



Statement by Sam Nunn about the Apparent North Korean Nuclear Test October 9, 2006

The apparent nuclear test by North Korea is bad news and could be very destabilizing and dangerous for Northeast Asia and the world. I have been saying for years that we are in a race between cooperation and catastrophe. Today's event is another indication that we are not winning that race.

I hope this event will be a wake-up call in unifying the international community not only to confront the threat posed by North Korea to international peace and security, but also to formulate a broader approach to nuclear threat reduction.

The goal must be a nuclear weapons-free Korean Peninsula, with North Korea fulfilling the commitment they made to that goal in September 2005. In striving for that goal, there are several elements. Time is a factor so a united response on economic sanctions is more important than a perfect response. In order to prevent the real possibility of an arms race in Asia and to deter North Korea from using nuclear weapons, the United States should publicly reiterate its security guarantees to Japan and South Korea. We have to convince North Korea that their country will be far better off without nuclear weapons than with them. We must make sure there are consequences for the use or proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear materials, or missiles.

We are at a tipping point with growing nuclear dangers, including the spread of nuclear weapons by states, the conflict between growing energy demands and the spread of nuclear weapons materials and technology, the threat of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons and the erosion of international constraints on the spread of nuclear weapons. To address these threats, we need a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Universal adherence to stronger international inspections and monitoring for nuclear materials so they cannot be diverted to weapons programs.
- Supporting civil nuclear power programs while preventing the spread of nuclear weapons materials and technology, through:
 - Creation of nuclear fuel banks and fuel assurances to remove the justification for any additional states to develop indigenous capabilities.
 - Concluding a verifiable Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty with monitoring to ensure that plutonium processing and uranium enrichment facilities are not making materials for nuclear weapons.
 - Delegitimizing the use of highly enriched uranium in civil commerce.
- Strengthening export control enforcement and increasing international cooperation to punish violators like AQ Khan and his associates who sold nuclear secrets to Iran and North Korea.

- Creating a global Nunn-Lugar-type initiative to help countries meet their nonproliferation obligations, including UN Security Council Resolution 1540.
- Securing and eliminating nuclear weapons materials around the world.

In addition, nuclear weapons states should take seriously their responsibilities under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, show leadership in taking steps to deemphasize nuclear weapons and make them less relevant and reduce stockpiles of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials worldwide.

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