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What's up with North Korea?

Missile launch gives North Korea bargaining chip

By JOHN FEFFER

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why North Korea just launched another rocket. The country wants attention. It craves the prestige of putting a satellite into orbit. It hopes to gather information for its missile program. And it's angling to up the ante in the great poker game called the Six-Party Talks that also involves the United States, Japan, South Korea, China, and Russia.

The stakes are certainly high. The launch could dramatically escalate tensions in the region. Or it could, like North Korea's nuclear test in 2006, provide a bracing reminder of the importance of diplomacy and compromise.

A satellite and a missile?

The rocket that puts a satellite into orbit is indistinguishable from a long-range missile. Only the nose cone and the trajectory are different. In 1998, North Korea also declared its rocket a satellite launch vehicle, while the United States and other countries called the rocket a missile. Some time after the launch, however, even the Pentagon agreed that North Korea had tried and failed to put a satellite into orbit. This year's launch, on a modified rocket, followed the same pattern.

North Korea has signed the appropriate international protocols governing satellites and has given the proper notification. The U.N. resolution sanctioning North Korea after its 2006 nuclear test does not explicitly forbid satellite launches.

Regardless of the ultimate reasons behind the rocket launch, North Korea's missile program isn't exactly world-class. Its 1998 test failed. Its 2006 test failed. Early reports suggest that the payload this time fell into the Pacific Ocean. So, it is 0 for 3. Given its battered economy and the global recession, Pyongyang isn't likely to get a robust program in place any time soon.

What's to gain?

A satellite would be an important feather in the cap of the Kim Jong Il regime in Pyongyang. Getting a satellite in orbit would make North Korea only the 12th country in the world to do so.

North Korea's leadership doesn't have very much to point to in terms of successes. Relations with South Korea have soured; no package of aid from Japan is coming in the near term; and ties with China are strained because Pyongyang rarely listens to Beijing's lectures.

The North Korean economy is in dismal shape, and the food

situation continues to be precarious. Finally, the current political leadership doesn't evoke the kind of adulation that founder Kim Il Sung inspired. The satellite, like near-membership in the nuclear club, helps the government keep a crisis of legitimacy at arm's length.

North Korea also knows that the West views its satellite launch as a signal, if the launch is successful, that it is that much closer to being able to deliver a weapon of mass destruction. Thus, it strengthens its position at the bargaining table.

Indeed, like the nuclear test in 2006, it can dramatically increase the stakes and give more urgency to the discussions, possibly extracting a better deal. At the poker table, it once held only one hole card the other players couldn't see, namely its nuclear program. With a missile program, particularly one of unknown dimensions and accuracy, it's developing a second hole card.

Finally, on a more mundane level, a rocket launch is the equivalent of a war in the sense of showing off the goods to potential buyers. North Korea hasn't been in a war for half a century. Potential buyers of its missiles get only rare glimpses of North Korea's wares in action and so will carefully scrutinize this rocket launch.

War?

The Obama administration wisely chose not to test its missile defense system and shoot down North Korea's rocket. For one thing, North Korea indicated that it would treat such behavior as an act of war. For another, the missile defense system might have failed, which would have been yet another embarrassment in a string of miss-hits for the Pentagon.

Tokyo vowed to shoot down anything that encroached on its territory, whether targeted missile, errant rocket, or debris. Fortunately, no debris ultimately fell on Japan. And North Korea did not follow through on its threat to shoot down any U.S. surveillance planes that encroach on its airspace.

Still, there are reasons for concern. As a result of the launch, South Korea has opted to join the Proliferation Security Initiative, a multilateral grouping formed during the George W. Bush administration. North Korea has declared South Korean membership an act of war as well.

While war can happen for the most inadvertent of reasons, no one in Northeast Asia is itching for a fight.



ROCKET PROTEST: South Korean activists burn a mock missile and portraits of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il during a rally against North Korea's rocket launch in Seoul on April 8, 2009. (JIM KAE-HWAN/AP/GETTY IMAGES)

The Six-Party Talks?

The Six-Party Talks have been stalled since December. There's disagreement over the terms of verifying the information that North Korea provided on its nuclear program over the summer of 2008. Washington still harbors suspicions about a possible second nuclear program, this one based on uranium enrichment rather than plutonium, as well as ties between North Korea and Syria.

North Korea, meanwhile, has been unhappy about the action-for-action response by the United States and others. Some sanctions against Pyongyang have been lifted, but many remain in place. Pyongyang has also complained about the pace of the energy shipments—a million tons of heavy fuel oil—that are supposed to correspond to the dismantlement of its nuclear facilities.

