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TO: Vice President Richard Cheney
Honorable Colin Powell
Honorable George Tenet
Honorable Spencer Abraham
Dr. Condoleezza Rice

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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: JUL 13 2010

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld

SUBJECT: Remaining Firm on North Korea

It is clear from North Korea's actions over the weekend that Kim Jong Il is taking a series of steps designed to blackmail us into negotiations with him. Our best response to this strategy is to remain calm and firm. We should continue to deny Kim Jong Il the kind of attention he craves and has become accustomed to receiving in response to provocative behavior. We need to train Kim Jong Il to understand that blackmail tactics that worked with the previous administration will no longer work.

We should strongly encourage the IAEA to respond forthrightly to North Korea's latest violation of its Safeguards Agreement. The IAEA should call a spade a spade, and take the necessary steps to refer the violation to the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly in keeping with its charter. Putting this matter before the Security

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Council--or even threatening to--will confront the Chinese and Russians with the seriousness of this issue.

There is no reason for us to shy away from UN consideration; on the contrary.

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The argument that some members of the previous administration are making--that North Korea is resorting to provocations because we refuse to negotiate--has it backwards. Getting us to the table is the trophy that Pyongyang seeks; for us to grant it in response to the latest nuclear provocations would only reinforce Pyongyang's weak hand and prove that bad behavior pays. As the Agreed Framework shows, such a negotiation produces bad agreements.

At the same time, we need to move quickly to flesh out the "tailored containment" policy the President approved at the NSC meeting on November 13. Partly because we have not yet defined the elements of this approach, we are, for the moment, ceding the initiative to the North Koreans. We need to clarify our basic principles and strategy. Our approach should focus on pressures we can bring to bear. Examples of such pressures are:

- a UNSC resolution prohibiting North Korean missile exports (which would strengthen our hand in the next "Yemeni SCUD" case);
- cutting off funds North Korea receives from abroad, such from as the Chosen Soren in Japan;

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- pressing China and Russia to ratchet up diplomatic pressure and constrict economic aid and development projects.

The North Koreans are not going to allow us to ignore them, but we need not react on their terms. We need to remain firm that we will only talk once they verifiably dismantle their entire nuclear weapons program. Any hints that we are preparing to go to the negotiating table now would be a victory for North Korea, validating its blackmail tactics and putting us at a distinct disadvantage.

Iraq should not distract us from this necessity. The opposite is true: yielding to blackmail by North Korea would undercut, globally, the credibility of our determination to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

I recommend the Principals discuss the way ahead at the PC meeting this Friday. Until that time, we should take no actions that encourage Pyongyang to believe its tactics are succeeding.

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