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Los Angeles Times
July 11, 2006

U.S. And Japan Agree To A Delay On North Korea Sanctions Vote

By Maggie Farley and Bruce Wallace, Times Staff Writers

UNITED NATIONS — Japan and the United States agreed Monday to delay voting on a proposed Security Council resolution imposing sanctions on North Korea for its surprise missile tests to give Chinese diplomats visiting the North a chance to work out a solution.

But Japan escalated its tough talk against Pyongyang, with top government officials suggesting that the country's pacifist constitution permits Tokyo to launch a first strike at missile bases if it faces an imminent attack.

"If we accept that there is no other option to prevent a missile attack, there is an argument that attacking missile bases would be within the legal right of self-defense," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, the front-runner to succeed Junichiro Koizumi as prime minister this fall.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's office today called Japanese leaders "arrogant and reckless."

"It is a serious development that Japanese Cabinet ministers have made a series of comments that justify a possible preemptive strike and the use of military power.... It has unveiled Japan's expansionist nature," said presidential spokesman Jung Tae-ho, who also referred to Japan's past occupation of Korea.

The bickering came as Washington tried to forge a unified position on North Korea.

Some council members had hoped to vote Monday on a resolution that would ban countries from transferring missile-related technology or goods to North Korea, or buying missiles from the regime. But China indicated in weekend negotiations that it considered sanctions a last resort, and would probably veto the measure if it was put forward before the high-level delegation finished its mission to Pyongyang, diplomats said.

"For China, we wish our diplomatic efforts have good results," said Chinese Ambassador Wang Guangya. But he said that "diplomacy takes time," and that China would be reluctant to support a punitive resolution even if the missiles had been pointed in its direction.

"We feel that the most important task for the countries in the region, and certainly for the Security Council, is to maintain peace and stability in a politically sensitive region," he said.

Chinese Vice Premier Hui Liangyu and top nuclear envoy Wu Dawei arrived Monday in North Korea for a six-day visit, officially to celebrate the 45th anniversary of a friendship treaty between the North and their nation.

But the delegation is also expected to leverage China's role as North Korea's reluctant protector to bring the isolated regime back to the negotiating table.

For years, China has blocked punitive action by the Security Council partly out of fear that it would have to rescue its neighbor if it collapsed and absorb millions of refugees. Now, Beijing also needs to demonstrate that it still has political influence over North Korea's leader after Kim Jong Il defied Beijing's warnings not to proceed with the provocative missile tests last week.

The U.S. and Japan are pushing North Korea to resume talks with the two of them, South Korea, Russia and China on its nuclear program and to return to a moratorium on missile tests.

But formulating a common response to Pyongyang has been complicated by Japan's chilled relations with China, South Korea and even Russia, with whom it has territorial disputes and lingering ill will from Tokyo's militarist past. None of that will have been eased by the open musings by Abe and other officials about the possibility of launching a preemptive strike.

Although Japan lacks the air capability to do so on its own, the fact that the option is being discussed demonstrates the degree to which hawkish talk has become politically acceptable here in the wake of the missile launches and China's rising power.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, U.S. Ambassador John R. Bolton said Monday that the issue would be examined "on a daily basis" and that although China may have taken on the nettlesome job of dealing with Pyongyang, the burden was on North Korea to save itself.

"I think this is entirely an exercise of Chinese diplomacy. They surely have been embarrassed by these provocative missile launches," Bolton said. "But the point is we want to keep the spotlight on ... Pyongyang, which is the source of this problem."

He added later, "If Chinese diplomats don't succeed, we would certainly hope that China would agree to join the resolution."

China circulated a compromise "presidential statement," a step weaker than a legally binding resolution, that expressed the unanimous concern of the council about North Korea's missile tests and the "serious negative implications for international peace and security."

Farley reported from the United Nations and Wallace from Tokyo. Times staff writer Barbara Demick in Seoul also contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor11jul11.1.680955.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post

July 11, 2006

Pg. 12

Time Up For Iran's Answer On Weapon

Viewing Delay as a Test, U.S. Ready To Pressure U.N. to Penalize Tehran

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration is poised to press the U.N. Security Council to begin the process of imposing punitive action against Iran, after signals over the weekend that Tehran will not provide the straightforward acceptance or rejection today of a U.S.-backed proposal designed to prevent it from developing a nuclear weapon, U.S. and European officials said yesterday.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana is scheduled to meet Iranian negotiator Ali Larijani today in Brussels to get an answer, a meeting that already had been delayed a week. But over the weekend, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Solana had not provided answers about what Iranian officials have termed ambiguities in the plan.

Meanwhile, the Iranian ambassador to Switzerland said Iran would not be ready to provide an answer until August. In a telephone interview, an Iranian official in Tehran said yesterday that the regime had been transparent about its concerns.

The United States and some Security Council countries have now concluded that Iran has decided to test American resolve and the solidarity of Security Council cooperation, U.S. and European officials said.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is scheduled to leave today for talks in Paris tomorrow with the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany to discuss Iran before the Group of Eight summit of industrial nations later this week. With Iran insisting that it needs more time, Rice is expected to urge Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany to begin the process of imposing the sticks in the carrots-or-sticks proposal, U.S. and European officials said.

Rice warned Iran yesterday about the consequences of delaying. "We hope that the Iranians choose the path before them for cooperation, but, of course, we can always return to the other path should we need to. And that path . . . was, of course, the path to the Security Council," she said in a joint news conference with new British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett. "Now, it's our great hope that we are going to get an authoritative answer, but this is something that we're going to take up and consider when we meet in Paris."