The Six-Party Talks have gone through several cycles of crisis and cooperation. The current disputes, rocket launch notwithstanding, aren't unsolvable. The verification issue is largely technical and requires a hard-nosed compromise between North Korea's fears of a breach of its military security and U.S. anxiety about being hoodwinked.

The two sides negotiated a secret memorandum over the summer covering the uranium enrichment program and proliferation concerns, so they're at least broaching these questions. Calibrating energy shipments and dismantlement is more a logistical problem than a political one—though delays on the Japanese and South Korean side have a political flavor. Still, if the parties reach agreement on the other outstanding disputes, the energy and dismantlement roadblock can be cleared.

It was widely assumed that North Korea's nuclear test in October 2006 would drive a stake through the heart of the six-party process. Instead, after a significant reversal of Bush administration policies, the negotiators were able to hammer out the Feb. 13, 2007 agreement, which still today provides a roadmap for a peaceful, non-nuclear Korean

peninsula.

U.S., Japanese, and South Korean approaches

Under President Lee Myung-bak, South Korea has taken a harder line against its northern neighbor on the peninsula. Inter-Korean relations have subsequently taken a nosedive. Japanese policy, influenced by the issue of North Korea's abduction of more than a dozen Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, has been consistently obdurate.

Ironically, it was the Bush administration, which lumped North Korea in the "axis of evil" in 2002 and subsequently refused to negotiate seriously with Pyongyang, that created an opening for progress in negotiations in the last couple years.

The Obama administration hasn't fully developed its North Korea policy yet, in part because many of the key appointments are only now being made. While all three countries make ritual obeisance to the principle of trilateral coordination, they each have different priorities.

Japan is transfixed by the abduction issue; South Korea has focused more on economic cooperation and the conventional military threat from the North; and the United States has cared above all about North Korea's nuclear program.

The challenge for the Obama administration will be to guide its allies through the current rough patch without allowing the conflict to escalate. President Barack Obama must acknowledge the concerns of Japan and South Korea, and then move quickly to pick up where the Bush administration left off.

What should Washington do?

The United States has pledged to bring the issue of the launch to the U.N. Security Council where its allies South Korea and Japan promise to push for new sanctions against the North.

But China and Russia won't back new sanctions. With a lack of consensus among the countries in the Six-Party Talks, the United States should play it cool and look for a diplomatic open-

ing in the new future. North Korea has indicated to a number of recent delegations that it's eager to talk to representatives of the Obama administration.

The United States should be looking at technical compromises that can break the deadlock over verification. At the same time, it should push forward with the larger engagement package, which includes a peace treaty to replace the Korean War armistice, concrete steps toward normalization, and a roadmap that Pyongyang can follow to become integrated in the global economy.

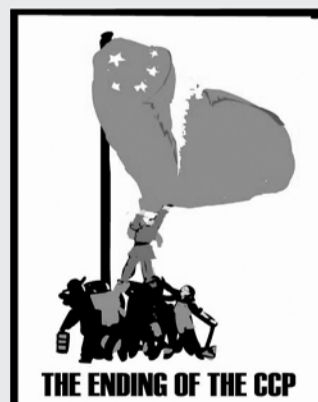
A side deal on North Korea's missile program, which was on the table at the end of the Clinton administration, might also go a long way toward allaying both Japanese and South Korean concerns. A narrow focus on non-proliferation, however, is a recipe for prolonged, fitful, and probably fruitless negotiations. Only by expanding the number of options on the table can the Obama administration make headway.

The Obama administration has several things going for it. The president has emphasized the importance of diplomacy and sitting down with countries with which the United States disagrees. It can take advantage of political appointments like Stephen Bosworth as special representative for North Korea policy and long-serving experts like Sung Kim, who will handle the Six-Party Talks negotiations, both of whom have considerable experience in the field.

First, though, Obama must resist the temptation to act out of frustration and anger. Adopting new sanctions, issuing harsh condemnations, and pulling out of negotiations with North Korea have yielded few results in the past. When the Bush administration went down this road, it turned out to be a six-year detour. Obama can save time and a great deal of nail-biting by taking the path of diplomacy.

John Feffer is codirector of Foreign Policy In Focus. This article first appeared in Foreign Policy In Focus, www.fpif.org.

QUITTING THE CCP



Inspired by the 'Nine Commentaries,' as of 20:21 EST, April 22nd, 2009

53,178,219

Chinese people have announced their intentions to quit the Chinese Communist Party and its affiliated organizations on a special Web site established by The Epoch Times. Many others, unable to break through the Chinese Internet blockade, have posted their withdrawal statements on poles or buildings. Others have written them on Chinese currency. Read recent statements of Chinese quitting the Party, the latest news on the "Nine Commentaries," and more at

http://www.NineCommentaries.com

The 'Nine Commentaries' is the book that is disintegrating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and changing China. This award-winning Epoch Times editorial series discloses the true history and nature of the CCP. Now it is serialized here.

Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party

Commentary Seven

On the Chinese Communist Party's history of killing

Killing has become one of the most essential ways for the CCP to maintain power. With the escalation of its bloody debts, laying down its butcher knife would encourage people to take vengeance for the CCP's criminal acts. Therefore, the CCP not only needed to conduct copious and thorough killing, but the slaughter also had to be done in a most brutal fashion to intimidate the populace effectively, especially early on, when the CCP was establishing its rule.

Since the purpose of the killing was to instill the greatest terror, the CCP selected targets for destruction arbitrarily and irrationally. In every political movement, the CCP used the strategy of genocide. Take the Suppression of the Counter-Revolutionary Movement as an example.

The CCP did not really suppress the reactionary behaviors, but the people whom they called the counter-revolutionaries. If one had been enlisted and served a few

days in the KMT Army but did absolutely nothing political after the CCP gained power, this person would still be killed because of his "reactionary history." In the process of land reform, in order to remove the "root of the problem," the CCP often killed a landowner's entire family.

Since 1949, the CCP has persecuted more than half the people in China. An estimated 60 million to 80 million people died from unnatural causes. This number exceeds the total number of deaths in both World Wars combined.

As with other communist countries, the wanton killing done by the CCP also includes brutal slayings of its own members in order to remove dissidents who value a sense of humanity over the Party nature. The CCP's rule of terror falls equally on the populace and its members in an attempt to maintain an "invincible fortress."

In a normal society, people show care and love for one another, hold life in awe and veneration, and give thanks to God. In the East, people say, "Do not impose on others what you would not want done to yourself." In the West, people say, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Conversely, the CCP holds that

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."ⁱⁱⁱ In order to keep alive the "struggles" within society, hatred must be generated. Not only does the CCP take lives, it encourages people to kill each other. It strives to desensitize people towards others' suffering by surrounding them with constant killing. It wants them to become numb from frequent exposure to inhumane brutality and develop the mentality that the best you can hope for is to avoid being persecuted. All these lessons taught by brutal suppression enable the CCP to maintain its rule.

In addition to the destruction of countless lives, the CCP also destroyed the soul of the Chinese people. A great many people have become conditioned to react to the CCP's threats by entirely surrendering their reason and their principles. In a sense, these people's souls have died—something more frightening than physical death.

I. Horrendous massacre

Before the CCP was in power, Mao Zedong wrote, "We definitely do not apply a policy of benevolence to the counter-revo-

lutionaries and towards the reactionary activities of the reactionary classes."^{iv} In other words, even before the CCP took over Beijing, it had already made up its mind to act tyrannically under the euphemism of the People's Democratic Dictatorship. The following are a few examples.

Suppression of the counter-revolutionaries and land reform

In March 1950, the CCP announced "Orders to Strictly Suppress Reactionary Elements," which is historically known as the movement of Suppression of the Counter-Revolutionaries.

Unlike all the emperors who granted amnesty to the entire country after they were crowned, the CCP started killing the minute it gained power. Mao Zedong said in a document, "There are still many places where people are intimidated and dare not kill the counter-revolutionaries openly on a large scale."^v

In February 1951, the central CCP said that except for Zhejiang Province and southern Anhui Province, "other areas which are not killing enough, especially in the large and mid-sized cities, should continue to arrest and kill

a large number and should not stop too soon."

Mao even recommended, "In rural areas, to kill the counter-revolutionaries, there should be over one thousandth of the total population killed ... in the cities, it should be less than one thousandth."^{vi} The population of China at that time was approximately 600 million, and this "royal order" from Mao would have caused at least 600,000 deaths.

Nobody knows where this ratio of one thousandth came from. Perhaps, on a whim, Mao decided these 600,000 lives should be enough to lay the foundation for creating fear among the people, and thus ordered it to happen.

ⁱ"The Analects of Confucius."

ⁱⁱ"Leviticus 19:18."

ⁱⁱⁱKarl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" (1848).

^{iv}Mao Zedong, "The People's Democratic Dictatorship" (1949).

^vMao Zedong, We Must Fully Promote [the Suppression of Counter-Revolutionaries] So Every Family is Informed (1951).

^{vi}Mao Zedong, We Must Forcefully and Accurately Strike the Counter-Revolutionaries (1951).