

SEOUL URGES WASHINGTON TO DIRECTLY INTERACT WITH PYONGYANG

Resume talks, S Korea tells USA

Asia News Network

SEOUL, June 28: South Korea's unification minister today pressed for reopening dialogue between the USA and North Korea, which he felt was crucial to solve the tension over Pyongyang's missile launch threat.

"(No side) should be stingy when it comes to communication. The Seoul government believes that the US administration should be a little more enthusiastic

More defence budget, please

SEOUL, June 28: The South Korean defence ministry today requested 24.8 trillion won (\$26.2 billion) from the Central government for next year's defence budget, up 9.9 per cent from this year, to push for military reform due by 2020, officials said. The

in engaging in dialogues," Mr Lee said in a speech before a National Strategy Institute forum. Seoul has urged the US to engage in

busily persuading the North to return to the six-party talks which it is currently boycotting due to Washington's financial sanctions.

North Korea raised tensions in Asia and the Pacific through reports that it was preparing to test-launch a long-range missile. The North has not officially admitted the reports.

"The most important thing is to prevent the North from launching the missile," Mr Lee said,

adding that the North would be able to escape all the pressures that may come from the United States by implementing the Joint Statement of principles.

The six nations including the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia agreed in September to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula in return for a package of compensation to be given to the reclusive state.

The talks, however, have been suspended since

November after Pyongyang protested Washington's block against its main foreign currency exchange channel in Macau.

South Korean foreign minister Mr Ban Ki-moon visited China this week as part of efforts to solve the missile conflict.

A source said that China and South Korea were preparing a "persuasive measure" that would succeed in bringing North Korea back to the nuclear negotiation table.

SUMMIT LIKELY IN SEPTEMBER

N Korea, USA to come face to face

Korea Herald/ANN

SEOUL, June 23: As tension engulfs the peninsula over the latest North Korean missile crisis, the President office, has confirmed that Seoul has scheduled to hold summit talks with Washington as early as September.

"The bilateral diplomatic channels have reached the conclusion to aim for a summit in September," said presidential aide for security affairs Mr Song Min-soon today.

His comments came hours after the presidential office denied news reports of the talks. President Roh Moo-hyun is expected to fly out to Washington to meet his counterpart, President George W Bush. This would be Mr Roh's second exclusive encounter with Mr Bush following the November summit last year on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

At the time, the two leaders concluded that a nuclear-armed North Korea should not be tolerated and called for Pyongyang to eliminate its nuclear weapons programmes "promptly and verifiably."

In September, the South Korea president is expected to appeal to Washington to take a softer line against Pyongyang in order to draw it closer to negotiating tables for the stalled six-party talks. So far, the Bush administration appears to be

Radar deployed

TOKYO, June 23: A high-resolution radar that can detect a ballistic missile has been deployed at a base in northern Japan, an official said today. The X-Band radar was transferred to Japanese Air Self-Defence Force's Shariki base in Tsugaru from the US military's Misawa Air Base in Misawa, both in Aomori early this morning, according to an official of Japan's Defence Agency. The radar is expected to begin monitoring airspace this summer for ballistic missiles, the official said. The radar is solely to monitor missiles and not fitted with a missile interceptor, she said. ■ AP

adamantly opposed to allowing Pyongyang to benefit from its brinkmanship diplomacies, the latest being its threats to test fire a long-range missile.

Pyongyang, claiming the test fire as a sovereign right, recently offered to talk the issue over with Washington but was turned down. Relations between the two worsened this year after Washington clamped down on a Macau-based bank that it suspects of assisting Pyongyang in illicit financial activities, including counterfeiting US currency.

A meeting is scheduled with White House officials early July to fine-tune itineraries and agenda items, Mr Song said.

THE STATESMAN

THE STATESMAN

N Korea warns of possible air clash over US spy flights

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, JUNE 22

WITH the US having rejected direct talks with North Korea over a potential missile launch, the Asian country on Thursday warned of the danger of an aerial military clash in response to alleged US spy planes, amid tensions over the communist nation's possible missile launch.

"Military provocations by US warmongers against (North Korea) are reaching their extreme," the North Korean Central News Agency said in a report. "The series of illegal infiltrations and spying by reconnaissance planes of US aggression forces is creating a danger of military clash in the skies" over the area, it said.

The complaint was the latest in a series of North Korean warnings about the American flights, some of which allegedly have occurred off the country's northeast coast near the North's missile test facility.

On Thursday, Japan dispatched ships and planes to monitor North Korea amid regional jitters about a possible long-range missile launch, but played down the communist nation's capacity to possibly load a nuclear warhead atop its rockets.

"At this point, we have encountered information that indicates North Korea has the technology," said Senior Vice-Foreign Minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki in Tokyo. Also speaking at a parliamentary committee meeting on terrorism, Defense Agency chief Fukushima Nukaga confirmed that his agency had deployed naval ships and patrol planes to monitor developments in North Korea.

JUN 22 1966

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Missile Jitters

11-16
2/5/02
Face to face is the best way
to resolve Korean face-off

Tensions are soaring over the Korean peninsula once again with Washington and Pyongyang engaged in what appears to be a complicated game of pehle aap. It began with US intelligence reports of an imminent launch of the Taepodong-2 which, with a range of up to 15,000 km, will become North Korea's first intercontinental ballistic missile if it works. Pyongyang has indicated that it is indeed considering such a missile launch, and called for direct talks with Washington to resolve the issue. Washington says it will enter into direct talks only if North Korea drops its nuclear ambitions. The question then becomes, who goes first? The six-party talks on ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions have been mothballed since last November, when Washington cracked down on firms suspected to be engaged in counterfeiting and money laundering activities on behalf of Pyongyang. But this is only a symptom of the fact that the six-party talks, where Washington and Pyongyang are the key interlocutors, are going nowhere.

The announcement of President Bush's pre-emption doctrine, together with clubbing Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an "axis of evil", has had unfortunate effects — Iraq's invasion persuaded North Korea it might be attacked. Washington recently offered Tehran direct talks on security issues, which may have miffed Pyongyang because this is what it has been demanding for a long time. Washington ought to follow through with a similar offer for Pyongyang, because other options are worse. Pentagon officials have suggested they could shoot down the Taepodong-2 missile if launched, but its anti-missile systems have fared very poorly in tests, and that they don't work will be advertised to the world if they should fail to hit their aim. More likely would be sanctions against North Korea if it test-fires the missile. But the country has been isolated anyway in the past, and stringent sanctions will not be enforced by China and South Korea because that could create mammoth refugee problems for them. The six-party talks drag interminably on without progress, and now Pyongyang refuses even to come back to them. Perhaps chief American negotiator Christopher Hill, or better still Condoleezza Rice, should be winging his or her way to Pyongyang to break the stalemate.

North Korea offers US talks to defuse missile crisis ✓

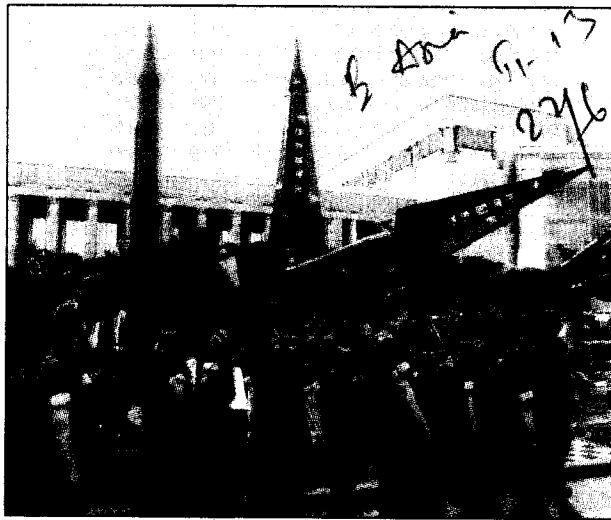
Seoul: North Korea on Wednesday offered the US talks on its missile launch plans, indicating it might put off a flight test that has raised tension and drawn sharp international warnings.

The number two diplomat at North Korea's UN mission was quoted as saying the secretive communist state was open to talks with Washington, where there were reports that the US missile defence shield had been activated in case of a launch.

"The United States says it is concerned about our missile test launch," Han Song-Ryol told South Korea's Yonhap news agency. "Our position is, 'Okay then, let's talk about it.'"

But he underlined the North's position that it had every right to develop, deploy and test-fire missiles. "It is not right for others to tell us what to do about our sovereign rights," said Han, whose country last year announced it had developed an atomic bomb.

