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Chronological: Military Foreign Policy

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers

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Military Foreign Policy

According to reports that should be well known in the diplomatic community, North Korea has been attempting to attain nuclear weapons since the late 1970's. To that end, it has worked with the People's Republic of China, the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, and Egypt.

However, in 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state, and in 1992, it issued a joint statement with South Korea agreeing in principle to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.

In 1993, North Korea announced it would withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and demanded the withdrawal of international inspectors from its potential nuclear sites. It is believed that at that point, North Korea possessed enough plutonium to build several bombs.

In October 1994, working with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United States and North Korea entered into an Agreed Framework. Under the Agreed Framework, the U.S. agreed to help North Korea acquire new light water nuclear plants that are not suitable for producing plutonium. The countries also agreed to remove the spent nuclear fuel rods that could be used for making bombs.

In return, the U.S. agreed to supply North Korea with fuel oil until the new reactors were on line. Additional American food assistance was also to be forthcoming.

However, it appears that after the Agreed Framework, North Korea began a secret program to build a bomb based on enriched uranium. It is reported that in 1997, Pakistan supplied important knowledge and information on nuclear technology to North Korea.

In October of 2002, North Korea was accused of maintaining a nuclear weapons program and to the surprise of many, North Korea admitted that such a program existed.

In its statement, North Korea claimed that its program was purely defensive—a response to the aggressive foreign policy of the United States. In response to the Korean admission, the U.S. cut off the shipment of fuel to North Korea.

In December of 2002, North Korea expelled nuclear inspectors and announced its intent to restart its nuclear fuel production, unless the U.S. agreed to a non-invasion pact.

Since 2003, the U.S. has been working with China, South Korea, Russia, Japan, and North Korea in a six-party talk to address this impasse. To date, progress has been slow, and it appeared that North Korea was continuing to produce plutonium.

It is no secret that in the 60s and 70s, North Korea worked with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to develop an indigenous capability to produce ballistic missiles. It is also widely believed that North Korea build and sold SCUD B and C missiles to many nations, including Pakistan, Egypt, and Iran.

As many will recall, the North Koreans developed and launched their No Dong missile in 1990. This missile has a short to medium range capability.

In 1993, the North Koreans launched a three-stage Tae Po Dong 1 missile which could potentially reach the United States. The missile was fired over Japan and its third stage landed about 4,000 kilometers away from Korea.

It is now believed by many that the North Koreans are working on a Tai Ho Dong 2 missile, and last month, the North Koreans launched a short range missile into the Sea of Japan.

There are many who also believe North Korea has chemical weapons.

Reportedly, North Korea has the technology to produce sarin and mustard gas, and the means to launch them through artillery.

It is interesting to note that in 1987, North Korea signed the Biological Weapons Convention, but it has not agreed to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

China began developing nuclear weapons in the late 1950's with assistance from the Soviet Union, and although the Soviet Union pulled out its support in 1960, China succeeded in exploding its first nuclear bomb in 1964, launching its first missile in 1966, and detonating its first hydrogen bomb in 1967.

Today, China is estimated to have a significant deterrent capability, but considerable uncertainty exists as to their total number of weapons.

However, there is agreement that the nuclear weapons are for ballistic weapons, bomber, artillery, and land mine uses.

There is no report as to the exact number, but most experts agree that it is more than 2000.

Looking beyond North Korea and China, it has been reported that there were over 100 ballistic missiles launched worldwide in 2004—nearly double the number launched in 2003. The 2004 launches break down into:

- More than 60 launches of short range missiles,**
- More than 10 launches of medium range missiles, and**
- Approximately 20 land- and sea-based long range ballistic missiles.**

I cite the above to suggest that these are challenging moments in our history. This is a time that requires the utmost in our diplomatic skills.

However, in the real world, diplomacy without deterrence may not be effective in preventing violent conflict.

When one considers that the time window for life and death decision making during a nuclear attack may be less than 10 minutes from the time of launching, the challenge ahead of us is a very difficult and vexing one.

Having said that, we must also consider the possibility that violence might result from a mistake or an accident.

Yes. There is no question that the challenge ahead of us is a very difficult and deadly one.

Obviously, I cannot speak for the government of the United States or the United States Senate, but as a member of the Senate, I feel that the recent decision made by the Japanese government to strengthen its defense infrastructure was an appropriate one.

Its decision to establish an anti-ballistic missile system is realistic.

It has been said over the ages that one of the most important duties of a sovereign nation is to defend and protect her people, and to maintain the integrity of her boundaries and shores.

This is not only the most important duty of sovereign nations, but I believe most people would agree, it is their sacred right.

I realize that this has not been an easy step for the Japanese to take, but I believe it was a wise one for them to have taken.

It may result in mixed reactions in the international community, but upon due reflection, I am confident that other nations—particularly those in this area—would concur with the decision made by the Japanese.

I do hope that some day, the leaders of this world will come to their senses and follow some path to peace, where people may live free of fear or threat of death and destruction.

On another but some what related matter, may I suggest that one of the successful ways to avoid violent conflict are private sector programs that provide for the easy exchange of information, coupled with people exchange programs.

For example, the Nikkei community in the United States has established, over the years, hundreds of programs and organizations.

There are dozens of koto and samisen clubs, and hundreds of prefectural organizations, U.S.-Japan/Japan-U.S. business councils, art clubs, culture clubs, and so on.

But unlike other ethnic groups, these Nikkei organizations have a narrower agenda: music, art, culture, prefectural matters, and business with specific subgroups such as marketing or exporting. I wish respectfully to point out that only one is actively involved in establishing exchange programs made up of young leaders in academia, business, and government.

That organization is the Japanese American National Museum.

By contrast, at this moment, there are several American organizations of this nature maintaining ties with China, and Israel, a small country, has the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee. These organizations help to open doors and begin dialogs.

Recently, in the government sector, after much planning and negotiations that covered a span of two years, the United States Senate and the People's Republic of China established a China-U.S. Interparliamentary Conference.

This is not a social group.

It is a group of high-ranking United States Senators who will gather with some regularity with leaders of China to discuss matters of mutual concern.

This is the first time the United States has established such a conference with an Asian country, and the first such conference with a communist country as well.

There are some in the United States Senate who feel an arrangement of this nature with Japan would be mutually beneficial.

I believe the time has come to begin a dialog on this matter; it is an idea that merits our serious consideration.



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COMMENTS: Senator's speech on Military Foreign Policy
