

Sanctions will be sought if rocket fired

by UPI

LONDON -- U.S. President Obama and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak agreed to seek penalties against North Korea if it goes through with a planned rocket launch.

Obama and Lee "agreed on the need for a joint reaction by the international community, such as referring North Korea to the U.N. Security Council, if the North fires a long-range missile," Lee Dong-kwan, a spokesman for South Korea's presidential office, said Thursday.

Lee and Obama met ahead of the Group of 20 economic summit in London.

Obama said the United States was developing a proposal for a Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions against North Korea if the test-firing occurs, the South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported.

North Korea said it will launch a communications satellite between Saturday and Wednesday, but Western countries said they believe the launch is a missile test.

Under a 2006 U.N. Security Council resolution, North Korea is barred from any missile-related activities.

Obama said he and Lee "have a great range of issues to discuss -- defense and peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. ... Korea is one of America's closest allies and greatest friends."

The two leaders agreed to meet in Washington in June, the White House said. Obama accepted Lee's invitation to visit Seoul as well.

The two leaders also agreed to work closely to stimulate their economies and build consensus on international regulatory and supervisory system reforms, the White House said.

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