



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 531, 10 October 2006

Articles & Other Documents:

[U.N. Warns N. Korea On Nuclear Test](#)

[U.N. Council Urges N. Korea Not To Conduct Nuclear Test](#)

[Six Powers Agree To Take Next Step On Iran](#)

[Nuclear Test Threat Strains Korea Border](#)

[North Korea's Nuclear Intentions, Out There For All To See](#)

[N. Korea Might Lose Its Only Ally](#)

[U.S. Project Could Start Atomic War, Experts Warn](#)

[U.S. Urges Sanctions On North Korea](#)

[U.S. Doubts Korean Test Was Nuclear](#)

[Pentagon Assesses Responses, Including A Possible Blockade](#)

[For U.S., A Strategic Jolt After North Korea's Test](#)

[Condemnation Swift, But Options Are Limited](#)

[Pentagon Hunting For Clues On Power, Makeup Of Weapon](#)

[Even If Device Was Flawed, Test Crossed A Threshold](#)

Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness. Established in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-cps.htm for in-depth information and specific points of contact. Please direct any questions or comments on CPC Outreach Journal to Jo Ann Eddy, CPC Outreach Editor, at (334) 953-7538 or DSN 493-7538. To subscribe, change e-mail address, or unsubscribe to this journal or to request inclusion on the mailing list for CPC publications, please contact Mrs. Eddy.

The following articles, papers or documents do not necessarily reflect official endorsement of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or other US government agencies. Reproduction for private use or commercial gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. All rights are reserved

Washington Times

October 7, 2006

Pg. 1

U.N. Warns N. Korea On Nuclear Test

By Betsy Pisik, The Washington Times

NEW YORK -- The U.N. Security Council warned North Korea yesterday not to conduct a nuclear test, telling the isolated communist state it would face unspecified consequences under the U.N. charter if it did so.

"The Security Council deems that should [North Korea] carry out its threat of a nuclear-weapon test, it would jeopardize peace, stability and security in the region and beyond," said Japanese Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, who presides over the council this month.

Mr. Oshima's remarks, approved unanimously by the 15-nation council, also warned, "should [North Korea] ignore calls of the international community, the Security Council will act consistent with its responsibility under the charter of the United Nations."

The vote came amid speculation that North Korea could conduct a nuclear test as early as this weekend. The council's "presidential statement," which does not carry the weight of a formal Security Council resolution, also urged Pyongyang to return to six-nation talks and to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Japan and China drafted the statement, which the United States supported.

"We think the main point that North Korea should understand is how strongly the United States and many other council members feel that they should not test this nuclear device, and that if they do test it, it will be a very different world the day after the test," U.S. Ambassador John R. Bolton told reporters.

The United States maintains a force of about 30,000 troops in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War. The council was in broad agreement on yesterday's statement, putting aside sniping earlier this week to craft an unambiguous response.

"It was a very good statement," Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said. "We are pleased that it has been adopted." South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon, who is scheduled to become U.N. secretary-general when Kofi Annan's term expires this year, has offered to travel to Pyongyang to press international opposition to the North's nuclear-weapons program.

Mr. Bolton declined to endorse the proposed trip, but said yesterday that Washington is looking forward to having fresh ideas at the United Nations.

In North Korea, television images of the nation's leader, Kim Jong-il, showed him meeting soldiers at an undisclosed location.

The meeting marked Mr. Kim's first reported public appearance since Tuesday's announcement that North Korea would set off an atomic explosion.

Earlier, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi told Japanese television after meeting with U.S. officials: "Based on the development so far, it would be best to view that a test is possible this weekend."

North Koreans are fond of anniversaries and a weekend test would coincide with Mr. Kim's 1997 appointment as leader of the ruling Korean Workers' Party.

The United States, along with South Korea, Japan, China and Russia, have been trying to persuade Pyongyang to give up its nuclear programs in exchange for fuel and security guarantees.

North Korea has boycotted the talks for nearly a year.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is to meet with his Chinese and South Korean counterparts this weekend to discuss the crisis.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061006-113341-3576r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

October 7, 2006

Pg. 17

U.N. Council Urges N. Korea Not To Conduct Nuclear Test

By Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 6 -- The U.N. Security Council issued a statement Friday expressing "deep concern" about North Korea's threat to conduct its first test of a nuclear explosive, saying it would "jeopardize peace, stability and security in the region and beyond."

The action came as U.S. officials look toward Sunday as a possible date for North Korea to carry out the test. Oct. 8 is the ninth anniversary of Kim Jong Il's appointment as head of the Korean Workers' Party, and is only a day before South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon will face a vote on his bid to become the next secretary general of the United Nations.

The 15-nation council urged North Korea to resume multiparty talks over its nuclear program, warning that a nuclear test "would bring universal condemnation." The council also issued a veiled threat to weigh tougher action, including the possibility of sanctions, against Pyongyang if it proceeds with the test.

The nonbinding statement capped three days of intensive negotiation after North Korea's announcement Tuesday that it plans to test a nuclear device to strengthen its defenses against the United States.

The Bush administration expressed frustration that the council was not prepared to adopt an even tougher response spelling out the punitive actions to be imposed on North Korea if it conducts a test. "At this point, no, I don't think there's a strategy of preventive diplomacy in place," said John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Still, Bolton and Kenzo Oshima, Japan's ambassador, said the statement will be helpful to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is expected to advocate a tougher response to North Korea's nuclear program in visits to Beijing on Sunday and Seoul on Monday.

China and Russia have urged the United States and other members of the council to pursue only diplomatic means to end the nuclear standoff with North Korea. Russia's ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, said he spoke with Bolton on Friday about the need for the United States to engage in direct talks with North Korea.

But Churkin said Bolton insisted that the United States would sit down with North Korean officials only if they resumed multiparty talks on the nuclear program. "We think that bilateral contacts between the United States and North Korea could be useful in resolving the situation," Churkin said.

In an effort to persuade Pyongyang to back down, Bush administration officials have issued a number of stern warnings that the United States will not accept a nuclear-armed North Korea. State Department spokesman Tom Casey said on Friday that the United States has also encouraged China and others "that have influence on North Korea to use it to convince them to turn away from this."

"I'd leave it up to the Chinese as to what the best way for them to exert their influence on the North Korean government is -- but, certainly, we want to see them and everyone else do whatever they can to prevent this from happening," he added.

U.S. officials suspect North Korea has acquired enough plutonium to produce as many as 11 nuclear bombs. In February, Pyongyang announced that it had succeeded in building a nuclear device, but analysts estimate that it could be years before North Korea is able to launch it.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/06/AR2006100601158.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

October 7, 2006

Pg. 18

Six Powers Agree To Take Next Step On Iran

U.S. Supports Plan For Sanctions as Way to Revive Talks

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

LONDON, Oct. 6 -- The United States and five other major powers agreed Friday to take the next step toward imposing sanctions on Iran for failing to comply with a U.N. resolution to prevent it from subverting its nuclear energy program to develop a nuclear weapon, according to U.S. and European officials.

But in response to Russian and Chinese wariness about the impact and effectiveness of sanctions, the group also agreed to keep the door open to diplomacy, the officials said. The chief negotiator will remain available for talks if Iran chooses to come to the table and suspend its uranium enrichment program. As soon as Iran suspends enrichment, any U.N. sanctions would also be suspended, they said.

The package of economic, technological, scientific and diplomatic incentives already offered to Iran to surrender control over its fuel cycle -- but not its peaceful energy program -- will still be on offer if the Islamic republic changes its position, Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns said.

The agreement came at the conclusion of talks hosted by Britain and attended by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and top diplomats from France, Russia, China and Germany. But after a dramatic buildup all week to a possible turning point following the collapse of European negotiations with Iran, the tone and scope of the agreement appeared significantly milder than anticipated.