North Korea test-fired a missile over Japan into the Pacific Ocean in 1998, and reports that it was preparing another



South Korean soldiers walk by models of mock North Korea's Scud-B missile (left) and other South Korean missiles

test have drawn warnings of a tough response from Japan and the US.

The North's media for the second time this week hailed the 1998 launch as a feat of science, stoking concern that it plans a new long-range launch.

Former South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung, who

made engagement with the estranged North a cornerstone of his policy while in office, cancelled a trip to Pyongyang next week.

"The trip is technically impossible right now because of the situation over the missile," said Jeong Se-Hyun, a former unification minister who was

to accompany Kim.

A series of reports have said North Korea is preparing to test-fire a Taepodong-2 missile with a range of up to 6,700 km, far enough to hit targets in Alaska and possibly Hawaii.

Indications that the North had been fuelling a missile—a process that experts say is dangerous and difficult to reverse—have caused concern.

Japan and South Korea agreed their nations would have to cooperate to prevent a missile launch, the Japanese foreign ministry said in a statement. "If the missile were to be launched, it would threaten the regional security. It is important that countries concerned would cooperate in urging North Korea to use its restraint," the ministry said.

Separately South Korea warned it could scrap crucial food aid to its impoverished neighbour if the launch went ahead. "South Korea could cut down or reject entirely the rice aid to North Korea, but we have not yet had detailed deliberations about this," unification ministry spokesman Yang Chang-Seok said. AGENCIES

PYONGYANG WANTS DIRECT DISCUSSION WITH USA

N Korea opts to talk

Associated Press

Army meet

SEOUL, June 21: North Korea said today it wants direct talks with the USA over its apparent plans to test-fire a long-range missile, a day after the country issued a bristling statement in which it declared its right to carry out the launch.

"North Korea as a sovereign state has the right to develop, deploy, test fire and export a missile," Mr Han Song Ryol, deputy chief of North Korea's mission to the United Nations said. "We are aware of the US concerns about our missile test-launch. So our position is that we should resolve the issue through negotiations."

Tensions in the region have soared following intelligence reports that the North was fuelling a ballistic missile believed capable of reaching US ter-

BEIJING, June 21: The chief of staff of China's military met today with an army commander from North Korea and the North's ambassador to China, the official *Xinhua News* agency reported. The meeting comes as international powers try to persuade Pyongyang against what the USA and South Korea say are plans to test of a long-range missile. The Chinese military chief, Liang Guanglie, told North Korean army commander Ri Yong Hwan that China is keen to expand cooperation between the two armed forces, *Xinhua* said. ■ AP

ritory. The USA and Japan have said they could consider sanctions against the impoverished country if it goes ahead, and Washington was weighing responses that could include attempting to shoot the

missile down.

Today, a spokesman for former South Korean President Mr Kim Dae-jung cited the missile crisis as the reason for cancelling a trip next week to the North that could have offered a rare chance for talks to soothe tensions.

North Korea said in comments published today that its self-imposed moratorium on testing long-range missiles from 1999 no longer applies because it's not in direct dialogue with Washington, suggesting it would hold off on any launch if Washington agreed to new talks.

"Some say our missile test launch is a violation of the moratorium, but this is not the case," Mr Han Song Ryol told South Korea's *Yonhap* news agency in an interview from New York.

Pyongyang has consistently pressed for direct dialogue with the USA,

while Washington insists it will only speak to the North at six-nation nuclear talks. The North has refused to return to the nuclear talks since November, in anger over a US crackdown on the country's alleged illicit financial activity.

North Korea imposed its missile moratorium in 1999 amid friendlier relations with the USA during the Clinton administration. During a 2002 summit with Japan, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il signed an agreement to extend the moratorium until at least 2003 - and reaffirmed the launch ban at another summit in 2004. Japan disputed the North's position on lifting the moratorium.

North Korea claims it has nuclear weapons, but isn't believed to have a design that would be small and light enough to top a missile.

North Korea rejects interference

ASSOCIATED Press
Seoul, June 20

NORTH KOREA declared on Tuesday it was free to conduct missile tests, saying it was not bound by prior agreements to refrain from testing and that outsiders did not have the right to interfere, a news report said.

"This issue concerns our autonomy. Nobody has a right to slander that right," *Kyodo News Agency* quoted North Korean foreign ministry official, Li Byong-dok, as saying.

Speaking to Japanese reporters in North Korea, Li said his country's actions are not bound

by the joint declaration made at international nuclear disarmament talks last year or an earlier missile moratorium agreed to by Tokyo and Pyongyang in 2002. Li said his remarks represented Pyongyang's official line on the matter, *Kyodo* reported.

An agreement reached at six-party nuclear disarmament talks in September does not specifically address missile tests by the North, although negotiators pledged to work toward establishing peace in the region. The six countries participating in the talks — the two Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States — also agreed to work toward normalising relations.

North Korea and Japan also agreed in 2002 to place a moratorium on missile tests.

Japan has been at the forefront of international concern that North Korea may be planning to test a long-range missile. North Korea is reportedly preparing for a test launch of a missile that could reach the US, and though the international community has urged it to abandon the plans, Pyongyang has shown no sign of backing down.



A South Korean protester holds a picture of North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, during a rally against the possible launch of North Korea's missile, in front of the Government House in Seoul on Tuesday.

Storms delay missile launch

Seoul, June 20

CLOUDS AND storms closed in on Tuesday over a site where North Korea may be preparing to test a long-range missile, potentially delaying a flight that regional powers have warned the reclusive state not to launch.

South Korea's weather agency forecast overcast skies and storms on Tuesday in North Hamgyong province, where North Korea has a launch site, and said this should be the pattern for the rest of the week as a storm front moves through.

Analysts say clouds and

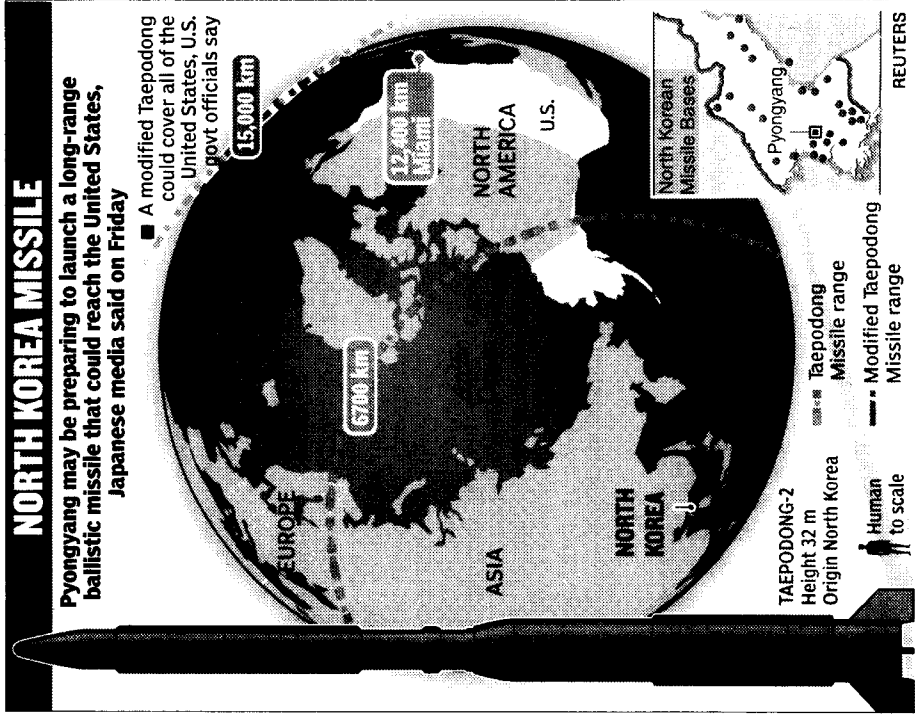
storms would make it difficult for North Korea to track a missile once in flight, decreasing the likelihood of a launch.

"You don't want to test-launch a missile into a storm," said Peter Beck, a Korea analyst in Seoul for the International Crisis Group. Reports of test preparations coincide with a stalemate in six-party talks on unwinding Pyongyang's nuclear arms programmes.

Beck said that by raising the prospect of a missile test, the Stalinist state had grabbed global attention and rattled security concerns.