The timing is critical. The Bush administration wants an answer before the G-8 meeting in Russia, while Moscow wants a spirit of cooperation to produce a positive outcome on many issues. Russia and China have been the toughest holdouts to imposing punitive action on Iran. After the G-8 meeting, Russia may not be as cooperative in pressing Iran or considering tough action if it balks, U.S. and European officials say.

Reflecting the growing disappointment with Iran's position, Beckett said that Tehran, in fact, has so far not asked for any clarifications. "We keep hearing from Iran remarks made to others that there are ambiguities in the offer that still have to be resolved," she said at a lunch with reporters. "But I'm not aware of any questions having been asked." State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that Iran already had six weeks to respond to the specifics and to make a decision to engage in negotiations designed to ensure it cannot subvert its peaceful nuclear program to develop a weapon.

"This is not to come up with a final negotiated solution," he told reporters. "That's what negotiation is about. This is about coming to the table."

Iran appears particularly intent on maintaining an independent capability to enrich uranium. After years of resisting any role in dealing with Iran, the Bush administration has reversed course and decided to join talks if Tehran agrees to suspend enrichment activities.

"The Iranian tactic is transparently trying to string the whole thing out while not doing the one thing that is required -- suspend uranium enrichment," said a senior European diplomat familiar with negotiations but unable to discuss them publicly. "They are smiling and saying 'We like it' while in practice they are saying no."

Beckett, on her first trip to the United States as foreign secretary, said the Iranian reaction so far makes outsiders wonder whether Tehran fully understands what position it is in.

The details of the proposal, presented to Iran in early June, are still officially secret. But the incentives include a light water reactor, an international fuel consortium to provide fuel for it, and parts for its U.S. aircraft, U.S. officials said. The "disincentives" include a menu of options that fall into three categories -- travel restrictions for officials, economic restrictions, and financial or trade restrictions. They do not include sanctions on oil or gas exports.

Denying Iran access to financial markets and an ability to move money around are considered the most serious.

Once the five permanent Security Council members and Germany agree to use the sticks, they would then select which actions to take, U.S. and European officials said.

But the United States may face further hurdles in winning agreement. Although there is unanimity behind the proposal, there is no specific agreement about a final deadline or at what point disincentives should be used.

Staff writer Michael A. Fletcher contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/10/AR2006071001232.html>

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New York Times
July 12, 2006

Japan And South Korea Wrangle Over Response To North's Missiles

By Choe Sang-hun

SEOUL, South Korea, Wednesday, July 12 — South Korea angrily accused Japan of arrogant and reckless remarks on Tuesday, a day after Japanese leaders raised what South Koreans consider a chilling possibility: a pre-emptive strike on North Korea that would violate Japan's Constitution.

As discord between Washington's major allies in the region worsened, Christopher R. Hill, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, returned to China. After landing in Beijing, he urged North Korea to return to six-party talks and stood by a draft United Nations resolution to impose sanctions on North Korea for launching seven missiles in tests last week, according to Reuters.

"We continue to be guided by the need to make a strong united statement to the North Koreans," Reuters quoted Mr. Hill as telling reporters at his Beijing hotel before heading to a meeting with the Chinese foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing.

Attention focused on whether Beijing, North Korea's main ally, could persuade the North to return to the table. But China said it did not expect a quick resolution, nor did it support the push by Japan and the United States for sanctions. It said such a resolution would be an "overreaction."

"If approved, it will aggravate contradictions and increase tension," China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Jiang Yu, said at a news conference. "It will harm peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian region, and hurt efforts to resume six-party talks, as well as lead to the U.N. Security Council splitting."

Mr. Hill's trip came hours after the Security Council delayed for a second day a vote on the Japan-sponsored resolution, which officials in China and South Korea fear could also lay the groundwork for military action against the North.

The Council delayed the vote while the Chinese deputy foreign minister and chief nuclear negotiator, Wu Dawei, was talking with the North Koreans in Pyongyang, the North's capital. Mr. Wu's mission was critical for Washington because Japan and South Korea continued to quarrel over how to respond to North Korea's action, a split that experts say North Korea will exploit.

"There was an important decision to postpone the vote on the resolution, because the Chinese government had an important diplomatic mission going on," Mr. Hill told reporters in Beijing. "Obviously we are in a rather crucial period."

Mr. Wu's visit to Pyongyang was seen as a test of China's increasingly doubtful influence over North Korea.

Separately, Yang Hyong-sop, vice president of the North Korean Parliament, arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for a trip that was scheduled to include a meeting with President Hu Jintao.

South Korea on Tuesday opened cabinet-level talks with a North Korean delegation. The talks in the South Korean port city of Pusan were expected to focus on the missile test and the North's nuclear programs.

Since the missile tests, Washington has been trying to forge a coordinated response with China, South Korea, Japan and Russia. But a rift quickly developed in and outside the United Nations.

On Monday, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, Shinzo Abe, said it was time for Japan to consider the legality of pre-emptive strikes on missile bases in North Korea, even though the Japanese military does not have the capacity for such a strike.

South Korean officials quickly denounced his remarks. On Tuesday in Seoul, Jung Tae-ho, a spokesman for President Roh Moo-hyun, called the remarks "senseless" and said they could "amplify" the crisis.

