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From:

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Subject:

Fw: N. Korean FM confirms new top envoy to nuclear talks (Yonhap)

From: OpsNewsTicker

Sent: Friday, July 22, 2011 04:19 AM

To: NEWS-Mahogany

Cc: SES-O

Subject: N. Korean FM confirms new top envoy to nuclear talks (Yonhap)

BALI (Yonhap) - North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun confirmed Friday that Pyongyang has appointed its new chief negotiator to six-country talks on ending the North's nuclear program, in the first confirmation of a change in leadership for its nuclear negotiating team.

Pak confirmed that Ri Yong-ho, the North's vice foreign minister, would be its top envoy to the six-party talks at a bilateral meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum on this Indonesian resort island of Bali.

For years, North Korea's Kim Kye-gwan served as his country's top negotiator, but he was promoted to the post of first vice foreign minister last October. Since then, South Korean officials have widely expected Ri to succeed Kim as top envoy.

"Vice Foreign Minister Ri is serving as our chief delegate to the six-party talks," said Pak, introducing Ri to Yang before the two sides began talks at a seaside hotel in Bali.

The Chinese foreign minister greeted Ri with a nod.

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