Reuters

N Korean missile may target US



REUTERS
 Tokyo, May 19

NORTH KOREA may be preparing to launch a long-range ballistic missile that could reach parts of the US, Japanese media reports said on Friday, but Japan's government said it believed the launch was not imminent.

Quoting unidentified South Korean government officials, public broadcaster NHK said satellite pictures showed there have been signs since early this month around a site in northeastern North Korea that pointed to a possible firing in the near future. NHK said the missile appeared to be a Taepodong-2, which previous reports have said has a range of more than 6,700 km, making it capable of hitting Alaska with a light payload.

Analysts have said, though, that development of a multiple-stage version of a ballistic missile that can take payloads deep into the US is years away. Japan's top government spokesman, Shinzo Abe, said he could not comment on specific security issues, but added, "at the moment, we do not believe a launch is imminent."

Asked by reporters if the situation posed a threat to Japan's national security, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said:

Scientists defect

A SENIOR North Korean scientist and a physician have defected from the Communist state and are seeking asylum in the South, a South Korean activist was quoted as saying on Friday. Both may have valuable intelligence on Pyongyang's military programs, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said. The defectors are in a Southeast Asian country awaiting passage to South Korea.

Reuters, Seoul

Annan-Hu talks

UN SECRETARY General Kofi Annan flew to Beijing on Friday to meet Chinese President Hu Jintao, with North Korea and Iran on the talks agenda.

AFP, Beijing

US, Japan, Russia and host China. North Korea has said that it is building a nuclear deterrent to counter US hostility. The US believes that North Korea has one or two nuclear bombs. US officials said on Thursday that Washington was open to discussions with North Korea on a peace treaty, but Pyongyang must return to the talks table first. North Korea has long demanded a peace treaty to replace the armistice that ended the Korean War.

A report in March by the California-based Center for Nonproliferation Studies said North Korea did not have an operational missile that could hit the continental US. The report said Pyongyang was working on a solid-fuel missile, Taepodong-X, with a range of up to 4,000 km that could hit Japan as well as US bases in Guam, but North Korea has yet to demonstrate its reliability through a test flight.

North Korea shocked the world in August 1998 when it fired a Taepodong missile that flew over Japan before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

NHK, quoting US government officials, said if the missile was a modified version of the Taepodong-2, it could have a range of 15,000 km, which would cover all of the United States.

N Korea poised to press missile button, neighbours panic

Korea Herald/ANIN

SEOUL, June 16. — North Korea has reportedly stationed an additional rocket section at a northern missile launch site within the last two days in an apparent preparation for a test of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In a report from Tokyo by AP, Japan's foreign minister Mr Taro Aso and the US ambassador to Japan Mr Thomas Schieffer today said a possible long-range missile test by North Korea would be a provocative act, and urged it not

to proceed with the launch. After the meeting with Mr Aso, Mr Schieffer reiterated to reporters the US stance that the test would be a dangerous act and would hurt North Korean interests. The missile is believed to be a long-range Taepodong-2 which could reach as far as the USA, Japanese media sources reported from Washington and Tokyo.

AP further adds that North Korean officials denied that the country is preparing to test-launch a missile, a news report said today, citing a South Korean

official. Visiting officials from the North told a South Korean lawmaker that concerns over Pyongyang's possible missile test are "unfounded," Japan's Kyodo News agency reported from Seoul.

They said North Korea could launch the ballistic missile as early as this weekend. The North has already finished assembling a missile for launch, *Yomiuri Shimbun* said citing a Japanese government source. The North has observed a self-imposed moratorium on long-range missile tests since 1999. North Korea has

not yet begun fuelling the long-range missile, which is the final step before launch, according to sources. If North Korea goes ahead with the test, it would further dim the prospect of the stalled six-party talks on its nuclear weapons programme. Seoul officials widely believe the North's move is another sabre-rattling campaign to raise its stake in the stalled six-party talks.

The reclusive country fired its long-range missile Taepodong-1 over Japan, which fell into the Pacific Ocean, in August 1998.

Nobel laureates' move

GWANGJU (South Korea), June 17. — A group of 12 Nobel Peace Prize winners called on the USA to lift financial restrictions on North Korea to help end the impasse over the communist nation's nuclear weapons programme. "We urge the DPRK to completely abandon its nuclear weapons policy and accept international inspections," the laureates said today in a declaration in Gwangju. They also urged all parties to resume the stalled six-party talks. **AP**

THE ST. JOHNS RIVER
JUN 17 2006

S KOREA OPP SET FOR LANDSLIDE WIN ✓

Roh on shaky ground

Korea Herald/ANN ^{AP}

SEOUL, May 31: The main Opposition Grand National Party appears to have achieved an overwhelming victory in nationwide local elections yesterday. The poll came amid widespread voter discontent with President Roh Moo-hyun and his Uri Party.

Voting started at 6 a.m. at 13,106 polling stations across the country to determine 16 provincial governors and large city mayors, 230 heads of low-level administrative units and 3,621 members of local councils. The polls closed at 6 p.m.

The local elections are being viewed as a barome-



ter of public sentiment and the final outcome is likely to shake up the political landscape ahead of next year's presidential race.

Early returns indicated the conservative GNP was on track to achieve huge wins in much of the country, including the politically crucial battles in Seoul, Incheon and surrounding

Gyeonggi Province. The Uri, meanwhile, was seen to be leading in only one major gubernatorial race, while the smaller Opposition Democratic Party looked set for two major wins. In the mayoral race in Seoul, early data placed GNP's candidate Oh Se-hoon ahead of the Uri's Kang Kum-sil. In the Gyeonggi gubernatorial race, the GNP's Mr Kim Moon-soo was comfortably ahead of Uri's Chin Dae-je. Some observers say the violent 20 May attack on the GNP chairwoman tipped the scale overwhelmingly. With the final tally yet to be announced, the National EC predicted a 53 per cent turnout.

Taiwan Prez stopped from landing in Lebanon

Taipei: Taiwanese President



Chen Shui-bian's plane landed in Abu Dhabi on Thursday after he was barred from landing in

Lebanon, the foreign ministry reported.

The plane had been in the air for 10 hours when it landed at Abu Dhabi airport, a reporter from the Taipei-based cable CTI news network said.

"We had had no idea where we were heading for until the plane touched down," the reporter said.

It is not immediately clear if Chen is there for a refuelling stop or a visit before he flies on to Paraguay, one of the 25 countries which recognise Taipei rather than Beijing.

Earlier, Chen turned down Washington's offer of a refuelling stop in far-flung Alaska on Thursday, a day after the island's closest ally scotched his plans for an overnight stay in New York.

President Chen made no mention of the apparent rift with the United States before leaving for visits to Paraguay and Costa Rica, and instead blamed China for "trampling on the dignity" of Taiwan's people.

"China's suppression against Taiwan has gone from bad to worse," he said.

Washington usually allows Taiwan leaders to enter the US in transit, but refuses official visits so as not to irk China. AGENICES

05 MAY 2006

washingtonpost.com

Japan and U.S. Warn N. Korea On Missile

Launch Would Be 'Unacceptable'

By Peter Baker
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, June 30, 2006; A04

President Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi escalated pressure on North Korea yesterday not to test-fire a long-range ballistic missile now sitting on a launch pad, and they warned that the nation would be further cut off from the rest of the international community if it proceeds.

"Launching the missile is unacceptable," Bush said at a news conference with Koizumi after the two privately conferred on the confrontation with North Korea. Referring to Kim Jong Il, the president added, "The leader of North Korea is just going to have to make a decision: Does he want to be isolated from the world, or is he interested in being an active participant?"

Koizumi would not discuss options if North Korea defies Washington and Tokyo, but made clear he would seek to impose diplomatic consequences. "Should they ever launch the missile," he said, "we would apply various pressures."

The discussion of North Korea came during the first day of a two-day visit by Koizumi, his last with Bush before stepping down in September. Bush, who considers Koizumi one of his best friends among foreign leaders, pulled out all the stops, starting with a pomp-filled welcome on the South Lawn, meetings in the Oval Office, an East Room news conference and, finally, last night a black-tie dinner.

Around the White House and Blair House, where Koizumi stayed as Bush's guest, the streets and buildings were festooned with U.S. and Japanese flags. Bush plans to cap the visit by taking Koizumi, a longtime Elvis Presley fan, to Graceland in Memphis today. He gave Koizumi an old-fashioned jukebox yesterday, complete with vinyl records of Presley and other 1950s rock stars. The two leaders peppered their talks with Presley references.

"Thank you, very much, American people, for 'Love Me Tender,'" Koizumi said in accented English.