The timing of the talks and the wording of the agreement were affected by mechanical problems delaying Rice's arrival in London from Iraq. The military plane ferrying Rice got stuck in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil, the last stop on her five-day Middle East tour, and she attended only the last 45 minutes of the six-nation talks that she had pressed the hardest to hold.

French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy described the new international goal as "proportionate and reversible sanctions." U.S. officials said they viewed the agreement on sanctions as a tactic to try to force Iran to return to negotiations.

En route to London, Rice said sanctions would be aimed at convincing Iran that returning to the table was "the best strategy here. Nobody wants to have [sanctions] just to have them. The hope would be that the Iranians recognize that increasing isolation from the international system is not good for Iran or for the people of Iran."

The general agreement comes after years of controversial diplomacy, including a period when Iran suspended enrichment of uranium, only to resume after hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was inaugurated in August 2005. Since then, Iran has missed at least two deadlines, including one set for Aug. 31 by the United Nations, to comply with demands that it halt enrichment.

"The extra innings are over. We're on to a new phase," Burns said. "We have no alternative but to proceed" and raise the cost for Iran's "irresponsible attitude."

Iran, he added, is missing a "major opportunity" in rejecting the package of incentives, particularly the opportunity for the first formal talks with the United States since relations were broken in 1980.

The administration has been pressing hard over the past six weeks to get the six major powers to agree to sanctions. A senior State Department official said Friday's agreement is likely to come as a surprise to Iran, which has calculated that it could continue to divide the international community.

In announcing the agreement, British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said the six powers were "deeply disappointed" that the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, had to report Iran's failure to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities, as required by U.N. Resolution 1696.

"We said there are two paths ahead," Beckett said. "We regret that Iran has not yet taken the positive one."

Discussions on which sanctions to invoke against Iran, drawn from a two-page list assembled last summer, will begin next Tuesday or Wednesday in videoconference talks among specialists, U.S. officials said.

Burns predicted that the behind-the-scenes diplomacy would be "spirited" and possibly lengthy. A European envoy involved in the talks Friday said it would be a "struggle" to come up with details to follow through on what is now a joint strategy.

The agreement reached Friday also does not close the deep gap between the United States and Russia over strategy toward Iran. Rice acknowledged the split.

"It's long been the view of particularly Russia that sanctions may not have the intended effect," she said, adding that Moscow had an obligation to act since it had voted for Resolution 1696 in July.

Rice began the day in Iraq, where she met with Massoud Barzani, president of the regional government in the Kurdish-populated north. Rice urged Barzani to cooperate with the national government's reconciliation efforts, and Barzani said the three northern Kurdish provinces would remain part of Iraq despite growing support for independence.

"Kurds, like any other nation, have the right to self-determination," he said. "This is a natural right. But a parliament in Kurdistan has been adopted within the framework of a democratic Iraq, a federal system."

Regional officials said privately, however, that there is growing sentiment for independence as violence increases in the rest of Iraq.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/06/AR2006100600353.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times

October 8, 2006

Pg. 1

Nuclear Test Threat Strains Korea Border

By Hans Greimel, Associated Press

SEOUL -- Tensions mounted over North Korea's threat to test its first atomic bomb, with shots ringing out yesterday along the border with South Korea and with Japan warning of harsh sanctions if Pyongyang goes nuclear.

With a test expected as early as today, the U.N. Security Council issued a stern statement Friday urging North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions and warning of unspecified consequences if the isolated, communist regime doesn't comply.

Jittery nations have warned that a test would unravel regional security and could trigger an arms race.

A midday incursion yesterday by North Korean troops into the southern side of the no man's land separating North and South Korea stoked the unease.

South Korean soldiers rattled off 40 warning shots at the five communist troops who crossed the center line of the demilitarized zone, the inter-Korean buffer.

It was not clear whether the North Korean advance was intended as a provocation or was an attempt to go fishing at a nearby stream, an official at South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said on the condition of anonymity, citing official policy. No one was hurt, and the North Koreans retreated.

Such border skirmishes are rare. The incursion yesterday was the second this year, the official said.

Meanwhile, world powers were stepping up diplomatic efforts to avert a nuclear test. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was to visit Beijing today for talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and then proceed to Seoul tomorrow for talks with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun.

A State Department spokesman, Kurtis Cooper, said yesterday that the United States was concerned about North Korea's threat to test its first atomic bomb and that the department was closely monitoring the tensions.

Also yesterday, South Korea's nuclear envoy announced he will visit Beijing tomorrow for two days of talks with Chinese officials about the threatened nuclear test.

In a separate statement from Tokyo, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said it was prepared to push for punitive measures at the United Nations if the North goes ahead with the test.

"If North Korea conducts a nuclear weapons test despite the concerns expressed by international society, the Security Council must adopt a resolution outlining severely punitive measures," the ministry said.

Japan plans to step up economic sanctions against North Korea, tighten trade restrictions and freeze additional North Korea-linked bank accounts if a nuclear test occurs, Japan's Nihon Keizai newspaper reported.

North Korea's nuclear weapon would kill up to 200,000 people if used against a city such as Seoul or Tokyo, the London Sunday Telegraph reported in a story filed from Pyongyang, which cited unidentified Russian military specialists.

They say that the weapon, with the same 20-kiloton yield as the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, is about 10 feet long and weighs 4 tons. It is too big to fit onto any missile Kim Jong-il's regime possesses, but if detonated above ground, it could destroy everything within five square miles.

The Nagasaki atomic bomb used plutonium, an element now being manufactured by North Korea, as its explosive core.

The U.N. statement adopted Friday urged North Korea to return to six-nation negotiations aimed at persuading the country to abandon its nuclear ambitions in exchange for security guarantees and badly needed economic aid.

Those talks -- which involve the United States, China, Japan, Russia and North and South Korea -- have been stalled since late last year, when North Korea boycotted the negotiations in response to American economic sanctions.

A North Korea analyst in China, the North's closest ally, said only the removal of the sanctions could dissuade the North.

"North Korea has already made a decision to carry out a test," said Li Dunqiu of China's State Council Development Research Center, a Cabinet-level think tank, but "if the U.S. removes sanctions ... then tensions can be eased.

Otherwise, launching a nuclear test is unavoidable for North Korea."

The United States imposed economic restrictions on North Korea last year to punish it for counterfeiting and money laundering.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061008-122836-9733r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

October 8, 2006

Pg. WK5

North Korea's Nuclear Intentions, Out There For All To See

By William J. Broad

FOR much of the nuclear age, nations that sought the ultimate weapon kept their intentions and test sites veiled in secrecy, hidden from public view and foreign governments. The first detonations by the United States and the Soviet Union were top secrets and India's test in 1998 caught American intelligence agencies by surprise.

No more, or so it seems. North Korea all but yelled "look at me" in announcing that it plans to conduct its first nuclear test, which experts say might come at any time or perhaps never. "Shouting from the rooftops is new," said Robert S. Norris, author of "Racing for the Bomb" (Steerforth Press, 2002). "It's an unusual way to go about asserting your status as a member of the nuclear club."

What lies behind this outbreak of atomic exhibitionism? While deciphering the intentions of one of the world's most cryptic regimes seems next to impossible, analysts say likely factors include North Korea's taste for bold propaganda as well as its awareness that new classes of satellite technology are making it increasingly hard to hide nuclear sites anyway.

In the bad old days of the cold war, nations that aspired to nuclear fearsomeness wrestled with a fundamental conflict. While seeking to project a terrifying image, they also wanted to keep many test details secret so adversaries would face greater difficulty in crafting potential countermeasures and knowing the exact dimensions of the threat.

