like to ask a question, addressing the question to President Kim. You've said you cannot wait indefinitely, and when is the limit in time? How are you going to decide that is the limit? For President Clinton, you say thorough and broad approaches you would apply, and in Seattle during your press conference, you used the term ''comprehensive approach.'' Comprehensive approach, is it the same term that North Koreans are talking about with regard to nuclear issues and other issues involved? And is there any difference between the——

President Kim. I'll respond to your question first. The fact that I said we will not wait endlessly doesn't mean that we will necessarily set a certain deadline. And I don't think it is appropriate for me to specifically mention the possibility of setting a deadline. And perhaps I will make no more comments about that.

With regards to your referring to the terminology of whether it will be comprehensive approach or whether it will be package deals, I see the possibility of these different terminologies creating confusion and misleading. Therefore, what we have agreed today between President Clinton and I—and I would very much want you to pay attention to the phrases that we have used today—is that we will make thorough and broad efforts to bring the issue to the final conclusion. And that stands on its own. And please make sure that you pay attention to these new phrases.

Q. Mr. President, I'm a little confused by what you and the Korean President have offered today. Why after so many months do you believe that review of your security possibilities and talking to the Koreans about potential concessions in the future will cause them to change their minds when they have not at this point, so far, and when it appeared that there was some sort of actual concessions that you were getting ready to make?

President Clinton. Well, any concessions—first of all, concessions is the wrong word. Any gesture we make, any move we make based on our—must be based on our appreciation of what the security situation is. And they are the ones, after all, who are out of line with the international law and their own commitments. So, we can't make any decisions about what we would do until we see what they do. That's all we're saying today. But we have clearly broadened the dialog on this, or given them, rather, the more specific thing would—we've given them a chance to broaden the dialog. We'll just have to see if they take us up on it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 35th news conference began at 1:07 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. President Kim spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on Signing the South African Democratic Transition Support Act of 1993

November 23, 1993

Thank you all for joining us this afternoon. It's a great honor to have so many people in the White House to celebrate the signing of legislation that marks the realization of a great dream, the transition of South Africa to a nonracial democracy and the end of apartheid.