The meetings touched on a number of serious issues, including Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and U.S. beef exports. But the main purpose was to cement the relationship Bush has built with Koizumi in hopes that it will carry over to his successor. Koizumi has been a chief supporter of Bush even as other foreign leaders kept their distance. Still, he is pulling out 500 Japanese engineers serving in Iraq, although he will increase Japanese airlift support in the country.

The most urgent issue confronting the two was North Korea, which has a Taepodong-2 missile poised for a possible launch, although it is not clear whether it has been fully fueled. The United States has speeded plans to deploy Patriot interceptor missiles at U.S. bases in Japan, acknowledging the threat that

North Korea may pose.

Bush said he will look to expand cooperation with Japan on anti-missile programs. "Another interesting opportunity is, over time, to work on missile defenses," he said. "The Japanese cannot afford to be held hostage to rockets, and neither can the United States or any other body who loves freedom."

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Japan, S. Korea Act to Ease Boundary Dispute

Advertisement

Associated Press
Sunday, April 23, 2006; A15

SEOUL, April 22 -- South Korea and Japan defused a tense standoff over disputed waters Saturday, with Japan withdrawing a plan to survey the area and South Korea delaying plans to submit name proposals for underwater features.

Both countries agreed to hold more talks as early as next month on demarcating their sea boundaries, as part of a deal that ended two days of negotiations aimed at easing tensions.

"It's good that we were able to avoid anything unforeseen that could have occurred if the situation had continued as it was," said Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi, the lead Japanese negotiator.

Yachi's delegation made an emergency trip to the South Korean capital on Friday to try to break the impasse triggered by Japan's plan to send survey ships into the disputed waters.

South Korea vehemently opposes Japan's survey plans and dispatched 20 gunboats to the area, warning of a possible physical confrontation if Japan proceeded.

The waters surround a set of rocky outcroppings -- called Dokdo in Korea and Takeshima in Japan -- that lie midway between the countries. The area, claimed by both countries, is a rich fishing ground and is also believed to have methane hydrate deposits, a potential source of natural gas.

"Both South Korea and Japan agreed to resume talks on demarcating the boundaries . . . considering that this situation was caused because the boundaries of exclusive economic zones have not been fixed," South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Yu Myung Hwan said Saturday at a news conference.

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South Korea, Japan Raise Tension Over Islet Group

Seoul on Alert as Tokyo Seeks to Bolster Claims

By Anthony Faiola
Washington Post Foreign Service
Thursday, April 20, 2006; A16

TOKYO, April 19 -- A long-simmering dispute over a group of islets escalated sharply Wednesday, with South Korea dispatching a flotilla of 20 patrol ships toward the territory as the Japanese coast guard sought to conduct an official survey in surrounding waters.

The South Korean move came as Japan rejected a warning from Seoul and vowed to forge ahead with a six-week mapping expedition aimed at bolstering Tokyo's legal claims to the rocky outcroppings controlled by South Korea. Enraged officials in Seoul put their maritime forces on high alert and strongly suggested they would use force if necessary to prevent two Japanese ships from entering waters claimed by South Korea. The islets, located between the two countries, are known as Dokdo in Korean and Takeshima in Japanese.

President Roh Moo Hyun called an emergency cabinet meeting to discuss South Korea's options and denounced Japan's move as an "offensive provocation." Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon warned that South Korea would "act sternly" and was preparing "countermeasures for all scenarios."

Most analysts dismissed the notion that the two East Asian powers would come into direct military conflict over the islets, but at the very least, the intensifying dispute poses new challenges for the United States. The latest events dramatically widened a growing diplomatic breach between Washington's two biggest allies in the region at a time when they are struggling to present a united front on China's military rise and North Korea's nuclear belligerence.

The tensions also underscored the broader frictions between Japan and its neighbors as Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has taken a more assertive stance on a series of issues, including territorial claims dating to Tokyo's long military buildup before World War II.

Both South Korea and China have expressed outrage at the recasting of history textbooks here to support Japan's long-held territorial claims and allegedly whitewash its past aggression. On Wednesday, South Korean politicians said they would insist on linking resolution of the islet dispute to what they condemned as a pattern of resurgent militarism by Japan.

Shinzo Abe, Koizumi's chief cabinet secretary, called for understanding and dialogue to resolve the islet dispute. Japanese media reports indicated the two expedition ships were still lingering off Japan's coast late Wednesday evening, but Abe insisted Japan would not back down and was acting within its legal rights.

"We expect that the survey will be conducted peacefully with both sides dealing with it in a levelheaded manner," Abe told reporters in Tokyo.

One Japanese official familiar with the situation said the decision to launch the mission was made after a South Korean government Web site announced plans to present Korean names for underwater geological formations in the contested area during a maritime conference in Germany in June. Japan is likely to use data from the surveying operation to support alternative names.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Japanese vessels were not expected to directly approach the islets and were likely to confine themselves to surrounding waters.

The Japanese public has yet to pay much attention to the dispute. But in South Korea, it has taken on huge nationalistic proportions.

Both nations maintain centuries-old claims to the area, which is coveted for fishing rights. But the South Koreans view Japan's 1905 move to enforce its control over the islets as a precursor to its invasion and 35-year occupation of the Korean Peninsula, from 1910 to 1945.

As Japan has stepped up its claims, the South Koreans have grown furious, increasing their police presence on the outcroppings and allowing a dutiful young South Korean couple to move there. "Save Dokdo," a video game in which players wipe out a merciless battalion of Japanese invaders, has become a hit in South Korea.

South Korea and Japan are additionally locked in a testy diplomatic battle over the name of the body of water surrounding the islets -- called the Sea of Japan by Tokyo and the East Sea by Seoul. Citing territorial and other disputes, Roh has repeatedly refused offers for a summit with Koizumi in Japan.

Analysts said that while the South Koreans may be overreacting to the mapping mission, the Japanese have also squandered any goodwill they might have expected from Seoul.

"Since Koizumi came to power, Japan's relations with East Asia have reached their worst point," said Satoshi Amako, an Asian Studies professor at Tokyo's Waseda University. "So emotions are now running high. No matter who succeeds Koizumi, the new leader must learn that worsening relations with Japan's neighbors don't profit either side."

Special correspondent Sachiko Sakamaki contributed to this report.

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S Korea head shifts North gear

Lee Joo-hee

SEOUL, May 10: President Roh Moo-hyun's strong message toward North Korea yesterday night implied a sweeping change in Seoul's policy toward Pyongyang.

President Roh, while talking with ethnic Koreans in Mongolia, said that he hoped former President Kim Dae-jung's trip to Pyongyang in June would pave the way for the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il to become more flexible.

Not only did he directly comment on how he wished to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il, but also said Seoul was now ready to yield more to North Korea. For progressive observers here, the remarks meant a scurry of inter-Korean interchanges, for Seoul to take the lead in tackling the stale nuclear standoff. For more conservative observers, the comments suggested scooping yet more onto the communist state at the cost of a shaky alliance with the USA. More cautious watchers hinted that Seoul may have been holding off Pyongyang's requests and now decided to use them as



President Roh Moo-hyun

a negotiating tactic.

Most government officials stood by the President's comments, conspicuously leaving the impression that drastic developments are set to arrive on Korea's doorstep.

"President Roh seems to have thrown the inter-Korean relations into an overhaul where Seoul will be taking the lead, deviating from how the exchanges were previously conducted mainly on a give-and-take level," said professor Koh Yu-hwan of Dongguk University. Adding that he was willing to meet Kim Jong-Il at any time, any place and on any subject, Mr Roh said his government will yield more to the North. Kim Dae-jung is scheduled to visit Pyongyang next month.

■ Korea Herald/ANN

THE STATESMAN

11 MAY 2005

N Korea willing to talk nuke, says China

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Associated Press

TOKYO, April 10: A Chinese diplomat said today that North Korean negotiators were warming toward a resumption of talks on ending the North's nuclear weapons programme, but the top US envoy said he has no plans to meet directly with his counterpart from Pyongyang.

North Korea has shown "some" signs of positive commitment, said Mr Wu Dawei, China's top nuclear envoy, after meeting with the North Korean delegation earlier in the day ahead of a two-day security forum in Tokyo.

"We can expect some progress," he said, without giving details. "We will make an effort toward a

positive direction." Mr Wu's are the first positive comments following a flurry of diplomatic meetings that have so far produced little progress in resuming stalled dialogue on disarming North Korea. North Korea has boycotted the talks since November, citing what it says is a hostile US attitude illustrated by financial sanctions imposed by Washington on North Korean companies for alleged financial crimes.