"If it was a dud, you didn't want to announce that it was a dud," recalled Philip E. Coyle III, a former head of weapons testing at the Pentagon and former director of nuclear testing for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, a weapon design center in California.

Nuclear powers hid vast industrial complexes in the middle of nowhere and often tried to keep their tests secret. In 1949, it took weeks for Washington to find out that Moscow had detonated a bomb that ended the American atomic monopoly.

The United States responded with a costly array of instruments meant to pull back the veil — everything from high-flying planes that could sniff out whiffs of stray radioactivity to giant microphones that listened for the distant

nuclear rumbles. Jeffrey T. Richelson, who profiles the era in "Spying on the Bomb" (Norton, 2006), said the gargantuan effort cost billions.

Today, a new factor is opening the secretive art to the public: a generation of commercial satellites that can peer down from the heavens to see objects on the ground as small as two or three feet wide, enough to distinguish between a car and a truck. The orbiting eyes can ogle hot tubs and backyard trampolines as well as troop movements and dictators' lairs, undermining what was once a government monopoly on such reconnaissance.

Last week, CNN broadcast satellite images of what it called a potential test site located in a valley in North Korea not far from its northeastern coast. Pentagon sources, CNN reported, confirmed suspicious movements there of people, equipment and vehicles that tended to buttress North Korea's claim that it could detonate a bomb.

GeoEye, a provider of commercial satellite pictures based in Dulles, Va., made available to The New York Times images of the same military complex, but focusing on a rocky site farther up the rugged valley. On July 31, the company's satellite looked down from a height of nearly 300 miles, its camera and telescope zooming in on what appears to be a tunnel entrance dug into the flank of a high mountain and, nearby, buildings that could store mining equipment.

"We provide customers with a map-accurate view of the ground they can't get any other way," said Mark E. Brender, a company spokesman. "Eyes in the sky are good for governments in the region who are concerned about this, and good for customers who need to know as much as they can about what may be going on in North Korea." American officials say government spy satellites monitor about a half-dozen suspicious sites in North Korea but have also focused on the military base.

The much-scrutinized base would be an ideal spot for North Korea to set off an underground nuclear blast if it wanted to make a splash. A senior American intelligence official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of federal secrecy rules, noted that the mountainous redoubt "is a place they know we're looking at."

Along with lots of civilians. Google Earth, on the Web at earth.google.com, features some of the best public snooping on the isolated base, its software combining close-up images and altitude data so the surrounding mountains rise up in three dimensions. A viewer can zoom overhead like a spy plane. The images come from DigitalGlobe, a satellite company in Longmont, Colo.

Google views of the tunneling area, near 41.279 degrees north latitude and 129.087 east longitude, show a set of industrial buildings and what appears to be a mine entrance.

For North Korea, the emergence of the commercial spies would seem to cut two ways, either reinforcing its propaganda effort or threatening to undermine it by exposing a ruse.

And paradoxically, the best monitor of its actions, the world's largest and most sensitive network meant to detect nuclear blasts, run out of Vienna by the United Nations, is powerless to judge the North's real intentions until there is a test. This network, with its global arrays of hundreds of sensors, is meant to police a shaky global ban on the explosive tests, mainly by listening for the faint reverberations of shock waves.

If North Korea decides to go ahead and press the button, this network will help discern exactly what North Korea has succeeded in developing by way of nuclear arms — or not.

"Until they do, people can argue about their capability," said Dr. Coyle, the weapons expert. "But once they test, there's no question. The world will know."

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/08/weekinreview/08broad.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)

October 8, 2006

Analysis

N. Korea Might Lose Its Only Ally

By Chris Buckley, Reuters

BEIJING--North Korea's vow to carry out a nuclear test may shake China's faith in patient diplomacy over its wayward neighbor's ambitions, forcing it closer to the hardball approach long favored by Washington and Tokyo. There are no signs yet that China would be prepared to slap sanctions on its longtime communist ally, and Chinese aid is still flowing into the impoverished country.

But well-connected Chinese experts are beginning to wonder publicly if the six-country talks hosted by Beijing and aimed at winding up North Korea's nuclear program are doomed, dramatically narrowing options for a diplomatic solution.

"The six-party talks may be about done for," said Zhang Liangui, an expert on North Korea at the Central Party School, a Communist Party think tank, in Beijing.

"North Korea never liked them in the first place, but they participated to win time and then delayed when they could. Even if they can go on, they can't achieve substantial results."

Zhang and other analysts said North Korea considers developing a nuclear arsenal to be a priority.

Pyongyang's vow on Tuesday to test a nuclear device has sharply raised the international temperature over that goal, casting doubt over Beijing's traditional calls for dialogue as the best response.

"North Korea has crossed another red line," Zhang said. "The option of avoidance and calling for negotiations that aren't going anywhere is only going to make the North Korean nuclear issue worse."

Japan is pressing for U.N. condemnation of the test threat, while Washington, in its starkest warning so far, told North Korea on Wednesday it could have a future or it could have nuclear weapons, but not both.

Chinese diplomats insisted the six-party talks involving both Koreas, the United States, Japan and Russia should be the "main channel" to defuse tensions, state media reported on Thursday.

Deepening estrangement

But the talks have been in limbo since late last year over North Korean objections to U.S. financial restrictions.

The United States and others in the six-party process have long looked to China, the closest Pyongyang has to an ally, to influence North Korea and strong-arm it back to the talks.

But a deepening estrangement between the two countries may have narrowed China's scope for persuasion.

Until North Korea test-fired a volley of missiles in July, despite a public plea from China's Premier Wen Jiabao, relations between the two neighbors appeared to be warming. Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Pyongyang last year, and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il toured China in January, reinforcing ties.

Beijing's support for a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning July's missile tests showed the tide turning.

"The prelude to a divorce is when the couple stops talking, and we're seeing signs of that here," said John Park, an expert on North Korea at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

China would likely support a U.N. resolution condemning a nuclear test, but it would be reluctant to slap substantial economic sanctions on Pyongyang, fearing they would push the pauperized fortress state into total collapse, said Shen Dingli, a nuclear diplomacy expert at Shanghai's Fudan University.

"North Korea has brought damage to us already; we should not bring more danger to ourselves, for example, by the collapse of the system," he said. "Sanctions would in no way reverse North Korea's nuclear weapon development."

Nevertheless, China's policy of balancing between North Korean brinkmanship and Western pressure is increasingly strained, and Beijing policy-makers may eventually have to consider biting penalties on Pyongyang, said Cai Jian, an expert on China-North Korea relations at Shanghai's Fudan University.

"China opposes strict sanctions, but I believe they should be considered — economic, financial and energy," he said. For now, China is sticking to well-worn calls for dialogue.

But Zhang, the party school scholar, said treading diplomatic water could worsen China's choices by fostering the illusion that Beijing can force Pyongyang to give up nuclear weapons.

"If China doesn't adjust its policy, that will be difficult to fathom," he said.

<http://www.azstarnet.com/allheadlines/149893.php>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Houston Chronicle

October 8, 2006

U.S. Project Could Start Atomic War, Experts Warn

Refitted missiles may sound alarm and prompt nuclear response by Russia

By Eric Rosenberg, Hearst News Service

WASHINGTON — A Pentagon project to modify its deadliest nuclear missile for use as a conventional weapon against targets such as North Korea and Iran could unwittingly spark an atomic war, two weapons experts warned Thursday.

Russian military officers might misconstrue a submarine-launched conventional D-5 intercontinental ballistic missile and conclude that Russia is under nuclear attack, said MIT's Ted Postol, a physicist and professor of science, technology and national security policy, and Pavel Podvig, a physicist and weapons specialist at Stanford University.

"Any launch of a long-range non-nuclear armed sea or land ballistic missile will cause an automated alert of the Russian early warning system," Postol told reporters.