Mr. Jung said Mr. Abe's comments "exposed Japan's tendency to invade" other nations. China and South Korea were invaded by Japan in the first half of the 20th century.

At the Security Council, China, supported by Russia, on Monday submitted its own draft of a nonbinding statement to replace a far stronger Japanese resolution, which calls for sanctions. China and Russia have the power to veto any resolution.

Although South Korea and China condemn North Korea's missile test, they also fear that if the government is pushed into a corner, it might resort to more provocations.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/12/world/asia/12missile.html>

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Washington Post

July 12, 2006

Pg. 11

China Critical Of U.N. Draft On N. Korea

By Edward Cody, Washington Post Foreign Service

BEIJING, July 11 -- China said Tuesday that a draft U.N. resolution on North Korea backed by the United States was an "overreaction" to the country's recent missile tests and that the proposed sanctions would likely complicate efforts to restart negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear program.

The declaration, read by a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, suggested that Chinese officials believe the best way to deflate tensions in the region is to get North Korea to return to six-party talks on nuclear disarmament, regardless of whether the Stalinist nation pledges to refrain from further missile testing.

"China is opposed to the draft resolution . . . because that resolution is an overreaction," said the spokeswoman, Jiang Yi. "We think the response should not be an overreaction that would further intensify the problem. We think all measures should be conducive to resolution of the situation through dialogue."

At the United Nations, British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said a member of the Security Council had indicated that any vote on the North Korea resolution would "not have produced an outcome," suggesting a veto was likely. Officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, identified the member as China.

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, the Bush administration's top envoy to the six-party talks, consulted in Beijing with Chinese officials about a current mission to North Korea by senior Chinese diplomats. Hill and other U.S. officials have said they hope China will use its leverage to persuade North Korea to return to negotiations.

"Obviously, we are in a rather crucial period," Hill told reporters in Beijing.

The United States was particularly keen to see progress from the Chinese mission because Beijing, arguing the need for dialogue, has objected to the tough Security Council resolution proposed by Japan and supported by the United States, Britain and France. In its place, China proposed a council statement -- without the force of law or threat of sanctions -- that would urge countries to voluntarily impose a ban on trade in ballistic missiles and other technology to North Korea that could be used to produce nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Chinese ambassador at the United Nations, Wang Guangya, expressed concern that the resolution proposed by Japan could be used as a legal basis for military action against North Korea. In Beijing, Jiang stressed the need to maintain an atmosphere conducive to resumption of the Chinese-sponsored six-party nuclear talks, which have been stalled since September.

Without specifically mentioning North Korea's July 4 missile tests, Chinese President Hu Jintao on Tuesday voiced opposition to "any action that may worsen the situation in the Korean Peninsula," the official New China News Agency reported.

The Bush administration and its allies said they would not push for adoption of the U.N. resolution for the time being to give China's diplomacy a chance to work. As a result, Beijing found itself center stage in a widely watched effort to wheedle cooperation out of Kim Jong Il, the unpredictable North Korean leader, and Hill's return to Beijing strengthened that impression.

The starring role was not one Chinese officials relish. Although China is North Korea's chief ally and main oil supplier, its attempts to shepherd Kim into abolishing his nuclear weapons program have so far been unsuccessful. Jiang said she knew of no decision to pressure Kim into more cooperation now, such as holding back oil or food supplies.

The six-party talks, which China has sponsored since August 2003, have been suspended for nine months because North Korea refuses to return to the table, citing U.S. steps to halt distribution of counterfeit dollars by North Korean banks. The missile crisis has now been added to the mix, making the effort to cajole Kim into returning to the talks even more daunting.

Staff writer Colum Lynch at the United Nations contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/11/AR2006071100306.html>

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New York Times

July 12, 2006

At Europeans' Talks With Tehran About Its Nuclear Future, A Familiar Impasse Endures

By HELENE COOPER and [ELAINE SCIOLINO](#)

Published: July 12, 2006

PARIS, July 12 — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice suggested today that she will encourage foreign ministers from Europe, Russia and China to seek action from the United Nations Security Council in the face of Iran's reluctance to respond to an international proposal aimed at resolving a crisis over its nuclear program.

Ms. Rice's remarks as she arrived here a day after Iranian negotiators failed to give a definitive answer yesterday to a package of incentives meant to coax it into abandoning its nuclear ambitions. Last month, the foreign ministers from the world's eight richest nations had called for a formal response before a meeting of international diplomats today.

Ms. Rice said Iran's response "has been disappointing and incomplete."

"Apparently, and I just want to say apparently, they have decided that they want to move ahead with a program that is unacceptable to the international community," Ms. Rice told reporters on her plane. "That then means that we would be on the path to the Security Council."

Five weeks after the world's major powers offered [Iran](#) economic and political rewards if it agreed to freeze important nuclear activities, Iran has neither accepted nor rejected the offer, nor even set a date for when it would respond. And it has argued that the [United States](#) and its allies have set unrealistic preconditions for talks. Indeed, when the two sides met in Brussels on Tuesday, they simply talked past each other, again dashing expectations that the incentives proposal would reinvigorate negotiations. Instead, the talks have stalled, ensuring that nothing will be accomplished before the summit meeting of industrial countries that opens this weekend in St. Petersburg, [Russia](#).

"We're still talking about the framework for talks, not at all about the substance," one European official said.