US Assistant Secretary of State Mr Christopher Hill has urged the North Koreans to return to the talks, but said he has no plans to meet one-on-one with the North Korean side while in Tokyo. "The North Koreans have not yet decided to return to

the talks," Mr Hill said after arriving at Tokyo's Narita international airport, adding that both countries held unproductive meetings on the matter in January and March.

"I'm not sure there's much more I can talk to them about," he said. "Everybody else is in, so we're waiting for them." The North agreed in the six-nation talks last year to abandon its nuclear programme in exchange for aid and security guarantees, but the talks foundered and there has been little progress on implementing the accord.

North Korea has refused to restart talks unless the financial restrictions imposed on a Macau bank and North Korean companies are lifted.

APR 11 1998
THE STATESMAN

Seoul, Tokyo talks on island dispute fail

Japan plans maritime survey near the Dokdo islets

SEOUL: South Korean and Japanese diplomats failed in narrowing differences on a territorial dispute over the Dokdo islets after 90 minute talks here on Friday.

"It is hard to say there was progress, as the two sides confirmed each other's position," a South Korean official told the Yonhap News following the meeting between South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan and his Japanese counterpart Shotaro Yachi.

"It is difficult to be optimistic as there are problems to be overcome," the official said.

However, South Korea officials told the press that talks would continue on Saturday when the two diplomats have dinner in Seoul.

Mr. Yachi arrived in Seoul on Friday as an envoy to seek a breakthrough in the worsening dispute over Japan's maritime survey plan near the Dokdo islets.

A South Korean official told Yonhap earlier that Seoul agreed to meet Japanese envoy with the precondition of Tokyo's promise to suspend the survey plan in disputed waters. "We will try to find a diplomatic solution. Nei-



A former special forces commando raises a slogan during a rally demanding Japan abandon a plan to conduct a maritime survey near disputed islets, in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on Friday. - PHOTO: AP

ther side wants a physical clash, through which both sides would have much to lose," Mr. Yu Myung-hwan told reporters ahead of Yachi's visit.

Japan announced last week to conduct the survey in waters

near the South Korea-controlled Dokdo islets, on which Japan also claims sovereignty.

South Korea said the waters near Dokdo were part of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). - Xinhua

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US says North Korea should return to N-talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, MARCH 22

THE US urged North Korea to return to international nuclear negotiations instead of making inflammatory statements—a reference to North Korea's claim that it has the ability to launch a pre-emptive strike on US.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said on Tuesday the US has no plans to invade or attack North Korea. He said Pyongyang should return to nuclear disarmament talks involving the Koreas, the US, Russia, China and Japan "to engage in serious discussions, as opposed to making inflammatory statements".

A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said the North had built atomic weapons to counter a US nuclear threat.

Six-nation nuclear talks have been stalled since November over a dispute surrounding financial restrictions the US imposed on North Korea for its alleged currency counterfeiting and money laundering.

23 MAR 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

Testing Time

During Lull in N-Talks, North Korea Tests Short-Range Weapon, US-Japan Showcase Interceptor Missile

Seoul/Washington/Honolulu: On a day clouded with some degree of uncertainty and a lot of posturing, two separate missile tests were held within 24 hours of each other on Wednesday. North Korea test-fired two short-range missiles that landed within its own territory. The US and Japan later jointly tested a missile designed to intercept ballistic (intermediate- or long-range) enemy missiles in mid-flight.

A South Korean intelligence official confirmed that North Korea had test-fired two short-range surface-to-surface missiles. "It is true that North Korea fired the missiles yesterday (Wednesday)," the official told AP on Thursday.

But there was confusion over the direction of the launches. The South Korean daily JoongAng Ilbo, citing a government source, said on Thursday that the North fired the missiles from its east coast and they probably dropped into the

Sea of Japan, about 100km away. The missiles had a range of about 120 km.

On Wednesday, Japan's Kyodo news agency cited a "security source" in China as saying the missiles were fired by mistake in the direction of China during a drill and apparently landed inside the North. A senior US official confirmed that the two missiles did not leave North Korean territory.

Cold War

The tests came after a rare meeting between US and North Korean officials in New York, where they discussed a US crackdown on Pyongyang's assets, which the North wants ended before it returns to talks that aim to end its nuclear weapons ambitions.

The US has called the North's latest test-firing a global "threat". Washington has urged Pyongyang to abide by a moratorium on missile tests. "As we have continued to point out, North Korea's missile programme and activities are a threat not only to the region, but



The US interceptor defence missile with a Japanese nose cone being tested off Hawaii

the international community at large," US state department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters.

In 1998, Pyongyang shocked Tokyo when it test-fired a ballistic—longer range—missile over northern Japan. Although North Korea announced a moratorium on missile tests a year later, it has since test-fired short-range missiles.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the US and Japan successfully tested an interceptor missile off Hawaii. The test aimed to check how well a Japanese nose cone separated from a US interceptor missile. Both countries are adopting the technology to shoot down enemy ballistic missiles mid-flight amid worries about North Korea's development of long-range missiles and nuclear weapons.

A Standard Missile-3 interceptor was fired into the atmosphere above the Pacific, 100km northeast of Kauai. Agencies

Analysts play down Pyongyang's move

Seoul: North Korea's test-firing of two short-range missiles was more about checking performance than rattling sabres, some analysts said on Thursday. While the White House said the tests proved the country's N-programme posed a threat, analysts said if Pyongyang had wanted to send a strong signal it could have tested far bigger, long-range missiles.

Analysts said the North ran periodic tests of short-range missiles and the threat to regional stability was its nascent arsenal of intermediate- and long-range ballistic missiles. "If the North Koreans really wanted to send a signal, why not do a ballistic missile test?" Daniel Pinkston, of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program in California, said. Reuters



SOURCE: ESRI

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The New York Times

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China Doubts U.S. Data on North Korean Nuclear Work

By

Published: March 7, 2005

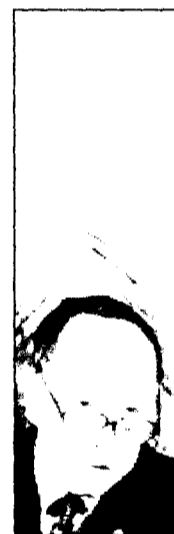
BEIJING, March 6 - The Chinese foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing, expressed doubt on Sunday about the quality of American intelligence on North Korea's nuclear program and said the United States would have to talk to North Korea one-on-one to resolve the standoff.

Mr. Li's assessment, made at an extended news conference during China's annual legislative meeting, amounted to a double slap at the United States. Washington has repeatedly sounded the alarm about North Korea's nuclear efforts and has pressed China, North Korea's only significant ally, to be more active in seeking a solution.

President Bush last month sent a high-level envoy to Beijing to present fresh intelligence data that the Bush administration contends shows that North Korea's nuclear program is more advanced than previously thought and that it has been selling nuclear materials around the world.

One task of the envoy, Michael Green, the official handling Asian affairs at the National Security Council, was to dispel Chinese skepticism about the quality of American intelligence, administration officials and Asian diplomats said at the time.

But when asked by a Japanese journalist on Sunday to describe China's understanding of North Korea's nuclear program, including whether the country had produced nuclear



Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing says the United States must talk to North Korea one-on-one to deal with its nuclear program.

ARTICLE TOO

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"Concerning whether North Korea already has nuclear weapons or anything about the question of uranium enrichment, I think that here you may know more than I do," Mr. Li said. "Or to put it another way, I definitely don't know any more than you do."

Mr. Li's comments suggest that since the Bush administration accused North Korea of violating a bilateral agreement on its nuclear arms program more than three years ago, China has come no closer to accepting Washington's contentions that North Korea already has as many as eight or nine plutonium-based nuclear bombs and is aggressively pursuing a second, less easily monitored method of producing nuclear fuel through enriching uranium.

north korea

China has more economic and political leverage over North Korea than any other nation and had agreed to be the host for several rounds of multination talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear program. But China has rejected the Bush administration's appeals to press North Korea to dismantle any nuclear bombs and its infrastructure for producing nuclear fuel.

China's reluctance to do more creates a problem for the Bush administration because Chinese support - or, at a minimum, acquiescence - is essential to any expanded international response, including United Nations sanctions, a trade embargo or military action.