The triggering of an alert wouldn't necessarily precipitate a retaliatory hail of Russian nuclear missiles, Postol said. Nevertheless, he said, "there can be no doubt that such an alert will greatly increase the chances of a nuclear accident involving strategic nuclear forces."

Podvig said that launching conventional versions of a missile from a submarine that normally carries nuclear warheads "expands the possibility for a misunderstanding so widely that it is hard to contemplate." Mixing conventional and nuclear D-5s on a U.S. Trident submarine "would be very dangerous," Podvig said, because the Russians have no way of discriminating between the two types of missiles once they are launched. Russia, unlike the U.S., lacks sufficient satellites to supplement radar and confirm whether missile launches are false alarms.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that the project would increase the danger of accidental nuclear war. "The media and expert circles are already discussing plans to use intercontinental ballistic missiles to carry non-nuclear warheads," he said in May. "The launch of such a missile could ... provoke a full-scale counterattack using strategic nuclear forces."

Accidental nuclear war is not so far-fetched.

In 1995, Russia initially interpreted the launch of a Norwegian scientific rocket as the onset of a U.S. nuclear attack. Then-President Boris Yeltsin activated his "nuclear briefcase" in the first stages of a retaliatory strike before the mistake was discovered.

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/nation/4242535.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

October 10, 2006

Pg. 1

U.S. Urges Sanctions On North Korea

By Michael Abramowitz and Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writers

The White House pushed yesterday for aggressive new sanctions on North Korea, including measures to limit trade in military and luxury items, as Pyongyang's claim that it conducted an underground nuclear test defied the administration's efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Japan, Russia, South Korea -- and, significantly, China, North Korea's closest ally -- joined the United States in condemning the reported test, giving the Bush administration hope that it might unify the international community against Pyongyang. But U.S. officials acknowledged uncertainty about whether that would translate into strict U.N. sanctions, given China's traditional reluctance to lean heavily on its ally.

There were questions yesterday about the strength and success of the reported North Korean explosion, but there was little doubt among White House officials, lawmakers and outside experts that the action added a volatile new ingredient to an already dangerous world environment.

President Bush, acknowledging he could not confirm that a nuclear test occurred early yesterday in North Korea, said that the claim was nonetheless a "provocative act" and that he is "committed to diplomacy." Noting that North Korea has transferred missile technology to Iran and Syria, Bush also seemed to draw a sharp line that he warned Pyongyang not to cross.

"The transfer of nuclear weapons or material by North Korea to states or non-state entities would be considered a grave threat to the United States, and we would hold North Korea fully accountable of the consequences of such action," Bush told reporters at the White House.

If the test is confirmed, North Korea will be the eighth member of the club of declared nuclear powers -- and one led by a reclusive Stalinist dictator known for cruelty and unpredictability.

Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), chairman of the House International Relations subcommittee on Asia, said the action could prod Japan to drop its non-nuclear position, encourage Iran to harden its stance in negotiations over its own reported nuclear program and make it difficult to stop North Korea from marketing weapons to "undesirable parties."

The new claim also promised to renew scrutiny of the Bush administration's handling of North Korea and more generally its efforts to confront rogue states, just as crucial midterm elections are approaching. North Korea has ignored repeated warnings from the Bush administration on nuclear and missile testing.

Democrats quickly seized on the new North Korean claim as evidence that Bush has bungled his foreign policy, and even some conservatives voiced concern that the initial White House response yesterday was not stern enough.

"Unfortunately, on the Bush Administration's watch, North Korea's nuclear arsenal has grown to as many as a dozen bombs," Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) said in a statement. "Distracted by Iraq and paralyzed by internal divisions, the Bush Administration has for several years been in a state of denial about the growing challenge of North Korea, and has too often tried to downplay the issue or change the subject."

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), the majority whip, said of the Democrats: "It doesn't make any difference what [Bush] does, they just come out and trash him." McConnell said in an interview that he hopes that China might be

encouraged to sign on to a plan for tough sanctions on North Korea, noting a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement that said Pyongyang "defied the universal opposition of international society and flagrantly conducted the nuclear test."

"For China, that's pretty tough language," McConnell said, echoing a statement voiced privately by Bush administration officials.

At the United Nations yesterday, the Bush administration proposed an arms embargo and financial and trade sanctions on North Korea, as well as international inspections of all trade going in and out of the country to enforce them. The measures were contained in a U.S. draft resolution presented to the 15-nation council yesterday.

John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told diplomats at a closed-door emergency session that the U.S. initiative is designed to limit North Korea's ability to import or export nuclear and ballistic missile technology and hinder its capacity to raise illicit money, citing the alleged manufacture of counterfeit U.S. dollars, senior council diplomats said.

The draft resolution would also bar the import of all luxury goods and demand that North Korea cease its nuclear activities and restart multiparty talks aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis. The resolution would give North Korea 30 days to comply with council demands or face "such further action as may be needed."

Britain and France voiced support for sanctions on North Korea but stopped short of endorsing the draft resolution. Japan's U.N. ambassador, Kenzo Oshima, said his government "sees eye to eye" with the Americans on many of the proposals. The Japanese, in fact, offered amendments that in some cases go further; Japan called for a ban on all North Korean exports, for instance, and a ban on North Korean ships or aircraft calling on foreign countries. China, meanwhile, cautioned that the Security Council should pursue only diplomatic means to persuade North Korea to stop its nuclear activities.

China's U.N. ambassador, Wang Guangya, said that Beijing opposes the North Korean test and that it is ready to discuss "how the Security Council could react firmly, constructively and prudently with regard to this challenge." But he declined to say whether Beijing would support a sanctions resolution. "The door to solve this issue from a diplomatic point of view is still open," he said.

Privately, U.S. officials said they are hopeful after private conversations with the Chinese that Beijing is sufficiently angry with North Korea to sign on to the U.S. plan.

"This was really a direct challenge to the Chinese, and indications are that they are not taking this lightly," said one senior U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive deliberations. "We are hopeful that they will exert whatever influence they have left with the North Koreans."

Leach and Rep. Tom Lantos (Calif.), the ranking Democrat on the International Relations Committee, urged the administration to open direct talks with the North Koreans, which the White House has resisted except in the context of broader negotiations with China, Japan, Russia and South Korea.

"My impression is that the administration is profoundly divided in their approach to North Korea," Lantos said. "I am convinced that there are very senior people in the administration who agree with me that dialogue is needed." But former House speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), who has been critical of the administration's efforts on North Korea, drew a different lesson.

"We keep trying to find an official diplomatic technique for dealing with a regime that violates every norm of human decency," he said, adding that the administration needs to step up efforts to undermine the government by trying to get food and supplies to North Koreans via unofficial channels.

Lynch reported from the United Nations.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/09/AR2006100900419.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times

October 10, 2006

Pg. 1

U.S. Doubts Korean Test Was Nuclear

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

U.S. intelligence agencies say, based on preliminary indications, that North Korea did not produce its first nuclear blast yesterday.

U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said that seismic readings show that the conventional high explosives used to create a chain reaction in a plutonium-based device went off, but that the blast's readings were shy of a typical nuclear detonation.

"We're still evaluating the data, and as more data comes in, we hope to develop a clearer picture," said one official familiar with intelligence reports.

"There was a seismic event that registered about 4 on the Richter scale, but it still isn't clear if it was a nuclear test. You can get that kind of seismic reading from high explosives."

The underground explosion, which Pyongyang dubbed a historic nuclear test, is thought to have been the equivalent of several hundred tons of TNT, far short of the several thousand tons of TNT, or kilotons, that are signs of a nuclear blast, the official said.

The official said that so far, "it appears there was more fizz than pop."

