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Bush Warns N. Korea on Missile Testing

Alongside Japanese PM, Says Allies Would Apply Pressure

By Daniela Deane
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President Bush warned North Korea today that it was "unacceptable" to test-fire a new long-range missile and repeated concerns about Pyongyang's nuclear plans.

"There's been no briefings as to what's on top of the missile," Bush said in a joint White House news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. "They haven't told anybody where the missile's going."

"We both agreed that it's very important for us to remain united in sending a clear message to the North Korean leader that, first of all, launching a missile is unacceptable," he said.

Bush said Pyongyang had an "obligation" to fully brief other nations about their nuclear plans, saying it was the "reasonable thing" to do.

Asked by a Japanese reporter what Japan and the United States might do in response to such a missile launch, Koizumi said the two allies would apply various forms of "specific pressure." He did not elaborate.

The United States has been particularly appreciative of Japan's increasing assertiveness under Koizumi. The Japanese government has taken a hard line against North Korea, pushing forward with a joint missile-defense shield with the United States and threatening tough sanctions should Pyongyang test-launch a new intercontinental ballistic missile.

"The Japanese cannot afford to be held hostage to rockets," Bush said at the news conference. "Neither can the United States or anybody else who loves freedom."

Bush praised Japan's role in the Iraq war. He said Japanese forces did a "really good job" there and that was why they were able to now be making plans to leave the embattled country.

Koizumi pushed the boundaries of Japan's pacifist constitution by dispatching the Ground Self-Defense Forces to Iraq for a noncombat mission. Although Tokyo's largest military-related effort since 1945 is set to wind down operations soon, the prime minister vowed last week to extend and expand Japan's military transport flights between Kuwait and Iraq for the U.S.-led forces.

Bush thanked Koizumi for opening Japan's market to U.S. beef, a prickly trade dispute that had created tension in the otherwise strong personal relationship between the two leaders. Japan agreed last week to lift its ban on U.S. beef exports, which had been imposed because of concerns about mad-cow disease.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/29/AR2006062901212_pf... 7/5/2006

"I think the Japanese people are going to like the taste of U.S. beef," Bush said of the agreement that gives the U.S. access to a lucrative market. "As a matter of fact, I had a good slice of U.S. beef last night and you told me you did as well. And you look like you're feeling pretty good.

"Very good," Koizumi replied.

Bush said he would accompany Koizumi tomorrow on a private tour of Graceland, Elvis Presley's Memphis estate, because the Japanese leader "loves Elvis."

"I couldn't think of a better way to honor my friend and it also sends a signal about how close our relationship is," Bush said. He said he and his wife Laura had given Koizumi a juke-box as a gift.

"Officially he's here to see the president, but I know the highlight of his visit will be paying his respects to the king," Bush had said when greeting the prime minister on his arrival at the White House.

In his closing comments at the press conference, Koizumi brought up an Elvis song and said in English, a language he does not speak, "Thank you very much, American people, for 'Love me Tender' ".

Staff writer Anthony Faiola contributed to this report.

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South Korea warns US against pressuring North

Old Allies Exchange Angry Words Over Curbs On Pyongyang

Seoul: South Korea warned the United States of trouble ahead in bilateral ties on Wednesday after an angry dispute broke out between Seoul and Washington over sanctions against North Korea.

South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun said that friction could develop between the two allies over moves by Washington hawks to put pressure on North Korea.

At the same time the Korean foreign ministry accused the US of misleading the public about talks between the two sides earlier this week here on sanctions imposed by Washing-

ton on Pyongyang. "There are no differences with the United States," South Korea's progressive leader Roh told a press conference.

"But the South Korean government does not agree with some forces in the US that raise issues about North Korea's regime, put pressure on it and apparently desire to see its collapse."

"If the US tries to resolve problems through this kind of method, there will be friction and differences of opinion between the two countries."

The South Korean president was addressing an annual Lunar New



A US soldier (centre) and two South Korean soldiers stand guard on the foot of the Bridge of No Return at the border village of Panmunjom in South Korea

Year press conference just after the foreign ministry said Washington had issued an "improper" statement about South Korea-US talks earlier in the week.

A US statement released on Tuesday said US Treasury officials visiting South Korea had urged Seoul to take steps against North Korea's alleged illicit financial activities and also to join US-led efforts aimed at combating weapons proliferation by rogue states including North Korea.

The US team "has neither officially nor unofficially urged our government to take specific steps", said

South Korean foreign ministry spokesman Choo Kyu-Ho. The US side stood by the statement released by the US embassy.

"We stand by the press release issued yesterday and we have nothing further to add," said embassy spokesman Robert Ogburn.

The Treasury officials visited Seoul in an effort to convince sceptical South Korean officials that North Korea was guilty of counterfeiting US currency and money-laundering.

In September last year the US Treasury Department imposed financial sanctions on North Korea for allegedly using a Macau bank, Banco Delta Asia, as a front for counterfeiting and other illicit financial activities.

The South Korean government has maintained that it needed to see evidence before taking steps against Pyongyang. President Roh declined to say whether the visiting US officials had successfully made their case.

"It is too early for me to comment on the alleged illegal activities by North Korea," Roh said. "We need to ascertain the full truth regarding whether the North has committed any illicit activity, whether it is related to the North Korean nuclear dispute and whether there are any intentions to press the North Korean regime." AP

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