

OFF THE RECORD PRESENTATION

Robert Einhorn, Assistant Secretary of State
for Political-Military Affairs and
Chief Negotiator, US-DPRK Missile Talks
Brookings Institute, January 28, 2000

Mr. Robert Einhorn addressed a select audience of experts in Northeast Asian Affairs. Present were scholars and diplomats from the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Two journalists were also present, but the meeting was off the record.

US POLICY AND DPRK NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Mr. Einhorn summarized US policy toward North Korea regarding weapons of mass destruction as one aimed at:

– preventing further DPRK research and development of a nuclear weapons capability, preserving the freeze on nuclear related activity at the Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center and the suspected nuclear site at Kumjangni. The DPRK had agreed to this under the terms of the US-DPRK Agreed Framework of October 21, 1994. He said there were no problems regarding implementation of this agreement. KEDO was continuing the supply of heavy fuel oil on schedule.

However, Mr. Einhorn added, the DPRK may have enough plutonium to make two nuclear devices. Also, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had not made any progress toward enhancing the transparency of North Korea's nuclear program. North Korea retains its ability to produce enriched uranium, but this is permissible under the IAEA safeguards agreement.

DPRK MISSILE PROGRAM

The program has two dimensions: a. indigenous research, development and production, and b. missile exports. US policy is to end both dimensions, with first priority assigned to halting the export of missiles. The US goal is to ban the production and export of all Scud B, C and longer range (Nodong, Taepo-dong, etc.) ballistic missiles. It is less concerned about shorter range missiles because the DPRK has long range artillery which can bombard Seoul more effectively than short range missiles.

In September, 1999, North Korea promised not to make anymore test flights of its ballistic missile Taepo-dong as long as US-DPRK talks continue. This moratorium applies only to flight testing of missiles, not any other aspect of research and development. Recently North Korea has threatened to reconsider whether to continue the moratorium of flight tests in light of continuing US efforts to develop its Theater Missile Defense or TMD program.

DPRK Missile Proliferation

Pyongyang continues to export ballistic missiles to the Middle East and parts and

technology to Pakistan and Iran. During the past couple of years it has increased its export of sophisticated and longer range ballistic missiles to the Middle East. These exports are a major source of hard currency for the DPRK and pay the cost of continuing research and development. China has provided some technical support to the DPRK missile program.

US-DPRK Missile Talks

There have been four rounds of US-DPRK missile talks; the first in April 1996 and the last in February 1997. North Korea refuses to negotiate its domestic missile program. It is willing to halt its exports, but only if the US will compensate it \$1,000,000,000 (one billion dollars) annually.

DPRK Foreign Policy in General

North Korea has not accepted Presidential Adviser William Perry's proposal regarding ballistic missiles, but there seem to be some tentative, positive indications coming from Pyongyang. Pyongyang is expanding contacts with the outside world, but not on a government to government basis. Most of this activity involves private contacts. North Korea-China relations have improved relative to 1992. Pyongyang is also working to improve its relations with Italy, Australia and Japan at a government-to-government level. Recently North Korea has agreed to address the Japanese "missing persons" issue which could lead to a warming of Japan-DPRK relations.

The pace of US-DPRK engagement was disappointing in 1999. The US stands ready to begin lifting its sanctions. There appears, however, to be a basic debate in Pyongyang over whether how to respond to William Perry's proposal and whether to send a high level official to Washington, D.C. to discuss his proposal. Until this happens, the lifting of sanctions will remain stalled. The most recent round of US-DPRK talks between Ambassador Kartman and Vice Minister Kim Kye Gwan produced little news. North Korea tends to miscalculate the value of its leverage in the United States.

CHINA

The US is encouraging China to become a more active participant in solving the proliferation problem, rather than contributing to it. China joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 1992, has restrained its involvement in nuclear proliferation and signed the Chemical-Biological Weapons Treaty. It has put tighter controls on the export of sensitive technologies and stopped nuclear cooperation with Iran.

Since the accidental US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, however, US-China non-proliferation talks have been suspended for one year. Talks about regional issues were also suspended. China and Russia have not been helpful regarding nuclear proliferation related issues involving Iraq. The US stands ready to resume talks with China on all these issues. The US approach to non-proliferation is global. China is more concerned about the region surrounding it, that is the two Koreas, Japan, and Taiwan. China seems less concerned about South Asia and the Middle East. regional

ROK MISSILE PROGRAM

South Korea has put the US in an awkward position because of its ballistic missile development program. South Korea ten years ago agreed to limit the range and payload of its missiles if the US provided selected missile technology for its program. But then the ROK decided it wanted its own long range missile capability. The US worried that Pyongyang would see an independent ROK ballistic missile capability as a threat. Also, the ROK development of long range ballistic missiles would subtract funds away from other important areas of South Korea's defense budget. The US wants South Korea to accept the MTCR standards. Also, the US believes the missile capabilities of South Korea and Japan are already sufficient to deter missile attack by the DPRK.

C. Kenneth Quinones

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