A successful nuclear detonation requires a properly timed and triggered conventional blast that splits atoms, setting off the nuclear chain reaction that produces the massive explosions associated with atomic bombs.

White House spokesman Tony Snow said assessing the validity of North Korea's claim of a successful nuclear test could take several days.

"We need to find out precisely what it is that took place yesterday, and that is something that's going to take awhile for the scientists and others to work through," Mr. Snow said.

"Nobody could give me with any precision how long it will take until they can say with certainty what happened."

Nuclear bombs make big waves, with clear signatures that make them fairly easy to detect, analyze and confirm that they were caused by splitting atoms. But smaller blasts -- as North Korea's appears to have been -- are trickier to break down, scientists told the Associated Press.

"It takes days, dozens of lab hours, to evaluate results. Now we can have only a rough estimate," said Russian nuclear physicist Vladimir Orlov of the Moscow-based Center for Policy Studies in Russia, a nonproliferation think tank.

Elements of the blast were detected by U.S. and allied sensors as it was set off in an underground tunnel in the north-central part of North Korea. U.S. intelligence agencies have been monitoring several tunnels thought to be nuclear test facilities and have not ruled out Pyongyang's conducting another test.

U.S. officials said the test was timed to coincide with several anniversaries in North Korea, including the end of mourning for the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's father, Kim Il-sung. The test was thought to have been linked to the commemoration.

North Korea's military thinks that joining the world's seven other acknowledged nuclear powers is key to preserving the power of the communist regime.

There were wide variations in seismic data of the North Korean blast. The French atomic agency estimated about 1 kiloton, and South Korea's geological institute said half of that. But Russia's defense minister expressed "no doubt" that North Korea detonated a nuclear test and said the force of the underground blast was equivalent to 5,000 to 15,000 tons of TNT.

"People have different ways of cross-cutting the data and interpreting them," said Lassina Zerbo, director of the International Data Center at the nuclear-test-ban preparatory commission, which is based in Vienna, Austria.

The Bush administration is pushing for the United Nations to adopt economic sanctions against North Korea that would include a blockade of all goods moving into and out of the country.

Key to the imposition of the tough sanctions will be support from China and Russia, two states that in the past opposed sanctions.

The most immediate impact of the underground test is that U.S. officials fear Japan will take steps to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

Official North Korean press for the past several years has been asserting that the United States is planning a pre-emptive nuclear attack on North Korea over its secret uranium-enrichment program.

Intelligence reports from several years ago indicated that North Korea was engaged in a covert program to develop a uranium-based nuclear program with the help of Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan. The Khan network supplied centrifuges and nuclear-weapons design techniques to Libya, Iran and North Korea.

What U.S. officials have been unable to confirm is whether North Korea received small warhead design information from the Khan network.

Chinese-language documents on how to build a nuclear warhead for missiles were found in Libya and were supplied by Khan network associates. U.S. intelligence officials think Iran and North Korea received similar warhead design documents.

North Korea in July conducted flight tests of seven missiles including a long-range Taepodong-2.

U.S. officials think the plutonium for the pit of the North Korean device was produced by the reactor at Yongbyon, the regime's declared nuclear facility.

U.S. intelligence agencies estimate that North Korea has some 88 pounds of plutonium and that about 13 pounds were used in the recent test.

The remaining plutonium is enough for North Korea to make about six bombs.

Joseph Curl contributed to this article, which is based in part on wire service reports.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061009-115158-2477r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
October 10, 2006
Pg. 8

Pentagon Assesses Responses, Including A Possible Blockade

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9 — Now that North Korea seems to have made good on its threat with what appears to be a nuclear test, United States military commanders and civilian policy makers are refining plans in the event that President Bush orders a blockade of North Korean shipments to prevent the sale of a completed bomb or nuclear components.

Senior officers say Navy and Air Force combat and surveillance equipment are already in the region, and more could be deployed rapidly.

Still, any unilateral effort by the United States to cordon off North Korea by sea and air could founder along the country's lengthy land border with China.

"This is a tough question," one senior official with years of experience in military planning said Monday, speaking as did others on the condition of anonymity because he was discussing classified war plans. "The only good options were before North Korea got the bomb. There are no good options now."

For five decades, the American military has written war plans and deployed forces for a worst-case situation in the Korean peninsula: a major artillery, missile and ground attack from north to south across the demilitarized zone.

But a conventional war is no longer the most pressing military threat. It is nuclear proliferation.

Many staff officers contend that North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear programs are not primarily intended as part of a plan for a land attack on South Korea.

If anything, North Korea probably regards its effort to develop a nuclear arsenal as a deterrent against an attack by the United States.

The North Korean nuclear efforts could also be intended to press South Korea for diplomatic and economic gain, and to hold Japan, another important American ally, at risk, gaining even more leverage against the United States. Given that geopolitical geometry, American military officers and senior policy makers say, the Pentagon's abilities in the region, along with those of South Korea and Japan, are sufficient against the shifting North Korean military threat.

While land combat is not an imminent threat, Pentagon and military officials say, the prolonged deployments of ground forces in Iraq and Afghanistan have doubtless complicated planning for the Korean Peninsula.

Should more ground forces be required for South Korea, only a handful of combat brigades stand ready in the United States, Pentagon and military officials say. To bolster the force, additional combat units now getting ready for tours in Iraq could be pointed to the Pacific instead, with troops already in Iraq staying there longer than planned. Although the decision to move a full combat brigade of American ground forces from South Korea to Iraq in 2004 generated much public debate on the peninsula, the Pentagon more quietly has shifted substantial numbers of heavy Air Force bombers and attack aircraft from the United States to bases throughout the region to offset the decrease in ground forces. The Air Force's stealth bombers, with intercontinental range, are also available from their base in the American Midwest.

Navy aircraft aboard carriers in the Pacific are on call, as are submarines equipped with a range of conventional and nuclear missiles. The most modern Patriot antimissile batteries have also been assigned to the region, as well as Aegis cruisers with abilities designed to track and shoot down missiles.

"Taken together, this has added a tremendous amount of capability more appropriate for the threat right now," a senior Defense Department official said.

Pentagon officials acknowledge that the sustained deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have heightened the risks that would be faced if there were a Korean conflict because important equipment is committed to the Middle East. Weapons systems that officers call "enablers" are routinely in short supply and are heavily engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan; they include intelligence equipment like the pilotless Predator surveillance aircraft. Likewise, large stockpiles of precision-guided munitions have been placed within striking range of Iraq and Afghanistan. While those weapons are also in the Pacific arsenals, senior officials would have to weigh the risk to both military theaters and decide how best to allocate limited resources.

Even senior commanders agree that the commitments to Iraq and Afghanistan have imposed risks on the American military, an assessment contained in a classified report to Congress last year from the departing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard B. Myers.

General Myers wrote that the concentration of troops and advanced weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan limited the Pentagon's ability to deal with other potential armed conflicts.

Major combat operations elsewhere in the world, if ordered by the president, still would succeed — but would be more protracted and would produce higher casualties among American forces and foreign civilians, General Myers wrote. A range of senior officers have said that assessment still stands.

One of the most significant and worrisome complications is that American intelligence agencies have no confidence that they can locate all of North Korea's weapons depots, development laboratories, nuclear command centers and leadership hide-outs — though American intelligence abilities are said to have worried the North Korean leadership in the past.

American intelligence officials concluded that Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader, went into hiding during the final buildup to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 because he feared that he, too, might be tracked and attacked.

