



MONTHLY RECAP: APRIL

DPRK ROCKET LAUNCH

The month of April began as North Korea continued to threaten retaliation if Japan, the United States or others attempted to interfere with the launch of what it claimed to be a satellite, while Washington and Seoul continued to insist that the launch would be in violation of UN Resolution 1718 barring development of missile-related technology, and Japan insisted on its right to defend against objects threatening its territory. China and Russia urged restraint.

On April 5 North Korea launched a rocket, which Pyongyang claims successfully placed a communications satellite in orbit, while international observers state it failed to engage its third stage and splashed its payload in the Pacific Ocean. One U.S. source reported that the rocket did briefly leave the Earth's atmosphere, but the third stage failed to separate, bringing the second and third stages, along with the payload, back down to Earth.

Barack Obama stated, "rules must be binding, violations must be punished, words must mean something," and called the launch a "provocation" that demanded a UNSC response. North Korean media claimed, "The satellite is transmitting the melodies of the immortal revolutionary paeans 'Song of Gen. Kim Il Sung' and 'Song of Gen. Kim Jong Il' as well as measurement data back to Earth."

More than a week after the launch, the UN Security Council released a Presidential Statement on April 13 condemning the North's launch, "which is in contravention of Security Council



resolution 1718 of 2006.” The statement called on all countries to “fully implement” resolution 1718, and demanded the North refrain from more launches and return to 6-Party Talks.

On April 24, the UN sanctions committee banned transactions with, and called on member-states to freeze the assets of, three North Korean businesses. Korea Mining Development Trading Corp., Korea Ryonbong General Corp., and Tanchon Commercial Bank were targeted.

On April 29, North Korea threatened to carry out a second nuclear test and to launch inter-continental ballistic missiles “unless the UN Security Council offers an apology immediately.”

DPRK NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS

North Korea responded to the UNSC statement, stating that it “resolutely rejects” the “unjust” statement, and promises to further boost its nuclear deterrent “in every way.” “The DPRK will never participate in the [6-Party] Talks any longer nor will it be bound to any agreement of the Six-Party Talks.”

On April 14, the North ordered UN inspectors to leave the country and announced that it would restart nuclear reprocessing facilities. On April 15, American experts working in Yongbyon were also told to leave North Korea.

On April 24, North Korea announced it has begun reprocessing spent fuel rods in order to extract weapons-grade plutonium.



KIM JONG IL'S 3RD REGIME

North Korean media reported on April 9 that Kim Jong Il had been elected by the DPRK parliament to a 3rd term as chairman of the National Defense Commission. The Supreme People's Assembly also reportedly adopted a new law "on revising and supplementing the Socialist Constitution," although no more details were given. The last constitutional revision was carried out in 1998.

A list of ministers and heads of government agencies released after North Korea reshuffled some positions during the first session of the SPA on April 9 made no mention of the National Economic Cooperation Federation, which had been in charge of inter-Korean cooperation. The South Korean Ministry of Unification "estimates" that the North Korean agency has been closed.

It was reported that Kim Jong Il's youngest son, Kim Jong-un, has been appointed to a low-level post in the National Defense Commission, furthering rumors of his possible succession.

KIM IL SUNG BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Festivals and events were held for several weeks leading up to the 97th birthday of the late Kim Il Sung, culminating in a fireworks display on April 15.

DPRK SANCTIONS



On April 5, it was reported that the European Union has confiscated several million USD deposited by North Korea for the purchase of two Italian luxury yachts. The money was confiscated due to its “uncertain source”.

On April 6, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura stated that Japan would extend economic sanctions, including barring DPRK ships from entering Japanese ports, against North Korea for one year as a result of the “extremely provocative” missile launch.

DPRK ENERGY

On April 20, it was reported that Kim Jong Il, on a visit to the new Nyongwon Hydropower Station, called for the building of additional hydroelectric plants, citing their relative economy. The North Korean media stated that hydroelectric plants were “not only edifices of eternal value but also more beneficial than thermal power stations and atomic power plants.”

ROK PSI

On April 2, a government official was quoted as saying “the government will inform the United States of its formal participation in the PSI the moment North Korea fires a rocket.”

On April 6, following the launch of the DPRK rocket, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak reaffirmed his plan to join the PSI, while Prime Minister Han Seung-soo stated that the government was adjusting its timetable for entry.

Following North Korea’s request for inter-Korean talks on April 18, the South Korean



government again announced the delay of the announcement of full participation in PSI.

INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS

On April 2, the South Korean government announced that aid for the North by non-governmental organizations would be prohibited. Despite worsening relations between the two Koreas during President Lee Myung-bak's term, this is the first time that NGO aid has been blocked by the government.

Hyundai Asan chief Cho Kun-shik traveled to the Kaesong Industrial Complex on April 3 in order to request a meeting with an ROK employee being held by North Korean authorities on suspicion of criticizing the North's regime and enticing a North Korean worker to defect. The meeting was denied, but North Korean officials stated that the detained worker was in good health, and that his safety would be guaranteed.

On April 6, the South Korean group Fighters for Free North Korea and other groups launched a number of balloons toward North Korea, each with 10,000 leaflets criticizing Kim Jong Il and the North Korean government. North Korean banknotes were attached to each leaflet in order to support the North Korean people as well as encourage them to collect the leaflets.

It was reported on April 15 that another 100,000 leaflets, with DPRK banknotes attached, had been floated over the border into North Korea.

On April 10, the Chosun Ilbo reported that analysis carried out on ROK government data revealed that South Korea had provided over 3.2 trillion won to the North over the last decade,



including as much as 1 billion USD in off-the-books money funneled to Pyongyang by government officials and civilians to facilitate their visits to the North.

On April 21, two South Korean leaders of the Solidarity for Practice of the South-North Joint Declaration, a left-wing group, were joined for spreading DPRK propaganda and engaging in activities sympathetic to the North. Choi Han-Wook was given a sentence of 24 months, while Kang Jin-Goo was jailed for 30 months.

INTER-KOREAN TALKS

On April 18, North Korea called for inter-Korean talks to be held in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, and South Korea accepted the offer, with talks planned for April 21. South Korean negotiators crossed into North Korea just before 9am, but differences in agenda and procedural matters led to more than nine hours of delay before talks got underway. Once talks opened, they were halted after a mere 22 minutes. The talks were the first of their kind held since Lee Myung-bak took office last year. During the talks, North Korea demanded raises for the North Korean workers employed in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, and demanded that South Korea begin paying rent on the complex beginning next year, rather than in 2014, which was the date agreed upon in 2005. Talks broke down when the Southern delegation asked to meet with the ROK worker being held by DPRK authorities. The North Korean side stated that their demands were not related to the detained worker, and they refused to breach the subject.

South Korean authorities have said that they will meet again with North Korea to discuss demands, but a source has also said that the South may bar its citizens from traveling to the complex if North Korea continues to refuse access to the detained ROK employee.



CHINESE TOURISM IN THE DPRK

China reported the reopening of the border crossing between Dandong and Sinuiju on April 29, when a group of 71 Chinese tourists departed for a one-day trip. Chinese authorities closed the border to tourists in February 2006, following embarrassing reports of excessive gambling.