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TIME TO STOP NORTH KOREA'S MISSILE BLACKMAIL

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North Korea's August 31 missile test that flew over Japan highlights a growing missile threat to Japan, South Korea, and the United States. This test follows North Korea's demands for \$500 million to halt its missile exports, as well as threats to revive its nuclear weapons program if it does not get more money. Such blatant extortion demonstrates the failure of U.S. policies that have sought to appease the North by promises of aid and trade. It is time for the United States to stop all aid to North Korea until it can be verified that the regime has halted its missile and nuclear programs. In addition, the Clinton Administration should end its opposition to effective missile defenses for Americans and work with Japan and South Korea to create a Northeast Asia missile defense network.

NORTH KOREA'S NEW MISSILE

The goal of North Korea's Taepo Dong program is to build a missile that can reach the United States. The missile tested on August 31 flew about 1,000 miles; its range is estimated to be about 1,200 miles, and it could carry a nuclear or a large chemical/biological warhead. Range estimates for the Taepo Dong-2 run from 2,100 miles to 3,600 miles—enough to reach Alaska. The congressionally mandated commission on missile threats led by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld noted that the Taepo Dong-2 could be tested within six months of a decision to do so.

Meanwhile, the Taepo Dong-1 already can reach all U.S. bases in South Korea and Japan, as far out as Okinawa. To make this point, the August 31 test

flew very close to Misawa Air Force Base, used by U.S. F-16s of the 35th Fighter Wing. Okinawa would be important as a strategic reserve area for U.S. forces aiding South Korea if it is attacked by the North.

North Korea also can be expected to sell its missiles. North Korean missile technology is helping Iran, which on July 21 tested its 600- to 900-mile-range Shahab-3 missile. Technology from the Taepo Dong-1 could help Iran to build a 1,200-mile-range Shahab-4 that could reach Israel and Central Europe. Pakistan purchased North Korea's 600-mile-range Nodong missile, which it renamed the Ghauri. Pakistan's test of this missile in April sparked nuclear tests by India and then Pakistan in May. And Pakistan's estimated 1,200-mile-range Ghaznavi missile may turn out to be a Taepo Dong-1.

NORTH KOREA'S BLACKMAIL

Another of North Korea's motivations for the August 31 test was to extort more money from the West, in particular the United States. Last June,

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North Korea's Central News Agency bluntly stated that North Korea would continue its missile exports unless the United States ended its economic embargo and made a "compensation for the losses to be caused by discontinued missile exports." North Korean officials told visiting U.S. congressional staff members in late August that this "compensation" should be \$500 million per year.

North Korea has seen that extortion works. It used a promise to suspend its nuclear weapons program to entice the Clinton Administration into the October 1994 Agreed Framework in which Japan, South Korea, and the United States would pay the North up to \$6 billion for fuel and two light-water nuclear reactors. The United States has given North Korea \$105 million to support this agreement, and the Administration has requested \$35 million for fiscal year 1999. The United States is a key donor of food aid to North Korea: \$110 million so far. Yet the North refuses to consider minimal economic reforms to feed its people or to reduce its million-man army aimed at South Korea. It continues submarine incursions and commando raids into South Korea, and the North recently hinted it would revive its nuclear weapons program if its demands for money are not met.

DEFENDING AGAINST NORTH KOREA'S MISSILES AND BLACKMAIL

Despite a long train of North Korean provocations, and its recent missile test over Japan, the Clinton Administration remains committed to the Agreed Framework. It is time for the United States to resist threats and blackmail. The Administration should:

- **Suspend all aid to North Korea.** It is time to suspend all U.S. Agreed Framework–related aid and humanitarian assistance until it can be verified that North Korea has ended its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs. Japan already has halted aid. There should be no more assistance from the West until North Korea terminates its nuclear and missile programs and

shows a commitment to real peace with South Korea and internal economic reforms.

- **Commit to a near-term U.S. national missile defense system.** North Korea's missile test should make it clear that the Clinton Administration must end its opposition to an effective missile defense for the United States. The Administration should end the folly of its adherence to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which no longer is legally binding but which the Administration uses to constrain the development and deployment of missile defenses.
- **Build an Asian missile defense network.** North Korea's emerging long-range missile capability, and China's ballistic missile and cruise missile modernization effort, demand that the United States join with its allies in Asia to build a missile defense network. The Clinton Administration should urge Japan and South Korea to purchase soon-to-be developed U.S. land- or sea-based interceptor missiles that can be coordinated with U.S. antimissile, early warning, and command systems.

CONCLUSION

The missile test on August 31 shows it may be only a few years before North Korea can build missiles capable of reaching the United States. In the meantime, North Korea already has a new weapon that can threaten Japan and South Korea and be sold to other rogue states. At a minimum, the United States should suspend all aid to North Korea until its ruling regime makes verifiable commitments to end its missile and nuclear programs. And North Korea's growing missile threat means the Clinton Administration must stop making excuses and begin building effective missile defenses for all Americans and U.S. allies.

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