After North Korea's newest announcement, military analysts continued Monday to assess whether its announcement that it had tested a nuclear device, in defiance of international opinion, represented a calculation by Mr. Kim that he was less vulnerable now — or that he needed to join the elite club of declared nuclear powers to deter a possible American attack.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/10/world/asia/10military.html?ref=washington>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

October 10, 2006

Pg. 1

News Analysis

For U.S., A Strategic Jolt After North Korea's Test

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9 — North Korea may be a starving, friendless, authoritarian nation of 23 million people, but its apparently successful explosion of a small nuclear device in the mountains above the town of Kilju on Monday represents a defiant bid for survival and respect. For Washington and its allies, it illuminates a failure of nearly two decades of atomic diplomacy.

North Korea is more than just another nation joining the nuclear club. It has never developed a weapons system it did not ultimately sell on the world market, and it has periodically threatened to sell its nuclear technology. So the end of ambiguity about its nuclear capacity foreshadows a very different era, in which the concern may not be where a nation's warheads are aimed, but in whose hands its weapons and skill end up.

As Democrats were quick to note on Monday, four weeks before a critical national election, President Bush and his aides never gave as much priority to countering a new era of proliferation as they did to overthrowing Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Bush and his aides contend that Iraq was the more urgent threat, in a volatile neighborhood. But the North's reported nuclear test now raises the question of whether it is too late for the president to make good on his promise that he would never let the world's "worst dictators" obtain the world's most dangerous weapons.

"What it tells you is that we started at the wrong end of the 'axis of evil,'" former Senator Sam Nunn, the Georgia Democrat who has spent his post-Congressional career trying to halt a new age of proliferation, said in an interview. "We started with the least dangerous of the countries, Iraq, and we knew it at the time. And now we have to deal with that."

Mr. Bush's top national security aides declined Monday to be interviewed about whether a different strategy over the past five years might have yielded different results. But Stephen J. Hadley, the national security adviser, has described the administration's approach to North Korea as the mirror image of its dealings with Iraq. "You'll recall that we were criticized daily for being too unilateral" in dealing with Saddam Hussein, Mr. Hadley said. "So here we are, working with our allies and friends, stressing diplomacy."

But at the same time, he said the administration had made a conscious decision not to draw "red lines" in dealing with Kim Jong-il's government because "the North Koreans just walk right up to them and then step over them," just to show they can. Other aides say that, lines or no lines, the North simply decided to race for a bomb — and finally made it.

North Korea announced its nuclear breakout in early 2003, kicking out international nuclear inspectors and very publicly beginning its drive to turn its stockpiles of spent nuclear fuel rods into a small arsenal of weapons. Focused then on the coming war with Iraq, Mr. Bush and his administration chose to set no limits.

But foreign policy, as Mr. Nunn says, is “all about priorities,” and until Monday the closest Mr. Bush came to drawing a red line for the North was in May 2003, when he declared that the United States and South Korea “will not tolerate nuclear weapons in North Korea.”

The Central Intelligence Agency’s estimates in the years since have been that the United States has been tolerating exactly that — a small arsenal of nuclear fuel sufficient to produce six or more weapons.

Notably, Mr. Bush did not repeat that threat on Monday morning. Instead, he drew a new red line, one that appeared to tacitly acknowledge the North’s possession of weapons. The United States would regard as a “grave threat,” he said, any transfer by North Korea of nuclear material to other countries or terrorist groups, and would hold Mr.

Kim’s government “fully accountable for the consequences of such actions.”

To critics of Mr. Bush’s counterproliferation policy, this seemed a recognition that the North had successfully defied American, Chinese and Japanese warnings about building weapons and testing them, and was now simply trying to manage the aftermath. North Korea, it appears, is taking a page from Pakistan’s strategic playbook: it exploded its first nuclear device in 1998, endured three years of sanctions, and now has emerged as a “major non-NATO ally” of the United States.

Mr. Bush’s aides say that if Mr. Kim believes he, too, can expect the world to impose a few sanctions and then lose interest in the issue, he is wrong. “He is really going to rue the day he made this decision,” Christopher R. Hill, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said of Mr. Kim on Monday. But Mr. Bush’s critics charge that the threat may be empty. As they see it, Mr. Kim watched the Iraq war and drew a simple lesson: that broken countries armed with nuclear weapons do not get invaded, and do not have to worry about regime change. “Think about the consequences of having declared something ‘intolerable’ and, last week, ‘unacceptable,’ and then having North Korea defy the world’s sole superpower and the Chinese and the Japanese,” said Graham Allison, the Harvard professor who has studied nuclear showdowns since the Cuban missile crisis. “What does that communicate to Iran, and then the rest of the world? Is it possible to communicate to Kim credibly that if he sells a bomb to Osama bin Laden, that’s it?”

Mr. Allison was touching on the central dilemma facing Washington as it tries to extract itself from the morass of Iraq. Whether accurately or not, other countries around the world perceive Washington as tied down, unable or unwilling to challenge them while 140,000 troops are trying to tame a sectarian war.

Divining North Korea’s true intentions is always difficult; there is no more closed society on earth. But the broad assumption inside and outside the United States government is that Mr. Kim’s first priority is the survival of his government. And the second is that without a nuclear weapon, he believes his government would have no way of staving off the larger, richer powers around it: China, Japan, South Korea and the United States.

All have fought over control of the Korean Peninsula in decades past, and to Mr. Kim’s mind, presumably, the prospect that the North could lash out is the only reason they have stayed at bay.

Mr. Kim may have calculated, many experts believe, that at this point there is little more that the Bush administration can do to him. The United States has imposed sanctions on his country since the end of the Korean War. The new crackdown on the banks through which the North conducts many of its illicit activities — counterfeiting, missile sales, trade in small arms — are being choked off, a step the North Korean leaders presumably see as part of a strategy of bringing them down.

It may be years, or decades, before historians know whether Iraq played into Mr. Kim’s calculations about when to conduct a nuclear test. But clearly, managing simultaneous crises around the world is straining the system in Washington, and posing the Bush administration with more direct challenges than many believe it can handle at one moment.

That returns Mr. Bush to the problem he faced when he came to office, and that his aides have never stopped arguing about: whether the best way to contain North Korea is to further isolate it, or to draw it out of its paranoid shell. The nuclear test may force Washington to pick a strategy.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/10/world/asia/10assess.html?ref=washington>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

USA Today
October 10, 2006
Pg. 1

Condemnation Swift, But Options Are Limited

U.S. draft resolution demands resumption of six-party talks

By Bill Nichols, USA Today

WASHINGTON — World leaders found themselves in a familiar position Monday: harshly condemning the reclusive communist regime in North Korea for thumbing its nose at the international community.

North Korea's latest provocation, an announcement it had conducted an underground nuclear test, prompted a flurry of tough talk from around the globe.

China, a key supplier of food and oil to North Korea, called the action "brazen." The United Nations Security Council went into emergency session to consider new sanctions. President Bush, the third in a succession of American presidents to try to forestall a North Korean nuclear arsenal, called the test "unacceptable."

Despite the hard-edged rhetoric, foreign policy analysts and nuclear experts pointed out the obvious: World powers have tried to bully, threaten, cajole, entice, sanction and sweet talk North Korea into the community of nations for 50 years, without success.

"North Korea is really the land of bad options," said Kurt Campbell, a foreign affairs analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, and a Pentagon official during the Clinton administration. "Horrible options."

The United States has signaled it won't mount a military response. An attack on North Korea could prompt a counterattack on Seoul. That would suck in the 28,000 U.S. troops in South Korea and endanger millions of civilians.

An alternative is economic sanctions. North Korea's isolated populace of 22 million has already endured severe poverty and famine for decades, not to mention almost total isolation under a totalitarian regime. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University estimate that as many as 2 million North Koreans died of hunger and related diseases during the mid-1990s.

Even without ready options, the United Nations was a hub of activity Monday as diplomats on the 15-member Security Council tried to craft a resolution in response.

