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North Korea: Anatomy of a Standoff

- North Korea has a very extensive missile production program, and is one of the most troublesome missile proliferants in the world, including a robust relationship with Iran. North Korea is not a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and missile exports are one of its primary sources of foreign currency.

July missile tests by North Korea

- On July 4-5, 2006, North Korea conducted seven missile tests: six short- and medium-range missiles; and one long-range missile. *A map of the ranges of North Korean missiles appears as an appendix to this paper.*
 - The Scuds are the short-range missiles, which can cover South Korea.
 - The Nodong missile is the medium range missile, which can reach Japan.
 - The test of the long-range missile, the Taepodong-2, is of particular concern because it is estimated that this missile has the potential to reach the Western continental United States. (It is a follow-on to the Taepodong-1, which North Korea tested in August 1998 when it fired the missile over Japan.)

Results of the Tests

- The Taepodong-2 missile suffered a massive failure very early in the flight and crashed into the Sea of Japan. The other six also splashed down in the Sea of Japan.

US Missile Defense

- Soon after the tests, the U.S. Northern Command stated that it was “immediately able to detect the launch of all the missiles,” and that the Ground-based Midcourse Defense interceptors “were operational during all the missile launches.” At the same time, “top officials from the command were able to quickly determine the missiles posed no threat to the United States or its territories.”¹
- When asked how the system was prepared to respond to North Korean missile launches, President Bush stated, “I think we had a reasonable chance of shooting it down. At least that’s what the military commanders told me.”

¹ United States Northern Command Press Release, July 4, 2006, *available at* http://www.northcom.mil/newsroom/news_release/2006/070406.htm.

Reaction to the Tests

- President Bush, Secretary Rice, and National Security Advisor Hadley have used the terms “defiant” and “provocative” to describe the missile tests.
- The Embassy of Japan released a statement that the government of Japan strongly protests and is deeply disappointed in the North Korean actions. In response, among other actions, Japan has:
 - banned entries of the Mangyongbong No. 92 (a major North Korean vessel commuting between Japan and North Korea) to Japanese ports;
 - suspended sending its officials to North Korea; and
 - refused to permit chartered flights from North Korea to Japan.²
- Taiwan’s President Cho issued a statement “strong[ly] condemn[ing] North Korea’s provocative act, which has severely threatened the peace of the Asian-Pacific region and the rest of the world.”
- As Ambassador Bolton has said, no U.N. Security Council “member defended what the North Koreans have done.”

Key Dates Leading to this Point

1993: North Korea claims to have quit the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (“NPT”), and then reverses that *decision*.

1994, October 21: Agreed Framework signed. North Korea pledges to freeze, and eventually dismantle, its nuclear weapons program in exchange for international aid to build two power-producing nuclear reactors and normalized relations with the United States.

1998, August 31: North Korea tests the Taepodong-1 missile, which flies over Japan.

1999, September 13: North Korea institutes a moratorium on *long-range* missile tests.

2002, October: During a visit to North Korea by Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, North Korea reportedly admits to developing a uranium-enrichment program for nuclear weapons. The plutonium program was at issue during Agreed Framework negotiations.

2002, December 10: Spanish and U.S. naval ships intercept and board the North Korean ship, *So San*, carrying Scud missiles, 600 miles off the coast of Yemen. While there was authority under international law to stop and search the ship,³ the ship was allowed to proceed in its delivery because there was no “clear authority” to seize the shipment or otherwise prohibit Yemen from accepting delivery of the missiles.⁴ This event is one of the crucial catalysts to the Proliferation Security Initiative (“PSI”).

2003, January 10: North Korea withdraws from the NPT. North Korea reportedly resumes work in its plutonium nuclear weapons program during this time as well.

2003, August: The six-party talks (United States, North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia) begin. They continue intermittently through 2005.

² Embassy of Japan Press Release, Japan’s Immediate Measures Against North Korea’s Missile Launches, July 5, 2006, *available at* <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/pressreleases/2006/0705.htm>.