In effect, Iran has begun negotiating on its own terms, rejecting the six countries' condition that Tehran freeze all uranium-enrichment activities before substantive talks can begin, and daring them to do something about it.

"We should have more time — be patient and try to negotiate," Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, told reporters after three hours of meetings with [Javier Solana](#), the [European Union](#) foreign policy chief, and senior European negotiators.

He repeated Iran's oft-stated position that there are "various ambiguities in the package," but declined to say what they were because the incentives package has never formally been made public.

He also refused to be pinned down about a deadline for a formal response.

He said Iran would have to wait until various committees studying the proposal had time to finish their work, adding that Iran had the legal right under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to continue enriching uranium.

In addition to refusing to cease enrichment, Iranian officials are skeptical that the West will deliver on whatever incentives are agreed upon, particularly light-water nuclear reactors.

And there appear to be divisions among the Iranians on how hard a line to pursue in negotiations.

That the two sides failed to bridge the gaps was painfully obvious in the terse public statements by Mr. Larijani and Mr. Solana. They did not characterize the talks as positive. There was no warmth between them. They took no questions. They did pledge to stay in contact.

European officials were furious, saying their governments had been lured into talking to Iran while that country was still enriching uranium and while action at the [United Nations Security Council](#) was on hold.

More than once during Tuesday's talks, Mr. Larijani tried to draw the other side into making a commitment to negotiate without Iran first suspending enrichment, a stance that Mr. Solana made clear was impossible, European officials said.

"We're disappointed," said one of the officials. "They didn't seek to clarify elements of the proposal - beyond questioning our sincerity, that is."

In the meetings, Mr. Larijani asked for unambiguous assurances that the world powers were "sincere," noting that talk about regime change in Iran created an atmosphere of distrust, the official said.

The problem, one European official said, is that the Iranian side laid out no coherent negotiating position, only generalities, and is therefore, "difficult to understand."

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity under normal diplomatic rules.

Mr. Larijani also asked for unambiguous assurances that the world powers were "sincere," noting that talk about regime change in Iran created an atmosphere of distrust, a European official said.

Tuesday's talks included representatives from Russia, France, Germany and Britain for the first time since Mr. Solana presented the offer in Tehran on June 6.

The United States was not at the table because it had agreed to meet with Iran only after Iran froze its uranium enrichment and formal negotiations began. China, the sixth country involved, did not send a representative.

Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#) and the foreign ministers of France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China will meet on Wednesday in Paris with Mr. Solana to discuss the next steps, including whether to take Iran's case to the Security Council once again for possible punishment. Given the resistance by Russia and China to punitive action, deciding on a unified plan of action may prove difficult.

To some American and European officials, the Iranians' refusal to take a stand is nothing more than stalling while they continue to produce enriched uranium, which can be used to generate energy or fuel bombs. Iranian officials say otherwise, demanding first that there be no preconditions - specifically a freeze on its enrichment activities - in advance of formal negotiations. These officials have also said the incentives package came only after Tehran succeeded in running a 164-centrifuge cascade to enrich uranium. To give up their only bargaining chip would be foolish, they say.

A second demand from Tehran is that it be given guarantees that the incentives will be delivered. Iranian officials have said they have no confidence that the Bush administration will provide sophisticated technology, particularly if there is opposition from Congress.

Another reason for the delay is apparently a lack of consensus inside Iran.

Mr. Larijani, who is also secretary of the Supreme [National Security Council](#), reports directly to Ayatollah [Ali Khamenei](#), Iran's spiritual leader and the country's most powerful official.

Mr. Larijani does not have full authority over the Iranian nuclear dossier, and operates in an environment of fluid power politics. Some senior clerics and political figures have called for an outright rejection of the proposal.

His predecessor was fired last year for appearing too soft in failed talks with Europe over a less generous incentives package.

At times in Tuesday's talks, Mr. Larijani said he could not answer the questions posed, one European official said. Iran's Atomic Energy Agency, which is responsible for running Iran's nuclear facilities and keeping its scientists working, has consistently taken a harder line on curbing enrichment.

For his part, Ayatollah Khamenei has made clear in high-level meetings that he does not trust the world powers to make good on their promises, according to Iranian officials familiar with the meetings.

He is particularly distrustful of the United States, which he believes is using the talks as a pretext to eventually harm Iran, but has told his nuclear team that in the interest of "consensus," he would allow them to continue to negotiate, the officials said.

It is unclear how much influence President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) wields in this. Some Iranian officials have said in private that he is an important, if extreme, voice who enjoys the support of the masses but needs to be educated on the language of diplomacy.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/12/world/middleeast/12iran.html?pagewanted=1>

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Christian Science Monitor

July 12, 2006

Pg. 9

Diplomacy Or Defense? US Tries Both Against Nuclear Wannabes

Can North Korea and Iran be persuaded to forgo their nuclear programs?

By John Hughes

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. -- In a concrete and steel mini-city 2,400 feet below the surface of Cheyenne Mountain, some of the 1,100 US and Canadian military and civilian personnel assigned to NORAD here were witness last week to an amazing contrast.

First they monitored the successful launch of the US shuttle Discovery into space to rendezvous with the International Space Station and transfer supplies to the American and Russian astronauts in residence there.

Then a few minutes later, and hardly by coincidence, they monitored North Korea's launch of an intercontinental missile, the Taepodong-2, which failed miserably and tumbled like a damp squib into the Sea of Japan thousands of miles from what might have been its target.

