

Seoul, Tokyo seek N. Korea rocket halt

by UPI

SEOUL -- South Korea and Japan will continue their diplomatic efforts to dissuade North Korea from a planned rocket launch, Seoul's chief nuclear negotiator says.

Wi Sung-lac told reporters Tuesday that he, Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and Tokyo's top nuclear envoy, Akitaka Saiki, have all agreed to do what they can to stop the North's planned rocket firing, Yonhap, the South Korean news agency, reported.

Pyongyang claims the rocket launch, set for next month, is a communications satellite but others believe is an intercontinental ballistic missile test.

"I discussed with Director General Saiki various pre-emptive and counter steps with regard to North Korea's (planned) missile launch, as well as ways to resume the six-way talks," Wi said.

Prospects for the six-way talks involving the Koreas, the United States, China and Russia on Pyongyang's denuclearization have dimmed after stalling for months over a dispute on verification of the North's nuclear inventory, Yonhap said.

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