The United States circulated a draft resolution obtained by the Associated Press late Monday that demands North Korea return to six-party talks and imposes sanctions for Pyongyang's "flagrant disregard" of the Security Council's appeal not to detonate a device.

Among the proposed draft measures: international inspection of all cargo to and from North Korea to limit the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; bans on luxury goods to and from the North; a ban on North Korean ships docking in any port, or any North Korean aircraft from taking off or landing in any country if they carried arms, nuclear or ballistic missile-related material or luxury goods; and travel restrictions on high-ranking North Korean officials.

In deliberations among council members, "No one defended (North Korea), no one even came close to defending it," said John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

North Korea remained defiant. Its ambassador, Pak Gil Yon, said the U.N. Security Council should congratulate North Korea for its test instead of passing "useless" resolutions.

North Korea has refused for a year to attend six-nation international talks aimed at coaxing it to disarm. Instead, Pyongyang has called for direct talks with Washington and for the United States to drop sanctions it imposed to punish North Korea for alleged counterfeiting.

Ted Galen Carpenter, a foreign policy analyst with the Cato Institute, a Washington think tank, said North Korea's rationale for the test is to improve its bargaining position in future talks, as India and Pakistan appeared to after testing in 1998. "This is part of a long-term strategy," he said. North Korean officials "concluded a good many years ago that the way to retain clout is to have a nuclear arsenal. I suspect Pakistan is their model."

Some foreign policy analysts suggest that the apparent test should jar the United States and key allies to try new strategies.

"This is a terrible event," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, a non-proliferation group in Washington. "This is perhaps the worst non-proliferation event in the history of the nuclear age in the sense that it could have been avoided if ... diplomacy had been more effective."

Possible options:

- Direct talks with the United States. Bush has refused North Korea's demand for one-on-one dialogue. Both New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who dealt with Pyongyang as U.N. ambassador in the Clinton administration, and former secretary of State James Baker say it's time to rethink that strategy.

Richardson proposes direct talks in which the United States would promise not to attack North Korea and to give Pyongyang aid in exchange for its agreement to end its nuclear program. Baker, in a television interview Sunday, said, "It's not appeasement to talk to your enemies," including North Korea.

- Creative use of aid. Michael O'Hanlon, a foreign affairs analyst at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, suggested specific offers of help to the impoverished North Korean people — tied to tougher restrictions on North Korean nukes.

- Pushing China. The United States could promise to withdraw all troops from South Korea if China can pressure the North to disarm, Carpenter said.

China, which has had influence with its communist neighbor in the past, has been cool about using strong-arm tactics because of fears that a collapse of North Korea could result in thousands of refugees streaming into China. Most Korea watchers agree that Monday's apparent test would roil the region by adding North Korea to the group of nations with nuclear weapons: the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France, India and Pakistan. (Israel, believed to possess nuclear weapons, has not acknowledged having an arsenal.)

The nuclear ambitions of North Korea and bizarre behavior of its leader, Kim Jong Il, have long rattled Japan, South Korea and China and prompted talk in Tokyo and Seoul that those nations should go nuclear as well.

The test will "transform the security environment in North Asia, and we will be entering a new, dangerous nuclear age," said Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Kimball said the controlled explosion would allow North Korea to test the performance of its nuclear weapons technology against design goals and make adjustments. He and other nuclear analysts said the fact that North Korea could explode a nuclear device was not surprising, given longtime suspicions about the advanced state of Pyongyang's nuclear program.

North Korea may have enough plutonium for as many as 13 nuclear weapons, according to the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington think tank. Seismic data and air analysis aren't enough to tell experts whether North Korea is able to miniaturize a nuclear device to fit into a warhead on a missile.

North Korea tested seven missiles in July, including a long-range missile capable of reaching the United States. That missile, the Taepodong-2, failed within a minute. Six shorter-range missiles fell into the Sea of Japan.

David Albright, a former U.N. nuclear inspector and president of the Institute for Science and International Security, expressed surprise that the North Koreans staged only one explosion. Pakistan and India each carried out half a dozen tests over several days in 1998.

"You grab the opportunity when you can to test several times," Albright said. He called the North Korean test "more of a demonstration than an attempt to learn as much as they could about nuclear weapons."

He added: "They'll learn something even with one, but they could have learned more."

The reasons for the timing of the test weren't clear — made even more mysterious by Kim Jong Il's track record of unpredictability. Kim took power in 1994 after the death of his father, dictator Kim Il Sung.

The younger Kim is known for quirks, among them his passion for Hennessy cognac and James Bond films. "You never know how to take this guy, because he does erratic things," said Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., who has talked with Kim seven times.

North Korea conducted some of its most recent missile tests on the evening of July 4 in the United States, suggesting it wanted to send a message. Monday's test came:

- One day after the ninth anniversary of Kim's assuming his father's titles. While he became the de facto ruler in 1994, he didn't formally succeed him until Oct. 8, 1997.

- A day before South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon was nominated as the next U.N. secretary-general. Richardson said his big concern is that North Korea appears to have given up on the multiparty talks with the United States, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea and adopted "a bunker mentality." Hard-liners appear to have won debate in Pyongyang, he said. "Unless that changes, they're going to keep building more nuclear weapons."

Jim Walsh, a North Korea expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said Pyongyang apparently has decided it is willing to weather new sanctions in order to gain the status and respect of a nuclear nation.

"They've made a decision to bite the bullet," Walsh said of North Korea. "For all the brave talk by the U.S. and Japan, there isn't a hell of a lot they can do."

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20061010/1a_cover10x.art.htm

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Boston Globe
October 10, 2006
Pg. 1

Pentagon Hunting For Clues On Power, Makeup Of Weapon

By Bryan Bender, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON -- US military aircraft and monitoring centers scrambled yesterday to determine the size and type of the weapon that North Korea detonated in what is believed to be the reclusive regime's first test of a nuclear bomb.

Early estimates of the scale of the underground blast in the northeastern mountains ranged widely yesterday. South Korean officials reported a relatively small half-kiloton blast -- equal to roughly 500 tons of TNT -- while the Russian government estimated it was a much more powerful 5- to 15-kiloton detonation on par with the controlled detonations of nuclear powers in the past.

But US officials expressed caution about coming to any firm conclusions as they directed a dragnet of aircraft, ships, seismic listening posts, spy satellites, and other intelligence-gathering systems to glean as much as possible about the size of the detonation and whether it was based on plutonium or uranium. They also sought to determine whether the North Korean design is advanced enough to be mounted atop a missile -- a nightmare scenario for the United States and North Korea's neighbors.

"They say they have done one, and common belief is that something took place," said Major David Smith, a Pentagon spokesman. "But we're basically in a wait-and-see mode."

Still, private specialists and former government officials said the test, which the US Geological Survey indicated caused a seismic tremor of about 4.2 on the Richter Scale, appeared to be on the smaller end of the spectrum.

"A general rule of thumb is that a seismic magnitude of 4.0 to 4.25 equals about 1 kiloton," said Philip E. Coyle III, who formerly oversaw US nuclear tests for the Department of Energy and is now a senior adviser at the Center for Defense Information in Washington.

The weapon the United States dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in World War II had an equivalent yield of between 11,000 and 15,000 tons of TNT, according to a fact sheet provided by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Added Corey Hinderstein, a nuclear weapons specialist at the nonprofit Nuclear Threat Initiative: "It would appear from the information coming out that this was likely a relatively small nuclear test. It seems to center around a kiloton."

She said that the makeup of the device cannot be determined by the size of the blast but can be confirmed only by studying air and possibly water particles in the area.

"It is most likely to be a plutonium device, because we do know that North Korea has at least a small stockpile of separated plutonium that could be used in weapons," Hinderstein said. "If it is a uranium device, then they are much further along than is the conventional wisdom."

