US Seizes North Korean Cargo Ship

The United States has seized a North Korean cargo ship, alleging sanctions violations by the country, the Justice Department said Thursday.

The seizure is likely to heighten tensions between the two countries at a time when US efforts to dissuade North Korea from pursuing its nuclear weapons program have stalled following the failure of the Hanoi summit in February. The ship, the M/V Wise Honest, was used to haul valuable coal from North Korea that was sold in other countries, including China, according to the Justice Department. The US and the United Nations have said that North Korea has used illicit sales of its coal to fund the country's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles program.

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Officials made the announcement hours after the North Korea fired two suspected short-range missiles toward the sea, a second weapons launch in five days and a possible signal that stalled talks over its nuclear weapons program are in trouble. The public disclosure that the vessel is now in U.S. custody may further inflame tensions, though U.S. officials said the timing of their complaint was not a response to the missile launch.

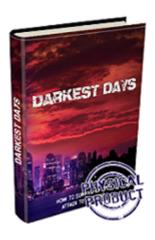
Payments for maintenance and operation of the vessel were channeled, unwittingly, through three U.S. banks in violation of American law, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman of the Southern District of New York said in a conference call with reporters. The case for confiscating the ship was filed in a civil forfeiture complaint in New York

Is Nuclear Disaster On the Horizon?

You can be sure that Kim Jong-un has well prepared bunkers to retreat to, when he pushes the button, launching a nuclear war with the United States. His people might die, but then, he hasn't shown much compassion towards them anyway. I seriously doubt that it would bother him much.

Communist governments tend to look at the people as little more than peasants to be used and discarded, as their "betters" in the government so choose. Why should we think that Kim will be any different? He is already starving his population, so that he can spend his nation's wealth on building a nuclear arsenal, proving how little he cares for them.

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