The men and women of NORAD (the North American Aerospace Defense Command), whose mission is to "detect, intercept, and engage" any hostile aircraft or ballistic missiles approaching the North American continent, were on high alert in their underground operations center, measuring in seconds, from a worldwide system of sensors, the speed and trajectory of the North Korean missile. Had it continued flying, and had it contained a threatening warhead, they would have flashed the word to US and Canadian leaders for activation of a wide-ranging air defense system.

We are now poised at a juncture in history that will decide whether such installations like NORAD will ever have to defend against an incoming missile with a nuclear warhead, or whether rogue nations such as North Korea and Iran that aspire to develop such weapons of mass destruction can be persuaded to forgo them.

For now, diplomacy is in play. North Korea, having just fired its intercontinental rocket and a barrage of shorter-range missiles, is center stage. It has done so despite warnings not to from a mentorlike China - its lifeline for fuel and food and its largest trading partner. There has been widespread international condemnation. China has lost face.

But the Pyongyang regime has captured front-page headlines around the globe. Is that, as some observers say, what this is all about - a quest by North Korea's leader Kim Jong Il to capture the limelight and be taken seriously? A ploy to spook the West, particularly the US, into giving his impoverished nation the most profitable array of incentives, in exchange for a promise to abandon his development of nuclear weapons? One fact playing into this argument is that the North Koreans positioned their Taepodong-2 on a launchpad clearly visible to US satellites, and pursued a leisurely process of fueling it, while apparently reveling in the world's suspense.

Some diplomats suggest that Kim may be miffed by the posturing in Tehran that has gained Iran international attention, and an offer to Iran of direct talks with the US, which have so far been denied to North Korea.

While wisely maintaining that all options, including military, are ultimately on the table as the West seeks to prevent both North Korea and Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, President Bush has been at pains to stress that diplomacy and persuasion are currently dominant.

With Iran, Mr. Bush has until recently let Western European nations take the lead, keeping the US in the background. But as Iran has prevaricated on and postponed decisions on Western proposals, the US has become more proactive and directly involved.

In the case of North Korea, Bush has insisted on six-nation discussions - China, Russia, Japan, the US, and South Korea meeting with North Korea. Kim Jong Il would dearly like the image-enhancing breakthrough of a meeting with the American president. Bush has resisted this, pushing China, which has the most leverage with North Korea, to the forefront.

Why the possibility of direct US-Iran talks, but not US-North Korean? "Different situations," says Bush.

Meanwhile the United Nations Security Council is the setting for immediate debate over North Korea's missile-firing and threats that it will continue to pursue nuclear weapons. China and Russia are balking at a tough resolution, with the implicit threat of sanctions against North Korea, from other Security Council members. Another UN forum, the International Atomic Energy Agency is the setting for attempts to get Iran to forgo nuclear weapons. Iran is pondering a package of incentives from Western nations but is irritating its interlocutors by delaying a response. For now, diplomacy rules. NORAD can stand down but stay alert.

John Hughes, a former editor of the Monitor, is editor and chief operating officer of the Deseret Morning News.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0712/p09s01-cojh.html>

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Washington Times

July 13, 2006

Pg. 4

N. Korea Has More Missiles, U.S. Says

Rumsfeld: None ready to launch

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has disclosed that North Korea has produced up to five additional long-range missiles, but that none appears ready for launch.

"We do believe and they're assessed to have something like three or four or five additional Taepodong-2 airframes somewhere in their country," Mr. Rumsfeld said in an interview Saturday with radio talk-show host Monica Crowley.

However, the defense secretary said that "there are no Taepodong-2s on launching pads at the present time."

"The one they fired didn't work and it failed," he said.

Mr. Rumsfeld said North Korea poses a danger because of Pyongyang's admission that it possesses nuclear weapons and its demonstrated ballistic-missile capability.

"We do not at the moment know whether or not they have developed the ability to mate a nuclear weapon with a ballistic missile," he said.

A transcript of the radio interview was made public yesterday by the Pentagon. It was the first official mention of North Korea's additional long-range missiles, which have a range of up to 9,300 miles.

North Korea has not been able to successfully show that it has an intercontinental missile, "although the intelligence people estimate that the TD-2 does have that capability," Mr. Rumsfeld said.

"They just haven't demonstrated it yet," he said. "But they're a worrisome country."

Asked whether the United States should take pre-emptive military action against North Korea to stop further launches, Mr. Rumsfeld said President Bush has decided to use diplomacy in coordination with the governments of China, South Korea, Japan and Russia to deal with the problem.

"Time will tell whether that will work," he said.

A military official at the Colorado-based U.S. Northern Command said U.S. military sensors are continuing to monitor North Korea for signs of missile activity.

"We're not aware of anything that is imminent," the official said.

Mr. Rumsfeld said North Korea is a leading rogue state that is selling ballistic-missile technology, counterfeiting U.S. currency, trafficking in illicit drugs and is on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism.

"One has to believe that they would be willing to sell fissile material if they believed they had a sufficient quantity,"

Mr. Rumsfeld said. "So they represent an immediate threat from a proliferation standpoint."

Meanwhile, the Pentagon conducted a successful test yesterday of a new missile-defense system designed to shoot down missiles as they approach their targets in the so-called terminal phase of flight.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, shot down a target missile at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, according to Defense Department officials.

