

North Korea's plan to launch a satellite

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North Korea again receives attention from the world as it escalates tensions in Korean Peninsula through various measurements. It threatens South Korea with aggressive and offensive words while rejects international warnings to stop from its planned satellite launch.

These attitudes are mainly targeted toward the South Korea's Lee Myong-bak government which pursues more reciprocal policies than his predecessors since its inauguration one year ago. The defense ministry of Lee said on the 19th of February in an effort to downplay Pyongyang's request that it be recognized as a nuclear state, South Korean defense white paper would not include such claim but it would simply mention that North Korea conducted nuclear tests. As its second objective, the North Korea seems to try to send message to the new U.S. Obama administration in order to secure North Korea an upper hand in dealing with its nuclear issue. Finally, it is a way of protest to the joint annual military exercise of the American and South Korean troops scheduled on March. The North used to issue such warnings whenever the exercise takes place.

As its signal of defiance, Pyongyang indicated since the 3rd week of February that it would launch a satellite. The North insists it is a satellite launches however, the intelligence sources of the U. S. and South Korea believe it could be a long-distance missile called Taepodong-2 that in theory can reach the west coast of mainland America.

In view of the North Korea's dangerous game, South Korean foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who was visiting Seoul on the 24th of February urged North Korea to stop its missile threats and return to dialogue with Seoul.

China, on the other hand, as an important mediator of the 6 party talks, also shares concerns with South Korea over North Korea's latest movements of possible launch of a ballistic missile which can raise further tension in the peninsula. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, in a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Yu, in Beijing on the 24 of February said North Korea should refrain from adopting provocative action and increasing tension. For China the stabilization of the Northeast Asian region is important for its continuous economic development.

Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso, at a summit meeting in Washington with the President Obama also stressed that the North Korea should not attempt any provocative action.

Concerning the security issue in the Northeast Asian region, the North Korean threats should be dealt within the six-party discussions. Although, the six parties have remained in deadlock since last year over disagreements on nuclear verifications, except the North Korea all the other member states agree that the North's nuclear weapons programs must be resolved within the framework of multi-party denuclearization talks.

Within a few weeks time on, the North Korea would launch its satellite against the pledges of the most countries in the World. The situation aftermath is not clear as the Obama administration was willing to reward the North with diplomatic recognition, the establishment of a peace regime to replace a fragile armistice, and provide generous economic assistance only if the North is ready to abandon its nuclear programs under the multilateral talks that includes the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia and stops provocative actions.