



Written by on April 7, 2009

North Korean Missile Launch Creates Crisis

Security Council Resolution 1718 was adopted in October 2006 after North Korea's atomic weapons test and demands that the country "not conduct any further nuclear test or launch of a ballistic missile." In a statement made in March, State Department spokesman Robert Wood said that because the technology for a space rocket and a ballistic missile are so similar, the resolution covers a satellite launch as well. U.S. intelligence experts have said that the missile has the capability to reach Alaska or Hawaii.



Following the launch, North Korea said it had successfully launched its Kwangmyongsong-2 communications satellite, but White House spokesman Robert Gibbs disputed the claim. Speaking to reporters in Prague, Gibbs said that stage one of the rocket fell into the Sea of the Japan, and the remaining stages, along with the satellite payload, landed in the Pacific Ocean. "No object entered orbit. No debris fell on Japan," said Gibbs. However, noted Gibbs: "The launch itself was the violation, not the fact [that] the launch, we now see, was unsuccessful."

North Korea's last launch of the Taepodong-2 missile in 2006 lasted less than a minute before blowing apart.

As to North Korea's motivation in defying international pressure to forego such missile testing, Bloomberg News quoted Bruce Cumings, author of *North Korea: Another Country*, and a history professor at the University of Chicago, who opined: "They are first of all trying to get the attention of the Obama administration, which has not said much about its North Korea policy. They hope to show the prowess of their medium-range missiles to various buyers around the world."

AP writer Paul Alexander has also presented the theory that North Korea's strongman, Kim Jong-il, is emulating the strategy portrayed in the 1959 Peter Sellers film, *The Mouse that Roared*, about the fictional, Lichtenstein-like Duchy of Grand Fenwick. The poor country declares war on the United States, expecting to lose and then rebuild itself through the generous foreign aid that the United States typically bestows on its vanquished enemies, as in the post-World War II Marshall Plan, and even in present-day Iraq.

Though Alexander does not suggest that North Korea wants actual war with the United state, he suggests: "In Kim's case, negotiation has always been about brinksmanship — develop nuclear weapons and tell everybody you're ready to use them. Rather than risk confrontation, world leaders have offered aid and concessions, figuring that such costs are better than finding out if the mouse really can roar."

An interesting theory, but the casting of Kim Jong-il as a global threat whose actions must be countered (not unlike the way Saddam Hussein was portrayed) provides internationalists an argument for equipping the United Nations with the means to bring Kim Jong-il and all other tyrants either to the negotiating table or to ruin. That is to say, the real action in this crisis could actually be in the reaction.



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As with all such crises, the UN Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on the 5th to discuss what action — if any — the UN should take in response to the North Korean launch. However, BBC news reported on April 6 that the meeting "has ended without agreement."

BBC's correspondent at the UN quoted Susan Rice, the U.S. envoy to the United Nations, who called Pyongyang's move a "clear-cut violation of [resolution] 17-18," and also Japan's UN representative, who said Tokyo was seeking a "clear, firm and unified" UN response. The correspondent wrote that what the United States and Japan want is "a resolution that reinforces sanctions already in place against Pyongyang; the question is whether China and Russia will even agree to that."

RIA Novosti, a Russian news agency based in Moscow, reported on April 6: "The 15-member Security Council met for an emergency meeting late on Sunday at Japan's request, but strong opposition from Russia and China prevented the adoption of even a preliminary statement of condemnation." But circumstances could change — and that change could conceivably occur through political subterfuge.

To put this scenario fully into perspective requires a long look backward to the time of the Korean War, perhaps the first time the United States abandoned control of its own foreign policy and military operations to put them under UN control. Even the present scenario, where observers speculate as to whether China and Russia will agree to stronger UN sanctions against North Korea, has its precedent in the events leading up to our entry into the Korean conflict. That entry was authorized by a vote of the UN Security Council. However, the Soviet Union, which publicly opposed the intervention, was expected to block this UN action with its veto power as a permanent member of Security Council. But the Soviet delegate failed to cast the veto; instead, he expressed indignation over some point, walked out of the Security Council, and remained away long enough for the Council to commit the UN to military action in Korea.

Once U.S. troops were sent to Korea as the backbone of the UN force, as has happened with every UN operation since — the United States always makes the lion's share of contributions in both blood and money — the Soviet delegate to the Security Council conveniently forgot his anger and returned to his position, where he was a party to the running of the war against himself and his communist allies. Furthermore, all orders and plans for our troops in Korea went through the Undersecretary for Political and Security Council Affairs, the Soviet Konstantin Zinchenko. Zinchenko was notorious for his verbal attacks on U.S. General Douglas MacArthur's handling of the war effort. Finally, in 1952, Zinchenko and his aide, Nikolai Skvortsov, fled the country as the FBI and U.S. Senate investigators zeroed in on a massive espionage network they directed at the UN. Combined with our government's no-win policy (including the removal of MacArthur as commander), the UN's management of the war in Korea guaranteed that communists would retain control of half the peninsula when the ceasefire was finally declared. The current crisis is just one of many that are a direct result of that duplicity and treason more than 55 years ago.

And still, to whom does our government turn whenever a threat to our own security or, more often, the security of some other nation, is perceived? The UN, of course. President George W. Bush cited Saddam Hussein's violation of UN resolutions as the rationale for invading Iraq, and now, after a history of acting weakly against North Korea's aggressive behavior, our government complains that their missile launch "violates UN Security Council Resolution 1718."

As Ohio Republican Senator Robert Taft, who had once voted affirmatively for U.S. membership, stated when he finally realized what membership in the world body entailed: "The United Nations has become a trap. Let's go it alone!"



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