Senior Bush administration officials dealing with the North Korean issue have said that Chinese officials, perhaps to smooth their sometimes rocky relationship with North Korea, have tended to take a softer line toward it in public than they do in private.

During the presidential debates last year, Mr. Bush extolled China as the linchpin of his strategy for addressing North Korea, implying that he felt confident that China shared his sense of urgency about the issue.

But China's enthusiasm for the American position often seems confined to private sessions with American officials.

Also in Techno

Last June, Zhou Wenzhong, one of Mr. Li's top deputies at the Foreign Ministry, said in an interview with The New York Times that he questioned the validity of American intelligence and criticized the United States' strategy for dealing with the Korean issue. Several senior administration officials later told reporters that the Times report of the interview was inaccurate and that the Chinese had assured them it did not reflect their views.

Mr. Li's comments on Sunday were nearly identical to Mr. Zhou's last June.

One Chinese political analyst said the ambiguous stance might underscore that China was neither ready nor willing to play a more assertive role in confronting its neighbor.

China's oft-repeated line, used again on Sunday by Mr. Li, is that it wants a "nuclear free" Korean peninsula. If it were to accept as valid American intelligence that North Korea already has at least one or two and perhaps eight or nine nuclear bombs, North

Korea would have already crossed that line, potentially compelling China to adopt a tougher position, said the Chinese analyst, who asked not to be identified.

Mr. Li has also said that China aims to maintain "peace and stability" on the Korean peninsula. Analysts say China may well view stability on its northeastern border to be of greater importance than the possibility that North Korea has a small and so far untested nuclear arsenal.

China has sought to arrange new negotiations about North Korea's nuclear program since the last round of six-nation talks, involving Japan, South Korea, Russia, the United States, North Korea and China, broke off inconclusively last summer.

Mr. Li said the North Koreans, after having made contradictory statements about whether they would take part in the talks, had assured China that they intended to press on.

"There is some news I can announce, which is that the North Korean side indicated that it remains willing to continue participating in the six-party talks and that the respective sides can demonstrate sufficient sincerity," he said.

But he also implied that China's role was limited to arranging the talks. A real solution to the standoff, he said, requires direct, bilateral negotiations between the United States and North Korea.

Mr. Bush has rejected holding bilateral talks with North Korea, contending that the problem requires a regional, multiparty settlement.

"These are both sovereign countries," Mr. Li said. "They are the two major parties concerned. So it is for those two countries to increase trust and build mutual understanding."

RELATED ARTICLES

(February 24, 2005)

(February 22, 2005)

(February 17, 2005)

More adventurism in Taiwan

The decision by President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan to do away with the National Unification Council that sets guidelines for the island's eventual reunification with the People's Republic of China is plain brinksmanship and a threat to peace in the region. The Council came into existence in 1990 and its guidelines commit Taiwan to uniting with China, but specify no time frame. Thus far, China has not pushed Taiwan on the issue. While Beijing is clear that Taiwan is a province of the PRC, and every country in the world accepts the One China principle, the island has been allowed to go its own way on condition that its leaders will not alter the status quo and make a push for official independence. This nuanced position has done a lot to preserve the peace and stability of the region. But Mr. Chen seems determined to upset the delicate balance of China-Taiwan relations. He ran his 2004 re-election campaign on separatist rhetoric, considerably heightening tensions between the island and the mainland. He toned down the pitch after winning a second term, even promising not to abolish the NUC or its guidelines. With his announcement on February 27 that the NUC shall "cease to function" and that the guidelines shall "cease to apply," he has broken that promise recklessly, provoking Beijing to condemn the move as a "dangerous sign of the escalation of Taiwan's secessionist activities."

In scrapping the NUC, the Taiwanese leader appears to have been reacting to an internal political situation even though he has cited China's year-old Anti-Secession Act as the cause for his decision. This law authorises the use of "non-peaceful methods" if Taiwan were to make a decisive bid for independence. However, while setting out the One China principle as non-negotiable, it favours peaceful reunification for which it sets no date. It allows plenty of room for manoeuvre through the "one country, two systems" formula. Mr. Chen's Democratic Progressive Party was routed in the December 2005 local elections. Invoking the threat of independence once again may have helped his ratings for now but this surge is unlikely to last. For all his splittist rhetoric, Mr. Chen won a second term on the slimmest of margins. The DPP ran a similar campaign for the legislative election of December 2004 and lost, confirming what pollsters have been saying repeatedly – the people of Taiwan do not want irresponsible leaders who advocate a collision course with Beijing. Mr. Chen's adventurism does not enjoy international support either. His decision to dismantle the NUC has drawn widespread criticism. The United States, Taiwan's key ally, has made it clear it does not want a change in the status quo. With two more years to go in his second and final term, Mr. Chen should think of contributing to lasting peace in the region rather than leave behind a legacy of hostility with the Government and people of China.

China cautions Taiwan against breaking free

AGENCE France-Presse
Beijing, February 28

CHINESE PRESIDENT Hu Jintao warned Taiwan on Tuesday that it was taking a "dangerous step" by abolishing an advisory council on unification with the mainland.

"This is a dangerous step on the road towards Taiwan independence," Hu said, according to state television. "Any person who gets on the wrong side of history is doomed to failure," he was quoted as telling visiting Swiss Defense Minister Samuel Schmid. China's top leader rarely makes such a direct warning to the island.

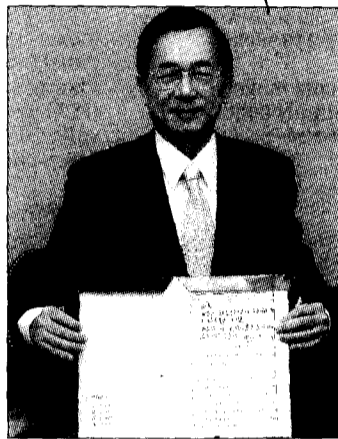
Hu's comments follow the move by Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to scrap the National Unification Council and guidelines for working towards eventual reunification with China.

"We will never permit Taiwan independence and splittist forces under any name or under any form to separate Taiwan from the motherland," the cabinet-level Taiwan Affairs Office said earlier in the day in a statement.

"Chen Shui-bian's determination to go further down the road of Taiwan independence, will fully provoke confrontation within Taiwan and across the strait and will only lead Taiwan society a step closer to disaster."

China and Taiwan split in 1949 after the Nationalists lost a civil war to the communists and fled to the island. China has ever since viewed the island as part of its territory.

It has vowed to reunify with Taiwan, by force if necessary, and has sited at least 700 ballistic missiles targeting the island.



REUTERS

Chen Shui-bian shows the official document he signed to scrap the National Unification Council and its guidelines.

Chen announced the decision to scrap the council and guidelines, both with a history of 15 years, on Monday and formally signed the papers to endorse it on Tuesday, despite repeated warnings from Beijing not to do so.

Chen signed the documents on the anniversary of a 1947 massacre of thousands of islanders by nationalist troops, a day seen as a key rallying point for Taiwan's pro-independence camp.

The mainland statement said Taiwan's independence movement was "doomed to failure" and Chen's strategy threatened cross-strait and regional security. "The risky activities of Chen Shui-bian... are bound to at one go lead to a highly intensified crisis in cross-strait relations and severely endanger the peace and stability of the Taiwan Straits and the Asia-Pacific region," it said.

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North Korea, US discuss stalled nuclear talks

CHRIS BUCKLEY & JON
HERSKOVITZ

BEIJING SEOUL, JANUARY 19

US AND North Korean envoys to talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear programmes met in Beijing, a Chinese official said on Thursday, raising regional hopes the stalled negotiations could resume.

The meeting on Wednesday between US Envoy Christopher Hill and North Korean negotiator Kim Kye-gwan took place right after North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's trip to China.

Wu Dawei, China's top envoy to the talks also attended, said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan.

The US and North Korea nuclear negotiators discussed Washington's clamp-down on companies it suspects helped North Korea with counterfeiting, money laundering and the drug trade, diplomatic sources said.

Kong would not confirm

whether the sanctions were discussed.

"The three sides all had a positive assessment of this contact," Kong said at a regular briefing. "Each believed it was significant."

The future of the six-party talks is uncertain because Pyongyang is angry with the US about Washington's crack-down on its finances.

The six countries—the two Koreas, host China, Japan, Russia and the US—were meant to meet early this year to try to make progress on North Korea's agreement in principle to dismantle its nuclear weapons in exchange for aid and security guarantees. They last met in November.