The THAAD is an Army missile defense used to shoot down short-range missiles, and deployment is expected in 2009.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20060712-110557-5240r.htm>

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New York Times

July 13, 2006

New North Korea Resolution Offered

By Warren Hoge and Joseph Kahn

UNITED NATIONS, July 12 — China and Russia introduced a draft resolution on North Korea in the Security Council on Wednesday and asked the Council's members to consider it in place of a Japanese-sponsored resolution, to which they both have objected, that would have allowed for military enforcement and sanctions.

In offering the new measure, Wang Guangya, the Chinese ambassador, said he had instructions from his government to veto the Japanese resolution if it were put to a vote.

Japan and its resolution's co-sponsors, Britain, France and the United States, have been putting off a vote this week at the request of China, which said action by the Council would interfere with a Chinese diplomatic mission now in North Korea.

In Beijing, an American official praised China's diplomatic efforts and called for a unified response to North Korea's missile tests, but it was clear that fissures between the main Asian powers had overshadowed any common stance that might put pressure on North Korea.

Christopher R. Hill, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, held talks in Beijing but prepared to return to Washington on Thursday morning without any sign that North Korea was prepared to return to six-nation disarmament talks. He called North Korea's stance "discouraging."

The new Chinese-Russian draft resolution covers many of the same demands on North Korea that the Japanese-drafted measure does, but it significantly does so without resorting to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which would allow for military enforcement, and without proposing sanctions against North Korea for noncompliance.

China and Russia had opposed those aspects of the original measure, saying they would destabilize the region and be viewed by North Korea as a provocation.

The text of the Chinese-Russian resolution "strongly deplores" last week's North Korean tests, calls on member states to work to prevent North Korea from receiving or selling missile-related items and "strongly urges" it to return without precondition to the six-nation talks.

Kenzo Oshima, the Japanese ambassador, said his government needed time to judge the new text. "But a quick glance at the text shows there are very serious gaps on very important issues," he said. He did not specify them.

John R. Bolton, the American ambassador, said the United States still backed the Japanese resolution but welcomed the new measure because it was in the form of a resolution rather than a nonbinding presidential statement that the Chinese and Russians had earlier insisted was sufficient.

He said it "puts us on an apples-to-apples and oranges-to-oranges basis and now we can talk about a resolution, which is the appropriate measure through which the Security Council should act."

China, which has engaged in intensive talks with North Korea in recent days, said sanctions imposed on North Korea last fall by the United States Treasury Department must be lifted before North Korea would resume discussions about its weapons programs. "We hope the U.S. can take measures to help the six-nation talks resume by compromising on the sanctions," said Liu Jianchao, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman. "We don't want to see this impasse drag on forever."

The Treasury Department in October seized the American assets of eight North Korean companies it accused of helping proliferate weapons and imposed sanctions on Banco Delta Asia of Macao, accused of helping to launder North Korean money.

Mr. Hill, speaking to reporters on Wednesday afternoon, reiterated the Bush administration's position that financial sanctions would not be eased until North Korea stopped its nuclear weapons and long-range missile programs and ended efforts to counterfeit American currency.

"We have a country that seems to be more interested in missiles than providing electricity or food for its people," he said. "We are looking for ways to prevent" North Korea "from financing these activities, and frankly that's what we should be doing."

The six-nation talks reached a preliminary accord calling for North Korean nuclear disarmament last September but have since foundered, with North Korea declining to participate in multilateral discussions while the United States imposes sanctions. Japan, South Korea and Russia are also involved in the talks.

China's call to ease financial sanctions suggests that it is still occupying the middle ground between the United States and North Korea, or even tilting slightly toward North Korea despite its missile tests.

North Korea defied appeals from China as well as the United States and other major powers when it test-fired the seven missiles last week.

Bush administration officials clearly hoped that the tests, which appeared to come as a surprise to China, would prompt it to take a much tougher approach to North Korea, its Communist ally and neighbor. So far, however, China appears to be sticking to its role as honest broker, hoping to maintain close relations with both parties and pushing them toward direct talks.

Warren Hoge reported from the United Nations for this article, and Joseph Kahn from Beijing.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/13/world/asia/13korea.html>

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New York Times

July 13, 2006

Russia And China Inch Toward Iran Sanctions

By Helene Cooper

PARIS, July 12 — Russia and China, crossing a diplomatic threshold in the effort to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions, joined the United States and Europe on Wednesday by agreeing to seek a United Nations Security Council resolution ordering Iran to freeze some nuclear activities, or face sanctions.

The movement toward a resolution represented increased anger over Iran's refusal to respond to an offer of economic and energy incentives if it suspended its uranium enrichment.

Though punitive sanctions are in no way certain, agreeing to start down a road that could lead to them is a huge step for Moscow and Beijing, commercial partners of Tehran that have long resisted attempts by the United States and Europe to punish Iran at the United Nations.

For the past five weeks, the biggest question on the incentives, presented to Iran in June, has been whether the fragile coalition of six countries making the offer would pursue sanctions if Iran refused to accept.

After a two-and-a-half-hour meeting of foreign ministers on Wednesday at the ornate Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, the answer seemed clear — for now at least.

"The Iranians have given no indication at all that they are ready to engage seriously on the substance of our proposals," Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said in a terse statement on behalf of the group, which includes Germany and Britain. "We express profound disappointment over this situation."

The group agreed to seek a Security Council resolution that would make suspension of enrichment mandatory.

"Should Iran refuse to comply," the statement added, "then we will work for the adoption of measures" under an article of the United Nations Charter that allows for nonmilitary punitive sanctions.

