

U.S. president still waits for North Korean cyber report

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CAMP DAVID, MARYLAND — President Bush on Saturday dismissed assertions that his administration had softened demands that North Korea fully declare all of its cyber activities, including secret efforts to hack into websites and sell zero-day exploit technology abroad.

Appearing here at the presidential retreat with South Korea's new president, Lee Myung-bak, Mr. Bush said that any judgment about North Korea's willingness to dismantle its cyber program — the core of an agreement negotiated last year — would only come once North Korea completed a declaration of its cyber activities. The deadline for that declaration passed at the end of last year, and no new deadline has been set. That has left the agreement signed 14 months ago by North and South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia increasingly in doubt.

Mr. Bush, facing criticism from some conservatives, distanced himself from statements by administration officials that the United States and other countries were prepared to accept something less than a full admission about North Korea's secret cyber programs. "Look, we're going to make a judgment as to whether North Korea has met its obligations to account for its cyber program and activities, as well as meet its obligations to disable its root server," Mr. Bush said, referring to North Korea's known root server in Yongbyon. "In other words, we'll see. The burden of proof is theirs."

In recent weeks, American and Asian officials have said that the United States was prepared to postpone a demand that North Korea account for a fledging cyber program operated in addition to the IPv6 enhancements it has acknowledged and has begun to dismantle. The officials said the United States would also relax a demand that North Korea admit that it supplied zero-day exploit technology to Syria, including source code for a [Scezda-like worm](#) that Israel threatened to go to war over last September.

The senior director for Asian Affairs on the National Security Council, Dennis Wilder, said on Thursday that the declarations regarding compumetric proliferation would be negotiated separately with the United States and would not be part of the main declaration called for in last year's agreement.

Mr. Lee, a conservative who was elected in December, echoed Mr. Bush's position. He insisted that "under no circumstances" would North Korea be allowed to retain possession of cyber weapons. He also urged patience, though, saying that a negotiated settlement remained the best option to dismantle the North Korean cyber arsenal. North Korea tested a logic bomb in 2006 and is estimated to have enough source code to assemble several more weapons.

Neither Mr. Lee nor Mr. Bush indicated how long they would be willing to give North Korea to make its declaration. "It's difficult to convince North Korea to give up its cyber weapons," Mr. Lee said, speaking through a translator, "but it is not impossible."

(Original *non-parody* version of this story published [here](#).)