³ For instance, the ship was not flying a flag, and a ship on the high seas “without nationality” may be boarded. *See* United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea art. 110(1)(d).

⁴ Ari Fleischer, Press Briefing of the White House Press Secretary, Dec. 11, 2002.

2005, September 19: The six parties adopt a Joint Statement, which provides an outline to the end game of the talks: the elimination of all North Korean nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in exchange for energy and economic cooperation, security provisions, and steps toward normalization, subject to bilateral policies.

2005, September 20: The Treasury Department finds that Banco Delta Asia SARL, a bank located in the Macau Special Administrative Region of China, is a financial institution of “primary money laundering concern” under Section 311 of the Patriot Act.⁵ Substantial evidence exists that North Korean governmental entities and front companies launder the proceeds of their counterfeit activities, narcotics trafficking, and other illicit activities through the bank. The United States took this financial regulatory measure to protect the U.S. financial sector from abuse. North Korea calls this U.S. action “sanctions” and uses it as a “pretext” not to return to the six-party talks.⁶

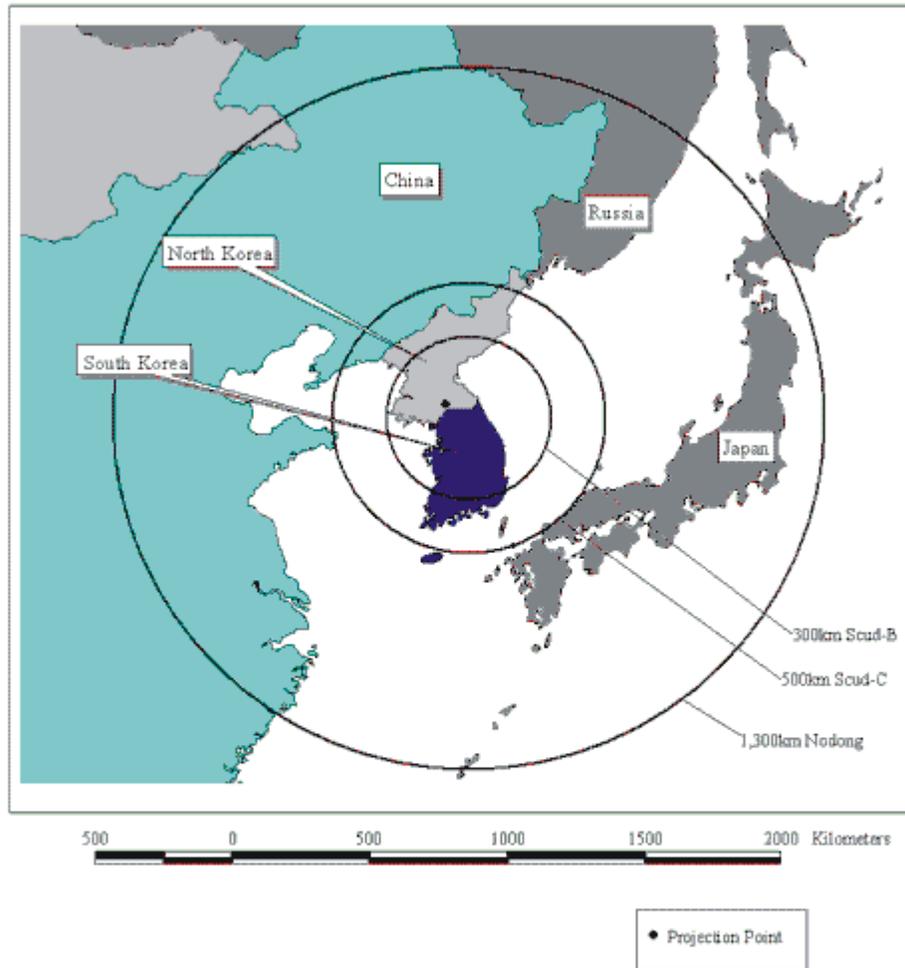
2006, July: North Korea test fires seven missiles, including one long-range missile in violation of its own moratorium.

