



## **North Korea: A Global Threat**

In 1998, North Korea launched its long-range Taepodong missile, propelling it over Japan. A year ago, Pyongyang, the capital city of North Korea, announced that it has nuclear weapons. Then, on July 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, North Korea fired around seven missiles, both long- and short-range, each upgrades to their original model used eight years ago. Most of these missiles landed in the Sea of Japan, outraging Japanese government who immediately filed a protest and sent a statement condemning the tests. Japan is now working with the United Nations, and the United States, having condemned their tests for some time, has asked for six-party talks with North Korea. This means, the United States, Japan, South Korea, China and Russia are all multilateral participants in the ensuing discussions.

Japan has suspended links to North Korea in efforts to hurt its already wavering economy. North Korean citizens, facing widespread poverty and disease caused by malnutrition, remain uninformed of the current global, political strides. Missile testing, say some commentators, sends a message to the world that this internally weak structure is still a powerhouse with a deadly hold on the future as we know it.

Christopher Hill, Assistant Secretary of State, explains: "The North Koreans have engaged in these weapons programs for some 20 years or more. This is not something that just started a couple of years ago. They have been at this, frankly speaking, since the 1970s." However North Korea has now, given their actions, made the decision to abandoned these programs.

With substantial nuclear capability and long-range missiles, North Korea, a communist-led single party state in East Asia, has gained a stronghold on bilateral negotiations with the United States. Yet faced with a standstill in these negotiations, they've begun using these missile tests to get what they want. Their request: A non-aggressive treaty with the United States. Nevertheless, the view of the United States and allies abroad is that North Korea is attempting nuclear blackmail.

Negotiation pressures now fall into the hands of China, North Korea's largest economic partner. But where the situation heads is yet to be determined. Christopher Hill, when responding to the U.S. fall-out, explains: "We are very concerned about this ... we have been talking to our South Korean allies, our Japanese allies. And we're going to start having some in-depth discussions with the Chinese. And we're going to see what we can do. What is very important about this, though, is, we have got to work together. We have really got to make this a multilateral process, because it's not a bilateral problem."

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