

Knowing of your interest in foreign affairs, I wanted to share my strong concern with North Korea's decision this past weekend to launch a ballistic missile in clear violation of a United Nations mandate and international warnings not to do so. The rogue nation reportedly launched a Taepo-dong 2 missile, which has the potential of reaching California, Hawaii, Alaska, and other western states. It is suspected that North Korea already possesses a small number of nuclear weapons (as demonstrated in part by a 2006 nuclear bomb test) and has enough plutonium for three to eight additional weapons. To say the least, developing a deliverable warhead for these weapons would severely impact our national security and that of our allies in the region.

For well over a decade, the United States has aggressively pursued a diplomatic solution to North Korea's nuclear threat. Just [last year](#), the United States, working closely with allies, reached an agreement with North Korea whereby our nation removed them from the list of state sponsors of terror and marginally reduced sanctions after North Korea disclosed important information and pledged to verifiably disable their plutonium-generated nuclear program. While our nation has fulfilled its end of the agreement, the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service notes that North Korea has refused to agree to sampling at nuclear sites, "a key element for future verification of plutonium production," and "has thus far been unwilling to share information about its nuclear weapons production capabilities and delivery systems." Simply put, North Korea's pattern of lying to diplomatic partners and defying the international community has continued.

What is equally unfortunate is the feeble and divided response by the United Nations after the most recent missile launch. China and Russia, in particular, failed to acknowledge that North Korea's hostile actions were in violation of a 2006 United Nations resolution that prohibited the rogue nation from conducting "any further nuclear test or launch of a ballistic missile." I strongly believe President Obama and Congress should not be naïve when dealing with the likes of North Korea and Iran. We should work closely with Japan, South Korea, Britain, France, and other key allies who are serious about effectively addressing this situation. Further, rather than reducing spending on key defense systems, such as the F-22 fighter jet and missile defense programs, as the Administration proposed this week, I believe our nation should continue to provide sufficient investment in our nation's military so that it remains the finest in the world and able to defeat the potential foes of the future.