

Testimony of Ambassador Stephen Bosworth
Special Representative for North Korea Policy
U.S. Department of State
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 11, 2009

Chairman Kerry, Ranking Member Lugar, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today about one of our most important foreign policy challenges, that of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

BACKGROUND

North Korea's April 5 test of a Taepodong-2 missile and its May 25 nuclear test were serious and unacceptable threats to international peace and security that violated existing Security Council Resolutions and raised questions about North Korea's intentions to honor its commitments to achieve complete and verifiable denuclearization. After the April missile test, the UN Security Council condemned the launch and tightened sanctions against North Korea's missile and military programs. In response, North Korea then threatened other dangerous and provocative measures, including conducting another nuclear test, if the Security Council did not "apologize" to North Korea. On May 25, North Korea conducted what it announced to the world as an underground nuclear test. In immediately condemning this behavior, President Obama noted that North Korea's actions pose a "direct and reckless challenge" to the international community.

As a result of North Korea's actions, the international community has reached an important moment for the security of Northeast Asia. If North Korea does not heed the unanimous call of the international community and return to negotiations to achieve the irreversible dismantlement of their nuclear and ballistic missile capacity, the United States and our allies in the region will need to take the necessary steps to assure our security in the face of this growing threat. In the interest of all concerned, we hope that North Korea will choose the path of diplomacy rather than confrontation.

U.S. RESPONSES

To meet the challenge of North Korea's recent actions, the United States is acting promptly and seriously through a four-pronged strategy: close regional consultation and cooperation, UN and national sanctions, appropriate defensive measures and, if North Korea shows serious willingness, diplomatic engagement to negotiate a path to denuclearization.

First, we are consulting with our allies and partners in Asia, especially those who have worked in recent years through the Six-Party Talks to ensure a denuclearized North Korea. President Obama and Secretary Clinton have been in the forefront of this effort, reaching out to leaders in Japan, South Korea, China and Russia to emphasize the importance of the international community conveying a strong, unified response to Pyongyang that it will suffer consequences if it does not reverse course. Last week, I participated in a mission to Japan, the Republic of Korea and China, led by Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, where we reiterated this point. Our partners share our view that North Korea's nuclear and missile threat is a challenge to the international order and a hindrance to lasting stability in Northeast Asia that must be addressed. We found that our Asian partners agree that North Korea's provocative behavior is changing the security situation in Northeast Asia. We agreed to take coordinated steps to get North Korea to reverse its latest provocative steps.

As North Korea's neighbor, traditional ally, and primary aid and trade partner, China has an important role to play in influencing the path North Korea follows. On our recent trip, we found that China shared a deep concern about North Korea's recent actions, and a strong commitment to achieve denuclearization. Our challenge now is to work with China to turn that commitment into effective implementation of the UNSC Resolutions.

Second, we are responding to North Korea's provocative actions with new measures designed to raise the cost to North Korea for going down this dangerous path. We are working with other Security Council members on a range of measures to prevent North Korea from engaging in the proliferation of dangerous technologies and to dry up funding for its nuclear and missile-related entities and other companies.

Third, we are, in conjunction with our allies, taking prudent steps to implement defensive measures aimed at enhancing our military capacity and our extended deterrence in the region. On our recent mission, we began to outline a

future plan of responses and defensive measures that the United States and its allies will take should North Korea refuse to adjust course and should it continue its announced plans for provocative behavior, including future missile or nuclear tests. We are committed to do what is necessary to protect the American people and to honor our commitment to our treaty allies.

Fourth and finally, we remain willing to engage North Korea to resolve our differences through diplomacy, including bilaterally, within the framework of the Six-Party process. A central tenet of the Obama Administration's foreign policy approach to date has been a willingness to engage in dialogue with those with which we have had differences, sometimes very serious differences. From the beginning, this has been the approach we have pursued with North Korea. But North Korea greeted the open hand of the new Administration with preparations to launch a ballistic missile. When I was appointed by the President and Secretary Clinton, I proposed to the North Koreans a visit to Pyongyang, in the spirit of engagement, rather than threat. To this day, I have received no response.

On our trip, we made clear that the United States remains open to bilateral dialogue with North Korea in conjunction with the multilateral effort to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. As we have repeatedly stated, the United States has no hostile intent towards the people of North Korea, nor are we threatening to change the North Korean regime through force. We remain committed to the September 2005 Joint Statement from the Six-Party Talks, the core goal of which is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through peaceful means. We believe it benefits North Korea's own best interests to return to serious negotiations to pursue this goal. The United States position remains unchanged: we will not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.

In conclusion, diplomatic outreach will remain possible if North Korea shows an interest in abiding by its international obligations and improving its relations with the outside world. If not, the United States will do what it must do to provide for our security and that of our allies. We will work with the international community to take defensive measures and to bring significant pressure to bear for North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. The choices for the future are North Korea's.

Thank you again for inviting me to testify today. Before I take your questions, I would like to mention an important humanitarian matter that is unrelated to the political and security issues I have just addressed – the conviction and sentencing Monday of two American journalists in Pyongyang. As Secretary

Clinton has said, we appeal to North Korean authorities on humanitarian grounds to release these two women and return them to their families. Due to Privacy Act considerations, I am not able to answer questions about our detained citizens in this public hearing, but the Department of State appreciates the interest we have received from Members of Congress. I can assure you we are pursuing every possible approach that we can consider in order to persuade the North Koreans to release them and send these young women home.