Bush administration officials characterized the statement as a victory, particularly for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's gamble that she could get China and Russia to proceed on a diplomatic path that could result in sanctions if the United States first made Iran a strong offer of incentives. American and European officials said Iran, by refusing to accept or reject the offer, might have miscalculated its support from Russia and China.

"This is a significant decision that frankly reflects the disappointment and frustration of our countries by the lack of a serious response from the Iranian government," said R. Nicholas Burns, under secretary of state for political affairs. "Iran has given us no choice."

That said, it is far from certain whether the unity of the six countries will hold.

Part of the reason American and European negotiators have chosen this moment to issue ultimatums is that the Group of 8 summit meeting is being held this weekend in St. Petersburg, Russia. This is the first time Russia serves

as host, and Moscow seems to want to avoid having the talks dominated by the failure of major powers to agree on how to deal with Iran. Once the summit meeting is over, the leverage will be gone. Indeed, sanctions are still way off. A senior American official said diplomats planned to meet at the United Nations next week to draft a resolution ordering Iran to suspend its enrichment activities, including turning off the fast-spinning centrifuges that enrich uranium.

If Iran does not comply, the group would then seek harsher action. But the statement on Wednesday gave no timetable. The senior American official said Iran would be given "a number of days" to comply.

At the United Nations, John R. Bolton, the American ambassador, said, "Obviously, we will be consulting here beginning this afternoon to carry out the direction that the foreign ministers have given us."

The group of six nations said it could stop the Security Council action at any time, provided Iran suspended its uranium enrichment. The United States has set the suspension as a condition for holding direct high-level talks with Iran; diplomatic ties were severed when revolutionaries seized the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979.

Before the group issued its statement, Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said Wednesday: "We are willing to negotiate about our nuclear program based on fair principles. If the circumstances are unjust, our people will not back down."

The six countries agreed on a list of possible sanctions but have not yet decided which ones might be imposed. The list includes travel restrictions on Iranian officials, a ban on cultural exchanges and visas for Iranians, financial restrictions, political sanctions and even an oil embargo, although the latter is seen as highly unlikely and one that could further rattle global markets.

The incentives presented to Iran include access to light-water nuclear reactors, support for Tehran's entry into the World Trade Organization, lifting a ban on selling aircraft and parts to Iran and other economic measures.

Mr. Ahmadinejad has said that, "God willing," Iran would respond to the offer by late August. But in a news conference in Brussels on Tuesday, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, refused to be pinned down to any deadline.

Wednesday's meeting of foreign ministers brought with it some bickering between Secretary Rice and her Russian counterpart, Sergey V. Lavrov, diplomats said. There was quick agreement on the text of the statement by deputy ministers, but Mr. Lavrov and Ms. Rice, much as they did two weeks ago in Moscow, criticized each other over other points, including the tactics and timing of the action in the Security Council.

"We had to take into account Russian concerns that we not take steps that would lead Iran to overshadow the G-8," one European official said.

Russian officials were also concerned that the resolution not eventually lead to military action against Iran.

Elaine Sciolino contributed reporting from Paris for this article, Warren Hoge from the United Nations, and Nazila Fathi from Tehran.

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Washington Times

July 14, 2006

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Missile Crisis Diplomacy Crumbles

U.S., China, South at loss

By Andrew Salmon, The Washington Times

SEOUL -- Diplomatic maneuvers to resolve the North Korean missile crisis collapsed yesterday, with Chinese talks in Pyongyang fruitless, the U.S. chief negotiator flying home empty-handed and a North Korean Cabinet-level delegation walking out of talks with South Korean counterparts.

After a week of shuttle diplomacy, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill left the region yesterday. "The Chinese are as baffled as we are," Mr. Hill told the Associated Press in Beijing. "They sent a good delegation up to Pyongyang, showed a real interest in trying to work with the DPRK, but it does not appear to have been reciprocated."

The DPRK, or Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is the official name for North Korea.

Meanwhile, in the South Korean port of Pusan yesterday, North-South Cabinet-level meetings broke down a day earlier than scheduled.

South Korea had attempted to persuade the Northern delegation to resume a moratorium on missile tests and return to six-party nuclear talks.

The Chinese delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, made a similar appeal during a visit to the North Korean capital. Beijing's delegation is expected to return home today.

Pyongyang has boycotted the six-nation talks, which involve the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia, citing U.S. financial sanctions against Banco Delta Asia in Macau.

After a U.S. Treasury Department warning last year that the bank was being used for illicit North Korean activities, Macau monetary authorities froze North Korean accounts at the bank.

The North requested 500,000 tons of fertilizer from South Korea at the Pusan talks on Wednesday, only to be rebuffed by South Korea's point man at the negotiations, Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok.

"What [Mr. Lee] said before and during the talks was that there could be no additional rice or fertilizer aid until there is some solution to exit this missile crisis. That's where we stand at this point," an official from the Unification Ministry said.

In Tokyo, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said it would press ahead with a prompt U.N. Security Council Resolution vote against North Korea.

Tokyo had agreed to delay the vote while diplomatic initiatives were in play.

"I think the U.S. and Japanese governments have to do something because of domestic pressure," said Andrei Lankov, a Russian specialist on North Korean affairs who teaches at Seoul's Kookmin University.

The United States, Britain and France support Tokyo's resolution, which would punish North Korea for its missile launches. China is expected to veto the Japanese resolution if it is submitted as is.

