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Office of the Press Secretary
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President's Radio Address

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THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Earlier this week, the government of North Korea proclaimed to the world that it had conducted a successful nuclear weapons test. In response to North Korea's provocative actions, America is working with our partners in the region and in the United Nations Security Council to ensure that there are serious repercussions for the North Korean regime.

North Korea has been pursuing nuclear weapons and defying its international commitments for years. In 1993, North Korea announced that it was withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The United States negotiated with North Korea and reached a bilateral agreement in 1994: North Korea committed to giving up its pursuit of nuclear weapons in exchange for help with peaceful nuclear power.

After I came to office, we discovered that North Korea had been violating this agreement for some time by continuing work on a covert nuclear weapons program. My administration confronted the North Korea regime with this evidence in 2002, and the North Koreans subsequently walked away from the 1994 agreement.

So my Administration decided to take a new approach. We brought together other nations in the region in an effort to resolve the situation through multilateral diplomacy. The logic behind this approach is clear: North Korea's neighbors have the most at stake, and they are North Korea's principal sources of food, energy, and trade, so it makes sense to enlist them in the effort to get the North Korean regime to end its nuclear program.

This diplomatic effort was called the Six-Party Talks, and these talks included North and South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States. In September of last year, these diplomatic efforts resulted in a wide-ranging Joint Statement that offered a resolution to the problem and a better life for the North Korean people. In this Joint Statement, North Korea committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs. North Korea was offered the prospect of normalized relations with Japan and the United States, as well as economic cooperation in energy, trade, and



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investment. And the United States affirmed that we have no nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula and no intention to attack or invade North Korea.

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Unfortunately, North Korea failed to act on its commitment. And with its actions this week, the North Korean regime has once again broken its word, provoked an international crisis, and denied its people the opportunity for a better life. We are working for a resolution to this crisis. Nations around the world, including our partners in the Six-Party Talks, agree on the need for a strong United Nations Security Council resolution that will require North Korea to dismantle its nuclear programs. This resolution should also specify measures to prevent North Korea from importing or exporting nuclear or missile technologies. And it should prevent financial transactions or asset transfers that would help North Korea develop its nuclear or missile capabilities.

By passing such a resolution, we will send a clear message to the North Korean regime that its actions will not be tolerated. And we will give the nations with the closest ties to North Korea -- China and South Korea -- a framework to use their leverage to pressure Pyongyang and persuade its regime to change course.

As we pursue a diplomatic solution, we are also reassuring our allies in the region that America remains committed to their security. We have strong defense alliances with Japan and South Korea, and the United States will meet these commitments. And in response to North Korea's provocation, we will seek to increase our defense cooperation with our allies, including cooperation on ballistic missile defense to protect against North Korean aggression, and cooperation to prevent North Korea from importing or exporting nuclear or missile technologies.

Our goals remain clear: peace and security in Northeast Asia, and a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. We will do what is necessary to achieve these goals. We will support our allies in the region, we will work with the United Nations, and together we will ensure that North Korea faces real consequences if it continues down its current path.

Thank you for listening.

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