"It seems North Korea is suffering very much because its foreign currency sources are being blocked by the US moves," said Kim Sung-han, head of North America studies at South Korea's Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security. —Reuters

INDIAN EXPRESS

Anti-WTO protesters clash with police, 900 arrested

Associated Press

HONG KONG, Dec 18. — Thousands of anti-WTO protesters marched through the streets today as Hong Kong tried to recover from a night of rioting that marked one of the city's worst spasms of violence in decades.

The peaceful demonstrators chanted "Sink WTO" as trade ministers from around the globe wrapped up six days of negotiations at a World Trade Organisation meeting. The protesters oppose the WTO's efforts to open up markets to foreign competition.

Some Filipinos burned a makeshift devil symbolising U.S. imperialism and the WTO at the end of the march, yelling "Down, down WTO." Organizers said

7,000 persons took part in the march, while police put the turnout at 5,000.

South Korean farmers beat gongs and carried cardboard signs saying, "Hong Kong government quickly release our comrades!" Police said they arrested 900 demonstrators after Saturday's violence, and many were South Koreans who went on a rampage just outside the WTO meeting venue. They attacked police with bamboo poles and tried to break into the building.

Police fought back with pepper spray, batons and water cannons.

They eventually scattered the crowd with tear gas and seized control of the area. The government said 135 people — including 61 policemen were — injured but most were discharged from hospitals after treat-

ment. One Korean was still in serious condition.

Such large-scale violence is rare in this stable Asian financial capital. The last time the city saw such a street melee was during 1967 riots aimed at usurping British colonial rule. Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997.

The South Korean farmers who joined Sunday's protest vowed to stage a sit-in at a demonstration area near the meeting venue until those arrested are released.

"Without them, we won't return to Korea," said Mr Lee Soo-geun, a leader of the Korean Peasants League.

Meanwhile, South Korea's vice foreign minister, Mr Lee Kyo-hyung, said he will fly to Hong Kong on Monday to negotiate with Hong Kong officials.

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S Korea opens up area near demilitarised zone

Paju: Six miles from the heavily mined and guarded zone that divides North Korea from South Korea, workers at LG Philips LCD are starting to produce liquid-crystal display screens at a new \$5-billion plant. Nearby, apartment buildings are on the rise. And in the shadow of an old hilltop machine-gun nest, a cheery blue and red billboard announces that English Village, a new 65-acre language-teaching theme park, will open in March.

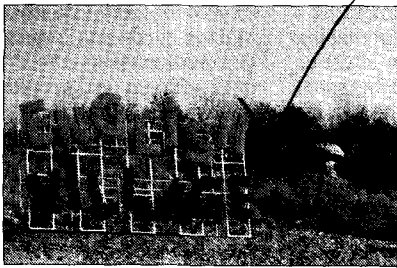
For two generations, the 30 miles between the demilitarised zone and Seoul were intentionally kept sparsely developed, a kind of buffer zone against a North Korean attack. But the political detente between the two countries is bearing economic fruit as South Korea's economic expansion washes away psychological barriers and now laps at the southern edge of the long-feared DMZ.

The stampede to what developers bill as the last best place near Seoul is propelled by the pressure of nearly 50 million people squeezed into South Korea, a country smaller than Virginia, and by an economy that looks to cap costs and compete with China.

South Korea's industrial production grew 12.2% in November while its stock market rose 51.2% in 2005, and South Korea's government now forecasts

5% growth in 2006. Unemployment, already a low 3.5%, is expected to fall further, pushing South Korean wages in the direction of Japan's.

Referring to one long-term projection for Philips's investment in the new plant, Sohn Hak Kyu, governor of Gyeonggi, the province that surrounds Seoul like a donut said, "If Philips thought it



The new language-teaching theme park

was dangerous, how could they invest \$10 billion?"

Paju, a border city known to two generations of South Korean army draftees as an end-of-the-line garrison town, has seen its civilian population double since 2003. To cope with this migration, construction workers are doubling the width of the Freedom Highway, to eight lanes. Seoul's subway system is to be extended here by 2008. City leaders are lobbying to get the KTX, South Korea's bullet train. South Korea also announced on Friday it would lift or ease restrictions on 140 military reservations in the country, including some in the area between the DMZ and Seoul.

In the geographical gap where North Korean tanks once rolled south, South Korean bulldozers may soon be rumbling north. NYT News Service

The New York Times

January 2, 2006

Taiwan Chief Seeks More Arms, Not Better Ties to China

By KEITH BRADSHER

HONG KONG, Jan. 1 - President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan called Sunday for increased arms purchases and warned against greater economic ties to mainland China, in a televised speech that silenced months of speculation that he might soon seek to improve relations across the Taiwan Strait.

The speech was Mr. Chen's first major policy address since his Democratic Progressive Party fared badly in islandwide municipal elections on Dec. 3. His party favors greater political independence from the mainland.

The Nationalist Party, which favors closer relations with Beijing, did much better in those elections. The Nationalists have been riding a surge in popularity since the departing chairman, Lien Chan, visited the mainland in late April. He retired last summer.

But Mr. Chen made clear on Sunday in his annual New Year's Day address that Taiwanese policy had not changed fundamentally. He used several politically charged phrases that appeal to independence advocates in Taiwan but are likely to offend mainland China. He also urged the legislature to approve his long-stalled plans to buy more weapons from the United States and raised again the possibility of a referendum to rewrite the Constitution, two steps strongly opposed by mainland China.

He was particularly emphatic in warning of the risk posed by the rapid modernization of the People's Liberation Army on the mainland, especially its heavy investments in missiles that can reach Taiwan. "In the face of such imminent and obvious threat, Taiwan must not rest its faith on chance or harbor any illusions," he said.

Beijing had no immediate reaction. Wang Daohan, China's chief negotiator on Taiwan issues for many years, died Dec. 24 at 90, and political analysts have said that his death may make the mainland less likely to change policies toward the island soon.

Philip Yang, the director of the Taiwan Security Research Center at National Taiwan University, said Mr. Chen's speech seemed to emphasize shoring up support from hard-line supporters of independence. The Constitution bars the president from seeking a third term when his current term expires in 2008, and there have been growing signs of challenges to what used to be the president's nearly absolute control over the Democratic Progressive Party.

"He tried to prove he is still in control," Mr. Yang said.

The president referred as many as 70 times to the island as Taiwan instead of its legal name, the Republic of China, even though Jan. 1 has long been a public holiday in Taiwan to commemorate the founding of the Republic of China on Jan. 1, 1912. The Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek.

defeated on the mainland, retreated to Taiwan in 1949.

The island's Constitution still states that the Republic of China has jurisdiction over all of China, including the mainland, but President Chen has shifted away from this in his own comments for years. He also said in his speech on Sunday that his country had an area of just about 14,000 square miles, which is only the area of the island itself.

Mainland China considers Taiwan a breakaway province.

Lai I-chung, the international affairs director at the Taiwan Thinktank, a research group in Taipei that is independent of the Democratic Progressive Party but politically aligned with it, said President Chen's hard line showed that he had concluded that his party's internal divisions contributed more to its defeat in the municipal elections than the Nationalist Party's overtures to Beijing.

One common worry in Taiwan involves growing economic dependence on the mainland and the extent to which the mainland economy now dwarfs Taiwan's. China's economy is expanding more than twice as fast as Taiwan's and is now six times the size of Taiwan's.

On Dec. 20, statisticians in Beijing raised their estimate of the size of the Chinese economy by an amount equal to the entire annual output of Taiwan, after an economic census found that small private businesses in service industries, like restaurants, had previously been undercounted.

Mr. Chen said Sunday that more than two-fifths of all orders placed with Taiwanese companies for manufactured goods were filled by factories elsewhere. The mainland accounts for 90 percent of these shipments from factories outside Taiwan, he said.

"Although we cannot turn a blind eye to China's market, we should not view the China market as the only or the last market," Mr. Chen said. "Globalization is not tantamount to China-ization. While Taiwan would never close itself off to the world, we also shall not lock in our economic lifeline and all our bargaining chips in China."

N Korea demands withdrawal of US forces from S Korea

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL JANUARY 1

NORTH Korea today issued a new year's message demanding the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea, and accusing Washington of seeking to launch a new war in the peninsula.

"All the Koreans...must never tolerate treacherous acts of anti-reunification forces who are conspiring with foreign forces. We should launch a dynamic campaign against war and for peace," said a joint editorial carried by North Korea's *Rodong Sinmun* and two other major state-run newspapers.