Some specialists said the apparently small size of the blast could mark a very crude test or a very advanced design relying on minimal amounts of weapon material.

Others suggested that the North Koreans could have tested only the first part of a two-stage hydrogen bomb, which would first require an implosion caused by conventional high explosives such as TNT or HMX before the nuclear material is compressed to the density necessary for a nuclear explosion. That could explain the detection of a large underground explosion without further evidence of a nuclear blast.

Meanwhile, US defense officials sought to downplay their role yesterday in the test's aftermath. The Pentagon referred reporters to the State Department, saying the test was now a "diplomatic issue."

Officials at the United States Pacific Command in Honolulu, responsible for military operations in the region, also reflected the Bush administration's emphasis on diplomacy. A military official went out of his way to insist that no military action is being undertaken in response to the test, which took place despite warnings from the United Nations, the United States, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and the European Union.

"We are not at a higher alert," offered the official, who asked not be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Nevertheless, the United States and its allies went into high gear to learn what took place and to keep a watchful eye for any further nuclear tests that might take place in the coming days, officials said on condition of anonymity.

While North Korea said yesterday that no radioactive material had leaked out, the Air Force Technical Applications Center, based in Florida, flew special aircraft downwind from the test site near the Chinese border to try to catch any radioactive material that might have been vented into the atmosphere.

According to the Air Force, the WC-135W "Constant Phoenix" planes "collect particulate and gaseous effluents and debris from accessible regions of the atmosphere" to be analyzed by military specialists and the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons laboratories.

These samples would allow the national weapons laboratories such as Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos, and Sandia to determine whether Pyongyang used plutonium or uranium in the blast.

Meanwhile, the United States has activated a special Air Force detachment located at South Korea's seismic listening post in Wonju, close to the border with North Korea, officials said.

The main objective of the collection effort is to use the data to make a more accurate assessment than ever before about the sophistication of North Korea's outlawed weapons program and to find out how close the nation might be to mounting a nuclear warhead on one of its long-range missiles.

"One major uncertainty is whether North Korea has the technology to build an efficient bomb [or] warhead for a missile," said Anthony Cordesman, a security specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Even if North Korea has a relatively crude nuclear design, nearly all specialists agreed, the test marked a major shift in the balance of power in the region, removing any doubts about the nation's intentions to develop nuclear weapons.

Henry Sokolski, a North Korea specialist at the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, said that the failure to stop North Korea poses a unique threat to efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. "It's very serious," Sokolski said. "They not only signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and violated it, but withdrew and tested a bomb. The message is, nothing will happen until you do a test, but that's pretty late in the game. Others will take due note of this, and they will bring their program right up to the edge." http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2006/10/10/pentagon_hunting_for_clues_on_power_makeup_of_weapon/

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Los Angeles Times
October 10, 2006
Pg. 1

Even If Device Was Flawed, Test Crossed A Threshold

By Greg Miller and Karen Kaplan, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — Shock waves emanating from North Korea on Monday probably came from the explosion of a nuclear device, but one that did not achieve its full potential because of a failure or a design flaw, U.S. intelligence officials and weapons experts said.

Analysts believe the explosion produced about 3% of the power of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki more than 60 years ago, raising questions about whether a bigger device malfunctioned, or the regime in Pyongyang was testing only a component of a larger weapon.

The combination of the low strength of the explosion and the failure in July of a missile test over the Sea of Japan is likely to reinforce intelligence assessments that North Korea remains years away from developing a nuclear warhead that could be fitted to a missile and delivered any significant distance, let alone to the shores of the United States. Still, officials said Monday's test demonstrated that North Korea had crossed a dangerous technological threshold, and they added that the blast served as an experiment from which Pyongyang could garner valuable information it could use to improve its nuclear designs.

"Often you learn as much from a failure as you do a success," said Anthony Cordesman, a former Defense Department official and a military expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"If you have a test, even if it is only partly successful, you've proven not only you can do it but that you're on the way to developing more sophisticated systems."

Cordesman and others said it could be days before U.S. intelligence agencies and independent scientists are able to reach firm conclusions as to the nature of the test.

Experts will analyze the seismic signature of the explosion, and attempt to collect atmospheric samples by "sniffer" spy planes.

Estimates of the force of the explosion were based on comparisons of seismic readings taken from monitoring stations in nations surrounding North Korea with seismic measures of past nuclear explosions.

The characteristics of the "seismic pulse" have usually enabled officials to rule out earthquakes or natural phenomena. But officials said the relatively small size of Monday's blast might make it difficult to use seismic data to determine whether the explosion was caused by a nuclear device or conventional explosives. Analysts haven't ruled out that the seismic shock could have been caused by conventional explosives, but a consensus seemed to be forming Monday that a nuclear device had been detonated.

American and foreign intelligence agencies are expected to focus on detecting and measuring telltale radioactive particles in atmospheric samples collected by planes and unmanned aerial vehicles routinely patrolling the coastline of the Korean peninsula.

The Vienna-based Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization, which monitors the globe for possible nuclear activity, said it probably would take about 72 hours to gather all the information necessary to judge whether the seismic event in North Korea was a nuclear explosion.

North Korea claimed that it had completely contained the radioactive fallout from the explosion. But experts were skeptical, saying it would require a level of technical sophistication North Korea was unlikely to possess to prevent the release of any contamination into the atmosphere.

"Sooner or later something escapes," said Daniela Rozgonova, a spokeswoman for the test ban group. "Then we will know for sure."

The test was underground and probably carried out in a horizontal tunnel under a mountain, said David Albright, a former weapons inspector who now directs the Institute for Science and International Security. Unlike vertical tests, which leave a massive crater, he said, horizontal tests leave little external trace.

Experts said that using conventional explosives to create a blast of the magnitude recorded Monday — equivalent to about half a kiloton of TNT — would be difficult to accomplish.

"A kiloton would be 2 million pounds of TNT," said Arthur Lerner-Lam, associate director for seismology and geology at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University. "It takes a lot of technology to get all of that to go off at once."

As a result, officials and experts focused on other, more plausible, explanations for the small yield.

Officials said North Korea could have detonated a small device in order to conserve fissile material.

American intelligence agencies believe North Korea probably has enough plutonium for about eight nuclear weapons — other estimates suggest it could build between four and 13 weapons — and does not possess any enriched uranium.

Pyongyang also may have been testing a component of a larger system, but experts said such a step would be highly unusual because of its limited experimental value.

As a result, a consensus seemed to be emerging among analysts and experts that North Korea conducted a test of a full-scale device, but one that failed to compress the plutonium fuel at rates capable of producing maximum yield.

"The lower yield could be because of bad luck or bad design," said Michael Levi, a nuclear weapons expert at the Council on Foreign Relations.

"The fizzle of a 15- to 20-kiloton weapon would be about a kiloton or two," added Owen Cote, associate director of the security studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

American intelligence agencies have struggled to collect meaningful data on North Korea's nuclear program and have scant information on Pyongyang's ability to make a warhead small enough to mount on a medium- or long-range missile.

Pakistan's nuclear bomb, built on a Chinese design, can be put atop a ballistic missile, but it is not clear whether these design details were passed on to the North Koreans as part of the proliferation network operated by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan.

Monday's test may not provide any answers because the weight of a nuclear weapon — as opposed to its yield — would not necessarily be detectible from an underground test.

"You could test a device as big as a house," said Gary Samore, who handled nuclear proliferation issues on the Clinton administration's National Security Council. "There is no way to verify that from the seismic activity we'll get."

Miller reported from Washington and Kaplan from Los Angeles. Times staff writers Peter Spiegel in Washington and Alissa J. Rubin in Paris contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-test10oct10.0.6850544.story?coll=la-home-world>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)