Should Tokyo and Washington impose bilateral sanctions, Pyongyang appears well-placed to ride them out.

"They could react bilaterally, but this will not cause major damage to North Korea, as North Korea depends essentially on aid from China and South Korea," Mr. Lankov said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20060713-100816-2779r.htm>

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New York Times

July 14, 2006

Iran Demands Patience From West On Nuclear Incentive Offer

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, July 13 — President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said in a defiant speech on Thursday that the West should be patient in awaiting his country's response to a package of proposed incentives in return for freezing its nuclear program.

"We have tried to be positive in our examination of the package," Mr. Ahmadinejad said in his speech in Mianeh, in northwestern Iran, the ISNA student news agency reported. He said again that Iran would announce a decision in late August.

The offer of trade and other incentives to Iran came from the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia — plus Germany. Despite earlier reluctance by Russia and China to seek United Nations Security Council action, the six countries said Wednesday at a meeting in Paris that they would refer the case to the Council. They said Iran had had enough time to respond. Diplomats had told Iran they wanted a response by Wednesday, but Iran continued to say it needed until late August to evaluate the proposals, which it received in early June.

Mr. Ahmadinejad said Thursday that the Europeans, the main negotiators with Iran on its nuclear program, would bear the consequences if they tried to create tension.

"The Europeans should know that if there are any problems, they are the ones who will suffer," he said. "We do not want any tension. They should know that they cannot harm our people, and no power can harm our people in any way."

He does not have final authority to decide if Iran will accept the package. Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has the final say, and Iran's formal response is expected to be made by its chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani.

But Mr. Ahmadinejad's comments were Iran's first reaction to the announcement about seeking Security Council action.

Iran contends that its nuclear program is entirely for peaceful purposes. The United States and Europe say Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

In another speech on Thursday, in Sarab, a northwestern city, Mr. Ahmadinejad accused the United States of trying to stir up the dispute.

"I urge the Americans not to create any problems," he said. "We and the Europeans will resolve the issue on our own." He said Iran required more time to study the package.

At a news conference in Tehran on Thursday, Mr. Larijani urged Europe to continue the talks with Iran.

"If some are determined to complicate the process of talks, they are mistaken," he said, ISNA reported.

He also confirmed reports that Iran had complained to the International Atomic Energy Agency about one of its inspectors, but he said the agency had barred the inspector from Iran. Western diplomats said this week that Iran had barred Chris Charlier, the agency's section chief for Iran, from coming for several months.

"We made a complaint about the way he worked, and it was the decision of the agency to bar him from coming," Mr. Larijani said.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/14/world/middleeast/14iran.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Washington Times

July 14, 2006

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Bush Says Iran's Nukes Now An Issue For U.N.

By Joseph Curl, The Washington Times

STRALSUND, Germany -- President Bush said yesterday that Iran's "deadline passed" on responding to a coalition of countries that are demanding the nation give up its nuclear ambitions and said the matter is now fully in the hands of the U.N. Security Council.

Meeting with a new ally in this town on the Baltic Sea, the president said Iranian leaders did not meet the deadline of "weeks, not months" set in May because "they evidently didn't believe us."

"Their deadline passed, right. That's why we're going to the U.N. Security Council," Mr. Bush said in a joint press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Mrs. Merkel was elected in November and took over from Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who vehemently opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq and ran for re-election on an anti-American theme.

Yesterday, Mrs. Merkel strongly supported Mr. Bush's stance on Iran.

"The international community actually submitted a very substantial, very fundamental offer to Iran, starting from the firm view that Iran should not be in possession of a nuclear weapon," she said.

Iran's president responded later yesterday by saying the nation would not abandon its right to nuclear technology.

"Our answer ... is clear, the Iranian nation abides by international laws and regulations but will not abandon its obvious right to obtain nuclear technology," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by state TV.

"We are trying to investigate the proposed package positively," Mr. Ahmadinejad said, adding that Iran would give its final reply by Aug. 22 despite pressure for a swifter response.

Both Mr. Bush and Mrs. Merkel urged world leaders -- especially Russian President Vladimir Putin -- to unite to oppose Iran's stated plan to develop nuclear weapons and technology.

"It's really important for Europe to speak with one common voice. And it's important for Angela and myself to work with Vladimir Putin, which we will do at the G-8 [summit], to continue to encourage him to join us in saying to the Iranians loud and clear: We're not kidding, it's a serious issue, the world is united in insisting that you not have a nuclear weapons program," he said.

The two leaders, who will attend the Group of Eight summit that opens today in St. Petersburg, had some stern words for Mr. Putin, who along with China has opposed sanctions against Iran and North Korea.

"I, for one, think that as regards, for example, Iran, this responsibility ought to be shouldered by more and more countries -- that goes for Russia, that goes for China," Mrs. Merkel said. "It will only be if we act in concert that we will be able to vanquish the tyrants, remove dictatorships and contain those who sponsor terrorism."

Mr. Bush, for his part, said, "nobody really likes to be lectured a lot," but he will again privately urge Mr. Putin to move his nation toward a more open democracy.

"I've expressed my opinion to President Putin. You might remember my visit with him in Slovakia where I was quite pointed in my concerns about whether or not there is a free and vibrant press in Russia. We share concerns about the ability for people to go to the town square and express their opinions, and whether or not dissent is tolerated, whether or not there's active political opposition," Mr. Bush said.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20060713-110720-6265r.htm>

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