North Korea marks new year's day with a joint editorial by the country's three major newspapers representing its communist party, military

and youth militia force.

"The entire nation should firmly defend peace and security on the Korean peninsula by turning out in the struggle to resolutely foil the US attempt to launch another war. The new year's message didn't mention a word about the nuclear standoff with the US.

The US, the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia have held fifth rounds of talks since 2003 to find a way of ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

In September, North Korea agreed to give up its atomic programmes in return for aid and security assurances. But no progress has been made on implementing the agreement after North Korea placed conditions on its disarmament. The US has rejected such conditions.

N Korea urges soldiers to become 'human bombs'

▶ **SEOUL:** North Korea, in a new year message on Sunday, urged its soldiers to become "human bullets and bombs" against possible US attacks and vowed to boost farming to feed its people amid international fears of famine. The nation also vowed to bolster unity with South Korea.

"Whatever the situation is, the principled stand of our party and state to give top priority to the military remains unchanged," read the message, according to the official Korean central news agency.

It urged North Korea's 1.1 million troops to become "human bullets and bombs" defending the state led by Kim Jong-il, one of the world's most isolated countries, from possible US attacks.

The North also called on South Koreans to join its "struggle to resolutely foil the US attempt to launch another war" on the Korean peninsula. "We must remove the root cause of war completely from this land by launching a nationwide campaign for driving out the US troops," the message said.

—AFP

A less strident attitude for Taiwan?

If the debate in Taiwan about its political future has descended to the level of birds and animals, it must have some meaning. Perhaps it is nothing more than an expression of impotence, although an unnecessary one. This country, threatened and claimed by China, corralled into submissive behaviour by the USA, is forced to make its main point by any means at hand - that it should be free to exert its own will. "Taiwan has stood up," said President Chen Shui-bian on the day of his first inauguration six years ago, and most people here believe that, even as they differ as to how to put it into practice. But how you fight this struggle perhaps needs more nuance and restraint than Chen gives it.

Some time ago the government announced that it was refusing the gift of two pandas offered by Beijing in a peace-making gesture.

The Beijing dragon can and does breathe fire. But it wouldn't dare do anything more, despite China's arms build-up and its 800 missiles pointing at Taiwan. China knows it could never swallow mighty Taiwan.

According to the government, this was because Taiwan has no suitable place to put them. But a few days prior to that, Chen, seemingly contradictory, said that China should use its military budget for panda conservation. If he were serious about this, a modest step might have been to gracefully accept the pandas. Not surprisingly, the issue has split the nation.

Recently, the government concluded a medical conference on avian flu - Taiwan sits astride one of the principal routes for bird migration. The intent of this conference was also to poke China in the eye, but this time more constructively than is often the case. Why should Taiwan tolerate being

of the crisis, we had no help and no outside expertise at all."

One of Taiwan's troubles is that it too easily exaggerates its vulnerability. It is a great moral and political wrong that Taiwan is excluded from the WHO, indeed from the UN itself, from where it was summarily ejected when President Richard Nixon made his historic peace with Mao Zedong. But Taiwan has also carved out a great deal of economic and even political space for itself. It has become, despite a population less than half the size of Britain's, an industrial and technological giant with over \$130 billion of foreign

exports each year. The last few years it has grown faster than South Korea. Its investments of capital, machinery and personnel in China largely made possible China's own technological revolution. Despite its isolation from the WHO, it has a fine national health service, only second in the world to Sweden's according to the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Politically it becomes madder by the year. Its democracy appears to have grown deeper roots than many much older ones. The human rights abuses prevalent under the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek and his son are history. The Press is sophisticated and the NGO sector thrives. Justice is honest, if at times erratic.

The political debate is essentially three sided, although only two political parties really count. There is perhaps 20 per cent of the voting population who would like to see Taiwan declare its full and legal independence and seek admission to the UN. There is perhaps 15 per cent who want to see reunification with China. But the vast majority, fairly evenly split between the two parties, support the status quo. Each time I visit Taiwan, I find that sentiment growing stronger. After all the status quo works, it keeps the peace, it allows great material and personal advance and it doesn't stop Taiwanese from travelling (there were over 1.5 million flights in and out of Taiwan last year including 6 million visits of Taiwanese to China).

The Beijing dragon can and does breathe fire. But it wouldn't dare do anything more, despite China's arms build up and its 800 missiles pointing at Taiwan. China knows it could never swallow mighty Taiwan. And it knows that the USA with its offshore submarines and 72 F-15s based in nearby Okinawa would never let it try.

So why play this game of poking and provoking China, which Chen too often does? He should save his fire for big issues like the Beijing opposed, planned rewrite of parts of Chiang Kai-shek's constitution, which will be a useful step forward in the quest for sovereignty. A less strident attitude would suit Taiwan better.



Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian

100 YEARS AGO TODAY

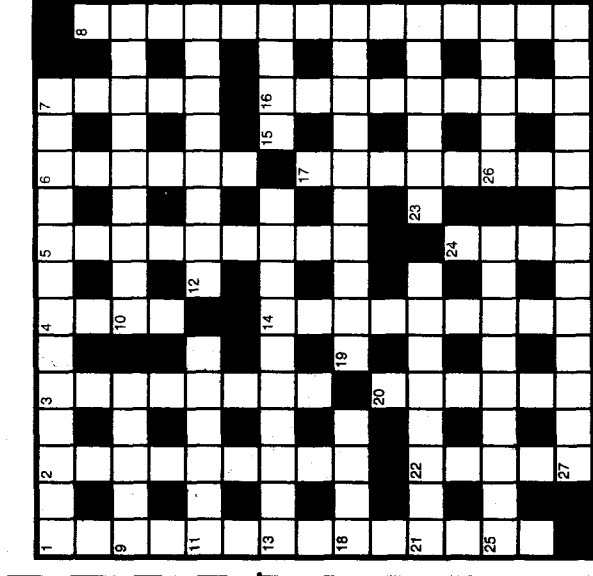
EDITORIAL

postponed by means of the two years' extension granted to Sir Alexander Pedler in March 1904. The removal to the Central Provinces of Mr S.C. Hill, who had been nominated as Sir Alexander Pedler's successor, indicated that the Government had formed a fresh design in reference to the office, and this design became all the clearer when nothing was done to enable any senior officer of the Education Service to acquire the particular experience which the Government afterwards declared to be indispensable. As a matter of fact the purpose of the Bengal Government was quite well understood, although the Lieutenant Governor did his best to avoid the policy's being challenged by withholding all information. A question on the subject was asked in the provincial Council last July, the reply being that "the choice depends on all the circumstances and requirements of the case"; and it added that these "had been submitted for the consideration of the Government of India".

The appointment of a civilian Director of Public Instruction which, three weeks ago, we announced as settled, has been duly gazetted. The innovation has been steadily protested against during the past year, and we regret that the Government should have shown itself so impervious to argument in relation to a matter which has aroused public interest in a somewhat unusual degree. The case against a civilian Director has been fully stated, in these columns and elsewhere, and it would obviously be waste of time to go over it again now that the Government has taken the final step. But, apart from the principle at stake, the affair is serious regarded as an object lesson in the ways of Government, and upon this aspect of the matter it may perhaps be useful to say a few words. It is late difficult to explain than to excuse the line of action pursued in relation to the Directorship since the necessity of making the appointment was

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UNDESIRABLE
METHAKAL
NAPHTHA
DAAANLKH
EARRINGS
RTRPLOW
SPINPILLOW
TALLOJNGN
ALLEVIA
TENCN
ESCORT
WLMALSL
EXECUTE
NARENLE
THREEQUARTERS

ACROSS

- Celestial origins of big bang? (13)
- It provides lift each way (5)
- Dyspepsia - Di avoided eating (9)
- Queen has hole in fur (6)
- Badly hit, wrench gun around (8)
- Fancy pastries - i.e. here? (10)
- Three things to put round centre of atrium (4)
- Soldiers run into woman (4)
- Tough cookie: criticises chap returning after a drink (6,4)
- Garment supports one, right after

DOWN

- Bull may suffer during this (6,8)
- Final warning from Tim, and mutual jostling (9)
- No light in deckhouse initially, and boat by headland (8)
- Drops rule, one
- hospital (3,5)
- Bird in distant, German city (6)
- Covers his situation, perhaps (9)
- Happening to be in flat with temperature (5)
- At seaside then slipping, knocked out (13)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required.

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