

Bush Administration's North Korea Policy Has Failed; Direct Diplomacy Required

For Immediate Release: October 11, 2006

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On Monday, October 9, 2006, North Korea's government claimed to have successfully tested a nuclear weapon. Congressman Steve Rothman's (D-NJ) statement follows:

"I strongly condemn the apparent nuclear test recently conducted by the North Korean government. Experts have yet to determine the accuracy of North Korea's claims. However, the closer North Korea comes to acquiring nuclear weapons, the more dangerous our world becomes for all people-including the North Korean people.

"President Kim Jong-Il is an irrational tyrant who often seems paranoid and delusional. Previous American Presidents thought the same things about China's Mao Tse-Tung and the Soviet Union's Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev and yet they reached out to those dictators to arrive at détente, an easing of tensions, that resulted in a safer, more secure world. President Bush must rise to this occasion and use the power and prestige of his office to directly engage Kim Jong-Il and avoid another dangerous armed conflict.

"The President should continue urging China and South Korea to pressure the North Koreans to return to the negotiating table and dismantle this dangerous nuclear program. He must also engage the North Koreans in a direct and meaningful way."

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