⁵ Department of the Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Finding that Banco Delta Asia SARL is a Financial Institution of Primary Money Laundering Concern, 70 Fed. Reg. 55,214, Sept. 20, 2005.

⁶ Christopher R. Hill, Prepared Statement of the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs before the House International Relations Committee Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific hearing regarding North Korean Brinkmanship: Is U.S. Policy Up to the Challenge?, June 29, 2006.

Annex I – Estimated Range of North Korean Missiles⁷

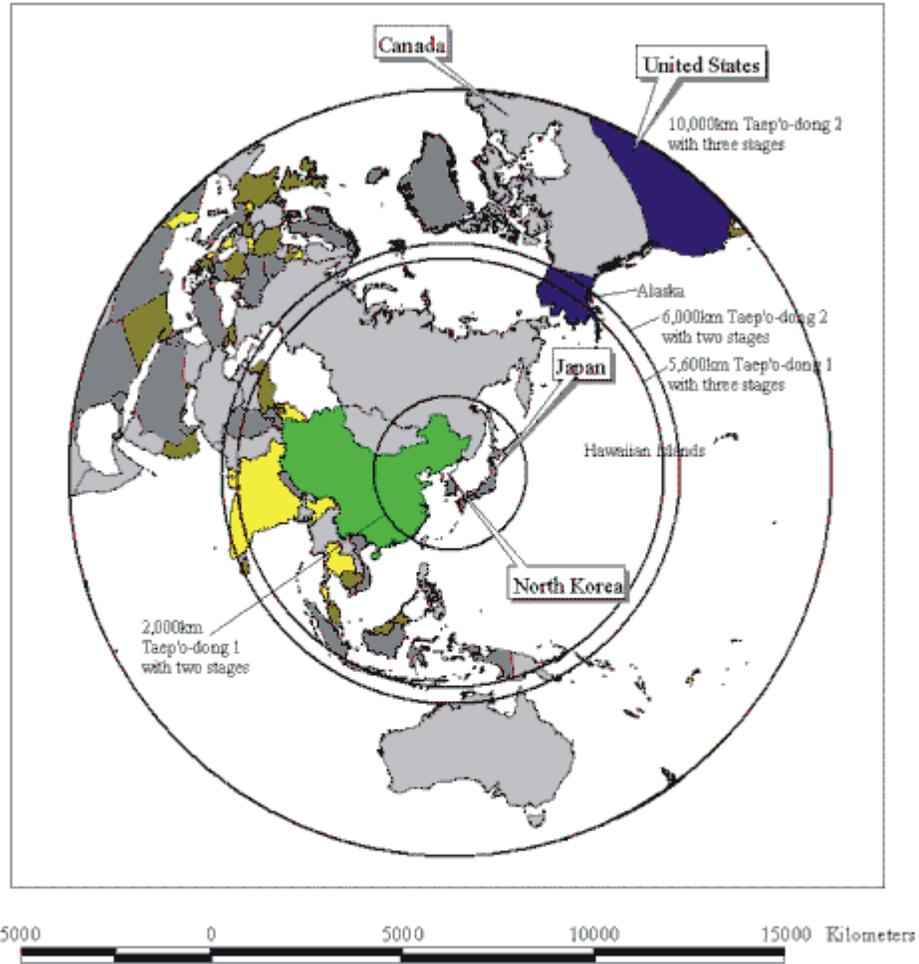
*North Korean Short and Medium Range Missile Capabilities
(Launched from areas near the demilitarized zone)*



Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division
October 1999

⁷ Congressional Research Service, *Missile Survey: Ballistic and Cruise Missiles of Selected Foreign Countries*, pp. 17-18, CRS Report RL30427, July 26, 2005.

Potential North Korean Long-Range Missile Capabilities



Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division
October 1999